

Reflecting on Summer

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As I write this I am sitting in the Chemical Engineering building at University of Cape Town in South Africa. I arrived here about three weeks ago, and as soon as I stepped off the plane my summer ended. Because here it's winter. It took a little adjustment transitioning from the 90 degree, humid days of New Orleans into the chilly winds of Cape Town, residing in a house lacking central heating, as most buildings here do. But I've adjusted, and the city is beautiful.

While settling in here I've realized how thankful I am for my summer in New Orleans. Through living on my own and having an internship I developed my independence and sense of self. The money and emotion management this entailed prepared me for my time here: in a foreign country for 5 months, away from everyone I know. My work with Mama Maji helped me learn to be timely getting myself where I need to go. That's very important here because I have to walk to the train station, catch the train, next catch the bus, and then walk to class the majority of my days.

During my internship with Mama Maji there have been several times when my boss had to leave shortly for a meeting or not so shortly for an out of state presentation to a potential donor. During this time, he gave me assignments, and it was my duty to get them done in a timely fashion, even when no one was watching. Building upon my skill of self-motivation through willpower has prepared me for the work I need to do here at UCT. I don't have a roommate here who will encourage me to study by constantly asking me to go to the library with her. I'm living in a homestay, and am responsible for studying when I tell myself to. The city has so many things to offer, and the weekends will go by quick. It's up to me to work before play.

Overall, my internship with Mama Maji has been a fabulous experience. Through it I have matured, built my knowledge of non-profits, fundraising, New Orleans, and Kenya. I have become more comfortable interacting with employers- sharing my ideas, and asking questions to learn more about those I'm working with, how to do my job more effectively, and the non-profit sector as a whole. In the coming weeks I will be starting up my internship with Mama Maji again, in a digital sense. I look forward to doing more outreach work for this wonderful organization, and can't wait to see what my future will hold. Oh, and I raised \$2,550 for Mama Maji's clean water project in Homa Bay!