

## **Student scholars spend summer studying**

**by Natalie Johnson - Tuesday, July 29, 2008**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1050/student-scholars-spend-summer-studying/>

Aaryn Mustoe's summer has gone to the birds — in a good way.

As one of 13 University of Wisconsin Oshkosh McNair Scholars working on research projects with faculty mentors this summer, Mustoe has been studying how songbirds metabolically respond to an immune response.

Working with UW Oshkosh animal ecological physiologist Sheldon Cooper, Mustoe, of Milwaukee, determines how much energy black-capped chickadees devote to their immune activity in basal and maximum metabolic rate.

“My role, under the supervision of Dr. Cooper, is to run the birds under cold stress. I also participate in basic measurements, feeding and other bird care, data analysis and assisting with catching the birds from the wild, which are banded and released a couple of days later,” Mustoe said.

The results will provide data that is relatively unknown to assist and guide future research on immune activity and metabolism in songbirds. The results also will provide immune- and seasonality-related information that other ecological physiologists can use to monitor and protect bird populations in the future.

A new \$220,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education funds the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, which prepares undergraduates for doctoral study.

“We are delighted to be able to provide continued support for students, particularly first-generation and underrepresented students, as they consider pursuing a graduate degree,” said program director Susie Sandrin. “This program is just one of a number of student-centered academic programs that provides students with practical, hands-on research experience.”

Other undergraduate McNair research projects underway this summer include studying education in the Milwaukee Public Schools, interracial dating in the Hmong community, Latino parent involvement in schools and coping strategies of families with deployed soldiers.

College of Nursing Undergraduate Program Director Suzanne Marnocha, who is mentoring McNair Scholar Amanda Krohn, of Oshkosh, said most research on military families focuses on the soldiers' experiences. But information about the effect on other family members would be beneficial to nurses and other healthcare professionals.

“We will be caring for a great number of soldiers, and often times the spouses or partners of these service people are the silent victims. Few stories have been told about their perceptions,” she said.

After gathering data from interviews with family members of deployed soldiers, the researchers are spending the summer analyzing the data.

In the fall, 12 other undergraduates will begin work as McNair Scholars. The complete list of the summer McNair Scholars is as follows:

- Vanessa Ante (biology)
- Damion Burgin (criminal justice)
- Krystal deLeon (communication)
- Nathan Harris (physics)
- Amanda Krohn (nursing)
- Janene Lang (philosophy/environmental studies)
- Pa Nhia Lee (international studies)
- Vai Lor (biology)
- Aaryn Mustoe (psychology)
- Olivia Navarro (education)
- Ryan Schuh (biology)
- Amanda Scripture (social work)
- Jonathan “Leviathan” Whitfield (English education)

More information about the McNair Scholars Program is available at [www.uwosh.edu/mcnairsscholars](http://www.uwosh.edu/mcnairsscholars).