

GROWERTALKS

Young Voices

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Incredible Secrets About Interning in the U.S.

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Coming to the USA to do my internship at Kendall Farms in California has been a great opportunity for my career. Being a Zambian studying in Costa Rica, I was looking for an opportunity outside my comfort zone to do my internship in a place that is more advanced in agricultural practices.

I was fortunate to be accepted to do my internship at Kendall Farms because I researched and I discovered that California is one of the most productive places in the world in terms of food production. First, it is the world's fifth largest supplier of food, cotton fiber and other agricultural commodities, yet has less than 4% of the farms in the U.S. After reading this, I gained interest and this motivated me to apply for the internship because I want to learn how they produce their products at such a level. Another reason is that the weather conditions are almost the same as in Zambia, except that we do not produce at such a level.

Pictured: Jane harvesting squash for a local community project during her internship at Kendall Farms.

Horticulture is a diverse and important industry that spans a variety of subjects in relation to plants like flower production, landscape design, pest biology and gardening. As it is said, "Working in the garden is like digging knowledge from the earth." I chose to expand my knowledge in flower production, which consists of working in the farm.

The family-owned Kendall Farms provides premium flowers to their customers around the world, and they thrive to exceed their expectations by offering innovative and profitable opportunities in all those relations. At Kendall Farms, I have had a chance to see their innovative practices, including on-site compost where they divert green waste from

the farm produce to compost in order to reduce the amount of commercial fertilizers. Water management is also another interesting factor because it is managed by a massive reservoir and water treatment system for capturing and recycling almost all of the water used on the farm.

Just like any other farm, Kendall Farms has so many activities I could participate in. The farm has a project in partnership with the community, which is an outreach farm project and they produce food like watermelon, onions, tomatoes and other farm products that are given to people in need or organizations that help people who are less privileged.

In addition, I have also participated on a research project that is being conducted to identify common pests and their control. This is to help in sensitizing the workers who have little or no knowledge about it. I also work in the field on inventory of plants. With time, I will learn how to design flowers, post harvesting, irrigations processes and all other applications on the farm.

My future dream is to become an entrepreneur when I will go back home after graduating. I will apply the knowledge obtained here at school as I will be completing my final year. This experience will be done in:

- My graduation projects
- I will teach students during work experience days
- I will implement the knowledge obtained to my community
- I will teach my community how they can be more productive in horticulture crops production

My advice to those who plan or wish to come to the U.S. for an exchange or internship program is that you need to have goals and they must be SMART goals.

- Do not just go because you need to earn some money or make new friends and want to know a new place. You will face a lot of challenges during the time you will do the program, so the best suggestion is to come well prepared and choose something that you have interest in.
- Research more about the place you are going to, like the weather conditions, prices for food, culture, taxes, bus fares, taxi fares and more.
- Find a place where you can learn something new—it will help you in the future and even your lifetime.
- Be open minded because it opens up opportunities for you to learn from others on how they do things or why they believe in what they do and how they do it.
- Learn to manage your time because it will help you in many ways. Complete activities on time and learn to manage and stick to a schedule, as well as be social.



Pictured: Cut flower varieties grown on Kendall Farms where Jane interned.

My internship has taught me how I can survive now and in the future. Even if the population increases on earth, this experience, together with the knowledge obtained from EARTH University in Costa Rica, has impacted me with new ways of cultivation during any period of the year and on any space of land, but with a lot of different produce.

Life in the USA is as beautiful as a lot of places. People are so friendly and a lot of people eat out, not only because of interest of time and convenience, but because it is fun! In addition, I was told that the USA is called a melting pot because of the different cultures, bringing along a variety of tasty food options that come from many different backgrounds and cultures, and there are such a wide variety of beliefs,

values and traditions.

There is no such thing as the typical American and it makes such an interesting and surprising place. **GT**

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