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In today's world, it's becoming more and more common to come across newspaper headlines alluding to new discoveries in the rapidly progressing field of breast cancer research. Never did I imagine that I would one day be working side-by-side with the very scientists who are responsible for these discoveries. Organized by the Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition, the Students and Scientists Environmental Research Program provided me with the precious opportunity to conduct research in the Soto & Sonnenschein Laboratory at Tufts University Medical Center this past summer. Participating in the program not only expanded my understanding of oncological medicine; it gave me a new appreciation for environmental research.

In the current industrial race to develop more efficient products, manufacturers driven by commercial revenue tend to overlook consumer health and safety. In doing so, people are inadvertently being exposed to environmental carcinogens, some of which act as endocrine disruptors that upset body functions. The Soto & Sonnenschein laboratory studies the morphological effects of xenoestrogen bisphenol A - a chemical that is commonly found in plastics and metal cans - on the mammary glands. I contributed to this effort by examining tissues under a microscope, preparing whole mounts, and performing hematoxylin and eosin stains and immunocytochemistries.

Due to the availability of the necessary resources and facilities, this program provided the perfect opportunity to obtain laboratory research exposure. I gained comprehensive knowledge about mammary biology, the operation of laboratory instruments, and lab interaction. Getting an "insider's look" at cutting-edge breast cancer research through the Students and Scientists Environmental Research Program was a fascinating and valuable opportunity that I am thankful to have experienced. I hope to share my insights from this experience with the community, as education is the first step to addressing the increasingly prevalent world issue of breast cancer.