Corey DePerno
"This I Believe"

Follow Your Own Path to Find Yourself

I decided in summer of 2013 that I was going to work with marine mammals. I didn't care how I got there, but I knew it was going to happen. I looked up several applications and many of them required applicants to be open water SCUBA certified. What did I do? I called my local dive shop and got in the first available class. I didn't know anything about diving and I'll admit I'm an awful swimmer, but I did it anyways.   During my final dive, I looked up and saw the sun shine through the water like glass. I can honestly say there is nothing more beautiful in this world.

After five weeks of class, I finally applied to the closest aquarium. The aquarium I applied to was approximately four hours away from my hometown, and two hours away from my college. Well, that was close enough for me. A few days later I received an email, and a few days after that, I had my phone interview. I don't know how or why I got hired because all my words meshed together during my interview, but I was motivated and ready for a new experience. I shadowed a few days later and couldn't believe my eyes. I was touching frozen dead fish and it didn't even matter to me because I was able to see the animals. I never wanted the job to end.

I commuted through Upstate New York weather in the winter and was outside during the coldest of days for zero pay. Everyone asked why I would do such a thing and my only response was, "why not?" Just because this is not the career I have decided to choose, doesn't mean I didn't learn about the animals and myself. This experience has lead me to the Bahamas to continue SCUBA diving and to study marine biology. I also am taking the opportunity to Study Abroad to Antarctica this winter. I'll never forget the smile I got every time I looked into the big beautiful eyes of those animals and the way they made me believe life is what you make of it.   I believe in taking every opportunity. Try something new- you never know where it may take you.