

Thanks to the Nora Baart Travel Grant, I have been able to study pancreatic cancer at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore (United States of America).



Baltimore is best known for “The Wire” - a tv show about Baltimore’s law enforcement system and illegal drug trade. I decided to watch the show in preparation for my stay there. It is one of the greatest tv shows, but I didn’t realise how accurately it depicted life in Baltimore until I got there. The night I arrived, I was dropped off by my Uber driver in a dark alley at a temporary Airbnb. He warned me for the neighborhood and told me to never get out at night before quickly getting back into his car and racing off. And there I was in the dark with my big suitcase, fumbling with the keys, trying to get into the Airbnb as fast as I could. That night it was hard to catch some sleep with police cars tearing down the street every five minutes. I later found out there were multiple shootings with six people killed (which was just an average Friday night in Baltimore).

My internship taught me a lot. It taught me critical scientific thinking, novel laboratory techniques, and good academic writing. But above all it taught me about diversity in ideas, background and culture. I got to work in a multidisciplinary and multicultural team of incredibly bright minds. Each individual taught me so much, from looking out for details, cooperating together, to fluorescent staining, and tissue dissection. But going abroad, and going to one of the most dangerous cities in America taught me a great deal too. It also taught me about diversity in ideas, background and culture. While I got to go to fancy benefit galas to raise money for cancer research, young boys in Baltimore were drawn into drug crime to be able to afford groceries. Every day, I was confronted by the random division between poor and rich. I would leave the perfectly groomed Hopkins campus with its armed security guards on every corner of the street, to enter one of the most neglected, and impoverished neighborhoods I had ever seen. America, which I had always perceived as a progressive, world leading country, shocked me.

I eventually moved to a different place, where I would hear the sirens every fifteen minutes instead of



every five. I realize that I have been in an incredibly fortunate position, where I have been able to get funding from the Nora Baart Travel Grant to travel to a great university, to study cancer in an amazing team, and to learn from the best. But the Nora Baart Travel Grant also gave me the opportunity to travel to a piece of the world, where I would have never have gone to otherwise, which maybe even taught

me more. I therefore would like to thank the Nora Baart Foundation for this great opportunity.