Experience is one of the best teachers for Rhasaan Bovell MY '19. The ecology and evolutionary biology major from Silver Spring, Maryland, has collected biological samples in the rain forests of South America, conducted lab research in New Haven, and honed his people skills as a First-Year Counselor.

“Animal biology and behavior have always fascinated me,” he says. “And this summer I saw a lot of both.” Rhasaan spent the summer before his senior year volunteering at The Purr Project, a nonprofit cat rehabilitation center located in a 24-hour animal hospital. “We had cats that had been hit by cars, had been abused, or turned feral, and some that had been injured from violent lives in the wild. I helped to thread IVs and do bloodwork, supporting the medical technicians as they cared for the animals and balanced their dietary and medication requirements, all while warming the cats to human interaction. It was fascinating to see how a cat’s behavior alters as its health improves.”

Rhasaan was able to work at the nonprofit thanks to a Yale domestic summer award, a grant for financial aid recipients participating in unpaid internships in a service, arts, or government program within the United States. Its objective is to ensure that Yale students who qualify for financial aid during the academic year can also participate in meaningful summer-time learning and service opportunities.

“In my time at Yale, I’ve been able to do so many things I never imagined. These experiences have changed the way I work, my worldview, and how I interact with people. I had been considering going right to grad school, but after this summer I want to work in a lab for a few years first. I am so glad to have had this opportunity.”

Donors make it possible for exceptional students like Rhasaan to attend Yale, regardless of their financial circumstances. To learn more about ways to support these students, please visit giving.yale.edu or call 800.395.7646.