

## Student Shadows World Renowned Scientist

By Danae Jarrett

Cultivating her passion for marine biology, Marlee Lewin, a sophomore at NSU University School, has elevated her learning through the Independent Research Study (IRS). This unique program gives students the opportunity to work one-on-one with university professors and conduct extensive, graduate-level research. Marlee is currently being mentored by world-renowned marine scientist, Dr. Alexander Soloviev, who is faculty at NSU's Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography.

As a self-assured, fearless freshman, Marlee dove into accumulating as many science and biology courses at NSU University School, until seizing the opportunity to have a distinguished mentorship in the field of marine biology.

Marlee's passion for marine biology evolved during her early childhood years, while on fishing trips with her father. Swimming with dolphins and seeing the intricacies of their lives uprooted a curiosity in marine conservation that would blossom into a desire to learn the communication patterns and processes of underwater mammals.

Through her mentorship with Dr. Soloviev, one particular area of research that has captured her interest is the ability to target whale stress patterns and analyze the sonar evaluations with whale oil. Amid research, oil is collected and tested to identify the species releasing the oils. The oil is further assessed in order to establish processes that can be implemented to rid the stress of whales.

Marlee's ability to learn primarily through hands-on experience and observation has been significant in her growth, high school success, and aspirations for her future.

"I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge from my mentorship with Dr. Soloviev. His commitment, leadership, expertise, and inspiration has assured my passion and career trajectory as a marine biologist.



The sacrifice he makes as a professor, with compassion for the future of today's youth, is exemplary," said Marlee.

The ASPIRE program, Independent Research Study (IRS), and the mentorship with Dr. Soloviev have propelled Marlee to excel. She will continue working with Dr. Soloviev through the remainder of high school and anticipates participation in grant writing, in depth research and publication, and the opportunity to present her research in the near future.

Marlee's aspirations do not end there; She continues to encourage USchool students to find their passion.

"If you want to do something and truly have a passion for it, take the step. There may be a tiny spark of interest within you—don't ignore it. See if it's really what you want to do because in the end, it will be 100% worth it," said Marlee.

Beyond her current studies, Marlee plans to apply to Boston University, Duke University, University of Hawaii, and University of California, Santa Barbara, to study Marine Biology. She would love to start a rescue and rehabilitation center, focusing on beached whales, dolphins, and marine animals. In this environment, she would study and research injured marine animals, nurture them back to health, and then release them into the wild.

