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SunValley Floral Group Intern (January 2019 – July 2019)  
American Floral Endowment  
Vic & Margaret Ball Internship Student Report

Interning at SunValley Floral Group has boosted my confidence as a Horticulture student and professional. Since moving here six months ago I worked in seven different departments at SunValley and have learned different skills from each. SunValley Floral Group is a huge flower farm and its size seemed intimidating at first though the workers had made me feel so comfortable and were interested in teaching me all there was to know about the company. I think the whole premise of this internship is a gateway to personal and academic growth. Moving to a different state can be uncomfortable and moving to different departments throughout the farm every two weeks and starting again as the new employee could be uncomfortable but growth does not happen in your comfort zones.

The first couple of weeks I worked in the busiest area of Sun Valley. It was late January, early February and Valentine’s Days sales had been picking up. I worked in the Tulip bunching room where there are virtually assembly lines of workers bunching and putting the bunches in flower sleeves. The technology they have in the bunching room is very inspiring and adds a huge amount of efficiency to this process. One machine in particular that they had is the Furora machine. It can take two different colored tulips and measure them by bud size and stem length to create grade A bunches. I’ve seen this machine in lectures at my University and it was surreal to be working on that assembly line. The number of tulips they prepare in one day is awe-inspiring. I then moved on to the shipping and packing department. Here I learned a lot of organizational skills as well as learning to pay very close attention to detail. Weeks later I was working as a flower picker. I worked in the Ranunculus picking and Iris picking areas. Here I learned the different stages of blooming and when the correct time to pick each different flower was. Floriculture is a very tedious business to be involved in and each department has an important role on the farm. It was interesting to be a part of each of the steps of production from crop tending, planting, picking to bunching and shipping. There are so many factors to be mindful of in floriculture production such as picking too early, bunching unevenly (which could affect water uptake when stored), ensuring the correct temperature of the storage areas, and how quickly the picked crop needs to be sent out. Without the hard work, patience, and care that my coworkers put into each process, beautiful bouquets wouldn’t be able to make their way to bring color and love, hope, and joy to many families lives around the United States. The last area I worked in was plant propagation. Here I mirrored SunValleys propagator. I learned how to propagate Roses as well as Ilex. I loved working in this area of production because I had taken a plant propagation course at University and was able to learn more about this subject and build upon the skills I had already learned.

Working at Sunvalley had allowed me to use my academic knowledge in a hands-on way. I loved how this internship allowed me to work in many different departments helping me gain a well-rounded idea of all the aspects of a floriculture business. I believe having hands-on experience is so essential to academic growth. What I learned in the classroom has been complemented and enhanced by this Internship which further, has given me a huge confidence boost as a Horticulture student and future professional. I plan to use the insight I have gained through this experience to be a beneficial part of the Floriculture industry.