Jenny Paterno

Jenny Paterno, who just completed her first year in the Graduate Program in Ecology and Evolution, was awarded a $10,000 scholarship by the BrickLayers & Allied Craftworkers Local Union No. 7, the highest financial award from this organization.

Paterno graduated from Richard Stockton College in 2012 with a bachelor’s degree in Marine Science and a minor in Biology. While at Stockton, she was involved with research at Rutgers through the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory (HSRL) in the summers. “I started out as an REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) intern, then a lab technician and after my Stockton graduation, became a full-time graduate assistant.”

In the master’s program here at Rutgers, Paterno’s research interests are restoration ecology in aquatic systems and community science education. She’s been working with Project PORTS: Promoting Oyster Restoration Through Schools for the past two years, evaluating the habitat value of the reef on the restoration site off Gandy’s Beach as part of her master’s thesis.

Jenny Paterno pictured with a bushel of oysters. She was assisting with monthly disease monitoring of oyster seed beds in the Delaware Bay.
An outreach initiative of the HSRL, Project PORTS is an education and community-based oyster restoration program that targets elementary and middle school communities in New Jersey’s Delaware Bay shore region. “Students create shell bags that form the structure of the Gandy’s Beach Oyster Restoration Enhancement Area (GBOREA) in the Delaware Bay. I am studying the faunal community on the GBOREA.”

“I enjoy being in the classroom with kids just as much as I love being out on the water. I am interested in bringing science into the classroom to provide children with a more hands-on learning experience. Community members and scientists working together for the good of the local ecosystem is a beautiful thing,” said Paterno.

This year, the Local awarded 91 scholarships, totaling $105,000 to students in New York and New Jersey and awards were based on “academic achievement and potential, character, leadership, social awareness, career goals and financial need.” Students must be union members or spouses, dependent children or grandchildren of a member to qualify. Paterno’s father has been a member of the Union for 23 years.

Filed Under: Fisheries/Aquaculture, SEBS, Students