



Alumni Testimonials

For over forty years, “the SSP experience” has had profoundly beneficial effects on its students, far beyond mere academics. These benefits are documented and confirmed in three major ways:

- eloquent personal statements from alumni and their parents
- the impressive accomplishments of its alumni
- the willingness of alumni to assume responsibility for both funding and operating the program after 1999 (unprecedented, as far as we know, for a six-week summer program)

This document contains a sample of statements from alumni, young and old. Those from recent students reflect the exuberance of youth inspired, while older alumni are able to look back a decade or more, evaluating the program’s benefits in the context of their entire educational and vocational careers.

Each individual has mentioned what SSP meant to him or her personally, but several themes are common. Our students learn academics (it is often their first exposure to astronomy, calculus, and programming). On a deeper level, they learn how science is done, how scientists think, whether a career science is for them, and what college is like. Other summer enrichment programs offer many of these same benefits.

But most profoundly, SSP students are surprised to find themselves challenged to work up to their full potential, in an stimulating environment of cooperation, living and working side-by-side with their true peers in intellect, interests, and motivation. They find this incredibly rewarding, and often a stark contrast to their experience in high school. Thus many alumni cite SSP’s social and psychological benefits as its most important.

Caltech Prof. Paul Routly, SSP’s first Academic Director, summed it up best: “**I don't believe there's a program anywhere that has a track record of proven value like the SSP.**”

Class of 2006 - Socorro

SSP is a laboratory in which the subject of the experiment and the scientist are the same person, and that's you. –Ben Knudsen

When you are surrounded by geniuses, you have no choice but to get smarter. – Adrian Melia

I found out that there are people out there as eccentric and odd as I am. –Peck Yang

Cooperation, individuality, and rigor falls short of describing SSP. It is more than that... SSP is a place where one rediscovers his/herself, where one's mind is challenged to its limits and beyond, where one's character is tested, and where one learns the true meaning of "leadership is not a quality it is a way of life." – Lambert Wang

SSP is swing dancing for three hours before heading straight for the computer lab to finish a programming assignment. It's only at SSP that having fun can motivate you to do more work. –Michelle Chang

I learned more in 6 weeks at SSP than I did in an entire year of some of my classes back at home. –Hannah Clevenson

I loved working to all hours of the night with my peers and the feeling of genuine camaraderie that was present in everything we did. I learned that working in a group can be fun and that it is a great motivator. I will always remember this experience and never forget what it has taught me. –John Scudato

I thought I would grow tremendously intellectually here at SSP - and I was right, but I found that the priceless part of it was being with my SSP family and growing the most socially and as an individual, which was unexpected but definitely fruitful. –Fakhra Khalid

It's not a coincidence that SSP alumni keep such strong ties to the program - a program so academically rich, and allowing you to meet people as intelligent and passionate about science as you are, is bound to stick in your mind for the rest of your life. –Erik Madsen

There are few places that you get to know and identify with people so alike and yet so different from yourself. –Yipeng Huang

SSP is probably one of the most important things that's ever happened to me. – Ross Greenwood

Meeting these incredibly intelligent yet also social people has just made me so excited about college... I hope that the SSP environment will carry on into my college years. –Joy Lin

Class of 2006 - Ojai

SSP is literally life x 1000. That's the only way I can describe it. –Yuen Henry

The most intense summer of my life: in between measuring, midnight basketball, and early morning programming, I have made memories here to be cherished. –David Tsao

Before I went to SSP 2006, I read through the quotes that people had written about the experience. At the time, I thought they involved a lot of cliché and exaggeration. I did not take them seriously at all. Yesterday I was reading through the quotes again, and I realized that all of them were completely correct.

SSP really is intense. It really does change lives. And you really don't want to miss it. –Kimberly McManus

The friends I've made here at SSP, the memories I've shared, and the knowledge that I can do anything I set my mind to have forever changed me for the better. –Emily Podany

SSP has been the most wonderful and craziest experience of my life; both socially and academically I have done more than I ever expected possible in six years, let alone in six weeks! I have learned so much about not just physics and astronomy, but also about myself. I would not trade my experience at SSP for anything. –Suzanna Piatt

At SSP, people care not only about academics, but really care about each other. Being around such amazing people altered my outlook on life. –Andy Lyon

In school there's only a handful of individuals who are truly interested in academics and pursuing something great in life; at SSP, there are thirty-six. –Jonathan Finn-Gamino

Class of 2005

SSP taught me that the most affective way to learn is through collaboration. Finding people who shared my interests greatly accelerated my learning rate and allowed me to have the best summer of my life. –Brandon Giles

I made some of the best friends I ever had, and I can't bear to leave them. Best of all, I learned how much I absolutely love science. –Mary Masterman

The life change per day rate was higher than I ever imagined it could be. Thank you, you have profoundly affected my life for the better. –Matt Bowes

... the epitome of camaraderie. –Allen Yu

SSP opened my eyes ... there's so much that we know and so much more we don't know. The prospects for the future are endless. –Alex Haase

I have learned more than I ever thought possible. It was hard but it was also very exciting. I wish I could spend every summer at SSP. –Sarah E. Stanley

SSP has changed my life. It has opened my eyes to the wide and deep field of astronomy and astrophysics. –Dmitriy Yakovlev

SSP is a great opportunity to learn a lot of cool things about science and an even better way to learn about yourself. –Andy Eck

SSP has changed how I look at my choices and given me perspective on other cultures, beliefs, and lives. The social experience can't be beat. –Rachel Wagner-Kaiser

SSP has drastically changed my life and taught me a lot about what I want to study in college. –Jennifer Li

It is impossible to put into words the experience of SSP. I have never been around such an awesome group of nerds & geeks with social skills. –Sean Malone

The essence of SSP is the night before the OD is due, in the computer lab. We'll laugh at anything and stress out about anything. –Shen Huang

SSP has given me a rare chance to explore my career choices before I go to college and has helped me realize how much I really do want to be involved in the sciences. –Elaine Johnson

It has been an incredible experience to work with such great people and cool equipment. –Mike DeLiso

SSP has given me a much better idea of what I love, where I want to go to college, and what I want to do for the rest of my life. –Lindsay Wilhelmus

I never imagined meeting such a diversity of peers. –Ota Amaize

Six weeks of work for six little numbers = the best summer I've ever had. –Patrick Holvey

SSP is one of the best things that ever happened to me. It is the social experience that made a critical change in my development. The people here are smart, motivated, and talented. –Anh Nguyen

SSP makes you aware of the bubble you may have been living in, and breaks you out. –Calvin Lee

The people here are truly amazing. It feels like I've known them way longer than six weeks, and simultaneously as if I should be here six weeks longer. –Anna deBakker

I wish I had a quote, but I don't because I haven't slept in the past six weeks. –Kalina Ward

Best classes, best social activities, best people. –Omer Erkovan

I learned how to pick two out of sleep, study, and social life. –Masha Baryakhtar

Everyone is motivated to do their best. We are like a happy family. –Shiyu Bai

I will never forget the friendships I made here. –Jenny Kwan

An experience that unfolds the world of research to those committed to undertake what it asks of them. –Anguel Alexiev

SSP: an amazing, unforgettable, overwhelming six weeks of programming, observing, and general insanity all fueled by sheer excitement and lemonade. –Benjamin Steele

SSP rocks my socks. –Laura Chanan

Working hard, playing hard, making friends, I had my life completely changed by the students and faculty of SSP. –Chris Kim

Diversity – of intellectual capacity, ethnic background, culture, ideology, emotional intelligence – was the most exceptional and invigorating aspect of this program. –Lucas Baradello

Class of 2004

What amazed me most was the people here. They weren't all nerds and geeks! I learned that you can be really smart but cool at the same time! --Teresa Van Diest

SSP became who we are, and we became SSP. --Shuo Han

SSP has been an amazing experience for me. Here I have made the best friends I could ever make and have found out that my true career does indeed lie in science. Thank you SSP!! --Jyotsna Venkataramanan

SSP was the most amazing social experience I have been privileged to have. It also manages to be a model for the way learning really should be pursued. --Camilo Brokaw

I'm sorry. I've failed you. I am incapable of summarizing SSP, my experience here, and the impact it's had on me in even several sentences. --Emma Lipari

When I came here, I was a little skeptical; how could your whole life change in only six weeks? Now I know firsthand that it is possible. These past six weeks will be part of me forever. --Nichole Clarke

Every morning I would wake up and think, hey, I'm going to work, doing what I love, with people just like me! --Renuka Ramanathan

You're in another universe for six weeks -- where you learn about everything, about life – then you go back to earth and carry that experience inside of you everywhere you go. --Helen You

SSP has been a life-changing experience. There is nothing else like this in the world. I will remember it forever. --Marshall Fox

It's a world where people are people and science is cool. --Jameson Neff

SSP has changed my life. (Yes! The cliché phrase!) There is no way I'll return home and look at my life in the same way I did before. Simply knowing that people like this exist (and being surrounded by them for six weeks!) is amazing. My interest in astronomy has been renewed; as soon as I get home, I'm going to take out my telescope and explore. --Irene Toro Martinez

An experience like SSP cannot be put into words. It's exhilarating, exhausting, emotionally uplifting and simply incredible. I've just finished the most amazing six weeks of my life. --Ariadne Medler

Class of 2003

Whoa! A “flip you upside down shake you and pour more knowledge in until you like it” kind of place. --Chris Christensen

SSP has by far exceeded my expectations ... by how much? Infinitely. --Anna Ly

They were right when they told us that we'd learn we weren't as smart as we thought we were, and we'd learn more than we ever thought possible. But I had no idea how much fun it would be, and how great it would be to go through it with others just as excited as I was. --Eve Burstein

Why can't school be like this?! Finally I'm doing real challenging work, not just busywork. --Alex Early

At SSP, with every step, you feel you are developing. First week, you try to see in the dark; last week you can see in the dark! --Ahmet Kizilay

You can never fully prepare for SSP. The experiences, the friendships, the work, and the sleep deprivation are unlike anything you've ever experienced. And you can never "recover" from SSP. You'll remember it for the rest of your life. --Nathaniel Major

SSP is a lot more fun than I expected, which is saying a lot, because I expected to have a blast! --Peter Combs

Class of 2002

*SSP has had an **astronomical** impact on my life. --Michael Moseley*

For the first time in so many years, I am motivated and inspired to learn – I was challenged and I enjoyed interacting with such fun, smart people! --Kerry Eskenas

SSP is like a black hole ... if you get to it you won't let go forever. --Alex Phelps

I never knew learning could be so challenging or so exciting. --Melissa Latham

SSP is a community of scholars where you push yourself not to keep up with your peers, but with yourself. --Laura DeMare

SSP was an absolutely amazing experience. Not only did I learn, study, and observe at a frantic pace, but I also got to enjoy the company of my bright and funny classmates. --Greg Chanan

SSP changed my life. It pushed me so far beyond the limits of a high school education and experience that I feel as if I do not need another year of high school. SSP is the turning point in my life. --Evelyn Cheung

Never before had I realized you could be brilliant and confused at the same time, but now I know that's the norm. --Karen Brown

Class of 2001

I am extremely thankful for being one of the lucky few students that were part of this program. Over the 6 exhilarating weeks, I was both able to challenge myself academically with the interesting topics discussed in lecture and meet many intriguing people in an atmosphere of concentrated and elevated intellectual activities. The experiences I had at SSP will never be forgotten.

I thank you for granting me this opportunity to be part of this program and for making this program possible. I hope this program will continue successfully into the far future

and provide a transient but memorable education opportunity for the best and the brightest.--Tian Xia '01

I learned an overwhelming amount and made several lasting friendships. There were only 29 other students, 2 professors, 5 TA's, 3 cooks and 4 dogs at The Happy Valley School, and I lived with them all for 6 weeks. I learned their likes, dislikes, goofy personalities, and bizarre habits. I shared this great chapter in my life with those 39 people (and 4 dogs) and it would not have been the same without them.

If you are thinking that it was a lot of hard work and sleepless nights, you're right, it was, but it was so much more than that; it was the most self-rewarding, mentally stimulating, wonderful experience of my life. – Katy Kappahn '01, as quoted in the Oakridge Outlook (school magazine)

The program was a really, truly amazing experience, it was the best experience of my life. Some of the people who came were so brilliant. One of my goals is to get someone from Traverse City to go every year. --Jim Kreft '01, as quoted in the Grand Traverse Herald (Michigan)

It's been only about 3 months since the end of the program, but boy am I ready to go back. I would love to be a TA – Rasvan Ungureanu '01

"I've never been challenged like this before," Tarter said. He viewed the intense training as an opportunity of a lifetime. "It was the best six weeks of my life," said 15-year-old Tarter. –J.B. Tarter '01, as quoted in the Times-News of Twin Falls, Idaho

Class of 2000

Thank you for the wonderful experience I had at SSP. It was the most memorable five weeks of my life and gave me an entirely different perspective on life. In a way, you can say that it "expanded my horizons".

Enclosed is a donation for \$30 to the SSP fund. Please use it anyway you see fit to further the Summer Science Program.

As for recruiting new students for the program, I've told many of my friends of the experience I had at SSP and they seem deeply interested. I will refer them to the website and I am confident that many of them will apply.

Thank you again for the wonderful experience I had at SSP.-- Chris Day '00

The weeks I spent at SSP were some of the best of my life so far. I met amazing people, learned a lot, and had a great time. – Michelle Giron '00

Classes 1990-1999

Attending the Summer Science Program was a life-altering experience. The excitement of the new experiences and the challenges of the work made the program perfect for me. For the first time in my life, I felt that I was challenged. I made friendships that will last a lifetime. Likewise, I realized that there were people my own age that shared the same passion for astronomy that I did.

We were able to use the 24-inch telescope at the Mt. Wilson Observatory, and the measuring engine that Edwin Hubble used!

SSP helps to prepare you for college. Not only do you do college level work, but you also learn how to better budget your time which is a necessity in college. Attending the Summer Science Program is one of the best choices you can make! --Tiffany Titus '99

Being in the company of students from diverse backgrounds, all with an intense love of learning, brilliance, and sense of fun, challenged and excited me in ways I never thought possible. What SSP taught me inside and outside of the classroom (from the teachers and my peers) helped me to grow not only educationally, but also into the person I have become. The lessons I learned at SSP will stay with me for life, and the friends I made are mine forever. --Elana Klein '98

For me, the Summer Science Program was an unforgettable experience. Its goals and its participants' goals were identical, which as a public high school student was a new concept for me. There was no hierarchy, and everyone was brilliant. The SSP experience gave me insight into the minds that will someday be the innovators of our world. --Zak Cotler '98

I had arrived with a sense of "oh-god-another-summer-nerd-school"; a really bad attitude and a cynical personality. I left raving about SSP to all of my friends at school. The honor code instills responsibility on campus, and one really learns to trust everybody else. It becomes a small community.

Every SSPer is a testament to the life-changing experience of the program. The sense of accomplishment (and relief) of finishing the impossibly difficult orbit determination and overcoming 72+ hours of sleep deprivation makes a lasting mark on every participant, whether that student decides to go into JPL or agriculture.

Having been to numerous summer programs, I can safely say that SSP was the best experience of all. --Joanne Chang '97

One of the greatest things about the program is the sense of community that develops. Everyone, including the staff and the TAs are always willing to help. The homework, and especially the Orbit Determination, is next to impossible to do by yourself, thus you develop many close friends, which you keep contact with long after SSP officially ends. In other words, APPLY! --Serguei Vassilvitskii '97

I know that one of my great fears when going to SSP was that everyone would be smarter than me, have taken Calculus and Physics, know everything, etc. I thought I would be slaving over my homework alone for hours... but I was wrong. SSP was a great experience and sooo much fun! --Rachel Thessin '97

For those of you thinking of attending SSP, I'd highly recommend it, so long as you aren't afraid to work hard and stay up late... --Michael Wyman '97

My parents took a huge leap and said they would make it happen because they felt it might be of great importance to my life. Boy were they right! The risk they took has shaped my life and put me on an amazing path to success. As I start grad school, I owe a lot of where I am to SSP. I am slated to become the first person in my entire extended family to obtain my doctorate. --Andrew West '94

SSP was the pinnacle of purposeful, hands-on learning in my life. Additionally, the thoughts, aspirations, and dreams that were born, fostered, and allowed to flourish in the SSP environment were bar-none the most intellectually-liberating, emotion-evoking, and purpose-defining of my life.

I express my gratitude (yet again) to those that helped provide the environment that has, does, and will continue to make SSP such a wonderful, pleasant, and lasting memory in the hearts and minds of those that passed through its six week journey from the macrocosm of the universe to the microcosm of the individual. --Ryan Palacio '91

To be immersed in a science experiment working with your peers, to discover that there really are other teenagers who like science as much as you do, is a wonderful experience. To have it happen in a positive, supportive atmosphere is truly a blessing. My experience at SSP gave me confidence in my abilities and helped teach me the joy of an intellectual challenge. The friendships I made there will last a lifetime. --Bonnie Valant-Spaight '89, TA '93

Before I started my career in astronomy/astrophysics, I attended SSP (1988). There I was introduced for the first time to the mathematical and experimental rigor associated with scientific work. The program provided me with the opportunity to apply knowledge acquired in calculus, linear algebra, spherical trigonometry, astronomical observations, and computer programming. Looking back, I feel that the program gave me the experience that I needed in order to decide what career path I truly wanted to pursue.

In 1993 I returned to SSP as a teaching assistant. I felt that it was important for me to give back to the program that gave me so much. I was able to share my knowledge with the students, and I was given another wonderful experience. I was able to work with students of extraordinary caliber. To teach them for those few weeks has been one of my most treasured experiences. --Christopher Garasi '88, TA '93

Classes 1980-1989

The Summer Science Program is the best educational experience I ever had. Anyone who has ever been in contact with the electric atmosphere of the campus as teams of students successfully complete orbital element calculations knows that The Program must survive. Future scientists deserve the chance to learn in this wonderful place, too. --Lara Salamacha '85

Although I was taught science incomparably well there, truths I discovered on my own were the most remarkable. I found that the right company could make any place ideal, and I no longer needed the big city. Further, I found how marvelously wild and free I could feel, being perfectly myself. In short, I seem to have found the quintessence of everything that summer. --Laden Malek '84

College would be much more difficult without that boost SSP gave me. I regret only that I shall never have such an opportunity again. --Ken Kelley '84

The impact on my life has been tremendous. Being with such creative minds challenged me to seek my own limits and capabilities. I cannot speak highly enough of my own experiences at SSP. --Carol D. Bronsdon '82

I discovered my passions and lost my intellectual virginity at the SSP.

At first, my roommate and I shared no common ground. Within a week we were good friends. He helped me with calculus, helped me pull off wild pranks. We left the program as great friends and stayed connected in college. In those six weeks, our asteroids' trajectories overwhelmed most cultural differences between the students.

Working much of the day and night on an interesting problem is a luxury which everyone ought to experience to see if science is for them. It surprised me how naturally we devoted much of our free time to pursuing and deepening the intellectual challenges offered at SSP. SSP taught me that bright people with shared purpose can accomplish anything if given the environment to succeed. --Charlie Zender '81

SSP was certainly a major factor in my decision to become a physicist. And watching some of the initially introverted students make friends and become involved in the SSP community was quite rewarding. --Elizabeth Simmons '80

The greatest and most valuable exposure to true genius I experienced in my six weeks at the SSP was to my fellow students. It was at the Summer Science Program that I truly learned to appreciate and gain from the brilliance of my peers. As an undergraduate at Caltech, I found myself well prepared by the SSP to enjoy and appreciate my classmates' intellectual abilities, rather than feel compelled to compete with them. There is much to be admired and learned from those around us. --Charles R. Barrett, Jr. '80

Classes 1970-1979

Never before had I met such a group of motivated students. I enjoyed their company not only because so many of us turned out to be nocturnal creatures, keen on problem sets, bull sessions and practical jokes, best between 3 and 5 A.M. They also provided a preview of what I could expect at college (I went to Princeton) in terms of a stimulating, motivated peer group. Moreover, the camaraderie that took three years to develop at college seemed to blossom at SSP in less than six weeks.

The feverish excitement of the last two weeks showed me firsthand how thrilling it could be to do science. And the notes I brought back turned out to be helpful in Princeton honors physics. --Steven Dickman '79

I had a wonderful experience at SSP, but concluded from that experience that my true calling was in fields other than hard sciences (I wasn't smart enough to keep up with the math and physics whizzes). I went on to Harvard, got an undergraduate degree in Economics, and later an MBA at University of Chicago, where I was first in my class. Just a demonstration on how much smarter scientists are than business people.

Throughout all of this, I retained a very strong attachment to SSP -- I grew up in a small farm town in the San Joaquin Valley of California, less than 10% of my high school classmates went to 4 year colleges, let alone places like Harvard. SSP opened my eyes to a much bigger world, and even though I didn't choose the precise path laid out by the curriculum, I started on the path of moving well outside the world I knew pre-SSP, to which I owe the program an ongoing debt.

I am currently a partner at Bain and Company, a global management consulting firm. I am educating my kids on the heavens with the same 4" reflector that my grandfather did with me 30 years ago.

SSP remains one of the most important events of my life. It gave me the courage to apply to Harvard, and to go there once I was accepted. While I have ended up pursuing a career in business, I have only ended up where I did because of SSP. The idea of working in teams to complete a group project is as important in business as it is in the scientific community, and the work at SSP was invaluable in this area. --Michael McKay '78

SSP was my first exposure to a national peer group of students and teachers to loved learning, who revered science, who felt passionately about humanity, who dealt compassionately with people, and who knew all the lines from Monty Python.

The Program had a profound impact on me, intellectually, professionally, and personally. It has been of such significance to me that the "Education" section of my professional resume lists my Ph.D., my B.A., and my S.S.P.

SSP is aptly named as the Summer SCIENCE Program, not the Summer Celestial Mechanics Program. Maybe it should be called the Lifelong Science Program. --John K. Kruschke '78

Surely there are other students now who are in the same position as I was. They desire to know, but their high schools cannot supply the knowledge. They have not had the opportunity to work in a team of equally bright students under the supervision of trained scientists. I hope that SSP can continue to provide all this. --Steven Allen '77

After SSP, I was fortunate to go on to some other astronomy experiences that were tremendously important to me, but I have to wonder: would I have made it, without SSP as such an inspirational stepping stone, at such a difficult and impressionable time in my life? --John W. Briggs '76

I think that one of the most useful aspects of the program is that it gives bright students a chance to see how interested they are in science. Some students choose to study other things in college based on their experience at SSP. As it turns out, the program increased my interest in math and physics, and convinced me to attend Caltech, which I think was the perfect place for me to go to college. --Eric Korevaar '76

SSP was a definite turning point in my life -- I had always been interested in science and mathematics, but SSP gave me a focus and introduced me to a wider world. Without doubt, going to Caltech was a direct result of SSP. I would not have had the knowledge and confidence otherwise. --Dr. Forrest Brewer '75

The Summer Science Program has had a significant and positive effect upon my life. It is not that I was led into a career in science. In fact, after receiving degrees in physics and engineering I decided that I would prefer to be an historian. However, what I learned at the Program applies every bit as much to the humanities as to the sciences.

After years of enforced mediocrity in the secondary schools I learned that knowledge is a wonderful thing, well worth seeking regardless of tangible reward, that excellence requires hard work, and that I need not be ashamed before my peers of my curiosity.

These are lessons far more valuable than any equations. They are lessons not taught in most schools. SSP teaches the exhilaration of learning. The Program is wonderful. I honestly believe that you would have a difficult time finding a single alumnus or alumna who would dispute that claim. --David Fullerton '74

I can honestly say that not a month goes by that I don't think back with fondness toward the six weeks I spent at SSP. I made many close friends while there. But I suppose the most important memory and the reason why SSP is so valuable is that for the first time I was on my own and surrounded by thirty-five equally committed and equally intelligent people but with thirty-five different backgrounds from which I could learn. I cannot to this day tell you the excitement that a seventeen-year-old can feel when, placed in that environment, he becomes challenged to the limit of his intellectual capacity for the first time, and working with other talented people, solves a problem which at the start of the program was completely incomprehensible.

Although I am now a lawyer, there really are many aspects of The Summer Science Program experience which are still useful to this day. My clients frequently present me with impossible problems, they do not give me sufficient data to use, and they place unreasonable and impossible deadlines on me to accomplish their goals. SSP was much the same, and the techniques of problem-solving are the same, in astronomy, medicine, or law. --Ricky D. Balthrop '74

Classes 1959-1969

I was immersed in an atmosphere of intense intellectual stimulation and challenge. Exposure to such an environment is critically important to the development of any bright, young student, regardless of whether or not that student ultimately chooses science as a career. It certainly had an enormous impact on me. I am utterly convinced of the value of the Summer Science Program to science and education in this country. --Richard P. Kubelka '69

Of all the significant benefits my career derived from SSP, the discovery for the first time of a peer group was one of the most important. The camaraderie engendered by a boarding program gave me a glimpse of how attractive an academic community could be, and the life-long friendships it fostered reflect the kind of feelings which cause alumni to donate in such numbers years after their SSP experience.

No one who knew me before SSP would ever have predicted I would someone who would reach Mt. Everest Base camp or the North Pole.

The U.S. has junior Olympic camps in athletics, it trains some of the best athletes in the world, and it MUST train the best and most creative thinkers. The SSP role in that regard is NATIONAL, and remarkable. While judging at the International Science Fair earlier this year I had dinner with a number of Nobel prize winners and many high school students. I could (and did) say truthfully that SSP is the best of any pre-college program in the U.S. I know of. --Douglas Duncan '68, TA '74-'76, National Education Coordinator, The American Astronomical Society

I cannot think of a more valuable experience for students. --David W. Warren '68

Another benefit was to meet a lot of other people who were just as smart as I was; this was a chastening, and valuable, experience.

I well remember several graduates in my year announcing that the experience had convinced them not to go to college in science. The value of this was brought home to me when I went to a technically-oriented college, and watched people making the same decision after spending a year or more going in what turned out to be the wrong direction. --Duncan Carr Agnew '67

We got to know scientists working in the field as people --interesting, quirky, and personable. I am always proud to tell people that the man who discovered quasars used my baseball glove. --John Press '67

Attending SSP was an intellectual and social watershed for me. The feelings of isolation many academically talented teenagers experience can be mitigated by a program like the SSP which encourages positive social interactions as well as intellectual growth.

Over a decade later I founded and led Lotus Development Corporation. Without doubt, SSP was a material positive influence on my later progress. --Mitch Kapor '66

I personally credit SSP with waking me up intellectually, and therefore with one foundation of my success. The incredible confidence the faculty had in all of us, including many who had never risen to a challenge before, changed my perception of what I was capable of doing. --Oakley E. Van Slyke '64

One summer of living and working with scientists and graduate students was worth more to me than many years of study at high school, and continued to be a help and an inspiration during my college years and beyond. In my opinion, SSP deserves the designation of The Summer Science Program. --Robert F. Stellingwerf '64

The program pushed me faster than I thought I could ever go. Without the SSP, I doubt that I would have discovered my true potential for success in science. --Ron Chestnut '63

By the end of the program I and most of the others had been completely transformed. I was truly ready for college as a learning experience, not a grade competition. I had learned by actual experience the value of openness and intellectual honesty. In short, I had done several years worth of maturing in six weeks and had an incredibly good time doing it. Later, as an undergraduate at Caltech and graduate student at UCLA, I watched while people more talented than I dropped out or flunked out. Their immaturity and emotional struggles won over their academic talents. To this day, I believe I would have been one of the dropouts had I not been lucky enough to experience SSP. --Denis A. Elliott '63

Attending SSP was the first time I was able to relax and be myself in a group of peers interested in the same things I was. --Alan Gross '62

SSP was a life-changing experience. Like most attendees, my SAT scores were the highest in my class --the time was ripe for a reality check. We were challenged and stretched in a manner that felt like an intellectual boot camp. I think the momentum provided by SSP got me all the way through my Ph.D. --Joel Kvitky '61

Be assured you have MY support. My eyes were opened to a world (science) I scarcely knew existed. -- Bob Gulliver '61

In some respects, SSP remains the most academically cohesive and intense educational experience I have ever had. That, I suspect, is true for most who are fortunate enough to attend it. If it weren't for SSP my vision would be narrower, my aspirations less ambitious, and my life less rich. I don't exaggerate. --E.C. Krupp '61

SSP had a profound effect on my career development. To be in the company of so many really bright peers was an extraordinary experience. It was the first time that I could be carried along by the pleasure of developing a deep understanding of a subject. --Henry A. Lichstein '60

SSP established among us a realization that excellence requires discipline, diligence, and dedication -- getting up at 3 A.M. to take your turn with the telescope. In my own case, the immersion was both a shock and a spur, and as a result I was not as surprised by the later intensity of undergraduate work as some of my fellow freshmen. --David Helfman '59