

# The Phillips Scholar

## *The Stephen Phillips Memorial Scholarship Fund*

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The Stephen Phillips  
Memorial Scholarship Fund  
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*The Staff (from the left):  
Kate Gearan, Pamela  
Constantine and Karen  
and Arthur Emery.*

*Service to others is the hallmark of Phillips Scholars. In this issue, we focus on four students committed to service: Cailla Quinn (Parsons School of Design and Eugene Lang College '09) volunteers with ART START in New York City; Michael Brannagan (Hillsdale College '07) and Alanna Hughes (Georgetown University '08) have both served with the Peace Corps; and our Alumni Scholar Zola Mendoza (Northeastern University '14) gives back to those organizations that helped her. **To read more about these students, please visit the Alumni Scholars page of our website [www.phillips-scholarship.org](http://www.phillips-scholarship.org).***

*Cailla Quinn*

ART START is a non-profit that started in 1991 with artists who wanted to make art with kids in shelters. We work with kids ages 5-18 who live in shelters, on the streets, in alternative incarceration programs, or surviving with parents in crisis. Through a variety of visual, performing and media arts workshops, we develop self-expression and raise self-esteem while our programs instill in youth the confidence to think critically, ask important questions, and pursue meaningful opportunities in life. Eventually, ART START kids learn to trust themselves as their own safe place in very difficult circumstances.

Originally a volunteer artist, this past year I was hired as the Assistant Director to work closely on curriculum, fundraising, and staff development. For the summer, I have focused on our Homeless Youth Outreach Programming, expanding our workshops and intertwining our music and visual arts curriculums. We have been in one of Manhattan's largest public shelters since the beginning, and my goal is to increase our presence there. It is important to me that ART START exists outside of an hour time frame because after our workshops end and our volunteers leave, our students go back to roaming the halls with nothing to do. Our kids need to be constantly stimulated and challenged on a creative level, so instilling in them the resources and confidence to do this on their own is a huge component. It is not something that happens overnight, but occurs slowly over time with love and devotion.

The most important thing I've learned through this experience is that the influence of intentions, words, and actions don't need to scream their presence. It's human nature to want to see tangible evidence that something is taking place, but that's not what ART START is about. We know that every kid who comes to us walks away with a new experience, a new perspective. Even if it just pertains to a small detail, it creates a vibration; it is forever in that child even if subconsciously. This is relevant even in those who never come into our rooms, but walk by and see us there week after week, because they learn that no matter what, ART START's doors will always be open to them, and that's huge.

I have also been spearheading The Right Brain Campaign, a fundraising project that celebrates creativity as an essential life skill. Our right brains are used in everyday situations- from figuring out how to stay cool in the summer heat, deciding

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on what to wear in the morning, creating a report for work, to putting food on the table. Creativity is not limited to the painter, chef or musician, but is an inherent universal ability that every human being shares. This campaign will celebrate those who recognize the importance of the right brain and support ART START's programming that nurtures this in our youth who need it the most. Instead of poverty and statistics, the bright ideas of our kids will determine their futures. **To learn more about ART START, please visit [www.art-start.org](http://www.art-start.org).**

## *Alanna Hughes*



Although I have finished over 40 books in my 23 months here in the Dominican Republic, one particular quote has stayed with me: "The way to know me is to know my work; I am my work." While my accomplishments pale in comparison to those of its author (Mother Teresa), I do think that her words speak to my experience as a Peace Corps volunteer.

When I decided to join the Peace Corps back in August 2008, I was fresh out of college. A lot of my friends from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University opted to stay local, finding employment in DC and NYC, but I knew I had to go farther. To work in international development, I knew I couldn't start out in the "developed" world. How would I ever understand the problems I would be trying to solve if I had never lived them myself? It was in this frame of mind that I shipped out as a Community Economic Development trainee.

Somehow, completion of 10 weeks of training qualified me to consult and train on a project involving tourism, cocoa farming, and chocolate production. It was a bit daunting, considering "chocoholic" and "globetrotter" were about as close as I had to relevant prior experience. Or so I thought. As it turns out, I have actually had more to offer than I thought to the "Chocolate Tour" – a community-based tourism project that shows

how the cocoa plant becomes chocolate and how Fair Trade actually does help alleviate poverty. Applying business, communication, and technology skills learned in school and former jobs, I have succeeded in training 14 local guides and over 30 women in topics ranging from public speaking and customer service to accounting and general business administration. Additionally, I have collaborated on new product development (e.g. a home-stay program), promotional materials, grant writing, and implementation of evaluation systems.

Aside from my primary project, I have had the opportunity to share with my community through secondary projects and cultural exchange. In terms of "work," I have taught business skills to over 60 women, consulted and trained youth artisans and entrepreneurs, built a park in cooperation with my community and Ben & Jerry's, offered English classes and summer camps, and organized community clean ups and educational one-off events for Dominican children. Additionally, for "fun," I have both partaken in Dominican festivities and family time as well as invited them to share my own traditions with me. For example, for Easter, friends in my community showed me how to make *habichuela con dulce*, the seasonal sweet bean treat; I in turn shared our sweets with them through an Easter Egg Hunt for the little ones. (Talk about a sugar high!)

As my Close of Service date (October 29th) draws closer, I begin to feel anxious about transitioning back to the States. I plan to work for two more years and then attend grad school, although where is still the question. Despite the potential fear of the unknown, I feel like things will eventually work out. I am proud to have accomplished a lot through my projects; not only does this mean that my labors here will open doors to future opportunities, but also that the Dominicans I've befriended here will never forget the "Americana" who pushed them to excel and share in life's twists and turns for two years.



*One of the Pierce Arrows on display at the Phillips House. Please see the article on the next page "100 Years at 34 Chestnut Street."*

**Photo courtesy of Historic New England.**

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*Michael Brannagan*


For the last two years, I have lived on an island in the Amazon Rainforest. After graduating from Hillsdale College as a Phillips Scholar, I entered the Peace Corps and was placed in the South American country of Suriname. For the first three months I lived with a host family learning the Aucan language and the Peace Corps approach to development. After training I lived in a remote but important village called Diitabiki.

There are no roads to Diitabiki. My transportation options included an hour-long flight in a Cessna or a three-day boat trip up the Marowijne River. My main project in Suriname was a weekly radio show in the Aucan language on small business economics. To communicate complicated ideas I would tell culturally relevant stories about everyday life. People throughout the region listened to my program, and the experience helped me to understand the language and culture in new

ways. Other projects included a sports club with mentors to impart life skills and a clean water project with training sponsored by UNICEF. I also served as the Peace Corps warden for the area, in charge of safety and evacuation plans in the case of emergency.

Most of the people are subsistence farmers, growing cassava and rice as staples, and clearing new ground from the forest every year to preserve the fertility of the soil. The river is used for travel by dugout canoes, bathing, and washing clothes and dishes. Unfortunately, the river has flooded in recent years, destroying some houses and many crops, and forcing the people to rethink their slash and burn agriculture. As the Peace Corps cooperates with other agencies, I have made several trips with Red Cross and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture to distribute seeds and give agricultural training to help the people recover.

The Peace Corps has the three goals: helping people in other countries understand Americans; helping Americans understand other countries; and doing whatever we can to make life better in the places we serve. While development projects are important, so are learning about Suriname and helping the people here understand a bit more about America. This exchange is a major task in itself.

In my spare time I explored the river in my dugout canoe, hiked in the jungle, fished for piranha, or helped my friends clear brush and trees with machetes for their farms. The wildlife that I've seen (or eaten) in my area includes wild pigs, tapir, macaws, toucans, anaconda, piranha, spider monkeys, sloth, capybaras, far too many insects and spiders, and a large rodent called a konkony. While life in the rainforest is rather rustic, I did have plenty of adventures.

I will be attending Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in the fall. After I earn a Master's degree in International Economics, I would like to work in the State Department to support free trade and assist American businesses working overseas.

To see more about my Peace Corps service, please read my blog at [www.michaelbrannagan.blogspot.com](http://www.michaelbrannagan.blogspot.com).

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*100 Years at 34 Chestnut Street*

2011 marks the 100th anniversary of the Phillips family's ownership of Stephen Phillips's childhood home at 34 Chestnut Street in Salem. After purchasing the home, his parents had it remodeled back to the Federal style with large windows to allow for lots of light and fresh air for "good health and sanitation" and had it updated to a modern home. According to Historic New England, "For everyone's comfort the house was fully electrified and for the staff, a modern gas stove was installed next to the coal-fired range in the kitchen."

To mark this centennial, the Phillips House will offer a series of tours and lectures focusing on a century of technology at the house, including the "Gadgets and Gizmos" tour, featuring kitchen technologies; a lecture about the transition from carriage to car; and a talk about historic interiors and color choice, which will showcase the paint analysis technology used by the museum staff in 2000-2001. The very popular August annual antique car meet, coincidentally, will also hit the decade mark in 2011.

## *Keeping in Touch with Alumni*

So many Phillips Scholars are engaged in the same kinds of activities as the ones highlighted in this issue. We love to hear from you about what you are doing, and we are now putting Alumni news on our website's Alumni page. We encourage alumni to keep in touch with us by updating your addresses and emails. There is a very quick on-line form on the website for that ([www.phillips-scholarship.org/updateform.htm](http://www.phillips-scholarship.org/updateform.htm)), or you can just email us with your news and changes to addresses.

### *2010-2011 Alumni Scholar: Zola Mendoza*



The Phillips Scholar Alumni Award was established in 2003 to recognize one new scholarship recipient in particular who exhibits strong involvement in the community while meeting our other criteria. The Trustees are very pleased to award a \$10,000 Alumni scholarship for the 2010-2011 school year to Zola Mendoza of Boston, MA.

Zola is the first Alumni Scholar who initially applied to the scholarship as a college student. She attended Burke High School in Boston and graduated from Charlestown High School in 2009. Currently a sophomore at Northeastern University, she is majoring in International Affairs with an eye toward working for an NGO or some other opportunity in the realm of social justice, particularly on behalf of youth. She dates this interest to her first summer participating in the Upward Bound program in Boston, where she met people so dedicated to working for the advancement of others that she is committed to "doing for others what Upward Bound did for me." A four-year member of Upward Bound, Zola took college courses through-

out the years at UMass Boston and Regis College. This summer, she is working as a Resident Teaching Assistant in New York City with the Upward Bound program there, where she hopes to "reveal the strength and unlimited ability that is stored within each participant." She plans to continue her commitment to Upward Bound next summer as well.

Having lost her mother to cancer, Zola received assistance in her college search as a high school senior from Northeastern University's Linking Education and Diversity (LEAD) program, which guides Boston public school students through the college admissions process. As a Northeastern student this past year, she was able to volunteer with the same program as a mentor. Zola also helped develop academic skills of middle school students through the AVID program (Advancement Via Individual Determination), tutoring at a Boston middle school weekly. This builds on teaching skills she developed in high school tutoring younger students at the Boston Public Library. Finally, she served as a member of the International Student and Scholar Institute at Northeastern on the Planning and Programming Committee for the NU Internationale Carnavale, a 2-month celebration with diverse cultural events each day.

Many thanks go to all of the alumni of The Stephen Phillips Memorial Scholarship Fund who donated so generously to the Alumni Scholarship. A friend of the scholarship matches all donations dollar for dollar, which makes each contribution a significant gift. All monies raised were used toward Zola's award.

### *Words of Thanks*

The following Phillips Scholar Alumni have donated generously to the Phillips Scholar Alumni Award during the past year. Matched dollar for dollar by a friend of the scholarship, these funds helped expand our ability to assist students with the soaring costs of education. A sincere thank you to all.

#### **\$1,000 and above**

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†\*Judith Nowinski

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