

The Phillips Scholar

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Stephen Phillips Memorial
Scholarship Fund, Inc.
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International Work and Study

“By studying or working abroad for an extended period of time, a person gains an invaluable set of personal and global citizenship skills which are highly transferrable to today’s job market.”



The above quote is from Amanda Wright, a Phillips Scholar and the Education Abroad Coordinator at Amherst College, pictured to the left. It reflects an increasing understanding among educators of the essential value of international work and study to develop important workplace skills as well as to create a more global citizenry.

While a student at Ithaca College, Amanda spent six months in Cordoba, Argentina. This experience, along with her educational background in Latin American culture and her previous work in admissions for a study-abroad provider, all led her to this role at Amherst College. She explains that extended time abroad brings about useful culture

shock, as one learns to deal with the unexpected.

“Overcoming anxieties about the unknown or the unfamiliar when living abroad provides an inherent increase in confidence, maturity, and independence, as well as the ability to better deal with ambiguity. A cross-cultural understanding allows for the ability to work among people of diverse backgrounds and beliefs while maintaining an openness and sensitivity to differing points of view. Acquiring or improving language skills is also a plus in many workplaces. I am cautious not to romanticize the study abroad experience, as there are definitely challenging moments. We tend to have this idea that study abroad is an extended vacation, but it is very much an academic experience with real challenges. While some people experience culture shock more than others, it is important not to negate that part of the experience.”

Amanda reports several factors that prevent students from studying abroad: not planning ahead early enough to ensure that all required coursework can be accomplished for one’s major; the misconception that certain majors (particularly STEM majors) have such specific requirements that it is impossible to study abroad; and, to a lesser degree, the prioritizing of athletics over international study. In addition, funding may be a factor, although colleges differ in their policies for study abroad. Students should therefore begin investigating the options to go abroad early in their career, plan their academic programs with that in mind, and investigate opportunities for funding both from their schools and other possible sources. “My biggest regret,” says Amanda, “is not having stayed for the entire year.”

“Almost as long as I have wanted to be a nurse, I have wanted to work in Africa. When I was 16, I went to Ethiopia for a mission trip and fell in love with the culture and the people. I figured when I had some skill I would return and be a little more useful.”

Mallory Kimball (University of New Hampshire '16) spent three months this summer in Ghana working as a nurse through the organization Work the World and living in a house with about 15 other students in various medical fields in the city of Takoradi. Although she did not receive course credit for her work there, she did have the full responsibilities of a nurse and also was able to travel with the group throughout Ghana on the weekends. There are expenses involved in participating in Work the World programs, which Mallory was able to fundraise to cover.

“What did I particularly like about my summer? That I was able to go, give, and serve. That I could enjoy a beautiful place with people who are so full of love and spirit. That there were children everywhere. That everyone smiled. And everyone was your friend as soon as you met eyes. That I lived simply. So simply that I couldn't help but appreciate the smallest of conveniences. That I could hug my patients, pray with them, cry with them. That I played football with over a dozen energetic young orphaned boys and only heard them laugh, yell, and tease me. That I could squeeze the little munchkins across the street on my way to work, yell out to the mothers in their native tongue, and blow kisses every morning.”

“It's so important to see a world outside of your world. My attitude, goals, and values are affected just by seeing outside the bubble of my state university. I take everything in a new light. I still see the faces of my patients in Ghana who receive a fraction of a fraction of the healthcare Americans receive. Nothing will break your heart more than the moment you realize how much need there is for more hands and more hearts. And nothing will give you greater joy than knowing you are using what you have learned to be just two hands and one heart in that number. I'd send anyone, and everyone to take a step and try new things, do good things, and make people smile.”



Pharviana Marcelin (Gordon College '16)



Pharvy (center) pictured with a Haitian counselor from the Global Trauma Institute (left) and a Rwandan lawyer at the GTI Conference.

“Rwanda gave me a new found type of hope. How far they have come as a people, just 20 years after their genocide, is truly inspiring--to see the unity and the initiative being taken by the people to become a nation that is bigger than their past.”

Pharviana Marcelin spent the summer of 2014 in Rwanda, first as part of an international seminar with Gordon College and then as an intern for International Justice Mission (IJM). The course focused heavily on development through the perspective of different enterprises in Rwanda, from the private sector to NGOs to government initiatives. The course included an immersion experience where students spent a week interning with a local company. Pharvy spent an intense week at Village, a design firm, learning about “interior and product design with a strong user-centered focus,” an experience that she was able to translate back at Gordon into serving on a team redesigning study spaces on campus.

With an academic focus on International Affairs and Neuroscience, Pharvy experienced the convergence of those interests at the International Justice Mission, where she interned for the bulk of the summer. Based in the United States, the IJM originally sought to help people reclaim their property after the genocide. Now, however, it works to provide both care and justice for children who are sexually abused. In addition to working with the staff and victims, Pharvy also had the opportunity to attend a conference hosted by the Bible Society and the Global Trauma Institute bringing together American and Rwandan professionals in this field.

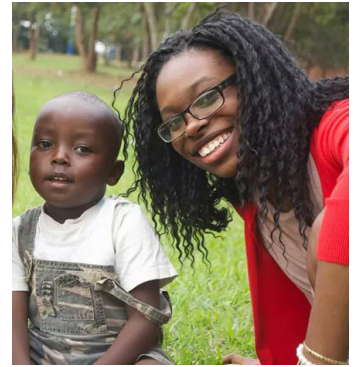
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“Working at IJM, I spent my time with the Client Care staff, made up entirely of Rwandan social workers and counselors to provide legal aid to children and youth who were victims of sexual assault. I worked closely with the staff who provide therapy and aftercare to the victims and their parents. You just don’t come back the same after hearing all these stories.”

Pharvy didn’t experience much general culture shock in Rwanda, in part because she has traveled abroad before. As a first year student at Gordon, she volunteered primarily as a medical translator on a college service trip to Haiti, her mother’s homeland. This year, she and a co-leader are assembling a team to return to Haiti, and she is already planning how to match the students’ service learning to their majors.

“I strongly encourage students to travel and study abroad as much as they can. It motivates me to continue with my studies so that I can be of use to those people who are not only without a voice, but aren’t even given the chance to speak.”



Resources for Study Abroad

In addition to aid that may be available on college campuses there are outside sources for scholarships to study abroad. Use these resources at the beginning of your research into study-abroad opportunities.

Foundation for Global Scholars (<https://fgscholars.org>) The Foundation for Global Scholars serves U.S. undergraduate, graduate, and professional students pursuing accredited study abroad programs, typically with \$2,000 awards.

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program (www.iie.org/programs/gilman-scholarship-program) Sponsored by the US Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, these awards are for Pell-eligible undergraduates at two- or four-year colleges.

Institute of International Education (www.iie.org) The Institute is an excellent resource both for programs and financial assistance. Visit IIEPassport.org for listings of programs and www.studyabroadfunding.org for listings of funding opportunities.

The Boren Awards for International Study (borenawards.org) Graduate and undergraduate scholarships and fellowships in critical regions for US national security.

Words of Thanks

The following Phillips Alumni have donated generously to the Phillips Alumni Scholars over the past year. Matched dollar for dollar by a friend of the scholarship, these funds helped us assist more students with the increasing costs of education. A sincere thank you to all.

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2014 Alumni Scholars

Thanks to the generosity of our Phillips Alumni, we were able to award three Alumni Scholars this year! Below are brief introductions to each Scholar. To learn more about them, please visit the Alumni page of our website.



Arly Macario graduated with high honors from Gloucester (MA) High School and is a member of the Suffolk University Class of 2018. Her activities at GHS included the National Honor Society, tutoring, the Interact Club and Student Council. She also played an integral role on the tennis team, all while working part-time.

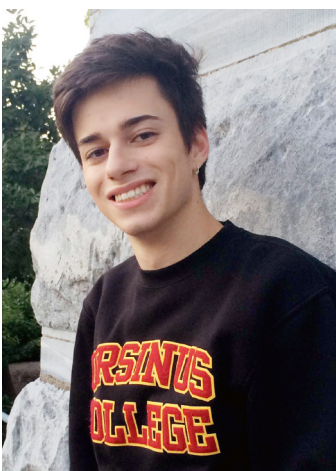
Arly is proudest, though, of her work outside school as a member of the Gloucester Youth Leadership Council, an organization dedicated to having a positive impact on the community. Working in coalition with the Healthy Gloucester Collaborative, they have publicized the dangers of tobacco use; sought community feedback about promoting healthy life styles in innovative ways; and lobbied representatives and senators at the Massachusetts State House. The group has participated in a number of other citywide endeavors.

At Suffolk, Arly plans to major in Applied Legal Studies and is considering a career in politics or as an immigration lawyer. She plans to take advantage of Suffolk's many domestic and international internship programs.

Idekelly Santana is an extremely self-motivated learner. Moving to the US from the Dominican Republic in eighth grade caused her to struggle at first. Starting at Lynn (MA) English High School, though, was transformative. "It opened doors to so many opportunities that I didn't have in the Dominican Republic. I knew this journey wasn't going to be easy; every stage of my life has shaped my character and helped me discover something about myself."

A constant to her life has been her commitment to education. Kelly made excellent use of the afterschool and English Language Learner programs at Salem Cyberspace. In high school and college, she has participated in the Cyberspace College Success program, both on the receiving end and helping others with their college-search processes. In addition, she is committed to giving back to the broader community as well. Faithfully volunteering at her church, she has also served as a mentor at her high school and a tutor for students of all ages both in Lynn and at Salem Cyberspace, now called LEAP for Education. She has also held several part-time jobs.

After two years at Salem State University, Kelly is now a member of the Northeastern University Class of 2016 for engineering. This has been her dream school all along, and she anticipates great co-op opportunities.



Zev Bliss has a passion for learning and also for sharing that knowledge with others. A graduate of Casco Bay High School in Portland, Maine, he is a National Merit Commended Scholar who designed his own independent study in quantum mechanics. He also served as a student representative from his school to the Portland School Board.

Zev particularly enjoys sharing with children his wonder for how the world works. He has interned at the Breakwater School and served as a summer camp counselor at the Breakwater Creative Arts Camp. He views education as the "only real way to better the world. It is my philosophy that the more you know, the more complete a person you are, and the more you are able and bound to help others." With that philosophy, he plans to dedicate himself to teaching after college.

Zev has volunteered in a number of different venues. A charter member of the Casco Bay Volunteer Club, he particularly enjoyed the face-to-face nature of weekly work at a soup kitchen. He has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in West Virginia, where he helped develop oral histories of residents, and he also worked extensively in the political arena as an advocate for Maine's "Yes on 1" Campaign. In high school, he participated in Model UN, the Debate Club and GSA.