STUDENT STORIES FOR 2017 DAY OF GIVING

If your alumni club is championing the MSU Alumni Association National Board Endowed Scholarship Fund, below are some quotes and photographs from MSU students who have studied abroad that you can use in your promotion of the fund.

// STORIES
Michigan State University has not only given me the opportunity to become the first in my family to graduate from college but also the first to ever travel abroad. I can't thank the university enough for how many opportunities they have provided me but in return I can spread the message of education abroad. I'll tell everyone it's an opportunity they can't miss during their time here at Michigan State University.

Markeith B.
Applied Engineering major
Grand Rapids, MI

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Ever since I was a kid I've wanted to travel to Africa. My passion is big cats and I've always wanted to make a career out of studying them in the wild.

Unfortunately, as a first-generation college student coming from a low-income family, my dream of going to Africa felt far out of reach. Yet, with dedication and the help of scholarships and loans, I was able to make my dream come true!

I remember the safari vehicle pulling up next to a lioness, who laid contently on the ground, silently surveying the land. Instantly I was overcome with emotion and cried tears of joy. In that moment, I couldn't help but think about how much I wanted to spend the rest of my life feeling this way and following my passion. It was one of the best moments of my life.

I now am certain, without a doubt, I want to continue my education so that I am capable of following a career of conducting research out in the field. Being able to live and work with animals, like that lioness, is the career pathway I see myself truly being happy in. This experience has shown me this reality and I am so thankful I had the opportunity to discover who I wanted to be.

Ashley O.
Zoology major
Mount Morris, MI

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As the youngest child in a low-income family, I had never been outside the country. Growing up, my academic breaks were not spent in Cancun, Punta Cana, or Disney World like my classmates.

As I’m sure many other students will say, one of my reasons for attending MSU was the broad array of opportunities abroad. When I signed up for the Entrepreneurship and Development: Agriculture & Environment Studies in Belize program, I was worried about two things: finances and culture shock. With help from my network of friends and family and the generous contributions of scholarships, I was able study in Belize and complete some of my Horticulture degree requirements with a greatly reduced financial burden.

Financial and cultural obstacles can be very discouraging to some students curious about education abroad. These obstacles almost prevented me from even applying to the program, but a little research into the country and scholarships as well as the support of my loved ones were enough to encourage me to take the risk and experience class in an incredibly enriching new way!

Degen G.
Sustainable and Organic Horticulture major
Mount Pleasant, MI

Experiencing Russia first-hand offered me an opportunity that studying on campus didn’t. Learning the language in the context of a culture is a privilege.

Thank you MSUFCU for the scholarship funding. This was truly a great experience, and drastically altered the course of my studies and my life. I remembered that in Russia, I represented more than just myself. I represented my country, my school, and those who helped fund this wonderful adventure.

Derek L.
Russian major
Okemos, MI

Being part of International Engagement in Mexico and serving a community in need is something I will always cherish. Studying abroad in my home country was eventful, before traveling I was beyond excited for the opportunity to explore my culture more in depth. I was also exposed to the Oaxaca cuisine and when walking through the streets, the aroma of every restaurant reminded me of home. These lifelong lasting memories will always remind me that compared to other people, I am blessed for what I have.

I would not say I’m poor because I have everything I need for a stable life but sometimes my family struggles because of money. My family is made of nine siblings and our parents; most of my family members are farmworkers and I have worked in the fields too. I believe this program would not have been possible without financial help and I am thankful for all the opportunities I have received at Michigan State.

Luis V.
Spanish major
Immokalee, FL
In high school I had a fascination with the business aspect of the Asian culture and I started to understand its importance and impact on business in the states. When I was presented with the chance to go this summer I knew I had to take the opportunity no matter the cost.

This program gave me the chance to have my first experience going out of the country and being able to set myself apart from my peers by being able to say I’ve been to China. I can go back and show my niece and nephew that although we are struggling, if you keep working to achieve your goals, they can be accomplished. And no goal is out of reach no matter how far away it may seem it is.

I want to thank those who helped to fund the scholarships I was fortunate enough to receive because honestly, without them, I would have not had the opportunity to go.

Matthew B.
Supply Chain Management major
Inkster, MI

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Studying at EARTH University in Costa Rica gave me a chance to learn in a completely different way.

I took water samples among crocodiles, saw a beach covered in miles of plastic garbage, interviewed families who depend on the river, and snorkeled on a recovering coral reef. On top of that, my work contributed to a study presented to the government to address the pollution that I saw firsthand.

I got to work with an indigenous community in the rainforest, have homestays at local family farms, and interact with other students from around the world. With every new moment, I really had the freedom to explore my own interests and make the most of it, gaining real-world perspectives and lessons I know I couldn’t have gotten any other way.

When I first came to Michigan State, I had assumed that studying abroad was something completely out of reach. I halfheartedly began my pursuit as a freshman, but I never allowed myself to think it could become a reality. After earning a planning scholarship from my college, I began to really look into all of the different opportunities abroad at MSU. I ended up finding an incredible program and using scholarships to cover almost half of my expenses.

I’ve found that when it comes to studying abroad, just welcoming the possibilities opens so many doors, and staying determined to go after it can help make so many unimaginable experiences a reality.

Shaina O.
Environmental Studies and Sustainability major
South Lyon, MI

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// PHOTOGRAPHS

Each of the above stories has an accompanying photograph of the student taken during their study abroad. It's your choice whether you use a photo with the story.
Photographs are located in the folder named #GiveGreenDay in the File Share tab of the Club Admin Panel, and they are named using the first name of the student and where they studied.

To access the File Share tab of the Club Admin Panel, go to: https://alumni.msu.edu/get-together/club-admin/index.cfm