

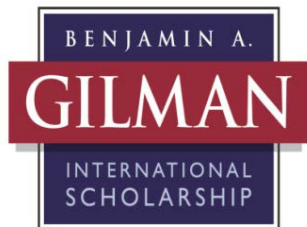
Gilman Alumni Ambassador Program

The Gilman Alumni Ambassador Program is a diverse group of Gilman Scholarship recipients who have studied abroad in various countries around the world. They are official ambassadors of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program providing presentations and promotional outreach to university and college campuses around the nation to students and advisors interested in learning more about the Gilman Scholarship Program. The Gilman Alumni Ambassadors have been trained by the Gilman Scholarship Program.

If you would like to request a Gilman Alumni Ambassador to present at your campus or if you are interested in becoming a Gilman Alumni Ambassador, please contact Gilman Scholars by email at gilman_scholars@iie.org or call 832-369-3496 if you have any questions.

Gilman Alumni Ambassadors who completed training in September 2009:

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Page</u>
<i>Cherise Beardsley</i> , Marquette University, Spring 2007, Spain	2
<i>Zudina Hidrobo</i> , Miami Dade College, Fall 2008, Morocco	3
<i>Clifton Johnson</i> , Elon University, Spring 2006, Argentina	4
<i>Jeehye Lee</i> , Oregon State University, Fall 2007, South Korea	5
<i>Robert May</i> , University of South Carolina – Columbia, Spring 2009, United Arab Emirates	6
<i>Naida Montes</i> , Arcadia University, Spring 2008, Equatorial Guinea	7
<i>Uyen Phan</i> , University of Texas – Arlington, Fall 2006, South Korea	8
<i>Katrina Walker</i> , Santa Monica College, Spring 2008, South Africa	9
<i>Ismail Warsame</i> , University of Main, Academic Year 2006-2007, Egypt	10



Gilman Alumni Ambassador

Cherise Beardsley

Spain, Spring 2007
Marquette University



My study abroad experience in Madrid, Spain was everything I thought it would be and more. I lived in a bustling Madrid neighborhood with an amazingly caring Señora and her daughters. I attended Universidad Complutense de Madrid where I took history, grammar, philosophy and theology classes. I was also an English tutor for two young girls twice a week and built a great relationship with their family. My goal to studying abroad was to take in everything I could about the Spanish culture. I spent many days wandering around the city going to parks and museums and trying on shoes just so I could interact with people. I was also lucky enough to get an “intercambio” (university student to *exchange* Spanish and English language practice) who took me under his wing and I learned so much from his family and friends.

Receiving the Gilman Scholarship is something that I will cherish for my entire life. With limited funds for college, I never thought studying abroad could ever be a reality. The Gilman Scholarship allowed me not only the opportunity to study abroad, but travel and grow professionally. I knew receiving the Scholarship was such a blessing but I am amazed at how often I use my experiences abroad in my personal and professional life.

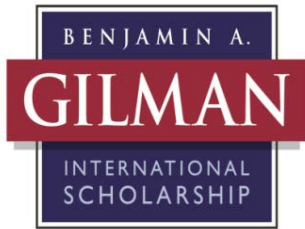
For my Follow-on Project I held informational meetings at my university regarding the Gilman Scholarship. I presented on everything including requirements, applying, my experience with the Scholarship and more. I felt it was so important to spread the word about the scholarship opportunity and it was a great way to give back.

Now that I have graduated, I am a supervisor and coordinator at a local community center and at a local high school. My role at the center and high school allows me to interact with high school and college students on a daily basis. I have taken this opportunity to share my experiences with the Gilman Scholarship and am currently helping one student apply so they can also receive the many benefits from studying abroad.



While studying at a university in Madrid, Spain, Cherise met new friends, explored Spain and visited other European countries.





Gilman Alumni Ambassador

Zudina Hidrobo

Morocco, Fall 2008

Miami Dade College



I am pursuing a Bachelor's in International Relations at Miami Dade College because understanding systematic structures and interactions of human species as a whole is of great interest to me. One of the most important aspects of society today is cultural diversity, hence my reason to study abroad. I wanted to deepen my experience and knowledge in the Middle Eastern culture. Growing up, I was always surrounded by this amazing culture. In my country of birth, Venezuela, there are several Lebanese and other Middle Eastern people that have made beautiful contributions to my hometown's culture.

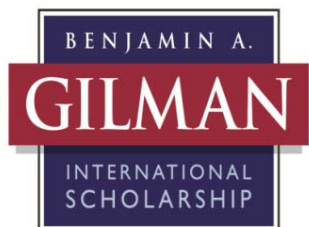
Living in Morocco for four months was more than life changing. Not only did I learn two new languages, French and Arabic, but my experience made me become a messenger of what I saw and what I experienced in a land so far and distinct from my life in Miami. While abroad, I immersed myself completely into the Moroccan culture. I had the wonderful opportunity to come across extraordinary people and places that I had only dreamed of ever seeing. The Gilman International Scholarship made my journey a reality. One of my fondest memories comes from my community service, when I visited a grammar school in a small town. My interaction with the children opened a whole new perspective for me; I became more aware of people as a whole and not so focused on solely what I see around me every day. The children were so open and eager to learn about me without any judgment whatsoever, and it was rewarding to see how important it is to have a humble approach to one another regardless of who we may be.

Upon my return to the U.S. and to complete my Gilman Follow-on Project, I conducted a series of presentations to share my experience with my community and bring that awareness back to others. I wanted to create a positive impact among the people that surround me. My future academic goals have been highly influenced by having received a Gilman Scholarship. Not only do I want to focus more on spreading the message about the benefits of receiving a scholarship, but overall will continue to encourage students to explore other cultures, to search for a deeper understanding and break free of assumptions by experiencing diversity on their own. I am a living example of the remarkable contribution that the Gilman International Scholarship Program is providing to scholars. I will never cease to express my gratitude for having received the Gilman Scholarship and how essential a component it has been in my academic success.



During her semester abroad as a Gilman Scholarship recipient, Zudina explored Morocco, as well as learned two languages and met new people and friends.



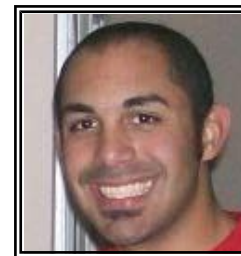


Gilman Alumni Ambassador

Clifton Johnson

Argentina, Spring 2006

Elon University



During the Spring of 2006 I had the opportunity to study abroad in Buenos Aires, Argentina. My program hosted through CIEE allowed me to take a diverse selection of courses at local universities, Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA) and Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO). My program sponsored group trips throughout the country and cultural activities within the city such plays, tours, and tango shows. My study abroad experience allowed me to live and experience a culture different from the one I experienced growing up with my family and at college. My experience allowed me to see the world from a new perspective and enjoy all the little things in life.

The Gilman Scholarship was an important aspect to my study abroad experience. Not only assisting me financially, the Gilman Scholarship also allowed me to appreciate my experience even more. I was able to reflect on my personal growth and development while abroad, which would be an integral part of my Follow-on Project. The Gilman Scholarship inspired me to volunteer and help others while in Argentina, making a difference the lives of many others.

My Gilman Follow-on Project consisted of developing a manual that would assist students who tutored ESL students in the local community. The manual consisted of personal reflections of learning a new language, emphasizing the feelings and frustrations associated with such an arduous task. The manual was also supported by research relating to second language acquisition. My experience and project also allowed me use its content to co-teach a three-week study abroad course in Costa Rica.

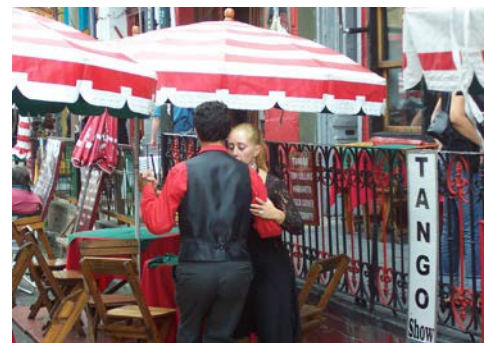
I am currently working at Elon University as the Assistant Director of Campus Center Operations while completing a master's degree in Public Administration at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. As a member of the Student Life Division at Elon, I have had the opportunity to co-advise a service trip in Honduras and co-teach a study abroad course in Costa Rica. My study abroad experience has made me realize my passion is working with people, especially college students. Upon completing my master's degree, I hopefully will begin a doctoral program in Higher Education Administration. I will continue to work in education with hopes of working with the development of students through their study abroad experiences.



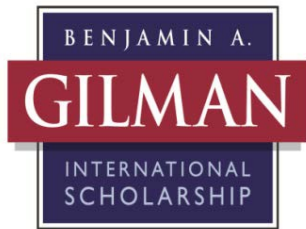
Clifton with his host family and friends.



Clifton in Ushuaia, Argentina's capital of the province of Tierra del Fuego, considered the southernmost city in the World.



A street tango show in the La Boca neighborhood.



Gilman Alumni Ambassador

Jeehye Lee

South Korea, Fall 2007
Oregon State University



I enrolled in the Portland State University's partnering college Kyungnam University (KU) in South Korea Fall term 2007 research abroad. With support from the Gilman International Scholarship Program, I was able to financially coordinate my oversea education and utilize beneficial resources for my journey. At KU, I took courses related to the Korean language, the culture of North Korea, and environmental sciences. While there I conducted an exploratory study on the impacts on economy and culture due to *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, contamination in Pacific Oysters in Tongyeong. I interviewed shellfish industry members to examine health policies surrounding bacterial outbreaks, which taught me a great deal about cross-cultural barriers in research. This work was later used to produce a thesis documentation of BioResource Research Interdisciplinary Program and International Degree Program at Oregon State University (OSU).

Additionally, my experience abroad allowed me to further ponder my self-identity of 'Korean-American' or 'American-Korean' labeled differently by people from South Korea or the U.S. Questioning and ultimately recognizing my self-identity was necessary for me to grow into a socially-aware young adult. As part of my Gilman Follow-on Project, I presented a self-documentary *You can't go home again?* with footage I filmed while abroad. The presentation invited youth, fellow college students and the general public and conveyed an interesting discussion on international understanding and intercultural communication issues.

My international experience has offered numerous professional development opportunities. I could evaluate my interests in the field of national resources and educational outreach. I am currently working as a biological science technician at the Gold Beach Ranger District in Rouge River Siskiyou National Forest for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service. For a long term goal I hope to become an educator who would demonstrate innovative ideas to promote diversity and sustainable living in my community.

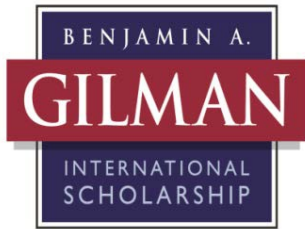


Je at Changdeokgung Palace, "Palace of Prospering Virtue."

Je with a KU faculty member.



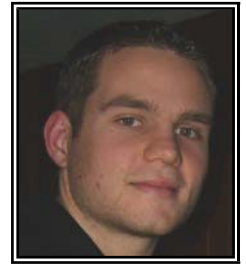
Pile of oyster shells from her research in Tongyeong.



Gilman Alumni Ambassador

Robert May

United Arab Emirates, Spring 2009
University of South Carolina, Columbia



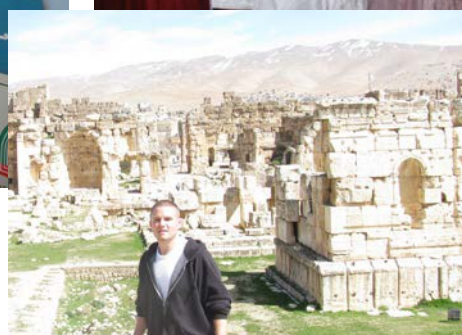
Robert "RJ" May was born and raised in Newport News, Virginia and as an active member of his community he was awarded an NROTC Marine Corps Option Scholarship to the University of South Carolina. Unfortunately, RJ suffered traumatic injuries to his lower spine his first semester and had to undergo multiple corrective operations. His medical dis-enrollment from the program followed. Determined to serve his country, RJ shifted his focus to the study of areas of strategic importance to the United States. He was awarded a Gilman Program Scholarship in December 2008 to the American University of Dubai. While there, RJ completed a Middle Eastern Studies Program, which also included beginning Arabic classes. During his six months overseas, RJ traveled to 18 different countries and experienced a wide array of different cultures and customs. Along The way he met high profile public figures like the former President of India A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, former Secretary of Education Margaret Spelling, and Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York. In addition to meeting these and other individuals, RJ had the opportunity to see and visit some of the world's most breathtaking places of natural beauty, man's greatest engineering marvels, and ruins from past civilizations.

In gratitude and obligation to fulfill the terms of his scholarship, RJ has undertaken a self-designed, multifaceted Gilman Follow-on Project that includes reaching out to both high school and college students. RJ spent two days at his former high school discussing the application process, and opportunities offered by the Gilman Program and the values of studying abroad. In addition to encouraging young students to think ahead, he also has joined the Virtual Advising Network or "VAN" at USC, which helps prospective study abroad participants to be in contact with fellow students who have recently returned from studying overseas. RJ posted blogs while in Dubai so that other students, faculty, and interested parties could have a firsthand look at his experiences. Furthermore, RJ has promised his time and resources to the Study Abroad Office as a peer advisor for study abroad candidates.

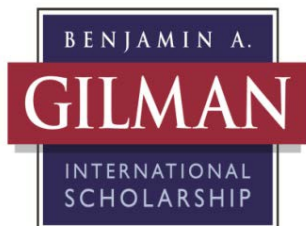
RJ is currently a senior and will graduate Magna Cum Laude with a B.A. in Political Science and Criminal Justice in December. He is awaiting replies from Law schools for the entry in the Fall of 2010 and from government agencies for employment opportunities. Because of his time overseas, RJ's career goals have been solidified, his perceptions of the world confirmed, and his desire to contribute to the betterment of society deepened. He only wishes that through his efforts to promote the Gilman International Scholarship Program that other students will also make the decision to change their lives by studying abroad.



RJ not only had the opportunity to study in the UAE, but also visited many places, met diverse people, and learned from each new experience.



As a Gilman Scholarship recipient in Dubai, RJ was invited to attend an Education Without Borders international conference.



Gilman Alumni Ambassador

Naida Montes

Equatorial Guinea, Spring 2008
Arcadia University



Studying abroad in Equatorial Guinea, Africa has been an experience like no other. During my stay, I spent several days doing primate research and conservation work with the Bioko Biodiversity Protection Program on Moraka Playa. I continued to do my own primate research as part of a class with the help of a local expert in Moca village. When I returned to Malabo city in the capital of Equatorial Guinea, I had the pleasure of volunteering to teach English at the Universidad Nacional de Guinea Ecuatorial while also taking other classes. The Gilman Scholarship gave me the opportunity to experience a whole new world and really do something good out of appreciation for those who supported me when I was unsure of what life had in store for me.

I feel that my Gilman Follow-on Project, although completed, is ongoing. My project had a strange twist to it. My goal was and still is to promote study abroad, advancement, opportunity and literacy around the world. Being that I was a teacher in Equatorial Guinea, I really got to see the importance of books and education since many of my own students did not have any books. When I returned to the U.S., I continued working with book drives that would support not only international causes but local ones as well. I have had the opportunity to speak at information sessions at Arcadia University as well as my local Community College of Philadelphia. One of my greatest honors was to be invited to be a key note speaker at an 8th grade graduation by a woman who was amazed by a speech of mine as I shared my experiences. I had the opportunity to speak one on one with students from my local North Philadelphia community where drugs, violence, and dropping-out of school are prevalent. I shared some of my hardest experiences abroad and how that gave me strength. I was their voice during the graduation and had the opportunity to speak to parents and friends, giving a message of hope to this community. I continue to speak at places wherever I am invited bringing a message of love and hope to youth and adults.

I have just begun my Masters in International Development with a global concentration at Eastern University. This is a field I would have never even thought of going into about two years ago. In a year I plan to conduct field work in another country - loving, laughing, living and enjoying my passion to serve others around the world.



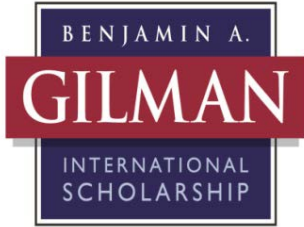
Naida conducted field research counting some of the most endangered primate species.



Naida with some of her English class students at the University.

From her experience teaching English to university students in Equatorial Guinea, Naida continues to channel her passion of helping others through her community service and her graduate work.





Gilman Alumni Ambassador

Uyen Phan

South Korea, Fall 2006
University of Texas, Arlington



There are two ways to live your life: One is to live in hope of an opportunity; the other is to strive for what can become an opportunity. My experience in South Korea has provided new ideas and perspectives about myself and my own culture. The experience has not only strengthened my values, it has caused me to alter or abandon some while embracing new concepts and perceptions.

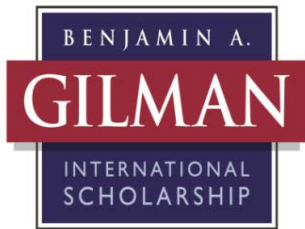
I have gained a greater appreciation for life through partaking in various volunteer opportunities in South Korea, particularly while at the Hwasung Orphanage. My volunteer days have given me much understanding about humanity, hope and what ultimately sets us free. I must say that in lending a hand to some, I have been the recipient of a great many things in return- in kind and in spirit. I volunteer because I believe in lending a hand. This is the same philosophy I incorporate into my career goal of helping others. I want to learn and hopefully teach the concept of "volunteering" as an action done not out of obligation, but rather from the innate sense of caring.

Upon my return home from studying abroad, I eagerly have been encouraging friends and people whom I have encountered to study abroad, if ever given the opportunity. I strongly encourage studying abroad because often times, Americans are much less informed about the world beyond the nation's boundaries. Students who study abroad return home with an informed and much less biased perspective toward other cultures and people. There is no better and more effective way to learn a language than to be immersed in a culture that speaks the language you are learning. It is an opportunity to discover new strengths and abilities, conquer new challenges, and solve new problems. The Gilman scholarship not only provided me with the necessary financial assistance, it also helped made me feel more secure while being away from home.



Uyen volunteering with the young children of the Hwasung Orphanage in Seoul, South Korea.





Gilman Alumni Ambassador

Katrina Walker

South Africa, Spring 2008
Santa Monica College



Thanks to the Gilman International Scholarship Program, I can honestly say that there is nothing else more liberating to me than my time spent abroad. While studying abroad I explored the role of the media in South Africa and its affect on the people who live there. I made positive contributions through two organizations called Next Aid and Hope Worldwide by volunteering to provide and distribute educational resources to less advantaged children. I was also educated regarding the prevalence of AIDS, HIV and the disturbing epidemic of sexual assault and rape. Because I can relate to the torment of that experience, I was filled with empathy and more determined to implement a positive change. So I committed myself abroad to the service of those less fortunate, and learning the true meaning of global citizenship.

For my Gilman Follow-on Project my fellow study abroad classmates and I started a club at Santa Monica College (SMC) called Hope International (Ubuntu Club). While serving as President of the Hope International (Ubuntu Club) at SMC, I committed myself to increasing awareness regarding the destitution in South Africa. By doing so, the organization raised close to a thousand dollars, which was donated through Next Aid to an Aids orphans' village in Dennitlon, South Africa. This not only encouraged students to study abroad and become global citizens; but it also promoted the services of the Gilman International Scholarship Program. With the help of SMC students and staff that had studied abroad as well, this organization became a success.

Looking back, I realize that since studying abroad, I have accomplished so much. I had the opportunity to complete my Associates Degree at Santa Monica College in the Spring of 2008. I am now attending Spelman College and I am filled with inspiration to do something great for others. At Spelman my major is Human Services/Premed. Deciding on my major was the most exciting moment of my life. My desire is to contribute to the cure of many terminal illnesses that are affecting populations of people all over the world. It is my desire to work in the areas of medicine that are saving lives and moving people forward in life. I made this decision while abroad, working within the villages and townships that were highly affected by the spread of HIV and AIDS in South Africa. I now volunteer at Grady Hospital and I will be graduating from Spelman College in May of 2010. Looking forward to my future in the field of medicine, I plan to have more experiences abroad, so that I may continue to study in other places of the world, fighting to implement change and development as a global citizen.

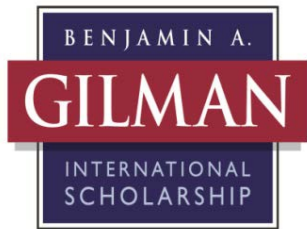


Katrina volunteering in South Africa.

Katrina's experience in South Africa has given her direction and passion for providing "good hope" to those in need, especially when she enters the medical field.



Katrina visited the South African Broadcasting Corporation's News Center as her class explored the role of media on the people and culture.



Gilman Alumni Ambassador

Ismail Warsame

Egypt, Academic Year 2006-2007
University of Maine



I was born in Somalia and became a U.S. citizen in 2006. My family was amongst the many families displaced by the Somali civil war in early 1990s. We were resettled in Portland, Maine in 2001. I attended Portland High and University of Maine respectively. During the academic year 2006-2007, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Egypt. With the help of the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, I was able to cover the cost of travel, tuition, and living in Egypt.

I experienced life in Cairo, a vibrant ancient city with modern high rises and sky scrapers. My study abroad program was at the American University in Cairo, one of the most prestigious higher education institutions in the region. I attended classes and received academic credit towards my International Affairs Bachelors degree, but more importantly, I took accelerated Arabic classes and supplemented street conversation with the Egyptians to further enhance my language acquisition. I have seen the world through a different perspective, which has prepared me well to deal with multiculturalism and to overcome language obstacles.

Upon my return from the study abroad program, I worked as a peer advisor at the Office of International Programs at the University of Maine. I advised an average of about ten overseas-bound students per week. This was the perfect job for not only completing my Gilman Follow-on Project but also molding my future career interest in the international education field.

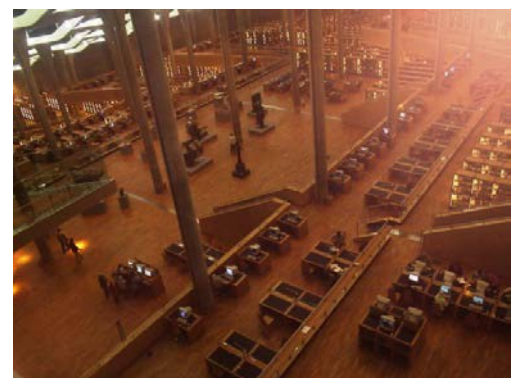
Working at the Office of International Programs gave me a glimpse of what it was like to not only work one-on-one with students, but also gave me an avenue to do what interested me - advising students about the different study abroad programs that were offered at the University of Maine. I always knew that I enjoyed working with people and not with machines, but I did not know exactly how and where to proceed. Now as a graduate student in the Higher Education program, many undergraduate students turn to me for advice regarding study abroad and scholarships, I always tell them about the opportunity provided by the Gilman International Scholarship.



Ismail visiting the Pyramids of Giza.



Ismail with the Alexander the Great statue outside the New Library of Alexandria.



Inside the New Library of Alexandria, which is dedicated to recapture the spirit of openness and scholarship of the original Bibliotheca Alexandrina.