

# Grace Elizabeth Groner Foundation

The Grace Elizabeth Groner Foundation's mission is to preserve Grace Groner's legacy by encouraging Lake Forest College students to prepare for their careers and lives of service to their community and alma mater.

Spring 2014

## Groners at RFUMS

Last summer, Maria Ruiz, Yusuf Ismail, Ryan Porter, and Heather Heitkotter were accepted as student researchers at Rosalind Franklin Univeristy of Medicine and Science. Maria and Yusuf returned to their labs to continue their work with Dr. Michelle Hastings and Dr. William Frost, respectively. This summer, RFUMS accepted four new Groner Recipients.

Page 4



## First Groner Recipient to intern in Panama

During the Spring 2014 semester, Biology Major, Luis Carlos Beltran, interned with the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute at Barro Colorado Island (BCI). Luis' unique opportunity was made possible and directed by Dr. Lynn Westley, biology professor at LFC. Luis had the opportunity to attend various conferences at BCI, presented by leading field biologists. A huge thanks to Dr. Westley for making this possible.

Page 3



## Groner Fellow receives Masters from London School of Economics

By Ioana Sirca Belintan

After graduating from Lake Forest College, I worked at a Peruvian restaurant as a manager for one year. I was able to learn about food, music, history, and arts. In 2012, I started my Master of Science in Comparative Politics at the London School of Economics. I graduated from LSE in December 2013, and received merit in five out of my six courses, and distinction in one course. During my time at LSE, the GEGF provided me the opportunity to intern at the Prince's Regeneration Trust. I joined the Grants & Fundraising team where I was responsible for putting together and updating tables of trusts and foundations for various projects (usually Level I - strictly pro-bono consultancy work for community groups looking to regenerate their heritage buildings).

As for my experience at LSE - I could not be more grateful and proud to say that I hold a Master of Science from one of the best universities in the world. It was my dream to

attend a globally renowned higher level institution and to say that I have accomplished it sounds almost unreal. I am convinced this experience will open new doors for me. The knowledge and advice I received at LSE is something that I will use as long as I practice the social science discipline. Furthermore, LSE has taught me a new way of looking at the field of social sciences and the world in general. It has helped me become more diligent, organized, determined, and knowledgeable.



LSE and PRT have helped me gain trust in my capabilities and realize my true potential. The experiences have been challenging, yet extremely rewarding. They formed my building-blocks as an adult, a professional, and a career-driven individual. The networks and

relationships I have made are memorable. I have met wonderful, bright, and motivated people who are going to do amazing things. Being one of them is an exhilarating feeling.



Ioana Sirca Belintan  
Grants and Fundraising  
Assistant

The work the GEGF puts forward and the caliber of opportunities it creates for Groner Recipients are unprecedented and unparalleled. Words will never be enough to express my gratitude for the opportunities I was offered as a Grace Groner Fellow. I hope my story encourages others to become Grace Groner Fellows, so that together we can create a network of people motivated and experienced to go out into the world and make real, long-lasting change, while passing on the spirit and the memory of Grace.

## Note from the Trustees

*We have completed a busy and successful year at the Grace Elizabeth Groner Foundation. So many Lake Forest College students, faculty, and staff have worked together with the GEGF Trustees and the Director, Daniela Resendiz, as she coordinated unique service internship opportunities through the 2013-2014 academic year.*

First, we would like to congratulate the graduating seniors whom we have supported this year. They are Victoria Egedus, Mbakisi Gopolang, Ashley Gora, Candice Kosanke, Nicole Kosanke, Danielle Leonardo, Nora Logue, Anhar Mohamed, Lana Panitch, Camila Quinteros, Karen Taboada, Stefanie Turza, Samantha Van Kollenburg, Zachary Wenner, and Barbara Wye. It was our pleasure to host them and their families at our fourth annual Senior Celebration. Many of the parents expressed their gratitude to the Trustees and Daniela Resendiz for providing their sons and daughters with opportunities for community, national, and international service while developing and enhancing their talents and skills. We are proud of their service, accomplishments, and the ties Groner Recipients made with the Lake Forest community, the United States, and the world. Many of these students are representing the GEGF by continuing to serve during the summer and a few will continue to serve throughout the following year. We have every confidence in them as they follow their academic and career paths. Congratulations to the new class of Grace Elizabeth Groner Fellows!

To the undergraduates who were and became Grace Elizabeth Groner Recipients this year, we expect that you will step forward and accept the opportunities for service and academic experiences the GEGF provides. Rising seniors are Akua Agyei, Abigail Brownell, Luis Beltran, Elizabeth Bulley, Ryan Drake, Yusuf Ismail, Olga Kutkovska, Hiwot Mamo, Samuel Mercier, Gabriel Trujillo, and Ariane Uwamba. Rising juniors are Heather Heitkotter, Sally Nahhas, Ryan Porter, Campbell Punnett, Maria Ruiz, Hanna Samberg, and Matthew Spehlmann. Rising sophomores are Brittany Avots, Joseph Bortolotti, Casey Hartfiel, and Kaitlyn Woodman,

Most of all, we want everyone to remember that these opportunities were generously provided by Grace Elizabeth Groner, graduate of Lake Forest College, Class of 1931, and resident of Lake Forest until her death at almost 101 years old.

L. Robert Pasquesi  
William C. Marlatt

## Service Awards

*The following awards were presented to the recipients at the Lake Forest College Honors Convocation the Friday before Commencement.*



The awards and descriptions are as follows:

The Community Service Award is given to a student who earned distinction while volunteering at a community organization. This year's Community Service Award was presented by Brenda Dick, Executive Director, to Candice Kosanke for her work supporting various departments and projects at the Gorton Community Center.

Candice will be continuing her service through a Bridge Program at RFUMS. Candice will work in the marketing department and will be part of the team that produces Helix, RFUMS' magazine publication.



The National Service Award is given to a student who earned distinction while volunteering for a national organization. This year's National Service Award was presented by William Marlatt, Trustee, to Camila Quinteros for editing and designing a book on historic homes and public buildings in Jamaica, while interning for Ed Chappell at Colonial Williamsburg.

Camila will be pursuing her dream of becoming an architect and will be attending The Glasgow School of Art this fall.



The International Service Award is given to a student who earned distinction while volunteering to serve people around the world. This year's International Service Award was presented by Daniela Resendiz, Director, to Ashley Gora for her work developing, implementing, and promoting health initiatives and sustainability efforts while interning at The Monteverde Institute in Costa Rica.

Ashley will be continuing her service through a Bridge Program at MVI. Ashley will return as the Interim Student Internship Coordinator, which entails coordinating the Groner/MVI eight-week internship program in Costa Rica's beautiful rain forest.



Congratulations Candice, Camila, and Ashley. Your unconditional commitment to service has been inspirational to your fellow Groner Recipients and all of those around you.







# Grace Elizabeth Groner Senior Celebration

*The Grace Elizabeth Groner Senior Celebration is held the Thursday before Commencement. GEGF Trustee, William Marlatt, his wife, Kathryn, and the GEGF Director, Daniela Resendiz greet the Groner Recipients and their families.*

The Foundation Trustees and Director enjoy sharing Grace's life story with the Groner Recipients and their families.

prepared- a video with images of each GEGF graduating senior.

Recipients are presented with a gold "G" pin that is worn on their gowns at Commencement. As each Groner Recipient was presented with a pin, he or she shared the opportunities that were made possible by Grace Groner. Parents expressed their gratitude towards Grace Groner for the experiences she made possible.

The evening was a joyful occasion with many hugs and smiles.



The purpose of the gathering is to honor the graduating Groner Recipients who are about to become one of Grace's Fellows. The Groner Recipients share with other Recipients and their families the unique opportunities which were provided by Grace's generosity. They reflect on the learning experience and satisfaction of carrying on Grace's legacy of service to others.



William Marlatt, Trustee, and life-long friend of Grace Groner, reminisced about Grace's hopes and wishes for the students of Lake Forest College. The Foundation has grown to support over seventy students in the past three years. Mr. Marlatt took the opportunity to reflect how each Groner Recipient has ensured that Grace Groner's wishes are fulfilled. After this introduction, Groner Recipients, Sam Mercier and Campbell Punnett, revealed a small surprise they had



The Senior Celebration also serves as a pinning ceremony. As a Groner Recipient becomes an alumnus of Lake Forest College, he or she becomes one of Grace's Fellows. The





## Groner Recipient Interns at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute

By Luis Carlos Beltran

I would like to express my utmost gratitude to Dr. Lynn Westley and the Grace E. Groner Foundation for helping me get the chance to work and do research on Barro Colorado Island. Regarding how I feel right now, I feel changed and I feel grown. This experience has given me the chance to learn just how much more I still need to grow to become a great tropical biologist and I am excited to continue on this path!

I worked with Merlin Sheldrake, a PhD candidate, and Dr. Joe Wright, senior staff biologist.

admire Merlin because he worked tirelessly and had a great sense of humor. He is a brilliant musician, as well. Through our shared interest in music we became close friends. Soon after my arrival, Dr. Allen Herre started inviting me to the island for cookouts and walks.



Dr. Paul-Camilo Zalema and Dr. Carolina Sarmiento, guided me through the idea and implementation of the Mucilage Project. After their strong support, it became my responsibility to design the Mucilage Project, gather all necessary materials, and execute the experiment. This was an arduous ordeal, but it was the adventure I wanted. I had designed small experiments for biology classes, but

never something that had the potential for publication.

I would also like to thank PhD candidate Brett Wolfe for allowing me to use his equipment which made it possible to measure the water stress on the seedlings and soil.



When it comes time to do reforestation research (like in Costa Rica), my experience with the mucilage project will be beneficial.

This was a grueling and tedious experience. However, it is through struggle that I learn. I feel I have tested my mind and body with this internship and I am ready to keep going – I have learned that I truly like biology and really want to continue on this path. I have also learned to continue nurturing the other sides of me like music and poetry to keep a balance.



I am excited to see what my senior year will be like after going through BCI! Today holds a very promising future.



Merlin and I quickly connected while harvesting his plants and labeling countless sample tubes. I grew to

## Groner Recipients At RFUMS

*The summer RFUMS program has continued to grow. Two of last year's summer students, Maria and Yusuf, continue their work at RFUMS this summer. In addition, four new students started research internships in labs at RFUMS this May and June. This summer's research will be featured in our next newsletter.*

### **Maria Ruiz, 2016**

Maria Ruiz is a biology major who will graduate in 2016 and hopes to attend the College of Nursing at Rush University.

Maria spent last summer working in Dr. Michelle Hastings' laboratory. This research focuses on the molecular basis of human diseases. A broad number of diseases are caused by aberrant RNA molecules. The lab focuses on how pre-mRNA splicing and expression of small non-coding regulatory microRNAs are altered in disease cells.

Maria's research focuses on Alzheimer's Disease. She is examining altered ryanodine receptor expression in mild cognitive impairment and Alzheimer's disease. Maria has been responsible for conducting multiple tests on rats with altered ryanodine.

This summer, Maria will continue her research on Alzheimers and will serve as a mentor for the incoming student researchers.

### **Yusuf Ismail, 2015**

Yusuf is a biology major and computer science minor who will graduate in 2015. After graduation, Yusuf hopes to continue a career in research.

Last summer, Yusuf worked in Dr. William Frost's laboratory. Yusuf's unique internship with Dr. Frost required a five-week research program at RFUMS followed by five weeks at Friday Harbor Laboratories, a marine field station located on San Juan Island in Washington. Yusuf's goal was to help Dr. Frost research on how neural networks process information, store memory, and create behavior.

Yusuf specifically conducted research on the neural pathways associated with behavior in marine invertebrates, specifically the sea anemone, *Stomphia coccinea*.

This summer, Yusuf has returned to Dr. Frost's lab to put the finishing touches on last summer's research and to prepare the research for publication.