

# 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 to serve their communities.

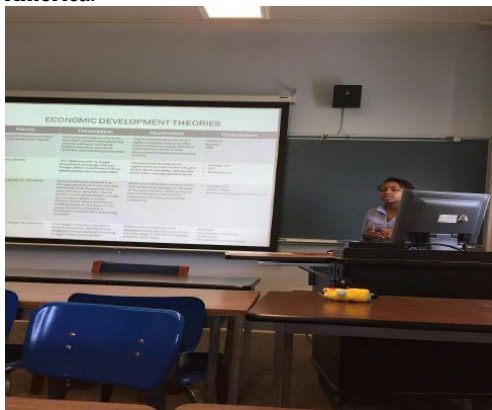
Summer 2015

## A Summer Well-Spent

By Akua G. Agyei

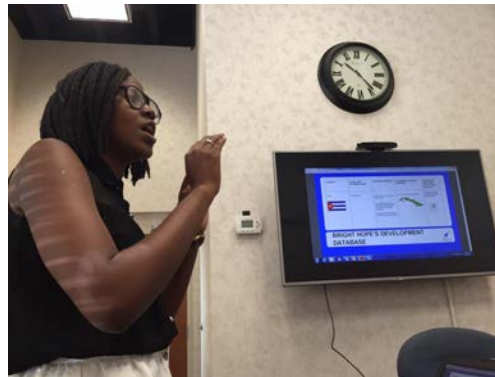
Investigating any topic or subject is essential for any profession and the ability to do so effectively is an asset in today’s job market. Students are selected to conduct research under the supervision of Professor Les Dlabay for ten weeks during the summer. Their research topics are from the interdisciplinary concentration of Developmental Studies. Each student is assigned a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in the Chicagoland area as the focus of their work.

This year Niah Anson '18, Samukelisiwe Ngwenya '17, Linh Tran '16, and Nadiège Uwamba '17 were fortunate to be research assistants and consultants for Bright Hope International and World Relief. These NGOs aim to alleviate poverty by providing the basic needs such as water, food, healthcare, and education to people in Africa, Asia, and South America.



Students were responsible for gathering information, analyzing data, and ultimately developing unique solutions to remedy the identified issues. At the end of the program, students present their findings to the Board of Directors of the NGOs. This experience allows

students to hone their research skills and written and oral communication skills, while simultaneously sharpening their critical thinking skills. Like Albert Szent-Gyorgyi said: “Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought.”



This is what Ngwenya had to say at the end of the program: “When I did my final presentation it was so rewarding to see the people at Bright Hope appreciate the work that we did this summer and comment how it was impressive. What stood out to me the most was how they appreciated the component of sustainability that I aimed to include in every part of the development database I created. Looking into the future I can definitely see how this will positively contribute in opening up many other opportunities.”



Tran added: “Before the research project, I was quite confident about my knowledge of the developing countries since it is also where I am from. However, after the research, I realized that I had learned a lot about developing economies.”



Anson, Ngwenya, Tran, and Uwamba are thankful to the GEGF, Professor Les Dlabay, the Forgotten Majority Learning Lab members, and the Directors of Bright Hope and World Relief for a great experience. Though summer is a time of rest and relaxation, the students felt it was well-spent increasing their knowledge on issues of global importance and adding to their professional skill-set.



# Groner Recipients' Third Year in Falmouth, Jamaica

By Akua G. Agyei

Known for its lush topography, mountains, and reef-lined beaches, Jamaica is one of the most visited nation islands in the Caribbean. Among its many attractions is Jamaica's rich architectural and cultural heritage, which in recent decades has received increased international attention.

Thanks to the Grace Elizabeth Groner Foundation, Joaquin Basile '17, Casey Hartfiel '17, Samuel Mercier '16, Ryan Drake '15, Akua Agyei '15 and Stefanie Turza '14 participated in the Field School of Tangible Heritage, a month-long program in collaboration with Falmouth Heritage Renewal (FHR).

The Field School exists to provide participants with an opportunity to better understand the concept of historic preservation, thus aligning with FHR's mission of restoring the built historic environment of Falmouth, a town situated on the north coast.

## Historic Architecture



The first component of the Field School deals with historic architecture, which includes recording threatened buildings through measured drawings and learning how to interpret the historic fabric of a building for preservation. Students had the privilege of learning from experts in their fields: Ke Vaughn Harding, Director of FHR; Edward Chappell, Director of Architecture and Archeological Research at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; Samuel Mercier, Assistant to Edward Chappell and Field School Coordinator; and Brent Fortenberry, Ph.D, Archeological and Architectural Researcher at Clemson University.

## Archaeology



Excavating in enslaved villages, washing, bagging and learning how to identify and interpret artifacts constituted the archaeology component. Casey Hartfiel, an International Relations major, commented: "Archaeology taught me about history and culture in a more interactive way than sitting in a classroom and reading books." Hayden Bassett, Ph.D Archaeology Candidate at the College of William and Mary, spearheaded this part of the Field School. Stefanie Turza was responsible for curating and showcasing previously found artifacts.



## Oral History

Makini Emmanuel, Oral History Teaching Assistant, and alumna of the Field School, led the methodical collection of personal accounts of individuals whose houses were restored by FHR. Students better understood the historical information of the houses and the town of Falmouth. Joaquin Basile, a Communication major, stated: "My favorite part of the Field School was interviewing locals because I had the opportunity to interact with people and learn about their stories." He continued to say "this experience reinforced my interest in communications."

## Cultural Excursions

Field School participants also explored the island during their stay in the island. They visited Montego Bay to view exhibits from the National Museum and Cultural Centre. Mercier

mentioned: "it gave students (and me) a chance to consider the development of contemporary Jamaican culture from its sugar-and-slave-driven economy in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries into the vibrant island nation it is today."

## Service Project



In the spirit embodied by Grace, students were tasked with the service project of painting the outside walls with lime wash, (a prehistoric house staple), and planting a garden to enhance the appearance of Melbourne House, FHR's headquarters. Additionally, students worked with FHR carpenters to build window sills for a house undergoing reconstruction.

Participants are grateful to the Grace E. Groner Foundation for allowing them to live with and learn from passionate and knowledgeable individuals, spark their interest in historic preservation, and develop wonderful friendships.

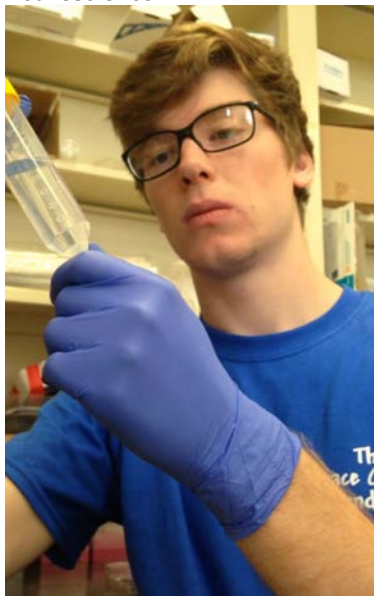


# Undergraduate Research

By Akua G. Agyei

For the past four years, the Grace Groner Foundation has supported a number of opportunities for undergraduate students to gain research experience over the summer at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science (RFUMS). Below are some student comments on their experiences:

**Trevor Buhr**  
Class of 2018  
Neuroscience



"I've learned that working in a lab has greatly strengthened my understanding of molecular biology. It is one thing to read something in a textbook, but in actually seeing first-hand how science and biology work, you really learn."

**Lindsay Hartup**  
Class of 2017  
Biology & Chemistry

"I like the way that research challenges you and forces you to think. It was awesome to have the opportunity to work alongside a graduate student in the lab. Together, the two of us could solve problems, troubleshoot, and celebrate when we figured something out or something worked. I love being part of a team."

**Jeremy Berg**  
Class of 2017  
Neuroscience & Psychology



"For me, one of the most rewarding aspects of the work I'm doing at Rosalind Franklin would be building connections and establishing relationships with the mentors, researchers, and students. They are all invaluable resources, and I'm thankful to have met many of them."

**Joseph Bortolotti**  
Class of 2017  
Chemistry & Biology

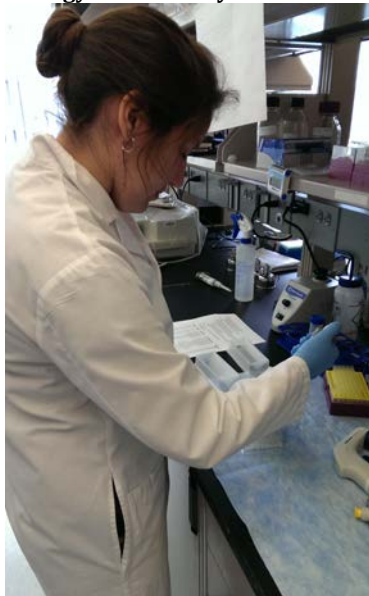


"You're not going to learn what you can and can't accomplish something if you never think you're good enough. I've surprised myself with how capable I am in the laboratory."

**Alexandra Skoczek**  
Class of 2018  
Chemistry & Neuroscience

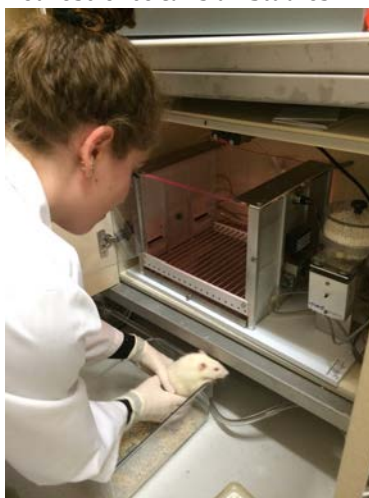
"My favorite part of working in the lab was helping with the various surgeries and complex procedures. The very first week I was in the lab I got to observe the surgeries and by the last week I was able to perform them on my own. It felt really good to know how far I have come."

**Kaitlyn Woodman**  
Class of 2017  
Biology & Chemistry



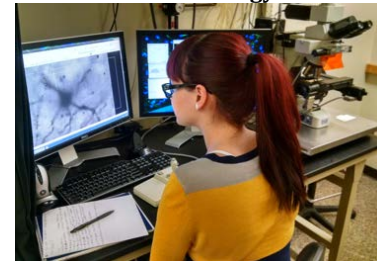
"Working in research has been an incredible experience that has given me a new perspective on my life goals. I know that I want to pursue a PhD in biochemistry or pharmacology and continue doing research."

**Hannah Samberg**  
Class of 2016  
Neuroscience & Asian Studies



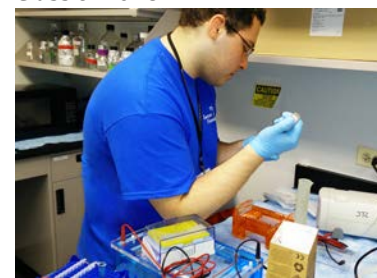
"I am extremely lucky to have the opportunity to conduct research at RFUMS; it has heightened my understanding of what medical school will be like and made me excited to apply and work towards my end goal of becoming a psychiatrist."

**Heather Heikotter**  
Class of 2016  
Neuroscience & Biology



"The most rewarding aspect of working at RFUMS has been the ability to do independent work that I would do if I were in graduate school. I have learned how to be responsible for myself and my ideas, which has allowed me to feel confident about my actions."

**Zachary Weinstein**  
Biology, Chemistry & Finance  
Class of 2018



"Having never been exposed to many of these lab techniques and substances, I learn new information virtually each time I have the opportunity to conduct an experiment or shadow a lab associate."

Groner recipients who participated in this program would like to express their gratitude to their RFUMS team who supervised them, Dr. Lynn Westley who coordinated their placement in the appropriate RFUMS labs, and the Grace Groner Foundation for the support they have received.

The Grace Groner Foundation would like to thank the students for an outstanding performance, RFUMS for exceptional supervision, and program director Dr. Lynn Westley, for making this year's program a success.

# Pura Vida for Grace Groner Recipients

By Akua G. Agyei



Monteverde, Costa Rica is a popular summer program for Groner recipients. This year, Antonio Ávila '15, Logan Graham '17, Peyton Schrag '17, and Brittany Schweiger '17 spent eight weeks in Costa Rica, interning at the Monteverde Institute.



The institute's programs are based on the belief that to achieve sustainability—both locally and globally—a combination of environmental, social, cultural, economic, and technological factors must be carefully considered. To that effect, MVI fosters a synergetic approach that combines international study, community engagement, and applied research.



One of the unique features of the GEGF Monteverde program is that participants enjoy the pleasure of getting better acquainted with some of the locals through a

homestay. This not only increases their cultural intelligence by learning about the destination, students are able to improve their proficiency in the Spanish language.



Below are the students' comments on their overall experience:

## Antonio Ávila



"I am glad I was assigned to an internship with the Radio Comunitaria Monteverde. I definitely gained new skills and knowledge, but most importantly, I was exposed to the community more deeply and that's because of the two projects I did. I interacted with families and kids and it was just amazing! I get excited about these things because my legacy is to contribute to the community I live in to make it a better place. I hope one day I go back to Monteverde and visit the institute, my friends, and host family!"



## Logan Graham



"Before leaving to go to Costa Rica, I had never heard of medicinal plants, let alone, was I able to name even one plant that could be used as a medicine. I rarely thought about conservation, the importance of organic products, or the importance of family. These are all things that, after this experience abroad, I have thought about in great detail and feel more appreciative of and understand much more fully."



## Peyton Schrag



"Thanks to this trip, I have a much more optimistic outlook on the future and am not overly-concerned about what may happen in my life or how much money I

will need. I feel much more in tune with nature and find myself asking what a certain plant is and how it might be used. I am excited to share the knowledge and the love that I received in Costa Rica with anyone that I come across and feel motivated to learn things in a way that make them applicable to my life."

## Brittany Schweiger



"I don't think there is anything I could compare to my experience with the Monteverde Institute in Costa Rica. It's something I will never forget and has bettered me in more ways than I could have imagined. I'm so grateful for this opportunity and all of the amazing people and places I got to experience."



Participants thank the GEGF, MVI community, support team, supervisors, host families, and Ashley Gora (Student Program Coordinator) for making this experience possible, enjoyable, and memorable.

