

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” –Mahatma Ghandi

I first read the quote by Mahatma Ghandi written on a wall at Camp Hope in New Orleans during Alternative Winter Break with Habitat for Humanity last year. In the past year, it has become central to my personal philosophy.

My dream is a world without extreme poverty. My passion is development. I am an idealist and I believe progressive world change is possible. I am beginning with myself; I understand the difference one person can make in the world, especially when united with other people who want to change the world as well. I believe in the hope for a different world; the change will begin in me.

Last year in New Orleans, I discovered how much hope a group of students can provide an entire community. In my second semester, I found myself in a class of students who truly care about human rights and are willing to debate and discuss their beliefs both in and out of class. The week-long LeaderShape conference introduced me to the idea that I could actually make a real difference in the world; I learned to network with students and organizations with goals similar to mine, to communicate well with other, and most importantly, to lead with personal strength and character. Last summer, I was able to see a successful humanitarian organization, Habitat for Humanity, in action through a 10-week AmeriCorps position. I constantly interacted with an amazingly diverse group of people; all contributed to drastically improving a previously dangerous part of Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

These experiences lead to my decision to study a semester of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England. I have spent the last four

months learning about the economic, social, political, environmental, and cultural aspects of development. My lecturers have worked in developing (and developed) nations all over the world, including Nepal, Ghana, Kenya, Guatemala, Madagascar, India, China, to mention a few. They taught us of their research experience, including challenges faced, progress made, and what still needs to be done. I learned about sustainable development and the challenges of making real progress globalizing world. I have been studying amongst students who share my 'crazy' dreams of a world free of hunger, without extreme poverty, and at peace. I've also worked with a Fair Trade organization and Make Poverty History. My time here helped me discover I have a passion for Fair Trade, and I want to have a future in development work or international public affairs. However, before I can continue in development work or public affairs, I need concrete experience in a developing country.

I have been researching options for summer experience in development work since early autumn. I recently discovered a unique opportunity for volunteer development work in Madagascar. AZAFADY, an accredited, well-respected, non-profit charity organization based in the United Kingdom provides passionate individuals the opportunity to contribute to development work in Madagascar. I would begin my six- or seven-week stay in Madagascar on July 1, 2008, and return home in August to complete my final two semesters at BGSU. I have already established a connection with the head of AZAFADY: she looks forward to receiving my application.

Because this is my first experience working in a developing country, the AZAFADY program is perfect. I can discover my own strengths and weaknesses for future development work while helping a struggling community. While living in safe, but

very basic conditions (often tents), I will be exposed to several kinds of development projects, ranging from construction work building schools and wells, to environment and species conservation, to teaching English, to assisting with income-generating projects and beyond. I will spend three weeks working in urban development and three to four weeks working in rural development. The AZAFADY program will expose me to many experiences vital to a successful future in international development. Through this program, I will gain valuable knowledge of Non-Government Organizations, allowing me to better understand an important aspect of development worldwide. Because AZAFADY projects work in teams, I will learn how to lead and follow within a multi-cultural team in a new setting. I will also gain a basic understanding of the Malagasy language; any additional language acquisition is important for my future. I will gain a better understanding of the needs of rural communities in developing nations, learn basic biological research skills, understand first-hand the affects of poverty on environmental conservation, work directly on sustainable development, and participate in public-health activities, among other activities. I have learned about all of the previously mentioned aspects of development work in my Development Studies program; now I wish to be involved in the development work first-hand.

The AZAFADY program will give me important gateway experience to work in development. With this experience, I have a stronger chance of living the life I want to lead; I am more likely to be offered a position with the Peace Corps, accepted to a challenging International Public Affairs or International Development Studies program for my Master's degree after graduation from BGSU, obtain an internship with an influential Non-Government Organization, or work with the United Nations; this

volunteer experience would open the doors to a myriad of future opportunities, all of which would allow me to do my best to change the world for the better.

Please consider allowing me to be a 2008 Givens Memorial Fellow. I am responsible, passionate, and committed to my cause; I will see this program through and enjoy sharing my experience with others when I return to Bowling Green. Allow me to gain, and give back, even more from my experience at BGSU. Without the funding from the Givens Memorial Fellowship, I will not be able to afford the program and travel expenses of participating in AZAFADY. This will be a truly unique opportunity for me to help the lives of the Madagascan people, and for them to touch my heart as well.

Budget for Fellowship Project

Natalie Olson

Please note: While the following budget proposal reaches approximately \$6000, I wish to raise additional funds for the AZAFADY program as I share my plans with family and friends.

Title	Description	Amount
Flights	USA to Madagascar, round trip Flights online now range in cost between \$1900 and \$2350. Flight costs are expected to decline slightly between now and February, when I would book my flights.	\$2000-\$2300
AZAFADY Program Fee	Development program in Madagascar: fee includes all in-country travel and project costs, full training in all aspects of project work, all meals for 6 or 7 weeks and safe drinking water, campsite facilities, a full-time London-based staff member to answer pre-project questions, a dedicated team to guide you in Madagascar orientation, and language classes upon arrival.	6 Weeks: \$3200.00 or 7 Weeks: \$3400.00
Travel Insurance	Through ISIC	\$30.00
Madagascar Visa		\$33.45
Madagascar Camping Gear	Tent, Mosquito Netting, Mosquito lotion, Sleep pad, etc.	\$200.00
Assorted costs	Extra food, some transportation, weekend trips, "buffer funding"	\$200.00
Total:	If I am able to obtain flight for \$2100 or less, I will complete 7 weeks in Madagascar; If my flight costs up to \$2300, I will complete 6 weeks in Madagascar.	Approximately \$5963.00