

# SMALL WORLD

MAGAZINE

## WINTER 2012

- Semester at Sea 2
- Critical Language Scholarship 4
- From London to Amman 6
- Global Gateway, Brazil 8
- From the Beltway to Berlin & Beyond 11
- Not Just Football 12
- Hope, Education, Love, Protect 14
- Navigating the Patuca River 16
- OSU Summer Program in Russia 18
- Alumni Highlights 19

Adam Kong exploring the Chimney Rocks, in Cappadocia, Turkey while on the Semester at Sea study abroad program.

# TURKEY



33 Townshend Hall  
1885 Neil Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43210-1222 USA  
(614) 292-9657  
[internationalstudies.osu.edu](http://internationalstudies.osu.edu)



# SEMESTER AT SEA

Adam Kong



Adam enjoying the view off a hillside on Lokrum Island. Lokrum Island is off the coast of Croatia. It sits in the bay of Dubrovnik, and legend has it that Richard the Lion-Hearted cast ashore here after being shipwrecked in 1192.

Adam Kong is a senior majoring in World Economy and Business. He spent last summer touring the world on the Semester at Sea study abroad program. Here is his story.

"Semester at Sea is a study abroad program that offers a unique traveling experience to its participants. Consisting of a 100 day voyage around the world (66 if on the Summer Voyage), 700 college students live and study on a ship while visiting up to 13 countries in the span of three months. Advocates attribute it to a once in a lifetime experience as it gives students the opportunity to experience the world while earning class credit towards their respective degrees. On the other hand, critics tend to stress the word "cruise" and argue the legitimacy of a study abroad aboard a former cruise ship consisting of 700 19-21 year olds. With several controversial nicknames, it is understandable why there is some hesitancy to fully endorse such a program.

During the summer of 2011, I embarked on Semester at Sea and found out first-hand what it was all about.

Beginning in mid-June, I recalled my initial feelings of nervousness...anxiety...but also excitement. From the minute I boarded the plane, I began meeting my fellow shipmates. It amazed me how geographically widespread the student body was. Every state was represented and even a few foreign countries. In the process of meeting everyone, I quickly discovered the high percentage of Greek life affiliation among participants. A quick walk through the halls revealed an endless supply of three lettered brightly colored tank tops. Another realization I made was just how relaxing life on the ship could be, making departure exceptionally difficult. For many people, their days revolved around classes, tanning, sports, and special social evenings, where with drink vouchers, students were allowed up to three alcoholic beverages for the

night. Life was simple and tranquil on the MV Explorer as my days consisted of learning from highly qualified faculty and staff, playing piano, working out, and dining to beautiful sunsets.

Arriving in a new country was always an interesting experience. Some students rushed to the exit in an attempt to be the first to disembark while others, knowing they had field programs later in the day, would not wake up until hours after docking. Leaving a country could be just as stressful given that students wouldn't return to the ship until the final hours prior to departure. Some showed up with minutes to spare, panting, sweating, and holding the oddest collection of souvenirs. My own experiences traveling in new countries usually began with a few hours of chaos. A typical day started with balancing travel companions and finalizing plans. In addition to the logistical problems, we had to adjust to different forms of transportation, exchange currency and accustom our-



Adam got a chance to try bungee jumping while in Varna, Bulgaria. Varna is along the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast, and was recently made the seat of the Black Sea Euro-Region.

selves to a new culture. However, once the preliminary plans had been addressed, traveling could finally begin.

Despite my passion for traveling, there are many aspects I dislike. Much of it can be tedious, especially under the summer heat with a fully loaded backpack, my shirt drenched in sweat, and nowhere to sleep for the night. However, what draws me to traveling is the problem solving, going off the beaten track, and the teamwork. Swimming through a seventy five foot long underwater cave in Croatia would not have been possible without the support I had from random cliff jumpers cheering me on. Speeding down Barcelona's hectic avenues on street bikes was made possible by the willingness of my friends. An island as beautiful as Santorini, with its baby blue houses and glistening coast lines could have been miserably lonely without another to share it with. Semester at Sea taught me more than just what was in our classroom. Rather, the time I spent

abroad was a period of self-realization and discovery where the lessons I learned could not be received anywhere else.

To a certain extent, the program did live up to its reputation. When 700 college students are dropped off in various countries for a week, one can expect a level of disorderly conduct. An evening in a foreign country often consisted of flocking to the nearest bar, dancing to an endless playlist of European techno music, or experiencing the variety of Mediterranean cuisine. Through my own experience, I realized that Semester at Sea provides opportunities, thus giving us a choice of what to take away. If a student is intent on treating the voyage like an international bar crawl, then so be it. Others saw what was truly being offered and took advantage of every opportunity to educate themselves on different cultures while having the time of their lives.

In essence, Semester at Sea changed me for the better. I found that it wasn't what I did that made a difference but who I did it with. The best days were the ones I spent hopelessly lost in a crowd of hungry short tempered Moroccans after a Ramadan fast or scrambling up ancient Turkish rock houses. I almost enjoyed getting Venetian pigeon feces in my hair thanks to the wonderful supportive friends that collapsed with laughter at my expense. Thinking back to my time abroad, I realize that everything I heard and read about the program was true. Would I go back? The thought of boarding the MV Explorer and not seeing all the familiar faces doesn't feel right, so returning isn't an option for me. On the other hand, I do recommend the program to anyone interested and hope their experience is as life changing as mine."

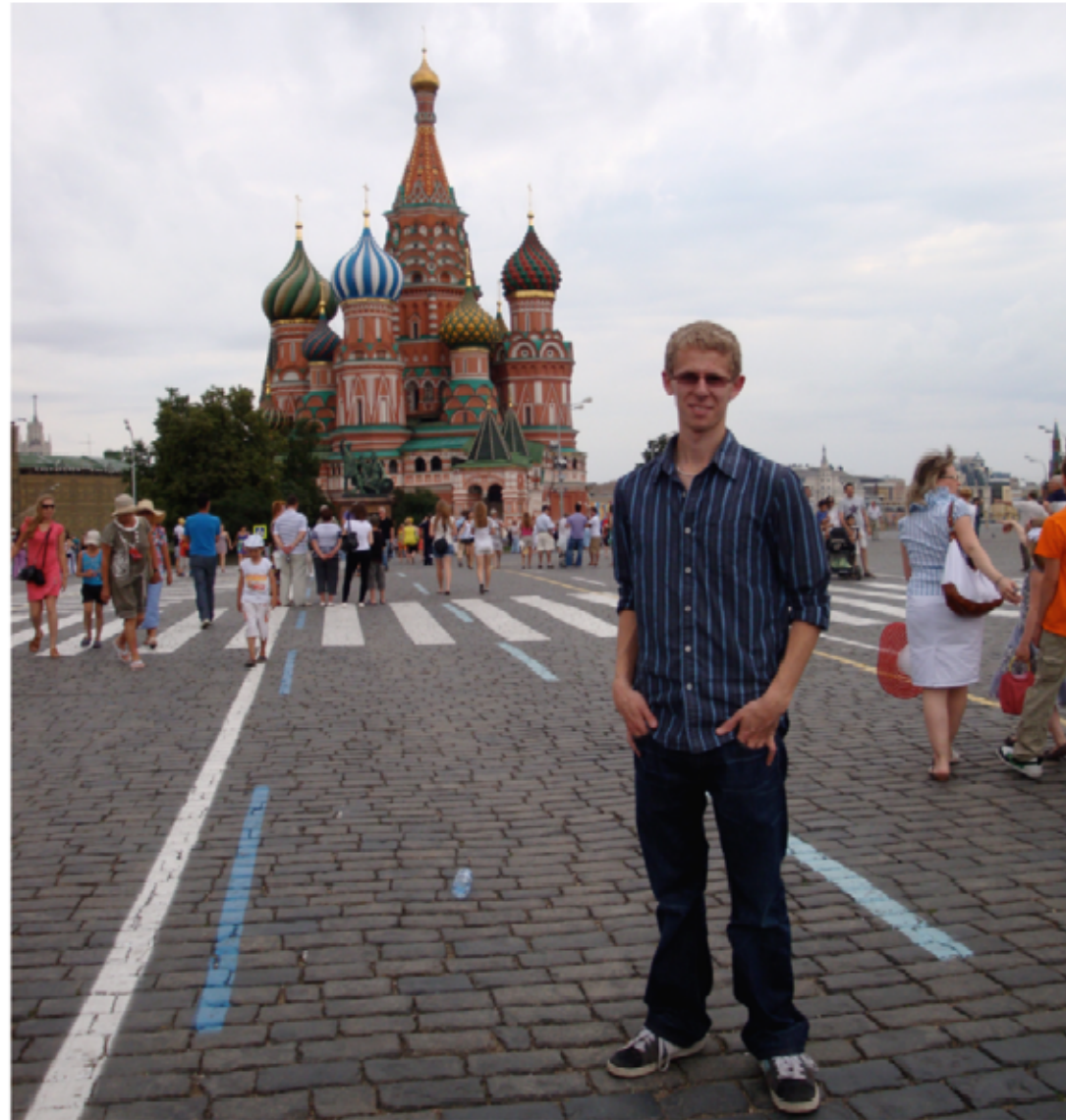
*Photos for this article taken by Abigail Moul and Melissa Josephson.*



# Critical Language Scholarship to RUSSIA

David Agranovich

David in front of St. Basil's Cathedral in front of the Kremlin while studying abroad in Russia. David received a Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) from the U.S. State Department.



David Agranovich is a junior majoring in Security & Intelligence and Political Science.

"In my first year at Ohio State, I was inspired by President Gee's goal that every Ohio State student would have a passport. Though I had travelled as a tourist before college, I vowed that I would make use of the opportunities available to me through my university to travel and study abroad. This summer, I was immersed in an intensive Russian language program in Vladimir, Russia as a US State Department Critical Language Scholar. The CLS program pro-

vided an all-expense-paid two-month academic program and home-stay in Vladimir, including excursions to surrounding cities. With the assistance of an Honors Collegium grant, I was able to augment my travel with excursions to neighboring cities and events that helped connect me with the Russian people and achieve my cultural and language goals.

My first challenge upon beginning the program was transferring my Russian skills – entirely learned in an academic setting – into everyday life. Complicating this was the fact that, outside of the

program, I had no English-speaking contacts to rely on for translation, guidance, or simply emotional support. I was delighted to find that I could quickly adapt to the most apparent cultural differences, and found myself enjoying the solitude and silence that dominated public venues – the bus, trolley, and malls. At the same time, I was amazed at the warmth and hospitality of my quickly-increasing Russian friends, and how strongly their demeanor changed as we grew closer.

My greatest takeaway from the experience was realizing that, while I had



David pictured in front of St. Isaac's Cathedral in St. Petersburg on a cultural excursion as part of the CLS program.

gained a proficient grasp of the Russian language, I had also acquired a new way of thinking, built upon my interactions with friends and colleagues in Russia. Finally, and perhaps most powerfully, I realized the value of the friendships I made – many of which had begun with little to no ability to communicate verbally. I learned the debilitating and vulnerable feeling of being unable to explain my wants, needs, and desires – as well as the thrill of successfully figuring out how to get what I want in an adopted tongue.

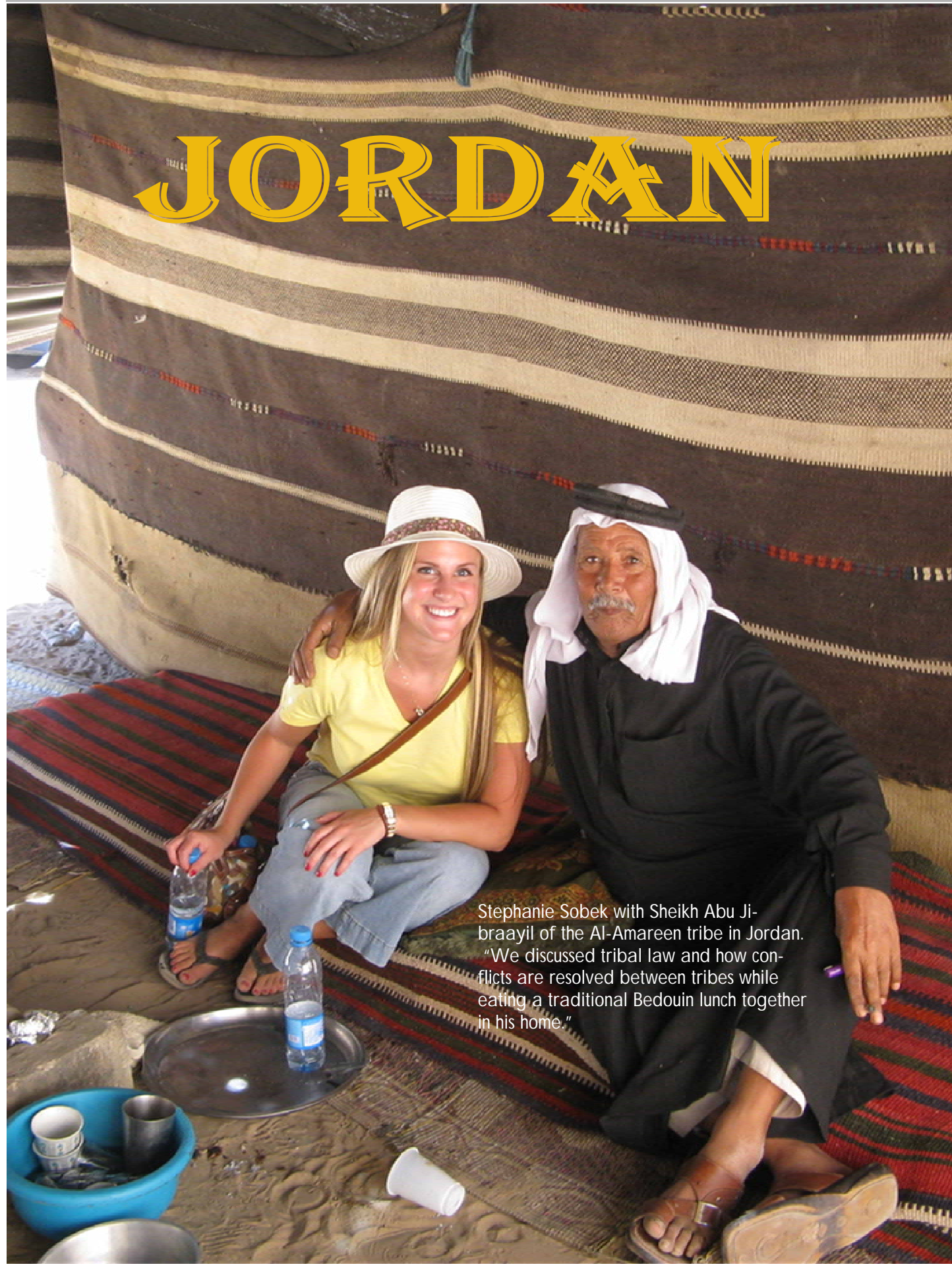
My travel throughout Russia enhanced my language ability (as only arguing

with a Russian train attendant can) but also opened my eyes to a different reality of the country. I had travelled to Russia as a tourist two years prior, yet my newfound ability to connect with Russians and blend into the residents meant I got to see a distinctly Russian (and non-touristy) side of the country. Churches meant much more when I could ask the elderly attendants to tell me their stories about the church, and museums took on an entirely different texture as each room's assistant regaled me of their feelings and opinions of the displayed exhibits.

I returned to the United States with ad-

vanced proficiency in Russian and a strict exercise regimen, courtesy of the Russian love for mayonnaise, sour cream, and butter – but in truth, I had gained far more. My time in Russia allowed me to examine myself as a student, as well as accept an entirely different lifestyle and culture. I hope to return soon, as well as to apply my newfound language and cultural skills to my existing work and coursework at Ohio State."





Stephanie Sobek with Sheikh Abu Jibraayil of the Al-Amareen tribe in Jordan. "We discussed tribal law and how conflicts are resolved between tribes while eating a traditional Bedouin lunch together in his home."

# From London to Amman, Jordan

Stephanie Sobek

Stephanie Sobek is a senior majoring in Middle East Studies and Political Science. She is also completing a minor in Arabic.

"I sat patiently on a red, woolen cushion as the small porcelain cup of coffee was passed around the circle of American students. We were gathered in a Bedouin tent in Jordan. Once all had been served, Sheikh Abu Jibraayil of the Al-Amareen tribe began to explain tribal law and conflict resolution. I was intrigued when the Sheikh used the Arabic words *ard* ("land") and *sharaf* ("honor") interchangeably; the Bedouins, he explained, associate land with honor, a commonality still reflected in the modern Arabic language. Such subtle, yet significant cultural differences have inspired my study of the Middle East and the Arabic language, and have motivated me to pursue a career with the Foreign Service in the Middle East. In preparation for this career, I partici-

pated in a six week, "Peace and Conflict Resolution in the Middle East" study abroad program in London and Amman this summer.

I spent the first three weeks of the program in London studying the conflict in Northern Ireland. Under the direction of Dr. Paul Arthur from the University of Ulster, my classes focused on the Northern Ireland peace process and how it might be transferred to current conflicts in the Middle East. I had the opportunity to meet with Jonathan Powell, Tony Blair's Chief of Staff and Lord Alerdice to discuss their contributions to the peace negotiations. My personal research dealt with the incorporation of terrorist groups such as the IRA into the peace process in Northern Ireland and what implications this approach may hold for the current union between Fatah and Hamas in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

From London, we moved to Amman, Jordan where we analyzed various Middle Eastern conflicts and possible solutions for peace. Through this program, I also met with prominent figures in Jordanian society such as Dr. Abd al-Salaam al-Majali and Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber, who lectured on political issues facing the Middle East and their potential solutions. I also had the opportunity to immerse myself in Jordanian culture by camping out with Bedouins in Wadi Rum, visiting Petra and spending the day with the sheikhs of the Al-Amareen tribe. Overall, it was an amazing experience both culturally and academically. I hope to return to Jordan next year as a Fulbright Scholar to teach English, Insha'Allah!"

Stephanie with one of the camels of the Al-Amareen tribe. "The Al-Amareen tribe continues to live the traditional Bedouin lifestyle by raising animals and living off the land."







The image of Jesus on the street was at a celebration for Corpus Christi. The town covered its streets with colored sand murals for the holiday. After an outdoor Catholic mass was held, those visiting the town walked through the murals on the street in closing of the festivities.

Sarah Pfladderer is a senior. She is majoring in Journalism, and also completing a minor in International Studies. She, along with a group of other OSU students, participated in the Global Gateway trip to Brazil. Here is her story.

"Eucalyptus trees were introduced to Brazil upon the arrival of the Portuguese at the brink of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Now their sky-bounding canopies and lengthy lean trunks are all around the

country. Settled within a controlled, yet miniscule portion of eucalyptus at a forest reserve in Rio Claro, Brazil there sprouts a more familiar tree species: the palm tree.

It was at this reserve I found a genuine fondness for Brazilian culture when, with my peers in the Brazil Global Gateway Program, we found ourselves captivated by the sight of jubilant children being pulled down a gently slanted hill by their parents on fallen palm tree

leaves. We found ourselves amidst a range of other visitors and native onlookers who chose the mere enjoyment of the sound of a child's amusement from riding on a leaf rather than relying on any technologies for their entertainment. This moment was matchless to any other experiences I've had at Ohio State, being I am used to a campus flooded with students plugged into their iPods between classes, texting under the desk in lectures and flipping open Mac books at the library. Seeing



Photo: Fisherman's wharf in Salvador. "After gathering their catch of fish in the morning, fishermen pull their boats ashore during low tide. We were visiting a small shrine/house of the Candomble, Salvador's Afro-Brazilian religion, which was located right off the shore where the boats were."

a leaf suffice for entertainment instilled in me it's acceptable to live a simple and "selfless" life, as Tiara Washington, third-year in respiratory therapy referred to Brazilian culture.

Tiara said she saw much selfless behavior during our time in Araraquara and Salvador due to the lack of technology in Brazil. "Technology in the United States allows us only to be concerned with ourselves, never even considering the fact that someone else may need our help," she said at a barbeque one of our newfound Brazilian friends held in honor of our visit. The hostess didn't even eat to ensure there was enough food for us. Tiara added, since her return to the U.S. she is feels inspired to give more to others as well.

On our first leg of the program in Araraquara at our host university, UNESP, I also observed such selflessness. I was impressed with how unwired students were and admired the impact it had their culture and, at the end of the journey, that it had on me.

UNESP students were flabbergasted by the sight of the Macs our group brought to campus, and in time we noticed how

little students used their cell phones in public. By the end of our stay, I for one had not seen even a glimpse of an iPod on the university's grounds.

English majors were most hospitable given that they were delighted to put their studies to use in conversation with our group, and we in turn were desperate to learn some survival Portuguese from them since there was no language requirement to apply to the Global Gateway. Thus I applied to the program having knowledge only of German as a second-language, a language far from Portuguese. The majority of the 17 students in our group had studied Spanish, however, and said having the background made it easier to pick up Portuguese. "I had the misconception in the beginning that knowing Spanish meant I would instantly be able to understand Portuguese, and I found out pretty quick that was false!" said Ariana Belle, second-year in international studies in Development and one of the strongest Spanish speakers in our group.

Ariana added after about two weeks she felt she could easily understand most Portuguese and was able to com-

fortably carry on a conversation, but found people viewed her as a Spanish speaker when she used her Portuguese because of a significant difference in accents.

In conjunction with sharing our languages, UNESP students dutifully encouraged us to join them at social outings outside of class where we shared the norms of our cultures. I found amusement in a few of the following differences: Brazilians greet one another with a customary cheek kiss, which is actually a graze of the cheek and kiss to the air. Toilet paper doesn't go in the toilet; it goes in the trashcan. Milk is served and sold warm. Coffee is served in miniature cups, unless paired with milk. It's not expected to receive a diamond when getting engaged. I also received some alarming feedback from a UNESP student who admitted most Brazilians hate the way North Americans text so vigorously, because it's outwardly rude and unfriendly. Perhaps this is why we found the students to be so kind and welcoming toward us since they were enticed by our presence, not ours or their gadgets.

Along with this altruistic means of life in



the state of Sao Paulo, we found Salvador had similar offerings as we embarked on our second leg of the trip through its touristy town on the Atlantic coast. We had home stays, where I found another amusement in seeing monkeys, instead of birds, perching on phone lines. Salvador overflowed with history and African influence, being it was the first town colonized by the Portuguese and dubbed Brazil's first capital. It was Brazil's center as one of the last countries to abolish slavery.

What seemed like limitless amounts of multihued favelas (slums) rose up on the outskirts of the city in dense quarters. Kathleen Hamel, third-year in International Studies in Development, said she took notice of this. There is a large gap between the rich and poor, regardless of Brazil having the fifth largest economy in the world. This point was heavily stressed to us in several lectures at UNESP and at our Salvador host institute, ACBEU. Kathleen added, "In my opinion, Brazil needs to strongly focus on its social development, which is made evident through its corrupt education system."

To an extent, I envy Brazil's education system at the college level. I was puzzled to learn from UNESP students they attend the public university for free with government funding and are given a higher quality education than private universities which are not free. The circumstances are switched in high school though, where public schools are free to attend and private schools require fees. However, public schools do not offer a quality education, especially for college preparation. This leaves a majority of high school graduates to independently study for years after graduation to test in to public universities. The corruption in society's acceptance of this without taking strides toward correcting the problem that public high schools and private universities are below par.

Destiny Jackson, a fourth-year in Film Studies and Sociology said she felt Brazilians lacked concern for government and social issues. She mentioned when asking "what was being done to reduce the numbers of people who are homeless, especially by the Catholic Church, I could never seem to get a straight answer." Instances such as this stood out to the majority of our group.

"I wrongly assumed that other countries were doing lots more volunteer work and paid more attention to social issues, but by being taken out of the U.S. and being put in another country I was definitely able to see the U.S. does not deserve the bad and selfish reputation it continually gets." Upon returning to the U.S. Destiny sees our country "with new eyes." She has noticed more people, prominently OSU students, behaving selflessly in their volunteer efforts.

Nevertheless, while in Salvador we did see some attempts to address social and economic issues on a field trip to a housing development built by prospective and underprivileged community members with governmental funding. We saw similar efforts on a field trip to Baguncaco, a non-profit music school for children to attend before or after school to prevent them from roaming the community's drug-ridden streets.

Michael Jaskot, a now-graduated senior from our group in International Studies in International Relations and Diplomacy said upon his return to the U.S. he couldn't shy away from the influence the Global Gateway Program and Brazilians had on him. "This propelled me to utilize my 'gift' (speaking English) and help those that need it the most," Michael said as he has landed a job teaching English back in Araraquara and is scheduled to depart in January.

Unfortunately, I won't be able to travel back to Brazil anytime soon, but I have high hopes to return within the next ten years to visit my host mom, Leda from Salvador, after I learn more Portuguese.

Katey Borland, Professor of Comparative Studies at OSU and resident director of the Brazil Global Gateway said preparations are in gear for next year's program so students may hopefully be enrolled in a web-based Portuguese language study just as soon as they are admitted to the program. It will be under the new direction of Lúcia Costigan, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese at OSU. Professor Borland said enrollment in the web-based study should "frontload some of the important information and skills students need to make the most of the experience." Furthermore, students will be attending a different UNESP campus and are sched-

uled to go on more field trips in Salvador rather than attend lectures.

Professor Borland recalled a day trip to Cachoeira from our base in Salvador being one of her fondest memories from the program. She enjoyed the feel and architecture of the town, the trip to the Hans Bahia house, sleeping in the monastery and eating at the farm.

Other memorable moments she said were going to a samba club in Sao Paulo, attending a folk ballet in Salvador and getting UNESP students to sing Carmen Ohio with us. Singing Carmen was also one of my fondest memories of the trip along with withdrawing from an ATM my first handful of colorful Reais, the Brazilian currency. I greatly enjoyed the Baguncaco students teaching us how to drum on their recycled instruments. More memories include being introduced to the song "Zum Zum Baba" and our group chanting the tune through our remaining weeks, seeing my host mom fascinated with us readying for our day using makeup and without a doubt the image of children riding on a palm tree leaf. These have become not only my most fond memories of the Brazil Global Gateway trip, but they have become some of my fondest memories of my tenure at OSU."

**To learn more about the Global Gateway Study Abroad Program to Brazil, go to:**

[http://oia.osu.edu/programs/search-programs.html?sasid=59&country=Brazil&region=&lang\\_used=&term=&subject=&duration=&scholarship=&prgtype=&keyword=&type=category](http://oia.osu.edu/programs/search-programs.html?sasid=59&country=Brazil&region=&lang_used=&term=&subject=&duration=&scholarship=&prgtype=&keyword=&type=category)

## From the Beltway to Berlin and Beyond

Stephen K. Pytlik



Stephen K. Pytlik (left) in front of the law firm where he interned during the summer. "Once Spring Quarter had ended, I quickly packed up and headed for Washington, where I lived a block from the Supreme Court, Capitol and countless other government hot-spots."

Stephen K. Pytlik is a senior majoring in Security & Intelligence and Political Science with a minor in Legal Foundations of Society.

"Sometimes things have a way of falling into place. Following a lengthy search for a summer internship, I was elated to accept an offer in Washington, D.C. with the country's premier government relations law firm to serve as a public policy intern with the Energy and Natural Resources Practice Group. Once Spring Quarter had ended, I quickly packed up and headed for Washington, where I lived a block from the Supreme Court, Capitol, and countless other government hotspots.

Each day I made the commute across town to M Street, where in a rather nondescript brick-and-glass building overlooking Georgetown, I went to work with some of the sharpest minds in "The District." The firm represents foreign sovereigns from every continent, including China, Canada, India, and a range of countries in Latin America and Africa. Even though they are experts at lobbying, they also handle all of the other

activities of a law firm – contracts, litigation, negotiation, etc. – which makes the office a unique mix of Washington's power players.

One project in particular allowed me to expand my international studies background as I had never imagined. Energy security is a major concern for countries all over the globe, and one way countries are looking to reduce this burden is through renewable energy. Further, a major component of many countries' renewable energy plans includes developing electric vehicle infrastructure. I compiled an extensive white paper on the feasibility of electric vehicles in the United States. To do so, I examined countries in Scandinavia, continental Europe, Israel, and India. Electric vehicles often seem like a particularly excellent solution to the world's energy woes, but the infrastructure costs alone can dissuade many countries from even exploring the option. So many countries are reliant on gasoline that it could take generations to make the switch. Additionally, if solar energy or another renewable energy is not used to collect the energy for electric vehicles, the pol-

lution these "EVs" would reduce is merely displaced to the source of the electricity, and often this ends up more polluting than the cars would be on their own.

Working with the country's leading public policy firm also afforded several opportunities to sit in on meetings and fundraisers with senators and representatives, and also lobby several offices on Capitol Hill on behalf of legislation – not to mention enjoying fantastic breakfasts and lunches prepared by the in-house chef.

After D.C., I was lucky enough to travel to Europe for nearly three weeks. A friend and I flew to Berlin to meet our roommate who was doing research there. After that, we made our way to Dresden, Vienna, Munich, Venice, Cinque Terre, Nice, and finally to France. Backpacking around Europe is one of my favorite ways to travel because hostels and travelling provide so many opportunities to meet people and get to know the local culture. Plus, it never hurts to practice your language skills!"



# OSU Athletics **Not just football.**



My name is Jonathan Krabacher. I am currently a junior at Ohio State majoring in Security and Intelligence and minoring in Forensic Science and Russian. In addition to being a full time student I am also a member of The Ohio State University's Varsity Rifle Team.

For those unfamiliar with collegiate shooting, here is a quick summary. For each competition two rifles are used, small-bore (.22) and air rifle (.177). Shooters have to shoot from three positions: standing, kneeling and prone. During a competition each shooter is given a set amount of time to shoot twenty (20) shots per position, per rifle.

These competitions can last five to six hours from start to finish. Targets range in distance from 10 meters to 15 meters with a bulls-eye being about the size of a grain of sand. Taking into account that most rifles weigh anywhere from ten to fifteen pounds and that shooters are required to hold them perfectly steady for the duration of the competition, it is easy to see why this is a varsity sport.

I was born and raised in Irving, Texas (just outside of Dallas). I first started competitive shooting in high school and quickly became captain of the team. After accepting Ohio State as my choice of college, I decided to pursue a collegiate shooting career. Although it can be difficult to juggle academics, athletics and a social life, I have managed so far and am very grateful for the opportunities that Ohio State and the Athletic Department have given me.



# Hope, Education, Love, Protect (HELP)

Hannah Vidmar



Hannah Vidmar (left in photo) with other volunteers at HELP Malawi. One of her first tasks as intern was to host fundraising events with other local nonprofits.

Hannah Vidmar is a junior double majoring in International Relations & Diplomacy and African-American & African Studies, with a minor in Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies.

"I came across the internship position for HELP on a nonprofit based website. HELP (Hope, Educate, Love, & Protect), is a nonprofit organization dedicated to sustainable primary education in impoverished African regions, with a specific focus on Malawi. Malawi is a peaceful country that boasts a stable democracy, but continues to remain one of the poorest countries in the world. This means they have limited resources to invest in healthcare and education. Since 2006, HELP has built and staffed the Nan-

thomba Full Primary School, the Nandumbo Health Centre, and The William Kamkwamba Community Library. To date, the school has enrolled 750 pupils, who are not only educated at the school, but also provided the opportunity to attend Life Skills Classes and Entrepreneurship Classes. Along with providing programs at the school, wound care prevention and HIV/AIDS prevention at the health center, HELP also trains volunteer teachers to teach at Nanthomba and three other local schools. HELP is also striving to make the school, health center and library completely sustainable.

Funds are currently being secured while research is being done on installing so-

lar panels at Nanthomba.

After reading how wonderful and impactful this organization was, I knew I wanted to apply. I was seeking out an internship in the nonprofit sector as part of narrowing down my interests for a career. After interviewing I, along with four others, was hired for the summer intern position. At the beginning of the summer we partnered with a few other local nonprofits to host fundraising events. For one of the events, we partnered with SWAP (Students With A Purpose) to host an event for students from local schools, which was a great success! Once the events passed, our focus was switched to the trip to Malawi our founder, Jillian Wolstein, was making in late



Children greeting the volunteers as they were getting out of the car. "I didn't think I was really cut out for it, but interning with a nonprofit that has such a direct impact on children really helped me realize how much I actually loved the work."

June. We also planned to send school supplies and other resources with her.

On a daily basis, I worked with clients who purchased products from us, sat in on weekly Skype conference calls with the Program Director in Malawi discussing upcoming projects, such as the solar panel installation, and other basic office work. One thing I really loved about

working at HELP was that no two days were the same. Everyday I would be given a list of tasks that were completely different from the day before. I did outreach to clients from our donor database system, helped sell products to raise funds, and helped redesign the website. Interning at HELP was a great opportunity for me to really narrow down what I want to do after I gradu-

ate. Before starting, I had made this assumption that I wouldn't really like nonprofit work and I didn't think I was really cut out for it, but interning with a nonprofit that has such a direct impact on children really helped me realize how much I actually loved the work. "



# Navigating the Patuca River

Sara Santiago



(From left to right) Zoe Pearson (Geography graduate student), Sara Santiago (Geography & International Studies), and Prof. Kendra McSweeney (Geography). In order to travel to the Tawahka communities, we travelled on the Patuca River by motorized dugout canoe. In this photo, we are exiting the reserve and making our way back to the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa.

Sara Santiago is a junior majoring in Development Studies and Geography. She spent the last part of Spring quarter with Prof. McSweeney in Honduras working on her thesis research.

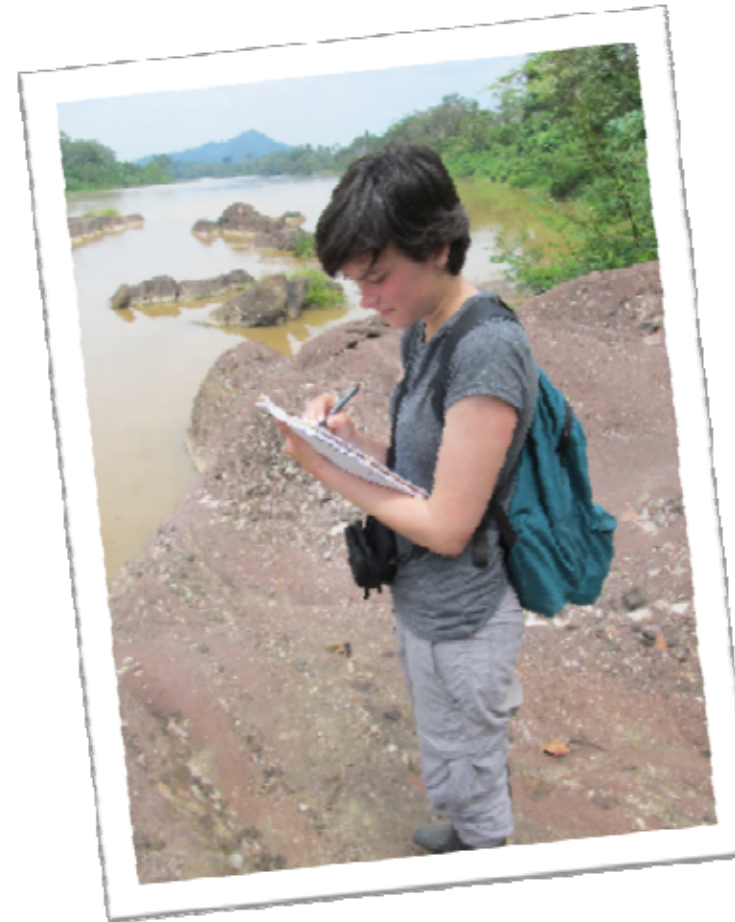
"A dramatic landing in Tegucigalpa, capital of Honduras, was just the beginning to one of the most challenging and awe-inspiring adventures I have ever had. Approaching the city from the Caribbean coast, the landscape is mountainous, rugged, and tropically forested with, at the same time, rather dry meandering rivers. Smoke rose up from the rainforest, a product of slash and burn agriculture. This landscape turns to

farms closer to the urban center. The city itself lays lowly nestled among rigid hills. Suddenly, the short and surprising runway appeared beneath us after taking a giant turn and drop.

I joined Dr. Kendra McSweeney and PhD student Zoe Pearson of the Geography Department as a third year undergraduate majoring in Geography and International Studies last May in a research project to take place in the heart of rural Honduras. Our goal was to study how indigenous people are affected by and react to climate change in the Honduran rainforest. Through this research endeavor, I aimed

to gain field experience, immerse myself in Latin American culture, and ultimately write an honors research thesis on the role of the dugout canoe, or *pipante*, in an area where life on the river is central to indigenous life.

We began our month-long journey speaking with organizations and officials in Tegucigalpa about the current political-economic and environmental climate in Honduras, especially in relation to the indigenous groups Miskitu and Tawahka native to the eastern Mosquitia region. From Tegucigalpa, we made a four-day journey to the Tawahka communities located along the



Sara conducting a census of the motorized dugout canoes owned by families in the Tawahka capital of Krausirpi.

Patuca River in the Tawahka Asagni Biosphere Reserve in order to hold community meetings and complete household surveys. Some of our travel was made in trucks across the country, including forested and barren landscapes as well as driving along the beaches of the Caribbean until reaching the Patuca River where we made our way up the river in a *pipante*.

This trip introduced me to an entirely different reality than ours in the United States, or what most people experience when they travel. Honduras has experienced a wide range of problems: the aftermath of devastating Hurricane Mitch in 1998, a coup d'état against their democratically elected President Manuel 'Mel' Zelaya in 2009, climatic variability, land grabs in indigenous territory, and most recently the threat of an impending mega-dam project proposed by a Chinese dam builder and bank.

The proposed dam came to the forefront of these issues during our time in Honduras. Intended as a development project, the enormous 104MW hydro-power dam called Patuca III, which is to be followed by dams Patuca I and II, is not meant to provide electricity to remote indigenous communities, but to provide energy for urban centers and for export to Central America. It would also forever alter the flow of the Patuca River. The Patuca River runs through the middle of Tawahka territory. Thus, these dams would destroy ecosystems, subsistence agriculture located along the river's floodplains, threaten the lives of fish, iguana, and turtles that are part of Tawahka diet, and cut off the Tawahka villages from one another. With a further lowered river, the people will be unable to propel their canoes up and down the river, completely disrupting their trade, communication, and transportation systems.

The Patuca Dam Project has been in the

making for decades, but has been thwarted by indigenous movements against dam construction. Yet this time, the Honduran government and Chinese companies are not providing information to the Mosquitia about their plans, and the indigenous groups are at a severe political disadvantage under the current administration to speak out against the dam.

In my research, I did not expect to encounter such a tense situation. We visited the proposed dam location at the beginning and at the end of our trip, witnessing the media campaign the government is running to gain support for the dams. Professor McSweeney, who has worked with the Tawahka since the mid-1990s, has earned great trust from them, and so they shared their concerns for their livelihoods and culture's survival. There is a great battle ahead.

Now that I am back to my reality at Ohio State, which feels like a world away, and working with Professor McSweeney and Zoe on our research, I am focusing my thesis on the so-called development project of the Patuca Dams. I am greatly appreciative and excited to be working with two geographers who so clearly understand the Latin American landscape and can translate that into meaningful research. But beyond our writing, it is necessary to continue working on this issue as much as possible from home.

As a leader of Oxfam America at Ohio State, a student organization that works for lasting solutions to social justice issues, I am working to integrate non-profit Cultural Survival's campaign against the Patuca Dam Project into our Oxfam campus campaign. Anyone interested in working with us in solidarity is invited to sign and mail a letter to current Honduran president Señor Porfirio Lobo Sosa, which can be found on Cultural Survival's website. This experience has taught me the importance of immersing oneself in another culture to learn its intricacies and to, in turn, be aware of international affairs and how we have a voice in influencing them. I have confidence the Ohio State community will too lend its voice in such social justice issues."



## OSU Summer Program in RUSSIA

Alex Polivka

Alex Polivka is a junior majoring in Security & Intelligence with minors in Russian and Slavic & East European Studies. He spent the summer in Russia improving his language skills. Here is his story.

"This summer I had the once in a lifetime opportunity to study abroad in Russia for nine weeks as part of OSU's Intensive Russian Language and Culture program. As a first year, I had only taken Russian 101, 102, and 103 at Ohio State, so I did not really know what to expect from studying 104, 401, and 402 in the motherland itself. Having been awarded a Mershon Center International Security scholarship as part of my Security and Intelligence major, I prepared to get the most I could out of this trip for my major and for myself.

Once our group arrived in Moscow, the experience became amazing from the get-go. After studying in classes taught by native Russian speakers, we were free to explore Moscow on our own until one in the morning if we chose to. Using the nearby Novoslobodskaya metro station, we could travel anywhere in the city in under thirty minutes. As a runner, I mapped out a jogging route to Red Square that allows me to say that I am probably one of the only people in the world who have run to the Kremlin, as Russians do not seem to like to run. At the halfway point of our trip, we went to St. Petersburg for a week and spent our time exploring the city until we were exhausted.

Thanks to this amazing experience and program, I received an overall A in my 18 credit hours, learned a ton about Russian culture and language, and spent my time in famous Russian landmarks such as St. Basil's Cathedral, the Hermitage, Church of the Christ on Spilt Blood, and the Kremlin. I can't even think of a better way to say how I spent my summer."



## J STREET Washington D.C.

Kevin Rachlin (2007)

Kevin Rachlin graduated from The Ohio State University in 2007, with majors in Security & Intelligence, Political Science and a minor in Hebrew. He currently serves as a Government Affairs Associate for J Street, the Political Home for Pro-Israel, Pro-Peace Americans, where he is the Congressional liaison to the Midwest Delegation (including Ohio) and the Logistical Coordinator and Supervisor of J Street's 2012 Advocacy Day, to be held in March 2012.

"J Street has been an amazing opportunity for me. Working at a young company on such a heated issue has taught me so much about Washington politics and the political constraints of trying to achieve peace in Israel/Palestine. To be honest, I would have never been able to do this job had it not been for the opportunities to study abroad in Israel and the Security and Intelligence Major at Ohio State. I reference both experiences so much in my daily life (not to mention being the most outspoken advocate of Ohio State football in my office)."





# International Orthodox Christian Charities- Jerusalem

Lauren Presler (2010)



"In early spring the news came that I would be spending my summer in Jerusalem as an intern for International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), an international humanitarian organization. I had applied for an IOCC internship with the hope of going to Beirut, but instead was awarded the Jerusalem internship. I was skeptical at first, but Jerusalem turned out to be the perfect fit for me.

I packed my bags and flew to Baltimore for a day of orientation at IOCC headquarters, then back on a plane the next day for my flight to Tel Aviv. From the moment I landed on May 20, 2011, I was excited about what lay ahead of me. The desert landscape and palm trees were a dramatic change from my hometown of Cleveland, and I basked

in the glow of the sun as I took it all in. I said to myself, "I'm finally in the Middle East!" I was excited, but had no idea how much I was going to come to love it here.

After being here for only three short months, I am still perplexed about the political affiliations here. In fact, aside from advising you that there two major ethnic groups and three major religions fighting for control of the same land, you may need to research the situation on your own for more information and clarity. Three months is just not enough time to fully grasp the depth of the situation here. Also, aside from my pedestrian grasp of the issue, I am unable to identify myself with any one side. This is also due to a general lack of understanding. In all situations though, I

have a humanitarian perspective and therefore want equality for all people.

Most of my work in IOCC's Jerusalem office includes managing a database of affiliated organizations, collecting information about IOCC's activities, interviewing the beneficiaries it serves, and sharing these details in various reports and articles for IOCC publications. From these activities I learned both how an international NGO operates as well as how the IOCC projects help the beneficiaries rebuild their lives. Seeing first hand the impact of such projects is a very touching and enlightening experience.

My favorite duty has been taking field visits to IOCC project sites in the West Bank. Going to see IOCC's projects in



Gaza is not possible due to visa and security issues. The project sites that I am able to visit are funded in collaboration with Finn Church Aid. IOCC provides assistance to vulnerable families by helping them to establish and maintain home gardens and bee keeping activities as a way for them to provide some of their own food and also earn extra income from produce and honey sales.

During my time here, I have experienced the inner workings of an international humanitarian aid agency. I observed my colleagues working together as a team, putting in long hours collecting all the needed facts and figures that go into developing a project. From there, I observed them carefully explaining, in writing, the endless details required in drafting a project proposal. When IOCC was awarded the project, there was a collective sigh of relief and

expressions of gratitude that their work would continue. The wonderful and capable IOCC staff members in both Jerusalem and Baltimore contributed much to my very educational and pleasant experience.

Aside from being part of such interesting work, there is a never-ending supply here of things to do and see! I feel so lucky to have been able to see so many important historical, religious and cultural sights inside and outside of Jerusalem. In all of my trips, visits and activities, one thing stood out to me: the people that I met along the way. I learned that the friends you make along your way are the most important, and they are the part of the trips that you keep for the rest of your life. It is not the sights, food, or souvenirs that hold the most value and that you get attached to. I appreciated most the wonderful people that I met and grew to care so

much about. I learned what is really important in life, and that is people. People, on the most basic and individual human being level, are what matter most. I learned that through loving people you can make the most difference. Learning about people means you learn to love them, and through that you can change society's perceptions. Through changing society's perceptions you can change situations and this changes the world."



## GRADUATE PROGRAM IN Agricultural Economics

Ying Zhang (2011)



"My name is Ying Zhang, and I come from Dalian, China. In Spring 2011, I graduated from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor's degree in International Studies. To continue with my studies of applied economics, I will be pursuing a MS degree in Agricultural Economics this coming fall. Being born and raised in a country which is representative of the Eastern culture, I became curious to learn what people are like on another side of the world and flew to the U.S. at the age of 18.

To me, study is an experience that sharpens my mind so that I can tell what I really want. In the past I was undecided on my major but then I thought I would be an International Studies major because it has a specialization in World

Economy and Business, and it also allows me to take interdisciplinary courses to fulfill my knowledge.

My major interest is the global economy, and in the future I wish to become a conference Chinese-English interpreter. It took some time for me to decide on my career goal since I became a college student, but now everything has fallen into place.

In summer, I visited my hometown city in China and was quite amazed at the rate of growth of this medium-sized city. China is now changing vigorously in many sectors, especially the urban areas.

In the near future, many more collabo-

rations between China and other countries will be needed because of China's further openness to the world. Through my overseas learning experience, I hope to contribute to the improvement of understanding between China and other places in the world. Having lived in foreign countries, I have realized the importance of knowledge of one's own country, so it will be something I will concentrate on much more from now moving forward."

## PEACE CORPS: Kazakhstan

Catherine Molleno (2010)



Catherine (back row second from left) with a few of her students at the elementary school in Zhitikara, Kazakhstan. She joined the Peace Corps shortly after graduation.

Catherine Molleno graduated in Spring 2010 with majors in Anthropology and International Relations & Diplomacy. She also completed a minor in Theater. Catherine was awarded The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship which she used to fund her participation in OSU's study abroad program to Ecuador. While a native speaker of Russian, she also studied Spanish while an undergraduate student at OSU.

Upon graduation Catherine applied to

the Peace Corps and is now teaching in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Here is an update on her Peace Corps experience!

"My name is Catherine Molleno and I am an OSU alumni Class of 2010. I am currently a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Republic of Kazakhstan teaching English at the Primary and Secondary level. I live in a small town of 35,000 people called Zhitikara (which means seven black in Kazakh) in the Oblast (State) of Kostanai.

My town is about seven kilometers from the Russian border, I live really close to Russia. I am a Russian speaker and I do enjoy learning more about the language because it is awesome to be able to talk to the locals."