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Going to South Africa has opened up my need to travel and study abroad in the future. Studying at University of Cape Town, volunteering at the local orphanage, and making friends from South Africa and other countries has made me more aware of what is important in life. I have a greater appreciation for others and for what I have here at home. My only regret was not staying for an entire year.

My experience volunteering at the orphanage in South Africa had led me to the realization that education in the U.S and abroad has to be at the forefront of our government's mind. From this experience, I made my decision that I wanted to pursue a career in education policy with the hopes of someday moving to international education policy.

Upon returning to the U.S., I was able to share my experience in many ways. At my mentoring program, Sister-to-Sister, I was able to share by experience in South Africa with teenage girls who are on probation for misdemeanors. I took some time out of our session to discuss my experience and encourage them to attend college and pursue opportunities like I had in South Africa. The girls had a lot of questions, which I was more than happy to answer. Besides the questions about language, cultural barriers, etc, I was also asked how I was able to pay for all it because money seems to be the biggest concern when talking about college. I told them that I was able to study abroad because of The Gilman Scholarship. A few of the participants even asked for the website so that when they are in college they can have an opportunity like mine. These girls primarily need an example. They need a space in which they can dream, and a space where people can tell them that their dreams can be a reality. I was honored to be able to share my experience with them and to hopefully encourage them to pursue similar dreams.