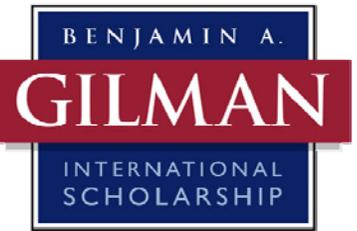


TASHA SOLOMON, JORDAN, 2010

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I can honestly say that my time studying abroad was the most rewarding experience of my life. It changed the way I viewed the world and allowed me to mature as I became aware of how people outside of my country live their lives. It made me value the simple things in life and appreciate them so much more. These values have stayed with me since my departure of my host country and study abroad experience.

I studied abroad in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the “heart of the Middle East” as many people say, and although it may sound

cliché, living there truly changed my life. I do not believe that the knowledge and experience that I gained while abroad compares to any college course or book I could have read. While there I met with Jordanian politicians, professors, political and social activists, and everyday citizens, while learning about the region, the country, and its culture. I also had two home stays, one in the capital, Amman, and the other in the rural Badia, allowing me to immerse myself into the culture by essentially becoming a member of a Jordanian family. In addition to my time in Jordan, I also spent a week visiting Egypt, which allowed me to experience two very distinct Middle Eastern countries during a very historical time period. Not only did this time abroad impact my academic life, it also impacted my personal life as well.

When I left from the Middle East, I was saddened because I felt that I was leaving behind the wonderful people and places that had changed my life. However, I was also eager because I would be going back to America sharing my stories and experiences, in hopes

of the possibility of others having such an experience. Studying abroad impacted my life more than I could have ever known. I still keep in touch with my teachers, my home stay family, and

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the other students from my program. This experience reaffirmed my objectives of wanting to learn more about the region and to work in a field that would allow me to learn, while also making a difference. Jordan will forever have a place in my heart, and I will never forget all of life’s lessons, stories, and experiences that I have taken from there.

FOLLOW-ON SERVICE PROJECT

My Follow-on Service Project focused on increasing the awareness of study abroad opportunities to minorities in college, especially African-Americans. My project goals

were to encourage the minority community at my university to seek out study abroad opportunities. I networked and used my connections as an active member of my sorority and

Greek council on campus, marketing the advantages of study abroad and promoting the Gilman Scholarship.