Eamon Devine, China, 2011

Johnson County Community College
Kansas

Growing up, I assisted my father with teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) courses and developed an enthusiasm for languages. After mastering the Spanish language, I took an introductory course in Mandarin, and my love for it transcended all of my other passions. With the intent of gaining fluency in the Chinese language, I decided to study abroad in Nanjing, China.

My experience in another country, far away and very different from my own, was something that has molded the way I think about the world. I lived within another culture and brought back a deeper sense of understanding about this big world that we live in. I will also be going back, as much as I can, to continue to learn Chinese and study international business. I simply cannot get enough of traveling abroad now that I have done it. In China I made a lot of very nice friends, and tutored a student with his English; learning much from these people as I am sure they learned much from me. In addition to these friends, I also had many interactions with people on the street and in places of business. These interactions truly helped my communication skills.

The study abroad experience I had was amazing, just writing about it makes me reminisce about all the great times I had. It has shaped me into a more serious student with an international career goal. Previously, I had planned on majoring in Economics, but now my current academic plan is to major in International Business and someday return to participate in an internship in China. I would like to thank all of the people at the Gilman Scholarship and the U.S. Department of State for making all of it possible. Because of your scholarship, my life has been enriched and I have more direction than I had before.

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Follow-on Service Project

As a part of my Gilman Follow-on Service Project, I gave a presentation to an audience of GED students about my experience in China and how the Gilman Scholarship helped with my program expenses. Being a non-traditional student myself, my goal was to give motivation to students who are in the same position I once was and show them how far they can go to achieve their goals. I spoke more about the Gilman Scholarship and the eligibility requirements one must meet in order to apply. I also mentioned other scholarships and assured the students that there are a lot of resources to utilize if they want to study abroad