

Macalester Senior Receives Watson Grant

St. Paul, Minn. – Charlotte Fagan '12, of East Greenwich, R.I., has been awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. The fellowship, a one-year grant for independent study and travel outside of the United States, is awarded annually to graduating college/university seniors. This year the Foundation awarded 40 fellowships out of the 147 finalists who were nominated, and the awardees came from 29 of the 40 colleges on the Watson roster. The fellows come from select private liberal arts colleges and universities.



The Thomas J. Watson Fellowship offers college graduates of "unusual promise" a year of independent, purposeful exploration and travel, in international settings new to them, to enhance their capacity for resourcefulness, imagination, openness, and leadership and to foster their humane and effective participation in the world community.

Based on a project that they have designed, the students are awarded a \$25,000 stipend to execute and evaluate their project over the year.

Fagan, a geography major, said the Watson will help her understand how women are personally, politically, and economically empowered through participating in bike movements and cultures.

“Receiving the Watson means everything to me,” said Fagan. “It’s a life’s dream come true to go around the world and study women’s bike movements. I am so excited to see what women all over the world are doing on bikes, and to learn about how they organize themselves.”

Her project proposal, titled “Pedaling Towards Empowerment: Exploring Women’s Bike Movements,” will take her to China, Indonesia, Hungary, Sierra Leone and Guatemala.

What will Fagan do when she finishes her Watson? “In many ways the Watson itself will shape what I do afterwards - so I’m open to having the Watson change my perceptions of what I want to do with my life,” said Fagan. “But I do think that I will want to continue to live abroad and work with women’s bike movements.”

The Thomas J. Watson Fellowship Program was established in 1968 by the children of Thomas J. Watson, Sr., the founder of International Business Machines Corp., and his wife, Jeannette K. Watson, to honor their parents’ long-standing interest in education and world affairs.

Watson fellows must leave for their travel by August 1 of the year of their fellowship and return in time for the Returning Fellows Conference. During this time they may not return to the United States.

Fagan also received a \$10,000 grant from the Davis Projects for Peace initiative where she’s designed a grassroots project for peace that she’ll implement this summer. Her project, “La Biblioteca de Bicis para Carishinas: the Bike Lending Library for Carishinas in Quito,” will take her to Quito, Ecuador, where she’ll start a “Bike Library” for low-income and marginalized women. Riding a bike in Quito as a woman can be an intimidating and difficult task. The main goal of this project is to reach women who are in the greatest need of the personally empowering effects of biking. The women will also learn the practical skills of bike mechanics and share their perspectives and reflections in discussions throughout the city. Economic

empowerment is also a goal as the bike lending library will encourage women to work towards purchasing their own bike as personal transportation, freeing the original bikes to be loaned to others.

“The idea of the bike library,” said Fagan, “is to provide women with a mechanism to save money on transportation - by using the bike loan - that they can then use towards buying their own bike, so that the bike library bikes can circulate to other women.”

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 1,978 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>)

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