2013 Projects for Peace winners
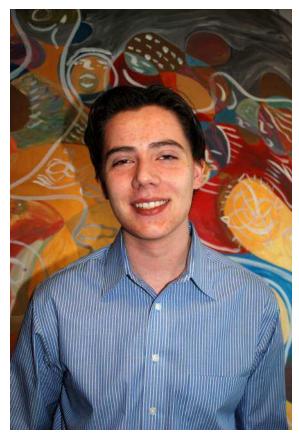
St. Paul, Minn. – Four Macalester students, **Valentino Grbavac '15**, **Andrea Grimaldi '16, Omar Mansour '16** and **Joseph Sengeh '16,** have received grants to undertake projects for peace in two different regions of the world. One student will help improve the quality of education in the town of Ljubuški in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the other three will work in the Sierra Leonean community of Kpetema Village building toilets and new roofs while increasing awareness of healthy sanitation practices.

All received their grants under the Davis Projects for Peace initiative funded by the late philanthropist Kathryn Wasserman Davis who launched Projects for Peace on the occasion of her 100th birthday in 2007. **In 2012, nearly $1.25 million was awarded** in $10,000 grants to students submitting the winning proposals for projects to be completed over the summer of 2013 that the students themselves will implement throughout the world. Projects which address conflict resolution, reconciliation, foster understanding, provide opportunity, and unleash human potential to build community are among the many successful projects to date.

Grbavac hopes to improve the quality of education in his hometown of Ljubuški in Bosnia and Herzegovina by renovating the science classroom in the elementary school. Through workshops he will promote multicultural understanding and reconciliation among the students from different ethnic backgrounds. Through media attention on his project he hopes to encourage other schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina to stop segregating their students based on their ethnicity and religious beliefs.

Valentino Grbavac '15
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"I came up with the idea for this project due to my great wish to make an impact in my hometown and to show people there that there is hope for better future through improved education and reconciliation of two ethnic groups in my home town that waged civil war less than two decades ago: Croats and Bosniaks," said Grbavac. "My idea was to make a project that will not only improve the quality of education, which is a key for successful future, but will also show that multiethnic cooperation is not only possible, but actually natural if the kids are taught the right values instead of hatred."

"Through media attention that I will bring on this project, I plan to inspire other schools in other towns and cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to stop segregating students based on their ethnicity and to finally understand that a better education is the key for reconciliation."

Andrea Grimaldi, Omar Mansour and Joseph Sengeh planned and will work together in the Sierra Leonean community of Kpetema Village building toilets and new roofs while increasing awareness of healthy sanitation practices.

Their project will take place in the Sierra Leonean community of Kpetema Village. They will build two toilets in the village and replace thatch roofs with zinc roofs to avoid leaks during the rainy season. They will also increase awareness of healthy sanitation practices to avoid diseases and improve the standard of living.

Joseph Sengeh '16, Andrea Grimaldi '16, and Omar Mansour '16
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Grimaldi, who's from Argentina, would like to learn how to develop a project and how to implement it working together with a community.

"I hope to get some insight on how development projects work and how to optimize the help that is given to communities in order to make them sustainable, independent communities," she said. "I would also like to learn from Sierra Leonean culture and from this country's people, hopefully lessons that will last forever."

Mansour, who's from Jordan, has never been to that part of the world before. "I think I will learn a lot from the people about their lifestyle, culture and way of thinking," Mansour said. "I also hope that this experience will teach me how to appreciate having access to basic daily life necessities, motivate me to do more projects and volunteer work in the future to make a difference in the world. Most importantly, I hope I will learn from my mistakes and try to improve for next time."

Sengeh's mother is from Kpetema Village. He visited last summer and helped build the first and only latrine there. When he returned after interviewing people in Kpetema, he shared his vision with both of Grimaldi and Mansour who agreed to join him and work on the project as a team.

"Personally I think this experience is going to be great for not only my colleagues," said Sangeh, "since they are going to experience a completely different culture, but also for me since for the first time in my life I will be able to manage a huge budget, serve as an intermediary between the people of Kpetema and my friends, and lastly thoroughly carryout something that I have well planned and written on paper."

Davis Projects for Peace is an initiative for all students at the Davis United World College Scholars Program partner schools to design their own grassroots projects for peace that they themselves will implement anywhere in the world during the summer of 2013. Through a competition on over 90 campuses including Macalester, projects are selected for funding at $10,000 each. Kathryn Wasserman Davis was the mother of Shelby M.C. Davis who funds the Davis UWC Scholars Program. The competition involves students from UWC colleges.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,035 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/).

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