

# GETTING CREATIVE

## WITH FUNDRAISING FOR GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

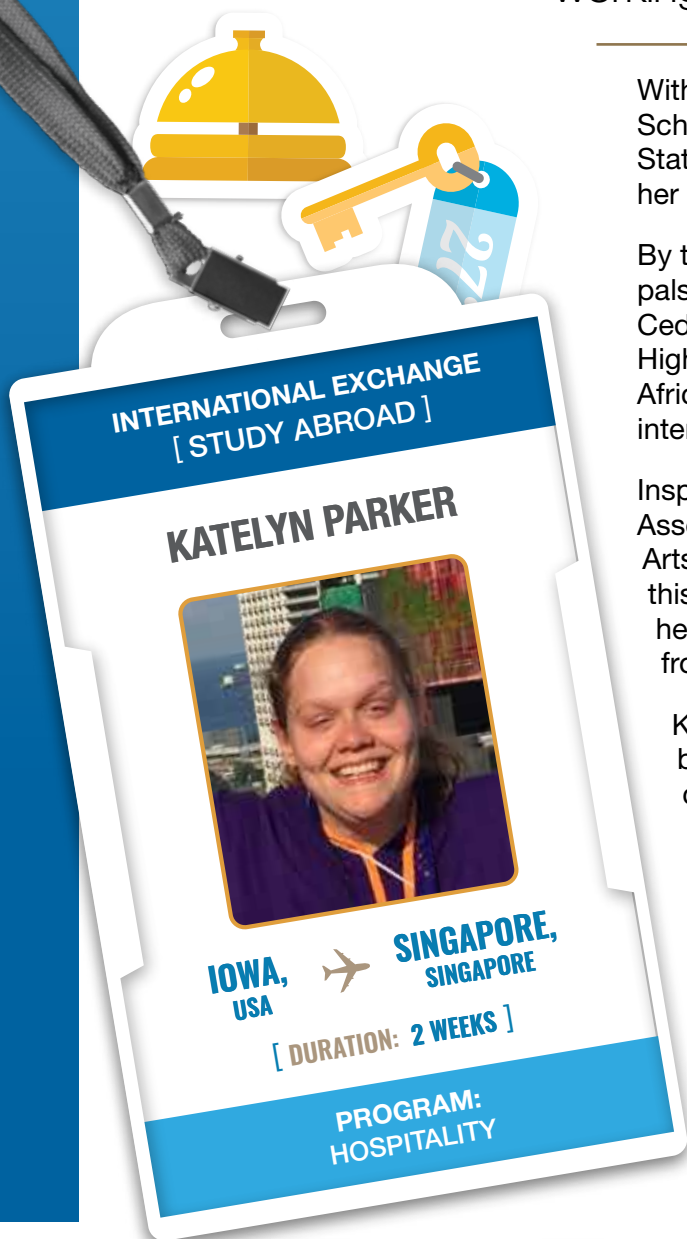
There are lots of careers where you go to college and you are mostly learning from a textbook and then you later step out into the real world after getting your degree, and you realize “oh this is what this is actually like,” but learning and receiving real practical experience as you earn your degree at The Hotel at Kirkwood Center enables students to learn what it’s going to be like working in the real world before you graduate.

With help from her college, community, and a Gilman Scholarship Award, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Katelyn Parker learned more about the world and her own vocational interests.

By the time Katelyn Parker, a student with cerebral palsy, enrolled at Kirkwood Community College (KCC) in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, she had already traveled quite a bit. Highlights included mission trips to Zimbabwe and South Africa. These early experiences left her with a passion for international exchange.

Inspired by these early travels Katelyn chose to pursue her Associates of Applied Science Degree (AAS) in Hospitality Arts at Kirkwood Community College because she thought this would be an ideal path for a career that would take her all across the globe and enable her to meet people from many different cultures.

Kirkwood’s Hospitality Management program is unique because it offers the chance for students to take classes while practicing their skills on the job. The goal is to learn how to manage a hotel. This does not just include learning management techniques and food preparation, students build a grounding in technical subjects such as financial record keeping, food fundamentals, computers, food purchasing, sanitation, equipment, human relations, and the safety and legal aspects of the hospitality industry. Students get to help run The Hotel at Kirkwood Center. They also lend a hand at Kirkwood’s Class Act restaurant which serves up a variety of exquisite gastronomical options for the local community.





In addition to building skills on the job, another exciting element of the course was the chance to gain global experience. Katelyn jumped at the opportunity to study abroad with the Institute of Technical Education in Singapore (ITE), which was one of the Global Education Network (GEN) institutions offered through Kirkwood. She joined a group of students from Kirkwood's vocational programs to study the culture and hospitality of Singapore at the Kirkwood campus, before hopping on a plane to spend a few weeks in the country itself.

The GEN is used to facilitate student and faculty exchange of expertise and international outlooks between Kirkwood and three other partner schools in Australia, Canada, and Singapore. Singapore was a great place to visit for the hospitality students because of its thriving tourism industry, spanning small boutique hotels to some of the largest, luxury hotels around the world.

Among other activities, Katelyn enjoyed exploring Merlion Park, Little India, and Marina Bay Sands, the largest hotel in Singapore. Katelyn also relished meeting and getting to know people from all over the world.

Katelyn was impressed by both Singapore's safety and diversity. It's a regional nexus of cultures, with people from Chinese, Malay and Indian backgrounds intermingled. Though English is one of the spoken languages of Singapore, she often found herself navigating language barriers while trying to navigate the light rail system.

Though Katelyn enjoyed her program in Singapore, the funding necessary to join was not easy to obtain, especially considering the additional costs for accessibility needs, but Katelyn got creative!

She resorted to a few different funding sources both to pay for program tuition and travel costs as well as a scooter rental, which she identified as necessary because her cerebral palsy limits her stamina if she has to walk or stand for extended periods of time.

By far, the most significant support she received was the U.S. Department of State's- Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. The Gilman

## KATELYN'S TIPS FOR FUNDRAISING

We are lucky to have Katelyn Parker's thoughts for fundraising as she has searched for coins under rugs three times over the last few years from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Singapore.

- Identify specific things that you're raising money for** i.e. a scooter.
- Apply for every scholarship you can find**—Ask your school's study abroad department if they know of any additional scholarships you may be eligible to apply for.
- Set up a GoFundMe** or some other page where people can donate.
- Get other media involve!** Katelyn contacted a local newspaper to share her story to help with her fundraising.
- Put together a list of all of the people that you know** including friends, family and indirect acquaintances through all of your community networks including church, school and beyond. **Pro tip:** Indirect acquaintances can sometimes be the best.
- Don't be afraid to ask multiple times.** If someone does not respond to the first outreach, try a couple more times before you give up. Sometimes people want to support your dream, but they just need to be reminded.
- Finally, don't forget to thank them for their contribution,** and make sure to share by giving a presentation, writing a blog, putting together a photo album or sharing your story with the Clearinghouse!

Program enables students of limited financial means to study or intern abroad. Students who are awarded Gilman Scholarships must study or intern abroad for a minimum of two weeks, if they're at a community college, or a minimum of three weeks if they're at a four year institution. As an outstanding community college student with disabilities, receiving Federal Pell Grant funding, Katelyn was an ideal candidate for the program.

Additionally, Katelyn applied for and received a \$1,500 scholarship from Kirkwood and organized a GoFundMe campaign to raise money to rent her scooter. Katelyn also contacted her local newspaper to help promote her campaign. She was able to raise all the funds necessary. It can be a vulnerable experience to put yourself out there, but in the end Katelyn was able to access an opportunity that she will never forget and will continue to reap the benefits for years to come.

The faculty as well as the Singaporean students were always willing to lend a hand when it came to negotiating escalators or curbs with Katelyn's scooter rental. Though she was reluctant to request formal reasonable accommodations from study abroad staff due to fears that they would not let her go, Katelyn coordinated with Kirkwood and staff at the Institute of Technical Education to plan logistics for the scooter rental.

Katelyn still has that flair as someone who likes people and wants to share her passion for learning about different cultures with others around the world. After finishing her hospitality arts program, she plans to continue her search for a career that includes travel and meeting interesting people.

## APPLICATION TIPS FOR THE GILMAN SCHOLARSHIP

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by the Institute of International Education (IIE).

Students from underrepresented backgrounds including those with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Submit a successful application by following these key tips.

- ➔ You may have to begin your Gilman application before you apply to your program.
- ➔ Submit your transcript with time to spare. Expediting a transcript of the last minute could get expensive.
- ➔ Take time to write and revise your essay.
- ➔ Hook the reader from the beginning with something that makes you unique.
- ➔ Have a trusted person review your essay for grammar and style.
- ➔ Demonstrate that you have researched your program by explaining how it relates to future goals, career plans and major.
- ➔ One of Gilman's priorities is to enable more students from backgrounds that are underrepresented in study abroad to go overseas, so disclosing if you are at a community college, the first of your family to go to college, a person of color, a person with a disability, studying STEM, from a rural background etc. can make your application more competitive.