Grace Elizabeth Groner Foundation

The Grace Elizabeth Groner Foundation exists to preserve Grace Groner’s legacy by encouraging Lake Forest College students to prepare for a life of service to self, community, and their alma mater.

Gorton Community Center

“Being with the Groner Recipients is inspiring. What a talented, motivated group of young people you have gathered through the Grace Groner Foundation. It is very exciting for Gorton to have the opportunity to work with these young people and benefit from their bright minds and new perspectives.”
- Brenda Dick

Story Below

Groner Recipients at Gorton Community Center

They walk just a few hundred yards from LFC to the Gorton Community Center to tweet, update Web sites, organize think tanks, and help out in a myriad of ways in the Children’s Drop-In Center.

The walk might be short, but it brings loads of experience for the four students who are volunteering at the local community center as Groner Recipients from the Grace Groner Foundation.

Senior Julia French, a psychology major and business minor, is working in Gorton’s administrative offices. “I’m getting real-world experience,” she said, and forging professional relationships with the Gorton staff. “She brings a different perspective, fresher,” Logan said of her college-age cohort. Living with Facebook, Twitter and the like every day, the students have heightened Gorton’s social media presence, a hurdle to cross that Logan describes as “huge.”

Camila Quinteros, a junior majoring in studio art and minoring in computer design and digital media, has learned much from working with the public on computer details that come second nature to her – incorporating QR codes into marketing, building a social media presence and updating Gorton’s website. “Usually, I work with designers,” said Quinteros, where everyone working together understands the same digital speak. “At Gorton, I am seeing things from the other side. What people are actually looking for,” she said. And she has to communicate with team members in every day language.

Senior Mikayla Warner, a psychology major and education minor, has been working in the Children’s Drop-In Center. “I’ve learned so much about the development of kids (at the Drop-In Center) that is applying exactly to what I’m studying,” she said. “It’s confirmed my love of working with children.”

Junior Agnes Dadej, a psychology and elementary education major, described the opportunity to work in the Drop-In Center as “phenomenal” and said she has “learned a lot.”

Sue Buhrmester, Director at Gorton’s Drop-In Center, said the interns have learned a lot because they don’t shirk responsibility. “They’re doing everything,” Buhrmester said, from answering phones, to developing lesson plans, doing research and working in the classroom.

The local component is important to Groner Foundation Director, Daniela Resendiz. “Grace was a big supporter of organizations in Lake Forest. She spent over 70 years volunteering in the community,” Resendiz said.

Groner felt so strongly about the community that one of the missions of the Foundation she set up before she died in 2010, was to keep it local, “to serve the needs of the community,” Resendiz said. “Gorton’s role as a community center meshes perfectly with that goal.

“We have work that needs to be done,” said Gorton Executive Director, Brenda Dick. “These college students listen carefully, work with intelligence and do it all with a tremendously positive attitude. They are really special.”

- Story and photograph by Linda Blaser
Note from the Trustees

We have completed a busy and successful year at the Grace Elizabeth Groner Foundation. So many Lake Forest College students, faculty, and staff have worked together with the GEGF Trustees and our Director, Daniela Resendiz, as she led us through the 2011-2012 academic year.

First, we would like to congratulate the graduating seniors whom we have supported this year. They are Allyson Bain, Veronica Castro, James Dunnigan, Julia French, Tatiana Galli, Amy Gonzalez, Amber Green, Allison Hamel, Kosova Kreka, Sarah Lendy, Jerold Rosema, Katlin Sandvik, Pratibha Shrestha, and Mikayla Warner. It was our pleasure to host them and their families at our annual Senior Celebration party. Many of the parents expressed their gratitude to Daniela Resendiz and the Trustees for providing their students with opportunities for community, national, and international service while developing and enhancing their talents and skills. We are proud of their service and accomplishments and the ties they made with the Lake Forest community and throughout the U.S. and the world. Many of these students are representing LFC and the GEGF by continuing to serve throughout the summer and a few will continue to serve throughout the following year. We have every confidence in them as they follow their career paths. Congratulations to the new class of Grace Elizabeth Groner Fellows!

Now, to the undergraduates who have been Grace Elizabeth Groner Recipients this year; we expect that you will step forward and accept opportunities for service and academic experiences that we will provide. Rising seniors are Jimena Resendiz, (degree to be conferred in December 2012), Agnes Dadej, Kimberly Diah, Emily Hampden-Smith, Cleo Hahn, Nikita Kotecha, Anika Lin, Aidan Price, Camilla Quinteros, and Alexus Urbanik. Rising juniors are Ashley Gora, Danielle Leonardo, Ryan Vlarr, and Christopher Way. Rising sophomores are Abigail Brownell, Ryan Drake, Leticia Lazcano, Sam Mercier and Samantha Niesie. We encourage you to forge new paths in your journey towards graduation and beyond.

Last of all, we want everyone to remember that these opportunities were generously provided by Grace Elizabeth Groner, graduate of Lake Forest College in the class of 1931, and resident of Lake Forest until her death at almost 101 years old.

L. Robert Pasquesi
William C. Marlatt
Trustees

Misericordia: Heart of Mercy

For the first time, Lake Forest College students interned at Misericordia: Heart of Mercy. Misericordia is a residential care facility that works to integrate persons with mild to profound development and physical disabilities. Misericordia provides a home of care and support for its residents as well as their families who are not able to provide the same care at home.

Veronica Castro Padilla ’12, a psychology major, was accepted to intern with the Art Therapy Department. She learned about counseling and art therapy through readings, discussion, research, and participation in therapy sessions for individuals and small groups. Veronica learned how to apply art to promote relaxation, enhance communication and coping skills, to encourage the residents to develop and enjoy their creativity, and to support the residents in embracing positive attitudes. As the semester progressed, Veronica was responsible for planning and preparing materials for therapy sessions and assisting, participating, interacting, and, eventually, leading the sessions. Veronica described the experience as, “one of the most rewarding experiences in life. I loved it!”

Sarah Lendy ’12, a psychology major, was accepted as an intern for the Personal Effectiveness Program (PEP). Sarah assisted classroom instructors in providing individualized services to participants. The services included communication, positive behavior support, functional academic and vocational skills, independent living skills, and social and interpersonal skills. PEP was developed for individuals who are unable to effectively adapt to the demands or experiences within typical developmental and vocational settings. Sarah learned to use sensory and interactive technology to assist individuals in gaining and enhancing skills in the areas of concentrating, waiting, asking for help appropriately, making choices, and accepting correcting or redirection. Sarah was given the responsibility of leading meditation sessions. She describes the experience as “amazing” and stated she was “unable to talk about it without a smile on her face.”

LFC: Border Studies

At the end of their spring semester on campus, students travel to the U.S.-Mexico border for the final three weeks of the Border Studies program, spending time in Arizona and Mexico observing and considering issues of immigration, trade, and labor rights.

“My time along the Arizona-Mexico border was full of interesting experiences. We met with many interesting people and went to many different organizations that left me in tears, but, at the same time, with hope for the many immigrants that cross the border on a daily basis.

Being able to witness Operation Streamline where there are immigrants who are being processed with misdemeanors and deported was something that really stuck with me. It broke my heart to see them with shackles on their hands, waist, and feet. Most of them were from Mexico and a few from Guatemala, Ecuador, and Costa Rica. Being a part of this experience motivated me to become one of the best immigration lawyers to be able to help them!

During the trip, I was looking forward to experiencing what immigrants go through. I had that opportunity to volunteer at Marana Farm. It was very hot that day, and I felt that I was going to pass out, but I told myself to stop complaining because there are other people who have it harder. I spread hay around the vegetables and plants that were already growing. This helped me see how they work, every single day from sunrise to dawn, it is very exhausting, but they do it to earn money to feed their families.

The most memorable experience was going to CAME, an organization that resides in a local church where they provide the immigrants who have been caught with a place to sleep and food to eat. I got the chance to meet and talk to a family of three who came from El Salvador. Their story was particularly interesting and it got me extremely worried because this would be the first time the 11 and 15 year-olds would try to cross the border. My dream for them, and for the many more that come into the U.S. is that I wish them the best and that I admire them for pursuing a better life for their families.

This was an opportunity that was given to me thanks to the Grace Groner Foundation, Professor Tuttle, BorderLinks and Lake Forest College. This experience will forever be with me every step of the way from now on.”

-Story by Letty Lazcano
The Grace Elizabeth Groner Senior Celebration is held the Thursday before Commencement. The junior Cottage Residents are responsible for greeting the senior Groner Recipients and their families.

The purpose of the gathering is to honor the graduating Groner Recipients who are about to become one of Grace’s Fellows. The Groner Recipients share with other Recipients and their families the unique opportunities which were provided to them due to Grace’s generosity. They reflect on the learning experience and satisfaction of carrying on Grace’s legacy of service to others.

The Foundation Trustees and Director enjoy sharing Grace’s life story with the Groner Recipients and their families.

William Marlatt, Trustee, and life-long friend of Grace Groner, shared the brainstorming process that Grace and he had gone through for over a decade. After exploring different options, Grace began experimenting with service learning programs. She supported Lake Forest College students to attend the UVa Architectural Field School in Jamaica. The students benefitted on many levels and showed their appreciation to Grace Groner by giving back to the community. It was after reading those “Thank You” notes, that Grace Groner and William Marlatt developed the concept, which has become the Grace Elizabeth Groner Foundation.

The Foundation took the opportunity to share some of the unique developments that are in the near future. The newest programs are a year-long internship at Grymes Memorial School for the position of a primary teacher. Another work-in-progress is a nine-month internship with the Prince’s Regeneration Trust working with the last Victorian Pottery in the United Kingdom at Middleport Pottery and working to reopen the Pools at Cleveland Pools, Bath, the only surviving Georgian Lido in the England.
Summer 2012

This summer, the Foundation is sponsoring 26 students to pursue service projects in four continents. The projects include an archaeology field school at Montpelier, research at medical schools of the Chicagoland area, an architecture field school in Jamaica, environmental research in Costa Rica, the installation of solar panels in Swaziland, research and service work at Colonial Williamsburg, a student attending the Apicius International School of Hospitality, two students attending Anderson Ranch Arts Center, a year-long internship at James Madison’s Center for the Constitution, and researching the behavior of lemurs in Madagascar. Please look for our newsletter at the end of the summer for an update on the summer programs.