

9-2015

Honors Oracle, September 2015

Marshall University Honors College

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Recommended Citation

Marshall University Honors College, "Honors Oracle, September 2015" (2015). *Honors Oracle*. 23.
<http://mds.marshall.edu/oracle/23>

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Marshall
University's
Honors
College
Newsletter

The Honors Oracle

The Oracle

September 2015

Sedor finds home away from home



By Ian Lovern

Hailing from Anchorage, Alaska, Jack Sedor has more than 4000 miles between his hometown and his new life at Marshall. However, this distance has not stopped him from feeling at home in Huntington, the Marshall men's soccer team or the Honors College. Sedor had not heard of Marshall until his senior year of high school, when he travelled across the country to play in a soccer showcase tournament in Raleigh, N.C. It was there, he said, that a member of the Marshall family

approached him. "Coach Olivier [assistant head coach of the men's soccer team] invited me to visit his school after a game," Sedor said. "I came in completely blind. I hadn't even seen 'We Are Marshall' yet. I stayed a few days longer on the East Coast, and took a trip to Huntington before flying home." Sedor's visit to Marshall may have scared away some prospective student athletes, but the Alaskan native said the irony of the conditions sealed the deal. "I visited Marshall in the middle of a snowstorm," Sedor said, "There was close

to a foot of snow and it showed no signs of stopping. I looked around and couldn't help but to appreciate the humor of the situation. I thought, 'Hey, this place is alright!' I committed to Marshall soon after that." While he originally chose Marshall for the opportunity to play soccer at the collegiate level, Sedor said he has come to love the other aspects of his university as well. After choosing to become a part of the Honors College, Sedor has enjoyed the enrichment the program offers, as well its welcoming attitude. Despite being a Business and Economics double major, Sedor said he

Upcoming Dates:

-09/30: Habitat for Humanity campus chapter

-10/08: Deadline for Honors College shirts

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has already begun his Honors classes.

“There are two of us [freshmen soccer players] in the Honors College,” Sedor said, “We have Honors English now. The class has been one of my favorites this semester, and it’s nice to have one of my teammates with me as well.” While Sedor has quickly come to love his new home, he said many aspects of West Virginia were surprising to witness for the first time.

“There’s sunlight here,” Sedor said. “That’s probably the biggest difference. There are all kinds of slang words we don’t use at home, and all the

(Sedor: Continued)

food is fried. I am already amazed at how quickly the weather changes, we don’t really get that in Alaska.” As Marshall’s first student athlete from the Land of the Midnight Sun, it’s understandable for Sedor to have had reservations before arriving. However, he said his interactions with the Honors College, team, and the university in general have made him quite proud of his decision.

“Another thing we don’t have at home is Southern

hospitality,” Sedor said. “It’s so friendly here. Everyone I meet seems to be happy to see me, and that really makes it easy to feel at home, even so far away.”



Honors students reflect on the American Dream

By: Amanda Gibson

In the seminar “Constructing, Deconstructing and Reconstructing the American Dream”, Honors students are coming face to face with one of America’s most sought after ideals: The American Dream.

The seminar focuses on how the American Dream was formed in history, along with encompassing the ideas of how the dream fits into the lives of people today and how it will change in the future. Zach Falther, a senior Honors student, is enrolled in the seminar. “I’ve always been interested in what other people think of the

American Dream,” Falther said.

He said the American Dream is a complex idea in the United States and it is interesting to see how other people interpret it.

Right now, the class is concentrating on the first part of the course, which is constructing the American Dream and looking at where the idea came from in history. The first project the students have is to take pictures of things in Huntington that represent the American Dream in four different ways: imagined, achieved, unattained and lost.

Dr. Brian Hoey is the instructor for the seminar, and has been part of

the Honors College since 2010. He has been involved in the Yeager 3 Seminar and he has taught two seminars in the Honors College before. “[This is] one place in the University where we really put an emphasis on scholarship,” he said.

Hoey said the American Dream is important for college students. He said the questions he asks in this class are for scholars and Honors students are ready for the difficult questions.

Despite it being an Honors seminar, Falther said the workload for the class is actual-

ly easier than a regular course because the class is more discussion-based with challenging concepts. Falther said this course may have the potential to alter his perception of the American Dream, but to him, “The American Dream is just setting goals for yourself and being successful.”

The class is small because it is a seminar, but Hoey said the quality of discussion isn’t hindered by this fact.

“I am having a wonderful time, it’s very satisfying to work with students like this,” he said.

Honors student serves in India

By Kasey Madden

Approximately 8,000 miles from Marshall University, senior Yeager Scholar Courtney Kramer spent her last summer as a college student teaching English in India.

Kramer, a biology education major, traveled with classmates Liza Hauldren and Annie Brownfield to teach English for seven weeks at the Tura Christian Girls School in Tura Meghalaya.

Kramer said the girls they taught lived in the West Garo Hills, where they speak a remote tribal language called Garo. According to Kramer, the remoteness of the language presented them with a challenge because there are no online translators.

“We got to learn some of their language through speaking with them,” Kramer said. “The girls were really good at writing and understanding English because they watch a lot of American television and have been learning English since they were little, but speaking English is really challenging for them.”

As a future biology teacher, Kramer did get to observe a few courses while in India, but her main task

was teaching after school English at the girls school. While she was teaching, Kramer celebrated her 21st birthday and said her students threw her a surprise party complete with gifts. “The girls that we taught were the best students I’ll have in my entire life,” Kramer said. “They were so eager to learn and so sweet.” Kramer said she loved the landscape in India, from the mountains to palm trees reminding her of home. “It’s a really beautiful place. It’s the rainiest region in the world actually and we went during monsoon season, which was not the smartest,” Kramer said.

Kramer said it was easy to grow tired of things there: if it was not the rain, there was eating white rice for two meals a day. However, she added she had no regrets about the experience.

“The thing that made it worth the distance and the roughing it in the jungle was the people there were the most hospitable people I have ever met,” Kramer said. “Their culture, how much they appreciate and value family was really cool. They don’t have nursing homes because people take care of their parents.”

Another cultural difference Kramer said they experience is staying in a matrilineal society where the youngest



daughter receives the family’s inheritance. If the family is all sons, the family adopts their closest female relative to receive the inheritance.

“Crazy right?” Kramer said. “Women propose to men and men take women’s last names when they get married, so it’s so opposite, but it’s their tribal thing,” Kramer said.

From experiencing monsoons in the rainy season to an earthquake measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale, Kramer said her experience in India is one she will not soon forget.

“We wanted to go just to serve people on the other side of the world,” Kramer said.

Phi Kappa Phi assists Tiny Talkers



By Nancy Peyton

Marshall University's chapter of Phi Kappa Phi was awarded one of 14 nationwide Literacy Grants totaling \$2,500. The Phi Kappa Phi Literacy Grant program was established in 2003 to provide funding to Phi Kappa Phi chapters for ongoing projects or new initiatives that reinforce the society's mission. Phi Kappa Phi, along with the Honors College Student Association and the National Student Speech-Language Hearing Association, held a book drive during the spring 2015 semester. The 302 books donated were used as a starting point to expand the Tiny Talkers program to a local subsidized housing

complex through Marshall's partnership with St. John's House. Mary Beth Reynolds, President of the Marshall chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, said she and the members put careful consideration into deciding where they wanted to lend a helping hand in the community. "What we wanted to do last year was to try to really think about something focused that we could do to try to make sure we were living our mission here at Marshall," she said. Phi Kappa Phi, in partnership with the Marshall Speech and Hearing Center, outlined a two-tier program to help promote literacy in

the children living in the subsidized housing complex. The first tier focused on an after-school program already in place through St. John's House to improve literacy skills in children ages 3-18, while the second tier helped to introduce a new branch of Tiny Talkers to the subsidized housing complex.

The Tiny Talkers Book Club was established in 2013 as a focus for emergent literacy in 3-5 year olds. This program, started by the MU Speech and Hearing Center, focuses on strategies that promote the oral, narrative and hearing skills development of children in a small group setting. They also teach families to utilize these

skills to teach their children at home.

"One of the ladies who works there said that one of the little girls that was at the Tiny Talkers has been teaching her mother to read," Reynolds said. Jennifer Baker, faculty advisor for the National Student Speech-Language Hearing Association, said that this program is important in building the proper foundations for children to learn literacy skills. "There is a great need for this program to continue, but funding is limited," Baker said. "We are currently seeking financial supports to continue this program in the future."

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Honors College welcomes new addition

Ryan Fischer

The Honors College welcomed another new face this year, with Kate McComas filling the role of administrative assistant beginning this semester.

After Mitzi Cyrus announced her retirement, McComas moved to the Honors College to fill the vacancy. She most recently worked in the Classics Department at Marshall, which teaches literary, religious and humanities coursework. As an administrative assistant, McComas uses a variety of software to manage an array of office tasks, including scheduling, file management and communications. Her main objective, she said, is not necessarily gazing at a computer screen.

“Speaking with students is one of the biggest parts of my job,” McComas said. “It is how I learn the position.” McComas is one of the first faces to greet students within the Honors College, and she said that any student should feel free to ask her for information and guidance.

Although McComas’ job includes heavy computer use and administrative skill, her previous work included arts management and grant writing for familiar establishments, including the Huntington Museum of Art and The Clay Center. “Being a craftsperson was the perfect job for me to have before I started in arts management,” McComas said, “because I understood how hard it was to be a full-time artist and craftsperson, and living in West Virginia.” McComas said the hospitable staff at Marshall University affected her in a positive way, stating that she felt incredibly welcomed by other staff members like Dr. Jeremy Barris, who taught her to play Bridge. “I immediately had this sort of community here that really helped me to adjust,” McComas said.



McComas worked exclusively as an artist before moving on to arts management. She continues her work in spinning and weaving to this day, though almost entirely for personal associates and family. McComas had left West Virginia to live in Acheron, Ohio, but she stated that her return to Huntington was ultimately motivated by her family. “I came to Huntington because my daughter and grandson live here,” McComas said, “and it’s really important for me to be here and a part of his life when he’s so young.”