



▶ Scholarships Through MYE

MYEF offers several scholarships to MYE alumni. The Higher Education Scholarship helps alumni access higher education, while the Program Scholarship helps students access programs and opportunities beyond what MYE offers. Here are updates from three alumni who have received these scholarships in 2009.



▶ Spring Quarter @ UC Davis by Yeni Magana MYE 14

Spring quarter at Davis is hectic. This is when all the big university events occur, and I was involved in organizing several events for Mujeres Ayudando la Raza (MAR), an organization I joined on campus. The first event I was involved with was their 13th annual Youth Conference which was held during La Raza Cultural Days week – when cultural events are held to educate students about the Latino culture. MAR also runs a project to provide resources for the Migrant Center community, which I also helped out with. Throughout the school year MAR takes in donations of clothing (shirts, pants, shoes, sweaters, etc of all sizes) and house appliances. At the end of the year, MAR takes these items to a local Migrant Camp, gives them to the community there, and hosts a series of day long events.

During this time I was also a part of a group that helped re-establish the Women's Self Defense group on the UC Davis campus. I am currently the Communications officer for the club. Not busy enough, I also volunteered to give several Fillmore HS groups campus tours. One of the groups was a part of the One Step A La Ves program I helped establish when I was a student at FHS.

When I first arrived on the UC Davis campus, I intended to pursue a career in the field of psychology but subsequent events have made me realize I no longer want to major in psychology. Currently, I am an American Studies Major, but am still not really sure what my academic future will hold.

I plan to apply to graduate school and by that time hope to have a better understanding of the right path for me. In the spring quarter I took a Women's History class which helped me appreciate that the actions some strong women took in the past have given me the privileges I have now. This course has stimulated my interest in Women and Gender Studies.

In the spring quarter I was very productive in terms of activities. In terms of academics I felt there was still room for improvement and decided to take summer classes at Davis. For the first session I took Computer Science Engineering, a pre-requisite class, and an acting class, just for fun. My grades were A and B- which helps my G.P.A. Although I am improving my grades by doing summer school, I would like the chance to travel. I am hoping that happens next year when I go Study Abroad!



▶ THE POWER OF ONE - A Journey to Sweden by Zach Brown MYE 20

As my train rumbled across the Swedish countryside, I slowly turned the pages of my book (*The Power of One* by Bryce Courtenay), trying to savor each word. It was the only book I had left for the remainder of my trip and also carried heavy symbolic meaning for me. Its title held the thematic statement behind my epic, thirty day Swedish adventure: *The Power of One*.

Somewhere between wandering the cobblestone streets of Stockholm, and summiting peaks in the Artic Circle - all by my lonesome, with no comrades to keep me company - it had been up to me to find my own "Power of One", and to rush through my guide book seemed a bit foolish. To locate and nourish that inner sense of independence; that was my goal - one bred from necessity on my solo trip.

But did I find it - did I find myself, that all elusive "Power of One"? That seems to be the big question upon my return. "Did it change your life Zach?" I don't know if I can answer that question yet. But here is a snapshot of my journey.

When I stumbled off my plane in Stockholm I realized I had no idea what I was doing. I was in Europe for the first time, had never even been alone in a big city before, and here I was in Stockholm, Sweden's capital city. I staggered into a coffee shop and sat down to find my bearings. It was raining, I didn't know my way around, and I was still groggy from my 8-hour flight. Lucky for me Sweden has abnormally strong coffee, and a couple tall cups later I was ready to go - and go I did.



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► THE POWER OF ONE - A Journey to Sweden *by Zach Brown*

Over the next four days, I walked all over the city of Stockholm, met people from my youth hostel, and explored the Stockholm Archipelago—a geographic marvel which contains some 20,000 islands. By the time I left Stockholm I had found my bearings and a level of comfort being in the city.



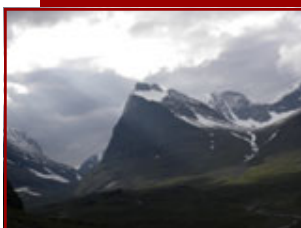
I caught a train to Nynashamn, the departure point for my ferry to Gotland Island, the location of Medebys Hastgard - a farm that was my next destination. I missed the ferry and wandered around for 6 hours with a fifty pound backpack, looking for a way to Gotland. It was one of the low points of my trip and I felt very homesick. After napping in a bush in some random park, I found people who helped me figure out the ferry schedule, and that evening I boarded the last boat for Gotland. All was not lost, and I found my host family before midnight. On the farm I was greeted by seven smiling Swedes who welcomed me into their home. Greta and George Holmer and their five children (all under the age of nine), created an atmosphere that made my stay exciting and enjoyable.



I had made the connection with Greta and George through an organization called WWOOF (Willing Workers On Organic Farms), and in exchange for food and a place to stay, I worked as a farm hand for the family. Some of my jobs included - moving hay-bales, cleaning out and painting a barn, fencing a horse pasture, and taking care of horses. It was a wonderful experience, and I was blessed to have a family who strove to create a positive experience for their WWOOF-ers. I was always encouraged to balance work with play, and had access to a small yellow Volkswagen whenever I wanted to use it. Three other WWOOF-ers, from Germany and Australia, who were travelers with interests and values similar to my own, added to the positive experience.



After two weeks on the farm, I headed north by train to stay with some family friends who are fly fishing guides in a tiny town called Gimdalen. After two days of fun, I continued further north to Lappland, which lies within the Arctic Circle—the land of the midnight sun.



In Lappland I hiked the Kungsleden Trail, spending my six days on the trail using many of the valuable backcountry skills I acquired from MYE. Altogether I walked over 90 km—or about 55 miles, in some of Scandinavia's most scenic mountain country. Several days into the hike I camped at the base of Mount Kebnekaise—the tallest peak in Sweden. After being turned back by a vicious snow storm on my first summit attempt - I climbed the mountain. The weather had cleared and from the summit I had breathtaking views of country that extended well into Norway, hundreds and hundreds of miles away.

I did the rest of my hike—some 50 km—in two days. I encountered several ferocious rain storms and had two very tired feet, but I also had time for some soul-searching. Hiking alone for that much time allows a person to work out a lot of kinks in their life, thinking, philosophizing, and for me, this was one of the most valuable and enriching parts of my adventure. Hiking alone can also encourage some people to develop the habit of singing and talking out loud—a lot. But we won't get into that...

It is too early to know whether or not my life has changed as a result of my trip. One thing that is clear to me, is that the MYE and the Orfalea family have dramatically changed the course of my life. If it weren't for my acceptance into the Wilderness Challenge Course in 2008; Doug Littel, my MYE instructor planting the WWOOFer idea in my brain; and the program scholarship that helped make my Sweden trip possible, so many things in my life would be different.

MYE and the people associated with it have inspired and empowered me to do so many wonderful things already—and I've only known them for a year. Being part of MYE 20 proved to be a turning point in my life, and I can't wait to see what the future holds as a result. Maybe someday I'll be lucky enough to find that all elusive "Power of One" within myself. And maybe I already have.



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► NATIONAL YOUNG LEADERS STATE CONFERENCE *by Caroline Green MYE 17*

National Young Leaders State Conference was not what I expected. Nominated by my counselor, I signed up for the four day conference thinking I would be with a bunch of intimidating students listening to speeches from government people. The conference definitely beat my expectations. I arrived at the Marriott Hotel in Irvine, the conference venue, was assigned a group and given a journal. There were a number of groups - the Pacific Ocean; Hudson River, Mississippi River...my group was the Atlantic Ocean. I was directed toward a room where all conference goers were gathered, and it was packed with 6th through 11th graders. At first I felt intimidated because they all looked so smart, but after having lunch with some of my Atlantic Ocean group, I became more comfortable. I even met people from my school!

Each day was carefully planned, packed with meetings and workshops. Most meetings, which I did with Atlantic Ocean group, were focused on how to lead a group, set and achieve goals, and be part of a team. We participated in problem-solving activities, and we learned who automatically took charge, and who didn't actively participate. We realized everyone needed to participate and work together to achieve our goals.

Our group also participated in a range of workshops, including a public speaking one. During this workshop we had to write a one minute speech on any topic, and present it to the group. The workshop focus was on presentation skills rather than content, and we learned about announcement, speed, volume and delivery of the speech. After practicing our new skills, our presentations were videotaped and watched by the group. We gave everyone feedback on what they did well and what they needed to improve on. This workshop was helpful because I needed to work on my public speaking skills. In the future I will be more comfortable because I now know how to deliver a speech in a professional manner. We journalled all the workshops and meetings we attended.

I also signed up for the Press Club – a group for people interested in putting together a conference newsletter. Initially it seemed like an impossible task, to put together a newsletter in four days, with only a few Press Club meetings. But we did it! We applied our new skills - split into groups, assigned tasks, and set realistic goals. By dividing up the work we were able to publish a great newsletter with articles, games and even pictures.

There was also a group called 'Student Led Seminars' where students put together discussion topics for other members of the conference to debate. I enjoyed the seminars and attended the Facebook vs. MySpace, and driving age debates. All these activities encouraged us to interact and cooperate within our groups, and have fun doing it. On the last night of the conference there was a talent show. The Atlantic group got the courage to perform a dance and had a great time doing it. I am so happy I was part of the group, our mentors were fun, and the group members were enthusiastic and great to be around for four days. I keep in touch with them as I do my MYE group.

I would like to thank MYE for supporting me with a Program Scholarship. The conference was amazing. I honed the leadership skills I developed during my Wilderness Challenge Course, and met a bunch of nice people. Without MYE's support I would not have been able to attend. If you are determined to go somewhere and need assistance, I encourage you to fill out an MYE Program Scholarship request like I did to attend the NYLSC. Thank you so much MYE for your help.

Scholarships Through The MYE Foundation

MYE Foundation offers MYE alumni access to several types of scholarships. MYE Foundation scholarships are for MYE alumni in good standing. This means that you have stayed in contact with MYE, participated in MYExplore events, and/or have written for our newsletter or website, and are seeking the next level in your development or education. This means you!

MYE Foundation Program Scholarship

This scholarship will help you to access programs and opportunities beyond what MYE provides. The programs need to support the goals and spirit of MYE – with a focus on learning, leadership, service, sustainability and/or the outdoors. You don't need to wait for us with this one, if you see something you are interested in being involved with that fits the criteria above – apply for the scholarship and step into your next adventure!

For more information and application forms go to the Alumni/Life skills page at the MYE website: www.myeconnect.org or contact Jerry Lawrie at: jerry@myeconnect.org