

The Sullivan Family Scholar

Samantha Gray

Green Cove Springs, FL

Swarthmore College

Junior: Linguistics

College GPA: 3.7

Activities:

- Longsword Folk Dance Team
- President: Psi Phi Science Fiction/Fantasy Club
- Tabletop Role-Playing/Gaming Group
- Conlangers Bulletin Board Contributor
- Volunteer: Ninjagram Group Delivery Service, Led Cognitive Science Tutor, Diver for the REEF Environmental Education Foundation
- Year Round Research Assistant at the Lab for Endangered Languages



As a linguistics student at Swarthmore College, I have been able to apply my interest in spoken and written communication over a broad field – from the preservation of ancient languages, to the acquisition of language in children and the hearing or developmentally impaired, to the creation of a machine/language interface in the realm of artificial intelligence – and have supplemented my primary studies with courses in cognitive science, psychology and computer science. My activities as a research assistant have focused on the documentation and revitalization of endangered languages and the cultural knowledge they embrace. This summer I will continue my work with the Navajo Language Academy, which is committed to preserving the Navajo language and teaching it to younger generations. My Wings Over America scholarship will help me complete my undergraduate studies next year, and hopefully achieve my goal of continuing linguistics research at a graduate level. By analyzing morphology (the smallest units of meaning in a language) and the historical changes that have taken place in languages (both existing and extinct), I hope to further our understanding of how languages are related to each other, how we learn language, and what that tells us about human cognition. It is my aspiration as a linguist to use this knowledge to improve how we communicate with each other in the future – between cultures, between humans and computers, and ultimately, between worlds we may know nothing of yet.