

# *Wings Over America Scholar*

**Samantha Gray**

Green Cove Springs, FL

**Swarthmore College**

*Major: Linguistics/Cognitive  
Science*

High School GPA: 4.37

## Activities:

- National Honor Society
- Creative Writing, Poetry & Photography Club
- North American Computational Linguistics Olympiad
- 3D modeling & Animation, 3D Game Design (Stanford U.)
- Underwater Photography (University of NC)
- Debate Club
- Hands Across the Sea
- REEF Environmental Education Foundation, volunteer diver
- Project AWARE Foundation, volunteer diver
- Titusville, FL Belly Dance Troupe



In an age when the ability to text message has bypassed the need to converse, I want to preserve the importance of words. My 2013 Wings Over America scholarship award will help me meet this goal, by letting me combine my interests in linguistics with studies in the larger realm of cognitive science at Swarthmore College this fall. My desire to learn more about the process by which we communicate is an outgrowth of my lifelong fascination with words. I am a self-taught distance learner, and have lived on a boat my entire life – in an environment where words (in the absence of TV, Xboxes and iPhones) were a pivotal force, both for communication and entertainment. As a Swarthmore student, I will be able to merge multidisciplinary studies in cognitive science (including natural language processing and artificial intelligence) with the theoretical language skills that will enhance our ability to communicate in the future – between cultures, species, humans and machines, even galaxies, with worlds we know nothing of yet. Someday, I'd like to be the expert called upon to construct a communications tool between humans and sentient beings perhaps totally unlike us. Until then, my scholarship will allow me to study the structure of language and the science of communication across its many facets, and continue my work as a literacy volunteer.