

GEICO Scholar

Samantha Gray

Green Cove Springs, FL

Swarthmore College

Sophomore: Linguistics

College GPA: 3.7

Activities:

- Psi Phi Science Fiction Club
- Tabletop Roll-Playing Club
- Colangers Bulletin Board, Contributor for online forum
- Swarthmore College Bellying Dancing Club
- Volunteer: Enchanted Forest Sanctuary Certified Guide Asst., North Brevards Homeschool Association Tutor, Hurricane Sandy Recovery
- Year-Round Research Assistant and Course Grader for Swarthmore Linguistics Department



As a 2015 Wings Over America scholarship recipient, I will be able to continue my studies and research activities in linguistics and cognitive science at Swarthmore College not only next school year, but during an internship this summer as well. This past academic year, I was offered the opportunity to apply my interest in language structure outside the classroom as a research assistant in the College's Laboratory for Endangered Languages. Here I worked with linguist K. David Harrison, PhD, a noted activist for the revitalization of vanishing languages, helping to document and preserve these ancestral tongues and the centuries of cultural and traditional knowledge they embrace. My scholarship will help me continue this work next year, and more immediately this summer as a research intern, when I will be helping to develop a reference grammar for the Navajo language, covering the structure, meaning, and use of all known Navajo sentence types. Navajo is spoken by about 100,000 people in Arizona and New Mexico, making it the largest American Indian speech community in North America. For several weeks, I will be participating in the Navajo Language Academy workshop at Dine College in Arizona, assisting Swarthmore professor Ted Fernald, PhD in presentations on Navajo theoretical linguistics. I am grateful to Wings Over America because, without the support of my sponsors, I would not be able to pursue these extraordinary opportunities in addition to my academic studies.