

Donor Showcase

Arati Sharangpani's Memory Lives On

As a child, Arati Sharangpani was outgoing and involved in many activities. In high school, she was an exchange student to Germany, and as an undergraduate at U-M, she continued her involvement with many university groups, and was awarded outstanding Resident Advisor twice. She was a double major in German and Organizational Studies.

In January of 1997, Arati was offered a job in marketing with Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati, Ohio. She perished in a plane crash returning from Ohio that same day. To honor her memory and many contributions, her family and friends established the Arati Sharangpani Memorial Award. This award provides travel scholarships for students to study abroad in Germany. The Arati Sharangpani Memorial Award has helped nearly 30 students realize their desire to study abroad, including Jaimie Cavanaugh.

Jaimie Cavanaugh, pictured here in the Arati Sharangpani Lounge in Mary Markley Hall, is an LS&A senior who will graduate with a German/Linguistics major and Global Change minor in May 2009. During her sophomore year, she decided to study abroad and received the Arati Sharangpani Memorial Award for study in Freiburg. Before her year-long program began, she enrolled in a language course at the Goethe-Institut. After her return, Jaimie was selected to be a one of the 28 American DAAD Young Ambassadors who are spokespersons for study-abroad on their local campuses. Jaimie plans to pursue a career in Environmental Law, where we are certain she will make a difference.



By Jaimie Cavanaugh

Making a Difference

My final three months in Germany were some of the most memorable of my year abroad. I'd been in Germany for 9 months and had been attending a German University before I began my internship with the City of Freiburg. I had no idea what to expect, but was excited to work with the environment.

I was nervous to work in an office; I'd heard that professional settings in Germany can be very formal. I timidly began my first day, but was greeted by a welcoming team. I immediately felt comfortable and knew fitting in wouldn't be a problem for me. During my first week I got the chance to go on a field trip with a local elementary school class and help teach the students about a local river. It was on this day a coworker of mine looked at me and said, "With us you will see the most beautiful parts of Freiburg." And she was right.

Although I also did some office work, my internship took me to streams flowing through forests, meadows and down mountainsides. For the final 3 weeks of my internship I worked to fight invasive plant species with groups of American high school students traveling through Europe. Somehow, an ocean away from home I was meeting Americans from all over the United States. They were usually quite shocked to find me living in a small city in southern Germany, but I always assured them that my year abroad had been very meaningful.

My internship ended up teaching me a lot; my German improved greatly and I finally felt a stronger connection to the city I'd been living in for a year. I was able to say I'd done my part in improving Freiburg and it made me want to come home and continue to give back to the environment.