

Dear Class of 1955,

I would like to offer you my sincerest thanks for choosing me as a recipient of the Class of '55 Award. Any amount of financial assistance makes all the difference and is appreciated by me and by my parents. Your generous donations make it possible for students who otherwise could not afford to study abroad to experience all that college has to offer.

I went on a program sponsored by the School for International Training (SIT) to India. The program focused on National Identity and the Arts. I stayed in New Delhi for two and a half months and then two weeks in Mumbai. In the first two months I took classes on Indian art and identity as well as prepare for my independent study project (ISP). In class I examined the visual and performing arts of India through seminars as well as participated in intensive Hindi language study. We analyzed the history, religion and arts in order to better understand Indian identity.

The whole program was geared towards the ISP. Classes we took gave us a basis for this month of independent study. I chose to study the street food industry and how it interacts with Indian culture and society. This last month was a tough process but completely worthwhile. I got to practice my Hindi through conversations with vendors and customers as well as learn more independence. During the duration of this program, I have gotten to explore Delhi and Mumbai, take a sunset boat ride on the Ganges in Varanasi, meditate under the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya, see the temples at Khajuraho, observe tigers in Bandavgarh, circumambulate the stupa at Sarnath, create miniature paintings in Jaipur and absorb the beauty of the Himalayan mountains in Mussoorie. But even this is just a small taste of what India has to offer.

Even though people say this often, I have to agree and say that study abroad has seriously impacted my life. It has opened my eyes to the world and its cultures, introduced me to some wonderful students and friends and taught me a lot about myself as well as give me a push closer towards my

future goals. After staying here I know that I want to work outside of the U.S. for a number of years and also I realized through my ISP that I want to learn more about entrepreneurship in third world countries. My time in India offered me an unparalleled opportunity for personal and intellectual growth through its many intense experiences. Thank you for allowing me to have this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Namita Shah