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November 13, 2016
Vienna Summer Program

This summer, I had the incredible experience of living in Vienna, Austria for a month. There is no way I can ever truly thank the people who provided me this opportunity. I am a dual major in German and history, and this trip combined both into an incredible, once in a lifetime experience.

Studying abroad has always been something that I wanted to do. I am fortunate enough to have parents who encourage my learning, and who help me flourish intellectually and as a person. They really wanted to send me on this trip, but I wanted to pay them back, even if it is only small compared to what they have done for me. I wanted to show them that my hard work will pay off. Receiving this scholarship gave me a chance to prove how dedicated I was to school and my majors, and it gave them a chance to send me abroad with little worry about finances.

I have learned that traveling always opens your eyes up to new experiences. Going to the museums in Austria, Hungary and Slovakia reinforced my love of history. When you choose a major in college, there is always a fear that you have chosen the wrong one. But by traveling and learning the history and culture of countries in Europe, I realized that I am exactly where I want to be, doing exactly what I want to be doing.

Every weekday, we would spend three hours studying German with Austrian teachers who were our age. Having the chance to improve my speaking skills in such a unique way is indescribable. I met friends from other countries in those classes, and I took a weekend adventure to Salzburg with a girl who lives in Washington. I could never have had an experience comparable to this without the financial help of the Language Department at West Chester University, or the kind donor of the scholarship money.

One of the best memories of the trip and one of the best moments of my life, was walking around the beautiful Fuschl am See. We found it completely by accident. The weather was dark and gloomy, and I was alone, because my travel companions had other places to be. It was supposed to rain, but I decided to go for a walk anyway. I came out of the forests of Austria, and the sun was shining and the sky was blue. I think about this all the time. There is always a good time to be had, even when it seems dark. Being alone is not a bad thing, but something worth

enjoying. Expect the unexpected. The world is a magical place. Sometimes, you do not even have to look to find the things that you have been hoping for.

I would not trade anything about this trip for the world. It opened my eyes to the things going on around me and the wonders of travel. I hope that it impacts my work someday, and that I can share my love of traveling with others. I truly cannot express how grateful I am. I am honored that I was chosen, and I am so happy that other students can get the chance for the same incredible experience that I had. The world is a stunning place, and this scholarship finally gave me the chance to truly realize it.