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You can join the list of very supportive and generous donors by contacting Barbara Track, Executive Director: Advancement, Alumni and Communications at 416-978-4197 or barbara.track@utoronto.ca.

Summer Abroad Reunion: Coming off the most successful year to date, it is no surprise that this year’s reunion was a tremendous success. Over 500 students, faculty and staff attended the event on October 13th to reconnect and share memories of their experiences from this past summer. Summer Abroad staff is already gearing up for next year’s program.

Legacy giving makes this possible. Valenya Mordanova (BSc 2017 WDW) is studying full-time while pursuing her dream of becoming a pilot. Leave a bequest to Woodsworth, and you too can help students like Valenya realize their passions. Find out more: michelle.osborne@utoronto.ca or 416-978-3846 or gift.utoronto.ca.

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The Value of Planned Giving

Bequest helps students study abroad

Wodsworth alumna Marjorie Simonds (WDW 61) had a long career as a teacher and hence was well acquainted with the value of education. Through a generous unrestricted bequest that she left to Woodsworth College, a scholarship was established in her name for students participating in the Summer Study Abroad Program.

The program provides opportunities for students to travel to exciting destinations around the world and participate in courses which count toward their degrees. The program started in 1972 with one destination in Sena, Italy; today there are 17 destinations offered. Students who have participated say that it is a life-changing experience, especially for those who have not had the opportunity to travel abroad before. This past summer the program saw participation rise to over 1000 students and ten of those students benefitted from the generous scholarships that were made possible through the estate of Marjorie E. Simonds.

Her extraordinary generosity gave the College the ability to meet today’s needs and priorities, adds Michele Osborne, Executive Director Gift Planning, U of T. The Marjorie E. Simonds Travel Award combines her commitment to education and to Woodsworth by supporting students who would otherwise be unable to experience this vital learning opportunity.

To learn more please contact Michelle Osborne, Executive Director, Gift Planning at 416.978.3811 or michelle.osborne@utoronto.ca or Barbara Track at 416.978.4197 or barbara.track@utoronto.ca.

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A Message from Principal Joe Desloges

It has been a very successful and busy time at the College over the fall term. During this time, I have had the pleasure of serving as the Provostial and Vice-Presidential Advisor on International Student Experience these last six months. In this role I have investigated and advised on the enhancement of international experiences for University of Toronto students, including exchanges, study and summer abroad programs, international placements, and other activities. This role was in direct response to one of President Meric Gertler’s three priorities: namely that of creating more opportunities for our students to benefit from an internationalized learning experience and enhance the ability of our faculty and students to meet global challenges.

Part of this effort is to expand the offerings and types of international experiences for students. In this light, it is rewarding to recognize that here at Woodsworth we are at the forefront of these endeavours with our Summer Abroad Program, which each year grows in terms of student participation and global reach.

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will note that we have had wonderful success with our Boundless Campaign – and that the campaign has been expanded to further support our efforts in establishing financial and merit based awards that will help our students succeed. Let me add my sincere thanks to all our donors, whose gifts we truly appreciate.

Wishing you all the best for the year ahead!
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Let me add my sincere thanks to all our donors, whose gifts we truly appreciate. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will note that we have had wonderful success with our Boundless Campaign – and that the campaign is a full-time student and is a member of the cohort of students from sub-Saharan Africa who are part of the MasterCard Foundation Scholarship Program. These scholarships provide funds for students who have demonstrated academic talent and a personal commitment to giving back to their country, but who would otherwise face significant economic barriers to higher education.

First-year student Michael Samakayi is very excited to be at Woodsworth College and the University of Toronto. He is living in residence and is a member of the cohort of students from sub-Saharan Africa who are part of the MasterCard Foundation Scholarship Program. These scholarships provide funds for students who have demonstrated academic talent and a personal commitment to giving back to their country, but who would otherwise face significant economic barriers to higher education.

Michael is from Zambia and faces the additional challenge of not only coming to a new country to study but of being deaf. He became profoundly deaf at age 12 and had to overcome many challenges to securing an education in Zambia. He is excited to now be here in Canada for the next four years and has galvanized those around him to become better acquainted with deaf culture.

Michael, along with Woodsworth’s Office of the Dean of Students, organized three well attended American Sign Language (ASL) and deaf culture information sessions for students, faculty and staff who were interested in learning to communicate in ASL. His goal was also to spread information about deaf culture and to build a signing community so that he could get more out of his courses, socialize and communicate with new friends. This enthusiasm has led to the formation of an ASL club at U of T so that more students can learn to sign. The session on deaf culture was run by instructors from Deaf Spectrum, a Toronto area community organization which seeks to create greater accessibility for deaf communities, by providing services in ASL. (More info on Deaf Spectrum is available on their YouTube channel and Facebook page.)

Michael is grateful to U of T’s Office of Accessibility Services, as he can attend classes with the accompaniment of sign-language interpreters. He is keenly aware that studying in Zambia would have been more difficult. In fact, Michael was inspired to continue his education because he realized that not all deaf people in Zambia had the same opportunities to learn to communicate that he had been given. He would like to “give back to Africa,” a sentiment that forms part of the core MasterCard Foundation philosophy. Michael believes that, “Africa will not evolve into a ‘wonderland’ by itself, but it will be transformed by bright people from Africa, some of whom will be educated through the MasterCard Foundation program.”

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Wishing you all the best for the year ahead!

Wiebke Smythe, who passed away on August 16, 2016, graduated from a mass course student in 1990 and then went on to complete her Masters of Library Science. During her time as a student she was active on the Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students. It was as an alumna, however, that she made her mark. Wiebke spearheaded the annual Woodsworth College book sale and due to her tireless efforts the sale continued for over ten years with all proceeds going to fund scholarships for Woodsworth students. An amount in excess of $200,000 was raised in this way for the College. Wiebke single handedly collected, sorted and organized the books for the sale and spent countless hours in the Woodsworth basement on these tasks.

Wiebke was also very active on the alumni association board, twice serving as its president. She was a steadfast figure around the College and could be spotted on any given day working with determination to ensure the success of any endeavour she put her mind to.

Over the last decade Wiebke lent her talents to a new enterprise: the Bookroom at Robarts Library. Her usual prodigious energy, enthusiasm and will were put to good use in this equally successful project.

A recipient of U of T’s Arbor Award for her volunteerism, Wiebke was honoured by the College with the establishment of the Wiebke Smythe Service Award, in recognition of her many years of service. She was also an Honorary Director of the Alumni Association of Woodsworth College.

Wiebke had a great love for books and learning, and as her Globe & Mail obituary rightly stated, “her spirit will live on in the hallowed halls of the University of Toronto and in the lives of all the students and friends she inspired.”
The College is very pleased to announce that it has surpassed its initial Boundless Campaign goal of seven million dollars. We would like to acknowledge and thank all of our donors for their steadfast commitment to the mission of the College and for continuing to help create opportunities for our students to learn and thrive.

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