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Alumna and Peace Corps Veteran Wins Fulbright Grant to Turkey

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University graduate Teresa Sherman Class of '09 has been awarded a Fulbright grant to teach in Turkey.

Sherman is one of 1,600 U.S. citizens who will travel abroad for the 2012-2013 academic year through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program.

Operating in 150 countries worldwide, the Fulbright program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. Envisioned by U.S. Sen. J. William Fulbright in 1945, the program promotes a mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries of the world. Since its inception, more than 100,000 Americans have studied, taught or researched abroad with the program.

An English-writing and history double major from Mahomet, Ill., Sherman will head to Turkey for 10 months where she will teach English. She will begin her journey this September in Ankara. While in Turkey, Sherman plans to participate in secondary projects within the community as well. “One project idea I am interested in pursuing is volunteer mentoring in the community,” she said, “the aim of this project is to pair English-speaking university students with secondary students interested in learning English.”

Sherman selected the Fulbright program in Turkey as a result of her experience and passion for international education. “I was drawn to the program in Turkey because of the singular way it would require me to implement the skills I have acquired as a cross-cultural English teacher, while allowing me to cultivate my career aspirations in the sphere of international education,” she said.

The idea to participate in secondary projects developed during Sherman’s Peace Corps service in Azerbaijan between October 2009 and December 2011. While teaching English at the Technical and Humanities Lyceum in Agstafa, she was active within the community as well. “In

addition to teaching I did a lot of secondary projects with youth development, including grant work for an interregional boys and girls softball team,” Sherman said. She currently works as a placement specialist for Youth for Understanding (YFU), a non-profit high school international exchange program, where Sherman is able to draw upon her Peace Corps experience. “My current job is great because when I was in Azerbaijan I was helping students get into programs like YFU, now I’m helping students like them on the other side,” she said.

After she returns from Turkey, Sherman plans to attend graduate school and continue to pursue a career in international education. “I hope to start a career working for organizations that share Fulbright’s mission of intercultural educational exchange,” she said.