

GRASP News

April 2017

Alumni Spotlight, a "thank you" from Lydia Fitzgerald

I would first like to thank you again for your support of my education at Virginia Tech. I was honored and very grateful to be awarded the Last Dollar Scholarship in 2014. I apologize for not sending a letter following the spring 2016 semester but I want to take this opportunity [to] get up to date. I will start my last semester at Virginia Tech in a few days and plan to graduate in May with a degree in Crop and Soil Science with a minor in Agricultural and Applied Economics. I plan to attend graduate school for two years upon graduation. I am unsure where I will be attending graduate school but am looking forward to continuing my education.



During the spring 2016 semester I got to take classes like World Crops, Small Business Management, and Soil Genesis. At the beginning of the summer I had the opportunity to study abroad in Ecuador to study food, culture, and agriculture for two weeks. I then worked part time at Up-N-Smoke food truck, volunteered to help with local churches VBS programs, and helped part time with my family's farm. At the end of the



summer I was blessed with another opportunity to travel and study agriculture. I attended AFA (Agriculture Future of America) Crop Science Institute in Sacramento, California for 4 days. I had the opportunity to tour farms and learn about production and processing of the diverse commodities in California. While there I got to network with other students, meet many industry professionals and even got to have dinner with the California Secretary of Agriculture. I returned and started classes with a fresh perspective and a renewed passion for my education.

I really enjoyed my classes in the fall 2016 semester. Some of my favorite classes were Plant Pathology, Soil Fertility and Management, and Production and Consumption Economics. I was able to make dean's list both semesters. Over the fall semester I got involved with the Peer Mentoring Program where I worked with two mentees that were freshman in the life sciences. I continued my involvement with the Block and Bridle club at Virginia Tech, the College of Agriculture and Life Science Ambassador Program, and New Life Christian Fellowship. I also started a part time job working with ADAK Farm Systems.

I am thankful for all the opportunities I have had while at Virginia Tech. I have learned so much in and out of the classroom. My success would not have been possible without your generous support. It has allowed me to take advantage of opportunities and focus on my classes. Thank you again for your support!

Sincerely,

Lydia A. Fitzgerald (Nelson County High School, 2014)

Lydia's current plans include applying and hoping to attend graduate school at the University of Kentucky, and then her goal is to work in Cooperative Extension in either Kentucky or Virginia with a long-term goal of working in international agricultural and economic development.

Scholarship Season is Here!

Spring is an exciting time for GRASP, as we can personally help students understand their financial aid award letters and also encourage students to apply for scholarships, including the GRASP Last Dollar Scholarships. For the past several years, GRASP has been fortunate to be able to award at least one GRASP Last Dollar Scholarship at each GRASP-served school. These scholarships help students who need a little more financial support to make their education choice a reality.

This year, GRASP was also able to establish "GRASP 2+2 Scholarships" specifically for students planning to start their post-secondary education at a Virginia community college and then transfer to a four-year university. GRASP's 2 + 2 scholarship is designed to assist students in receiving a baccalaureate degree from one of Virginia's colleges and universities at a much lower cost and with less debt. Select applicants will be awarded a scholarship of \$1000 for their first year of community college. These scholarships help meet the cost of books, computer or other expenses not covered by the student's financial aid package.

Scholarship committees will be reviewing applications over the next few weeks, and scholarships will be awarded at each high school's awards ceremony.

Many thanks to the GRASP supporters (individuals, businesses, and foundations) who have made these scholarships possible!





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GRASP (Great Aspirations Scholarship Program, Inc.) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, charitable, college access organization that assists Virginia's students and families in reaching their educational goals. Happy Spring!

 4551 Cox Rd., Suite 115, Glen A...

 info@grasp4virginia.com

 (804) 527 7726

 grasp4va.org

