

## PERSONAL STATEMENT

McKenna Domalski, Bulgaria, English Teaching Assistantship

My name is McKenna Alysse Domalski, the only person with this name in the entire world. I hail from Algonac, Michigan, a two-stoplight town located on Lake St. Clair, graduating with my high school class of 140 students. I am the only child of a single mother, and I wouldn't have had it any other way. My mom has been my biggest inspiration, teaching me more in my twenty years about life than most people will discover in their lifetime. After being asked to be a student ambassador at age 11, my mother scrounged up the money to send me to Australia, sparking my love for travel. Since then, it has been my goal to travel to all seven continents. This has led to me investigating the Apartheid and painting an orphanage in South Africa, hiking the Andes in Argentina, going sledding and playing with penguins in Antarctica, working with numerous non-profit organizations in India, and volunteering at a children's shelter in Mexico. The majority of these experiences are through the Michigan State University Study Abroad Program, which has helped me experience and fund some of the most amazing and influential experiences of my life.

The Study Abroad Program was one of the main reasons I chose to come to MSU, as well as to experience the drastic change from moving from a small town to one of the largest colleges in the United States. Going to this university has allowed me to be taught under some of the smartest professors in the countries, some of whom are Fulbright Scholars. My college, the College of Education, is the best in the nation for my program. I have always had a passion for reading, as well as writing, so it only made sense to become an English teacher, and hopefully inspire students to feel the same love for the art as I do. Though I am in my last year at MSU to become a secondary education teacher, I highly enjoy working with students of all ages.

Henry Ford Hospital is home to an organization named Sandcastles, an association that helps children who are dealing with grief. I volunteer at the annual weekend camp they organize, which has been very enlightening and rewarding, especially in seeing the hope it inspires in the kids. I am also a volunteer with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), an organization dedicated to finding a cure for this disease, as well as providing a week long camp for children ages 6-18 who have the disease. Inspired by MDA is Volunteers Assisting the Disabled (VAD), a southeast Michigan organization created to provide a week of camp for adults with Muscular Dystrophy, of which I am also a volunteer and organization board member.

Other than my experiences traveling, working closely with these three organizations, the other volunteers, and those who the camps benefit have affected the person I am today more than anything else in my life. I have developed an unrelenting drive to help others, also inspired by my mother. She has shown me how important it is to give back to the community. Often times, it seems as though I am the one who is truly being helped, and who is certainly learning the most. Interacting with the amazing people I often find myself around and those who I have been fortunate enough to meet through all of my experiences has allowed me to become such a happier, smarter, and more well-rounded student and person than if I had just stayed in my comfort zone; a desk inside a classroom. In fact, the desks in my classrooms are where I learned about the places I wanted to go, and the person I wanted to be. As a teacher, I plan on doing the same for my students. Being a Fulbright Scholarship recipient is the honor of a lifetime; something that I have only dreamed about. Everyone needs a great teacher; someone to look up to and inspire them to be all that they can be... it's my turn to be that person.