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## Student Profile: Meg Maloney

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*University of Dayton*

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# Student Profile: Meg Maloney

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Wednesday September 14, 2016

University of Dayton junior Meg Maloney had an adventurous, eventful summer in the U.S. and abroad. The Chicago native - an environmental biology major with a minor in sustainability, energy and environment - traveled to Sikkim, India, on a study abroad experience through the Students for International Training program. She also conducted research in Dayton with Ryan McEwan, associate professor of biology and the environmental biology program coordinator.

## **What did you do in India this summer?**

During the summer, I farmed and took a course called Food Innovation Lab. The honors program and the Hanley Sustainability Institute sponsored me. I did a research project comparing industrial farming — what we do in the United States — to traditional farming — what they do in India. I would wake up at 5 a.m. and milk cows, feed goats, shuck corn until about 7 at night with my host family. I also helped around my host family's house with their almost 2-year-old son.

## **Tell me about the type of research you completed with Professor McEwan?**

I have an honors thesis that I started freshman year and I research salamanders. There is an invasive plant called honeysuckle that sits on the sides of streams and changes the bugs in the water, almost like it is toxic to them. Salamanders eat those water bugs, so I study how the salamander population is changing. For my research, I had to find a new way to sample salamanders for the Environmental Protection Agency. There are no existing methods to quantify salamander population, so I worked to create a new method for the Ohio EPA and then used that method to continue my research.

**What made you choose this research area, and environmental biology as a major?**

In high school, an awesome friend of mine got me into “herping,” or herpetology, which is the study of reptiles and amphibians. From this, I realized I was really interested in salamanders. Salamanders are kind of mysterious and there is a lot of research open to study them, which I really like. I originally wanted to be a pediatrician until I took a class my senior year of high school. I realized there were so many problems in the environment; with so many people becoming doctors, I felt I was needed more in the environmental field than the medical field. In general, I am more passionate about our environment.

**How has Dayton benefited you?**

Dayton has definitely shaped a lot of the things that I do. It’s a big hotspot for ecological studies. There are a lot of MetroParks around that give me ample opportunity to be outside. I am big on community service and last semester I was presented with the Monalisa Mullins Commitment to Community award for my community service around campus. I did more than 125 hours my first semester of my sophomore year and something similar my second semester. Most of my community service is in restoring wetlands, which I do every Saturday morning. Dayton has helped me discover my passion — restoration and herpetology.

**You are currently training a service dog. What inspired you to get involved in that?**

I cannot really take credit for this. Mary, my roommate, wants to be a veterinarian and became a part of the 4 Paws for Ability program. You get to train these dogs and give them to a family in need, which is really cool. The dog we have currently is named Avias. She is a 1-year-old black lab. Not only do I love dogs but I think it is really cool to be a part of something where you can train an animal who can help someone else in the future. Mary inspired me to get trained and to want to help people.

**What happens after graduation? Career goals? Traveling?**

After going to India, it gave me the itch to continue traveling, just because studying abroad really changes your perspective on things and helps you understand different cultures. After I graduate, I want to apply for the Fulbright program. Through the program, I would go to a different country and help with either a sustainability project or teach English. I want to do that for about a year and then get my master’s in environmental education. I want a career in connecting people to the outdoors.

**What are your long-term goals?**

My long-term goal is to really keep continuing to connect people with the environment. I really want to create a passion in people to start preserving our environment and to learn more about it so we can combat local and global issues in regards to sustainability.

- Dawnn Fann ‘19