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### Student Profiles: Cienna Madrid, Seattle University

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## Student Profile

## She Acts, She Writes, She Cooks

By Sean Reid

Cienna Victoria Madrid has a busy day ahead of her. She has just come off acting in a one act play at Seattle University, has a 10 page paper to write for upcoming finals week, and then must return to campus to work tech for other plays in the evening. That leaves precious little time to purchase a couple of Cadbury Easter Eggs at a neighboring market.

A few minutes later, she cracks one open and bites into it like it was ambrosia.

"I was raised with hippie people, eating soy ice cream before it was good," she says. "When I got to college, it was all Lucky Charms and candy."

The Idaho-born creative writing major finds time for unique bits of joy at her university, but also remains determined to keep busy both in and out of the classroom.

Madrid is one of Seattle University's Sullivan Scholars — a high octane group of students who are awarded full tuition for their excellence in leadership, service and academics. As the pride of SU, Sullivans are heavily involved in extracurricular activities and volunteer work.

"I was never homesick, and I attribute that to the Sullivan community," Madrid says on the beginning of her freshmen year. "It was impossible to have a rough transition when you show up at school knowing 26 really awesome people who are connected to everything."

Those connections drove Madrid to numerous service organizations, notably the Multifaith Works AIDS Project, which assists AIDS patients in their daily lives by helping them with errands or providing social support.

"We had a care partner who was dying of AIDS and was 20, and unfortunately she passed away this past summer. Now we care for her mother, send cards, call to say 'hi' and visit occasionally."

Madrid also maintains an active role in the Sullivan community, in both



## Cienna Madrid

organizing events to introduce new members to campus and planning get-togethers with current scholars. As a strong advocate for the enriching potential of food, she participates in a cooking commune at SU, where students meet three times a week and prepare a meal for one another. "For a lot of people, especially college kids, the only real time to socialize is over meals," says Madrid. "With me I'm either working on something or eating."

Madrid recognizes the vital role bonding time plays in her university experience, convinced that she'd probably go nuts with overwork if the social support wasn't there.

Thus, the dessert party. Truffles, orange slices, sugar drinks, and chocolate dotted the serving table in Madrid's apartment, where a large number of Sullivans and other SU students gather to chat and have a good time. "Desserts are the best food, so we had a party where

we could just eat all we wanted...and we did," she says with a smile.

But back to work. In addition to the plethora of her studies at SU, Madrid is taking a writing course sponsored by the independent news service, Salon.com, and taught by local Seattle writer Dan Savage. The course's best work by a student—pieces that range from opinion to feature writing—will be considered for publication by Salon.

"I've never worked so hard for a class—ever; I've never put as much into my writing as I do there. I love to get really good feedback, as in 'this is what you need to fix' as opposed to 'this is good or bad.'"

This year, Madrid also initiated a return to acting, since leaving it behind in high school to focus on volunteer work. In the one act, "Beauty" written by Jane Martin, she played an intelligent woman who meets a genie on a beach and wishes to become more attractive. The piece serves as a meditation on the concept of beauty, both physical and internal.

As Madrid enters her senior year this year, she plans to parlay her experience working with local community organizations into SU's International Development Internship program. "I'd like to study in Senegal, Zambia, or Tanzania," Madrid says, hungry for a challenge. "It's really hard living in a different country and trying to learn a language. You feel stupid. You talk like a five year old."

Still, as opposed to just studying in somewhere like France, Madrid likes the coupling of service with study abroad. "I'm used to doing things—to get involved and have work. I think that introduces you to the culture more than hanging out and drinking wine."

*Sean Reid is a creative writing major at Seattle University.*