

For the first time in my life, I went camping. I also saw stars and saw the Parliament Building. I learned about the psychology of addictions and realized I want to pursue neuroscience in post-secondary. I also saw a 3D printer in real life and realized the struggle of waking up early for morning lectures. There are so many other firsts I had at SHAD but the biggest first was being surrounded by people who embraced my ambition rather than roll their eyes at it.

Before this July, I never truly understood what SHAD would entail. I assumed everyone accepted into the program was just really smart or very good at writing essays. However, on Sunday, July 5, 2015, I met extraordinary people. I met athletes who were top in Canada and people who programmed software for fun; individuals who were ICDC champions and others who could understand financial reports like another language. However, as I got to know them over the next four weeks, I no longer identified them by their accomplishments. They became my hair twin; the funniest person I've ever met; and above all, my second family. Not only did they inspire me to follow my passions, but the people I met at SHAD embraced my quirks and made me realize that, like them, I am also extraordinary.

The bursary you gave me is more than just money. It is an opportunity. Even though SHAD Carleton 2015 has ended, SHAD is still ongoing. I still talk to my Design Project group every night and I am a member of several rocky Skype calls each week with people from my campus. I support countless initiatives my friends have started and I have begun to teach myself how to code. SHAD isn't just an experience for me; it is a way of life. As cliché as it sounds, I am not the same person that I was two months ago: I am more ambitious, more keen to learn, and more outgoing. The word thank you doesn't even begin to express the scope of my gratitude, so I hope to display my gratefulness by taking what I've learned from SHAD to better this province by studying even harder and learning new things each day.

With your gift, you and SHAD have turned a shy, slightly-altruistic, and occasionally-ambitious teenager into a confident, determined, and over-achieving SHAD Fellow. Without the bursary you provided, I would have never seen stars or considered neuroscience as a post-secondary option. But most importantly, I would have never realized that I too can be a change-maker. Thank you so much for the incredible opportunities you have given not only me, but thousands of other people over the years. We will never forget the unbelievable time we had, and are still having, at SHAD. Our appreciation is unwavering, as is the ambition and potential of the SHAD community.

Sincerely,

SHAD Carleton 2015 Alumni and proud SHAD Fellow