

2005

A Microcosm of the World

Mardi Mileham
Linfield College

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Recommended Citation

Mileham, Mardi (2005) "A Microcosm of the World," *Linfield Magazine*: Vol. 1: Iss. 3, Article 13.
Available at: http://digitalcommons.linfield.edu/linfield_magazine/vol1/iss3/13

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A microcosm of the world



Chantal Rozairo '03

They came from two very different countries and cultures thousands of miles apart. But their common denominator is Linfield College.

Chantal Rozairo '03 of Sri Lanka and Catherine Fegan of Northern Ireland have never met, but they have a common bond: they both studied at Linfield. Rozairo spent four years at Linfield, and Fegan came on a one-year exchange. But their

experiences have some remarkable parallels.

Rozairo had dreamed of studying in the United States and enrolled at Linfield after visiting the college in 1999 while on tour as a World Vision Youth Ambassador. She knew that the experience would change her perceptions and broaden her horizons, but she had no idea how much.

"My core values haven't changed," she said, "but my view of the world and the people in it has certainly changed. The way I approach a situation is no longer so narrow-minded and one-sided."

Studying abroad helped her learn her potential and what she is capable of achieving.

"When you take yourself out of your comfort zone and away from all those you depend on, and you have to stand on your own and succeed, you really learn how much you are capable of and you learn your weaknesses and, most importantly, your strengths," Rozairo said.

Both women were amazed at the accessibility and availability of faculty at Linfield.

"There is virtually no interaction between the lecturer and the students (in Northern Ireland)," Fegan said. "I found the American system much more personal and greatly appreciated the informal approach taken by the professors."

Rozairo enjoyed working on projects, papers and exams that gave a more in-depth understanding of a subject. "The variety of learning methods used in class provided me with a well-rounded understanding of the subject," she said.

Fegan found Linfield to be a microcosm of the world.

"Not only was I in day-to-day contact with Americans, I met students from India, Sweden, Norway,

Japan, England and many other parts of the globe," she said. "I have learned the importance of learning from others up close, and in turn teaching them something about myself and where I come from."

Fegan is now completing the final year of a law degree at Queens University in Belfast. She plans to pursue graduate work in humanitarian law and peace-keeping, preferably in Central Europe and eventually at the United Nations.

Despite her three years at a university in Ireland, she believes her true college experience was her year at Linfield.

"I learned the value of true friendship and the importance of building and maintaining relationships," she said. "I returned home a more motivated, ambitious student with a much clearer idea about what I wanted to do after college."

After graduating with a degree in communication, Rozairo spent a year as a resident director at Fort Lewis College in Colorado and is currently working on her master's in mass communication at the University of Florida. She hopes to work in the non-profit sector, at World Vision or UNICEF.

One of the most valuable lessons of her years at Linfield was learning to embrace diversity.

"The many experiences I had with students showed me how tolerating diversity is no longer enough," she said. "We must embrace our differences and in doing so we learn greatly from each other. The more people are aware of what's going on in the world and have a broader education, they don't tend to jump to quick assumptions. Ignorance makes us fear the wrong people."

— Mardi Mileham



Catherine Fegan, left, creates a jack-o-lantern along with Chinh Hoang '07 from Vietnam and Ina Cronstadt from Sweden, who also spent last year studying at Linfield.