

# OUR D5020 AMBASSADORIAL SCHOLAR FOR 2019-2020 – EMILY PERCIVAL PATERSON

BY HARRY PANJER

From her upbringing in the small Vancouver Island town of Sooke to her outreach work with Indigenous youth in remote areas of Canada's north, Emily Percival-Paterson is driven by a sense of community.

Now, as she pursues a masters degree funded by a D5020 Ambassadorial Scholarship and a Rotary International Global Grant Scholarship, Emily has embraced the support of the Rotary community.

The combined \$30,000USD in funding will allow the 25-year-old Rotary Scholar to pursue her MSc International Public Health, with a specialization in sexuality and reproductive health at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine starting this fall.

Emily said the scholarship has opened the door to an exciting academic opportunity which she hopes will broaden her education on the sexual and reproductive health of the LGBTQ+ community.



*Rotary District 5020 Ambassadorial Scholar for 2019-2020 – Emily Percival Paterson*

“It has changed my path in life in a positive way,” she said.

Emily said she would not have been able to afford a masters degree in the United Kingdom without the help of the scholarship.

“I am so grateful for the scholarship, it has

made all of the difference in whether or not I'm able to [complete my master's degree],” said Emily, who is the first person in her family to pursue post-secondary education. “And it will continue to make a huge difference in the years after I complete it.”

Emily discovered the power of the Rotary community when a generous Rotarian offered airline miles to cover the cost of her travel to and from the UK following an appeal for help at the D5020 Training Assembly and Conference. On top of this, an anonymous donor offered \$10,000 CAD to help defray some of her living costs.

Emily's commitment to making her community better is what earned her the prestigious scholarship. After completing her undergraduate degree in biology at the University of Victoria in the fall of 2017, Emily moved to Ottawa to work as an outreach instructor at Actua, a national charity which prepares youth to be innovators and leaders by engaging them in science, technology,

engineering and mathematics (STEM). In that role, Emily created, developed, and delivered STEM content to youth across Canada, specifically to Indigenous communities in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and northern Ontario.

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Before moving to Ottawa, Emily served as a youth worker supporting young people on the Beecher Bay First Nation in her home community of Sooke. There, she created supportive programming focused on science, civic and environmental engagement, and community health.

As part of the Ambassadorial Scholarship, Emily said she's looking forward to traveling to different Rotary clubs across England to share with other Rotarians the focus of her studies as well as information about District 5020.

“I'm excited to be going as part of Rotary, to be able to cultivate a new community and meet new Rotarians,” Emily said.

## **Testimonial – 2018-19 Scholar Lacye Groening**

Thanks to the generosity of the District 5020 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship and the Rotary Foundation Global Grant, I have been able to pursue a Master of Science in Global Health at the University of Geneva, located across the street from the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

During my Master program, I was able to participate in a variety of research work focused on global health. Some of this research included using digital epidemiology to identify health risks in refugee camps and humanitarian settings and examining the HIV epidemic in the Pacific. For my Master specialization, I spent 6 months in Sydney, Australia at the University of New South Wales focusing on HIV and AIDS. During this exchange, I worked closely with several experts, examining the HIV epidemic in the Pacific region. Alongside my studies, I worked at the University of Tasmania with the Menzies Institute for Medical Research, participating in field data collection for the Childhood Determinants of Adult health study, a cohort study examining how childhood health affects adult health outcomes by following up participants who were screened 30 years ago as elementary children. This job allowed me to travel around the state of New South Wales and contribute to a very important longitudinal study.

When I returned to Geneva from Sydney, I worked at UNAIDS (the Joint UN programme on HIV/AIDS) as an intern for 6 months in the Fast Track implementation department while writing my Master thesis based on this work. My work focused on community health worker programs around the world and culminated in the biannual Programme Coordinating Board meeting where major decisions for UNAIDS are made by all of the member states

involved. Being at UNAIDS also allowed me to attend the 2019 World Health Assembly, where I assisted the UNAIDS Office of Innovation during the launch of the new Health Innovation Exchange, which brought investors and communities together in search of innovative solutions to many pressing health problems. My thesis, which I recently defended in September, was a scoping review focused on the roles of community health workers working toward retention in care for HIV patients.

Following my Rotary scholarship, I have graduated with my Master in Global Health and I am now working for the Washington State Department of Health. In the future, I hope to work in capacity building for community health worker programs and other community-based initiatives.

### **Testimonial – 2016-17 Scholar Dariusz Dziewanski**

Funding from Rotary's Global Scholarship was put towards tuition and living expenses as part of my last year at the School of Oriental and African Studies doctoral programme in Development Studies. In line with the Rotary Foundation's focus area of peace and conflict prevention and resolution, I studied how young men and women from marginalised communities in Cape Town, South African can get out of gangs and street culture. Cape Town consistently makes the list of the world's deadliest cities. In 2018, it had the highest murder rate in Africa, and the eleventh highest globally. Police statistics indicate that over one-third of murders are due to gang-related violence.

The resultant doctoral thesis is being converted into a book with the provisional title: *Beyond The Street: Exit from Gangs in Cape Town*. Other aspects of my doctoral research have been used in academic papers that look at: female

participation in gangs and street culture, hip-hop, gangs, and street culture, gang exit as role transition, and virtuosic street practices of gang members in the context of Bourdieusian criminology. I have also used my engagement around gang issues in Cape Town to write from a journalistic perspective for outlets including *Al Jazeera English*, *Huffington Post Canada*, *The New Humanitarian*, *Ground Up*, *The Daily Maverick*, *Mail & Guardian*, and most recently for an article for the *Globe & Mail* on army deployment into gang-affected communities in Cape Town:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-in-a-cape-town-crackdown-on-guns-and-gangs-south-africans-fear/>.

In parallel to my academic and journalistic endeavours, I have been working for the last decade as a research consultant in international development and humanitarian settings. Over the years, I have worked in Central and South America, South Asia, and Southern, East, and West Africa on topics such as: violence and armed conflict, gangs, gender-based violence, security system reform, rule of law, child protection, public health, and agriculture. The resultant research findings of these projects have been presented academically, as well as in research reports for governments, development agencies, non-governmental organizations, and think tanks. My hope is to eventually return to Canada apply my skills and experience towards Canadian work in international development and/or to work domestically on issues related to gangs.

## **Testimonial – 2015-16 Scholar Katie De Rosa**

My passion for refugee rights came as a result of my print journalism career. A reporting project in Australia, funded by the R. James Travers Foreign Corresponding Fellowship, allowed me to tour several immigration detention centres and speak with refugees about their traumatic experiences during their years-long detention.

This led me to pursue a Masters degree in International Migration and Public Policy at the London School of Economics in 2015-16, which was only possible thanks to funding from the District 5020 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship and the Rotary Foundation Global Grant. During this time, I visited Calais, France to volunteer in a refugee camp known as the Jungle and speak with migrants who were willing to risk their lives to get to the United Kingdom.

I wrote about this experience in the Victoria Times Colonist and spoke about it during my talks at Rotary clubs across England. After I graduated with distinction, I returned to Victoria where I continue to write about refugee and migration issues for the Times Colonist. I also entered academia as a lecturer at Royal Roads University's School of Communication and Culture, teaching a Masters and undergraduate class in Global Communication. I am now in the research stages of writing a non-fiction book for young adults on refugee issues and migration.



### **Testimonial – 2014-15 Scholar Kristiana Bruneau**

I had spent two years working for a youth focused NGO in Swaziland (Eswatini) - aimed at preventing unplanned pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and STIs. One of the key questions that consumed my thinking and that of my colleagues, was - why? Why, given the information presented to young people was it not translating into different behaviours that would help prevent pregnancy or illness? What else was

happening? How better can we engage young people in the communication and design of our health messages?

I enrolled at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg to pursue a Masters in Social Anthropology, with the support of Rotary International, to investigate just that. From 2014-2016 I conducted my field research in Eswatini, to investigate the role of cell phones in the social practice and behaviours of youth romantic relationships - to help inform the integration of cell phones in how health communications strategies could be better designed to reflect common practices and uses, while tackling inequities, and being peer-to-peer driven.

Upon returning to Canada I was hired at a global health advocacy organization, RESULTS Canada, and took on the child health and nutrition policy advocacy portfolio. The job combined with my education and experience in political and health communications, scholarship in sociocultural theory, and understanding of global health trends and global organization processes.

In my 2.5 years in this role, I advanced proven cost effective policy changes within the Government of Canada's international assistance policy priorities, and advocated for alignment on key positions and interventions by the Canadian government at the World Bank, World Health Organization, and at the United Nations - namely the Scale Up Nutrition Movement. I helped to mobilize a renewed resource commitment from the Government of Canada to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) and the Global Financing Facility - a global fund for women's and children's health and nutrition.

Today, I am International Policy Specialist at UNICEF Canada. I am the policy and advocacy lead in child health, nutrition, education, protection and rights. Similarly to my previous role, I help shape Canada's International policy priorities to focus on the critical gaps in child rights and wellbeing, while providing guidance to UNICEF global and partners like GPEI, in their strategic engagement of the Canadian government. Altogether, we work in alignment, to advance our policy priorities, to respond to the needs and wellbeing of every child, everywhere.

