



Canadian Centennial Scholarship Fund

GILLIAN STRESMAN

A PROUD CANADIAN MAKING HER MARK IN THE WORLD OF MALARIA RESEARCH AND EDUCATION



Gillian in Zambia receiving her first ever malaria test.

A current CCSF recipient and PhD candidate at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in London, Gillian found herself a long way from her hometown of Thunder Bay, Ontario while spending significant parts of the past few years conducting almost a dozen research studies in rural Zambia and the highlands of western Kenya in an effort to further understand malaria.

While undertaking a Bachelor of Environmental Studies degree at the University of Waterloo, Gillian developed an interest in how the environment impacts our health. This led her to become fascinated with malaria, a complex disease that still kills almost a million people in Africa, mostly children. The degree programme provided the opportunity for work experiences at the City of Toronto's Economic

Development Office, the Climate Change and Health Office in Ottawa and the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa, all contributing towards her decision to pursue a path in the health science sphere.

While volunteering with the National Paralympic Committee of Zambia in Lusaka, Gillian was encouraged to continue with post-graduate studies. The appeal to return to Zambia to work with an established research facility motivated Gillian to choose Johns Hopkins.

A successful and rewarding two years in Baltimore culminated in her thesis titled "Climate Change and Ecological Risk Factors for Malaria Transmission: Potential Implications for Public Health and Malaria Control." A research publication followed, and helped propel Gillian as a rising scholar in the scientific community researching the disease.

She was recruited as a Doctoral Student at the University of Miami, but a growing desire to work alongside the leading scholars in her field spurred a decision in 2011 to take up a place at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Over the past two years, a combination of time spent in the field, analysing data in the lab and working on her thesis has consumed Gillian's efforts. With her limited free time, she plays an important role on the London Lionhearts women's volleyball team at venues around the city and enjoys the competitive camaraderie shared with her teammates throughout the year.

Now an accomplished and published author of a number of important studies on malaria, including measuring transmission, ecological risk factors for transmission and hotspot-targeted interventions, a desire to remain in London to conduct further research - in either a fellowship or post-doctorate capacity represents Gillian's short term priority.

With a view towards her native country of Canada, Gillian cites the valuable work currently being done by the Canadian Institute of Health Research along with CIDA and sees strong potential for further investment and development of internal capacity in tropical infectious disease research. Her family in Ontario, including parents in Perth and a sister in Ottawa, provide incentive for return trips a couple of times a year.

Grateful for the support she has received from the CCSF, Gillian is proud to represent Canada in the field, in London and at scientific conferences throughout the world - and we look forward to following her progress as she continues to make her mark on the world of malaria research, prevention and education.

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The CCSF helps outstanding students from across Canada who are enrolled in postgraduate programmes at UK universities, colleges, institutes or conservatories. It is a UK registered charity (no. 313966) and is funded by the Maple Leaf Trust.

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