



my compositions. I also had extra homework from these classes, so for a week, I was attending 5 hours of class and working outside of class for about 4-5 hours.

The rural location of HCC was a major asset to the program because it facilitated interaction with local Greek speakers rather than English-speakers and tourists. My speaking skills improved significantly this summer, thanks to my making friends with Greeks on the island and spending the majority of my personal free time with them rather than the students that the school who were not comfortable expressing themselves in Greek in social situations.

The breadth of my learning experience in Ikaria went beyond language improvement because the island offered me copious outlets for academic and personal enrichment. My stay in Ikaria followed a class I had taken at New York University over the summer which thoroughly familiarized me with issues of gender, sexuality, ethnicity and migration studies and touched upon techniques for ethnographic research. Consequently, my trip to Ikaria offered me an opportunity to test the techniques for research in ethnography that I had studied in class. The time I spent away from my books was naturally channeled to my informal first attempt at field research.

On my third day in Ikaria, I made friends with—or rather, was “adopted” by—an older couple with whom I had coffee almost every morning for the remainder of my stay on the island. Not only did this offer me invaluable language practice, but it placed me in a advantaged position for ethnographic research because I was not referred to as a ???? (foreigner). Rather, I was included in the village in a way similar to the young adults that live in Athens or the States, but return for the summer. Having discovered my passion for ethnography, I hope to one day return to Ikaria to do formal research on topics such as the construction of Greek (and specifically island) sexuality and the summer as a place of convergence between diasporic identities and permanent Ikarians.

Sincerely, I cannot thank the Foundation enough its support of my studies this summer. By the end of the program, I had reached my goal of being able to speak and write on a wider array of topics, with significantly increased vocabulary and grammatical accuracy and, most importantly, without hesitation. Furthermore, my summer in Ikaria was a turning-point in my life because I realized that I would like to live and work in Europe when I graduate. The fellowship was pivotal to this end because I am confident that with my continued language work at Yale, I will be able to apply for internships and programs in Greece next summer. I wish to convey the deepest gratitude to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation for this invaluable opportunity.