Student Scholarship Winners
By A of A Awards Committee Chair, Binnie Schuman Donald, Ed'61

On a January evening each year, the Penn Association of Alumnae welcomes the Rosemary D. Mazzatenta Scholars Award recipients along with the administrators of the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships. Sophomore and junior women students are invited to the Sweeten Alumni House for this enlightening program.

Each of the 2012 Mazzatenta award recipients pursued a summer internship abroad and/or research relative to her academic pursuits at Penn, and each student gave a very fascinating TED-style presentation about her experiences. This presentation style encourages speakers to be lively and informative while also remaining very concise.
Carthi Mannikarottu, a junior in the College from Albany, spoke about her internship where she lived, worked and did research with a medical staff in the village of Vakkom, near Kerala, a small state in the southernmost tip of India. Her work focused on the idea of a standardized health registry in rural India. Carthi described how she visited homes to learn about different families’ health practices, issues, and concerns, then used that information to map information and look for patterns in the region. She emphasized how one can use technology to aid healthcare and education near understaffed rural health centers, but also emphasized the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Autumn Patterson, a Penn senior in the College from Harrisburg, used her Mazzatenta award last summer to help support her internship at the Embassy of the United States in Ankara, Turkey. She worked for the Foreign Agricultural Service, the diplomatic branch of the US Department of Agriculture. In her talk, Autumn reported on her responsibilities, which included helping promote fair economic policy, trade and sustainable agricultural practices in West and Central Asia. Autumn will continue her involvement with international service during her graduate education as a Thomas R. Pickering Fellow, and will enter the United States Foreign Service as a diplomat for our country in 2015.

What wonderful, worthy projects, and what spellbinding presentations! It is always a real treat for the Board to have the opportunity each year to interact with current Penn undergraduate women, and to hear about the winners’ amazing projects. Dr. Wallace Genser and Dr. Harriet Joseph from Penn’s Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships shared very helpful information with the other students about the opportunities and wonderful services that their department provides year ‘round. Some of the intelligent, determined, and innovative young women in the audience may be offering their own presentations to A of A in the near future. For now, we join them in congratulating the 2012 Association of Alumnae Mazzatenta scholars on their incredible accomplishments.