

Meet Our Latest District 5170 Global Grant Scholar . . .



Carson Smith is from Chicago and a tribal citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. She is a fourth-year student at Stanford University, where she majors in Political Science, minors in Native American Studies and will receive honors in Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law. Carson acts as a co-chair for the Stanford American Indian Organization and a Social Justice Fellow at the Native American Cultural Center at Stanford. Additionally, she also sits on the Advisory Committee for the Native American Rights Fund's Indigenous Peacemaking Initiative. Her research has primarily focused on culturally-competent conflict resolution mechanisms, called Peacemaking, in tribal communities throughout the United States.

Outside of her Peacemaking work, she is often completing community service through working with tribal communities. She has gone to the Rosebud and Pineridge reservations to learn about culturally-based healthcare and education initiatives and volunteer with Native youth in the area through organizations including the YMCA. Additionally, she has worked with her tribe as they developed their Peacemaking system and is currently collaborating with tribal communities through her honors thesis on Peacemaking. The results of her thesis will be provided to all of the tribal communities she is working with so that they may apply these findings to their Peacemaking systems. On an international level, Carson has presented her work and the importance of cultural methods of conflict resolution at the Caux Conference on Just Governance for Human Security in Switzerland. While there she built relationships with other indigenous peoples around the world and learned about their communities and cultures.

In the autumn, she is excited to begin a Master in Philosophy in Socio-Legal Research at Oxford University. Her area of focus is Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution with a specific goal to end ethnic tensions. At Oxford, she will research the impact of restorative justice mechanisms on indigenous and immigrant communities. One of her primary goals is to create meaningful, trusting, and reciprocal relationships with these communities. After her study and research at Oxford, she would like to earn a law degree in the United States with an emphasis on international human/indigenous rights and criminal law. In her future career, Carson hopes to advocate for cultural justice mechanisms on an international scale.

When she is not studying or giving back to the community, Carson enjoys writing poetry, collaborating on short stories with her friends, and learning new board games. Her role model is her Dad, and her motto in life is "Family Is First." When she received the news, she wrote, "This week has been really exciting for me and my family. My Dad even started to tear up when I called him about the Rotary Scholarship. I cannot thank you and the Rotarians enough for the profound impact you and Rotary have made on my life." She wants to stay connected with Rotary throughout and after her study at Oxford.