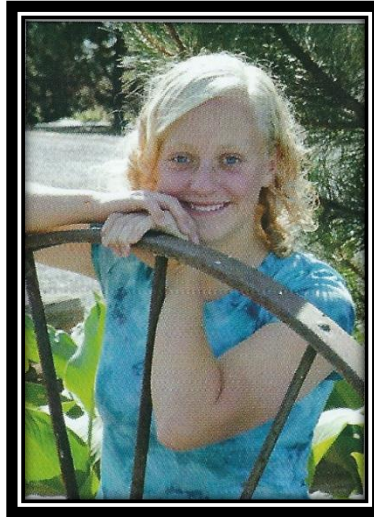
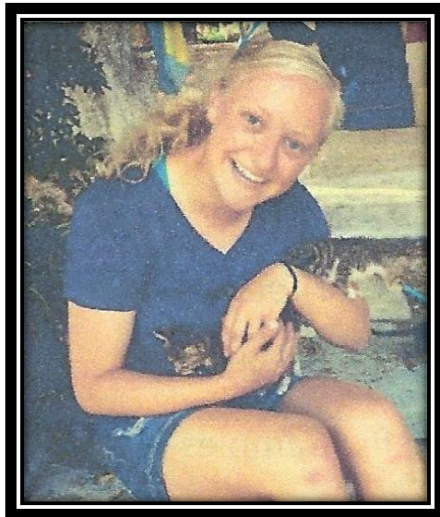


***Kari Inch Class of 2011***  
***Ephrata Alumni Association Noted Alumni***



Kari Inch was a very active student while attending Ephrata High School. She was a member of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Family, Community, Career Leaders of America (FCCLA), the Spanish Club, and the National Honor Society.

Kari was a four-year letter winner in soccer; named three times to first team all-league and was named second-team all-state honors in her final season. She finished second in state while competing with the Columbia Basin United club soccer team and also played on the Yakima Sun City Strikers team.

As a three-year letter winner in track & field Kari ran the 100 and 200-meter races and joined team mates in the running of the 4x200 relay and the 4x400 relay.

Kari believes: *"Hard work pays off. If you give 100% on and off the field there is always a reward".*

(Kari Inch in 2011 Tiger Annual)

**After graduating from Ephrata High School, Kari...**

...attended Saint Martin's University in Lacey, WA where opportunities in soccer and biology enticed her. She was a member of the Biology Club, Beta Beta Beta Biological Honor Society and 13 Letters Bible Study.

...played four years on the Saint Martin Saints' women's soccer team; achieving Great Northwest Athletic Conference honorable mention player award and named as a FAR Scholar Athlete.

...completed a Study Abroad Program in Tropical Ecology and Conservation in Perth, Australia; taking ecology classes at Murdoch University and researching the giant clams of Ningaloo Reef. She snorkeled with whale sharks and swam with manta rays while taking her first scuba diving lessons that led to a PADI Open Water Certification.

...graduated from Saint Martin's University with a degree in Biology and received a prestigious award from the Biology faculty of the university.

...served an internship with the Washington State Department of Ecology before heading to the University of Essex in Colchester, England where she received a Master's Degree in Tropical Marine Biology; graduating in 2017. Her studies for this degree took her to Samos Island in Greece as well as to the Hoga Island in Indonesia. While in Greece, she collected data for her master's dissertation which was published in a scientific journal in 2018.

...returned to the states and obtained PADI Rescue Diver and Dive Master Certification before heading off to be an Intern Marine Biologist at COMO Cocoa Island in the Maldives where she busy establishing a recycling program and reef clean-ups. After a brief return to the States to obtain her PADI Master Scuba Diver Instructor certification, she currently resides at Conrad Rangali Island in the Maldives, where she works as a scuba instructor and marine biologist. She is introducing and educating people from all over the world to marine life; stressing the importance of respect and care for this fragile and threatened ecosystem.

*"If we all do our part, however small, what a difference it will make in preserving this beautiful ecosystem!"* (Kari Inch in the Maldives)

## Study Abroad at Saint Martin's

As she strapped on her snorkeling gear and dove into the water, Kari Inch felt a combination of nerves and excitement. She had never swum with a whale shark before. Once she plunged into the water and swam alongside the 27-foot whale shark, she felt something she didn't expect—a sense of peace.

Since childhood, Inch has been fascinated by two things: the ocean and Australia. Her love for the ocean and the animals that live in it led her to marine biology. “Not many people think about how even the simplest of actions can have the most detrimental effects on marine life,” Inch reflects. “I want to [find](#) a way to make people more aware of their actions so marine life can preserve and thrive.”

At Saint Martin's, Inch took her passion for marine biology to a new level. “I chose Saint Martin's primarily because they had a strong biology program, and class sizes were small,” she says. “I wouldn't just be a number.” Inch pursued her marine biology dreams from the get-go, but it wasn't until her junior year that she realized her [study abroad](#) dreams could come true. “I often thought of Australia as a trip I would eventually take in my future, but I began to realize that it would always be that ‘eventual trip’ unless I made it a reality.”

When Inch began her search for the right study abroad program, Study Abroad Director Brenda Burns was there to assist her. “The past four years at SMU has really taught me the meaning behind hard work, dedication, and perseverance,” Inch recalls. “I realized that even if I didn't always have the confidence in myself, someone else did.” Burns helped Inch to explore her study abroad options, apply for the CIEE Marine Biology program and arrange to earn Saint Martin's [credit](#) for her study abroad courses. In addition, Burns encouraged Inch to apply for the SMU International Experience [award](#), a \$500-\$1000 award that funds Saints' study abroad experiences.

Through studying abroad, Inch turned her marine biology and Australia dreams into a reality. Snorkeling with whale sharks was just one of many adventures in her five-week program. She also swam with manta rays, petted kangaroos and took scuba diving lessons that led to an Open Water Diver certification. She took marine ecology classes at Murdoch University in Perth, visited the nearby town of Fremantle and researched the giant clams of Ningaloo Reef.

Studying abroad surprised Inch in more ways than one. It offered not only the chance to study marine life of Australia, but also a sense of community and camaraderie, with both American students and local Australians. “You would pass someone on the street and they would stop and asked how you were,” Inch recounts. “You actually had a conversation with the person instead of saying something in passing.”

She still laughs about the first day of scuba diving: “Everyone had their gear on and we were about to go underwater in the pool we were training in and everyone was looking from one person to another with the same look on their face like, ‘you go under first!’ It was terrifying but so much fun at the same time!”

For Inch, Australia was a chance to discover a new culture and experience her passion for marine biology in a new way. When she returned to the U.S., she returned with an even stronger desire to learn about other cultures and to make a difference in the world as a future marine biologist. “Although it can be a little scary at first, as it was for me, it is so worth it,” she recalls. “Without this opportunity, I wouldn't know what Australia was like, let alone what it would be like to swim with some of the most fascinating animals in the ocean.”

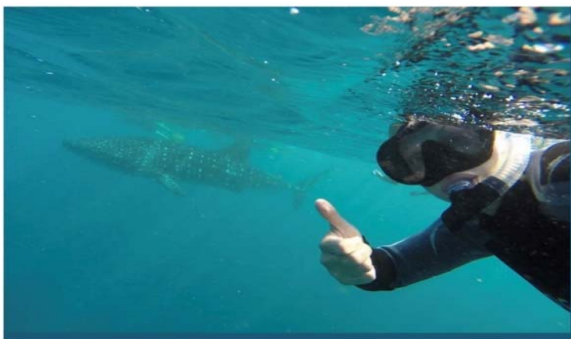


Kari Inch Class of 2011

Little did Kari know what was in store for her after graduation from Ephrata High School in 2011! With a love and curiosity for the ocean, after living next to the ocean and experiences from early academic years in Santa Barbara, CA., Kari chose to attend Saint Martin's University in Lacey, WA., where opportunities in soccer and biology enticed her. While at Saint Martin's, Kari played all four years on the women's soccer team while pursuing her biology degree. With an interest in marine biology and with the support and approval of Saint Martin's, she completed a Study Abroad Program in Tropical Ecology and Conservation in Perth, Australia. She took marine ecology classes at Murdoch University, visited the nearby town of Fremantle and researched the giant clams of Ningaloo Reef. Snorkeling with whale sharks, swimming with manta rays, petting kangaroos, sightseeing and taking her first scuba diving lessons that led to a PADI Open Water Certification, were just a few of the many adventures. During this experience, she realized how enriching it was to study with other students from around the world and her passion and concern for marine life and conservation.

[www.stmartin.edu/news-events/saint-stories/swimming-sharks](http://www.stmartin.edu/news-events/saint-stories/swimming-sharks)

## SWIMMING WITH SHARKS



"Although studying abroad can be a little scary at first, it is so worth it. Without this opportunity, I wouldn't know what Australia was like, let alone what it would be like to swim with some of the most fascinating animals in the ocean."

Kari Inch  
Biology  
Class of 2015

Study Abroad at Saint Martin's

As she strapped on her snorkeling gear and dove into the water, Kari Inch felt a combination of nerves and excitement. She had never swum with a whale shark before. Once she plunged into the water and swam alongside the 27-foot whale shark, she felt something she didn't expect—a sense of peace.

In 2015, she graduated with honors with a degree in biology from Saint Martin's University and received the Rosalind Elsie Franklin Award, an award given to a biology major and chosen by the biology faculty. A year of work experience was in order before her next step. She worked as an intern and then an Environmental Technician at the Washington State Department of Ecology conducting product testing on children's toys, while also volunteering with the marine monitoring unit collecting water samples, preparing fish samples for toxicity analysis, and separating marine invertebrates from sediment samples. After further exploration and a desire to pursue a Tropical Marine Biology degree, Kari headed to the University of Essex in Colchester, England, where she received her MSc and graduated in 2017. Her field studies, while at Essex, included Reef Check scuba surveys on Hoga Island in Indonesia and time on Samos Island in Greece as part of the Archipelagos Marine Mammal Team, participating in photo-identification surveys of short-beaked and common bottlenose dolphins. It was while in Greece that Kari collected her data for her master's dissertation, which was published in a scientific journal in 2018, along with advancing her diving skills by becoming a PADI Advanced Open Water diver.



### ***Short-Beaked Common Dolphins***

Upon her return to the states, she accepted a summer position with Malibu Divers, in Malibu, California, obtaining her PADI Rescue Diver and Dive Master Certification. She then spent the summer on Catalina Island, working for Malibu Divers as a Dive Master, at one of the largest Boy Scout Camps in the world, Camp Emerald Bay.

During her time on Catalina she applied and was hired for a 6-month Intern Marine Biologist position, at COMO Cocoa Island in the Maldives. Her position at Cocoa included working with the resident marine biologist on monthly house reef surveys of sedentary and mobile sea life, monthly coral fragment measurements of coral lines, assisting with sea turtle and manta ray identification, marine educational presentations, the rescue of several injured sea turtles, and taking guests from all over the world on



snorkel and scuba excursions. She will tell you her biggest accomplishment though was not in her job description, but the establishment of a recycling program at the resort and beach and reef clean-up days!



***Seagrass Surveys***



***Beach Clean Up Crew***

The collage below includes a photo of Kari and Emily (resident marine biologist) tending coral lines, taken by Henley Spiers, a visiting Photographer, which was entered in the 2019 World Oceans Day competition where it took first place in the category, "Gender and Oceans." World Oceans Day is celebrated on June 8 every year by the United Nations and other international communities, which come together for the conservation of oceans. For the year 2019, the theme was 'Gender and the Ocean'. As everyone is fighting for gender equality, the international communities are finding possible ways to promote gender equality in ocean-related activities such as marine scientific research, fisheries, labor at sea, migration by sea and human trafficking, as well as policymaking and management. This picture was incorporated into the collage which was used as a backdrop at the conference.



When she wasn't working, you could find her traveling or practicing and playing soccer with the men's team, a first for these Maldivians and a real eye opener to the opposing teams! It was not easy to obtain

this respect and to be allowed, as a woman, to play in the Maldives, but a door she hopes she has opened for other women who would like an opportunity to play.



***COMO Cocoa Soccer Team***

This past summer Kari returned to Malibu Divers where she obtained her PADI Scuba Diving Instructor Certification, and several other specialty certifications, and used that training once again at Camp Emerald Bay, instructing scouts and others not just with diving but educating and teaching them the importance for the care of our oceans and respect for the habitat and marine life they enjoy on their dives.



***PADI Instructor Certification/Kari with PADI Dive Examiner***

A return to the Maldives in October finds Kari at Conrad Maldives Rangali Island where she has been hired as a Marine Biologist/Scuba Instructor and will spend the year. Her daily office tasks include educational marine presentations, scuba diving instruction, almost daily swims with whale sharks, when they aren't in hiding, manta rays, sharks and all sort of other marine life and introducing and educating people from all



over the world to marine life- stressing the importance of respect and care for this fragile and threatened ecosystem.



***Manta Ray***



***Scuba with the Garibaldi***

If you ask Kari what's next, she isn't certain, but this she does know: she loves travel, has seen the effects of global warming first hand, is sickened by the tragic effects of garbage and toxic chemicals on our marine life and the marine ecosystem and knows change must happen now! We must cross whatever boundary separates us and work together to reverse the damage that has been done, as this is the only way we are going to preserve what we have. Kari hopes to do her part whether that be in a small way or hopefully together with others, as she will tell you, "if we all do our part, however small, what a difference it will make in preserving this beautiful ecosystem!"

Who would have ever imagined these possibilities and this future at graduation in 2011!

