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**Charles Darwin**  
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# Galapagos Travel *Final Report*

**19 years of supporting Galapagos  
conservation stars.**

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## Overview

In 1994 Galapagos Travel began a scholarship program with the Charles Darwin Foundation in conjunction with Galapagos Conservancy to train local (Galapagos resident) and national (Ecuadorian mainland) students. During this time, Galapagos Travel funded 13 local conservationists and scientists to conduct important research in the archipelago and report on the results in their thesis. Funds contributed to costs such as living allowance, travel and the printing and publication of thesis papers. Many of the scholarship students throughout the program have gone on to work on major conservation projects in the Galapagos in organizations such as the Charles Darwin Foundation and Galapagos National Park Service.

On the following pages we provide an update of the 13 students who were funded by Galapagos Travel and a thank you from some of the people involved.



Photos from left to right: Diogenes Aguirre, Angela Kuhn, Carolina Angermeyer, Abraham Loaiza

## Personal Accounts

### Johannah Barry: President, Galapagos Conservancy



“In 1994, Galapagos Travel began the first travel-company sponsored initiative in Galapagos. The idea of ‘giving back’ to the local community, while now a fairly standard tool in eco-travel marketing, was an innovative and forwarding-thinking decision and over the years, Galapagos Travel and its passengers have provided over \$175,000 in scholarships to a range of young people who have gone on to leadership positions in Ecuadorian and US universities and as importantly at the Galapagos National Park.

The value of this investment by Galapagos Travel cannot be overstated. Creating capacity in now two generations of young people in Galapagos has significantly enhanced conservation and science in the islands. The work that the GT scholars have undertaken has also provided for important personal growth and transformation for these young people. Galapagos Conservancy has been honored to serve as program administrator for this scholarship program since its beginning and we owe a special debt of gratitude to both Barry Boyce and Mark Grantham whose leadership and encouragement has marked this program as the longest running travel-supported program in Galapagos.”

### Swen Lorenz: Executive Director, Charles Darwin Foundation



“It is a privilege to highlight my support of this program as well as to honor the students and volunteers who have passed through the doors of the Charles Darwin Foundation throughout the last 19 years. As a long-term supporter of youth projects in the Galapagos Islands, I’m aware of the critical need to increase local capacity the importance which volunteer and scholarship programs have in reinforcing conservation goals. Galapagos Travel’s support of 13 students to study at the Charles Darwin Foundation has given many Galapagos residents and Ecuadorian nationals the opportunity to get a head start in their professional careers, and in many cases, provided a springboard to working in major organizations where their skills and experiences undoubtedly make a difference to the “bigger picture”.

Only by engaging the community and harnessing local and national talent will we be able to conserve the islands for future generations. Galapagos is the real winner of this program’s successes and its impacts which be felt for years to come. Thank you to Mark Grantham and his team for contributing to two decades of CDF Galapagos conservation projects and I wish you and your staff much success in the future.”

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**Jennifer Suárez: Former Galapagos Travel Scholarship Student, now CDF Marine Scientist**

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“This scholarship allowed me to finish my thesis - the final requirement for graduating as a biologist. I put into practice the theoretical knowledge learned throughout my studies which gave me the confidence to develop as a researcher. I now have an important role in protecting the Galapagos Marine Reserve from invasive species and have had several opportunities to support senior scientists in the publications of reports and scientific journals.

biodiversity. I will always be thankful to Galapagos Travel for getting me started on my professional journey!”

As someone who was born in the “enchanted islands”, I am enormously proud of my job in protecting this archipelago’s unique biodiversity.

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**Diana Salazar: Former Galapagos Travel scholarship student, now Environmental Consultant**

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“Thanks to the grant awarded from GT, I could finish my undergraduate thesis. During my 8 month scholarship, I got to know the REAL Galapagos Islands for the first time and spend time working on a research projects involving the adorable Galapagos sealions! Since graduating, I have worked on frontline projects which directly support the conservation of the Galapagos Islands. I’ve been able to put into practice a lot of the theory I learned as a student such as environmental management and planning as well as managing the human impacts which are so important in modern day Galapagos. Now I work full time as an environmental consultant and I’m pleased that I’m at the stage in my career where I have the experience and knowledge to pass on my expertise to other organizations and stakeholders.”

As someone who was born in the “enchanted islands”, I am enormously proud of my job in protecting this archipelago’s unique biodiversity.

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**Alizon Llerena: Former Galapagos Travel volunteer student, now CDF investigator in charge of the CDF land iguana project**

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“When I worked as a Galapagos Travel funded volunteer at the Charles Research center, the land iguana captive breeding program was fairly new. Now 20 years later, iguana numbers have been restored to such a point that we do not need to raise more individuals in captivity. The land iguana captive breeding has had great impacts on the restoration of reptile numbers in the Galapagos Islands and is often used as a concrete example of a successful conservation model.

always be grateful to Galapagos Travel handing me that original opportunity when I was a volunteer.”

It’s so important that organizations such as Galapagos Travel provide funding opportunities to help new Ecuadorian professionals gain experience in conservation. Personally speaking, the GT program allowed me to get started as a Galapagos scientist and I have gone on to lead CDF reptile projects which strive to conserve these iconic species. I will

## Galapagos Travel scholarship students and volunteers since 1994

Name of student/volunteer	Scholarship/student type	Course studied	Thesis title	Current position
<b>Gabriel Redin</b>	National	Sociology with minor in Development	<i>"Nature and Religion in Galapagos"</i>	Unknown
<b>Jennifer Suárez</b>	Local (Galapagos)	Biology	<i>"Biologic communities in the mangroves of Isabela, Santa Cruz and San Cristobal"</i>	Works in the Marine Science area of CDF
<b>Angela Kuhn</b>	National scholarship	Oceanography	<i>"Effect of temperature on the rocky subtidal communities of the Galapagos Marine Reserve"</i>	Undertaking a Masters degree in Canada
<b>Abraham Loaiza</b>	National scholarship	Biology	<i>"Ecology and feeding behavior of the mangrove finch"</i>	Unknown
<b>Carolina Larrea Angermeyer</b>	Local (Galapagos)	Biology	<i>"Movement, dispersal and reproductive success of the Flightless Cormorant in the Galapagos Islands."</i>	GNP Licensed Naturalist Guide
<b>Diana Salazar</b>	Local (Galapagos)	Biology	<i>"Food Ecology of the Galapagos sea lion (Zalophus wollebaeki) on the Caamano Islet"</i>	Environmental Consultant in Quito
<b>Diogenes Aguirre</b>	Local (Galapagos)	Biology	<i>"Ethological aspects, anthropogenic influence and distribution of Lava Gull, an endemic species of the Galapagos Archipelago"</i>	Planning technician Galapagos Governing Council (Consejo de Gobierno)
<b>Alizon Llerena</b>	National volunteer	Chemistry and Biology	N/A	CDF Herpetologist, specializing in Giant Tortoise and Land Iguana Research
<b>Fernando García</b>	National volunteer	Biology	N/A	Biology Teacher in a school in Guayaquil, mainland Ecuador
<b>Javier Morán</b>	National scholarship	Geoengineering	<i>"Biogeography and seasonal distribution of Giant Tortoises, Santa Cruz Island, Galapagos".</i>	Unknown
<b>Milton Yacelga</b>	National scholarship	Biology	<i>"Methodology to improve the survival of endangered Marine Iguana populations"</i>	Wildlife Biologist-Research Associate, California
<b>Paola Buitron</b>	Local (Galapagos)	Biology	<i>Evaluation of the breeding program and distribution of the population of land iguanas on Baltra, Galapagos Islands, from 1980-1997"</i>	Works for the Ministry of Tourism in Galapagos
<b>Washington Tapia</b>	Local (Galapagos)	Biology	<i>"Current status and seasonal distribution of giant tortoises Of five hills, Cinco Cerros, Cerro Azul volcano, Isabela Island, Galapagos"</i>	Responsible for the management area of the Galapagos National Park