

Application for the 2007 Lambaréné Schweitzer Fellows Program

Program Description: Each year since 1979, the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship has selected four senior medical students to spend three months working as Fellows at the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Lambaréné, Gabon on clinical rotations. Fellows work as junior physicians, supervised by Schweitzer Hospital medical staff. Fellows generally spend the full rotation on either the Pediatrics or Medicine service. The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship provides complete funding for students (airfare, room, board, immunizations). Previous Lambaréné Schweitzer Fellows have received academic credit for their experience according to their school's policy.

Many Fellows have found their three months to be among the most valuable of their medical school career, and several have reported that their lives and career plans have been changed in major ways by their experiences in Lambaréné. Upon returning, Fellows will join a network of over 1,300 Lambaréné and U.S. Schweitzer Fellows – the *Fellows for Life network* – who are dedicated to maintaining service in their personal and professional lives.

Time Period: Two Fellows serve from May 1, 2007 - July 31, 2007 and two serve from August 1, 2007 - October 31, 2007. Dates are not flexible. Students who cannot guarantee full participation during these dates should not apply.

Eligibility: Medical students from schools affiliated with the U.S. Schweitzer Fellows Programs (Baltimore, Bay Area, Chicago, Delaware Valley, Massachusetts, NH/VT, North Carolina, or Pittsburgh), who have completed their third year are eligible to apply. Fluency in French is required.

Fellowship Requirements:

1. Complete three full months of service during the dates specified.
2. Attend a day-long orientation retreat in Boston on March 24, 2007.
3. Submit monthly reports by email during the rotation.
4. Submit a five to ten page final report documenting and reflecting on your experience within 60 days of return to the United States.
5. Publicize the work of The Schweitzer Hospital, and health care in Africa more generally, and recruit potential new Fellows through a presentation at your school about your experience at Lambaréné.
6. Help plan and lead the orientation of new Fellows in March 2008.

Skills/Experience:

1. Because all patient encounters occur in French, a working knowledge of that language is *absolutely essential*.
2. Prior completion of clerkships in medicine, pediatrics, and surgery are required.
3. Some background or coursework in tropical medicine or parasitology is important but not a prerequisite.

To Apply: Submit a two to three page letter that explains your interest and goals in applying for the Lambaréné Schweitzer Fellowship and your experiences interacting with other cultures and in speaking French. We encourage you to reflect on the ways in which you anticipate a fellowship in Lambaréné might broaden your experience and shape your future life, how you might contribute to the hospital, and what it might mean for you to belong to a network of "Fellows for Life."

Include your resume and the names and telephone numbers of two references.

If possible, include the name and contact information of a faculty member at your school who might serve as a liaison or mentor for you in this elective.

Deadline: Applications for the 2007 Lambaréné Schweitzer Fellows Program must be emailed to dreber@bidmc.harvard.edu by December 15, 2006.

Interviews: The Albert Schweitzer Fellowship will interview qualified candidates in Boston on January 15, 2007. Conversations in French will be part of the interview.

For questions and to submit applications, contact:

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Perspectives from Lambaréné Schweitzer Fellows:

This fellowship has changed my life... I cannot adequately express my gratitude for the life-altering experience that was this fellowship. Completely against my expectations, I did find my own Lambaréné, rather than visiting someone else's.

- Ethel Weld, 2004 Lambaréné Fellow

This experience will certainly serve as a reminder of fragility and inequality of life...a reminder that health care is not a privilege but a basic human right. Schweitzer's "reverence for life" philosophy serves as a perpetual example of how a single individual truly actualized humanism and love in this world and he didn't even begin until he was well into his 30's.

-Benjamin Gilmer, 2004 Lambaréné Fellow

My interest in community health has been strengthened. I was impressed with the work of the Protection Maternelle-Infantile, and enjoyed my time working directly with the villagers to prevent disease before it happened. Overall, the experience reinforced my sense that my natural intellectual interest lies in questions of public health, and I look forward to finding ways to combine my clinical work with an attention to larger societal determinants of health.

-Kohar Jones, 2003 Lambaréné Fellow

Towards the end of my stay, I started to envy the German researchers for their opportunity to stay in Gabon for nine months or more. I simply did not want to leave. Had I been given the chance to extend my stay, I would have taken it without hesitation. It is still not entirely clear to me why I found my daily work in Gabon so gratifying. Seeing children get better, parents' gratitude and learning to trust my clinical instincts certainly played a role. As a consequence, I can easily picture myself in similar settings in years to come.

- Elizabeth Shae Whitacre, 2002 Lambaréné Fellow