

## profiles: today's students

### Empowering Kids Through the Media

**C**ara Lisa Powers considers herself “really, really lucky” and says that entering Goddard’s Individualized Master of Arts Program led to a transformation that allows her to integrate the varied aspects of her life.

“I can pursue my master’s and not put my life on hold,” she says. “My life gets to make sense together.”

Focusing on empowerment through media education, Cara says the central question to her graduate work is, “How can young people of the hip hop generation use media to organize for a more just and sustainable future?” This has led her to explore social justice, sustainability and ways “to reengage a disenfranchised youth population.”

A self-proclaimed wearer of many hats, Cara also runs her own program, the Youth Media Institute, at Project: Think Different, a media arts empowerment organization in Boston.

“It was a synergistic fit from the beginning,” she says of her job, and she is an energetic wealth of information on the subject of empowering young people and using the media as a means for social change.

She cultivates a variety of projects that aim to create positive content for the media as well as holding the media outlets accountable for media bias. Workshops, forums, community discourse and creative projects engaging youth are all aspects of her work.

She also is a member of the executive committee for What’s

Up? magazine, a publication concerned with social justice, art and activism. A life-long love of poetry informs much of her work.

Her relationship with Goddard began a number of years ago, when she worked as an AmeriCorps volunteer and shared an office with a student in Goddard’s IBA program. This eventually led her to her graduate endeavors at Goddard.

### Saving Paradise

**A**s the heimong (high chief) of Tobi, and one of the few Western-educated environmentalists in Palau, I was tired of feeling disenfranchised with the environmental movement in Palau,” says Sebastian Marino of his decision to enroll in Goddard’s Individualized Master of Arts Program.

He had also seen that the environmental agenda for Palau, an island nation in the Pacific, was set by outside experts who didn’t understand its traditional resource management systems.



“It’s vital to me to understand myself as a whole person, to live holistically, so that I never have to hit the ‘stop’ button,” she says. “I have performance work, legislative work, grant writing, my job ... I don’t have to compartmentalize any of it. Goddard has been huge in helping create that dynamic.” ■

—ARTICLES BY  
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“Nor did they recognize that it was the existence of these systems that has allowed Palau to remain the pristine paradise that they have come to ‘conserve.’”

Sebastian enrolled at Goddard as part of his effort to build a conservation program for Tobi, a small coral island that is the remotest place in the Palau Republic. The island is less than a quarter of a square mile, with its highest point less than 20 feet above sea level.

“I have been focusing on indigenous conservation practices and traditional environmental knowledge,” Sebastian says of his Goddard studies.

His efforts also come in to play in his work as chairman of the board for the Helen Reef Conservation Area, which is part of Tobi and one of the largest conservation areas in Palau. Helen Reef is an atoll, a ringlike coral island that encloses a lagoon,

Sebastian Marino’s studies are fueling a conservation plan to save Tobi, a biodiverse coral island in the Pacific. Here, Sebastian sails to Tobi (visible in the background).



Cara Lisa Powers, a student in Goddard’s IMA program, runs a program in Boston that uses the media as a tool for social change.

and one of the most biodiverse atolls in the Pacific, with a significant turtle nesting site and bird rookery. The area is being threatened by global warming, poaching and erosion, and the community is working to protect it. Sebastian and the Helen Reef board are negotiating with Conservation International (CI) to establish a “conservation concession agreement” to extend the legislation governing the area for 25 to 30 years. In return, CI will raise funds to support conservation and community development activities on the atoll.

“To me the most exciting aspect of this work is that the conservation area will be managed based on traditional management practices,” he says, “so we will be able to preserve not only important biodiversity but also to preserve our culture and traditions.” ■