



**The Zdeněk Bakala Foundation
wishes you a new year full of
joyful discoveries**



Research ambitions

give way to an investment career

Martin Bernát, a recipient of the Zdeněk Bakala Scholarship, has finished his studies abroad and joined a budding Czech investment company, where his responsibilities include analysis and acquisition management. How does this compare to his goals when he was 18? "My plan was to do research, to start a university academic career. I did work in research for several years, in fields like synthetic organic chemistry; physical, computational, and theoretical chemistry; and chemical and mining engineering. The Foundation gave me enormous support at a time when I was beginning to realize that academic research and laboratory work were not ideal, as I had initially thought, and I was looking for something else to do." Fortunately, Martin's study abroad provided him with a wealth of experience and knowledge, with which to launch his career. As he put it, "I gained technical expertise, creativity in problem solving, and the ability to learn. I learned to work in teams of people with diverse opinions and views, to be open, self-confident, and humble. And, last but not least, I gained the capacity for rational critical thinking that I rely on every day. When I first stepped out of the tube in the center of London, fresh out of secondary school, I was swallowed by the crowd in Tottenham Court Road, feeling for a while that I had bitten off more than I could chew. Today, London is my second home where I have many close friends." Martin's message to students heading for studies abroad is: "Never underestimate yourself. As long as you are open to new experience and you never give up, things will work out." Pictured is Martin during his spring-break trek in Tiger Leaping Gorge above the Jinsha River in China.



Simon Havas among sharks

Simon Havas, another Bakala Scholar, is a descendant of Czech refugees who sought refuge in New Zealand during World War II. Now, he is studying in New Zealand, where during Christmas time trees like the Pohutukawa, the country's national tree, are in bloom and the streets are full of blinking Christmas lights and festively decorated evergreen trees. Simon is something of an adventurer. Indeed, he is pictured here with a seal at Tauranga Marina, on his way to the White Island volcano. Early this month, when Simon found a problem on his boat, he spent two days anchored off a deserted island. The Zdeněk Bakala Foundation's support has enabled Simon to harness his passion for maritime adventure by moving to Tauranga, where he is participating in a Ministry of Education-sponsored program aimed at giving future marine biologists like him, as well as aspiring divers, an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the ocean. So why is Simon pursuing a degree in marine biology? "The sea is unique. I believe that each and every one of us is connected to the sea by the mere process of inhaling and exhaling. My ambition is to become its protector, a respected Czech ambassador for saving the ocean and what is left in it." For more information about Simon, or any of the other Bakala Scholars, visit www.facebook.com/bakalascholars