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## Fearless Friday: AnnaMarie Houlis

AnnaMarie Houlis  
*Gettysburg College*

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## Fearless Friday: AnnaMarie Houlis

### **Abstract**

Constantly working to make open and safe spaces on campus for women to speak up and receive support, using her writing and journalism skills to find and spread the word about social injustices affecting women, and taking the initiative to start her own women's justice blog, AnnaMarie Houlis '14 uses her creativity and passion to help those not just on campus, but globally.

### **Keywords**

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, inequality, justice, change, journalism

### **Disciplines**

Inequality and Stratification | Sociology

### **Comments**

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](#) Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

# SURGE

[ VERB ] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

## FEARLESS FRIDAY: ANNAMARIE HOULIS

May 2, 2014

Constantly working to make open and safe spaces on campus for women to speak up and receive support, using her writing and journalism skills to find and spread the word about social injustices affecting women, and taking the initiative to start her own women's justice blog, AnnaMarie Houlis '14 uses her creativity and passion to help those not just on campus, but globally.



On campus, AnnaMarie not only works as the Editor in Chief of the newspaper, a director at the campus radio station, and a peer writing tutor at the Writing Center, she also serves in the Women's Center as the Sexual Assault Awareness Program Coordinator and Educator. "Most of what I do is about raising awareness," says AnnaMarie. "I've been going around to the first-year meetings the first Sunday of every month to give different presentations on sexual assault and patterns in abusive relationships so that people know what to be looking for. I also have open office hours for women to come and talk to me if they have any issues."

AnnaMarie has been able to combine her passion for social justice issues with her love of writing and media, not just in terms of being a Journalism in New Media major with two minors in Writing and Women and Gender Studies, but also in starting her own social justice blog called HerReport, a site devoted to covering international women's news.

"It's kind of a long story, but HerReport started because in the fall of 2012, I studied abroad in Morocco. Part of our program was writing extensive journal entries, and I ended up writing six feature-length articles about

different issues, specifically focusing on Fashion Week in Morocco. I did 50 interviews in French and Arabic and ended up with a great story. So I started pitching my article to magazines—a lot of magazines. I actually got an interview with Vogue Turkey, but then they told me they weren't going to take my article because, since it was about Morocco, it wouldn't be relevant for their audience.



“Then I started pitching it to the Times and smaller papers for a year. I'd get a few interviews, but all anyone kept saying was that 'no one will want to read this,' 'no one cares,' 'there's just no audience for this.' But people should care! The woman I focused on in my article is a human with a great story to tell! So that's when I decided to start HerReport and create my own platform to share her story.”

Since starting HerReport, the website has gotten viewers from over 100 countries across the globe, as well as an average of 4,000 unique visitors each month. “I try to publish bi-weekly, and I always make sure that I have at least one interview for each article. I never just post my own opinion. And I'm absolutely obsessed with this blog—it's my favorite thing to do.”

AnnaMarie's experiences in Morocco and in creating HerReport have also led to her create a documentary called the Revolution of Moroccan Fashion (original title in French), travel to 13 different countries, go back to Morocco on a Mellon grant, and meet interesting women everywhere she goes.

“You know, I've had a lot of different internships at magazines and media organizations,” says AnnaMarie, “where all I would be writing about were mom jeans and skinny jeans and stupid crap like that. All that's dull to me and I feel like it doesn't really matter. Being a journalist and being a woman, I feel like it's important for me to try to get more media coverage of women that actually talks about women and women's issues in meaningful, powerful ways.”

Currently, in addition to all the groups and organizations AnnaMarie participates in on campus, she holds a freelance position for the Veritas News Network and is doing investigative reporting for them.

“I just did my first report for them on human trafficking in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania is actually ranked the 9th in the country in terms of human trafficking, and received a grade of 'F.' I had no idea that human trafficking was a such a huge issue here, and I'm really glad to have had the opportunity to write about such a large human rights issue like that.”

AnnaMarie's devotion to her passions for writing and justice, her initiative in creating her own blog to tell the underrepresented stories of women, and her use of media to promote change and awareness make AnnaMarie an invaluable leader on the Gettysburg College campus, as well as a globally minded leader. Her abilities to think critically, ask the right questions, and tell the stories of the women she meets make her a role model for those around her, and a leader in bringing more social justice issues into the media.

<http://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com/2014/05/02/fearless-friday-annamarie-houlis/>