



Emma Smith named to Forbes' '30 Under 30' list

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by Diane Craig

Sounder Contributor

Former Orcas resident Emma Smith was recently named to the prestigious Forbes' "30 Under 30 European Technology List."

Smith, 26, is the co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of the Berlin-based startup Eversend, a mobile-wallet payment system for African consumers that makes it easier and cheaper to send money through mobile phones and saves the user up to 20 percent in transfer fees. According to the Forbes website, the start-up "has transferred \$5.4 million for more than 9,000 users."

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Attending Orcas Island Christian School from 4th through 10th grade, Smith spent her junior year abroad, followed by a two-year study program in New Mexico at the United World College, from which she graduated in 2012. Her studies at UWC fueled an interest in international politics, a path she followed to a Bachelor of Arts/Science degree from Duke University, where she also studied Arabic and fell in love with the African continent.

Smith received a Master of Arts/Science degree from the London School of Economics, where she studied international economics and coding. While attending graduate school, she met a fellow student who frequently sent money back to his family in Africa, always with difficulty and always expensive. Together, they developed the mobile application that became the startup Eversend. Smith makes her home between Paris and Berlin.

Smith's selection by Forbes means that she will be attending the World Economic Summit in March in Jordan.

She credits her mission trips to New Mexico and Costa Rica during her years at Orcas Christian among the influences on her career. But her biggest influence is the Orcas Island community.

"I want everyone on the island to know that my global mindset is because of them," she told the Sounder. "They showed me how to live with intention, how to be a good citizen and how to be a good person. It's the people on the island who made me who I am today."

Her mother, Orcas Islander Lynsey Smith, also has high marks for the island's teachers.

“Our island educators are the true heroes that mentor and shape our ‘30 under 30,’” she said.

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