

CCF visits Kenya, sponsors school

Organization gives money and support to Kenyan school

BY BETHANY COURY
Assistant Features Editor

No showers for a week, school all day and homework at night in the middle of nowhere: This isn't Truman finals week but rather the week 15 members of Campus Christian Fellowship journeyed to Africa.

CCF is four years into its five-year contract with the Africa Hope program to sponsor the Elangata Enterit (E.E.) school in Kenya. Members of CCF collect and send about \$600 a month to E.E. through Africa Hope (a campaign they call Spare Change for Life Change).

From May 13 to 27, CCF went on its fourth annual mission trip to E.E..

CCF's Kenya intern, alumna Chelsey Hickerson, has gone on all four mission trips to Kenya. Hickerson said they stay

at the school for a week, in tents with no showers. They usually assist the teachers in the classrooms, help the kids with their homework at night and sometimes bring supplies and build desks. Then, they stay at Africa Hope's base in Narok for a week, helping with building maintenance and college campus projects.

She said they do whatever the school needs while in Kenya, but the relationship CCF has with the E.E. school is most important.

"We organize the trip

every May, so it's not just a paycheck in the mail, it's a relationship," Hickerson said. "Most of it's about awareness. The school especially is out in the middle of the bush, and the government doesn't typically care about the school. It's a really big deal that people across the world know who they are, and when we introduce ourselves we're like, 'Hi, our friends and families send their greetings,' and they clap, like that's the coolest thing ever. It's all about the relationship."

Hickerson initially had little desire to go on CCF's first trip to Kenya, but after the interest meeting, she said she felt God was asking her to do it.

"So it just kind of happened," Hickerson said. "And when I'm there it's like, this is not the end of my time here, I'm coming back. I think God really made it clear that my time was not done after each trip, and the friendships weren't done."

After that first trip, she was hooked.

"There's just something while I'm there — I've never felt more out of place and more out of my comfort zone and yet more at home and where I belong," Hickerson said. "It just feels right."

For senior Amy Schloss, who went on the Kenya trip for the first time this May, the fellowship aspect was the most significant.

"I think the building relationships part was the most meaningful of the

whole experience," Schloss said. "Like, getting to know the kids there and getting to see how they live there, and then it helps us come back to CCF and share our experience and get people to help donate."

Schloss said she was impressed and surprised by the children's contentment in E.E. She said their lifestyle was completely different than the materialistic American lifestyle, but at the same time, they're so much happier.

"There, they have like a little pencil that's broken and a notepad, if they're lucky, and they're just so content with what they have," Schloss said. "When I was coming back to America, I was thinking I could just give away everything I own and be fine. When I was over there I was thinking about it — all this stuff I have and what they don't have, and I was like, 'Why can't I just give it all away and live like that?' I'd probably be happier."

Senior Angie Whitlatch also went on the mission trip for the first time this May.

She said although she thought the mission trip sounded interesting, she didn't think going was something she could do, having never been overseas.

"But it was like a feeling I couldn't get rid of," Whitlatch said. "It was this gut feeling that I had to go, which is so cool, I never had that direct sense."

Whitlatch said she loved every part of the trip. They ran into a few glitches — they weren't allowed to roam much at night, as territorial elephants moved in a fourth of a mile from their tents — but she never felt scared, due in large part to the villagers, who eagerly welcomed them into their culture, she said. Like



Photos courtesy of Angie Whitlatch

Senior Angie Whitlatch went on the CCF mission trip to Kenya this May and said she fell in love with the culture and hospitality she found there. CCF sends money and provides school supplies for the students at a school they sponsor there.

Schloss, she was impacted by the lifestyle in E.E.

"They were sharpening pencils with razors — no sharpeners," Whitlatch said. "And they were shar-

ing pencils. Here we have an abundance, and if our erasers are gone, we throw it away. But there they hold on to every single thing they can. They have rough

conditions ... it kind of put me in my place — I'm a spoiled American, we all are."

Debate team promotes peace, sends instructional video to Afghan schools

Female members don saris to respect traditional culture

BY ALEX CARLSON
Staff Reviewer

Four members of the Truman Speech and Debate team were invited to Lawrence, Kan., to participate in an unusual debate on Aug. 28.

Team members senior Sarah Backhaus, sophomore Jessica Petrie and freshmen Haley Sawyers and Andrew Schupick participated in a presentation video for Afghani debate students alongside the debate team from Washburn (Kan.) University. The project was organized to promote non-violent methods of constructive debate and conflict

resolution through dialogue.

Three Kabul universities will use the video for a pilot program and for training both students and faculty in other universities in the region, according to the press release for the event.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems sponsored the video. Diana Carlin, University of Kansas professor and IFES member, served as the debate specialist.

Truman Presentation Sponsor Kevin Minch said that unlike other

debates the Truman team has been involved in, cultural sensitivity and respect was a crucial matter for the participating students.

In addition to discussing a relevant topic for the audience, the female members of the group were required to wear clothing similar to traditional Afghani women's in order to respect traditions of the Afghani culture.

"There were certain things that we needed to adjust in terms of appearance," Minch said. "The

motivation for adapting dress was motivated largely by making a variety of different people in different parts of Afghanistan comfortable."

The selected debate topic also was made especially relevant to the audience in order to involve their own customs, lifestyles and environment to the debate process.

"The debate was designed to reflect cultural norms in Afghanistan and also talk about a topic that was relevant to Afghanistan, which was the issue of employment while in college," Minch said. "So the debate needed to be framed in a context that reflected what their lives are like. The people delivering the debate needed to speak at a rate that is more intelligible and use language and references that can be more eas-

ily picked up on by the students than them just watching a tape of a debate by Americans about some American policy."

Minch said the Truman team proved enthusiastic about the experience, holding the uniqueness and contributory nature of the event to be major driving forces behind their involvement.

"It was a good experience," Minch said. "It was a different kind of debate than [the Truman students] were used to."

Backhaus said she hopes viewers will learn the power of free speech and critical thinking from the video, as well as be inspired to challenge the norm.

"It seemed like it would be an enjoyable experience," Petrie said. "It would be something that would be very beneficial for the debate team in Afghanistan."



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