

SIUE students take off for first travel study in Uganda

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EDWARDSVILLE - A five-week trip to Uganda will offer the first passport stamp for many of the eleven Southern Illinois University Edwardsville students participating in the University's first student travel study in Eastern Africa from May 30 to July 4.

The international service experience is the finale of some of the students' academic journeys, as they complete a bachelor's in public health from the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior (SEHHB) in August. Others are pursuing a bachelor's in either speech language pathology and audiology from the SEHHB or international studies from the College of Arts and Sciences.

"We are thrilled to launch this global opportunity for students as we continue developing a long-term partnership with Ndejje University in Uganda," said Michelle Cathorall, DrPH, assistant professor of public health. "SIUE public health students will be placed in groups with Ugandan students and will travel with them to outlying communities to complete needs assessments, program planning, implementation and evaluation activities."

Cathorall will accompany the students, as will Kathryn Brady, PhD, associate professor of speech-language pathology and audiology.

"Speech-language pathology students will visit a number of different facilities, including schools for children with disabilities, rehabilitation centers, schools for the deaf, and community organizations working with children with disabilities," Brady said.

Participating students include international studies major Lauren Pruitt, of Alton, along with public health majors Cheyenne Durham, of Swansea; Brianna Reed, of Chicago; Chelsea Franklin, of Greenville; Mica Coleman, of Pawnee; Haley Adrian, of Auburn, Ala.; and Arné Burns, of Mascoutah; and Mikayla Colenburg, of St. Louis.

Speech language pathology and audiology students traveling to Uganda include Katherine Wilson, of St. Louis; Brianna Bowles, of O'Fallon, Ill.; and Sarah Geatley, of Cedarhill, Mo.

The students have already begun documenting their experience through blog posts and a video journal. They can be accessed through the faculty pages of Drs. Cathorall and Brady at siue.edu/~mcathor/international-travel-study/Uganda/travel-study-student-blogs.html and siue.edu/~kabradyl/2018-travel-study-in-Uganda.html.

"Not only will this experience allow me to see the world, but also gain experience in my area of study while providing services for individuals in the communities we'll visit," said Bowles.

"It has been a lifelong dream of mine to study abroad," added Burns. "I'm most excited to become immersed in a different culture. I can't wait to meet new people, make new friends, try new foods, and see the land and animals."

“I’ve told people, and myself, that someday I want to work internationally in the field of disease epidemiology,” Adrian explained. “This will be my first test to see if that is something I truly want to do. I’m excited to gain insight in the public health field and see how Ugandans deal with the burden of disease from policy and research standpoints.”

During a January visit to Uganda, Cathorall and Brady finalized plans with Ndejje University and Katalamwa Cheshire Home for Rehabilitation Services. They also explored service and sightseeing opportunities for the participating students.

The students will spend a weekend painting the Namulonge Health Center, a small underfunded facility that services a variety of health needs to community members, including HIV education, prevention and treatment, midwife services and more.

The village of Namulonge is the site of public health and education work provided by Project Restore, an Edwardsville-based organization founded and directed by Catherine Keck. The work done by Project Restore laid the foundation for the relationship between the Department of Applied Health at SIUE and has allowed us to make connections that would otherwise have taken years to make. Painting the health center is one small way that SIUE faculty and students are trying to give back to the community to support and continue the work Project Restore is doing.

“It’s kind of intimidating to take action, but it’s time for us to step up and implement what we have learned,” said Coleman. “I want to help everyone I can during this trip, and I know it will make a lasting impact on my life.”

“I hope to come back as someone who has realized how big the world is compared to what we see every day,” added Colenburg.

The [SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior](#) prepares students in a wide range of fields including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.