

**Sources:** David Westfall, davidwes@k-state.edu;  
and Corinne Christopherson, ccorinne@k-state.edu

**News tip:** Manhattan, Newton, Summerfield, Topeka and Wichita, Kan.; and St. Louis, Mo.

**News release prepared by:** Stephanie Murray, 785-532-2535, media@k-state.edu

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### **Students heading to Uganda for summer research, service**

MANHATTAN -- Seven Kansas State University students will spend their summer making a difference in the East African country of Uganda.

The students will be conducting research and doing a service project. David Westfall, doctoral candidate in sociology, is the leader of the team.

Westfall has traveled to Uganda several times over the past few years while researching his dissertation. Early in 2012, at the request of numerous students, Westfall began to explore the possibility of taking several students with him to help perform research. His department quickly jumped on board, and put Westfall in touch with the university's International Service Teams program to aid in planning the trip.

Six undergraduate students were selected and, along with Westfall, are now working with the International Service Teams program to prepare for the trip. Among the biggest challenges the students have faced are raising funds for the trip and preparing for the things they will see and experience in a country deeply affected by poverty and still recovering from civil war.

"My personal biggest challenge has been raising the money," said Corinne Christopherson, a senior in kinesiology from Wichita. "But for the group, I would say the most difficult part has been getting prepared. There's no curriculum they could really provide to truly prepare us for what we're going to see and hear."

The team will be leaving in late May, and will spend 10 weeks conducting ethnographic research. They will examine the effects on the local people of the Lord's Resistance Army, an insurgent group that was responsible for atrocities throughout the country nearly a decade ago.

In addition, Westfall's group has partnered with M-Lisada, an orphanage in Kampala, Uganda, and will do volunteer work for the orphanage and the local community. They also will get the chance to open a new relationship between Kansas State University and Uganda as they work with their hosts to establish a new long-term service site for the International Service Teams program.

Westfall said that while the students will make a huge difference in the lives of the people they will meet, this trip also will have an irreversible impact on their own lives.

"It has been a humbling experience to not only see the enthusiasm from previous students, but also the level of support and hard work put forth by numerous people at K-State," he said. "Creating the ability for K-State students to receive real-world, hands-on experience is priceless -- training they could never truly duplicate in the classroom. In addition to conducting timely and important research, the students will also assist an orphanage in one of the poorest areas of one of the poorest countries in the world. The stories, experiences and connections made on this trip will fundamentally alter the way these students view the world. The red dirt of Uganda has a way of dyeing one's soul."

To raise money for the trip, the team has created a campaign on the crowd sourcing site [indiegogo.com](http://www.indiegogo.com). In return for donations, the students are providing donors with thank you gifts based on the size of the donation. More information about the project, including how to donate, can be found at <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/Uganda-2013--3/x/2443516>.

Along with Christopherson, students accompanying Westfall on the trip are:

Grant Kohlmeier, junior in history, **Manhattan**; Chase Fortune, junior in pre-journalism and mass communication, **Newton**; Maggie Burger, senior in anthropology, **Summerfield**; and Anna Clary, senior in horticulture, **Topeka**.

From out of state: Danielle Crossland, senior in social work, **St. Louis, Mo.**

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