

# College of Notre Dame nurses help in Tanzania

As part of the global nursing program at College of Notre Dame of Maryland, 15 registered nurses will bring their medical expertise to Tanzania Oct. 5-19 - providing hands-on assistance while learning about key health care concerns in the East African nation.

The nurses, who are earning master's of science degrees in nursing at the Baltimore college, will provide first aid and health assessment classes in Karatu. They will also participate in health education classes for pregnant teenage girls abandoned by their families, while helping with health screenings in village dispensaries in the region.

The students will provide staffing hours at Lutheran Karatu Hospital and Catholic Maternal Child Center. Some will work in a village wellness program operated by Towson's St. Joseph Medical Center.

"We will be working with NGO (non-governmental organizations) to understand how health care is organized in that country," said Barbara Friend, assistant professor and coordinator for global nursing at Notre Dame.

The biggest health care problems in Tanzania stem from poverty, Friend said. Non-potable water leads to gastrointestinal illnesses. Malnutrition, pneumonia in the elderly and infant death are other challenges, she said.

Participants will gain invaluable cultural insights that will increase their sensitivity as health care providers, the professor explained.

"There's a worldwide migration going on right now," said Friend, who visited Tanzania in July. "We are seeing a cultural mix like we've never seen before. This program will help students better understand where people are coming from."

Students will receive credits for their clinical courses and they will complete assignments and research projects while in Tanzania.

Notre Dame is seeking partners willing to donate stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs with monometers, digital thermometers, textbooks for nursing and vitamins. Those who give monetary gifts of \$25 or more will receive a hand-beaded bracelet from Tanzania as a token of appreciation.

The nursing program at Notre Dame has reached out to other parts of the world. Last year, 10 students visited Canada to compare and contrast that nation's health care system to the one in the United States. There will be a trip to Australia and New Zealand in June, focused on nursing leadership.

Notre Dame is one of just three nursing schools in Maryland to offer students and international learning experience.

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