

Northwest

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS TO LAST A LIFETIME

FAMILY

► SEPTEMBER 2009 • VOLUME 16 • NUMBER 5



Northwest students presented school supplies to the Panamanian teachers during their service-learning trip in July.

► INSIDE

- Students learn through travel in Colorado and Panama
- President Jasinski era begins at Northwest

Non Profit
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Maryville, MO
Permit 215

MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHWEST
N
Division of Enrollment Management
800 University Drive
Maryville, MO 64468-6001

Alumna on “Target” with career in retail management

Only one year after graduation, Northwest alumna Robyn Thomas is on the fast-track to corporate success.

Since receiving her degree from Northwest in 2008, Thomas has worked as executive team leader at the Super Target store in Liberty. She manages personnel, delegates tasks, works with human resources and generally makes sure things keep running efficiently. Thomas says there are a lot of things she enjoys about her job, but that the people she works with are her top priority.

“I love working with people. I’m in charge of 250 employees in this store, so I get to deal with people all the time, whether it’s personal or work-related,” she said.

Thomas has already gained respect from colleagues beyond her own store. In addition to her responsibilities in Liberty, she also trains future executive team leaders for other Targets in the district.

Like many college seniors, Thomas was nervous about finding a job after graduation, and, after talking with a Target representative at a campus Career Day event, she began to look more deeply into opportunities with the national retail chain.

“I was impressed with the company in general,” she said. “I



Robyn Thomas

did some research on how long they’ve been in existence, as well as their sales and economic growth, and I knew they were going to be around for a while. I was impressed with the people they hire as well – everyone is really positive, and it’s fun to come to work. Target also has a great track record of letting you develop at your own pace. You can take your time, or you can work hard and start moving up the ladder quickly.”

Thomas credits Northwest with preparing her for professional success. As a former public relations major, she is especially grateful for the instruction and hands-on experience she received as a student in the University’s Department of

Communication, Theatre, and Languages.

“In any job setting you’re going to have to be able to communicate to succeed,” Thomas said. “The experience of getting up in front of people in class, giving presentations and putting what I had learned into practice was a huge help.” ■

Grad credits Northwest faculty for K.C. Board of Trade career

Smithville native Keath Coleman came to Northwest in 2004 to play college baseball, but he ended up finding his most valuable success in the classroom, not on the diamond.

After his first season Coleman decided baseball wasn’t for him, and he began to wonder if he’d made the right decision in becoming a Bearcat. After a semester at a community college, however, he realized that Northwest was the place he belonged.

Upon returning to Maryville, Coleman was still feeling restless and grew uncomfortable with his choice of a major field of study. After bouncing around a bit between various academic options, he finally settled on management information systems and never looked back. Earning his degree in May, Coleman is now an up-and-coming employee with the Kansas City Board of Trade.

“I was hired by KCBT as a Systems

Administrator,” Coleman said. “I implement and maintain the technical architecture that supports their core business functions.”

Landing a job with a company as well known as KCBT straight out of college is quite an accomplishment, especially in tough economic times, and Coleman said he owes a debt of gratitude to Northwest for helping him prepare for this success.

SEE COLEMAN, page 3

Grad combines high-tech skills with love of farming

Growing up in the rural north Missouri town of Skidmore, Kandi Jenkins always felt connected to farming and farm life. Now, just six months after graduating from Northwest, she is working at the forefront of agriculture technology.

Jenkins’ initially chose Northwest because of its location and size. Growing up in a small town left her with little desire to attend a big college in a big city, and she didn’t want to get too far away from home. Northwest was always a strong possibility, she said, but it wasn’t until settling firmly on a career path that she made the final decision.

“Northwest’s agriculture program is pretty well known,” she said. “When I decided I wanted to major in ag, I knew it was a good place for me.”

Jenkins’ decision to attend Northwest was, in large part, based on the hands-on experience she knew she would receive at the R.T. Wright University Farm.

The North Farm, as it is often called, is a 750-acre spread where students and agriculture faculty maintain a beef herd, produce market lambs and conduct a farrow-to-finish swine operation. North Farm crops include corn, soybeans and hay, and the site also provides opportunities for students to perform soil analysis and global positioning research.

Actual farm experience coupled with the opportunity to plan her academic and professional future with the help of a caring, qualified advisor are two big reasons

for her success at Northwest and beyond, Jenkins said.

“I had a really good advisor while attending Northwest,” she said. “Having someone to advise, mentor and give direction was great.”



Kandi Jenkins

Part of Jenkins’ college experience included a course in managerial communication, during which she worked on a project that focused on job and career Web sites. Jenkins set up accounts on a variety of sites and, during her research, discovered a recruiting company

called Volt Technical Resources.

Through Volt, Jenkins landed a job as a customer support representative with John Deere Ag Management Solutions. A December 2008 graduate of Northwest, she now spends her days working with John Deere customers, dealers and farmers to discover how technology can help them

Northwest’s agriculture program is pretty well-known. When I decided I wanted to major in ag, I knew it was a good place for me.

– KANDI JENKINS

maximize efficiency and profits.

“The GreenStar system provides precision farming products that optimize efficiency in our customers’ farming operations,” Jenkins said. “Our products include displays; aids for guidance,

accuracy and section/rate control; and software. These components are designed as an integrated part of John Deere equipment and can be moved from machine to machine to get the most out of your investment.”

Jenkins’ journey to the forefront of agriculture technology was long and demanding, and she credits Northwest Missouri State for providing the educational opportunities that made it possible.

“I love the products that John Deere Intelligent Vehicle Systems has come out with. It’s amazing what they can do with technology, and I really enjoy being a part of it.” ■

COLEMAN

“Due to the current economic conditions, it was very challenging to have a job lined up prior to graduation. However, I was one of the lucky ones. The company contacted a Northwest faculty member for a recommendation,” Coleman said.

“I stress to current students that it is very important to establish a relationship with instructors, because you never know when one of them might get that call, and when they do, you want your name to stand out.”

More than anything, Coleman said, it was the expertise and dedication of Northwest’s faculty that allowed him to jumpstart his career after graduation.

“Northwest taught me how to learn, how to think and how to solve problems,” he said. “I appreciate the faculty and staff and their willingness to help. I cannot express how much I appreciated my instructors throughout my career at Northwest. My hat goes off to them.” ■

Service learning in Panama and Colorado

Panama experience is 'life-changing' for Northwest psychology students

A recent trip by a group of Northwest students and faculty to a Panama City, Panama, school for at-risk students was a life-changing experience, according to Dr. Carla Edwards, chair of the Department of Psychology, Sociology and Counseling.

Edwards, who was one of the four faculty members and four undergraduate psychology majors to make the trip during the first part of July, said she hopes future service-learning initiatives will continue to offer hope, help and new opportunities for students, families and teachers from both the United States and Panama.

While in the Central American country's capital city, the Northwest group worked with grade school and high school students and parents from socially and economically challenged backgrounds. Activities included self-esteem-building and motivational exercises plus conversations focusing on challenges posed by poverty and lack of educational resources.

"We gave the parents presentations on how to motivate their child to study and also on listening," said Edwards, who explained that perhaps the most serious issue observed by the group was a lack of communication between parents and teachers.

The group's work with parents hobbled by poverty, difficult family circumstances and limited education was perhaps its "major contribution" during the trip, Edwards said. However, she believes that insights gained by the Northwest students will, in the long run, lead to far-reaching results that cannot yet be measured.

"It was really an eye-opener, just a life-changing thing," she said. "Watching the students' eyes open as they started realizing what reality is like for some people was pretty amazing."

One of the most notable differences between the school in Panama and an American school was the lack of equipment and resources, Edwards said.

"We actually took some school supplies to them, which made the teachers cry, and that shocked us," she



Northwest students Kristen Stewart, left, and Jera Archer, are pictured with a child they worked with in Panama.

said, adding that the entire Northwest group returned to Maryville with a greater sensitivity to the needs of Central American children and families forced to live in difficult circumstances.

"Our students became very aware of the privilege we have (in the U.S.) related to education," Edwards said. "Another of the big things that we all got out of it was a commitment to community. I know that all four students have talked about, and are very excited about, doing something further, not only with this Panama project but in our own community. I think they've come to truly recognize the importance of philanthropy and community service."

Nevada, Iowa; Miranda Oehler, senior, Maryville; and Jera Archer, senior, Riverside. ■

Edwards is already working to push the Panama service learning initiative forward and wants to organize fundraisers later this year through various University organizations. The proceeds, she said, will go for books and school supplies.

In addition, depending on funding, Edwards wants to expand next year's trip to include more students, who would spend up to two weeks in Panama engaged in service-learning activities and research.

This summer's trip was funded through a Northwest Culture of Quality grant from the Office of the Provost and four \$500 student research grants from the University's College of Education and Human Services.

Organizational assistance was provided by the Pro-Ed Foundation, founded by Panamanian philanthropist Alex Psychoyos. The foundation is led by Psychoyos' daughter, Debbie Psychoyos, who was Northwest's 2008 Ploghof Lecturer and is currently an Ed.D. candidate in Northwest's cooperative doctorate program offered through the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Participating students included: Kristin Stewart, senior, St. Joseph; Michael Webster, sophomore,

Nevada, Iowa; Miranda Oehler, senior, Maryville; and Jera Archer, senior, Riverside. ■

Insight gained by the Northwest students will, in the long run, lead to far-reaching results that cannot yet be measured.

— CARLA EDWARDS

Recreation students learn by doing during trip to Colorado

Northwest students studying parks and recreation management, corporate recreation, and wellness and therapeutic recreation recently spent 12 days touring various recreation agencies and facilities in Colorado as part of an elective course offered by the University's Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

The three-credit-hour, experience-based course is designed to give students opportunities to observe first-hand the kinds of events and services they will lead and administer after completing their degrees.

A total of 14 students took the course, which involved networking with professionals in order to discuss possible internships and other field experience opportunities.

"Students studying recreation often are experiential learners," said Dr. Sue Myllkangas, who taught the course. "Taking the students into the field allows them to observe the concepts as they are applied."

The exploring recreation resources course has been offered at Northwest for the past three summers and has given nearly 40 students the chance to observe such facilities as the Craig Rehabilitation Hospital, the Coors Employee Wellness Center, Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Rocky Mountain National Park, YMCA Camp of the Rockies and the Children's Museum of Denver.

Future recreation professionals taking the course also participate in a day-long white-water raft trip on the Arkansas River designed to offer insights into teamwork and leadership styles.

Some of the other facilities and events visited by this summer's class included the Rocky Mountain Senior Games in Greeley; Sports Made Possible, which provides a baseball field for young people with disabilities; and



Northwest recreation majors Heather Becker, left, a senior from York, Neb., and Kelly Cornett, right, a senior from Pattonsburg, pose with a participant at Sports Made Possible, a recreational facility in Centennial, Colo., that operates a baseball park adapted to the needs of young people with disabilities.

the King Adult Day Activity Program, which is part of the Multiple Sclerosis Center of Colorado.

Evaluations at the end of the course show that participants demonstrate a marked increase in their knowledge of core recreation concepts and a fuller understanding of national certification competencies. ■

It's official: President Jasinski era begins at Northwest



Dr. John Jasinski visits with staff members on his first day at Northwest.

Dr. John Jasinski and family were welcomed by an enthusiastic crowd of well-wishers, including a group of Horace Mann schoolchildren, after arriving at the east door of the Administration Building July 2, for the new University president's first official day on the Northwest campus.

Applause and cheers from faculty and staff, clad mostly in Bearcat green, greeted the Jasinskis as they walked from their car beneath the blue sky of a perfect July morning. Northwest mascot Bobby Bearcat worked the crowd, and the entryway leading into the Administration Building was decorated with a green carpet and a large banner reading, "Welcome Dr. Jasinski."

While First Lady Denise Jasinski, accompanied by children Matt, Joe, Leah and Lucas, mingled and shook hands, President Jasinski spoke a brief word of welcome to the crowd before taking questions from a group of reporters during an impromptu press conference in front of the Circle Drive fountain.

"It's a great day to be a Bearcat, and we are ready to get after it," Jasinski said. "There are great things here at Northwest, so many good things, and we are very, very excited." He added that, as president, he was eager to hear from members of the University community and listen to their ideas.

"It's important that we hear from you," Jasinski said. "You all know that we've got a long, long tradition of greatness and of excellence at Northwest, and that will continue. Thank you for being here and have a great day."



Dear fellow Bearcat fans,

As I am settling into my role as Northwest president, I am reaching out to campus and community members alike. Part of what makes Northwest Missouri State University so special is the strong relationship between the academic and local community. In a recent meeting with the Northwest Leadership Team, local officials and civic and business leaders in our region, we discussed ways in which Maryville, Nodaway County and the University can form a partnership to meet shared challenges.

This collaboration does not end with just this region though. I want to make sure the University, the region, the state, alumni, students, stake holders and community members are all working together for the betterment of our community. I look forward to hearing your suggestions on how we may move forward as a University and as a community, and forge strong partnerships. Please feel free to leave comments on our Facebook fan page, www.facebook.com/nwmissouri, on our Twitter account by labeling your post @nwmostate (read our updates at www.twitter.com/nwmostate), or e-mail me directly at presid@nwmissouri.edu.

In other news, our fall 2009 enrollment is running ahead of last year by 5 percent, or 276 students, compared to the same time last year. Our undergraduate enrollments are up 5 percent, while the graduate enrollments are even. We are on track to meet our goals of increasing our enrollment 20 percent over a 5-year-period. We are excited to welcome so many new Bearcats this fall!

For additional Northwest news, including campus happenings and features on current students, alumni and faculty, follow us on Facebook and Twitter or visit www.nwmissouri.edu/universityrelations/news/index.

I look forward to working together with you to better our University and our community.

John Jasinski
Dr. John Jasinski

It was to be, in his own words, "a busy, busy day" with a schedule that included a morning-long Leadership Team meeting with senior University administrators, lunch with Board of Regents President James W. "Bill" Loch, and an afternoon session with Interim Provost Douglas Dunham and Nodaway County Economic Development Director Lee Langerock.

"Northwest is a great institution," said Jasinski, the University's tenth president. "It's just vibrant, and looking ahead I see nothing but greatness on the horizon." ■

Finance major receives business honor society scholarship

Heather Niece has received a \$1,000 scholarship from Delta Mu Delta, an international business administration honor society comprising institutions accredited by the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs.



Heather Niece

Niece, a native of Maysville who will be a senior this fall, is a finance (financial services option) major in Northwest's Melvin and Valorie Booth College of Business and Professional Studies and currently serves as an intern at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

She is one of just 42 students from 40 colleges and universities nationwide to receive a Delta Mu Delta Awards Program scholarship for the 2009-2010 academic year.

"I want to offer my warmest congratulations to Heather for her achievement in being awarded a scholarship from this prestigious organization," said Dr. Tom Billesbach, Booth College dean. "Her continuing University career reflects the high standards and academic excellence that Northwest students and faculty – as well as the companies that hire our graduates – have come to value and expect." ■

University begins countdown to smoke-free campus in 2010

Northwest is going smoke free, but students, faculty, staff and others used to grabbing a quick nicotine fix while on campus have just under a year to get used to the notion of lighting up somewhere else, or, better yet, kicking the habit altogether.

The University already bans smoking inside campus buildings, but the practice is still OK at a limited number of outdoor locations. As of Aug. 1, 2010, however, the no-smoking rule will be expanded to include all university-owned or leased property and all university vehicles.

Northwest Wellness Director/Assistant Director of Health Services Beau Dooley said the University recognizes how tough it can be for smokers to quit, and that the campus Wellness Center will make smoking cessation classes and other resources available to students, faculty and staff starting this fall.

"Everyone benefits from a smoke-free campus," Dooley said. "Recent campus surveys indicate that a majority of faculty, staff and students do not

smoke and are in favor of a smoke-free environment. For those who do smoke, research shows that smoke-free policies help empower individuals to reduce their cigarette use or quit altogether."

The policy applies to all students, employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors on university-controlled property and encompasses cigarettes, cigars, pipes and all other forms of smoke-generating products. ■

Student non-profit project awards \$8,000 to three local charities

Northwest students who recently completed a course in nonprofit leadership and management were instrumental this spring in distributing a total of \$8,000 to three local charities with program funds awarded in 2008 to a select group of universities nationwide.

Because of its longstanding commitment to student volunteerism and service learning opportunities, Northwest was one of only 10 academic institutions chosen to participate in the 2008-2009 Students4Giving program sponsored by the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund and Campus Compact.



Students taking the nonprofit leadership course at Northwest acquired classroom and practical experience in using charitable dollars to meet community needs. Activities included researching local issues, evaluating IRS-qualified 501(c)(3) public charities and recommending which causes and non-profits are to receive funds.

"The mission of the Northwest Student Philanthropy and Civic Engagement Project is to prepare students to lead nonprofit fundraising and giving activities," said Amy Nally, University coordinator of volunteer programs and service learning. "The program engages students in strategic grant-making activities and partnerships with local nonprofit organizations and provides hands-on experience in identifying needs in the community, setting criteria for grants and administering funds."

Local grant recipients included:

The Children and Family Services Center (\$3,000). The center plans to use this money to further programs that provide healthy, developmental activities for children who have been abused.

Community Services Inc. (\$1,000), which will help fund a fall back-to-school fair along with backpacks and school supplies for children and families in need.

The Nodaway County Senior Center (\$4,000), which plans to refurbish its kitchen and purchase appliances needed to continue weekly meals for older residents.

Before awarding the grants, participating Northwest students spoke with local officials and representatives from area non-profits. After determining two primary areas of need – services for the children and the elderly – they developed a request-for-proposal document that various charities used to apply for funding. Students then reviewed responses, interviewed finalists and spent class time discussing requests and forming a consensus on which programs to fund.

Nally said the University plans to continue the program in the future while broadening efforts to educate students about the role of non-profit organizations both nationally and within the Maryville/Nodaway County community. Of the original \$15,000 given to Northwest by the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund and Campus Compact, Nally said \$7,000 has been saved for a new course offering. Her office plans to pursue fundraising initiatives in order to replenish the distributed funds. ■

16 international students to attend Missouri Academy

Sixteen teenage international students will attend the University's Missouri Academy of Science, Mathematics and Computing this fall.

The two-year residential academy serves gifted, highly motivated students during what would be their junior and senior years in high school.

After completing the highly rigorous program, Academy graduates receive both a high school diploma and a two-year associate's degree.

Three students from Panama and 13 from South Korea make up this year's international contingent at the Missouri Academy.

All three Panamanian students have returned to Northwest after participating in a two-month College Horizons Outreach initiative earlier this year.

The Korean students are coming to the Academy via the HoraceMann Corporation, an educational concern that has partnered with Northwest in order to facilitate teacher preparation/exchange programs, language study and faculty and student research opportunities. ■



Sixteen international students will be attending the Missouri Academy this fall.

Bearcat Productions to create diabetes video for children, parents

Bearcat Productions, a semi-independent multi-media production company staffed by Northwest students and organized through the Department of Mass Communication, is teaming with St. Francis Hospital and Health Services to produce a DVD designed to educate children and their families about diabetes.

Financial support for the DVD project is provided by St. Francis Hospital and Health Services, the St. Francis Hospital Foundation, the Heartland Foundation, Heartland Health and North Kansas City Hospital through the Healthy Partnerships program.

St. Francis diabetes instructor Debra Hull, RN, BSN, said the video focuses on Type 2 Diabetes, which she said is associated with

obesity, physical inactivity, family history, impaired glucose metabolism, gestational diabetes and race/ethnicity. The video will be offered during the 2010-2011 school year to third- through sixth-graders in Holt and Worth counties.

Formerly known as "adult onset" diabetes, Type 2 is increasingly common among children, said Hull, who cites Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics showing that one in three children in the United States can be expected to develop diabetes in their lifetime if current trends continue.

"Type 2 diabetes is a complex, dynamic and progressive disease, but a person can significantly lower their risk of developing this disease through exercise and moderate weight loss," she said.

Hull added that 31 percent of Missouri children aged 10-17 are overweight, according to a report by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. She added that one in six overweight adolescents have a condition known as pre-diabetes, which can lead to full onset of the disease.

The DVD project grew out of a series of live presentations Hull made to Nodaway County schoolchildren titled "A Journey with Joe into Diabetes."

"The response was overwhelmingly positive," Hull said. "Requests have been rolling in to get this information to more children and to the public, and this led us to Bearcat Productions and the idea of creating a DVD."

In addition to viewing the video in classrooms, youngsters will be given a copy to take home and watch with their families. Hull also plans to continue offering live presentations in Nodaway County during the coming school year, this time to high school students.

The ultimate goal, she said, is to come up with a finished product that will both educate and motivate youngsters and their parents to make healthy lifestyles changes and choices.

"Education is a key component to managing this disease," Hull said, "but motivation ranks a high second." ■

Calendar of Events

September

- 4-5 Volleyball Comfort INNvitational
- 7 Labor Day: no classes
- 8 Faculty Recital: Dr. William Richardson, trumpet
- 10 Soccer vs. Truman State
Encore: "Intersection"
- 12 Northwest Cross Country Invitational
Soccer vs. Missouri Western
- 14 DeLuce Gallery: Stephen Goldblatt
animation exhibit opening and lecture
- 15 Second installment due
- 16 Volleyball vs. Washburn
- 18-20 Family Weekend
- 18 SAC Family Weekend: hypnotist
Kevin Hurley
- 19 Northwest Athletic Training
5K Run/Walk Roll
Football vs. Nebraska-Omaha
Soccer vs. Southwest Baptist
- 24 Exploring Majors and Minors
- 24-25 Theatre: "The Good Doctor"
- 25 Volleyball vs. Pittsburg State
- 26 Football vs. Truman State
Volleyball vs. Southwest Baptist
- 26-27 Theatre: "The Good Doctor"
- 30 Mock Interview Day
Ploghoft Lecture: Erin Gruwell

October

- 1-2 Bearcat Women's Golf Classic
- 1 Soccer vs. Central Missouri
- 2-3 Theatre: "Fugue"
- 3 Northwest PowWow

- 4 Wind Symphony concert
- 7 Volleyball vs. Nebraska-Omaha
- 8 Soccer vs. Washburn
Jazz Ensemble concert
- 9-10 Theatre: "An Evening of Ives"
- 10 Soccer vs. Emporia State
- 12-16 Mid-term examinations
- 12 Studio Jazz Ensemble concert
- 14 Fall Career Day
Volleyball vs. Missouri Western
Encore: "I Love A Piano"
- 15 Third installment due
- 16 First block ends
Theatre: "Ride"
- 17 Volleyball vs. Missouri Southern
Theatre: "Ride"
- 19 Second block begins
DeLuce Gallery: Mark Zimetbaum drawing/sculpture exhibit opening and lecture
- 22 Homecoming Variety Show
and Royalty Crowning
- 23 Walkout Day
Homecoming Variety Show
Volleyball vs. Fort Hays State
- 24 Homecoming
Soccer vs. Nebraska-Omaha
Football vs. Washburn
Volleyball vs. Emporia State
- 26 Preregistration for spring 2010 begins
- 29-31 Theatre: "Night of the Living Dead"
- 31 Fall Green and White Visit Day
Soccer vs. Missouri Southern

For an up-to-date calendar, go to www.nwmissouri.edu/calendar

Northwest

FAMILY

For more information about Northwest, visit www.nwmissouri.edu or call 660.562.1212

Published six times during the academic year by the Offices of Enrollment Management, Residential Life, Student Affairs, Advisement Assistance, Career Services and University Relations.

Editor: Mallory Murray

Designer: Teresa Carter

Photographer: Darren Whitley

Editorial Board: Matt Baker, Jackie Elliott, Brad Landhuis, Angel McAdams Prescott, Beverly Schenkel, Joan Schneider, Rose Viau

NORTHWEST
MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY