



2007 EPS FELLOW

Emma Lawrence

HOMETOWN: Shaker Heights, OH

MAJOR/DEGREE:
Psychology and
Public Policy,
Class of 2009

PROJECT TITLE:
Project HEAL
(Helping Educate and Advocate for Life)

FACULTY MENTOR:
Kim Chapman Page,
Assistant Director,
UNC Institute for Global Health

COMMUNITY PARTNER:
Komfo-Anokye
Teaching Hospital, Ghana

PROJECT LOCATION:
Kumasi, Ghana

“Faced with the shortages and limitations of Ghana’s health care system, my experience showed me the strength of international partnerships, introduced me to a group of dedicated and compassionate individuals and taught me the importance of a community-directed approach.”



UNC ENTREPRENEURIAL PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWSHIP (EPS)

Project HEAL (Helping Educate and Advocate for Life)

Despite recent economic growth, Ghana continues to experience a national shortage of adequate health care facilities, medical personnel and basic medical supplies. With an inadequate supply of clean water and a climate that fosters the spread of infectious disease, health risks in Ghana are high. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that infections, compounded with malnutrition, cause 70 percent of child deaths under the age of five. Ghanaians need basic medical knowledge about wound care and supplies to treat cuts and burns. Through my fellowship, I held educational workshops on basic first aid and distributed family first aid kits to over 1,000 school-aged children and their families in the regions of Kumasi and Lawra.

Project Goals

1. Hold three educational workshops at primary schools and community centers.
2. Open dialogue with community leaders and build a network of communication and support.
3. Train community leaders to carry on the educational workshops in the future.
4. Develop a sustainable source of medical supplies.

To continue this work, I trained local leaders to hold similar workshops on their own and began a partnership with the Lawra district hospital. To further ensure sustainability, I co-founded Project HEAL, a nonprofit organization that will use entrepreneurial fundraising strategies to support ongoing medical outreach efforts in Ghana.

My interest in developing this project began the previous summer when I volunteered in an orphanage in Ghana. During my first week, Kwame, a sweet five-year-old orphan, came running from outside with a gaping wound on his leg. Because the orphanage had run out of gauze and antiseptic, I helped bandage his leg with strips from an old t-shirt. In the local schools, I witnessed countless other children whose families lacked the knowledge and finances to acquire basic medical supplies and pro-



vide basic first aid treatment. At the same time, I was inspired by the compassion, dedication and determination of the healthcare workers, nurses and school officials, despite the obstacles of poverty, scarce supplies and the general public’s lack of basic healthcare knowledge.

Frustrated by this severe inequality in international health care, I shared my experiences with several friends at UNC. After discussing the fact that the schools and orphanage were faced with a very addressable problem, yet did not have the resources to fill their medical needs, we designed a project aimed at addressing this need. Currently, I am developing plans to return to Ghana with other UNC students in summer 2008 to bring more medical supplies, hold another round of informational workshops and build upon community contacts.



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