

NEWS RELEASE

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USM Nursing Instructor's Gift Will Send Saint Mary Students on Mission Trip to Nicaragua

(Leavenworth, Kan.)—Four University of Saint Mary nursing students will spend Spring Break on a mission trip in Nicaragua thanks to the generosity of USM adjunct faculty member Capt. Konni Hansen.

Capt. Hansen, with the U.S. Army's Nurse Corps, donated a semester of her Saint Mary salary to cover the bulk of the four students' expenses. The students still need to raise money for airfare before they travel to Nicaragua under the auspices of Kansas City-based International Service Learning.

"I wanted to do something with my salary other than to keep a hold of it," said Capt. Hansen, a pediatric clinical instructor for the university. "My Saint Mary students are highly-motivated, and their level of energy is incredible. As far as nurses go, they're going to be good ones."

The students making the trek to Nicaragua are seniors Laurie Haney of Leavenworth, Kan., and Jenna Bradley of Tonganoxie, Kan., and juniors Karol Salas of Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and Chelsea Wilkerson of Dodge City, Kan. They'll be in Nicaragua for nine days, from March 13-21, providing basic health care and other assistance to underserved areas of the country.

Glenna Mahoney, assistant director of USM's nursing program, said the nursing students will learn a lot from the experience.

"We believe nurses need a global perspective on health care, and this is a wonderful opportunity for our students to be of service to those in need beyond our borders," she said. "We are very proud of them, and we are especially grateful to Konni Hansen for making this dream a reality."

The students received their awards at USM nursing department event the evening of Wednesday, Jan. 27. The event featured an appearance by Lt. Col. John Groves, a head emergency nurse for the U.S. Army who served in Iraq. Lt. Col Groves, who has been featured in CNN's 2006 documentary "*Combat Hospital*" and in the pages of *National Geographic* magazine, shared some of his experiences with an audience of nursing students.

The University of Saint Mary is a Catholic co-educational applied liberal arts university founded and sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The University of Saint Mary is located at 4100 South 4th Street, Leavenworth, Kan., with additional locations in Overland Park, Shawnee, and Kansas City, Kan. Visit www.stmary.edu on the web for more information.

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