



NSGA Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2012

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SMU geography students and faculty participating in the Healthy Water, Healthy People project.

Healthy water, healthy people

Water is one of the most essential elements to health and a balanced lifestyle. However, many of us take this gift for granted.

Geography students and faculty members from Saint Mary’s University (SMU) are currently in The Gambia working with NSGA on the *Healthy Water, Healthy People* project. They have the opportunity to educate and work with Gambians on the significance of clean water in everyday life.

The project has been two years in the making, and now, in its second year, the project has become more than an educational process – it’s a cultural exchange between two groups of people. The

project began with a focus of addressing ways to improve water quality, and now its goal is to improve the understanding of proper water usage through word-of-mouth interaction. The SMU group will be travelling to four different schools across the Gambia: two in Bansang and two others in JanJangbureh.

Travelling to a new country is always nerve racking, and the students are anxious of what awaits them during their two-week stay in The Gambia. “I’m excited for the enthusiasm [that the students there will have],” says Gillian Spears, a fourth year geography student.

“I’m just excited to have the opportunity to step outside my comfort zone,” says Mandi Bartel, one of the nine students participating in the trip.

The students believe that this trip not only allows exposure to two different cultures and values, but that it will also strengthen the link between The Gambia and Halifax for many years to come.



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New grant for HIV/AIDS life skills education in The Gambia

An estimated 18,000 people in The Gambia are infected with HIV/AIDS. The NSGA's goal is to put a halt to the growing number of people diagnosed by educating them with important life skills in addition to important health lessons. This includes training and counselling in areas such as self-confidence and awareness, empowerment, and leadership.

NSGA was recently awarded with a new grant to expand on previous NSGA education on HIV/AIDS life skills in The Gambia. The new educational program will provide information on prevention, treatment, care, and support through mass media, community workshops, and home-based care. The program began in September 2012 and will run until September 2015.

NSGA Gambian staff member moves to Halifax to attend SMU

The Gambia is home for Nuru Sey, one of many beneficiaries of NSGA's efforts and programs. Nuru recently made a big move to Halifax to pursue a master's degree in international development from Saint Mary's University.

Nuru has been an employee of NSGA at The Gambian headquarters for the last ten years. "It allowed me to not only gain work experience and know every corner of my country, but as well availed the much needed resources to support my family," says Nuru of his position as a staff member.

Nuru's work in The Gambia made him realize that it's not always large-scale health campaigns or expensive advertisements that make a difference -- even little things at the right time can create change.

The long-time influence of NSGA in his life is what led Nuru to his current studies in international development. "I was always attracted to the idea of international connection and the concept of two countries working together to provide mutual change," he says. Please join NSGA in welcoming Nuru to Canada and wish him well in his studies.



Nuru Sey settles in on Canadian soil.



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Nova Scotian and Gambian students connect

NSGA's new School Twinning Program is an interactive program in its pilot year that connects junior high and high school students from Nova Scotia and The Gambia through Skype. The goal is to have ten schools from both Nova Scotia and The Gambia connecting once a month for a cultural exchange. If you know a school that may want to participate, please contact muhammed.ngallan@novascotiagambia.ca.

NSGA welcomes new directors and board members

NSGA has welcomed three new board members to its team: Mary Catherine Connolly, Richard Norman, and Said Msabaha. Two new co-chairs and a new secretary were also elected: Cathy Conrad, (Co-chair) Kilby Townshend (Co-chair), and Angela Walker (Secretary). NSGA is looking forward to working with the new members of the team!

This issue was written by NSGA volunteers Celina Lam and Elaine Hoyeck. Celina and Elaine are both second-year public relations students at Mount Saint Vincent University.

Questions? Suggestions? We'd love to hear from you!



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