

## Beyond our Borders

### Students organize book drive for Ethiopian orphans

Three medical students, **Jennifer Nuechterlein** ('09), **Whitney Luke** ('09), and **Sofya Asfaw** ('09) organized a book drive last autumn at the School of Medicine to benefit Ethiopian HIV/AIDS orphans.

The effort was a way to support outreach efforts of the Ethiopian North American Health Professionals Association (ENAHPA). ENAHPA is an organization founded in 1999 by Asfaw's family to improve health-care standards, access, and delivery to the people of Ethiopia and African nations.

Asfaw explains that books "can challenge the minds of the children by promoting and encouraging literacy and give them the escape that we all remember as children, and even as adults."

The plight of the orphans of Addis Ababa has touched the students. "It always overwhelmed me when I heard about the number of individuals afflicted with HIV/AIDS and saddened me even more when I heard of the million or so children that have been orphaned by this disease," Asfaw says. "Their greatest need is access to everything — education, funding, adequate health care. These children are so special, so amazing, so friendly, and many times, they don't even realize what they are missing in life. I



Jennifer Nuechterlein and Sofya Asfaw collect books to take to Ethiopian orphans.

think in order to break the cycle of poverty and sickness, we need to start with the youth, and who better to help than the HIV/AIDS orphans who have lost everything. These children need to be in touch with people who care, people who can help them. That is what we are trying to do in our small way."

The students took the books to Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, traveling with a 60-80 member delegation on one of two medical/surgical missions. "Part of the wonderful thing about the School of Medicine is that they encourage projects and missions like this," Asfaw says. ●●●

### Denim & Diamonds tops donation record

The SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine raised a record \$240,000 at its eighth Denim and Diamonds fundraising event. The funds will be used to help complete the research laboratories in the Institute's permanent building in Springfield.



In addition to the 640 guests who dressed in denim or formal attire for the Rhinestone Cowboy theme, 38 sponsors and numerous donors for various auctions made the event a success. This year's major sponsors were: Memorial Medical Center; St. John's Hospital; Isringhausen Imports; Citi Smith Barney; H.J. and Beverly Collins; and Joan and Charlie Robbins. Volunteer co-chairs for the event were Mark Townsend of IBM and Paula Milling of Bank of Springfield.

The SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute at SIU focuses the medical school's efforts in cancer research, physician and public education, and treatment for patients from across central and southern Illinois.

### Estridge funds to examine cardiac care in rural areas

SIU School of Medicine has awarded the first funds from the Bernie L. and Annie Marie Estridge bequest, named the Estridge Translational Research Award in Cardiovascular Disease.

Bernie Estridge was a lifelong resident of Springfield who died in 2004. Because heart disease affected the Es-

tridge family, he directed \$450,000 from his estate be used for cardiac research at the medical school.

**Mark L. Francis, M.D.**, associate professor and chief of the rheumatology division, will use an award of \$100,000 to determine whether people who live in rural areas are more likely to have heart dis-

ease than their urban neighbors. He and his research staff will analyze data from sources including the National Center for Health Statistics and Center for Disease Control to see if people in rural areas are at greater risk for heart disease and if their care is similar to those in urban areas.

"I am grateful for Mr. Estridge's foresight in leaving this kind of legacy," said Dr. Francis. "My long-term goal is to close any disparity we may find in the prevention, assessment or treatment of heart problems in people who live in rural areas in Illinois, especially in downstate Illinois." ●●●

# Students benefit from Student Resource Fund

Anatomical models and simulators enhance the interactive, hands-on learning experience at SIU, notes medical student **Jennifer Creamer**, '09. "I learned with some anatomic models that were falling apart and simulators that had been poked too many times in the wrong places."

Those well-worn models and simulators have now been replaced, thanks to those alumni and friends donating to the Student Resource Fund, which annually funds educational and social needs of the medical students that cannot be met through other fund sources.

"Those replacements really make a difference," Creamer says. "People might assume that models and simulators are included in the whole medical school package. But these are actually provided for by the alumni and friends of the School."

**Tracey Smith** is predoctoral coordinator for Family and Community Medicine. "Academic budgets are tight, so instructors have to find other sources to provide teaching tools beyond the bare essentials," she says. "Gifts to the Student Resource Fund deeply impact how students learn and their preparedness in the clinic." Smith received funding for a wound care simulator, female catheter simulator, eye retinopathy, and ear diagnostic trainers. "Students more confidently work with patients after they practice procedures with the simulators."

The funds also support student life. This year, funds were used to buy a new television for the student lounge, health club memberships, tickets to local performances, and a subsidy for the Winter Ball.

"Experiencing what a difference the alumni gifts can make, I know I'll give money back to the School after I graduate," Creamer says.

"SIU School of Medicine alumni have an enormous impact on the lives and education of students through annual alumni gifts. They only have to compare their own campus experience



Tracey Smith, left, and Julie Varns, far right, instruct Annie Parkin, '11, on a wound simulator.

## Campaign gifts advance initiatives

The Student Resource Fund is just one way your donations make a difference at SIU School of Medicine. Each year, SIU School of Medicine alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends renew our partnership in the missions we share as we meet the health care needs of the people of central and southern Illinois.

If you have responded to the annual appeal with a gift or a pledge, we thank you for directly advancing medicine through SIU School of Medicine. If you have not yet responded, it's not too late to make a real difference for students, faculty, clinicians, scientists, and patients. You may direct your gift to the Annual Fund campaign for these fundamental initiatives:

- The Dean's Excellence Fund meets worthy and immediate administrative needs at the School of Medicine.
- The Student Scholarship Fund lessens the burden of student and family

debt and even enables some students to attend medical school.

■ The Student Resource Fund supports student organization activities and educational enhancements that cannot be provided through other sources.

■ The SimmonsCooper Cancer Institute raises the standard of cancer care in downstate Illinois through community-based patient care, outreach programs, education and research.

■ The General Research Fund provides for the program needs of scientists engaged in 216 active research projects on the Carbondale and Springfield campuses.

You may also make a gift at our secure online site and review other giving opportunities at [www.siumed.edu/foundation](http://www.siumed.edu/foundation) or contact Deborah Case, Director of Development, at 217-545-6447 or [dcase@siumed.edu](mailto:dcase@siumed.edu).

with campus life today to see tremendous advancements that they've made happen," says **Julie Robbs**, director of Alumni Affairs. "Every gift, no matter its

size, makes an important change possible. We can thank the alumni, SIU staff and friends for that." ●●●