

courtesy Jason Logie



## Learning to be Leaders

Students in the Global Leadership Initiative learn lessons about leadership in the classroom and beyond.

Experts estimate that up to 300,000 children live and work on Kenya's streets. Some of these kids collect waste for recycling, clean cars, or simply beg for the money to buy food. But others resort to pickpocketing and prostituting to pay for their meals.

**Erica Eber**, a Penn State senior, hopes to help some of these youth. In May, she traveled to Nyeri, a town just north of Nairobi, to teach life skills and self-awareness techniques to youngsters at the Children and Youth Empowerment Centre (CYEC), a program that aims to empower street children to imagine and create a better reality for themselves.

Eber's experience was part of a multi-pronged HHD program, called the Global Leadership Initiative (GLI), which helps undergraduate students hone their leadership skills through coursework and travel.

"The goal of the GLI, which began in fall 2010, is to provide students with the tools, experiences, and perspectives necessary to make a difference, locally, nationally, and globally," said **Linda Caldwell**, a professor of recreation, park, and tourism management and the director of the GLI. "Through rigorous academic preparation and experiential learning, students are exposed to new ideas, challenged about existing beliefs, and engaged with leaders from all parts of the globe in ways that pertain to their majors."

During the fall 2010 semester, Eber, a nursing major, took a seminar with Caldwell in which she began to cultivate the tools that are essential for becoming a leader in areas related to global health and human development. The purpose of the course is to develop students' competence regarding intercultural issues, hone students' disciplinary expertise and interdisciplinary perspective, and teach students to reflect upon their work, among other topics.

As part of the course, Eber and her research partner **Andi Thieman**, another Penn State student, co-developed a curriculum to teach students to become aware of their emotions, to manage their anxiety and anger, to resolve conflicts in healthy ways, to be leaders, and to manage their time. Then, for three weeks in May, the pair taught the curriculum to the children of the CYEC in Nyeri. Despite some issues regarding language differences, Eber said she felt the work was a success.

Eber and Thieman also are having success with another project: a series of interviews of children and adults on the topics of leadership and happiness. Their goal is to gain insight into cultural differences because, as Eber said, "culture is so important in shaping how people define good leadership as well as how they define happiness and its relationship to health." The pair eventually will create videos out of their interviews.

"One of the most important lessons I learned in Kenya was to master patience for cultural differences," said Eber, noting that the most

prominent difference she witnessed involved methods of time management and organization.

**Jenna DeAngelis**, another GLI student, also learned to be open to cultural differences. The senior, majoring in nursing, traveled to Cape Town, South Africa, for two weeks in March, accompanied by three other nursing students and **Beth Bates**, an instructor in the School of Nursing. The group visited different townships, or urban living areas that, from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the end of Apartheid, were reserved for non-whites. They also visited urban hospitals and rural clinics, and attended nursing lectures at the University of the Western Cape.

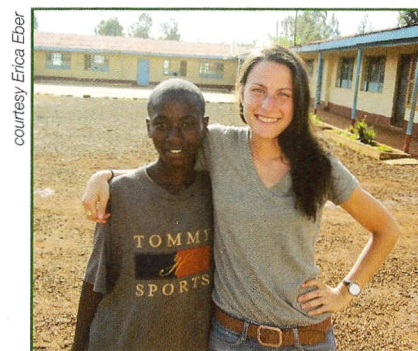
"One of the most important lessons I learned while in South Africa was to be open to differences," said DeAngelis. "The way we do things in the United States is not always the best way. I witnessed how well organized a clinic crowded with hundreds of people was and how efficiently it operated, even with a limited staff, and I was amazed by how resourceful the people working in the clinics were with very limited supplies."

Another GLI student who recently visited South Africa is **Jason Logie**, a junior majoring in hotel, restaurant, and institutional management. Logie joined a group of Penn State faculty members and students who are involved in the College of Agricultural Sciences' Ag2Africa initiative, which has a goal of promoting Penn State's collaborative initiatives in Africa in order to enhance food and economic security and sustainable agricultural development. The group spent ten days traveling in South Africa and Mozambique, studying topics related to malaria, food security, and food supply/value chain analysis.

"The Global Leadership Initiative afforded me the opportunity to better understand what it takes to be a leader in today's global community," said Logie. "In particular, it taught me to acquire indigenous knowledge and to reflect on your experiences. These ideals had, and will continue to have, the most impact on my global leadership experiences."

Next year, Logie plans to continue to refine his global leadership skills as a participant in the School of Hospitality Management's Global Hospitality Management program, through which he will spend a year studying at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hoge Hotelschool in The Netherlands.

According to Caldwell, the experiences of Eber, DeAngelis, and Logie encompass what the GLI is all about. "Leaders with cultural sensitivity can be more effective than those without," she said. "In this way and others, the GLI is preparing students to effectively engage with people in other cultures and contexts."



Erica Eber's Kenyan "dugu" (brother), Mohammed (15 years old).