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Student Secures Grant from Google Foundation for Local Habitat for Humanity Chapter

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BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University senior Nick Kogelman had an integral part in helping the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity land a \$30,000 grant from Google Foundation (Google.org). The Plainfield native was the main author of the grant, which will help the McLean County branch of Habitat for Humanity create and post ads on Google and all of its affiliate websites.

“I’m ecstatic,” said Kogelman, a business administration major. “It’s great to think you can work and reach out, and that work will mean something to so many other people.”

Kogelman spent the summer as an intern with the University’s State Farm Internship Program. The program pairs students in Illinois Wesleyan’s Action Research Center (ARC) with concurrent internships at State Farm Insurance Companies® and a local not-for-profit organization during the summer. “I came to college with an interest in studying business ethics, so the concept of putting together the corporate world and not-for-profits appealed to me,” Kogelman said of the ARC Program.

When paired with McLean County Habitat for Humanity, Kogelman worked on the organization’s website and helped promote events online. ARC Director Deborah Halperin suggested he assist Habitat with a grant proposal, and he immediately thought of Google.org, the the foundation side of the search-engine giant Google, Inc. “We learned about Google.org in a class I took with [Assistant Professor of Business Administration Sascha] Vitzthum,” said Kogelman. The course also introduced him to AdWords, the program Google uses to place advertisements. “It’s the program that allows sponsored ads to be matched with certain search words that are entered into the engine,” he said.

The national and highly competitive grant from Google.org will pay for a series of ads to run on Google.com, and will provide assistance in developing those ads. Even though his internship has ended, Kogelman is staying on as a volunteer to help work on the ads. “This is a great opportunity for us to get our name out there into the world of the Internet,” said Kristin Sand, interim executive director of Habitat for Humanity of McLean County. “We are extremely fortunate to have Nick, first as an intern and now as a volunteer.”

With all of the programs currently in progress at Habitat, Kogelman said it is a good time for the ads. “They have so many initiatives going on now, like the Women Build, the naming of the local students chapters as the best in the nation, and building affordable green housing,” he said.

Kogelman will graduate early this December, and is currently interviewing with various companies and not-for-profits. “Showcasing my IWU background along with my experiences – in both the business and the not-for profit-sector – has really helped in me during job search,” he said.

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