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Students Capture Goal with 'Nets'

December 12, 2007

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— Illinois Wesleyan University students are helping to fight malaria by raising more than \$1,200 in a little over a week for the Nothing But Nets campaign.

Students decided to assist the international group after working on a class project for Health 280: Perspective in International Health.

“One of our class assignments was to write a research paper recommending a global health issue and international organization that was making a difference,” said Katie Winkler, a senior biology major from Mount Prospect, Ill., and co-coordinator of the student effort. “Three or four of us chose malaria and Nothing But Nets, and the class decided to raise funds for them.”

Nothing But Nets is a grassroots organization, which purchases and distributes mosquito bednets in developing countries, especially Africa. “Malaria is on the rise in certain areas, and more than 408 million people worldwide suffer from malaria,” said Visiting Professor of Environmental Studies and Health Laurine Brown, who teaches the class. UNICEF reports 3,000 people a day die from the disease. “A mosquito net costs about \$10, and can reduce transmission of malaria by up to 90 percent in affected areas, but that is out of reach for many people in developing nations.”

Students decided to raise \$1,000 for Nothing But Nets under the team name IWU 4 Nets. “We thought \$10 a net was an attainable amount for college students,” said Sara Koller, a senior biology major from Apple Valley, Minn., who also helped coordinate raising funds, and noted one net can help as many as four people.

The 21 students in the class created fliers and posters, pipeline, Facebook, e-mail and in-class messages, and collected funds at tables outside the student cafeteria, at an event in Hansen Student Center, and a concert. “I was impressed how generous the students were,” said class member Mike Feeney, a senior economics and international studies major from Monticello, Ill. “We’d ask for money all day, and end up with everything from the change people had pulled from their pockets or even a \$20. And for college students who usually have little money, it was impressive.”

In all, the group exceeded their original goal of \$1,000 and raised \$1,248, but Feeney said the accomplishment went beyond the monetary. “The nets will do good for people, but with this effort, we also raised awareness of what you might call a ‘lost’ disease. We worked hard to provide people with the facts,” he said. Nothing But Nets reported nets are currently being distributed in Mali Africa over these 2 weeks.

Students can still give to the IWU 4 Nets team by going to www.nothingbutnets.net. All funds raised for the organization are matched by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



Illinois Wesleyan students celebrate exceeding their fund-raising goal for Nothing But Nets.