

John Yak Speaks with College of Education Students

COE STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEETING WITH SUDANESE LOST BOY AND ACTIVIST, JOHN YAK, IN THE LOUNGE/MRC

Last month the Multicultural Resource Center's Open Course/Film series, in conjunction with Robin and Warren Heydenberk, welcomed a special guest speaker, John Yak. One

of the estimated 27,000 Lost Boys of the Sudan who fled persecution during the Sudanese Civil War, John shared his experiences, current projects and screened clips from a

Sundance award-winning documentary on the Lost Boys, *God Grew Tired Of Us*.

After a decade of sleeping on a mud floor in a refugee camp John arrived in America as one of approximately 4800 young men who resettled here. He had never seen a car, a toilet or a light bulb but nevertheless, quickly adjusted to our culture, earning a degree from Penn State and is now working on a graduate degree. "The UN provided rudimentary classrooms with few supplies to the lost boys in... can't

COE Food Drive Begins as Neighborhood Center Closes

As educators, counselors, researchers and administrators we are witness to financial challenges not only in our own lives but in those of the individuals we serve. Clearly we can not support every student, every client or every person we come across in our day-to-day lives. Yet, as a college, we are also in a unique position to give back to our community in a powerful, intentional and meaningful way.

Part of the success of this winter's previous food drive is our approach of combining small donations to buy products requested by the South Bethlehem Neighborhood

Center (SBNC) in bulk. This included larger ticket purchases like diapers, cleaning supplies and other items not normally donated in canned goods drives.



Sadly, and in a great loss for our local community, the SBNC will shut its doors tomorrow after a cut in its United Way funding. Obviously, the

needs of the clients it serves are still very real.

As such, the MRC is launching a monthly fundraiser to help as services and clients are transitioned to other agencies. We have been in touch with the center and they are referring most clients to New Bethany Ministries, which we will support through our drive.

To donate, please give cash or a check made out to Lehigh University to Rob Messner (Iacocca Hall, Room A-325-K). This is an ongoing drive so it's never too late to give. Please spread the word and don't hesitate to contact mrc@lehigh.edu.

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**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- ◆ SBNC Closing: Our march food drive begins today!
- ◆ Tonight, March 18th (6:00pm) *Andre Salz* from the Compassionate Listening Project will be speaking about his mission in the Middle-East in MG290.
- ◆ April 15th (7:00pm) *Global Climate Change: Is there New Hope for Kenya's Maasai* sponsored by the COE, a panel of experts present on innovative and culturally-sensitive ways of addressing the global climate crisis through technology and education.

Web Resource: The Conflict Resolution Education Connection

Conflict and culture; these two things share more than alliteration. Evidence of their relationship is manifest in the story of John Yak shared earlier in this newsletter, in the class and racial tension between groups on our university campus, and even in our college's courses where students and faculty from different backgrounds and experiences struggle to explore issues of privilege in their own personal and professional development.

John Yak con't

the refugee camps. What they have done with their education is astonishing. Every time we meet with John and his brothers we leave more grateful for what we have and very grateful for knowing them," said Robin. In the weeks following John's visit, students reflected similar feelings, having gained not only a larger perspective on the conflict but a sense of importance for resilience and a greater appreciation for the power of education. Despite the horrors of John's flight across Africa and his loss of family, friends, and community, he remains optimistic and has great faith in humanity. Thus far John has helped to establish a school of 800 students in southern Sudan. Additionally, the Heydenberks are currently working with John and his brothers to form an *Academy of Peace and Reconciliation* to be built near the school, the first steps of which include the creation of a non-profit parent organization for the project.

For more information on this project or with questions about John, the film or the Lost Boys of the Sudan, please contact the Multicultural Resource Center.

CREducation.org is a website devoted to the inclusion of conflict resolution as a key component of education. Their site offers a wealth of resources for people in various roles. For researchers, the site provides links to conferences, journals, funding, collaboration opportunities and more. For teachers it offers a blog, online videos, learning modules and activities. Policymakers can browse write-ups of current issues from bully-

ing to drop-out rates, familiarize themselves with relevant legislation and review standards and best practices.

From an international perspective, the site provides a global forum, world news updates, conference presentations and a host of other resources. Though rich with information, the site is still growing and has specific needs, so please consider contributing your knowledge.

Best Practices in Psychology Conference

The Society for the Teaching of Psychology is excited to announce the 8th conference in the popular "Best Practices in Teaching Psychology" series. The 2009 conference will focus on teaching controversial topics in psychology. We are interested in proposals that will address positive ways to teach topics in psychology that evoke an emotional response. We encourage proposals that provide up-to-date information on issues surrounding a



controversial topic and innovative ways to open minds while still respecting the individual. Modeled after the format of the previous conferences, 2009's will include two keynote speakers, Dr. David Myers, discussing "Bridging the Divide: Strengthening Marriage, Welcoming Gays", and Dr. David Buss, presenting "17 Tools for Teaching Evolutionary Psychology." More info and proposal guidelines available at: teachpsych.org.

Graduate Assistantship Announcement

The Multicultural Resource Center is currently accepting graduate assistantship applications for the 2009-10 academic year. The GA will be responsible for working with the members of the COE Diversity Committee in the development and operation of the Multicultural Resource Center which seeks to foster knowledge, skills, understanding, and awareness in the area of multiculturalism and diversity.

The position is a 20 hr/wk, nine

month assistantship. Benefits include tuition and stipend. A detailed job posting including specific goals of the center and duties of the GA is available on the MRC's website (www.lehigh.edu/mrc). If you are interested in this position, please send an email to mrc@lehigh.edu by April 15th, 2009 with your CV and a one-page statement of interest that highlights your qualifications and any relevant prior experience.

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-ROBIN HEYDENBERK