

# Travel Vital to SC Educational Experience

story by Charles Osen

Southwestern College senior Hayley Holthus has lived the SC mission statement, leadership through service in a world without boundaries, during her time at the college.

Holthus, a senior from Basehor, has helped Hurricane Katrina victims in Mississippi and homeless people in Boston, and will travel to the Dominican Republic in the summer of 2007.

"I am excited about the international experience and going to a third-world country," Holthus says. "I have learned through Leadership Southwestern that to be a leader you have to step out of your comfort zone."

Holthus is not alone. In fact, traveling abroad for educational purpose is not just a Leadership idea. It is a fact of life at Southwestern.

- David Gardner, director of choirs, has conducted his students in Carnegie Hall in New York.
- Stephen Woodburn, assistant professor of history, has taken students to Russia.
- Men's basketball coach Doug Hall has taken his teams to Alaska, Hawaii, the Virgin Islands, and Louisiana.
- Dave Denly, women's basketball coach, has taken his teams to Florida twice.
- Roger Moon, director of theatre, took his students to competition in North Dakota last winter and leads an annual student/alumni excursion to New York.
- Jim Helmer, men's track and cross country coach, has traveled with his championship athletes to Wisconsin, California, Kentucky, and British Columbia.

SC athletic director Mike Kirkland has found that travels to far-away places is a major moment in the student's lives.

"I've traveled with teams to Hawaii, Florida, and Alaska (twice) and got to observe our students maybe fly for the first time, go farther than 100 miles from their hometowns for the first time, and more than likely, travel to a far-away place they have only read about and would never have the opportunity to visit," Kirkland says. "For some, it was a major event in their young lives and Southwestern College helped provide that experience."

For 12 years, Leadership Southwestern has been taking the potential in their students and developing leaders. The program takes in 14 new students each year. Cheryl Rude, director of Leadership Southwestern, emphasizes that Leadership groups are travelers, not tourists.

"We use the motto that travel is different than tourism; it is genuine engagement with languages, cultures, and norms different from one's own upbringing," says Rude. "Unlike tourism that endeavors to envelope the traveler in a cocoon of comfort and familiarity, travel entails vulnerability, growth, and encounters that occasion adaptation."

Scott Kuhn, senior from Hays, is a biology major with minors in leadership and environmental studies.

"The service learning trips are vital to our experience and curriculum," Kuhn says. "It's easy to learn about leadership from a book in the comfort of our campus but it doesn't really sink in until you get out and practice it. Our trips to Boston and Pascagoula (Miss.) have put us in the



real-life context of leadership. We are able to see and understand the true difficulties and challenges that leaders face and it also allows

us to practice servant leadership, where we serve not from above but among the followers."

Paul Bean, vice president for institutional advancement, says his department tries to help out with the expenses for the trips.

"The institutional advancement department becomes involved if and when there is a fund-raising effort for a particular trip," Bean says. "We then will try



**Educational trips hosted by Southwestern College are funded through a variety of sources—student payment, donor support, and fund-raising projects help make these opportunities possible. Leadership students are shown preparing for the annual apple pie sale that supports travel. Left to right are Kate Topham, Lauren Pettey, and Addie Lambing.**

to solicit funds to help reduce the cost for the students making the trip. This is not always the case however. Sometimes the trips are paid 100% by the students themselves."

According to Bean, SC donors can be involved, too. He says the best way for donors to help students is to provide funds for scholarships. This helps make college more affordable and opens up funds for the students to take advantage of trip opportunities when they arise.

Along with the Leadership venture to the Dominican Republic, Discipleship Southwestern is embarking on an international trip next semester. The team will head to Costa Rica May 8 to build an orphanage. Currently 28 Discipleship students are signed up to go. Director of Discipleship Ashlee Alley says that the international experience brings a new outlook for students.

"When we go to another country it reveals things about our own culture," Alley says. "It expands our world views and teaches us about ourselves."

And Southwestern students will continue to be on the move. Future SC trips include a Woodburn excursion to Egypt, Helmer returning to Kentucky, a visit by Denly's team to Texas, and Moon's annual journey by students and community members to New York. Hall has two games scheduled in Arizona, and Rude will take a social science group to Chicago over spring break.

Travel is a vital ingredient to the learning experience at Southwestern. Rude likes what she has seen and continues to work to get the most out of each travel experience.

"I want our students to grow. I want their minds to change, I want them to change how they think, and I want their hearts to change," Rude says. "You can't do it by just reading books, writing papers, and sitting in a classroom. That is helpful but not everything. I want the complete package."

## FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE YEARS...



The Sutton Hall porch is the perfect spot to recreate a photo opportunity from three decades ago.

When friends from the class of 1976 gathered at Homecoming in October, they made sure to pose in the same order as on April 16, 1973—from left to right are Laura (Monson) Seyfried, Debbie (Godwin) Adams, Jo Lynn McWilliams, Kent Seyfried, Elizabeth Weston, Jim Gillaspie, and Glen McFall. (not pictured are Jean (Ford) Gould and Lorraine Mushacke).