



2008 Wesleyan University Summer Experience Grant Application

When completed, save this application as a Word document and submit through MyCRC by Tuesday, March 25, 2008, at 11:59 p.m. See the Quick Start Sheet for submittal instructions. Please be aware that this is a firm deadline: you will not be able to apply after this date and time. Hard-copy applications will not be accepted.

Your Name:	John Chisholm		
WesID:		Social Security Number:	
E-mail Address:		Are you a U.S. Citizen?	YES
Major(s):	Government		
Home Address:			
Home Phone:			
Organization Name:	Friends of Kakamega		
Sponsor Name & Title:	Sukie Rice, Director		
Address:			
Sponsor Phone:		Sponsor Fax:	
Sponsor E-mail:			
Dates of Employment:	5/25/08-7/25/08		

1. Provide a brief overview of the organization for which you will intern or program/project you are developing.

Friends of Kakamega is a Maine-based, non-profit organization that supports the care of children orphaned by AIDS in the rural town of Kakamega, Kenya. The organization is unique because it is operated in the U.S. entirely by volunteers; without paid staff, close to 100% of donations are spent directly on work in East Africa, where the help is sorely needed. The primary aim of this nascent group has been the construction, maintenance, and operation of the Kakamega Orphans Care Center, which will expand into a second building this April to make room for more children. There, in Kakamega, a Quaker women’s group acts as a partner organization to ensure that fifty orphaned children with nowhere to turn receive meals, education, and the closest thing possible to a parents’ love. Additionally, the organization connects American sponsors to “home-based” orphans who are under the care of an extended relative; American sponsors’ modest gifts are used for school fees, food, and other basic necessities that aging grandmothers or great-uncles—with virtually no income and half a dozen inherited orphans—could not otherwise provide. More immediately, as a result of ethnically-based political violence in Kenya at the start of 2008, over half a million Kenyans have been driven from their homes and found themselves living in densely-packed refugee camps with extremely limited food supplies, clean water, or shelter. An outpouring of donor support has helped Friends of Kakamega branch off from its usual activities and deliver relief supplies such as blankets, soap, and maize within the Kakamega area’s crowded refugee camps.

2. Briefly provide details of the internship or experience, including responsibilities and tasks.



If funded for this internship, I will work on administrative and fundraising activities in and around Southern Maine and New England. I will *not* need to rent an apartment (I can live at home in Freeport, Maine), but *will* need to travel extensively within New England in my old but reliable 209,000 mile Subaru. One of my major responsibilities will be fundraising presentations at libraries, Rotary Clubs, churches, and other community centers. Although the nonprofit has had plenty of involvement in the immediate community, there is a need to travel farther within Maine and New England to share the project with potential donors and volunteers. Another major component of the internship would be to overhaul the organization's website, which has hardly been updated in the past two years after a young, tech-savvy volunteer was no longer able to manage it. I would write and post updated project information (with two years catching-up to do), create photo galleries, include a special tab on the political unrest and refugee relief, and install a tool to facilitate online donations. Administrative work will also be a significant and necessary part of the experience, including recording donations, shifting recordkeeping over to *Quikbooks*, and mailing "thank you" letters. Lastly, I am looking forward to gain experience in writing grant proposals for Friends of Kakamega, which was finally given 501(c)3 non-profit status in 2007 but has had little chance since then to undertake searching/applying for grants. The internship will thus provide me with experience in many of the activities necessary to running a small, non-profit organization.

3. How have you communicated with the employer and determined mutual interest?

I first volunteered for Friends of Kakamega in high school, traveling to the orphan care center in Kenya as a service-project volunteer. The relationships I developed there changed my entire perspective on life, and I realized without a doubt that I wanted to dedicate myself to fighting extreme poverty in Africa. At Wesleyan, I have organized a number fundraisers for the organization, and in the summer 2006 I was able to travel once more to Kenya as a volunteer. Since then I have continued a relationship with Friends of Kakamega, and have always hoped to have the opportunity to involve myself more thoroughly (for example, as a full-time summer intern!). I have spoken on the phone about this summer internship with the director of Friends of Kakamega, Sukie Rice, and she was very enthusiastic (to say the least). As an all-volunteer organization managing close to \$100,000 a year, Friends of Kakamega needs all the help it can get! The duties described previously—presentations, web site, book-keeping, and grant writing—were mentioned during the conversation as the most likely of my summer endeavors. We are both truly thrilled about the potential of this opportunity to grow the organization, provide me with experience, and create hope where it is needed most. To get to the point, we have indeed talked and established "mutual interest".

4. How will this experience enhance or broaden your career goals?

My first visit to Africa was a major catalyst in my life; I realized that I had no choice but to fight the injustices that I witnessed. How, I wondered, can children be left without shoes to wear, food to eat, a blanket to sleep under, and even basic education... but for lack of a few dollars? The unnecessary despair that I observed was a devastating blow to my heart. It was wonderful to be able to bring happiness into the eyes of the children that I grew to know and love at the Kakamega Orphans Care Center. But what about the millions of children—nay, hundreds of millions—that I did *not* get to know? During my second trip to Kenya, I was able to visit children receiving "home based" sponsorships. In many cases, crippled great uncles and aging grandmothers were responsible for five or ten children inherited from younger relatives that had died of AIDS. Friends of Kakamega's small sponsorship stipend was not only paying the sponsored children's school fees, but feeding the entire extended families as well. I maintained a relationship with Samson, an aging man who insisted I was his brother after I brought bags of maize and beans. Sadly, my brother Samson died late last year, survived by two

of his own children and five orphans he had been caring for. With almost no land to grow food, the family is in a desperate situation. While I have been fortunate enough to continue to support Samson's family, it saddens me to know that this relief is the tip of the iceberg. It is a stark reality: long-term solutions must be found, or the cycle of easily preventable suffering will continue across the world. This is a fact that permeates my thinking as I look toward the future.

As a Government major here at Wesleyan I am studying—as best I can—international development and solutions to extreme poverty. Classes such as *Political Economy of Developing Countries* have taught me that sustainable development is a steep road uphill, but that it is indeed possible. I have tried to take every class available on the topics of Africa, political economy, and everything else that might bolster my understanding of development barriers and their solutions. Taking Swahili language my freshman year was an immense help in Kenya, and while I have only been able to arrange one Swahili “Self Instructional Language Program” (SILP) since then, I have tried to stay current as I communicate with Kenyan acquaintances and hope for future treks to East Africa. Last semester, studying abroad in the Netherlands, I was able to take a class on local solutions to extreme poverty. As well, I took an *International Public Law* class that studied human rights law and culminated in an extensive research paper on the disastrous effects of US and European farm subsidies on Third World agriculture—and their blatant illegality under our World Trade Organization treaty obligations. Whenever possible, my coursework in college has focused on the complex force of globalization that has helped many but left many more behind. For a thesis, I am hoping to investigate ways that food aid money can help small farmers in poor countries, rather than become a drop in the bucket for subsidized, billion-dollar agribusiness in the United States. I have applied for a Davenport Grant that would send me on a four-week trip at the end of the summer (after this Dana internship) to Kapchorwa, Uganda. There, I hope to study an innovative “Warehouse Receipt System” that lets small farmers avoid predatory harvest-time middlemen, receive loans for investment in seeds and sell part of their harvests to the World Food Program for a better price. If I am awarded this Davenport Grant, I will utilize the Davenport-funded plane ticket to extend the trip and spend as much time as possible in Kakamega (six hours' drive away), happily continuing my Dana internship work with projects that must be done in Kenya. Regardless, a full-time internship with Friends of Kakamega this summer will help put my college study into perspective. I will experience first-hand the dearth of foreign aid funding when writing competitive grants. In presentations, I will be able to understand how little people know about poverty—a problem largely ignored by mainstream media—and yet how empathetically they want to help. In short, the internship will relate to the knowledge experiences that I have continuously sought out in college.

As I have already implied, my career aspirations focus on bringing about social change to lead to a more just world. I do not yet know whether this will take the form of a career at a large NGO, the creation of my own NGO, sustainable fair trade business, or something else altogether. No matter what, though, my goals will not waver. Experience in web site construction, fundraising, grant writing, and administration will be helpful to no end if I ultimately start a similar NGO on my own. If I work for a large nonprofit, the UN, or a development agency, there is no doubt these skills and experiences will be beneficial. It is perhaps unusual to apply for a Dana Grant to intern with an organization that I have so much experience with. However, I have never had the chance to do more than organize occasional fundraisers, help out now and then with bookkeeping, and volunteer for a few months in Kakamega. A full-time internship will help me understand if running an NGO is right for me. Instead of waiting tables to get by and save for my Summer Earning Expectation, the Dana Grant offers me a chance to learn how the operation of a small non-profit works. As I near graduation, this experience will afford me the chance to formulate the most effective and feasible path in life to help bring about an end to poverty.