

# U4U Continues Mission to Support Ugandan Students

**MOELLER MATH TEACHER** Connie Ring, leader of Unified for UNIFAT (an organization dedicated to supporting UNIFAT Primary School in Northern Uganda), traveled to Uganda this past summer for the second consecutive year. Moeller teachers Doug Rosfeld and Paul Kindt as well as John Harbaugh '11 joined her, along with students from Taylor, Mount Notre Dame, Sycamore, Madeira, and Wyoming. They were on a mission to deliver the much-needed textbooks they purchased through fundraising and to visit the 120 Ugandan children U4U supports.

Recently, the organization's members initiated a mentor program that will be responsible for overseeing the students U4U supports. "It was all the kids' idea," says Ring. "They wanted to ensure the funds we raised went to the children to provide tuition, shoes, uniforms, school lunches, and emergency medical services. They were also worried about the children themselves. Were they going to school every day? Were they healthy? Who's taking care of them? Wouldn't it be cool if we could have mentors watching over them?"

So Ring went to work. She began researching how other organizations handled mentor programs, which eventually led her to Erica Swisher who had recently worked in Washington, D.C., with the Little Lights Program. Swisher, niece of Michael Zimmer '67, agreed to help and spent two months in Gulu, Uganda, earlier this year working with the UNIFAT administration and teachers to create the new U4U Mentor Program. The program has now hired four mentors who are responsible for overseeing 30 students each. The mentors communicate with Ring and the U4U students via e-mail, and Swisher continues to serve as a consultant.

With the mentor program in place, Ring has another project in mind. "If we really want to make serious change, we've got to get (the Ugandan students) a high school education," says Ring. "Now when they graduate from UNIFAT (a primary school) they're going everywhere for high school, and there's an incredible drop-out rate. Only

a small percentage make it through high school." Her answer? She wants to build a high school on UNIFAT grounds.

"I cannot ask my current U4U members to do anything more than they're doing," says Ring. So her goal is to encourage the U4U chapters to continue taking care of sponsorships, while



(Photos clockwise from top) John Harbaugh '11 poses with 1st and 2nd graders at UNIFAT school. Below, Connie Ring with U4U mentors (from left) Mwaka Alfred, Laker Irene, Akello Jennifer, and Opiyo Dennis.



she tries to search outside resources for construction and technology costs. Currently there are 17 chapters, with more on the way. Already the organization has an ambitious budget in mind. They plan to join in raising \$25K for technology, \$40K for construction, \$36K for student sponsorship, and \$8K for mentoring, for a grand total of \$109K. "The ultimate goal of Unified for

UNIFAT is to put ourselves out of business," says Ring. "With the construction of both a UNIFAT Secondary School as well as an Internet café, the children will be guaranteed a high school education and UNIFAT will be able to sustain themselves."

For more information or to support U4U's efforts, see [www.unifiedforunifat.com](http://www.unifiedforunifat.com).