

Bringing Research to LIFE

In Brief

Renewed Research Investment

On February 23, the Honourable Gary Goodyear, Minister of State (Science and Technology), announced the renewal of two CRCs at the University of Manitoba, representing an investment of \$1 million from the federal government.

Dr. Digvir Jayas, acting vice-president (research) at the University of Manitoba, says the renewals continue the important research already underway by these two researchers and the impact that this research has on the lives of Manitobans, Canadians and people around the world.

"Drs. Perry and Freund are leaders in their fields and are prime examples of the calibre of the researchers at the University of Manitoba. We congratulate them on having their Chairs renewed today," Jayas says. "The importance of studying our past and, in particular, the social history of Western Canada, helps us as a society come to new understandings of our ever-changing cultural landscape. Improving the lives of individuals with diabetes is nearer thanks to the research being conducted by Dr. Freund and the funding provided by the CRC program."

The University of Manitoba currently holds 48 Canada Research Chairs. Chairholders are research leaders in natural sciences and engineering, health sciences, or social sciences and humanities.

Upcoming

Speaker Series

Teen Health Talk

By Roberta Woodgate

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

7:00 PM

Robert B. Schultz Lecture Theatre,

St. John's College

For more information:

Phone: (204) 474-9020

Tri-Council Policy Statement

Panel Presentation

Thursday, March 26, 2009

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Theatre A, Basic Medical Sciences Building

Bannatyne Campus

For more information:

www.pre.ethics.gc.ca

Helping you see Uganda's gorillas

BY SEAN MOORE

Uganda can offer tourists something only two other countries can – mountain gorillas in natural habitat – but its tourism industry lacks some vital tools so the University of Manitoba's Michael Campbell is helping them out.

The associate professor of Kinesiology and Recreation Management has partnered with Makerere University (among others like the Uganda Wildlife Authority) to establish a master's program in wildlife tourism and recreation management in Uganda.

In late September 2008, the Makerere University senate approved of the curriculum, making it the first tourism graduate program in the country. Now, Uganda can train its own people to manage an industry that accounts for 50 per cent of the country's GDP. Currently, most positions are filled by Kenyans, Indians, South Africans and Europeans running programs funded by Western money (read: unsustainable since when the money disappears, so do the programs).

"We want to raise capacity in tourism services in the country so that the benefits of tourism accrue to the local communities rather than international companies that come in," Campbell said.

"And we want Ugandans to train their own people at every level – from policy development with government to grassroots local community's initiatives."

The program will train students to assist community's in conservation initiatives (Uganda has one of the world's highest population growth rates so strain on the environment is high), or helping launch tourism initiatives (Ugandans are starting to realize that many well-heeled



Submitted Photo

Kinesiology and Recreation Management's Michael Campbell on a research trip in Uganda, where he is helping establish a sustainable tourism industry.

westerners like birding and Uganda, though a third the size of Manitoba, has over 1,000 bird species).

The students will learn to help communities write grant applications. You see, currently the Ugandan Wildlife Authority sets aside 20 per cent of gate fees for community conservation projects. But the community members are lost in red tape when navigating the grant proposal process so the money either languishes or gets redirected.

"It's been available for ten years," Campbell said, "but it's underutilized. So they have some good policy in place to attempt to address some of these conservation tourism initiatives, but when you get to the grassroots level, these small communities have nobody with the capacity to write a proposal and business plan."

And it's a lot of money sitting in the coffers. For instance, an individual's permit to enter the area of parks known to have

gorilla groups is \$500 (USD). This does not guarantee you a gorilla sighting, although it's common, and once you come across a group you get one hour with them. An armed guard accommodates the eight-person-maximum tour group.

The first habituated gorilla groups for tourist purposes were set up in 1993. The growth was high until 1999, when rebels killed eight tourists and four Ugandans (hence the now mandatory armed chaperone). Tourists eventually returned and acquiring a gorilla tracking permit can be difficult during the busy dry seasons; while not all tourists visit the gorillas, the last official numbers Campbell saw reported 600,000 annual tourists.

The only other countries with mountain gorilla populations are Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Horrors beyond any of Kurtz's imaginings are plaguing the Congo so that leaves Rwanda and Uganda as tourist destinations.

Teen health, let's not get too physical

BY SEAN MOORE

Teens do indeed listen to what you tell them, at least they do when you're yammering on about health.

That's what Roberta Woodgate, Nursing, found in a recent qualitative study she conducted with 71 adolescents from around the city.

She will discuss her findings and their implications at the next *Bringing Research to Life* speaker series on March 18 (details below). Her presentation is titled, Looking Good or Feeling Healthy?

The young absorb and understand much of what governments, curriculums, media and parents tell them about health. That's good. But here's the bad: they're not hearing about the whole spectrum of health, which includes mental and emotional health; they only get messages about physical health.

Obesity is a major issue nowadays so the promotion of physical health makes sense. And so the 12-19 year-olds interviewed by Woodgate and her research assistants – Jennifer Leach and Colette Pancoe, graduate students in the Faculty

of Social Work – knew all about healthy foods and the need for exercise.

"We asked them to go around with a camera and to take photos of things they think are important to them and their health. Three weeks later we interviewed them again about the photos they took and I got tired of looking at pictures of fruit," Woodgate said.

"What's interesting is the kids say health is important for health's sake, but through multiple interviews you really find out that health, at the end of the day, means body image. It doesn't matter if it's boys or girls. To them, girls should be thin and boys should have muscles."

When it comes to the other determinants of health that agencies like the World Health Organization value, Woodgate has found that our adolescents fail to make the connection. When the teens talked about everyday life they spoke about safety and family and friends, but they never spoke about it in the context of health.

"Many talked about bullying. Many wanted to learn how to deal with bullying. Bullying was a huge issue. And that's part

of mental health. But they never linked it to mental health. When you talk about health, they talk only about food and exercise.

"I know we have a problem with obesity but I really wonder what these kids are going to be thinking of themselves when they get older. If they eat a bag of chips they feel horrible – like they're doing drugs. There is a morality to food these days: I'm good if I eat this, I'm bad if I eat that."

Woodgate will talk more about the implications and potential solutions to these problems, but briefly, here are two. One, expand the message we're broadcasting to youth about health to include the other determinants. And two, make youth want equality. The adolescents said they desire green space and safe streets to play in, and healthy food to eat. But they don't equate these issues with politics. So, Woodgate says, make them political advocates for themselves.

To learn more, come to Looking Good or Feeling Healthy?, a free presentation held on March 18 at 7 p.m. in the Robert B. Schultz lecture theatre in St. John's College. For more information, call 204-474-9020.