



# All Things Ignatian



## Blessed to be a Witness Backpack Journalism in Uganda

*John O'Keefe, Tim Guthrie and Carol Zuegner and the Backpack Journalism students*

The Jesuit value of being men and women for and with others is the very heart of Creighton's Backpack Journalism project, a collaboration between the Department of Theology and Department of Journalism, Media and Computing. Led by Dr. John O'Keefe of Theology and Dr. Carol Zuegner and Tim Guthrie from JM&C, 14 students traveled to northern Uganda to produce an award-winning film, "Mato Oput (Justice & Reconciliation)."

The filmmaking is part of a five-week summer course that immerses students from a variety of majors first into a weeklong boot camp of learning how to shoot and edit video, write blogs and stories. They also learn about and discuss the elements of social justice and the Catholic Church. Armed with that knowledge and backpacks brimming with tripods, cameras and sound equipment, the students traveled to Uganda to explore the efforts of the Catholic Church to build justice, peace and reconciliation after a civil war that lasted more than 20 years.

The experience is a transformative one. Sophomore Hannah O'Keefe says witnessing firsthand the heartbreaking struggles of the people changed her: "Although I saw the horrifying effects of extreme poverty and civil war, I also found myself surrounded by inspiring and hopeful people working for a better future. I think it is safe to say that, thanks to the people I encountered on the other side of the world, I am one step closer to truly being a woman for other and have a reinvigorated thirst to seek justice."

2011 Backpack Journalists: Student director Peter Freeze, Marybeth Carlough, Matthew Dorwart, Chase Ehlers, Elizabeth Fredrickson, Sara Gentzler, Michelle Hancock, Milana Jordan, Bridget McQuillan, Molly Miller, Megan Murobayashi, Hannah O'Keefe, Kira Olson and Aurelia Roddy.



*One of the most compelling people interview for the documentary was Mama Angelina Atyem with the students at her home in northern Uganda. Mama Angelina's daughter was one of the children kidnapped during the civil war.*



*Creighton student Aurelia Roddy runs with the children from a rural parish school. For the backpack journalists, one of the best parts of the experience was spending time with children.*



*Students film an interview in Gulu, Uganda. They also wrote blogs and stories for a website about their experiences. One of the schools they visited is the first Jesuit high school in Uganda, Ocer Campion. The Creighton premiere of the film was a fundraiser for the school and raised about \$500.*

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