Columbians Taking Initiative

Barnard Freshman Delivers Books for Freedom

Shelby Boyle doesn’t know the meaning of traveling light. Ever since she was 14 years old, she has been carrying books to children in rural areas of El Salvador, Nicaragua, and other Central American countries. During the past five summers, Boyle has spent at least a month, sometimes two, volunteering for Books for a Better World, a nonprofit dedicated to sending child literacy rates in Latin America. In an average trip, Shelby visits more than 20 schools and libraries and delivers up to 70 books per stop. “The first time I went, I was flooded by the poverty I saw and how people are trying to clean up in the wake of civil war,” says Boyle. “Being with children in a reading corner, school library, or partners with local families, often sleeping on their floors and forgoing amenities like running water. This summer, she had to cut her trip short after contracting dengue fever and her spirits hung low. However, she is looking forward to beginning her studies in neuroscience and behavior and Latin American Studies at Barnard this fall—where she hopes to make new friends who will be interested in joining next summer’s excursion.”

Interns Raise Money for London Bombing Victims

On June 9-11, Sean Duffy, CC’06, pictured above, and his friend Leo Chau, a senior at the University of Colorado at Boulder, crawled 2.26 miles and straight into the Guinness Book of World Records, raising nearly $20,000 for the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation in the process. The crawl, which took just over 44 hours through hail, lightning, rain and freezing temperatures, exceeded the previous world record of 4.44 miles set by two Scotsmen in 1992. The grueling ordeal pushed the pair to their physical and mental limits. Both were treated at a local hospital at the crawl’s conclusion, Duffy suffering from hallucinations and motion sickness and Chau, from severe dehydration.

The event took place on the football field of Duffy and Chau’s high school alma mater in Colorado Springs, where hundreds of onlookers braved the elements to cheer for the pair as they completed 155 laps of the field.

How did the friends come up with such an unusual idea for a fundraiser? Duffy explains: “We were looking at the Guinness Web site and thought it would be fun to break a record for charity. We saw crawling as a metaphor—we were crawling so that kids could crawl.”

Wesley Griffin, GS’06, and Andrew Liebowitz, CC’06, were interning in London for the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) when the July 7 bombings occurred. Though neither was injured, they felt angry and in shock. When a fellow intern approached them with an idea of organizing a charity football match among interns to raise money for victims, they were moved to pitch in and help. Held on July 20, the event raised a total of £2,129 (US$3,817) including matching funds from the RBS Community Investment Team. RBS Human Resources had also lent a hand by sponsoring official football shirts and prizes. Said Liebowitz, “Terrorism knows no geographic boundaries and neither should those who seek to help others in need.” The support of the Royal Bank of Scotland and our education at Columbia were key drivers in bringing our dream to fruition.

RICHARD AXEL, University Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics and Pathology and recipient of a 2004 Nobel Prize for his pioneering studies on the human olfactory system, has been awarded a $5 million grant from the Grand Challenges in Global Health Initiative to develop safe, effective, and low-cost mosquito repellents, which could aid in reducing malaria transmission. Axel’s proposed research builds on state-of-the-art knowledge of the sense of smell in insects. The Grand Challenges Initiative was launched by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in partnership with the National Institutes of Health to support scientific breakthroughs against diseases that afflict the world’s poorest countries.

Columbians with new president for Information Technology

Columbia has a new vice president for Information Technology: Candace Fleming, who has previously directed IT customer relations for Cadbury Schweppes. Kathleen Crowley has been appointed to the newly created position of associate vice president for Academic and Residential Facilities. He will lead the formation of a new organization with responsibility for public safety and radiation safety for the entire university, in addition to her current responsibilities at the Medical School… Bruce Ferguson, dean of the School of Arts, will be on sabbatical during 2005-2006. Dan Kleinman will fill in as acting dean… Joe Ienusho has been appointed to the newly created position of vice president for Academic and Residential Facilities. He will lead the formation of a new organization with responsibility for public safety, grada...