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NEWS RELEASE



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\$7000 raised to support Vanier Students on Malawi Aids Study Trip

Organizers from Vanier College's International Education Department were overjoyed with the success of a recent Wine and Cheese Reception and a Silent Auction that raised \$7000 to support Vanier students selected for an Aids Study Trip to Malawi in January, 2008. This study trip is part of a larger program, *Vanier AIDS Action in Africa*, which aims to increase awareness amongst Vanier students of the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on Africa and on the world. Six Vanier students will travel to Malawi to see how HIV/AIDS is affecting that country. Once back in Canada, they will share their experiences with fellow Vanier students and high school students.

Not only did the fund raising events collect money for a worthwhile cause, they were also a lot of fun. Throughout the day of the Silent Auction, members of the Vanier community visited the College Learning Centre to bid on the 80 items up for auction that had been donated by Vanier staff and faculty members and local businesses. People dropped by the centre, sampled cakes and cookies by Vanier bakers, had a cup of coffee, walked around the room looking at the items up for auction, and put down their bid.

At 4:00 pm, the Wine and Cheese reception began when Master of Ceremonies Donny Insogna invited the company to enjoy wine and appetizers donated by the Vanier community and friends. Director General, Gilbert Héroux kicked off a short program with opening remarks on the importance of international education. Next, Judy Macdonald thanked Cari Clough who co-authored the project proposal to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Sonali Srivastava who has been responsible for implementing the project on campus, Doug Miller, who will lead the students in Malawi where they will be staying in the village of his wife, Nellie Miller; Melodie Hicks from Vanier's Nursing Department who will bring her commitment to the cause of eradicating HIV/AIDS; and Pam Espinosa with her team of Jennifer Joseph and Emily Myles. The highlight of the program came when Vanier's Choir Director, Erica Phare, student Jessica Laflamme, and Michael Plummer joined voices to sing *God Bless Africa*, the national anthem of Africa.

Afterwards, bidding on the Silent Auction continued amid mounting excitement with each bidder determined to win. The items most sought after were a hockey stick signed by all the Montreal Canadiens and a weekend getaway for 2 to Stoweflake Inn in Vermont.

"I just found it so moving that people came to support students going to Africa," commented Judy Macdonald, Coordinator of Learning Enrichment and Support Services for Programs, and the person responsible for all the activities. "At the same time it brought together the entire Vanier community. Our financial expectations were more than met, thanks to the generosity of the entire community. And people had a lot of fun!"

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