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## Students travel to Jamaica to help

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

**CRESTVIEW HILLS** - Twenty-nine Thomas More College students recently returned from a two-week volunteer stint in Jamaica. The students taught children and did maintenance at schools and orphanages in the northwestern part of the country.

The trip is part of three courses Thomas More offers: Global Business, Nursing in the Caribbean, and the Education Course Exploring Boundaries.

"I was interested in the trip because it was a service learning trip. It didn't matter that it was Jamaica. I just wanted to be of service to another country," said nursing student LaVon Moore.

Associate accounting Professor Thomas J. Gilday has been the lead faculty member on the trip since its inception five years ago.

"Consistent with the mission of Thomas More College and the position of the Catholic Church, we strive to educate our students as to their role in the world with a particular emphasis on service," Gilday said.

Before taking the trip, students attend class using the Jamaica trip as a backdrop to their learning. Business students studied international business issues and the economic theory of globalization. Nursing students learned about health issues in the Caribbean. Education majors focused on learning how to function and teach outside of their comfort zone.

Students were also involved in preparing for the trip. They raised money, designed the service projects, acquired tools and materials, and chose accommodations.

"I am absolutely convinced that our group of faculty, staff and students are the beneficiaries of each of our trips as opposed to the residents of the service sites that we visit," Gilday said.

Moore gained perspective about the United States.

"The people were in a lot more poverty than I had seen in the States. It was enlightening. I just didn't know that people had to live like that daily," Moore said.

The trip began as part of a community service club at Seton High School.

"I began my participation during its second year as a chaperone," Gilday said. "My daughter and I have participated in the trip at least once per year, every year since then. When the academic dean learned of my experiences in Jamaica, he encouraged me to create a course for Thomas More."

Two alumni and five staff members accompanied the students to Jamaica.

Other community-service projects sponsored by Thomas More include income tax preparation assistance to residents in downtown Covington and Over-the-Rhine and trips to Mexico offered by the sociology department.

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