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Brossart students hear call to Africa

Idea of two-week mission to Uganda began with Darfur studies

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ALEXANDRIA

- Bishop Brossart High School is sending 13 of its students, two young adults, a doctor, two nurses, two teachers and eight other adults on mission work to Uganda for two weeks.

The idea for the trip came from the Holy Spirit, said Donna Heim, the school's campus minister and theology teacher.

"One of our seniors said, 'I think I'm called to Africa,' " said Heim, who describes her job as listening to the Holy Spirit through the students.

"I began to pray about that. Then I taught seniors last year and we studied the Darfur crisis. In addition to raising awareness and raising money for relief efforts, the idea came up again, 'We should do a mission trip to Africa.' We began praying as a class about God's will for that and as God has continually done for us."

Heim's daughter, Gina, will turn 15 while in Uganda with her mother. The group will be helping to paint a school and build a dormitory in the village of Masaka. It is 81 miles southwest of Uganda's capital city of Kampala. It was nearly destroyed in the 1979 war between Uganda and Tanzania. A majority of Ugandans are Christian.

The trip "gives you a great feeling, that you have the opportunity to make a positive influence in many peoples' lives," said Lauren Kremer, 14. "Even though it may just be a couple people you helped, you know you still made a difference in somebody's life."

Anna Hollmann, 15, said two weeks in the African heat is a better way to spend her time than the traditional summer trip to Florida.

"When I go to Uganda I will be able to help people, when you go to Florida you are there for yourself. I could go to Florida anytime, but Africa is a once-in-a-lifetime experience," she said.

Anna's father, Fred Hollmann, said he and his wife, Marianne, are worried but proud of their daughter.

"We're nervous wrecks for one, but looking back I don't think I would have had the guts at 15 to do this trip."

The group leaves Tuesday.

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