Aid to Rwandan Refugees in Zaire

The civil war in Rwanda forced hundreds of thousands of refugees to flee into neighboring Zaire. Many of the refugees required medical attention. Sandra Burgener, professor of nursing, was funded by IUPUI's Department of Environmental Affairs to assist the United Nations refugee camps for three-and-a-half weeks last April.

During her trip to Zaire, Burgener went to refugee camps near the city of Goma, about a half mile from the Rwandan border. The largest camp, Kibumba, housed refugee families, with about 120,000 people total. Burgener worked with two nurses from the Church World Service to set up a community health plan. The plan included making rounds to check on the health of people, starting to document high-risk cases, and implementing a nutritional program.

Burgener also helped to educate 93 health workers about the health problems around the camp, such as pneumonia, diarrhea, and measles. Her program made a dramatic difference. Before Burgener arrived at Kibumba about 1,000 people in the camp died each week. By the time she left the death rate less than 50 per week.

As a result of the war many children were unable to locate or were left without their parents. Two of the camps in which Burgener helped, Rutoboko and Mama Christine’s Unattended Children’s Camp, housed 90 and 500 of these children, respectively. The children, who were age three to 18, required care for a number of diseases, and all were treated for scabies (a skin disease caused by microscopic mites). At both camps Burgener taught the children about oral care, and distributed toothbrushes to them.

Besides her work at the camps Burgener found time to make some contacts in Zaire and Zimbabwe, as well as attend two meetings that focused on the health needs of the refugee camps.

Burgener called her experiences “the best service/practice/learning experience in my 22 years of professional nursing.”

IUSB Pianist Wins Rubinstein Competition

Alexander Korsantiya, a pianist student of Alexander Toradze at IU South Bend, won the grand prize at the 1995 Artur Rubinstein Master Piano Competition in Tel Aviv, Israel. Korsantiya, 29, was “the great discovery of the competition,” according to The Jerusalem Post.

This latest and most prestigious of a series of competitive successes for professor Toradze’s students continues international recognition for the programs of IUSB’s Division of the Arts, headed by Dean Robert W. Demaree, Jr.

“This means Alexander Korsantiya is going to have a big career, playing in the most famous concert halls in the world,” said Demaree. “We are proud to send him out from IUSB as a symbol of excellent young artists in the Toradze piano studio. This studio has produced prizewinners in half-a-dozen important competitions over the last three years, and now we have reached the apex of today’s music world.”

Korsantiya’s winnings included $10,000 and performance engagements in major cities around the world.

According to Toradze, Martin Professor Chair for Piano, Korsantiya was one of 150 original entrants. Both he and another Toradze student, Maxim Mogilevsky, survived the first cut to 52 contestants. After presenting two solo recitals, Korsantiya was included in the semifinal list of 16, and then the final roster of six. In the final round Korsantiya performed Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 3.

Korsantiya was selected as the Grand Prize winner, and also awarded two minor prizes as the audience’s favorite performer and for the best presentation of a new commissioned work.

The Rubinstein event is one of the three most important piano competitions in the world, along with Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Competition and the Van Cliburn Competition in Fort Worth, Texas.