

# Jobs abroad deemed worthwhile High schoolers up career preparation

BY KAYLA CARRICK  
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

Everyone's talking about it: "I would love to relive it or do it again in a different country," sophomore Emir Sandhu said. "I would do it again in a heartbeat," senior Jason Wang said. "Yeah, I'd definitely do it again, no questions, no doubt," junior Liz Carter said.

## The experience

Sandhu worked at a small hospital and an orphanage in Accra, the capital of Ghana.

He began his trip performing administrative tasks at the hospital but gradually was allowed to perform clinical exams.

"I did it because I'm interested in a career in medicine and wanted to see the daily life, the ins and outs."

Sandhu learned about the day-to-day routine in Africa by living with a local family.

Wang also said he learned about the culture when he interned at a Chinese nongovernmental agency called the Beijing Aizhixing Institute of Health Education.

Wang studied in Beijing for a semester before working for the summer.

"When working with an NGO that deals with current issues, you



Sophomore Emir Sandhu worked at a hospital and orphanage in the capital of Ghana.

really get a glimpse of Beijing." He said working with Chinese co-workers helped him to understand the culture and the people.

He primarily dealt with HIV and AIDS advocacy, support and education by working with at-risk populations, such as migrant workers.

He helped redesign information pamphlets for distribution.

"I helped a lot on the language side of things, but I was also able to contribute ideas," he said.

Wang said he also served as a translator for people who came into the institute.

Carter also helped with translation at her job interning for a women's issues nonprofit called the Maple Psychological Counseling Center in Beijing.

## Getting the job

Carter and Wang traveled to China under the Jones Apparel Group Honors Asian Studies Fellowships.

University Career Services and the Study Abroad Program can help find organizations and fel-



Senior Jason Wang worked for a Chinese NGO that specializes in various health issues.

lowships such as these.

Robert Miles, associate dean for study abroad and international exchanges, said it's important to work abroad with the increasingly global labor market.

Miles, a native of England, said students often will find themselves in jobs where working abroad is necessary — something he has experienced firsthand.

"To participate in a program that involves an internship is excellent preparation for what might be a requirement or option in their working life."

UCS will host a career panel with an international focus January 31.

In the past the forum has consisted of people from the United Nations and from the N.C. Department of Commerce, among others.

"We try to hit everything," UCS associate director Vicki Lotz said.

To assist students on the job hunt, UCS subscribes to an online service called Going Global, a directory for key international employers.

Carolina Connections, a large database, lists international contacts with UNC alumni.



Junior Liz Carter worked for a women's issues nonprofit organization in Beijing, serving as a translator.

Another option is the Peace Corps. To apply, students must be 18 years old and ready to commit 27 months to the program.

The application process is outlined at [peacecorps.org](http://peacecorps.org).

## Why it's worth it

Sandhu said he felt he was making a difference in Africa. "I think working makes a big difference because you're helping develop the country and giving back."

Carter said she felt she got more out of the experience than her nonprofit.

"It was gradually over the course of the summer that I began to understand more of the language. At the end, I began to understand everything. It's that realization."

Sandhu said the orphans he worked with left a lasting impression on him.

"They had so little but were so happy and thankful that you came," he said.

"That was pretty indicative of the society. That's what I'll take with me."

## By the Numbers

513,011 N.C. students were enrolled in career- and technical-education courses during the 2004-05 school year.

4 CTE courses were added to East Chapel Hill High's curriculum for the 2006-07 year.

96 percent of CTE alumni surveyed by the N.C. DPI were employed.

impressing an employer.

He said that as a mediator between students and the real world, he can help students find internships that match their career interests.

He cited a past student who wanted to become a museum curator. She found a job at the N.C. Museum of Art.

Many students take advantage of these cooperative opportunities, allowing them to maintain after-school jobs and still get credit for graduation.

Joyner said this allows students a greater level of success. "I had a student come up to me and say, 'The busier I am, the better I do.'"

County schools offers a program known as School-to-Career that helps students make the adjustment from school to work, coordinator Graham-Young said.

"It's anything that gets them out of the classrooms to get them to connect with their career path," she said, citing opportunities such as job shadowing for middle-school students and internships for high-school students.

A survey conducted by the N.C. DPI also showed better success rates for students who had graduated from a CTE program.

In 2006 only 4 percent of the CTE alumni surveyed were unemployed and looking for work. The N.C. Youth Unemployment rate is 21.4 percent.

Carter maintains that training in a specialized field is an invaluable resource for students regardless of their ultimate career paths.

"Every scholar needs a skill," he said. "And so many of these are skills anyone can use, no matter what."

# UNC-system schools share career services tips

BY SHANNAN BOWEN  
INVESTIGATIVE TEAM EDITOR

When it comes to helping students prepare for jobs after graduation, campus career counselors know their role is vital.

Each of the 16 UNC-system universities has a career services department dedicated to helping students polish their job-application skills and find careers.

While each school offers something a little different, the leaders of the campus career departments often put their heads together to think of new ways to prepare the nation's future employees.

"We come together to share tips and how to make services better," said Leslie Wright, career-development counselor for UNC-Wilmington's

career services department.

She said career services counselors and directors from UNC schools meet at regional and state conferences through organizations such as the Southeastern Association of Colleges and Employers Inc.

"It's an opportunity for us to share ideas and best practices."

University career departments usually offer the basics — internship searches, resume and interview advice and job fairs. But each university has a unique approach catered to its students.

At UNC-W Wright said she targets student leaders and members of campus organizations.

"We target those folks because they tend to be the spokespeople for the members," she said.

UNC-W offers classroom outreach and resume assistance, career and internship placement and help with job searching.

E-mails, word-of-mouth transmission and building relationships with faculty also are strategies the career department uses.

"Students know we exist when they step through the door," Wright said.

UNC-Pembroke helps students focus on lifelong career goals through five job fairs, resume critiques, workshops and a Web site with job postings.

"We do just about everything you can think about, from choosing a major to choosing a career to finding jobs and internships," said Denisha Sanders, director of

career services at UNC-P.

UNC-P also partners with a group called Roadtrip Nation, which offers grants for students to explore careers during summer road trips.

All UNC-system schools have career information posted that's accessible from their home pages.

N.C. State University's career Web site offers a calendar for on-campus job interviews and a question-and-answer function that allows students to submit questions electronically to career counselors.

UNC-Charlotte's career services Web site includes a career-planning guide that features frequently asked questions about applying for jobs, preparing for interviews and adjusting to the workplace.

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