

Marianists make plans for mission trip to Africa

By Khalid Moss

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Lisa Gooding has taught survival skills and hiked the corridor trails of the Grand Canyon. But in a few weeks, she'll embark upon a mission that will test her ability to live off the land.

Gooding and Brother Alex Tuss of Dayton's Marianist Mission, 119 Franklin St., are shoring up plans for a mission trip to Africa. Once there they'll join North Carolina photojournalist/pastor Joshua Goocey to visit "miracle schools" in the Malawi outback and capture the scope of Marianist projects in eastern Africa.

Gooding is director of development and executive director of Marianist Missions for the United States. It will be her first trip to Africa. "To be a credible storyteller I need to be there," Gooding said. "In order to engage the public, I have to tell a credible story about my experiences in Africa. My job is to help people understand what the Marianists' spiritual alliance is all about and what Marianists are doing throughout the world." Landlocked Malawi is one of the world's least developed nations with most of the population involved in subsistence farming. Four out of five Malawians practice Christianity, and many religious organizations have established missions in this Bantu-speaking nation of grinding poverty and internal strife.

This will be Tuss' second mission abroad. He has experience tutoring students in the most impoverished districts of Bangalore, India, as well.

"Unlike India, there will be a greater breadth to what we are doing because we'll be in a lot of different places," said Tuss, special projects coordinator for Marianist Missions. "We'll begin in Nairobi to work with our Marianist brothers in the largest slums of Kenya. Brother Chole Mulenga, the African regional supervisor, suggested we also go to Mombasa, Zambia and Malawi, where they have set up schools and outreach programs." Mulenga recently visited the Dayton Marianist office and explained why it's important for the delegation to visit his country.

"It's good for them to come and see what's really happening on the ground," Mulenga said. "We've set up women's programs, children's programs,

primary and secondary schools and libraries. We provide training in skills such as dressmaking and carpentry. Lisa and Alex's visit will open a whole new horizon of cooperation."