

Kappa Delta Pi Visits the UN

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On Jan. 30th, 14 MC students, who are members of the National Education Honor Society, Kappa Delta Pi, went to the United Nations to attend the 11th annual "Protecting Human Rights" conference. The event was hosted by The Committee on Teaching About the United Nations (CTAUN). Accompanying these students were two MC education professors, Dr. Karen Nicholson and Brother Raymond Meagher.

The conference featured keynote speaker and award winning author, Greg Mortenson. Mortenson, who wrote the internationally best-selling book, *Three Cups of Tea - One Man's Mission to Fight Terrorism and Build Nations*. Mortenson is also the co-founder of the Central Asia Institute (CAI) and the program Pennies for Peace (P4P).

According to the CAI website, the Pennies for Peace program (P4P) "educates American children about the world beyond their experience and how they can make a positive impact on a global scale, one penny at a time. It teaches children the rewards of sharing and working together to bring hope and education opportunities to the children in Pakistan and Afghanistan."

P4P has grown significantly over the past year. "Tens of thousands of children all around the world collectively raised more than \$900,000 in 2008 - one penny at a time - to help build schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan. This program resonates deeply with children and adults around the world," Br. Raymond said.

"Many of our 14 students who went to the United Nations are interested in getting involved in this program when they become teachers to help educate their students about parts of the world they may not be able to find on a map," Br. Raymond said. "It's an opportunity to share and work together to bring hope and education to other children around the world."

Over 800 educators worldwide attended this conference and, out of 21 Kappa Delta Pi representatives, 16 of those were from MC. "It was a unique educational opportunity for the fourteen students," Br. Ray said.

"Kappa Delta Pi (KDP) has been developing resources and networking oppor-

tunities related to international education and these new initiatives will facilitate idea sharing and provide access to global knowledge and skills. One of these initiatives involves developing a relationship with the United Nations and connecting with its global education efforts," said Br. Raymond. "The Executive Director, Faye Snodgrass, felt that our involvement on this important day was an opportunity to strengthen the connection between KDP and the Center on Teaching About the United Nations."

Mortenson's speech, which talked about improving the quality of life in Pakistan and Afghanistan, claimed that the progress must first start with the development of the educational system. Mortenson said that more Afghan children are attending school now than they had been in years. About 6 million students were enrolled in 2008, compared to only 800,000 in 2000.

Regardless of the improvements, Mortenson made it apparent that there is still a long road ahead before the goal can be reached. Books, teachers, and even schools are in short supply and poverty conditions, along with safety concerns, often prevent children from attending school. "It was obvious to us all at the conference that he has taken on this responsibility as his life's work," Br. Raymond said.

These challenges make the construction of schools for girls in Afghanistan and Pakistan a dangerous feat. "Islamic extremists like the Taliban in Afghanistan ban education for females. They oppose girls' schools and the first thing they destroy when they invade remote regions are the schools for girls," said Br. Raymond. "The extremists in these countries are destroying girls' schools, threatening female students and their families, and intimidating teachers."

One statement that Mortenson made during his speech had resounding affects on the audience. Mortenson quoted an African Proverb that said, "If you educate a boy, you educate an individual. But if you educate a girl, you educate a community." Br. Raymond said, "Most, if not all, of our group were emotionally moved by this."

Mortenson's talk made an impression on much of the audience. "All of us agreed that it was uplifting and motivating," senior Alyssa Getzel said. Br. Raymond said, "it was an exciting, energizing, and powerful experience."

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-Brother Raymond Meagher

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