

## From the classroom to Kenya

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Malliron Hodge, assistant director for student leadership and engagement at Newcomb College Institute, plays jump rope with children at Ngong Road Children Association Camp in Nairobi, Kenya. (Photo from Newcomb College Institute)

With its mission to educate undergraduate women for leadership in the 21st century, faculty and staff members at [Newcomb College Institute](#) are well aware of gender-based challenges facing women today. Through NCI's latest service-learning initiative, they seek to connect students with an interest in women's leadership with girls in Kenya, where HIV/AIDS has left approximately 1 million orphans.

Executive director [Sally J. Kenney](#) and Malliron Hodge, assistant director for student

leadership and engagement, traveled to the African nation last August to teach sessions on gender and leadership to teens at Ngong Road Children Association Camp. The camp, organized during the summer school holiday, provides education and support for impoverished Nairobi children whose families are affected by HIV/AIDS.

While there, the two laid the groundwork for a study abroad service-learning opportunity that would connect Tulane University students interested in gender equality with hundreds of young girls eager to learn more.

Hodge notes, "These girls are ambitious, driven and dedicated leaders, in their community, family or church, who continue to thrive in the face of adversity. They're eager to share their experiences and talk about what leaders in their community are doing."

But Tulane students won't just be bringing a desire to help to Kenya; they'll also bring knowledge about their host country learned in a new International Development course, Women and Social Development in Kenya, where each student will develop a gender-based project. [Gwen Thompkins](#), a 1987 Newcomb College graduate and the former East Africa bureau chief for National Public Radio, will teach the class in the spring. If approved, students would travel to Kenya next August to work at the camp.

"Working with these girls as I have over the last three years has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life," Kenney says. "The enthusiasm and joy they bring to life and learning is infectious."

Registration for the course begins Nov. 9.

*Aidan Smith is external affairs officer for the Newcomb College Institute.*