



**INDIANA UNIVERSITY
KOKOMO**

What matters. Where it matters.

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact –Danielle Rush

Communications Specialist
2300 S. Washington Street
Kokomo, IN 46904-9003
(765) 455-9414
darush@iuk.edu

February 7, 2014



IU Kokomo senior Pamela Plain received the College/University Intern of the Year award from Indiana INTERNnet.

IU Kokomo student earns Intern of the Year award

KOKOMO, Ind. — Indiana University Kokomo senior Pamela Plain received the College/University Intern of the Year award from Indiana INTERNnet this week.

Plain, a health sciences major, was one of two students who received this award, chosen from 41 nominees statewide. She earned the recognition for organizing a breast tissue donation event in Kenya, as an intern for the Komen Tissue Bank (KTB) at the IU Simon Cancer Center.

She was excited to be nominated, and thrilled to win.

“I just thought it was an honor to be nominated, because everyone there had done such amazing internships,” said Plain, 50, from Tipton. “When I won, I couldn’t believe it.”

Plain learned about the KTB – the only repository for healthy breast tissue in the world – when she volunteered as part of a civic engagement and breast cancer class with Jessica Henderson, assistant professor of health sciences. Plain and six of her classmates donated healthy breast tissue, which researchers use as they seek a cure for breast cancer.

During her time at the center, she talked to Jill Henry, chief operating officer of the KTB, about the Kenya project, offering her skills in international shipping to facilitate getting the needed supplies to Africa. KTB’s goal is to collect breast tissue from women all over the world. They targeted Kenya because a particularly aggressive type of breast cancer is common there.

“I was a customs expert before I went back to school,” Plain said. “I realized they didn’t have a grasp on the shipping process, and this was a way I could make a difference.

“I started at the very beginning of the process, and did everything from packing the boxes, loading the container, and doing all the customs paperwork to send the shipment to Kenya. Even after my internship was over, I followed through on a daily basis, and made sure our shipment cleared customs.”

Those who supervised Plain’s internship said the award was well deserved, and no surprise to them.

“In our eyes, Pam is a rock star,” said Henry. “The truth is, we really do not know what we would have done without Pam Plain this past summer. She performed a superior job spearheading the planning and logistics of packing and shipping all the supplies for the tissue drive we were planning in Kenya, and was able to harvest information about the process we never would have had otherwise. Pam outlined what she would accomplish, and how she intended to accomplish it, then delivered everything she promised.”

She is especially proud that the shipment of medical supplies cleared customs in a week, saying it usually takes a month. In addition to items needed to collect tissue samples, the Komen Center sent vitamins, incubators, and other biomedical supplies to the Riley Mother and Baby Hospital in Kenya.

Henderson called Plain’s work “an extraordinary accomplishment,” and noted she had never seen an intern given responsibility of such magnitude.

“This project involved tens of thousands of dollars, superb communication skills and organizational skills, and an understanding of different cultures,” Henderson said.

“Pam’s passion lies in helping others. She is exactly the type of person who we want in our field, and who we want to stay in Indiana.”

Interim Chancellor Susan Sciame-Giesecke is proud of Plain’s accomplishment.

“She is an excellent example of how a regional campus, like IU Kokomo, provides access to a college degree to a variety of students, in different stages of their lives,” Sciame-Giesecke said. “I wish her the best in her next educational endeavor.”

Tracy Springer, manager of IU Kokomo’s Career and Accessibility Center, said Plain is a role model to other students, for understanding how important internships are for their future careers.

“Pam gained invaluable on-the-job experience from this internship, which will help her as she looks for employment and applies to graduate school,” Springer said. “We encourage all of our students to seek out these opportunities, as Pam did.”

Plain graduates in May, and hopes to find a job near Indianapolis, so she can begin working on her master’s degree at the School of Public Health at IUPUI. Her goal is to earn her Ph.D. before she turns 60.

“I really feel passionate about breast cancer, so if there is a job I can do in breast cancer research, I would be thrilled with that,” she said. “I also have a huge passion for cardiovascular health. I work at the Heart Center in Indianapolis, and I’ve learned that heart disease is the number one killer of women and of adults worldwide. I hope to funnel one of my passions into a job in the health realm, where I can make a difference.”

Indiana INTERNnet, managed by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, is a statewide resource for internship opportunities that has helped connect students and employers across the state since 2001.

For more information about internship opportunities available through IU Kokomo, go to iuk.edu/career-services.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

-END-