

## **Meet Lisa McCroskey, from rural USA to East Africa**

**Lisa McCroskey**

**MA in International Development,**

**Masters of Social Work, Certificate in Humanitarian Assistance**

**BA in Government and Politics, University of Maryland College Park**

### **Tell me about yourself:**

I'm originally from a small town near Springfield, Missouri. Rural Missouri, my father is a dairy farmer. I think my rural background gave me a platform for exploring my passion for agriculture in agrarian-driven countries. This summer, I traveled to Tanzania to do an agricultural internship for a few weeks to learn about farming techniques on Kilimanjaro and about the agricultural seasons there. I also spent a portion of the summer in Ethiopia with Prof. Peter Van Arsdale and a team to work on a primary school library in a small village called Mai Misham.

### **What brought you to the Josef Korbel School?**

A conglomerate of experiences brought me here. Six years ago, I wanted to volunteer abroad, somewhere in Africa. I chose Tanzania because I wanted to learn Swahili and see Kilimanjaro – I know it sounds touristy. I taught English there for two months. It opened my eyes to the way other people live in the world. I found more commonalities with people in Tanzania than with people from major cities in the U.S.. I'm from a small town where everyone knew one another. In Tanzania I saw a lot of similarities with how I grew up and I really connected to the people.

Then my fiancé was injured in Iraq by a roadside bomb. It turned my world upside down. Eventually he was transferred to Walter Reed and that was my first experience with casualties of war. Through these initial experiences my interests shifted to a humanitarian emphasis. At Walter Reed the people making the biggest difference aside from the doctors were the social workers. I then incorporated the international element into it by studying International Development at Korbel. So many conflicts and issues in the world stem from poverty and oppression. There's so many multifaceted layers to it. I came here specifically for this dual degree program. I moved to Colorado with my husband three years ago. We love it here in Denver, I love the mountains.

### **Do you participate in any outside organizations?**

I'm doing an internship with the African Community Center (hyperlink <http://www.acc-den.org/>) . I am using my program development skills and doing some case management. It's great because I get a chance to use my Swahili there. I also tutor two kids from Liberia who are from refugee families with the

Bridge Project (hyperlink <http://www.du.edu/bridgeproject/>).

**Where do you see yourself after obtaining your degrees?**

I haven't looked into the broad picture yet because I'm varied right now. I would love to work for a refugee or settlement agency because it brings together all the things I'm passionate about right now. So many refugees are survivors of war like my husband – only they were civilians, many of whom don't have access to the same resources as combatants. I like connecting people with resources that can help make their life better. They come here and face so many challenges. Ideally I would love to work for an NGO in East Africa – somewhere where I can speak Swahili.

**How do you think the Josef Korbel School will help you get there?**

It's been nice to learn both theoretical and practical frameworks. Even studying the international political economy and how it truly does affect people's lives on the ground. Politics at the macro level can affect people in villages across the world. The array of classes here have been really neat. I think the humanitarian classes at Korbel have been the most beneficial for me. They pull in the development aspect and the social aspect. My Health and Humanitarian Aid class has helped me bridge the gap in my mind that more must be done to treat civilians in combat zones. It helped me think about the missing link in medical care that should be given to civilian casualties.

**Have you had any pleasant surprises at the Josef Korbel School?**

I didn't know it was possible to do the dual degree in Social Work and International Development and also pick up a certificate. I also did not expect to make the close relationships with the professors that I have. I'm supported by my professors at Korbel and feel really empowered by their mentorship. It's definitely one of the strengths of the program. It's great that the professors will take the time to sit down and talk to me and support my passions and convictions.

For more information about our dual MA-MSW program, click [here](http://www.du.edu/korbel/academic/degrees/ma/jointdegree/intStudiesSW.html).  
(<http://www.du.edu/korbel/academic/degrees/ma/jointdegree/intStudiesSW.html>)

**M. Schwinn, MA candidate in International Security  
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