



Thibault Inspired to Help with Project Safety

By Matt Dougherty, NFHCA Director of Communications

CHANDLER, Ariz. – Worcester State junior Jolane Thibault is the walking embodiment of the idea that a terrible event can sometimes end up leading people to do great things.

Thibault, from Douglas, Massachusetts, created Project Safety to promote good health and hygiene to underprivileged children across the world. She began to feel the pull to help others in the aftermath of the terrorist attack at the 2013 Boston Marathon.

“I wanted to try to think of something positive that could help people after the Boston Marathon bombings, something that would help with little things. Some of my professors guided me and helped me begin. I took a class that helped in getting support and donating, and figured where I would start from there.”

With the idea in place, Thibault put Project Safety into action. She collected bandages, gauze pads, tweezers, scissors, advil, ibuprofen, rubbing alcohol, saline solution and more to create first-aid kits to send to Malawi, Africa for children who needed help with such basic necessities that are taken for granted by most people in the United States.

It was all made possible by the great support Thibault received for the project from family, friends and the entire Worcester State community.

“I reached out to my coaches and they were so willing to help donate and think of ways that the team could help create packages,” Thibault said. “Other professors donated, people from other sports donated. More professors that I never even had were willing to help, and one created 15 kits by himself.”

Thibault ended up creating 100 first-aid kits, and shipped them to Malawi for delivery in August. Thibault’s mother, Diane, is a nurse at Massachusetts General Hospital and works with Chimwemwe Moya Clarke, a Malawi native who went to deliver and distribute the first-aid kits to orphanages.

“She (Clarke) said it was incredible, people were practically fighting over them. We put them in tupperware containers because that’s what they wanted, and she had to explain to them what everything was used for. It was an incredible reaction and something small means so much to them.”

Thibault’s venture is truly a family affair, as she gets help from her parents, boyfriend and sister Suzanne, a sophomore field hockey student-athlete at Mount Ida College. Jolane now hopes to expand the project and continue to bring assistance to those in need.

“I want to send supplies to all different areas that are poverty stricken,” she said. “The next destination would be to go to Haiti. I know someone who owns a hospital over there and she would donate them to villages and areas in the poverty line.”

Thibault is majoring in Public Health and Pre-Nursing, and wants to use that experience towards a career in the medical field.

“I want to be a nurse practitioner in the pediatric oncology field,” Thibault said. “After I graduate I would have to get a master’s degree in nursing specializing in pediatric oncology. I always wanted to help kids with cancer in any way I could.”

Until then, Thibault will focus on field hockey, a sport that she “fell in love with” when her father first encouraged her to play in middle school. She’ll continue to work towards her degree at Worcester State, a place where she has “loved every second” of her experience so far. And she will also hope to bring more support to children in poverty through Project Safety.

“It has just been a great experience for me and I’m happy that people are willing to jump on board. I really appreciate everything that has been done for me so far.”

More information on Project Safety can be found at facebook.com/ProjectSafetyHygiene.