

Bridge between worlds

BY PATRICK GALLAGHER

pgallagher@westfairinc.com

From a makeshift office in an alcove of his Norwalk home's basement, Peter B. Korzenik is working to create opportunities for doctors and medical professionals to volunteer with clinics in Uganda and other underserved areas.

Through the organization Give Back Global, Korzenik hopes to send volunteers with experience in all facets of the health care industry – from finance to human resources to marketing – to help hospitals and clinics in sub-Saharan Africa improve their operations and management structures.

While there is a demonstrated need for such services across the sub-continent, it has taken Korzenik a significant amount of legwork, research and fine tuning to put Give Back Global in a position where it is able to compete for grants and charitable contributions from foundations and individual donors.

"It has been a very challenging, very stressful, kind of lonely pursuit," Korzenik said.

Korzenik's experience, which has taken place in an area chock-full of private equity funds, angel investors and successful startups, illustrates the challenges inherent in getting a nonprofit off the ground and running.

Prior to founding the organization, which is seeking nonprofit certification, Korzenik worked for more than 14 years with International Executive Service Corps, a group devoted to sending senior-level business volunteers to assist with projects in developing countries.

From 2003 to 2006, Korzenik served as IESC's director of global program resources, but when the nonprofit moved its headquarters from Stamford to Washington, Korzenik chose to remain with his family in Norwalk.

Later on, at a conference at Yale University, Korzenik heard a speaker discuss the management challenges facing health care providers in the developing world. "I was astonished to find this was a very underserved, niche market," he said.

But while Korzenik had worked for two decades in the international volunteer arena, he said he knew little of the global health care field. "So there was a steep learning curve."

Korzenik said he spent countless hours compiling databases that identify parts of the world where Give Back Global could assist, potential avenues for

fundraising and prospective volunteers, who he then reached out to on an individual basis.

The job was made even more difficult by laws in many countries requiring their ministry of health's approval to bring in volunteers. All the while, Korzenik took a handful of temporary positions just to keep generating income to pay the bills.

"Financing is the big issue. There are grants that are out there" from foundations and individual donors, Korzenik said. "We just needed some field experience and a track record – a story to tell, if you will. ... There are people out there who are looking for the right opportunity and Give Back Global I think hits a nerve."

Ernie Balasco, a former health care administrator from Exeter, R.I., was Give Back Global's first volunteer. Balasco was in Uganda from mid April to mid May, when he worked with the head of a health care provider that oversees two dozen clinics.

Korzenik said the project, in which Balasco worked with locals on strategic planning, performance improvement and leadership development, among other areas, was "very successful."

"I'm enormously grateful to Ernie," Korzenik said. Balasco paid for both his airfare and the approximately \$30 per day fee for housing while in Uganda. Korzenik said he is hoping to raise enough funds to support round-trip airfare for Give Back Global's volunteers,

with the local sponsor of a volunteer project paying for room and board.

Korzenik said he is in the early stages of recruiting for two follow-up projects in Uganda. One would involve management mentoring and operational involvement for a nonprofit in Kampala that serves the HIV/AIDS community, and the other would be to assist the Department of Medical Microbiology at Makerere University College of Health Sciences – Uganda's largest university – with its data management.

"There's no shortage of volunteers out there," Korzenik said. More information on Give Back Global can be found at givebackglobal.org and Korzenik can be reached at pkorzenik@givebackglobal.org.



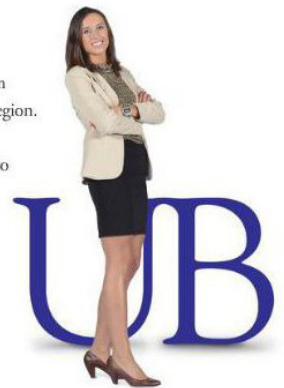
Adapt and thrive in the shifting world economy with a Master's degree in East Asian and Pacific Rim Studies.

In our two-year program you'll learn the skills essential to navigating the East Asian and Pacific Rim marketplace. Students gain a rich understanding of the culture, protocol and development of the region. Integral to your studies is learning an Asian language — a process demystified by our step-by-step curriculum. And the highlight of the program is an immersive overseas internship that allows you to enhance your language skills and gain practical experience in this increasingly important region.

The Master of Arts in East Asian and Pacific Rim Studies Specialized Concentrations Offered

- Global Management
- Global Communication
- Negotiation and Diplomacy
- International Political Economy and Development

To learn more, visit www.bridgeport.edu or call 1.800.EXCEL.UB.



UNIVERSITY OF
BRIDGEPORT

Opening doors. Building futures.

BRIDGEPORT • STAMFORD • WATERBURY