

Students helping others achieve their entrepreneurial dreams

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A brother and sister team prepare to travel to Venezuela this summer to assist others in their entrepreneurial dreams.

As participants in Help International, Andy and Jen Nicoll will be loaning out small amounts of money to help natives begin and succeed in their business endeavors.

Known as micro credit, students traveling to South America will give \$50 loans to help finance natives' aspirations in beginning their own businesses, said Andy, 23, a junior from Hartford, Conn., majoring in accounting.

"Micro credit is literally small loans. With our program, we travel to poor countries to give out these loans. Eventually, the people are able to get out of poverty," Andy said. "It takes money to make money."

With the loans, individuals are able to buy the resources and materials needed to begin their endeavors.

Many women participate, Andy said.

"Men usually find themselves in an industry with steady pay. However, the women at home have lots of business ideas and want to make extra money," he said. "If you invest with a woman, you are investing in a family."

Recipients of the loans receive financial training before and after the loan is issued. Their education helps them make good business decisions, Jen said.

Training the loan recipients is not the only way Jen expects to help the Venezuelan economy. Students will partner with an existing financial institution in the country to ensure that micocredit aid continues once they leave, she said.

Other students can help the people of South America by attending a benefit concert tonight at Club Omni, Jen said.

Ryan Shupe and the RubberBand will be performing tonight at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the cover cost is \$5. All profits will go directly to the people of South America.

"Friday night is certain to provide enjoyment for all that attend. This will certainly not be a painful way to serve others," she said.

From their Web site, Ryan Shupe and the RubberBand describe themselves as "a band that plays a unique style of music using such instruments as the guitar, mandolin, bouzouki, fiddle, bass, drums, banjo and keyboard. This self-dubbed "PostHeeHawFunkadelicHipHopNewGrass" draws from many musical influences including rock, bluegrass, pop, country, jazz and folk."