

# The Challenge Continues

*UNC professor offers to match—dollar for dollar—all donations to the School’s Student Travel Fund*

UNC SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH ALUMNA VANESSA ROMMELMANN DID NOT KNOW ABOUT A UNC SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSOR’S CHALLENGE TO ALUMNI WHEN SHE DECIDED TO “GIVE BACK” TO THE SCHOOL THAT SHAPED HER CAREER. BUT SHE



Vanessa Rommelmann

was inspired when she was told about it—For every dollar you donate to a fund for student travel opportunities, the unnamed faculty member pledged, I’ll donate a dollar, too.

Now working as a statistician at Research Triangle Institute (RTI) in Research Triangle Park, N.C., Vanessa studies ways to improve pregnancy outcomes. Her work is a rewarding means of using the master’s degrees in biostatistics and maternal and child health she earned from the School in 2003. Vanessa also holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Health from the School.

During graduate school, Vanessa traveled to Tanzania for a summer where she learned about the health surveillance systems to monitor diseases, track health outcomes and make health policy decisions.

She feels fortunate that, as a student, she did not have to worry much about finances. Support from the Carolina Population Center and a supplement from former UNC Department of Maternal and Child Health Chair, Dr. Pierre Buekens, who donated to a student travel fund, allowed her to make the important trip to Tanzania.

“It’s wonderful to travel to a place you care about and to know you’ll learn something there that you can’t experience anywhere else,” Vanessa says. “Lack of money shouldn’t keep a person from making those kinds of discoveries. I was lucky—not everyone has the opportunities I did.”

Quietly re-investing in other students’ prospects for seeing the world is one way Vanessa manages to share her good fortune.

*Create travel opportunities for students by supporting the UNC School of Public Health’s student travel fund. Complete the enclosed gift envelope and invest in the world—one student at a time.*