

AS GLOBAL RESOURCES BECOME INCREASINGLY SCARCE, **CHLOE STULL-LANE '07** IS WORKING TO ENSURE THAT THE DEVELOPING WORLD HAS EQUAL ACCESS TO SAFE AND PLENTIFUL WATER.

# THE WEIGHT OF Water

By Lisa Gulya '07

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BILL KELLEY

WHEN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT activist Chloe Stull-Lane '07 sat down to lunch at the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize Forum with environmentalist Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize laureate from Kenya, her schoolwork provided more than polite table talk. The conversation turned to water privatization in Africa, a process by which private companies, rather than the government, control water treatment and sewage facilities.

Stull-Lane, a native of Mendocino County, California, became interested in the issue while studying abroad in Namibia as a sophomore at St. Olaf.

Maathai invited Stull-Lane to spend last summer researching how Kenya's water-management program affects rural women. With the Nobel laureate's help, Stull-Lane interned with the United Nations Environmental Programme in Kenya and received St. Olaf's Kloeck-Jenson Scholarship for Peace and Justice Internships to fund an extended stay in the region.

Stull-Lane was interested in sociology, anthropology and environmental studies when she was looking for a college. She was attracted to the liberal arts curriculum and the renowned music program at St. Olaf, but she chose the school because of one professor.

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"ST. OLAF FOSTERS A SPACE FOR STUDENTS TO THINK ABOUT VOCATION, RATHER THAN JUST OUR PASSIONS OR PROFESSIONS IN ISOLATION OF EACH OTHER."

— CHLOE STULL-LANE '07

"I came to St. Olaf because of Rebecca Judge," says Stull-Lane, referring to the associate professor of economics and environmental studies. As a first-year student in Judge's course in environmental policy and regulation, Stull-Lane learned about sustainable development, defined by the United Nations as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Stull-Lane initially wanted to pursue seven different majors. Judge, who became the ambitious student's academic adviser, helped her formulate a realistic plan. "Chloe's approach is so interdisciplinary," Judge says. "She tries to see the interconnection of everything. The hardest thing for Chloe sometimes is narrowing those interests down."

With Judge's help, Stull-Lane created an individual major in sustainable international development through the Center for Integrative Studies. She also is majoring in American Racial and Multicultural Studies, with concentrations in Africa and the Americas, and environmental studies. All of those pursuits feed her interests in the connections among economics, politics, and social and environmental issues in community and international development.

Her friendship with Claire Mpagazihe '07, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, influenced Stull-Lane's decision to study in Africa. The practical experience she had abroad was a vital counterpoint to classroom time on campus.

"My attention was first turned toward issues of water access during my internship with the Southern African Institute for Environmental Assessment in Windhoek, Namibia," Stull-Lane says. Namibia's landscape is primarily desert, and its government gives international organizations and multinational corporations subsidized access to water while Namibian residents struggle to find clean water for daily use, she explains. The scenario showed her how race, economics and environmental concerns can clash on a global scale.

Stull-Lane created an e-mail alias that allowed her to send messages to dozens of people simultaneously: urging them to get involved in her work, congratulating them on progressive political victories in the United States and asking for donations when a region she was working in was flooded.

She joined the steering committee of SustainUS: The U.S. Youth Network for Sustainable Development and attended the United Nations' Fifteenth Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in May 2006, encouraging delegates from around the world to pledge their commitment to renewable energy.

## QUICK FACTS ABOUT ADDITIONAL ST. OLAF HONOR HOUSES

Tucked inside Norway Valley behind the emerging Science Complex is the **Forest Inn**. Members of this hideaway are all seniors, and they promote literacy on campus and around the community. Each Thursday at 7 p.m. they host the "Adventure Girls Book Club" for girls ages 9 to 14 at Northfield Public Library.

The women of **Haldorsen House** are carrying on the Nightingale legacy project. In its 10th year, the project provides personal, academic and social support for Northfield Middle School girls.

**Lincoln Inn** is home to St. Paul's Outreach project, whose mission is to provide a place where Christian college students can experience growth and support in their faith. In addition to working with national chapters of the St. Paul's project, these housemates are active at St. Dominic Catholic Church in Northfield.

All seniors, the residents of **Schmidt House** volunteer at the Northfield Care Center through Story Circles International, an organization that connects college volunteers with seniors through storytelling.

Affiliated with the Asian Studies Department, **Flaten House** is home to six housemates who coordinate weekly and monthly educational events and collaborate with other Asian multicultural groups, including the Asian Cultures Association and Korean Cultures Association.



German is spoken routinely at **Holstad House**, and homework help is easy to find. The residents host *Stammtisch*, a weekly discussion group that allows students to practice their language skills outside the classroom, and monthly educational activities about the German culture.

Better known as *maison française*, **Lee House** serves as a focal point for French culture and activities that range from lectures and films to baguette-and-cheese night and *soiree crepe* (crepe night).

Nothing but Spanish is spoken in **Rose House**, a.k.a. *la casa hispánica*, home to five residents who coordinate cultural events intended to promote cultural and linguistic awareness of the Spanish-speaking world. They also hold weekly Spanish conversation tables.

**Swanson House**, a.k.a. *Norskhuset*, is a home away from home for four housemates who speak Norwegian and incorporate Norwegian culture into their daily routine. They organize co-curricular activities for St. Olaf students as well as larger events, such as the *Syttende mai frokost* (May 17th breakfast) for the entire Northfield community.

Affiliated with the Russian Department, the Russian language tutorial house, **Ytterboe House**, is home to five Ole juniors who have a passion for the Russian language, people and culture. Housemates hold twice-weekly study sessions for students majoring in Russian or in Russian Language and Area Studies and host weekly dinners that help Oles hone their language skills.

**LAUREN FISCHER '08** is an English major from Princeton, Minn., with a media studies concentration.

"Chloe is a remarkable young woman who has used her college years to put her education to work for a better world," says Anthony Lott, an assistant professor of political science who worked with Stull-Lane on the water privatization issue. "She seeks to expand on the classroom setting by locating opportunities to participate in international civil society."

Stull-Lane participated in Kenyan culture without fear and without flouting her difference, two problems that sometimes plague international aid workers. In the late fall, she worked with Womankind Kenya, or Wokike, an organization started by two women in Kenya's northeastern province. Stull-Lane had been warned not to visit because of reports of violence against aid workers. Equipped with cultural sensitivity, however, rather than the recommended two armed guards, Stull-Lane lived in the area without incident.

She covered her head with a shawl, as many women of the region do, and wore a *diraa*, a local form of dress. "I wore the clothing with much respect for the choices these

women have made to continue wearing the clothes despite outside pressure to change," she explains.

This fall, Stull-Lane will begin a two-year master's program in international development and management at Lund University in Sweden. The program includes a year of study in Sweden and one year of fieldwork in a developing country. After that she's considering international development work, followed by a career working to influence U.S. development policy in Washington, D.C.

"St. Olaf fosters a space for students to think about vocation, rather than just our passions or professions in isolation of each other," she says. "This focus has motivated me to move my ideals into action and seek all the opportunities I have been privileged to be a part of throughout my time at this college." 🦄

**Lisa Gulya '07** is majoring in English and Russian and plans to pursue a career in journalism or media analysis.