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**Carly Nieman's Journey from Business Student to Missionary Leader**

***From Classroom to Community: UW-Parkside Graduate Carly Nieman’s Journey to Serve South Africa***

Story by UW-Parkside

On Saturday, Dec. 14, over 400 University of Wisconsin-Parkside students officially completed their degrees and celebrated the beginning of the next part of their journey. Carly Nieman’s path combines business acumen with a passion for international service. While deciding what to do with your life following graduation can be a daunting task, Carly is confident that she has found her passion and is ready to follow her path.

“My future is something I am not as scared of anymore because I know what I am meant to do with my life, and as long as I follow my passions I have no fear. UW-Parkside has been critical in developing who I am and the knowledge I have that will be necessary in my future as a missionary that will allow me to serve my global community,” she said.

Carly graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business and was named an Outstanding Graduate. Her journey is marked by academic excellence, international volunteerism, and deep personal commitment and stands as a testament to how education can fuel a life of service. Carly intends to continue her mission work in South Africa with Engage Africa after graduation.

While many business students plan careers in corporate environments, Carly has chosen a different path, one that blends her academic skills with her calling to be a missionary in South Africa. Although Carly admits she once feared the future, not knowing exactly where life would take her, her time at UW-Parkside has equipped her with the skills, experiences, and confidence to take bold steps in a new direction.

Carly’s unique perspective is grounded in her belief that mission work, much like running a business, requires a broad skill set, including accounting, marketing, organizational management, and leadership. Throughout her time at UW-Parkside, Carly has gained invaluable experience not only in the classroom but through hands-on community-based projects. From editing an employee handbook for the United Way to analyzing enrollment data for the Kenosha Area Soccer League, Carly has honed her business skills in real-world settings. These experiences have helped her build the confidence to effectively communicate her message, a crucial skill for missionary work.

Beyond the classroom, Carly has been committed to community service both locally and internationally. She has volunteered with organizations like Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast, mentoring girls earning their Gold Award, and has served as the Kids Ministry Co-Coordinator at her local church. Carly’s dedication to service culminated in a National Gold Award from Girl Scouts for her project that created a community room in a low-income, dual-language school.

Perhaps most impactful, Carly’s heart for South Africa has led her to volunteer multiple times with Engage Africa, a ministry based in Rustenburg, South Africa. There, she helped with everything from community outreach to business strategy, gaining insight into the challenges and rewards of mission work.

This summer, Carly spent three months in South Africa working with children, youth, and adult ministries while also supporting Engage Africa’s administrative operations. Her mission to help others is clear and she is determined to continue that mission after graduation. Carly plans to make multiple trips to Africa in the next year. She is eager to continue her work and keep building the relationships she has established as she works to make a positive impact.

“Each time I have gone, my heart has been drawn closer to the people and work that needs to be done there. There is so much that this organization is involved with that I was able to assist with in my time there. They run an orphanage and run a church in Freedom Park. During my time there, I also got to help out on the business side of their ministry by helping with accounting processes, fundraising practices, and planning for future growth,” Carly explains.