

# Teacher to study overseas

STAFF REPORT

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RIO GRANDE — Gallipolis City Schools educator Sandra Forgey of Rio Grande has been selected as a 2008 Earth Expeditions participant and this summer will travel to Kenya to study sustainable approaches to human-wildlife co-existence.

The Earth Expeditions program, established by Miami University's Project Dragonfly and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, recognizes outstanding educators throughout the country and provides them with research experiences at conservation hotspots around the world.

This month, Forgey will travel to Kenya with a group of U.S. educators and Miami and zoo instructors to conduct field research projects at the Amboseli National Park. While in-country, the group will also join Kenyan educators to begin long-term collaborative projects linking classrooms in both countries.

When Forgey and the Kenyan educators return to their home institutions, their

**Please see Forgey, A5**

## Forgey from Page A1

work will continue on Dragonfly's web platform, created specifically for educator collaboration. Educators on some expeditions will be joined by professionals from zoos across the U.S. as part of Miami and the Cincinnati Zoo's newest collaboration, Wild Research.

The Earth Expeditions program provides graduate credit to classroom teachers and educators from zoos, museums and other informal settings through direct study experience at research sites in Africa, Asia, Central America and the Caribbean. The project's mission is to build an alliance of educators with firsthand knowledge of inquiry-driven, community-based learning for the benefit of ecological communities, student achievement, and global understanding.

"We need to go beyond textbooks and engage educators and students in the real world," said Earth Expeditions Co-Director Dr. Chris Myers, director of Project Dragonfly and professor of zoology at Miami University, Oxford.

"We envision every educator as an ambassador who creates as well as transmits knowledge, who promotes needed dialogue at all levels of society, and who inspires their students to do the same," Myers added.

"Reading about the role of the Maasai in the ecosystem is one thing," said Dave Jenike, co-director of Earth Expeditions and chief operating officer at the Cincinnati Zoo. "But it can be transformational for students to hear about it from their own teacher who has experienced it firsthand.

"Through Earth Expeditions, teachers become the conduit for their students to engage more deeply in their studies, for their schools to become centers of investigation, and for all to advance a powerful conservation ethic to help preserve our natural world," he added.

All Earth Expeditions participants earn tuition-free graduate credit from Miami University. The Earth Expeditions program is supported by funding from Miami University and the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden.

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