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**Peterson receives human rights award**

*Summary: Senior Nick Peterson has received the Upper Midwest Human Rights Fellowship Award. He will travel to London for 12 weeks beginning May 23 to participate in a human rights outreach project.*

(May 11, 2006)-Nick Peterson, a University of Minnesota, Morris senior from Elk River, has received the Upper Midwest Human Rights Fellowship Award. Peterson, who has demonstrated an understanding of human rights and dignity throughout his experience as a UMM student, will travel to London for 12 weeks beginning May 23 to participate in an outreach project.

Marynel Ryan, UMM history faculty, encouraged Peterson to apply for this award. Peterson said, "I think this program is a genuine experience encouraging human rights and civic responsibility." While in London, Peterson will work with the National Housing Federation, which is a non-profit government established organization that assists with housing development all over the United Kingdom. The organization looks at housing from a human rights perspective with a non-discriminatory view. Not based on social status, the NHF assists those in need of housing, viewing and approaching economic problems somewhat differently than the United States. Along with other human rights advocates, Peterson will learn about the work of the NHF, and bring ideas back to share and use ideally everywhere.

Outreach and civic responsibility are not new concepts to Peterson. As a UMM student Peterson has served as director of the Student Legislative Coalition, which lobbied the Minnesota Legislature to fund the biomass facility at UMM when he served as a member of the Student Legislative Advocacy Committee. In addition, in his role as renewable energy development assistant at the University of Minnesota's West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, Peterson coordinated the logistics and program information for the wind turbine dedication ceremony last spring.

Peterson and head of UMM's plant services operations, Lowell Rasmussen, attended the November 2005 National Green Power Marketing Conference to accept the 2005 Green Power Leadership Award presented to UMM for its commitment to on-site generation of renewable energy.

The Upper Midwest Human Rights Fellowship Award was inaugurated by the University of Minnesota Human Rights Center in 1988. The program was implemented to help train effective human rights advocates and offers financial assistance to those who wish to participate in projects reaching out to others. The program was started in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The organization has contacts around the world for opportunities of outreach in human rights, but allows and encourages individuals to set up their own contacts helping to expand the network. Projects can be done where the individual desires—anywhere from their hometown to a city across the world. Individuals receiving this award should plan for a 10-week minimum commitment to their projects. The U of M Resource Center fundraises and receives donations for monetary awards to applicants, which are awarded in amounts up to \$5,000.

Regarding the social work Peterson will be performing, he said, "The idea of going somewhere and bringing part of it

back is what it's all about.”

To qualify for the Upper Midwest Human Rights Fellowship Award, one must demonstrate an understanding of human rights. The application process includes writing essays to demonstrate such and the application can be accessed online at <http://www.umn.edu/humanrts/center/uppermidwest/guidelines.html>.

Peterson is also one of two UMM students to receive the 2006 Mary Martelle Memorial Award. This award serves as a continuing tribute to those personal qualities and many and varied contributions made by Mary Martelle, a senior secretary in the Office of Student Activities at UMM from 1965 until her death in 1976.

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