

After graduating from UD in 2006 with a bachelor of arts degree in political science, Matt Maroon decided to spend a year in the East African nation of Malawi working with the Marianists before heading to law school.

Ten years later, he's still there, and Malawi has become home.

"That wasn't originally the plan," Maroon said. "Law school was the plan. But once I got here, I was hooked."

Maroon turned a year of service into a vocation. After working with the Marianists in the city of Karonga, Maroon returned to the United States for an anthropology masters degree at the University of Cincinnati. Upon graduation, Maroon came back to Malawi and founded a non-profit NGO charity, Determined to Develop (D2D), designed to empower Malawian citizens to create sustainable, community-driven solutions to issues facing their communities. D2D focuses on education and youth support, women's empowerment, health and nutrition, and environmental needs.

As a home base for these operations, Matt built a lodge, Maji Zuwa, which hosts visitors from around the globe. That number has included many UD students during the past few years, notably the Malawi Practicum for Human Rights and the ETHOS program.

For D2D's latest project, which broke ground during the summer, Maroon is working with the School of Engineering, the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Education and Health Sciences to build a high school and create a curriculum using best practices for teaching in an African context.

"We started construction in late July," Maroon said. "UD is a huge supporter of this project helping us rethink how we do education on the African continent."