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## Innovations: Professor cures African children

By [Nicquel Terry](#)  
The State News  
Published: October 24, 2007



**Boivin**

When Michael Boivin journeyed to Africa in 2003, he brought back bittersweet memories from a heartfelt experience.

Boivin, with his expertise in neuropsychology, saved the life of a Ugandan girl who was severely impaired with cerebral malaria.

And as Boivin makes his frequent visits to cure the sick in Africa, the girl's mother shows her gratitude by knitting appreciation gifts for him.

The Detroit native is currently working with his colleagues and students to assist in developing computer games that rehabilitate mental and cognitive skills for Ugandan children who have suffered cerebral malaria.

"There are a lot of children there with special needs," he said. "We hope that these programs will become readily available in places where there is no rehabilitation available."

He attended graduate school at Western Michigan University where he studied experimental and psychobiology and earned his master's at University of Michigan in neuropsychology and public health.

Boivin began his work at MSU in 2006 where he works in the departments of neurology and psychiatry. He teaches behavioral science and medicine courses, as well as evidence-

### Meet ... Michael Boivin

#### Department

Neurology and Psychiatry

#### Type of Research

Neuropsychology and Public Health

#### Date of Research

Boivin began his research in this particular field in 1989 and started working with the development of computer programs for cerebral malaria children this year. Boivin will travel to Africa in January 2008 to help with the training of these children.

#### Funding for Research

The University of Michigan's Global Health Research and Training Initiative allocates \$15,000 for the project, and he also has collected funding through the MSU Department of Neurology.

#### Basics of Research

Boivin said cerebral malaria is the single largest cause of death and hospitalization of children in Africa under 5 years old. He said the computer programs were previously created and that he adapted them to a new setting in Uganda. The implementation of these programs will aid children with memory and attention skills.

#### Social Impact

Boivin said he hopes these computer programs will become readily available to places in Africa where there is no rehabilitation for children suffering from cerebral malaria.

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based medicine in the doctorate program.

When Boivin is not teaching or doing research to help save lives, he said he enjoys trout fishing in Quebec, Canada and playing ice hockey.

He said his first trip to Africa in 1989 was the tipping point for his decision to do in-depth research on neuropsychology.

“I was challenged by (the experience), and I wanted to find ways to take my training in neuropsychology and apply it to public health concerns in Africa,” he said.

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Comments 

**Norman Abell, MD**

10/25/07 @ 9:19am

Way to go, Michael. All this interesting work since you and Grace and kids were our guests at Moanza in Congo in 1989 and Kikongo in 1990-91.  
From Dad and Mom Abell

**Jim Abell**

10/25/07 @ 10:48pm

At least two African men that I used to work with have died from cerebral malaria. Thanks, Mike, for your hard work in this important area!  
Your brother-in-law, Jim

“It’s a personal mission to enhance the development of children in terms of their learning ability,” Boivin said.

Boivin said he hopes Ugandans can gain more access in the coming years to the Internet and programs that will treat the children who are suffering from these types of diseases.



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