

The Social Work Leader



SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

School of Social Work



From the Dean

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the new academic year. In this issue of *The Social Work Leader*, we include several articles about some of the activities that faculty are engaged in with the community. As a school of social work, the Springfield College School of Social Work (SCSSW) is in a unique position to become a cornerstone for advancing the social agenda in Western Massachusetts. The presence of a graduate school of social work in a community provides a platform for social consciousness. Community-school partnerships create a channel to empower people to improve their neighborhoods, communities, and country. Through partnerships with surrounding agencies, the SCSSW is contributing to

the social agenda by supplying person power and innovative ideas. Community-based partnerships are dually beneficial because they provide graduate social work students with opportunities for practical application of theories and skills. In turn, the organizations flourish with faculty and graduate student support that would otherwise not be available. In short, everyone benefits from successful partnerships.

Community partnerships are facilitated through two components: successfully getting faculty involved with the community, and allowing the community access to the School's resources. Here at the Springfield College School of Social Work, the dedicated faculty is often at the forefront of recognizing pressing social issues in the community. A number of faculty members are currently leading projects in order to initiate changes in the community. Faculty members have chosen to extend their efforts to confront social problems, disparities in health and mental health, and other injustices. For instance, the program "Strengthening Community Health through Outreach, Organizing, Linkage, and Support" has been developed to respond to the unacceptable and growing disparity in health among Mason Square families, particularly for school-age children. For the sixth year, the SCSSW has worked with outdoor specialist programs and Massachusetts agencies to create a safe and fun-filled environment for prospective parents and children in need of stable homes to meet on campus. The SCSSW has been recently awarded a grant to establish a specialization in gerontology, a growing area of social work. The receipt of this grant will strengthen relationships between the School and community agencies that currently provide services to elderly individuals. These are just some of the initiatives that are underway in partnerships between the SCSSW and community-based organizations.

The Springfield College School of Social Work is fortunate to be a part of an institution that prides itself on diversity and community service. Springfield College sponsors Humanics in Action Day in order to unite the College with its surrounding neighborhoods. Recently, the mayor of Springfield proclaimed June 19, 2009, as President Richard B. Flynn Day. President Flynn has embodied the mantra of *lead by example* during his past ten years of service by encouraging community engagement. The combination of a school of social work devoted to learning through community-based partnerships, and a college dedicated to giving back to its community becomes an invigorating force of social change. The new academic year, which is also the 125th anniversary of Springfield College, is the ideal opportunity to celebrate the College's mission to prepare students for leadership in service to others coincides with the School of Social Work experiences. You have my very best wishes for a productive semester and my appreciation for your continued interest in the work of our outstanding faculty, staff, and students. Thank you all, and we look forward to working with you in the year ahead!

Francine J. Vecchiolla, Ph.D., M.S.W.
Dean and Professor of Social Work
September 2009

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Faculty List for Academic Year 2009-2010

Full-Time Faculty



Miguel L. Arce,
Assistant Professor.
M.S.W., 1976, San Jose State University.
Areas: Program Design and Technical Assistance;
Community and Organizational Practice.



James J. Canning,
Associate Professor.
Ph.D., 1997, Smith College School for Social Work;
M.S.W., 1982, Smith College School for Social Work.
Areas: Clinical Research; Clinical Practice with Infants, Children,
Adolescents, and Families; Social Justice; Social Work Practice.



Kate H. DeCou,
Assistant Director of Field Education.
Ph.D., 2005, SUNY Albany; M.S.W., 1972, University of Chicago,
School of Social Service Administration.
Areas: Corrections; Empowerment of Women; Women's Issues;
Domestic Violence; Trauma; Mental Health; and Policy.



William T. Fisher,
Professor and Director of Field Education.
Ed.D., 1989, Columbia University Teachers College;
M.S.W., 1997, University of Connecticut School of Social Work;
M.Ed., 1983, University of Massachusetts.
Areas: Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counseling;
Community Organizing; Community Mental Health Program Evaluation.



Joseph R. Gianesin,
Professor.
Ph.D., 1995, University of Denver;
M.S.W., 1978, University of California, Los Angeles.
Areas: School Administration; Group Work; School Social Work;
Male Adolescent Development; Therapeutic Applications of Adventure.



John Habif,
Assistant Professor.
M.S.W., 1974, University of Connecticut School of Social Work.
Areas: Quantitative and Qualitative Research; Mental Health
and Addiction; Quality Management; Program Design and Evaluation;
Administration; and Strategic Planning.



Walter J. Mullin,
Associate Professor.
Ph.D., 1999, Boston College Graduate School of Social Work; Certificate in
Intensive Individual Treatment, 1988, Smith College School for Social Work;
M.S.W., 1978, University of Connecticut School of Social Work.
Areas: Child and Adult Mental Health; Couples Counseling; Family Social
Work; Child Welfare.



Ann W. Roy,
Professor.
Ph.D., 1985, Mandel School of Applied Sciences,
Case Western Reserve University;
M.S.W., 1980, Louisiana State University.
Areas: Quantitative Research; Gerontology; Policy Advocacy; Social Work.



Linda Anderson Smith,
Professor.
D.S.W., 1989, Hunter College School of Social Work;
M.S. in Social Service, 1973, Boston University School of Social Work.
Areas: Community Mental Health Practice; Program Development
and Evaluation; Clinical Practice with Overwhelmed Families
and Individuals Across the Lifespan; Diversity.



Francine J. Vecchiolla,
Dean and Professor.
Ph.D., 1987, Brandeis University, Florence Heller School of Social Welfare;
M.S.W., 1974, University of Connecticut School of Social Work;
2001, Management Development Program, Harvard;
2009, The Leadership Academy in Aging, New York Academy of Medicine.
Areas: Child Welfare; Program Development; Public/Private Collaboration;
Administration; Management and Leadership.



Katherine Walsh,
Professor.
Ph.D., 1990, Boston College Graduate School of Social Work;
M.S.W., 1977, Columbia University School of Social Work.
Areas: Oncology Social Work; Therapeutic Applications of Adventure;
Family Treatment; Women's Issues; End of Life, Loss, and Bereavement.



Joseph M. Wronka,
Professor.
Ph.D., 1992, Brandeis University, Florence Heller School of Social Welfare;
M.A., 1972, Existential/Phenomenological Psychology,
Duquesne University.
Areas: Qualitative Research; Social Welfare Policy; Global Human Rights.

Administrative Staff

Lorraine Fortes,
Staff Assistant/IT Liaison.

Chris Hinely,
Admissions Coordinator.

Anne Iglesias,
Administrative Secretary.

Verna Ledoux,
Administrative Assistant.

Social Work Examination Services: Licensing Preparation Course

June 5 & 6, 2010

\$250 for SCSSW May Graduates

Includes Study Guides and Two Day Training Program

Adjunct Faculty

Steven Bogatz, M.B.A., M.S.W.
Central Connecticut Dialysis Center

Cora Buttler-Jones, M.S.W.,
Department of Mental Retardation
Hill Health Center, Conn.

Theresa Cain, M.S.W.

Jean Carosella, M.S.W.
Conn. Gambro Healthcare - Dialysis

Mary Ann Franco, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W.
Saint Vincents Hospital, Mass.
Crisis Assessment

Geraldine French, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W.
Chicopee (Mass.) Public Schools

Glen Gemma, L.C.S.W.
Cromwell (Conn.) Public Schools

Margie Gilberti, M.Ed., M.S.W.
Mass. Department of Children and Families

**Susan Hauschild, M.S.W., U.C.S.W.,
A.C.S.W., C.A.D.A.C.**
Chicopee (Mass.) Public Schools,
Private Practice

Terri Haven, M.S.W.
Mass. Private Practice

**Aura L. Irizarry, M.Ed., M.S.W.,
L.C.S.W., S.A.C.**
Springfield (Mass.) Public Schools

Constance Johnson, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W.
Mass. Valley Psychiatric Services Inc.

**Winston Barrington Johnston,
M.S.W., L.C.S.W., A.C.S.W.**
Conn. Social Work and Psychological
Services for Hartford Public Schools

Sandra Joyner, M.S.W., M.B.A.
Conn. Hill Health Center

Effrosini Kokaliari, Ph.D.
Elms College

Freda Malone, M.S.W.
Department of Children and Families

Jennifer Markens, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W.
ServiceNet, Inc., Northampton, Mass.

Katy Miller, M.S.W.
Department of Children and Families

Anita Minkin, Ph.D., M.S.W.
R.I. Insight

Karen Poisson, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W.
Clinical Support Options, Greenfield, Mass.

Edwina Ranganathan, M.S.W.
Conn. Rushford Center Inc.

Karen Reiniger, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W.
Mass. Valley Psychiatric Services

Frank Robinson, Ph.D.
Mass. Partners for a Healthier
Community Inc.

Dora Robinson, M.S.W.
CEO, United Way of Pioneer Valley,
Springfield, Mass.

Sara Ruest-Kendall, M.S.W.
BHN Crisis Services, Mass.

Karen Scherping, M.P.A., M.S.W.
Conn. Newington Children's Hospital

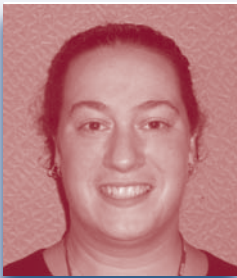
**Karen Seltzer, M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W.,
L.A.D.C.I.**
Mass. Valley Psychiatric Services Inc.

**Douglas B. Stephens, Th.M., Ed.D.,
M.S.W.**
N.Y. Samaritan Counseling Center
of the Capital Region

Joyce Taylor, Ph.D.
Assistant to Rosie D. Court Monitor

**Charlotte Zeller, Ph.D., M.Ed.,
M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W.**
Mass. Private Practice

Welcome New Adjunct Faculty - Sara Kendall-Ruest



Sara Kendall-Ruest is thrilled to have the opportunity to teach at the Springfield College School of Social Work. After many years of working with students of this program as a field supervisor, she is looking forward to expanding her engagement with the College, focusing on the study of human behavior and the behavioral, emotional, cognitive, and psychological challenges people experience. Kendall-Ruest believes every social worker would benefit from the examination of the classification of mental disorders, both the advantages

and drawbacks, through the utilization of the person-in-environment perspective of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV TR). Kendall-Ruest is currently working with the Springfield College School of Social Work by assisting with coordination and clinical consultation for the annual Suicide Prevention Conference, aimed at enhancing community knowledge and linkages and establishing collaboration for professionals working with people who have been affected by suicide.

Kendall-Ruest attended colleges in North Carolina and New Hampshire before returning home to Western Massachusetts, where she was born and raised, to complete her bachelor's degree, with a concentration in social work, at Elms College in 1999. She earned her master's degree in clinical social work at Fordham University in New York in 2000.

Kendall-Ruest has worked in crisis services at the Behavioral Health Network since 2000, serving many roles. Initially starting as a direct-care crisis clinician, with her primary site location at the Baystate Health Emergency Department, she provided a clinical level of risk and care determination to those experiencing a mental health and/or substance abuse crisis, ranging from infancy to geriatric age. For three years,

she provided direct clinical consultation and shift supervision for the twenty-four-hour service, along with provision of telephonic clinical and triage supervision to a sister crisis team as a staff supervisor. Along with various administrative tasks, Kendall-Ruest began to provide direct field supervision to master's-level interns from area colleges, including Springfield College's School of Social Work, and represented the agency in community focus groups and meetings.

Since 2006, she has been the staff development supervisor, acting as clinical supervisor for a bustling team of more than 100. Within her many duties, she has oversight and direct supervision of the large, competitive internship program, which has expanded to include students from a local high school, three area bachelor's-level programs, and four area master's-level programs. A primary daily responsibility includes comprehensive training and ongoing development, as well as coordination and provision of educational opportunities, for all staff. Kendall-Ruest has been a fervent advocate and proponent for continued learning for provision of best practices to those experiencing a psychiatric crisis.

Over the past year, Kendall-Ruest has also become a leader for the young Behavioral Health Network's trauma response team, providing coordination and response in the event of traumatic events. Providing group and individual intervention to those both directly and indirectly involved in a traumatic event, including children, adults, employees, students, and the community, Kendall-Ruest has acted as an advocate for the person and the environment. Exploring and providing opportunities for those impacted by trauma, she has found herself advocating for the concept of a neighborhood and cooperative spirit. Kendall-Ruest urges the students and staff members with whom she works to challenge themselves, to accept the human experience with the goal of best-care practice, and to strengthen our profession and the community. She looks forward to teaching about the nature and concept of pathology, its impact, and looking beyond the pathology to the person.

Springfield College School of Social Work Outcome Assessment Committee End-of-Year Report, May 15, 2009

Members included: Katherine Walsh, Ph.D., William Fisher, Ed.D., Francine Vecchiolla, Ph.D., and John Habif.

Mission Statement

Through the teaching of social work knowledge and practice, the School of Social Work at Springfield College promotes a commitment in individuals to meet universal human need that will engender mutually beneficial interaction between individuals and societal systems at all levels, based on principles of economic and social justice, dignity, and human rights.

The mission of the Springfield College School of Social Work is articulated through a single concentration in advanced generalist practice that gives equal weight to micro-, mezzo-, and macro-level knowledge and practice underscored by the themes of human rights, social justice, and social change. The advanced generalist concentration is appropriate to graduate social work education in that it prepares the social work professionals of tomorrow for a broad range of roles, both to shape the direction of the changing world of social services and to function competently in emerging practice environments. The emphasis of the M.S.W. program on economic and social justice is consistent with the commitment of the social work profession to promote general welfare and social justice. The program's emphasis on the struggles of vulnerable populations and cultural diversity is consistent with the principles of the profession to work with all persons, at all levels of intervention, and, in particular, to prevent and eliminate discrimination against any person or group. The emphasis on the development of autonomous practitioners is also in accordance with the basic principles of professional social work education.

Summary of Key Accomplishments

- The School has an Outcomes Assessment Committee, which meets on a monthly basis throughout the academic year.
- The School has adopted the new competency-based standards approved by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
- The School has adopted a five-year strategic plan, leading to its 2013 CSWE accreditation, for the development and implementation of a capstone assignment to effectively evaluate competencies.
- James Canning, Ph.D., and Katherine Walsh, Ph.D., participated in a nation-wide "Think Tank" for advanced generalist social work faculty held in Denver, Colo., on January 8 and 9, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was to explore and establish core competencies that would apply specifically to advanced generalist M.S.W. programs and would be adopted as standards by the CSWE.
- On January 29, 2009, a faculty retreat was held to develop a capstone assignment that would provide an integrative approach to assessment of Concentration-Year competencies. It was determined that the assignment would begin in September 2009.
- From February through May, the Outcomes Assessment Committee facilitated development of client situations to be used for the capstone assignment as well as a rubric for evaluating the assignment that assesses competencies and for use in data collection.
- A graduating student survey was administered in April 2009, with results compared to 2008 graduating students.
- The Foundation Practice Self-Efficacy (FPSE) survey, assessing first-year students' confidence level in achieving Foundation-Year objectives, was administered as a pre-post survey separately to our weekday and weekend cohorts.

Outcomes Assessment Update

A. Program Goals

The following learning outcomes comply with the standards of the Council on Social Work Education Commission on Accreditation.

The School of Social Work has six program goals:

1. Provide substantive theoretical knowledge and analytical skills pertaining to advanced generalist practice.
2. Promote the integration of social work values, ethical principles, and standards relative to clients, agencies, and organizations, the social work profession, and society in general.
3. Integrate into advanced generalist practice a special sensitivity to the struggles of vulnerable populations, which includes an understanding of the dynamics of oppression and issues pertaining to cultural diversity.
4. Develop practitioners who function autonomously in social work practice and assume leadership roles in public and private social service organizations.
5. Promote both quantitative and qualitative research to increase the effectiveness of social work practice, policies, and programs.
6. Inspire commitment to bringing about a just society through the promotion of public-spirited citizenship.

Foundation-Year Learning Outcomes (First Year)

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice. (Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards [EPAS] 3.01; School of Social Work Foundation Objective [SSW FO] 1)
2. Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly. (EPAS 3.02; SSW FO 2)
3. Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. (EPAS 3.03; SSW FO 3)

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6. Apply the knowledge and skills of a general social work perspective to practice with systems of all sizes. (EPAS 3.0M6; SSW FO 6)
7. Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand individual development and behavior across the lifespan and the interactions among individuals and between individuals and families, groups, organizations, and communities. (EPAS 3.07; SSW FO 7)
9. Evaluate research studies, apply research finding to practice and evaluate one's own practice interventions. (EPAS 3.09; SSW FO 9)
10. Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities. (EPAS 3.010; SSW FO 10)
11. Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice. (EPAS 3.011; SSW FO 11)
12. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems and seek necessary organizational change. (EPAS 3.012; SSW FO 12)

Concentration-Year Learning Outcomes (Second Year)

1. Respond to the needs of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural groups with the goal to involve the social work profession in the elimination of oppression and discrimination and the promotion of social justice. (Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards [EPAS] 3.1; School of Social Work Concentration Objective [SSW CO] 1)
2. Demonstrate professional use of self and the application of critical thinking skills via the integration of both theoretical and practical content in application to systems of all sizes which includes practice interventions with individuals, families, groups, and communities. (EPAS 3.1; SSW CO 2)
3. Demonstrate explicit understanding and application of the social work code of ethics as the concentration for professional practice in clinical-, organizational-, and social-change-levels of practice, while encouraging working within the organizational structures, but seeking organizational change as necessary. (EPAS 3.1; SSW CO 3)

4. Integrate and apply knowledge on bio-psycho-social-environmental variables enabling students to use analytic skills, as well as apply various theoretical frameworks, to understand the person-environment phenomena. (EPAS 3.1; SSW CO 4)
5. Critically examine the history of the social work profession and its relationship to the development of programs and policies with particular attention to the impact of these policies on oppressed populations, integrating throughout the art and skill of policy analysis, development, and implementation for the purpose of impacting both private and public sectors of policy. (EPAS 3.1; SSW CO 5)
6. Develop as knowledgeable, skilled advanced generalist practitioners who demonstrate the effective use of supervision and consultation appropriate to practice. (EPAS 3.1; SSW CO 8)

B. Appraisal and Assessment of Student Learning

The program uses the following instruments to assess students' achievement of program goals and objectives:

1. The *Supplemental Survey for Field Supervisors: Student's Progress Toward Acquisition of School of Social Work Foundation Objectives* is administered at the end of each academic year.
2. The *Student's Self-Evaluation of Acquisition of Field Objectives* is administered at the end of each field experience.
3. The *Foundation Practice Self-Efficacy (FPSE) Scale* is administered as a pre-post test to first-year students in the beginning and end of the academic year.
4. The *Graduating Student Survey* is administered to all graduating students at the end of the academic year.
5. The *Alumni Survey* is sent to graduates of the School every third year.

C. Analysis

In an analysis of the data:

- Over ninety percent of field supervisors assessing student progress agreed or strongly agreed that students had acquired the skills identified in the learning outcomes.
- Students graduating in 2009 showed a significantly higher level of confidence in having achieved Concentration-Year learning outcomes over students graduating in 2008.

- The self-efficacy of first-year students in achieving Foundation-Year outcomes was substantially improved from the beginning to the end of the academic year.

The data from the assessment affirms that the existing structures within the program are succeeding in students' achievement of learning outcomes. However, these assessment instruments are measures of student perception of learning, and while useful, they have limitations in their effectiveness to measure competency.



D. Next Steps

For the 2009-10 academic year, the faculty will integrate into the curriculum the new Council of Social Work Education Commission on Accreditation competency-based standards. These standards will replace the current program objectives (i.e. learning outcomes). Syllabi will be revised to incorporate the new standards. For Concentration-Year students, a capstone assignment will be utilized as a primary measure of competence. The assignment will occur in all required Concentration-Year courses, beginning in September and extending throughout the academic year, and syllabi will be revised to include the capstone assignment. All faculty members teaching these courses will engage in evaluating the competency of each student utilizing an internally developed grading rubric. An aggregate report of data from individual assessments will be used to determine overall program effectiveness in achieving competencies.

Loan Repayment Awards

The National Health Services Corps Loan Repayment Program is now accepting applications for loan repayment awards funded by \$200 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds.

Applications will be accepted continuously until funds are expended or September 30, 2010, whichever comes first.

<http://nhsc.hrse.gov/loanrepayment/apply.htm>

School of Social Work Open House

Social work is evolving at an unprecedented pace. Today's practitioners must be able to respond. Gain state-of-the-art knowledge and hone your skills through part-time and/or full-time advanced degree programs, some with evening or weekend classes. Learn more at the Springfield College School of Social Work Open House on the following dates:

November 12, 2009

4 to 6 p.m.
Brennan Center

February 4, 2010

4 to 6 p.m.
Brennan Center

Save the Date Springfield College School of Social Work

Western Massachusetts Regional Suicide Prevention Conference

Best Practices in Suicide Prevention and Intervention: "Community-wide Interventions for Western Massachusetts"

A Program of the SCSSW Suicide
Prevention Services Funded by the
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Co-Directors:

**Dr. Walter Mullin
and Dr. Joseph Gianesin**

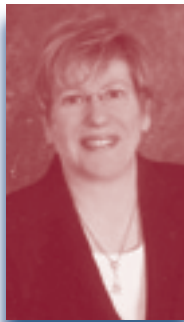
**Friday, September 25, 2009,
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**



SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

School of Social Work

Brennan Center, 45 Island Pond Road, Springfield, MA
Phone: 413-748-3065
www.springfieldcollege.edu/ssw



The Roll of Social Work in the Recession

Charlotte Zeller, Ph.D., M.Ed., M.S.W., L.I.C.S.W., Adjunct Faculty

Reprint from the *National Association of Social Workers-Massachusetts (NASW-MA) FOCUS*, May 2009

The United States is faced today with an unprecedented economic downturn that has not been seen in decades. This downturn has crossed all social-economic lines. Historically, the poor have been limited to one segment of the society. However, today they are joined by the blue and white-collar workers and wealthy of our nation.

In our daily practice we see the educated and previously employed losing their jobs, homes and standing in lines for food. We are witnessing our elderly on fixed incomes returning to the workforce and our students leaving colleges for lack of funds. The loss of health care has become another significant issue as people can no longer afford the high cost of medical care or the extended healthcare plans such as COBRA. We are now faced with clients that are in great need of the necessities of daily living. As we view this spiraling decline, we must ask ourselves, how can social workers contribute to meet the needs of our clients, families and society-at-large? The answer lies in the fact that social workers possess the skills to make a major contribution in these most difficult times. They can become knowledgeable about the resources in their communities. They can become a bridge to the social supports and agencies that can assist their clients in obtaining the life necessities.

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, there exist many assistance programs at the state and federal level. There are also many non-profit organizations that can be utilized as a resource. Among programs provided are: fuel and utilities assistance programs, housing programs, financial counseling and debt services, dental and medical clinics, homeless shelters, education training programs and food pantries. These organizations represent a resource to our clients and their families.

In a recent conversation with Christine Cargile of the Community Survival Center in Indian Orchard, Massachusetts, Ms. Cargile reports the increase demands of her organization that provides for emergency food for individuals and families,

a pre-schoolers food program, an outreach program for senior citizens and clothing and household goods program. Ms. Cargile states that she has seen an influx of white-collar workers seeking support. In one case, a man that had been laid off for four months came for emergency food. He asked that the food be bagged in identical bags stating that he wanted his wife to think he went shopping. He added that for the first time in four months he felt like a man again. In another case, a state welfare worker recalls a man calling for state medical care. He apologized and stated that he never thought he would have to do this but he had lost his wealth from a deceptive investor. This state worker responded to the caller that he not be ashamed since he had paid into the system through the many years he had worked. There are many more similar stories across our state and the nation and we must ask ourselves is there anything more we can do to help? The answer is YES!

Social work advocacy is needed at both the state and federal level. Currently, the NASW-MA along with a coalition of mental health organizations has advocated that a portion of the monies distributed by President Obama be allocated for providing mental health care to our residents. As President Obama begins discussions in meeting our country's health care needs, social workers are needed to lobby for better mental health care for our clients. Social work input is also needed in regard to issues of unemployment, housing and education as new policies are being formulated. We must take this opportunity to not only provide a bridge for further resources for our clients but to advocate at the legislative levels for policies and funding which will provide an adequate standard of living for all. Social workers have historically met the needs of our country when national disasters have occurred. Once again our skills are needed at this most unique and trying time.

Springfield College School of Social Work Advisory Board

The spring 2009 advisory board meeting held on March 12, 2009, was quite productive. Chaired by Joyce Taylor, Ph.D., the agenda focused on introduction of new members and a discussion of the use of communication-technology software, WIKI.com, to expedite communication among board members and committees. The large group then subdivided into committee work groups.

- The Board welcomed the following new members: James Morton, executive director of the YMCA of Greater Springfield; Janet Rodriguez-Denny, director of City of Springfield Elder Affairs; and Elizabeth Johnson-Tyson. All three joined the Community Partnerships Committee. In addition, Paul Fitzsimmons, regional director of the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families, joined the Diversity, Student Interests, and Recruitment Committee, and Katherine Nowak-Crane from the Social Services Department of Reed's Landing joined the Field Education Committee. Both are also new members.

- Francine Vecchiolla, dean of the School of Social Work, offered a status update on the School. She noted the growth in numbers of students that has led to pinched space, especially in the weekend program. This is being addressed by a plan to eventually create more space in the Brennan Center by moving the Springfield College Archives to the main campus. The dean also spoke of her work with the

New York Academy of Medicine's Leadership Academy in Aging that has led to strong interest in our School's development as a center for gerontological leadership in Western Massachusetts. Two pending grant proposals were discussed, the major one being to the Hartford Foundation to initiate a gerontology center. This would advance learning by enhancing school curriculum, would use the practice of "Communities of Partnership" to foster enhanced communications with scholars, leaders, and services for the elderly, and address workforce development by creating a specialty focus for students to prioritize gerontology both in classes and in field education. Subsequent to the board meeting, the School learned of being awarded that grant under the leadership of John Habif, assistant professor. The School was also awarded a second grant to host a major conference on gerontology in spring 2010. The Community of Partnership Committee began offering advice regarding potential community leaders, services, and ideas that have been forwarded to Habif and will be further developed in the creation of a "Gerontology Partnership Community."

- The WIKI.com software was discussed and demonstrated. The board voted to acquire the software and commence its use for future communications.

- The Field Education Committee discussed an agenda regarding the development of a Field Advisory Committee with field supervisor leaders

who would meet separately and report to this committee. The Field Advisory Committee would be chaired by William Fisher, professor and director of field education, and might offer substantive reviews of field competencies as they are actualized in the field, possible future stipend or shared student support possibilities, discussion of safety policies, and more. Much of the discussion was preliminary, with consideration of duties, time commitments, and relationship to the board. No final decision was made.

- The Diversity, Student Interests, and Recruitment Committee addressed the topic of the student government's wish to enhance guest speakers during the school year. This would mean expanding the scope of luncheon speakers to weekend, as well as weekday, sessions and to generate a list of topics of student interest. The plan was to invite speakers for this fall and spring.

Respectfully submitted,
Kate DeCou
Faculty Liaison to the Social Work Advisory Board



SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

School of Social Work

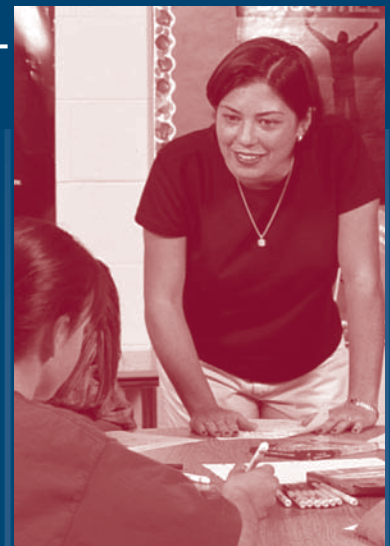
Post-Master's Certificate in Advanced Practice with Children and Adolescents

Become a better practitioner.

Advance your clinical skills with children and adolescents.

Earn 90 CEUs in two semesters, beginning in September '09 or January '10.

December 1: Due date for spring applications



Aging Grant Awarded to the School of Social Work

June 18, 2009 – The Springfield College School of Social Work (SCSSW) has been awarded a grant by the Council on Social Work Education Gero-Ed Center to participate in the Specialized Gerontology Program. In this highly competitive process, in which only fifteen programs were granted funding, the SCSSW has been awarded \$10,000 over a two-year period. The project, to be lead by John Habif, assistant professor, will provide students with a series of skills to better serve older adults, while allowing the School to build new expansive working relationships with gerontology experts and agencies.

The grant also will allow master's-level social work students to dive into a rapidly growing, dynamic specialization. In the past, gerontology has been an area where few social workers chose to practice. Nationally, four percent of social workers specialize in gerontology. Timing is of the essence for the SCSSW to introduce an area of emphasis. Demands of the ever-growing senior population must be met, and the specialization is on the rise. A strong commitment from faculty and students, along with a job market that requires specialization, creates the perfect atmosphere for this project.

Students will be able to complete the area of emphasis by finishing required coursework in gerontology. In addition, assignments for Concentration-Year courses will include or emphasize the study of older adults. New field placement opportunities will provide hands-on experience in gerontology. Interested students will have ready access to a gerontology faculty researcher for guidance and advice. An area of emphasis is particularly compatible with the current structure of the SCSSW program. In the advanced generalist approach, students are provided with access to the different levels of social work, as well as a solid foundation for practice. This area of emphasis will be a first for the SSW. Students will begin to specialize through classroom learning and hone their skills through real-world practice with agencies geared toward older adults.

Currently, approximately fifteen students seek a focus in gerontology each year. After implementation of the program, that number should increase to twenty-five. "This project will assist us in building gerontological social work practice expertise that is necessary to enable us to remain competitive in preparing graduate social work professionals for the labor market," explained

Francine Vecchiolla, dean of the School of Social Work. The first graduates with this area of emphasis will receive their degrees in 2011. Students should achieve the advanced skill level or better on the Social Work Leadership Institute's Practicum Partnership Program Geriatric Social Work Competency Scale II.

Although this is the first area of emphasis offered at the SCSSW, the School offers a wide variety of electives and opportunities to explore various areas of social work.

Mason Square: Strengthening Community Health through Outreach, Organizing, Linkage, and Support

Summer 2009 – Through the leadership of Assistant Professor Miguel Arce, the Martin Luther King Charter School of Excellence (MLKCS) received funding from the Mason Square Healthy Neighborhood Fund (MSHNF) in collaboration with the Springfield College School of Social Work (SCSSW) and the Springfield College School of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (SCHPER). Both MLKCS and Springfield College have a record of provided enriching educational activities through family activities and community service projects. The mission of MLKCS is to prepare kindergarten through fifth-grade students of Springfield for academic success and engaged citizenship through an emphasis on rigorous, challenging educational experience.

The three distinct schools (i.e., MLKCS, SCSSW, and SCHPER) have joined together to focus on enriching the lives of students at MLKCS, most of whom live in Mason Square, a geographic area comprised of four distinct neighborhoods: Upper Hill, Old Hill, McKnight, and Bay, and has the zip code designation of 01109. The community is comprised of 30,655 individuals who are primarily in the low income bracket and are members of a minority (United States Census Bureau, 2000). "Residents in Mason Square neighborhoods, particularly racial and ethnic populations, experience appalling disparities in health, wealth and opportunity. Black and Latino residents disproportionately experience major health-related burdens...healthy diet and physical activity provides more power in creating health and influencing chronic conditions."

Strengthening Community Health through Outreach, Organizing, Linkage, and Support

(SCHOOLS) has been developed to respond to the unacceptable and growing disparity among health in Mason Square families. SCHOOLS will use MLKCS as the focal point for health services directed toward children and families who are enrolled, many whom reside in the target area. SCHOOLS plans to positively impact students by increasing school attendance and participation, engage community members, increase school performance, and directly impact the health of the community, as well as help children succeed through health-focused efforts. This project requires the engagement of children, parents, and the community, as well as provider support. Effective assessment and treatment of the three focused areas – nutrition and fitness, health protective factors, and mental health – requires the active engagement of children and their families in managing their own situation.

The SCHOOLS effort entails three organizations working together to help the community recognize and face shared public health needs in the neighborhood. MLKCS, SCSSW, and SCHPER will unite to overcome serious, pressing, persistent, and urgent health problems that affect the residents of Mason Square. Interpersonal, social, and community relationships will be built upon and strengthened.

Source: Robinson, 2008, p.16-17

School of Social Work Hosts Special CANS Training

William T. Fisher, Jr., Ed.D., M.S.W.

*Professor and Director of Field Education
Faculty Liaison to the Massachusetts Children's Behavioral Health Initiative*

On June 1, 2009, the School of Social Work hosted thirty-two current students and recent graduates at a special introductory training session on the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool being implemented by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as part of its new Children's Behavioral Health Initiative. The Children's Behavioral Health Initiative was instituted by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services in response to a decision by the U.S. District Court in the 2001 case of *Rosie D. v. Romney*. The 2006 decision found that Massachusetts had not provided sufficient behavioral health screening of children and youth in primary care, behavioral health assessments for children and youth, service coordination, and home-based behavioral health services. The introduction of the CANS as

an assessment tool in children's and youth services statewide is one component of a comprehensive effort to address these insufficiencies.

In an effort to institute "early periodic screening diagnosis and treatment" per the terms of the court order, as of November 30, 2008, MassHealth, the public health insurance option, has required all behavioral health clinicians who work with children and youth up to the age of twenty-one to use the CANS tool in their assessments. In order to use the CANS, clinicians must be trained and pass a certification test. The training held at the School of Social Work, without cost to participants, provided preparation for students to take the online certification test. Passing the online certification test will assist students and graduates to take roles in the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative.

Developed by John S. Lyons, Ph.D., professor of psychiatry and community medicine at Northwestern University, and being used in more than thirty states, the CANS employs everyday language and focuses on both strengths and needs. It is intended as an assessment that can be used by both clinicians and families in developing service plans for children and youth with behavioral health concerns. The training at the School of Social Work was conducted by Risa Sugarman and Erin O'Hearn, experienced trainers and practitioners of children's and family services, who are part of the University of Massachusetts Medical School's CANS Program. Refreshments for the training were underwritten by the CANS Program. More information about the CANS may be found at <https://masscans.ehs.state.ma.us>.

Springfield College School of Social Work Announces Worcester-Area Seminar for Field Supervisors

*William T. Fisher, Ed.D., M.S.W.
Professor and Director of Field Education*

The Springfield College School of Social Work is offering a Seminar in Field Instruction (SIFI) for Worcester, Mass.-area field supervisors of students in field placements during academic year 2009-10. The seminar series, offered without cost to participants who receive Continuing Education Units for their attendance, will be held in the Worcester area and is open to all new supervisors of M.S.W. students. Others who are currently supervising M.S.W. students from the New England schools of social work may also attend.

The Worcester SIFI will be conducted by William Fisher, director of field education, and MaryAnn Franco, L.I.C.S.W., adjunct faculty member.

The Seminar in Field Instruction is offered by all schools of social work in New England. Massachusetts schools rotate responsibility for the Worcester-area SIFI. The SIFI core curriculum, specially designed for new supervisors of M.S.W. students, was developed in a collaborative process among several of the New England schools of social work in an effort to provide a level of continuity of content for all schools' supervisors and for students in field placements.

If you are interested in attending the Worcester-area Seminar in Field Instruction, please note that the series will be held on selected Fridays during the academic year, and the sessions will run from 9 a.m. to noon. The dates are: Oct. 9 and 23, and Nov. 20, 2009, and Jan. 29 and April 9, 2010. A location will be announced soon. If you would like more information about registering for the Worcester-area SIFI, please contact the field office at 413-748-3058. Also, look for updated information on the School of Social Work Web site in the near future.

Faculty and Alum Present at WNEC Annual Social Work Conference

Walter Mullin, associate professor; Miguel Arce, assistant professor; and alumna Maureen Holland, G'04, presented at the Western New England College annual social work conference. The workshop, entitled "The intersection of resilience research and community practice," focused on the role of and implications for social workers in providing services in the community. The presenters stimulated conversation about how working in urban settings is a critical dimension of social work practice. There was an overlapping intersection with the Springfield College School of Social Work's commitment to a strength-based approach to practice in community. The object of the workshop was to better appreciate the source of support that exists in neighborhood settings. The goals were to identify challenges and potential barriers to community practice and to inform social workers about skills and tools that might be useful.

Faculty Presents to Community Health Workers

Miguel Arce, assistant professor, was a panelist at the annual Community Outreach Worker Network

and Training (COWNT) Coalition. The Springfield Department of Health and Human Services, the Pioneer Valley Area Health Education Center (AHEC), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Baystate Health, and other community partners hosted a one-day conference, "Pathways to Success Through Community Outreach." The conference's purpose was to provide professional development for Springfield's community health workers, develop ongoing inter-agency communication and service offerings and needs. This conference also helped to foster a better referral and integration process. The learning objectives provide an overview of health and/or human service professions that are experiencing shortages in the region and educational and/or training requirements and opportunities.

Students and Faculty Join With Social Work Colleagues Across the State to Look Behind the Scenes at the Role of NASW in the Political Process

On March 23, 2009, students of the Springfield College School of Social Work took part in the National Association of Social Workers-Massachusetts Chapter's annual Legislative Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD). The weekday Social Policy 2 classes of William Fisher, associate professor, and Miguel Arce, assistant professor, united with hundreds of social work students and professionals at the Massachusetts State House in Boston to expand social work students' and practitioners' knowledge of policy issues and to learn more about opportunities for legislative and public action on important areas of social work practice.

Governor Deval Patrick, Carol Trust of NASW-MA, and Michael Weekes, president of the Providers Council, spoke about the role of social work in a challenging economy. Approximately thirty Springfield College School of Social Work graduate students joined graduate and undergraduate students from six other social work programs in attending discussion sessions in which legislators and policy advocates spoke on issues related to families and children, health care, mental health and substance abuse, criminal justice, housing and homelessness, immigration, and elder issues.

James Canning, Ph.D.

James Canning was awarded reassigned time by Springfield College for the fall of 2009. The reassignment will allow Canning to direct an autism project that will provide assessments and interventions to children and families in Springfield. The new project is a collaborative effort between the School of Social Work and Valley Psychiatric Services in Springfield and will address the growing need for assessment and advocacy services for parents of children with autism and autism spectrum disorders. The program will provide field education and training of School of Social Work interns and will allow Canning to share the latest research and practice knowledge of autism and autism spectrum disorders with the School. The new project is the latest of several of collaborations between School faculty members and area schools and agencies.

William Fischer, Ed.D.

William Fisher, director of field education, has been a Western Massachusetts and School of Social Work representative serving on the Safety Task Force of the NASW-MA Chapter. First convened in fall 2008, and continuing into fall 2009, representatives from state agencies, private nonprofit agencies, and schools of social work across Massachusetts are uniting to bring together information and resources about social work practice safety for dissemination to the social work practice and educational communities. The task force is co-chaired by Carol Trust, executive director of the NASW-MA, and Judith Pearlstein, associate director of field education at Boston University. As part of his contributions to the task force, Fisher researched and developed an annotated bibliography of materials on the role of cultural competency in safety planning and procedures. He is also on the resource compilation and Web page design subcommittee of the task force. A Web page on the NASW-MA Web site is expected to be launched this fall with resources relevant to direct practitioners, agency supervisors and managers, and policy advocates.

In spring 2009, Fisher was named consortia liaison co-chair for the North American Network of Field Educators and Directors (NANFED), along with Diane Frankel, director of field instruction at Bryn Mawr College. Fischer also serves on the NANFED's Steering Committee. Across the nation, many schools of social work and field education directors and staff belong to a regional field consortium. Meeting once a month or several times a year,

depending on location and resources, the national field consortia facilitate information exchange among field staff, organize professional development events for field supervisors, and provide opportunities for peer discussions and networking. The Springfield College School of Social Work is a member of the New England Consortium (NECON) of Graduate Social Work Field Education Directors. Working more closely with the field consortia across the nation – providing information about the activities of the NANFED and receiving input from the consortia – is a priority of the NANFED. Fisher and Frankel have been in communication with a number of consortia chairs and are developing a system for dissemination of NANFED and field education information as part of this increased communication effort. Creation of additional consortia where needed and inclusion of schools in currently existing consortia are also part of this initiative. More about NANFED can be found at www.nanfed.org.

Fisher continues to serve on the Distribution Committee of the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts. The Distribution Committee makes decisions about funding program proposals submitted by area agencies and nonprofits. This past spring, Fisher participated in the third year of the Community Foundation's special initiative to fund programs designed to assist children age five and younger, and their families, move out of poverty through education, career development, and expanded parenting and life skills development.

Katherine Walsh, Ph.D.



Katherine Walsh with the first M.S.W. class at Health College of Nyregghaza, Hungary, November 2008.

Katherine Walsh co-authored a report, "Best Practices in Psychosocial Oncology Exchange Between Hungary and the United States of America," along with Elizabeth Clark, executive director of NASW, and colleagues from NASW and Cancer Care. The report to funder Bristol-Meyers Squibb Foundation summarizes the design,

implementation, and evaluation of the first Psychosocial Oncology Summit held in Budapest in November 2009. Walsh co-chaired the planning committee for this summit, which brought together psychosocial oncology professionals from the United States and Hungary to share best practices, and is co-author of a grant proposal to fund a second summit in Romania for the fall of 2010. In conjunction with the implementation of this summit, Walsh taught two days of social work classes for the first M.S.W. training program with a health concentration at the College of Nyregghaza in Budapest. A poster on the summit was presented at the International Psychosocial Oncology Society annual meeting in Austria in June, and Walsh has co-authored a paper on the summit that has been accepted for presentation at the Annual Program Meeting of CSWE in Austin, Texas, for the fall of 2009.

Walsh's work on the C-Penn Award-winning Cancer Survival Toolbox, a self-advocacy training program for cancer survivors and their caregivers, continues. Following the production of the newest module of the toolbox, multiple myeloma, in the spring of 2009, work is proceeding with funding from the National Center for Disease Control with the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship on a new module on non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. The complete toolbox is available for downloading or viewing at www.cancersurvivaltoolbox.org.

Joseph Wronka, Ph.D.

Joseph Wronka was recently elected permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva for the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). His joint statement for IASSW and the International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM) on the Eradication of Extreme Poverty was presented before the eleventh session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. He also provided input for the IASSW for the UN Special Rapporteurs on the International Right to Solidarity and the second phase of the World Decade for Human Rights Education. He also wrote an instructor's manual, including PowerPoints, lecture notes, examination questions, and sample curricula, for his latest book, *Human Rights and Social Justice: Social action and service for the helping and health professions* (Sage, 2008). His abstract on "Culture, Justice, and Human Rights" was accepted for the international issues track for the next annual program meeting of the Council on Social Work Education in November in San Antonio, Texas.

Congratulations M.S.W. Class of 2009

The Springfield College School of Social Work is proud to announce the recipients of the 2008-09 Frank Vecchiolla and William Coolidge Reid Scholarships.

Peter Cofoni

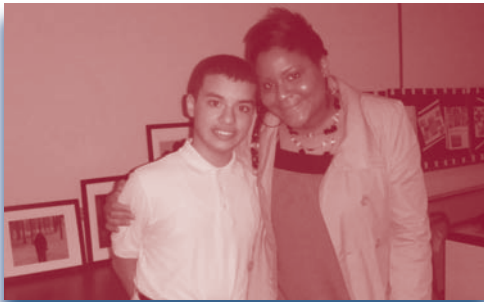
Recipient of the 2008-09 Frank Vecchiolla and William Coolidge Reid Scholarship in Child Welfare

Levinia Burgess

Recipient of the 2008-09 Frank Vecchiolla and William Coolidge Reid Scholarship in Gerontology



School of Social Work Student Hosts Art Show: "A to Z Springfield"



Claudia Griffith, a recent graduate of the Master of Social Work program, organized an art show as part of her second-year field practicum as an adjustment counselor at Duggan Middle School in Springfield. With the assistance of Marion King, her field supervisor, and Francine Vecchiolla, her faculty advisor, she conducted an after-school program with eleven students with a wide range of social and behavioral issues.

The students participated in a semester-long art project. "Photography allowed the students to focus their attention on the environment around them," Griffith said. Students were provided with disposable cameras, and began to study the art of photography. The project, entitled "A to Z Springfield," gave students an opportunity to examine the beauty in their communities.

The project culminated in an art show hosted by the Springfield College School of Social Work. The students of Duggan Middle School were able to showcase their hard work for family, teachers, and other professionals from the community. The students proudly donated their photographs to the School of Social Work.

The Challenging Life of an M.S.W./J.D. Student

Sarah Walker, Class of 2001



"If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere." The words of Frank A. Clark ring true for the life of a law student. The first year of law school is a tough experience for students around the country. Students

wade through courses such as property law, contracts, and rules of civil procedure. The year is filled with long nights of take-out and Dunkin' Donuts runs, pouring over page after page of legal jargon with a trusty legal dictionary by your side. Dreams are filled with fears of getting cold-called

during class, and days are filled with caffeine. My year was no different.

My cold-calling experience happened around mid-semester. In one week, I was called on in all five classes. My worst nightmare had come true. Unlike the social work program, law professors use cold-calling to test your knowledge of class material. Usually two or three students get called per class. When my time came, question after question was fired my way. I was remarkably comfortable during the entire episode, and I attribute my composure to skills I learned in social work Practice 1 and 2, where I became comfortable explaining, discussing theories, and speaking in front of fellow professionals.



Phi Alpha Honor Society

Phi Alpha is a national honor society for social work students.

The purpose of Phi Alpha is to foster high standards of education for social workers, as well as promote humanitarian goals among students. Being invited to join Phi Alpha is a prestigious honor for students. It is reserved for students that have maintained a grade point average of 3.9 or higher.

2009 Inductees:

Kerri Ann Cappuccio, Gia Catanzarite, Sara Conner, Jessica DeDay, Kristin Duke, Jeffrey Ogle Duprey, Carrie Graham-Ellis, Robert Johanson Wolff, Carol A. Judd, Kati Knapp, Maria Elena Knight, Jennifer Lawrence, Cristina Martins, Allison Beatty Maynard, Debra McGranaghan, Kerry-Ann Miller, Tamara O'Rear, Joseph Osterman, Jacqueline Porter-Clinton, Theresa Rembiszewski, Aimee Richter, Jennifer Sell, Jillian Silverman (honorary), Michelle Templeman (honorary), Jane Marie Trevethan, Michael Tyskiewicz, Leslie Tzivanis, Mara Veronesi, David James White, Charles Wuest, and Rosa Zubizarreta

Student Organization

Congratulations to the following new officers:

President:	Corey Kwieciensk
Vice-President:	Jennifer Lawrence
Secretary:	Victoria Valenti
Treasurer:	Tanya Parker
Cultural Affairs Officer:	Jessica Anglin

Although my experience was parallel to all other first year students, one aspect of my first year was different. I was not trudging through the academic year alone. I had the support of my family and friends. And in addition, I had ongoing support from the Springfield College School of Social Work (SCSSW). Even while not taking any social work courses, I treated the SCSSW as my safe haven, and whether I needed a confidence boost or a place to seek respite, I was always welcome.

The support I had was, bar none, the best motivator during my first year. It was unparalleled to any other student in my class.

From First Semester Jitters to Confident Professional

Amber Maneca, M.S.W. 2009



Two years ago, I walked into Springfield College School of Social Work (SCSSW) for the first time. Eager to learn and willing to help, I was embarking on a new journey of my life. I was both excited and nervous about beginning a graduate program. Looking back now, as a newly graduated and employed M.S.W., I can say that my academic experience at the SCSSW provided a professional foundation that will remain with me always.

Coming from a close-knit Portuguese-Italian-American family, I learned the value of being open and receptive of other cultures and people of the world. In my family, we laugh often, eat plenty, talk loudly, and love and live zealously. With that being said, shyness is a quality I personally have never related to.

All this changed on my first day of school when “new student” jitters silenced even me, until I started to become comfortable with my new environment. After realizing the professors at the SCSSW were warm and approachable, I was able to open up after my first day. The SCSSW is an environment that appreciates diversity, cultural competence, and life experiences brought by each individual student. At Springfield, I was able to learn in a supportive setting that not only taught social work theories, but helped me find my own voice to articulate my new thoughts and ideas as I became more aware of the world we live in.

During my second-year internship, I discovered the type of clients with whom I was passionate to work. Steve Bogatz had taught my Research 1 class, and his stories about his work in a dialysis unit intrigued me. After interviewing with Professor Bogatz, both of us decided that the medical setting seemed to be a good fit for me. He has mentored me as I have gained experience working with patients with chronic illnesses and their family members. Interning as a medical social worker in a dialysis unit, I saw firsthand how assisting people occurs on more than just the individual level. At the dialysis unit, I interacted not only with the brave men and women enduring kidney failure, but other providers and government officials as well. Topics I discussed with my patients during my

year there included the pros and cons of permanent vascular accesses, transplants, grieving, and relationships under stress. Their inspiring stories of facing potentially life-threatening illnesses with strength and hope continue to stoke my drive to work in this field.

Upon learning of the availability of a professional position, I prepared and interviewed at the End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Network of New England, and was offered the position a month prior to my graduation. The Network of New England, which covers the states of Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Connecticut, facilitates the improvement of health care and quality of life for individuals who have ESRD. It is one of seventeen organizations throughout our country that the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) contracts with to ensure excellence of dialysis services dispensed to nearly half a million people. My title is patient services coordinator for the Network. I identify issues or unmet needs of patients and providers within the renal community provide educational material and support, edit the agency's newsletter, and facilitate the Patient Advisory Committee, which consists of me and a group of wonderful renal patients who offer their time to help others on dialysis.

At the Network, I have found an ideal job I am ardent about and a place to work with my advanced generalist skills I gained from the Springfield College School of Social Work. I interact with eleven strong, empathic women who welcomed me from my first day, and in truth, the supportive environment reminds me of my alma mater. I have become a member of the Council of Nephrology Social Workers and I remain a member of the National Association of Social Workers. Practicing in Connecticut, I have begun the important process of obtaining my clinical social work license which normally takes about two years. It is the next step on the progression of life-long learning, which is essential to remain maximally effective in service to our clients. Whether I am providing clinical counseling, researching a problem or new idea, or advocating for social justice, I remain cognizant that positive change does not typically happen overnight. With determination, persistence, and competence in our professional skills, we can make this world a better place.

Nomination for Outstanding Service: Clinician Melissa Hafner-Bandoski

Melissa N. Hafner-Bandoski, Class of 2007, has been nominated for the award of Outstanding Service: Clinician for the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps Staff Appreciation 2009 by Hank Mathieu, clinical director at Springfield Secure Treatment Program. Mathieu has provided his recommendation for Hafner-Bandoski's nomination:

Melissa originally came to the Action Corps as a first-year master's-level clinical intern from the Springfield College School for Social Work in 2005. She was hired as a clinician for the Springfield Secure Treatment Program in 2007, and she is now entering her third year as an employee with the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps.

Since the beginning of her employment, Melissa has grown tremendously in acquiring knowledge and skills specific to this population as she has embraced Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT), to the point where she is now one of the program “experts” in the delivery of DBT treatment. She has continuously facilitated a majority of the DBT groups and has strived to help her clients utilize these skills in their everyday lives. Melissa has also eagerly embraced working with sex offenders and has participated in acquiring the skills necessary to work effectively with these clients.

Melissa is a truly empathic and caring clinician who has continued to take on more and more challenging clients to the point where she now has some of the most emotionally difficult and needy clients in the program. She is an extremely hard worker who routinely goes above and beyond the requirements of the position in the service of her clients. Melissa is an excellent team member who works collaboratively with clinical colleagues as well as program staff to serve her clients and help improve the program. She is an admired and well-liked member of the clinical team who has also earned the respect of the Department of Youth Services' caseworkers and community service providers. Melissa is a very reliable individual who can be counted on not only in a crisis, but to do whatever is necessary to help others in any situation. She is an outstanding clinician, colleague, and individual who is well-deserving of this recognition.



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