Greetings from the School of Social Work!

There has been a whirlwind of activity since I joined the School of Social Work on July 1, 2002. I have been warmly welcomed by the School, University, and Fort Collins communities. I have also inherited excellent social work programs thanks to the wonderful leadership of former School of Social Work Director, Dr. Ben Granger. Dr. Granger retired last summer, but he continues to be involved with the School of Social Work through HABIC and as a member of our Advisory Council.

The BSW Program is thriving under the leadership of Dr. Victor Baez, Undergraduate Program Director. We have 208 social work majors this year. A new core curriculum is in effect, and one major change is that students can now graduate with 120 credit hours rather than 128.

The MSW Program is also growing. We added an Advanced Standing option for applicants who graduated from an accredited BSW program. Admitted students are required to enroll in 9 credit hours of bridge courses in the summer before their final year of graduate study.

In May 2002, 20 students from the Western Slope graduated with MSW degrees, and the faculty recently voted to support a second cohort of students as well. Successful completion of this three-year distance program leads to the MSW degree. Dr. Eleanor Downey is providing leadership for this program and anticipates admitting 30 students this fall.

We have already started the process of self-study for the anticipated Council on Social Work Education reaccreditation in 2005. Faculty, students, and friends of the School of Social Work are discussing and updating the curricula, admissions criteria, and both School and field placement policies and procedures. Strategies to enhance relationships with the community, state, and region are also being identified.

I look forward to hearing from our alumni and friends throughout the state and the nation. Please do not hesitate to call and give me an opportunity to get to know you and your enthusiasms. I hope you will consider becoming more involved in the School of Social Work as we face the social, political, and economic challenges of the coming year.

Sincerely,

Deborah Valentine
970-491-6612
devalentine@cahs.colostate.edu

Come Celebrate Social Work Month With Us!

It’s official—we’ll be commemorating Social Work Month this March by hosting an open house and presentation on March 20, 2003. The open house will take place from 3:00-5:30 pm. It will be held at the CSU campus in the first floor lobby of the Education Building. Faculty and students will be available for experiential exercises and discussions. After enjoying soup and bread provided by faculty, everyone is welcome to attend a presentation from 5:30 until 7:00 pm entitled “Social Work Goes to the Movies: The Portrayal of Social Workers in Film”. Director of the School of Social Work, Dr. Deborah Valentine, will be hosting this unique presentation, showing film clips, and facilitating a discussion. We hope to see you at this important event honoring the social work profession.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE!

Please take a moment to visit the Colorado State University School of Social Work website. Learn more about our academic programs, faculty, and School activities:

www.cahs.colostate.edu/sw/
The CSU-Rocky Mountain BSW Traineeship Project received continued funding this year. The project aims to provide undergraduate senior level social work students with unique educational opportunities that promote their knowledge, values, and skills in the field of public child welfare. Participating students, selected through a competitive process, are awarded stipends. In return, these students are expected to complete their field placements in the area of child welfare, attend a child welfare seminar, and work in child welfare for one year post-graduation.

Last fall, we caught up with two students who were among last year’s award recipients: Michelle Knott and Erin Thompson. Both are now working in the Logan County (Colorado) Department of Health and Human Services. Michelle works with adolescents providing home based services to youth and their families. When asked whether her Colorado State University BSW education has proven valuable in her work as a county employee, she answered with an enthusiastic, “Definitely!” She has found her systems and family-based training especially helpful. Her advice to new social work graduates is, “Know that your work will be stressful-- there’s a lot to be done.”

Erin is the head intake worker for Logan County’s Child Protective Services. She works closely with families in investigating allegations of abuse, developing safety plans, and helping them access services. She believes that her job, although stressful, is an important one. She, too, praised her Colorado State training and believes the “hands-on” experience provided throughout the curriculum is most helpful. “It would be really hard to start out with no experience”, she said. “Looking back, I’m really glad I participated in the program. It provided me with the incentive to find a job and to gain new experiences.”

This year, Katie Hui, Gisele McFadden, Ryan Zenk, Andrew Sammeth, Janeah Weaver, Alys Doyle, Jessica Kudlock, Monica Lumibao, Katharine Walden, and Eva Blackburn received the awards. Congratulations, and we wish you the best of luck throughout the program!

Dr. Maria Elena Puig is Selected as Guest Speaker for 11th Hour Speaker Series

Professors from across campus were nominated by their students to speak at The 11th Hour Speaker Series sponsored by the Association of Student Activity Planning (ASAP). The ASAP Speakers Committee had the difficult task of choosing speakers for the series. Drew Sammeth, BSW student and Chair of the Speakers Committee, nominated his School of Social Work professor, Dr. Maria Puig, for this special honor. “When we extended the invitation to Maria, she was really excited and jumped at the opportunity to participate,” said Drew. Dr. Puig’s presentation addressed the plight of Cuban and Haitian refugee children who were detained at the U.S. Naval base in Guantanamo, Cuba. Drew went on to say, “Once advertising for Maria’s speech began, the response was amazing. Her lecture brought in a full house! After all was said and done, it was clear that she was a great choice as our first 11th hour speaker for this year.”

Dr. Puig’s main interest areas are human rights, immigration policy/refugee affairs, cross-cultural social work practice and research, human diversity, macro practice, child welfare practice and policy, family preservation and reunification, and juvenile delinquency services. In addition to her teaching and research responsibilities, Dr. Puig serves as the coordinator for the school social work licensure program, providing the technical assistance and program documentation necessary to meet the accreditation requirements.
Poetry Anthology Emphasizes the Importance of Friendships

*By Rick Riddoch*

With the support of an enrichment grant, Dr. Rich Furman is soliciting poems about friendship for an anthology. The purpose of the anthology is two-fold: (1) to produce a body of high-quality poetry; (2) to produce a body of work that elucidates the intricacies of friendships, which are often undervalued and misunderstood. It is anticipated that this book will be of high literary value and also may be used as a means of understanding human behavior vis-à-vis friendship.

As Dr. Furman’s Graduate Assistant for this project, first-year MSW student Rick Riddoch has had the task of writing poets who have submitted poems with news of acceptance or suggested revisions. Submissions will be accepted until enough quality work has been received.

The poetry already accepted reflects the writing of many accomplished poets. Among their recognitions are NEA Fellowships, various states’ Arts Council awards, and poetry prizes such as the Pushcart Prize, the Yale Series of Younger Poets, and the SEBA Award. All have been previously published in such journals such as Prairie Schooner, The Colorado Review, the Georgia Review, and many others.

Undergraduate Helping Skills Class Both Demanding and Rewarding

*By Kelly Klein*

One of the unique aspects of the social work curriculum is the experiential component. The class entitled “Introductory Helping Skills” offers undergraduate students this kind of hands-on experience with clients. SW286 is a two-semester course in which students focus on relationship-building and communication skills. What makes this course unique, though, is the mentorship developed between students and clients (mentors) in the community. The School of Social Work partners with Fort Collins agencies serving older adults and people with developmental disabilities to provide undergraduate social work students this interesting experiential opportunity.

Students meet with their mentors two hours per week for two consecutive semesters. Course instructor Eleanor Downey says, “During this time, students develop their professional interviewing skills, learn about the importance of confidentiality, and the nature of a professional relationship. They also learn how to terminate with clients, which can be very difficult.”

This is hardly a one-sided victory for BSW students, however; the class provides over 3000 hours of community service to individuals in the Fort Collins area. When asked about her student protégé, Michelle Oliberos, mentor Bertha Poliakon said, “I like her so much. She’s a wonderful person and she’s so helpful.” Feelings were mutual, and Michelle reflected, “I feel so lucky to have been paired with Bertha. Its definitely been good practice, and its a nice break from work and school to come visit with her.”

SW286 students have the benefit of both course instructors and mentors, but it doesn’t end there; an added bonus is the presence of experienced undergraduates who serve as “facilitators” in the course and lead weekly group meetings for each agency. These meetings allow students the opportunity to discuss important agency issues with their peers as well as further their own professional development.

“The good social worker...doesn’t go on helping people out of a ditch. Pretty soon she begins to find out what ought to be done to get rid of the ditch.”

Mary Richmond (1918)
Last fall, the School of Social Work (SOSW) hosted a Peace and Justice Forum at which students and faculty discussed their views regarding possible war with Iraq. In order to best represent a variety of viewpoints, Forum planners invited ROTC personnel, faculty, and students to make presentations.

Those attending the Forum were encouraged to speak their minds and to pose honest questions to presenters.

Ultimately, the goal of the Forum was to present both sides of a very controversial issue with emphasis on peaceful alternatives to war. For instance, during the discussion, School of Social Work Director, Dr. Deborah Valentine, posed the question, “What if the money spent on war were matched, dollar for dollar, on exploring other alternatives—peaceful alternatives?”

Hypothetical questions such as these sparked both ideas and debate among attendees. SOSW faculty member Dr. Bruce Hall headed the planning committee for this event.
As our nation’s population ages rapidly in the next three decades, social work education programs must prepare students to be aging-savvy social workers, able to serve older adults and their families. The School of Social Work at Colorado State University is one of 67 institutions nationwide participating in a project focused on changing the shape of social work education at all levels, with the goal of preparing social work graduates to be just as effective as advocates and resources for the older citizens of our communities as they are for our children.

This exciting new effort, called the Geriatric Enrichment in Social Work Education Program, is administered through the Council on Social Work Education and the University of Washington, Seattle, and is supported by the John A. Hartford Foundation. The program’s primary mission is to ensure the pervasiveness of gerontological learning experiences and sustainability of curricular changes in each of 67 funded projects. The School of Social Work at CSU, which has already received planning funds, will receive $60,000 for this three-year project.

Now entering the second year of this three-year project, the School of Social Work first spent a year planning changes to the curriculum and is now implementing these changes by developing a wide range of aging-focused student learning experiences.

Focus on dissemination of the knowledge gained during the process and evaluation of outcomes will occur during the third year.

A unique feature of CSU’s program has been the use of a design team approach. This design team model brought together agency administrators, front-line staff, supervisors, consumers of service, and university resources (including students) to answer the fundamental question of what helps and what hurts in the provision of services to the elderly. The design team met beginning in March 2002 and throughout the summer and fall semesters. In October, the design team and social work faculty members held a meeting at the Fort Collins Senior Center to start the process of curriculum change.

Voices From the Alaska Bush

By Kelly Klein

School of Social Work faculty member Roe Bubar, new to Colorado State University last year, conducts fascinating research in the area of investigation and prosecution of child sexual abuse cases in the Alaska Native population. Professor Bubar has traveled and worked in rural Alaska for over five years. During her visits, she was struck by what appeared to be an overrepresentation of child sexual abuse cases in the Alaska Native population. More salient, however, were her impressions of the under-representation of child sexual abuse cases in the non-Native population. In her eagerness to learn more about her observations, she began consulting professionals about their opinions in these matters.

Her research explores the impressions of professionals from two rural Alaska communities. She shares with readers their thoughts on child sexual abuse and their opinions regarding the unusual statistics in their communities, that appear to defy the national norms around child sexual abuse.

Results of her research indicate that professionals believe representation by public defenders and a greater willingness in the Native population to admit to sex-offending may be a factor in the disproportionately high number of prosecutions for child sexual abuse in Native communities. Local professionals also speculate that isolation, trauma histories, and alcohol abuse play a role in child sexual abuse and/or the reporting of abuse in these communities.

Bubar’s article is entitled, “Voices from the Alaska Bush: Native and Non-Native Professionals’ Opinions on Investigation and Prosecution in Child Sexual Abuse Cases” and is forthcoming in the Wicasa Review this year (2003).
How has social work responded to the changes impacting vulnerable families as a result of the welfare reforms of 1997? One response has been the development of the Colorado Collaborative Partnership (CCP). Prompted by time limits and new program requirements, a sense of urgency emerged around providing services to vulnerable families. Because many of the families served by our social welfare system have multiple needs, finding ways to strengthen linkages among service providers and close gaps in services became even more important.

The CCP is a partnership among human services providers, the Colorado Department of Human Services, and the CSU School of Social Work. Through this partnership, community-based inter-agency “Design Teams” are formed. Design teams bring together agency administrators, front-line staff, supervisors, and consumers to assess their human service systems and collaboratively design a plan to respond to the needs, issues, and barriers to service identified by the teams.

Many communities in Colorado have forged local coalitions and collaborative groups in order to strengthen service capacity. Design team participants have shared that it is exciting to both observe and be a part of this change. When asked if they did anything differently as a result of their involvement with Design Teams, the majority of participants said that they were more sensitive to their clients’ needs and more aware of community resources.

Communities continue to face challenges as they attempt to meet the needs of vulnerable families. With major changes to federal social welfare policy, human service providers seek new solutions for these challenges at local levels. The CCP provides a format for communities to identify local needs, make plans to address these needs, and put the plans into action.

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OFFERS LOCAL SUPPORT**

The Colorado Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers is planning many activities these days -- workshops, committee gatherings, support groups, and social activities. To learn more about the excitement, check out www.naswco.org or call Marilyn or Debbie at (303) 753-8890 or toll-free (888) 595-6295. Colorado NASW is always eager to help students, social workers, and friends of social work to get involved!

**MSW APPLICATION DEADLINE REMINDER...**

Just a reminder from our staff that application packets for the MSW program are available beginning in October, 2003 (by mail or on-line). The early application deadline for the 2004-2005 school year is December 15, 2003, and the second deadline for application is January 31, 2004. Applications for the CSU/USC program are due by March 1, 2004. We look forward to hearing from our next cohort of MSW students!
Bob Seiz and Vicky Buchan are in the second year of a five-year research grant to evaluate the impact of a new community-based, technology-driven agricultural health and safety curriculum. The evaluation will determine the effectiveness of the curriculum on acquiring and retaining preventative knowledge in nine areas of risk, reducing agriculture-related injuries and illnesses, and instilling safety attitudes and behaviors. Forty schools and 475 high school sophomores are being evaluated in Colorado. Wyoming high schools are currently being recruited. Following stratification by size, participating school programs were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups.

Experimental programs implement the new health and safety curriculum. The use of technology in the experimental curriculum allows the incorporation of more visual imagery and provides a more interactive platform than most traditional curricula available. Control programs continue to offer their usual course of studies. Data are collected from high school sophomores enrolled in agriculture classes at various points during the school year and again approximately one-and-one-half years following the implementation of the curricula. Qualitative data will be collected by in-depth interviews with randomly selected families of students who were taught the curricula.

Drs. Bob Seiz and Vicky Buchan proudly display the CD containing their agricultural safety curriculum.

Giving and Getting in the Field
By Nancy Gerardi, Director of Field Education

We are proud of our field program, for the great job our students do, for the wonderful opportunities our agencies offer, and for their invaluable teaching. Our students tell us that the field education program is one of the most important components of their social work education. We would like to share a little information about this “highlight” in the students’ progress toward a professional degree.

With over 400 agencies located in all regions of Colorado and in many neighboring states, our students have the opportunity to work with a great variety of service programs and talented agency staffs. Our agencies share a commitment to social work education, and the opportunity to work with people in need, where vital issues and life-impacting policies are evidenced daily. Our dedicated agency field instructors and staff invest significant time in the teaching and training of interns, as they make a contribution to the students’ development, as well as to the social work profession.

Of course, our students make very significant contributions to the agencies, as well. Every year the SOSW places approximately 75 bachelor level students, who work for 450 hours in their internships, and approximately 80 master’s level students who work for 720 to 988 hours in their internships. This year alone, social work students will provide over 75,000 hours of service to clients, agencies, and our communities.

"The CSU School of Social Work has provided the Larimer County Department of Human Services with 15 to 20 interns each year. These students have enriched our programs, provided high quality, new ideas and energy, and have bettered the future for our community’s families.”
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

The following students were honored at the College of Applied Human Sciences Scholarship and Awards Dinner last fall: Theresa Bert, Sara Bailey, Sarah Black, Mayasa Alshaibi, Andrew Sammeth, Alys Doyle, Jason Wedemeyer, Alisia Flemate, Kathryn Vohnout, and Caitlyn Cordova. Congratulations to each of these exemplary students!

The popularity of animal-assisted interventions with at-risk and vulnerable populations has grown swiftly and steadily in recent years. In response to this rapid growth, research studies have attempted to investigate the effectiveness of this potentially important therapeutic modality with different populations.

Dr. Bob Seiz is principal investigator (and heads an interdisciplinary team of CSU researchers) in a study of a regional residential treatment program that uses a unique brand of animal assisted intervention. The program teaches troubled boys to train abandoned dogs rescued from area animal shelters. Once the boys train the dogs to follow basic commands, the dogs are adopted out to families wanting trained dogs.

The study uses an experimental research design, with random sampling, to compare boys who train the dogs with a control group. After checking the boys in the experimental group for bonding with the dogs, the groups are compared on three broad outcome variables shown to be therapeutically important to the population of boys under study: (1) the development of increased empathy; (2) the exercise of appropriate self-disclosure; and (3) an increase in pro-social behaviors.

Assessment Package Offers Insight Into BSW Programs

By Dr. Vicky Buchan

In 1997, two faculty groups working independently on outcomes assessment in social work education decided to join forces and work together on a package of instruments that could be used by BSW programs. This has come to be called the Baccalaureate Educational Assessment Package (BEAP).

Cumulative results of BEAP, accounting for two and one-half years and the participation of 123 schools across the country (approximately 30% of all accredited BSW programs), were presented at a recent meeting of Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD) in Pittsburgh, PA.

A few of BEAP’s interesting findings include:
- Gender breakdown for BSW programs is 87.7% of students were female versus 12.3% male.
- Average age at entrance into a BSW program is 25.6 years.
- Upon exiting a BSW program the majority of students report working for private/non-profit agencies, although in the last two years, the percent of public/state employment has increased.
- At exit from a BSW program, 73.9% of students report planning to pursue an MSW.
- Of those, approximately 30% have actually applied to a graduate program.

Data for both groups are collected from multiple sources and at various times during the program’s training cycle. Funding for the research comes from a corporate grant.

Dogs like Genny are trained by RTC residents and adopted out to families as part of the research Drs. Seiz and Buchan are conducting.
Continued Success for the HABIC Program
By Dr. Ben Granger

Last fall, CSU received word that The Dr. Scholl Foundation decided to again fund HABIC (Human Animal Bond in Colorado) in the amount of $10,000. This makes the seventh continuous year in which HABIC received this grant. The funding will enable HABIC to develop new programs to aid troubled youth through the therapeutic intervention of trained human-animal teams.

The Scholl Foundation has already assisted HABIC in such programs as: a three year research project with children with autism; animal-assisted therapy for children with emotional, behavioral, and academic needs in public schools (pre-school to high school); a hospice youth program; programs for adolescent children in an alternative high school; programs for children in residential treatment; and individual therapy for children with special needs such as a degenerative disease or hearing impairment.

HABIC has been in existence for nine years and now has 75 trained and supervised human-animal teams who work with over 350 individuals each week. Many of those with whom HABIC works may not otherwise receive special services.

NEW ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SEEKS MEMBERS

One of the most exciting of the recent initiatives in the School of Social Work is the emergence of an Alumni Association. Founders hope CSU School of Social Work graduates from both the BSW and MSW programs will participate in the activities of the School, provide advice and consultation, promote the School’s educational, research, and service activities, and support and network with one another to advocate and provide the best services to clients. If you are interested in becoming a founding member of this Association, please contact Deborah Valentine at (970) 491-6612 or debvalentine@cahs.colostate.edu.

Contemporary Social Welfare Class Draws Campus-Wide Attention
By Brenda Miles

Brenda Miles, course instructor, places students in direct-service positions in local Fort Collins agencies. A few of the community partners who are eager to receive the assistance of CSU students are: Boys and Girls Club, Girl Scouts of America, Foothills Gateway, Elderhaus, and the Food Bank of Larimer County. Students perform a variety of tasks at these agencies; they provide tutoring after school, serve as classroom aids, assist with activities, and provide companionship to agency clients.

Since SW110 is a service course within the University, students come from a wide variety of academic majors. Students’ responses to the experience, regardless of major, are favorable. In fact, many indicated that they would continue to volunteer at their agencies after the class ended. So, local agencies and clients will continue to benefit from the extra helping-hands and hearts of CSU undergraduates thanks to this service learning opportunity.

Dr. Ben Granger and Georgia Granger with several of HABIC’s finest
We are pleased to introduce you to this year’s School of Social Work Advisory Committee. The members of the Advisory Committee meet twice annually to provide the School of Social Work with guidance and direction to meet the challenges of preparing future social work practitioners.

Art Bavoso
Mr. Bavoso works at the Health Services District of Northern Larimer County as the Director of Community Projects. He believes the CSU School of Social Work is a very important player in this area and that it has done an excellent job training students for professional life. “I was privileged to serve for a number of years as a part-time Instructor in the Social Work Department and am now looking forward to making a contribution on the Advisory Committee.”

Tony Hernandez
As Director of the Colorado Fannie Mae Partnership Office, Mr. Hernandez is responsible for the investment of $35 billion to assist at least 200,000 families over the next five years in Colorado. As part of the investment strategy, he works to break down barriers to affordable housing and home ownership through strategic partnerships. “As a member of the advisory board, I bring a perspective of how social work skills are used in non-traditional areas to change behaviors and improve social conditions of communities and the people who live in them.”

Dave Berns
Dave Berns is the Director of the El Paso County Department of Human Services. Mr. Berns has been a Big Brother since 1972 and has worked in numerous volunteer positions. He earned his B.S. in Psychology and Masters Degree in Social Work from Michigan State University, and Master of Arts in Public Administration from Northern Michigan University. He was also recently named Social Worker of the Year by the Colorado Chapter of National Association of Social Workers.

Marva Livingston Hammons
As Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Human Services, Marva Hammons is responsible for the investment of $35 billion to assist at least 200,000 families over the next five years in Colorado. As part of the investment strategy, he works to break down barriers to affordable housing and home ownership through strategic partnerships. “As a member of the advisory board, I bring a perspective of how social work skills are used in non-traditional areas to change behaviors and improve social conditions of communities and the people who live in them.”

Judee Filip
Currently, Judee Filip works with federally funded Child Welfare Resource Centers. She participates in State Child and Family Services Reviews and provides technical assistance to states developing Program Improvement Plans and implementing program changes. Her social work career has been continuous in the Child and Family Services area. She recently left her position with the Children’s Bureau to enter private practice.

Kay Alexander
For the last six years, Ms. Alexander has been a State Representative for House District #58. She has been involved in legislation which addresses issues in foster care, child care, mental health, substance abuse, and guardian ad litem services. Her time in the legislature has sensitized her to the importance of having social workers involved in the political process. “I am especially interested and supportive of CSU School of Social Work since I have supervised students from the School in the BSW and MSW programs and know them to be good, solid programs”.

Martelle Chapital
Martelle Chapital has spent most of her career in higher education and working with community-based organizations. Presently, she is working with Warren Village and Northeast Women’s Center in Denver. She joined the advisory board during her recent tenure at CSU. It is her hope to be part of the team that advocates for the profession and the School of Social Work. “I also want to stay current with legislation that impacts our profession and those we serve. Most important, though, I want to influence and support students and new professionals entering the field.”

Ben Granger
Retired Director of the School of Social Work, Dr. Granger continues his commitment to the social work profession and to social work education through services on the Advisory Committee. Ben continues to be involved with HABIC (Human Animal Bond in Colorado), legislative breakfasts, and a myriad of other activities.

"Civilization is a method of living and an attitude of equal respect for all people.”
Jane Addams
This survey is provided in each Alumni and Friends Newsletter to remind you to send along your news and address changes. Also return if you would like to be added to our mailing list. Send completed form to Colorado State University, ATTN: Dawn Carlson, School of Social Work, 129 Education Building, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1586, phone: 970-491-2536, or e-mail: dcarlson@cahs.colostate.edu.

Please PRINT

Name (while in school): ____________________________ Degree: ______________ Year: __________
Name (now): __________________________________
Address: ____________________________ City, State, Zip: ____________________________
Phone Number: Work: ____________________________ Home: ____________________________
Job title and description: ____________________________
Professional activities (publications, awards, honors): ____________________________

If you would like to contribute to a specific scholarship fund, please check the box(es) below:

☑ Richard Mimiaga Scholarship Fund (#19685)
This endowment fund was established by his colleagues, friends, and former students in honor of Rick’s tenure as a faculty member in social work. The award goes to an undergraduate or graduate student committed to working with diverse populations.

☑ Larry Morita Scholarship Fund (#49203)
Established for students planning to work with gay a lesbian clients. Larry was an MSW graduate of the School of Social Work who passed away after a brief and difficult illness. He was a highly creative clinician who practiced with intelligence and warmth.

☑ Michael J. Schissler Scholarship (#19705)
This memorial scholarship was established by his wife, Elizabeth, in 1990. Michael, who died in 1989, was a 1970 graduate of CSU in sociology and was involved with social work issues.

☑ School of Social Work Scholarship Fund (#53123)
This fund is for both undergraduate and graduate scholarships for students.

☑ School of Social Work (development fund, #12553)
Established to assist the school with special events, lectures, and other needs.

Return completed form to: CSU Foundation, P.O. Box 1870, Fort Collins, CO 80522-1870

Please cut forms apart at dotted line. Thank you.
After being accepted into the MSW program at CSU, I was a bit curious about one of the classes I kept hearing about… SW500. I was told that this foundation course was designed to bring the incoming class of MSW students (none of which were BSWs) up to speed and ready for the social work curriculum. Honestly, though, I wasn’t overly concerned about this class until a well-meaning second-year student told me that “Boot Camp” really wasn’t too bad. Wait a minute—“Boot Camp”?!?! After hearing this description of SW500, I decided to research it a bit more and attempt to discover what I had gotten myself into!

I learned that Boot Camp took place during the first two-and-a-half weeks of the semester, from 9am until 4pm, Monday through Friday—now that’s a lot of class! As the weeks progressed, I concluded that SW500 had been named “Boot Camp” for good reason: it was a very challenging course. Looking back on it, however, I can’t think of a better way to have started the MSW program. Our class got to know one another well—and fast; Boot Camp started the afternoon of our first day on campus. The SW500 experience was demanding enough to let us know we had arrived in graduate school, yet fostered enough success and growth between students and professor that we all knew we were in the right place.

In conclusion, though our version of Boot Camp didn’t require us to shave our heads or wear military fatigues, it did take us into uncharted waters and we were guided through intensive training in a short period of time. The selection of our “Drill Sergeant”, Dr. Bradford Sheafor, couldn’t have been better. He led us through unfamiliar territory with the knowledge and wisdom of a decorated officer. So, in contrast to the unpleasant images the words “Boot Camp” conjure up for many of us, the experience of our Social Work “Boot Camp” was, in fact, a worthwhile and valuable journey.