Greetings from the School of Social Work!

Greetings from the Director!

The faculty, staff and students at Colorado State University School of Social Work are proud to announce some very exciting accomplishments during 2004. Despite major financial cuts affecting the entire university, the School of Social Work was able to meet the challenge with determination and optimism. Some of our success is due to the generosity of alumni and friends of the School who sent donations so that student scholarship funds were not depleted. Others supported the School through financial support of other projects and through the provision of volunteer time to the School. While working as a team, our accomplishments are significant.

In August 2004, the new Social Work Research Center (SWRC) was approved and opened its doors for an Open House. Located at 222 Laurel Street in Fort Collins, the SWRC conducts research on the effectiveness of social work interventions. At the present time, three projects are active. Colorado Collaborative Partnership continues to promote the capacity of health and human services systems to partner across organizations, disciplines and with community members, using a collaborative, client-centered, strengths-based philosophy. A Restorative Justice project is underway with Turning Point, a non-profit organization serving Colorado youth. The third project, Applied Research in Child Welfare (ARCH), represents a collaboration with 10 community partners, plus state and national representatives. An evaluation of the effectiveness of kinship care is underway. We are very proud of these research programs and believe the information we obtain will ultimately benefit client systems, organizations, and social work students.

Two very successful events were sponsored by the School of Social Work. The Annual Spring Open House highlighted social work as a career and an excellent presentation by Manuel Trevino on Hispanic Communities. The topic of the all day annual Fall Forum was how social workers can address the needs of immigrants and refugees.

Our part-time distance program in the Western Slope is also thriving. In the second year of a three-year program, students are providing expertise to a wide variety of agencies in Grand Junction, Glenwood Springs, Delta and Montrose communities. Additional good news is that the School of Social Work just received approval to start a part-time, distance program in Colorado Springs beginning January 2006. Informational and recruitment meetings will be scheduled this spring for prospective students. Please be on the look out for newspaper announcements and mailings regarding the time and location of these meetings. Information about this new three-year program will be available from the School of Social Work Graduate Office in March.

Two student associations are now very active. Both the graduate and undergraduate student associations have made substantial contributions to the community taking very seriously the role of activist and the goal of promoting social and economic justice. I congratulate students involved in these organizations for finding the time and energy to be successful students, work, maintain family relationships and generously give to others.

Lastly, please check out our new look. The School of Social Work web site has been remodeled and Social Work offices, hallways, and lobbies have been updated to include paintings, prints, quilts, photographs and posters that represent diversity in our communities.

I appreciate your support of the School of Social Work at Colorado State University. With your help, 2005 will be full of promise and hope. Thanks for all the important work that you do.

Deborah Valentine
With new energy and enthusiasm, members of the undergraduate student social work organization voted to rename the organization, Social Work in Action (SWA) and opened membership to all interested CSU students. The primary focus brings together community service and the values of social work. Officers for 2004-05 are Tanya Ahamed, President, Cindy Webb, Vice-president, Gina Demattee, Secretary, and Athena Camp, Treasurer. Faculty advisors are Malcolm Scott, MSW, and Roe Bubar, J.D.

SWA put its focus on community related issues and needs. Social workers in SWA sponsored a drive for the Crow Creek Shelter, Wiconi Wawokiya located in Fort Thompson, South Dakota homeland of the Crow Creek Tribe. Lisa Thompson, Director of Wiconi Wawokiya engaged communities throughout the west to support and raise awareness for Native women and children who have been victims of violence and sexual abuse. Native women are overrepresented in domestic violence and offenders are most often non-Natives. SWA sponsored a drive throughout the fall to deliver needed supplies for women in the Wiconi Wawokiya shelter.

SWA also sponsored 30 families impacted by HIV/AIDS for a Thanksgiving project headed up by the Northern Colorado Aids Project, (NCAP). With the support of faculty member Malcolm Scott, SWA worked in collaboration with the Abyssinian Church. The Abyssinian Church purchased 30 turkeys and SWA was able to raise money and food donations to create 30 complete thanksgiving dinners for HIV/AIDS impacted families. NCAP recently sent a letter to SWA thanking students for their donation and acknowledged how grateful they were for the level of dedication and community concern social workers from Colorado State University demonstrated in providing for others. SWA President Tanya Ahamed addressed the SWA members in an end of the year dinner reminding members that it was the concerted effort of many giving what they could that really made this project successful. “Some people gave a can of food and I am not sure they realized that can made a difference.” Understanding and embracing community issues means defining community in a very broad and inclusive manner if we are truly going to make a difference for all.

Congratulations to Dr. Vicky Buchan for receiving the College of Applied Human Sciences Award for Excellence in Research! Her social work research career began after spending over 14 years in social work practice, most notably in the field of medical social work. She joined the faculty at Colorado State University in 1987 and soon began teaching Research Methods. Her extensive research output began in earnest in 1991 with the establishment of the NIOSH Agricultural Occupational Health and Safety Center for Public Health Service at CSU.

Recently a contract has been awarded to Buchan, by the Centers for Disease Control to provide leadership to ensure the continuation of the Agricultural Center Initiative evaluation process and to develop and implement a model to evaluate the impact of the Agricultural Centers program on the safety and health of agricultural workers and their families. This is a three year contract totaling $405,966.

Besides designing and conducting her own research projects, Dr. Buchan coordinates multiple research projects being conducted by the Center’s researchers.

She also generously responds to requests from her students and community agencies for assistance in the design and implementation of research projects, particularly with evaluation research.

In an interview with Dr. Buchan, Brooke Vice, MSW student learned that Buchan did not plan on teaching research; in fact, she had her heart set on teaching policy and macro practice. Who would have thought that a world filled with research designs, measurement, sampling, and data analysis would soon become both her joy and area of expertise? As Buchan’s Graduate Research Assistant and one of her many graduate students, Vice often wonders if there is anyone who loves research more than Dr. Buchan. Her excitement, enthusiasm, and motivation for improving the social work knowledge base captures colleagues and students. The award for excellence in research is not only a reflection of her exemplary work in the School of Social Work, but also an expression of gratitude from the hearts of her students who see her as an outstanding researcher and teacher who puts the needs of the school and her students first. Rosellyn Harvey, an MSW student writes: “Dr. Vicky Buchan exemplifies a woman whom with dignity and grace has balanced the love for her family, the dedication to her profession, and the passion to impress upon her students the importance of research in the social work profession.”
Welcome Kim Bundy-Fazioli

The School of Social Work welcomes Kim Bundy-Fazioli, MSW, Ph.D., and a new assistant Professor joining the faculty this fall. Dr. Bundy-Fazioli came to Colorado at the end of this summer after being a life-long East Coast resident.

Twyla Gingrich, MSW student, states that “Kim is a passionate and enthusiastic person; I am happy to have her as a professor.”

Kim was first exposed to the classroom setting when Dr. William Reid (recently deceased) at the University of Albany encouraged her to move from a part-time student to full-time doctoral student. A teaching assistantship award provided her with the opportunity to teach micro practice. Kim made the plunge, quit her position as Regional Manager with a Therapeutic Foster Care program and has not looked back. Not only did she receive her Ph.D., but she discovered that time away from the field reignited her passion for social work, especially child welfare. From the experience of being a teaching assistant, she came to the realization that she loved being in the classroom. She not only enjoyed teaching but also learning from students. The opportunity to continue research was another pull towards becoming a professor. Bundy-Fazioli reports to be “thrilled to be at CSU and in the beautiful state of Colorado.”

Kim reported that her most memorable social work moment involved pulling together a community response team to deal with the sudden death of a young girl on a bike trip from Massachusetts to Maine. From that experience she received employee of the month from York County Counseling in Kittery, Maine.

When asked for tips to stay sane through the madness of graduate school, Kim’s response was, “I work hard to live one day at a time, exercise regularly and maintain balance in my life… an ongoing challenge!” She loves the outdoors. She and her husband, Jim, are avid alpine skiers who love to hike, bike, and kayak. “At times we just love to sit in the National Park and gawk at the incredible beauty.”

Faculty Member in South Africa

This fall, faculty member Roe Bubar accompanied a federal/tribal delegation of professionals who traveled to South Africa to develop partnerships and experience the transportation issues as they applied to a post-apartheid South Africa. Tribal programs, tribal delegates and federal highway personnel toured throughout South Africa to meet local, provincial and national programs and become acquainted with the types of challenges and successes experienced in this environment. Bubar was able to meet and collaborate with social work faculty and students, as well as other related programs and organizations at the University of Pretoria. Student elections were underway and the campus was filled with political posters of student candidates. The national political parties within South Africa have representative student parties that run on similar political platforms within the university environment. African students were not well represented in the university environment and students spoke openly about the challenges in this climate. According to Bubar, “Relationships and related language challenges for African and Afrikaans students in the post-apartheid climate play out in the political leadership of student groups.” Some classes are offered in Afrikaans while others are offered in English. Given that Afrikaans is the language of the party associated with apartheid many African students are reluctant to participate in classes taught in Afrikaans.
Last summer I completed my 30th year at CSU and my 10th year working one-half time as Associate Dean for Research for the College of Applied Human Sciences, the umbrella college that includes the School of Social Work. With a “changing of the guard” in the Dean’s Office, this seemed a good time to return to my roots—social work. It feels great to be back with the faculty, staff, and students in the School.

Most of my career has involved some form of administration ranging from being a human services agency director to administration in higher education. Contributing to organizations accomplishing their missions, whether to serve clients or more effectively educate students, has been a rewarding career. Bouncing around administrative roles at CSU had created a constantly changing and challenging, yet stimulating set of opportunities.

Coming home after viewing social work from different administrative levels of the University—as well as thirty years of social work’s growth and development—perhaps provides a useful view to share in retrospect.

When I arrived, social work had just been included among the first undergraduate programs in the nation to receive full accreditation. We have held that accreditation continuously since. Social work was a “division” of the Department of Sociology. Now it is one of three “schools” at the university.

The MSW program was initiated in 1982 and has been continuously accredited and is now ranked in the top one-fourth of MSW programs in the U.S. And...we have an arrangement with the School of Education for a Ph.D. option to prepare students for teaching in social work.

The latest data from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) indicates that MSW programs accept about 2/3 of their applicants for admission. This year we accepted just over 1/3 of our applications at CSU. Clearly we are able to attract and educate some of the best potential social workers as our students.

The faculty has been relatively stable, but has been enriched by new blood bringing a healthy diversity of cultural perspectives to the School. As opposed to other units at CSU, this faculty is especially strong in relation to its quality of instruction and careful student advising. It also has a strong national presence in social work with the editor of the preeminent social work education journal (Deborah Valentine) and members of several of CSWE’s and the Baccalaureate Program Director’s Association’s major committees and commissions. External grants bring more than one-half million dollars to the School each year and we continue to produce journal articles and textbooks that move social work and social work education forward.

It’s good to come home to such a high quality program.

“Nothing could be worse than the fear that one had given up too soon, and left one unexpended effort that might have saved the world.”

Jane Addams
Operation Pedro Pan
With Dr. Maria Puig

Last academic year (2003-2004), Dr. Maria Puig was granted a leave of absence from her position at Colorado State University to work at Barry University, School of Social Work, in Miami, Florida. As a Visiting Professor, she taught undergraduate and graduate courses on U.S. immigration policies and social work practice, and an advanced policy class on children and families issues. Like other faculty, she also advised students and served on several school-related committees. According to Puig, “the most exciting part of my year was spent learning much more about a project that has been very dear to my heart: Operation Pedro Pan.” In addition, a related aspect of her work involved helping the Dean of the School of Social Work with the creation of a research center on immigration and refugee resettlement issues.

Puig quickly realized how little she actually knew about Operation Pedro Pan. Although familiar with the project’s general history she was not aware of the confidential details about its development. One of the first things she learned was the distinct difference between Operation Pedro Pan and the Cuban Children’s Program which, oftentimes, are assumed to be one and the same. The Cuban Children’s Program was started to provide foster care for Cuban refugee children who found themselves in the U.S. without the care and protection of their parents. Operation Pedro Pan resulted from the need to help Cuban parents, in Cuba, send their children to the U.S. (as unaccompanied minors) to avoid Communist indoctrination. Both programs were developed at the same time, but Operation Pedro Pan lasted a much shorter period. Between January 3, 1961, when the U.S. and Cuba broke diplomatic relations, and the October 1962 missile crisis, Puig reports that 14,048 unaccompanied Cuban children came to the U.S. via Operation Pedro Pan. Puig and her older brother, Rick, were part of this massive exodus.

Frequently asked why Cuban parents sent their children into exile alone, Puig admits that there are no simple answers that cover all situations and circumstances. However, her research has led her to conclude that the primary reason why parents sent their children to the U.S. alone had to do with the fear they had about losing their parental rights (or patria potestad). At that time it was widely circulated that the Cuban government would run state day-care centers where children, at age four, would be “entrusted to the government and live in government run dormitories and be permitted to visit their parents 2 days a month.” Facing such a future for their children and the fact that they wouldn’t be allowed to come, Cuban parents made the only decision they could – to send their children to the U.S.

Puig states that nine months in Miami provided “the opportunity to meet and work with members of the Pedro Pan Foundation; people who, like myself, had been part of the Operation Pedro Pan Project. It also gave me the chance to see the tons of records about this project that are archived at Barry University’s library”. Although she couldn’t examine the children’s case records (these records are sealed for 70 years), she was able to review the program’s administrative records. “This information will provide me with ongoing research opportunities to explore how and why the U.S. government supported this project.”

Operation Pedro Pan resulted from the need to help Cuban parents, in Cuba, send their children to the U.S. (as unaccompanied minors) to avoid Communist indoctrination.
Save the date!  
Celebrate Social Work Month at the  
SPRING OPEN HOUSE:  
March 29th

On Tuesday, March 29, 2005  
The School of Social Work  
will host its third annual  
Spring Open House honoring  
the experiences and lives of  
women who have survived  
domestic violence and abuse.

The Open House will take  
place from 3:00-7:30 pm and  
will begin in the lobby of the  
Education Building.

This year’s highlights include…

4:00 - Presentation on Social  
Work Licensure

5:00 - For your eating  
pleasure we’re hosting a local  
bake-off competition! Take  
this opportunity to vote for  
the best chili, and the best  
cornbread or pie.

6:00 - Please join us in the  
Art Building Room F-101 for  
two special guest speakers,  
Pamela Miller and Rhiannon  
McCabe who will share their  
individual stories of surviving  
domestic violence.

Please check the  
School’s website,  
www.cahs.colostate.edu/sw/  
for emerging details. We hope  
to see you at this important  
event.

HABIC Update  
By Dr. Ben Granger

HABIC (Human-Animal Bond  
in Colorado) is a program of  
the College of Applied Human  
Sciences, School of Social Work  
at CSU. Its mission is to “improve  
the quality of life for people of all  
ages through the therapeutic use  
of companion animals.” HABIC has  
85 trained human-animal teams,  
usually owner and dog, serving  
over 600 persons a week. We  
have 27 animal-assisted therapy/  
activity programs in schools, health  
care and social service facilities;  
including 20 in public schools, two  
in hospitals, three in long-term care and  
rehabilitation, and two in hospice.  
HABIC also enjoys working with  
students who are interested in the  
human-animal bond and animal-  
assisted intervention.

In cooperation with the Research  
and Development Center of  
the Schools of Social Work  
and Education HABIC recently  
completed several research/  
evaluation projects. These are:  
“Animal Assisted Therapy with  
Children with Autism;” “Evaluating  
the Effectiveness of Animal  
Assisted Therapy Approaches  
in an Alternative High School for  
Expelled Youth;” and “Animal  
Assisted Therapy in  
Restorative Care:  
A Comparison  
of Three HABIC  
Therapy Groups.”  
These reports are  
available upon request. A summer  
course on the human-animal bond  
and animal-assisted therapy (SW  
550 – 3 credits) will be offered  
during the first four week session.

It is amazing how the presence  
of an animal enables the human-  
animal team to work with those with:  
emotional, behavioral, educational,  
physical, and social needs. This  
is possible because the person  
(i.e., student, resident, patient)  
has the opportunity to develop a  
bonding, trusting relationship with  
the animal, and has motivation to  
work on specific goals/objectives.  
The best part is that the interaction  
is enjoyable as well as productive  
for all.

For more information on HABIC please  
feel free to contact us:  
970 491-2776,  
e-mail HABIC@cahs.colostate.edu or  
visit our office at the School of Social  
Work, 138 Education Building, CSU,  
Fort Collins, CO 80523-1586.
This fall the School of Social Work hosted a forum which included speakers, guests and faculty addressing issues that refugees, immigrants and international students face. The luncheon speaker, Dr. Kay Stevenson, is the program director of the Rocky Mountain Survivors Center (RMSC). The RMSC is one of 34 treatment programs in the United States for survivors of torture and war trauma that are affiliated as the National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs. Since its inception in October 1996, RMSC has successfully provided direct services by mental health providers to the survivors of torture and war trauma, and their families, regardless of their immigration status.

In her address, Dr. Stevenson defined the terminology so that one could better understand the status of the individuals with whom she works. “An immigrant is someone who arrives from another country with intent to reside here. A refugee is granted status from another country to leave and travel to the US; they carry documents from their country which grants them rights to be here. They are usually fleeing due to upheaval or war, and fear for their safety if they stay in their own country. Individuals that seek asylum have no documentation or status; they have been tortured or traumatized in war situations and they may have a student visa, travel visa, or credentials that are exaggerated in order to get them here. When they arrive here, they typically have no money, family, or medical care.” Approximately 1000 individuals from 32 countries arrive in Colorado each year, and almost half of them have suffered torture and cruelty. The majority of the clientele are asylum seekers who have been tortured and are entering this country without status or documentation. 80% of these people are from African countries; Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and the Republic of Congo. The other 20% are from Bosnia, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Russia.

Staff at the RMSC help survivors of torture and war trauma apply and gain either asylum or refugee status so they will not be at risk of deportation. The RMSC slowly works with individuals to become empowered, safe, rebuild a life for themselves, attempt to unify with others from their families, culture or country, and advocate for them internationally. Sharif Amin instilled some hope in that he is able to live here and tell his story so that more people become aware of the plight of refugees and asylum seekers.
THE $10 CAMPAIGN

The Friends and Alumni Scholarship is up and running! This scholarship was created to help students in the School of Social Work. Remember the financial struggles of being a student? The current student body faces a continuing financial crunch. If every alumni of the School sends just $10 to the fund, we would have a sufficient base for awarding two $500 scholarships each year, available to both undergraduate and graduate students. The faculty has demonstrated monthly and annual donations to the fund as well as personal fundraising efforts. Additional tax deductible donations from alumni and students would make the scholarship even more of a success.

Thank you for your support!

Our lives are constructed through stories that we give meaning. They are events, linked in sequence, across time, according to a plot. Have you ever wondered how best to incorporate a client’s need to tell their story with productive counseling? The School of Social Work sponsored an intensive workshop on Narrative Therapy. Visiting professor, Dr. Miriam Freeman from the University of South Carolina College of Social Work provided training to CSU field instructors.

According to Freeman, people come to therapy with “problem” stories. Narrative Therapy names and externalizes the problem, uses language purposefully different from that of the dominant culture so that societal contributors to the problem are not supported. The therapist explores the effects of the problem, the relationship of the problem to other problems, and how and why the client is satisfied or unsatisfied with those effects. The therapist must skillfully lead the client on this journey with pointed, incremental questioning and deconstruction.

The eventual reconstruction of an “alternative story” and the unique Narrative therapeutic approach empowers the client and gives them actual tools to help themselves. Narrative takes the best of many models and a unique, purposeful, and balanced approach emerges.

Our lives are constructed through stories that we give meaning.

If you would like to volunteer as a Victim Advocate and do crisis intervention through support, education, referral, and advocacy, please contact Kat Walden at volunteers@alternativestoviolence.org.

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/
Colorado State University announces the opening of a new Social Work Research Center. An open house introducing the new center was celebrated on September 22nd. Attendees included CSU faculty, administration, students, alumni, community members, and agency directors.

The mission of the SWRC is to serve the people of the State of Colorado, as well as at national and international levels by conducting research to evaluate social work interventions and respond with innovative solutions to existing problems. The Center provides support to faculty, students, and community partners. It also facilitates training, mentoring, and program development services to social welfare agencies, governmental departments, community groups, students, and faculty. The Social Work Research Center is designed to strengthen the relationship between theoretical research and actual social work practice. Current projects include Colorado Collaborative Partnerships (CCP), Sue Tungate, Assistant Director; Applied Research in Child Welfare (ARCh), Marc Winokur, Assistant Director, and the Restorative Justice Project in collaboration with Turning Point Center for Youth and Family Development.

One of the first studies conducted by ARCh is a systematic review of literature pertaining to kinship and foster care and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data from counties around Colorado. It will follow children as they are raised with a person who has a connection by blood, marriage, adoption (kinship care) or parental care not related by blood or legal ties (foster care). Working closely with county departments of Human Services in the new research initiative, Winokur, said, “We expect our findings to influence policy and practice at the county level.”

Just a friendly reminder from our staff that application packets for the MSW program are available beginning in October, 2005 (by mail or on-line). The early application deadline for the 2006-2007 school year is December 30, 2005, and the second deadline for application is January 31, 2006. Please check our website for further information:
http://kokoschka.cahs.colostate.edu/ssw/Graduate/MSW/

We look forward to hearing from our next cohort of MSW students!
Dr. Manuel Trevino Speaks at the Spring Open House
By Cindy Webb, BSW student and Marcia Fitzhorn, MSW

On March 26, 2004, keynote speaker, Dr. Manuel Trevino captivated an audience of students, faculty, and community members. Dr. Trevino received his BSW from CSU in 1975, his MSW in 1977 from the University of Denver and his PhD in Education/Special Populations at CSU. His dissertation is based on an oral history project and interviews with elders from Chicano/Mexicano families in Northern Colorado. These stories relate experiences of disenfranchisement, marginalization, community and family strengths.

One related story from his own family, “The Greatest Hate,” told of his grandparents’ experience with their employer/landlord, a farmer, who prohibited his own children from playing with Mexican children. However, the farmer’s children defied their father and visited often, enjoying the loving home of the Hinojos/Trevino family. One day the farmer professed his profound change of heart to Dr. Trevino’s grandparents and openly admitted that he had made a mistake in not allowing his children to play and visit their children. After the formal presentation, several young Latinos in the audience shared their current experiences with prejudice and conflict within their own culture. This led to a discussion of “lateral violence,” self-hate that extends to others who look like you.

It was a powerful experience for everyone in the room. Dr. Trevino states that stories help make sense of his life and it is his goal to use stories to develop lesson plans for educational purposes. Dr. Trevino currently teaches for The Center for Applied Studies in American Ethnicity at CSU and the Hispanic Studies department at the University of Northern Colorado.

Reflections on the MSW Experience
By Melissa Kimball, MSW Student

The experience of a 2nd year CSU MSW student is intense. I must begin by sharing that sitting down to gather these thoughts is truly a calming experience. The responsibilities of school, field, research, work, family and friends pull in many different directions as we become experts in time management. Is this what CSU meant in the MSW application’s question: “The demands of graduate school are varied and great. How do you plan to manage the often competing demands on your time and energy?” After the first month or so into this second year I stopped telling people about my schedule; it only sounded like I was complaining. Each time I gave someone the details of how I am sleeping 3-5 hours a night and scheduling my meals as if they were a task on the to-do-list, I received the verbal pat “I don’t know how you do it.” The irony is that while we may not know how we do it, we know why we do it. We choose social work because we believe we have contributions to make and we want to help others. During our crazy schedules, this knowledge helps to keep us moving.

As students, we reserve the privilege to waffle. We oscillate between appreciation for the student life and meltdowns and deadlines. There are “ah ha” moments where it all falls into place, yet there are moments of fear when we lack confidence in our development and wonder if we chose correctly. Luckily we are housed in an environment designed to cultivate this experience. We are a part of a once-in-a-lifetime community where colleagues and mentors see us transforming and support us through it. We chose this, and we have much influence in how the experience goes. These opportunities and all of the inexplicable rewards that come with social work rightly remind us of the falseness in the martyr label that so many generously connect with our profession.
SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS RECEIVE SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, the School of Social Work provides scholarships to a handful of exemplary students. For the 2004-2005 academic year, School scholarship recipients were:

Human-Animal Bond in Colorado (HABIC) Scholarship:
Kacy Cotton

Lawton Graduate Student Scholarship:
Elisabeth Slatt

Richard G. Mimiaga Memorial Scholarship:
Enny Ortecho

Larry Morita Memorial Scholarship:
Monica Evans

Michael J. Schissler Memorial Scholarship:
Amelia Musgjerd

School of Social Work Scholarship:
Linda Rumney

Congratulations!

Reflections of a Non-Traditional BSW Student
By Sue Walker, BSW Student

Returning to college in my 40s has proven to be more challenging and rewarding than I could ever have anticipated. I always knew that I would return to college to complete my bachelor’s degree, but first I needed to figure out what I really wanted to do. Over a decade of volunteering in numerous organizations led me to social work as the profession that would provide me the right opportunity to work with people.

When I started classes at CSU I was challenging myself to see if my brain could still meet the rigors of an academic environment. The thought of memorizing mountains of material, taking tests, and writing papers alongside young adults that could easily be my children was somewhat intimidating. Acquaintances had shared their personal stories of returning to college only to be teased and ostracized by the traditional students in their classes. Fortunately, the complete opposite has been my experience. If ever there was a major for a non-traditional student to enter, it is social work. People associated with this major, both faculty and students, tend to be open minded, accepting of individual differences, and very caring. I have encountered warmth, acceptance, and guidance throughout the past three years, and have learned numerous life lessons from the people I have gotten to know.

As I receive my diploma in May, I know I will be at the beginning of a path that will challenge me to continue to grow and develop. Pursuing a BSW at CSU has helped create renewed energy and confidence that will drive my life choices in the coming years. Another important benefit is that I am proud of the example I have set for my teenage sons.

Student Masters of Social Work Association
By Chris Leck, and Janelle Spears, MSW students

The Student Masters of Social Work Association is back in action. Great strides were made last year to get this important organization off the ground, and now the new executive team has taken the reigns for this year. Janelle Spears and Chris Leck (Co-chairs), Melissa Michaud (Secretary), and Matt Law (Treasurer) were chosen by their classmates for the honor of leading the SMSWA into 2005. “How did students ever get by without the help of the SMSWA? I just don’t see how that was possible back then,” said Matt after the first meeting.

This year the three main committees hit the ground running and aren’t looking back. The Education committee is creating more educational opportunities and supplementing the MSW program with workshops and seminars. Keep your eyes open for upcoming events. The Social Action committee is also planning some great opportunities for MSW students to get involved in their communities. The first activity served Thanksgiving meals at a local homeless shelter. The most popular committee, the Social Activities committee, has many fun events planned. It is always a challenge to accommodate all of the students with their varied and busy schedules. Activities are planned in a variety of locations so everyone will get the chance to participate.

The doors of the SMSWA are always open so don’t be afraid to get involved. More people, voices, and opinions equal more opportunities!
In 2004, during the summer break between the two years of the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Colorado State University, Jill M. Thurman, MSW Student, participated in international volunteer work to broaden her experience in the international social work field. While doing research on opportunities and Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) overseas, her interest was piqued by the cultural diversity and needs of the Nepali people.

Nepal is located in the heart of southeast Asia, sharing borders with China (former Tibet) in the north, India in the south, Pakistan on the west, and Bhutan on the east. It is the home of the Himalayan Mountains and a peacefully balanced combination of Buddhist and Hindu populations. Nepal is considered a developing country with an economy that struggles with extreme poverty. The government operates on a caste system, stressing the hierarchical nature of this culture. Women have few rights compared to men in Nepali society. In addition, the education system is not only minimal, but also expensive especially to those in the lower castes.

Thurman states that “the MSW program at CSU fully supported my choice to delve into educational and women’s issues in Nepal for the summer to supplement my social work education.” Through her own research she applied to and was accepted by a volunteer group, Inside Nepal Friendship Organization (INFO). Thurman arrived in Kathmandu, Nepal on June 1st, 2004 and stayed through August 1st, 2004. After orienting to Kathmandu, going through brief culture and language classes and trekking through the Himalayan Mountains for a week, she was placed with a host family in a small village to start her volunteer work. According to Thurman, she quickly realized she had to take the initiative and formed a small class of students to continue her past volunteer work with a local women’s group. “My village placement presented many challenges and also many opportunities. I was very much on my own as a volunteer there, left to structure my interactions with the village as I saw fit.”

Thurman had time to travel and explore Nepal and the Nepali culture. Visiting Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha, and staying at a Buddhist monastery for a week she also explored wildlife and visited many other villages and towns throughout Nepal. “The Nepali people proved to be extremely polite and grateful for my interest in their culture,” states Thurman. “I felt safe traveling alone and was greeted well throughout all my adventures and encounters in the country.” Currently, Nepal struggles with extreme poverty, an imbalance of social power, and terrorists (Maoist) who threaten the people and the current government. International human service work done for the Nepali people is held in high regard and Thurman urges people to consider volunteering their social work skills in Nepal.

Lessons in Mexico

Gandhi stated “Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” It was on the basis of this philosophy that Amelia Musjard, MSW student, decided to spend the past summer in Mexico taking Spanish classes, living with a local family, and traveling the countryside. “My mother might say that the decision was more of an excuse to pay $5 to sleep in a hammock in Chiapas than a philosophy, but then again she would have recommended I get a job to help ward off those mounting student loans,” says Musjard. “In the end, what I took from my experience was worth far more than the value of the few dollars I would have earned. The lessons will forever impact my practice and my understanding of both the Mexican people and their culture.” For years Musjard had been trying to master the use of the subjunctive verb form which is seemingly nonexistent in...
Nicaragua, the largest and poorest of all Central American countries, has continually been witness to dynamic changes, ongoing humanitarian struggles, and substantial political and environmental challenges. The country is full of pristine and beautiful expanses of intriguing undeveloped land and tropical forests, as well as urbanized areas where disparate class differences and dire poverty run rampant. Nicaragua’s capital of roughly two million, Managua, is a prime example of such a sprawling urban epicenter where the poorest of the poor struggle to meet their most basic necessities, including food, housing, and health care. Through CSU’s School of Social Work, Stephen R. Thompson, MSW student, had the opportunity to work with a Managua-based Nicaragüense agency known as San Francisco de Asis (SFA) for the month of June, 2004.

Urban poverty is one of the most difficult humanitarian issues to address. At least out in the countryside, the people can work the land, turn their energy toward harvesting crops, and eke out an existence of sustenance farming and market trading while giving back to the land, to Gaia. In the urban beast of Managua, however, serious barriers of mass unemployment, widespread undereducation, and inadequate housing keep many Nicaraguans oppressed and struggling. In Managua, the wealthy neighborhoods stand out, exemplifying significant socio-economic class gaps, and property boundaries are well-defined with razor-wire. Although ecological awareness in the area is increasing, sustainable and environmentally sound land management practices remain in their infancy. "With valiant efforts and limited resources," Thompson reports that "SFA’s medical clinic and pharmacy attempt to address some substantial shortcomings and issues regarding the urban poor’s access to health care; the agency also runs a private school (grades K-12), offers a food assistance program for malnourished infants and their families, and has an orphanage for adolescent boys."

Thompson called Managua, “the mad city” observing that daily struggles are a very real way of life for many Nicaraguans. “San Francisco de Asis attempts to provide an opportunity toward a life of self-sufficiency that on a large scale will eventually strengthen the community and the country as a whole. These are the long-term mystic aspirations of the humanitarian visionary; the road to progress and lasting change is long.” The School of Social Work as CSU plans to continue its involvement with SFA though the non-profit organization, International Giving (www.internationalgiving.org).

the English language. Her instructor, Hugo, explained it like this: “As a U.S. citizen, you live in a culture of independence that encourages and expects that hard work will result in success. Within our culture, life is not considered a predetermined path down which we must go blindly. We determine our destiny. The subjunctive reflects the opposite of this. It is a verb form that acknowledges fate. At times, an individual does not have control of their destiny regardless of what they do.” Musjard’s study of Spanish led to an important insight that has amazing relevance to social work practice. “As social workers in the U.S., we are operating within a culture that expects and believes individuals can overcome most innate or situational disadvantages by working hard. If a client believes in the power of destiny, social workers must work to better understand the impact of a different philosophy on life. How we will do this depends on our own philosophy and life experience, but it is a must if we expect to serve clients in a competent and skilled manner.”
Did you know that there is a program for adolescents in our community that incorporates therapy with motorcycles? Did you also know that in the past four years, this program has worked with over 150 youth (ages 10-15) and that it is so successful, that 90% of the time they are able to meet their goals and make positive changes in their lives?

Four years ago, the Larimer County Department of Human Services and the Larimer Center for Mental Health teamed up to deliver an integrative project that is designed to provide the youth of Larimer county an opportunity to make positive changes in their lives by offering an exciting and challenging environment intended to support them in all areas of their lives: home, school and community. This program is the National Youth Project Using Minibikes, or NYPUM. It is supported by the American Honda Corporation, and our local program is one of fifty across the U.S. This program is now federally funded, with its roots dating back to 1969 – when it first materialized at a YMCA on the east coast, the brain child of a youth worker. It has since grown, and is now part of the Robert F. Kennedy Child Action Corporation.

The philosophy behind the program is to work with youth that are referred to NYPUM by Larimer County caseworkers, mental health therapists, the judicial systems and local school systems. The participants and their support systems, identify goals that are then used to create a behavior contract. Riding time on the Minibikes is earned through completing goals and following program expectations. In Larimer County, the youth spend an average of 4 hours a week for up to 6 months in the program. The staff, headed by Ken Walker, MSW, work closely with the youth and their parents/families and this is what makes the program have a success rate of almost 90%. In addition to working with the youth individually and in groups, the program also has a parents/multi-family group that incorporates the parents, children, siblings and others who support the goals for the youth. Mr. Walker stated that the attendance rate for the parents/family group is over 75% and they cover topics such as parenting and diversity. The facilitators use both a cognitive/behavioral approach and a positive peer culture approach with both the parents and the youth.

Each week, Mr. Walker, his staff, interns/volunteers and the youth spend 1-4 hours riding and another part of their time is involved in motorcycle maintenance. He believes that both riding and taking the time to look after the bikes can be seen as a metaphor. It teaches them respect for property, they look out for each other, they learn to apply patience, and anger management, and they build self-esteem in the accomplishment of being able to handle the bike and to fix broken parts.

This program works closely with the CSU School of Social Work’s field program. Currently there are two interns working closely with Mr. Walker, his two other staff members and volunteers.

Special thanks to Elisabeth Slatt, Editor, Social Work News.
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Funding Opportunities

- Richard Mimiaga Scholarship Fund (#19685)
  This endowment fund was established by Rick’s colleagues, friends, and former students in honor of his 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)
  This scholarship was established for students planning to work with gay and 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 studying social work.

- School of Social Work Enrichment Fund (#12553)
  This fund was established to assist the School with special events, lectures, and other educational needs.

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Alumni Roundup

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, School of Social Work, 129 Education Building, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1586, phone: 970-491-2536, or e-mail: swfriends@cahs.colostate.edu.

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Twenty-four MSW students in the Western Slope have completed their foundation course work and field placements. The students begin the concentration course work during the Spring, 2005 semester. Their field assignments covered a wide range of practice settings including adult protection, criminal justice, public health, schools, mental health, child protection, and a unique placement at the Colorado Chapter office of NASW. Looking forward to graduation in May 2006, the students will be completing their research projects in November 2005 culminating in their oral defenses on the CSU campus.

Three additional students have joined the Western Slope group during the summer. Tiffany Bloomer, a BSW graduate of Utah State University and Christine Snow a BSW graduate of Metro State College, Denver, Colorado joined the class as advanced standing students. Cynthia Baluta joined the class as a transfer student from the University of Denver Graduate School.

The next MSW distance education program will begin in January 2006 in Colorado Springs. Using the same three year format designed for students working full-time in the human services, the program will be delivered in the Colorado Springs area. Students with a BSW degree from an accredited school of social work are eligible to enter as Advanced Standing students. Informational meetings will be held in the Colorado Springs area beginning in the Spring of 2005. For further details consult the School of Social Work website, Dawn Carlson or Eleanor Downey at the CSU School of Social Work.