Jennifer Parker

I am often amazed at the various ways that social work professionals are able to assist others in their struggles in life. There are advocates who walk along with people who need someone in their lives to navigate systems that are overwhelming. There are social service workers who broker people to services that assist to make positive changes that help individuals and families. There are social activists who work to change governmental systems that better respond to community needs. There are lobbyists and legislators who work to develop laws and social policies that improve the quality of community, individual, and family life.

In my late 20s, I realized I needed to be in a career that would allow me to assist others and be creative. I realized I would need to earn a master’s degree. I was reluctant to choose a degree program that narrowed my career options. I then discovered the Master of Social Work program at Colorado State University. After researching the program, I realized that social workers were prepared to enter into a variety of jobs in different fields. On top of that wonderful revelation, I realized that the advanced generalist concentration prepared me to develop my skills in any direction my heart guided me. At the time, I don’t think I realized the amount of diversity that my education would give me.

During my education, I had internships that included direct practice skills as well as policy skills. Since receiving my MSW from CSU in 1999, I have been a therapist who worked with the child welfare system, started my own private practice with children and families, began working with university students, and currently work with domestic violence victims who live in rural areas. I have enjoyed returning to CSU as the field coordinator for the Distance MSW Program in Colorado Springs. I love that I never know where my passion will lead me next but always know that my Master of Social Work will help me navigate that journey successfully.

Marilyn Thayer

I have worked at Colorado State University for more than 10 years, leading the Community Organizing to Reach Empowerment Center project. CORE, overseen by the College of Applied Human Sciences, has found a permanent home in the School of Social Work. Serving as director of the CORE Center since its inception in 1989, I have had the opportunity to follow my passion in supporting children, youth, and families from the diverse neighborhoods in north Fort Collins. My position continues to provide incredible experiences not only for learning the unique assets of communities but with the gift of developing special relationships with many of the residents.

Recently, I was asked to describe what I most enjoy about my position. While I am stimulated by the varied challenges in my work, I appreciate that there is never a typical day for me as an administrator. Whether it involves meeting staff from a local organization to identify strategies for collaboration, visiting a family in one of our neighborhoods who has not been attending our programs, or trying to comfort a young child who arrives at our center feeling upset from an incident she experienced earlier at school, I value each situation as a special learning opportunity.

Sue Tungate

Sue Tungate, MSW, Ph.D., has become the Brighton MSW site and field coordinator. She is also director of Colorado Collaborative Partnership, a joint venture between the Colorado State Department of Human Services and the Colorado State University School of Social Work that provides facilitation and technical assistance to collaborative groups in the area of human services. Sue will be assisting MSW students with identifying, obtaining, and completing their field placements.

Sue has worked with interagency and interdisciplinary groups on service assessment, strategic planning, and collaborative processes in the human services since 1997. She also has a background in program evaluation research and needs assessment. Sue has provided classroom and field instruction to social work students at Colorado State University since 1994. Social work practice areas include domestic violence, aging services, hospice, and medical social work. Her current focus is on the intersection between child welfare, family poverty and basic needs assistance, and human services systems collaboration.
Greetings from the Director …

I am proud to share the 2010 School of Social Work newsletter with you. I am very impressed with the ways that our social work students, faculty, staff, and alumni are addressing the many economic and societal challenges that people and communities are facing.

For example, Louise Quijano is providing cognitive-behavioral therapy to older Latinas experiencing depression in Weld County. David Becerra is working with Marilyn Thayer and community partners to provide services to children and families who have experienced trauma. Kim Bundy-Fazioli continues to be active with grandparents caring for grandchildren. Our Center for Lifelong Learning and Continuing Education continues to respond to MSW students who need a part-time program by opening a second distance site in Brighton.

Our alumni are serving the homeless population through work with the new Murphy Center for Hope in Fort Collins and in school systems throughout the state, meeting the needs of children and families who are struggling to survive. Please read this newsletter and check out our website for the other ways that Colorado State University social workers make a difference.

This newsletter is dedicated to all of you – as a thanks for all that you contribute, every day, to improve the quality of life of people throughout our state, the country, and the world. Please know that you are appreciated!

Deborah Valentine, Ph.D., Director

Upcoming Events

**Grand Junction SOSW Alumni Meeting**
September 30, 2010

**Colorado Springs SSW Alumni Meeting**
May 2011

Contact Keli Murray for more information at (970) 491-6612 or murrayka@cahs.colostate.edu.

School Remembers Former Chair

Faculty, staff, and alumni of the School of Social Work are saddened to learn of the death of a former chair of the department, Pamela S. Landon.

Pam led the program from 1982 until 1992, when she retired and Ben Granger assumed the chair position. Pam will be remembered for her wry sense of humor, political acumen, commitment to BSW and MSW students, and important contributions fleshing-out the concept of advanced generalist that has defined the MSW program at Colorado State University from its beginning.

Dr. Landon, with her husband, Harry, retired to New Mexico, but periodically, she called or dropped in to the School of Social Work to make sure all was running well. Pam passed away in September, at the age of 81, in Las Cruces, N.M. She will be missed.

Pamela Landon

School of Social Work Faculty

James Amell, Ph.D.
Victor Baez, Ph.D.
Nancy Banman, Ph.D.
David Becerra, Ph.D.
Pamela Bishop, MSW
Roe Bubar, J.D. (Ethnic Studies)
Victoria Buchan, Ph.D.
Kimberly Bundy-Fazioli, Ph.D.
Emily Dakin, Ph.D.
John Gandy, Ph.D.
Nancy Gerardi, MSW
Ben Granger, Ph.D. Emeritus
Bruce Hall, MSW Emeritus
Brenda Miles, MSW
Maria Puig, Ph.D.
Louise Quijano, Ph.D.
Malcolm Scott, Ph.D.
Robert Seiz, Ph.D.
Bradford Sheafor, Ph.D.
Marilyn Thayer, M.Ed.
Deborah Valentine, Ph.D.
Marc Winokur, Ph.D.

www.ssw.cahs.colostate.edu
Three Women Unite Around a Common Purpose

Mental health was part of the program of study when Gail Cotton was a student in the School of Social Work in the late 1980s. She could not have imagined that her education and passion as a mental health advocate would come full circle years later and inspire her to establish a scholarship in honor of her dear daughter, Anne.

As founder and donor of the Anne Andrews Scholarship for Mental Health Advocates, Gail’s passion will continue through the scholarship’s first recipient, Angela Condit, a master’s student. Gail, Anne, and Angela believe in the same causes and solutions and share a common purpose – helping people affected by chronic mental illness. “This is why I started the scholarship,” said Gail. “Angela shares the same hopes that I have – that we will continue to find solutions for those struggling with mental health challenges.”

Angela was among the speakers at the College’s annual scholarship luncheon in December. She described how receiving financial assistance is a phenomenal gift when faced with the rising cost of higher education. “I am very grateful for this support.” While Gail was unable to attend the luncheon, the two are planning to meet soon when Angela can personally share details of her career goals with Gail.

But that’s just part of Angela’s story. “When reflecting on a personal and professional level, receiving a scholarship means so much more,” Angela explained. “Receiving this scholarship means there are individuals who not only share my concern for those with mental health issues, they are choosing to do something to help by providing funds to support the education of those who may be able to make a difference.”

Gail and Anne shared their personal and emotional story of their own mental health journey with a social work class last year. Their compelling and genuine talk gave a first-person account of the hellish nightmare and their gratitude for the care and advocacy they received when they needed it most. “What impressed me, and touched me deeply, about Gail and Anne was their willingness to share this deeply moving experience for the benefit of future social workers,” said Lori Sims, director of development. “This is a story they want to tell and are very open about.”

As a social worker helping older adults for the past 10 years, Angela understands the great need for qualified professionals who want to work with this population. “As I progressed in my work with the elderly, I began to see the mental health struggles many of them endure. Of the 31 million Americans age 65 and over, nearly 5 million suffer from serious and persistent symptoms of depression, which adversely affect their physical health, quality of life, and mortality.”

Angela clearly realizes what this scholarship means not only to her, but also what it can mean for older adults with mental health issues who may benefit from her education. “I am thankful for Gail’s support, concern, and action to help individuals with mental health issues. To find individuals and organizations that share your concern for others is rare. Finding ones that want to support this concern through action is a precious commodity.”

School Receives Grant to Establish PERC Center

The School of Social Work was awarded a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to establish the Prevention, Empowerment, and Resiliency Collaborative Center, which will be located at the CORE Center and grounded in the principle of building on the strengths and developing the capacity of youth, families, and neighborhoods to facilitate recovery and promote resilience.

Through collaboration with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network treatment centers, mental health organizations, and child welfare system, PERC will provide culturally appropriate, evidence-based treatment and care for children, youth, and families from four neighborhoods where trauma is precipitated by chronic poverty, community violence, child maltreatment, and the immigration experience.
LCAG: Supporting Grandparents Raising Their Grandchildren

The Larimer County Alliance for Grandfamilies was established in 2007 and is a coalition of grandparents, relative caregivers, professionals, and other allies. The mission of the LCAG is to work collaboratively to support the health and well-being of grandchildren through community education, development of support systems, and advocacy for change.

The LCAG is an interdisciplinary alliance with 50 members representing various entities at Colorado State University and the Larimer County Department of Human Services, as well as the Namaqua Center and the Larimer County Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support groups.

Following a framework focusing on community mobilization, LCAG members are organized into a leadership council, work teams, and affiliates. The leadership council comprises 12 of 15 members including work team chairs, grandparents and/or relative caregivers, and at-large representatives. The current LCAG work teams focus on community outreach, education and training, University engagement, and policy issues.

In the two years since the formation of the Alliance, great strides have been made. Through the combined efforts of the LCAG, available funds to support grandfamily efforts in Larimer County expanded from $9,000 to $70,000. This includes grant monies for an online grandfamily support program, a service-learning project with University students, and a health needs assessment of grandparents. The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren online support program, created by CSU Extension county agents and faculty in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies and the School of Social Work is a valuable resource for grandfamilies throughout the state and nationally. This website can be accessed at www.ext.colostate.edu/grg/index.html.

In addition, funding from the Larimer County Office on Aging, the Department of Human Services, the Larimer Center for Mental Health, and the Bohemian Foundation was combined to create a new position in the county dedicated to working with grandfamilies. In 2008, Josh Rabe was hired as the kinship navigator. Josh has a significant role in providing support to grandfamilies in Larimer County. He is instrumental in helping grandparents navigate numerous county systems when seeking resources and support. Josh, along with the LCAG members, offers resources to the support groups, provides community awareness, assists with navigation of systems support, and supports respite care and education programs.

The LCAG also helps foster undergraduate and graduate student involvement with students from the School of Social Work and the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. LCAG was fortunate to have two graduate students working closely in macro-level field placements throughout the 2009-2010 academic years. Graduate students in the School of Social Work, Brooke Pevny and Helen Frost, are extending their graduate experience and becoming specialized in gerontology through the Hartford Partnership for Aging Education Program. Their passion around aging issues has inspired them to work with grandparents and the LCAG for their yearlong research project. This research project is focused on exploring the legal issues of grandparents raising grandchildren. The findings of this research were presented to the LCAG leadership council and discussed in their annual Strategic Planning meeting in April.

The leadership council of the LCAG embraces the philosophy of a community-based participatory model where each member of the Alliance is viewed as an equal contributing partner. The leadership council, since its inception, has been facilitated by Jacque Miller, CSU Extension agent for family and consumer sciences. Jacque has been instrumental in providing strong leadership, guidance, and structure for the Alliance. Beginning in 2010, she will transition from this position and Kim Bundy-Fazioli, CSU Faculty, School of Social Work will serve as the new chair, along with Joy Brill, grandparent caregiver who will serve as vice chair of the LCAG. Kim and Jay will continue to seek opportunities for Alliance members to partner and support grandfamily efforts. Future work will include ongoing education efforts, research and grant-writing efforts, and recruitment of new Alliance members. The goal of the Alliance is to sustain our momentum of success in helping to improve the health and well-being of grandfamilies.

– Brooke Pevny and Kim Bundy-Fazioli
The Council on Social Work Education Women’s Council annually names a feminist scholarship honoree and awardee whose work has advanced social work practice, policy, research, and education related to the intersections of gender and social justice.

In November 2009, Deborah Valentine was recognized at the Women’s Council Breakfast for her contributions to feminist scholarship through her kincare, family violence, women with disabilities, and family caregiving research, as well as gender roles in higher education and mentoring of new faculty and community mediation incorporating a feminist perspective.

Deborah Valentine received the CSWE award for her contributions to feminist scholarship. Mary Hart, Kia Bentley, and Kathryn Collins share the celebration.

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Deborah Valentine received the CSWE award for her contributions to feminist scholarship. Mary Hart, Kia Bentley, and Kathryn Collins share the celebration.
I came to Nairobi to conduct research for my thesis, a qualitative ethnographic study using photovoice to document the lives of youths of the Mathare slum. I’m working with the MWELU foundation (www.mwelu.org), a youth-based photography program in Mathare. Photovoice is a method that allows the participants to document their lives and record their stories using photography and a series of guided interviews.

Those who have previously studied the Mathare document the horrific conditions – the lack of electricity, water, and sewage system; the murders, gangs, and violence. I document the resiliency of these kids, their strengths, and the community’s strengths. Those who wish to keep up with my adventures, wish to comment, send donations, or otherwise communicate with me, please e-mail me at snoyesp@gmail.com. Cheers!

– Sarah Parker

Upon arriving in Nairobi, I was greeted by a swarm of taxicab drivers speaking a mixture of English and Kiswahili and offering rides at a variety of prices. I wandered around for half an hour looking for Julius. I learned later that Julius sees orange as yellow, so telling him to recognize me by my bright orange bag did not help me stand out from the crowd.

We grabbed a cab and were off zipping through an absolutely illogical traffic pattern, allowing buses to test the durability of our rear bumper roughly every 30 seconds. Taking in a breath of the “fresh” Nairobi air awakens all my senses and is a much different smell than the stale air from the airplane. It is a mix of sewage, burning garbage, diesel fumes, brown dust and, twice daily when the hawkers and police clash, tear gas.

Reflections of a Jamaican Doctoral Student

Receiving my acceptance letter from Colorado State University to pursue doctoral studies in the field of education and social work was indeed a dream come true. My mentors were equally ecstatic and charged that such opportunities are often once in a lifetime, particularly for individuals in developing countries such as my homeland, Jamaica. I recall a comment from a mental health practitioner with whom I had previously done my practicum, stating that I would be blown away by the beauty of not just Fort Collins, where CSU is located, but more so the inner beauty of the people. CSU has lived up to all my expectations and more. Students, faculty, staff, and people at large treat each other with warm positive regard, irrespective of individual differences. Deeply ingrained is a culture of mutual respect, acceptance, and hospitality which engenders a sense of belonging immediately.

Being a minority student, in addition to just migrating from the tropics, my anxieties were many. The professors were particularly accommodating and considered everything needed to make a smooth transition. I quickly realized that my fears were unwarranted, and they dissipated more rapidly than they were formed. The support from faculty and staff is simply amazing!

The program provides an excellent opportunity for aspiring scholars to launch their careers in academia, yet the bar is set high for academic performance with an emphasis on adherence to rigorous research standards. Another attractive facet of the studies is the autonomy allowed by professors for students to explore their personal areas of research interest while providing the nurturing environment of constructing cutting-edge research. Courses are designed to ensure that students are exposed to all aspects of research, and the supportive social bond developed between scholars is a great encouragement.

I am currently in the midst of my second year of doctoral study and plan to complete requirements for the Ph.D. program within the next two years.

– Valerie Thompson-Ebanks
CLOE: Challenge and Opportunity

Each year brings new opportunities and challenges. Over the course of 2009-2010, the Center for Lifelong Learning and Outreach Education has found new opportunities to serve the people of Colorado and to increase learning opportunities for social work students. The work of 2009-2010 has laid a firm foundation for further development of our outreach education efforts in 2011.

The biggest opportunity and challenge came in the form of a faculty decision. In April 2009, the Colorado State University School of Social Work faculty voted to expand the Distance MSW Program; as of January 2010, there were two cohorts running simultaneously in different locations. Although locations have changed over the years, only one cohort went through the distance part-time program every three years. In 2000, the first of two cohorts, held on the Western Slope of Colorado, began. After the second Western Slope graduates walked across the stage in December 2006, the School of Social Work started the first Colorado Springs cohort, which graduated in 2008. A second Colorado Springs group is currently in classes. Brighton, Colo., is now the site of a new Distance MSW cohort as of January 2010.

The decision to expand the distance program was based on demand; we were experiencing a continual stream of requests for information from potential students within Colorado and well beyond. Managing the application process along with the various logistics that are a part of beginning a new program could have happened in a six-month period only with the knowledge and skills of excellent faculty and staff.

Sue Tungate, director of Colorado Collaborative Partnership, has expanded her time with the School of Social Work and now serves as the Brighton MSW site and field coordinator. Sue joins Jennifer Parker, who serves in this capacity for the Colorado Springs MSW program. Working with Nancy Gerardi, field director, Jennifer and Sue are building the foundation for a strong field team within the Distance MSW Program. Many of you may well have conversations with one of these women as we seek field experiences for our distance MSW students from around the state and, on occasion, look for a volunteer to serve as a field instructor. Our program could not exist without the generous time committed by field instructors and the agencies in which our students complete their field placements.

Other successful ventures within CLOE have been the expansion of collaboration between CLOE and CSU Extension. As the state specialist for CSU Extension from the School of Social Work, I am particularly excited to see social work students engaged with CSU Extension, the historic outreach arm of this land-grant university. The Washington County community assessment completed by some of our BSW students is part of a two-pronged pilot project in which our CSU team is developing a model of social-capacity building that can be replicated in other rural communities. The second part of this effort is the development of a community leadership training series in which Linda Kuk, BSW, Ph.D., of the CSU School of Education, and I are taking the lead. Jim Banning and Sharon Anderson, also of the CSU School of Education, further round out the CSU team.

Also on the Eastern Plains, Sue Tungate and Allison Fink are helping to further the partnership between the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs Rural Outreach Office and CSU Extension, by developing a process to assess the needs of veterans in a five-county area of northeastern Colorado for services provided by both the VA and CSU Extension. We are hopeful that the partnership between the VA and CLOE will help us develop additional professional development opportunities for our alumni and colleagues in the social services.

The citizens in the rural areas of Colorado, such as those we’ve met in Washington County, face the challenges of drought, economic losses, and declining population, while at the same time there is great opportunity to build on the strengths of a community that has found a way to continue to provide access to health care professionals, supports its high school sports teams, and is home to the National Radial Engine Exhibition (aircraft). Through the expansion of the Distance MSW Program, development of new field sites around the state and the new outreach effort with partners such as the VA and Extension, the staff of CLOE have been challenged over the past year and found new opportunities to build upon in the coming year. We’ll be keeping you up to date on our progress via the new School of Social Work website. Drop by the site and let us know what you think at www.ssw.cahs.colostate.edu.

– Nancy A. Banman, CLOE Director
CORE: Empowering Communities to Serve Residents

The Community Organizing to Reach Empowerment Center within the School of Social Work has had a long-term presence in and commitment to the neighborhoods in the north Fort Collins community.

Supported by a federal grant awarded from the U.S. Department of Education in 1989, the center began as an educational partnership between Colorado State University and the Poudre School District to implement an Even Start Family Literacy program. Family literacy programs acknowledge the cyclical nature of illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of the state’s low-income families, through the integration of adult literacy, early childhood education, and parenting support.

Focusing on families considered most in need, the Even Start Learning Center was established in Poudre Valley Mobile Home Park, the area with the greatest concentration of poverty in the community. In 2006, the CORE Center moved to its current location in space donated by Poudre Valley Health Systems.

In October 2002, CSU was awarded a Community Outreach Partnerships Centers (COPC) grant from the Office of University Partnerships with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In addition to continuing family literacy programs, funding from the COPC grant provided the opportunity for the University, the school district, and local community organizations to forge partnerships to provide comprehensive, coordinated services to meet the needs of the residents from the target neighborhood. To reflect this change, Even Start was transformed to become the Community Organizing to Reach Empowerment Center and implemented a community-based, community-focused, and community-directed program model to ensure that programs were responsive and relevant to meet the needs of the residents. In particular, the CORE Center focused on providing programs and services in three primary areas: (1) affordable housing and home improvement; (2) public safety and personal well-being; and (3) educational opportunities promoting economic self-sufficiency.

Building on the momentum and successes of the COPC project and the identified concerns from the residents, the CORE Center recognized the critical need to address the issues of safety in the home and neighborhoods. Acknowledging collaboration as a key strategy in effective, comprehensive community prevention, Colorado State University received funding from the Department of Health and Human Services to support the CORE Center in serving as the catalyst to mobilize and facilitate the Fort Collins Communities Empowering Youth Collaborative to support residents in reducing the levels of gangs, youth violence, and child abuse and neglect in their neighborhoods. Through training and technical assistance in cultural competence and conducting community outreach, the partners and affiliates of the FCCEY Collaborative have joined together in building their collective capacity to provide the powerful prevention work to ensure that youth receive the appropriate support to lead healthy, safe, and successful lives.

Go to www.ssw.cahs.colostate.edu to learn more about the CORE center.

– Marilyn Thayer

“I like coming to CORE ’cause it’s cool. We do homework, play games, and eat dinner too. I like to read books at CORE.”

– Isai (6 years old)

“I like (having) my kids come to CORE because they are happy here. Everyone is awesome! They also help my children on homework that I sometimes don’t understand and can’t do. It’s a good place.”

– Mom
A Community Graduation for GED Recipients in Larimer County

Sometimes when you teach students about working with communities, you are fortunate to have those who take this to heart.

Take, for example, spring semester of 2009 and the first undergraduate course that I have ever taught: SOWK 342, Introduction to Practice with Communities and Organizations.

It was the hope that, each year, young GED recipients would receive recognition through a ceremony designed and hosted by their community.

I assigned students to work with various community-based programs including the Boys and Girls Club, La Casa, Elderhaus, Colorado State University International Housing, and the Lacy Jo Miller Foundation. All of the student groups did very creative projects on behalf of these community-based programs. One student group even organized a fundraiser for the Lacy Jo Miller Foundation and raised more than $700 to help support this program’s efforts.

Near the end of the spring semester, one of my students, Erica Hostetler, approached me about wanting to do a directed study project with me. Erica wanted to do something that would allow her to use her skills and time to engage in a project that would make a lasting impact on a community program. Erica was particularly interested in issues related to youth and, more specifically, with the project efforts undertaken by my student group who had worked with the Lacy Jo Miller Foundation.

Erica’s work with 2 Hearts began after meeting with Wendy Cohen. They talked about the history and needs of the organization. One of Wendy’s students also brought to her attention that GED recipients should be recognized for their hard work and accomplishments. This led to the idea of organizing a graduation ceremony for GED recipients – one in which 2 Hearts students could attend and would also include GED recipients across the entire community.

Erica spoke with a number of people at CSU about how to make a GED graduation happen for GED recipients across Larimer County. She soon learned about the PRAXIS program offered through the SLiCE office. PRAXIS is a grant and leadership training program offered to CSU students who wish to create a sustainable project that would benefit CSU and the community.

Through the grant-writing process, the idea of a GED graduation ceremony was clarified to be something that would be annual and entirely community-based. In other words, it was the hope that, each year, young GED recipients would receive recognition through a ceremony designed and hosted by their community. Erica’s efforts were rewarded, and she received a $2,000 PRAXIS grant to support a GED graduation.

As of this point, Erica has been working closely with 2 Hearts and other organizations in Larimer County serving high-risk youth to create a task force that will connect these organizations and better serve the population. This task force will also inform other organizations of the upcoming GED graduation so that they may participate and/or refer clients who wish to be recognized for their efforts in receiving their GEDs.

The GED graduation ceremony was held May 1 at the Lory Student Center Theatre. With the help of volunteers, this effort was a success! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Erica at e_hostetler2006@yahoo.com.

We in the School of Social Work applaud Erica for her work and beneficence in turning a community-initiated idea into a reality.

— Assistant Professor Jim Amell and Erica Hostetler

2 Hearts: The Lacy Jo Miller Foundation

2 Hearts: The Lacy Jo Miller Foundation was started by Wendy Cohen in loving memory of her daughter. The Lacy Jo Miller Foundation is an organization committed to violence prevention through education, awareness, and compassion.

2 Hearts Academy is part of the organization that offers a free, safe, and supportive learning environment for youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who are interested in obtaining their GEDs. In addition to classes covering the five GED subtests, 2 Hearts Academy students also participate in GED pretesting and life skills workshops.

Visit www.2hearts4lacy.org for more information.

Pictured: Lacy Jo Miller
Increasing Education Engagement Using Animal Therapy

HABIC (Human-Animal Bond in Colorado), in cooperation with the Social Work Research Center, conducted research on animal-assisted therapy (AAT) in schools. This partnership with the Colorado Department of Education evaluated the efficacy of AAT with at-risk students.

HABIC’s AAT team model requires a trained owner/dog and school professional staff member to work collaboratively with an individual student. Students are identified as appropriate for AAT through Individual Education Plans or other assessment approaches. AAT addresses social-behavioral, emotional, and academic concerns, with specific issues relating to motivation, self-esteem, empathy, problem solving, behavioral control, disengagement, and absences.

The report covers a two-year period, 2007-2009. Eleven schools, and five school districts participated, with 77 students receiving AAT. A bonding scale, consisting of 12 items, was used to evaluate the effectiveness of AAT. From pretest to posttest (beginning and completing AAT at the end of the academic year), there was a statistically significant difference for the overall composite bonding scale score. In addition, children reported significant improvement for the following questions: “I know what my dog likes;” “My dog gives me a reason for coming to school;” “I know what my dog does not like;” “I am close with my dog;” “My dog is very important to me;” ”I miss my dog in between visits;” ”I look forward to working with my dog;” “There are times that I am lonely without my dog;” and “I feel safe with my dog.” Eight interviews were also conducted with school professionals, with improvements noted in behavior, emotional development, socialization, and academic performance. Most notably, a reduction in behavioral incidents was noted and attributed to students being more on-task, displaying better listening skills, and doing what was expected of them in school.

The study helps demonstrate that AAT can be especially successful in empowering students to feel responsible for something outside themselves and in facilitating a greater desire in students to engage in their education. A copy of the full study can be obtained through the School of Social Work, by contacting HABIC or the Social Work Research Center at www.ssw.cahs.colostate.edu.

– Ben Granger

MSW Student Association Addresses Hunger

A warm hello from the Master in Social Work Student Association! We are happy to report that we have been working hard, having fun, and making big plans for the spring semester. Members Emily Flinkstrom, Julie Holthaus, Erin Gerdes, Odelia Broehl, Maggie Anderson, and Heather Sparks, have divided up our efforts into three committees.

The Social Committee hosted a pumpkin-carving party in October as a way for all MSW and BSW students to get to know each other. A celebratory end-of-semester gathering took place in December, and several more events occurred this past spring. The Community Outreach Committee organized a Holiday Food Drive with all nonperishable items donated to the Larimer County Food Bank. The remainder of the academic year was spent partnering with other organizations within the College of Applied Human Sciences to coordinate a collegewide service project. Finally, our Professional Development Committee sponsored a guest speaker from the Food Bank to discuss their operations and the issues associated with hunger. In the spring semester, other professionals from the community were invited to speak about their experiences as social workers and to allow students to network with potential employers.

Please contact Emily Flinkstrom, EFlinkstrom@gmail.com, if you have any questions or would like to become involved in any of our activities.

– Emily Flinkstrom
The Doctoral Journey: A Personal Story

In 1983, I began my doctoral studies in social work and statistics at a southeastern university. While I completed all course work, comprehensives, and even a dissertation, I remained terminally “all but dissertation.” Since that time, I have taught at all levels of social work education, managed a number of social work programs (large and small), and worked as a social work researcher. And yet, I always wanted to complete that Ph.D. and focus on social work education.

So, in 2007, I returned to school at Colorado State University in the education/interdisciplinary studies doctoral program. This was absolutely the best decision of my entire career! The faculty both in the School of Social Work and the School of Education were very knowledgeable, helpful, and supportive.

There simply are not enough superlatives to describe my dissertation committee. Their standards were high, and they worked with me through the entire process; their ideas and feedback helped me develop and complete a dissertation of which I am very proud.

When I began the job search last spring (for a position to begin this fall), I was open to nearly any place and position. The search was enjoyable even while the travel was at times exhausting. The position I accepted was with Oglala Lakota College, a BSW program on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. I teach primarily research and macro practice courses, and I am the field coordinator for the program. The program is small, as are the class sizes. The distances, however, are great. There are 11 college centers throughout the reservation, with one in Rapid City, and we have students in field placements throughout the reservation and the Black Hills region.

While at times I miss the feel and camaraderie of a traditional university setting (my office is in my home and car), I could not have found a better “fit.” With small classes, I can devote even more time to individual students and can really get to know all our students. As field coordinator, I have the opportunity to develop and expand the field program and to facilitate a field experience for each student that will help him or her grow as a social work professional.

I feel this is an opportunity to make a real contribution and difference for students, the program, and the profession. And while I teach social work principles and methods, the students very generously teach me the Lakota language and culture.

– Kathryn Kidd

Social Work in Action!

SWA was busy in 2009 participating in Adopt-a-Neighbor, holiday caroling at a retirement home, and collecting cans for the annual Cans Around the Oval food drive. This spring, the association hosted the “Sleep in Someone Else’s Box” event in collaboration with other departments in the College of Applied Human Sciences. Members also participated in CSUnity and a walk to create human trafficking awareness.

2009-2010 SWA officers
Lauren Dixon, President
Amy Bratschie, Vice President
Priscilla Pedroza, Secretary
Leann Tafoya, Treasurer

We would like to grow our attendance in order to reach and help more people! Please contact us for more information or to join!

SocialWorkInAction@gmail.com

From left, Deb Valentine, director of the School of Social Work; Kathryn Kidd, newly hooded Ph.D.; and George Morgan, professor in the School of Education.
Trauma Treatment: Using Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics

Today, I write this article as a competent and confident clinical social worker, and I am proud to be an alumna of CSU’s School of Social Work, graduating class of 2006.

As the owner of a private practice, I embrace the ability to use multimodal interventions to treat my clients. That helps customize treatment and apply methods tailored to their specific needs. One of the models I have become very familiar with over the years was developed by Bruce Perry and is called the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics. I had read his literature and heard him speak on several occasions and became more influenced by this approach to helping clients who have experienced early childhood trauma. Late this summer, I was honored to be selected, among a handful of therapists in the United States and abroad, into the inaugural class for individual certification in the NMT approach.

In the first session, Dr. Perry summarized the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics to be “an evidenced-based, developmentally informed, biologically respectful approach to working with at-risk children. As a promising practice, this clinical approach helps professionals determine the strengths and vulnerabilities of a given child and create individualized intervention, enrichment, and educational plans for the children. Simply, the goal is to find a set of therapeutic activities that match a child’s current needs in various domains of functioning (i.e., social, emotional, cognitive, and physical). Patterned, repetitive, and developmentally appropriate activities provided in context of nurturing relationships are the keys to effective intervention. Active participation of caregivers and other adults in the child’s life is important to the success of the NMT; indeed, by weaving activities throughout the child’s various relationships and environments, the majority of the therapeutic experiences are provided outside of the actual context of conventional therapy. The model has three key components – assessment, staffing/training, and the array of therapeutic, educational, and enrichment activities.”

I am excited to implement the NMT model into my therapeutic work with children who have experienced physical or emotional trauma. I will also apply the model to my work with teens and young adults to further understand the behaviors they display in their current lives. Focal points of my therapy will involve patterned, repetitive activities that will help stimulate brain stem activity, improve regulation, and begin to bridge the gaps in brain development caused by trauma. Some examples include brushing techniques, music and movement, parallel play, participation in social groups and sports, and use of positive and consistent adult relationships.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or would like additional information.

– Cheri Barger; cheribarger@mtnsoulonline.com
Yes, I want to support the School of Social Work with a charitable gift!

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

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

☐ Ben Granger Distance Education Scholarship (#57773)
  This scholarship was established to honor Ben Granger, professor emeritus and the former director of the School of Social Work. Dr. Granger was the moving force behind the establishment of a School of Social Work Distance Education Program. Students enrolled in one of the distance education degree programs are eligible.

☐ Georgia V. Granger Human Animal Bond in Colorado (HABIC) Endowment (#45125)
  Established at Colorado State University's School of Social Work by Ben and Georgia Granger, HABIC is an animal-assisted therapy program that effectively draws upon the powerful human-animal bond to help people of all ages improve the quality of their lives.

☐ Richard Mimiaga Scholarship Fund (#19685)
  This endowment fund was established by Mimiaga'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.

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

☐ Pershing E. Sims Scholarship for Poverty Prevention (#61693)
  This memorial scholarship was established by the Sims family in honor of their father, Pershing E. Sims. The award goes to an undergraduate student dedicated to poverty prevention and eradication.

☐ Anne Andrews Scholarship for Mental Health Advocates (#62413)
  Established by Anne's mother, Gail Cotton, the scholarship supports students planning careers advocating for those affected by mental illness.

Return completed form to: CSU Foundation, P.O. Box 1870, Fort Collins, CO 80522-1870, or donate online at www.ssw.cahs.colostate.edu.

It's easy to let us know where you are or your news!

Send the completed form to Colorado State University, School of Social Work, 129 Education Building, 1586 Campus Delivery, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1586, phone (970) 491-6612, or respond via e-mail to SOSWAAlumniMembership@cahs.colostate.edu.

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☐ Yes! I want to be a member of the CSU School of Social Work Alumni Association.

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