

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

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Celebrating access, collaboration, and excellence in SW education



First graduating cohort of the Blended MSW Program.

This spring, MSU is graduating our first cohort of students in our **Blended MSW Program**. Welcomed to campus for a one-week orientation and introduction in June 2006, this pioneering group established five learning communities in diverse locations across the state. This program introduced the potential to gain an MSW degree from multiple spots in the state of Michigan. With **ACCESS** ties to their home communities, oftentimes working in local social service agencies, a talented group of students began their studies via interactive television, the Internet, and face-to-face teaching. With our cohorts in the Flint area, and our new Advanced Standing MSW program in Oakland County, the School of Social Work is bringing MSU's land grant mission to provide an accessible education to life.

Our new **Advanced Standing Program in Oakland County** is built on a multi-year partnership with Oakland University. We supported the development and accreditation of Oakland's BSW program; now we will open the MSU MSW Program at Oakland University in the summer of 2009. Our Flint program continues in cooperation with Mott **COLLABORATION** Community College. Each social work program—BSW, MSW in East Lansing or around the state—builds on our field education partnerships with multiple community agencies. These university, agency, and community partnerships support our programs and provide rich relationships to advance research, service, and the profession of social work.

Whether it is the academic and professional counsel from our skilled advisors, the connection of field education to classroom learning facilitated by field liaisons, the research conducted by our faculty, dedicated teachers, or leadership by committed administrators, whether a program is in East Lansing, or the Upper **EXCELLENCE** Peninsula, we are committed to providing an excellent education. For example, our Blended Program has mentors, creative faculty, a field coordinator and advisor, a program coordinator, and other administrative supports. The MSU team cares about students and works to deliver a high quality educational experience.

Congratulations to all of our BSW, MSW, and PhD students and the very first Blended graduates! And a special welcome to Oakland. **S**



Gary R. Anderson

Social work's role in uncertain times

As you are reading this newsletter, the United States continues to experience an economic crisis unlike any other in generations. In the state of Michigan, we have been experiencing a recession for many years already. While hopeful that the state and country can emerge from these difficult circumstances, the repercussions may continue for some time.

The University and the School are not immune from these pressures. A public university, such as MSU, derives a significant percentage of its financial support from the general funds of the State of Michigan. This percentage has been steadily decreasing as state aid has been continually reduced and other expenses such as health care costs increase. The result of rising costs and reductions in state support has been tuition increases. This is a distressing equation for a land grant university that prides itself on access and excellence. A college education is increasingly expensive, and as a result students and their families are acquiring greater loan burdens and increased work hours. This is worrisome, as a

professional program with coursework and field education requires a significant time commitment, and incomes upon graduation make it difficult to quickly repay student loans.

Simultaneously, the demand for education is increasing. There is a need for an educated population, and Universities can be generators of economic activity and growth. The need for sound social policy, for strategies to address poverty and unemployment, strengthen communities, reduce prison populations, improve schools, strengthen families, and promote mental and physical health is great. There is a need for professional social workers. We live in a time of increased need and demand, increased costs, and decreased resources.

In addition to cutting costs at the School where possible, our response has been and will continue to be: (1) an emphasis on quality teaching and commitment to students so that students are well-equipped to meet the challenges of these times; (2) an increased focus on research so that we are contributing to knowledge and gaining the funding to support the faculty and students engaged in that research; (3) partnerships within the School, University, and community to combine resources and enhance the

impact of our work; and (4) a search for additional resources to support students financially and provide enriched learning opportunities. For example, with support from a University Visiting Scholars program, we have welcomed Gordon Limb (Brigham Young University) to provide a week of training and consultation associated with Michigan Indian Day; Monit Cheung (University of Houston) to teach play therapy with traumatized children in East Lansing and Flint; and Harry Aponte (Drexel University) for an encore visit with faculty, students and community members. The thoughtful financial support from alumni and friends during these tough times has been particularly appreciated and used for student scholarships and to support faculty and programs.

I am not quite ready to start writing mottos on the chalkboard like basketball coach Tom Izzo ("players play, tough players win"), but during significant national economic downturns—the turn of the century, the Great Depression—social workers have had a key role in addressing family distress, promoting community health, and strengthening social policy. We appreciate your support for social work education. **S**

Welcome our new business manager: Angie Belin



Angie Belin

Angie Belin comes to us from Los Angeles, CA, where she spent 8 ½ years at UCLA as the manager for Undergraduate Education Initiatives, a unit charged with creating and managing innovative programming for freshmen and sophomores. Prior to her time at UCLA, Angie worked as a paralegal in San Francisco and a research analyst for the Vanderbilt Institute of Public Policy Studies (VIPPS) in Nashville, TN. While at VIPPS, she worked on a longitudinal

evaluation of wrap-around mental health care services for children in military families.

Angie is a graduate of UCLA with a bachelor's degree in psychology. Social science research, particularly in the areas of diversity and access in education and healthcare, has been a personal and professional interest of hers, and she hopes one day to pursue her own graduate work. Angie and her family look forward to enjoying white winters! **S**

Initial studies show IT impacts on youth are often positive

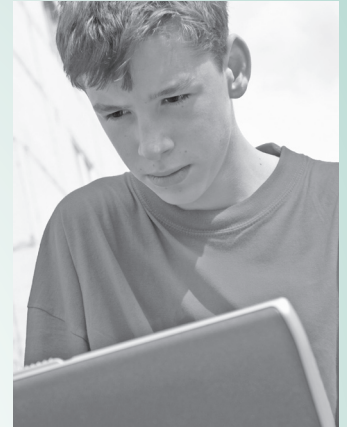
Information technology (IT) impacts the lives of youth around the world. As children use IT at ever increasing rates, significant professional debate has arisen about the positive and negative aspects of this use and its impact on child development. Despite concerns such as exposure to violence, social isolation, and obesity, IT has been shown to offer opportunities to develop new and diverse skills. Research suggests that children are expanding their world views and learning styles with access to immediate global information, while also extending social networks through their growing variety of communication skills. Quantitative studies have explored the impact of IT on children's cognitive, social, psychological, and moral development, but little work has been done to give voice to youth themselves in an attempt to understand the impact of IT. **Dr. Rena Harold** worked with a team of colleagues, **Erica Shifflet Gibson**, **Brian Ahmedani**, and **Dr. Victoria Fitton**, on a study funded by the National Science Foundation that expands the current professional debate by qualitatively examining the impact of IT on the psychosocial development of 13- and 14-year-olds.

For this study, 128 eighth-grade students from urban and rural middle schools were interviewed using a semi-structured protocol. The interviews focused on students' use of IT, their comfort level and concerns with technology, and their level of skill, as well as other inter-relational factors. Demographic information was obtained as were self

reports of access to and use of technology, and their thoughts and feelings about IT.

The ways people communicate are constantly changing. Much attention has been paid to the idea that America's youth are replacing human interaction with technologically-based activities. Few studies, however, have focused on the ways in which youth use technology to enhance interpersonal relationships. One finding of this study, supported by the interviews, demonstrates that for many adolescents, technology does not limit their relationships with others, but eliminates space and time barriers to these relationships, allowing for expansion of social environments.

To understand the social environments of today's youth, an understanding of the pervasiveness and extent of their use of technology is necessary. Adolescent IT use is so pervasive that participants in this study could not separate out the time during the day when they use IT from the "non-IT" time. Understanding this phenomenon will provide a fuller awareness of adolescent development and allow us to better understand this important life stage, as well as begin to comprehend the impact of this "cyber environment" on all of us and particularly on this age group that is growing up with this system as a part of their every day world. In addition, understanding the patterns and purposes of IT use among today's adolescents will help us understand the needs of tomorrow's social work education programs. **S**



For many adolescents, technology... eliminates space and time barriers...



Pictured L-R: Brian Ahmedani, Victoria Fitton, Rena Harold, and Erica Shifflet Gibson.

Office on Violence Against Women 2008 Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation & Safe Exchange Grant Program

The US Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) awarded Ingham County Friend of the Court, Eve, Inc., and the School's Chance at Childhood Program a 36-month planning grant to support the supervised visitation and safe exchange of children in situations involving domestic violence, dating violence, child abuse, sexual assault, and stalking. Through a cooperative agreement with OVW, a team composed of **Shauna Dunnings**, Friend of the Court director; **Tonya Avery**, Eve, Inc. PPO coordinator; **Tarra Ray**, Ingham County Friend of the Court parenting time specialist; and **Kimberly Steed**, Chance at Childhood program coordinator, will work with the Ingham County community to develop a center that provides victims and children with the protection and services they need to pursue safe and



Kimberly Steed

healthy lives and assist the County in holding batterers accountable for their actions. The planning and development period is October 2008 through September 2011.

The Chance at Childhood Program and Ingham County Friend of the Court have run a Supervised Parenting Time Program for low-income families since 2005. The program provides services for parents who have lost custody of their children due to domestic violence, substance abuse, lack of contact between parent and child, or other issues that necessitate the use of a third-party supervisor. Law student and graduate social work student interns supervise the visits and assist parents in improving relationships with their children.

The program has served more than 70 families and with the development of the new center, will be able to serve up to 100 families annually. Eve, Inc., domestic violence shelter will provide expert training on domestic violence for students, volunteers, staff, and community members through this project.

For more information about this community endeavor, please contact Kimberly Steed at 517-432-8406 or steedkim@msu.edu. **S**



The **Safe Havens guiding principles** embody the statutory requirements and objectives of the program and are established to help guide best practice in the provision of safe visitation and exchange services and in the overall community response to child(ren) and adult victims of domestic violence. They are:



- ◀ Equal regard for the safety of child(ren) and adult victims
- ◀ Valuing multiculturalism and diversity
- ◀ Incorporating an understanding of domestic violence into center services
- ◀ Respectful and fair interaction
- ◀ Community collaboration
- ◀ Advocacy for child(ren) and adult victims

MSU Social Work goes international

MSU Assistant Professor **DeBrenna LaFa Agbényiga**, who also serves as assistant dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusive Academic Affairs in the MSU College of Social Science, has strong expertise and interest in international social work practice, education, research, and field training.

Recently, she has been working on a research study funded by the MSU School of Social Work and Department of Sociology, looking at *Refugee resettlement and Michigan's newest families* together with **Dr. Stephanie Nawyn** from Sociology, MSW student **Cara Ludlow**, and doctoral students **Dee Ann Sherwood Bosworth** and **Linda Gjakaj**. The goal was to find out through interviews with refugees from Burundi in eastern Africa and Burma (Myanmar) in Southeast Asia how they access assistance, from what sources, and what kinds of assistance they found most helpful in their early experiences of resettling and adapting to life in Michigan. They also wanted to determine how these refugees assess their relationship with different organizations and individuals offering services in a hope of finding possible solutions for the problems facing refugees who are being resettled. Overall, findings revealed the continued need to develop and maintain stronger social networks as a necessary aspect for refugees in Michigan to thrive beyond the six-month federally-mandated resettlement support period. Additionally, findings point to the importance of community-level resources for improving the resettlement experience of recently-arrived refugees. Phase two of this study comprises interviews with caseworkers from the clients' agencies.

Agbényiga is principal investigator on another project with international overtones: *Undefended childhood in a global context*. Working with **Drs. Deborah Johnson** (Family and Child Ecology) and **Robert Hitchcock** (Anthropology) and funded through the Global Area and Thematic Initiative Program of the MSU Center for Advanced Study of International Development (CASID) and the MSU Women in International Development Program (MSU-WID). As a part of this three-year project, they hosted a one-day international conference last spring, including



DeBrenna
Agbényiga

presenters from several countries, featuring Kenya's High Commissioner to Canada as keynote speaker. Presenters covered various topics relating to children's experience of various types of abuse and blocked access to health, education, and housing from a global perspective. Currently, in the final year, they are co-editing a volume that includes some of the papers presented at the conference. More information can be found at www.undefendedchild.msu.edu.

Agbényiga is also co-editing another book assessing Ghana's response to children's rights since the signing of the UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child ten years ago. Chapters are being written by scholars in several countries who are seen as Ghanaian experts. Continuing with her work in Ghana, she and **Dr. Reitumetse Mabokela** (Education) completed a preliminary study to assess the impact of women's economic stability on girls' access to education, looking at women in rural and peri-urban areas who farm or run micro businesses to support their family. This preliminary study, funded by CASID, has identified climate change aspects that have impacted women's ability to sustain economically and the long-term impact on the family. Dr. Mabokela is also involved in the MSU Study Abroad Program *Social Development and Education: Ghanaian Perspective* with Agbényiga, who is faculty leader. Since 2006, this program gives MSU students an opportunity to learn about the culture and development work in Ghana.

In further work with an African focus, Agbényiga is engaged again with Dr. Reitumetse Mabokela plus **Dr. Christopher Dunbar** (Education), working with teachers in Namibia around Action Research as part of their professional practice assessment; how to collect, analyze and present their findings; and utilizing their work to make changes in educational policies and family/community connection to education. This is funded by the Academy for Educational Development, a nonprofit organization working globally to improve education, health, civil society and economic development in collaboration with US Agency for International Development and the National Institute for Educational Development, a Directorate within the Namibian Ministry of Education. **S**

Veterinary Social Work Services Study

The importance of the human-animal bond has long been recognized as important by social work, medicine, gerontology, and veterinary medicine. The new field of Veterinary Social Work (VSW) is growing; it includes the use of animal-assisted therapies, counseling to help people cope with grief and bereavement after the loss of a pet, understanding of the roles of companion animals in the family unit, and awareness of the link between domestic violence and animal abuse. In their work with veterinary professionals, veterinary social workers assist with the management of compassion fatigue, provide support in mediation and conflict resolution, aid in handling difficult clients, and help with communication.

In 2008, the MSU School of Social Work and the College of Veterinary Medicine designed a survey to explore the attitudes of veterinary professionals regarding the VSW specialization. Led by **Linda Lawrence**, LMSW, and **Margaret (Peg) Whalen**, PhD, the survey included questions regarding the types of issues or discussions with clients that are most challenging, the feelings experienced by veterinarians after euthanasia and non-euthanasia patient deaths, the frequency with which veterinarians encountered client issues such as domestic violence or owner isolation, and veterinarian interest in various VSW services. A total of 59 surveys were returned

and analyzed. Among other findings, veterinary professionals expressed:

- ▶ Interest in receiving a list of therapists to whom they could refer grieving clients.
- ▶ Interest in an on-call veterinary social worker for clients.
- ▶ Deep concern about unnecessary euthanasia, e.g., due to behavior issues or because owners cannot or will not pay for treatment.
- ▶ Interest in learning more about and/or contributing to the VSW specialization.



Linda Lawrence



Peg Whalen

Based on study findings, Lawrence is compiling a list of referral sources of mental health providers from across the state of Michigan and is training group facilitators to provide Pet Loss Support Groups in different areas of the state. In addition to many local residents, people have come from Traverse City, Centreville, Flint, Brighton, and Detroit to attend the MSU Pet Loss Support Group. The full report can be found at <http://socialwork.msu.edu/outreach/docs/VetSWsurveyRPT.pdf> **S**



Statewide survey of adoptive couples shows

Different pathways to family formation can lead to positive outcomes.

Couples who adopt children from the child welfare system form families in unique ways. Professionals believe that adoptive parents may experience distinct challenges and opportunities. Although much has been published about parenting adopted children, little existing research has focused on experiences of parents in their relationships with each other as spouses or partners.

To expand knowledge and inform practice specific to the couple relationship, the *Strengthening Marriages and the Well-Being of Children* project has been conducting a statewide

survey of adoptive couples. This project, funded by a federal grant with **Dr. Gary Anderson** as the principal investigator, includes development and dissemination of a curriculum for couples, authored by **John and Judy McKenzie** and **Rosemary Jackson**. Construction, distribution, and analysis of the survey involve **John Mooradian**, PhD; **Tina Timm**, PhD; **Rosemary Jackson**, LMSW; **Robert Hock**, MSW; **Gretchen Archer**, MSW; and **Maria Jacome**.

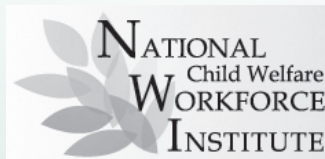
This project recognizes that different pathways to family formation can lead to positive outcomes. It uses a strength-based approach

MSU holds leadership role in new center

Building on the federal five-year grant, *Developing models of effective child welfare staff recruitment and retention training*, completed by MSU School of Social Work in September 2008, MSU plus the other seven programs with recruitment and retention projects applied to establish the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI). This consortium of schools, plus the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), was awarded a grant in October 2008 by the Children's Bureau of the US Dept of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families.

This new five-year project has multiple features, including: (1) developing leadership training for middle managers in child welfare agencies; (2) identifying curricular and other resources to support supervisory training and leadership training in child welfare; and (3) awarding child welfare traineeships to nine schools of social work to strengthen child welfare curriculum, field education, and graduate students equipped to be child welfare leaders.

MSU has special responsibility for implementing the child welfare traineeship program. A request for proposals was developed and disseminated nationally; a high number of schools of social work applied for this special funding and programmatic opportunity. After a NCWWI-led review process, the Children's Bureau selected nine programs that will now award traineeships within their schools and collaborate on advancing child welfare



Gary
Anderson



Toby Salzman



Joanne
Riebschleger



Danielle
Rudder

education and training in their own programs and across the country.

The partners in this new Center, in addition to Michigan State University and NICWA, include Denver University, Fordham University, State University of New York–Albany, and the universities of Iowa, Michigan, North Carolina, and Southern Maine. This Center builds on our previous accomplishments through recruitment and retention grants and demonstrates the federal government's continuing commitment to focus on child welfare workforce issues. The goal of the Center is to advance and strengthen the child welfare workforce to enhance the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families. Principal investigator for this project is the School of Social Work Director **Gary Anderson**,

PhD, LMSW. MSU project leaders include **Toby Salzman**, LMSW (Special Assistant to the Director), Assistant Professor **Joanne Riebschleger**, PhD, LMSW, and Research Specialist **Danielle Rudder**, LLMSW. **S**

strong relationships

to ask adoptive couples about overall marital satisfaction, conflict management strategies, communication patterns, co-parenting processes, and their exposure to adoption-specific issues.

Survey respondents have willingly shared their experiences, offering a breadth of useful information. Couples report that pre-adoption procedures rarely provide prospective parents with information about stresses and strengths couples experience as a result of adoption. More attention to this content is recommended, as long as it is addressed in a supportive manner. Couples also report that they highly value interaction and support from experienced adoptive couples.

Preliminary data analysis indicates that many adoptive couples have very limited "adult" time, yet most respondents are very satisfied with their marriages: 91% indicate that they rarely, if ever, considered divorce or separation. These couples are highly committed to cooperative parenting, and often experience connection with each other in the process of raising their children. They work together to form realistic expectations of themselves and their children. They also describe themselves as highly religious and rely on their faith to strengthen their relationships and problem-solving efforts.

Data collection will continue through partnerships with the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS), the Michigan Association for Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Parents (MAFAK), and the Michigan Federation for Children and Families. The survey is available online at the Federation website, www.michfed.org; click on *Survey*. **S**

Our distance education MSW programs provide human service professionals with an opportunity to enhance their education and careers in their own community.

MSW Flint Program

The Flint MSW program continues in its eighth year, under the leadership and guidance of Program Coordinator **Julie Farman**, LMSW, Academic Advisor **Linda Campbell**, LMSW, and Field Education Coordinator **Erica Shifflet Gibson**, LMSW, providing human service professionals with an opportunity to enhance their education and careers in their own community. The majority of the students in the program work full time in many human service fields. Two such students have been actively involved in the Flint community, working with the homeless population and addressing violence prevention:

▲ **Jameca Patrick-Singleton** is employed with the Metro Housing Authority in Flint and is directly involved in many of the community outreach services for homeless individuals. She co-chairs the homeless count, which occurs twice a year. The most recent count in January provided resources to over 400 homeless people. Another city-wide program is the annual luncheon that provides a free meal and personal items in the fall to hundreds of homeless individuals. Jameca's position as coordinator of the Flint/Genesee County Continuum of Care provides a venue for homeless service providers to meet and discuss current services available, funding opportunities, and gaps in service to provide a committed provision of services to the homeless.

▲ **Kenyetta Dotson's** active involvement in the Flint community includes successfully having the city council enact a gun buy-back program. Kenyetta along with people from other non-profit organizations presented the issue to the Flint City Council to engage their support in this important matter. Kenyetta participated in proposing to the Council that due to the vast amount of crime that the city has faced, it would be life-saving to host a gun buy-back program. Kenyetta's personal commitment to the community and her diligence in addressing a devastating concern was instrumental in establishing a program that will have far-reaching effects.

These two students demonstrate the social work profession in action in their communities and are wonderful representatives of the Flint MSW program. **S**

Flint and Oakland MSW Program leaders



Linda Campbell
Academic Advisor



Julie Farman
Program
Coordinator



Erica Shifflet Gibson
Field Education
Coordinator

MSW Advanced Standing Program at Oakland University

Our new MSW Advanced Standing Program will start its first cohort at Oakland University this summer! Finalization of plans is nearing completion, with Oakland University and the School of Social Work ready to welcome them to another off-campus program, ably staffed by Program Coordinator **Julie Farman**, LMSW, Academic Advisor **Linda Campbell**, LMSW, and Field Education Coordinator **Erica Shifflet Gibson**, LMSW. Our Graduate Office received many strong applications that will result in final selection of a very dedicated student body. While many applicants were from Oakland University, applications were also received from graduates of surrounding area colleges, such as University of Michigan-Flint, Saginaw Valley, Marygrove, and others.

An orientation for the Advanced Standing students will occur in May; students will be informed about the graduate program and details related to both campuses. This is an opportunity for students to meet faculty and staff and be welcomed into the MSW Program. As these students will begin their field practicum this summer, the Field Office has been renewing their Oakland area placements sites and establishing new ones in anticipation of the new program. Students will begin their matching process with the Field Office to ensure this valuable piece of learning for them.

We are all very excited about this new program and look forward to its establishment as a valuable resource for the surrounding community! **S**

Blended MSW Program

It is an exciting time for Cohort '06, the first group of students admitted to the Blended Statewide Clinical MSW Program, as they graduate this May! They will join students from all our other programs at the School's recognition ceremony on May 8, 2009. They will come from all over the state—some from the Upper Peninsula, upper lower Michigan, and even from Wisconsin. They have worked hard over the past three years, and some have had to overcome personal tragedies and obstacles. With the support of their learning communities, faculty mentors, and Blended Program faculty and staff, they have persevered. Congratulations and best wishes to Cohort '06!

The Blended Program is preparing to enroll its fourth cohort in the program, Cohort '09. Students admitted to

Blended Statewide MSW Program leaders



Sally Rypkema
Program
Coordinator



Cheryl Williams-
Hecksel
Field Education
Coordinator

this cohort will begin their studies in May and will attend, along with Cohorts '07 and '08, Summer Institute from June 14-18 on the MSU campus. Thanks to the efforts of our Continuing Education program, students will have the opportunity to take seminars for elective credit with courses that have been "bookended" around Summer Institute.

Once again, we have attracted a large and highly qualified group of applicants from across the state. Thanks to our recruiting efforts and our current students, who do an outstanding job of getting the word out, information about this unique program is reaching increasing numbers of potential applicants. For more information, go to <https://www.msu.edu/~swdisted/statewide.html>. **S**



Hartford Practicum Partnership becomes "Levande Program in Gerontology"

In 2006, the School received a Hartford Grant to support graduate educational experiences within the field of gerontology. A group of faculty has worked with a consortium of approximately 25 agencies in offering a sound rotational model of field education, classroom offerings, diversity experiences, and specialized liaison seminars to students interested in pursuing a career in gerontology. To date, we have graduated 17 master's-prepared Hartford social workers, with another 13 graduating in May 2009.

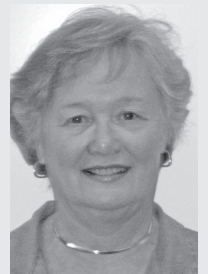
External funding for this unique and wonderful program will end this spring. However, thanks to the support of **Dr. Diane Levande** (faculty emerita), this program will continue indefinitely while at the same time additional funding sources will be explored. Thus, the change in name to the Levande Program in Gerontology is timely and appropriate.

Please stay tuned for additional developments. If you serve the older adult population and would like to become a member of the consortium, please contact **Jo Ann McFall** at mcfallj@msu.edu.

The School celebrated *Careers in Aging Day* at the East Lansing Hannah Community Center on April 13. Student poster sessions on gerontology were on display, and the graduating Hartford interns were honored. This annual event is promoted by the Gerontological Society of America and the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education to bring greater awareness and visibility to the wide-ranging career opportunities in aging and aging research. Universities and colleges across the world participate by sponsoring events at their schools or in their communities. **S**



Diane Levande



Jo Ann McFall
Associate Director
for Field Education

Creating a culture of research friendliness in the undergraduate program

Under the leadership of the School's Research Committee Chair **Dr. Ellen Whipple** and BASW Coordinator **Sue Bowden**, the BASW program has been taking a close look this academic year at the role of undergraduate research in our program. In line with University priorities, we have begun involving more undergraduates in faculty research projects and creating an atmosphere at the School that encourages our BASW students to view research as an exciting and useful task for social workers.

A subcommittee consisting of **Dr. Arnie Greenfield, Dr. Tim Stocks, Dr. Kyunghye Lee, Monaca Eaton, and Sue Bowden** has been reviewing existing courses and outcome measures, looking at sponsoring a day of student research



Ellen Whipple



Sue Bowden

presentations and looking for funding sources that reward both students and faculty for their activities. "Our hope is that we will find ways to pay students, most of whom need employment to pay for their schooling, to do research with faculty, rather than work at fast food restaurants," states Bowden.

A record number of undergraduate students were involved in faculty-led research projects this academic year. **Dr. Marya Sosulski** has worked with juniors **Jessica Jensen** and **Caitlin O'Neil** and seniors **Jamie Servoss, Nikki Dingwell, and Brittany Konarz**. They are actively engaged in research on topics related to welfare mothers enrolling in college, caregiving for disabled relatives, and African American women living with serious mental illness. Dr. Sosulski is encouraging them to submit papers and hold poster sessions at the MSU Undergraduate Research Forum.

Dr. Kyunghye Lee is working with juniors **Olivia Miller** and **Jessica Hutta** and senior **Kelsey Dowty** on the topic of Head Start and academic outcomes; they also attend Dr. Lee's graduate level research methods course. Olivia and Jessica hope to continue their research activities at their senior year field placement. Kelsey says, "Participating in the undergraduate Head Start research initiative at MSU has been a rewarding learning experience. I am strengthening and gaining confidence in my research skills."

Dr. Suzanne Cross and junior **Ashley Ryerse** plan to present their findings on the academic careers of Native American faculty at the 2009 Council on Social Work Education conference. **Dr. John Seita** and **Angelique Day** are working with senior **Alicia Dieboldt** and junior **Dominique Carter** on their research on foster care. **Dr. Joanne Riebschleger** and the staff at the Kinship Care Resource Center also have undergraduates helping with their respective research projects.

Future students admitted to the social work program will be asked if they want to work on a research project and will be assigned to interested faculty members upon admission to the program. In this way, students will have two years' experience working with faculty on their research. This, in turn, will enhance the School's reputation as a premier undergraduate social work research center. **S**

Career Development Day Transition from Student to Professional

The School's Third Annual Career Development Day was held at the MSU Union on February 26. The program was developed specifically for students as they prepare to take on their roles as professional social workers after graduation. Students attended a variety of sessions to help them with their next steps.

Sessions held:

Writing the Resume, Getting the Job, and Planning Your Career

Linda Gross, MSU Career Services assistant director; **Kristy Coleman**, MSU College of Social Science field career consultant; **Angie Chisholm**, MSU student

Transitioning into the Profession practitioner panel

Maureen Moloney, Debi Moor, Ann Marie Lesniak

Life After Your Degree

Michele Brock, MSU School of Social Work continuing education coordinator

Field Education Program



Erica Shifflet
Gibson

As always, the Field Office is an expanding and busy place. Our antiquated 1994 agency data system is being replaced by new web-based software that will allow for greater efficiency, productivity, and accessibility in our tracking, matching, and program evaluation process. Such a system will never substitute for the human experience necessary to facilitate a smooth placement process, but data at our fingertips will be helpful. We expect the process to be mostly seamless from the agency, field instructor, and student perspectives.

To support the School's new Oakland Advanced Standing MSW Program that begins

this summer, agencies, field instructors, and faculty liaisons are being recruited within the Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, and Livingston County areas. If you are interested or know a colleague who might be, please contact Erica Shifflet Gibson, field coordinator of the Flint and Oakland Programs (shiffle6@msu.edu).

Past, current, and potential field instructors, please note: Field Instructor Orientation/Enrichment sessions will be available in September 2009 in East Lansing, Flint, and across the state via interactive video. Two free CECHs will be available on the topic of *Reflective Supervision*. Hope to see you there! **S**

Child Welfare Resource Center assists DHS with system improvements

The Child Welfare Resource Center at Michigan State University (CWRC) began operations in July 2008 in partnership with the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) and Casey Family Programs (CFP). Designed to advance Michigan's vision and efforts to lead child welfare improvements, the CWRC has demonstrated its capacity for timely response to new priorities as work shifts from planning to implementation.

Some highlights of recent work include:

◀ **Competency-based Evaluation and Exam.** CWRC worked with DHS staff to help DHS align its training with the competencies workers need to successfully work with the children and families in their caseloads.

◀ **Mini-grants for Child Welfare Direct Services Projects.** Financial resources became available for small awards to six programs that had demonstrated success reducing the number of children in out-of-home care.

◀ **Permanency Planning Specialists and Assistants Training.** CWRC began working with DHS to anticipate needs and develop a curriculum for training those who



Jim Hennessey
CWRC Director

will be assigned to expedite efforts to achieve permanency for children who have been in placement for long periods of time.

Two current projects will help DHS meet critical needs for further improvement in child welfare services:

◀ **Concurrent Planning Program Development.** CWRC assisted DHS with research and delivered to DHS a comprehensive training curriculum to

support the concurrent planning policy changes expected to help children attain reunification or legal permanency more quickly and with greater stability.

◀ **Program and Services Needs Assessment.** CWRC is conducting an assessment of needs and an analysis of gaps in service availability, to be completed in May and used to determine priorities for future program and service development.

As reform efforts proceed in Michigan, CWRC will continue to assist DHS and other players in the child welfare system to meet the challenges inherent in improving the safety, permanency, and well-being of Michigan's children. **S**

Building a Technology Inclusive Agency: A Case Study of Technology Use by Women in Recovery

By James Edwards, PhD (MSU 2009), LMSW



James Edwards

We know that a “digital divide” exists between those with access to technology and those without access. The literature describes individuals with a disability, older adults, ethnic minorities, and families with incomes below \$25,000 as more likely to have limited access to technology.

This qualitative case study examined how women in recovery experienced the digital divide and evaluated their treatment provider’s effort to assist the women in bridging the digital divide. The study found that the participants (n=30) of this small grassroots agency were aware of their lack of access to technology and felt disenfranchised as a result of this gap. Further, agency efforts to provide technology skills and access to the Internet were well-received by the participants who completed eight weeks of computer training (n=4). For the participants, learning to send and receive e-mail was an empowering activity that allowed them opportunities to connect to the larger community in ways previously unavailable.

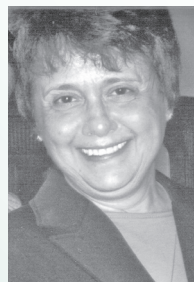
Other empowering activities were: registering to vote for the first time, contacting political leaders, and interaction with local institutions via e-mail. Additionally, the agency benefited from the participants’ access to technology through increased communication with the participants via e-mail. The results of this study support the concept of using technology to promote empowerment with vulnerable populations. **S**

In Knowledge Abstracts, recent PhD graduates from the MSU School of Social Work share practical implications of their dissertation research for social work practice.

**TECHNOLOGY
HOSPICE SETTINGS
SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE**

The Influence of Advocacy the Passage of Social Work

By Jane Hayes, PhD (MSU 2008), LMSW, ACSW



Jane Hayes

My dissertation was a case study of the passage of Social Work Licensure in Michigan, MI PA 61 of 2004. The research examined the variables that influenced passage of the policy from 1990-2004. The literature theorized that it was the alignment and activities of advo-

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Factors that Aid or Hinder Collaborative Work in a Hospice Setting

By Rie Kobayashi, PhD (MSU 2009), LMSW



Rie Kobayashi

I have had the privilege of working as a hospice social worker for the last 12 years. The inspiration for my dissertation project came from working with a group of hospice professionals on a hospice interdisciplinary team. In order to receive Medicare funding, hospices must develop individualized plans of care to meet the bio-psychosocial-spiritual needs of their clients.

The aim of this research study was to deepen an understanding of the processes of interdisciplinary collaboration in hospice and the impact of variables that aid or hinder collaborative work. The study explored

interdisciplinary team members' perceptions of their own participation, the participation of other team members, and perceived outcomes of collaboration. Also examined was the impact of certain variables on perceived level of interdisciplinary collaboration. Variables that were identified as possibly influencing interdisciplinary collaboration included professional role, structural/organizational characteristics, personal characteristics, history of collaboration, quality of care, and job satisfaction. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed.

I hope that findings from this research will provide useful information for hospice practitioners and their administrators as well as clinicians on teams in other settings in enhancing collaborative work that leads to improved client care. **S**

Groups and Political Opportunity on Licensure in Michigan

cacy groups coupled with a political opportunity that resulted in the passage of the policy.

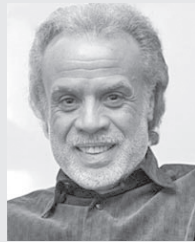
Interviews were conducted with 21 representatives of groups in support and opposition as well as public officials. The variables examined for their influence on the passage of the legislation included the election of a new governor, the alignment and activities of groups, organizations and public officials in support and opposition, the event of the transfer of social work regulation from the Michigan Occupational Code to the Michigan Public Health

Code, and public understanding of the issue. The study concluded that it was the alignment and the activity of the advocacy groups and the election of a new governor, Jennifer Granholm, which produced its passage.

The research is useful for social workers interested in policy practice and the influence of advocacy groups and political mobilization on policy change. Also, the research provides practical guidelines for other occupations interested in attaining professional licensure. **S**

Visiting Scholar Harry J. Aponte returns to present on ethics

Dr. Harry J. Aponte, internationally known family therapist and trainer, returned to the MSU campus as part of the University Visiting Scholars program. Dr. Aponte, formerly a staff member and teacher of family therapy at the Menninger Clinic and director of Philadelphia Child Guidance Center, is currently clinical associate professor in the Couple and Family Therapy Program at Drexel University in Philadelphia. In addition, he has a private practice and presents workshops throughout the country. He presented two programs on use of the Person-of-the-Therapist approach in ethical clinical practice and ethical clinical supervision. **S**



Harry Aponte

Continuing Education to launch Great Lakes Summer Institute in beautiful Traverse City

Michigan State University School of Social Work Continuing Education is launching the inaugural **Great Lakes Summer Institute (GLSI)**, a professional development experience comprising two-day, one-day and half-day intensive courses on a variety of current topics taught by experts in their fields.

MSU is dedicated to responding to the feedback thousands of participants who have attended our programming over the years have requested. The great lakes summer institute is the result of your requests, designed to blend meaningful learning experiences with maximum relaxation.



July 16-18, 2009

Committed to offering the most innovative, accessible and valuable professional development experiences for social work professionals, we invite you to join us on this exciting adventure. *Come relax and learn!* **S**

GREAT LAKES SUMMER INSTITUTE • AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2009	FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2009	SATURDAY, JULY 18, 2009
All programs 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM	Full-day programs 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM	All programs 8:45 AM - 12:00 PM
Motivational Enhancement Therapy / Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Blending Motivational & Cognitive Therapies to Enhance Your Clinical Skills (day 1 of 2)	Motivational Enhancement Therapy / Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Blending Motivational & Cognitive Therapies to Enhance Your Clinical Skills (day 2 of 2)	Where Do I Start? Diagnosis & Treatment of Co-Occurring Disorders
Health Centered Social Work Practice: Serving Clients More Effectively with Less Stress (day 1 of 2)	Health Centered Social Work Practice: Serving Clients More Effectively with Less Stress (day 2 of 2)	Our Brains in Therapy: Weaving the Concepts of Neurobiology into the Flow of Psychotherapy
Beyond the Basics: Dialectical Behavior Therapy (1 full day)	Transforming the Difficult Child through Treatment and Parenting (1 full day)	Pain Is Manageable, Suffering Is Optional: Evidenced-based Strategies to Reduce Physical Pain Co-occurring with Chemical & Process Addictions
What Should I Do? Advanced Ethical Dilemmas & How to Respond (1 full day)	AM program 8:45 AM - 12:00 PM	Intercultural Communication 101: Learning the Key Points of Communication across Cultures
	Suffering Differently: The Intersection between PTSD & Culture	
	PM program 1:00 PM - 4:15 PM	
	Bipolar Disorder: Demystifying Diagnosis, Treatment, & Prognosis in Adolescents & Adults	



CE classes scheduled for May–August 2009

Supervision in Child and Family Services Certificate

May 15	Supervision Workbook 4: Communication Skills
June 5	Supervision Workbook 2: The Practice of Retention-focused Supervision
June 5	Supervision Workbook 3: The First Six Months
Practice	
June 4	Elder Law Issues: What Social Workers Need to Know
June 12-13	Adventure Therapy: An Experiential Approach to Social Work Practice
June 19	Transformative Leadership & Community Organizing: Creating & Managing Change in an Organization, in a Community, across a Society
June 19	Emergency Mental Health Assessments: Guidelines for Practitioners in Any Setting
June 25-26	Sexual Orientation & Gender Expression for Social Work Practice
July 10-11	Community Organizing & Community Partnerships: How to Win Friends, Important Causes, & Presidential Elections
July 23-24	Social Work Practice in the Legal Arena
July 24-25	Human Sexuality in Social Work Practice
July 31-Aug 1	Current Issues in Substance Abuse
August 6-7	An Introduction to Dialectical Behavior Therapy
Child Welfare	
May 29-30	Creating a Playroom: Play Therapy Assessment & Intervention for Traumatized Children
June 5-6	Creating a Playroom: Play Therapy Assessment & Intervention for Traumatized Children
June 11	Navigating Rough Paths with Kinship Caregivers
July 10	Attachment & Bonding: A Historical Review & Current Case Studies in Early Intervention with At-Risk Infants & Toddlers
July 24	Social Work Ethics for Home Visitors with a Focus on Serving Families of Young Children
Social Work Exam Preparation Course	
May 16-17 • Livonia June 5-6 • East Lansing	

With the exception of the Social Work License Exam Preparation courses, programs offered by the MSU School of Social Work meet State of Michigan social work continuing education requirements. Michigan State University School of Social Work is approved by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE), Provider No. 1136.

To register or to view workshop descriptions, completion requirements, and accommodation needs policy, please visit www.socialwork.msu.edu/ceu. Contact us at (517) 353-3060 or e-mail swkce@msu.edu if you have questions or concerns. **Schedule is subject to change.**

*Upcoming Fall
2009 Programs*

Contemporary Issues in Aging

- 9/19 Older Adult Abuse & Neglect
- 10/11 Healthcare Disparities
- 11/14 Spirituality & Older Adulthood

Alumni Breakfast

- 10/3 Ethics & Boundaries
- 12/4 Pain Management

Supervision in Child and Family Services

- 10/9 Role of Leaders in Staff Retention
- 11/20 Recruiting & Selecting the Right Staff
- 11/20 Working with Differences

Child Welfare

- 10/16 Transforming the Difficult Child
- & 10/23 through Treatment and Parenting

**Dorothy Harper Jones
Endowed Lecture**

Stephen Maddigan, PhD

9/18

Narrative Family Therapy

**Ruth Koehler
Endowed Lecture**

Eliana Gil, PhD

11/13

An Integrated Approach to Helping Abused/Traumatized Children: Combining Non-Directive & Directive Techniques Such as Play Therapy & Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



SCHOOL OF
**SOCIAL
WORK**

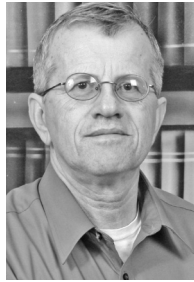
CONTINUING
EDUCATION

WWW.SOCIALWORK.MSU.EDU/CEU ♦ PH. (517) 353-3060

Dean plays major role in quality assurance

Larry W. Dean, ACSW (MSU 1979), has had a long social work career in child welfare. He began with approximately four years as a child care worker (then social worker) at Baptist Family Services in St. Louis, MI, later moving to the Alabama State Department of Human Resources where he has been employed for over 29 years.

In Alabama, Dean began as a line worker with a foster care caseload, though he later had duties which



Larry W. Dean

included child abuse/neglect investigations and adoption and foster care services, followed by a variety of state office roles in the Independent Living Program, Child Welfare Training Office, and Office of Quality Assurance. Currently program manager in the Family Services Division, as a Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) coordinator he is responsible for coordination of CFSR activities, which presently consists of work related to the Program Improve-

ment Plan (PIP). He is also responsible for coordinating activities related to the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), submitted to the US Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families each year.

Dean serves as a consultant reviewer for several states for Round 1 of the Federal CFSR program. The goal of these reviews is to focus on states' capacity to create positive outcomes for the children and families who receive services and to help states achieve child safety and permanency and family and child well-being.

In addition, Dean has served as a member on several review teams with the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group, a private, nonprofit organization developed to assist child welfare systems to create, design, and manage organizational change for improved practice and outcomes for children and their families. The Group offers assistance to agencies and organizations seeking to improve their ability to protect children from harm, strengthen families, and provide permanence and stability for their children in their care.

Dean offers this encouragement to current social work students: "Amidst all the needed state-of-the-art technology, cutting edge, comprehensive service array, individualized service planning, family team meetings, etc., the single most significant tool social workers can possess remains the effective use of self in the respectful engaging and joining with the children and families with whom we are involved. Keep that as a top priority in all the work you do with children, adults, colleagues, and community partners." **S**



Remembering...

Professor **Shirley Knapman** (retired), a great social work educator and leader, passed away last September. Shirley was the first person to teach family therapy in the School's MSW curriculum and generously loaned books and resources to faculty and students interested in that area. She was an advocate for women's rights and in the late 1970s was elected president of the Michigan chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, serving as a strong advocate for the profession. She also enjoyed teaching undergraduate and graduate practice courses. Shirley was a proud alumna of Smith College and took great joy in her three children. After her retirement from the MSU School of Social Work, she remained a good friend and adviser to the School. Her wit and sparkle will be sorely missed.

Mardese Conyers-Holmes (MSW 2007-Flint program) of Flint was an employee of the General Motors Corporation (GM) since 1979; in 1999, she received a position at the UAW-GM Center for Human Resources in Detroit, MI, where she held an International Appointment of Special Assignment. Mardese was a member of Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society.

Margaret "Jinks" Jervey-Page (MSW 2007-Gaylord program) of Charlevoix was owner and founder of Gaitway Equine Therapy. She worked with abused and neglected children, was involved with the former American AIDS Ride fundraiser, was a Women's Resource Center social worker, and was pursuing her equine therapy certification.

Edsall focuses on work with the elderly

Jennifer Edsall, LMSW (MSU 2003), recently joined the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) to work with the Michigan Department of Community Health as the Michigan Dementia Program Coordinator. The Michigan Dementia Coalition was established to improve the quality of life of persons with dementia and their families in Michigan. Coalition membership includes community agencies, government representatives, consumers, and universities, and is charged with implementing the 2009-2011 Michigan Dementia Plan. The plan's main priorities are addressed by the Caregiver Support, Primary Care, Long-term Care, and Public Awareness Work Groups. Public awareness is addressed in part through an information-rich web site: www.worriedabout-memoryloss.com/.

Prior to joining MPHI, Edsall served as a program coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association (Michigan Great Lakes Chapter), followed by a position as program director for the Capital Area Interfaith Respite (CAIR), where she served the last five years. Currently, she is also a part time clinician with a focus on older adults.

Her work as a family caregiver has taught her the importance of support for families who care for a loved one. According to the Family Caregiver Alliance, almost one in four households (approximately 34 million people) have someone who cares for a family member age 50 and up. These caregivers are often ill prepared for this role and are unaware of the increased health risks, actual role responsibilities, and community supports. Her entire career has been spent working with caregivers in various capacities and she feels very passionate about it.

While at the School, she learned the importance of blending macro and clinical practice, Incorporating this philosophy into all of her professional experience. Since graduation, Edsall continues to give back to the School, serving as a field instructor (receiving a recognition award in 2008) and as a member of the School's consortium to support the Hartford field model for geriatric education. And she represented the School, presenting at the 2007 Council on Social Work Education conference!

Edsall says, "Attending MSU was a great experience and opened many doors for me. I have especially enjoyed



Jennifer Edsall

working with the faculty and the community in integrating gerontological social work education and practice. I have benefited from working with MSW and BSW students who have been enthusiastic about learning social work practice and working with older adults. They have been an energizing force in

my own work! Overall, I have been grateful for the wonderful contacts I have made within the school and in the greater community."

Her advice to students: "Be mindful that you have been given a wonderful opportunity to not only follow your passion but to inspire and change the lives of others." **S**



Faculty loss

On Saturday, March 14, **Dr. Tom Luster**, professor in the MSU Department of Family and Child Ecology, College of Social Science, died suddenly from a heart attack. The MSU School of Social Work mourns the loss of Dr. Luster and remembers with great appreciation his dedication to many Social Work graduate students, particularly PhD students. Dr. Luster taught doctoral courses on research and child development. He served on a number of Social Work doctoral committees. He was a valued teacher and colleague. His areas of research included child and family resiliency. These interests led him both to study and befriend the Sudanese boys who were relocated from Africa to mid-Michigan. In this project, he worked with Lutheran Social Services in Lansing. He also led a research project at Mott Children's Hospital, examining the lives of adolescent women and mothers. His study team included a number of social workers from the hospital and the community. Tom was a great colleague and friend to the School of Social Work. We will miss his humble, intelligent, and thoughtful presence in the classroom and in the committee room. We extend our best wishes and sympathy to his wife, two children, and the faculty of the MSU Department of Family and Child Ecology.



Tom Luster

Moloney celebrates 30 years at CMH

Maureen Moloney, LMSW, ACSW, CAAC (MSU 1983), is director of Adult Mental Health Services at the Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties. She celebrated her 30-year anniversary at CMH in January 2009! In her current position, she is responsible for the direction and administration of services for adults with serious mental illness, an impairing personal life crisis, or other mental health service needs. This includes assessing community needs, planning services, program development, evaluation and oversight, budget development and monitoring, grant development and administration, and involvement in many initiatives with community partners.

Moloney started at CMH as a music therapist (BM MSU 1978) in a temporary position in the Adult Day Treatment Program and was planning to return to graduate school. She reported to a social worker as her supervisor who said that an MSW would open many doors for her, and that was exactly what happened.

After graduate school, she took a senior mental health therapist position at CMH and then made the leap to management in 1989, serving as a direct program coordinator for 11 years before moving to a supervisor position in 2001 with responsibility for administration and oversight of a number of programs in Adult Mental Health Services. In 2008, she served as acting co-director for Adult Mental Health Services and accepted the position on a permanent basis in January 2009.



Maureen Moloney

A major focus of her work over the past 20 years has been in the area of housing and homelessness issues; she has worked on projects which have created safe and affordable housing options for many in our community. Moloney states, "I am extremely proud to be a part of a larger community

who cares deeply about serving persons and families experiencing homelessness, particularly those with disabling conditions."

Moloney can relate to students who are working their way through graduate school slowly but surely; she went part-time for four years to earn her MSW. She relates that her graduate assistantship with Dr. Paul Freddolino provided an opportunity for her to stretch her research skills and opened her eyes to the challenges of families with a loved one with a mental illness.

Moloney says, "I have never regretted becoming a social worker.

Social work has given me the opportunity to do many different jobs and serve those in need in many different ways. I can relate to those students who will be graduating soon in a tough economic time as I had that experience when I finished my undergraduate degree. Use all of your contacts and don't be afraid to take temporary or short-term options as you never know where those will lead. I started at CMH in a temporary position in 1979 and am still here today!"

She serves as one of the School's field liaisons, where she has the opportunity to mentor future social workers and received a field liaison recognition award in 2007. She has presented workshops in our continuing education program and also provides direct clinical services through her small private practice in Lansing where she serves adolescents, adults, families, and couples. "It keeps me sharp clinically, and I appreciate the practice of working directly with individual and families." **S**

McAllister making news on the West Coast

Carolyn McAllister (PhD MSU 2008) serves as assistant professor at California State University-San Bernardino, where the Department of Social Work, established in the mid-1980s in trailers behind the library, earned the more professional designation as the School of Social Work at the end of last year. McAllister's classroom was recently featured in the *San Bernardino Sun's* coverage of this occasion. **S**



Carolyn McAllister

Amanda T. Woodward, PhD, AM
Assistant Professor

From ad agency to social work career

Why did I go into social work?

I started as an account executive in a Chicago ad agency but, seeking balance in my life, I left to work at an organization whose mission is to empower men and women who currently are, or at risk of becoming homeless. I was amazed and humbled by the complexity, violence, and uncertainty of their lives and the strength, humor, and grace with which they met their challenges. I had no clue what social work was or what social workers did when I started, but the experience led me to go back to school to become a social worker.

What have I done in the field?

Much of my current work is informed by my first MSW field placement in a day treatment program, working with people suffering from serious mental illness. I learned a lot about what my clients experienced individually, and also the social and systems level challenges they encountered and the frustrations of dealing with the same systemic issues over and over and over again.

What do I do in social work education?

I love research and enjoy looking for creative ways to explain complex ideas to help students develop an appreciation for research as an important practice skill. I also try to bring my research experiences into class and incorporate students in my research as much as possible. The project described above was an interdisciplinary team that included BSW, MSW, and PhD students, as well as post doctoral fellows and faculty at various levels; I hope to be able to provide similar experiences for my own students.

What have I learned from my experience at MSU?

I have great appreciation for MSU's commitment to and ability to partner with the community. As a new faculty member, I am learning about the

I am learning about the challenges and benefits of working with community partners in research and education. I want to take what I learn into the field to work with community agencies.



Amanda T. Woodward

challenges and benefits of working with community partners in research and education. I want to take what I learn into the field to work with community agencies. MSU provides a great place for me to do that, and I look forward to building the relationships and connections that will allow it to happen.

What are my research and teaching interests?

My main areas of research relate to aging. The first: where do people go for help when suffering from a mental disorder? I find that gaps in access to care often occur at the intersections of informal support and professional services. I am also interested in underutilization of mental health services by older adults and racial and ethnic minorities, and I am looking at the added complexities faced by those with comorbid mental, substance, and physical disorders.

The second: The current population of older adults includes those with onset or diagnosis of a disorder late in life as well as individuals with an early-onset disorder. These two groups are often lumped together, but may be very different in terms of their informal support system, service needs, and relationship to the professional service system. How do the needs of these individuals change with age? How will our mental health and aging service systems need to collaborate to meet those needs? **S**

Julie K. Farman, LMSW, ACSW, SSW
Clinical Instructor; Flint/Oakland MSW Program Coordinator

Inspired by volunteer work, MSU educators



Julie K. Farman

The quality education that I received from the School of Social Work drives me to provide that same high level of education, commitment and support to the students in the off-campus programs.

Why did I go into social work?

I began volunteer work with the developmentally disabled and was encouraged to go into social work by the leader of this group. I was a non-traditional student who changed career paths and have been glad that I did ever since!

What have I done in the field?

At this point in my career, the question could be “what haven’t I done”! My most significant work was working with hospice patients as a clinical social worker and coordinating the bereavement program. Then after deciding that I hadn’t had many opportunities working with children, I became a school social worker.

What do I do in social work education?

I am currently the coordinator of two MSU off-campus MSW programs in Flint and

Oakland County. I also teach Human Behavior and Social Environment sequence courses and a generalist practice class. Instructing non-traditional students in the Flint program has provided the opportunity to think about and develop alternate ways of instructing the adult learner.

What have I learned from my experience at MSU?

My MSW is from MSU, so what I have done with my current position is to be the best teacher that I can be to emulate the terrific faculty that I had in grad school. I was and have been encouraged and supported to grow and stretch myself beyond my own limits.

What are my research and teaching interests?

The quality education that I received from the School of Social Work drives me to provide that same high level of education, commitment and support to the students in the off-campus programs. And add my own unique sense of humor to it as well! My research and clinical experience relates to older adults and also grief and loss. To keep my connection with older adults, I am currently president of the advisory board for the Genesee and Lapeer County Foster Grandparent Program. With this position, I am also able to provide in-service workshops to the older adults who volunteer their time working with children in school settings. **S**

School co-sponsors University events

Along with the Geriatric Education Center of Michigan and the MSU Colleges of Human Medicine, Osteopathic Medicine, and Nursing, the School of Social Work sponsored the 21st Annual MSU Geriatric Symposium, *Caring for culturally diverse older adults: Four perspectives*. Intended for all types of health care professionals who care for older adults, its goal was to teach participants about some of the unique aspects and challenges of aging within four specific cultural communities. Presenters included Director Gary Anderson, Assistant Professor Margie Rodriguez LeSage (providing a Hispanic/Latino perspective), and Jerilyn Church, BASW (MSU 2005), MSW (providing a Native American perspective).

Established in 1987, the Geriatric Education Center of Michigan (GECM) is a federally-funded, statewide consortium administratively located at MSU, a member of the nationwide network of 49 GECs. The mission of the GECM is to advance geriatric education within the State. **S**



Distinguished pioneer in integrative medicine and world-renowned expert in the mind/body connection, behavioral scientist **Joan Borysenko** came to MSU as part of the University's World View Lecture Series. Support for this presentation came from the MSU Office of the President and the School, as well as the Colleges of Nursing and Social Science, Department of Zoology, Honors College, Residential College in Arts & Humanities, Graduate School/Wellness by Design Initiative, and University Physician's Office/Health4U. Borysenko's work has been foundational in an international health care revolution that recognizes the role of meaning and the spiritual dimensions of life as an integral part of health and healing. **S**



Many join in behind the School's banner for the traditional University commemorative march on MLK Day.

MLK Day celebrated

On January 19, 2009, the School of Social Work celebrated its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day event. This year's theme, *I have a dream, the dream is alive*, commemorated Dr. King's legacy as well as highlighting last year's historic election of President Barack Obama.

The event began with a diversity-themed potluck. Special thanks go to social work junior **Je Min Shin** and the Korean Student Organization for providing a sample of delicious Korean main dishes. Then winners of the Diversity Project Poster competition were announced. First place: social work senior **Christina Phippen**; second place: **Rhea Johnson**; and third place: **Andrew Burns**.

President Obama's January 20, 2008 speech in Atlanta, GA, honoring Dr. King was shown, followed by this year's poetry contest winners reciting their winning poems: MSU alum **Jimmie Smith Jr.** and graduate students **Marcia LaCorbiniere-JnBaptiste**, and **Fredy Rodriguez Mejia**.

Next, a student panel, including social work students **Shamidah Wyden**, **Ashley Ryerse**, and **Christina Phippen**, answered questions reflecting on King's legacy and President Obama's role as a continuation of this legacy. The School's celebration closed with powerful inspirational drumming by students from the North American Indian Student Organization (NAISO). Afterwards, many joined the MLK march from the Student Union to the Beaumont Tower; and several also attended the MLK Jr. community dinner and program held at Akers Hall. **S**

New grant: BSW Experiential Learning (BEL)

Associate Professor **Suzanne Cross** and Undergraduate Coordinator **Sue Bowden** are the investigators on an important new grant received from the John A. Hartford Foundation and the Council on Social Work Education National Center for Gerontological Social Work Education. The BEL Program (BSW Experiential Learning) is intended to recruit undergraduates to gerontological social work field placements, MSW level education in gerontological social work, and careers working with elders and their families by involving students in direct interaction with older adults through experiential learning activities.

This grant was awarded to a limited number of BSW programs, and its intent is to analyze effective ways to infuse the required social work curriculum with more geriatric content so that more undergraduates will be interested in working with elders and their families. **S**



Suzanne Cross



Sue Bowden

Retirements follow many accomplishments

There are many people whose contributions to the School of Social Work and to our students make the University motto, *Transforming Lives*, a special reality. Two of our colleagues—both well-known for their clinical skill and teaching ability among other talents—are retiring at the end of this academic year: **Dr. Margie Rodriguez LeSage** and **Dr. Mary Barron**.

Dr. Margie Rodriguez LeSage came to Michigan State University as an assistant professor in 2001. She has taught the BASW advanced practice course that addresses working with individuals, families, and small groups. She has also taught courses in Social Work and Health Care, and Grief and Loss. Her areas of research have been ethics and end-of-life decision making, working with older adults, working with Chicano/Latino communities, the use of music and other creative arts in therapy, and other topics. She has served as the faculty advisor for the Organization of Latino Social Work Students (OLASW) at MSU, and she has served on the School's Diversity Committee. While a faculty member, she has been active in the community, made a number of professional presentations, and served the School and College. For example, she served on the faculty panel that welcomed freshmen to the College of Social Science. Her great ability as a researcher, teacher, and clinician has helped many BASW, MSW and PhD students. Dr. Rodriguez LeSage will be returning to her home in El Paso, TX, to be with her extended family. We are hopeful that faculty and students will be able to continue to work with Margie from a distance as we enlarge her extended



Margie Rodriguez LeSage



Mary Barron

family! Thank you, Margie, for all that you have done for MSU!

Dr. Mary Barron has served as a clinical assistant professor at MSU since 2001. She was an active and highly regarded clinician in the Flint area. Her area of research, teaching and practice was working with couples and families, particularly in the use of mediation to address divorce and family stress. Building on her community commitment, Dr. Barron was the first coordinator of the School's Flint area MSW program. In addition to her administrative work in launching this program, she taught clinical practice in the MSW program in East Lansing and in Flint. After coordinating the Flint program for a number of years, Dr. Barron became the chair for the School's clinical practice curriculum sequence committee, while continuing to teach clinical practice. Mary has been a dedicated and skillful teacher, clinician, and administrator. Her dedication to the School and her multiple talents have resulted in a solid MSW program in the Flint area and a strong clinical educational program at the School.

In addition to their many accomplishments, Dr. Rodriguez LeSage and Dr. Barron have been wonderful colleagues. We have appreciated their counsel and wisdom, their positive examples, and we have enjoyed their humor, kindness, and optimism. They are extraordinary social worker educators. We will miss their formal presence at the School but will maintain lifelong friendships and collegial relationships. They have left an important and lasting positive legacy at MSU. **S**

Call for help answered, new endowment established to assist future PhD students

She was a special person, professional, and doctoral student, and her early death was a special loss to our school and community.

Linda Lane worked in the field education office, with JoAnn McFall and Julie Navarre and staff member Mary Lou Jenks, while pursuing her doctorate. She worked with Gary Anderson and Peg Whalen in launching an evaluation of Family Group Decision Making pilot programs in Michigan. She was caring and thoughtful. She encouraged us to listen to parents and families. She was herself a good listener and team member. And she had an irresistible cancer that eventually took her life before she could complete her doctoral studies. The field education team faithfully visited her throughout her illness. We still miss Linda.

Ruth Henry was an early alumna of the MSU School of Social Work. Like many social workers, she had not acquired great wealth. Like many alumni, she lived and worked and was not in frequent contact with her alma mater. She moved to Florida, but she remembered her social work education at Michigan State, and one day her family attorney contacted the School and shared with us that she had left a gift to the School. It totaled \$27,000.

To honor Ruth Henry's generosity and thoughtfulness and to remember Linda Lane, the School established the Henry-Lane Endowment. The funds generated from this endowment would be used to assist PhD students by providing support for student work and scholarships. But at MSU, \$30,000



Linda Lane

Thanks to the kindness of multiple social workers, future cohorts of students will have additional financial help through the Henry-Lane Endowment.

(raised within five years) is required to fully endow a fund and reach a threshold to generate interest that could be put toward its intended purpose. The School was nearing the five-year mark and still needed \$3,000 to complete the endowment.

In December 2008, a note was sent to the School's doctoral students, PhD alumni and faculty members, asking for folks to consider a gift to help complete this endowment. It was not an auspicious time to ask for money as the economy was already in steep decline. Many of our doctoral graduates have not been out of school very long; and some who received the notice are still students. In three weeks, through gifts small and large, donations surpassed the \$3,000 goal. With gifts from current students, recent graduates, older graduates, and faculty members, the endowment had reached the minimum level and would now generate interest that could be annually dispersed to students. The first grants will be dispensed in the fall of 2009.

Thanks to the kindness of multiple social workers, future cohorts of students will have additional financial help. And we will remember the gracious and kind intelligence of Linda Lane and the generosity of Ruth Henry. We are a profession built on relationships and values. Even in these difficult times, the capacity to care for others and to care for future generations is evident and deeply appreciated.

—Dr. Gary Anderson

S

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GET in touch

Tell us what you're doing today!

Notes from Alumni will be featured in the *Fall/Winter 2009 News*.

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