

~ Field Notes ~

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

OFFICE OF FIELD INSTRUCTION NEWSLETTER
VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1 OFI-FALL 2008

New Field Liaison	2
New Office of Field Instruction Staff	2
Field Instructor Training	2
2008-2009 Freud Fellows	3
A Spotlight on Dr. Michael Spencer	3
Recent Grad at Southwest Solutions	4
International Field Opportunities	4
Thank You, Peer Facilitators	5
In Memory of Earl Carr	5
Empowerment and Policy on Capitol Hill	6
Staying Informed in the Field	6
Preventing Social Worker Burnout	7
Announcements	7
Contacts and Contributors	8
Where in the World Are our Alumni?	8

From the Director's Desk

By Elizabeth (Betsy) Harbeck Voshel, LMSW, ACSW- Director of Field Instruction



Betsy Voshel

As I sat down to write the fall OFI Newsletter Director's column, I realized what an historic time we have lived in during the last several months. From the nomination of a woman for vice-president to the crash on Wall Street, now more than ever social workers will be needed at all levels, and opportunities are ripe for making a difference that will affect future generations.

The social work skill set is made up of a unique blend of knowledge and practice-based skills that positively impact lives in both macro and micro spheres. Students are provided multiple field-based experiences under the "watchful eye" of a credentialed field instructor in order to become proficient in their method of practice. Field instructors are usually overworked and underpaid, but their passion for their profession and their seemingly unlimited capacity related to field training is to be commended. The School of Social Work and the Office of Field Instruction cannot thank enough all those social workers who continue to give tirelessly to their respective clients, agencies, and students. Without their efforts, our field program would not be as robust as it is today.

In this newsletter, we have highlighted a few of our current field placements that our students are excited about. It is particularly gratifying for me when our newly minted alumni eagerly offer to become a field instructor once they are a minimum of two years post-masters.

I also would like to recognize the great loss to the social work community that occurred with the passing of Earl Carr, LMSW. He has left a wonderful imprint on budding professionals, and his loss will be felt for years to come.

I presented at the Annual Program Meeting for the Council on Social Work Education in October 2008 regarding our Student Peer Facilitated Foundation Field Seminar. It seems that this model may be one of a kind. Having an opportunity to work with our students in a co-facilitation role has improved our ability to develop group cohesion and approach problems in a positive manner from the student peer perspective and experience. Congrats and thanks to those students who have been selected to be a seminar facilitator this term.

I hope you will welcome the new additions to the OFI office by extending your greetings to Susan Wiant Crabb, LMSW, Hannah Briolat, BS, program coordinator, and Kellyann Wargo, our

new freshman work study student. I also want to introduce Christine Godzinski, MSW candidate, who is working with me this year as a graduate work study. She is the editor of the Field Notes newsletter and will be working with our Freud Fellows during the academic year, producing two editions of the newsletter.

The OFI webpage has been updated, so please explore it and let us know if you have any suggestions. We are slowly moving to putting online most of our required documents, such as the educational agreement/evaluation forms, which will be easier to use and provide us good data about students' learning experiences in their field settings.

While our football team has struggled, we in the field office remain optimistic about what the future will hold regarding the role that social work will play to insure that social justice is a reality in those arenas where we are passionate.

"Now more than ever social workers will be needed at all levels, and opportunities are ripe for making a difference that will affect future generations."

Betsy Voshel



Interested in contributing ideas to future Field Notes editions? We would love to include an article about something that is making a difference in the lives of those who work in field instruction. Send us your ideas!

The OFI Welcomes a New Field Liaison

By Christine Gosdzinski, MSW Candidate



Susan Wiant Crabb

The OFI would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest field educator, lecturer, and liaison, Susan Wiant Crabb!

Susan received her BS from Western Illinois University and two master's degrees, including her MSW and a certificate in gerontology, from Eastern Michigan University. She is joining our faculty after 22 years in nonprofits, working with clients and staff in various roles including as president and CEO of a large nonprofit. She has worked with abused and neglected youth and older adults in which she emphasized dignity, respect, and the impor-

tance of physical activity to improve quality of life. As a member of Eastern Michigan University (EMU)'s adjunct faculty, she received the Gerontology Alumna of the Year Award in 2006 and 2007. She was also a field instructor for over 10 years.

Susan believes that these experiences have been integral to her work with students and field instructors as a liaison. She stated, "Not a day has gone by that I don't pull from my prior experiences in helping students problem solve, develop learning experiences or think about the skills that

they want to develop for their 'ideal' job." When asked about the position so far, she stated, "Unlike so many disciplines, social work recognizes that there is more than one way to solve a problem. And when you bring our diverse, unique students together to solve a problem, the solutions are amazing!"

Susan sums up her most valuable lesson learned in a quote by Aldous Huxley, "Experience teaches only the teachable." We are glad to welcome an experienced, passionate, and insightful individual to the OFI.

New Office of Field Instruction Staff

By Christine Gosdzinski, MSW Candidate



Hannah Briolat

Hannah Briolat began working for the OFI as an undergraduate work study in the fall of 2007. She received her BS in biology from U-M in 2008, worked as an OFI administrative assistant, and was hired as Project Coordinator this fall. Her job includes administrative support to students, faculty, and staff through database management, overseeing the agency recruitment process, and other field instruction activities.

Christine Gosdzinski, began working for the OFI this fall as a work study for Betsy Voshel. She received her BA from U-M in psychology in 2007. She is an MSW candidate concentrating in Interpersonal Practice and is scheduled to graduate in 2009. Christine's tasks include serving as the editor-in-chief for the OFI newsletter, managing the Freud Fellows, coordinating field seminar activities, and other tasks related to the improvement of the OFI.

Kellyann Wargo joined the OFI this fall as the new undergraduate work study student from Novi, MI. Kellyann is a freshman in the School of Art and Design and is interested in digital art and mixed media. Upon graduation from U-M, she plans to become a museum curator or conservator.

We look forward to the creativity and innovation that these staff members will bring to the OFI.



Christine Gosdzinski



Kellyann Wargo

Fall 2008 Field Instructor Training



First-time field instructors gather in front of the SSW building this fall after learning about placement requirements and working with new student interns.

Introducing the 2008-2009 Freud Fellows

By Christine Gosdzinski, MSW Candidate

The OFI welcomes the recipients of the Clarice Ullman Freud Fellowship. This fellowship is awarded to students who show outstanding potential for professional practice in work with children and youth.

Kristen Duda is a recent graduate of Virginia Tech (with a concentration in sociology and psychology), where she participated in research, activism, and community service. She is a Community Organization concentrator and currently works at the Community Action Network as a program assistant for the youth after-school program. In her career, she is interested in under-

standing gender and power as they relate to domestic and dating violence prevention.

Miché Jo graduated from U-M with a major in psychology and a minor in Spanish. She is an Interpersonal Practice concentrator and is placed with the Maternal Infant Health Project. Her role is to provide support to parents through conducting home visits, discussing development and parenting, and helping them access community resources. Upon graduation, she is interested in being an Infant Mental

Health therapist and hopes to create change through involvement on multiple levels.

Lauren Klos is a graduate of Oakland University with a major in psychology and a minor in Spanish. She is an Interpersonal Practice concentrator with a minor in Community Organizing. She currently works as a caregiver for people with disabilities. After graduation, she plans to provide counseling while developing community programs focused on delinquency prevention.



Freud Fellows: Lauren Klos, Miché Jo, and Kristen Duda

Everyday Inspiration: A Spotlight on Dr. Michael Spencer

By Miché Jo, MSW Candidate

Dr. Spencer has been an associate professor at U-M since 1997. While many describe his work as “community organizing,” Dr. Spencer prefers the term “community practice,” which includes the key elements of program evaluation and Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR).

Dr. Spencer provides opportunities for MSW students in a number of programs. One of these is an intergroup dialogue program at Huron and Ypsilanti High Schools. MSW students are paired with a teacher to co-facilitate the dialogues. The goal is for concerned students to use dialogue to identify an intergroup issue in their school and create an action plan to address it. Past examples of these have included on-campus events to promote diversity, such as showcasing musical acts among the student body, and working with freshmen to address power and privilege.

A second program run by Dr. Spencer and Dr. Edith Kiefer, called the REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health) Detroit Partnership, recruits lay people from the community and

trains them as health workers to provide education, case management, and advocacy in their communities. The program aims to reduce health disparities among African-American and Latino/a residents of Detroit, and empower people to become involved in their own self-care. MSW students working in this program help in the research process and learn valuable skills about how to conduct CBPR.

For community organizing and management students interested in research and evaluation, Dr. Spencer’s Agency-Based Community Research and Evaluation program is another field opportunity. Based on the CBPR model, this program works with social service providers such as Even Start Family Literacy and Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit to assess strengths and identify areas for improvement.

Dr. Spencer offers his students mentorship on personal and academic levels. He describes his supervision style as “person-centered” and sees supervision as not simply a time to “catch up on tasks,” but a time to discuss how to incorporate what students are

learning in school into fieldwork. Working with Dr. Spencer is a unique opportunity to benefit from the leadership of a fellow social worker who is truly an example of living one’s work. Because social work students are committed to promoting social justice personally and professionally, having mentors who exemplify this is an essential part of our training. In his own words, “We must believe that all people, both from dominant and targeted groups, have a critical role in dismantling oppression and generating a vision for a socially just future.” Our responsibility as social workers is to examine this role for ourselves and guide others to do the same. As Dr. Spencer and I spoke about the mentors he learned from in graduate school, I was reminded of the concept of a lineage and the importance of being inspired through the example of others. He demonstrates through word and action the invaluable quality of profound caring: a quality that is embodied in his social justice work and his mentorship of students who will be carrying the torch into the future. If you have the good fortune to work with Dr. Spencer, expect to be inspired.

“Working with Dr. Spencer is a unique opportunity to benefit from... a social worker who is truly an example of living one’s work.”



Michael Spencer

Recent Grad Impacts Detroit at Southwest Solutions

By Lauren Klos, MSW Candidate



Southwest Solutions:
Photo courtesy of
www.swsol.org

“The reason I have my job today is because I came into Detroit as a student and developed a passion and love for the city and its people.”

Originally from Grand Rapids, MI, Katherine Raymond graduated with her MSW in August 2007 from U-M. As a student, she was a Foundation Field Seminar peer facilitator and a strong student. After graduation, she secured a position at Southwest Solutions as a bilingual clinician. Here she serves about 100 clients by providing mental health counseling and case management services to a high-risk population.

While at U-M, she concentrated in Community Organizing and did not intensely study interpersonal practice techniques. But because she had her field placement in Southwest Detroit, she was able to familiarize herself with local agencies and programs. She said, “I use this information to refer my clients for resources and to be able to relate to where they are living and what they are experiencing.”

As a student, Katherine was placed at Southwest Detroit’s Good Neighborhoods Initiative, which focuses on improving Detroit neighborhoods. She gained skills in planning goals, objectives, and programs, and greatly improved her Spanish-speaking skills. She made connections within the city and became familiar with

agencies and services, which helped her gain employment at Southwest Solutions. She stated, “The reason I have my job today is because I came into Detroit as a student and developed a passion and love for the city and its people. I knew I wanted to work in this city, and because I gained familiarity with the agencies during my placement, I had connections during my job search.” Katherine demonstrates the importance of a student’s field placement and the impact it can have on job searching, career planning, and skill development.

Katherine’s current employer, Southwest Solutions, provides more than just bilingual counseling services and case management. In fact, Southwest Solutions is a nationally recognized agency that offers both mental health and housing solution services. They provide counseling, literacy programs for children and families, affordable housing, and several programs and events for people in Detroit. One such program is the Go-Getters Homeless Drop-in Center. This consumer-run program offers opportunities for people who are homeless to recover and improve their quality of life. Go-Getters provides social

activities, a warm shower, and nutritious meals, as well as several other services, to consumers. More specifically, the program focuses on the creative arts and music since many of their consumers are quite talented in these areas.

Southwest Solutions has also positively impacted Detroit by recently renovating the Whitdel apartment building. Owned by Southwest Solutions, this apartment complex offers affordable housing in 32 renovated units. The building also has an art gallery, ceramics rooms, and a multi-purpose classroom. The city recently recognized the positive impact that Whitdel has made on the community by awarding the building the CREW Detroit 2008 Impact Award.

Katherine is definitely involved in a great Detroit organization. Through mental health and housing services, Southwest Solutions is making a strong and positive impact in the community. “Simply make a trip to Detroit,” Katherine says. “In fact, make more than one trip. Learn about the city, the people here, the projects that the community is working on, and the agencies that are dedicated to the city’s people. You will find it inspiring and hopeful.”

Several students and a faculty member plan to participate in a Costa Rica field placement next summer.



International Field Opportunities

The Office of Global Activities is helping 20 students complete social work field placements and special studies projects at six international sites this year!

1. Australia: An exchange program through the University of Melbourne
2. China: Cross-Cultural

3. Costa Rica: Partnership with the Costa Rican Government, Reto Juvenile Internacional, and the United Nations
4. Ecuador: The Quito Project

5. South Africa: Cross-Cultural Solutions
6. Toronto

For more information about the sites and the process, please visit www.ssw.umich.edu/public/OGA.

Thank You, Peer Facilitators!

By Kristen Duda, MSW Candidate



Social work students beginning their field placements are enrolled in a field seminar to discuss their field experiences. Seminars are taught by field liaisons teamed with peer facilitators who have completed their foundation field placement. The OFI would like to thank our fall peer facilitators for all that they have contributed. They all were asked to tell us about themselves, their role as a peer facilitator, and to evaluate the seminar's success.

Amanda Leland-Young, one of our talented facilitators, had a successful experience working with Oliva Kuester. **Sara-Marie Kuntz** believes that her seminar with Leigh Robertson has also been successful. "We help students to problem solve, learn from each other, and learn about themselves. We do this through different group exercises, conversation, and life sharing." Sara-Marie hopes to continue facilitating

groups after graduation as a way for communities to learn more about themselves, empower themselves, and work for change. **Rosalyn Campbell's** experience as a facilitator has helped her to grow as a social worker. She says, "Working with Su Crabb is wonderful!" Rosalyn enjoys interacting with students and watching them progress. "Students start out very nervous and apprehensive. As the semester goes on, they grow more confident and secure in themselves and their abilities." **Christopher Joseph** loves being connected to the School of Social Work students. He says, "Being able to talk with students about what they are most concerned about and help them problem solve is very rewarding." Chris says field seminars have improved since he was a student in the class. He says, "Fostering a safe environment has helped students share personal stories." **Meshon**

W a t - kins also helped to create a safe space for students to talk about concerns or issues that arise in their field placements. She has learned to be "quick to listen and slow to speak." She says that "skills such as listening, appropriately intervening, and encouraging interaction are valuable tools in the social work field." **Rachel Reyst-Carroll's** seminar has been a success for her and the students. She looks forward to using facilitation skills in her future career in management. She says the best thing about facilitating is "being able to make others lives easier than they could be otherwise. Using my personal strengths to do that is a very empowering and community-minded endeavor."

Thanks again to our facilitators for their unique contributions to field seminar.

Rachel Reyst-Carroll, Christopher Joseph, Meshon Watkins, Sara-Marie Kuntz, and Amanda Leland-Young acted as peer facilitators this semester. Not pictured: Rosalyn Campbell.

In Memory of Earl Carr: Inspiring Field Instructor Passes Away

By Lauren Klos, MSW Candidate

On Tuesday, October 7, 2008, Earl Carr passed away in his sleep. The 58-year-old employee of Wolverine Human Services committed over 20 years to the organization, recently received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to Human Services, greatly impacted youth in the community, and inspired students and staff at the U-M School of Social Work.

Mr. Carr earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Detroit and his MSW from Eastern Michigan University. He belonged to the National Association of Social Workers and worked as a field instructor to 12 U-M MSW students in the past several years, in addition to other students from Eastern and Wayne State.

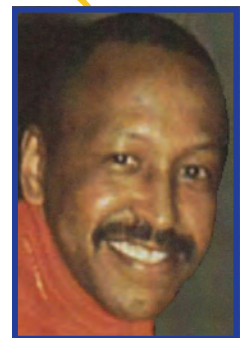
"Mr. Carr was fun and inspiring," says Nicole George, a current 16-month MSW student who worked under Mr. Carr's supervision at

Wolverine Human Services. "He always challenged me to search to understand my own personal goals and how I could achieve them." Nicole also said that he challenged how she would interact with the world as a social worker. Lori Blakeway, another 16-month student under Mr. Carr's supervision, adds, "It was really important to him that all of us [interns] succeeded as social workers. He wanted the best for all of us."

Throughout his years of service, Mr. Carr profoundly and positively influenced youth at Wolverine Human Services Diagnostic, Assessment, and Treatment Center and in his own private practice, E. L. Carr & Associates. "He was always the person that people went to when they needed support," Nicole says. "There was nothing quite like seeing him compassionately reaching out towards our clients and meeting them with the care and concern

that they most needed. He truly had a special way of connecting in the most important way at the most essential moments."

Mr. Carr will be missed. He made a strong impact in the world and in the U-M School of Social Work community that will carry on for generations. Nicole said that right before he passed, he told her something that will stay with her, "'You can do what you love, serve other people and be wealthy in life.' Mr. Carr believed that, as social workers, it was essential that we knew that we could serve our communities and our calling without having to sacrifice our own stability and happiness." The University of Michigan School of Social Work extends condolences to his friends and family and thanks to Mr. Carr for his contributions, insights, and encouragement to students, staff, and clients.



Earl Carr

"He truly had a special way of connecting in the most important way at the most essential moments."

Empowerment and Policy on Capitol Hill

By Kristen Duda, MSW Candidate



Omar Rashed

“Be creative, be resourceful, and try to cultivate or develop a placement that fits your interests, desires, and future career goals.”

“The heart of Washington, D.C. is policy,” says recent U-M SSW graduate, Omar Rashed. Concentrating in social welfare policy, Omar embraced the opportunity to be placed in the office of Congressman Edolphus “Ed” Towns on Capitol Hill in the summer of 2007.

“I spent a lot of time getting acquainted with Congress, reading up on the policy process, and developing different projects to work on throughout the semester,” explains Omar. Some of the projects included writing floor speeches for his congressman and drafting a diplomacy resolution to encourage the president to refrain from initiating conflict with foreign nations. Omar also drafted a survey that was disseminated to Rep. Towns’ constituents, revealing what proportion of respondents knew about and were prepared for the analog to digital TV switch. People were then informed about how to get a converter box.

Research was a large part of Omar’s experience. He was

able to focus on health and low income policies, issues of particular interest to him. “I wanted to know about different solutions proposed by the experts to guide the direction I pushed and to inform my work,” he says. Omar was assigned to read about and summarize different policies as part of the process of crafting new policies. He worked with the Congressional Research Service and was supervised by Rep. Towns’ deputy chief-of-staff, doubling as his health legislative assistant. Omar also worked with the Mental Health Caucus, the group that helped to pass Mental Health Parity.

When asked what the most valuable part of his policy placement in D.C. was, Omar said, “Learning how important networking is. Having experience on the Hill teaches you how policies are made and what kinds of people work in Congress. Learning the process of legislation from start to finish was very useful.”

Omar’s advice to current students considering an national placement is, “Start early. You

have to talk to your advisor and plan your academic schedule accordingly.” He emphasizes the value of “switching it up” and applying one’s skills outside of Michigan. Omar says the experience is worth it if you can afford it. “I would strongly recommend going into the Field Office to see what opportunities are available. But you shouldn’t limit yourself to what the Field Office already has established. Be creative, be resourceful, and try to cultivate or develop a placement that fits your interests, desires, and future career goals.”

Omar Rashed decided to stay in Washington, D.C. to work on voter mobilization efforts with the American Muslim Task Force, and he completed the job on Election Day. He explains that although voter mobilization is more community organizing than his policy field placement, the research skills he gained definitely came in handy. Omar hopes to do more policy work and advocacy on Capitol Hill. We look forward to hearing about his future accomplishments!

Staying Informed in the Field

Want to learn strategies for staying informed without leaving your office? Now there is a web page designed to help! In addition to explaining library privileges you retain as an alumnus, this website suggests ways to compensate for lack of access to licensed databases that are available to you only from a campus workstation. Five tutorials on “Information Literacy Competencies for Social Workers” begin at www.lib.umich.edu/socwork/rescue/msw.html.

After viewing the home page and the tab labeled “Library Services,” explore the more extensive tutorial by clicking on the “Staying Informed” tab. Here there are instructions and examples for obtaining social work news updates via blogs, table of content alerts from publishers, and automated literature searches.

To explore evidence-based practice websites, click on “Critical Issues” and review

sections on appropriate populations. The objectives of these modules are to define evidence-based social work, become familiar with key concepts in evidence-based social work, apply key concepts to searching and evaluating the social work literature, learn strategies for retrieval of evidence-based social work resources, and identify web-based resources that support evidence research and practice.



Preventing Social Worker Burnout: Employing a Self-Care Regime

By Miché Jo, MSW Candidate

We've all heard of social worker burnout. Maybe family and friends warned you when you announced your grad school plans. Maybe you know someone who started out in this field before they went back to get another degree. Perhaps you know someone in your field placement who seems overtired, overworked, and underappreciated. Burnout is a serious concern for social workers, as many of us work with vulnerable populations who have experienced multiple stresses and trauma. Risks of burnout include decreased life satisfaction, exhaustion, and a sense of hopelessness. Furthermore, burnout can take a physical toll. According to the APA, burnout increases the risk of cardiovascular disease as much as other risk factors such as smoking.

Is burnout inevitable? I don't believe so. Whether we are students entering a fieldwork experience for the first time or social workers

who have been practicing for a number of years, it is never too late to learn about and begin to actively practice self-care. Caring for ourselves is something we must do not only to avoid burnout, but also in order to stay grounded enough to provide our agencies and clients with the kind of caring, creative, and compassionate services outlined by the NASW Code of Ethics.

At this point you might be thinking this doesn't apply to you. "I have lots of energy for this work," you might believe, or "the rewards of helping will balance out the drawbacks." All of this may be true; we enter this field with a passion for social work and energy to take on new challenges. Indeed, the work is very rewarding. However, the rewards and the challenges of social work don't exist on the same continuum—in other words, we can find our work rewarding and still benefit from balancing the inevitable

stresses with a self-care regime.

Two alumni, Elsa George and Shalay Jackson, compiled a booklet in July 2007 titled, *Self-care for MSW Students*. Here are their suggestions for keeping yourself healthy and happy during stressful times:

- **Body care:** Stretch, practice deep breathing, exercise (with a partner, if you can).
- **On your own:** Make a to-do list, create a "stress journal," set precise and reachable goals.
- **Social support:** Talk with a friend, volunteer, call your family.

To these I would only add: Don't expect too much of yourself. We're here to learn, not to achieve perfection. Practicing compassion and empathy toward ourselves is the first step to maintaining the ability to practice these social work skills with the populations we serve for many years yet to come.



"Risks of burnout include decreased life satisfaction, exhaustion, and a sense of hopelessness."

Announcements

Reminders: Don't Forget!

- The required workshop for all 16-month foundation field students who are starting field in Winter 2009 will take place on January 5 from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. in the Palmer Commons Great Lakes Room. All attendees will receive field credit for these workshop hours.
- The Winter 2009 Field Instructor training will take place on January 16 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the SSWB Educational Conference Center (ECC). Electronic letters will be sent in the near future.
- The Spring Agency Fair will be held on March 26, 2009.
- MSW Students who are enrolling in spring/summer 2009 classes need to apply for financial aid on separate forms in the following offices: (1) The Office of Student Services, 1748 SSWB (materials available on SSWB website by mid-December) or (2) The University's Office of Financial Aid (OFA), 2011 Student Activities Bldg. (materials available on the OFA website in late January or early February). In addition, students must fill out a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the current academic year if they have not done so using the following link: www.finaid.umich.edu/Financial_Aid_Library/Financial_Aid_Forms/springsummerap.asp.

Want to post a job?

- Post a position by e-mailing ssw.employment@umich.edu.

Congratulations!

- Congrats to all December 2008 graduates! We wish you luck and continued success in your future careers!
- Faye Askew-King, director of programs and services at SOS Community Services and Field Instructor, received the Girl Scouts Women of Distinction Award (Sept. 2008) and the NASW Michigan Chapter Lisa Putnam Award (May 2008). Congrats, Faye!





“Reach Out, Raise Hope, Change Society”

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Thank you to all contributors of the third
volume of Field Notes!

Freud Fellows
Kristen Duda, MSW Candidate
Miché Jo, MSW Candidate
Lauren Klos, MSW Candidate

Field Notes Editor-In-Chief
Christine Gosdzinski, MSW Candidate

OFI Staff and many more!

Where in the World Are our Alumni?



- Alison Whyte** (MSW '08) is working for the World Bank in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, until January 2009.
- Valerie Varela** (MSW '08) is completing an internship with the United Nations in Switzerland and is applying for a permanent position in England.

Are you an alumnus who is working internationally? Email Christine Gosdzinski (cagos@umich.edu) to let us know where in the world you are!