From the Director’s Desk

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

I am writing this as the buds are struggling to push their way up through the earth and the students are counting down the days until graduation. We all wish the graduating class continued success in starting their careers and hope you will stay in touch with the Office of Field Instruction as time marches on. We look forward to recruiting you to be a field instructor one day!

Since this is our last issue for the 2008-2009 academic year, I want to thank Christine Gosdzinski for her excellent leadership as this year’s editor-in-chief of “Field Notes” and for her dedication to field related issues while working in my office. She has made many contributions this past year and I will miss her! I also want to thank all the students who helped make this year’s newsletter possible. The Freud Fellows, Kristen Duda, Miché Jo, and Lauren Klos have done a fine job and their work is much appreciated. Finally, I have to also thank our Winter term Student Peer Facilitators who will be finishing up their co-facilitation role in the Foundation Field Seminar. The mid-term evaluations were great and we have received many positive comments about their work. Their participation in seminar has been a great experience for us all.

In this issue, we will provide our readers with updates related to on-going OFI projects over the past year. The most significant is the addition of the new Transportation Assistance Policy thanks to the leadership of Associate Dean Mary Ruffolo. Students will now be able to apply for a grant to help them with transportation to and from their field placements. Please read the newsletter article for details.

We are also excited to share our Winter Term Agency Spotlights and thank our field instructors for all their efforts this past year. In March, we hosted another successful Agency Fair with over 45 agencies and 80 new students present. It was great to see many current student interns representing the agency tables. The incoming/new students also seemed eager to talk with the experienced students about their field placements.

Finally, the School of Social Work Alumni Board of Governors recently awarded their competitive scholarships to students who plan to travel nationally or internationally for a field-based experience in the Spring-Summer 2009 term. We look forward to learning about their experiences upon their return and wish them safe travels. Students will be going to Costa Rica; Cape Town, South Africa; Ecuador; Australia; Los Angeles; Canada; New York; and Mississippi.

Since March was Social Work month, I wanted to take the opportunity to announce that two of our field instructors were selected for National Association of Social Work Michigan Chapter Awards. Mr. Robert Miller, LMSW received the NASW Lifetime Achievement Award. Bob currently works at United Way in Ann Arbor and has been a field instructor for many years. He is also an adjunct lecturer in the School of Social Work. Mr. David Garvin, LMSW was selected as the NASW Michigan Chapter Social Worker of the Year. David currently works for Catholic Social Services in Ann Arbor and has also been a field instructor for many years. Congratulations to both!

In conclusion, I would like you to join me in welcoming our new Dean, Dr. Laura Lein. She arrived in a cold and snowy January from the warmth of the Texas sun and has been very busy meeting the challenges of her new position. We are happy and excited that she has chosen the School of Social Work. We want to welcome her and her family to Ann Arbor.

Tip of the term:
Students are encouraged to ask field instructors to participate in agency employee interviews to gain an understanding of the interview process.
March was Social Work Month, and this year’s nationwide theme was “Purpose and Possibility.” Unified by this theme, social work organizations across the country celebrated in different ways. In our School of Social Work (SSW), the Offices of the Dean and Student Services helped plan a month-long event. Bill Vanderwill, field faculty and member of the Social Work Month Planning Committee, has seen the event evolve over the years. During an interview, he spoke on behalf of the committee about our School’s interpretation of the national theme. He outlined how three unique goals were accomplished in the School including the importance of honoring students, celebrating the field, and promoting self-care.

“The first goal is to honor students and help them feel professional pride in their choice to pursue a career in social work,” explained Bill. The SSW has hosted a number of events to instill a sense of professional pride, including professional development workshops and panel discussions. For example, on March 4th, the SSW gathered in the Educational Conference Center for a panel discussion titled “The Diversity of Disabilities” to raise awareness and give voice to people with disabilities. In addition, the Social Work Planning Committee sent weekly e-mails to students filled with inspirational fun facts about social work. The month started off with this fact: “There are more than 200 social workers in national, state and elected office, including U.S. Senator, Debbie Stabenaw - Michigan.”

“The second goal is to celebrate each other and the field,” Bill continued. March began with a Celebration for students in McGregor Commons, followed by a “Social Work Social” at Damon’s Grill. The SSW also gathered on March 17th for the Student Awards Ceremony to celebrate the accomplishments of scholarship and fellowship recipients. Students, faculty and families were welcomed by John Tropman, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. The program included a musical performance and an encouraging message from Dean Lein. Students were honored individually and celebrated together at the reception that followed.

Bill stressed the importance of the third goal: to promote self-care. “The more we can renew ourselves, the more we can be help agents in others’ lives,” Bill said. Students have been encouraged to take time to care for themselves in their busy weeks of caring for others. “Self Renewal Day” took place on March 18th and was dedicated to bringing self-care and relaxation right to the School. “A back massage in the middle of the day was perfect!” exclaimed Melissa Villegas, a social policy student who took advantage of the free events. “Too bad I had to throw a backpack on and get back to class,” she laughed.

With the enthusiasm of faculty and students, Social Work Month was a success in the School. “It’s great that the School takes the time to honor social work students,” said Jenn Hurt, a community organizing student. By dedicating an entire month to honoring, celebrating and caring for social workers and the field, we are reminded of the importance of our work. Students and field instructors are encouraged to celebrate Social Work Month in their internships and jobs, and to remember their great “purpose and possibility” year round. Thank you to the Social Work Planning Committee for your dedication to students and the field of social work!
Peer Facilitators Wrap-up a Strong Semester

By Christine Gosdzinski, MSW Candidate

This winter, the OFI’s peer facilitators have been one of the strongest groups of student leaders yet! In conjunction with field faculty these peers have assisted students in their first term of field placement. To acknowledge their contributions, we asked them to reflect on their roles this semester.

Students who find time to facilitate field seminar while participating in classes, internships, and other responsibilities are committed to the field experience. Jay Holden explained, “I became a peer facilitator because I had such a great experience in the seminar as a student that I wanted to try to create that for other students”. Marissa Marshak noted that she has also been able to grow professionally through facilitating. She stated, “Teaching others allows me to increase my problem-solving abilities, enables me to apply my creativity, and heightens my awareness of privilege, oppression, diversity, and social justice.”

These facilitators have gained skills and knowledge but have also experienced challenges. Adi Bodenstein noted that her biggest challenge was, “To help everyone learn and work together in ways that best support their needs.” Jessie O’Brien reflected on the difficulty that peer facilitators have as both a teacher and learner. She stated, “The biggest challenge is being a leader while being their peer at the same time. There is a balance I am continually learning between guiding someone, and remembering I have something to learn from them.”

Despite these difficulties, the facilitators have also learned valuable lessons. Emily Besancon stated, “Sharing about myself is part of the group development process and it helps create an environment where others are comfortable to share too.” Julia Churchill’s experience as a facilitator taught her lessons that will carry into her career. She remarked, “[being a facilitator] has truly emphasized even more why I became a social worker in the first place. It was to find what I was passionate about and give my all.”

These peer facilitators have inspired students and have helped the Office of Field Instruction continue to improve the field experience. We would like to thank them for their contributions, dedication and wish each of them the best in future endeavors as leaders in the field.

SSW Joins Local Agencies to ‘Take Back the Night’

By Miché Jo, MSW Candidate

The month of April has been designated Sexual Assault Awareness Month by the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. The center provides materials to organizations in the form of publications, pins and stickers to promote awareness of sexual violence. Many activities are organized around the country for Sexual Assault Awareness Month, including the Take Back the Night march and rally, held locally on the University of Michigan campus in early April. This year’s march and rally marks the 31st anniversary of a tradition that started on the streets of San Francisco in 1978 that later spread internationally. Take Back the Night 2009 is sponsored by Michigan Takes Back the Night and University Women Against Rape, the School of Social Work, the Ginsberg Center, and the Michigan Student Assembly. On the evening of Take Back the Night, survivors of sexual assault and their allies come together for an evening of song, poetry, sharing survivor stories, and demonstration in remembrance of victims. Following this, the group takes to the streets to reclaim the sense of power and security that are brutally taken from those who have been assaulted.

The goal of Take Back the Night is to provide a safe haven and a voice to those who have been silenced by sexual violence. The March also serves the purpose of awakening the consciousness of the community about the enormity of the problem, and to provoke thought about how to address this issue. Given the staggeringly high rates of sexual assault, awareness is essential. Recent reports show that 1 of 5 college-age women report having been raped and 1 in 3 sexual assault victims are under 12 years old.

These statistics only include reported cases, and it is believed that 16% of rapes and sexual assaults are reported to police. (www.sarochester.edu/masa/stats.php)

The experience of attending a rally in support of ending sexual violence is incredibly powerful, and a reminder that whether or not we are one of the 22% of U.S. women who report having been raped or sexually assaulted, gender oppression affects all of us every day. Sadly, many of us cannot be safe every night, but for a few hours every evening in April, the streets really do belong to us all.

For more information or to get involved, visit: www.tbtnannarbor.org
www.NSVRC.org

“All human beings have the right to be free from violence, the right to be heard, and the right to reclaim those rights if they are violated.”

—takebackthenight.org
Need Gas Money? OFI Can Help!

By Lauren Klos, MSW Candidate

As of February 2, 2009, the School of Social Work began offering transportation assistance to students who travel far distances to their field placements. “It was Mary Ruffalo [Associate Dean for Educational Programs] who came up with the idea,” said Betsy Voshel, Director of the Office of Field Instruction. “It has been in the works for most of the Fall 2008 term.”

This new policy was designed to help students pay for gas and mileage as they travel to and from their placements. The field site must be at least 45 miles one-way from the School. Betsy stated that the mileage cap was developed to help as many students as financially possible. Another reason for choosing a 45-mile cap was the large quantity of Detroit placements coupled with the School’s desire to support agencies within that area.

A unique feature of transportation assistance is that it is not a loan and it is not based on the student’s financial status. The funds come from the School of Social Work in the form of a grant. “It is basically a gift from the School of Social Work that supports a field-related expense,” explained Betsy.

The policy would not have been implemented without the support of the School’s administrative staff. “Every administrator in the School is devoted to working and assisting students to be successful;” asserted Betsy. “Once the Dean indicated that the School could financially support this idea, it was just a matter of developing the policy.”

The application process is simple, with a turnaround rate of about 24 hours. Policy guidelines and applications are available on the OFI website and in the Field Manual. Carefully read through the policy and eligibility requirements, complete the form, and wait to hear from OFI. Should a student get approved, it is his or her responsibility to increase their financial aid budget – otherwise, the transportation aid will reduce the student’s loan amount. In addition, students are encouraged to apply if they have a special situation and therefore do not meet the eligibility requirements. Betsy said, “Apply anyway and indicate [your] special need. All decisions are made based on an individual basis.”

This policy is a great opportunity for students who travel long distances to field placements. “It is helpful to have that money – it alleviates financial worries for how I’m going to get to my internship every week,” said Jessie O’Brien, a 20-month Interpersonal Practice Children and Youth student. “The application was easy and I was surprised that I received it so quickly. Most importantly, it’s nice to have someone recognize that we need transportation support.”

Apply and see how OFI can improve your field experience by paying for your gas! http://ssw.umich.edu/programs/msw/ofi/Transportation_Assistance_Policy_and_Application.pdf

Recent Graduate Works in Cambodia

By Christine Gosdzinski, MSW Candidate

Recent Graduate, Alison Whyte (MSW ’08), accepted what she calls an “unexpected” position at the World Bank in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from October, 2008 thru January 2009. The World Bank is an international organization that helps developing countries reduce poverty through implementing rigorous evaluation methods. Alison worked on a project that evaluated Cambodian early education programs. The project sought to help Cambodia provide universal primary education for children by expanding programs that were cost-effective and predicted child achievement.

Alison’s experience taught her about the education system, methods, and challenges of influencing social change internationally.

Additionally, Alison had the opportunity to learn about social change and the country’s oppressive history as a tourist. Highlights of her travels included visiting the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Ankor Wat (pictured), and attending the United Nation’s International human rights Day, which showcased and celebrated Cambodian culture.

Alison noted, “My work was not exactly what I would call global social work, but there are a lot of opportunities to do social work in Cambodia”. She found that those working abroad start as volunteers and work their way into organizations as employees. Individuals interested in global social work should contact the School’s Office of Global Affairs (ssw.oga@umich.edu), where Alison shared her resources.

We hope Alison’s work can inspire others to take advantage of unique experiences abroad. Good Luck, Alison!
We Can’t Do it Without You: SAPAC, Men, and Sexual Violence Prevention

By Miché Jo, MSW Candidate

In January of 1985, a group of University of Michigan students organized a sit-in at the office of the Vice-President for Student Affairs. Their concern involved the rising number of sexual assaults on campus, and they were determined to convince the executives that women’s safety should be a priority for the University community. Out of this effort, the Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) was born. SAPAC provides crisis intervention and counseling for survivors of sexual and domestic violence, stalking, and harassment as well as their partners. They also run numerous education and prevention programs. Those familiar with SAPAC consider it an important campus resource for women. However, it is less well-known that the center runs a program where men distribute information about sexual violence to other men in the campus community. Recently I spoke with Shuchi Jain, the coordinator of the Men’s Activism Program, about how men in social work can get involved in the effort to prevent violence against women.

The goal of the Men’s Activism Program is to help men understand their active role in ending violence against women. Some events involve workshops, a men-only discussion series, and public games, such as the “Root Beer Pong” tournament held in U of M’s Diag every Fall. The program also invites a male activist speaker every two years to give a lecture. This year’s speaker was Byron Hurt, a nationally renowned filmmaker and anti-sexiem activist. The idea, Jain said, is to target campus populations who do not usually hear this message. Jain reported a positive response from most groups the team works with. SAPAC has also formed alliances with campus fraternities, who plan to screen movies and host events.

Despite the success of the Men’s Activism Program, the demand for volunteers far outweighs the supply. Out of the twelve volunteers, only four are men. It’s difficult to provide men with a salient message about the importance of preventing violence when there aren’t enough guys to convey it, Jain said. The program is constantly battling for male involvement, which is a serious setback to the mission. The good news is that there are possibilities for men in social work to choose a placement or volunteer for a cause that needs energy, vision, and commitment. Men such as Leigh Carter, a current Social Work student placed with SAPAC, are conveying the message that sexual assault prevention is a problem that we all have a stake in, whether we work with an anti-violence organization or in some other social work capacity. In order to see a future free from sexual violence, this issue needs the commitment of every one of us.

Hannon Foundation Intern Captures Stories of Detroit Seniors

By Kristen Duda, MSW Candidate

The Hannan Foundation, located in Detroit, helps to improve older adults’ quality of life. The SSW has been coordinating internships with Hannan since 1998. Students work on a variety of projects and directly make a difference in the lives of seniors in the Metro/Detroit area.

Michelle Fucci, a geriatric scholar, spoke highly of her internship experience at The Hannan Foundation. Michelle’s role is to help implement an Oral History Project, funded by the Michigan Humanities Council. The project is titled, “Volunteering in Detroit: Seniors Keep The Motor City Running,” and captures on digital audio the stories of dedicated volunteers who are senior citizens in the Detroit area. The recorded stories will be shared with the community to promote volunteerism among older adults.

“I was lucky enough to be involved in finalizing the grant application,” Michelle said. She has been working on the project since its inception in September and continues to be an integral part of the project’s success by organizing and coordinating interviews. Michelle had the opportunity to hear the stories of those who have volunteered at hospices, Red Cross Disaster Relief centers, and churches as care-givers in neighborhood organizations and activist groups.

Michelle and others, including a panel of volunteer seniors, will be presenting the work in progress at “The Art of Aging” Conference at Wayne State University. The recorded project will be completed in November and broadcasted on Detroit WDET public radio. Michelle says they also plan on doing a road trip workshop that travels to retirement communities to share stories and promote volunteerism.

“The Oral History Project will continue to be used as an outreach tool,” explained Michelle, who hopes the project will have an ongoing effect. She requested if you know anyone who is interested in participating in an interview, or if you are interested in learning more about the project, to e-mail her (mfucci@umich.edu) or look for project updates at Hannan.org.

Michelle summarizes her experience at The Hannan Foundation: “Hannan is a wonderful place to do an internship. As someone not familiar with the area, it was an amazing chance for me to jump right in and learn about Detroit. My mentors have been incredible. I am so happy I went to Hannan.”
Variety in the Field: U of M Hospital Placements

By Lauren Klos, MSW Candidate

A unique component of field placements at the University of Michigan Hospital is that students have the opportunity to gain experience in a variety of areas – they may be placed in one unit, but are able to observe another unit at some point during their internship. Available field placements at the U of M Health System include 14 areas for Interpersonal Practice (IP) and Mental Health concentrators and 15 areas for IP and Health. The opportunity for variety is what drew Amy Coppa, a 16-month IP/Mental Health student, to apply for a hospital placement.

“My main goal was to get as much experience in as many different [areas] as possible. At the hospital, I knew there would be an opportunity to experience other specializations of social work,” explained Amy, who is placed in the Adult Outpatient Psychiatry Unit with the Depression Team. “I want to try out as much as I can so that I know what I want to do when I’m job searching.” Amy has a variety of responsibilities, including a caseload, observing evaluations, making phone calls, and writing dictations. As she progresses, her responsibilities will increase to include co-leading groups and performing evaluations.

Sam Edwards, on the other hand, is a 16-month IP/Health student placed in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Her responsibilities are quite different from Amy’s. Sam conducts psychosocial assessments and provides supportive counseling, resources and referrals to families. “Because we see every family that comes into the NICU, I work with families that are functioning at a variety of levels,” said Sam. “For families, [the birth of a child with special needs] is a big disruption in their lives and is far from what they expected. I am here to be a resource, as someone to talk to.” Sam also coordinates meetings between doctors, nurses, and families, and provides support to these parties.

UM Hospitals provide additional classes and support systems for students. The weekly classes include hospital protocols, therapeutic techniques, treatment modalities, and job search training. Both Amy and Sam have found these classes helpful. “I think it provides us with a level of support and education we wouldn’t get elsewhere,” explained Sam.

For Amy and Sam, their hospital experiences have supported their future career goals. “I want to be a medical social worker and that is exactly the experience I am getting at the hospital,” Sam asserted. “I’m getting a wealth of knowledge in patient care and medical social work that will apply to any job I look for.” Amy would also like to work in a hospital setting, but is currently unsure which area she is most interested in. “It’s too soon to say where in a hospital,” explained Amy, “but that’s why I chose this placement – to see all the different units within a hospital in which to work as a social worker.”

Across many interests, The University of Michigan Health System can accommodate a variety of student needs.

Updates from the Office of Field Instruction

By Christine Gosdzinski, MSW Candidate

The OFI hosted its first Educational Agreement Coaching Session in January in response to student-reported challenges completing first-term Educational Agreements. This session provided an overview of the agreement, an opportunity to view past Educational Agreement samples, and time to ask questions to experienced students and faculty. A logic model was also designed to help students link field experiences with future jobs by connecting skills they would like to learn as a social worker, learning experiences in their educational agreements, and skills they would like to include in their resumes. Based on student feedback, the OFI hopes to integrate this logic model into future pre-field orientations.

The OFI and the OFI Advisory Committee have launched a new online instrument that evaluates the field experience for students, field instructors and field liaisons. This survey was developed to identify areas in field instruction that are successful and those in need of improvement. Course evaluations have been completed by students in the past, but this is the first time that formal feedback has been gathered from multiple sources about the entire field instruction experience. The survey takes about 30 minutes to complete online. Evaluations for the 20-month cohort graduating in May will be sent to students and their field instructors after field placements have ended. The Committee and the OFI look forward to student responses in order to continually improve the field experience.
Help the OFI and Fellow Students: Update Your Field Description

By Hannah Briolat, Office of Field Instruction Project Coordinator

The Office of Field Instruction is always actively working to provide and expand placement opportunities for our students and improve those already available. We recognize that students use the online program descriptions as a key tool in deciding which placements will provide the best environment for their educational goals. We strongly encourage agencies and student interns to review the posted program descriptions for their placement on the OFI webpage and email updates. We have found it very helpful for students making their placement selections to have a list included in the program description outlining the available student learning experiences.

Review your program’s description at the following URL: http://ssw.umich.edu/programs/msw/ofl/slots/

Select the checkbox at the top of the page, above Practice Method and Practice Area, to see a comprehensive, alphabetized list of current placements available through the field office. If your program’s description needs updating or editing, please email an updated description to briolhan@umich.edu and title the subject, “Updated Program Description”. Be sure to include the agency and program name that corresponds with the description.

Thank you for your efforts to improve the services of the OFI!

Announcements

- The NIH is sponsoring the 5th International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Clinical Supervision on 6/11/09-6/13/09 in Amherst, New York. The NIH will support conference fee and hotel discounts for field instructors at any school of social work. Additional information can be found at the conference Web page: http://www.socialwork.buffalo.edu/csconference/
- The Office of Continuing Professional Education is pleased to announce the Michigan Sexual Health Certificate, a post-graduate certificate program offered in partnership with the University of Michigan Health System, Department of Social Work, Center for Sexual Health. For more information, or for a listing of mini-courses, please visit www.ssw.umich.edu/programs/ce/MSHC/index.html

Important Field Instruction Deadlines:
- Spring/Summer term deadlines: Field Instruction starts on 5/5/09; Field Verification forms are due on 5/11/09; Educational Agreements are due on 5/26/09, Educational Agreements/Evaluations are due on 8/10/09; and Field Instruction ends on 8/12/09.

Congratulations!
- Congratulations to all Winter and August 2009 graduates! We wish you luck and continued success in the field!
- 2008-2009 Board of Governor’s Practicum Award Winners: Elizabeth Koomson, Amanda Leppek, Kendra Bostick, Anika Fassia, Jaimie Philip, Emily Haddad, Rosana Lee, Stephanie Brubaker, and Traci Koch.
- Congrats to Karri Lynn Simpson whose paper on the Johnson and Bush Administration’s framing of poverty was accepted at the IGPI conference in March on “Emerging Issues in Poverty and Inequality.”

Winter 2009 Agency Fair

School of Social Work staff, faculty, field instructors, current MSW students, and prospective students gathered on March 26th, 2009 to share and learn about University of Michigan School of Social Work field placements in the Michigan League Ballroom.
18 New Field Placements Open in 2008-2009

By Christine Gosdzinski, MSW Candidate

To continue to provide field placements that fit diverse student needs, the Office of Field Instruction successfully collaborated with new community partners and opened 18 additional field placements for students. Here are the exciting new placements opened during the 2008-2009 school year:

- American Indian Health & Family Services of Southeast Michigan, Inc. (Detroit, MI)
- Catholic Social Services of Oakland County (Waterford, MI)
- Hospital for Sick Children - Dept. of Social Work (Toronto, Ontario)
- Institute for Family Health (New York, NY)
- Jewish Gay Network of Michigan (West Bloomfield, MI)
- LifeWays (Jackson, MI)
- McLaren Home Health & Hospice (Davison, MI)
- Melvindale-Northern Allen Park School District (Melvindale, MI)
- Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (Southgate, MI)
- Michigan Department of Community Health (Detroit, MI)
- Renaissance Gardens at Fox Run (Novi, MI)
- Restaurant Opportunities Centers United DBA Restaurant Opportunities Center of Michigan (Detroit, MI)
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program (Lansing, MI)
- St. Michael School (Livonia, MI)
- The Information Center, Inc. The Family Resource Place (Taylor, MI)
- UM Dean of Students (Ann Arbor, MI)
- UM Intergroup Relations (Ann Arbor, MI)
- Wayne State University Counseling and Psychological Services (Detroit, MI)

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

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

OFl Staff, Students, Faculty, and many more!

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