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Power or Privacy: The Ethical Dilemma of Social Networking

By Libby Cochran

An important part of a social work education is learning how to make ethical decisions in professional practice; but what about the gray areas? Sometimes you can't look to a specific line in the Code of Ethics for an answer to an ethical question. There are always some ethical choices that need to be made without the benefit of a hard-and-fast rule or even a general consensus among social workers. Students often confront some of these questions at their field placements well

before they become licensed social workers. In the brave new world of social work on the digital frontier, many of these unan-

Social networking has tremendous power to promote engagement, access to resources, and empowerment if used wisely.

swered ethical questions surround the use of social networking. Because anything posted on the internet is public and can never be completely removed, something posted on impulse can

cause irreparable harm to your clients, your field agency and your own professional reputation. However, social networking also has tremendous power to promote engagement, access to resources, and empowerment if used wisely.

Some uses of social networking are more clearly unethical than others. Posting information which might infringe on a clients' right to confidentiality and privacy is a comfortably obvious example. Using your personal social networking accounts to friend or

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National Placements

By Kathy Bolton



The University of Michigan School of Social Work (SSW) has a long history of placing students in national placements such as Washington D.C., which is viewed as a hub for social change. Placements also exist in locations such as California and Chicago.

The idea behind national placements is to allow students to receive training that they could not receive here in Michigan. The SSW's sixteen-month educational track allows students to have the rich experience of a national placement in Washington D.C. during their spring/summer term. To be eligible for national placements, students are required to apply by October. The SSW Board of Governors has devel-

oped a fund that assists students with some of the expenses they will incur while in a national placement, such as housing.

The SSW Career Center and Development Offices identified approximately 300 U-M SSW alumni in the greater Washington area, many of whom are working at the macro level. As a result of their efforts to build relationships with these alumni of the MSW program, many alumni have agreed to host MSW students in summer placements at their Washington-based agencies. Among these placements are Generations United, National Family Planning & Reproductive Health, the National Low Income Housing Coalition, and Wider

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From the Director's Desk

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



Training and preparing the next generation of social workers is one of the most critical jobs we do in education. Our ability to partner with our field instructors, our community-based faculty, in large part determines how successful a student will be not only while in graduate school, but how they will perform when they enter the work force. Our capacity to imprint these budding professionals is profound, which is why it is vital that we not only respect but acculturate the social work professions' values and ethic with guidance from the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics.

The Office of Field Instruction hosted our bi-annual field instructor training in January, which was well attended. Upon reviewing the evaluations, however, I became troubled about a comment that had been written. To paraphrase, someone stated that they were tired of all the focus and discussion on minority students, the ADA and LGBTQI issues as this was merely a reflection of our (the School's) social and political agenda. Candidly, I was quite taken aback at first and then after some reflection, became quite proud of the compliment we

had just been given.

You are absolutely right—we focus on all issues related to privilege, oppression, diversity and social justice (PODS). The lens we use in our coursework continually promotes discussion, learning, and reflection using the PODS lens. Please be clear, we also expect that our field instructors respect these same values and that they too are constantly evaluating how they are helping our students learn about these matters as they are played out in the field.

These issues have also become a political agenda item as of late with the introduction of HB5040, which, if passed, will give individual beliefs and morals precedence over ethical principles and values found in the social work Code of Ethics. This piece of legislation is clearly contrary to what social work stands for and belies the principles we hold so dear.

If passed, this legislation will also put students in direct violation of the Code, by which all social workers must abide throughout their educational and professional careers. One of the six ethical principles of the profession, *Dignity and Worth of the Person*, states, "Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion,

mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity." Additionally, the Code of Ethics states that "social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical disability."

Of course, a social worker, even if they meet the state's licensing regulations, can certainly choose to not abide by the Code of Ethics—but is this the person who we want imprinting the next generation of social workers? Is this the social work professional we want teaching our students? Is this the person capable of being a voice for those who are underrepresented, oppressed, disenfranchised? I think not. My appreciation to all of you who strive to provide unbiased, ethical service to your clients/constituents, utilizing the basic principles of our great helping profession. Our students will become better social workers because of you.

Field Notes Editorial Team 2011-2012

Our sincerest thanks to the School of Social Work students, faculty, staff, and field instructors whose contributions made this newsletter possible.

Kathryn (Kathy) Bolton, Freud Fellow

Elizabeth (Libby) Cochran, Freud Fellow

Nastassja Cuellar-Wilson, Freud Fellow

Dafnah Meron, Freud Fellow

Alia Wesala, Editor-in-Chief

Everything You Need to Know About E-Portfolios:

A Q&A with Urmila Venkatesh

Interviewed by Dafnah Meron



“The ultimate goal is for students to walk out of this program with the ability to articulate the concrete knowledge and skills they now possess, and to show the evidence of that learning to multiple audiences.”

Urmila Venkatesh

What is an e-portfolio?

An e-portfolio, or electronic portfolio, is a collection of documents that communicates one’s knowledge, skills, and evidence of learning to a public audience, in a digital format. The School of Social Work’s (SSW) pilot portfolio program promotes the concept of integrative learning, which is the process of making meaning across contexts. Once you identify the knowledge and skills you develop in different contexts, you are able to apply learning from one situation to another.

What is the value of these portfolios?

MSW students identify the professional competencies they are developing as social work students, and critically analyze the moments and products (in classes, fieldwork, and other experiences) through which they develop those competencies. The ultimate goal is for students to walk out of this program with the ability to articulate the concrete knowledge and skills they now possess, and to show the evidence of that learning to multiple audiences.

MSW students are also developing their skills to become social change agents in a variety of contexts, and become even more effective at promoting change and empowering others when they recognize and can articulate what they are capable of doing themselves.

How can I use this portfolio?

The contents of a portfolio have value to multiple audiences, but it is the process of creating a portfolio that may have the most impact.

The actual portfolio product showcases the knowledge, skills and values that students gain when critically reflecting on their “learning

artifacts” (the concrete products and experiences one develops in the MSW program through coursework and fieldwork). Additionally, portfolio products show that a student can communicate clearly, think critically, solve problems, learn from challenges, process experiences thoughtfully, and articulate guiding values and beliefs – essentially, *that one has learned to reflect in a meaningful way*. These skills are important considerations for so many audiences, including: employers, when choosing someone to hire and train; educators, when evaluating students’ learning; graduate school committees, to identify potential for academic success; and, the portfolio author herself, to be able to set achievable and authentic professional, personal, academic, and lifelong goals.

However, it is the *process* of developing the portfolio that gives students those very skills to speak confidently and articulately about themselves. This is extremely important in some concrete ways—when doing job interviews, writing cover letters, developing graduate school applications, and any other situation in which clear, effective and concise communication is important. But more importantly, this process is the key to becoming a lifelong, active learner, professional social worker, and social change agent. When you learn how to critically analyze the work you do in multiple situations (at work, in class, in professional practice, in your relationships, through your service, when pursuing your interests, etc.), you can recognize the skills you use, the principles that matter to you, the environments in which you tend to flourish, the moments when you feel most engaged and don’t even feel you’re doing work. These observations are crucial to setting goals, learning from future experiences, and recog-

nizing that there are lessons and knowledge in ALL of your experiences – not just what you learn in class. Furthermore, this critical reflection allows you to see the value and wisdom in *others’* experiences and knowledge as well, which is a hugely important skill when working towards social justice in collaboration with others individuals and communities.

Can all grad students in the SSW create an e-portfolio?

Currently only students who have enrolled in an integrative learning seminar elective course have had the opportunity to create an integrative learning e-portfolio. Beginning Fall 2012, a team of faculty and staff will be expanding our portfolio development resources, first for a small pilot group and eventually for all MSW students to access. It is a significant effort to scale resources up to the entire program. We hope to be able to offer some services (workshops, online resources, perhaps a minicourse) while we expand the program over the next two years to allow students to do this kind of critical and analytical reflection even if they are not part of the long-term portfolio program being rolled out over the next few years.

Urmila Venkatesh is Curriculum Coordinator at the SSW. ♦

Freud Fellows Newsletter Team



Kathy Bolton is currently an MSW candidate with a graduation date of December 2012. Her area of focus is Interpersonal Practice with Children and Youth. She holds a BA in Psychology from Oakland University with a concentration in Criminal Justice. She loves her field placement, which is through the U-M Health Systems, Child and Adolescent Outpatient

Psychiatry unit. For fun, Kathy enjoys biking, spending time with family, friends and her beloved yellow labs Tucker and Abby. Kathy is enjoying her time here at the U-M and feels she has made some lifelong friends.



Libby Cochran is a 20-month student with a concentration in Community Organizing/ Children, Youth and Families and a minor concentration in Social Policy and Evaluation. Libby Cochran has a BA in Linguistics from Indiana University and a Master's in Celtic Studies from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. Her field placement this year is at

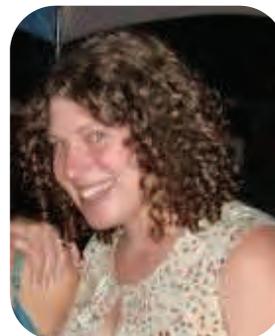
SafeHouse Center, working with children living in shelters. She is an avid language learner, violin player and Chinese calligraphy enthusiast.

Many thanks to our dedicated team of writers who have taken time out of their busy student lives to make contributions to *Field Notes*. Kathy Bolton, Nastassja Cuellar-Wilson, and Dafnah Meron are recipients of the Clarice Ullman Freud Fellowship, and Libby Cochran is the recipient of the Clarice Ullman Freud Individual Research Scholarship. Professor Clarice Ullman Freud was Director of Field instruction when she was on the U-M School of Social Work faculty. These scholarships, awarded to MSW students in the Children and Youth in Families and Society practice area, are made possible through a gift from Professor Freud, with the intention of providing opportunities to help students build connections between theory and practice.



Nastassja Cuellar-Wilson is a first-year MSW candidate in Interpersonal Practice with Children and Youth. Her undergraduate background is in child development, which is where she developed her passion for working with infants and toddlers. Nastassja hopes to integrate both her child development and social work

knowledge in working with military families. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her own family, cooking, and baking (especially experimentally from ideas found on Pinterest).



Dafnah Meron is a first year 16-month student concentrating in Interpersonal Practice with Children and Youth. She is interning with the Huron Oaks Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program and gaining experience working with adolescents in small groups, as well as their families. Dafnah completed her undergraduate education at the University of

Delaware and spent her junior year abroad at the University of Cape Town and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Dafnah has also spent time living in India working with a grassroots NGO as a World Partners Fellow.

Power or Privacy: The Ethical Dilemma of Social Networking

(continued from page 1)

follow your clients could blur the lines between your personal and professional life, creating a possible conflict of interest. These are the easy examples—some potentially unethical online behavior is less readily identifiable. For instance, lots of people talk about their jobs and co-workers on Facebook, Twitter or in blog posts, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's ethical for a social worker. The staff and interns at our field agencies have a right to privacy; confiding in a friend over coffee about an issue with a colleague is one thing—writing about it in your blog or on Facebook is a whole new ethical ballgame.

Even if you merely mention your agency on a social networking site, then everything else you post online (and everything your friends post on your wall, too) may affect how people view you and your agency. There is also the possibility that clients may Google you. If you've been working with clients on building healthy relationships, will tweeting about

your ugly break-up inspire them with confidence? Would you necessarily trust a substance abuse counselor who's clearly drunk in their Facebook profile photo?

Despite these pitfalls, social networking also holds the promise of improved communication, access to information and collaboration. Social networking can help people organize to create change. It was utilized with spectacular effect by protesters in Egypt during the Arab Spring. Some field agencies are already using sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Foursquare and looking for further ways to utilize social networking to benefit their clients.

Erica Hollins, a U-M SSW student intern whose fieldsite is starting to use social networking says, "In macro practice, social networking offers an invaluable resource for an agency. It can be used to share agency work with the public as well as with other agencies, it can provide publicity, and it allows for connection with the public—this can serve to make the agency more personal to the people it serves."

However, even in a community organization setting, social networking is not without its pitfalls.

Hollins says, "The hazard is that, if used improperly or without clear direction, those connections and that personalizing may cross into dangerous territory. A social network user must constantly be aware of issues

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READING BETWEEN THE LINES:

What Can *THE NASW CODE OF ETHICS* Tell Us About Ethical Social Media Use?

“Social workers should respect clients’ right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services....” *Section 1.07(a).*

“Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through use of computers, electronic mail, [etc.]” *Section 1.07(e).*

“Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client.” *Section 1.06(c).*

“Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker’s employing agency.” *Section 4.06(a).*

Guidelines for Ethical Social Media Use by Clinical Social Workers

By Alia Wesala

PROTECT YOUR CLIENTS’ PRIVACY

- ◆ **Do not search for clients online** without their consent unless you have a clinically-significant reason for doing so (e.g. to ensure the safety of a client)
- ◆ **Do not “friend”/“follow” a client** under any circumstances
- ◆ **Carefully manage client information** that is found online accidentally
- ◆ **Warn clients that email is not secure** and may not necessarily be as private as they may think

PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

- ◆ **Google yourself** so you will know in advance what information a client could find about you
- ◆ **Create a professional website** to maintain some control of your professional reputation online
- ◆ **Consider using a pseudonym** for some or all online activities
- ◆ **Keep your professional role in mind** when posting anything
- ◆ **Utilize strict privacy settings** whenever possible
- ◆ If your agency has one, you might want to **discuss your agency’s social media policy with clients**

AND if your agency does not have a social media policy, consider helping them to develop one.

Serving Those Who Serve: Social Work with Military Families

By Nastassja Cuellar-Wilson

Historically, our nation's military population has maintained a culture of strength and resilience in which social services have been viewed as unnecessary and for the weak. However, as evidenced by an increasing body of research, we now know that our service members and their families are highly at risk for mental health and interpersonal concerns throughout the deployment cycle.

During pre-deployment, families of service members often experience overwhelming anxiety in anticipation of their loved ones' deployment. Time is spent preparing for deployment, mentally and logistically (such as organizing finances and other important documents). During deployment, family members continue to change and live their lives while their service member is also changing due to his or her experiences. Post-deployment reintegration is when families must face the reality of the "disconnect" that may have developed during their time apart. Parents clash about parenting techniques. Couples disagree about household responsibilities. Friends find they no longer have much in common. All of these areas call for attention.

Social workers need to advocate for policies that will help veterans reintegrate

into society with ease. For instance, many veterans struggle to find employment because their military service does not equate to education or applicable experience in the civilian world. It also seems that the required briefing sessions held by

Many veterans struggle to find employment because their military experience does not equate to education or applicable experience in the civilian world.

the different branches of the military do not adequately prepare service members to return home. Many returning service members face a lifestyle for which they are not prepared—some turn to substance abuse as a way of coping. Due to the limited availability of employment they also face risks for homelessness.

For the past ten years, our country has been engaged in a war that has involved countless service members and their families. As an increasing number of these service members return home, it is imperative that social service providers are prepared to meet their needs.

Many organizations and institutions around the country have started initiatives to ad-

dress these issues at the macro level. The University of Southern California has even established a specialization within their MSW program for students who want to focus on working with military personnel and their families.

Here at the University of Michigan, Research Associate Professor Susan McDonough recognized the need for a specialized class within the School of Social Work: "Social Work with Military Families" (SW 713 003 in Winter 2012). Drawing upon her experiences in volunteering with programs that help families cope effectively during military service, Dr. McDonough wanted to provide students and social service professionals with opportunities to become educated about military culture. She encourages the students in her course to volunteer in reintegration programs on weekends and the U-M M-SPAN (Military Support Programs and Networks) initiative "Strong Families".

The availability of field placements that work directly with service members, veterans, and their families is currently very limited. Through this class, the hope is to expand the opportunities for students to experience some of the things that exist in military culture and to serve our service members and their families. ♦

Resources for Social Workers Working with Military Populations

Center for Deployment Psychology at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

<http://deploymentpsych.org/>

Military Support Programs and Networks at the U-M Depression Center

<http://m-span.org/>

Jobs for working with the VA or other military-related careers

www.usajobs.com

Website dedicated to what military life is like (with an extensive list of resources)

www.intheirboots.com

Ways for professionals to give back

www.giveanhour.org

www.aihfs.org/



Student Spotlight: Jessica Bailey Advocating for Underserved Native American Veterans

By Nastassja Cuellar-Wilson

Jessica Bailey is an Advanced Standing student concentrating in Interpersonal Practice and Mental Health. She is currently placed at American Indian Health & Family Services of Southeastern Michigan, Inc. (AIHFS) where she has taken the initiative to bring more attention to the Native American veteran population.

“I wanted to address both Native Americans and service members. Using my resources that I have at AIHFS, I have been able to bring it together.”

Jessica Bailey

Jessica has been personally touched by the military, having had many close friends and family members that have served. In combination with her desire to work with the Native American community due to her Native heritage, she developed a passion for Native American Veterans. As Jessica began to research this interest, she realized that there was little research on the Native American population in general and even less on the Native American Veteran population specifically. When Jessica began to ask around her field site to learn more about this population, her colleagues were only able to give her information based on their personal knowledge of clients or family members. It became clear to Jessica that, in addition to a lack of research, there were few programs for Native American Veterans and current active-duty Native Americans and their families. Realizing that there

was a population so underserved under the auspices of her own agency, Jessica has developed a project to bring attention to the lack of services and information about Native service members, veterans, and their families.

AIHFS is the recipient of the Garrett Lee Smith Suicide Prevention State/Tribal Grant. This grant has helped bring attention to the suicide rates of Native Service Members and Veterans between the ages of 18-24. Thanks to the funding, Jessica has been able to accomplish her goal of hosting an event to help expand awareness of Natives in the military.

On March 29th, AIHFS hosted a “Meet and Greet” for professionals and others who work with Native and non-Native veterans, service members, and their families. Jessica’s goal was to provide the attendees with a place where all professionals involved with the population can work together to bridge the gap between the Native American service member population and available services. “I wanted to address both Native Americans and service members. Using my resources that I have at AIHFS, I have been able to bring it together. I hope to have this program develop into a regulated educational service for the community to build more networks and referrals for this targeted population,” Jessica explained.

The Meet and Greet featured a brief overview of Native American cultural information, AIHFS agency information, and a statistical summary of



the Native American population within the military. This event also kicked off the planning process for a future feast honoring Native veterans, service members, and their families.

At the feast, there will be small presentations about services that can be utilized by the audience and an informal dinner for everyone to talk and network. Pending input from Native veterans, AIHFS may host a flag ceremony and an honor song by a Native drum group in honor of veterans, service members, and their families.

Jessica encourages anyone interested in volunteering for the feast to contact her at jbailey@aihfs.org. ♦

Student Spotlight: Sarah Sebaly

Homeless Vets Reintegration Project

By Nastassja Cuellar-Wilson

Sarah is 16-month student concentrating in Management of Human Services with Community and Social Systems. She is a Community Based Initiative scholar working with the Homeless Vets Reintegration Project (HVRP) at Southwest Housing Solutions in Detroit. Sarah is particularly interested in working with the military population due to her “lived military experience”—her boyfriend is an officer in the United States Navy. Through the experience of having a partner in the military, she became fascinated with issues facing service members.

Through the HVRP, all branches of all ages are served as long as they have veteran status, including Guard and Reserve veterans. As Sarah explained, the need of the veteran population is extensive: “The veteran population specifically needs help reintegrating on every front. We focus so much on housing, that we are missing the wrap-around services. We do our best to refer to other agencies, provide counseling, and do all that we can, but with such a great need, it is extremely diffi-

cult. Additionally, the problems will only increase with the massive amounts of veterans returning to civilian life. We need to perfect our processes now so that we are better prepared to handle the future.”

“...the problems will only increase with the massive amounts of veterans returning to civilian life.”

Sarah Sebaly

Sarah has found that her experience in the Social Work with Military Families class is helping her better understand the challenges faced by service members, veterans, and their families. She views the guest speakers, many of who are veterans themselves, as a learning opportunity in engaging and interacting with veterans. A lot of the themes discussed in class are pertinent to her placement and help her when interacting with clients. She is also realizing that the more she interacts with veterans and learns from class, the more passionate she becomes about the field. “Every time I hear a new problem, from educa-



Sarah Sebaly, MSW student

tion mismatches to childcare mishaps, I want to do everything!” Sarah exclaimed.

At Sarah’s field placement she describes herself as wearing many hats, but one of her primary responsibilities has been to plan a “Stand Down”. “A Stand Down,” Sarah explained, “is a huge one- or two-day event with tons of vendors to support our veterans with all services [including] counseling, health care, housing, food, [and] employment.” This event was particularly important because it served as an opportunity for veterans to receive the wraparound services that specialized programs are unable to provide. It was also an opportunity for the public (and students) to get involved and volunteer to help this event go smoothly. The goal was for the veterans who attend to utilize as many of the services being offered as possible.

The HVRP Stand Down took place April 13th from 9 am – 4pm at the Smith Homes Community Center in Detroit.

Those who are interested in other volunteer opportunities with HVRP can contact Sarah at ssebaly@swsol.org. ♦



Sarah’s partner is an officer in the US Navy



Intern Spotlight: Sandra Holt

Hidden Gems: SPE Students and the Curtis Center

By Dafnah Meron

Most students in the School of Social Work know how easy it is to come across an Interpersonal Practice (IP) student, but students in Social Policy and Evaluation (SPE)—our program's least-represented curriculum method—seem to be a little more difficult to find. This writer happened to track down one of these rare students in an often-overlooked corner of the school's lower level.

Sandra Holt is a 16-month SPE student concentrating in Community and Social Systems. She is from Muskegon, MI and has a BA in psychology from MSU. Sandra got into community-based work through a mentoring program she participated in junior year of college. When asked what brought her to SPE, Sandra explained that she actually started out as an IP student, and was very comfortable with it, but felt like she wanted to diversify her skills in other areas.

Sandra was initially exposed to research and evaluation work through her involvement in the Adolescent Diversion Project at Michigan State University and had a positive experience with it. "I decided to change to SPE and I'm absolutely happy with that decision. Since I'm not as well-versed in policy, I'm really enjoying learning about it and expanding my understanding of systems level approaches to social work," Sandra shared. She started to chuckle as she went on, "Policy is so interesting because everyone thinks it's so scary, and it's really not!"

In terms of future career paths, Sandra is open to different possibilities, but has been giving thought to pursuing a career as a program evaluator for community-based projects. She's doing a great job of preparing for it by interning with Sue Ann Savas, clinical faculty member, in the Curtis Center Program Evaluation Group (CC-PEG) as her field placement. While interning, she is learning valuable skills like logic modeling, evaluation planning, tool assessment, data collection, and report writing.

Just like our SPE students, the Curtis Research Center is another hidden gem of the School of

Social Work. Located in a corner of the Lower Level, it's easy to miss on your way down to the Lower Atrium. The mission of the Curtis Center is to support faculty engaged in research that creates social change by furthering society's understanding and treatment of behavioral and physical health conditions. Special emphasis is placed on research designed to improve the lives of underserved populations.

The two main components of the center are intellectual and research development, and program evaluation. Sandra explained how valuable the Curtis Center can be to students because of the technical assistance and resources offered for any research-related work. As an intern, Sandra is a part of the Program Evaluation Group that contracts out to organizations (like many of our other field placement agencies). She currently is working with the Michigan Criminal Reform Project. This non-profit organization, under the American Friend's Service Committee, advocates for individual prisoners' rights and prison reform and systemic change in Michigan's justice system. Sandra is helping them to develop an annual report. She explained how important it is for an organization to have an annual report, but to assist in the development of one, there needs to be a system to track and document the efforts of employees and how they affect the bigger issues.

When asked what her experience has been like in her field placement at the Curtis Center, Sandra said, "It's something totally new. Sometimes it feels overwhelming, but it's nice to be put into something that has a degree of discomfort because that's what leads to growth and discovery. It's been fun!" She feels many students still have no idea what the Curtis Center is or how it could be her field placement, but she hopes it becomes more recognizable and suggests students start taking advantage of the resources they have to offer.

To learn more about the Curtis Center, visit <http://sww.umich.edu/curtiscenter> or stop by and visit! ♦



Sandra Holt, MSW student

I think a child at my field placement is being abused. What should I do?

Social workers are mandated reporters. We have a legal and ethical obligation to report any reasonable suspicion of abuse and/or neglect of a child or vulnerable adult. What does this mean for graduate students in the field?

Firstly, student interns **MUST NOT** contact Protective Services by themselves.

If you suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is being abused or neglected you should:

- ◆ Notify your field instructor or another staff member immediately
- ◆ Share your concerns with your field instructor even if you merely **SUSPECT** abuse/neglect but have no concrete evidence
- ◆ If agency staff decide to call Protective Services, you may be able to be present when the call is made and participate in documenting what has been disclosed/observed—discuss your role in the process with your field instructor
- ◆ Take time to process the experience and your emotions. Encountering abuse or neglect can be a source of vicarious trauma for practitioners—take care of yourself!
- ◆ When in doubt, shout! Be sure to contact your field liaison with any questions or concerns

National Placements

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Opportunities for Women, as well as the Department of Health and Human Services and National Association of Social Workers.

Approximately 15 to 18 MSW students participate in the University sponsored spring break trip to Washington D.C. each year, where they have the opportunity to network and interview with potential summer placement locations.

Field faculty member Warren Clark provides support to



Field faculty Warren Clark

social work students in Washington D.C. for the spring/summer term. During this time, Warren works to establish new and existing field placement commitments for the following year.

National field placements in Washington D.C. offer a unique opportunity to MSW students where they get to work shoulder to shoulder with individuals and organizations that are working to bring about positive change in our society, and what better place to participate in advocating for positive change than in Washington D.C. ◆

Power or Privacy: The Ethical Dilemma of Social Networking

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around privacy, branding, and representation. That's why I think that before this awesome tool is used, policies and ground rules should be at least considered if not firmly established."

People are not necessarily fully aware of the privacy and security risks of social networking. This is of particular concern to those agencies who work with children and vulnerable adults, who may not be able to understand some of the risks involved. Posting information online is extremely easy; people may not always take time to reflect before revealing per-

sonal details. Even by posting a thank you note on an agency's page, clients may inadvertently reveal to their employer, school, family and friends that they have received services. For agencies that work with stigmatized and oppressed populations such as the LGBTQ community, incarcerated populations, the mentally ill, survivors of domestic violence or people with drug and alcohol dependencies, such accidental breaches of privacy could negatively impact the well-being and even the physical safety of their service participants.

However, many social work agencies are still willing to try new ways to serve their clients through social networking and are looking for opportunities to utilize the powerful potential of social networking while minimizing the potential risks. Hollins says, "I imagine the use of social networking will only grow. As we develop more comprehensive policies and procedures, more of the agency's programs will be able to brand themselves and market via social media, allowing more visibility to community members." ◆



Social work intern Kyle Brickner, MSW alumna Sirene-Rose Lipschutz, and mentor Darlene Ray-Johnson enjoy Thanksgiving dinner with a group of Blavin Scholars

Agency Spotlight: The Blavin Scholars Program Fostering Futures

By Sirene-Rose Lipschutz, MSW Alumna

The Blavin Scholars Program consists of a scholarship and program designed to support U-M students who were formerly in foster care through their undergraduate degrees and prepare them for future endeavors, whether in their careers or continuing education. The program originated as a scholarship endowed by Paul Blavin, a U-M alumnus and entrepreneur.

It soon became obvious that these students needed more than just money to see them through. Thus, in 2009, the Blavin Scholars Program was created. Key players, including staff from housing, financial aid, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), and University Health Services (UHS) were recruited and educated about the specific needs of this student population. The Blavin Scholars staff serve as point people to connect the scholars to important resources on campus, at a local level, and

across Michigan. The program's staff is also dedicated to outreach and education about the foster care population.

“These children didn’t choose to be in foster care ... they should have a choice about their future.”

Paul Blavin

Just over a year ago, the Blavin Scholars Program introduced a mentoring program that has been successful so far. The program is different from others in that it connects scholars with University of Michigan faculty and staff, who are either paired with a student through an application process, or sought out as individuals whose interests and experience aligned with a specific student's needs. Mentors and scholars meet one-on-one, but are also invited to group activities. In the past year, pairs have taken

part in activities including a scavenger hunt, a home-cooked Thanksgiving dinner, and a U-M basketball game. This program is currently undergoing evaluation with the input of all those involved to help make it the best mentor program possible.

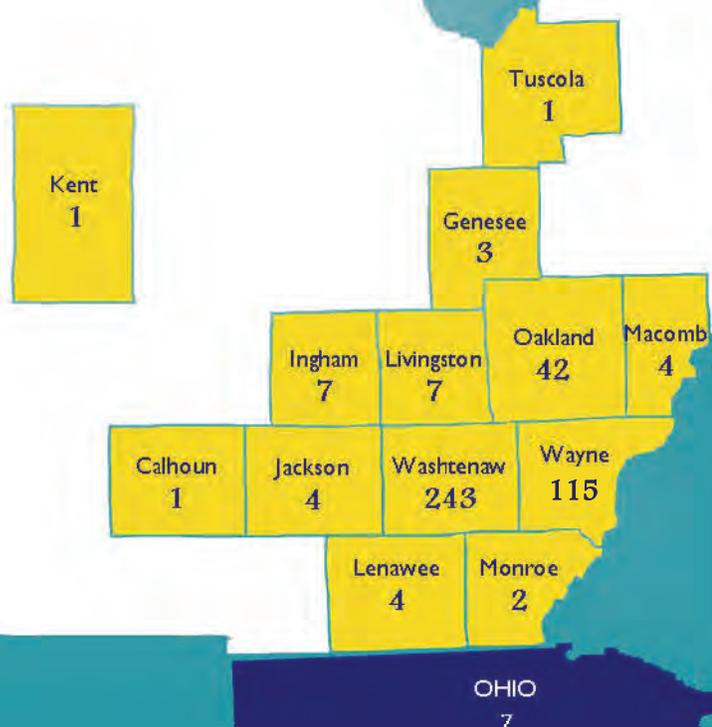
Kyle Brickner is a 16-month, MSW candidate who is currently doing his field work in the Blavin Scholars Program. In his placement, he believes he has attained numerous skills to transfer to his next place of employment. He has learned to critically and constructively apply knowledge gained in the classroom to his practice as a case manager. It has been extremely helpful to use evidence-based research, which aids in identifying the sources of political, social, and economic inequalities that impact foster care youth, in order to continually guide the design and development of the program. Kyle states that he has begun to understand

Continued on page 14

Map of Winter 2012 Field Placements

Student Placements by County

This semester, our **441 STUDENTS** in field will have contributed **110,583 HOURS** of service to the social service organizations of Michigan (and Ohio)...the equivalent of **12.6 YEARS** of time.



Field faculty Olivia Kuester's field seminar enjoys the sunshine



Thoughts on Diversity

By Kathy Bolton

In field seminar, we are asked to think about and discuss the importance of acknowledging and respecting diversity. Here are some students' thoughts on diversity in social work and in field placement:

"Diversity is an essential component of any kind of work a social worker undertakes. Without understanding our own background and belief systems, we risk misjudging our clients and failing to accurately assess their situations. I have been fortunate to work in many diverse settings with clients who have allowed me to understand my own background better and how to deconstruct any preconceived notions I may have regarding people who are both similar and different from me." *Syma Khan*

"Humility is very important to keep in mind. I know for sure that I won't understand or be able to figure out what a client's cultural make up or history is, but asking questions in a polite and appropriate way can provide you with the answers... clients seem to be very receptive to efforts made to have a deeper understanding of their life." *Jessica Jurek*

"Every therapeutic interaction is a cross-cultural interaction where learning, psycho-education, and goal-making takes place in order to be successful as a practitioner and as a client. It is important that

I recognize my patients individually and...leave behind my own biases and provide my patient(s) with the best care possible." *Erica Riba*

"As a child, I was taught to honor and respect people whether they were similar or different from me ... everyone deserves respect and understanding The education I am receiving through the school of social work is serving to reinforce ... how I already felt about diversity; the importance of honoring and respecting others for who they are and what they believe." *Kathy Bolton*

"Diversity does not just mean race and gender, but covers the vast span of human existence and experience. My supervisor and I have been discussing ways to respect and address diversity issues in a culturally competent way, especially when these issues are ...broad. I have taken notice that the families I have seen thus far have been treated with the utmost respect and dignity and issues of diversity are not glossed over, but instead discussed openly and honestly." *Daniella Simon*

"At my internship [in a substance abuse clinic], I work mainly with middle-aged white and black low-income men-- totally out of my comfort zone. Just in the few sessions I have participated in with these men, I have gained so much awareness about them and myself. ...they want to be loving, reliable, and clean." *Tiffany Fouch*

"Diversity means recognizing the myriad ways individuals differ from one another and not being threatened by those differences, but rather aware of them and curious and open to understanding them.... A key way to appreciate diversity is to learn about it openly and not quietly act like it does not exist. I have a great opportunity in this way to model both inclusive, respectful language and honest exploration of diversity with my clients... The various social identities that we each carry with us influence and guide our lives in profoundly unique and interesting ways.... Respecting diversity as a social worker entails understanding my own layers and learning about those of others." *Kari Fedewa* ♦

Fostering Futures (continued from page 11)

the ways in which his social and cultural identities inform his practice, especially when building professional relationships with his coworkers as well as other colleagues on campus who come from different academic and professional backgrounds. This awareness has helped Kyle learn how to best advocate for and connect Blavin Scholar students to needed supports and services.

Originally, the Blavin Scholars field placement position was that of a “campus coach” – someone scholars could meet with one-on-one to

check in, discuss academic and personal concerns and progress, and who could provide support and resources when needed. Unfortunately, the nature of a field placement is that it is short-lived. While the short-term Campus Coach role works for some scholars, it does not work for others. Many of these students have difficulty building trust, and do not want to make a connection that will soon be broken. Therefore, the internship is now available as an opportunity for students who would like to work at a programmatic or systems level. ♦

Social Work Inspiration: An Angel in the Attic

By Kathy Bolton

My social work story began in the attic space of an old school in Royal Oak, Michigan. To get to that space, she and I had to walk down a long dimly lit hallway that led to a steep and narrow staircase, which seemed to take forever to climb. She always held my hand as we climbed those stairs. At the top of the stairs, a door opened to a small space with angled ceilings where there were two small wooden chairs and a desk by a window which looked out over the entrance to the school. We were up so high above everything. She was a willowy black woman with short smoothed hair that swept across her forehead. I was maybe five or six at the time, and looking up at her, she seemed so tall in that little attic.

One day, as we entered the room where we had met many times before, she told me, “I have a gift for you.” As I waited eagerly, she sat down next to me, placed a cup of water on the table, and handed me a small octagonal box with an opening that twisted into itself to close. She encouraged me open it—the box opened to revealed six tiny colored disks. As I removed one of the disks, she asked me if I knew what it could do. I had no idea. She in-



Parker elementary Facebook page

The former Parker Elementary School, Royal Oak, MI

structed me to put it into the water. I watched in amazement as the disk slowly opened into a beautiful flower.

“You didn’t know it could do that, did you?” she said. “Well, you’re just like that little disk, you can grow up to be strong and beautiful and do anything you want to do.”

I have never forgotten that memory. It wouldn’t be until many years later, when I was in college, that I would realize the woman who had touched my heart was a social worker. I hope one day to be half as

inspiring as she was to me when her love and kindness made all the difference.

You see, my story is the story you are all going to hear hundreds if not thousands of times throughout your careers: A kid grows up in a not-so-functional family and struggles to find her way in a world that appears to be working against her. You are going to be the ones called upon to help her find her way—and if you reach out to her with love, you will never go wrong. ♦

Announcements

M School of Social Work Office of Continuing Professional Education

Free Registration for Current Field Instructors

The Office of Continuing Professional Education is pleased to announce that, effective immediately, current, active U-M School of Social Work field instructors may register for any workshop and/or mini-course for **FREE** (institutes and certificate program courses are *not* included).

Visit us online for a complete listing of our programs, www.ssw.umich.edu/programs/ce.

To register, www.ssw.umich.edu/programs/ce/welcome.html.

We look forward to your attendance at our upcoming programs.

M School of Social Work Office of Field Instruction

Future Brown Bag Sessions

The Office of Field Instruction wants to know what topics you would like to see at future Brown Bag sessions.

Please send us your suggestions by completing this survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NPBBF6Z>

Thank you!

M School of Social Work Office of Field Instruction

Field Instructors: Watch the Mail!

The Office of Field Instruction will be sending out important information about how you can obtain a newly **required** U-M account. This account provides field instructors access to the School of Social Work's online system using their assigned unique name (username) and password. It also provides access to UM Google tools like email, calendars, apps, docs and much more by simply logging in using your assigned unique name and password.

Please join us as we migrate field-related activities and forms (including the Educational Agreement) online! Simply fill out the forms and return them to the School using the self-addressed stamped envelope in the mailer. Please note: all field instructors are required to have a UM account before Fall 2012 so please act right away. Your prompt attention and cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Please contact the Office of Field Instruction with any questions (mrwortz@umich.edu).



Community Office Hours

As a proud member of the Metro Detroit Community, Google Ann Arbor is excited to be hosting community office hours as an opportunity for local nonprofits and small businesses to get their questions related to Google products* answered.

You're invited to join us at our Office Hours which are held at the McKinley Towne Center every Thursday from 11:00am to 1:00pm. Simply sign up for a 20 minute appointment and one of our Google Gurus will provide one-on-one help with your question or concern.

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When
Thursday afternoons
11am-1pm

RSVP (required)
<https://sites.google.com/site/googa2officehours/>

Where
McKinley Towne Center
201 S. Division Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

If you have any questions, please send them to a2communityofficehours@google.com. We look forward to seeing you at Community Office Hours!

The Office of Field Instruction
offers our congratulations to
our graduates!



We wish you
the best as
you begin
your social
work careers.

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www.ssw.umich.edu/programs/msw/ofi

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