Since the rise of globalization in the 20th century, international social work has been loosely defined as the global extension of the field of social work. The mission of international social work ranges from "relieving human suffering" (International Medical Corps, n.d.) to "[promoting] social work, best practice models, and facilitation of international cooperation," (International Federation of Social Workers, n.d.). International social work is sometimes defined more generally as disseminating resources and information across borders, but most social workers would agree that relaying information is not enough to promote social justice, which requires an assessment of needs, programming tailored to those needs, and evaluation. When considering social work programming efficacy locally or globally, Andrew Grogan-Kaylor, Associate Professor at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, emphasizes the question, "Does it work, or does it not work? Are our programs and interventions really having beneficial effects for those we claim to serve?"

Definitions gain significance in international social work primarily because the field of social work is so expansive. In the 1950s, the US Council on Social Work Education limited the term "International Social Work" to any professional level work done through the United Nations or an international non-governmental organization (NGO). In the more than sixty years since this definition was created, technologies have changed but the core ideas in social work have remained the same. Dr. Larry Root, Director of the Office of Global Activities at the School of Social Work, notes that international social work is, "social work dealing directly with problems that rise from or reflect cross-national issues [which] could be done in this country or elsewhere."

Positions geared specifically towards international social work can be hard to come by. In "How to Snag a Job in International Social Work," Ann McLaughlin, LMSW, highlights the challenges associated with gaining access to international social work occupations, including the high level of competition, lack of resources (a trademark of social work), and cultural components. Professor Grogan-Kaylor reiterates that, "developing a toolkit of specific skills will take [a professional social worker] far in either domestic or international work." There are many international opportunities through which a 'toolkit' can be developed at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. Dr. Larry Root stated that there are 31 students going abroad this year. Any social work student is eligible to participate in global special studies, which are largely student-driven projects. There are also currently seven approved International Field Placement sites. The Peace Corps Masters International program, along with the Coverdell Fellows Program for returned Peace Corps volunteers, are opportunities for two years of applied international experience. Aside from the Peace Corps, there are many international volunteering opportunities that range from a few weeks to a few years, though few opportunities outside of the Office of Global Activities guarantee professional social work expe-
In Field Seminar, we set ground rules in the first session. My favorite of all of them is “step up and step back”. That ground rule has been the theme of this past term as I “stepped up” and into the role of Interim Director of the Office of Field Instruction (OFI) and have now “stepped back” into my role as field faculty.

The Director of the Office of Field Instruction, Betsy Voshel, was offered the opportunity to take a term of sabbatical, which is somewhat unusual for this position. She wrote, interviewed, and traveled to Hong Kong and Australia, all in the name of field work. She met with field educators and learned about field programs from an international perspective, as well as from a national view. As you read this issue of Field Notes, you will see pictures and comments about her explorations. Betsy also interviewed the Director of the Center for Excellence in Interprofessional Education at New England University. I’ve included the link, so you can read the article: [http://fieldeducator.simmons.edu/article/interprofessional-education-and-social-work/](http://fieldeducator.simmons.edu/article/interprofessional-education-and-social-work/)

As the Interim Director I attended meetings within the school and gained more insight into committee work here at the UM School of Social Work. In this role, I needed to think about when to step up and represent OFI and when to step back and listen to others’ ideas. This was no different from other venues where social work happens. As professional social workers, we need to remember that listening is a big part of what we do, and we must learn to do it well and role model it for our students. I remind students that one marker indicating the integration of their social work education into their professional identity is when they listen, really listen to those around them. They are not thinking about the chores they need to do, the paper that needs to be written, or trying to formulate a response; they are listening. We need to be sure we are not just repeating what we’ve heard but are able to identify the emotions that accompany the words. We should ask if our reflection of the conversation is accurate. One method often shared in learning listening skills is the LARA method: Listen, Affirm, Respond, Add. As professionals, we should be able to hear opposing points of view, ask clarifying questions, and seek solutions that are mutually beneficial.

Teaching listening skills in the field and in the classroom means that we have to be excellent listeners, and that we need to help our students gain this skill, as it is a conduit to becoming a professional social worker. It doesn’t matter the method or area of practice; communication skills are the beginning of all relationships. If you look at the NASW Code of Ethics, each of the ethical principles (Service, Social Justice, Dignity and Worth of the Person, Importance of Human Relations, Integrity and Competence) all begin with our ability to communicate.

I wasn’t the only one who stepped up and stepped back over the course of this term. As I “step back” into the role of field faculty, I know that I spent the last term improving my listening skills in academia in my role as Interim Field Director, as well as in my field liaison role. Our excellent OFI team also “stepped up” and worked with some of my students and assisted with other responsibilities and duties, as did the “faculty in the field” who were flexible and accommodating. I am grateful for the opportunities that I had and appreciative of the support I received throughout the term.
OFI Welcomes New Social Work Resident:
Annie Kennedy

Annie joined the Office of Field Instruction in January 2014. She primarily works as a field liaison for students, in addition to developing curriculum for Field Seminar and helping to pilot the new online educational agreement. Before joining the OFI team, Annie worked as a Writing Teacher at The Family Learning Institute, an Ann Arbor nonprofit that serves exceptionally bright and sassy 2nd-5th grade students. She holds a BA in Fiction Writing from Columbia College Chicago and a MSW from the University of Michigan. Outside of work, you can often find Annie traveling around Michigan in her car, Charlotte, named after the heroic spider in Charlotte’s Web.

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An Advocate for Adventure

Corey Abernethy is a 20-month student in Interpersonal Practice and Children and Youth in Families and Society. She is also pursuing the School Social Work Certificate. Corey is someone who found her passion at an early age. In the 4th grade, she attended a summer camp that incorporated adventure therapy, sometimes referred to as wilderness therapy, and loved the experience. At that time, she began to develop an understanding of the power of simplicity, a facet of many of the activities adventure therapy utilizes and the environments where it is conducted. Adventure therapy is a unique form of therapy, similar to play therapy, that is particularly effective with children. It is about building trust and relationships; for children, play is so normal that adventure therapy makes the development of a therapeutic relationship easier.

With her exposure to adventure therapy, Corey realized she wanted to work outdoors and be interactive as a social worker. Adventure therapy allowed her to be a part of the change and more than just a facilitator. It was this passion that led Corey to explore adventure therapy at the University of Michigan, but it was not until taking Tony Alvarez’s course on adventure therapy that Corey had a name for her passion. Before taking his course, she simply knew that she wanted to do therapy that incorporated nature and physical activity.

It was also in this course that Corey learned about Holiday Camp, an adventure therapy retreat developed by Tony Alvarez and Gary Stauffer that was originally a nonprofit serving children and youth with disabilities. She then sought out a field placement working with a colleague and former student of Tony’s – Jason Ostifin, the current director of Holiday Camp.

Corey is currently doing her field placement for the Monroe Intermediate School District, which operates Holiday Camp. She spends one day each week at Bedford Junior High School, providing social work services to students through peer to peer groups and one on one meetings that incorporate adventure therapy. Corey spends an additional two days at Holiday Camp, which conducts adventure therapy programs for students throughout the entire year.

By Keli Peterson

Animal Therapy

As social workers, it is important not to discredit the importance of animals in the lives of our clients or the role they can have in our work. Most people can quickly bring to mind a special animal or pet that brings them joy. In a field that focuses on identifying and building an individual’s strengths and helping them build strong support systems social workers sometimes overlook the opportunity to provide interventions that incorporate this relatively universal bond with their furry (and less furry) friends.

In “The Science Behind Animal-Assisted Therapy,” Dawn A. Marcus (2013) collected the science behind why animal visits have been shown to reduce pain and suffering in chronically ill patients. When therapy dogs visit, patients experience decreased catecholamines and increased endorphins, which results in reduced pain levels. In an additional study that compared impressions of therapy dog visits with those of a human visitor, 70% of patients reported that their therapy was easier after the dog visit, and 70% were likely to look forward to the dog visit.

By Jordan Cusumano & Camilla Reynolds

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The Youth Arts Alliance (YAA) is an arts collaborative that provides creative arts workshop opportunities for incarcerated and at-risk youth in southeast Michigan. Each week, more than 125 youth in residential treatment and detention centers participate in YAA programming, with one participant saying the collaborative “offers a space where adolescents can take anger and feelings out on paper.”

YAA workshops began in January 2013 as an extension of the Prison Creative Arts Project, a similar program for adults who are incarcerated. The YAA offers 90-minute workshops over twelve week increments in visual arts, music, creative writing, and theater, tapping into the creative talents of youth who represent five Michigan counties. The benefits are both qualitative and quantitative: the youth report “feeling apathetic [before the workshop] and [leaving] proud and enthusiastic,” while the staff report lower incidences of seclusions. This translates to youth being less likely to exhibit impulsive behaviors and more likely to successfully self-regulate.

Though the healing capabilities of the arts spans centuries, with the ancient Egyptians using art for mental health therapy, these programs are often the last to be created and the first to be terminated. Collaboration between Washtenaw, Livingston, Lenawee, Jackson, and Monroe counties, in conjunction with the efforts of YAA Director, Heather Wilson, has ensured long-term stability for the program. Facility administrators from each county have acknowledged the tremendous impact YAA has on the youth who currently reside in the lockdown facilities and have continued funding even after initial grant monies ran out. YAA is currently the only municipally funded collaborative arts project for youth in the juvenile justice system, and additional grants will bring in local artists Yusef Lateef, Keely Jackson, and Javier Pescador to facilitate workshops for the youth.

To date, YAA has brought the arts to more than 450 youth through 1,400 workshop experiences. Over 45 community members and students have volunteered as workshop facilitators, making the 14 workshops offered a week possible. YAA seeks the talents of local professional artists, as well as everyday folks, with Heather stating that many of the volunteers learn different mediums of art alongside the adolescents. This interaction is equally powerful and meaningful for all parties involved, as the arts communicate ideas that are at times inaccessible and can often elicit emotions that feel more true than reality alone. YAA offers a space where young people can be philosophers, creators, and artists. Through a variety of artistic modes, these adolescents capture and share authentic ideas. Chaza, a poetry workshop participant, captured the fickleness of human emotion, the desire to be loved, and the heartache of hard times. She writes, “How I feel will not last, nor will my past... Life will show me, kick me, shove me, and if I’m lucky, life might love me.”

If you are interested in the arts, workshop facilitation, or both, please contact Heather Wilson at wilsonh@washtenaw.org to become a creative arts workshop facilitator or volunteer.
Changes in Medicaid Service Delivery:

By Hilary Russell

Regardless of the specific field of practice, social workers are required to provide a wide range of services to clients. Such services may include emotional support through individual counseling, concrete assistance such as housing or food resources, or the creation of programs for individuals within the community. One service that all social workers are required to provide to clients, regardless of the specific field and population, is advocacy. For social workers focusing on the macro fields, advocacy on a large scale is an expected and important part of their job. However, social workers concentrating on micro level social work, such as working with individuals or families, may not see large scale advocacy as an essential part of their work. Such social workers jump at the chance to advocate for their clients in courtrooms and schools, but advocating for an entire community may not seem like part of their job description. However, this is not the case. Both macro and micro level social workers can play an important role in large scale advocacy efforts. The changes put forth by the Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS/CPT) in Michigan on October 1, 2013 and the immense efforts to reverse this law demonstrate the importance of advocacy for social workers in all fields and the enormous power such advocacy efforts can have.

The changes to the code requirements put forth by the HCPCS/CPT in October 2013 modified the provision of Medicaid services for social service consumers in the state of Michigan. Such changes could have had extensive consequences for students, Michigan universities, service providers, and the consumers of such services. The changes endangered the field placement education for Master of Social Work (MSW) students, as well as their future career opportunities. The law dictated that MSW students who were not a Licensed (LBSW) or Limited Licensed Bachelor-level Social Worker (LLBSW) must be directly supervised during all assessment and therapy sessions involving clients with Medicaid, meaning that MSW students without these provisions were no longer able to provide any independent services to consumers without a LMSW also being present. Many students do not enter graduate level social work programs with a LBSW or LLBSW, as they plan to continue their education to obtain a MSW. Other students achieve undergraduate degrees in areas other than social work, making them ineligible for a LBSW or LLBSW. As a result of this, Michigan students seeking a MSW may have chosen to obtain such education outside the state. Many students may have also chosen to continue living in those states, rather than returning to Michigan to practice. This would have a very unfortunate effect for those needing services in Michigan. Fewer trained social work service providers would mean that the availability of services would reduce and the cost would increase. Further, students that chose to attend a social work graduate program in Michigan would risk being inadequately prepared for independent practice and licensure following graduation.

The law change also had extreme impacts on the seven universities in the state of Michigan offering social work graduate programs. Overall, the ability of these universities to adequately prepare MSW students for professional social work was in jeopardy. The new law also threatened the ability of universities to meet the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation...
The Power of Advocacy

standards. With MSW students being prohibited from working independently with clients, the ability for these students to develop independent, professional competence and readiness for professional, ethical practice was hindered. Essentially, the new law eliminated a part of the competency-based learning process deemed essential by the CSWE. Such accreditation concerns may have caused students to seek a MSW in other states, which would have had a substantial financial impact on Michigan universities. Additionally, universities would have faced a potential reduction in grants, as many grant opportunities depend on field placements and student enrollment. Such grant reduction influences the overall viability of schools of social work. Further, the law may have caused many agencies to withdraw from providing supervision to MSW students. This would have drastically limited the number of agencies available for students to complete their field placements. Many universities are already struggling to find a placement for each student. If Michigan universities could not provide internship sites for students, students would be blocked from completing their education, which would ultimately limit the number of trained social workers entering the workforce in Michigan.

This change would have also impacted agencies within the state. The required direct supervision of interns during all face-to-face work involving clients with Medicaid meant that agencies would need more staff and resources to accommodate the students, thus reducing the agency’s ability to serve clients. Prior to the change in the law, many agencies used students to expand their treatment capacity and to ensure they met Department of Community Health (DCH) reporting requirements. The changes may have caused agencies to feel that they receive no significant gain from taking on students and could have withdrawn from providing such services to universities. Providing indirect supervision and completing all requirements associated with being a MSW student’s supervisor is already a time consuming task, and the additional required hours of direct supervision may have been too large of a commitment for agencies to make.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) described the former method of MSW students providing services to clients as “sound and time-tested.” Given the potential negative impacts this law could have had, all parties involved expressed great concerns. The NASW Michigan Chapter and numerous collaborators were strong advocates against this change beginning immediately after the law was passed. Among these collaborators were numerous social service agencies and all seven Michigan universities. Their efforts included petitions on the NASW Michigan chapter’s website and meeting with legislators at the state capitol building. Thanks to the hard work of the countless collaborators advocating for this law to be changed, the Medicaid language was revised in March 2014, allowing MSW students to once again provide services independently to clients with Medicaid insurance. This is an excellent example of just how powerful advocacy can be when supportive, invested people are involved. It also demonstrates the importance of social workers from many different fields pooling their unique resources and acting as a team to advocate for necessary change.

Future updates regarding the revision of this law will be posted to the NASW Michigan Chapter’s website: http://www.nasw-michigan.org/.

Further questions may be directed to the NASW Michigan Chapter at: awachendorfer@nasw-michigan.org.
Psychoanalysis in Social Work

By Keli Peterson

Social workers have an incredible opportunity to apply their skills at the Clinical Moment events put on by the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute. At each event, a professional in the community presents a story about a case they are working on, and the attendees collectively analyze and discuss the case presented. These events offer social workers an opportunity to dialogue with other professionals, apply their therapeutic skills, and learn about a form of therapy they may not have previously utilized: psychoanalysis.

Each Clinical Moment event has a specific title based on the case presented. I attended the “Rivalry and Envy: Can They Cause Chronic Emotional Suffering?” event led by Dr. Michael Shulman and came away with a new perspective on psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis, as described by Dr. Shulman, is both a challenge and an invitation. He explained that the client brings their whole self to therapy or what is called analysis. The goal of psychoanalysis is to explore who a person truly is, what could be called their soul or essence. This form of treatment engages the mind and all of its layers, resulting in a unique type of intimate relationship between therapist and client. While therapy is a controlled environment, the client’s exploration and sharing of their life story leads the therapeutic relationship to become a form of intimate partnership, a shared effort in seeking understanding. This is something social workers may not have had the opportunity to practice, and these events allow an exploration into a unique form of therapeutic relationship.

Dr. Shulman’s presentation explored the importance of a single life event or experience in a client’s understanding of themselves. At times, clients may tell what seem to be insignificant stories to their therapists, which are simply seen as analogies or anecdotes and taken at face value. However, in psychoanalysis, these stories can be analyzed to provide useful insight into the client’s experience. The presentation further explored the importance of understanding the client’s perspective and how these small stories can provide a way to understand how the client sees a particular experience or even how they see themselves. These shared stories are just one of the ways the mind reveals things to both the client and the therapist, and this is an important part of psychoanalysis: identifying what aspects of the therapy session can reveal insight into the client’s mind and taking the time to realize what is being revealed.

All of the Clinical Moment events came from the framework of psychoanalysis but also offered insight into therapeutic interactions in general. Specifically, aspects of psychoanalysis can be incorporated into therapeutic interventions conducted by social workers. The analysis aspect of psychoanalysis is one that often is not practiced in social work and allows social workers to work towards understanding the complexities of a client, rather than focusing on resources or skills the client may need. While training in psychoanalysis is not part of the social work curriculum, social work students can benefit from thinking more deeply about their interactions with clients and seeing how the skills used in psychoanalysis can be applied to the generalist practice of social work. If students and professionals are interested in learning more about psychoanalysis, the Michigan Psychoanalytic Society frequently holds regular events in the Ann Arbor area. More information is available at http://www.mpi-mps.org/main/.

Student Spotlight: Greta Kaempf

World Traveler By Michael Lynch

Growing up in Harwood, Maryland, Greta Kaempf describes herself as always having a knack for adventure. In her early years, Greta’s adventures were limited to the creeks of her rural hometown and the recesses of her imagination through books. Those limitations, however, disappeared after she began her undergraduate career in Early Childhood Education at the University of North Carolina. Seeking global experience, Greta began her worldwide work early. Her first international venture came through studying abroad in Argentina and Chile. While in Argentina, Greta met a social worker helping homeless children attain safe housing. Though Greta remained in early childhood education, the start of her social work career was beginning.

After completing her undergraduate degree, Greta moved to Costa Rica and taught kindergarten for two years. Greta continued teaching after she returned to the United States, first

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The benefits of animal-assisted therapy were also studied by Tracy S. Geist. In “Conceptual Framework for Animal Assisted Therapy,” therapy dogs in a school setting were shown to help calm down and neutralize students with emotional disturbances or behavioral problems. Geist made the observation that children with these impairments are seen and appreciated by the therapy dogs, stating that “intervening in a student’s emotional state with animal-assisted therapy will break the sequence of negative automatic thoughts and help the student develop a healthier attachment and self-concept,” (2011, p. 248).

There are many ways to learn about using animals in therapy. In the Spring/Summer semester, a School of Social Work mini-course on the human-animal bond is taught by Professor Kristine Siefert. In addition to covering the use of animals in therapy, the course reviews the need for bereavement counseling for those who have lost animals, highlights effective interventions using animals, and explains the benefits of having a companion animal. Professor Siefert also gives resources for those considering future work with animals, including information on certificate programs.

In Washtenaw County, there are a select number of organizations that use animals in their work. Therapaws, whose mission is to “promote and foster the human-animal bond in therapeutic and educational settings,” sends volunteer-based human-dog teams into health settings, schools, and has even scheduled visits at the University of Michigan to help students deal with end of semester stress. The organization currently has 100 teams that visit 40 different facilities and is part of a national agency called Therapy Dogs Incorporated that has over 12,000 teams in the United States. You can read more about Therapaws at http://www.therapaws.org/

Therapeutic Riding, Inc. uses horses to help provide therapy to individuals. They serve a wide range of ages and offer individual or group lessons, summer camp, and field trips. They are also part of a national organization called The Professional Organization of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International. Their mission is “to provide recreational and therapeutic riding which develops physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities and enhances self-esteem.” You can read more about Therapeutic Riding at http://www.therapeuticridinginc.org/

Animal therapy can take many different shapes and forms. Therapaws and Therapeutic Riding, Inc. are two examples of animal therapy happening in our community. There are also many social service agencies that utilize animals in their work with their clients, such as Arbor Hospice and Catholic Social Services. Animal therapy can be done in almost any setting and has been shown to be very effective. Social work students that are interested in utilizing animals in therapy should consider taking the mini-course on the human-animal bond or volunteering at one of the agencies that provides animal-therapy in our community.


through a Head Start program in Alexandria, Virginia, and then at a bilingual school in Columbia Heights, Washington D.C. As Greta recalls her teaching experiences from Costa Rica to Washington D.C., it is apparent that the occupation was difficult to move on from. She describes her pupils as if they were her own children who have since grown up and moved out. Singing, dancing, playing ukulele, and naming pet fishes are all fond memories.

“I had been wanting to do the Peace Corps and graduate school,” Greta explained. She wanted to make a difference at the community level, where she could not do so as a teacher. The Peace Corps Masters International program is relatively new to the School of Social Work and runs on a four year schedule. The first year is completed on campus, followed by two years of service in the Peace Corps. The second year of the MSW program is completed on campus after the Peace Corps service. Greta will serve in Guatemala in the Youth and Development program, where she will likely be placed in a rural community where some dialects of Mayan are still spoken.

From her beginnings in rural Maryland to bustling cities in Costa Rica, Greta has found a way to call many different places ‘home.’ Her path as a social worker is not only less traveled but also largely uncharted. Each of us draws inspiration from unique sources. Greta finds some of hers in poems like “Terrain” by A. R. Ammons. The opening line reads, “The soul is a region without definite boundaries.” As Greta prepares to venture into the mountains of Guatemala, a new home for two years, we can hope that her indefinite soul connects to the local population.

“Microaggressions are the everyday slights, indignities, put downs, and insults that people of color, women, LGBT populations, or those who are marginalized experience in their day to day interactions with people.” Microaggressions can be conscious or unconscious and are often the result of assumptions made about others. Within the research on microaggressions, different definitions have been used, and the definitions are constantly evolving. Some definitions are more inclusive and consider all marginalized groups, while other definitions are less inclusive and take into consideration things like the intent of the speaker. Some definitions also consider a power dynamic and its impact on microaggressions – that when microaggressions occur from those with power against those who are disempowered, this increases the negative impact of the microaggression.

Microaggressions are something that happen everywhere, even within the School of Social Work. As social workers, we seek to further social justice, and microaggressions are an example of both a social injustice and a way of perpetuating imbalanced power structures. So what can we do, and how do we identify microaggressions when they happen? While microaggressions may be difficult to identify at first, dialogue and education can help them become easier to identify. Through dialogue, those who have experienced microaggressions can add their experience to the collective understanding of microaggressions. Through education, social workers can enhance their knowledge of the different aspects of microaggressions and how they can be communicated through words, as well as actions.
Number Fourteen

By Annie Kennedy

Five years ago, I didn’t know what a MSW was. Shock, horror, right? When I asked about what eventually became my first post-undergrad job, I got an email back from a woman with a laundry list of letters after her last name. I promptly hopped on Google and looked up the first three, because if she was going to be my boss, I thought I should at least know what MSW meant.

I graduated from the School of Social Work last year, and now I have my own collection of letters (eight, to be exact) after my last name. My job in the Office of Field Instruction has me co-facilitating Field Seminar, helping to pilot the new Online Educational Agreement (yes, everyone, it’s finally happening!), and, perhaps my most favorite part, being a Field Liaison for a cohort of 35 students. Not only is it a crash course in Michigan geography for this Illinoisan, it’s also an opportunity for me to get a firsthand glimpse into the impact our students are having in their organizations and communities.

Each liaison has their own way of conducting site visits. Stacy Peterson really emphasizes self-care, and Leigh Robertson has her students sum up their experience in one word. I’m still developing my own style, and one of the things I’ve started asking students is what their identity as a social worker looks like right now. Once that initial “Well, that’s a loaded question” feeling dissipates, I find that the underlying message of an appreciation of and respect for community and client engagement runs deep, no matter who answers the question. Whether it’s conscious or not, everyone is speaking a similar kind of social work language, one that ties together all thirteen competencies from the ed agreement.

I’ll be honest: when I had my first site visit, Su Crabb asked me to connect the competencies to what I was doing in my joint placement at 826michigan and Ozone House, and I immediately felt like I was back in elementary school, ill prepared for a test while my teacher stood at the front of the room, red pen in hand, waiting to mark up my paper with big fat F. My site visit wasn’t in a school, I wasn’t being quizzed, and Su prefers blue pens to red, but, even still, I panicked. “Was I in the right program?” I thought. “If I don’t know the competencies and how I’m using them now, does this mean I fail at social work?”

I’m sure you know the answer, but I’ll tell it to you anyway: of course not. I was in my first term of field, and I simply wasn’t thinking that way. In fact, I was still trying to figure out what social work meant for me, and while I have a much better handle on it now, I also recognize that my identity as a social worker will always be a fluid process. The same rings true for the competencies that I very ungracefully mumbled through last year, which, I promise, I got better at as time went on.

What started out as large and nebulous concepts that ran around in my head like an animal refusing to be lassoed remain just as giant and ambiguous now as they did then, but, as time progresses, I find that my rope throwing skills are becoming more refined. It will probably come as no surprise that I utilize the competencies every single day in my job. It will also probably come as no surprise that sometimes their integration into my work is very obvious, and sometimes it isn’t. If I tried to do each competency justice in this piece, you might have something halfway to a novella in your hands, and whether you’re a student or a Field Instructor, you probably have enough on your plate as it is.

What I can say, though, is this: “New-To-Field-First-Site-Visit Annie” would have jumped for joy at any blatant signs of competency connections, because I was navigating unfamiliar territory. As I transition into “Social-Worker-Field-Liaison Annie,” the terrain is still new, but my ability to tie those competencies to what I do at work isn’t as overwhelming as it was a year ago. When I think about what would have worked, then, to assuage any of my initial unease in starting field, I often consider the idea of a fourteenth competency: The Unknown. I’m not sure what the practice behaviors would look like, and it might make people frazzled, but bear with me for a moment. What if we purposefully gave ourselves the opportunity to cast a really wide net, see where it landed, and go from there? There are no easy answers in social work, and, sometimes, there are no answers at all. I didn’t know the intricacies of this field five years ago, and yet, here I am now, Annie Kennedy, MSW, LLMSW. I don’t know what my life or my career will look like in two years time when that first “L” gets dropped, but if there’s anything I’ve learned from immersing myself in this field, it’s that there’s a lot of beauty to be found in the things that I’m uncertain of. What it starts with is that first connection.
Microaggressions in the SSW

By Keli Peterson

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There are many things that can be done to combat microaggressions. One example of an effort to end microaggressions began in the Fall 2013 semester by the Association of Black Social Work Students. In the “Action on Race” event, faculty, staff, and students in the School of Social Work engaged in dialogue about the presence of microaggressions from both instructors and students, as well as other racial issues. One of the goals of the event was to develop initiatives that could be started immediately to address these issues within the School of Social Work. Through dialogue and a voting process, two initiatives came out of the event. The final initiatives were an African American Leadership Program and a Speak Up Campaign. These initiatives are currently being led by Phylicia Allen and Kimson Bryant, who are meeting with individuals within the School of Social Work, particularly the Office of Student Services, to move forward with these initiatives.

While this is just one example of an effort to end microaggressions, there is a range of actions that can be taken from the micro to macro levels. As individuals, we can speak out when microaggressions are used against us, confront others when they use microaggressions, and be mindful of our own language to ensure we do not use microaggressions against others. As a community, we can dialogue about the issue, create community initiatives, and seek to create a culture that does not allow incivility. On a macro level, we can develop policy that acknowledges microaggressions as a form of harassment, bullying, or other prohibited action and develop consequences for those who choose to use them.

Additionally, it is important to understand that microaggressions are not just a racial issue. Microaggressions can occur against any marginalized group. As members of the School of Social Work, we have an obligation to address these issues and take action for social justice. It is important to continue the dialogue around microaggressions as a profession and as a school. As a society, and especially as social workers, we must have an understanding of the impact our behavior can have on our community, the individuals around us, and ourselves.


Student Spotlight: Corey Abernethy

An Advocate for Adventure

By Keli Peterson

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At Holiday Camp, there are resources to implement adventure therapy, including a pool, pool house, high ropes, low ropes, swings, a cabin, and a river nearby. However, adventure therapy can be done without any tangible resources at all. It is about engaging individuals in a kinesthetic process in which they will develop skills that can be transferred back to their life experiences.

Corey has continued to explore areas of adventure therapy, both in her personal and professional life. Last summer, she interned in Oahu, Hawaii, doing sea adventure therapy that included going on 10-day long sailing voyages with at-risk adolescent males. Currently, she is doing a special studies with Tony Alvarez, working to implement peer to peer groups around the state of Michigan, developing an adventure therapy website as a resource for current and future students, and collaborating with the Office of Field Instruction to develop a survey to determine which field placements offer experiences with adventure therapy. Corey’s clear passion for social work and adventure therapy drives her to pursue ways to enhance the experiences of children in therapeutic settings, as well as help her peers and future colleagues to have a more fulfilling educational experience.
On March 29, 2014, the School of Social Work (SSW) hosted its fourth annual Social Justice Art Festival. Field Faculty Bill Vanderwill, with help from student volunteers and funding from the SSW Community Organization Learning Community, hosted the event. The theme for this year was “Creating Socially Just Neighborhoods.” The festival showcased art in all its shapes and forms: photography, music, spoken word, sculpture, paintings, dance, and much more. Both students and community members participated in and attended this exciting festival.

The Social Justice Art Festival gives individuals a voice and the opportunity to express themselves through art. There were many different themes throughout the art, including, but not limited to, racism, feminism, sexual violence, and ableism. All of these themes are current issues that individuals are dealing with in the community. The festival showcased work from many different artists, including those who may not normally have had the chance to have their art displayed. There was work from children, older adults, people with disabilities, professional artists, and international individuals, showcasing the diversity of our community.

Art and social justice is a growing trend in the social work field. In Detroit, people are using art to convey social justice issues. In the Springwells Village neighborhood, artists have painted around 50 murals. These murals give people in the community a chance to express themselves and also brighten up the streets. By painting these murals together, the community was inspired and enlivened.

The Social Justice Art Festival brought people together surrounding issues that were significant to them and started a dialogue around critical issues that our communities are facing. Most importantly, it gave people a chance to have a voice and a way to express themselves. This festival was a great example of the ways social justice and art can combine together and create something beautiful. For more information about future Social Justice Art Festivals, visit http://sswfair.wordpress.com/

Thank you to the following students who volunteered their time to put this festival together: Emily Whitley, Rachel Coe, Adrienna Perales, Maggie Chen, Sarah Beu, Miriam Holbrook, Reyna Asadizoudegani, Kimson Bryant, Andrea Picones, Maricela Solano Lopez, and Laura Alexander! Thanks also to Bill Vanderwill for his commitment to the Social Justice Art Festival and for all the hard work he has put in to making the festival a success!
Announcing the Online Educational Agreement!

The Office of Field Instruction is excited to announce that, after years of planning and designing, the Online Educational Agreement is now a reality. A group of 15 Foundation students and their Field Instructors participated in a pilot of the new Online Educational Agreement in Winter 2014. The same students and Field Instructors will participate in an Advanced version of the pilot in the Spring/Summer 2014 term, and the hope is to implement the Online Educational Agreement for all students in Winter 2015.

Here’s an example of what the educational agreement will look like!

The Online Educational Agreement is a positive development for students, Field Instructors, and Field Faculty. The pilot users have given us great feedback, and we are continuing to make improvements. A special thanks to Gordon Leacock and the Web Systems and Public Relations Team; Su Crabb, Interim Field Director; Annie Kennedy, Emma Rector, and Camilla Reynolds from the Office of Field Instruction; and Alia Wesala, Curriculum Coordinator, for their hard work on the project.

International Social Work

By Michael Lynch

Continued from page 1

“international social work is not different from social work in other contexts... it’s applying social work principles in areas that deal specifically with international issues.” The National Association of Social Workers defines those values as service, social justice, dignity and worth of individuals, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. Regardless of the context, space, or population, if these values are adhered to, not only does the profession of social work gain significance, but the world at large becomes more socially just. ◆


Student Spotlight: Emily Whitley

Art & Social Work

Since the 8th grade, Emily Whitley, a 16 month student studying Community Organization and Community and Social Systems, has loved to dance. After dancing on a competitive team and in high school, Emily began her college career as a Dance major at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Her educational trajectory changed, though, when she took a Race and Ethnicity in the U.S. course at a local community college. In gaining a heightened awareness of the realities of the world, Emily transferred to the University of California, Irvine, where she majored in Sociology with a minor in Psychology.

During her senior year, she interviewed clients with substance abuse and mental health issues at women’s shelters for her thesis. In learning about the women’s experiences, she began making connections between her project and the broader social science field, which led to a consideration of graduate programs in either counseling or social work. After a round of applications to California-based programs, one of her professors suggested she consider the University of Michigan, where he completed his postdoc. “One thing leads to another, and all the dots connect,” Emily said. “Life is kinda crazy that way.”

Emily is a recipient of the Community-Based Initiative (CBI) scholarship, which trains and supports MSW candidates in upholding social change in urban neighborhoods. CBI scholars take courses and complete their field placements in Detroit and the surrounding areas, which Emily says provides students with the unique experience of “learning in the context that you’re doing the work.” In her field placement at the Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance in Detroit, she works with a youth council of high school juniors and seniors. In her role with this group, she has been able to apply her background and passion for the arts and has seen the teens utilize art in order to come together with their neighbors and promote community engagement.

Emily’s ability to connect art and social justice also extends beyond her course and fieldwork. In addition to her work-study position with Professors Larry Gant and Lorraine Gutierrez, where she is assisting with the development of a course on arts and community change, she was the committee chair for this year’s Social Justice Art Festival and presented at the 2014 NASW Michigan annual conference with MSW candidate Kimson Bryant and Field Faculty Bill Vanderwill on the topic of Social Justice Art. Emily also works with Inside|Out, a community organization project through the Detroit Institute of Arts that involves the installation of masterpiece reproductions in different neighborhoods in the greater metro Detroit area.

Emily believes that if you are passionate about something, like the arts, and can find a way to incorporate it into your work, it will only make you a stronger, more well-rounded social worker. A part of that versatility comes with the notion that art can be applied in both micro and macro-level social work. For example, art therapy can help social workers and clients understand their worldviews and life experiences through the therapeutic expression of art. In the macro world, art can be a part of community organization, development, and empowerment, as Emily’s work in the Cody Rouge neighborhood shows. It has been her experience that art can spark conversations and provide people with a universal language. ◆
Betsy Voshel, Director of Field Instruction, and Katie Lopez, Program Manager from the SSW Office of Global Activities, traveled to the University of Hong Kong and met with the field education faculty team, visited agencies where our U-M exchange students are placed, and learned more about social work practice in Hong Kong. Betsy also traveled on to Melbourne during her sabbatical and met with the field department at the University of Melbourne, participated in an agency roundtable presentation, and visited agencies.

Hello from Hong Kong and Melbourne!

Many Thanks
to our Peer Facilitators!

Thank you to our Peers for their valuable contributions as co-facilitators for the SW531 Foundation Field Seminars in the Winter 2014 term.

Top, from left to right: Jessica Zacny, Annie Kennedy, and Anthony Provenzano. Bottom, from left to right: Janelle Goodwill and Steven Villereal
Announcements

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A FIELD INSTRUCTOR?

Do you know of any agencies that would be a good placement for a MSW student? Do you know someone who would be a great Field Instructor? The Office of Field Instruction is always looking for new learning opportunities for our students. If you know of any organizations or LMSWs who are interested in supervising students, you can refer them to the new agency information on our website or send their information to ssw-fieldoffice@umich.edu.

Check out the U-M SSW’s Continuing Education Certificate Programs!

See http://ssw.umich.edu/programs/continuing-education for more information!

Check out the new free social work journal, Reflections, available now especially for our alumni and field instructors!

reflections.narratives.of.professional.helping.org  username: umssw password: goblue

Did you see the article “U-M’s School of Social Work: Not Just an Ivory Tower?”

Accolades

Thank You Field Instructors!

The Office of Field Instruction would like to thank our Field Instructors for their time, commitment, and passion for the University of Michigan’s School of Social Work students. We owe the success of our field instruction program to the hard work and investment that the Field Instructors provide our students each day!

The next Field Instructor training will be held on October 3, 2014.
What’s Happening with the Field Staff!? 

Annie Kennedy graduated from the MSW program in December 2013 and did something she struggled with for the previous 16 months: reading books of her own choosing. Her favorite has been Stephen King’s Misery, which confirmed her theory that the Annie's depicted in pop culture can never catch a break.

Betsy Voshel went on sabbatical and traveled to Australia, Hong Kong, St. Lucia, and Ft. Myers Beach. She also helped her daughter and son-in-law move into their first house and spent quality time with her husband and dog.

Bill Vanderwill “adopted” a classroom at Harms School in southwest Detroit, where he provides funding for extra books and supplies for the students. He very much enjoys reading their “Mr. Bill” letters.

Camilla Reynolds started training for a 5K with her dog and began volunteering at The Ark.

Emma Rector loved watching her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter explore the outdoors for the first time. She and her husband recently bought a house in Ypsilanti.

Jettera Davis-Greggs is in the final year of her undergraduate career and declared a concentration in Cognitive Science. In between classes and studying for the GRE, she spent her spring break in Cancun, which may have been the best trip of her life.

Leigh Robertson stayed warm at Crisler Arena by attending University of Michigan women’s basketball games and enjoying free Pizza House milk shakes afterwards. She also traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, where she was pleasantly surprised to discover that she enjoys listening to country western bands.

Lisa Kelley’s actor son Neal (U-M Theater Grad) is producing/directing an off-broadway production of Becket in NYC - his first big bite out of the big apple! She’s going to NYC to see the play in mid-June. Lisa is recovering from an ankle injury and recently enjoyed a long Memorial Weekend at her favorite beach spot, Captiva Island, Florida.

Oliva Kuester traveled home to the Philippines and went to see The West Side Story at the Fischer Theater.

Stacy Peterson was accepted into the Academy of Certified Social Workers. She was also appointed by the Central Michigan University Board of Trustees and their Center for Charter Schools as a member of the Board of Directors at South Arbor Charter Academy in Ypsilanti.

Su Crabb was the Interim Director of the Office of Field Instruction and was provided with new challenges and opportunities, including traveling to Cleveland for the North Central Field Directors’ Consortium. She also vacationed in St. Kitt’s and will be attending the Network for Social Work Management conference in June.

Warren Clark went on a three-day field trip to Chicago with his son’s 7th-8th grade band. He had a great time and is still recovering.