

# Mosaics

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 1  
FALL 2008

News from the University at Buffalo School of Social Work

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## MUTUAL BENEFIT

MSW student Ginny Bryan and Girls Sports Foundation co-director Carlette Daniels each learned a lot from an MSW research-course project.

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MOSAICS : FALL 2008

## Mosaics

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The University at Buffalo is a premier research-intensive public university, the largest and most comprehensive campus in the State University of New York. UB's more than 28,000 students pursue their academic interests through more than 300 undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs. Founded in 1846, the University at Buffalo is a member of the Association of American Universities.

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# Our News

## Our Changing Profile

### MSW APPLICANTS INCREASING, BROADENING GEOGRAPHICALLY.

The School of Social Work has become more competitive since 2007 when U.S. News and World Report ranked it in the top third of all national programs. In the most recent admission cycle, the school received more than 500 applications for the MSW program, with many more of these than in previous years from out-of-state applicants. This year's incoming MSW class is 11 percent out-of-state students, up from the recent average of 3-4 percent. Something is happening in Buffalo!

### MBA/MSW PROGRAM BEGINS.

This year, the school also admitted the first class to an accredited MBA/MSW program, which it offers with UB's School of Management (ranked ninth regionally by the Wall Street Journal). The collaborative program reduces by one year the minimum time required to earn the two degrees separately. Candidates meet all the degree requirements of each program, completing a total of 96 credit hours, 48 in management and 48 in social work.

### PHD PROGRAM GETS READY FOR REVIEW.

The School of Social Work doctoral program is preparing for a university-level review (doctoral programs are not accredited by the Council on Social Work Education). Like much of the rest of the school, the doctoral program profile is changing. Most of the original cohort of PhD candidates who started in 1994 were our own graduates.

The program is taking on a somewhat more international face with two students now attending from non-Western countries.

Ya-Ling Chen is a second-year PhD student from Taiwan, and Shraddha Prabhu is a first-year PhD student from India. During the most recent PhD admission cycle, 54 percent of applicants were either out-of-state or international. Further, about a third of the currently active students graduated from social work programs other than UB's.

Graduates of the PhD program are also making a difference as faculty members or professional researchers. Eighty-eight percent hold faculty or research positions and of those, 44 percent are faculty members outside New York, teaching in Canada, Michigan, Vermont, Virginia, Florida, Arizona, and Pennsylvania.

## SSW strong in Philadelphia

The School of Social Work had high visibility at this year's Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting in Philadelphia, Pa. The conference opened Oct. 29, the night the Phillies won the World Series. Mayor Michael A. Nutter assured the opening ceremony that all the excitement and the parades were because social work educators had come to town. Seventeen UB faculty and some Buffalo-area community leaders either presented papers or were panel members. David Patterson participated in the conference arts festival, presenting "Three American Indian Healing Songs." Howard Doueck and Steven Sturman presented on SSW's new podcasting series. The UB SSW





FROM DEAN  
NANCY J. SMYTH

reception was well attended: more than 100 colleagues from across the nation and Canada lined up for a taste of real Buffalo chicken wings and to learn more about what's happening at the school.

### New center launched

On Oct. 16, the School of Social Work celebrated the opening of its Native American Center for Wellness Research. The center will focus on Native American community-based research projects that bridge research to practice useful for Native American communities. This includes providing studies of health and wellness throughout local Haudenosaunee (Six Nations of the Iroquois) communities, Native student supports, and Institution Review Board liaison services for research projects planned for work within Native American communities.

### PhD Student-Faculty Reception

The 2008 PhD Student-Faculty reception was held on Sept. 19. The annual event, hosted by Dean Nancy Smyth and Barbara Rittner, director of the PhD program, is an opportunity for doctoral students and faculty in the School of Social Work to socialize and for incoming students to meet other students and faculty in an informal setting.



Left to right: PhD students Ya-Ling Chen, Rebecca Eliseo-Arras, Kim Girdlestone and Shraddha Prabhu.

Twenty-eight faculty and students attended. The formal reception lasted for two hours. The informal reception that followed lasted well into the evening. ■



We now have a presence on Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)), the social networking Web site. The school's group, named *Living Proof: University at Buffalo School of Social Work*, is open to students, faculty members, staff, alumni, community partners and friends. It is proving to be a great way to stay connected. Take a look.

### In the next issue

All things electronic: You'll get an inside look at the evolving electronic face of the School of Social Work. The next issue of *Mosaics* will cover online courses, the school's first-in-the-nation podcast series, Living Proof, and the newly created Facebook page (see the item above).



Research has a bad rap with social workers. Every year at orientation, new students talk about their research-class anxiety. And at the end of the year the same students are surprised at how much they enjoy research. Last year, we featured some students' research at our Distinguished Scholar Speaker reception, and many attendees from community agencies remarked, in surprise, on how impressive the work was.

Social work research makes a real-world impact. It provides us with the knowledge necessary to design policy and practice solutions to critical social problems. It reveals which policy and practice interventions are making the biggest difference, and which interventions need to be retooled. As a result, more and more agencies are looking for strong skills in research and evaluation; this is the primary reason we schedule both our master's research courses in the foundation year of the MSW, so students can strengthen their skills as they apply them in their advanced year.

This issue of *Mosaics* highlights some of the important research being done by our doctoral and master's students, and by alumni as well. We can't possibly capture all the work that goes on in this area, but hopefully we convey a flavor of the nature of the work, its importance, and the need for it to continue.

Nancy J. Smyth, PhD, LCSW

What  
works?

Why does  
it work?

How do we  
know?

GOOD SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE STANDS ON THESE QUESTIONS.



The Girls Sports Foundation uses sports to teach integrity, respect and leadership. Does it work?

Douglas Levere

# Learning for Good

MSW student research projects produce community benefit.

By Judson Mead

What's the evidence in evidence-based practice? And how do we know it's any good? Clinical social workers want to know. That's why MSW programs teach basic research and evaluation.

But if you poll students coming into the MSW program, research is the subject they worry most about. And that's a challenge. Studying research is not an initiation rite but rather one of the keys to good social work practice.

For more than 15 years the School of Social Work taught research and evaluation in consecutive semester-long chunks during the foundation year. The two courses were crammed with material, the problems were class exercises, the courses didn't dovetail perfectly and, increasingly, the research faculty felt that while the sequence presented good material, it lacked the kind of excitement that would make the material stick.

So the research faculty talked. They eventually proposed making the two semesters a single yearlong course. The new course was implemented in 2007-08.

"It's a lot more work for the instructors, but it's significantly more relevant for the students," says Tom Nochajski, chair of the research faculty group.

And the students? "Research was what I was most anxious about before I started the program," second-year student Ginny Bryan says. "Now it's what I'm most passionate about."

She may not speak for all students, but her experience is directly related to the relevance Nochajski claims for the retooled sequence.

The key change was to incorporate community-based research projects. What had been exercises are now actual research experiences in agencies that directly benefit from the work.

In the first weeks of the new course, faculty and field education staff connect students (working in small groups) with agencies looking for program evaluation. The students define research or evaluation issues with their agencies; determine the best way to collect data; develop procedures for recruiting and protecting subjects; submit their research proposals for approval by UB's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees research involving human subjects; and, finally, collect and analyze data.

Adjoa Robinson, an assistant professor who teaches in the sequence, says that the program is a particular benefit for smaller agencies that don't have resources for conducting the evaluations they need for program development and to justify grant funding.

The amount of evaluation manpower the MSW research course now deploys is considerable: there are four or five research groups in each of five course sections in Buffalo and sections in Jamestown and Rochester. This year Nochajski's students are doing projects that range from evaluating outcomes in a youth court to quality-of-life effects for both recipients and volunteers in a meals-on-wheels program.

Robinson's groups are working with such programs as the HIV/AIDS Services Department of the Buffalo Chapter of the American Red Cross, a United Way initiative called CASH that helps low-income households with financial literacy, a Nazareth College program that supports refugee socialization, and Community Action for Prenatal Care.

### ON THE COURT

Ginny Bryan took the research sequence from Robinson. Her previous research experience consisted of a single undergraduate research methods course at Trinity College. She was teamed with three others including Mary DelBalso, who holds a master's of public health degree, and has taken some 20 hours of graduate-level research coursework. Robinson encouraged them to divide tasks along the lines of their expertise and learn from each other.

The group linked up with the Girls Sports Foundation (GSF), a year-old community program designed to teach self-esteem and leadership to girls 4-18 through mentoring and sports. DelBalso and Robinson had attended a presentation by GSF co-director Cecelie Owens and realized right away that GSF could benefit from an evaluation project.

Over the course of the year, the students produced an evaluation instrument and collected data from GSF participating girls' parents. Their findings—among them that the program was having a positive effect on participants' behavior at home and that it had helped some participants overcome excessive shyness—are supporting material in the application the GSF is readying for 501-C3 nonprofit status. Owens will continue to use the evaluation instrument.

"They did a marvelous job," Owens says. "Our goal is to use the data to drive what we're going to do here."

For seasoned researcher DelBalso, the learning experience was the improvisation that working on a shoestring can sometimes require. Coming from a grant-supported public health research projects that ran like a well-oiled machine, she learned to be flexible. "Things move a lot slower in real life," she says.

### KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

At the other end of the agency spectrum in terms of size—the Greater Buffalo Chapter of the American Red Cross—MSW research teams are contributing to the START (Students Targeting Asset-Building and Risk-Reduction Techniques) program by evaluating education materials.

Last year, Roseanne Jackson was part of a group that developed a set of evaluation tools to assess the effectiveness of the program's education intervention, and created a "booster" tool to use three months after the intervention, to gauge whether the information was sticking.

"We started by looking at how the program was conducting its outreach and the reasons for their choices," Jackson says. Her group zeroed in on the program's evaluation tool—a simple snapshot of the pre-intervention knowledge of people they were trying to educate—as something they could help improve.

Jackson, a part-time student who is an early childhood intervention screener for People Inc. chose her research project because she wanted to try something outside the world of children and families, which she calls her "comfort zone."

What they developed gave Monica Brown, who administers the START program, some ideas about curriculum modification. She is working with Robinson's class this year to translate the UB evaluation instrument into language that is more accessible to a young audience, and she has added a second research project: evaluating Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS, another program offered by her department.

Brown says she welcomes the opportunity to work with the school because having outsiders look at a program gave her an opportunity to look at it with fresh eyes as well; and deciding what to evaluate gave her the chance to focus on certain aspects of the program analytically.

For Jackson, the project experience was all good. "I was lucky," she says. "I learned so much."

When Adjoa Robinson distills what she wants her students to understand about research, she paraphrases former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld: "There are known knowns; there are known unknowns; and there are unknown unknowns."

Social workers, she says, should understand research well enough to decrease the known unknowns in their practice and to respect what they don't even know they don't know. ■



K.C. Kratt

# Research of EPIC proportions

*Drilling into what's effective to find out why*

The School of Social Work has organized its doctoral program to benefit the community while preparing students to work as original researchers within the context of community engagement.

By Jim Bisco

EPIC's Steven Harvey with PhD students Shradha Prabhu (left) and Nicole Tomasello.

The school's partnership with Every Person Influences Children Inc. (EPIC) is a living example of how the vision plays out.

EPIC is a Buffalo-based organization that for the past 27 years has been providing programs and resources to help parents, teachers and community members raise children to become responsible adults.

EPIC and the School of Social Work are currently engaged in a research project that will produce a comprehensive, in-depth evaluation of three EPIC programs designed to help infants and toddlers develop their skills by teaching parents how to read to their children and how to discipline appropriately.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to investigate the effectiveness of EPIC's interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being of families and the education potential for their children. The evaluation is based on a new approach drawn from epidemiology, using binary logistic regression models to determine what interventions work and in what circumstances.

Mansoor Kazi, research associate professor and director of the school's Program Evaluation Center, oversees the project. "It's more than just looking at outcomes," he says. "We're trying to find explanations as to why the intervention may work well with some people and less well with others, so that we can influence practice."

The project funds two doctoral students who are now collecting data from specially developed program evaluation forms.

Nicole Tomasello, a fourth-year doctoral student, has been involved from the

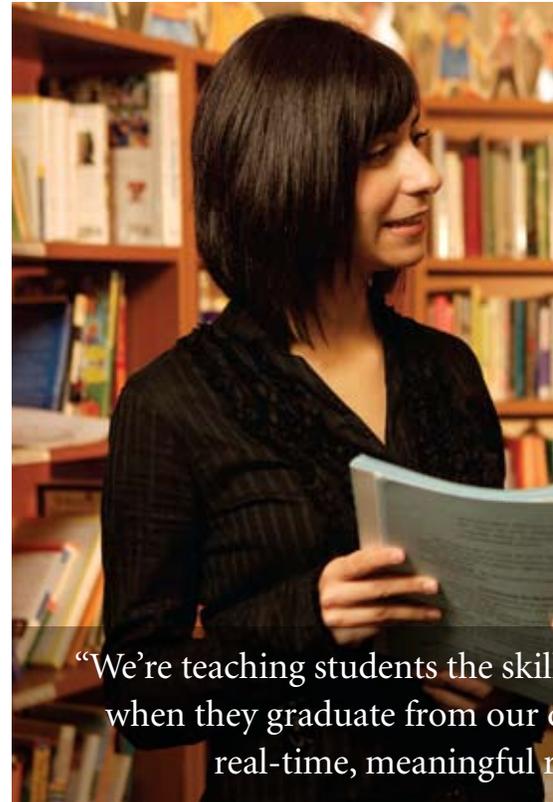
inception of the project in August 2007 and helped develop the evaluation form.

"The type of evaluation we're doing is more rigorous and in-depth," she explains. "First, we're asking parents about the skills they have. We look at family stress, income levels and behaviors, and we look at all the different areas of development with the child—social/emotional, gross/fine motor, communication, and self-help skills. We use some of the tools EPIC was using but we add more measurable instruments on parent behaviors, backgrounds and situations."

Presently there are 130 participants in the EPIC program, representing a broad spectrum of parents across Western New York, urban, suburban, and rural—from at-risk parents to those about to become new parents.

"We will be able to see whether the education levels of the parents make a difference," Kazi observes. "We have information on whether the pregnancy was planned or not, so we will be able to see if that makes a difference. And we have information on income levels, whether they're receiving benefits, and where they live, so we'll be able to make those comparisons. And we also have information on whether they were affected by mental health problems, as well as alcohol and substance misuse, so we can differentiate between them. We may have some interesting results. It's a very good cross-section of participants."

Steven Harvey, EPIC's vice president of research and program funding, is excited about the project and the partnership because of the resources it makes available to the organization. "We're a strong advocate of researching our programs and making sure that they have a

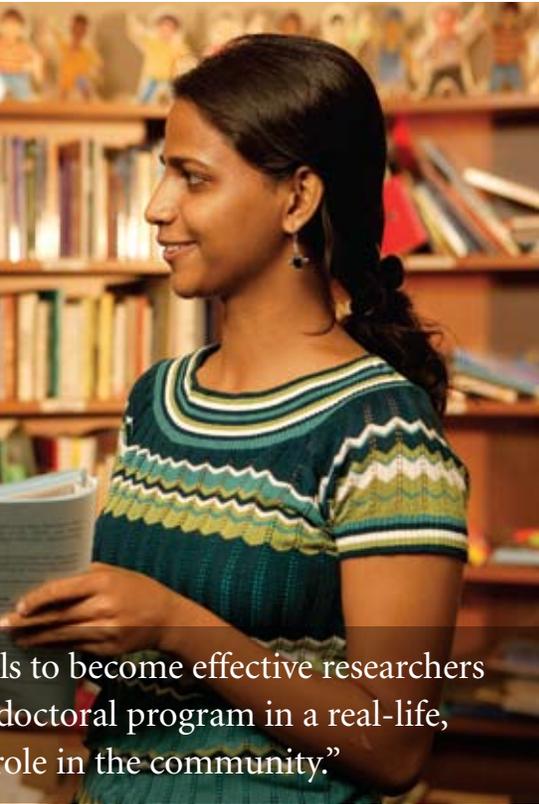


"We're teaching students the skills when they graduate from our real-time, meaningful research."

Nicole Tomasello (left), in the fourth year of her PhD program, is mentored by associate professor and director Barbara Rittner. The mentoring relationship is a key part of the program.

good impact on our parents," he says. "We had a grant to do long-term research on our programs and it made great sense to approach the School of Social Work."

According to Barbara Rittner, associate professor and director of the school's doctoral program, the connection with EPIC is an ideal partnership. "This is what the school is all about. We believe that research has an impact on practice and that the best way to make this impact is to do the research on existing practice," she explains. "The payoff in these EPIC programs is that kids are much more ready once they get into school. We already know that parents who spend time reading to their kids generally have kids who are more school-ready. This is a low-investment, high-impact program that begs the issue of what is necessary to help parents do that."



How to become effective researchers in a real-life, meaningful role in the community.”

K.C. Kratt

Mentoring first-year PhD student Shradha Prabhu. PhD program part of their doctoral education.

Finding community partners in doctoral students’ areas of interest is integral to their academic careers. Tomasello was a partner in the evolution of the EPIC research project, helping to develop the proposal with its deliverables, and she is now working on the next level of research. EPIC funded Tomasello on the first of the Department of Education grants. Now she has become part of the team applying for the next federal grant.

“We’re teaching students the skills to become effective grant researchers when they graduate from our doctoral program in a real-life, real-time, meaningful role in the community,” Rittner says.

After earning her MSW from the school, Tomasello worked in early intervention with two area agencies. She then decided to pursue her doctorate, feeling that she could make a more significant

change by doing research at the organizational level. “I feel passionate about this project,” she says. “It was nice starting from the beginning, learning how to input data and create the data base. I was always interested in early childhood development. It’s good to see how the parenting programs are affecting this development.”

Now, Tomasello is mentoring first-year doctoral student Shradha Prabhu, who recently arrived at UB from Mumbai, India, where she was involved in a similar program. “It’s quite an interesting introduction to the community for me,” she says. “I can see the value of this information in using it for interventions. We don’t have any programs to help parents become good parents. This is something I would like to use back home. It would really be needed.”

Faculty at the school’s Buffalo Center for Social Research are involved with the EPIC research. The center offers grant application support, as well as resources to help evaluate the data. With the mix of program participants, Rittner describes the experience as “a sort of natural laboratory with the people who live in Western New York.”

Harvey expects the research to bring good things to EPIC. “I cannot overstate the importance of the relationship with the School of Social Work,” he says. “Right now, EPIC is across the state, in New Jersey, and looking to expand nationally. The research will help us to do that. It was very useful to have when we went to Singapore. We’re becoming an international agency almost overnight and the research is helping propel that.”

The partnership developed from an initial publications-based request to a

collaborative grant application between UB and EPIC. “We’re looking for more funding that will bring more programs to the Buffalo Niagara area, since EPIC serves the region, not just the location,” Rittner says. Harvey expects the relationship with UB to expand quickly, noting several other grants in progress with the school listed as researcher.

The first part of the current project involved selecting the appropriate measurements and setting up the database. It has now entered the first follow-up data stage, which every six months will compare the sets of responses from the participants. Kazi is encouraged by the initial data. “At the moment, it’s like an assessment. You can see what the extent of the problems are,” he says.

“The type of evaluation we’re doing should tell us about any areas of the program that need to be changed,” says Tomasello. “The overall objective is to improve child development and decrease the risk for child maltreatment with these programs.”

Kazi describes the project as a good example of how the university can assist community agencies. “Agencies need to evaluate their practice and we are providing them with the means to do so,” he says. “In that respect, it’s a win-win situation for both of us. The evidence-based research helps make the intervention more effective.”

“I think the significance is larger than just this one case example,” summarizes Rittner. “It’s about UB’s partnership with the community. It’s about the university’s civic engagement vision, making a difference in the community, caring about the community.” ■

# At work in the world

Three SSW alumni pursue careers in social work research.

By Lauren Maynard

## BUILDING BETTER TRAINING MODELS

**PETER LYONS, PHD '99**, is a social work researcher who studies



the child protection system, as well as broader child and family issues. During his doctoral study at UB, he was manager of child protective services in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and so he had a natural intellectual curiosity about the child welfare system. He wrote his dissertation on a particular risk assessment instrument child-protection workers use to evaluate potentially at-risk children.

Lyons is now an associate professor at Georgia State University's School of Social Work where he established the school's Center for Collaborative Social Work. He oversees several state-funded projects that deliver and evaluate education and training for state child-protection workers. During 10 years at GSU, he has brought in over \$10.5 million in external funds.

"Four years ago, I wrote up a plan that basically asked, If you're going to spend money on new employees who then leave, why not spend that money on people who are already here?" Lyons says.

Supported by a state budget line, Lyons and a 22-member staff at Georgia State monitor workforce turnover and the adoption of advanced skill development training programs in child protection. Their investigations include what Lyons describes as "quasi-experiments" that use surveys and questionnaires to determine from both caseworkers and their supervisors whether those employees are applying their new knowledge to everyday practice.

Lyons is also the principal investigator on a program to provide training to veteran CPS caseworkers across the state. An evaluation of the program—Georgia's Professional Excellence Training—is another one of Lyons' projects. His study is designed to measure the impact of advanced skills training delivered to veteran caseworkers (who have worked for the state for more than 18 months). Again, job retention prompted creation of the program and its evaluation.

Lyons is also involved with a Georgia Supreme Court project to help move hard-to-place children through the state foster care system that spans 159 counties (New York, by comparison, has only 57 counties).

He looks at patterns in the court system and asks the necessary questions: What prevents children from finding good homes? What is working or not working?

"What we're finding is that concurrent planning isn't as good as concurrent action," he says. "The system needs a change in philosophy, and my hope is that our assessment will help that process along."

Lyons, who publishes widely, is also carving out time to collaborate with Howard Doueck, professor and associate dean for faculty and project development at the UB School of Social Work, on a book about how to write a successful dissertation.

## ASKING WHY CHILDREN RUN AWAY

**ELAINE MACCIO, MSW '98, PHD '04**, is an assistant professor



at Louisiana State University. Her early career is a story about connections.

She started her doctoral program at UB with interests in diversity, gender identity and gay and lesbian issues; but meeting Sanna J. Thompson, an expert on high-risk youth who was on the faculty at UB at the time, changed her course.

Thompson, who was conducting interesting surveys with homeless and runaway youth, enlisted Maccio to interview youths at Compass House, a Buffalo youth shelter, and their parents. Their goal was to capture family characteristics and the youths' reasons for running away. Thompson eventually sat on Maccio's dissertation committee.

Thompson left UB for the University of Texas-Arlington, eventually making her way to hUT-Austin; Maccio also landed in Texas, teaching at Our Lady of the Lake University in San Antonio before heading to LSU in Baton Rouge in 2006.

At LSU, Maccio met Juan Barthelemy, a social work faculty colleague. He was collaborating with David Pollio, a former col-

league of Thompson's at Washington University in St. Louis, on research concerning homeless youth.

"Juan brought me into the fold, so to speak," says Maccio, who is doing surveys of homeless youth in New Orleans, building on work that Thompson and Pollio did in St. Louis and Austin. This summer, she received an LSU faculty research grant for the project.

Maccio says it was initially difficult connecting with the "gatekeepers" in New Orleans whose job is to help protect troubled youth. She and an LSU doctoral student eventually reached two agencies, Covenant House and a place simply called Drop-In Center, to collect data samples from street youth ages 16 to 23. Many of the youth suffer from mental health issues and abuse drugs and alcohol.

The Thompson-Polio survey covered migration patterns and service use, legal questions and used standardized instruments to measure post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and substance abuse. Maccio's LSU team also added questions tailored to their hometown, about life in pre- and post-Katrina New Orleans, such as: Where did you live before and after the storm? Did the disaster contribute to your homelessness? And—a critical question for many—Why did you return?

With help from Pollio, Maccio hopes to secure national funding for the project. Due to the collaborative nature of LSU's Office of Social Service Research and Development—part of the university's school of social work—Maccio says she's received overwhelming support to expand her personal research.

## USING DATA TO INFORM DECISIONS

**HEIDI MILCH, MSW '98**, got a new job earlier this year when two Erie County-based social services agencies, Gateway-Longview Inc. and New Directions Youth and Family Services, launched Community Connections of New York (CCNY), an organization that coordinates countywide child and family care.

Milch, an experienced social worker who was then vice president for program development and support at Gateway-Longview, agreed to lead the new group. She has a research background, having completed doctoral coursework at UB (although she left the program to work as a clinical coordinator before writing her dissertation).

Community Connections was created to coordinate vendor services and conduct quality improvement and evaluation for

participating children's mental health agencies in the Family Voices Network (FVN), the children's division within the Erie County Department of Mental Health and Department of Social Services.

FVN provides "wraparound" care to 400 children and youth ages 5-17 with serious mental, behavioral and social challenges. A major grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides a portion of FVN's funding.

Wraparound care is designed to help families avoid institutionalized care. In Erie County, it is the highest level of child and family human services care. The county is one of 61 communities in the U.S. using this model. Advocates say it delivers significantly better outcomes for high-risk children than traditional programs.

Family Voices was three years into implementing the wrap-around system when it added the evaluation component.

"The county was doing great work creating monthly data indicators on what agencies should be looking at for quality improvement, but there was a dearth of people who knew how to use data in clinical practice," says Milch.

Community Connections of New York has set up an array of service that ranges from numbers crunching to designing risk-management, training and evaluation programs, to articulating policy and strategy, and setting up appropriate referral services. It has a staff of seven (three of whom are UB MSWs) in addition to Milch.

Milch says CCNY's central role is to "help practitioners and policy-makers use data to inform decisions." They consult directly with six primary agency partners and 47 affiliated social service agencies, community organizations and private practitioners.

One current CCNY project is to develop and test a laptop-based search engine software system called Family First, to be rolled out to the entire county system in January. Guided by social workers, the system will help facilitate team meetings and enable families to search for service and treatment vendors from the privacy of their homes.

This year, SAMHSA awarded the Family Voices Network a Gold Level Award—the highest in the data use category—for evaluation data use and dissemination and a Silver Award for family involvement. ■



# People People

## Alumni Association News

### Believe in UB...



The University at Buffalo is New York's premier public center for graduate and professional education, and our School of Social Work plays an integral role in the university's mission of outreach to the community, the state and the nation, and beyond.

Social workers commit their lives to making a difference. You will find us in many settings, focusing not just on persons, but also on challenges facing them in their social environments.

It is important for us as School of Social Work alumni to contribute to building UB's reputation for providing valuable education, and to be living proof in our communities that UB-educated social workers make a difference.

I urge you to become an ambassador for the university: you have 202,240 fellow alumni living in all 50 states, as well as in 132 countries around the world. UB produces more than 5,000 new alumni every year, many of whom join the workforce in Western New York and elsewhere in the state.

I ask that you join with me to help recognize the School of Social Work and the university and to help further the mission of outreach and growth.

Beyond becoming a member of the Alumni Association (go to [www.alumni.buffalo.edu](http://www.alumni.buffalo.edu)), I urge you to become a UB Believer ([ubbelievers.buffalo.edu](http://ubbelievers.buffalo.edu)). As a UB Believer, you will join an advocacy group that recognizes and supports the positive impact UB has on Western New York and seeks to raise awareness of UB's value to the state, nation and the world. Membership is open and free to all who believe in the future growth of UB. For more information, e-mail [UBadvocacy@buffalo.edu](mailto:UBadvocacy@buffalo.edu).

Rita M. Andolina, MSW '88  
Chair, UB School of Social Work Alumni Committee

### ...and sign up!



This is a great time to be a part of the University at Buffalo School of Social Work family. We will be celebrating our 75th anniversary in 2009, and we have some great events planned for the next year to mark the milestone.

Here is a slate of upcoming events you should know about. In December, we will have a dinner social hour with the dean December 2 from 4:45 to 5:45 p.m. in her office in 680 Baldy Hall and a holiday event at the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens on December 14 from 4 to 8 p.m. Next year, Alumni Day will be held on March 26, at the Buffalo Niagara Marriott; and our 75th Anniversary Gala is scheduled for October 24. For more information on these and other events, please see the school Web site at [www.socialwork.buffalo.edu](http://www.socialwork.buffalo.edu). All School of Social Work alumni are invited to participate in these events.

You will be receiving your annual UB Alumni Association membership mailing soon. I hope you all take advantage of the offer with its many benefits and discounts. You can get ticket discounts to the Buffalo Zoo, UB Bulls athletics events, UB Center for the Arts events and much more. If you are thinking of buying a new car, the West Herr Invoice Pricing Program for association members could save you thousands of dollars.

Another great alumni association service is UB Connect. I recently used UB Connect, an online community for UB graduates, to help reunite two classmates who had lost touch with each other. Maybe you have a friend looking for you, so update your profile at <https://www.ubconnect.org/olc/pub/BUF/register/register.cgi>.

Kathryn Kendall, MSW '95  
Director of Recruitment and Alumni Relations

## CLASSNOTES

### **Ken Jasnau (MSW '55)**

The Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving named Ken, who lives in Eatonton, Ga., a Volunteer Caregiver of the Year. He was honored at the institute's 2008 awards banquet on Oct. 23 for 32 years of service. He received a gilded rose and a check for \$1,000 presented by Rosalynn Carter.

### **Ellen Fink-Samnack (MSW '83)**

Ellen has been appointed to serve as a commissioner for the Commission on Case Manager Certification. Ellen is president of EFS Supervision Strategies in Burke, Va., a business dedicated to education and professional development for health and human service professionals. Ellen writes that she seeks to cut across interdisciplinary boundaries to maximize the expertise of all disciplines involved in case management. She is a national presenter and has published in numerous professional journals on the subjects of professional resilience, interdisciplinary communication and accountability for health and human service professionals. Ellen is an adjunct faculty member at George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College. She is a clinical supervision certification trainer and an approved instructor for the National Association of Social Workers of Virginia. She is an examination item writer for the Association of Social Work Boards and serves on the editorial advisory board for Lippincott's Professional Case Management. She also provides private clinical supervision

to social workers in Virginia. Ellen is a certified case manager, licensed clinical social worker and certified rehabilitation provider. A two-time president and vice president of the Case Management Society of the National Capital Area, Ellen was the 2002 recipient of their Distinguished Case Manager of the Year Award. She has served as an executive officer and as a member of the board of directors for the National Association of Social Workers of Virginia. Ellen was also delegate from Virginia to the 2008 National Association of Social Workers Delegate Assembly and sits on the assembly's professional self-care panel.

### **Sue Green (MSW '88)**

Sue had a speaking part in the UB Distinguished Speakers Series this fall. Khaled Hosseini, best-selling author of *The Kite Runner*, requested a conversation format for his Oct. 16 appearance at UB. Sue, along with other UB faculty and students, was selected to sit on stage with Hosseini in Alumni Arena and take part in the conversation.

### **Josh Gingrich (MSW '03)**

For the past five years, Josh has worked in the Rochester Community Mobile Crisis Team at the Strong Memorial Hospital Comprehensive Psychiatric Emergency Program. He works primarily with children, seeking to divert nonlethal patients from area emergency departments and rapidly link them to treatment in the least restrictive environment. Josh is also pursuing private therapy work with the Youth

and Family Partnership. As part of his role at Strong Memorial Hospital, Josh supervises medical students who rotate through the mobile crisis unit, and from this experience he has developed an interest in critical incident stress debriefings for the community.

### **Michele C. Sebring (MSW '03)**

For the past two years, Michele has been employed as a program counselor for the Family Team Coaching Program at Children's Home Society of Florida. The program receives referrals from caseworkers in the Florida Department of Children and Families whose cases concern child abuse and neglect. Michele goes into the homes of these referrals to teach parenting and life skills.

### **Esther David (MSW '07)**

Esther has been working as a clinical social worker at the University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville on a multidisciplinary team in the center's emergency room; she also works part time in other units of the hospital.

### **Siu Fong (Ivy) Au Yeung (MSW '07)**

Ivy is a clinical social worker at the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center in New York City.

### **Melissa Davies (MSW '08)**

Melissa has accepted a position working at the VA Hospital in Buffalo, N.Y., as a rehabilitation specialist for the blind.

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**Georgia Buckley (MSW '08)**

Georgia works for Catholic Charities. She runs the parenting program teaching classes to parents throughout Western New York.

**Stacie Dopko (MSW '08)**

Stacie works at People Inc. in Buffalo, N.Y. as a service coordinator. People Inc. assists individuals with disabilities or other special needs with a variety of services with the goal of fostering independence, productivity and health in their lives.

**Amy Y. Ng (MSW '08)**

Amy has taken a position as a clinical social worker at the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center in New York. Patients can use the health center's social work department if they receive medical services at the center. Most of the patients with whom Amy meets have social service needs that evolved from medical needs. The social work department offers individual and family counseling, social work case management, crisis intervention, entitlement and advocacy, and provides resources and referrals for the local community. Services are open for self-referral and referral from all medical departments at the health center.

**CONTACT US!**

Tell your fellow alumni what you're doing through *Mosaics'* Classnotes section. Please send your news to [ssw-alum@buffalo.edu](mailto:ssw-alum@buffalo.edu).

**NIH RECOGNIZES ONE OF OURS**

**Lori Wiener, BSW '77**, has received the prestigious National Institutes of Health Director's Award in the category Scientific/Medical.

The award specifically recognizes her pioneering psychosocial research in the National Cancer Institute. Criteria for the award, which goes to NIH employees, include such qualities as unusual display of leadership, unusual achievement, and sustained and excellent performance.



Originally from New York, Wiener took her UB BSW degree—which she says was “a great undergraduate education”—to the New York University School of Social Work where she earned her MSW and, nine years later, a PhD in social work. She is now the coordinator of the pediatric psychosocial program in the Pediatric Oncology Branch of the National Cancer Institute, which she joined in 1986. She is the author of numerous book chapters, workbooks and journal articles.

Her clinical research has focused on parental needs and coping, children's distress, sibling issues, mental health outcomes, diagnosis disclosure, transition from adolescence and young adulthood, loss and bereavement and interventions designed to meet the needs of critically ill children and their families.

She has been working in the field of HIV/AIDS since 1982, when the disease was known as gay-related immune deficiency.

A regular reader of *Mosaics*, Wiener says she thought the NIH award might inspire social work students now at UB. “I hope the message is that social workers can make a tremendous difference, even in areas that have been traditionally recognized primarily by MDs.”

# Development News

## Support for research



Because we have an exceptional dean, a committed faculty, superb community-based researchers and competitive students, we have the talent to be among the top 15 schools in the nation. We are currently at 34 and rising. Now, with your help, we can push to be recognized as one of the best schools of social work in the nation.

When it comes to rankings, research is a key element in the assessment of school quality. This year, the School of Social Work and the University at Buffalo face enormous challenges as the New York State budget is slashed and State University of New York campuses are pressed to find needed resources in the community. As this issue of *Mosaics* points out, the School of Social Work is committed to housing research that makes a difference in communities and organizations, and to families and individuals. We do this by teaching our students to be researchers in all aspects of their practice. The doctoral students featured in this issue, like many of our master's students, are supported by scholarships and stipends from our donors. Now, more than ever, the School of Social Work is counting on you to help support the best and the brightest. As director of development for the school, I know what we do best here—provide a rigorous education and help students achieve ambitious career goals—and I also know we need scholarship resources to make it happen.

As we approach our 75th year celebrations, there will be many opportunities to contribute to the school. Our goal this year is to raise \$500,000 for scholarships and endowments, and for the Fund for Excellence and Innovation.

Those of you who know me know that I am committed to the school, our faculty, and our students. We know that our alumni and friends will help us meet the challenges we face this year and help to position us to be great for the next 75 years, training graduate-level social workers for all fields of practice.

You may notice that there is no giving envelope inside this issue. This is just one way we are committed to cutting costs, saving money and going green. There are several ways to donate to the school. For information on how to give to the school, you may write to me at the School of Social Work, University at Buffalo, 675 Baldy Hall, Buffalo, NY 14260; call me at (716) 645-3381, ext. 274; e-mail me at [mds27@buffalo.edu](mailto:mds27@buffalo.edu); or visit our Web site at [www.socialwork.buffalo.edu/alumni/](http://www.socialwork.buffalo.edu/alumni/).

As always, I remain dedicated to you, the UB School of Social Work and the University at Buffalo.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Minnie Wyse".

MINNIE WYSE, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

### BENEFACTOR RECEPTION: WITH THANKS

One of the happiest events at the school is the annual Benefactor of the School of Social Work Reception held every fall. Hosted by Minnie Saleh-Wyse, director of development, and Dean Nancy Smyth to thank donors to the School of Social Work, this year's reception was held at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery on Sept. 24. The evening was capped with a tour of recent acquisitions during which a first-rate docent kept the benefactors fully engaged.



At the Albright-Knox (left to right), Tobi Laping, Eleanor Mautone, Carol O'Connor, SSW's Minnie Wyse, and Lillis McLean have fun with their guide.

# Research funding successes

The School of Social Work has a strong track record in securing research grants. Beyond supporting important research, this success contributes to SSW's growing national reputation. The school currently holds \$4,750,865 in active research grants.

**FEDERAL GRANTS:** Dean Nancy Smyth holds a total of \$3,562,241 from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Mansoor Kazi and Barbara Rittner have a \$316,638 grant from the Department of Education through Every Person Influences Children. David Patterson has a \$190,178 grant from NIAAA. \$124,810 was awarded to Lawrence Shulman from NIDA.

**NEW YORK STATE GRANTS:** Catherine Dulmus received \$88,334 from the New York State Office of Mental Health for the Deans Consortium Project. Law-

rence Shulman received a \$98,312 grant from the NY State Department of Education. Mansoor Kazi received \$158,106 from the Child Welfare Consortium.

**FOUNDATION GRANTS:** Deborah Waldrop holds \$89,884 in grants from the Fahs Beck Fund for Research and Experimentation and the Social Work Leadership Institute.

**SSW LES BRUN RESEARCH ENDOWMENT FUND PILOT PROGRAM:** The fund continues to support cutting-edge research, this year providing a total of \$71,088 to new investigators. David Patterson received

\$27,573 to study a variety of community-based projects; Laina Bay-Cheng received \$10,000 for a youth-based project; Filomena Critelli received \$10,040 to continue a study with abused women in Pakistan; and Deborah Waldrop received \$23,475 to continue hospice-based end-of-life studies.

**INTERNATIONAL GRANTS:** Mansoor Kazi holds \$51,274 in grants from the United Kingdom for ongoing work in Scotland and with the Children's Research Center.