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FALL 2014

NEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Growth and Changing Face of Faculty

The SSW is growing. Twenty years ago, the SSW had 10 fulltime and clinical faculty. This Fall the SSW added five new faculty to our existing 23 faculty (tenure-track, clinical and research), to the SSW for a total of 28 faculty -- and the SSW is recruiting for three additional faculty. Look for stories on the five new faculty members in the Spring 2015 issue.

Digital Signage in Baldy and Parker Hall

In an effort to keep students, faculty and staff better informed, we've installed six digital signage displays between our two buildings.

Faculty Awards and Appointments

Clinical Associate Professor Sue Green was appointed to the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York to take part in its Health Leadership Fellows Program in recognition of her leadership in health issues that affect elders and children living in poverty.

See more at:
www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2014/07/043.html



Collaboration with the College of Arts & Sciences with Foster Care Alumni (FCA)

The 2013-2014 SSW Graduate Student Association (GSA), under the leadership of class president Jill Baszczynski and GSA faculty liaison Barbara Rittner, developed and worked with a task group to change FCA campus experiences. The effort resulted in Marjorie Quarterly, field education coordinator, developing a specialized field placement to support and ensure the success of FCA who are undergraduates at UB. The field intern will help to develop this field placement and a mentoring program, coordinate educational and financial resources, and ensure continued housing for FCA over semester recesses and holidays.

Teaming Up with CEL

UB School of Management Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL) and UB School of Social Work are joining efforts in a conference on Transformational Leadership and Entrepreneurial Thinking for Nonprofits: Moving from Surviving to Thriving Conference, Sept. 22, 2014.

New Look - More Features

The SSW launched a newly designed and more interactive website in July!



Alumni Events

SSW hosted a Rochester Alumni Reunion on April 8, 2014 in a private room at Dinosaur Bar-B-Que. Over 50 people attended, including those from the previous Rochester Extension Program, and a great time was had by all, especially by Shirley Reiser, MSW '76, who helped us spread the word.

Graduate of the MSW program Joyelle Tedeschi, MSW '08, was named one of Buffalo's Business First 2014 Women of Influence Honorees! See the Spring 2014 Mosaics for more on this remarkable graduate.



NYC All-UB Alumni Event was held at the Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum on June 19, 2014.

Alumni with Dean Nancy Smyth
Photo credit: Robert Adam Mayer



On The News

Following the tragic deaths of children under CPS supervision, Assistant Professors Annette Semanchin Jones and Patricia Logan-Green appeared on Buffalo's WIVB to talk about their joint effort with Erie County Department of Social Services to identify and address patterns and trends in chronic neglect cases.

Watch the WIVB story:
wivb.com/2014/07/11/erie-county-and-ub-team-up-to-study-child-neglect/

FROM DEAN NANCY J. SMYTH

When we changed our MSW curriculum to incorporate trauma-informed and human rights perspectives, many people ask us to define “trauma-informed.” Social workers have been working with survivors of overwhelming life experiences — or trauma — from the first day our profession began. However, the growing knowledge base about how trauma affects people is now being used to inform changes in policy and practice to ensure that we support recovery and don’t inadvertently hurt people.

Simply stated, trauma-informed social work is policy and practice based on what we know from research about the prevalence of trauma and how it affects people. Recognizing that traumatic events make people feel unsafe and powerless, trauma-informed practice seeks to create programs where clients and staff feel safe and empowered. For example, recognizing that using physical restraints with clients could be a trauma-trigger for those with a history of physical or sexual abuse, a trauma-informed approach to mental health inpatient care would routinely use advanced-directives, having clients specify the methods that should be used to best protect them from themselves.

The feedback we have received from students, alumni, community partners and service recipients has validated the importance of trauma-informed and human rights perspectives, with many saying that they now have the “missing pieces” that were needed to bring their work to higher levels of relevance and impact. Several articles in this issue illuminate the contributions these two perspectives can provide. If you would like to read more, I invite you to check out our School blog, SocialWorkSynergy (socialworksynergy.org); for example two recent posts, “Caution: The ‘R Word’ is a Matter of Human Rights” and “Trauma-Informed Medical Care? Not at My Doctor’s Office...,” and our podcast inSocialWork (www.insocialwork.org), which contains many episodes that focus on human rights and trauma-informed social work, offer additional insight on the importance of these perspectives.

Note: Parts of this article come from Nancy J. Smyth’s blog post “Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice: What Is It and Why Should We Care?” and can be found at <http://njsmyth.com/2013/04/19/trauma-informed-social-work-practice/>.



SSW SEEKS ALUMNI MENTORS

We are seeking alumni interested in becoming a mentor to current students. Mentors and students are matched according to interest and will create a mentoring plan based on mutual expectations. This program invites alumni to share their professional experiences and encourages MSW students to broaden their network of support.

The student and mentor will contract on the type and amount of contact (at a minimum we ask for one contact per month during the school year). For alumni outside the WNY area, phone, email and chat are excellent ways to mentor.

Please contact Denise Krause at dkrause@buffalo.edu or 716-645-1223, if you are interested. socialwork.buffalo.edu/alumni/mentor-program.html

NANCY J. SMYTH, PHD, LCSW

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www.socialwork.buffalo.edu

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 29,000 students pursue their academic interests through more than 390 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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MOSAICS



Patricia Logan-Greene forges the influence of forensic social work on the legal system

The definition of forensic social work that Assistant Professor Patricia Logan-Greene uses in her class is any social work that interacts with legal systems, not just with criminal or judicial systems. Foster care, adoption work and child protective services are all considered types of forensic social work because they require much contemplation and consideration of legal systems.

“I have the students read parts of the New York State Penal Code, which is something that not many people do. The way that the code is written matters a great deal,” she observes. “It becomes important in the public discourse around things like gun violence, someone with a mental illness, and who should and should not be allowed to be under their own governance, or who should be involuntarily committed.”

It became clear to Logan-Greene that to prevent victimization, a more pragmatic approach must be taken toward those who commit crimes. “That is more likely to prevent the crimes rather than dehumanizing, stigmatizing and isolating,” she says.

Her research is focusing more on violence and delinquent youths, using a trauma-informed human rights approach toward this population as well. She refers to her experience at the SSW over the past three years as a perfect fit because of the philosophy of the school’s focus and its supportive environment.

A primary collaboration has been with the juvenile court outside of Tacoma, Washington. (She earned her doctorate at the University of Washington.) The court for some years has been advancing toward reforms that she advocated in her dissertation on juvenile justice: to understand the history of trauma and adversity that youths carry with them and to treat them as a diverse group. “One size does not fit all for youth in the juvenile justice system,” she reasons.

A second collaboration, with co-PI and Assistant Professor Annette Semanchin Jones, is a novel study with the Erie County Department of Social Services on cases involving chronic neglect of children by families, identifying the etiological factors behind the more than 30 percent of repeated abuse or neglect found in the 1,000 reports made each month to the state’s Child Abuse Hotline. “There’s not a lot of research out there on chronic neglect. We’re working in another paper on linking it to aggression and delinquency in adolescence,” Logan-Greene explains.

According to the department’s commissioner, Carol Dankert-Maurer, “If we were better able to successfully assist these families, we would likely break the cycle of maltreatment. This study will help our department develop a stronger approach. I hope this is the first of many collaborations between the school and the Department of Social Services.”

Gathering the data necessary to quantify such research is not always forthcoming within certain systems. She refers to the power that data can have on improving a court’s practices, using Tacoma as an example of an area where certain percentages of all youths on probation get automatically referred to evidence-based practices of interventions. “Data was used to identify who would most likely respond to those interventions,” Logan-Greene explains. “Most people who are in these systems don’t have the time, the resources or necessarily the know-how to use their data in the way that it has the potential to be used, which is how a university partnership can be so beneficial to everybody involved.”

Poor schools, childhood trauma and traumatization, and other kinds of adversity including poverty and racial hierarchies that exist in this country are factors that establish a pipeline to prison in her view. “Understanding how that pipeline occurs doesn’t mean that you’re not blaming the perpetrators for doing the bad things, you’re just understanding what it is that brought them there so that you can stop it in the future.”

Logan-Greene’s course in forensic social work begins with a section on mass incarceration, particularly on the war on drugs. The hope is that students get a much deeper awareness of these issues.

During the past year, she initiated activism assignments for the class that, she says, generated eye-opening results. One student solicited the opinions of corrections officers on crime and incarceration; another student talked to police officers and residents in Buffalo about the differing thoughts that they had about police activity in their community. Others became involved in issues related to bullying and domestic violence.

“I think it’s really important, particularly for MSW students, to know the potential power that they have to influence public policy and public opinion, especially within their own communities,” Logan-Greene maintains. “They can make an enormous difference for their clients.”

- Jim Bisco



“One size does not fit all for youth in the juvenile justice system.”

IT'S A Girl

Jennifer Ditta, MSW '00, and Kim Morris, MSW '03, lay welcome mat to motherhood for troubled teens

Jennifer Ditta, MSW '00, is mother to an 8- and 5-year-old at home. At work, she plays parent to eight teenagers at a residence called the Second Chance Home on Buffalo's East Side.

"Jen is the mom and dad at Second Chance and balances natural consequences and trauma-informed histories and understanding the stories that they bring to the table that affect our story for that day," says Kim Morris, MSW '03, executive director of Homespace, which provides services to 14-to-21-year-old pregnant and parenting young ladies and a small population of non-parenting who are placed in foster care due to abuse or neglect.

Second Chance, a Homespace program that Ditta manages, is a congregate care group home for mothers or about-to-be mothers, generally between ages 14 and 18. The residents come from troubled families. "It's very challenging to gain trust enough to help them make the significant changes they need to in their lives and also to teach new philosophies about parenting because they don't see how they were parented as inappropriate, and they're going to try to repeat those things," observes Ditta. "If we don't try to change that cycle, the same things will happen to their children."

The girls in the programs have varied histories — abuse, neglect, some both — as well as Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) and juvenile delinquency charges, according to Ditta. She says there is a high level of need for structure and consistency, especially for mental health services, counseling and/or psychiatric support because most of them have not had a successful track record with any of those services provided.

When the girls are placed in foster care, they are required to have regular hearings in family court so the judge is kept apprised of their progress in schooling, counseling and parenting programs.

Through the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), if a child has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, a petition is supposed to be filed for the termination of the parents' rights. If the mother in the program is a child who is supposed to be going home to live with her parents and they have not progressed toward their goal, those parents could lose their rights to that child.

"Where it does come into play more frequently with our girls is with their children," says Ditta. "If there are issues in their care of their

child, they could lose custody of their children, and their child could go into foster care. That's when that [ASFA] clock starts. It's even more pressure on that mom to get things together so that she could get her children back."

In working in foster care and adoption, Ditta was always drawn to the teens. "They were always seen as the most challenging and difficult, but I always saw them as just people who needed someone to listen a bit more. I also found that being consistent with them got me much, much further than other caseworkers who would try to just push programs on them."

Ditta is grateful for her experience at the SSW. "I felt like most of my hands-on learning came from my SSW field placements," she says. "Now as a field educator, it's so important to me to use that time with an intern to start them on the path that social workers need to follow if we're going to make the difference that we need to make."

The SSW's trauma-informed approach is a critical component of life at Second Chance. "There is such a strong need for the girls in our program to have that structure and consistency, but it can at times re-traumatize them to not have someone also giving them the understanding they need if they're going to progress," Ditta maintains. "They're going to learn to make better choices and to resolve some of their trauma."

She considers her current SSW intern, Clare Borowiak, as being very helpful in training staff on trauma-informed care. "She's been such an asset to us in understanding some of the behaviors of the girls and what their needs are, even though she's a student."

Ditta's passion is to help the residents address their needs and trauma to make their lives better. She emphasizes the importance of family in encouraging the girls to use healthy, appropriate supports.

"Part of it is being a mom and the joy that I've had with the experience of being a parent," she relates. "I could never do this work without the support of my family. I still tear up when I tell the girls what to expect when they first hold their baby. That helps to motivate me."

- Jim Bisco



A SALUTE TO DEDICATION TO EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL WORK

University at Buffalo School of Social Work Dean Emeritus Lawrence Shulman, along with two other recipients, will be presented with the Significant Lifetime Achievement in Social Work Education Award from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) – the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States – at their opening ceremony and awards presentation on Oct. 23, 2014 in Tampa, Florida.

"Dr. Shulman's work has shaped social work education around the world for decades," says Nancy J. Smyth, dean of UB's School of Social Work. "We are thrilled that the impact of his many contributions is being recognized with this prestigious award from the Council on Social Work Education."

The organization is honoring Shulman for his "dedication to excellence in scholarship and research, pedagogy and curriculum development, and organizational leadership." The School's dean from 1998-2003 and a social work practitioner educator for more than 40 years, he continues his involvement in the UBSSW community through his grant research and wide range of publications and presentations. Shulman, an early promoter of group work for social workers, is well known for his work in youth violence prevention and has developed and directs a multiyear funded research project on Violence Prevention in the Buffalo School System through the New York State Education Department.

- Sarah Goldthrite



STUDENTS HELPING STUDENTS

When Tabatha Lumley’s sister Khadijah died, her family decided to return her to Jamaica where her mother lives. If she’d been buried in the U.S., her mother, who is barred from entering the country, would not have been able to attend the funeral or visit her grave.

That meant Tabatha was faced with finding airfare to Jamaica to attend the burial. Her neighbors on Godfrey Street in Buffalo, where Tabatha has lived since she arrived in the U.S., offered to raise money for her trip, but the effort never got started.

Tabatha’s MSW classmate, Jill Baszczyński, told her the new Students Helping Students fund might be a source of funds. But Tabatha, who describes herself as “kind of a loner,” said no, she’d borrow the money.

“Jill told me to let my guard down,” Tabatha remembers. And she did. Fellow students rallied around her, babysat for her little boy, helped out in other ways. The fund paid for her flight home.

The financial assistance spared her the burden of more debt. The love from her classmates warmed her. “We’re a family,” she says about the school.

-Judson Mead

SOCIAL WORKER,

I Heal THYSELF

By Judson Mead

Tabatha Lumley (MSW ’14) has known some bad days. She was left to fend for herself and her deaf brother, Michael, when her mother was deported to Jamaica from Buffalo six years ago (her father had been deported a few years before).

Seventeen at the time, Tabatha lived for a while without heat or electricity, getting Michael ready and onto the bus to his school for the deaf every morning and then getting herself to high school.

It was tough -- but she got through. A grandmother and siblings in Rochester made a semblance of a whole family. Thanksgiving and Christmas were very special family celebrations. Tabatha became an American citizen. She earned a degree in criminal justice at Buffalo State College and enrolled in UB’s MSW program, intending to add a law degree eventually.

Then she suffered a loss she hasn’t recovered from.

On Nov. 23, the Saturday before Thanksgiving last year, Tabatha’s beloved 19-year-old sister, Khadijah, was killed by a drunken driver in a highway accident on Interstate 490 in Rochester.

Khadijah was finally buried in Jamaica on Dec. 27. When the coffin was opened so mourners could say a final good-bye, the sight of her sister seared itself onto Tabatha’s memory and still brings shock and tears.

So, what can a social work student do with her own trauma? Tabatha is still answering that question.

She had to jump right back into school, “confused, exhausted and angry,” she remembers. She’d been scheduled to start her field placement as a liaison between the Court Improvement Project and attorneys and judges in New York’s Eighth Judicial District on Dec. 29. She told herself, “Either I do my school work or I don’t do it.”

And that was really no choice, so Tabatha set aside her own grieving. And beyond that abeyance she had to limit the support she could give her family. If she had to write a paper, she couldn’t answer the phone when her mother called. “I had to set boundaries,” she says. “I learned that as a social worker.”

But she couldn’t shut out her sadness. “Not a day goes by that I don’t think of Khadijah. I have to get used to not hearing her voice. I have to get used to not hearing her raspy, unique laughter.”

By an almost mocking coincidence, before her sister died, Tabatha had signed up to take the course, Nature and Treatment of Alcohol and Drug Problems. She says it helped her understand what the drunk driver might have been going through on the fateful afternoon. She also says there were times when she wanted to flee the classroom.

As part of the coursework, she attended AA meetings. “I didn’t know how I’d get through that. I was very focused. I sat there and listened to everything the alcoholics had to say with complete attention and thought about Khadijah the entire time like a tape of her was running in my head. When I left, I was so angry.”

Tabatha may be a victim of grievous loss, but she’s also a social worker. “When I experience anger, I can think my way out of it. If I’m angry, I allow it to take its course, but I find ways to control it.”

And yet, as much as her learning helped her cope with her trouble, it isn’t a panacea. Tabatha says understanding alcoholism and addictions, even from a trauma-informed perspective, doesn’t make her loss easier to live with: “The hole will always be there.”

She pays attention to herself. She knows she has overdue business with her own delayed grieving. When she was anticipating a break between the end of school and finding her first job, Tabatha made a plan for the extra time she expected to rush into the vacuum: she would spend some of it with her young son, who has been waiting in daycare everyday for her school day to end, and she would care for herself by exercising.

She knows, in her own words, she’s “battled and succeeded” before.



Photos by Douglas Levere

“battled & succeeded”



ALISON L. FLAKES

To view a memorial photo album, visit socialwork.buffalo.edu/alison-flakes

In Memoriam

ALISON L. FLAKES, a School of Social Work adjunct faculty member beloved by students, colleagues and countless others, passed away at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York, on June 5, 2014.

There is not a student, a faculty member or a community who has not been touched by Alison Flakes, and her loss is deeply felt by her family, friends and the social work community of Western New York. She had a remarkable history in the SSW as a student, director, practitioner and adjunct faculty member that spanned more than 20 years. After earning a bachelor’s degree in communications from Buffalo State College, she earned her MSW at UB in 1996. She was the School’s director of recruitment, admissions and student affairs from 1998 to 2000; she was also an adjunct in the School in 1998 and from 2007 until 2014. Alison’s experience working in an alternative sentencing program sparked her interest in women facing substance abuse, mental health issues and trauma – a research area she further explored as a doctoral student at University at Albany before taking leave to serve a women’s residential drug treatment program in Georgia.

Alison was involved with many community-based organizations, including the Red Cross, the Buffalo Federation of Neighborhood Centers, Lakeshore Behavioral Health and so many others. Alison loved the classroom and relished in engaging students to think big and to make a difference in their communities. One of her great joys was seeing that “Aha!” moment in those she taught – those moments, she said, “get the butterflies in my stomach just buzzing!” She had an iridescent smile powerful enough to lighten any heavy heart with optimism and hope. It is not surprising that she was the 2014 recipient of the “Adjunct Faculty of the Year” award.

Alison was a Buffalo native with a personal and professional dedication to understanding and addressing the poverty and violence affecting so many Buffalo residents, particularly in the inner city. With a deep-rooted sense of the generational impact of these issues, she devoted many of her years to serving as a change agent and advocate in her community.

Her gentle grace, her care and nurturing of others, and the compassion and strength with which she approached being a cherished family member, a social worker, a friend and a mentor was consistent with Nelson Mandela’s admonition: “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.”



- Sarah Goldthrite and Barbara Rittner

An Alternative Path to Healing: Ancient Methods in Modern Social Work

While many conversations about treatment of depression and anxiety focus on pharmaceutical interventions, William Fudeman (MSW ’76, LCSW, LAc) can be a breath of fresh air.

When the Tompkins County Mental Health Association presented its Twentieth Annual Conference on Depression in Ithaca in November 2013 with a focus on “What We Are Learning about Treatment and Recovery in the Twenty-first Century,” Fudeman took to the forum to share his expertise on the values of ancient Chinese medicine in a modern context. His new book, “Before Pharmaceuticals: Emotional Healing with Chinese Medicine,” also explores those benefits.

“I believe that Chinese and ancient approaches to medicine are the most effective alternatives to pharmaceutical treatment that dominates mental health in the U.S.,” Fudeman says. “If we’re going to have responsible mental health treatment in this country, there needs to be education and exploration of alternatives that are useful. Chinese medicine isn’t the only one, but it’s one of the longest standing.”

Fudeman finds the propensity to over-prescribe in the medical world, particularly when it comes to children, a disturbing trend begging for reversal. “Pharmaceuticals like antidepressants and antipsychotics can be useful in extreme circumstances,” he explains, “but studies show that continued dependence on those drugs can lead to worse mental health outcomes. While ancient Chinese methods are not a replacement for psychotherapy, acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine are the ideal complement to that approach.”



A graduate of New England School of Acupuncture, Fudeman has more than 25 years of experience practicing Shiatsu massage and Qi Gong in addition to his 35 years of counseling experience informing his current practice at Healing Arts of the Finger Lakes.

-Sarah Goldthrite

CLASS OF 2014 GRADUATES



2014 STUDENT AWARDS

HONORS WERE CONFERRED ON 18 STUDENTS AT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK'S COMMENCEMENT, MAY 17, 2014

ANDREW J. LAUGHLIN AWARD

Travis Hales

ARCHIE W. SWANSON HONORARY AWARD

Cally Graham

BERTHA S. LAURY THORN & ROSE AWARD

Whitney Denesha

DENA P. GOLD MEMORIAL AWARD

Melinda Mizell

DOROTHY LYNN HONORARY AWARD

Marc Burns

DREAM AWARD

Jill Baszczynski
Amy Seivert, Sharon Wangene Nduva

HASELTINE T. CLEMENTS MEMORIAL FUND AWARD

Ali Kadhum

JULIAN SOJDA MEMORIAL AWARD

Francis Paul Muccigrosso

KRISTOPHER L. BRASELTON MEMORIAL AWARD

Emily Curry

LOUISA CIELEN SCHOLARSHIP

Elizabeth Hole

NASW AWARD

Elizabeth Agnello

NILES CARPENTER AWARD

Tamara Lindstrom



**BEST
GRAD SCHOOLS**

U.S. News & WORLD REPORT

**SOCIAL WORK
2013**



Photos courtesy of Onion Studio, Inc.

OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD

Jill Baszczyński

ROSE WEINSTEIN SCHOLAR AWARD

Lisa Christian

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION AWARD**

Rachel Wilson

TERESE EUSANIO MEMORIAL AWARD

Kim Bennett



**Rho Kappa Chapter
Phi Alpha National Social Work Honor Society Induction Ceremony**

Eighteen students were inducted into the Rho Kappa Chapter at The Garret Club on May 1, 2014.

To qualify, students must have maintained a 3.95 GPA and demonstrated the ideals and values of social work.

AWARD WINNERS

SEIZING THE DAY

DISTINGUISHED PHD IN SOCIAL WELFARE ALUMNI AWARD

ELAINE MACCIO, PHD '04

Given her accomplishments, it is no wonder that Elaine Maccio (PhD '04 & MSW '98) is one of the SSW Distinguished Alumni. She is currently an associate professor at Louisiana State University (LSU) and in the midst of a remarkable career as a passionate advocate for the LGBTQ community in a state not well-known for being embracing. Her progressive advocacy for the rights and health – both emotional and physical – of LGBTQ youth and adults is more than transformative – it is inspiring. She was instrumental in developing Baton Rouge, Louisiana's first LGBTQ youth group; organizing the city's first Equality March; and developing a family therapy program to serve families of LGBTQ youth exiting juvenile detention. She helped orchestrate the faculty senate, staff senate and student government resolutions to establish domestic partner health benefits for LSU employees, all of which passed in 2012 and 2013. In 2007, Maccio developed the LSU graduate elective Social Work with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People, taught as a service-learning course. She also serves on the Women's and Gender Studies faculty, Diversity Action Team, Hearing Panel Pool and Service-Learning Advisory Council. It was in Buffalo, New York, working with LGBTQ youth and their families that she came to understand and developed her strengths and passion for advocacy and transferred those skills to the Baton Rouge community at large. Maccio not only chairs the Board of Directors of Capital City Alliance and sits on the Board of Directors of Baton Rouge Crisis Intervention Center, she has been featured in Baton Rouge's The Advocate, on The Jim Engster Show, on WAFB and in the documentary "The Inclusion Illusion: One Baton Rouge," examining issues of race, class, and sexual and gender identity. The recipient of several service-learning and professional accolades, Maccio represents the essence of a passionate social worker engaged in the momentous movement toward true equality in the United States – the equality that transcends not only race and class lines, but also those of gender and sexual orientation.

TINA HOUSTON MCCREA, MSW '94

The University at Buffalo School of Social Work held its annual Field Educator Reception to honor the hundreds of professional social workers who volunteer to mentor students on Thursday, May 8 at the Twentieth Century Club. The reception is an annual event held by our school to honor the significant contributions made by all of our field educators who supervise students in their field placements as part of the Masters of Social Work program. It's an opportunity to express our appreciation for their commitment to our students, our school and the social work profession. The reception is also the occasion to present the Outstanding Achievement in Field Education. Based on student nomination, the award is given to a field educator who is an excellent role model. They must demonstrate a commitment to the values of the social work profession and evidence leadership within their organization and in the community. This year, the Outstanding Achievement in Field Education award was presented to Tina Houston McCrea, a social worker at the Buffalo Public Schools. McCrea was described by her former student, Katharine Collins, MSW '14, as "the most influential individual I have ever worked with." She states, "Not only has she dedicated her life to the students and school she works at, she is a vital community member and the perfect example of what a social worker is. She puts her heart and soul into her job and into the supervision she has provided me with." Field education is often said to be the heart of social work education. When you see the passion for the profession that McCrea inspires in her students, it is easy to see why.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN FIELD EDUCATION AWARD

EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD

NICOLE FAVA, PHD '14

Nicole Fava, MSW '08 & PhD '14, was recently recognized by the Buffalo Center for Social Research (BCSR) and the SSW for her outstanding research efforts in social work. She is the recipient of the BCSR 2014 Excellence in Research Award for her dissertation, "Achieving Sexual Well-Being After Abuse: Resilient Sexual Health Trajectories Among Youth with Maltreatment Histories." As a PhD student, Fava also won the inaugural Nochajski Essay Award for her article, "Trauma-Informed Sexuality Education: Recognizing the Rights and Resilience of Youth" (with Associate Professor Laina Bay-Cheng, published in the journal Sex Education). Currently a postdoctoral fellow in the Michigan Family Research Center at Wayne State University's Merrill Skillman Palmer Institute with Valerie Simon, PhD, Fava's emerging scholarship exemplifies the finest aspects of the interdisciplinary training our doctoral students receive in theories and methods, our School's specialization in trauma and resilience, and the strengths-based perspective of social work as a whole.

JOHN BRICOUT, MSW '94

John Bricout, PhD, MSW '94, had a reputation as an MSW student for being forward-thinking when it came to social work research. Even then, he was exploring the intersection between research findings and ways to improve practice. Over the years he has been an applied researcher examining the impact of Web-based and assistive technologies on people with disabilities to enhance their participation in employment, government and community life. His efforts have directly influenced policy and practice with disabled consumers. He would be the first to tell social workers that getting the word out through publications is a critical step in changing how things are done, and he has an impressive number of publications himself — but his modesty would prevent him from saying how influential his own publications have been in changing how things are done. He continues to publish cutting edge research, including his most recent coauthored article, "Telework Rationale and Implementation for People with Disabilities: Considerations for Employer Policymaking," in Work: A Journal of Prevention, Assessment and Rehabilitation. Currently a full professor and associate dean for research and community outreach at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA), Bricout actively collaborates with faculty on grant efforts and overseeing UTA's social work research centers and the Innovative Community-Academic Partnership (iCAP) program, as well as the continuing education program. He also co-chairs the Responsible Conduct of Research Committee and chairs the University Research Committee at UTA. Extending his outreach beyond academia into the community, Bricout volunteers at the Dallas Children's Advocacy Center (DCAC) and serves as co-chair for the SSWR Special Interest Group (SIG) on Disability Research. Before joining the faculty at UTA, he was an assistant professor/associate professor in Washington University's School of Social Work in St. Louis and the associate director for research at the University of Central Florida's School of Social Work. Bricout's dedication to excellence has also earned him a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship Award as a Fulbright Specialist in 2012, which entails a grant in social work at the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University in the Republic of Georgia.

DISTINGUISHED MSW ALUMNI AWARD



LEFT TO RIGHT: NICOLE FAVA, NANCY SMYTH, JOHN BRICOUT, ELAINE MACCIO



LEFT TO RIGHT: LAURA LEWIS, KATHARINE COLLINS, TINA HOUSTON MCCREA

Nelson Mar, JD/MSW '98, makes a case for

SOCIAL JUSTICE



Nelson Mar, JD/MSW '98, has a deep awareness of trauma as a factor in many social issues and social work applications.

A senior staff attorney at Legal Services NYC for the past 15 years, Mar's social work background plays a crucial role in his ability to work with and understand clients -- as well as to see a bigger picture for the issues with which they are dealing. (He says that he'd like to see all attorneys required to receive some social work training, specifically an intervention course.)

From an early age, the New York City native, 41, says, "I envisioned becoming a lawyer; I had a deep desire to do social justice work. My social work education made me keen to focus on those most at risk and in need; I fell into educational law, and now represent students and their families in the South Bronx."

Over 10 years ago, Mar and others started to observe a disturbing trend, one that continues today: schools, without the appropriate tools, training or resources, are in the practice of calling 911 to deal with disruptive classroom behavior in students -- sending young children to hospital emergency rooms even though they are not in need of medical care. This is traumatizing for both the children and their families -- and also ineffective.

Earlier this year, on behalf of six students and their families who have been subject to the practice, Mar filed a lawsuit against the City of New York and the Department of Education.

Says Mar, "This is about the sociological and physiological impacts of poverty. Everyone who lives in impoverished neighborhoods suffers traumatic stress and insecurity; there are higher crime rates, more exposure to violence."

"Many of these kids are diagnosed with ADHD; however, PTSD symptoms and qualifications are very similar," attests Mar. "Trauma, not chemical imbalance, is causing this behavior. More and more research is arriving at the conclusion that to be effective, social work needs to be trauma-centered; I know that the School of Social Work takes that view. There are similarities between what these kids experience and what those who live in a war zone go through. The research is honing in on that link."

With the current lawsuit, Mar says, "We are not minimizing the seriousness of the disruptive situations in school. We do want to highlight the connection between poverty and its impact on children.

"Longer-term, we want to address the root causes -- to reduce the 'achievement gap' and prevent more of these kids from being funneled into a 'school-to-prison' pipeline."

"In the shorter term, we want to encourage the City and the Department of Education to change these policies and practices," concludes Mar. "Schools with large populations of kids suffering dramatic exposure or toxic stress need increased resources. Then the kids' needs can be better met. We want to make sure that there are fewer incidents resulting in teachers and administrators thinking that a hospital room visit is the solution."

– Jana Eisenberg is a freelance writer.





Light IN THE Dark

By Sarah Goldthrite

THE PLIGHTS OF CHILDREN IN POSTWAR LIBERIA

After Liberian native and current MSW student Felecia Badio Merriam stepped off a plane in Liberia on Christmas Day 2013, what she saw journeying from the airport to her father's house instantly changed her path in social work.

"I was amazed to see so many children along the streets, everywhere -- really young children between the ages of 3 to about 17," Merriam says. "I knew I had to investigate to figure out what's going on with these kids and how the government is handling this."

Turns out, there is a lot going on. According to Merriam, the children in Liberia's streets, particularly in the densely populated capital, Monrovia, are homeless, orphaned or impoverished and working as street vendors or in drugs or prostitution to support themselves or their families, many times foregoing school completely to labor from the first beams of sunlight straight through the twilight of night. Merriam recalls even seeing children as young as 5 in nightclubs at 11 o'clock at night.



"Most children in Liberia don't have access to adequate education or other resources," she explains. "Because of the devastation of the war, the infrastructure was demolished. Many of the schools there are still broken down, just hallowed buildings.

"To compound that barrier, only about 1 percent of the population can access

public electricity -- I actually saw children huddled under a street light at night trying to study. One child, who was about 14 or 15, told me he gathers kids from the community and tries to help them with their schoolwork. My heart breaks for them. These kids who don't have anything are trying so hard to study and make themselves better."

They are children struggling with what are often called adult issues in a country where a staggering 61 percent of its population is under the age of 24. The war is over, but the youth of Liberia are now battling an array of global issues -- violence, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, mental health issues, sexual and physical abuse, and limited education, health and social resources. With so many children having to work and forego an education, as Merriam explains, preparing the future generation to take the reins proves problematic.

"If we have these problems with children now," says Merriam, "if they aren't in school and aren't prepared to take over, people who are in their 30s and 40s now will likely have to work for the rest of their lives."

Access -- to mental and physical health care, to social services, to basic necessities, to quality education -- is one crucial element in stabilizing Liberia 10 years after civil war, Merriam says. Without access, the next generation of children will face the same struggles, and the current generation will face these issues and barriers into adulthood.

Merriam originally intended to research and work with ex-child soldiers, now young adults, facing myriad issues a decade after spending up to 14 years engaged in combat. Adults impacted physically and mentally by long bouts of battle have few places to turn for help dealing with PTSD and the loss of limbs, for example.

Developing services for children ultimately translates to improved services for the entire population. Liberia's Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has constructed a 10 year plan aimed at rebuilding and strengthening much-needed services, and the University of Liberia recently introduced social work into its curriculum.

With a little light shed on Liberia's struggles and the importance of accessible social welfare resources, culturally-conscious people like Merriam can continue to help Liberia transform into a globally competitive nation with empowered citizens able to reach their full potential.

"With war come so many social problems that need to be addressed," Merriam says. "I'm amazed at how far they've come, but there is still a long way to go."





Photos courtesy of Felecia Badio Merriam



Greetings!

Our School of Social Work graduates are recognized nationally as among the very BEST, and with our reputation soaring, you will tell our story as professionals who universally ensure human rights, safeguard social safety nets, develop vital resources and offer support to those who need it most. As practitioners and educators of a helping profession, we seek and capture every opportunity available to assist our clients and our communities.

At graduation, I had the privilege of welcoming the UB School of Social Work Class of 2014 to our professional ranks. I felt such pride as an alumna of the School in introducing this outstanding group of professionals prepared to have a profound impact on our communities.

You are a graduate of the University at Buffalo, a premier public center for learning, research and discovery, and our School plays an integral role in the University's mission of outreach locally, nationally and internationally.

It is an exciting time for the profession, the School of Social Work and the University. We, like all our alum, are ambassadors for our alma mater and our profession, and maintaining these vital connections is an invaluable source of current practice information, advice and networking.

Please visit www.socialwork.buffalo.edu or www.alumni.buffalo.edu for opportunities to support our School of Social Work and our University and to help further the mission of community outreach, professional and educational growth, and real-world impact.

As always, contact me at GovGirl55@aol.com.

Rita M. Andolina

Rita M. Andolina
Advisor, UB SSW Alumni

Developing a professional social work identity is a quest. The quest begins with an awareness. Awareness might come in the form of a single event or through the layering of multiple experiences. This awareness, "I want to be a social worker," then moves through a series of both carefully calculated and absolutely random steps. Each step creates momentum; energy explodes, fizzles out and reignites. One moment the path is smooth and inviting and the next, a mixture of challenging hurdles and hidden dangers. Ruminating about the quest evolves into evaluation: "Is this the right career for me?"; "If I weren't doing this, what would I be doing?"; "What kind of professional do I want to be?" These introspections strengthen the determination to continue and, at times, lead only to more questions. After many attempts to discover the "answers," it becomes clear that the questions ARE actually more important than the answers.

This quest to develop a professional social work identity, as it turns out, is not static. It is a set of perpetual beginnings, middles and ends. Even more important, this quest is not a solitary endeavor. The quest for a professional social work identity relies on a community comprised of personal and professional relationships. The School of Social Work is invested in strengthening and maximizing both to embolden your quest. Our interest in your professional identity is mutually beneficial -- supporting you in achieving your highest potential reflects well on us and adds merit to your University at Buffalo School of Social Work degree.

Regardless of where you are in your own professional identity quest, invite us to join you. Tell us what questions we should be asking to maximize our relationship with you. Finally, as part of your quest, remain connected or reconnect with the UBSSW. We both will be better for it.

Denise Krause

Denise Krause
Clinical Professor and Associate Dean for
Community Engagement and Alumni Relations



CLASSNOTES

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Rosemary Sherman (MSW '92) was honored in September 2014 by the Mary Cariola Children's Center where she has ministered as a social worker for the past 20 years. Rosemary has been a Sister of Mercy for the past 30 years and is a member of the NYPPAW Community, whose administration offices are located in Buffalo, New York.

Frederick Marschner (MSW '97, LCSW) is currently in private practice in Amherst, New York. He specializes in PTSD and other anxiety disorders, as well as in addictions, grief and loss, and adult children of alcoholics. He is also working on a program to assist people with stage fright and other types of public performance issues.

00

Doris Corley (MSW '01) is a senior legislative assistant for the City of Buffalo Common Council.

Kirsten Anderson (MSW '03) is currently an adjunct professor at Erie Community College, where she teaches social science courses at North and City campuses.

Michele (Meesh) Sebring (MSW '03) started a new position as a substance abuse therapist at Changes Treatment Center in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in April 2014.

Jennifer Corbett (BA/MSW '04) received an MBA from the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business in May 2010. She currently works as a quality assurance specialist for the City of Alexandria, Virginia Department of Community and Human Services.

In October 2013, **Reverend Walter E. Pierce (MSW '05, CASAC)** began a position as a psychiatric social worker at Erie County Medical Center's Adult Outpatient Clinic.

Erin Carman (MSW '06) worked in social services administration in Brooklyn for six years before returning to Buffalo in 2012 to attend law school.

Rachel McCarley (MSW '06) now works for Catholic Health Sisters Hospital in school health and has created a health and wellness organization for women called Rachel's Experience. The organization is designed to "help women, families and communities prevent diseases, promote healthy cognition and produce spiritual fruit." Services are currently offered at Sisters Hospital. McCarley is also working toward an LCSW.

Jo-Anne Beggs (MSW '98) returned to Mississauga, Ontario, in March 2013. While in Buffalo, she worked for Child & Adolescent Treatment Services as a part of the original team that launched the Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) for Adolescents program. She also worked for Kaleida's Mental Health & Addiction/Trauma Services Program in addition to the After Hours/Urgent Care mental health pilot program. She is currently a clinical associate and serves adults and adolescents with DBT treatment at the Mindfulness Clinic in Toronto.

While taking classes at Baruch College's School of Public Affairs, **Marcy Abramsky (MSW '99, LCSW)** worked at two schools in New York City and for an agency in Bronx, New York. After the events in 9/11, her educational and professional goals shifted to a focus on supporting the staff and students in Manhattan schools. She recently completed post-master's certification in school leadership in 2013 at Stony Brook University and obtained New York State licenses in school building leadership and school district leadership. Abramsky is also a mentor for two UB SSW MSW students and currently works as a social worker at Hauppauge Middle School.

Marva Williams (MSW '06) recently transitioned into an executive director position at the Sarah Minnie Badger Foster Care Agency, which is affiliated with Bethesda World Harvest International Church and provides services to children and families in Erie County, New York. She is currently recruiting potential couples or individuals who would like to become foster parents.

Molly Wolf (MSW '07) earned her PhD in 2014.

Stacie Arnts (MSW '08) is a medical social worker for frail elderly at Catholic Health LIFE and a program a field educator for MSW students.

Christina Rine (PhD '08) is now a Department of Social Work faculty member at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania.

Jill Cooke (MSW '09) has gained her licensure and has worked at Mid-Erie Counseling as an adult mental health counselor since 2010. She plans to continue in community and mental health for the next three years in order to earn psychotherapy "R" privilege and ultimately open her own practice. Cooke has also been running a men's domestic violence group for the past three years.

Jenna Witkowski (MSW '09) has been a social worker at Attica since May 2013, working for the Intermediate Care Program (ICP) where she runs therapeutic groups and conducts individual clinical counseling. Criteria for inmates to enter this program include Axis I diagnosis with a serious mental illness or a history of recent self-harm/suicide attempts. Witkowski enjoys the dynamic environment and trying new approaches and techniques in group and in session.

HOT

off the
Press

WWW.SOCIALWORK.BUFFALO.EDU/AMAZON

When you go to Amazon.com through the School of Social Work website to buy a book (or almost anything else), the school will earn a percentage of the sale. We think Amazon.com is a great company to partner with because books are the heart of its business and the core of education.

Go to www.socialwork.buffalo.edu/amazon. It will take you to the Amazon.com link as part of our Associate Partnership program.

We use these earnings to support special initiatives. You help support our goals when you use our website to go shopping at Amazon.com.

So bookmark our page if you haven't already. And then go shopping!

IT'S A VIRTUOUS COMBINATION.



SOCIAL ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY
NATIVE AMERICA: REFLECTIONS
FROM TURTLE ISLAND

edited by Hilary N. Weaver, professor and
associate dean for academic affairs.
[Ashgate Publishing Co., 2014]

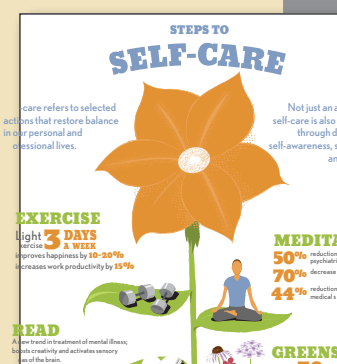
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Over 2400+ repins of our "How to Flourish in Social Work" infographic on our Office of Continuing Education's Pinterest Self-Care Resources board!

www.pinterest.com/source/socialwork.buffalo.edu/

Follow them for more great resources on trauma, finding a job and much more.



CALL FOR CLASSNOTES

Got something to say? Some news to share?
Send your story to Sarah Watson at
sjwatson@buffalo.edu or call 716-645-1259

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Aaron Borowczyk (MSW '10) has been promoted to outpatient chemical dependency program manager at WCA Hospital in Jamestown, New York, where he previously held positions of Counselor II and Counselor III in both the inpatient and outpatient programs.

Alanna Chiler (MSW '10) is a protective services worker with the Health and Human Services Agency of San Diego County.

Julie Maier (MSW '10) is current a PhD student in Kinesiology at the University of Maryland. She recently wrote an entry in the Pop Health blog about the intersection of sport and mental illness: <http://pop-health.blogspot.com/>.

Sandra Sheppard (MSW '97, PhD '10) recently accepted a position as executive director at West Side Community Services in Buffalo. This community center is made up of committed individuals who come together as board members, program members and staff to improve education, health and wellness, and income for the West Side of Buffalo.

Margaret Coombes (PhD '11), assistant professor, took a position at University of Fraser Valley in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Venus Wiggins (MSW '11) is currently a mental health/addictions therapist.

Recent graduate **Besty Constantine (MSW '12)** was chosen for the 22nd annual class of 40 Under 40 winners by Business First for her work with the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo.

Katie (Homer) Crosby (MSW '12) is now a development associate for the UB Schools of Social Work, Nursing, and Public Health and Health Professions. Since starting in October 2013, she has found herself involved with many different projects with the School of Social Work. She currently sits on a committee with faculty and staff from the School of Social Work, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Division of Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement that is working to develop a support system for undergraduate students who are alumni of the foster care system. Crosby has also worked closely with the School to manage their Random Acts of Coffee student giving campaign. This campaign encourages Social Work students to give up their coffee (or beverage of choice) for a week and donate it to the School of Social Work Student Emergency Fund. The fund is in place to assist Social Work students when they experience a life event that may derail their education unless they receive some financial support. At our new student orientation this year, Crosby introduced this campaign to our new students with much success! Thirty students gave with many more expressing interest. Crosby's favorite thing about working with the UB School of Social Work? "Having the opportunity to work together with faculty and staff that I admire to make a difference in the lives of our students, our alumni and the social work profession as a whole."

Since November 2012, **Beatrice Turner (MSW '12)** has worked for 2U, a company that partners with prestigious universities to provide superior higher education to graduate students in a variety of programs across the nation. Currently she is a compliance specialist working on various projects, including, among other projects, creating and facilitating live and asynchronous trainings for employees on issues such as FERPA, handling crisis situations, and utilizing appropriate documentation.

Andrew Wilton (MSW '12) recently started practicing as a child and family therapist with the Catholic Charities Monsignor Carr Children's Clinic in Lockport, New York.

Ya-Ling Chen (PhD '13) joined the Chaoyang University of Technology faculty in Taichung, Taiwan.

Molly Harrington (MSW '13) recently earned her license as a master's prepared social worker in New York State. She was promoted at Weinberg Campus to Intake Specialist at Total Aging in Place, a managed long-term care company.

Samantha Kowalski (MSW '13) accepted a service coordinator position at Health Force in Cheektowaga, New York. She will be working with the elderly and traumatic brain injury populations so they can live independently in the community.

Nancy Kusmaul (PhD '13) recently accepted a tenure track position at the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Caitlin Walker (MSW '13) is currently working as a mental health counselor at Eastern Niagara Hospital's Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Unit in Lockport, New York.

Michele Wiepert (MSW '13) is now a medical social worker at Unity Hospital in Rochester, New York.

In Memoriam

Mrs. Jean Radde Bennett, MSW '39, our oldest living alumna, passed away on Aug. 21, 2014, at the age of 99.

1939

Correction - Ellen Fink-Samnack (MSW '83) Classnotes entry in the Fall 2013 issue was incomplete. For complete information, please go to www.efssupervisionstrategies.com/

SOCIAL MEDIA



Popular post with almost **50** comments!

**"INNOVATION IN SOCIAL WORK:
WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?"**

BY DEAN NANCY J. SMYTH

www.socialworksynergy.org

search: WHERE DOES IT COME FROM

BLOG

(HOT TOPIC!)

LISTEN TO **EPISODE 145** WITH
JORIEN BROCK AND
SIOBHAN FITZGERALD-CUSHING AS
THEY DISCUSS MEETING THE NEEDS OF
TRANSGENDER PEOPLE.

www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=145

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TUNE IN!

The UB School of Social Work is taking part in a new collaboration to host **semi-monthly Twitter Chats** at **#MacroSW** on **Thursdays at 9 p.m. EDT/EST (6 p.m. PDT/PST)**. Beginning in March 2014 and is on-going to date. The chats will discuss issues relevant to **macro social work practice** and will be geared to practitioners at all career levels.

The University at Buffalo School of Social Work is one of five moderators rotating as host of the semi-monthly chat, to be held on the second and fourth Thursday of each month.

14 & 15

School of Social Work

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BUFFALO, NY 14260-1050
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WWW.SOCIALWORK.BUFFALO.EDU



Thanks to you, I have a global perspective on social work practice.

Katie Witmer was a case manager working primarily with families of persons with developmental disabilities for People, Inc.—a Buffalo-area human services agency—when she enrolled in the MSW program. She didn't need an MSW to get her job; she wanted it so she could do the job better. She's still managing cases for People, Inc., now with a wider perspective on service delivery systems and organizational behavior, keener advocacy skills and a deeper understanding of the subtle oppressions that harm the lives of disabled persons and their families. During the final year of the program, Katie spent a semester in a field placement with a non-profit agency in Seoul, South Korea, that advocates for unwed mothers. A donor-supported stipend helped her get there. That opened her horizons: Why not the actual wider world, not just the metaphor? She's looking at jobs with the United Nations. Someday, that small seed of funds may bloom in a place far away.

When you support students at UB, you are investing in students like Katie.

The best public universities have the strongest private support.

www.giving.buffalo.edu or toll free at 855-GIVE-2-UB