

Mosaics

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

FALL 2006

News from the University at Buffalo School of Social Work

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Mosaics

Mosaics, the newsletter of the UB School of Social Work and its alumni association, is produced three times a year by the Newsletters Unit of the University at Buffalo Office of News Services and Periodicals, Division of External Affairs. December 2006. 06 SOC 005.

www.socialwork.buffalo.edu

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Our News

Warm, gentle, humble man

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama visited UB for three days this September. Before his visit, members of the community made peace flags as a gesture of good will and symbol of hope. The flags were strung together across the campus to remind us to promote peace among individuals, societies and countries. The School of Social Work's Kathy Kendall and Elaine Hammond helped organize the flag project; Minnie Wyse, Liz Schaal and Zoe Koston also volunteered during the Dalai Lama's visit. Many of our students and faculty—even children from UB's early learning center—attended an interfaith service featuring the Dalai Lama on the first day of his visit. The service opened with a haunting melody played by a Buddhist monk on a wooden flute.

A number of us attended the creation of a sand mandala painting that began with a consecration ceremony performed by the monks (our associate professor Diane Elze is looking on from the far right in the picture above). The



Fanfare during the Dalai Lama's recent visit to UB.

mandala emerged over the course of a day; it was ritually deconstructed during ceremonies at the end of the visit.

It was a brilliant early autumn day when the Dalai Lama spoke to 30,000 students, faculty, alumni and guests in UB stadium. He is a warm, gentle, humble man. He spoke to the heart of social work when he reminded us of the importance of compassion even toward those seen as enemies, and of the responsibility we all have to promote peace and understanding through dialogue.

Postcard from Scotland

Traveling to Scotland was educational, cultural, exciting and moving. I learned about the ins and outs of the social service programs in a variety of Scottish cities and discovered that Scotland is facing many of the same social problems as the U.S. I had the opportunity to present information to the social service workers and directors of Moray Council. The workers welcomed us with warm hospitality and treated us with kindness and appreciation. I also saw breathtaking views, such as the yellow and purple wild flowers that are scattered about the hills of Scotland, and tasted unique and delicate foods such as haggis and cullen skink. But my favorite memory of Scotland will be the lifelong friends I've made from the UK and the University at Buffalo's School of Social Work. I'll tell you more soon.

—Nicole Tomasello, PhD candidate



FROM DEAN NANCY J. SMYTH

Healthy living in two worlds

This past summer, the Buffalo Center for Social Research was full of the energy and enthusiasm of young members of Buffalo's Native American community attending Healthy Living in Two Worlds. The project was sponsored by the National Cancer Institute and directed by associate professor Hilary N. Weaver, DSW.

The participants, age 9 to 13, followed a culturally-grounded wellness curriculum that encouraged healthy eating practices and physical activity, and discouraged recreational tobacco use. The program drew heavily on Haudenosaunee cultural practices to reflect the culture of the majority of the participants. The curriculum was grounded in the realization that these youth live in a multicultural, contemporary urban environment even though they continue to be Native people.

Native American youth face some of the highest risk factors for cancer. Native Americans have high rates of smoking, they have the most obesity of any group in the U.S. and many have a sedentary lifestyle. In addition to teaching healthy practices, the program kept the kids constantly on the move through activities like swimming and lacrosse.

The program will now analyze data collected during the summer for the purpose of developing the curriculum for use with urban Native American communities around the country.

Expert leads certificate program

Internationally renowned trauma expert Ricky Greenwald, PsyD, is teaching this year's certificate program in child and adolescent



Greenwald

trauma treatment. Program training is being delivered by the Child Trauma Institute in collaboration with the Social Work Office of Continuing Education, and hosted by Child and Family Services in Buffalo. The program includes material on self-control and anger management, eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing, and advanced therapeutic interventions. Greenwald, who is the founder and Executive Director of the Child Trauma Institute, is the author or editor of several books, including "Child Trauma Handbook" (2005, Haworth) and "Trauma and Juvenile Delinquency" (2002, Haworth). ■



Out and about

Social workers get around: into local communities, forgotten neighborhoods, rural areas wherever people need services. The old adage start where the client is sometimes means going where they are.

The next *Mosaics*, will focus on the School of Social Work's long reach into local, national and international communities from Scotland to Maine and back to Buffalo.

A former client recently asked me if having a gun held to your head while someone demands money qualifies as trauma. What comes to mind when you hear the word trauma? Perhaps you think about extreme events like Hurricane Katrina or the attack on the World Trade Center. Or maybe you think of the physical and sexual abuse that many children experience, or shootings in our communities, especially in poor neighborhoods.

Does the word bring to mind domestic violence? Or the experience of witnessing domestic violence that affects so many children? Serious car or workplace accidents? Rape? Torture? Physical assaults in bars, prisons, gang fights? The death of a loved one? Being diagnosed with a life threatening illness? Each of these instances qualifies as trauma and each can affect people, organizations, communities and nations in a myriad of ways. Research shows that trauma is a significant risk factor for a range of problems, including substance abuse, violence, criminal behavior, educational problems, the wide range of conduct problems that children can struggle with, depression, anxiety problems and health problems just to name a few.

It is because of the far ranging impact of traumatic experiences that we're using this issue of *Mosaics* to highlight aspects of the work we do as a school to address this problem in our research, preparation of social workers, professional continuing education and our partnerships in the community. This area of our work is too extensive to cover comprehensively in a few pages, but it's our hope that this will give you a flavor of our efforts.

Nancy J. Smyth, PhD, LCSW



Safe place for the hard work

Cazenovia Recovery Systems residential programs help restore broken lives

At Visions Place, a converted convent on Buffalo's east side now home to 24 men and women living with the double hardship of mental illness and chemical dependency or alcohol abuse, Cazenovia Recovery Systems clinicians help residents regain their bearings. *Above, clockwise from the lower right, Joy Rothberg, Visions Place program director; Angel Pletcher (MSW '04), a Visions Place senior counselor; Suzie Bermingham (MSW '03), counselor at New Beginnings; and Bill Burgin, clinical director of Cazenovia Recovery Systems.*

By Lisa Game and Jud Mead

“I met Angel on the telephone through a counselor of mine who said I needed this place. I did an interview over the telephone. They put me on the waiting list but I didn't go. In January this year I checked myself into the hospital and they put me on the waiting list here for the fourth time. In order to get a bed, I had to call every day. I called from the hospital on the pay phone or a staff phone every day for one month. On February 7, Angel picked me up at the hospital and brought me here.”

Jim lives at Visions Place. He has been sober for more than eight months. “My outlook has changed,” he says.

“I felt at home here right away. The staff will take time to talk

to you. I've never really cared to be around people. But the way the staff approaches me—they're very compassionate. I've been here almost nine months and I'd like to be out by Christmas. I could always get another payee and leave and go to the City Mission. But I'm taking my counselor Joy's advice to stay. I fought to get in here. I'm sort of between a soft rock and a soft hard place.”

Cazenovia Recovery Systems provides four levels of community residential care: intensive residential rehabilitation, community residential services, co-occurring mental health and substance abuse residential treatment, and supportive living for clients with substance abuse problems.

Bill Burgin, Cazenovia's clinical director, says that long-stay residential treatment allows him to see his work make a difference.

"I've never been able to track the progress of somebody as well as I have in residential," he says. "You get them for a period of time and you can watch the wellness occur. When you're in an outpatient situation, you see them once, maybe twice a week. In inpatient, you have a 28-day turnaround, and in detox it's only a seven-day turnaround—you just can't see any progress in that short amount of time."

For Jim, simply having a residence is healing.

"My room here is all customized now," he says. "When I moved in all I had was one bag of clothes. Now I have a stereo and a TV and toys I bought at Family Dollar. The peers here are pretty good. I'd say we all have a quiet understanding that I'll leave you alone and you leave me alone. I came here to learn things and I am learning. I just have to keep my mind open. I like it better here because I feel like I'm getting somewhere."

THE LITTLE THINGS

Darwin Corley, program director of Cazenovia's New Beginnings, a residence that facilitates recovery from chemical dependency, almost left the field because of that lack of real progress.

"I was working in Queens in New York City and it was just a joke. Group therapies and cars double-parked and dope dealers hanging out outside. Forty people sitting in a group with only three group facilitators. Before people even get outside they're smoking up and walking over empty bags and crack vials."

Corley sees the difference between

his old job as an addictions counselor in New York City and his current role every day. "There's a relationship of mind, body and spirit here. There's an excitement that every day you get up and it's good before you even open the door."

Angel Pletcher, a senior counselor at Visions Place, is motivated by the daily opportunity to help in all kinds of ways, even the smallest.

"One of the things that draws me to residential is that you get to see the clients every day and they come to you even for the little things," she says. "Even something as simple as, 'Do my shoes match my shirt?' They ask you for help."

"There's a certain sense that this is home," says Joy Rothberg, program director of Visions Place. "This is where they live. We try to make it that way—so that they see this as their house. So that they can make it their own comfortable place."

Residents in Cazenovia programs learn right away that comfort comes

"Alumni I've spoken with who work there are really happy because they feel they're making a difference."

— Nancy Smyth

with responsibility. They are required to commit to a minimum of three months of treatment and may need to stay for as long as two years.

"They've got to follow our rules and regulations—not the same ones they lived under in their own households—so it's a definite commitment," Burgin says. And he says most residents are willing to make that commitment.

Everyday responsibilities for residents include such chores as washing dishes and cleaning the kitchen and the bathrooms.

Pletcher says that it's the residents' house so they have to keep it clean. "Most of them take pride in it."

The pride can show when new residents arrive. "Often, they don't have a lot of stuff with them," according to Pletcher. "We bring them in, kind of get them acquainted with the place, take them up to their room, get their stuff put away and then have them meet with their counselor to take care of all the intake paperwork. We try to get them into a group [therapy session] and the residents are really good about welcoming them. They'll take them around and show them what the place is all about. This is home for them."

EMERGENCY CONTACT

And having a home can be the beginning of a new life. Rothberg tells the story of a resident who had abandoned everything before finding her way to Visions Place.

"She had really had no family contact for about two years because she was using and on the streets. Her family didn't want to have anything to do with her and, at that point, she didn't really want to have anything to do with them. After being here for about a year and being clean for the entire time, she decided to contact a brother she hadn't seen for two years. A counselor helped her deliver the letter to her brother's last-known residence and, an hour and a half later, he called her. They spent most of the day together. When everyone first comes here we ask for an emergency contact. This resident hated that question because she didn't have an emergency contact. When her brother left, she said, 'I have an emergency contact now.' And that was just an amazing thing because she'd been alone for so long."

UB CONNECTIONS

Burgin is a proponent of evidence-based practice. “We believe that if research says that [programs] work, then we believe that they can work here,” he says. Cazenovia is implementing trauma-based services, training counselors in motivational interviewing, and bringing in cognitive therapies such as REBT (Rational Emotive and Behavioral Therapies) and has counselors in the Trauma Counseling Certificate program at UB.

Trauma issues came to Cazenovia’s attention when they consulted with Nancy Smyth, dean of the School of Social Work, for help with a residential program that was underperforming. Smyth recom-

mended that Cazenovia try to implement services to treat trauma issues their clients might have. “They integrated some really excellent evidence-based interventions for their programs in addiction.”

“The thing I think is really wonderful about that system,” Smyth says, “is that they value quality and they encourage creativity and innovation among their staff. Alumni I’ve spoken with who work there are really happy because they feel they’re making a difference.”

GOOD CLEAN FUN

Cazenovia runs a residential program for recovering addicts getting ready to return to fully independent living. Some residents of this program are now employed and have savings accounts.

Suzanne Bissonette, executive director of Cazenovia Recovery Systems, says that the most recent resident to finish with the program left with \$6,000 in a savings account. “It’s a real achievement that they can walk away with a large sum of money and not use it on drugs and alcohol,” Bissonette says.

Successes can appear unexpectedly. Burgin remembers a particular outing: “We had a resident who signed up to go on the Miss Buffalo boat ride, but then he didn’t want to go. He just wanted to stay asleep. But later that day, he guided the whole Miss Buffalo—both residents and perfect strangers—in singing the ‘Gilligan’s Island’ theme song. Then he came over to Joy and me and thanked us. I don’t care what job you have or what you get paid, you can’t get any better reward than that.”

He says that activities are an important way to rediscover that it is possible to be clean and sober and still have fun. When Cazenovia added Visions Place



Jim, a resident at Visions Place since February 2006, smooths a mug in the large ceramics workroom in the basement of the facility. Activities play a role in daily life at Visions Place.

to its programs, it included an activities coordinator, something they hadn’t tried before. Recreational activities are a regular part of the program and Visions Place even has a ceramics ‘wing.’

Rothberg says that recreational activities are important to many of the residents who, as she puts it, “had probably never spent time doing much more than getting high.” One client brought to court a ceramic pig she’d made because she wanted to show it off.

Taking the long view of his continuing residence at Visions Place, Jim offers an appreciation that social workers can hang onto for the hard days.

“I appreciate all the people who want to work in the field because people like me need people like that.” ■

More than a vision

Cazenovia Recovery Systems’ suite of programs

- **Turning Point House** serving individuals who have numerous recovery attempts from substance related disorders.
- **Cazenovia Manor and New Beginnings** facilitating recovery from chemical dependency.
- **Visions Place** a residential setting for treatment of individuals with co occurring disorders of mental illness and chemical addiction or substance abuse.
- **Supportive Living Program** attaining readiness for independent living.
- **Supportive Housing Program** helping participants find and remain in permanent housing.

See www.cazenoviarecovery.org for more information.

Alumni Profile

Trauma + trouble

UB MSW finds hope for recovery in better treatment for trauma victims who might once have gone undiagnosed.

By Lisa Game

Marcy Brimo was a social worker before she even knew what social work was. As an undergraduate at UB she was a political activist. She and her friends thought it was more important to go into the community to help address issues than to sit in a classroom and talk about them.

"We looked to see what was needed," she says. "What we found were children who hadn't ever seen a doctor. We found a grocery store with rotten food, we saw gangs, and we saw people who didn't have any clothes or books." Brimo worked with the Mutual Aid Society to create a food co-op. They brought doctors in to see the children, there was no more rotten food, they spoke to the gang members and handed out donated clothing and books. A social work miracle.

After college, Brimo taught high school English in Kentucky and then in Akron, Ohio. She took a graduate program in English composition and decided to incorporate writing as a self-discovery tool in her classes. "When students write about something they're interested in, their linguistic and syntactic growth develops very fast," she says. So does their confidence.

Brimo applied this knowledge to the courses she taught later at Akron University and Alfred State. At the time, she was working on a PhD in English but says she realized she was more interested in the growth she saw in students who had to reflect on their experiences in order to write about their lives. So she returned to UB to study at the School of Social Work.

With her MSW in hand, she took a job with Child and Family Services in Buffalo where she counseled victims of domestic violence. She moved on to the Sisters Hospital STAR Program as a family therapist and found many women there who were also victims of domestic violence while in relationships with people with addictions. Brimo didn't understand the correlation. "The question was, for me, what was going on with this person that they would stay with somebody who is so abusive?"

After further research into trauma and recovery, Brimo began to understand more about domestic violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, and why people continue to return to abusive relationships. She took training in eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR); she now teaches a course on EMDR at the School of Social Work. Brimo was one of the early chairs of a local trauma taskforce that was a major force in raising awareness of the effects of traumatic events and the therapies available to treat those effects.

"When somebody has that traumatic event healed, they can go on to be who they are and do what they weren't able to do before, because they had those symptoms affecting them on a regular basis," she says.

Brimo moved from the STAR Program to Kaleida Health to work with women with both chemical dependency and sexual abuse issues. She continued to study advances in techniques for helping people who have been traumatized. Brimo is excited by discoveries in the field because so little attention has been paid to improving trauma therapies before now. "These clients are people who people would just write off or throw meds at, and there are actually methods and hope for their recovery," she says.

"Your MSW is your ticket to learning. And once you've got that ticket to learn, you have to stay active and you have to continue to learn and to put those ideas into play. That's part of being a professional.

"You get to see people change—and it's lucky we don't have to reinvent the wheel. It's just a matter of finding the right wheel and putting it on." ■



MARCY BRIMO



Two generations, one mission

Daughter follows mother through UB MSW program and into child protection.

By Lauren N. Maynard

For both Lynda Filbert (MSW '87) and her daughter, Sarah VanDerLee (MSW '01), protecting children is a career mission that started from similar educational pursuits, literally a generation apart.

Both mother and daughter majored in Native Studies, focusing on Canada's First Nations People, in their undergraduate years at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. But from that point on, they took different paths to reach the same career field.

Filbert is now director of Child Welfare Services at Family and Children's Services Niagara (FACS) in Ontario, providing mandated child protection services to families and children throughout the Niagara Region. Her daughter is a children's service/child protection worker at the same agency who has worked as a field educator in Niagara University's BSW program.

Filbert was a part-time clinical assistant professor in the UB School of Social Work from 1998 to 2001. She has held training positions at Trent University, Ryerson University and Niagara College, but recalls "with unabashed pride" her appointment at UB and the years spent here as an educator.

GETTING TO UB

VanDerLee's path to UB was ready-made. "My choice of UB was driven by memories of my mother's experience in an environment that championed issues of diversity and the rights of children," she says.

"I drew heavily from the faculty examples at UB," VanDerLee adds. "Working at FACS has allowed me the opportunity to

continue my lifelong educational process through participation in internal, interagency and community training." As a member of the agency's Crown Ward Team, she specializes in the provision of children's residential services.

VanDerLee and her husband John welcomed their son, Justin Anthony in January 2006. Currently on maternity leave, she plans to return to FACS next year.

Her mother's early interests included law, especially the criminal justice system's relationship to children, and Canada's First Nations People. When Filbert graduated from Trent in 1972, she took a position with the university as a teaching assistant and seminar instructor with the Native Studies Department. As the department's bibliographer, she built a standardized component to the university's First Nations library holdings.

In 1974, Filbert accepted a position with the Ministry of Correctional Services for Ontario at a secure custodial facility for juveniles, known today as the Syl Apps Youth Centre in Oakville, Ontario. She served as a Supervisor of Juveniles with First Nations youth. A year later she was selected for an accelerated training program to become a superintendent of a correctional facility.

At that time, Filbert also had just met her future husband, Anthony. She decided to decline the program and returned to the Niagara Region to raise their two daughters.

Filbert's experience with First Nations children at Syl Apps caused her to reflect on why so many of them had been involved with the child protection system prior to their entry into the juvenile justice system.

"I was situated, perhaps, too far downriver to have a significant effect on their well-being," says Filbert. "Consequently, if upriver was where it all was crystallizing, I would move my efforts there to child protection." She joined FACS Niagara in Ontario in March 1976 as a residential child protection worker in the agency's group home system.

RESEARCH, PUBLISH, TESTIFY

This "reflective exercise" triggered Filbert's reassignment as a family service child protection worker. This placed her in direct contact with the primary caregivers where, she believed, "I could exercise a more substantial influence."

Since taking her first position at FACS, Filbert has followed her continuing interest in children's issues within the criminal justice system, particularly in forensic interviewing in child abuse cases. As a provincial trainer in the "Investigation of Sexual Offenses Against Children" program, she served as a guest lecturer at the Ontario Police College, chaired the Niagara child abuse teams, and developed and directed the Niagara Child Victim Witness Program. She was also honored to provide testimony before the Federal Standing Committee on Justice and in response to the Solicitor General's "Amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada and the Canada Evidence Act."

A highlight of her career, Filbert says, was the invitation by Howard Doueck, professor and associate dean for research, to present at the National Conference of Child Abuse and Neglect in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1993. In 1997, under Doueck's guidance, Filbert began a research study related to child victims in the criminal justice system, the results of which were published in the *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*.

Today, Filbert is involved with several disciplinary collaborations, including one with the Niagara Regional Police Services to establish a child advocacy center in the Niagara Region. Another has exposed her to issues of child protection relating to refugees and their separated children during the immigration process.

LIFE LESSON

VanDerLee says that her study at UB's School of Social Work gave her a useful comparative perspective on the Canadian and American child welfare systems and their various cultures. "The UB program allowed me to engage in a variety of courses that developed and enhanced my skills as a helping professional," she says.

VanDerLee cites several examples of her UB training: exposure to multiple interviewing and recording techniques, which

were sensitive to cultural diversity and ethics; the role of critical self-analysis; and how doing research taught her how to intervene "based upon collective strengths." The latter was a key, she says to "achieving enhanced credibility with clients, collaterals and colleagues in a collaborative manner."

For Filbert, UB provided her with a mentor in Doueck, who taught important lessons in how academic rigor can lead to a disciplined, principled practice. "He introduced me to an unprecedented standard of excellence that continues to inspire me."

VanDerLee, and her mother before her, left the UB School of Social Work with one lesson that keeps everything else they learned fresh—that education is a lifelong process. "I am indebted to the school for that," VanDerLee says. ■

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN TRAUMA COUNSELING

The UB School of Social Work Office of Continuing Education offers a noncredit postgraduate Certificate Program in Trauma Counseling. The program was established in 2001.

Trauma survivors comprise a large percentage of clients in many service settings, yet few settings include services to meet their needs, making it difficult to engage, retain and effectively treat these individuals and their families.

Participants in the certificate program have three years to complete approximately 16 days of training that provides a base of knowledge about trauma through required courses and electives. The program allows students to tailor instruction to their areas of interest. Regional, national, and international trainers who have assisted with the program include, Lisa M. Najavits, PhD, developer of Seeking Safety Therapy for posttraumatic stress disorder; Richard C. Schwartz, PhD, developer of Internal Family Systems Therapy; and Edna B. Foa, PhD, developer of Prolonged Exposure Therapy for posttraumatic stress disorder, a model program for the United States Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMHSA).

For information, go to www.socialwork.buffalo.edu/conted.

Q&A

A conversation with Craig Austin (MSW '82)

Craig Austin is a counselor for Church Mission of Help in Buffalo, N.Y. We interviewed him about the organization and his role in it.



Rose Mattrey

Mosaics: What is the Church Mission of Help?

Austin: Church Mission of Help is a private, not-for-profit agency. We have five full-time counselors, three MSWs, one psychologist and one psychiatrist, and six part-time counselors—MSWs and LCSWs. We do individual, group, family and couples counseling, all on an outpatient basis. We're an independent agency, so we primarily get our income from fees. What we do, all day long, is clinical work.

Mosaics: What does the name signify?

Austin: Our name is confusing. We're not related to any church. We were originally associated with Episcopal Community Services but as an independent agency. We're all social workers from different religions. We deal with spirituality, but we don't adhere to any one religion or anything. Because we're a small agency, we're not as well known—a lot of people call us a sort of hidden jewel.

Mosaics: How did you get into counseling?

Austin: I used to be an electronic technician and I was always fascinated about what makes things work. I discovered, when I started going to therapy myself, that there was a whole internal world. I had a few friends who were psychologists. I started taking courses in psychology and volunteered at Crisis Services. I just found that I enjoyed it. I completed my career change by earning an MSW at UB.

Mosaics: How did you get to Church Mission of Help?

Austin: I wanted to work here because I liked smaller agencies and also the best clinicians were here and my heart was always in doing clinical work. I used to work at Child and Family Service and I always heard, "Church Mission, Church Mission, Church Mission," and about this counselor and that counselor. It always had a good reputation. So I waited until there was an opening.

Mosaics: We always hear good things from students who intern with your organization.

Austin: We teach long-term therapy, which is not all that prevalent these days due to insurance limitations. Everything is geared to short-term counseling. We teach students the long-term model: the beginning, middle, and end or termination phases of therapy. Some students have clients from September all the way to May. We take our students very seriously—we treat them like colleagues, supervision is mandatory, they come to our staff meetings. We give them a lot of latitude because students these days are so proficient and are quick learners. I don't know if there is one modality that I teach but we do teach about trauma, which is important. For most people, whatever diagnosis they have, those early years are so important, and a lot of times what they're doing in adulthood has a lot to do with trauma from either neglect, or abuse, or something else early on.

Mosaics: What sets Church Mission of Help apart from everyone else?

Austin: We're an independent agency. We're very autonomous and can concentrate on the clinical model. We put clients on a sliding fee scale that is more flexible than most places. If clients can't afford to come, they're going to stop coming, so we have to accommodate them as best we can.

Mosaics: What do you like most about your job?

Austin: It's frustrating, but it's rewarding. Some days you leave and you wonder if you had an impact or not, whether or not it was a constructive day. It takes time, but you do see people moving forward in their lives—sometimes very slowly, other times quickly—but you do see the impact.

Faculty Profile

Recognizing trauma

UB School of Social Work Dean Nancy Smyth has spent her career unwinding the interaction between trauma and addictions.

By Lisa Game

“I was sick of school, dropped out of college and got a job as a mental-health counselor at a community residence for people with serious mental illness,” says Nancy Smyth. At that residence, Smyth saw a lot of people who were trauma survivors, people who had problems with addictions and a lot of people who fell into both categories.

She was interested in what she saw the social workers doing. She was especially impressed with social workers’ ability to make sometimes difficult systems work in order to improve and enhance their clients’ lives.

Smyth finished her college degree and then went on to earn both a master’s and PhD in social work at the University at Albany. Working in the field after earning her master’s, Smyth began to focus on the interface between trauma and addiction. She remembers observing a connection: “I was constantly treating people in the clinics who had grown up in abusive, alcoholic families and this clearly had a relationship to their addiction.”

Smyth couldn’t focus her doctoral dissertation on that link because there were no faculty in her program with research expertise in either substance abuse or addictions. As a result, she says with a grin, “I did my dissertation in prison.” More specifically, she interviewed inmates who had attempted suicide, a group with high rates of both trauma and addiction.

Smyth was clinical director for an outpatient clinic and started a program specifically to help women who have experienced trauma and addiction. She joined the UB faculty in 1991. At UB, she set up the alcohol and other drugs concentration. “We weren’t able to find places and internships for students because there weren’t that many social workers in the addictions field,” she says about that early effort.

Smyth participated in a statewide trauma initiative to address the lack of trauma services in communities. At the time, Erie County was doing little with trauma.

“It seemed like a good idea to get a trauma initiative underway in the county. I worked with the MICA [Mentally Ill and Chemically Dependent] task force to start a sort of sub-committee task force on trauma.” They gathered people interested in the topic, including recipients of services and trauma survivors to address the lack of trauma services.

She eventually initiated efforts to start a trauma counseling certificate program though the Social Work Continuing Education Program. (See box, page 9.)

In current research, Smyth has been working with Brenda Miller (PhD; Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, Berkeley, California) to research trauma and addiction in families. They are attempting to understand how these issues are passed down from generation to generation.

Now, Smyth’s research has to take a back seat to her administrative duties. “I like my role here because I can help move the school forward and work with the faculty and staff to accomplish that,” she says. “I’ve always thought—since I started out at UB—that there was a lot of talent here. It always seemed to me that, nationally, UB was a really well-kept secret.”

Perhaps not for much longer. “I think the school has the potential to be one of the top schools of social work in the country. I think we’re already further along than people know.”

Smyth readily admits that the post of dean does not come equipped with all the answers. “I don’t remember the last time I had a job where I’ve had to learn as much as I’ve had to learn here. That’s a good thing. It’s exciting to find new ways of doing things and to work with a such great group of people to build something and then to make it shine.” ■



NANCY SMYTH

People People

Alumni Association News

Greetings to all!



The holiday season is in full swing—the year seems to have passed so quickly. Our School of Social Work and the entire University at Buffalo continue to move forward in the strategic planning process that will set the course for the future of both. The primary value driving this process is academic excellence. Our school is excited about strengthening the quality of its programs and continues to welcome new faculty. I think that it's important for our alumni family to recognize that UB's reputation directly affects the perceived value of our degrees.

There are over a half million social workers in the U.S. who have committed their lives to making a difference. Social workers are found in many settings and our approach continues to be unique among the helping professions because we focus on people's challenges in their social environments.

School of Social Work alumni are an invaluable source of information, advice and networking assistance. We can help current students, recent and not so recent graduates and, most of all, the communities in which we live.

I encourage you to become an Alumni Association member if you aren't already signed up, or to renew your membership if you've let it lapse. There are many ways to get involved. Alumni Association members are among UB's best assets.

Getting involved as an alumnus is not limited to people living in the Western New York region. There are UB Alumni chapters across the United States. Please visit both of these Web sites—www.socialwork.buffalo.edu and www.alumni.buffalo.edu—to learn more about opportunities for involvement and the special benefits of membership.

My door is always open ... feel free to contact me at (716) 675-4263 or by e-mail at GovGirl55@aol.com.

Rita M. Andolina
Alumni Association President

Faith and the Senator



Faith Hoffman (MSW '93), left, greets Sen. Clinton at the VA in Buffalo.

New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton visited the Women's Wellness Center of the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center in Buffalo on Saturday, May 6, 2006. Senator Clinton was impressed with our holistic approach to women's health and the therapeutic clinic environment—according to Faith Hoffman (MSW '93), who directs the center. The center provided Clinton with statistics on veteran/active duty women enrolled for treatment at the site.

There are currently more women serving in the military than at any other time in history. Hoffman and Clinton discussed the 10-year history of the clinic, which offers gynecological services as well as comprehensive treatment for domestic violence and military sexual trauma. Our women's clinic was one of the first in the VA system. Hoffman says,

Our domestic violence program is a nationally recognized best practice and is currently the only comprehensive program of its kind within the VA, providing education and treatment to both batterers and victims.

Hoffman is the women veterans program manager and coordinator of the domestic violence program that she created when she was appointed to her position at the VA in 1995.

CLASSNOTES

Rob Schwartz (MSW '77)

Rob was recently promoted to vice president of community and workplace services for Child and Family Services in Buffalo, NY. He served as director of the agency's Employee Assistance Program since 1983.

Marian Mattison (MSW '78)

Marian is an associate professor of social work at Providence College in Providence, R.I. She recently won the Joseph R. Accinno Faculty Teaching Award, presented annually to the Providence College faculty member who "best exhibits excellence in teaching, passion and enthusiasm for learning, and genuine concern for students' academic and personal growth."

Heidi Milch (MSW '98)

Heidi directs program development for Gateway-Longview Social Services Agency. She was named a 2006-08 Western New York Community Health Foundation Fellow. The Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York "aims to bring health care industry leaders together to improve health outcomes for frail elders and children in communities of poverty in Western and Central New York."

Robin Ersing (PhD '00, MSW '91)

Robin is a principal investigator on "Exploring the Role of Neighborhood Associations in the Development of Social Capital" for the University of South Florida Collaborative for Children, Families and Communities. She was named a national program

reviewer with Head Start with an area of expertise in family and community partnerships. Robin has developed a partnership between the USF School of Social Work and American Red Cross for disaster certification; 23 USF students and faculty have been certified in the delivery of disaster-related services. She also organized students to assist Habitat for Humanity in the construction of new homes for low-income families in Sarasota.

Nicholas Benware (MSW '03)

Nicholas is currently working in the adult clinic at Behavioural Health Services North Inc. in Plattsburgh, NY.

Jim Coyle (PhD '05, MSW '81)

Jim is currently an assistant professor at the School of Social Work at the University of Windsor, Ont.

Marva Caroli (MSW '06)

Marva moved to Flagstaff, Ariz., after graduation. She works for the Department of Economic Security as a Child Protective Service Specialist. "My duties entail working with families whose children are in foster care or have been removed from their custody because of physical or sexual abuse. I teach appropriate parenting skills and connect families with outside community agencies that offer services, such as mental health, substance abuse counseling, parenting for different ethnic groups, etc. The majority of my clients are Navajo and they live on the reservation or in Winslow, Ariz. Their culture and way of life is very different."

IN MEMORIAM

Mr. Frank D. Funicello, Certificate 51

August 1917 November 2005

Mrs. Marie M. Moody, MSW 45

March 1920 June 2006

Mr. William J. McFarland, Certificate 52, MSW 56

April 1924 September 2006

Mr. Bernard J. Wohl, Certificate 52, MSW 53

January 1930 August 2006

Ms. Marjorie M. Race, BSW 74

November 1949 September 2006

Mr. Gaylon J. Speth, MSW 04

July 1959 April 2006

CORRECTION

Mosaics is relieved to hear that Mr. Thomas V. Grace, MSW 54 is alive and well.

We apologize to Mr. Grace and his family for any inconvenience or distress caused by mistakenly listing him here in the summer issue.

ALUMNI, SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Tell your fellow alumni what you're doing through *Mosaics'* Classnotes section. (We would especially appreciate information from people who did the community concentration.) Please e-mail your news to SSW-alum@buffalo.edu.

Donor Profile

Gerry Miller's many lives



By Jonathan Havey

Born in the Roaring Twenties, raised during the Great Depression and Prohibition, a freshman in college when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, a fighter pilot in the “Mighty Eighth” air force in England during World War II, a researcher investigating the then-unknown effects of nuclear energy after the war, and a social work practitioner and faculty member for 32 years, Gerry Miller witnessed most of the changes of the 20th century.

Like many other members of the “greatest generation,” Miller had a career that began with menial jobs to help pay for his education and included some right-angle career changes. A native of Lowville, New York, Miller’s father was a carpenter until the depression ended all private construction. The family then backed into the antique business in order to pay their \$40 monthly mortgage.

A \$100 scholarship enabled Miller to start at Hartwick College. He covered the \$6 a week it cost to live in a fraternity house by doing dishes and house cleaning. A Saturday job in a supermarket paid 35 cents an hour. Like most students, Miller was enthusiastic about getting into “the last good war.”

There were 24 fellows living in his fraternity house in September 1942. By April 1943, only four had not entered military service. Miller and his roommate Gordie Roberts hitchhiked to Albany to take the required physical and written exams to qualify for the aviation cadet program.

Once qualified to pilot P-51 Mustang single-engine fighter planes, newly minted Lt. Miller was assigned to the Eighth Air Force

in England to escort B-17s and B-24s, flying 1,000-plane daylight bombing missions over Germany. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross for destroying nine Luftwaffe aircraft on a single strafing mission. Miller’s roommate piloted B-24s in the Pacific, “flying the hump” across the Himalayas from India to China. Miller and Gordie and their wives recently had a reunion luncheon in Batavia, New York—after a 48-year separation.

A UB INSPIRATION

After the war, Miller stayed in the new air force reserve for a short time and flew the first U.S. operational jet fighter, the P-80 Shooting Star. Returning to Hartwick on what he describes as “the wonderful G.I. Bill,” he graduated with a BS in biology. He then earned an MS in biology at the University of Rochester. He worked as a research associate in the atomic energy project at the University of Rochester Medical Center. Then, inspired by a friend who was a graduate of UB’s MSW program, Miller decided to change careers.

The beginning of Miller’s social work experience reflects the very different state of American society in the early to mid-1950s. Interested specifically in Catholic social work, Miller decided to enter the new MSW program at St. Patrick’s College of the University of Ottawa. Father Swithun Bowers, the new dean with a Columbia University MSW degree, was emerging as a charismatic leader in social work education, attracting students from Catholic agencies in both Canada and the U.S.

“St. Pat’s” MSW field placements were on the block plan, enabling Miller to complete his internships close to home—at Catholic Charities in Rochester, New York and at the Astor Home in Rhinbeck, New York. The latter was a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed boys, ages 6 to 12, most of whom came from New York City through Catholic Charities.

After graduation, Miller went to work for Rochester Catholic Charities, where he supervised social work at St. Joseph’s Villa (now home of UB School of Social Work’s Rochester Extension Program). He also did marital counseling in the central agency, eventually becoming a field instructor for the UB School of Social Work.

At a time when abortion was out of the question, a large aspect of family social work involved working with unwed mothers and the babies put up for adoption. Screening interviews with potential adoptive parents were a major task for family social workers. With the legalization of abortion in the 1960s, most homes for unwed mothers disappeared from the social agency landscape.

The field of family social work also changed. “Just defining a family eventually became an impossible task,” Miller says.

“The annual Conference on the Family sponsored by the federal Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) ceased when participants could not agree on goals.”

THE PACE OF CHANGE

Medical social work is another major field in the profession that Miller has watched change. Before the development of antibiotics and widespread immunization, such diseases as polio, pneumonia, and syphilis, together with the fear and social stigma they aroused, fueled a need for long-term care. “There used to be a medical social worker on almost every floor of a hospital,” says Miller. “Today, patients go in and out of a hospital so fast, many only receive impersonal discharge planning.”

In 1961, Miller’s career took yet another turn when Dean Benjamin Lyndon hired him as an assistant professor at UB’s School of Social Work. It was an exciting time to join the faculty. The pace of social change—and changes in social-work practice—increased dramatically in the 1960s, when Great Society and War on Poverty programs, together with federally funded initiatives in child welfare, mental retardation and criminal rehabilitation, created an upsurge in student enrollment in social work schools.

It was a different time. One of the Kennedy-family daughters suffered from what was then labeled “mental retardation,” and that somewhat ameliorated the social stigma attached to this disability. As a result, many more families sought help for disabled family members they’d previously kept hidden. HEW provided stipends for students who were willing to work in mental retardation agencies. As an assistant dean, Miller wrote grant proposals to secure scholarship funds for UB social work graduate students.

“That program did a lot of good,” he says. “One of the recipients went on to head up a big state mental health organization.” There were also stipends to support social workers in the field of child welfare, reflecting federally mandated changes in the areas of adoption, foster care and child abuse.

Not all the changes in social programs were well designed, in Miller’s opinion. For example: criminal rehabilitation programs and the deinstitutionalization of mentally ill patients never received the

essential follow-up in the form of community support programs.

Miller also expresses deep frustration with the handicapping effects of drug addiction on family social work and the violence

engendered by drug trafficking.

Miller enjoyed the collegiality of other social work faculty members through those years when both the school and the State University of New York were expanding during Nelson Rockefeller’s terms as governor. Miller, Frank Hodges and Paul Edwards worked together for more than 20 years, including agonizing over student unrest on campus during the Vietnam War.

With Edwards’ passing, Miller now feels honored to be administering Edwards’ estate for the benefit of future social work students—in the form of the Edwards-Miller Scholarship Fund. “Paul would be happy about this,” he says.

Of his former social work students he says, “They weren’t going to get wealthy, but most got real satisfaction from their profession.” A civil and gracious man, Miller also has the plainspokenness of his generation. “As a society, we talk about our interest in helping children,” he says, “but our commitment is often only verbal.”

Miller and his wife Sally have been married for 47 years. They have three children and four grandchildren. Miller recently took his 16-year-old granddaughter to a lunch honoring the Dalai Lama. “His theme of compassion was very inspiring,” he says. In Gerry Miller, the capacity to be inspired is a constant. ■

“As a society, we talk about our interest in helping children, but our commitment is often only verbal.”

—Gerry Miller

New Faculty



ADJOA ROBINSON
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

**PhD, Washington
University in St. Louis**
MSW, Howard University
BS, University of Maryland

I like to think of research as my practice. Social work research, like social work practice, takes a unique perspective among the human services with its emphasis on understanding and addressing environmental forces. Our values of empowerment, self-determination and capacity-building strongly affect my work on behalf of families and community organizations. I learned research in an environment that involved consumers at every phase of a research

project, from conceptualization to evaluation.

My passion for social work research derives from seeing research change people's lives. Before coming to Buffalo, I worked on a research project in Portland, Oregon, that examined residential treatment practices in light of policy guidelines. What we heard from families and what we learned about specific institutional practices was disturbing. Through our efforts we convinced a national accrediting body to change its standards.

"I am now studying caregivers of children with mental health challenges to assess the impact of the caregiver's involvement in decision making and planning on functional outcomes. What I find may address the persistent gap between children's mental health needs and appropriate, adequate and accessible services. I look forward to being a resource for families and providers in Buffalo, helping them work together toward the mutual goal of promoting children's well-being.



**DAVID PATTERSON-SILVER WOLF
(ADELV UNEGWAYA)**
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

**PhD, University of Louisville/
University of Kentucky**
**MSSW, University of
Louisville**
BSW, Spalding University

A major area of clinical research currently being developed in my field focuses on retaining special, hard-to-reach populations in alcohol and drug treatment services. Although there are sound clinical research studies focusing specifically on treatment retention problems, the main area of my past research concentrates on those in particular circumstances who quickly terminate services, such

as HIV-infected individuals and those living in extreme poverty. I hope to include Native American populations within the Western New York area in upcoming treatment retention research.

My family and I are very grateful for all the support we received from UB staff and faculty during our transition to Buffalo. While we still miss our families and friends in Louisville, Ky., the good people affiliated with the School of Social Work have been a blessing to us. I look forward to meeting and working with more social work students during courses and to developing research agendas with UB faculty, as well as UB's Research Institute on Addictions. I am very excited about being a part of UB and all of the opportunities available in this community.

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