

Mosaics

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2
WINTER 2010

News from the University at Buffalo School of Social Work

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Putting a trauma-informed human rights
perspective at the center of the MSW curriculum.

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Mosaics

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The University at Buffalo is a premier research-intensive public university, the largest and most comprehensive campus in the State University of New York. UB's more than 28,000 students pursue their academic interests through more than 375 undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs. Founded in 1846, the University at Buffalo is a member of the Association of American Universities.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Barbara Rittner
Associate Dean for External Affairs
School of Social Work

Jud Mead
Newsletters Coordinator
Office of University Communications

DESIGN

Nick Peterson
Office of University Communications

Cover Illustration: Curtis Parker

News of the School

Good reviews for PhD program

In spring 2009, the University at Buffalo's Office of Comprehensive Program Reviews (OCPR) conducted a quality assessment of the School of Social Work doctoral program.

Jill D. Berrick of the University of California-Berkeley and Lorraine Gutierrez of the University of Michigan served as evaluators.

More than 75 percent of the program's graduates over the past five years are employed as full-time faculty; many graduates from earlier cohorts have advanced through the academic ranks; and an additional 12 percent of program graduates are employed full-time as researchers. The reviewers

observed that the majority of the doctoral students "were extremely enthusiastic about their program. They gave high marks for the high standards, academic rigor, thorough professional preparation and individualized mentorship they received in this program."

The review recognized the Buffalo Center for Social Research as an important resource supporting doctoral studies and, ultimately, providing a foundation for students' success as faculty at other universities.

The external reviewers noted that the research partnerships the program has developed in the community benefit both doctoral students and the community.

New roles, new face

DENISE KRAUSE has been promoted to professor, the first member of the school's clinical faculty to achieve this faculty rank. She is associate dean for community engagement and alumni relations.

KATHLEEN KOST, who has held the position of associate dean for academic affairs for the past five years, has returned to the faculty. Under her leadership, the school made significant organizational changes; she also guided the work of the MSW committee that developed the new orientation of the curriculum (see story on Page 8).

HOWARD J. DOUECK has been appointed associate dean for academic affairs. Doueck was associate dean for faculty development and had been director of the doctoral program.

DIANE ELZE was appointed director of the MSW program. In that role, she guided the submission of the Alternative Reaffirmation Project—a form of accreditation—to the Council on Social Work Education. The

council accepted the submission, "Developing Concepts, Framework, and Applications of a Trauma-Informed, Human Rights Perspective in Social Work Education," without revision.

DANA REED has joined the school as student services coordinator. Most recently, she was assistant director for assessment programs at Student Voice. She has held administrative positions at Mt. San Antonio Community College, Arizona State University and Iowa State University. Reed earned her MEd in higher education from Arizona State University.

KATHRYN KENDALL has been promoted to assistant dean for admissions and recruitment.

SHARON HERLEHY, assistant director of field education, has retired. We wish her the best as she leaves to pursue lifelong interests.

MARJORIE QUARTLEY has joined the school as field education coordinator. She was formerly a supervisor with Catholic Charities of Buffalo.



FROM DEAN
NANCY J. SMYTH

Incoming classes

The School of Social Work began the 2009-10 academic year with an enrollment of 505. The MSW program enrolled 100 new students to the full-time program, 47 students to full-time advanced standing and 10 students to part-time advanced standing.

This year, 12 percent of full-time students come to the school from outside New York, attracted by the flexibility the MSW program offers.



PhD students (from left) Supurna Soni, Sharaddha Prabhu, Yaling Chen, Savra Frouenfelker, Whitney Boccabella.

The PhD program is also developing an international reputation. This year's cohort of five new students includes two from outside the U.S. The annual PhD student-faculty reception this fall drew a crowd that included most of the incoming students.

Tribute to supporters of the school

A Wall of Donors was unveiled Oct. 1 at the Twentieth Century Club in downtown Buffalo. After two years of planning, Dean Nancy Smyth and Mantha Saleh-Wyse, the school's director of development, hosted a reception for donors and friends of the school. The wall, now located at the school, captures the history of the school and recognizes the importance of donors as living proof of the difference that social workers make in our local and global communities.

Distinguished speakers

The School of Social Work Distinguished Speakers Series presented its first speaker as part of the school's 75th anniversary gala weekend when Elizabeth Robinson, PhD, LLMSW, an MPH researcher in the Addictions Research Center, Department of Psychiatry, University of Michigan, presented "Spiritual Change in Recovery From Alcoholism." Robinson said it was wonderful to be back at the University at Buffalo where she was an assistant professor in the School of Social Work from 1990 to 1992. Her lecture presented intriguing findings about the role of spirituality in recovery and the problem of religious alienation in those struggling with recovery, especially women.

Hartford Partnership success

The Hartford Partnership Program in Aging Education, under the leadership of Deborah Waldrop and Laura Lewis, director of field education, recently received \$74,982 from the

Community Health Foundation of Central and Western New York and \$2,000 from the Amherst Senior Citizens Foundation. The Hartford Partnership Program helps provide MSW students coordinated, intensive and innovative experiences with health care and service providers that work with the aging population in Western New York. ■



Deborah Waldrop with Steven D. Szubinski, chair, Amherst Senior Citizens Foundation.

The University at Buffalo School of Social Work graduated its first professional social workers during the Great Depression. Largely trained as caseworkers to assist poor families, they provided services through agencies, hospitals and schools.

In the succeeding 75 years, the school has educated more than 5,000 social workers. On the occasion of our 75th anniversary, we celebrate their achievements and the impact they and our faculty have had on our region, the nation and the world. Each alumnus has been living proof that social workers make a difference in countless lives during the course of their careers. What's more, the clients, organizations and communities they helped have, in turn, improved the lives of innumerable others through successive generations. We have built proudly on that foundation with our nationally recognized PhD program and our innovative new master's curriculum grounded in both trauma-informed and human rights perspectives. Preventing and ameliorating the effects of trauma and supporting human rights are critical themes for the 21st-century world, goals that are key to creating a peaceful, sustainable world for all of humanity. The UB School of Social Work—alumni, students, faculty and staff—is the living proof that social work makes a difference in the world.

Nancy J. Smyth

Nancy J. Smyth, PhD, LCSW



Happy 75th!

The School of Social Work's 75th Anniversary Gala on Oct. 24 was a glorious evening of homage to the past, excitement for the future and just plain fun in the moment. More than 250 alumni, faculty, students, friends and family showed how to put the social into social worker. Proceeds from the event went to the 75th Anniversary Alumni Scholarship Fund. Gala co-chairs Bruce Nisbet and Catherine Dulmus and their fellow gala-committee members made it a perfect party.

Photos by Mark Mulville



1 Let the good times roll! 2 From left: Peter and Barbara Rittner with John and Toby Laping.
3 Juan Matias does the honors for Mildred Colon. 4 Catholic Charities' Dennis Walczyk
with Dean Nancy Smyth. 5 Nicole Tomasello and Devon Zuccarelli warm up. 6 Servers
bearing a dessert fit for a 75-year-old. 7 The calm before the dance floor. 8 Kate Hacker,
Marjorie Quartley, Maria Piccone and Laura Lewis.



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1 Catherine Dulmus and Robert Keefe. 2 Social workers gone wild. 3 Mantha Saleh-Wyse and Anna Cerrato. 4 From left: Bruce Nisbet, Zoe Kosten, Denise Krause, Susan Green and members of the Allen family: David, Brigitte, Elsie and John. 5 Carolyn and Howard Doueck. 6 Kathleen Kost talks with Deborah Waldrop. 7 Some like it slow. 8 And some like it hot.



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BELIEVING THAT ANY PERSON IN NEED CAN BE HELPED

For 75 years, the University at Buffalo School of Social Work has educated practitioners and researchers to be leaders in their field. Our graduates have made a difference in thousands and thousands of lives, one by one; and our graduates have changed the face of social work practice itself. The School of Social Work continues a proud tradition of leadership in education, research and practice.



University at Buffalo *The State University of New York*

REACHING OTHERS

Through a New Lens

by Charlotte Hsu

REFRAMING THE MSW CURRICULUM



In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association added post-traumatic stress disorder to the third edition of its Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Before then, soldiers with PTSD symptoms were often disparaged as cowards. Our understanding of trauma has evolved dramatically in the past 30 years. Now the School of Social Work has reoriented the MSW curriculum to give trauma and related issues a more central position.

WE KNOW SOLDIERS are not the only persons who suffer from PTSD. Victims of rape, child abuse and other distressing occurrences can all develop the disorder. Research shows that the great majority of public mental health clients have been exposed to trauma. Residents of communities with high rates of street violence, alcoholism and substance abuse are especially at risk. Stressors they encounter daily can make it difficult to recover from a horrifying event or series of events.

Few social workers fully embrace the importance of assessing for and treating trauma in their clients outside of mental health settings. Many routinely deal with clients' depression, addictions or major medical problems without discovering a co-morbid history of physical, sexual, psychological or institutional abuse. Clients may disclose such histories repeatedly to multiple caseworkers or clinicians in the course of seeking treatment in different service settings, leading, potentially, to re-traumatization.

As it marks its 75th year, changes in the curriculum will place the School of Social Work in the vanguard of social work education, blazing a path that professionals and other institutions can follow in a world where it's increasingly clear that a trauma-informed and human rights perspective is crucial in delivering effective and compassionate human services. The School of Social Work has revised its MSW curriculum to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to evaluate the underlying role of trauma in most social work practice. The new curriculum will prepare graduates with the understanding they need to formulate trauma-informed interventions across systems with a clear understanding of human rights. Importantly, courses in the revised foundation and advanced curriculum stress the importance of human rights, introducing students to the needs of client populations that include large numbers of victims of human rights violations.

"Students still will be focusing on various populations and settings that are of interest to them, but they will bring this lens and understanding to their social work," says Dean Nancy Smyth. "It's a paradigm shift. It just adds a layer of understanding that wasn't there before, and it has significant implications for policy and program development within human services and education.

"When we've shared this with people nationally and internationally as we've started to make these changes, we've received very positive feedback," Smyth adds. "My guess is that 20 years from now, many of these concepts will have become mainstream, but they're not right now. There is a large volume of research that has now emerged to indicate that the populations that are served in almost all social work settings have very high rates of trauma exposure. Yet that's often missed as a significant concern, both clinically and in terms of the design of programs and policies."

Incoming students read “A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier,” a book detailing the life of a young man who struggles to regain his humanity after committing and falling victim to atrocities as a boy soldier in Sierra Leone to help them come up to speed on trauma issues. Faculty members have integrated core concepts of trauma and human rights into most classes across the curriculum. An introductory advanced curriculum course provides an overview with lectures by multiple faculty on the relevance of trauma and human rights to arenas of practice, as well as across communities and populations. Field education partners have been involved in developing trauma-informed practices models with attention to human rights.

TRAUMA AND HUMAN RIGHTS, AND WHY THEY MATTER

The description in a 1972 New York Times story of one Vietnam veteran’s frightening experiences was typical of what doctors at the time were seeing among soldiers coming home from Asia: “Steve stiffened, looked around fearfully, and thought, ‘These people all look alike. How do I know who’s friend and who’s enemy?’ Then he shook himself, remembering: ‘They are all your friends. This is Times Square, U.S.A.’ Eighteen months after a nonpsychiatric discharge following four years of Marine combat duty in ‘The Nam,’ Steve still suffers unpredictable episodes of terror and disorientation.”

According to Sue Green, ’88, co-chair of the new course on trauma and human rights, recent research demonstrates that exposure to trauma is common among social work clients. Three quarters of

those in substance abuse treatment report abuse and trauma histories. In the late 1990s, researchers found that a staggering 97 percent of homeless women with mental illness had experienced severe physical or sexual abuse, with 87 percent of that population suffering this abuse both as children and adults.

Supported by research, the faculty

developed a curriculum that explores the impact of trauma when it is not the focus of treatment. Green puts it this way: “What’s clear is that we are re-victimizing or re-traumatizing individuals—not even purposely or consciously,” Green continues, “Somebody who comes to an agency or hospital setting for the first time often has to go through two if not four people before they finally see the specialist, therapist or doctor. Having to retell one’s story over and over again is a possible re-traumatization for that person. What makes us different as a School of Social Work is that we are heightening our awareness and knowledge base around how to do business in a more user-friendly way,” especially in the context of subtle stressors that can exacerbate trauma and violations of human rights experiences.

The revision of the MSW curriculum was a natural step for the School of Social Work, in keeping with its history of educational innovation. A trauma counseling certificate program for human services professionals has been in place since 2000, before crises such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the 2004 tsunamis drew public attention to extreme events and the challenges of recovery.

Three quarters of those in substance abuse treatment report abuse and trauma histories, according to Sue Green. In the late 1990s, researchers found that a staggering 97 percent of homeless women with mental illness had experienced severe physical or sexual abuse, with 87 percent suffering this abuse both as children and adults.



The curriculum change arose in part from discussions surrounding reaccreditation, during which the faculty expressed a desire to structure education around a core theme without limiting students' opportunities to develop a course of study in the advanced year that prepares them for work with clients across a wide variety of problems. Trauma and human rights perspectives stood out as a unifying framework.

Central to the new curriculum is the role of preserving human rights—rights to basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, education and health care, along with rights to dignity, privacy and opportunities to achieve one's potential—in a person's ability to navigate through difficult life experiences. Understanding the intersection between human rights violations and trauma made knowledge of each critical.

Human rights perspective is central to coursework and field experiences at both national and global levels. The curriculum explores human rights violations as a reflection of policies or belief systems that occur across a broad range of settings and places. Covered are differing ideas about individual and women's rights, systematic oppression of groups, atrocities in

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-NANCY SMYTH

war zones, denial of access to basic needs, services, health care or education that make it more likely for stressful events to become traumatic for some or compromise recovery from trauma for others.

"When people are traumatized, invariably some of those rights, if not many of them, are violated," Smyth says. "The value of a human rights perspective is that it adds a layer of global and policy perspective. Together, the concepts of human rights and trauma complement each other very well."

IN THE FIELD

Today, few people would deride veterans with PTSD as cowards. But for other trauma victims, many of the old, damaging dictums still exist. Drug addicts who cannot overcome cravings are weak; people preoccupied by traumatic events that happened long ago are overly sensitive. "Why do you hang on to the past?" friends and even family members might ask. Likewise, health professionals unaware of a patient's sexual trauma history might see resistance to being touched as attention-seeking or acting-out behaviors. To enable students to see first-hand

how an understanding of trauma leads to improved services, the School of Social Work, in conjunction with its curriculum revision, is strengthening old partnerships and building new ones with agencies that emphasize human rights and practice trauma-informed care.

CMH Counseling, a nonprofit on W. Utica Street in Buffalo where some MSW students are placed, is one such organization. Consider a woman who comes for counseling who witnessed frequent and sustained violence in her neighborhood. As a result, she has trouble sleeping. She experiences excessive anxiety and a depressed mood. Interactions with a controlling and abusive boss trigger defensive irritability and problems on the job. A social worker without a trauma-informed perspective might diagnose depression, recommend a medication consultation to combat symptoms while ignoring the trauma she underwent.

"The symptoms of trauma mimic the symptoms of so many other conditions—depression, low self-esteem, eating disorders, psychosis, relationship problems, especially regarding trust and intimacy," says Craig Austin, '82, a licensed clinical





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social worker at CMH Counseling who helped the School of Social Work develop its trauma counseling certificate program. “Someone could just treat those symptoms and never get to the core of the matter, which is that these are all symptoms of a traumatic reaction. It’s like treating a wound by putting a Band-Aid on it.”

Austin is firm on the issue: “It’s kind of an insult if we don’t get to the trauma piece, because then we say clients have

a disorder. There may be clinicians out there who feel they’re not equipped to deal with trauma—‘I can’t address that, I can’t do that kind of work’—but they’re just not educated enough on it.”

Creating a comfortable environment to help traumatized clients feel safe has established CMH Counseling as a place where trauma victims can feel at ease. Classical music plays in the waiting room. Magazines such as National Geographic,

Architectural Digest and Ladies’ Home Journal sit in tall stacks on a wooden coffee table between a three-seat, cloth, rose-colored couch and two green armchairs with Queen Anne legs. Floor lamps and sunlight brighten the room. It’s not just some sterile imitation of a living room.

“People come in, and they feel like they’re at home,” says Judy Breny, ’92, another licensed clinical social worker at CMH Counseling.

“I had a client who had PTSD,” Breny says, “who talked about how her life was so barren that she would drive past a crossing guard in Buffalo because that woman would greet her, because that was the only friendly face she knew—until she came here. Our receptionist greeted her with a smile, ‘Oh, we’re so glad to see you,’ and she felt so well-received. She was in tears telling me. Not until this experience had she felt so welcome and so well-regarded. So that’s part of what

Extreme Events

LISA BUTLER PUTS TRAUMA UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

In modern times, mass trauma has captured the public’s attention through such events as the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the hysteria in the 1980s and 1990s surrounding child abuse allegations. It is a phenomenon that School of Social Work faculty member Lisa Butler knows a lot about.



Douglas Levere



we believe makes the difference.”

The revised curriculum empowers social workers to challenge hierarchical models of care in which clients are ordered to follow strict regimens and are penalized for failing to comply, says Deborah Waldrop, co-chair with Green on the trauma and human rights course.

This more progressive approach involves shared power; instead of directing clients on what to do, social workers facilitate planning steps to improve lives, and collaborate on ways that encourage follow-through on goals. Agencies that practice trauma-informed care recognize that collaborative treatment that preserves self-

determination and the right to dignity is critical for those who have already been subject to human rights violations.

“No one likes to be treated with disrespect, and if you have people who are unstable emotionally, you’re just throwing firecrackers in their face when you criticize them or embarrass them,” says Jim Wells, executive director of the John Howard Society of Niagara, a Canadian nonprofit that promotes effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes. Activities include supervising individuals released on bail to ensure they participate in programs such as addiction treatment that can steer them toward a healthy lifestyle.

The School of Social Work places students at the Canadian organization, drawn by the group’s devotion to justice and human rights. The society must report clients to the court system when they fail to meet the terms of their release

“**T**HERE’S A WAY IN WHICH THE WHOLE TOPIC of trauma has become so much more present in the common vocabulary, the common thinking, and for good reason: it’s important,” says Butler, a nationally recognized trauma researcher who joined the School of Social Work this year. “It’s meaningful. And it’s always intriguing how people respond, and why they respond, and what they can do to recover from these profoundly life-altering events.”

UB hired Butler in January to expand the university’s expertise in extreme events, one of eight academic strengths the institution is looking to build as part of its UB 2020 long-range strategic plan.

Since earning her PhD in psychology in 1993 at Stanford University, Butler, an associate professor, has studied topics ranging from the impact of emotional support for women with metastatic or recurrent breast cancer to the effects of hypnosis on reducing the distress and duration of invasive medical procedures for children. She is the type of scholar who has the

ability to examine topics on a microlevel without losing sight of the bigger picture—how the results of any one study fit into a field of inquiry as a whole. In the past decade, she has served as a reviewer for 22 professional journals, including the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, the *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* and the *Journal of Psychological Trauma*.

The School of Social Work’s focus on trauma was part of what appealed to Butler about UB. She came to Buffalo from Stanford, where she built a successful career as a senior researcher in the medical school. Though her work in California was rewarding, she was ready to move on to a faculty position that would allow her to continue her research while devoting more time to teaching and mentoring young scholars.

“I applied because I saw a listing for a UB 2020 extreme events position,” Butler says. “It was a job that specifically valued trauma research, and those jobs are hard to come by. My research seemed very compatible with a lot of values here, and I guess people here felt that way, too.” *(continued on next page)*

on bail, but in counseling sessions, social workers do not fixate on punitive measures. They work, instead, to help clients realize they have the power to make positive choices and changes. The mission of the bail supervision program, Wells says, is to provide economic and psychological support to help people transform their lives by learning to deal with addictions, finding employment or getting an education or technical training.

“For us,” Wells says, “there are two approaches that we could take. One is to shake our finger at them. And they’ve had lots of people shake their fingers at them. So instead, we try to deal with their denial—their belief that their lives are OK—and get them to take the first steps in trying to rebuild or recreate their life.” The John Howard Society’s long history as human rights advocates and reformers is a good complement to the revised curricu-

lum that sees advocacy and trauma-informed practice as intricately connected.

THE COMING YEARS

Social work education and practice do not always reflect the body of evidence supporting the benefits of a trauma-informed perspective in providing care. Organizations such as CMH Counseling and the John Howard Society that tailor programs for a client population that includes large numbers of trauma victims are still relatively rare. As School of Social Work MSW students and graduates engage clients and contribute to policy-making, their articulation of trauma-informed and human rights perspective practice will help to transform fields of practice.

Michael Weiner, president of the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, appropriately notes, “It is vitally important for social workers to understand



trauma and human rights issues and their ramifications for consumers. Any therapeutic approach must take into account the totality of a consumer’s experience, and trauma is often a component of an individual’s presenting issue. Inculcating a thorough knowledge of and sensitivity to trauma and human rights issues in social work students is essential in a comprehensive, holistic social work program—for the sake of the students

BUTLER’S INTEREST IN TRAUMA stems from early in her career. One subject she approached with fascination as a doctoral student was experiential discontinuities: how humans respond to anomalous experiences, and why. That line of inquiry led her to trauma. She became interested, she says, in how people process and come to terms with events that “violate expectations about your place in the world or the safety of the world or how people treat you, or how you feel about yourself.”

She is interested not only in pathological dissociation, but also in what she calls “normative dissociation”: daydreaming, fantasizing, becoming intensely absorbed in one activity, or otherwise dissociating in everyday life. Butler has argued that learning about normative dissociation can inform understanding of pathological dissociation, the type

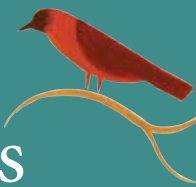
associated with trauma victims.

As a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford, Butler worked with psychiatrist David Spiegel, a world-renowned expert in trauma and dissociation.

In a recent project, Butler explored the trauma of the Sept. 11 attacks. Through a national study, she and fellow researchers examined posttraumatic resilience and growth following the events of 2001.

They found that people who developed less negative world views and had access to stronger social networks were more likely to recover or “bounce back” quickly after the terrorist attacks. Other predictors of resiliency included less media exposure—people who watched repeated images of calamity tended to become more distressed—and a willingness to express sadness or pain





Listen to the experts

The revised curriculum empowers social workers to challenge hierarchical models of care in which clients are ordered to follow strict regimens and are penalized for failing to comply.

and for the sake of the people they will ultimately serve.”

To nurture relationships with community partners, the school plans to develop a field education consortium comprising faculty, staff, clients and representatives of community organizations. Members will help the school refine its curriculum, weighing in on the utility of class assignments and helping to identify skills, practice behaviors and organizational

characteristics of agencies and professionals that bring a trauma-informed and human rights perspective to social work practice. Colloquia and annual networking meetings will bring stakeholders together to engage in dialogue and training centered on trauma and human rights.

For the School of Social Work, this year’s changes are in keeping with the school’s tradition as an innovator in social work education. ■

rather than suppress such feelings.

For other people, the trauma of 9/11 was very difficult. Even among this population, however, the study’s results carried good news. Some participants reported that despite initial setbacks, they experienced positive life changes, such as improved relationships, increased spirituality or an increased perception of their own strength.

The findings reflect a truth that Butler and others have discovered over and over again in studies of trauma: Even the worst experiences can, in some ways, be a source of strength.

“People have been struggling with personal trauma since the beginning of time,” Butler says. “The two world wars of the 20th century, plus countless other conflicts around the world, as well as terrorism and natural disasters, including the tsunami, are only some of the examples. It’s particularly important in social work to recognize that the vast majority of people get through these experiences relatively well, and I think there are a great many things we can do to enhance people’s strengths and ability to cope well.

“In my view,” she says, “looking at resilience and growth following something as shattering as 9/11, is, in a way, positive psychology meeting trauma psychology. It’s a way of finding something good in what happened.” —C.H. ■

The School of Social Work podcast series currently offers 10 episodes devoted to trauma and human rights issues. You can access the podcast series from the school Web site (www.socialwork.buffalo.edu) by clicking on the Living Proof podcast icon at the bottom left corner of the home page. The episodes average 30-40 minutes each.

With more than 10,000 national and international downloads to date, the podcast series has evolved into an important resource for those interested in trauma and human rights issues.

Trauma-related episodes include national experts such as Sandra Bloom, MD, of Drexel University, presenting “The Sanctuary Model: A Trauma-Informed Approach to Treatment and Services,” Shelly Wiechelt, PhD, University of Maryland, Baltimore, on “Cultural and Historical Trauma: Affecting Lives for Generations,” and Harold Kudler, MD, of Duke University Medical Center and the Durham Veterans Affairs Medical Center, talking about “Helping Veterans and Their Families Succeed: Current Research and Practice Guidelines in Management of Traumatic Stress.”

Podcast episodes in the collection concerning social work and various trauma and human rights matters are: 1, 10, 11, and 13, on issues arising from systematic oppression; 15 and 28, on disaster responses; 17 and 22, on the challenges of coping with HIV and health care disparities; and 27 and 32, on issues concerning veterans coping with post-war experiences.



To our alumni family, friends and supporters:



This has been an exciting fall for the School of Social Work. We unveiled our Wall of Donors on Oct. 1 and our 75th anniversary celebrations culminated with a gala three weeks later.

THE WALL OF DONORS HELPS US TO REFLECT on our past as we look to the future. It reminds us of the pioneering men and women who shaped our beginnings and the many persons who have since contributed to our expanding influence in the community, the state and the nation. Our committed donors support our faculty, our students and our graduates—all living proof that social workers make a difference.

This issue of Mosaics has its own recognition wall on the following pages, listing donors who made gifts to the school over the past year. Whether those listed here are first-time givers or yearly donors, each has a special story to tell about why the School of Social Work matters to them. I have had the privilege of meeting with many of our supporters over the years to hear the ways they are connected to the school, how they value the profession, and how much they recognize the importance of being active contributors to the future of social work. As we consider the future of the school, we know we can rely on our faculty, alumni and friends to provide generous support to the future of the profession.

It was in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the school that we launched our 75th Anniversary Scholarship Fund. More than half of our master students and all our doctoral students need financial help to complete their studies. Because of your generosity and commitment to educating social workers, one-third of the \$50,000 endowment needed for the scholar-

ship fund was raised through 75th Anniversary Gala ticket and sponsorship sales. With your continuing support, we anticipate awarding a 75th Anniversary Alumni Scholarship annually to a deserving student as living demonstration of the legacy of the School of Social Work making a difference in the communities in which we practice.

We all knew our gala event would be festive. We are gratified that it showed the degree of commitment of our friends and supporters to increasing both the size and number of scholarships for our students. I am confident that we—all of us together—see the importance of investing in their future.

As director of development, it is my privilege to be responsible for generating support for the School of Social Work by involving alumni and friends in opportunities such as this to strengthen the school. I am honored to report that your generosity is making a difference.

If you are interested in seeing the 75th Anniversary Alumni Scholarship Fund grow, or if you would like to contribute to scholarship, please contact me at 881-8206 or mds27@buffalo.

With thanks to all,

MANTHA SALEH-WYSE
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Honor Roll of Support

JULY 1, 2008 – JUNE 30, 2009

Gift Levels

Leadership Society
\$10,000+

Niles Carpenter Circle
\$5,000-9,999

Benjamin Lyndon Circle
\$2,500-4,999

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A love story

BARBARA AND PETER RITTNER'S LEGACY

When Barbara Rittner came to Buffalo from the University of Nevada-Reno to interview for a position on the faculty of the School of Social Work in 1993, her husband, Peter, was invited to interview for a position in UB's information technology administration. They still appreciate that accommodation for a hopeful assistant professor with exactly one year of teaching experience on her resume.

It was the start of a relationship with the UB community that Barbara and Peter have now arranged to extend beyond their lifetimes with a \$1.5 million gift bequest to the School of Social Work.

THE RITTNERS' PATH from the University of Connecticut, where Peter was a graduate student in English and Barbara had just finished her undergraduate degree, didn't point toward Buffalo the day in 1970 he took an empty seat next to her in a busy restaurant.

They introduced themselves by arguing about the merits of E. E. Cummings' poetry.

Peter asked Barbara for a date. They were married nine months later in an outdoor ceremony they describe as classic hippie.

Peter's antiwar work cost him his graduate stipend and they moved to Miami where his family lived. They both worked in social services. A few years later, they moved to Massachusetts so Peter could scratch an itch to use his MIT training in applied mathematics in a job with the computer maker Data General. The corporate world wasn't a perfect fit; three years later they were back in Miami. Barbara rose through the ranks of the Florida Department of Social Welfare until she was administering a multi-million-dollar budget and a staff of 370. Peter found an IT position with the University of Miami and started to enjoy his work.

Barbara went to graduate school and got hooked on research. Now they were academic itinerants. Reno for a year; Buffalo for three years; Athens, Ga., for three years, where they went because the Buffalo winters were making it increasingly difficult for Peter, who had polio as a child, to get around on crutches. And then—and finally—in 1999, Buffalo again. At each stop, Barbara landed the faculty positions; it was easy for Peter to move because he worked in a high-demand field.

They came back to Buffalo and UB (and winters) because they missed the place and the school. They made the right decision. Peter is now assistant dean for educational technology in the College of Arts and Sciences, Barbara directs the PhD program and is associate dean for external affairs at the School of Social

Work. It is as if their careers were wound together into a single cord connecting them to UB; the diversity and depth of their friendships anchor them to Buffalo.

Their decision to make a legacy gift to the School of Social Work is in keeping with the ideals that attracted them to each other and that influenced the course of their lives.

They both care deeply about social justice and see education as a shield against oppression. Barbara says that social work education in particular multiplies its good through the practitioner's influence on individual lives that touch other lives and so on, the benefit radiating through families, even generations.

Peter was the first in his family to go to college; he says his education was transformative. Barbara considers the opportunity to transform the lives of her students a gift that deserves a gift in return.

So when they began planning a legacy, education was an obvious option for leveraging what they could give. But where should they invest that support? His alma mater? Hers?

"There's a sense that you should give back to the school where you were an undergraduate," Barbara says. "But I spent four years there and I've spent 13 years here."

They also realized that donors needn't always give from the outside in: "Why can't you be a faculty member and be a donor?" she says they asked themselves. "It doesn't make any difference where you earn your money; it's where you leave it that matters."

They chose the place they came back to when they settled, the place they liked. They chose to leave the material product of their lives in the hands of people they know. They're confident that the community of the university they are so fully committed to will pass its values—along with their contributions, both moral and material—safely to future generations. —J.M. ■

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