

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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SPRING 2013

YEAR IN REVIEW

Winter

February

- MSW students Amanda Bigos, Kathleen Homer, Kaitlyn Dorety, Karrie Mietz, Lindsay Phelps, and Christine Montaro from Dr. Yunju Nam's research class present their paper-Veterans' Adjustment to Academic and Social Life at the University at Buffalo at the College at Brockport.
- MSW students Angela Mason and Shannon O'Keeffe march on Albany for an increased minimum wage (holding banner for Coalition for Economic Justice.)



Spring

March

- US News and World Report identifies UB-SSW as ranked among the 12% Best Schools of Social Work nationally
- The UB Alumni Association honors Rita Andolina (MSW '88) for her ongoing commitment to SSW alumni



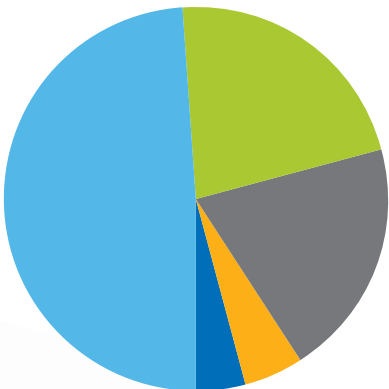
April

- 25 students are inducted into Rho Kappa Honor Society
- Field Educators hold reception with 90 in attendance



May

- 180 students graduate at the 78th Commencement Ceremony



- 49% MSW full-time traditional
- 22% MSW full-time advanced standing
- 20% MSW part-time traditional
- 5% MSW part-time advanced standing
- 4% Dual Degrees

Summer

August

- Funded by a SAMHSA grant, Dr. Tom Nochajski and Susan Green, of The Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care, train 20 police, probation and parole officers, judges, attorneys and other court personnel about trauma experiences of men and women involved in the justice system.
- The MSW Program adopts Trauma-Informed Care as a guiding principle in the curriculum. Like many powerful ideas, the essence is simple. Those working with people who have a mental illness or addiction problems have to start asking what happened to the person that caused the issues, not just focus on what the person did and what went wrong.
- 155 MSW and 6 Doctoral students attend two full days of orientation



Fall

October

- Gathering at the Sonoma Grille in Amherst, 35 mentors and mentees, alumni, faculty and staff recognized the Mentoring Program (see story page 11). Providing invaluable resources to the School, mentors share their time, knowledge, skills and social work professionalism with MSW students.

December

- SSW alumni Matthew Laun (MSW '08) contacts Dean Nancy Smyth with a request to provide the local National Guard with some suicide prevention training. UB SSW faculty and students mobilize immediately and develop a training program for 394 members of the NY Army National Guard 2/101 Cavalry to address the recent and tragic increase in suicide among service members. The training provides trainees with resources and knowledge, enabling them to interact with and train others while creating an ideal expanding network of prevention among stressed and suicidal service personnel.



FROM DEAN NANCY J. SMYTH



“The World is Flat,” discussed by Thomas Friedman in his book by that name, refers to the idea that digital connectivity has made geographical distance less important. In a flattened world, workers provide services to customers around the world; global volunteers collaborate on the largest, multilingual encyclopedia in history; social workers from many countries chat weekly about professional challenges; and citizens across a nation coordinate social action.

At UB, we are flattening our world even more as we introduce our online MSW program, an option for part-time students who are scattered across our state and beyond. The program offers a mix of online, hybrid and seated classes and will make our unique MSW program more accessible to a wider geographic area.

Paradoxically, at a time when the world is flat and many think that place is irrelevant, we find that place can be more important than ever. In this issue we describe extending our reach to far-ranging places: a project in Tanzania, study abroad in Costa Rica and field placements in Korea and Burma, each with a unique place, culture and people. Place-based or digital connections? The 21st century challenge for our profession will be learning when to use each.

NASW Website Award for inSocialWork

The SSW podcast series, inSocialWork, has received the NASW 2013 media website award. The award recognizes the breadth and depth of the School’s biweekly podcast series that features prominent, cutting-edge researchers discussing emerging trends and best practices pertinent to social work practitioners.



NANCY J. SMYTH, PHD, LCSW

“Although it’s simply one benchmark of a school’s overall quality and reputation, it does make people take notice.”

UB Provost Charles F. Zukoski, speaking on the 2012 Social Work ranking

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.

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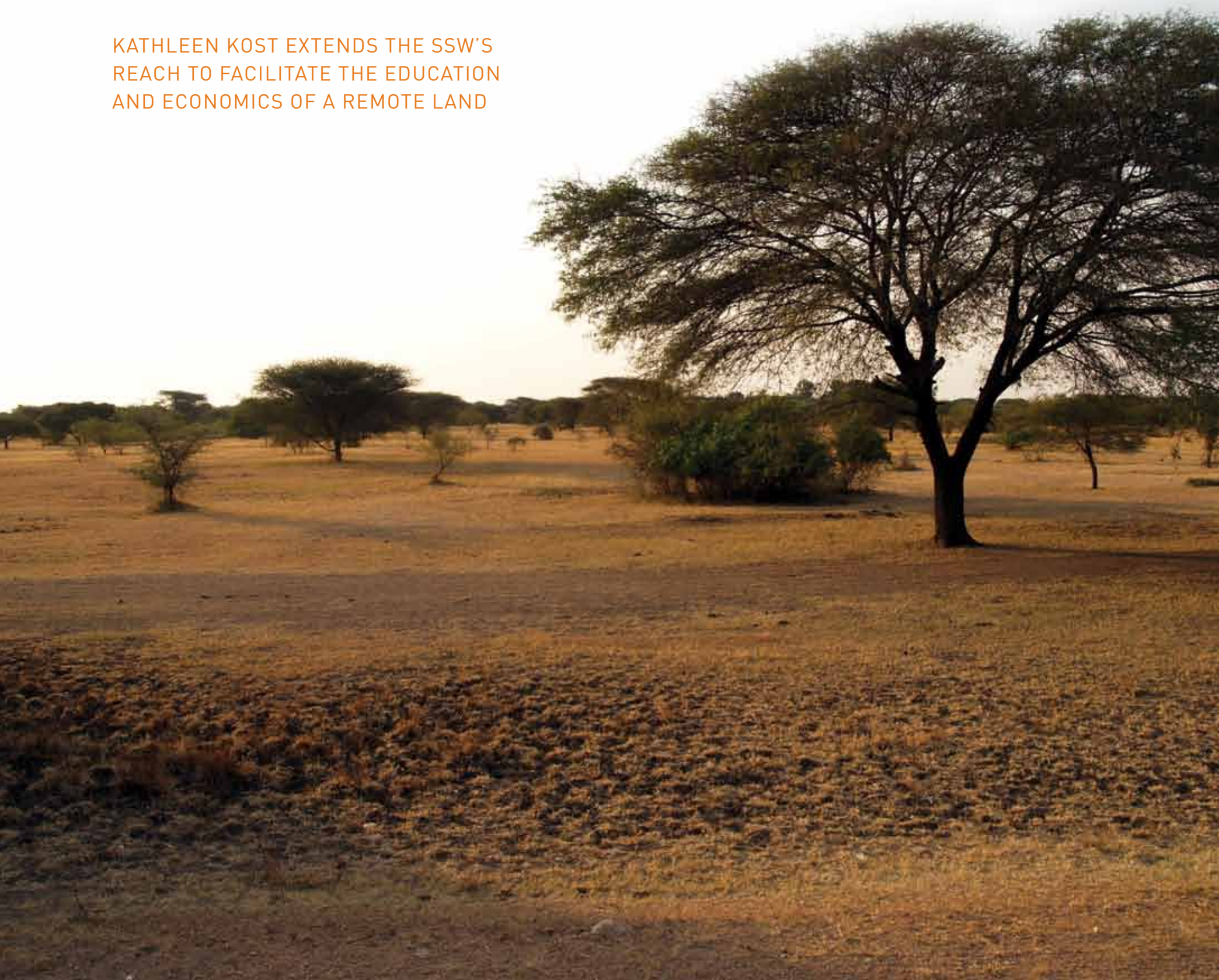
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THE (UNPAVED) ROAD TO TANZANIA

KATHLEEN KOST EXTENDS THE SSW'S
REACH TO FACILITATE THE EDUCATION
AND ECONOMICS OF A REMOTE LAND





From Left to Right

School building site in Kitenga

Water well in Kitenga with Dr. Daniel Nyaronga, Dr. Mara Huber, Dr. Kate Kost, Lindsay Wagner, Leah Van Bourgondien and Anne Wadsworth

Students in the library at NISW

Typical African village in Kitenga

Photos courtesy of Kathleen Kost

The Buffalo Tanzania Education Project (BTEP) began as an informal initiative that focuses on the Mara Region of Northern Tanzania as a partnership with the Immaculate Heart Sisters of Africa, an order of Catholic nuns who run successful schools and health clinics throughout Tanzania.

Kathleen Kost, associate professor in the School of Social Work, was part of the original group of 10 university-wide faculty and staff who journeyed to Tanzania from Buffalo in July 2009. She sought to identify field placement opportunities for social work students, along with potential research opportunities.



Kathleen Kost

That trip led Kost to develop a three-credit, 10-week summer elective course for graduate social work students desiring a grass-roots experience in remote Africa. In July 2011, two students in the course traveled to Tanzania for 12 days with Kost. They worked closely with Sister Annunciata Chacha, who received her BSW at Daemen College in Buffalo. “We flew to Dar where the National Institute for Social Work is. Then we flew to Musoma and traveled to Kitenga, a village near the Kenya border,” she says. “Extremely rural, very tribal, no water or sanitation, no electricity, not even any paved roads. We’re in the bush.”

The students engaged in the ongoing work of the BTEP as they and Kost evaluated the projects as a field experience. Sr. Annunciata, familiar with the academic requirements, expressed her support of international field placements. “The sisters can provide housing, so the students could have a place to stay where they could also do street work,” says Kost, who adds that placements provide much potential for students desiring international aid work.

In fall 2012, Kost returned to work on her own research project, “Assessing Readiness for Change Among Village Leaders in Tanzania,” funded through a university-supported 2012-13 Civic Engagement

Research Fellowship. Despite the area’s location near Lake Victoria, drought is rampant, leaving the area prone to malnutrition with limited food sources. Her

research work, in connection with the order of nuns, includes helping reconnect street kids with their families whenever possible.

In this tribal area, Kost discovered it’s not unusual for a girl to be married as early as age 10. “This is a very traditional society where the father has control over everyone. If a young girl is married early, very often it is an economic issue because she is traded for cows. That’s her value. So the cow goes to the family, providing not just milk as a food source but also a source of income because those things can be

sold.” Consequently, early pregnancy with all its associated health risks is a common danger, along with genital cutting and exploitation. She observes, and “There are a certain number of girls who appear to be trafficked. Unlike the United States where the rights of women are a very political issue, this is an economic issue.

“Our project is helping families see that by educating girls beyond primary school, they can actually be productive in other ways. They can learn skills and go on to university and bring even more income back to their family. So the emphasis has been on educating girls in secondary schools.”

Kost is in the process of summarizing her research efforts. “What I’m hoping to learn is who the community identifies as leaders, what they see as barriers to change, what they see as opportunities and how supportive are they,” she explains.

Endeavoring to develop a master’s in social work field placement site for UB students in Tanzania, Kost arranged a formal agreement for faculty and student exchanges with the National Institute for Social Work there. “This is a project that is far beyond just establishing a secondary school,” she says. “The role of our project is really to provide students, and potentially others, with the opportunity to become involved in the education of social workers.”

Kost detects a growing curiosity among UB students in exploring such field placements. Financial resources to support students are being developed to offset the expense of travel to the remote region, though unfortunately interest exceeds resources.

The BTEP has now grown to nearly a hundred participants from across UB and the Western New York community.

With a son who works in the area of international aid, Kost has some insights about organizations like BTEP. “This is an opportunity to get the kind of experience to get a job,” she observes. “This global perspective is really important because it opens our world to other ways of approaching problems and creating solutions. And it opens up our imagination in a way that’s otherwise not possible.”

– JIM BISCO

"What I'm hoping to learn is who the community identifies as leaders..."

Because she could

MARILYN SHINE LOVED HER WORK UNTIL SHE WAS STOPPED BY A LINE SHE WOULDN'T CROSS



“I loved the excitement. I never knew who was coming through the door. I was a very shy child, but at work I could stand there and say ‘How can I help you?’ to an out-of-control patient. You couldn’t be afraid.”

THAT’S HOW MARILYN SHINE (MSW ‘74, BS ‘72)

describes herself at work in the emergency mental health clinic of E. J. Meyer Hospital in Buffalo (later the Erie County Medical Center).

She grew up Marilyn Zinn in a comfortable household in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, N.Y. When she enrolled at New York University, her father wouldn’t let her study social work because it would take her into bad neighborhoods.

Then Jerry Shine intervened. Marilyn met him through a mutual friend in 1951 at the Surfcomber Hotel in Miami Beach when she was on an intercession vacation in Florida. He was from Buffalo. They married four months later.

That was the end of college for twenty years. When her youngest of three children was 9, she went back to school—and this time she could study what she wanted. She finished her BS in Social Work at UB in 1972 and stayed for an MSW while the campus heaved with antiwar turmoil.

She had volunteered and spent her second-year field placement in the mental health facility at Meyer and that’s where she went to work. She loved her patients and she loved her colleagues. And they loved her back. After a medical resident had words with her in the clinic, he eventually had to ask to the director why no one on the staff would speak to him. She went home happy at the end of most days.

Shine worked with her eyes open. She knew some of her poorer clients—often battered women—had trouble with their applications for welfare, so she presented herself at county hall to apply, to see how the system worked. The system was rude. Despite having a graduate education, she couldn’t follow the application forms. She finally blew her top when she arrived at a desk where she was ordered to “Siddown!”

Asked by a visitor to her department at Meyer-ECMC who was in charge, the director identified himself but pointed to Shine and said she was the boss. She knew what she could do, and she did it forcefully.

After seven years, arthritis ended her career at ECMC. She and Jerry moved to Phoenix, Ariz., where the climate would be easier on her body. But she had no intention of stopping work.

Shine found a job in a hospital-based adolescent residential metal health program that was barely limping along and turned it into a long-term, private-pay residential treatment center that was drawing patients from as far away as Alaska. This time she was both program director and boss.

Then, after five years in Phoenix, it was Jerry’s turn to move; Shine closed this chapter of her career and they relocated to Boca Raton, Fla.

Shine says that one of the great things about the MSW is that it’s so portable. She went to work in the mental health service of a nearby hospital.

An MSW may be portable but it doesn’t guarantee what you’ll find at your next stop. She was treated like a novice by a supervisor who’d been out of school for two years. After a couple of months, Shine had had enough. The supervisor insisted that she have an exit interview with the head psychiatrist, a standard procedure. Shine thought that under the circumstances this was ridiculous, but she complied.

The hospital was owned by a national for-profit health care corporation that was expanding into the specialty hospital business. Shine’s exit interview turned into a job offer: would she write a program for a residential treatment center the corporation wanted to start locally.

When she presented the program, the men in the room laughed. “Do you have any idea of how many staff this would take?” They sent her away to write an “adequate” program.

When the facility opened, Shine, who despite misgivings had accepted a position as director, couldn’t believe what she was seeing. Treatment was completely subordinated to insurance. If a patient’s coverage ended at noon on a particular day, the patient was out the door at 12:01 without regard to condition. Her Phoenix program had been private pay; her Meyer-ECMC experience had not been so cutthroat.

Jerry Shine told her she looked depressed, which had never been her mien. After a month, she gave a month’s notice; after a week, they were done with her and she was gone. No psychiatrist interview this time.

After 25 years, her outrage hasn’t softened. “Every place I’d worked, patient care was number one,” Shine says. “If you had morals, you couldn’t work in a situation like that.”

That was the end. Shine had loved her work; she’d been effective and she still misses it. She sounds like she could jump back in and do it just as well.

Marilyn Shine readily acknowledges that she had an advantage in her career that was pure good fortune: she didn’t have to depend on her paycheck to live. She was valuable because she was effective; she was effective because she was smart and relentlessly dedicated. But she was always free to walk away.

That freedom was a fact of her life. Her career is what she did with it.

— JUDSON MEAD

Marilyn Z. and Jerome D. Shine
Endowment Fund will provide an annual award
for a graduate student entering his or her second year, and
whose primary focus is the study of domestic violence.



THE VERY MODEL OF

MODERN MENTAL HEALTH

When Marilyn Shine started her career in mental health 40 years ago, the main focus in New York State was emptying the state psychiatric hospitals. There wasn't much community-level infrastructure to catch the outflow.

Today, the main action is supporting persons diagnosed with serious and persistent mental illness in their communities. So the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH) has a compelling interest in smart workforce development. That was the origin (in 2001) of the OMB-supported Schools of Social Work Deans' Consortium Project for Evidence-Based Practice in Mental Health, which the UB School of Social Work leads.

Kali Carpenter, in the second year of her MSW program, is one of the modern faces of the project. She starts most mornings briefing at Lakeshore Behavioral Health in downtown Buffalo with an Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) team before heading out in one of the agency jeeps on a preplanned run that typically involves visits to five clients anywhere in Erie County.

Carpenter, who studied psychology with the expectation of some kind of clinical career, was recruited into the project when she was looking at second-year field placements. Project participants complete coursework and attend colloquia in evidence-based mental health practice and complete a one-year internship at an OMH-approved field placement site. ACT is one of five evidence-based practices OMH is promoting through the consortium.

Project graduates get a certificate in evidence-based mental health practice, a stipend award and a big advantage in the job market. In return, OMH gets clinicians in the field who know why best practices are best and know how to follow and interpret evidence as it appears.

The Lakeshore ACT team with which Carpenter is training works with clients who have the co-occurring conditions of severe and persistent mental illness and substance abuse. Team workers see clients in their homes, in jail, in court, in hospitals or at a Tim Horton's donut shop—whatever is possible for the client. In addition to integrated substance abuse and mental health therapy, the ACT team provides as many other services as possible—from housing to vocational assistance, self-help and family support—that sustain recovery and keep clients in the community. Visits can be intense or as simple as delivering medications or just checking in.

With Carpenter, the deans' consortium project is working exactly as diagramed. She'd imagined herself doing some kind of therapy in an office. Now her ambition is to get a job with an ACT team in Syracuse, N.Y. and start logging the hours she needs to qualify for licensure.

She knows from her reading and coursework the evidence that supports the effectiveness of ACT. She knows from experience how good it can be to work on a team: "We're so cohesive. We check each other. We help each other." She knows the importance of her own self-care. When she gets in her car at the end of the day, she tells herself, "Okay, work is done."

She's just about ready to make the deans proud.

— JUDSON MEAD



Photo by Terry Brown Photography

RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME

NON-TRADITIONAL DEAN IN A UNIVERSITY WITH A PROUD TRADITION

As Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at Virginia Union University (VUU) in Richmond, Va., Dr. Linda Schlichting (PhD '05) says she's at the right place at the right time in her career. VUU is an HBCU (Historically Black Colleges & Universities) that was established in 1865 in Richmond with its first campus in Lumpkin's Jail, a former holding cell for slaves. Schlichting says at the end of the Civil War it was recognized that freed slaves had to be educated in order to survive independently. HBCUs like VUU were created to help meet that need.

"VUU has a rich history which is one of the reasons that I love my job so much. The University is known for its stance on equal rights and social equality. Today students, faculty and staff continue to pursue those same ideals of social justice. As a social worker, I could not be in a better place to fight the injustices that plague our society than in an environment educating and fulfilling for our students the promise of a limitless future."

After holding her position of professor in the social work department for two years, the university president offered her the position of Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Schlichting thought being dean could be a fitting capstone to a long career in social work. "So, after giving it a lot of thought, I decided to try it and this is my fifth year as dean." Clearly, she made the right decision.

"Although it can be overwhelming at times, I have discovered that I love the leadership role," says Schlichting. "I really feel that in my role as dean I

can contribute more to the students' education and the quality of their academic experience than I could as an individual instructor." While she still loves contact with students, noting that she still keeps her hand in teaching with one course a semester, she says, "I also like contributing to the bigger picture."

In some ways, she has the perfect credentials, drawing on her experiences in UB Social Welfare doctoral program and 25 years in at the Department of Veteran Affairs, mostly in social work leadership roles. "Certainly the University at Buffalo gave me a strong foundation and good feel for what it's like to be in academia. My adjunct experience at UB helped to give me a sense of what the expectations are within in a solid academic environment. I think the support from faculty was the thing that struck me the most," she said. "As both a PhD student and adjunct professor, the UB social work faculty were always there to offer guidance, answer questions and help with research."

What's next for Schlichting? "The next thing will be something in retirement. It will be less demanding, but it will still be working for equality and justice--the social work principles that have been with me and reinforced over the years, especially through the universities where I got my degrees in social work."

But, for now, she's excited to be where she is.

- RONALD ROBERSTON

IN MEMORIAM



SHERMAN MERLE, SSW DEAN EMERITUS, died in Wilcox Memorial Hospital in Kilauea, Kauai on December 31, 2012 at age 90.

Serman Merle became dean in 1972 during one of the most turbulent times on campus. He replaced two interim deans who served less than a year and faced disgruntled students and CSWE accreditation challenges. The SSW needed a trailblazer, and Sherman answered the call from UB vice president of academic affairs, Bernie Gelbaum, who told him, "Just get yourself up here." Sherman left his position as associate dean of Catholic University of America School of Social Science in Washington, D.C. "The rest," as he said, "is history."

Sherman rebuilt not only the reputation of the School, but restored professional relationships with our community partners. Like all good leaders, he was a straight talker and not averse to making hard choices – including eliminating the undergraduate program in 1977. He reshaped the curriculum to meet accreditation standards and is credited with introducing the part-time MSW program in 1979. Sherman Merle was exactly what the school needed at the time, and the SSW remains indebted to his vision and leadership. Thankfully he got himself up here.

- SARAH GOLDTHRITTE AND BARBARA RITTNER

EXACTLY WHAT SHE WAS LOOKING FOR

THE DIRECT PATH TO A RESEARCH CAREER

Laura Greyber (MSW '07) fell in love with psychology as a student at Jamestown High School, New York, subsequently charting the path for the rest of her life. "I had an amazing psychology teacher who inspired me to take the direction I did in undergraduate, masters and finally my PhD." When it came time to look for a college, she toured universities all over New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Her last stop: the University at Buffalo.

"I can't say exactly why I fell in love with Buffalo and the University, I just felt at home and that this was where I was supposed to attend." Wanting to continue her education beyond her undergraduate degree, Greyber hurried her studies along and graduated with her BA in psychology, three years after she started in 2002. As an undergraduate research assistant, she was introduced to mental and behavioral health research. Under this position she studied the aggressive behaviors of preschool children during play.

"I again applied to numerous universities across the state and elsewhere," Greyber recalls of her search for a suitable graduate program. She found exactly what she was looking for at UB: "The School of Social Work was a better fit for me in terms of not only continuing in my area of interest, mental health, but to also branch out into more systems, [from] environmental and community-based perspectives to working with children and families. I felt that social work was very much an applied science."

While working on her master's degree, she realized that she wanted to earn her doctorate. "I had an enthusiastic teacher for the research methods course, and it was then I decided I wanted to pursue research in mental health and wellness across the lifespan."

Admission to the research-focused PhD program in Social Welfare came with some surprises. "I knew that I wanted to focus on mental health and intervention research, but I had no idea that I would have the opportunity to work with world-class researchers and become involved in community organizations to conduct research." Greyber became the in-house research coordinator at Hillside Family of Agencies, a community-based mental and behavioral healthcare organization, where she conducts research and program evaluation in addition to serving as the Institutional Review Board Administrator. "I was submersed into real-world research with children and families," she said. "Firsthand, I was able to see how research can have a substantial impact on those who receive mental and behavioral health service. Moreover, research conducted within community-based organizations narrows the gap between research and practice through the creation of a data to practice feedback loop and vice versa." Most valuable about her experience as a student at the School of Social Work, she says, is the mentoring she receives from faculty and her Chair, Dr. Catherine Dulmus. "I have been able to take the skills learned in the classroom and practice them in community-based organizations," she says. - Ronald Robertson

"Such experiences have and will prove invaluable to not only me, but most importantly to the youth and families that we hope to help every day."

PROMOTIONS

Catherine N. Dulmus, PhD, Associate Dean for Research, was recently promoted from associate professor to professor and has earned the prestigious 2013 NASW-NYS Western Division Lifetime Achievement Award. A picture of professionalism, Dulmus’ interest in community-based translational research has led her to explore intersects of child and adolescent mental health, serious mental illness and evidence-based practice within community program delivery. Her substantial publication and professional conference presentation records include many doctoral students, fellow faculty and community partners as co-authors, making her a consummate mentor. Her designation as a Scientific Member of the Institutional Review Board at the Hillside Family of Agencies in Rochester, N.Y. and member of the Mental Health Association of Cattaraugus County Board of Directors renders her invaluable to the SSW.



Deborah Waldrop’s promotion from associate professor to professor is no surprise in light of her impact as a scholar in the field of gerontology. She has had a focused research agenda in aging, end-of-life decision-making, advance care planning, end-of-life care and healthcare. She has mentored a cadre of MSW students with her innovative field work placements and coursework alike and has mentored numerous doctoral students examining issues affecting aging populations. Waldrop has been awarded three Outstanding Faculty Teaching Awards, the Poster Award from the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine Annual Assembly for a qualitative research submission, and Fellow status by the Gerontological Society in America.



Filomena M. Critelli, PhD, joined the University at Buffalo School of Social work as an assistant professor in 2005 after 15 years of service at New York, NY’s Talbot Perkins Children’s Services and The Door. As a faculty scholar and researcher, her focus has been on transnational issues related to domestic violence and sexual exploitation of women, especially in Pakistan. She has been a major contributor to the school’s comprehensive international approach to social work and has been an active participant in university and community service projects, making her recent promotion to associate professor a natural transition. Most recently, she helped organize the UBSSW film series Global Issues/Local Realities.



Wooksoo Kim was recently promoted from assistant to associate professor. A two-time Professional Development Award recipient from United University Professions, Kim’s research and scholarship focuses on cultural competencies and transcultural experiences of Asian populations, especially among immigrants. Much of her recent research focuses on addictions in the immigrant Asian community with special attention to alcohol use among aging women. A strong methodologist, she came to UB SSW after a NIDA Post-Doctoral Fellow for the School of Nursing at the University of Washington. Her focus on Asian immigrants in the U.S. and Canada significantly adds to the expanding international scholarly contribution of the UBSSW program.



- SARAH GOLDTHRITE

UPSIDE DOWN
IN COSTA RICA

Twenty-eight year old Marie Clarcq (MSW ‘11) had never hung upside down. “I was afraid I wasn’t going to be able to do it,” she says, showing the photograph of her zip-lining experience.

Suspended on the zip-line with her legs above her head, knees bent as if sitting, Clarcq’s arms are spread wide like wings. She’s flying through the jungle in Costa Rica. Her blue eyes gleam under the bright red helmet—sheer happiness amid the fear she hid so well.

Clarcq’s experience demonstrates the intangible benefits of study abroad. She sees herself as one of the lucky ones to be exposed to new adventures and immersed, maybe even suspended, in another culture. Although she made her study abroad arrangements independently, her journey and cultural curiosity mesh perfectly with the School of Social Work’s commitment to global education and encouraging diverse international experiences for its students.



“

have really been trying to encourage students to participate in study abroad—especially in our globalized world,” says Diane Elze, MSW Program Director. “It broadens the lens that we look through. It can also broaden our understanding of how power and privilege manifest themselves in different places.”

Clarcq, a proud 2011 graduate of the MSW program, now recognizes community as global, reaching far beyond her home near Rochester, N.Y. She was hesitant at first: hesitant to zip-line, but mostly hesitant to participate in this immersion program. This overwhelming anxiety is common among students who challenge themselves in another culture by taking the plunge. It’s fear of the unknown. She had never hung upside down; she’d never had ceviche, a popular raw seafood dish in Central and South America; she had never been enriched by another culture to this degree. But she did it all.

For two weeks in Grecia, Costa Rica, Clarcq immersed herself in Spanish language classes and culture. She lived with the Ticas, a local family who didn’t speak much English, which forced her to use all her resources to communicate. Every day she took meals with the Ticas and delighted in how welcoming they were, encouraging her to fully experience their culture, and cherished being called “hermana” (sister) by the children. “It was an important realization that you can get close to people despite a huge difference between you,” Clarcq observes.

Clarcq engaged in a daily four hour “Spanish only” class in addition to programs allowing her to visit local agencies for women and children. She spent time in a fenced community for Nicaraguan immigrants where children stared at them. Some kids even ran up to touch their hands. A few called her and others in the group “gringa,” a somewhat derogatory word for “foreigner.” They were right. She was completely out of her comfort zone because she really was a foreigner. Clarcq shows the photo of her with five children from that site visit. A surprised and awkward smile paints her face while the kids playfully pinch her. “Maybe that was why they were pinching me—because my skin was so white!”

Clarcq often reflects on her journey to Costa Rica, incorporating those observations and global challenges into her career path. She’s fulfilled the mission of the School of Social Work: to educate future social workers to be responsive in communities—nationally and globally.

Shirley Reiser (MSW ’76), Clarcq’s academic advisor, recognizes Clarcq’s cosmopolitan mentality. “Marie sees herself as a citizen of the world, with responsibility to the world.” - Catherine Yeh



Photos courtesy of Marie Clarcq

LEFT: Clarcq zip-lining through Costa Rica jungle.
RIGHT: Clarcq at a site visit of Nicaraguan immigrants.



PHOTO BY UNION STUDIOS INC.

LESSONS, LEGACIES AND LOVE

Bonnie Collins and Shermeeka Mason meeting over coffee

RECIPROCITY IN THE SSW MENTOR PROGRAM

“The most important lesson I have learned over the years: no matter what walk of life you come from, no matter what kind of career you have pursued...all persons have the same needs—to be loved, to have someone care about them, to have their ego (ID) pushed upward, to have some kind of recognition. And of course the basics—to be fed, clothed, sheltered according to their needs...but somehow, love seems to be the most important ingredient.”

Pauline Reimer’s (MSW ’57) invaluable advice to her mentee stems from decades of devoted work and impressive accomplishments. It is precisely this depth of insight that is inestimable to the next generation of social workers.

Dean Nancy Smyth and Clinical Professor Denise Krause knew, when they began recruiting for the School of Social Work’s Mentor Program, there would be many benefits in using current mentors to become the pipeline for future mentors. It was piloted in 2011 to augment students’ support networks with caring alumni as informal advisors. The reciprocity of this relationship is instrumental to its value. The program anchors both mentor and mentee in the learning process and real-life professional experiences while giving professionals an opportunity to build and share their social work legacy with the emerging cohorts of social workers.

Bonnie Collins (MSW ’80) realizes the multifaceted and mutual value of a mentoring relationship for both students of social work and the professional mentor: “Everyone should have a mentor. The students gain a realistic view of the profession and don’t have to reinvent the wheel—kind of like built-in career counseling. And I have the opportunity to pay it forward, to share my experience with the next generation of social workers and leave a legacy.”

Shermeeka Mason, an advanced standing student, feels that she can be open and honest with Bonnie as she shapes her own professional goals. “I ask her about her years in the profession and her work in the community. She started a drug and alcohol education program that ran for 20 years; she saw that the programs prior to that one were ineffective and decided to launch an entirely new program. This is the type of contribution I want to make to the community.”

Susan Sharcot (MSW ’82) recognizes the student-mentor partnership is an important key in education and ultimately benefits the community of social workers. “I’m not at the beginning of my career, so students can learn from my mistakes. Providing mentees with guidance from a professional in the field who has learned over time is important because this new generation eventually will be taking care of us.”

Susan does just that with her mentee, MSW advanced year student Robyn Simpson. The advice she gives Robyn helps her anticipate the myriad challenges social workers inevitably encounter in the field. “I learned that social work reaches far beyond case management and can take a toll on your well-being,” says Robyn. Susan also learned from Robyn that the school’s current curriculum builds self-care skills. “UB’s emphasis on self-care is not merely a mission statement, but rather a necessity for longevity in the field of social work,” Robyn says, putting that curriculum element in context.

The dedication of SSW alumni and faculty to the profession imparts to the next generation the importance of lifelong professional generosity among practicing social workers and students. “I had two very loving parents who gave me an understanding of the community and the philosophy that you are here ‘as a renter,’” says Pauline. “You have to pay back much of what you have to the community and others who do not have it, nor understand it.” Her message is one of interconnectedness among social work professionals, whose mission is to build up the community and each other, and to gift each other with the unique knowledge and guidance that is born from experience, whether from personal experience or in a conversation with a student. - SARAH GOLDTHRITE

“My whole life has been like that,” says Pauline.

“Surrounded by great influences that I never anticipated.”

SOCIAL MEDIA

New Name for Podcast

The School of Social Work is changing its image. inSocialWorkSM is the (NEW) school podcast name replacing Living Proof. Over four years of informing practitioners, more than 100 podcasts later, and approaching 400,000 downloads, inSocialWorkSM has a new look, new voices and a new link at www.inSocialWork.org. inSocialWorkSM is a bi-weekly series featuring conversations with prominent professionals and researchers engaged in cutting-edge research and best practices on emerging social trends.

socialwork.buffalo.edu/podcast



Photo by Sarah Watson

THE PODCAST STAFF, LEFT TO RIGHT: Steven Sturman, Anthony Guzman, David Coppola, Charles Syms, Richard Amantia (back row), Rebecca S. Rouland Polmanteer, Vivian Wu and Peter Sobota



Overseas Student Blogs

This spring, two traditional MSW students are completing field placements overseas, and they are blogging about it! In Northwest Thailand, Sarah Nesbitt is engaged with Burma Border Projects and the displaced and refugee populations in Mae Sot. In Seoul, Republic of Korea, Katie Witmer is assisting the advocacy and service organization Korean Unwed Mothers Support Network.

To support these students and stay up-to-date on their adventures visit socialwork.buffalo.edu/abroad



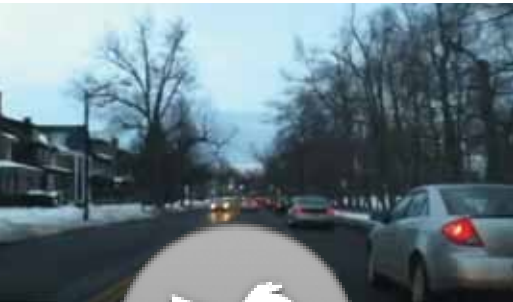
Did you know?

There is a LinkedIn group for SSW Alumni. Join us today and get connected!

Group name: UB School of Social Work Alumni



3 days in 4 minutes: Social Work student Sarah Nesbitt shows us her three day journey from Buffalo to





Students Assisting Sandy Relief Efforts

During winter break, MSW students Jen Hayes, Amy Thomas and Nira Tobochnik journeyed to Staten Island to assist with super-storm Sandy relief efforts. Working alongside local nonprofits, their duties ranged from gutting homes for mold removal to food distribution. Students, faculty and staff of the College of State Island SSW generously offered their homes to our MSW students during the trip.

Check it out on our Facebook page at facebook.com/ubssw

Photos courtesy of Jen Hayes.



her field placement in Burma in a clever four minute video. Check it out on our Twitter feed at twitter.com/UBSSW



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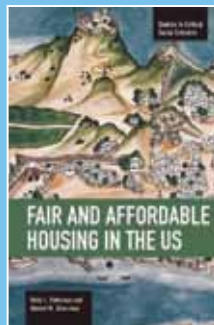
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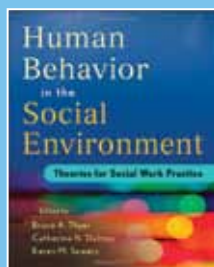
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For more information, visit:
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As an undergraduate psychology and health and human services major, Brad Loliger interned in the dementia unit of a nursing home and at the Erie County lockup. Deciding on the joint MSW-JD degree program was a natural choice. Discovering a vocation for legal services for needy elderly followed. His second-year social work field placement was with Legal Services for the Elderly and Disabled and Disadvantaged of Western New York: "This is where I belong." The School of Social Work awarded him scholarship funds that come from generous donors like you. **The best reason to support UB is what students like Brad will do in the future.**

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