St. Paul Social Work Scoop
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News and Reflections from Marcia Runnberg,
Social Work Program Coordinator

Making a decision to further your education is a big personal step for many. If you have been out of school for a number of years, or find yourself at the cross-roads of setting career goals and developing a plan, taking that “education leap” can be both exciting and scary. Doing your “homework” before you ever begin a professional education program is essential to learning success. This success happens when you become both a proactive consumer and potential student.

Consumer activities include: (1) Exploring college options: What colleges are offering the degree you are considering; is the program accredited by C.S.W.E.; what are the admission dates and procedures; how many credits does the program require; how and when are courses delivered (in class, online, day, weekend, evening schedules) (2) What are the college advisement services: are program faculty available to meet with prospective students; is course advisement available regarding the transfer of credits and other course planning; is a major course plan available; is career information available.

Student preparation activities include: (1) Securing copies of transcripts from all attended colleges (this will help in the advisement process to identify future course requirements) (2) Prepare financial planning: including tax filing, updating FAFSA reports, reflecting the school codes of programs interested in attending (3) Identify and plan life changes related to being a student: how will the demands of attending class and completing assignments be affected by employment hours, family needs, transportation, day-care schedules or other obligations? Will a part-time or full-time school plan work best for personal obligations? (4) What new “support” systems will I have to create or enhance to assist in my learning success?

The College of St. Scholastica Social Work Program encourages active consumers and proactive students to apply online at http://www.css.edu/academics/school-of-health-sciences/social-work/st-paul-campus/application-to-program.html

Recognition and Graduation—a Time to Celebrate

Every December the St. Paul campus Social Work Program hosts an Appreciation Dinner to honor our Field Instructors and students as they complete the end of their practicum experience and undergraduate education at CSS. This year the dinner was hosted at Dixie’s on Grand in St. Paul. Students were able to introduce their Field Instructor’s and share what they learned from their practicum experience. Students were also able to invite the people that supported them through their education. This included parents, siblings, significant others and community members. Faculty that attended was: Dr. Lee Gustafson, Program Chair; Michelle Robertson, Director of Field Education; Marcia Runnberg, Program Coordinator; Jennifer Gervais, Field Coordinator; and Matthew Bogen-Schutz, Instructor. Students were also welcomed to the Social Work Profession by Dr. Gustafson and Marcia Runnberg in a pinning ceremony. Pictured at left, they were: (back row) Zee Yang, Susan Sundberg-Pagel, Meredith Pedroza, Melanie Swaner, Deanna Dorsey, Chelsey Henry, Nicole Hendrickson, (front row) Kate Jednak, Angela Marti and Margarita Nadeau.

On December 19, 2009 the St. Paul Social Work faculty proudly cheered as nine graduates from our program walked on stage to receive their diplomas. They were Nicole Hendrickson, Chelsea Henry, Kate Jednak, Angela Marti, Margarita Nadeau, Jackie Nusbaum, Meredith Pedroza, Trish O’Reilly, and Zee Yang.

Congratulations to all our students!
Doin’ It in the Field

A fresh new year!

I love this time of year! Okay, the cold, snow, and cabin fever may not be on my list of favorites, but I do love the newness that a new year brings! Whether it is New Year resolutions, starting over, or looking ahead, this time of year is refreshing. On December 19th, 2009, nine social work students from our St. Paul program graduated. As they enter the work force, they bring with them all the knowledge, values, and skills obtained during their undergraduate education. They get to look out into the profession with fresh eyes and an optimistic attitude. I wish all of our graduates the best!

It is also the time of year that our program in St. Paul starts a new round of students in the Field Education Program. Students began Preparation for Field I on January 5, 2010. This course covers how to choose a field placement site, prepare for placement readiness, assess personal strengths and weaknesses, resume writing, interviewing skills, the role of a professional social worker, MN Board of Social Work licensing requirements, contracting with an agency, writing goals and objectives, effectively utilizing supervision, and getting the most out of a field placement. Students will be ready to enter into their first practicum experience on March 1, 2010. We are excited to use our new field placement matching system for the first time. As reported in our November 2009 newsletter, the Field Education Program can now match students and agencies based on a list of comprehensive questions including interests and what an agency has to offer. Students will then be provided a list of agencies that match their specific interests and specifications for a practicum. We look forward to being able to better meet the needs and interests of our students and agencies!

Lastly, in January I celebrated my second year at CSS in the Social Work program. I have been able to see 3 cohorts graduate and move on into the profession. I did not come from academia so I have had a lot to learn. So far I have learned that the saying “It’s not what you know but who you know” is completely accurate as a Field Coordinator. I have realized that I have learned as much from the students as they have from me. I am inspired every day by our students’ drive to achieve and succeed. Lastly, I have learned that academia is my calling. After almost 10 years in the profession, I now feel that it is my turn to give back. To all of our alumni, I am proud to stand by you. To our graduates, I am honored to have been a part of your education, and to our current cohort, I look forward to sharing with you the profession of social work! Happy New Year!

Focus on Field – PACER, Hilltop Elementary School, & AWUM

PACER Center, a non-profit organization providing information and advocacy services for families of children with disabilities since 1978, has more than three dozen projects that benefit children and youth, their families and the professionals who work with them as they strive to achieve their goals for education, vocations and careers, and independent living. The majority of the staff of 75 are parents or family members of persons with disabilities.

PACER provides workshops and trainings, inservices, and webinars on laws pertaining to special education and issues affecting youth with disabilities; consultations, library lending of software programs, and other services through the Simon assistive technology center; programs on school involvement for all parents; and Web sites and downloadable material in several languages.

PACER also is the center for national projects that provide technical assistance to 105 other parent centers across the country and a Bullying Prevention Program that has reached children and teens through Web sites and national media.

Unpaid internships are available at PACER in a variety of areas, depending on project need. Please visit www.pacer.org for more information on PACER Center or contact PACER at 952.838.9000.

Hilltop Elementary is one of three elementary schools in Inver Grove Heights and educates approximately 750 students grades Kindergarten through Fifth each year. Hilltop prides itself in creating an environment of mutual respect and a sense of community for all students, families and staff. These values have been supported with school wide use of Responsive Classroom which incorporates classroom morning meetings, all schools assemblies and other activities to support the social emotional learning of students as well as their academic achievement.

As a social work intern at Hilltop you can expect each day to be unique and offer new opportunities for learning. You will work closely with the Family Service Worker to create and facilitate groups, provide individual social/ emotional support to students, offer parent guidance and connect families with community resources. You will work closely with teaching staff by completing classroom observations, offering feedback to teachers, developing and leading classroom lessons as needed. An intern who is flexible, creative and self-driven would be well suited for this internship. I have enjoyed the opportunity of supervising two CSS students and welcome the experience again. I thinking learning is a mutual experience between student and supervisor, truly shaping theory into practice.

(article continues on back page)
Meet the Fantastic Faculty

Franki Rezek has been teaching with the St. Paul campus since April 2009. Courses include SWK 4777: Topics course, Working with Returning Veterans and their Families, and SWK 3363: Human Behavior in the Social Environment. She has also taught graduate social work courses at Augsburg College. Franki is currently employed as a Social Worker with the Minneapolis VA Medical Center and has been providing suicide prevention and case management services to veterans and their families.

Currently, she is working on President Obama’s initiative to end homelessness for veterans within 5 years, as well as the Health Care for Homeless Veteran HUD-VASH Program that assists veterans with permanent housing and community integration. Since 2003, Franki has worked in a variety of social work roles and services including mental health, outpatient psychotherapy, chemical dependency, and child protection. She has a special interest in issues around community organization, poverty, homelessness and reintegrations of veterans and federal probationers. Franki holds a MN license as an Independent Clinical Social Worker, and a License as an Alcohol and Drug Counselor. She obtained her M.S.W. from the University of St. Thomas, and her B.S. in Social Work from the College of St. Catherine. Franki has been a wonderful addition to our faculty team. Her real-life stories and her practice expertise make her courses “come alive”.

Classroom Connections – Social Work Students Learn Invaluable Lessons in Service-

January 6, 2010 was the beginning of a seven day life changing journey for six C.S.S. social work students from the St. Paul and Brainerd programs as they participated in a topics course entitled The Kino Border Initiative: a Social Work Response. Students traveled to Tucson, AZ and the twin border towns of Nogales, Arizona/Mexico, spending time visiting human service agencies and participating in the Kino Border ministry on the Mexico border side.

The Kino Border Initiative is a bi-national effort headed up by the California Province of the Society of Jesus, the Mexico Province of the Society of Jesus, the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist, the Archdiocese of Hermosillo and the Diocese of Tucson. These joint efforts staff a care center for a growing number of deported migrants, serve as a contact point for numerous humanitarian organizations working on the border and educate the community on immigration issues.

During this bi-national experience, students ventured out of their personal comfort zones to visit border migrant communities where they gained knowledge regarding Mexican culture; individual, family, and community responses to migration; historical patterns of oppression; spirituality and the integration of Catholic Social Teaching; and the role of immigration public policy. Students participated in client service and public provider discussions on the relationship between poverty in Mexico and immigration policies related to the plight of legal and illegal immigrants to the U.S. The implications for social workers came alive as participants were able to connect these broader issues to their commitments to personal and social change. Participants came away from the course better able to understand both the citizens of Mexico and the Mexican immigrants who now reside in the United States.

The student group will be demonstrating what they have learned from this special experience through interactive classroom presentations on the Brainerd, St. Paul, and Duluth campuses. Dates are tentatively set for May. Please contact Marcia Runnberg at Mrunnber@css.edu if you would like to attend one of the presentations or would like further information.

Hollaback – Alumni news and notes

Please send us your good news—we love hearing from you!

Congratulations to April Ferguson, Kate Jednak and Margarita Nadeau on passing the LSW exam! We are so proud of you!

Kate Jednak writes that she is now employed at Meridian as a Case Manager working primarily with children and adults in Anoka County. Congratulations, Kate, and we wish you all the best!

While continuing her job search, Stacy Nitti is heading Inver Grove Heights “Beyond the Yellow Ribbon”, a program for military families.

Lynn Carlson continues work on her MSW at Augsburg. She is excited to share that Augsburg now offers a grad program that allows students to receive an MBA along with their MSW.

Margarita Nadeau is volunteering at the Children’s Home Society and Family Services while making plans to begin work on her MSW at Augsburg.

Bree Meduna shares that she will graduate in May with her MSW. She plans to return to Minnesota to take her licensure exam.

What one hears, one forgets. What one sees, one remembers. What one does, one understands.”

Chinese Proverb

For more info on the Kino Initiative go to www.jrsusa.org/Kino/

SWK student, Sarah Krier, and Fr. Peter Neeley, Kino Initiative Director

Jeremy & Emily Owen, son and daughter-in-law of Marcia Runnberg, SWK program coordinator, demonstrate a traditional Muslim greeting with help from Diana Agunbiade, CSS SWK student. The Owens are home on a break from teaching in the Middle East.
Asian Women United of Minnesota started in 1993 as the Asian Battered Women’s Task Force, an informal group of direct service providers, in response to the lack of adequate services for battered Asian women and their children. The task force spent its first two years lobbying the legislature and others on behalf of battered Asian women. This led to the legislature mandating an interpreter certification program and designating capital bonding money for the establishment of a shelter for battered Asian women and their children. In June 1996, AWUM incorporated as a nonprofit organization and in 2001, opened the House of Peace shelter for Asian battered women and their children.

Most interns that come into Asian Women United of Minnesota are family advocates within House of Peace. House of Peace operates 24 hours, 7 days a week; we can house about 24 women and children at any one time. At House of Peace interns get a chance to interact with the participants who are temporarily staying at the shelter for safety reasons as a result of domestic violence. Interns and volunteers get a condensed version of advocacy training before they start their internship at House of Peace. They are provided a one-on-one training with our lead advocates. Advocates treat interns as colleagues that they can count on for support when handling situations. In the field of domestic violence providing and giving support is crucial to the work being done whether it is to the participant or to one’s own colleague.

The internship opportunities at Asian Women United of Minnesota expose interns to the following but are not limited:

- interact with participants & their children through activities & support groups
- speak with individuals who are calling our crisis line
- handling crisis
- learn that in the field of domestic violence we must work ourselves out of a job
- self awareness
- power & control within relationships
- legal system
- community resources within the Twin Cities metro area
- Advocacy
- Social change

Much of what an intern does is dependent on what they want to learn and how they best utilize the time they are with us. We encourage interns to attend trainings with advocates as plausible to them. To get the best out of one’s internship is to spend as much time within one day at House of Peace because each day is different.

At AWUM a new day is a new beginning and a new journey of growth and learning for both advocates, interns, and the participants who partner with us on this journey to end domestic violence within the Asian Pacific Islander community.