



Social Work News

FALL 2012

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A Word from the Chair



Judge Kathleen Kearney '77 spoke to Dr. K's Social Policy Class



Mary Anne Luzar '72, Ph.D with SW Research Methods students.



Dr. Kominkiewicz,
chair and director

Dear Friends,
I wish you all the best as we are in this beautiful season! I also hope that all is going very well with you at this most wonderful time of year! Our first semester ended with great plans about where

seniors are going to graduate school, or beginning employment or volunteer service.

Our senior Social Work majors will be deciding very soon regarding which M.S.W. programs they will be attending. Our students receive advanced standing in M.S.W. programs due to our CSWE-national accreditation. As you know, we received a perfect report during the our last accreditation visit. The national accreditation allows students to earn an M.S.W. degree in one year as their undergraduate courses are used to fulfill graduate school requirements. As our department does not have a graduate program, we see students complete their graduate education in such highly-respected programs as the Universi-

ty of Michigan, Washington University in St. Louis, the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, the University of Chicago, Case Western University, and the University of Illinois-Chicago. The majority of our Social Work students attend graduate school in order to attain their M.S.W. degrees.

The senior Social Work majors wrote grants for their field placement agencies in the fall 2012 semester in the Social Work Research Methods class that I teach, and presented their community-based work during class periods on campus at the end of this semester. The community agencies also attended their presentations. I am most excited to see the results of their grants, many of which we will not know until well into next year.

I was elected to the national board as a member-at-large of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors this fall, and attended my first board meeting in Washington, D.C., immediately following the presidential election. It was a privilege to win this national election and I look forward to serving in this capacity.

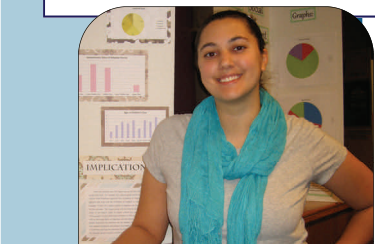
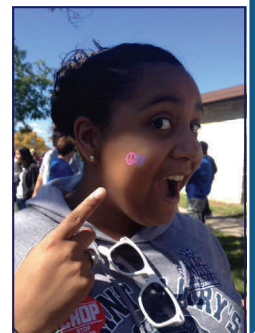
I hope that you continue to keep in touch throughout the year. May you have the best year ever in 2013!

Social Work Club News

The Social Work Club is a student run service opportunity for students at Saint Mary's. Throughout the year, the club works to bring the Saint Mary's community and the South Bend community together in hopes of helping the less fortunate. This past semester, the club raised over \$700 for the annual CROP walk to help end local and international hunger. In addition to this work, the Social Work Club also organized a Pumpkin Patch field trip for the children living at the South Bend Center for the Homeless. The Social Work Club hopes to continue the tradition of reaching out to others.

Adrienna Perales

President, Social Work Club



Notes from the Field



Professor Sanchez Field Practicum Coordinator

As the Field Practicum Coordinator, I see firsthand the outstanding work that the social work practicum students have contributed to the field. Saint Mary's College students understand the importance of making an impact in surrounding communities in need of social services. There are twenty social work students working in South Bend, Mishawaka, Elkhart, Goshen, and Rolling Prairie.

I continue my outreach to new social service agencies so that students have additional options in choosing a practicum placement for their senior year. This year's new placements include Riley High School, Juvenile Justice Center, Kids Peace, Center for the Homeless, The River Bend Cancer Services, and Hannah's House. The new placements have been extremely generous with their time, gifts, and social work talents. The students have been pleased with their field experiences and have gained many new professional relationships with both the agency staff and the clientele they serve.



Students from past years have educated field instructors on the capabilities and skill sets of an undergraduate generalist social worker. The interactions between students and field instructors have raised the bar for future students. Students are tasked with the responsibility of leaving a legacy at the field placement for future students to continue or build upon. Many placements have grown in the past five years with their experiential opportunities for the students. I believe the growth was driven from the legacy of past students. I would like to thank all the social work alumnae for "paying it forward."

The twenty students out in the field continue to impress me by the power of their young minds and their engagement with clients. The young women look at an old presenting problem with new eyes and a new optimistic perspective is offered. The new perspective gives clients hope and the determination to continue on their life journey.



Reflections from the Seniors



Hello, my name is Monica Murphy and I was born to be a world-changer—all to build the kingdom. My time at Saint Mary's has opened countless doors of opportunity. Studying Social Work has been an experience that has allowed

me to look at the world with my eyes wide open. I want people to get excited about their lives. Someone once said, "It is one thing to understand people—it is another thing to treat them like they are the most important thing in the world." When you listen and add value to people, they soar in their potential. It's really that simple. How can we, as social workers, inspire people to live their best possible life? Or how can we help individuals to understand that circumstances do not have to hold them back in life?

Leader John Maxwell once said, "Believing in people before they

have proven themselves is key to motivating people to live their best possible lives." I use this motto when interning at Ivy Tech Community College. One of my job descriptions is life coaching. I have had the grateful opportunity to work with many students who are on fire for positive change in their lives. Hearing their stories inspires me to lead in a greater way. Many are overcomers of dramatic life experiences: poverty, abuse, eating disorders, alcoholism, violence and prison. These students believe that they were born for greatness. This is why they are inspired to *fully* live.

In addition, I have had the opportunity to promote service learning on campus. Service learning coordinator, Adrian Six, and I have visited many agencies to see what kinds of opportunities and internships are available to students. Service learning and civic mindedness are key ingredients to self-discovery—exploring one's life

calling. It is our hope that Ivy Tech will implement service learning as a requirement for every class, all majors. We believe that students' lives will be enriched, transformed and positively impacted with such experiences.

What a blessing it is to be able to have a field practicum that challenges me every day and helps to develop my leadership. Being teachable helps me to stretch *my* vision and dreams.



Monica Murphy with her Field Instructor, Joann Phillips, MSW, from IVY Tech.

Reflections from the Seniors



*Megan Considine
Practicum Intern at Center
for the Homeless*

As a Saint Mary's student, you look forward to your senior year for a variety of reasons! Academically, you look forward to demonstrating your knowledge through the hands-on experience that is offered to you through Saint Mary's, one of the many benefits of a small school. As a senior social work major, this hands-on experience is given to you by means of a field placement.

In the spring of 2012, I was assigned to the Center for the Homeless located in South Bend to work with the school-aged children. I remember being excited, but nervous because no student from Saint Mary's has ever been placed there before. I could not help but feel a sense of pride knowing that I would be making my mark for the school and the department.

Twelve weeks into the semester, I still feel excited to go

there each time knowing the difference I am making. I have been exposed to so many more social issues than I ever thought possible. In my short time there, I have, of course, seen homelessness, but most of my learning has come from the circumstances that have made them homeless, including abuse, drugs, adoption, and trauma. I have encountered different races and a variety of ages. Some days seem quiet, while other days feel like I never catch my breath. I have developed relationships quickly and I have established trust. There is mutual excitement between the small children and myself when we see each other after being apart for a day or two.

With every situation I am presented at the Center for the Homeless, I grow more and more grateful for my education at Saint Mary's and the emphasis they place on critical thinking and hands-on experience. I always feel confident that my professors have prepared me to tackle anything, and I feel comfortable approaching them when I have questions and concerns. Their advice is invaluable. This field placement has given me a

great deal of confidence. I leave everyday satisfied in what I have accomplished. I know that my presence there each day has positively impacted someone else, and as a social worker, there is no greater reward!



*Meghan O'Rourke
Practicum Intern at
YMCA*

I am a senior Social Work and English Writing double major. When the word came in this year that I would be doing my field placement at the

YWCA, I was a little more nervous than excited – and I knew next to nothing about the facility. The YWCA is a national organization that promotes the empowerment of women and the elimination of racism through programs for domestic violence, chemical dependency, sexual assault and transitional housing. I love my job.

Jennifer's Blurbs



*Visiting Professor Jennifer
Bauwens Byers*

Every new endeavor is a chance for growth, and teaching at Saint Mary's has offered me several opportunities to sharpen my teaching skills. The resources are abundant here, and this includes the students themselves. This is my first time mainly teaching traditional students, so I am learning new ways to reach this group of learners. The people

in the social work program have also been extremely helpful. Dr. Kominkiewicz has been a mentor, Pro-

fessor Sanchez has been a sounding board and Mrs. Hammond has been a "life saver." Individuals outside of the social work department have also been essential. Sue Wiegand, who is our library liaison, has been very accommodating and accessible to me and the students. The talents of Sister Kathleen Dolphin, PBVM, Director for Center for Spirituality, and Sister Veronique Wiedower, CSC, Vice President for Mission, have been crucial in relating the work of the sisters to that of social work. Working together with these individuals to help students flourish has been a very rewarding and memorable experience so far and I am sure that next semester will bring forth more meaningful connections.

Reflections from the Seniors



My name is Paige Edmonds and I am a senior Social Work major with minors in Sociology and Justice Studies. My senior year field placement is at RiverBend Cancer Services in

South Bend, IN. This is a new placement for the Saint Mary's College Social Work Program this year. RiverBend is a non-profit organization that aims to provide non-medical cancer support to individuals and their families in the South Bend community and surrounding areas who are affected by this dis-

ease. We provide educational, financial, nutritional and mental health services to our clients. We have a variety of free services including wig fittings, equipment loans and prosthesis for women who have undergone mastectomies. Here at RiverBend, I mainly work with the financial assistance program. This program helps clients pay for prescription medication related to their cancer diagnosis. I have also been working on starting a new transportation program for clients to get to and from treatment. I feel that the Saint Mary's Social Work program has prepared me to not only continue my education to obtain a master's degree, but also to feel confident in entering the workforce.

The Department of Social Work has a Facebook Group, website, and photo site!

The Facebook group name is:
Saint Mary's College Social Work

The department website is:
www3.saintmarys.edu/departments/social-work

The department photo site is:
picasaweb.google.com/smcsocialwork

Find us on the Web!