



Social Work News

SPRING/SUMMER 2012

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A Word from the Chair

Dear Friends,

It is wonderful to be able to write to you again about all of the students' magnificent accomplishments! I hope that this newsletter finds all of you doing well

as we soon begin this beautiful summer.

The senior Social Work majors conducted community-based research in the fall. The research projects were conducted with the assistance of two community organizations, Hope Ministries and Bridges Out of Poverty. We greatly thank these organizations for their assistance. The students invited these community agencies to their research presentations and also included their research projects in their Senior Comprehensive e-Portfolios. Hope Ministries applied the results to make immediate changes by beginning a smoking cessation program for residents at Hope. Congratulations to Hope Ministries and our Students! Please see this link for further information on this great accomplishment: [http://www3.saintmarys.edu/news-events/news-coverage/social-work-students-do-](http://www3.saintmarys.edu/news-events/news-coverage/social-work-students-do-research-at-hope-ministries-2012)

[research-at-hope-ministries-2012](#). We are so proud of all our students and can only imagine the great contributions they will continue to make in this world!

I continue to research and presented on a research project with my colleague, Elizabeth Blue (University of Wisconsin-Superior), at the Baccalaureate Program Directors Conference in Portland, Oregon, in March. Also in March, I presented my research on child abuse at the European Society for Trauma and Dissociation in Berlin, Germany, and received a very warm welcome there.

I wish all of you a wonderful summer. We will be in touch again in the fall. We look forward to hearing from you!

Take care.
Fran
Kominkiewicz

*At Berlin
Budstage
(Parliament)*



Awards and Honors

Phi Alpha Honors

Seniors:

Alma Bravo
Kirsten Thornton

Juniors:

Paige Edmonds
Julia Fletcher
Rebekah Kohn
Gabriella Masini
Anna McMahon
Elizabeth Morales
Monica Murphy
Meghan O'Rourke
Julie Reed
Ciara Ward
Anne Zimmnicki

Phi Alpha Honorary Award

was awarded to Joann Phillips, MSW and Kregg Van Meter at the Social Work Spring Luncheon, April 27, 2012.

Social Work Awards at Hooding May 6, 2012

The Academic Excellence Award

Aileen Hurd

The Leadership Award

Kirsten Thornton

The Josephine Murphy Kuhl Research Award

Monica Drettmann and Sarah Shoff

The Kristi A. Morris Award

Alma Bravo



The Kristi A. Morris Award in Social Work was awarded to Senior Alma Bravo. This award recognizes the senior major who has excelled in the study of research in diversity.



Notes from the Field



Professor Sanchez is the field practicum coordinator

It was a busy second semester in the social work field for the junior and senior classes. The senior class continued to work with their clientele in the community of South Bend. They tested their skills in applying ethical principles, engaging in diversity and policy, advancing human rights, and using critical thinking. The students described how they applied the 10 social work competencies at their practicum placement using an e-portfolio. I would like to thank Steven Hall, a student at Central Michigan University, for creating the e-portfolio template. Steven was such a great help to the social work department and our students. The e-portfolios were very successful in promoting the social work skills and talents of each of the students.

The junior class consists of 20 eager students. With a larger group of students I had to recruit a number of new social work placements. The new placements to our program for next year are the St. Joseph Probate Court Juvenile Division, River Bend Cancer Services, Center for the Homeless, Riley High School, and Kids Peace. For a complete list of social work placements please visit our website or our Facebook page at Saint Mary's College Social Work.

I started the Facebook page in the fall to update and educate the students on current events in social work, to develop a network system between current students and alumnae, and to update the parents on their daughters' life in the social work program. Thank you for the support of well wishes,

information, and updates from the community, family, and friends on the Facebook page. Please visit and "like" the Saint Mary's College Social Work page.

I would like to thank my social work club officers Kirsten Thornton, Symone Pompey, Jen Leakakos, and Lauren Toth. They did such a wonderful job with the club this year. The club this semester made valentines for the children at Hope Ministries, walked for St. Margaret's House, sold jewelry for the Lazarus Community, hosted the students from the Activity Center for a college visit at Saint Mary's College, took families from Hope Ministries to a Silver Hawks baseball game, and attended Easter Mass and social event with the L'Arche/Emmaus Community at the University of Notre Dame. I cannot thank the social work club enough for all their hard work this past semester.

To the class of 2012, I would like to say congratulations on four great years at Saint Mary's College. I will miss you and the best of luck with your future endeavors.



Alumnae News

Alison Ashley Johnson '02

Since graduating from Saint Mary's in 2002, I have held a number of different social work positions in Minneapolis, Minnesota. I first started working for a non-profit agency that served adults with mental illness. I then had a promotional opportunity to work as a county psychiatric social worker for five years conducting psychiatric and chemical dependency assessments for the court. Wanting to expand my skills, I accepted a position with UnitedHealth Group in their Employee Assistance Program division. In October 2011, my husband accepted a position in San Francisco, California, which moved us and our 1½ year-old daughter, Devin, to the West Coast. We love it out here so far and I landed a very interesting position working with older adults. (Dr. Burke would be proud!) I am working on a new grant-funded program aimed at reducing re-admissions to the hospital for patients 65 and older. The program is a partnership between the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and Peninsula Family Service, my employer. We will be collecting data and statistics along the way, which will eventually become a study that will be presented at medical conferences.

Class of 2012

Alma Bravo—Indiana University, South Bend, Advanced Standing

Monica Drettman—Applied to University of Michigan for Advanced Standing

Aileen Hurd—Northeastern University in Boston, Advanced Standing

Jennifer Kline—Boston College Graduate School of Social Work, Advanced Standing

Jennifer Leakakos—Work for a year then University of Denver, Advanced Standing

Jane McNaughton—United States Army, Military Intelligence Officer

Jillian Meert—Volunteer as a Guardianship Advocate for REAL Services

Symone Pompey—California State University Long Beach, Advanced Standing

Sarah Shoff—Applied to three graduate schools and waiting to hear back.

Kirsten Thornton—University of Denver, Advanced Standing



Lauren Toth—Loyola University Chicago, Advanced Standing

Crystal Vinalon—Waiting to hear about a service program in Chicago, IL.

Burke's Blurb



The pictures of the junior social workers show how hard I worked them in the Mezzo course as they prepare to give presentations and lead groups in the field next

year! The best part of my work is seeing our students develop self-confidence as they learn the competencies and move into the profession. I can remember the early days with many of you!

I will be going on sabbatical this fall. I have decided to study culture change in long-term services and supports for older adults. The boomers are moving into their later years and are



not going to accept what has been available. So gerontology services are changing. I will be doing case studies of culture change in three nursing homes in northern Indiana and three



nursing homes in central Indiana. These facilities are involved in quality improvement training and are transitioning to person-centered services. I was invited to do this study by the Indiana State Department of Health. I will return in January as the Acting Chair of the Department (Dr. K. will be on sabbatical in the spring semester) as well as the Gerontology Program Director.

I will give you an update in next spring's newsletter!

The Gerontology luncheon was held on April 25, 2012 to honor senior GERO minors. Below from left to right: Molly Farrell, Lindsay Gisselman, Kirsten Thornton, Jennifer Leakakos and Lauren Toth. Missing in the picture are: Kerriann Dooley, Megan Hester and Riley Pummill. We were happy to offer a new course on Alzheimer's disease which was taught by Kathy Decker-Burrous who is Director of Residence Services at the Saint Mary's Convent, Sisters of the Holy Cross.



Class of 2012



From left to right: JoAnn Burke, Leonard Sanchez, Frances Kominkiewicz, Aileen Hurd, Monica Drettmann, Lauren Toth, Jennifer Kline, Crystal Vinalon, Jennifer Leakakos, Jane McNaughton, Alma Bravo, Kirsten Thornton, Jillian Meert, Symone Pompey and Sarah Shoff.

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!



Department of Social Work
100 Spes Unica, Room 265
Notre Dame, IN 46556-5001