



Social Work News

SPRING/SUMMER 2011

A Word from the Chair



*Dr. Kominkiewicz,
chair and director*

It is very hard to believe that we are ending our 2010-2011 academic year at Saint Mary's College. I hope that all is going very well with you as we head into the equally busy summer.

We are blessed with truly gifted Social Work students. The senior Social Work majors presented their community-based research accompanied by their research tri-folds at the Department of Social Work Spring Luncheon on March 29th on the Saint Mary's campus. The students received great positive feedback about their research. The junior Social Work majors have been working very diligently in the Social Work Practice courses (Mezzo Practice and Macro Practice), and are involved in experiential learning in the community. They also planned and implemented a Community Forum in the Human Behavior and the Social Environment II class. Our curriculum strongly prepares our students to practice in the community.

I was able to conduct and present research with my colleagues at the Baccalaureate Program Directors Conference in Cincinnati in February, and continue to be very involved in that organization. As you know, we submitted our Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Self-Study for our national accreditation, and also completed our site visit in November, 2010. The Council on Social Work Education Commission on Accreditation is meeting in June to review our Program for Reaffirmation Determination.

We wish you the best this summer. Please continue to keep in touch throughout the year.

I will be involved in distance education this summer at Saint Mary's College, and will be teaching Human Behavior and the Social Environment I (SW 235) online. It is such a treat to do this and I greatly enjoy it!



Awards and Honors



The Academic Excellence Award in Social Work—Angela Hollar
The Leadership Award in Social Work—Maria Kenney
The Josephine Murphy Kuhl Research Award—Maire Ready
Hannah Snyder

The Kristi A. Morris Award in Social Work—Monica Aguirre
The Sister Maria Concepta McDermott, CSC Award for Service in Education was awarded to Aileen Hurd '12 through the Saint Mary's College Office of Civic and Social Engagement. Aileen has provided over 700 hours to children in the South Bend community. Our congratulations to Aileen for this most prestigious award!



Monica Aguirre received The Kristi A. Morris Award from Mrs. Margie Wasoski, mother of Kristi Morris, and her family.

CONGRATULATIONS to Dr. Kominkiewicz on receiving Full Professor!
Phi Alpha Honor Awards to Dr. Patricia Fleming (Senior Vice President and Dean of Faculty)
Shotunus Peterson, LCSW (Youth Service Bureau)
Connie Adams '08 Leadership Award (AD-Violence Against Women)



*Professor Sanchez
with Aileen Hurd '12*

Notes from the Field



Professor Sanchez is the field practicum coordinator



It has been a great academic year for the Social Work Department. The students continue to raise the bar with their skills and their contributions to the community. As the practicum field coordinator, I have been able to see their efforts first hand. This year, I asked more of the students in completing their senior comprehensive portfolio. With the help of Stacie Jeffers, Director of Career Crossing Office, students were able to document their academic and field work along with work and life experiences in an e-portfolio. The e-portfolio included the academic components of the 10 social work competences, projects or experiences from the field, why they chose social work as their major, personal mission statement, and many of their contributions and accomplishments while at Saint Mary's College. In the end the students did a wonderful job on both the written and oral portion of the comprehensive. I hope the students share these experiences with their field instructors, other students, professors, staff, and their families. I believe they have developed a strong professional Social Work foundation to build upon.

This spring break I had the pleasure of going to Honduras to complete a service project with eight Saint Mary's students. It was an eye opening experience for everyone in the group to see the poverty and poor living conditions of the Hondurans. We spent most of our time at a residential program for boys called El Hogar Dia-

mante. The boys are at-risk youth who spend most of their time on the streets panhandling. El Hogar Diamante helps parents who do not have viable resources to provide for their children. I was so proud of the Saint Mary's students who went on the trip. These eight service students got up at 6:30am to start the day. They worked very hard painting El Hogar Diamante's cafeteria, the kitchen, and pillars outside of the dorm. The pay off was playing and spending time with the boys of the Hogar. The boys had such a great time developing a little brother-big sister bond with the Saint Mary's students. I believe the students will hold this memorable experience in Honduras for a lifetime. I would like to give a special thanks to Professor Karen Van Meter of the Education Department for co-facilitating the trip. She was a great help and a nice addition to the group. Next spring break I am planning a trip to El Salvador with Professor Jan Pilarski from the Justice Education Department. Students, please contact me if you have an interest in going.



Alumnae News

Anne Therese Stroude '09

As many of you know I recently graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, with a Master's in Social Work. I have been blessed with a volunteer opportunity to become a part of the leadership team in a small community in Jinja, Uganda. While attending Saint Mary's College for my undergraduate degree, I had a class with Sr. Stella Maris who is from Uganda. Through our continued correspondence, she connected me with Fr. Fred Jenga who is from Jinja, Uganda and is associated with the Mission Center at Notre Dame, falling under the Holy Cross Apostolates. Fr. Jenga is also involved with creating a program call the Lazarus Community. The Lazarus Community is a Community Based Organization which was developed by Fr. Jenga's brother Henry and his col-

league James in response to an overwhelming need to serve poor families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The program has around 120 active members, mostly widowed women and orphans. Along with the HIV/AIDS treatment program, the Lazarus Community is establishing a savings and revolving fundraising program, a child sponsorship program, and a small crafts program in an effort to increase household incomes. Another goal is to begin a "Grandmother's Group" which constitutes working with elderly women whose children have died of HIV/AIDS leaving them the responsibility of raising their grandchildren. Please accompany me on my journey by following my blog site: <http://jinjajourney.blogspot.com/>.

Adriana López '08

Last August I finished my MSW at University of Michigan. In November of last year, I decided to join a close friend and SMC alum living in Washington D.C. I started to apply for jobs and was hired as the Project Assistant to the Immigrant Rights Program (IRP) at the Equal Rights Center (ERC). The ERC is a non-profit civil rights organization that promotes equal opportunity in housing, employment, disability rights, access to public accommodations, access to government services and immigrant rights.

I am super excited to be able to join the ERC. Working with the Immigrant community has been one of my life-long passions, and I believe this job opportunity at the ERC will allow me to continue to develop professionally in this area.

Future Plans for the Class of 2011

Monica Aguirre, working with school aged children's services coach at the Center for the Homeless

Joan Chen, University of Texas with Advanced Standing

Brittany Corr, Western Michigan University with Advanced Standing; will defer until 2012 to do volunteer work for the year

Alison Costanzo, University of South Carolina with Advanced Standing

Megan Flynn, University of Chicago

Anna Frantz, Dominican University with Advanced Standing

Angela Hollar, University of Pennsylvania with Advanced Standing

Laurel Javors, University of Denver with Advanced Standing

Maria Kenney, will do post-grad service in Uganda through the Holy Cross Overseas Lay Ministry. Washington University in St. Louis with Advanced Standing in 2013.

Katherine Kohler, World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain in the Fall and hope to volunteer abroad in Calcutta. Columbia University with Advanced Standing Fall 2012.

Colleen Lake, University of Pennsylvania with Advanced Standing

Maria Ready, University of Michigan with Advanced Standing



Hannah Snyder, Boston University with Advanced Standing

Monica Way, Bryn Mawr College with Advanced Standing

Burke's Blurb



Dr. Burke with Jen Leakakos and Kirsten Thornton

I have been meeting with students for advising. I really enjoy hearing about the dreams and aspirations of our students. To walk with our students as they plan for the future is surely one of the most enjoyable aspects of my work. I receive much hope for the future as I envision them going forward. Because social work is so heavily impacted by the context in which we live, I try to discuss current issues in my classes.

The economic downturn of 2008 has impacted all of us. Yesterday one of my guest speakers encouraged our students to bring their knowledge of technology and social media to social service organizations. Using social media to communicate with community members for fund raising is new to many social service organizations. Our stu-

dents were encouraged by his words as they discovered a new use for Facebook. I think our graduates will provide leadership in their communities as we move forward to address challenges resulting from severe cuts in budgets for social service programs. It is a time when we need hope because fear will paralyze us.

Joan Chen and Anna Frantz completed their Gerontology Minor. Maire Ready and Hannah Snyder completed two semesters of a research study with Dr. Burke and we have submitted an article for publication.



Anna Frantz, Joan Chen Dr. JoAnn Burke, Hannah Snyder and Maire Ready all pursuing graduate studies in Gerontological work.

Senior Reflection by Maire Ready

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

The Facebook group name is:
SMC Social Work Department

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

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



My passion for working with the older population has always been clear but I was unsure in what capacity. However, my senior year my passion has become more focused after a series of opportunities encountered because of the social work department. To begin, my field placement at REAL Services was working in the case management sector. It was here that I began seeing and talking with older adults who lived in their own homes. Second semester, I switched to the Caregiver Connection Center which aims to aid informal caregivers of older adults by providing respite services and home modifications. What was unique about this placement was that I was simultaneously working on an independent research study with Dr. JoAnn Burke, Hannah Snyder, and Dr. Dennis Kaldenberg, Senior Vice-President and Chief Scientist at Press Ganey, Inc. doing this program's evaluation according to the grant stipulations. While I loved working with these older adults, it was becoming very evident to me that many of these people are

happy to be in their homes but very isolated and lonely. I began questioning whether or not remaining in their own home was the best thing for older adults. Last year, in my gerontology class I learned about The GREEN HOUSE Project where their mission is to create a more humane elderly housing/living model radically different from traditional skilled nursing homes or assisted living facilities where the focus is on the community as opposed to medical aspects of their care. Piecing these things together, my interest sparked drastically in creating these types of communities. As I am internalizing all of this, Dr. Burke received an email from an alumna with a job opportunity working with the GREEN HOUSE Project and quickly forwarded me this opportunity. While I was not qualified at this time for the MSW position, I inquired about possible summer internships and months later I received a phone call offering me an internship! So this summer I will be working in Washington D.C. with this project. In the fall, I will be attending the University of Michigan where I received the Geriatric Scholarship. Saint Mary's has provided me tremendous opportunities that have prepared me to make a difference with our baby booming population!

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