FROM THE DEAN

When our innovative, new MSW curriculum was implemented in 2014, one of its highlights was the Health and Wellness Concentration that not only focuses on medical social work, but also prepares students to be practitioners in diverse health, health promotion and prevention, integrated health and wellness settings. In addition to classical Western medical social work settings like hospitals, students are introduced to integrative health settings (where mental health, drug and alcohol intervention, and medical care are connected) and to organizations primarily focused on promoting mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, community, social and/or environmental wellness. Coursework also addresses health equities in the United States and globally, preparing students for culturally competent practice, as well as leadership and advocacy in health and wellness administrative and policy practice.

In this issue of GSSW Magazine, you’ll hear from faculty members who developed and teach courses in this new concentration, as well as students, practitioners and researchers in this varied field. We also invite you to read GSSW’s new Solidarity Statement for Racial Justice, developed by our community in response to historical and recent instances of racial violence. Additionally, we are pleased to introduce our latest Alumni Award and Deans Award recipients. Please join me in congratulating and honoring them for their service to our profession and our school.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Denver. Please be sure to update your current email address at www.du.edu/alumni so that GSSW’s event announcements and e-newsletters continue to reach you.

Sincerely,

James Herbert Williams, PhD, MSW
Dean and Milton Morris Endowed Chair

This and all past issues of our magazine online. Visit www.du.edu/socialwork, and click on “GSSW Magazine.” You can also scan this barcode to read GSSW Magazine on your smartphone or tablet computer.

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GSSW Creates Solidarity Statement for Racial Justice

In response to the all-too-frequent images of violence that have permeated social and news media in recent months, the Graduate School of Social Work created “The GSSW Solidarity Statement for Racial Justice,” at the request of the school’s faculty and staff. The statement was authored by a committee of faculty members who actively sought input from all departments of the GSSW community. The final statement has received the community’s wholehearted approval and support.

“Both recent and historical events are clear indicators that racism and racial injustice continue to be very prevalent in our country,” says Dean and Milton Morris Endowed Chair James Herbert Williams. “As a graduate school of social work, we have a professional obligation to initiate and support training opportunities and community engagement efforts to ameliorate racial injustice in our society.”

Faculty committee members included Assistant Professors Yulanda Anyon, Ramona Beltran and Leslie Haschke; Associate Professors Daniel Brisson and Nicole Nicotera; and Associate Professor Michele Hanna, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

Dean Williams Elected SSWR President-Elect

At the Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR), held January 14-18 in New Orleans, Louisiana, Dean and Milton Morris Endowed Chair James Herbert Williams was elected president-elect of the board of directors. He will serve a one-year term in that position, followed by a two-year term as SSWR president.

Founded in 1993, SSWR is a nonprofit, professional membership organization that supports social workers, social welfare professionals, social work students, social work faculty and researchers in related fields.

Williams previously served as president of the National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work, a volunteer membership organization dedicated to promoting excellence in social work education.

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SOLIDARITY STATEMENT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

The GSSW community stands in solidarity with individuals, families and communities who are fighting against historically situated and ongoing racism and other intersecting forms of oppression. As a school that is dedicated to training future social workers that embody the values and ethics of social justice, we commit to understanding our place in the larger context of institutional racism and to bending the arc of history toward a more just world. Recent and historical events shaping the environment of rage, fear and distrust of institutions across our nation reflect a deep wound anchored in a history that continues to repeat itself. Racial profiling, unnecessary use of lethal force, denial of basic human rights and civil liberties such as access to housing, employment, health care and due process, as well as exploitation of poverty via modern day “debtors prisons,” confront people of color on a daily basis. We aim to explicitly confront racism and related systemic oppression. In this spirit, we pledge to:

1. Engage each other and our communities in undoing institutional and systemic racism. We will have direct conversations that name these historical and ongoing experiences and actively seek to identify responsive social work practices.

2. Collaborate with the communities most affected by these injustices and participate, as directed by community, in efforts to dismantle systemic oppression. We will:
   - build mutually beneficial non-exploitative relationships in our research and practice, and
   - participate in non-violent actions that spur critical dialogue and embody anti-racist social work practice.

As an institution committed to the public good, we dedicate ourselves to developing a culture of critical consciousness that promotes and supports socially just, anti-racism programs and policies through our educational and scholarship efforts. We will continually address the intersectional nature of power, privilege and oppression in our interactions with clients, students, communities and each other. This statement aligns with the GSSW commitment and pledge for diversity.

Find a link to the GSSW Solidarity Statement on our homepage at www.du.edu/socialwork. Read the GSSW Diversity Pledge at www.du.edu/socialwork/diversitypledge.html.
Center for Effective Interventions Opens at GSSW

The Center of Effective Interventions (CEI), formerly located at Metropolitan State University of Denver, moved its operations to GSSW in January. David Bernstein, MSW ‘75, serves as program director.

CEI promotes evidence-based therapeutic services for families, children and youth by assisting with program development, supporting MultiSystemic Therapy (MST) trainings in four states, providing MST orientation training in Colorado and New Mexico, and hosting Functional Family Therapy training sessions in Denver. CEI also advocates for evidence-based practice with state and local stakeholders throughout the west and develops statewide MST databases in Colorado and New Mexico to supply information on demographics, accomplishments and sustainability of changes for MST clientele.

Initiative Expands Academic Women’s Leadership

GSSW is co-sponsoring the Southeast Europe Academic Women’s Leadership Initiative, which is aimed at increasing the sustainability of educational reform in the region, as well as the expansion of academic women’s scholarship and teaching expertise. Participating countries include Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Bulgaria and Romania.

The Initiative included, as a first step, attendance by eight professors at the 2014 Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), held in October in Tampa, Florida. The women participated in a Partnership Panel presentation, attended Global Commission and Women’s Council meetings, participated in the pre-conference Leadership Institute Workshop and presented their work under the category of peer-reviewed sessions. These activities were aimed at developing ongoing mentoring relationships for each scholar as she moves through the academic ranks and into leadership positions in her university.

Among the eight women attending the CSWE meeting were two professors from the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. GSSW has a significant presence in Bosnia under the leadership of Clinical Professor Ann Petrila, Assistant Dean for Field Education and Director of Global Practice Bosnia (formerly International Service Learning Bosnia and Herzegovina), the University of Denver’s oldest international service learning program. Global Practice Bosnia enables students to learn about the Balkans region through combined academic study and service-based internships in Sarajevo. Petrila also developed and teaches the MSW course “The Social Work Response in Post-War Bosnia.”

GSSW a Partner in New Professional Development Center

Dean and Milton Morris Endowed Chair James Herbert Williams has joined with the deans of DU’s Graduate School of Professional Psychology, College of Education and University College to create the Center for Professional Development. The goals of the new center are to facilitate collaboration across the University, serve the public good, create a revenue stream and bring community members who aren’t alumni into the University to experience what it has to offer.

“GSSW’s participation in the center expands our ability to foster interdisciplinary dialogue and professional growth,” says Trish Becker-Hofmeister, Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement and Special Events.

Lecture Series Features Notable Scholars

Register for this and other upcoming events at www.du.edu/socialwork. Don’t miss out! Click on the link to subscribe to GSSW’s Weekly Events Email for regular updates.

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The 2013 GSSW Lecture Series began on March 10 with a lecture entitled “Achieving Health Equity: Tools for a National Conversation on Racism” by Camara Phyllis Jones, MD, MPH, PhD. A Senior Fellow at the Morehouse School of Medicine’s Satcher Health Leadership Institute, Jones is a family physician and epidemiologist whose work focuses on the impacts of racism on the health and wellbeing of the nation. She seeks to broaden the national health debate to include not only universal access to high-quality health care, but also attention to the social determinants of health (including poverty) and the social determinants of equity (including racism). She has developed new methods for comparing full distributions of data, rather than simply comparing means or proportions, in order to investigate population-level risk factors and propose population-level interventions.

Jones hopes that her work will initiate a national conversation on racism that will eventually lead to a National Campaign Against Racism.

The series continued on April 9 with a lecture entitled “The Supreme Court and Your Health: Insurance, Abortion, Same Sex-Marriage, and (for Now) Legal Marijauana,” by John Petrila, JD, LLM, Chair and Professor, Department of Health Policy & Management, University of South Florida College of Public Health. Petrila noted in his talk that the Affordable Care Act is the most sweeping reform of the United States health care system since enactment of Medicare in 1965. Yet the ultimate shape and future of the law, he believes, will be determined as much by the U.S. Supreme Court as by the statute. While the Court has upheld the ACA to a large degree, it has made Medicaid expansion a state’s issue and has restricted access to contraceptives under the ACA.

In addition, the Court will soon hear cases involving the future of same-sex marriage, abortion rights, and the legality of tax subsidies that have enabled millions of individuals to purchase health insurance. With these cases, Petrila notes, the United States Supreme Court – usually by 5-4 votes – has become enormously important in shaping individual health care and, by extension, population health. His lecture reviewed what the Court has already done, and what it may do, to the legal and policy principles that directly affect our health.

Online registration opens this summer for two additional lectures, to be presented on September 24 and October 25, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., in the Boettcher Foundation Community Room of Craig Hall. The September lecture, entitled “Careers of Culture: Why Social Work Should Continue to Take Different Serious,” will be given by John Jackson, Jr., Dean and Richard Perry University Professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice. The October lecture, entitled “The Future of Global Human Development” will be presented by Barry Hughes, Director of the Frederick S. Pardee Center for International Futures and John Evans Professor at DU’s Josef Korbel School of International Studies.

For a description of GSSW’s professional development offerings, visit us online at www.du.edu/socialwork and click on “Licensees and Continuing Professional Development.”

Scholar Promotes Community-Engaged Scholarship

On February 9, GSSW partnered with DU’s Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning to sponsor a lecture by Professor Barbara Holland, PhD, senior scholar with the Center for Service Learning at Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis. Entitled “Coping with Change in Higher Education: The Growing Strategic Role of Community-Engaged Scholarship,” the lecture analyzed the strategic importance of community engagement to teaching, learning and research quality, as well as the need to monitor and measure engagement’s impacts and outcomes.

Holland has served as an advisor to more than 100 academic institutions across five nations. Chancellor Rebecca Chopp gave the opening remarks that preceded Holland’s lecture.
The Health & Wellness Concentration: Building Skills and Promoting Equity

by Clinical Associate Professor Michael Talamantes, LCSW-CO

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane,” the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr once told the Medical Committee for Human Rights in Chicago. King was addressing this issue in 1966, and GSSW is addressing it today in new and innovative ways.

The equal acquisition of health and the ability to maintain one’s health are among the core values of social work. During the redesign of our MSW curriculum in 2013, GSSW added the Health & Wellness concentration to provide students with the theory, policy, practice and research environments. Field Instructors and alumni have confirmed that I am on the right path. The approachability of the instructors within the concentration, in addition to the dedication of my internship supervisors, have played immeasurable roles in my preparation for a lifelong career in social work.”

“Health & Wellness concentration has given my passions for health and social work the chance to grow and develop further than I ever could have imagined,” says concentration student Julia Rose. "Being able to have focused discussions with my peers and professionals about health and wellness, while incorporating social work values, has been a priceless experience."

With the continued growth and expansion of an array of health services, GSSW graduates will be well-positioned to impact the health service delivery system at the micro, mezzo and macro levels for years to come.

“Trends and Perspectives in Health and Wellness” is the overview course, which focuses on health theories, health disparities, community health promotion, health social work roles and complementary health and wellness modalities. A major emphasis of this course is the identification, research and elimination of health disparities. Scholarship, research and advocacy in this area are central to the core mission of values of social work, and it is imperative that social work be involved in translational research to combat and eliminate disparities that impact the most vulnerable and oppressed members of society.

"Health Care Policy” is a required course for students in the Health & Wellness concentration but is also proving to be a valuable course for all GSSW students, because the content is applicable to any field of social work practice.

According to the National Institute for Health Care Management, "the two most important numbers in American health care are five and 50,” meaning that five percent of people account for about 50 percent of the health systems spending. In this policy course, students thoroughly analyze the complexities of the U.S. health care system. Our graduates need a solid foundation in, and understanding of, health policies in order to advocate for populations most in need of improved health care access and coverage.

"Social Work Practice in Health Care,” the final required course, is aimed at raising the proficiency of students entering health care arenas. The course aims to boost the students’ knowledge of medical terminology, interventions for acute and chronic illness, interdisciplinary team processes in health fields, medical ethics and health care leadership. Presentations by numerous guest speakers bring the real world into the classroom.

Additional recommended courses for this concentration include “Advanced Social Work Practice in Integrated Health Care,” “Grief and Loss Across the Life Span,” “Wellness Promotion and Interventions,” “Mind Body Connections in Social Work Practice,” and “Care Management Skills and Resources to Promote Community Living.” An elective course on disabilities is also being added to the curriculum, and students continue to have options in other areas such as mental health, aging and families. These offerings provide our GSSW students with a solid foundation and knowledge base to impact the field and make a difference for the clients they serve in health and wellness settings.

“I came to GSSW specifically to pursue the Health & Wellness concentration,” says MSW student Becca Fox. "The coursework, along with my field placements at the Rocky Mountain Stroke Center and on the Denver Health Inpatient Acute Rehabilitation Service, have not only challenged and motivated me, but also..."
Graduates Share Their Perspectives

"GSSW is a great beginning step to a clinical career as a social worker," says Morgan Davis, MSW ’11, LSW, an oncology inpatient social worker at University of Colorado Hospital. “After my program, I was able to identify clinical interventions that I was incorporating in my work and potential evidence-based outcomes. Although there was no health and wellness concentration to graduate from, I felt prepared as a clinician to work in the medical field.”

Nevertheless, adds Davis, the absence of courses specific to health care made her additional training “significantly difficult and time-consuming.” She notes that medical social workers are “… challenged daily with new medical terms, boundary setting, professionalism, advocacy of self and patient, and the keen sense of self and awareness of your own personal bias…” factors that combine to make medical work a unique specialty.

Karen Davidson, MSW ’06, LCSW, faced similar challenges in finding MSW courses that would prepare her specifically for a medical social work career. “My internship experience was pivotal to my current job responsibilities,” says Davidson, a pediatric dialysis and kidney transplant social worker at Children’s Hospital Colorado. “If [in addition] there can be specific training for those interested in medical social work, it would be helpful in providing the skills and knowledge that are needed in medical settings and therefore help patients cope and get the resources and support they need.”

“I think it is great that there will now be a specific concentration for health and wellness at DU,” says Michelle Bunch, MSW ’11, LCSW, a social worker at the University of Colorado Cancer Center. “Working in a hospital or other healthcare environment is unique, and specific training around access to healthcare, insurance, end-of-life issues and advanced directives is imperative… I believe that the need for social workers in healthcare institutions will only grow as our population ages and there are additional changes to our healthcare system.”

In fact, says Davis, “this concentration will not only prepare students for a higher level of medical understanding… but it will elevate clinical social work as a whole.”

Dancy Sypol, MSW ’08, LCSW, and Erin Rosenberg, MSW ’05, LCSW, both social workers at University of Colorado Hospital, express similar enthusiasm for the new concentration. It will “set our training apart from [that of health care partners who] attempt to dabble in psychosocial care and realize they are not trained appropriately,” says Sypol, who completed the PROGRESS gerontology program while earning her MSW.

One of the reasons GSSW developed its new Health & Wellness MSW concentration is the steady increase we’ve seen in students who are interested in “mind-body” social work. In fact, the added emphasis we place on wellness and holistic health concepts is one factor that sets our concentration apart from more traditional MSW practice specialties that are focused solely on medical social work.

For years, GSSW students have enjoyed our “Mind Body Social Work” elective course. Based on their enthusiastic responses, we added wellness promotion to the new concentration’s overview course, “Trends and Perspectives in Health and Wellness,” and we developed a new methods course for this program, “Promotion and Intervention across the Lifespan,” that I’m teaching for the first time during winter quarter this year.

As the faculty director for the University’s undergraduate Wellness Living and Learning Community since 2008, I have had the opportunity to develop three different courses with a wellness framework – courses that are inherently multidisciplinary. For example, mental wellness can include psychology, psychiatry, sociology, education and development theory. Spiritual wellness can include religious studies, mythology, cultural studies and geography. Physical wellness can include medicine, environmental studies, public health and so forth. As a social worker designing these courses, I sought to ensure that students view all of these concepts through the lenses of empowerment, social justice and a strong dose of community change theory.

One of my undergraduate courses, “Community Wellness,” examines the influence of human development and wellness benchmarks through the lifespan. Because all DU Living and Learning Communities include service-learning, I incorporated a project whereby students design sustainable wellness projects across the lifespan for agencies or DU departments. The course has all the hallmarks of a social work class, at least in its foundations.

The new Wellness Promotion course I teach at GSSW is based on that undergraduate course. Like all of our MSW courses, this course offers information and conceptual frameworks that apply to the micro (direct), mezzo (community) and macro (policy/systems) aspects of practice. However, the mezzo skills focus of this course is on creating programs and changing systems to promote wellness. We examine health disparities, health and wellness benchmarks, various developmental models, policies and best practices in wellness.

This course incorporates more holistic ways of seeing, such as circular developmental models. We are using Bill Pietreno’s book Nature and the Human Soul Cultivating Wellness and Community in a Fragmented World and Anode Jolliffe 2004 classic, Eastern Body, Western Mind: Psychology and the Chakra System as a Path to the Self. Both authors discuss the soul and energy, and the connection of all of life. Pietreno’s developmental framework proposes eight stages of life; not defined by years, but rather marked by achieving the soul’s work. He describes each stage as having two primary tasks, those that are cultural and those that are natural. He defines the current culture as “ego-centric” and opt for an “eco-centric” or “soul-centric” culture that considers humans as part of nature. Jolliffe book examines how an individual experiences family and culture in developing an energetic connection with the world.

I developed one facet of the new Wellness Promotion course in partnership with the Native American Health and Healing, which seeks to support individuals of all ages who struggle with substance use and addiction and offers programs that provide a buffer against peer pressure and negative external influences among children, youth and young adults. Divided into eight work groups, each focused on one aspect of the lifespan, the MSW students are helping the center develop wellness programs to serve DU and the surrounding community. They’ll present their ideas for promoting wellness to the center’s Reverend Anne Davidson Mundt during the last two weeks of class.

While many of our wellness concepts were considered “out there” only a decade or so ago within traditional social work frameworks, the trend toward more holistic social work is being cultivated in practice, study and research. In a February 10, 2015, release by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, there is an article by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) entitled “Nationwide Survey Reveals Widespread Use of Mind-Body Practices.”

"More Americans of all ages are rolling out their yoga mats in an effort to improve their health,” the NIH article states, in part. “A large, nationally representative survey shows that the number of Americans using mind and body approaches to improve health and well-being remains high. Of note is a significant increase in the use of yoga since 2002.”

Still, can we prove these methods work by scholarly research standards? According to Josephine P. Briggs, MD, Director of the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, “the survey data suggest that consumers are paying attention to medical evidence and using it to inform their decisions... This reaffirms how important it is for NIH to rigorously study complementary therapies and approaches that make that information easily available to consumers.”

It is exciting that GSSW’s new Health & Wellness concentration is flourishing at a time when this combination of Eastern and Western ideas is being fused through cutting-edge research and practice.

Rosa, a member of GSSW’s field education team, helped to found the nonprofit “Yoga for the People” in 2006 to make yoga accessible to everyone, regardless of their financial situation. Volunteer yoga instructors teach yoga at homeless shelters, mental institutions, hospitals, schools, prisons and other locations where people would ordinarily not have access to its healing power. Learn more at www.yogaforpeople.org.
Our program also supports the Colorado health care system through our participation in regional working groups, such as the Western Mountain Regional Health Alliance. Additionally, two of our students are completing internships at health-based agencies this year. "Initiatives are underway today to address the fragmentation of our health care system," says Allison Jorgensen, an intern at the Garfield County Public Health Office. "County public health departments, including the one where I am an intern, are uniquely positioned to address the needs of public health through an integrated health perspective."

As a part of her internship, Jorgensen is co-facilitating the Western Colorado Program's participation in the 2015 Health Equity Learning Series, presented by the Colorado Trust. The series is an educational program platform that brings together diverse constituents from across the region to discuss problems and possibilities surrounding health and health care delivery. Lectures are presented before a live audience in Denver and live-streamed to, and videotaped for, 27 remote viewing parties across the state. The Western Colorado Program received a $5,000 grant from the Colorado Trust to host viewing parties for each lecture in the series. We advertise and recruit event participants, and we facilitate roundtable discussions after each speaker's presentation. Our goal is to increase community awareness of the barriers to health equity and the ways we can increase access to healthcare in an affordable way for our local residents.

The first lecture, presented live on February 5, featured Doran Schranta, Executive Director of ISAIAH in Minnesota. She discussed the ways her faith-based organization engages community to develop solutions to health equity issues and how other organizations and individuals can become part of such a movement. We hosted a watch party for a video of the presentation on February 27, and we will also host watch parties for lectures on July 23 and September 27. You can find details online at www.coloradotrust.org, and you can watch past lectures on the Colorado Trust YouTube Channel.

Our program is to meet the special needs of rural and mountain communities, the Western Colorado concentration curriculum includes an elective course in integrated health care. The course is taught by Adjunct Professor Jenny Nate, MSW '03, LCSW, a senior community leader in system innovation and community-wide collaboration around improving care for our most vulnerable individuals. Nate explains, "Through this experience, I have concluded that social workers in this region need to be willing and able to step up in our communities, not only as clinicians and program administrators, but also as community leaders in system innovation and cultural transformation. It is truly an honor to support our MSW students in their preparation for these extremely important roles."

Sara Montag, MSW, LCSW, Assistant Program Director for the Western Colorado program, knows firsthand the value that social workers bring to the health care field. She's a part-time integrated care clinician at the Mountain Family Health Centers clinic in Basalt, Colorado. With additional clinics located in three other mountain communities, Mountain Family provides high-quality, integrated primary, behavioral and dental health care, with special consideration for the medically underserved, regardless of ability to pay:

"I work together with the primary care providers to address all the health needs of our patients," says Montag. "I help people dealing with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, grief, stress and many other issues. I like that I am able to reach people who might not seek treatment at a mental health center. I do draw on my social work education, not only for clinical skills, but also when building an understanding of the various systems and resources surrounding a patient. It's exciting that organizations, right here in Western Colorado, are embracing the idea of integrated health care, and I see social workers playing a role on all levels, from direct service to policy, funding, management and organizational change."

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As a part of her internship, Jorgensen is co-facilitating the Western Colorado Program's participation in the 2015 Health Equity Learning Series, presented by the Colorado Trust. The series is an educational program platform that brings together diverse constituents from across the region to discuss problems and possibilities surrounding health and health care delivery. Lectures are presented before a live audience in Denver and live-streamed to, and videotaped for, 27 remote viewing parties across the state. The Western Colorado Program received a $5,000 grant from the Colorado Trust to host viewing parties for each lecture in the series. We advertise and recruit event participants, and we facilitate roundtable discussions after each speaker's presentation. Our goal is to increase community awareness of the barriers to health equity and the ways we can increase access to healthcare in an affordable way for our local residents.
The Transformative & Healing Nature of Digital Storytelling

by Stephanie Begun, MSW ’12, PhD Candidate

For many Indigenous peoples, narrative is a fundamental and traditional cultural practice. Over the past year, I have had the incredible opportunity to work with Assistant Professor Ramona Beltrán in analyzing results from a community-based digital storytelling workshop that she facilitated with Maori community members in New Zealand. In the workshop, Professor Beltrán helped participants to create digital stories that focused on cultural strengths while discussing stories of resiliency amid historical trauma within the Maori community. Post-workshop in-depth interviews were then conducted to explore participants’ experiences in the workshop.

Analyses of interviews revealed that workshop involvement was a transformative experience, as participants articulated the power of finding belonging in explaining experiences of historical trauma that they had often felt and observed in their daily lives, but previously lacked concrete ways of describing. Additionally, acquiring the language and definition of historical trauma helped participants understand how historically situated trauma—particularly those associated with land loss, displacement and forced acculturation—continue to affect them today, not only as individuals, but also in collective familial and community-based contexts.

Participants also noted that the supportive, relationship-building process by which stories were created allowed for narratives to unfold and flourish within the “story circle” setting. In addition, participants said they could personally relate to stories created by others in ways that truly validated and spoke to their own lived experiences.

Furthermore, participants described digital storytelling as a promising way for promoting positive, healthy transformations and re-framing existing social problems in the broader Maori community. They named numerous ways by which they thought the creation and dissemination of digital stories and personal narratives could serve as healing agents of change in the Maori community, including substance use, suicide, poverty, mental health, and crime prevention and intervention.

We are encouraged by the positive transformations that appeared to transpire among the Maori individuals who participated in the workshop. Our hope is that the findings from this project will play a role in expanding dialogues of historical trauma, and that healing and praxis through participation in narrative and digital storytelling will amplify Indigenous voices while aiding in the healing of deep, collective intergenerational wounds.

For me, this project also provided many important reminders about conducting respectful research. I joined the project at the time of analyses and therefore did not personally become acquainted with the workshop participants. Nor am I a member of the Maori or other Indigenous communities. Because of that, it seemed especially important to me to approach participant stories with humility by asking for guidance and reflecting on my relationship to their narratives as I engaged in the analysis and writing process. As a White ally, I think there is a crucial onus upon social workers to approach research and practice with both mindfulness and transparency, especially regarding social position, power and privilege. In my research with homeless youth, my hope is to employ similarly authentic and culturally responsive digital storytelling approaches in the future.

Begun is completing a doctoral dissertation entitled “Homeless Youth Pregnancy and HIV Risk Behavior: The Role of Social Networks, Pregnancy Attitudes and Intentions, and Genres.”

Event Promotes Health & Wellness

Members of the GSSW community took a much-needed break from the pressures of academia when they gathered in the Boettcher Foundation for Health and Wellness Week events on February 17 and 19. Cosponsored by the Phi Alpha honor society and ECO Concerns, this two-day, home gathering gave participants the opportunity to practice yoga and meditation, get a massage, make healing crafts like scented “headache erasers” or even take a nap! Healthy snacks were provided, including fruit donated by Fruit Revival, a Denver-based company that delivers premium whole fresh fruit throughout the metro area.

Nature-Based Experiential Learning: An Eco-Spirituality Retreat

by Adjunct Professor Erica Elvove, MSW ’08, program coordinator, Institute for Human-Animal Connection

Daybreak found me slowly and strategically dressing in layers upon layer of winter clothing, covering any exposed skin and preparing myself for the frigid temperatures of the Boundary Waters region outside the door of the cozy lodge. Before the comfort of breakfast for the humans, we had work to do in the kitchen—feeding, watering, clipping and loading frozen waste into sleds for removal and, of course, loving on the 65 Canadian Inuit and Siberian Husky dogs that made this eco-adventure so rich an experience.

Imagine immersing yourself into subzero conditions of northern Minnesota after a foot of snow has fallen, teaming up with one other person and five gorgeous working dogs for a sledding adventure that would challenge you physically, mentally and spiritually. This is where I gratefully found myself in early January, and the haunting howls and bright eyes of the animals, human camaraderie and spirituality found in the frozen wilderness has inspired me ever since.

I am consistently impressed with the creative human-animal-environmental programming developed by our AHH professional development students. Much like Sister Trish, our students use this educational experience to infuse their multidisciplinary backgrounds with the power of nature and animals. We believe this connection to the living world fosters healthier communities for all living beings.

To learn more about the animals, people and programs of the Institute for Human-Animal Connection, visit us online at www.du.edu/humananimalconnection.

FIELD FAIR 2015: Finding the Perfect Match

Unlike many MSW programs, GSSW offers its students the opportunity to interview agencies and choose their internships, rather than simply being assigned to them. Nowhere is that active student participation more evident than at GSSW’s annual Field Fair, which offers foundation students the opportunity to meet with a variety of agency representatives and begin the selection process for their concentration internships. The 2015 Field Fair, held on February 11, included 153 field agencies and organizations that filled two floors of the Cable Center.

LEFT: Dean Williams welcomes representatives from Ridge View Youth Services Center who attended Field Fair in hopes of finding interns.

RIGHT: The internship selection process can be daunting for some students, with more than 150 agencies from which to choose. Staff and faculty members, like Clinical Assistant Professor Jim McQueen, were on hand to help students get the most out of their Field Fair experience.

Institute For Human-Animal Connection

This unique opportunity to participate in a four-day, eco-spirituality retreat hosted at Wintergreen Dog Sled Lodge in Ely, Minnesota, was designed and facilitated by the illustrious Sister Trish Dick of the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Sister Trish developed this animal-assisted activity as her capstone project for the Animals and Human Health (AHH) certificate program, a professional development program offered by GSSW’s Institute for Human-Animal Connection. Through nature-based experiential learning, the retreat challenges and provides spiritual guidance for a group of undergraduate students in their last semester before graduating from the College of St. Benedict and St. John’s University.

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Professor Lynn Parker Retires

Professor Lynn Parker, MSW ’70, PhD ’96, LCSW-CO, retired from the GSSW faculty at the end of December after a teaching career that spanned 26 years. Serving first as an adjunct professor and lecturer, Parker was appointed as Assistant Professor in 1997, then promoted to Associate Professor in 2003 and to full Professor in 2012.

Parker was a faculty member and AAMFT-Approved Supervisor with the Denver Family Institute (DFI), a postgraduate family therapy training center. She also served as program coordinator of GSSW’s Certificate in Couples and Family Therapy, offered to MSW students in partnership with DFI. She taught a wide range of GSSW clinical social work courses, as well a course on global relations and poverty in Mexico, and she served as coordinator of the Families MSW Practice Track.

Parker, who studied with nearly all the founders of the family therapy field, brought more than 30 years of clinical practice experience to her classroom teaching. She conducts research and writes about addressing power, privilege and oppression in therapeutic work. Her publications include numerous journal articles and book chapters, and she has co-authored three books. Her honors include the 2010 Faculty Award from GSSW’s Xi Delta Chapter of the Phi Alpha national social work honor society, the 2007 LGBTIQ Ally Award from DU’s Center for Multicultural Excellence and the 2005 Supervisor of the Year Award from the Colorado Association of Marriage and Family Therapy.

“Lynn provided tremendous leadership to the Families Track at GSSW, and it has been a pleasure having her as a colleague,” says Dean James Herbert Williams. “Her knowledge, practice skills and sense of humor will be missed.”

Research Associate Professor Nancy Lucero, MSW ’70, PhD ’99, LCSW, joined the GSSW faculty and Butler Institute for Families on December 15 as a Research Associate Professor. She serves as director of evaluation for the Capacity Building Center for Tribes, a Children’s Bureau project administered by the Butler Institute. Lucero has experience designing and implementing practice models in tribal and urban Indian Child Welfare services, and she is currently principal investigator for a Children’s Bureau project evaluating the Denver Indian Family Resource Center’s trauma-informed and culturally responsive Urban Indian Child Welfare practice model. Lucero’s most recent scholarship is focused on articulating how Native child welfare workers incorporate cultural practices and cultural preservation efforts into child welfare services. Lucero previously served as a GSSW adjunct faculty member.

The University of Denver’s Board of Trustees approved the following promotions, effective on January 16:

Marian Bussey promoted to Associate Professor Emerita

John Kayser promoted to Professor Emeritus

James Moran promoted to Professor Emeritus

Faculty Appointments & Promotions

Associate Professor Kim Bender and Assistant Professor Anamika Barman-Adhikari received a Public Good Grant in November for their project entitled Photovoice Youth Voice. A group-based analysis integrating grassroots social action with photography, Photovoice offers an innovative method for increasing engagement, yet it has rarely been used with homeless youth. The grant-funded project will use Photovoice to empower homeless youth to identify and describe issues of greatest importance and adversity in their lives, and to help the youth create social action around one critical issue. The project builds on Bender’s longstanding collaboration with Denver nonprofit Urban Peak, by better incorporating homeless youth as equal partners in the collaboration and drawing upon Barman-Adhikari’s expertise on social norms. The project will highlight new areas of scholarship and service needs while simultaneously piloting a methodology for better engaging homeless youth.

In January, Associate Professor Kim Bender was appointed to the University’s Transformative Directions Advisory Group, chaired by Chancellor Rebecca Chopp. As part of DU’s ongoing strategic planning initiative, the group is conducting a consultative process and furthering campus-wide conversations that will guide the University into the future. Gregg Kristal, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, serves as the group’s vice-chair.

Associate Professor Johnny Kim was awarded the 2014 Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) research recognition award at the Solution-Focused Brief Therapy Association annual conference, held November 5-8 in Santa Fe, NM. The award recognizes significant contributions to SFBT research over many years.

Associate Professor Julie Laser was among the presenters at a conference on human trafficking, held January 8-9 at the University’s Driehaus Center. Her presentation focused on clinical interventions for survivors of human trafficking. The conference was co-sponsored by DU Athletics and the Korbel School for International Studies.

Professor Heather Taussig, Associate Dean for Research, has been appointed to the National Mentoring Resource Center Research Board at the University of Arizona at Chicago. The board comprises prominent researchers who have expertise in youth mentoring practice program models, settings for implementation, and specific populations and outcomes of interest. The board’s primary role is to assess and report on the effectiveness of various mentoring programs, practices and resources that are intended to promote positive youth outcomes, particularly those relating to prevention of delinquent behavior, victimization and involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Clinical Assistant Professor Rachel Forbes, director of GSSW’s Western Colorado MSW Program, has been appointed to the newly formed Committee on Environmental Justice at the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). A joint effort of CSWE’s Commission on Diversity and Social and Economic Justice and the Commission on Global Social Work Education, the new committee is charged with making recommendations to the two commissions about the ways in which social work education should consider integrating issues of environmental justice into the social work curriculum. To accomplish that task, the committee will explore the history of “green” social work, current environmental social work efforts and social work practice related to environmental issues. These recommendations are to be completed by CSWE’s 2016 Annual Program Meeting.

Chancellor Rebecca Chopp has appointed Dean and Milton Morris Endowed Chair James Herbert Williams to the search committee for the Vice Chancellor for Campus Life and Inclusive Excellence. The position is a new one at the University of Denver.

Williams was quoted in the November/December 2014 issue of Social Work Today magazine in an article regarding the technological and business impact of the Affordable Care Act on social services. “Helping people navigate systems is what we do,” read Williams’ statement, in part: “Advocating and educating is an essential part of who we are, and it will not be different with the ACA.”

Faculty Highlights
**Recent Faculty & Doctoral Scholarship**

**Book chapters**


Book Reviews and Editorials


Peers-reviewed Journal Articles


Peer-reviewed Presentations


Peers-reviewed Presentations


The following papers, workshops and posters were presented in October 2014 at the National Social Work Education Association Program Meeting in Tampa, FL.

Rendler, K., Allschlager, Y., Yoder, J., & Parrish, D. Sharing social work student rights and responsibilities in the evidence-based practice process.

Haffejee, B., Hester, B., Hathaway, J., & Brender, K. Mindfulness intervention with homeless youth.


Kim, J.S., Franklin, C., & Brown, S. Understanding emotional change in SBP: Implications for social work education and practice.


Petralia, A. Ethical decision making and considerations in international internships and experiential service-learning programs.

Petralia, A. Off-site MSW supervision model. Field Education Innovators Showcase. CSWE Summit on Field Education.

The following papers and posters were presented in January 2015 at the Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research in New Orleans, LA:


Anyon, Y.T., Jensen, J.M., Furraz, J., Altchulad, I., & McQueen, J. Multilevel risk and protective factors for exclusory school discipline outcomes.


Barman-Adhikari, A., & Rice, E. Social networking technologies and HIV risk behaviors among homeless youth.

Rice, E., & Barman-Adhikari, A. A social networking technology and HIV risk behaviors among homeless youth.


Begun, S., Bender, K.A., Brown, S., Thompson, S., & Ferguson, K. Self-efficacy versus social connectedness among homeless youth. Prioritizing approaches to service provision in a time of limited resource availability.

Brown, S., Bender, K.A., Begun, S., Ferguson, K., & Thompson, S. Direct and indirect indicators of street victimization among homeless youth.

Ferguson, K., Bender, K., & Thompson, S. Predictors of formal, informal, and illegal income generation among homeless young adults in three cities.


Bender, K.A., & Jensen, J.M. Effective family-based approaches for preventing child and youth problem behavior.

Yang, J., Bender, K., Thompson, S., & Ferguson, K. Service needs of homeless youth formerly in foster care.

Lechuga-Peña, S., & Brisson, D. Do housing choice vouchers lead to service needs of young adults: Outcomes and implications (Dr. Sanna Thompson, moderator).

Jenson, J.M. Preventing bullying and victimization in children and youth: Findings from randomized school-based intervention trials.

Jenson, J.M., Willford, A., Obermann, A., & Durband, R. Effects of a randomized trial of the Youth Matters prevention program on bully victimization elementary to middle school.

Jenson, J.M. Preventing problem behaviors in children, adolescents, and young adults: Efficacy of school, family, and community interventions.

Jenson, J.M. Promoting effective policies and practices: The untapped potential of systematic reviews in social work research.

Jenson, J.M. & Bender, K.A. Empirical evidence and characteristics of school-based prevention approaches for preventing child and youth problem behavior.


McDonald, S.E., Nicotera, N., Hageman, T., Asciere, F.R., & Williams, J.H. A qualitative study of how children experience and intervene in threats to or presence of companion animals in the context of intimate partner violence.


In addition to the GSSW doctoral students listed as co-authors and co-presenters above, additional doctoral student scholarship by Stephanie Begun, Samantha Brown, Badash Hafiejje, Lisa Langenderfer-Magruder, Shauna Kattari, Suzanne Klawetter, Chris Knoepke, Shelby McDonald, Stephanie Lechuga Peña and Darren Whitfield included the following:


Videos Broaden the Reach of Global Practice Courses

Although GSSW’s new Sustainable Development and Global Practice MSW concentration is exposing many students to the rapidly growing field of international social work, relatively few students are able to experience global practice firsthand through international courses or internships. Now a series of high-impact videos, filmed on-location by Digital Instruction Specialist Ethan Crawford and edited by a team of students, are bringing global learning experiences to life for all students, as well as faculty, staff and visitors to GSSW’s website.

Crawford’s video project received additional financial support in January from an internationalization grant awarded by the University of Denver’s Office of Internationalization. In addition to Crawford, grantees included Clinical Associate Professor Karen Jensen, Assistant Dean for Community Academic Programs; Clinical Professor Ann Petrilla, Assistant Dean for Field Education and Director of Global Practice Bosnia; and Clinical Professor Philip Teitschi, Executive Director of GSSW’s Institute for Human-Animal Connection.

Crawford shared two of his videos with the GSSW community in lunch-hour presentations during February and March. Focusing on student internships in China and a global practice course in South Africa, the videos were also funded by an internationalization grant. The new grant will be used to create similar video footage on location in Bosnia and Kenya during 2015.

The global practice videos are posted online at http://videos.du.edu.

PhD Student News

Doctoral student Stephanie Begun co-presented a poster, Trauma and risk detection among homeless youth, with Associate Professor Kim Rendler on February 9 at a Center for Community Engagement 8 Service Learning Symposium entitled “Coping with Change in Higher Education: The Growing Strategic Role of Community Engaged Scholarship.”

Doctoral student Samantha Brown received a Dissertation Research Funding award from the GSSW Research Committee.

Doctoral student Helen Jiang received a grant from the Gerontological Society of America to support her project, The mentoring switch project: Two way mentorship.

Doctoral student Shelby McDonald presented a talk, Research on children’s exposure to intimate partner violence and concomitant animal cruelty: Implications for policy and practice, to the Gender Violence Intervention Program at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of Social Work & Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs in Richmond, VA, on February 9. McDonald has accepted a position as Assistant Professor at VCU, beginning this fall.

An excerpt from an interview with doctoral student Stephanie Lechuga Peña, conducted at the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) 2013 Annual Program Meeting, is currently available on the GSSW’s YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlPiQ3iWh7o. In the interview, recorded in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of the Minority Youth Fellowship Program, Peña reflects on her experiences at the time as a first-year fellowship recipient.

Doctoral student Ann Obermann was awarded a merit-based educational support grant from the Philanthropic Educational Organization to support her research endeavors.

Staff Member’s Volunteer Efforts Making an Impact

Admission Assistant Nick Ota-Wang exemplifies our school’s commitment to community service through his volunteer work with the Colorado 1 Have A Dream® Foundation (CIHAD). Founded in 1988, CIHAD is a long-term academic and social mentorship program for youth who live in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods and/or attend underperforming schools in the Denver metropolitan area. CIHAD is one of GSSW’s more than 600 field internship sites.

Ota-Wang joined the organization’s newly developed Young Professional Council (YPC) in April last year, at the suggestion of LeAnn Rohm, MSW ’14, who was completing her internship there at the time. Rachael Gazdick, CIHAD President and CEO, appointed Ota-Wang as YPC co-chair in November because of his background in education and commitment to educational success for all students. One of his activities was helping to lead a book drive that created a library at Denver’s Ruby Hill Elementary School last December. GSSW’s Kristina Crawley, one of six CIHAD interns this year, also works with the YPC.

Ota-Wang graduated from DU’s Morgridge College of Education in November, earning his Master of Arts in Higher Education with a concentration in college student development. Ota-Wang presented his final paper, LGBTIQ+6 Centers/Offices on College/University Campuses, at the University’s Second Annual Graduate Research and Performance Summit on Cross-Disciplinary Research on January 30.

Staff News

PhD Student News

Staff News

Staff News

PhD Student News

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GSSW’s former Assistant Dean of Administration, Linda Clark, has been awarded the status of Amica Universitatis by the University of Denver in recognition of her many years of dedicated service. Clark retired in June of 2014, after a 33-year career at GSSW. The Faculty Senate established the Amicus/Amica Universitatis Award in 1977 to honor the distinguished service of University administrator, research and support staff. “Linda more than exemplifies the criteria for this honor,” noted Dean James Herbert Williams in announcing the award.

Lisa Ingarfield, GSSW’s Director of Student and Career Development, present a roundtable entitled “Sexual Violence Victim Advocacy: While Women’s Negotiation of Race and Gender” in the Cultural Competence Track of the 2014 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Annual Program Meeting, held October 23-26 in Tampa, FL. Ingarfield earned her PhD in Communication (Critical Intercultural) from the University of Denver in June of 2014.

Trish Becker-Hafnor joined the GSSW staff on January 5 as Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement and Special Events. She previously served as a development and communications consultant at the Metropolitan Development Council in Tacoma, WA, where her projects included fundraising, coordinating community events and outreach, managing the Council’s social media and blogs, and publishing monthly newsletters. Becker-Hafnor earned her MSW at the University of Washington.

Butler Institute staff members Salvador Armendariz, Anna de Guzman, Miriam Estrada, Jeanne Ferguson, Collette Pella and Leslie Wilmot presented a workshop, “It Starts with Us,” as part of the University of Denver’s 14th Annual Diversity Summit, held January 22-23. Through a group exercise that explored individuals’ use of power and control, workshop participants developed new insight into their inner selves and new strategies for changing their individual behaviors. The theme of the Diversity Summit was “Fifty Years since Selma: Your Voice Still Matters.”
Student News

PROGRESS Students Learn from National Leader in Aging

Since 2006, GSSW’s PROGRESS program has offered second-year and advanced-standing MSW students the opportunity to enhance their gerontological social work knowledge and skills. PROGRESS (Providing Real Opportunities for Gero-Rich Experience in Social Work Services) offers not only unique rotational field education model, but also opportunities to participate in quarterly integrative seminars and intensive workshops.

On October 24, this year’s PROGRESS students attended a presentation by Wendy Lustbader, MSW, Affiliate Associate Professor at the University of Washington and nationally renowned leader in the field of aging. Held at the Lakewood Cultural Center, the presentation was entitled “Life Gets Better,” a reference to her most recent book, Life Gets Better: The Unexpected Pleasures of Growing Older.

Lustbader explored aging and what it means to flourish later in life. Drawing upon her almost 20 years of experience as a social worker in Seattle, WA, she suggests that we gain self-confidence, a sense of peace and a mindset of age, becoming more comfortable with who we are and being true to ourselves. She argues that the hard-earned lessons we learn in youth make our later years more rewarding.

“I appreciated the way she kept her presentation completely human,” commented PROGRESS student Jeri Norkus after the presentation. Lustbader is known for her engaging presentation style, combining wisdom, stories and dialogue to draw in her audience and inspire those who work with older adults.

The lecture was hosted by the Colorado Culture Change Coalition, a Denver-based organization that promotes person-centered values in long-term care settings.

Student-Sponsored Event Aims to Increase Police Accountability

A February 18 event sponsored by GSSW’s Multicultural Social Justice Student Organization (MSJ) provided the opportunity for students, faculty and staff to hear a firsthand account of racial profiling and brutality and engage in a dialogue with members of law enforcement aimed at preventing similar incidents from happening in the future. Entitled “A Personal Narrative on Racial Profiling, Police Brutality and Police Accountability” the event featured a talk by Denver activist Alex Landau.

In 2009, a then 19-year-old Landau was pulled over, without apparent cause, by Denver police officers who beat him unconscious. After a long and highly publicized legal battle, Landau received what was then the fourth largest settlement in Denver’s history, and three police officers were fired.

Landau’s talk was followed by a question-and-answer session that included members of DU’s Department of Campus Safety, moderated by MSJ member Will Logan. GSSW’s Graduate Student Association, Queer Equality Alliance and Shades of Brown cosponsored the event.

GSSW Students among Research Summit Presenters

Ten MSW and PhD students were among the presenters at the University of Denver’s Second Annual Graduate Research and Performance Summit on cross-disciplinary research. Held on January 30, the summit examined the nature of disciplinary practices and the interdisciplinary practices that arise in the context of graduate student research. Presenters included:


Shanna K. Kattari, PhD student presenter, “Experiences of Ableism Among People with Invisible Physical Disability.”

Alexandra Bland, MSW student presenter, “Political Consumerism in America.”

Lauren Furtney, MSW student and intern at DU’s Resource Center for Separating and Divorcing Families, co-presenter, “Interdisciplinary Approaches for a Holistic Approach to Divorce.”


Chisana White, Terri Shelton & Whitney Young, MSW students, poster presentation, “Social Justice and Environmental Justice: Bridging the Gap.”
For more information about this project, please contact me at linda.metsger@du.edu. To learn more about the Butler Institute for Families, visit http://www.thebutlerinstitute.org.

According to studies by the General Accounting Office and the Annie E. Casey foundation, this is estimated that turnover among child welfare workers ranges from 22 to 40 percent. Studies indicate that there are a variety of reasons for this high turnover rate. These include high caseloads, negative public perception, administrative burdens, lack of supervisory support, lack of training, insufficient time to participate in training and the risk of violence. Turnover not only costs agencies money in recruitment and training, but also has negative consequences for families. These result from difficulty in establishing relationships and building trust with children and families, delayed permanency and difficulty in making required contact to help ensure safety.

Research findings indicate that organizational culture and climate are the significant factors that help explain an employee’s intention to leave. To help identify and address some of the organizational challenges that increase caseworker turnover, Butler developed, tested and conducted a Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment (COHA) at four diverse child welfare agencies to assess factors impacting culture and climate.

The COHA was conducted at baseline, midpoint and project conclusion to assess organizational health and evaluate changes in workforce outcomes resulting from the Butler’s five-year intervention. The intervention included convening Design Teams comprising staff at all levels of each agency, tasked with identifying and addressing workforce issues using data from the COHA.

Some of the workforce challenges identified for intervention included coping with job stress, secondary trauma, supervision, negative public perceptions of child welfare, lack of team cohesion and agency morale. All of these issues directly impact turnover. Strategies formulated by the Design Teams to address these challenges included designing and implementing a supervisor model to set expectations of supervision, coaching for supervisors, a self-care fair to provide strategies to cope with stress and secondary trauma, and agency-wide celebrations to acknowledge the hard work of staff. To help improve public perceptions regarding child welfare, public service announcements were developed about the positive work of child welfare agencies.

Findings from the final COHA demonstrated that there were significant gains in all organizational domains from the baseline to the final assessment for all project sites. This indicates that, through targeted interventions, child welfare agencies can be effective in improving agency culture and climate.

Western Workforce Project Update
by Linda K. Metzger, MA, director of professional development, Butler Institute for Families

Back in 2010, we introduced readers of GSSW Magazine to the Western Workforce Project, funded by a child welfare workforce grant awarded to the Erna and Brad Butler Institute for Families by the Children’s Bureau, part of the Administration on Children and Families. Now, five years later, we want to share some of what we have learned about workforce challenges in child welfare.

According to studies by the General Accounting Office and the Annie E. Casey foundation, this is estimated that turnover among child welfare workers ranges from 22 to 40 percent. Studies indicate that there are a variety of reasons for this high turnover rate. These include high caseloads, negative public perception, administrative burdens, lack of supervisory support, lack of training, insufficient time to participate in training and the risk of violence. Turnover not only costs agencies money in recruitment and training, but also has negative consequences for families. These result from difficulty in establishing relationships and building trust with children and families, delayed permanency and difficulty in making required contact to help ensure safety.

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Four Corners
Four Corners Student Shares Child Welfare Knowledge

Concentration and advanced standing MSW students intending to work in public child welfare in Colorado may apply for Title IV-E child welfare stipends. Administered by GSSW’s Butler Institute for Families, the funds come from Title IV-E Directives and mitigate the recruitment, hiring and retention of early childhood professionals. Stipend recipients agree to work in public child welfare in Colorado for one year for each year they receive the stipend.

Four Corners MSW student Tiffany Ramos, who is receiving a child welfare stipend this year, recently gave a presentation for her classmates about Colorado’s child welfare process. Among her topics was the increasing shift, both nationally and in Colorado, toward Differential Response (DR) in cases of alleged child abuse and neglect. DR emphasizes flexibility and the importance of broadly assessing all families’ situations to identify and meet underlying needs. Ramos says she intends to apply for the child welfare stipend again next year.

“The [child welfare] stipend provides financial assistance towards my education with the expectation that I will commit a year to a rural child welfare agency [for] each year I receive a stipend,” she explains. “Once I graduate from this program, I hope to continue in child welfare and pursue positions in leadership to support not only the families that are involved in our agencies, but also the workers who work diligently in a challenging and stressful job.”
Bridge Project

New Curriculum Generating Positive Results

by Miranda Cook, MSW, program director

The Bridge Project’s philosophy is that increasing opportunities and ensuring healthy outcomes for at-risk youth requires more than just academic support. We also feel strongly that afterschool activities must be designed to increase the social, cognitive and behavioral skills of participants.

Three years ago, the Bridge Project began implementing the Second Step curriculum into its afterschool program. Second Step is a Kindergarten-5th grade social-emotional learning curriculum from the Committee for Children, a Seattle-based nonprofit organization that seeks to prevent bullying, child abuse and youth violence through education.

GSSW interns teach the Second Step curriculum with supervision from Bridge Project staff. The response from the student trainers has been very positive. “Second Step puts into words the feelings and emotions that kids have and sometimes don’t know how to express,” says Andrea Jennings, a foundation year MSW student. “It gives them practical applications in dealing with everyday situations.”

Results of Second Step have been impressive. Between fall and spring of the past school year, Bridge Project afterschool participants displayed significant increases in social, emotional and problem-solving skills. Increases in skills also had positive effects on students’ reading skills and academic performance. Second Step has been an important addition to Bridge Project interventions and program activities.

Donor Spotlight

Lynda Ricketson, MLS, CFRE
Director of Development and Alumni Giving

GSSW is pleased to honor Marianne Wilkening, MSW ’65, of Iowa City, Iowa. She’s one of the school’s most consistent supporters through donations to the Annual Fund. Her enthusiasm for the school began during her first visit to the campus more than 50 years ago.

“Denver seemed far away for a young woman who grew up in Illinois and attended college in Minnesota,” Wilkening writes. “But I strongly wanted to become a social worker, even though I didn’t know any social workers at the time. I decided that profession was somewhat like my mom. She had been a public health nurse during the 1930s, and I remember her stories of helping poor immigrant families.

“I can’t recall exactly why I chose the University of Denver, but Mom and I drove there together—and I made a GREAT decision when I applied to GSSW! Once I became involved in the classes and fieldwork placements, I immediately felt this is where I belong! My GSSW education led me to long careers in social work with foster children and children in residential care in Wisconsin, as well as in many years of working with children, parents and educators as a school social worker in Illinois.

“I still enjoy learning about new programs at GSSW, especially the use of animals with children in therapy. (My dogs have certainly been therapists for me!)

“My thanks go out to GSSW for helping me have a great career and a good retirement. My only regret is that I live too far away to attend DU or GSSW programs. My financial support of GSSW is my way of expressing my gratitude and staying involved with the school.”

GSSW News

For information about registration or sponsorship, contact: Rick Salazar, Bridge Project Development Director, at 303-871-7599 or rick.salazar@du.edu

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Ten notable and generous members of the GSSW community were honored with Dean’s Awards at a luncheon held on October 29 in the Roitberger Foundation Community Room. All of the recipients have established endowed scholarship funds benefiting MSW students.

Chair, Board of Visitors
Gary L. Yourtz

in the world. Please join me in being part of that change.

the faith I have placed in the students, faculty and staff to make changes

What keeps me connected to GSSW are the relationships I have made and

positive difference, both locally and on a global scale.

My hope is that you will invest in GSSW this and every year. Your

donor, as well as through the scholarship my wife and I established for

Social Work. I have been fortunate to give a significant amount of my personal time and financial support to GSSW for many years as a Board of Visitors member and Bridge Project co-founder and donor, as well as through the scholarship my wife and I established for GSSW students.

There are so many worthwhile organizations locally and abroad you could be donating to, and I encourage you to do so – but when you give to GSSW, you are truly giving to so much more. Our students come from across the nation and many countries around the world, and they complete internships at more than 600 agencies and organizations. So, by supporting our students, you are actually supporting any number of organizations and individuals all over the world.

My hope is that you will invest in GSSW this and every year. Your participation and support, at whatever amount feels comfortable, ensures that you stay connected with the GSSW community as a means of professional development, networking and promoting social change.

graduates at every stage, from their initial launch into a social work career

supports. We actively support the professional journeys of each of our

of the importance of social workers to the state of Colorado.

Helen and Marshall Abrahams created the Helen and Marshall Abrahams Endowed Scholarship Fund in recognition of the need to provide quality social work education, particularly in the area of mental health. Helen serves on GSSW’s Board of Visitors.

William Callin, along with his late wife “Connie” and many of her social work colleagues, established the Constance L. and William S. Callin Endowed Scholarship Fund prior to Connie’s death in 2006. Connie Callin served for many years as GSSW’s director of field education.

Joyce (Carpenter) Degenhart, MSW ‘80, PhD, established the Joyce A. and John S. Degenhart Endowed Scholarship Fund in honor of her husband, another 1960 MSW graduate. The couple met at GSSW, and they were married almost 53 years before John’s death in 2013.

Professor Jean East, MSW ’79, PhD ’95, created the Margaret Jean and Jean F. East Endowed Scholarship Fund in honor of her mother “Peg,” who died in 2006. Jean has been a member of the GSSW faculty since 1990 and served as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs from 2010 to 2014.

Billie Little, MSW ’77, and her husband David Little, MSW ’60, established Petye’s Endowed Scholarship Fund, named for Billie’s mother, who died in 2012. The couple wanted to honor Petye’s charitable work and her support for their social work careers.

Evi Makovsky, MSW ’79, JD, and her husband, Evan Makovsky, established the Beryl Backer Makovsky and Evan N. Makovsky Endowed Scholarship Fund to support educational opportunities for aspiring social workers. Evi is a member of GSSW’s Board of Visitors.

Ralph McClure, MSW ’65, created the Marie Dunitz McClure Endowed Scholarship Fund in honor of his late wife, who also earned her degree from GSSW in 1965. He considers the scholarship a gift from them both because of the impact that GSSW had on their lives.

Evi Makovsky

David Lillie, MSW ’60

In closing, I hope you will join me in congratulating the GSSW alumnae who were honored at the Colorado Social Work Month Celebration in March.

Sincerely,

Hope Erinco Wionislaw, MSW ’00 Alumni Association President

FORMER COLORADO FIRST LADY DOLLEE LAMM, MSW ’72, spoke to the luncheon guests about the importance of social workers to the state of Colorado.

Mid-Glenne Begay, MSW ’07, currently directs the Navajo Nation Community Health Representative (CHR)/Outreach program, the largest CHR program in Indian Country. Despite her demanding professional career, Begay continues to support GSSW’s Four Corners Master of Social Work program (from which she earned her MSW) by serving as a volunteer member of the program’s Navajo People’s Advisory Council.

The council’s ongoing input is vital to ensuring that the Four Corners program continues to respond to the needs of local and tribal communities. Additionally, the council has helped to make sure the CHR program offers specialized MSW curriculum content related to social work with Native Peoples. Since the program’s founding in 2002, 28 of its graduates have been Native Americans, representing 13 different tribes.

In closing, I hope you will join in congratulating the GSSW alumnae who were honored at the Colorado Social Work Month Celebration in March.

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Dean James Herbert, William Overington, CTKD Chair, talks about the significance of the CTKD team since 2007, when the volunteerized many hours of her time continued on pg. 28

Dean James Herbert

Mary Overington, MSW ’98, is one of the co-founders of Cloths To Kids Denver (CTKD), a nonprofit that provides new and quality used clothing, free of charge, to students from low income or in crisis families in the Denver metropolitan area. Since its founding in 2008, CTKD has provided more than 20,000 new and quality used clothing.

This award is presented to an alumnae who has demonstrated significant and continuous volunteer involvement in major community activities and/or charitable causes, above and beyond her/his employed position.

Mary Overington, MSW ’98, is one of the co-founders of Cloths To Kids Denver (CTKD), a nonprofit that provides new and quality used clothing, free of charge, to students from low income or in crisis families in the Denver metropolitan area. Since its founding in 2008, CTKD has provided more than 20,000 new and quality used clothing.
helping the budding organization apply for nonprofit status, fundraising, recruiting volunteers, holding clothing drives and preparing a store-like space for shoppers. Once the CTKD shop opened, she served alongside an all-volunteer staff for several years and spent a significant amount of her time spreading the word about CTKD’s services. Overington was a vital member of the organization’s leadership. She accomplished all of this while working a demanding full-time job at Denver Human Services.

“One of Mary’s most salient qualities is her ability to inspire others,” said Katie Jones, MSW ’11, in nominating Overington for the award. “She is a true leader and I feel honored to be awarded with the Robert L. Hawkins Social Work Alumna Award.”

Linda Mitchell, MSW ’78, has been President and CEO of the Colorado Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association since 1998 and serves as its associate director/program director for three years prior to that. The chapter is the premier source of information and support for the more than 63,000 Coloradans with Alzheimer’s disease, and their more than 229,000 family caregivers. Through its statewide network of offices, the Alzheimer’s Association offers education, counseling, support groups, a 24-hour Helpline and other services at no cost to families. Mitchell oversees services to families throughout the state through regional offices in Colorado Springs, Denver, Pueblo, Durango, Fort Collins, Grand Junction and Greeley.

As chief presenter for the Colorado Chapter, Mitchell has recently been featured in a series of public service announcements on local television stations that seek to overcome the lingering stigma attached to a diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease. The announcements are one aspect of the Colorado Chapter’s recent alliance with the Denver Broncos football team. That’s how she joined the team one of the 10 “Fight gegen den Zusammenbruch,” who play a key role in informing the widely publicized partnership with the team whose owners, Pat Bowlen, is one of the many Coloradans living with Alzheimer’s disease.

Along with her e-mail, Lee included an upcoming journal article and a PowerPoint presentation on his school’s effort to make it a safe place for students by changing the culture of silence from a culture of shared responsibility. He encourages Jenson to share both items with his colleagues and students. “At this point in my career, I look for opportunities to help the next generation of social workers,” he said.

Lee recalls commuting from Lander to Denver for his Monday and Tuesday classes, and has fond memories of GSSW. His letter to the October 2014 issue of the NASW journal, Social Work, expressed his support for a balanced approach to social work education and credited Acting Dean Kay Vail for ensuring that macro practice was sufficiently emphasized when he was a student.

Clinical Associate Professor Karen Bensen (MSW ’91), Assistant Dean for Community Academic Programs (facilitating, camera), married Cindy Deim (MSW ’92) on Nov. 11, 2014, at their home in Denver. The couple was legally married after 23½ years together. They have a 17-year-old son, Antonio.

Linda Trantow (MSW ’00) and Kate Trajillo (MSW ’91, PhD ’10) serve on the Board of Directors of The SOAR! Youth and Adult Choir, along with current MSW student Jason Lester. The three-year-old, Denver-based nonprofit offers opportunities for at-risk children to become part of a safe community of mentorship. Students who help them develop an appreciation of the arts, with an emphasis on developing skills the youth will need to succeed in life. The choir performed before a crowd of more than 15,000 people at the 2014 “Light the Lights” holiday celebration at Denver’s City and County Building in December. Their performance was broadcast live on KUSA Channel 9, Denver’s NBC-affiliated television station.

Jennifer Middleton (MSW ’98, PhD ’11) has been appointed Assistant Professor at the University of Louisville’s Kent School of Social Work, effective August 1, 2015. She has served as Assistant Professor at the University of Maine since 2011. Middleton’s practice background includes child welfare, addictions, medical social work and forensics.

“Jennifer has a strong record of scholarship, teaching and service and will be a great addition to our faculty,” said Kent School Dean Terry L. Singer in announcing Middleton’s new appointment.

In Memoriam

Portland State University Professor Charlotta Tosi Goodluck (PhD ’98) passed away unexpectedly at her home on Dec. 2, 2014, of natural causes. She was 68.

Goodluck served as director of Portland State’s BSW Program from 2008 until her death. She previously was on the faculty of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, where she served as BSW Program Coordinator from 1998 to 2003. From 2005 to 2008, she served as Director of Community Research for the Native American Cancer Research Partnership between the Northern Arizona University and the University of Arizona. Goodluck’s academic and research interests included Native American children and youth well-being indicators, the Native strengths perspective, Native American breast and cervical cancer research, and Indian child welfare. “Charlotta will be remembered for her gentle and kind spirit, passion for social justice and social work education, and steady leadership of the BSW Program,” said Laura Nissen, dean of the School of Social Work, in announcing Goodluck’s passing.

Goodluck is survived by her sister, her niece, and numerous cousins and relatives on the Navajo Reservation. Memorial donations may be made to the Dr. Charlotta Tosi Goodluck Endowed Memorial Scholarship at the Portland State School of Social Work by contacting Mr. Richard Jung, Development Officer, at 503-725-2997.
There are slim pickings these days for squirrels seeking a free lunch from the trash bin on Craig Hall’s Schramm Foundation Plaza. Such bins are now clearly marked “landfill” to remind people of their discards’ actual destination—a not-so-subtle reminder to recycle or compost these items whenever possible. In fact, most trash receptacles in the building’s public areas, kitchens and restrooms have recycling and/or compost bins right alongside them, thanks to a Craig Hall pilot project that grew out of a partnership among GSSW’s Graduate Student Association, Craig Hall administration, the University of Denver’s Center for Sustainability and Aramark Corporation.

The project also replaced office wastebaskets with large recycling receptacles that have only “tiny” (less than one-gallon) trashcans attached to them. The project’s goal is to establish Craig Hall as a model for best practices in waste minimization and diversion from the landfill, a key element of DU’s 2014-2017 Sustainability Plan.

While the composting results of the pilot project are still being determined, a preliminary survey showed that nearly 82 percent of respondents are now recycling and composting more frequently at the office, about the same percentage as those who say they recycle and compost regularly at home. And a one-day audit showed that 50 percent of Craig Hall’s total waste was going to recycling, more than double the campus average of 24 percent in fiscal year 2014.

That’s bad news for some marauding squirrels, but good news indeed for the future of our planet!

Learn more about DU’s Center for Sustainability online at www.du.edu/sustainability.