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stimulus

The University of Tennessee College of Social Work

Michael Miller (MSSW '76) Appointed New DCS Commissioner

Alumnus Michael J. Miller (MSSW '76) has been appointed Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS). He was officially sworn in on February 10, 2002.

Commissioner Miller was most recently the Executive Director for the Metropolitan Nashville Social Services Department and was an instructor for the Graduate School at the UT College of Social Work in Nashville. During his 11 years as Executive Director, he worked with nonprofit community organizations to enact many innovative programs, such as family resource centers.

His other experience includes serving as Administrative

Special Report

By Kate Miller



Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Human Services; Legislative Assistant with the Ohio State

Senate; Legislative Liaison for the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation; and Associate Administrator for the Central Ohio Psychiatric Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. He received a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Tennessee in 1976 and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Philosophy and Theology from Spalding College.

Two management principles guide Commissioner Miller's vision for DCS and his administration. The first principle is that of power and responsibility. "I have learned that for any organization to succeed, leaders must share power and shoulder responsibility," Miller

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Tom Ingram (MSSW '69) Accepts Political Post with Lamar Alexander



Tom Ingram (MSSW '69) has been named as U.S. Senator Lamar Alexander's Chief of Staff. The former president and chief executive officer of the Knoxville Area Chamber

Partnership (KACP) will play an integral part in the development of Alexander's agenda of education, jobs, and the environment throughout the state and in Washington, D.C.

This is not the first time that Ingram has worked closely with Alexander. He assisted during Alexander's two gubernatorial terms, his University of Tennessee presidency, and his tenure as the U. S. Secretary of Education. Ingram served as

press secretary in Alexander's 1974 gubernatorial campaign, managed his campaigns for governor in 1978 and 1982, and served as chief of staff and deputy during Alexander's first term as governor.

Ingram says, "I'm having a blast working side by side with Lamar again. The timing was right for me personally and professionally, and as Lamar has said so often, these are very serious times for our country and for the world, and I believe this is what both of

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College's Angel Flight Pilot "Gives Hope Wings"

By Gina Costello



Professor and pilot Vaughn DeCoster with his Piper Cherokee C.

grounded. All of the costs for the flights are absorbed by the pilots, who volunteer their time, expertise, money, and aircraft. The well-trained Angel Flight South Central pilots have flown over three million miles—accident-free.

DeCoster, who has a passion for flying says, "I wanted to find a meaningful way to use my flying experience." During his involvement he has served Angel Flight as a squadron pilot, the assistant director for the Tennessee

Wing, and the Southeast Regional Chair of the Angel Flight Health Care Professional Relations Committee. Education about Angel Flight services is important to DeCoster, so he also conducts educational seminars for social workers, physicians, nurses, and other health care professionals. Many of the Angel Flight referrals are made by social workers.

Most Angel Flight pilots have at least 300 hours of flight time and are able to fly using only aircraft instruments without visual references (instrument rated). DeCoster began his pilot training in 1999, after fellow pilot Dr. John Orme encouraged him to pursue this life-long dream. DeCoster is now a certified instrument pilot. He owns a 1966 Piper Cherokee C, which can carry four adults at an average speed of 130 mph for 650 miles.

Angel Flight is always accepting referrals for patients who are in need of air transportation for health care. Patients must be ambulatory and be able to fly in a non-pressurized aircraft. Please visit the South Central Angel Flight website at: <http://www.angelflightsc.org> for more information. E-mail Vaughn DeCoster at vdecoste@utk.edu if you are interested in an informational seminar about Angel Flight's services.

Gina Costello is the production coordinator for the College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service.

As a pilot and an assistant professor at the College of Social Work's Memphis campus, Dr. Vaughn DeCoster is doing his part to help those in need. DeCoster has been a volunteer pilot for the Angel Flight organization for over two years. He averages six missions per year transporting patients and family members with non-emergency needs who must travel some distance for care.

Angel Flight, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, whose motto is "In the air because we care," began in 1991. Flights through the Angel Flight organization are provided entirely free to patients and families in financial and medical need. Angel Flight provides assistance for any age patient—from infant up to eighty or more years old. Angel Flight South Central serves Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas and portions of New Mexico, Mississippi, and Tennessee in areas often lacking commercial flights. Affiliated Angel Flight Organizations can provide transportation throughout the continental United States.

Angel Flight pilots like DeCoster serve their communities by flying individuals who are geographically isolated or financially depleted by a serious illness to a care destination. Patients may travel for chemotherapy, organ transplantation, dialysis, or any number of specialized treatments. The pilots also provide transportation services for family emergencies and national crises. Angel Flight pilots were providing critical flights hours after the 9/11 incident when commercial carriers were

Michael Miller Named DCS Commissioner

says. To that end, he is interested in creating teams within DCS and partnerships outside of DCS while accepting ultimate responsibility for the operation and outcomes of the Department. The second principle pertains to the organizational design of DCS. "Organizations need to be as simple as possible to get the job done, while people need to be appreciated in all their beautiful complexity. The organization should respond to peoples' needs, not the other way around," he says.

In addition to his management philosophy, Commissioner Miller feels that the values and practice of social work should be at the forefront of DCS's practice and policy. He says, "Social work practices are helpful in meeting the basic needs and liberating people to achieve their potential throughout the organization, from the offices of the Commissioner to the case managers."

He would like to honor the social work profession and mentors that prepared him for his job by using these values and best practices. In particular he notes the influence of Dr. Thomas Cruthirds, his graduate school professor at the College of Social Work; State Senator Douglas Henry, Jr., who supervised his graduate school internship; and Eleanor Freeman Saxton, his first supervisor at the Hamilton County Department of Public Welfare (where he began his career as a social services caseworker in the early 70s) as individuals who have had a great influence on his career.

Dean Karen Sowers says, "Michael Miller has been an integral part of the College of Social Work, especially at our Nashville campus. He has played important roles on our Advisory Committee and as an adjunct instructor. As a leader in the state on social service provision, Michael has helped keep the College on the cutting edge. We are thrilled that Michael has been named as the new Commissioner. His expertise in services to children and families and his commitment to best practices will move Tennessee forward in critical ways. We look forward to continuing our relationship with Michael in his new role."

Kate Miller is a publications specialist for the College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service and is the editor of Stimulus.

Letter from the Dean

As you read this issue of Stimulus, you'll note that we have been very busy and enjoyed some wonderful successes. The College continues to grow and move forward. This is due in large part to our outstanding faculty who are so dedicated to the College and to their work. We are extremely fortunate to have such committed and productive faculty.

Our alums continue to shine. Two such examples are on the front page. It is so very rewarding to know that our alumni are so successful and embracing important leadership positions that will surely make a difference in the lives of others. As I travel across the country meeting our many alumni, I am increasingly grateful for their support, commitment, and love of the College. This could not have been evidenced more than at our Fall Homecoming Gala. Over three hundred alumni, faculty, students, and friends of the College gathered to share good



fellowship, celebrate the College and have great fun. We hope that you will be able to join us for this year's gala on Saturday, October 25.

The College continues its long tradition of interdisciplinary collaborative work,

and two new exciting partnerships have been developed. Our partnership with the College of Veterinary Medicine is featured in this issue of Stimulus, and the partnership with the College of Law will be featured in the fall issue. These are two new and wonderfully exciting opportunities for student training and collaborative research. We will continue to forge relationships across campuses and in the community that enrich student opportunities, foster community based faculty research, and help create better communities.

As the College continues to move forward, we invite you to be a part of the movement. Your commitment and support of the College is what helps to keep us great. You have good reason to be proud of your alma mater as we are proud of your many successes.

Don't miss these exciting Professional Continuing Education Spring workshops:

- ◆ "Meditation in Clinical Practice: Deeper Levels of the Self". . . Athens, Saturday, April 26
- ◆ "Living With Grief Teleconference: Coping with Public Tragedy". . . Knoxville, Nashville, and Martin; Wednesday, April 30
- ◆ "Anger Management with Problem Youth". . . Chattanooga, Monday, May 12
- ◆ "Forensic Social Work: An Introduction". . . Knoxville, Wednesday, June 9

Also, watch your mailbox for the Fall course catalog, which will begin mailing in August.

For more information about these and other workshops, or to request a catalog, call (865) 974-6016. To view our online catalog, click on "Professional Continuing Education" at <http://sworps.utk.edu>

Photo Gallery

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1. Tennessee State Senator Douglas Henry with Dean Karen Sowers at the August 2002 faculty and staff retreat.

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2. Emeritus faculty member Dr. Gideon Fryer receives the Heart of Social Work Award at the College's 2002 Homecoming Gala.

3. Dean Sowers leads the new faculty and staff in the College's rendition of "Rocky Top" at the August 2002 faculty and staff retreat.

4. Faculty, staff, and members of the 2002 Board of Visitors at the September 2002 meeting. Back row (l. to r.): Andy Dunsmore, Terry Stulce, Earl Medley, Mike Devoto, Karen Sowers, and John Turner. Front row (l. to r.): Elliott Moore, Mary Catherine Willard, Betty Robinson, Carol Tindell, Rebecca Henderson, Louise Harrison, Libby McColl, and Julie Hardin.

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5. New members are initiated into the Phi Alpha Honor Society at the College's 2002 Homecoming Gala. Phi Alpha is a national society honoring undergraduate and graduate students for their outstanding achievements in social work.

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8. (l. to r.) Bill Rowe (Dean, University of South Florida, School of Social Work), Dean Sowers, John Wodarski (MSSW '67), Lois Wodarski, and Gail Cooper (wife of Farrell Cooper, alumnus '67 and member of the College's Board of Visitors) at the Homecoming 2002 Party in the Park.

6. Dr. Gideon Fryer (Emeritus faculty member, l.) chats with Farrell Cooper (Alumnus '67 and member of the College's Board of Visitors) at the Homecoming pregame tailgate.

7. David Guth (MSSW '81) receives the Outstanding Alumni Award at the College's 2002 Homecoming Gala.

9. Faculty member Charles Glisson talks with the College's development officer, Andy Dunsmore, at the picnic before the 2002 Homecoming game.

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First-Year MSSW Student Receives Two Community Service Awards



Sandra Roof received the President's Student Service Award and the Scholars of Promise Award in 2002. Roof is a first year MSSW student, whose concentration

is in management and community practice. She was nominated for both awards through the National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS).

The President's Student Service Award is a White House initiative that recognizes

students for service to various types of organizations including local community improvement organizations and religious and community organizations. The award recognizes recipients, such as Roof, for their outstanding community service and to encourage others to serve. Any full-time student (kindergarten through college) who volunteers at least 100 hours of appropriate community service is eligible for the award.

In partnership with America's Promise, whose mission is to provide youth and children with the fundamental needs that every child deserves, the NSCS honors exemplary students with the Scholars of Promise award. The award is given to students who support youth-oriented

programs through at least 50 hours of service in 12 months.

Roof received her Associate of Science degree from Pellissippi State Technical Community College in December 1999 and her Bachelors of Science in Social Work from UT in May 2002. She has worked in a variety of community service settings including Adventa Hospice, Inc. as a first year master's intern, Cornerstone of Recovery, Inc. as a baccalaureate senior intern, Florence Crittenden Agency in the Mother/Infant Program (where she received the Outstanding Volunteer Award), and Lakeshore Mental Health Institute, Inc. as a psychosocial day program volunteer.

—Kate Miller

College Enjoys Long-Standing Partnership with Veterans Affairs Medical Center

The words "partnership" and "UT College of Social Work" go hand in hand. Through the College's MSSW field placement program and other collaborative work with agencies and businesses across the state, partnerships that benefit both the College's students and these agencies have been established.

The Social Work Department of the James H. Quillen Veterans Affairs Medical Center (Quillen VAMC) in Mountain Home, Tennessee, is one such agency that has provided field placement opportunities for the College's second-year MSSW students for more than 20 years. It has also served as an excellent source of employment for some MSSW graduates and has collaborated with the College's Professional Continuing Education program to offer workshops to Quillen VAMC Social Work staff members and members of the surrounding community. Noy Montgomery, alumni of the College (MSSW '75) and Chief of the Social Work Department at the Quillen VAMC, said that his organization's partnership with the College is a "win-win situation for the graduate students, the College, and the VA."

Montgomery has served as a social



James H. Quillen Veteran's Affairs Medical Center

worker in the VA system throughout his career and is pleased to offer the same opportunity to the College's MSSW students. About one third of the social workers on Montgomery's staff are graduates of the College. "If students have a successful second-year field placement in the VA system, they can be direct-hired, non-competitively, for one year following graduation. Through our affiliations with graduate-level social work programs, the VA has hired a number of former student interns," Montgomery said.

The Quillen VAMC has had funding for three field placements annually, and other non-funded placements may also be available. Second-year MSSW students who participate in field placements at the Quillen VAMC work three days a week from the fall semester of their second year

until graduation. Field placement opportunities are available at Quillen VAMC in long-term care, inpatient psychiatry, medical/surgical wards, homeless program, and domiciliary (outpatient residence) areas. The students work under the supervision of a VA social worker, and they are a part of the patient's treatment team along with physicians, nurses, chaplains, dietitians, and psychologists. Case management

assignments might include crisis intervention; psychosocial assessment; individual, group, and family counseling; patient and family education; referral to other VA and community resources; and discharge planning. "Our goal is to ensure that the field placement is a good match for the graduate student and our medical center," said Montgomery.

Dean Karen Sowers is also pleased that the College has established a long-standing partnership with the Quillen VAMC. "The College has enjoyed a lengthy relationship with Quillen VA Medical Center. They provide significant financial support for interns and provide an outstanding training ground for our students. We greatly appreciate their support and relationship with the College."

—Kirche Rogers

Andy Dunsmore Joins the College as the New Director of Development

The College of Social Work would like to welcome Andy Dunsmore as the new Director of Development and Alumni Affairs. Originally from Athens, Tennessee, Andy graduated from UT Knoxville in 1990 with a BA in political science. After receiving his degree he began a career in alumni and development work at Hiwassee College in 1991. In 1995, he left Hiwassee College and joined the development staff of Washington University School of Medicine and was there for five years before returning to Knoxville to pursue a graduate degree in political science from UT.

Andy joined the College in September 2002 and is the College's chief development and alumni officer. He works closely with Dean Sowers in cultivating support for the College from alumni, friends, corporations, and foundations. His main duty is fundraising, but he also organizes alumni activities and maintains that the link between the College and its alumni should not be discounted.



Andy realizes the importance of support for the College. He believes, "Establishing an appropriate level of private support that can fund endowments for student scholarships and fellowships, fund endowments that will support faculty in their teaching and research, and provide a steady stream of annual income that can be used to fill in the gaps that federal and state funding do not provide for is the next step in moving this college forward. A position in the elite rankings of Colleges of Social Work is possible if we can develop a constituency that will augment what we are currently doing with private funds."

Dean Sowers stated, "Andy comes to us with a wealth of development experience. His enthusiasm for social work and how we make a difference in the lives of others is just wonderful. He has new, fresh ideas for fundraising and has really hit the ground running. His energy, commitment, and creativity for social work development is outstanding. I love working with him and I look forward to us working as a team for many years to come."

—Kathy Perkey



Amanda Gentry Named Outstanding BSW Student of the Year

By Frank Spicuzza

The College of Social Work is pleased to announce that Amanda Gentry has been selected as the Outstanding BSW Student of the Year by the NASW—Tennessee Chapter.

Amanda has maintained a 4.0 cumulative grade point average throughout her four years of study at The University of Tennessee. Her junior-level and senior-level field supervisors have praised Amanda for far exceeding performance expectations.

As the chairperson of the fundraising committee of the BSSW-SWO in Knoxville, Amanda coordinated the silent auction this year. Under her leadership more than 100 items were donated for the auction, which raised more than \$2,000. In addition to her work with the BSSW-SWO, Amanda has volunteered to assist the BSSW program in various admissions events.

This is the second straight year that a student from the UT BSSW program has received this state award.

Frank Spicuzza is the director of undergraduate social work studies at the College of Social Work.

The Second Annual Homecoming Gala Draws Faculty, Alumni, and Friends

The College's Second Annual Homecoming Gala was held on November 8, 2002, at Rothchild's Catering and Conference Center in Knoxville. A group of 312 faculty, staff, students and their families, and community members attended the event.

The event began at 6:00 p.m. with registration, a silent auction to benefit the bachelor program's student organization (BSSW-SWO), and a social hour. A faculty receiving line allowed alumni and other guests the opportunity to greet and chat with faculty members.



Faculty members greet more than 300 guests who attended the Second Annual Homecoming Gala on November 8, 2002.

After dinner, an awards ceremony celebrated the work of an alumnus and professor emeritus. David Guth received the Outstanding Alumni Award, and Gideon Fryer, CSW professor emeritus, received the Heart of Social Work Award. The Phi Alpha initiation ceremony was also held at the Gala and included the presentation of new members and officers and lighting of candles.

The evening ended with dancing and the closing of the silent auction. The Jimmy Church Band from Nashville provided the evening's musical entertainment. Selections of Motown sound and slower music attracted many attendees to the dance floor.

The College is thankful for the generous corporate sponsors who helped defray the costs of the Gala. Corporate sponsors included Child & Family Tennessee; Youth Villages; Centerstone Community Mental Health Centers, Inc.; Pilot; TVA; the Greater Knoxville Mental Health Association; Akins/Crisp Public Strategies; and Mercedes-Benz. Contributions were also received from alumni and friends including Rebecca Henderson, Elizabeth McColl, Betty Robinson, and Mary Catherine Willard.

—Kirche Rogers

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Ingram Joins Alexander's Team

us are supposed to be doing with our lives right now.”

Ingram began his career in social work while working as a reporter for the *Tennessean* and attending UT Nashville as an undergraduate in the late 60s. He was granted a HUD scholarship to the MSSW program at the College's Nashville campus during this time. After receiving his degree, he spent two years in social work practice at AGAPE, an organization that serves the needs of families and children in Middle Tennessee through adoption, foster care, unplanned pregnancy support services, and faith-based counseling and psychological services. During that time he continued his job as a reporter.

Ingram left AGAPE to become a full-time reporter for the *Tennessean*, and later, the former *Nashville Banner*. He was the founder and first editor of *Nashville!* magazine. When not working for Alexander in the 70s and 80s, Ingram founded and sold The Ingram Group, a corporate consulting, public and government relations firm that now has offices in Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga, and Knoxville. In the 90s, he joined Whittle Communications in Knoxville. He left Whittle to form a venture capital group, and he assumed the role of Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership director in 1998.

Ingram says he will draw on his social work background in his new position. “My focus at the school of social work was community organization. It's been fascinating to watch communities and see the correlation between their successes and failures and leadership, communication, and group dynamics. I think the experiences I received in my field work and subsequent practice at the Red Cross and AGAPE also made me more sensitive to the disparities that exist in communities and how a community's response to those different life situations ultimately define the community's character,” he says.

Dean Karen Sowers says, “Tom Ingram is a highly valued alumnus who has provided great support to the College. While at the Knoxville Chamber Partnership he mentored Management and Community Practice students, providing them with dynamic and creative learning experiences. He is a wonderful example of the versatility of social work knowledge and skills. He has applied his education in nontraditional ways while making communities better for Tennesseans. He is an example for how all of us can make a difference in the lives of others. The College is very proud of Tom and we greatly appreciate his continued support of the College.”

Ingram will frequently be on special assignment throughout the state and will spend time in Washington as needed. He will continue to reside in Knoxville with his family.

—Kate Miller

The College of Social Work Welcomes Six New Ph.D. Candidates

by Kathy Perkey



The College's new Ph.D. students, (l. to r.) Heather Parris, Andrea McCarter, Charles Dabbs, Juile Grocki, Tracy Zaparanick, and Irma Molina.

The College welcomed six new Doctoral candidates at a reception held at Dean Karen Sowers's house on September 5, 2002. The new Ph.D. students are Charles Dabbs, Juile Grocki, Andrea McCarter, Irma Molina, Heather Parris, and Tracy Zaparanick.

Charles Dabbs, originally from the Los Angeles, California suburb of Venice, holds an MSW and MPH from the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). He is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in California and is a Board Certified Social Worker (ACSW). Charles has had many years of paid practice and has been active in many community, social, and political organizations. He is interested in negative environmental impacts on children and intends to focus his dissertation on children's exposure to pesticides. He plans to graduate from the doctoral program by the fall of 2006.

Julie Grocki, originally from Long Island, New York, graduated from East Tennessee State University (ETSU) in 1999, with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work, and in 2001 received her Master's in Social Work from Radford University, Virginia. She was a member of Pi Gamma Mu Honor Society while attending ETSU and Phi Alpha

Honor Society while attending ETSU and Radford. For 14 years, Julie has been working and volunteering in the field of mental health care for those categorized as mentally challenged and developmentally delayed as well as in the field of gerontological health care. Currently, Julie is working on her dissertation, which will focus on gerontological abuse issues or an area of spirituality/religiosity in social work. She plans to graduate from the doctoral program in 2005.

Andrea McCarter, originally from Maryville, Tennessee, holds a Bachelor's degree and Master's degree in Social Work from The University of Tennessee. Her work and volunteer experience includes one year in direct care with Florence Crittenton Agency, six and a half years in direct care and administrative positions with Child & Family Tennessee, three years with Gamma Sigma Sigma Service Sorority and Alumni chapter. She has held internships with Child & Family Tennessee, Office of Aging, and the Knox Area Rescue Ministry. Andrea is currently working on her dissertation, which focuses on adolescent residential treatment/organizational culture and climate. She plans to graduate from the doctoral program in 2005.

Irma Molina, originally from the Philippines, holds a Master's degree in Social Work. She has received a certificate of recognition from the Professional Regulation Commission for being a core faculty member of Bicol University, located in Legazpi City. (Bicol University was adjudged the top school of social work in the Philippines for the year 2002.) In addition to her work at Bicol University, she has also worked as a Medical Social Worker. Her dissertation

will focus on child sexual abuse in the Philippines. She plans to graduate from the doctoral program within three to five years.

Heather Parris, originally from Kingsport, Tennessee, holds a Bachelor degree in Psychology from the University of Central Arkansas and a Master's degree in Social Work from The University of Tennessee. She worked for Helen Ross McNabb Center for three years, dealing with the severely mentally ill adult population. Currently she is a research assistant for Dr. John Wodarski and is working on her dissertation, which focuses on using computer technology to decrease substance use on college campuses.

Tracy Zaparanick, originally from Dawson Springs, Kentucky, graduated from Hopkinsville Community College—University of Kentucky, in 1987, with an Associate's degree in Applied Science in Business Management. In 1989, she received her Bachelor's degree in Social Work from the University of Kentucky, and in 1992 received her Master's in Social Work from the University of Louisville. Tracy is a certified Licensed Clinical Social Worker and has had the opportunity to work in outpatient and in-patient settings and with long-term and acute care facilities for adolescents and adult populations. Most recently, she has had the pleasure of working in two veterinary medicine academic environments, offering support, educational seminars, and creating research projects. Tracy is currently working on her dissertation, which focuses on compassion fatigue in animal-related careers. She plans to graduate from the doctoral program in May 2005.

The College is pleased to have such an outstanding group of candidates enter the program. We welcome them and wish them good luck in their studies.

Kathy Perkey is a publications specialist with the College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service.

The Ph.D. program offers specialized training in research methods with a focus on direct practice and management and community practice issues. It also

- ◆ Provides access to world-class faculty doing research on the culture and climate of human service agencies, child neglect, foster parenting, juvenile justice, gerontology, antisocial behavior, and school social work.
- ◆ Features guaranteed 3-year stipends and fee waivers and student health insurance.
- ◆ Provides offices for Ph.D. candidates; computers with access to the Web.
- ◆ Presents opportunities to work with Children's Mental Health Services Research Center researchers.
- ◆ Has a regional low cost of living and pleasant yearly climate in the Knoxville area.
- ◆ Is home to two CSWE Minority Fellows.

For information, contact Dr. William R. Nugent, Chair, Ph.D. Program, The University of Tennessee College of Social Work, Henson Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996-3333. Phone 865/974-6481; fax 865/974-6437; email wnugent@utk.edu.

BSSW-SWO Students Again Participate in CANstruction Project for 2002

by Kirche Rogers



(l. to r.) Sara Ehrlich, Architect Thea Miller, and Sunshine Parker made CANstruction 2002 a success.

Twelve students from the University of Tennessee BSSW-Student Social Work Organization (BSSW-SWO) participated in the National CANstruction 2002 competition on November 6, 2002. The event took place at a large shopping mall in Knoxville to benefit Second Harvest Food Bank. This is the second year the BSSW-SWO has participated in this event. CANstruction's mission is to make significant contributions to the fight against world hunger by providing a unique, competitive way for agencies and organizations to donate thousands of cans of food.

Food City of Seymour, Tennessee, donated 600 cans of food and an additional 600 cans of food were purchased by the BSSW-SWO. After transporting the 1,200 cans of food to the mall, the BSSW students, working in groups of 4 to 5 along with the help of a local architectural firm, Sparkman and Associates, built the structure titled "A Guiding Light Across the State: UT College of Social Work." It included the

state of Tennessee with a recessed "Power T" and a beacon with a revolving light. This structure was chosen because the BSSW-SWO wanted to bring attention to the College's 60th anniversary and to the services the College provides to Tennessee.

By early afternoon the project was completed. The College's structure and 17 other entries were on display at the mall for five days. On day five, the project was dismantled, and the cans of food were donated to Second Harvest. The total amount of canned food collected at this event was over 45,000 pounds. "Where a CANstruction event takes place there is a substantial contribution to the fight against hunger," said Frank Spicuzza, BSSW-SWO faculty advisor. "Through the participation in CANstruction, the BSSW students addressed the nutritional needs of many members of the community and enhanced their problem-solving, leadership, and team-building skills."

Sara Ehrlich, a junior in the BSSW program and co-chair of the BSSW-SWO's fundraising committee, helped organize the event. "I think it is a great idea and am hoping that we will be able to build a much bigger structure next year," she said. Ehrlich is already working on design plans for the 2003 CANstruction event and will be soliciting local grocery stores for donations of canned food soon. The BSSW-SWO welcomes donations, help, and input on this project and hopes that other student groups on campus will get involved this year.

For further information regarding the national CANstruction event go to <http://www.canstruction.org>.

Kirche Rogers is a publications specialist for the Social Work Office of Research and Public Service.



The finished product: "A Guiding Light Across the State: UT College of Social Work".

Feature

SWORPS Co-Hosts the 2002 NSDTA Conference

By Betsy DeGeorge

In Tennessee rolling out the red carpet is a combination of the sounds of bluegrass and blues, the intellectual stimulation of over 75 different learning opportunities, and the elegance of Nashville's five-star Opryland Hotel. Last fall, the College of



NSDTA Conference attendees participate in one of the many seminars offered during the four-day event.

Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS), partnering with the American Human Services Association (APHS), the Tennessee Department of Human Services and the Tennessee Department of Children's Services took the chance to roll out that "Volunteer" rug by hosting the 2002 Conference of the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA).

The 15th Anniversary NSDTA Conference took place November 17–20, 2002, at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. Four hundred professionals from all over the United States who specialize in human service staff development and training gathered to enjoy this premier instructional and networking event. As expressed in the

conference slogan, the event "topped the charts" in excellent training offerings while providing a wide variety of experiences and venues for collaborative engagement.

Paul Campbell, Director of SWORPS and host of a popular Tennessee music show, *Mountain Jubilee*, welcomed the conference attendees with a quote from a country song by Barbara Mandrell, "I Was Country When Country Wasn't Cool." He continued, making the observation that SWORPS and the team of organizations hosting the conference "were partnering when partnering wasn't cool." Campbell pointed to a long history of advocacy for closing the gap between state universities and state government services. He said, "I welcome all of you to this conference, which celebrates partnerships of state and local social service and educational interests, and I encourage you to share your knowledge

and experience with institutions that are or will be trying to mobilize to incorporate a model of collaborative outreach engagement."

In addition to the training events, the conference offered an opening reception, featuring Nashville musician Sammy D. Williams, an art showcase, a special musical event at the Gibson Bluegrass Showcase, featuring talented bluegrass, blues, country, and rock 'n' roll musicians, as well as all of the historical, musical, and fun-filled evening events that the city of Nashville has to offer. Dr. Dale Henry, author and president of *Your Best Unlimited* presented the opening keynote address. Randy Cross closed the conference with an engaging address entitled *The Truth as I Have Seen It*.



SWORPS Director of Training Brenda Black and SWORPS Director Paul Campbell at the conference.

Conference planners and participants gave spirited praise for the four-day event. One delegate stated, "The conference was specifically relevant to trainers. Rarely do we get opportunities to talk about training and curriculum development." Another enumerated the best aspects of the conference, saying, "The variety and expertise of workshops, the venue was spectacular; opening keynote, Dr. Dale Henry, got us all in the mood—great!! It all flowed smoothly and in a timely fashion—I felt like this conference was just for me!"



Keynote Speaker Dale Henry meets conference attendants after his presentation.

Conference co-chairperson Darlene Lawson identified the basis for the success of the event. "The collaboration between SWORPS, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Children's Services is what made this conference a success. It was a real team effort!"

Betsy DeGeorge is the manager of publications for the Social Work Office of Research and Public Service.

Mark your calendars to attend the College's Third Annual Homecoming Gala on October 25, 2003!

New Veterinary Social Work Services Program Created in 2002

Veterinary Social Work Services (VSWS) is a program comprised of the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) and the College of Social Work (CSW) that provides services to clients, faculty, staff, and students of the small and large animal clinics. Elizabeth Strand, a third-year Ph.D. student in the CSW and a certified grief

specialist, laid the groundwork for and helped create VSWS in 2002. The collaboration is designed to address the complicated and often emotional issues veterinarians and pet owners face in regard to companion animals. According to Strand, "VSWS serves as a gateway for all people at the College of

Veterinary Medicine to seek supportive services for themselves when they are in need."



Third-year Ph.D. student Elizabeth Strand helped found the Veterinary Social Work Services Program.

CSW Dean, Karen Sowers, and CVM Dean, Michael Blackwell, hope that VSWS will be a demonstration project that other universities can look to for research purposes. Sowers remarks that, "The animal-human bond has been largely ignored in scholarship and practice. I was enormously pleased when Dr. Michael Blackwell was appointed Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine because of his commitment to the human-animal bond and its critical role in society. He saw the partnership between our two Colleges as a natural collaboration."

VSWS counselors Strand, Tracy Zaparanick, a first-year CSW Ph.D. student, and CSW Masters' students April Cox and Roberta Rowe provide counsel to clients of the clinic in the form of pet loss support groups that are designed for owners suffering the loss of a companion animal or dealing with the terminal illness of a companion animal. The VSWS counselors spend several days a week in the clinic offering non-medical guidance to owners who are making decisions, including euthanasia, about the treatment of their pets, providing an outlet for owners to show fear or grief about their animal's diagnosis, and furnishing follow-up services for owners after a loss or terminal diagnosis.

The importance of animals in people's lives and for their mental health cannot be minimized. Dr. John New, the CVM Comparative Medicine Department Head and co-founder of the Human-Animal Bond in Tennessee (HABIT)

program, says companion animals can often provide an emotional support system when there is no other. "For an elderly person living alone, a companion animal is a living creature that is there 24 hours a day—it gives them [the person] a focus for nurturance, which is a human

need. When a person's support system—whether animal or human—is taken away, the person can often plunge into a hopeless state," New says.

In addition to working

with clients of the CVM clinics, VSWS aims to educate veterinary staff about the deep relationships people form with their pets and how this affects their ability to make decisions about the care of their animal, while also emphasizing how important it is for veterinarians to take care of themselves. Individuals place their trust and sometimes the lifelong care of their pet in the hands of their veterinarian, so there is immense pressure for veterinarians to be understanding as well as medically competent.

Blackwell, who was instrumental in bringing VSWS to the clinics, believes that "social workers are better equipped to deal with the broad multidimensional issues that veterinarians often deal with." Everyone in the clinic seems to agree that having the social workers present has contributed to the overall well being of staff members and has increased their ability to help their clients. Veterinarians face patient death five times more than other health care professionals because of the relatively short life spans of animals. If emotions are not dealt with, veterinarians can experience what is known in the medical profession as compassion fatigue.

Zaparanick, a certified compassion fatigue specialist, is currently working to assess the needs of the CVM faculty, staff, and students and how these can be better met. She emphasizes that the pressure veterinarians feel now is more intense

than what professionals experienced 50 years ago. "The value of animals is increasing, so vets are essentially working on a family member. As social workers we need to be able to step away from our own opinions and work from the client's perspective and ... appreciate the relationship a person has with their animal," says Zaparanick.

Strand lists some of the objectives for VSWS, "to provide mental health resources and services—especially stress management and mitigating compassion fatigue—to students, faculty, staff, and clients of the College of Veterinary Medicine, to incorporate education about the human-animal bond, grief, compassion fatigue, and client communication skills within the veterinary curriculum, to work with HABIT and raise awareness about animal assisted therapies as a mode of practice for social workers, to raise awareness about the link between interpersonal violence and animal abuse, and to conduct research in all of these areas."

For more information about VSWS contact Elizabeth Strand at estrand@utk.edu.

—Gina Costello

Is the Management and Community Practice Post-Master's Certificate Program Right for You?

This post-Master's certificate program is designed for persons with master's degrees who specialized in a clinical concentration and now either find themselves in management or administration or would like to prepare themselves to move into a management or community practice position. Participants must complete 15 hours of coursework, including three required courses and two elective courses in management and community practice. Coursework may be taken on a part-time, flexible basis. The program is available at our Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis locations.

Contact program coordinator Dr. Rod Ellis at (615) 256-1885 or rellis5@utk.edu for more information.

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