



Spring/Summer
2008

stimulus

The Alumni Newsletter for the University of Tennessee College of Social Work



Veterinary Social Work: The Hands of Veterinary Medicine, the Heart of Social Work

see pages 5-7

also in this issue:

- The College of Social Work Moves Up in the U.S. News & World Report National Rankings
- Inklebarger Scholarship Creates New Opportunity
- Elliott Moore Named Outstanding Alumna
- CSEPP Coordinator Recognized for His Efforts





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Congratulations are due to all of you! The recently released rankings by U.S. News and World Report of graduate schools of social work ranked the UT College of Social Work 26th overall. That means that YOUR college moved up two spaces in the rankings. This places us 15th among all public institutions.

The strength of our college relies on the quality of our students, the outstanding teaching and research of our faculty, and the leadership of our alumni and donors. Thank you all for your dedication to the college and your help, which brought about this advancement in the rankings.

As you might imagine, moving up is no easy feat. All schools of social work strive to achieve this goal. And, for some of us to move up, others must fall. It is indeed gratifying to see that the progress of our college continues to be recognized nationally.

As you read this issue you will indeed find some of the reasons for our

advancement. The article on evidence-based practice training for faculty (on the facing page) highlights our new, leading-edge curriculum. In addition, our veterinary social work program continues to gain prominence nationally. The only program of its kind in the nation, UT Veterinary Social Work hosted an international conference this April to highlight the importance of veterinary social work and assist others in launching similar programs. (Read this exciting cover story on pages 5 and 6.)

The official kick-off of the UT capital campaign was April 17th, with three social work programs prominently displayed—undergraduate research, the Children's Mental Health Services Research Center, and Veterinary Social Work. As part of the campaign, many donors have stepped forward to endow scholarships and provide funds to support our programs. Thank you to all of you who continue to support us in so many important ways!

Karen M. Sowers

CSW Faculty Participate in Training on Evidence-Based Practice Led by Two Experts in the Field

by Kirche Rogers

On November 9, 2007, faculty members attended a full day of training on evidence-based practice (EBP) in social work, a relatively new development in the field. The purpose of the training was to increase their knowledge of the practice of using research methods and findings to enhance both social work practice and social work policy in response to the new MSSW curriculum, which includes EBP. Faculty members learned new tools and acquired resources that can be used in the classroom to educate future practitioners about EBP.

Drs. Edward Mullen from Columbia University and Aron Shlonsky from the University of Toronto conducted the training using the curriculum titled "Research and Empirical Applications for Curriculum Enhancement in Social Work" (REACH-SW), developed by Danya International, Inc.

EBP is an approach that is used in in direct practice, administrative practice, and policy practice. Using relevant, high-quality research

to make informed decisions about a client's situation and present the best course of action to help the client, while considering his or her values and expectations, is at the heart of EBP. The practitioner's ability to use his or her own skills and past experiences to assess and apply research that will benefit the client is also a very important component.

EBP benefits both the client and practitioner as they work together to make decisions about the client's welfare. The client becomes empowered as he or she collaborates with the practitioner in the treatment and intervention process, and benefits to the practitioner include the improved ability to think critically, practice self-directed learning, and conduct research.

This important method of helping others was chosen to be a part of the college's master's level curriculum because of its rising importance in the field. The curriculum provides cutting edge information that will help MSSW

graduates in their future careers as practitioners, administrators, and policy makers.

Dean Sowers noted the importance of EBP in the college's curriculum: "Many of the clients our graduates will serve will be disenfranchised, poor, and vulnerable. They are as deserving of the best treatments we can provide as any other patient or client."

As the major provider of social workers to the state of Tennessee, we have an obligation to make certain that our graduates are prepared in the best practices of our profession and that they will be skilled in knowing how to keep current with the most effective practices in the future. The training in teaching evidence-based practice offered leading-edge pedagogical techniques to support our new curriculum which relies very heavily on critical thinking, evidence-based practice, and the new research knowledge in neuroscience—all which are rapidly changing the face of social work practice."

—Kirche Rogers is the
Editor of *Stimulus*



Top: Dr. Edward Mullins, Columbia University (wearing tie), provides training to faculty on evidence-based practice.



Bottom: Dr. Aron Shlonsky, University of Toronto (wearing tie), works with faculty during training on evidence-based practice.

On March 28, U.S. News and World Report released its 2009 national rankings of graduate programs. The College of Social Work's graduate program was ranked 26th overall and 15th among public universities. This is a gain of two slots among all schools since it was last ranked in 2005.

Dean Karen Sowers said it is a major accomplishment to move up in these rankings, as UT competes with many top schools. "This is recognition of the outstanding accomplishments of our faculty in scholarly activities and externally funded research," she stated. "Our faculty members are committed to designing and providing leading-edge curricula."

Considering a PhD in Social Work?

The college's PhD 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 three-year stipends and fee waivers and student health insurance.
- Provides offices and computers with access to the Web for all PhD students.
- Presents opportunities to work with Children's Mental Health Services Research Center researchers.
- Is located in Knoxville, a region with a low cost of living and great community.
- Is home to two CSWE Minority Fellows.

For further information, please contact

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Doctoral Student Courtney Cronley Receives HUD Grant

by Betsy DeGeorge

Courtney Cronley, currently a doctoral student at the UT College of Social Work, is one of seven students in the nation to receive an Early Doctoral Student Research Grant (EDSRG) from the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of University Partnerships. This grant award is made to pre-dissertation doctoral students who are cultivating research skills through efforts that focus on housing and urban development issues.

Winning this competitive one-time grant of \$15,000 enables Cronley to pursue research entitled "Assessing the Relationship Between Organizational Social Context and Technology Utilization Among Homeless Service Providers." This is a project that will examine how the social context of agencies relates to homeless management information systems (HMIS) utilization among homeless service providers.

Cronley has a BA degree from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta and an MSSW degree from UT. She is committed to contributing to social change through scholarship. "I think," she muses, "in some disciplines, scholarship is content

with knowledge for knowledge's sake—even if the knowledge brings harm to people or has no relevance. Social work brings scholarship full circle—we seek to answer questions, bring new knowledge into the world, and then apply that knowledge to improving the lives of people."

The proposed research will "assess social context and HMIS utilization among the 12 homeless service providers in the Knoxville Continuum of Care (CoC) using the HMIS. The project will employ a two-stage model analyzing: 1) a cross-sectional survey of staff members to assess agency social context, and 2) data available in the HMIS to assess HMIS utilization by agency. The findings will supply policy makers, practitioners, and academics with new information about how to improve technology utilization and maximize use of the HMIS as a tool of practice for improving homeless service provision."

HMIS is a computer-based data network supported by HUD and has been directed, locally, for some time by college faculty member David Patterson. It is an integral part of the national effort to end chronic

homelessness in the United States. Patterson has stated that the "overarching goals" of the system "are to improve our ability to effectively and efficiently serve individuals, families, and children in need and advance our efforts to end homelessness."

Cronley's research is designed to study barriers to the successful use of the database system by service providers, and will add significantly to the scant literature on the subject by providing a theoretically driven, empirical approach toward identifying and understanding the common challenges faced by human service organizations that serve the homeless population.

Cronley has worked in a research capacity with the Knoxville HMIS for almost three years. She has studied social policy, research methods, statistics, and organizational theory on both the master's and doctoral level. She has prepared manuscripts related to homelessness and HUD's strategies for improving service outcomes. Additionally, she has co-conducted, with David Patterson, research projects examining the nature of homelessness in Knoxville.

Since entering the college's doctoral program in 2006, Cronley's research experience has included: 1) an exploratory study of homeless persons' reactions to HMIS implementation; 2) a pre-post test analysis of use of the HMIS to coordinate care among homeless service providers; 3) an inferential study of pet caretaking among the homeless; and 4) a comparative analysis of mental health institution discharge policies for homeless clients, using a web-based survey. This new project will both build on those projects and open new areas of study that will benefit both local homeless service providers and the national effort to create information exchange systems that dramatically serve homeless populations.

—Betsy DeGeorge is the
Publications Manager for SWORPS



Courtney Cronley, recipient of a HUD grant to study the utilization of technology by service providers, lectures in Tsinghua, China, in July of 2007, about services for the homeless.

Media Enhanced Feature

BSSW Senior Students Participate in Career Services Program



Shawna Hembree from UT Career Services (l.) meets with BSSW student Shireena Weston to work on her resume.

Seniors in the BSSW program are getting a head start on searching for jobs before graduation through a partnership between the college and UT's Career Services department.

Matthew Theriot, assistant professor and interim director of the BSSW program at the college, and Shawna Hembree, career consultant with the Career Services department, started developing the program a year and a half ago. The goal is two-fold: first, to enhance undergraduate and graduate student and alumni awareness of career development and job seeking strategies and, second, to encourage employers to utilize services offered by Career Services. Hembree serves as a resource for students interested in nonprofit/social service and government careers and social service agency and government employers. "We hope students and employers will come to view Career Services as a close partner in their career and recruiting efforts," she stated.

Students are introduced to the Career Services program through a seminar that is required for graduation. The seminar integrates what the students have learned in the program and helps prepare them for life after graduation. "In the seminar, students learn concrete strategies for maximizing their potential," stated Theriot.

Hembree visits the class twice to dis-

cuss resume writing, interviewing, job seeking, and graduate school. Students are also required to participate in a mock interview with Hembree. The interview is taped, which allows students to review their performance and improve their technique. In addition to the seminar, Hembree holds

satellite office hours for students as well as regular appointment hours in the Career Services department. Students can schedule an appointment by calling (865) 974-5435. These meetings provide students the opportunity to meet one-on-one with her to receive more in-depth help with preparing resumes and polishing interviewing skills. Master's students are invited to take advantage of the satellite and regular office hours as well. Students can also access other resources available in the Career Services' Career Resource Library, which has an extensive collection of print resources such as career development guides.

Since the program's inception a year and a half ago, student participation in all areas including individual appointments, registration on the job and resume database—Hire-A-Vol—and attendance at various job fairs has steadily increased. "I believe this is directly correlated with the regular incorporation of Career Services in courses, programming, satellite office hours, and list-serv messages offered by the College of Social Work. Registration in the Hire-A-Vol database has grown from 15 to 50 students and alumni and is expected to continue to grow as we continue the new partnership," Hembree stated.

Andrea Prince, a graduating senior in the BSSW program, has been pleased with the help she has received so far.

"When I met with Shawna, she gave great advice and critique on the elements that need to be added or taken away from my resume. She helped me organize it into a more cohesive and tailored document...I have learned the value of a good cover letter and the importance on having a flawless resume that may need to be tailored specifically to my area of interest."

Currently, 60 nonprofits and social service agencies are registered in the Hire-A-Vol database, but only a handful are actively utilizing the job posting capabilities, on-campus interviewing opportunities, and/or the job fairs. "I would certainly like to see more agencies taking advantage of our services," stated Hembree. "An immediate priority is to establish contact with agencies currently not participating to discuss how our services can be tailored to their specific recruiting needs. I am particularly open to and welcome the opportunity to visit agency sites to increase my own knowledge of the agencies while also informing them about Career Services. Agencies are also encouraged to contact me directly with any questions or requests for services," stated Hembree.

Theriot and Hembree are excited about what the program has to offer students and employers. Noted Theriot, "Shawna has been wonderfully receptive to my efforts to get Career Services more involved with the BSSW program. I am optimistic that the services of the program will really help our graduates be more prepared for life after graduation."

Hembree can be reached by phone at (865) 974-5435 or email: sbhembree@utk.edu.

To access the Hire-a-Vol database, visit http://career.utk.edu/employers/services_recruit.asp.

—Kirche Rogers

The Tennessee
Juvenile Court
Services Association
(TJCSA) will hold
its 25th annual
Joint Conference on
Juvenile Justice on
August 10-13, 2008,
at the Knoxville
Marriott Downtown,
500 Hill Avenue,
in Knoxville. For
more information
or to register to
attend, contact
Elvira Newcomb
at (615) 741-2687
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Newcomb@tscmail.
state.tn.us or Mary
Lindsey, TJCSA
President, at (865)
215-6431 or email:
mary.lindsey@
knoxcounty.org
You can also visit
the TJCSA training
website at <http://www.tennessee.gov/tcjfcj/Training.html>

The setting can be unorthodox and the challenges are great, but Veterinary Social Work holds immense rewards

Compassion in Action: Veterinary Social Work Practice

by Stephanie Piper

Sitting in the waiting room of the UT Veterinary Hospital while her miniature schnauzer, Keebler, underwent treatment, Barbara Underwood noticed brochures for the Veterinary Social work program. "I remember thinking, I hope I never have to use that," Underwood states. But a few weeks later, when Keebler died, Underwood recalled the brochures.

"He was a dear pet, and losing him was a very difficult thing for me," Underwood stated. She attended a Pet Loss Support Group conducted by faculty and graduate students from veterinary social work and, over time, found a way to deal with her grief.

"The group gave me an outlet to talk about my dog, and how hard it was to lose him," Underwood said. "There's

such a stigma in our society about death in general. When you talk about pets, people tend to think they are replaceable. That attitude made me feel angry and isolated. I learned that I had to grieve this loss the way I grieve other losses."

Veterinary social work (VSW) is a partnership between the UT College of Social Work and the College of Veterinary Medicine. Designed to enhance, support, and inform both professions, the program offers graduate and undergraduate training and focuses on grief and bereavement, compassion fatigue, the link between animal and human abuse, and animal-assisted therapies. Dr. Elizabeth Strand developed the program six years ago with the guidance and support of Social Work Dean Dr. Karen Sowers and Veterinary College Dean Dr. Michael Blackwell. This spring, the first Veterinary Social Work Summit was held at UT, bringing together veterinarians, researchers, social workers, and students in this new field from around the world.

"This is a landmark event in the study of the human-animal bond," said Dean Sowers. "We are proud that UT is the first academic institution to bring all four areas of veterinary social work practice together in one program. This partnership exemplifies the university's mission of teaching, research, and public service."

Dr. John New, who heads the Department of Comparative Medicine in the College of Veterinary Medicine, says the program has a powerful effect on students, faculty, and clinicians.

"Veterinarians must deal with human emotion, and we do very little to prepare students to deal with that side of the profession. Social workers are role models for our students and clinicians and for our faculty, teaching healthy coping skills and relieving them of some of the stress related to dealing with people in pain," New stated

Teaching veterinarians and students to take care of themselves is critically important, explained Elizabeth Strand. "Veterinarians deal with death at a rate that is five times higher than doctors who care for humans. My motto is, 'Be kind to yourself or else.' If a veterinarian has had three euthanasias in one day, we seek them out and ask them what they're going to do for themselves."

Veterinary social work teaches skills like Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and communication to help ease the burden on caregivers. Professor of Surgery Karen Tobias says this training has raised the comfort level of students, faculty, and clinicians.

"There has been a great improvement in communication throughout the College of Veterinary Medicine," Tobias noted. "People know they have a place they can go if stress is overwhelming." Veterinary social workers also help clients facing tough decisions about their pets, relieving some of the burden on the vet.



This feature is media enhanced. To view an interview UT Veterinary Social Work Program, go to

"Sometimes I need to relay information quickly and make decisions," stated Tobias. "It's hard for pet owners to make that leap. Social workers can take the time to help clients sort through the options."

Private gifts provide ongoing support for the program and help fund graduate fellowships. "This unique partnership between veterinary medicine and social work depends on the generosity of individual donors to continue its vitally important work," said Dean Karen Sowers. "The training, research and compassionate outreach of the program have already had a profound impact in both colleges and in the community. Our donors help to insure that veterinary social work continues to flourish."

—**Stephanie Piper is the Development Director for the College of Social Work**

The Genesis of Veterinary Social Work as a Sub-Specialty

When Dr. Elizabeth Strand started the UT VSW program in 2002, there wasn't a specific veterinary social work discipline already established. Out of the 28 veterinary schools nationwide, only a handful had a mental health professional onsite. "It came into my head that we needed to develop a 'best practice' [model] and develop a sub-specialty such as we have in oncological social work or school social work," she explains.

Dr. John New, the head of the Department of Comparative Medicine at the UT College of Veterinary Medicine, was on her doctoral committee and had a long-established rapport with the CSW. With his help and with the support of the CSW, she started developing best practices as part of her graduate assistantship.

Strand says that at that time the vet school was "a very unorthodox setting." She was the only social worker there and had no dedicated office space. "We had just a folder on the wall," she laughs. That folder

was where veterinary students and medical staff passed along requests for assistance with pet owners or asked for counseling for themselves.

Over the years, the program has grown to include two counseling rooms, an assistant director, three veterinary social work interns, and three veterinary social work PhD fellows. "We really are implementing the same approaches for intervention in this environment that you would find in a human medical hospital. The only difference is that what brings people here is the love that they have for their companion animals," says Strand. She states that the VSW program now often gets calls from other social workers around the country who want to use this program as a model for their own practice. They often start by saying, "You mean there's a discipline for what I'm doing!" she exclaims, adding, "There's a real hunger to get training, to get certification, to have a solidifying presence."

—**Margot Kline**

Veterinary Social Work Summit is a Success!

The Veterinary Social Work Summit, held April 17–20, 2008, was the first of its kind and provided an opportunity for veterinary social workers from across the world to come together to educate and be educated, to network and be connected, and to strengthen and solidify the new sub-specialty of social work practice.

The Summit included expert presenters on the four practice areas of veterinary social work—the link between human and animal violence, animal-assisted interventions, grief and bereavement, and compassion fatigue. There was also an international panel and evening dinner discussion on the human-animal bond across the nations.

The Summit was a great success, and the Colleges of Social Work and Veterinary Medicine were honored to sponsor the event.

—**Kathy Williams**

Veterinary Social Work Hosts First Annual Pet Memorial Day

by **Kathy Williams**

On September 9, 2007, Veterinary Social Work and the UT College of Veterinary Medicine held their first annual Pet Memorial Day at the UT Gardens. The free event took place to give pet owners the opportunity to honor a beloved pet they have lost. At the event, the attendees enjoyed refreshments and were invited to me-



Pet owners Boyce Ezell, Mae Belle Wyatt, and Barbara Underwood, who have used the services of the UT Veterinary Social Work Program, attended the first annual Pet Memorial Day.

morialize their pets by sharing pictures, stories, poems, songs, etc. They were also given the opportunity to make a monetary donation to the veterinary social work program in memory of their pets. Anyone who made a donation was given a wooden heart on which they could write their pet's name. These wooden hearts were then displayed in the UT College of Veterinary Medicine and College of Social Work. Attendees were provided an opportunity to reflect and remember their pets as they walked through the gardens. Before leaving the event, each participant was given two flower bulbs to take home and plant in memory of their pets.

Tiffany Pennington, a clinical intern in the veterinary social work program, organized the event and explained why it is so important to pet owners. "Events, such as Pet Memorial Day, are important because they allow pet owners and organizations to reflect, reminisce, and honor pets and/or working dogs whom they have lost. Creating an opportunity to remember and to gather with other people who have also experienced the loss of an animal can be very therapeutic in that it validates feelings and the relationship that existed. We at Veterinary Social Work were so happy to provide an event like this, and we look forward to providing additional opportunities like this in the future."

There were 15 people in attendance at last year's event, but the veterinary social work program expects this number to grow over the years and become a highly anticipated event.

This year's Pet Memorial Day will take place on Sunday, September 14, 2008. For more information on the event, contact Veterinary Social Work's hotline at (865) 755-8839.

—**Kathy Williams is the Training Coordinator for SWORPS**

with Elizabeth Strand, the founder of the
www.csw.utk.edu/stimulus.com

Dean Sowers Co-Edits Foundational Social Work Handbook

Karen Sowers is co-editor of a reference set titled *Comprehensive Handbook of Social Work and Social Welfare*. This four-volume set was published in March 2008 by Wiley Publishers.

This handbook presents a comprehensive and up-to-date review of the constantly evolving field of social work, featuring contributions from renowned national and international experts. It is organized by major foundational areas within the social work curriculum, including the profession of social work, human behavior in the social environment, social work practice, and social policy and policy practice. Each volume includes cutting-edge information related to all aspects of the profession to guide practice and policy decision-making across the field. Social work researchers, educators, practitioners, and students will gain important insight as well as practical resources related to this dynamic profession.

The handbook is available at the Wiley website: <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0471752223.html>

UT Vet School Dean Emeritus Michael Blackwell and Professor John New Awarded Social Work Honors

by Vicky Bridgeforth

Every year the Heart of Social Work Award is given by the college to honor those who give a significant contribution to the College of Social Work and make a difference in the life of the college. Dr. Michael Blackwell, former dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, was honored with the Heart of Social Work Award and Dr. John New, professor and head of the Department of Comparative Medicine, was honored with the Appreciation Award for Education of Social Work Students for their tremendous efforts as mentors and facilitators of research efforts of students within the College of Social Work.

What led to doctors of Veterinary Medicine being given awards by the College of Social Work? It was a partnership formed by the Dean of the College of Social Work, Dr. Karen Sowers, and the former Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Michael Blackwell's recognition of the potential for educational growth, understanding, and empathy between the two fields. Dr. Blackwell entered his term of service as the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine with a major goal in mind—to integrate the theories and



Dr. Michael Blackwell, former dean of the UT College of Veterinary Medicine

practices of social work into the practice and value system of veterinary medicine. "While the concept of combining social work and veterinary medicine is not a new one, two major events in my professional experience propelled my determination to form a partnership with the College of Social Work. While operating a private practice in Maryland, I was struck by the length to which people will go to protect and care for their pets and the power of the emotional connections that are created as a direct

response to the human-animal bond," said Dr. Blackwell. "The emotional bond between humans and animals and my work as the Chief of Staff for the Office of the Surgeon General of the United States gave me a deeper appreciation for the need for assistance and support for people's emotional health and well-being in regards to dealing with the pressures and weight of making complicated decisions about the medical care of their pets. I believe that the need for emotional support and empathy within the veterinary medicine field is self-evident."

Dr. John New is ready to continue supporting the Veterinary Social Work (VSW) program initiative where Dr. Michael Blackwell left off. "I am encouraged by how areas that have different but similar interests are able to build on each other so successfully". For Dr. New, the importance of the bond that forms between humans and animals and how we relate to each other has always been significant. Shortly after receiving a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Minnesota, Dr. New joined the faculty of the University of Tennessee's College of Veterinary Medicine where he has spent the last 30 years dedicating his time to teaching and community service. In 1986, he helped found a program for the UT College of Veterinary Medicine named

HABIT, Human-Animal Bond in Tennessee. HABIT is a nonprofit, community-based group of volunteers who work to provide animal-assisted therapy programs for people of all ages in a variety of settings including nursing homes, assisted living centers, hospitals, mental health



Dr. John New, head of the Department of Comparative Medicine UT's College of Veterinary Medicine

facilities, schools, and rehabilitation centers. Dr. New remembers one of his first encounters with the field of social work when Dr. Ellen Netting, an MSSW alumna from the University of Tennessee, conducted a research project on the human/animal bond. "What impressed me most about her was her intelligence and the compassion she brought to trying to help people and animals," said Dr. New.

A lot of people do not realize the connection between the possibilities for collaborative research between the two colleges but Dr. New recognizes them instinctively. "Veterinarians are three to five times more likely to witness the death of their patients, compared to physicians, due to the shorter life spans of animals. Death is an emotional experience and we have a lot to learn from social workers ranging from dealing with grieving clients to how to take care of ourselves."

In the future Dr. New would like to see a social worker associated with every veterinary practice in the United States. For now he is satisfied with demonstrating to students the benefits of the veterinary medicine and social work partnership so that they can take the tools and knowledge learned at UT and apply them to their own practices after graduation. "The VSW motto, 'The hands of veterinary medicine in the heart of social work' rings true because our partnership has tapped into the fundamental needs of our society. By giving our clients, students, faculty, and practicing veterinarians the opportunity to discuss the pain and stress associated with losing their companion animals, we are helping people, caring for animals, and drawing attention to the important contributions of social work to public health."

"Dr. Blackwell played a critical role in developing and implementing the veterinary social work program," said Dean Sowers. "His vision and dedication have made this program a reality. We will always be grateful to Dr. Blackwell for his partnership with the college and his leadership. Dr. John New has been a tremendous aide to the College of Social Work by serving on several social work doctoral dissertation committees and working with students in the VSW program. We look forward to a continuing and productive relationship between the College of Social Work and the College of Veterinary Medicine in the future and are confident that many more successes are waiting for us over the horizon."

—Vicky Bridgeforth is the Production Coordinator for SWORPS

Coordinator of Child Support Employment and Parenting Program (CSEPP) Recognized for His Work in the Community

Matthew Keller, coordinator of the Child Support Employment and Parenting Program (CSEPP) in Knox County and employee of the College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS), along with coworkers Debbie

Abrams-Cohen and Christie Richardson, have the challenging task of encouraging noncustodial parents to support their children. They have taken on the responsibility with enthusiasm and a strong commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of their clients.

Keller was featured in the December 2007 issue of the *Child Support Report*, published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). The article praised Keller and his team's one-on-one approach to helping parents find ways to get back on their feet and take responsibility for their children. Their case management skills and strong relationships with community partners were cited as contributing to clients' success in providing for their children.

The CSEPP program began under

an OCSE 1115 demonstration grant in 2003. Partnering with SWORPS, the organizations Policy Studies, Inc. and the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) Child Support Enforcement Division, and community and faith-based agencies work to



help noncustodial parents overcome barriers to employment, including transportation, lack of sufficient housing, health problems, mental health issues, difficulty fulfilling basic needs, and lack of education. The parents are either referred to the CSEPP program through the Knox County TDHS

Child Support Enforcement Division, the courts, or community agencies. Self-referral is another way in which clients take advantage of the program's services. "Most people want to do the right thing," Keller stated.

The first step in the process is to determine the parent's current situation. "We complete an assessment and then make referrals from there," Keller explained. A typical case plan includes helping parents find housing and obtain job-readiness training. Additionally, clients are referred

to organizations that specialize in housing for homeless people, faith-based responsible-fatherhood programs, and mental health needs. "With help from a housing specialist and other community resources," Keller explained, "the clients then have a team of people working with them." CSEPP's relationship with parents is ongoing, however. "After putting clients in touch with community resources, we continue our one-on-one work until they become self-sufficient and are able to have more positive involvement in the lives of their children."

To measure the success of the program, an evaluation of participation is being conducted by the SWORPS Research and Evaluation Unit. The program averages 35 active cases with a steady flow of new enrollees. Keller has had success in building one-on-one relationships with clients. One includes a homeless client who self-referred to the CSEPP program. He had seven children to support and through the help of CSEPP obtained temporary residence and job training, and he eventually found a job and was able to start paying child support. When his clients see Keller in the community, they express pride in what they have accomplished through the help of the CSEPP team. One said, "Hey Matt, I'm still working and still paying my child support!" Another stated, "...of all people, Child Support has helped me more today than anyone." This kind of feedback is gratifying to Keller, knowing that he has made a difference in helping parents get on their feet and support their children.

"These kinds of successes provide evidence that programs like CSEPP do give noncustodial parents real opportunities to remove barriers to employment and make good choices for the betterment of themselves and their families," stated Paul Campbell, director of SWORPS.

—Kirche Rogers

Elliott Moore (MSSW '78) Named Outstanding Alumna



Elliott Moore has been named Outstanding Alumna of the college. Moore was recognized for this honor at the college's Homecoming Gala last November.

Moore received her master's in social work from the University of Tennessee in 1978, and since then has continued to demonstrate her outstanding dedication to the university and the social work community. She is very active in the College of Social Work, where she serves on the Board of Visitors and is the chair of the college's capital campaign. Moore has more than 20 years of experience in government relations with an emphasis on health, mental health, and family policy. She is the past president of the Hospital Alliance of Tennessee and previously served as the executive director of the National Association of Social Workers—Tennessee Chapter. Moore is currently the assistant vice president of Community and Government Relations at Mountain States Health Alliance, a thirteen hospital healthcare system with headquarters in Johnson City, Tennessee.

Dean Karen Sowers praised Moore's work in the field, stating, "Elliott has been a leader in quality healthcare in the state of Tennessee for years. She has provided great guidance to the college and now, in her role as chair of the college's capital campaign, she has given of her time and talents in helping the college reach our campaign goal. I am so very grateful to have such an outstanding alum who not only exemplifies all the qualities of a great social worker but who is also so committed to her alma mater."

Moore expressed her gratitude for the award by stating, "I want to thank Dean Sowers and the college for this special recognition. Although my career ultimately took a nontraditional path, my social work education prepared and led me to where I am today. I want to express my appreciation to the UT College of Social Work for providing the foundation for this fulfilling professional journey."

—Kathy Williams

The following is a list of some of the agencies responding to referrals from CSEPP:

- ◆ Tennessee Career Centers
- ◆ Community Mediation Center
- ◆ Helen Ross McNabb Center
- ◆ Child and Family Tennessee
- ◆ Salvation Army
- ◆ Knox County Schools Adult Education
- ◆ Community Coalition on Family Violence
- ◆ Knoxville Urban League
- ◆ Goodwill Industries
- ◆ Department of Human Services
- ◆ Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitation Services
- ◆ Compassion Coalition
- ◆ Knox Area Rescue Ministries
- ◆ Volunteer Ministry Center
- ◆ Knox County Community Action Committee
- ◆ Knox County Christian Women's Job Corps
- ◆ Knox County Health Department
- ◆ Catholic Charities
- ◆ Heart of Knoxville Career & Resource Center
- ◆ Anglic Ministries

To make a referral to the CSEPP program please call:

865-291-0685

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Child Support Employment and Parenting Program

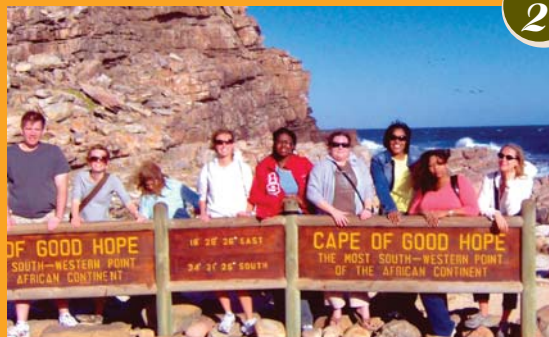


Child Support Services
507 S. Gay Street
Suite 400
Knoxville, TN 37902



1

1. Karen Sowers (second from r.) meets in Colima, Mexico, with grant partners on the US/Canada/Mexico Student Exchange Project. The project is funded by the governments of each country.



2

2. College of Social Work faculty and students (l. to r.) Dr. Sam MacMaster, Kimberly Fyke, Dr. Cindy Davis, Catherine Wright, Sherry Bougard, Ashley Wade, Binta Alleyne, Betina Scott, and Natalie Worley finally reach the southern most point of Africa!



3

3. Sam MacMaster, associate professor, enjoys a little play time with the children in Capetown, South Africa.



4

4. Cindy Davis, associate professor, teaches children to count in English in South Africa during a Spring Break trip.



5

5. Dean Sowers participates in the college's Phi Alpha Honor Society Initiation in Memphis on February 6, 2008.

6. Provost Holub (far right) joins in the singing of "The 12 Days of Christmas" with (l. to r.) Professor Emeritus Frank Spicuzza, Sabine Holub, and alumna Billie Spicuzza at the college's annual holiday party.



6

7. (l. to r.) Betty Robinson, Dean Sowers, Carol Tindell, June Terrell, and Chuck Tindell joined members of the CSW Board of Visitors and friends at the holiday party.



7



8

8. Dean Sowers holds an open forum with BSSW students.



9

9. MSSW students Elaine Wilson (l.) and Sarina Lyall (r.) joined other social work students in collecting more than 150 coats for the KARM's Coats for the Cold program. Wilson chaired the drive.

Endowed Scholarship Established in Honor of William Steven Inklebarger Offers CSW Students New Opportunities



William Steven (Steve) Inklebarger, who died while on a rescue mission, has been honored by his family and friends with an endowed CSW scholarship.

For the Inklebargers, the University of Tennessee is a family affair. Sula Inklebarger has two degrees from the university, her bachelor's degree in business and a master's in social work. Her daughter, Lynn Barnes, is a graduate of UT, as are her grandchildren, Heather Wisniowski and Steven Barnes.



Heather Wisniowski and Steven Barnes, Steve Inklebarger's niece and nephew, are U.T. graduates, as is their grandmother Sula, who received her MSW here.

Sula's son, William Steven Inklebarger, also received his BA degree from the university. A 1975 graduate, Steve Inklebarger was a member of Army ROTC, Scabbard and Blade, and Sigma Chi fraternity. Following graduation,

Steve served in the Army and attained the rank of Captain. He was killed in a helicopter crash in 1982, while attempting to rescue a fallen mountain climber in Colorado.

To honor his memory, the Inklebarger family and their friends established the William Steven Inklebarger Memorial Scholarship Fund. For many years, the fund was used to help Sigma Chi fraternity members who were pursuing graduate education at UT. Last year, the family and the fund's Board of Directors made the decision to use the fund to establish the William Steven Inklebarger Endowed Scholarship in the College of Social Work. The scholarship will provide financial assistance to a graduate student enrolled at UT Knoxville.

Sula Inklebarger began her graduate study in 1958. It was the first year that graduate study in social work was offered on the Knoxville campus. "I loved it. I was a natural born social worker," she recalls. "There were only 15 of us in that class, and we just sort of bonded. It was a wonderful experience." She received her MSW in 1964.

Sula worked for the Tennessee Department of Human Services for 30 years, first as a child welfare worker and later as a supervisor of financial assistance programs. "I've always felt close to the college and social work," she says. "Any money I had to give over the years I have designated to the college."

The new scholarship, she hopes, will "give someone the same chance that I had to further their education in the field of social work. I had a scholarship, and I want someone else to have that advantage. And because of my son, I'd love to see it go to a veteran or someone who plans to enter military service."

The scholarship agreement stipulates that preference will be given to applicants who are past or present members of the armed forces, or who plan to enter the military after graduation. Preference will also be given to applicants who plan to work in rural Appalachia.



Steve Inklebarger's mother, Sula Inklebarger (l.), his sister, Lynn Inklebarger Barnes (r.), and Lynn's husband Don Barnes (center).

The scholarship is a way of honoring the dedication and purpose that characterized her brother's life, says Lynn Inklebarger Barnes. "I wish that my children, Heather and Steven, who are both grown and successful UT grads, could have known their beloved uncle," Lynn says. "Steve would have been so proud of them. Through this scholarship, we hope to create opportunities for new generations of students to fulfill their dreams."

—Stephanie Piper

Caldwell Receives 2007 Heart of Social Work Award



One of the many people honored at the college's Homecoming Gala in November was Dan Caldwell. Dean Karen Sowers presented Caldwell with the 2007 Heart of Social Work Award for his dedication and contributions to the social work field.

Caldwell has worked at Cornerstone of Recovery (Cornerstone) for 18 years where he is now the president and CEO. He helped develop Cornerstone's treatment philosophy and gain accreditation from the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. He was also a key player in making Cornerstone one of the leading treatment centers in the region. He is a member of the National Association of Addiction Treatment Providers and the Tennessee Alcohol and Drug Association. He serves on the boards of the Healthcare 21 Business Coalition and the East Tennessee Mental Health Association.

In response to receiving the award, Caldwell stated, "I was honored to receive the award on behalf of Cornerstone of Recovery. Our patients and their families would have poor chances of recovery without the efforts of our Family Therapy Department. The College of Social Work has provided Cornerstone a continuous stream of clinicians that come to us as interns and family therapists and many have become key leaders in our treatment center. I am certainly grateful for the recognition but more grateful for what Cornerstone continues to receive from the College of Social Work."

—Kathy Williams

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College of Social Work

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