

stimulus

UT COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK ALUMNI MAGAZINE — Spring/ Summer 2013

Study Finds Poor Health Linked to Poverty

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, College of Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) provided data collection for a recent Knox County Health Department study that ties low income to poor health.

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also in this issue...

Dean Karen Sowers Recognized as Distinguished Scholar | Tennessee First Lady Crissy Haslam Receives Douglas Henry Award
Ayat Nashwan is First Jordanian Woman to Complete Social Work PhD in the U.S.

Welcome to the Spring Stimulus!



Welcome to the spring 2013 issue of *Stimulus*. This has been a year of celebrations, honors, and awards! I marvel at the continued accomplishments of the college and greatly appreciate the support of our faculty, staff, alums, students, and community. This April we honored First Lady Crissy Haslam with the Senator Douglas Henry Award in recognition of her tireless efforts in increasing literacy and a systematic and comprehensive approach to support the developmental processes of young children. First Lady Haslam has embodied the vision of Senator Henry, who has continuously advocated on behalf of the safety and well-being of the state's most vulnerable citizens.

We are pleased in this issue to recognize faculty who continue to engage in critically important research. Dr. Charles Glisson was recognized by the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, an honorific society of distinguished scholars and practitioners, as a fellow of the Academy. Membership is determined by election of one's peers and is one of the highest honors bestowed in social work and social welfare. I was recognized by the National Academies of Practice as a Distinguished Scholar Fellow. Dr. John Wodarski's research on "Teams-Games-Tournaments" was nationally recognized and included in the U.S. Office of Justice CrimeSolutions.gov Program listing.

Perhaps one of the most exciting events of the year was the College of Social Work and the College of Veterinary Medicine's International Veterinary Social Work Summit. It was an honor to host our two keynote speakers, Dr. Temple Grandin and Dr. Hal Herzog. Dr. Grandin, by her research on humane animal-handling and her innovation, and Dr. Herzog, by encouraging people to think critically about the human-animal connection through his extensive and widespread research, represent the best of research and ethical practice at the intersection between humans and animals.

The college's Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) continues to provide valuable leadership for the state, the region, and the nation. SWORPS's Center for Research and Evaluation, in assistance to the Knox County Health Department, collected data that explored the relationship between poverty and the correlates to poor health.

Again, let me thank each and every one of you for your support of the college. Your commitment to the college is nothing short of amazing! It is a privilege to work with such dedicated faculty, bright and enthusiastic students, and strong supporters of the college. Because of all of you, our future remains bright as we move forward in important ways to not only remain relevant to practice concerns but also in creating new knowledge to lead us into the future.

Thanks for all you do to support the college!

Ann M. Dowds

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News from around the College, the State, and the World

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by Elizabeth DeGeorge

Ayat Nashwan ('13) Will be the First Jordanian Woman to Complete a Social Work PhD in the U.S.

Several years ago, the University of Tennessee began the Ready for the World initiative. The College of Social Work immediately embraced the ideas of this program, encouraging students to gain international and intercultural knowledge that they need to succeed in today's world and seeking to attract international students to come to our campus.



Ayat Nashwan is completing her doctoral dissertation on acculturative stress and social support among Arab adolescents in the U.S.

One student who has become a welcome part of the college for the past three years is Ayat Nashwan. This social work PhD student hails from Amman, Jordan, where her family found refuge after leaving Hebron in Palestine.

In January 2013, *The Huffington Post* featured Nashwan in an article on Palestinian mothers who defy the odds, saying that by committing to her dreams, ideals, and ambitions to improve her community, she has been an inspiration to those around her. Her fellow students and friends from Knoxville know that this is certainly true.

Nashwan and her family always valued education. As a student at the University of Jordan, she worked hard and graduated first in her class in sociology. Though recently married and raising a newborn, Nashwan followed her dream of earning a Master's degree. Then, acting on the advice of an academic mentor, she pursued a scholarship to study abroad.

Nashwan states, "I applied to 10 schools of social work in the United States, but immediately upon receiving my acceptance at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, I confirmed! The curricu-

lum of the PhD program matched my needs in the focus on research and teaching." A recipient of a scholarship from Yarmouk University in Jordan, Nashwan will be the first Jordanian woman to graduate from the U.S. with a PhD in social work.

When she arrived in Tennessee, her English was not strong, but within days of her arrival Nashwan began classes. Her language skills have improved to the point that she not only understands and speaks informally, but has also taught as a guest lecturer in several classes and is a teaching assistant in the college. She is grateful for the support she has received from the Knoxville community as well as through the people at the College of Social Work and says she feels very blessed to have come here.

Currently, Nashwan is completing her doctoral dissertation on the subject of acculturative stress and social support among Arab adolescents in the U.S. Nashwan has been very inspired by her studies to develop ideas in relation to teaching and research.

"Knowledge is power," states Nashwan. "The system of study in the U.S. is strong because of its emphasis on classroom interaction." Her ultimate goal is to assist others in Jordan who have a vision for international education to experience the same opportunities that she has had. She finds that being the first in her field of study gives her a sense of responsibility to help perpetuate opportunity.

Nashwan lives in Knoxville with her husband, Nashwan, a professor with a PhD in physical education, and their three daughters, 8-year-old Riyam, 4-year-old Liyan, and 1-year-old Rand.

"The college is open to diversity, which is important to me," reports Nashwan. "Teachers draw on my experience from Jordan in the classroom, and I have found a friendly social environment, which is helpful not just to me but also to my family."

After graduation, the family will return to Jordan, and Nashwan plans to teach at a university, where she hopes to train the next generation of social workers and also empower women to pursue education and scholarship.

First Lady Crissy Haslam Receives Senator Douglas Henry Award

"Senator Douglas Henry has been called the 'patron saint of children and social workers' for his long and dedicated service to the children and families of Tennessee," states Dean Karen Sowers. She adds, "During his years in the State

Legislature, he has sponsored numerous bills that affect the safety and well-being of the state's most vulnerable citizens. The Senator Douglas Henry Award was created by the University of Tennessee College of Social Work in recognition of his inspiring example."

Since 2008, the award has been presented to an individual or organization whose work exemplifies Senator Henry's dedication to children and families at risk. Each year, the Senator Henry Award is presented during the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare awards luncheon. This year's award is especially important, as the conference is celebrating its 100 year anniversary of advocacy and service. The 2013 recipient is Crissy Haslam, wife of Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam. "We are pleased to honor Mrs. Haslam for the important work she is doing in promoting literacy," states Dean Sowers.

As First Lady of Tennessee, Mrs. Haslam has introduced the Read20 Family Book Club, which focuses on the interplay between family engagement and literacy improvement in Tennessee. She has been traveling the state to stress the importance of parents as first teachers and as education partners, and also to raise awareness for the exponential value of reading at grade level by the third grade.



Crissy Haslam reads to elementary school groups across Tennessee to help promote literacy.

"Literacy can be the most important skill to promote success in school and in life," says Mrs. Haslam. She adds, "The Read20 Family Book Club aims to provide students with fun reading experiences and encourage them to practice their literacy skills for at least 20 minutes each day. We want all of our Tennessee students to have a high quality education and opportunity to succeed in and out of the classroom."

— Elizabeth DeGeorge is the SWORPS Assistant Director of Publications and Media Technology

3 CSW Course on International Social Work Attracts Online Students Around the Globe

Cindy Davis, PhD, introduces a new course which encourages integration of global peer-learning in an online environment

Imagine 24 graduate-level social workers discussing these questions: “What skills do you need to become an international social worker?” and “What are the changes needed in your social work education and social work education globally to train effective international social workers?”



Cindy Davis

Now imagine that these students are not just together in a room in Tennessee, but are studying in China, Hong Kong, South Africa, Mexico,

Uganda, and the United States. They dialog, share ideas, and represent perspectives that surprise and enlighten.

A discussion like the one described is not imaginary, but actually took place as part of a graduate elective course entitled *International Social Work*, offered online in the Master's Program of the College of Social Work. Taught by Dr. Cindy Davis, the course is designed to introduce students to the theories and perspectives that underpin current thinking and practice in international social work.

A Combination of Global Initiative and Online Study

“This course is really a part of the *Ready for the World* initiative at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville,” explains Davis. “The experience adds a fresh dimension to what would otherwise be a standard class. The depth of discussion is incredible, and the learning is invaluable.”

Davis and the college received a Creative Teaching Grant from the UT Teaching and Learning Center to assist in setting up this course. Davis, who has spent years living in various places around the world, established connections with universities that have graduate social work programs. After receiving the approval of those institutions, the elective course was offered to students at the other locations and at UT who met the qualifications for participation in the experience.

“We required that those seeking to enroll in this class express a verifiable interest in international social work. Because of the limited class size, we sought students with either experience in or commitment to global practice,” says Davis.

The class is conducted primarily under an asynchronous study model. Initial plans for synchronous sessions were not adopted because of the wide differences in time zones and schedules for class members. Each session of study included a recorded lecture as well as a course “coffee shop” (chat room), where students could meet online for discussion and interaction.

In the chat room environment, assignments were discussed and topics critiqued. Students kept journals that Dr. Davis read each week. Even Facebook was utilized as a means for students to become acquainted and stay connected.

Assignments included watching videos, listening to podcasts, reviewing training manuals, and reading the textbook—a newly released publication entitled *Handbook for International Social Work*. One of the uses for the grant money was to make sure that a copy of the textbook was available for each student regardless of his or her financial situation.

“I am glad to see our students engaging in this kind of cooperative international experience,” comments Dean Sowers. “Students who have had global exposure of this nature will be far more likely to say, ‘I could go there’ or ‘I could do that’ than students who have not had such an experience. Plus, this course is a pilot and a model for more exciting programs of its kind.”

Similarities and Differences

In every nation, social workers address human needs and social justice issues. However, in different cultures, varying matters are the center of focus. In China, for example, students are seriously debating issues related to free speech, while students in South Africa look at how to equitably provide social services to previously disadvantaged groups. In the United States, concerns are expressed about gender and sexuality issues, and in Uganda, students speak of the problems related to various human rights violations.

Regardless of their culture-specific concerns, all students were able to relate to the peer-learning model and equally participate in discussions related to social work ethics based on the International Federation of Social Workers Statement of Ethical Principles (<http://ifsw.org/policies/statement-of-ethical-principles/>). Dr. Davis points out that all students understand the value of these principles, which are not derived from a narrow Western bias.

The success of this course has led to plans to offer it again next spring. Dr. Davis anticipates expanding the liaisons with additional universities, including ones in Borneo and Australia, as well as increasing the impact of faculty from those institutions by including them as lecturers and discussion leaders.

— Elizabeth DeGeorge



As part of a Fullbright Fellowship, Cindy Davis (center) traveled to Malaysia, where she taught workshops regarding online course development and delivery.

What's **Happening** in the **Field of** **Veterinary Social** **Work**

4



Veterinary Social Workers Meet for Third International Summit



Hal Herzog, UT alumnus, and Temple Grandin, who promote animal rights and understanding, keynoted at the 2013 Veterinary Social Work Summit.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Colleges of Social Work and Veterinary Medicine hosted the Third International Veterinary Summit in April 2013. World-renowned animal and veterinary experts Dr. Temple Grandin and Dr. Hal Herzog were the keynote speakers, and many leaders in the field conducted seminars on topics ranging from *Canines and Childhood Cancer* to *Compassion Fatigue in Veterinary Practice*.

The 3-day summit focused on the question “Is there a role for social work in the care and welfare of animals?”

There's more online!

Go online for the media enhanced issue of *Stimulus*—interactive features and links available only online: <http://www.csw.utk.edu/about/stimulus>



Presentations and break-out sessions were grouped using the four areas of Veterinary Social Work:

1. The Link Between Violence to Animals and Violence to People
2. Grief and Bereavement
3. Animal-Assisted Interactions
4. Compassion-Fatigue Management

Organizers of the summit incorporated both playful team building activities and mindfulness practice throughout the conference. The reason for this was to honor and replicate what many of the participants love about animals—their playfulness and their ability to simply exist in the present.

Temple Grandin presented the Thursday morning keynote address, which encouraged attendees to approach practice with “bottom-up thinking” that allows the specificity of cases and situations to enlighten understanding. Grandin is a well-known author and speaker on the subjects of humane treatment of animals and autism. Diagnosed with autism as a child, Grandin nonetheless pursued advanced degrees in psychology and animal science. She is credited with designing animal slaughter facilities across the world that eliminate fear and suffering from the processes.

Hal Herzog, author of *Some We Love, Some We Hate, Some We Eat: Why It's So Hard to Think Straight About Animals*, is an alum of the UT Department of Psychology and is a professor of psychology at Western Carolina University. He draws on more than two decades of research in the emerging field of anthro-zoology, the science of human-animal relations. Herzog presented the Friday keynote address.

Both experts explored the moral conundrums related to life with animals, in their presentations and in extensive question and answer sessions.

— Elizabeth DeGeorge

Pavlov, the Courthouse Dog, is the First of His Kind in Tennessee

The saying that a dog is human's best friend is proving to be more than just an axiom in Clarksville, Tennessee, where College of Social Work alumna Tiffany Trussell and the Child Advocacy Center are using Pavlov, a dog, to comfort anxious children while they are interviewed or testify in cases of traumatic abuse.

“It's incredible to watch an anxious child reach for him and find a sense of peace,” says Trussell, who is also involved in community-based advocacy for abused children, a parenting class, and a supervised visitation program.

While Pavlov cannot technically be classified as a therapy dog—it would create a sense of bias, legally-speaking, Trussell explains—his role as a calming presence is invaluable.

Animal-human relations is an important field of inquiry in social work, and the use of dogs for purposes like Pavlov's is an exciting new innovation in treatment and advocacy work known as Animal-Assisted Interaction (AAI). AAI is currently used in a variety of settings, with a variety of animals, for a variety of reasons, all characterized by their utilization of the unique relationship between people and the animal world.

Dolphins have been used for physical and cognitive therapies; horses have been used for mental health purposes; and it's not uncommon to see dogs in the hallways of nursing homes and assisted living communities. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Hodges Library even has dogs in its lobby during high stress periods for students, like final exams, for petting and playing—and de-stressing.

“I'm very excited about it,” says Trussell. Pavlov, who has his own Facebook Fan Page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pavlov-the-Courthouse-Dog/135984023223040>), is the state's first courthouse dog, but with the growing usage of animals for therapeutic reasons, he may very well be the leader of a pack.

—Thomas Walker



SWORPS Collaborations

The CSW Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) collaborates with state and regional agencies and organizations to provide answers to questions like, “Does poverty cause poor health?”

by Thomas Walker

UT SWORPS professionals include researchers, program specialists, statisticians, programmers, writers, trainers, instructional designers, content and assessment experts, accountants, designers, IT specialists, editors, and conference planners. SWORPS works with a wide variety of agencies and organization, and the findings from their research as well as their comprehensive studies and support services provide critical assistance to the services community.

Research Conducted by SWORPS Center for Research and Evaluation Helps the Department of Health Make Critical Correlations Between Poverty and Health

Tucked away in a series of offices and cubicles in the UT Conference Center, away from campus in downtown Knoxville and mostly out of sight, is a unit of the College of Social Work that many may never have heard of, but which is at the heart of the college’s core commitments to social justice and public service: the Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) and its Center for Applied Research and Evaluation (CARE).



Linda Daugherty “Through research, publications, and in some cases total project implementation, we really aim to carry out the mission of public service that’s so key to social workers and the college,” says Paul Campbell, director of SWORPS. “We’re able to link human services providers and agencies—public and private—to the academy and its resources, knowledge, and cutting-edge thinking.”

When the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) became one of the few metropolitan areas nationally to conduct its own local-level Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, a Centers for Disease Control–developed evaluation done on the national, state, and sometime local levels,

they knew where to turn for support. Linda Daugherty, assistant director of CARE, says, “When you want reliable information, you can come to us.”

With its in-depth understanding of data-collection methodologies and its familiarity with the CDC protocol in particular, CARE was perfectly positioned to collect the data for the Department of Health’s analysts to explore linkages between health and poverty in Knox County. Daugherty noted that they had done similar research for Hamilton and Madison Counties in Tennessee as well.

Through CARE and SWORPS, the Department of Health was able to connect with the on-the-ground realities of Knox County’s communities, with special care taken to represent the experiences of communities of color and immigrant communities.

Once the data was gathered, Health Department staff began analyzing and interpreting it, exploring especially the link between income and health. Its report posed the question: “Does poverty cause poor health?”

The numbers suggest that it does.

“In going through the data, we discovered a ‘stair-step’ or gradual relationship between income and many health indicators,” says Kathleen Brown, PhD, KCHD Community Assessment and Health promotion director. “There also is a similar ‘gradient’ in evidence with educational attainment.”

According to the survey, there are “striking correlations between education and health and income and health,” states Brown. She adds, “Knox County residents with the lowest income are not as healthy as those with higher income.”

Among Knox County adults (ages 18 years and older), only 7% making more than \$50,000 per year reported having poor health, while a staggering 52% of those making less than \$15,000 did; for those making \$15,000–\$24,999, the number was also high at 32%; and for \$25,000–\$34,999, it was 22%.

Percent of people who report fair or poor health, by income



Support from SWORPS Helps Improve the Quality of Social Services

The Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) is a unit of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, College of Social Work. Its mission is to improve the quality of human service practice in the state, the Southeast, and the nation. As part of a land grant university, the College of Social Work holds a unique responsibility to provide services that support the public welfare. This objective guides many of the efforts of the organization. UT SWORPS seeks to establish a cooperative relationship with Tennessee's state organizations and local social service agencies to expand opportunities for more effective delivery of public services.

As members of a service center within the University of Tennessee, the professionals and technical support staff who comprise UT SWORPS are experienced in working with social service staff and policy makers and linking them to academic and professional resources.

For more than 35 years, UT SWORPS has responded to requests from state and local agencies for

- needs assessment and analysis
- organizational and staff development (culture and climate)
- staff training—face-to-face
- staff training—online
- program design and management
- research services
- evaluation services
- data collection and analysis
- technical assistance
- software development
- systems engineering
- analysis of transfer of learning and return on investment
- curriculum development
- multimedia development

—Elizabeth DeGeorge

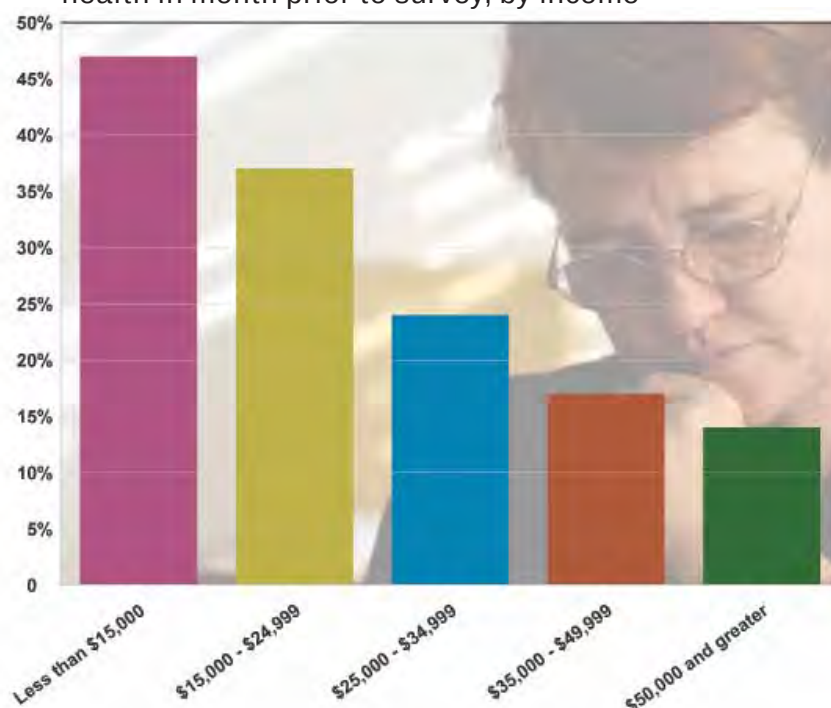


The SWORPS Research and Evaluation team recently helped determine effectiveness of afterschool programs.

Percent of people who report not going to the doctor during the past year due to cost, by income



Percent of people who report 6–30 days of poor mental health in month prior to survey, by income



The survey also revealed that lower-income people routinely do not obtain medical or dental care when they need to, because of cost. In the lowest income category, 31% reported not seeing a doctor and 66% reported not seeing a dentist when needed; of those making more than \$50,000 a year, only 4% had not gone to the doctor and 14% had not seen the dentist when needed.

An important aspect of work related to social justice is diagnosing the problems in order to solve them. While data collection alone may never make headlines, it is a crucial part of the process of understanding social problems and of developing the right programs that deliver services to meet people's real needs. These data are sometimes the

facts behind what makes the news.

The Behavioral Risk Factor Survey (BRFS) “would simply not be possible without the expertise in sample design, data weighting, and interviewing techniques—especially reaching hard-to-reach respondents—provided by CARE,” says Mark Prather, an epidemiologist at the Knox County Health Department who helps lead the BRFS effort.

“We’re proud to be part of these kinds of efforts,” says Daugherty. “It’s an important part of public service.”

— Thomas Walker is an
Information Specialist at SWORPS

Honors and Awards

Three leaders in the College of Social Work recently received national recognition for their role as groundbreakers in social work research, education, and social welfare.

Teams—Games—Tournaments (TGT) Included in CrimeSolutions.gov

Dr. John Wodarski's Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) alcohol prevention program has been selected for inclusion in the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs' CrimeSolutions, an initiative to seek out evidence-based models of crime prevention in the field. TGT's selection for the initiative will expand practitioners' access to this exciting and effective methodology of peer-supported education.

TGT is a unique adolescent education program that has been developed to teach adolescents about alcohol to prevent its misuse. It was developed through extensive research on games used as teaching devices and using small groups as classroom work units. TGT responds to the reality that "the most important socialization agent in an adolescent's life is his or her peers," and that many of the most detrimental practices and behaviors of young people happen in a very social context "that often overwhelms educated rationality."

Research indicates that simple exposure to the facts about the consequences of unhealthy and risky behavior is insufficient to deter it among



John Wodarski

adolescents; a methodology that understands and utilizes the highly social nature of youth is far more effective. Dr. Wodarski's work on TGT, which he describes as being "developed through two decades of research at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Social Organization of Schools," is precisely such a method. It

has proven to be an effective model for educating young people on a variety of subjects, notably healthy behaviors related to substance abuse and sexual activity.

By dividing groups of adolescents into teams that work together and then compete with other teams, TGT utilizes social concerns, peer support, and positive reinforcement to achieve long lasting effects. Role playing is also often utilized; done among peers, it more exactly replicates real-world situations in which students actually use what they learn.

CrimeSolutions.gov's choice of TGT is a strong indicator of the efficacy of the program. And, as Dean Sowers comments, it "is a great honor for John and the college and an example of our com-

mitment to positively impacting and serving our community through the college."

—Thomas Walker

Charles Glisson becomes a Fellow of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare

Dr. Charles Glisson, director of the Children's Mental Health Services Research Center in the



Charles Glisson

College of Social Work (CMHSRC), was among 17 new Fellows named at the Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare's 2012 Induction Ceremony, held November 10, 2012 in Washington, D.C. These 17 represent an elite group of social work teachers, researchers, and leaders who have dedicated their professional careers to the advancement of the profession. To be named a Fellow involves a rigorous selection process and is a great honor.

Dr. Glisson states, "I was pleased and honored to be asked to join the Academy and look forward to working with this outstanding group of researchers and practitioners."

The Academy is an honorific society of distinguished scholars and practitioners dedicated to achieving excellence through high-impact work that advances social good. It was established to

- encourage and recognize outstanding research, scholarship, and practice that contribute to a sustainable, equitable, and just future;
- inform social policy by serving as a frontline source of information for the social work profession as well as Congress and other government agencies and non-government entities charged with advancing the public good;
- promote the examination of social policy and the application of research to test alternative policies, programs, and practices for their impact on society; and
- celebrate excellence in social work and social welfare research, education, and practice.

Glisson was recognized by the Academy for his current work as Chancellor's Professor, University Distinguished Professor, and director of the CMHSRC at the University of Tennessee as well

as for 25 years of research funded by the National Institutes of Health. At the induction ceremony, Dr. Glisson was also lauded for a lifetime of exemplary work, including his early experiences as a mental health practitioner, which "led him to search for answers to significant questions about how to remove bureaucratic barriers to treating children effectively."

Dean Karen Sowers states, "This tribute is well deserved. It is such a privilege to have Charles Glisson in the College of Social Work!"

—Margot Kline

Karen Sowers Recognized as Distinguished Scholar

On April 6, Dean Karen Sowers was inducted as a Distinguished Scholar Fellow into the National Academies of Practice (NAP). NAP is a nonprofit organization founded to advise governmental bodies on our healthcare system. Distinguished practitioners and scholars are elected by their peers from 10 different



Karen Sowers

health professions to join the only interprofessional group of healthcare practitioners and scholars dedicated to supporting affordable, accessible, coordinated quality healthcare for all.

NAP represents 10 interdisciplinary academies: Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Optometry, Osteopathic Medicine, Pharmacy, Pediatric Medicine,

Psychology, Social Work, and Veterinary Medicine. The mission of the National Academies of Practice is to promote excellence in practice of health care professionals, and quality health care for all through interprofessional collaboration in service delivery, research, education, and public policy advocacy. Toward these ends, NAP recognizes and honors the contributions of the nation's leading health care scholars through its constituent academies.

Distinguished Scholars and Fellows are elected by their peers for their academic achievements, such as significant and enduring educational and/or research contributions to practice. Inductees are judged by distinguished peers to have made significant and enduring contributions in their profession. "I am honored to have been elected by my peers to receive the Distinguished Scholar Fellow from the National Academies of Practice," said Dean Sowers. "I am humbled to be included among this outstanding interdisciplinary group of scholars."

—Thomas Walker

CSW Sponsors a Star-Studded Knoxville Area 2012 Urban League Gala

by Margot Kline

Hollywood actors Cylk Cozart ("Conspiracy Theory") and Louis Gossett Jr. ("An Officer and a Gentleman")

were among the 900 guests at the 2012 Knoxville Area Urban League Gala, which took place October 25 at the Knoxville Convention Center. Joining them were Urban League President and CEO Phyllis Nichols; Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam and other national, state, and local legislators; area business leaders; and donors and faculty of the College of Social Work. The college was proud to be a sponsor



Phyllis Nichols

of this wonderful occasion, and Dean Sowers states, "We thank the Urban League for its role in helping so many in our community."

The Knoxville Area Urban League, a civil rights, economic development, and social service organization, was founded in 1968 at the height of the Civil Rights movement to promote equal employment opportunities for African-Americans in Knoxville. Today, the Urban League is a non-profit, non-partisan, interracial community-based organization that serves a diverse client base in Knox, Blount, and Anderson counties.

Nichols says, "In my not-too-distant past, when we talked about diversity, the conversation was mainly a black and white issue. Today's reference to diversity is far more encompassing. Dimensions of diversity include age, education, ethnicity, family status, gender, income, military experience, sexual orientation, and spiritual or religious practice."

Along with other National Urban League affiliates, the Knoxville area league operates under the guidelines of The Opportunity Compact, a comprehensive set of principles and policies set forth by the National Urban League and focused on the key areas of Opportunity to

Thrive (Children), Opportunity to Earn (Jobs), Opportunity to Own (Housing), and Opportunity to Prosper (Entrepreneurship).

The evening of the 2012 Knoxville Area Urban League Gala was a star-studded celebration to remember, with entertainment by the chart-topping group En Vogue ("Never Gonna Get It," "Free Your Mind"). The group has won more MTV Video Music Awards than any other female group in its history—a total of seven—along with five Soul Train Awards, six American Music Awards, and seven Grammy nominations.

In addition to great entertainment, the 2012 Gala afforded the opportunity to celebrate the Volunteer of the Year as well as the Minority Business, Corporate Leadership, and Whitney M. Young Lifetime Achievement awards.

Twin sisters Helen Ashe and Ellen Turner were named 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award winners for their efforts to end hunger in Knoxville. For more than 25 years they have provided food and inspiration to the homeless, homebound, and unemployed at The Love Kitchen, a local charity that they founded.

Cylk Cozart also received a special Lifetime Achievement award. He was born in Knoxville to a Native American mother and an African-American father and is perhaps best known for his acting roles, with 30 films to his credit. But Cozart says it is his love of children and helping others less fortunate that led him to Hollywood and what motivates him to utilize his celebrity status to advocate and support numerous charities and humanitarian events. Cozart is a spokesperson for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the National Make-A-Wish Foundation, and The Boys & Girls Clubs of America, as well as non-profit celebrity sports tournaments and fund-raisers.

— Margot Kline is an Information Specialist for SWORPS and is the designer of Stimulus

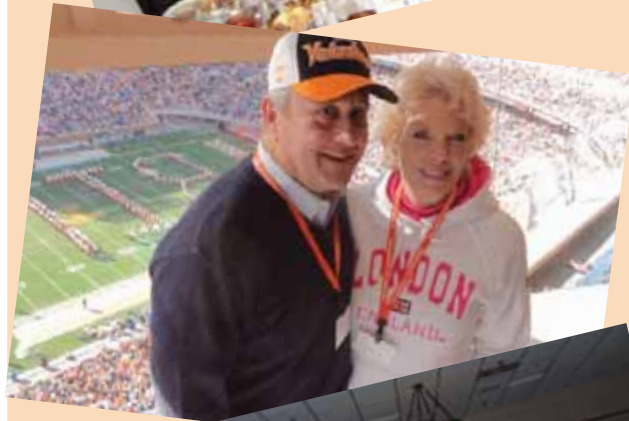


Sisters Helen Ashe (left) and Ellen Turner (right), founders of The Love Kitchen, received the 2012 Whitney M. Young Lifetime Achievement award.



Special Lifetime Achievement Award winner, actor Cylk Cozart enjoyed the evening with Dean Karen Sowers and Kenny Allred (left to right).

Start Planning Now for 2013 CSW Alumni Events!



Each fall the college hosts several not-to-be missed events, including the annual gala and football tailgates with alumni and friends. Mark your calendars for this year's Homecoming, which takes place the weekend of November 8, 2013.

Top: Karen Sowers and members of the CSW faculty and staff enjoy the festivities at the 2012 Homecoming Gala.

Middle: Tennessee Department of Children's Services Commissioner Jim Henry and wife Pat visit with Dean Sowers at the UT-Kentucky game in fall 2012.

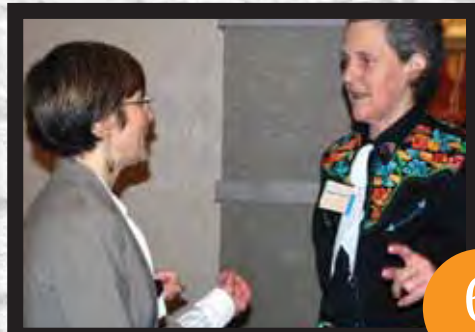
Bottom: Students and guests take to the dance floor at the 2012 CSW Homecoming Gala.



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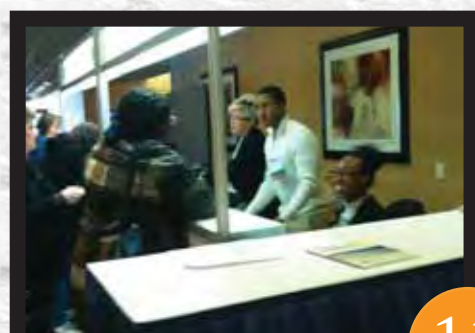
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Photo Gallery

(1) Dean Karen Sowers is named Distinguished Scholar Fellow at the National Academies of Practice. (2) CSW PhD students Erin Story, Autumn Lowry, Tara Veerman, Kellie Gergely, and Laurel Laiewski (l. to r.) enjoy some social time with Dean Sowers at the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting (CSWE APM) in Washington, D.C. (3) Dean Sowers and Tennessee First Lady Crissy Haslam at the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare luncheon. (4) (l. to r.) Dean Sowers joined Jean Moore, Manager of Military and Veterans Policy and Support for the National Alliance on Mental Illness; Kenny Allred; and Lieutenant General Patricia Horoho, 43rd Surgeon General and Commanding General of the Army Medical Command, at the National Alliance on Mental Illness "Inspiring Hope Through Research" Scientific Research Award Reception and Lecture. (5) MSSW alum Dr. Kia Bentley with Dean Sowers at the CSWE APM. (6) (l. to r.) Elizabeth Strand, director of Veterinary Social Work Programs for the College of Veterinary Medicine, with Keynote Speaker Temple Grandin at the 3rd International Veterinary Social Work Summit. (7) 2012 MSSW graduates Jaime Frimpong, Charla Cannon, Sarah Curtis, and Danielle Scoot (l. to r.) attend the 57th Presidential Inauguration in Washington D.C. (8) Carol Tindell, member of college Board of Visitors, and her husband Chuck, with Dean Sowers at the UT-Kentucky game. (9) (l. to r.) Governor Bill Haslam with actor Louis Gossett Jr. at the Knoxville Area Urban League Gala. (10) BSSW Coordinator of Field Education Kim Denton (3rd from left) and BSSW seniors Sweta Engineer, Megan Jones, and Casey Blackburn (l. to r.) volunteering at the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD). (11) BSSW students volunteering at BPD.



Members of the new BSWO expressed their views at Social Work Day on the Hill in Nashville:

Front (left to right): Ligen Feller, Kara Harden, Jana Beth Neubert, Mira Hanna, Brandin-Lea Stevens, Rebecca Fowler.

Back (left to right): Sean Feller, Kim Denton, Corey deRohan, Ryan Hood, Brooke Schwahn, Veliska Thomas.

BSWO Gets New Name and Fresh Focus

The Bachelor's of Social Work Organization (BSWO) is a student-run organization that strives to enhance professional development of undergraduate social work students and to increase the visibility of the social work profession and the College of Social Work on campus and in the community. It affords members the opportunity to take leadership roles within the organization and also allows students to interact with other professionals in the community and to serve as a social outlet while providing opportunities for interaction among other social work students.

Undergraduate students at the college have always been active in community service. For many years, students collected and presented piles of canned food to Second Harvest Food Bank after participating in local CANstruction events. However, this group, which was formerly known as BSSW-SWO, is now also determined to encourage diversity in its endeavors by sponsoring activities that reflect the different interests of students and the wide variety of ways that professionals practice social work in the field.

"It is important to our mission that these local initiatives encourage the interests of every social work student, including those focused on direct service as well as those concentrating on political action or community organization," states Mira Hanna, vice president of BSWO.

This group of students began the fall semester by requesting a name change, simplifying and refreshing their image by shortening a long acronym (BSSW-SWO) to BSWO. They engaged in a variety of

activities, from helping with a community clean-up campaign called Adopt-a-Spot, to developing a poster and PowerPoint presentation at the Social Work Day on the Hill in Nashville. BSWO encouraged the Tennessee Legislature to pass a bill dealing with the problem of human trafficking. This bill would call for the formation of a task force to increase education on trafficking for first responders. This task force would involve police, social workers, and victims and would encourage both statewide and local initiatives.

Another of the exciting activities that BSWO engaged in was "Global Connections: Exploring Issues that Affect our International Community." The conference, which was funded by a *Ready for the World* grant as well as the International House, was hosted by three students in the College of Social Work: Jasmine Brown, LaKiera Grimes, and Mira Hanna. Fifteen UT students from 10 different countries formed a panel to discuss political, social, and economic issues that currently affect their birth countries or cultural backgrounds. The presenters communicated with authentic voices and shared unique perspectives with conference attendees.

Gina Middleton, advisor to the BSWO, is extremely impressed by the maturity, vision, and passion that this group of students brings to the College of Social Work. She states, "This group of students puts action behind words. They are passionate about the social work profession and about making a difference in both their community as well as at the university."

—Elizabeth DeGeorge

CSW Alum (MSSW '11) Jimmy Smith Makes It into the Top 40 on American Idol TV Show



On January 23, 2013, American Idol fans got a chance to watch social worker and UT alum Jimmy Smith perform for the judges and earn his Golden Ticket to Hollywood.

His performance of Rascal Flatts' "Bless the Broken Road" got a loud "yes" vote from all four celebrity judges, including a strong endorsement from country star Keith Urban, who said, "I love your voice." Pop icon Nicki Minaj said, "Your voice is the voice that I was waiting to hear today!" Five-time Grammy winner Mariah Carey said, "You have something very special and unique." And record producer and veteran judge Randy Jackson simply shouted, "He's goin' to Hollywood!"

Before auditioning, the Waynesboro, Tennessee, native was living in Nashville, where he was a social worker in a dialysis clinic by day and a performer at different venues around the city by night. He did not beat out the competition to make it into the top 20 this year, but the American Idol experience has nevertheless boosted his music career. Jimmy just released his first album, *Stay Right Here*, and he is taking a break from social work to devote full time to songwriting and performing.

You can watch Jimmy sing "Bless the Broken Road" at his American Idol 2013 audition on the CSW media-enhanced version of *Stimulus* at <http://www.csw.utk.edu/about/stimulus>. To hear from his social work co-workers, who gave him wholehearted support, link to <http://www.zimbio.com/watch/03YvcLF53wL/Meet+Jimmy+Smith/Jimmy+Smith>

—Margot Kline

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