

S.W.I. News

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire



A newsletter for alumni and friends of the UW-Eau Claire Department of Social Work

Fall 2007

Outstanding Social Work Alumni



Bridget (O'Connor) Nelson '96

Bridget and Jeff Nelson met at the UW-Eau Claire Leadership Institute as undergraduates and completed their Bachelor of Arts degrees at UW-Eau Claire. Bridget completed a degree in Social Work in 1996 and Jeff completed a degree in Political Science in 1995. They married in the summer of 1996.

Bridget earned a Master's Degree in Social Work at Wayne State University in Community Practice and Advocacy in 2000. Following graduate school, she spent several years as an advocacy and education coordinator for the Hunger Action Coalition of Michigan.

Both Bridget and Jeff have been active in peace and social justice issues since graduating. They became very active with the peace community in Detroit, Michigan, working with coalitions to raise awareness on various justice issues, which included a trip in

1999 by Jeff to Iraq as part of a humanitarian delegation.

Jeff obtained his Master's of Divinity degree from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois in 2004. Jeff is particularly proud of his leadership with a youth project that is collecting one penny for every person on the continent of Africa who is infected with HIV/AIDS for a total of 23 million pennies.

The Nelsons live in Birmingham, Michigan, where Bridget is a self-employed social worker doing a variety of work for various agencies including Bread for the World, Young Neighbors in Action and Alternatives for Girls, and Jeff is an associate pastor for the First United Methodist church of Birmingham.



Mike McElwee '97

Since graduating in December 1997, Mike has worked in long-term care, mostly in Southeastern Wisconsin. He never thought he

would end up working with older people, but an internship at the now-defunct Western Wisconsin Area Agency on Aging led him to this area of practice. His first job was with Community Care's PACE and Partnership programs on Milwaukee's south side, working with a predominantly Spanish-speaking population. "My experiences and education at UW-Eau Claire left me well-prepared to deal with the people and situations I encountered," he said.

After two years in Milwaukee, Mike moved to St. Louis to enroll in the MSW program at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University. "I really appreciated my social work education," he said. "I was better-prepared than my classmates, and I was able to bypass all the introductory courses." While in St. Louis, he interned at and later worked for the St. Louis Development Corporation. He returned to Wisconsin and to long-term care to complete his final practicum at the Department of Health & Family Services in Madison.

After graduating in 2002, Mike returned to Community Care to help start the Partnership program in Racine County, before returning to Milwaukee to work in the quality assurance program for Milwaukee County's Family Care program. He is now a social worker in the Home Based Primary Care program at the Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee.

Distinguished Alumni

(Continued back page)

Dr. Gloria Fennell Returns from Scotland ... in her own words.

I will be returning to the Department of Social Work in fall after having spent a great year as the Resident Director of the Wisconsin in Scotland Program. I have learned so much and met so many wonderful people. It was indeed difficult to leave. I thank many of you for indirectly encouraging me to apply for the position. I heard so many students talk of their wonderful experiences abroad and felt as though I was living vicariously through them. The position required long hours as it was a seven days a week/24 hours a day position but part of that time was spent having a really good time with the student and staff participants in the program. I did have one long weekend a month off and the only way to be really "off" was to be away from the house. On those weekends I traveled to Switzerland, Norway, Ireland, Netherlands, and Belgium. The rest of my weekends off I spent traveling in Scotland learning to love its history, politics, and people.

Leaving Scotland was made easier by returning to new grandson - Trentyn - born April 13. I also missed everyone in the Department of Social Work. I am looking forward to beginning the new academic year. I will be teaching SW 320 and will also be Director of Internship and working with interns in SW 481. I will hopefully see some of you as I travel around visiting field sites. If anyone is working in an area that is near Eau Claire and that you think might make a good field site, please let me know.

Student Spotlight: Noelle Weber



Noelle Weber

I came to UW-Eau Claire with an undeclared major and it remained so until second semester of my sophomore year when a friend introduced me to social work.

From the beginning, I knew that I wanted to make a difference and positively impact others and social work was the major that would allow me to do just that.

Over the past four years I have enjoyed staying busy with interesting courses and other activities on campus such as the UW-Eau Claire golf team, TV10, College Feminists, Vagina Monologues, Resident Assistant, Association of Student

Social Workers, and Phi Alpha. I have also gained some great experience volunteering with Triniteam, ARCW, Special Olympics, and the Chippewa Valley Free Clinic.

I have also had the opportunity to do some traveling. In the summer of 2005, I taught English in China. In the spring of 2006, I attended the University of West Florida through the National Student Exchange, and this fall I am doing my social work internship in Batlokwa, South Africa. In preparation for my travel to South Africa, I was lucky enough to be a research assistant this summer to Dr. Kathleen Nybrotten of the Sociology Department and have been able to read many articles pertaining to HIV and women's health in South Africa.

Social Work department to receive visiting scholar

In September, the Department of Social Work will receive a Visiting Scholar from South Africa. Premie Pillay is a social worker at Durban Children's Home, in Durban, South Africa, and a supervisor of two of our current interns who are at DCH for a one-semester internship. Premie will arrive on September 18, for a two-week stay. During her time here, she will present to social work classes on various topics related to her work in South Africa, and she will give a presentation to the UW-Eau Claire community in a Brown Bag Presentation (lunchtime presentation).

Premie is a graduate of the University of Durban-Westville (today, the University of Kwa Zulu Natal). Prior to her work at DCH, Premie worked at Wylie House, another internship placement for UW-Eau Claire, and at Boys and Girls Town of South Africa. In her

capacity as social worker at DCH, Premie has supervised social work interns from the University of Kwa Zulu Natal.

Durban Children's Home is a multi-service child welfare agency which began about one hundred years ago as an orphanage, serving white children. Today, DCH serves children and their families of all races and ethnicities through residential services, group homes, and family counseling. DCH also houses a special project of the National Association of Child Care Workers called Isimbindi. The project works with orphans of AIDS in their home communities, to enable them to remain in their communities and become linked with their communities in circles of caring. DCH has been an internship site for UW-Eau Claire for about five years.

ALUMNI Updates

Algiers, Megan (2006) - is employed at the Allendale Association in Lake Villa, Illinois as a Mental Health Specialist II.

Beloungy, Jason (2001) - received the Independent living (IL) Advocate Award from the WI Coalition of Independent Living Centers.

Berg, Meghan (2006) - is attending graduate school at the University of North Dakota.

Boelk, Amy (Zlimen) (1996) - is an assistant professor and field coordinator at UW-Stevens Point, and is pursuing her Ph.D.

Bungert, Kimberly (Johnson) (2004) - is a family services coordinator for the Arc of Johnson County in Iowa City, Iowa. She plans to move to Madison, WI in July.

Dean, Adam (1989) - is a founding member of a criminal defense and family law firm in Portland, Oregon.

Defenbaugh, Kimberly (1999) - received her MSW from UW-Milwaukee in 2003. She is

currently a therapist at Lad lake, a residential treatment facility in Dousman, WI.

Johnson, Julie (Montgomery) (1992) - is employed by Ramsey County Human Services as a Spanish Speaking Social Worker II.

Jonasen, Aaron (2005) - is employed by the State of Georgia Human Resources Department.

Kohl, Laura (Ellerbusch) (2005) - Laura and her husband are in the Peace Corps-Guatemala.

Ludemann, Amber (2003) - is a case manager in therapeutic foster care in Baltimore, Maryland.

Stolzman, Joseph (1998) - works for the Dept. of Workforce Development for Milwaukee County and is working on his MSW at UW-Milwaukee.

Theel, Kayla (2005) - served in AmeriCorps NCCC for ten months and is residing in Massachusetts.

Williams, Karen (2006) - is employed by the Allendale Association in Lake Villa, Illinois.

NOTES from the CHAIR

I am pleased to share the good news that our program has formally been reaffirmed until 2015. Thanks to everyone for your support. We know that our program is excellent, but the load is a little lighter knowing that the CSWE Commission on Accreditation agrees. We are saddened, however, by the loss of faculty member Dr. Pam Richmond who has accepted a position at Mansfield University, Mansfield, PA. We wish her the very best as she builds her career. She has gifted our students with her enthusiasm, joie de vivre, and modeling of the professional social worker. Ms. Wanda Ryan has decided to return to professional practice, and we also wish her the very best. She is a breath of fresh air and a ray of sunshine, and the students she serves are lucky to have her. Thanks to all of you for making my first year at UW-Eau Claire one of the most memorable of my academic career. I look forward for good things to come.

Dr. Carol Langer

Scholarship Awards

Congratulations to the following recipients who were awarded scholarships for the 2007-2008 school year:

Kari Bjorklund received the Julie Guite Social Work Scholarship, the Phi Alpha Scholarship, and the Scientific Reasoning Inference Decision-Making Scholarship.

Christina Dietrich received the Lloyd and Jeanette Piper Social Work Scholarship.

Jennifer Erickson received the Elwood and Virgelee LeDue Social Work Scholarship.

Rebecca Rasmussen received the Jean Klein Memorial Social Work Scholarship.

Jerry River received the E. Louise Carter Scholarship.

Noelle Weber received the Madeleine Lieftring Social Work Scholarship.

Congratulations!

Maria Carvalho, a recent graduate and a social work and Latin American studies double major, received a special award at UW-Eau Claire's annual Service-Learning Recognition Breakfast. Maria completed an internship with Defensa de los Ninos Internacional, a non-profit children's rights organization based in Moravia, Costa Rica. She supported education for children and advocated for their rights by developing materials for sexual abuse intervention.

Bee Xiong, Eau Claire, received the Multicultural Affairs Office Outstanding Student Award at the Alumni Association luncheon in May. Bee graduated in December 2006.

Academic Excellence

Dr. La Vonne Cornell-Swanson was awarded the first annual Ron Satz Teacher/Scholar award by the College of Education and Human Sciences (COEHS) in April. She has been with the Department of Social Work since 2001. Congratulations La Vonne!

Scholarships & Funds



Support the Social Work Advancement Fund

Our Social Work Advancement Fund is the largest and primary fund for the department. It is used to support a wide range of activities in the Department including student travel to national meetings, special research and instructional equipment, faculty recruitment, and the seminar program. If you choose, your gift can also be applied in part or total to individual scholarship award funds. Undesignated funds will be credited to the Social Work Advancement Fund.

Some of the funds and scholarships available to choose from are: Social Work Advancement Fund, Hanke Family Scholarship, Madeleine Liffing Scholarship, Scientific Reasoning Inference Decision-Making Scholarship, Julie Guite Social Work Scholarship, and the Elwood and Virgelee LeDue Scholarship.

Your gift will enable the department to continue to build upon its reputation for excellence and to provide future generations the same quality education you received. If you would like to donate, please send your donation to:

UW-Eau Claire Foundation, Inc.
214 Schofield Hall
105 Garfield Avenue
Eau Claire, WI 54702-4004

To donate online go to: www.uwec.edu/fndn/giving.htm

Distinguished Alumni

(Continued)

Mike has also used his social work education outside of work. "I have always had an interest in macro practice," he said, "but I really haven't had many opportunities in my jobs to work at that level." Outside of the office, he has worked with community organizations in Racine, and now in Milwaukee, where he is helping to organize his church and surrounding neighborhood to join a new broad-based community organization affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation.

Mike lives in Milwaukee. He is back in school again, this time studying Ojibwe at UW-Milwaukee.

Mike also serves on the Advisory Board for the Department of Social Work at UW-Eau Claire.

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