Field Notes

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Faculty Features 2
Poverty Project Update 2
Words of Wisdom 3
Recent Highlights 4
ICOA 5
Photo Wrap-Up 6

News from the Field Director

This is the time of year that I remind myself of a quote by John Irving. “You only grow by coming to the end of something and by beginning something else.” The end of a school year means that we say goodbye to our graduates and celebrate all of their accomplishments. Reflect on challenges that may have arisen during the year and consider how to do things differently next year. It is a time for us to acknowledge that our effort to educate and prepare one group of students has come to a close. However, our time for celebration and reflection is followed with the immediate arrival of a new cohort of students. My first reaction to this realization is often a deep sigh, but as I begin meeting with these students to discuss plans for their field placements, I am immediately impressed by their enthusiasm and passion for the field and am reassured that they too will have much to teach me.

I write this message hopeful that all of our field instructors and agencies will also embrace the idea that there is more to learn and once again welcome students into their agencies. (I am guessing you knew this punch line was coming?) I, of course, want you all to take the summer to bask in the satisfaction that comes with knowing you have helped launch a new social worker by providing guidance, support, education, and supervision to one of our students this past year.

I want you to remember this feeling of accomplishment as you read this so that you will be inspired to take yet another student this fall. I write this lightheartedly, but please know that I am truly grateful for all that you do as agency field instructors, task supervisors, program managers, informal mentors, and team members. Your willingness to encourage, support, educate, train, and advocate for our students year after year is nothing short of heroic in these challenging times. I am eternally grateful. I hope you all have a fabulous summer, and I look forward to working with you again this fall.

-Patty Hunter

Alumni: Where Are They Now?

Tomas Loarca, a graduate of the MSW program in 2008, recently came out with an art book: A Possible Reality: Carlos Loarca: Artist & Muralist. The book showcases paintings and quotes by Carlos Loarca, who is Tomas’ father. Carlos has been painting for over 50 years; most of his paintings are inspired by the Guatemalan folklore story of El Cadejo. El Cadejo is a guardian dog who protects drunks after they leave the cantina. Carlos himself battled alcoholism for many years and believes he was protected by the dog. He also feels his family benefited from the guardianship of this wondrous animal. Carlos overcame alcohol in the mid-seventies, and that is when the image of El Cadejo began to appear in his work. Carlos’ color scheme is inspired by the bright, vibrant colors of the Maya, who utilized colors found in the tropical jungles of Central America. The paintings are deeply communicative, and Carlos used them as an outlet for creation and self-expression. A Possible Reality allows the reader to redefine everything they thought they knew about painting. Readers will bring their own “realities” to interpret Carlos’ vision. In this way, viewer and artist inspire each other.

Tomas has worked in the child welfare field since graduation. He has strong interest in relationship development and community involvement. Tomas was co-chair with alumnus Michael Langevin in the Building Community Partnerships program in Tehama County. Together, with the community, they developed summer lunch programs, after-school activities, soccer camps, community classes, murals, three community gardens, and coat drives, and petitioned the transportation department for service to high-risk outlying areas. All of this was done in an effort to reduce CPS, police, and medical response to the community. The targeted area saw a major reduction in all three areas.

Formerly employed by both Tehama and Butte Counties in their child welfare departments, Tomas is currently an adoption specialist for the newly formed Butte County Adoption Program. He has been married to his wife, Stacey, for four years, and they have two children, Chloe and Ellie. The book is available on createspace.com and amazon.com and at Lyon Books.
Faculty Features

Celeste Jones

Congratulations to Dr. Celeste Jones, director of the School of Social Work. She received the Lifetime Achievement award from the local chapter of NASW in March. The lifetime achievement award is intended to honor an individual who demonstrates social work values, outstanding achievement, and outstanding creativity—and who has made contributions of lasting impact. Celeste’s accomplishments are numerous, and her dedication to making social work education accessible throughout the North State will indeed leave a lasting impact on our region.

Jean Schuldberg

Congratulations to Dr. Jean Schuldberg, MSW director. Jean was appointed to the California Commission on Aging. The commission is the principal advisory body to the governor, state legislature, and state, federal, and local departments and agencies on issues affecting older individuals. Jean is a strong advocate for older adults and will bring a tremendous amount of expertise to this commission.

Poverty Project Update

The Poverty Project enjoyed great success over the course of the spring semester. Approximately 250 CSU, Chico students participated in three separate simulation events. Many were social work, sociology, and gender studies majors, and others came from a variety of majors across campus. Numerous BSW and MSW students also served as volunteers and as part of the research team, all contributing to the success of the program. We were especially grateful for the participation of both faculty and agency field instructors including Molly Heck, Jenny Sharkey, Patty Hunter, Meka Klungtvet-Morano, Dilia Loe, Donna Jensen and Sue Steiner, who volunteered their time and input to provide a powerful learning opportunity for all who participated.

Social work faculty Susan Roll and her colleague from recreation, Laurie Browne, are using the simulation to better understand how to teach and learn about poverty. They have found that the simulation does indeed engender an increased level of empathy among participants. They will present their findings at the International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement in the fall. Susan and Laurie look forward to continuing to conduct simulation events on campus and in the community in the next academic year with the goal of exploring longitudinal outcomes and the effect the experience may have on a commitment to social justice.
At our annual Field Reception this past May we asked the agency field instructors and students to reflect on their experiences throughout the year and provide us with some words of wisdom. We gathered a sampling from both the student and agency field instructor perspective and hope that our new and continuing students will read these words of wisdom and draw on them throughout their field placement.

From an Agency Field Instructor

- When you schedule your time, don’t forget to schedule time for yourself.
- Never lose your integrity. Do what is right even when it is difficult.
- Remember to breathe.
- Stay open to learning new and creative practices, as social work is always evolving.
- Relax and be flexible.
- Ask for support while supporting.
- Be a leader in your community.
- Reach out to your cohort after graduation. The conversations and laughter are healing.
- Being willing to be vulnerable allows room for growth.
- Have a self-care plan in place before you start and stick to it!
- Advocate for your education. Only you know what it is that you want.

From a Student

- Your program is what you make of it, so advocate for the kind of learning/experience that you want.
- Allow time for self-care.
- Embrace learning opportunities! Something may appear frustrating and overwhelming, but there are lessons in those moments.
- Be vocal. Tell your AFI what you want and expect out of your field placement. Don’t be afraid to “take charge” and get the hands-on experience.
- There are no failures, just different levels of success.
- Remember to stand your ground while remembering everyone has their own unique story.
- Be humble; we are not the experts. Those who we serve are; learn from them!
- Social work is not black and white; there is a lot of gray. As a social worker, you need to make decisions that will help your clients the most, and trust you did your best.
Recent Highlights...

MSW Student Receives Equity Scholarship

Aydin Kennedy (MSW class of 2013) has been awarded the Graduate Equity Fellowship, which is sponsored by the CSU Chancellor’s Office and California State University, Chico. The program provides a $750-per-semester stipend and a $2,000 research assistantship for research-related activities.

Aydin will be doing qualitative research examining the relationship between years since social and/or medical transition and later life self-esteem and adjustment for transgender/transsexual adults. The goal of this research is to enhance and further explore the data that was collected for his MSW thesis. Aydin’s goal is to apply for PhD programs in 2014.

A Time for Advocacy

Theresa Hughes, a 2013 graduate of the MSW program, completed her field practicum at Stonewall Alliance Center. While interning there, Hughes worked with numerous teens who reported to her that they had experienced repeated incidences of bullying and that nothing had been done to protect them from the perpetrators. She felt someone needed to advocate for these teens and began exploring what action needed to be taken to prevent the bullying of these teens and others in the community. Hughes collaborated with the No Bullying Coalition in Chico to organize a group of local teens to speak out about their experiences of “coming out” in a rural community and how they were bullied as a result.

On April 17, a group of five courageous teens spoke out about what it was like to be bullied and how little was done to protect them at their schools. The youth were amazing! The audience was shocked to hear all that these teens had endured, and many were moved to tears as they listened. One youth related his story of being beat up two years ago on the Day of Silence. He reported that the administration did not take any steps to protect him or to punish the students that had accosted him.

A follow-up meeting was scheduled for May 8 and the youth panel members were asked to come back and brainstorm ideas of how this problem may be remedied. It was a very successful meeting, and many ideas were formulated to help reduce bullying in the schools. The No Bullying Coalition is currently researching possibilities to implement these ideas in the fall of 2013.

MSW Graduate Writes Senate Bill

Tania Wood (MSW class of 2012) completed her concentration year internship with the California Senior Legislature. Working directly with Senior Assembly Member Shirley Krohn, Tania came up with the idea of focusing on the needs of the aging LGBT population in California. After extensive research, participation in a senior legislatures session and attendance of ICOA workshops, Tania decided to tackle the problem of discrimination and harassment that occurs in care facilities. After reading through the statutes that govern these facilities, she decided to take a top-down approach to change. Tania proposed that care facility administrators be required to take five hours of additional curriculum focusing on LGBT aging issues in order to obtain a certificate. The proposal was submitted May 2012 and was soon voted to pass as one of 10 proposals to take to the state legislature.

Jimmy Gomez decided to author Tania’s proposal as a bill and AB 663 was born. Tania has been to testify in two assembly committee hearings, which passed the bill along and was invited to the NASW Lobby Days to make a presentation about AB 663. The bill has now been assigned to the Senate Committee on Human Services, and Tania will continue to follow its progress through our legislative process.

Outstanding Social Work Students of 2013

Madilyn Johnson, BSW

Tina Cowan, MSW
Established in 2009, the CSU, Chico Interdisciplinary Center on Aging (ICOA) mission is to create innovative partnerships between CSU, Chico and the North State community that will focus on education, research, scholarship, and community service related to aging and attending to the aging needs of our region.

It’s no surprise that every day 10,000 people turn 65. The 16 counties of Northern California are grayer than rest of California and the United States 16 percent (167,800) of the population in these 16 counties is 65 or older. Out of which, only 1.8 percent (3,068) live in a nursing home, and 74 percent have some form of physical or mental health disability. The entire nation will face challenges due to growth in the aging population years later than what Northern California is faced with today. Due to this significant group (the Baby Boomers), the pyramid of our population is converting into a barrel.

The institutions such as education, retirement, workforce, transportation system, and leisure activities that represent the core of American society were not designed to support a barrel. They were designed to support a pyramid. We need to re-engineer our institutions!

The changing aging demographics have presented social workers and other helping professions with numerous opportunities and challenges. It is the ongoing goal of ICOA to improve the lives of both older adults as well as the communities they live in throughout rural Northern California. ICOA seek to continue their well-established efforts of improving the lives of older adults through advocacy, workforce development, awareness building, outreach, and community organization.

As a service to community, monthly lectures, workshops, and film series have been instituted on the CSU, Chico campus. Over 1,000 students, faculty, and community members have benefited from these efforts thus far. ICOA has also organized several workshops and special events in the community via collaborating with other local agencies including Passages, Adult Services Coordinating Council, and the Butte County Behavioral Health. Topics covered include Deadly Triangle: Older Adults and Suicide Prevention; LGBTQ+ Issues; Maintaining Professional Boundaries; Boomers: An Untapped Market; Balance and Fall Prevention; Managing Stress in Our Lives; Prescription Brown Bag Event; The Seasons of Losses: How to Help Others Grieve; Health at Every Size & Mindful Eating at Any Age; Aging in Place: Home Modifications for Older Adults; and Planning, Benefits, Abuse, and Discrimination: The Basics of Elder Law and Issues Specific to the LGBT Aging Community.

We urge you to take advantage of our workshops and other awareness events. Please encourage your employees, colleagues, and interns to be part of these trainings as well. To access our newsletters and explore opportunities to partner with us, please visit our website, www.csuchico.edu/icoa, or email Seema Sehrawat at ssehrawat@csuchico.edu. We have an active listserv that we use to send out monthly community events and other important trainings and updates. Send us an email to be added to this listserv.

We have to keep in mind that an aging society is not about old people, but it is about all ages!

For more information please go to http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nz8Cejfyg-I
Thank you all for a wonderful year!