March is Social Work Month and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has set the theme for 2018 as “Social Workers: Leaders. Advocates. Champions.” The NASW points out how 650,000 social workers across the nation work hard to make communities better places to live every day. In our Northern Californian 18-county region, we collaborate with over 110 social service agencies that host BSW and MSW students for their internships. There, thanks to the dedicated role models acting as task supervisors and agency field instructors, our students learn to fulfill the profession’s primary mission “to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.”

Part of acquiring the essential skills that build and combine to empower students to become future leaders, advocates, and champions, is learning how to be effective, empathetic helpers. As social workers who strive to alleviate human suffering, we learn to perform an intricate dance of finding the balance between the shared pain of trauma-infused narratives with the inspiration and strength of resiliency and recovery. In this line of work, we experience high concentrations of hardship, grief and loss, and, additionally, partake in the celebration of hard work that accomplishes goals and overcomes adversity. We honor the individual’s right to self-determine while promoting skills and strengths that can help uncover a path that guides them through daunting difficulties. In closing, I would like to emphasize that as we honor and acknowledge the importance of social workers in our society, we also take some time to be compassionately present for those around us and ourselves, spreading hope, tolerance, and deeper understanding. Social Workers: Leaders. Advocates. Champions.

Patrick Borel
On February 22 the School of Social Work welcomed over 60 community agencies to our campus for the annual field fair. As always, we were excited to see such a wide variety of placement options ranging from school social work to foster care and in areas stretching from Live Oak to Redding, California. Over 100 social work students filled the room eager to talk with agency representatives and gather more information about what types of services they offer and what populations are served. It is always exciting to see the current interns come to the fair to represent their agency. They come with such a unique perspective and are able to provide the incoming students with valuable information on what a day in the life of an intern looks like at that agency. We have received very positive feedback from the students about the field fair and would like to thank all the agency staff that took time out of their busy schedules to attend.

The field education team is now in the process of meeting with students to identify agencies they would like to interview with. Agencies can expect to begin hearing from students the last week of March and into June to schedule field placement interviews. We thank you for your continued support of our program and look forward to another great year of field placements!
The motivating force behind my honors project was a desire to give back to the alternative high school in Red Bluff, California where I was a student 14 years ago and that helped me through some challenging adolescent years. Generally, in rural, alternate schools there is a lack of college-going culture, and students have very little guidance and support to explore various career options. In partnership with the school principal, we will create and evaluate an innovative program to give young people at Salisbury High School information, support, and resources to create an expanded vision of their post-high school journey.

The first outcome will be a program manual outlining a series of workshops to be presented and shared with students, including topics such as financial aid applications, how to write essays for scholarships, college application support, and other options such as vocational school and job training. In addition, I will work closely with MPA graduate student Karyn Cornell to bring Town Hall 2.0 to Salisbury. Town Hall 2.0 is an innovative, community-engaged program at Chico State. Using Chico State students as mentors, we will bring Town Hall 2.0 to Red Bluff—culminating in a community forum where students will present their projects and research to local officials.

The topic of my honors project is to bring diabetes awareness to Butte County, specifically parents/caregivers and their children with type one diabetes. There is a lack of education and resources in Butte County. Resources are very limited for individuals that have low income and are on county assistance. This is the reason why I chose to do my honors project on diabetes. Being diabetic myself, I have seen and been affected by the lack of education and resources in Butte County. Children need to be educated on how to manage their diabetes. This project focuses on teaching young children age seven to nine utilizing a coloring book. The coloring book will include proper eating habits as well as the importance of exercise through a story line. As the child colors, the parent/caregiver will read with the child and explain what is happening in the pictures.
As I am wrapping up my bachelor’s degree this semester, I have become more aware of what social workers do and why. With that, I have become more aware of the social injustices in my own community. For this reason, I have been working closely with the Fort Sage Family Resource Center in Herlong, California for my honors paper. I wanted to keep the study close to try to make a difference in my community. My honors paper is called “Unmet Needs in Lassen Rural Lassen County.” It is my goal to find out what those needs are, and how we can go about obtaining them. This area of Lassen County has been neglected, and I plan on bringing that to people’s attention and getting this area the assistance it needs.

With over 27 percent of the children in Butte County living in food insecure homes, I am inspired to devote my honors project to bringing a unique and fun learning experience that will help encourage healthy eating habits for children to share with their families, aiming to reduce food insecurity in homes. This project also aims to connect and educate children about the local food web while cultivating an appreciation for seasonal food and inspiring creativity in the kitchen. They will learn recipes and practical cooking skills they can bring home and share with their families.

I have been able to incorporate my honors project with an agency I intern for: Northern California Counties Time-bank, a non profit organization that connects members of the community in an alternative time-based currency system. People can offer an hour of time in whatever skills or services they have to offer and can use those hours to receive services from others. This has been an amazing opportunity for me to connect with the community and offer my skills in a unique way.
Tina Cowan graduated from CSU, Chico with her BSW in 2012 and her MSW in 2013. She was a Title IV-E stipend recipient and completed her internships at Butte County Children’s Services. Upon graduating in 2013, she was hired on as a social worker. Collaboration with community partners was something that Tina discovered was crucial in working with children and families. Youth for Change was an agency that she partnered with often.

Foster care is something that is close to Tina’s heart because she was in the system from age 8 to 18. When she was presented with an opportunity to work as a foster care social worker at Youth for Change in May 2015, Tina thought that she could affect more change in that position. In September 2015, she became the program manager. Tina and her team work closely with foster youth and families. They strive to follow the YFC mission statement “Enhancing the well-being of individuals, children, families, and communities” in all that they do.

Along with her role as program manager and clinician working towards licensure as an LCSW, Tina has been an agency field instructor for social work students for three years. This spring, Tina is also teaching SWRK 681, “Advanced Child and Family Treatment”, in the School of Social Work. As a first time teacher, she hopes that she can influence the lives of her students as her professors did for her.

Kathy Cox has been granted a contract with Sage Publishing to develop a direct social work practice textbook. Designed for entry level social workers, it will include chapters on social work as an evolving profession, values and ethics, engagement, assessment, goal-setting, intervention (individual, group, family), evaluation, and use of supervision. During her sabbatical last semester, she completed the first three chapters of the book and they are currently under peer review. Kathy is weaving in insights from her own practice and research into the material presented and narrative applications of various concepts discussed. In most chapters, she is including a focus on integrating micro-meso-macro level work, as well as self-care strategies for social workers. Her deadline for completion of the text is January 1, 2019.

Kathy would love to hear from students, practicing social workers, or faculty if they have an interesting story to contribute about challenges and/or successes in conducting direct practice. Please email Kathy at kfcos@csuchico.edu.
IMPORTANT DATES

APRIL 18
Advisory Board Meeting
9 a.m.–noon
Selvester's Cafe

MAY 8
Annual Field Reception
5:30–7:30 p.m.
BMU Auditorium

Resources

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
NAMI
National Alliance on Mental Illness

The New Social Worker
Board of Behavioral Sciences

C O L L E G E O F
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&
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