

The Scholar Alumni Newsletter



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Jo Adams, Editor

ECU Collaborative Hosts Resiliency Conference Event

On February 22, 2006, the East Carolina University Child Welfare Education Collaborative hosted a statewide conference titled, 'Celebrating Resiliency: of Children, Families & Social Workers' at the Greenville Hilton. The conference offered two keynote addresses and six concurrent workshops for the approximately 150 attendees from across the state. Certificates of completion for five hours of continuing education were also provided. Conference attendees included current CWEC students from across the state, social workers, supervisors, and managers from over 30 county departments of social services as well as representatives from five CWEC university programs and the Central Office.



Scholars: Emika Mitchell, Raymona Estep, Brenda Eastman (Faculty), and Kelli Clay

Questions or comments? E-mail me at jeadams@email.unc.edu or call 919-962-6452



Dr. Ruth McRoy, Keynote Address Speaker

Dr. Ruth McRoy, University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work Professor Emeritus, delivered the morning keynote, 'Resiliency: Reasons for Hope.' Guilford County DSS Staff Development Coordinator, Jerry Cartwright, ended the day with a very personal and moving closing keynote, 'Lila's Whisper' that encouraged audience participants to pay attention to their 'inner voice.' Workshop presenters included UNC-CH, CWEC faculty Joanne Caye, ASU, CWEC faculty Judith Wesson, and NC CWEC Director, Evelyn Williams. Another of the workshops that generated a great deal of interest included a panel presentation titled: 'So You Want to Become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in DSS?' In this session, a panel of four licensed

clinical social workers from county departments of social services described their own personal experience with the licensure process and addressed questions from workshop attendees. Current ECU scholars served as workshop moderators throughout the day and assisted with registration the morning of the conference.

Evaluation feedback from conference participants was overall very positive, and included comments such as, 'It is always good to get away from my "norm" and get energized

by the fellowship of colleagues and encouraging mentors.' And, 'This was a wonderful learning experience for me and my student.' The ECU Collaborative faculty and staff were pleased with the interest in this conference and appreciated the support provided by other CWEC programs, county staff and students. They are already looking forward to their next conference, which will be held in 2008.

2006 Social Work/Law School Event

On February 11 at the Carolina Law School, Van Hecke-Wettach Hall, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Collaborative along with the UNC School of Law, presented the 2006 Social Work/Law School Event. There was courtroom testimony from the scholars at UNC-CH and NC State University. UNC-CH scholars were Quanda Williams, Beverly Wicker, Tara Chandler, Lori LaBelle, Zaconjia Titus, Bridget Mahoney, Stacie Williamson, and Kerri Null. The BSW from NC State was Amy Melton.

Alisa Huffman, MSW, JD, presented the court workshop this year. Her areas of practice include Collaborative Law, Family Law and Mediation. Alisa is the Family Court Administrator in Durham. She also has a private practice in Raleigh. The Say-So guests were two foster care youths from Wake County. Ashley Brown and Cassie Neighbors both from Raleigh.



Scholars and Law students listen at the Law School/Social Work Event

Advocacy Day, March 29, 2006

Annual Policy to Practice Day

This annual teaching/learning/doing event has grown tremendously in the past three years. In addition to Child Welfare Scholars, social work students and faculty from across the state participated in the annual the *Policy to Practice Day* at the General Assembly on March 29, 2006. The Collaborative worked with NASW-NC to host the event.

About 100 students and faculty attended and heard from an array of speakers involved in the legislative and policy development processes.

Representative Jennifer Weiss (D-Wake) gave a memorable keynote address that helped us understand the process for passing a bill. JoAnn Lamm, Section Chief of Family Support and Child Welfare, NC-DSS discussed how the Division works with the legislature and how practice can inform policy. Lunch was followed by a panel discussion with three advocates: Brian Lewis from Covenant for NC Children, Adam Searing with NC Justice Center – Health Access Coalition, and Kim Howes with Prevent Child Abuse NC. The final activity of the day was

a lively debate featuring Senator Vernon Malone (D-Wake) and Representative Paul Stam (R-Wake). Students also had a chance to observe the Study Commission on Aging. A round of



JoAnn Lamm speaks to participants at Advocacy Day

applause for Dan Beerman, JMSW Collaborative Coordinator who worked with Jennifer Sullivan, Government Relations Director for NASW-NC to plan this event.

Expanding the Collaborative

This year the Collaborative will once again seek expansion funding so that the program can be implemented at all accredited social work education programs at public universities. Expansion of the Collaborative will increase the number of social work-educated staff working in child welfare. For detailed information, please contact Dr. Evelyn Williams, Collaborative Director at ewms@email.unc.edu. You can help by informing your elected officials about your own experiences and the needs in your community.



Scholar students and alumni at Advocacy Day

JMSW

Scholars teaching Scholars

Three JMSW Child Welfare Scholar graduates are teaching the Social work for children course at UNCG this semester. Graduates Alicia Kaplan (2003), Allison Herring (2005) and Debra Moore (2005) are team-teaching this course for undergraduates. They bring with them the direct, daily experience of working in the field, Alicia is in Forsyth, Allison in Guilford and Debra

in Davidson County. Professors Maura Nsonwu and Dan Beerman have worked with them on the development of the course and have participated in a couple of class sessions. Students from the class of 2006 have also been involved in teaching through presentations that give an overview of DSS work and activity. Students in the Class are from social work, human development, and counseling. Feedback from students has been good as this course as they dynamic energy of these three graduates. The course meets once a week in the evenings.

JMSW Scholar, Jennifer Thomas



Jennifer Thomas graduated from the JMSW program as a child welfare scholar and received her MSW degree in May 2005. She began her social work career at Campbell University where she obtained her BSW and was an intern at Wake Co. DHS in foster care. That is when she knew she wanted to work in child welfare. She said the Collaborative at JMSW was able to prepare her so she would know what to expect in the field of child welfare. Jennifer did her MSW internship at Chatham Co. DSS and began working there shortly after graduation.

Jennifer is originally from Chatham Co. She knew it was a small, rural agency and that was where she wanted to work. She said she wanted to work somewhere that “the Director would know my name.” Jennifer works in the Case Management/ Foster Care Unit and does some Investigation and Assessment. She said that she better understands her clients being from the area and actually knows some of them. She finds they are comfortable around her and will talk easily and honestly to her. When I met Jennifer, I would never have guessed she was also a fire fighter. She is a thin, soft-spoken young woman that talked passionately for her job in child welfare. What I found out was, for three and a half years, Jennifer has been a volunteer firefighter at the Bonlee Fire Department in Bear Creek, NC. She has also been working on her certification for Firefighting I and II (only four more classes from being “statewide” certified) and only has two more classes from being ERT certified. When I asked her why she would want to be a firefighter, she said, “my husband is a firefighter and I was tired of setting in the truck and wanted to get out and help.” In the evenings, she goes to accidents that are automatically dispatched through 911

when injuries are involved. She goes to all types of fires and fire alarm activations and she “runs” medical calls. Not only does Jennifer do both jobs, she is a mother to a 9-year-old boy who is active in Boy Scouts. Jennifer and her husband take turns going out on calls at night so someone will always be at home with their son.

Jennifer said there is a comparison between child welfare and firefighting: “These are times when families are in crisis.” She is there to help them and they know that. She is there to deal with their needs although being a child welfare worker and a fire fighter are not seen in the same light. “We do what we can to help in both situations.”

This amazing woman has a true service calling and has “a great soul” as her Coordinator Dan Bearman has said. After meeting Jennifer, I agree. Social work is ‘people helping people’ and Jennifer does that every day and into the night.

NC State University

Interview Simulation

The Spring Semester Employment Interview Simulation was a huge success. Seventeen senior field students, including our senior CWEC Scholars, participated in the simulation. Students received four interview opportunities and our Child Welfare scholars took advantage of the opportunity to interview personally with three different child welfare professionals. They received valuable information on the types of questions to expect and helpful hints for improving their resumes. Chris Budnick had our students laughing as he stumped them with inappropriate interview questions. The feedback from the event was very positive.

We want to give special thanks to our community professionals who volunteered their time and expertise to our upcoming professionals. Thank you all:

- Richard Hayner, Wake Co. DHS, SRC
- Gregory Cooper, UNC-CH, Director of Social Work Admissions
- Darlene Johnson, Wake Co. Schools

- Deb Ginn, Dept. of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention
- Chris Budnick, The Healing Place of Wake Co.
- Judy Shotts, Ruth Sheets Center
- Anne Lyford, NC State Career Center
- Susan Boyette, C.E.O., Vanguard Professional Staffing
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Senior Scholars (L to R) Amy Melton, Lora Hampton, Ashley Manning & Leslie Skinner

Greetings from Appalachian State University!

It has been an exciting and busy year at ASU--- WITH 10 Child Welfare Scholars in Fall/2005 and 12 Child Welfare Scholars during Spring/2006. Our numbers are exceptionally high due to receiving some extra student funding for 2005/2006. There is growing interest in working with families and children, plus being apart of the Collaborative. You are building a strong reputation for our program and I commend you!!!

An update on this year: in December, Sara Osborne graduated and awaits notice of admission to Advanced Standing MSW Program. The upcoming graduation in May, will include 4 Scholars: Hillary Hedrick, Jennifer Hall, Dia Carswell and Tonda Lowman. This will increase the presence of graduated ASU Scholars to 9 or 10 fulfilling employment obligation with various county departments of social services.

Scholars attended 2 professional training events: *Play Therapy* at Gaston Community College in November and *Prevent Child Abuse* in Durham on March 22. We were unable to attend the Law Day event in Chapel Hill due to weather, some things about living in the mountains never changes!

In addition to the Child Welfare Collaborative news—the Social Work Program grows— Dr. Wilks became a father in December (son: Noah), Dr. Tiffany Christian is now a mother of

4—having had twins: Rayna and Raylen on March 20. The preparation for the Master of Social Work Program (similar to a birth) is well underway with a CSWE site visit to be scheduled soon. The plan is to begin with the part-time off-campus program in January/2007. More details are available on university website. Dr. Kellie Reed-Ashcraft will resume her teaching schedule next fall, with Dr. Leon Ginsberg assuming the position of Social Work Program Director.

Believe me, when I say, “a lot is going on”.

Hope all is going well with each of you. Let me hear from you!!

Until next time...Judith W. CWEC Coordinator



ASU Scholars participating in *Play Therapy*

Are You Ready?

Get Ready!

For the Post-Grad E- Survey!

Laurie Selz-Campbell will be sending out a Post-Graduate E-Survey. It will be for those scholars who are working on their employment commitment but have not completed it. She wants to learn about some of your experiences, so look for a letter within the next three weeks

East Carolina University

This spring, the East Carolina University Child Welfare Education Collaborative Program will graduate one of its largest classes to date, with 18 CWEC scholars receiving either MSW or BSW degrees. Graduates include both full-time on-campus students and distance education students from cohorts in Rocky Mount and Kenansville. Local departments of social services in 14 different counties have served as field placement sites for these graduates. ECU has been very fortunate in finding DSS agencies and staff who are willing to serve as field supervisors for our scholars. If you are interested in becoming a field supervisor for a Collaborative student, we encourage you to discuss your interest with your agency management and to contact the ECU Director of Social Work Field Education, Katie Leegins-Vinson, at 252-328-4211 for more information.

Even with the large graduating class, ECU anticipates a group of seven scholars returning to the program next year, with additional scholars slated to be added this summer.

If you are an ECU scholar graduate and would like to participate in the ECU Collaborative selection process, please contact the ECU Collaborative Office @ 252-328-2419 as we welcome your assistance in making these very important decisions.

The 2006 ECU Child Welfare Education Collaborative Scholar Graduates include:

MSW

Kimberly A. Andrews
Jolene F. Armstrong
Melvia K. Batts
Donza D. Blackmon
Mary A. Cox
Emily E. Freeman
Dawn M. Godwin
Hurey L. Hughes
Rhonda R. James
Geoffrey C. Maret
Octavia S. Muhammad
Samantha Nixon
Carrie D. Serjeant
Susan L. Taylor
Kelly Wilt

BSW

Stephanie S. Riddick
Morgan Robbins
Kristine J. Thomason



(Front Row) Rhonda James, Kelly Wilt, Geoffrey Merritt (Back Row) Samantha Nixon, Mary Ann Cox, Emily Freeman, Kim Andrews

Spotlight on ECU Collaborative Coordinator Deb Ryals



The name Deb Ryals is a familiar one to many social workers in North Carolina, particularly those in DSS circles. Deb had close to 29 years of experience in several county departments of social services when she retired in 2000 from her position as Director of the Greene County DSS. Prior to her retirement, Deb had been teaching social work courses for several years in the ECU Master's program as an adjunct faculty member and found that she loved the classroom. So when the ECU Collaborative Coordinator's position became available, she knew it was the 'perfect fit' as it combined the opportunity to stay connected to DSS, to teach and to work with a program that has the potential of improving the lives of children and families in our state better.

Deb is now in her sixth year as the ECU Collaborative Coordinator, and despite rumors of

a second retirement, is busy planning syllabi for her Fall semester classes. In addition to regular faculty duties within the ECU School of Social Work, Deb is currently working with Evelyn Williams, Collaborative Director, to provide Recruitment and Retention Training for child welfare supervisors in eastern North Carolina. Deb also continues to share her special gift of public speaking with various groups across the state and most recently was the keynote speaker for the Greenville NASW LPU Social Work Month luncheon. Deb continues to be a vital force in the social work community and her peers notice these efforts. She was recently honored by the East Carolina School of Social Work faculty as their 'Outstanding Alumni for 2006.' Everyone who knows Deb knows how deserving she is of this recognition.