From the Dean...

This issue of Contact focuses on the timely and vital topic of military and veterans social work. With many more troops expected to return home from Iraq, families are preparing to readjust to “normal life.”

But for many, that will not be easy. They will face other battles: how to deal with lasting physical injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, substance abuse or other mental health needs.

Our School has stepped up to help in numerous ways. As you’ll read in this magazine, faculty have created tools to identify service members in need; we’re training the state’s mental health professionals to serve this population; alumni and students are working with veterans; and we have active-duty masters and doctoral graduates across the world who are serving their country as military social workers.

Tragically, we lost one of our own on May 11 when Cmdr. Keith Springle, MSW ’84, was killed while working at a military clinic in Baghdad (see story on p. 15).

We were also saddened to recently lose John Turner, beloved former dean. We’ve included a tribute to him on p. 16.

In other School news, this summer we’ll say goodbye to two faculty members who are moving on—Oscar Barbarin and Nancy Dickinson.

Barbarin, the L. Richardson and Emily Preyer Bicentennial Distinguished Professor for Strengthening Families, has accepted a position at Tulane University in New Orleans. He will be working to help improve the school experiences and outcomes of children there, greatly challenged after Hurricane Katrina. A New Orleans native, this opportunity is close to his heart and will also allow him to be with his family.

Dickinson, executive director of the School’s Jordan Institute for Families since 1998, is leaving to join her husband Rick Barth in Baltimore, where he is the dean of the University of Maryland’s School of Social Work (see story on p. 22).

A sincere and heartfelt thank you and best wishes to Oscar and Nancy in their new endeavors.

We’re winding down a successful search for the Spears-Turner Distinguished Professorship and have had a powerful pool of candidates. I expect to announce our new professor in August.

As you are probably aware, the nation’s economic crisis continues to impact UNC. The University has hired a private consulting firm, Bain and Co., to look at ways UNC can consolidate to save money across units. How this may affect our School remains to be seen.

This year, our School was required to return a substantial amount of state appropriations. Our mandated budget cuts have totaled 7% for the 2008-09 fiscal year, which ends June 30. We must make another 5% cut by July 1 and have been told to prepare for up to 15% in cuts for 2009-10.

These will, indeed, be lean times. We are tightening our belts wherever possible, such as putting student orientation materials online instead of mailing them. And the next issue of Contact will be posted exclusively online rather than printed and mailed.

However, with cuts of this magnitude, there is no way to avoid faculty and staff losses. Layoffs have already started at the School, and we are making every effort to handle this painful situation with compassion and fairness.

And as with all state employees, our School’s faculty and staff have been subject to pay reductions by furlough.

The economic downturn has also affected our endowment income, resulting in less money available for scholarships. Our applicant pool is up 30% over last year, but we can’t provide students the amount of support we normally would. We are applying our funds as strategically as possible.

In further fallout from North Carolina’s budget crisis, one of our most valued programs is in jeopardy. The North Carolina Child Welfare Education Collaborative, based here at the School and training MSW and BSW students statewide for careers in child welfare, is in danger of losing its funding from the state. As of this writing, the Governor and the Senate have reduced or eliminated its funding from their proposed budgets, and the House is still hashing out its version.

With the state slashing its health and human services budget, I am also very concerned about the mental health care system in North Carolina. We will continue to work with NASW, other university deans and directors, legislators and government officials to effect legislation that will benefit the citizens of North Carolina.

Our resolve remains strong, despite the challenges we’re facing. Faculty are actively seeking grants and external funding sources, and we are hopeful for the future. Regardless of the economy, with your support, our School will continue to meet its core mission of teaching, research and service.

Jack M. Richman
Focus on Military and Veterans Social Work

AHEC and Citizen Soldier train professionals to work with returning troops • 4
Online tool helps identify service members in need • 6
Professor helps mental health care providers understand military culture • 8
Students work with veterans at the Durham VA Medical Center • 9
Alumni serve military members, veterans and their families around the world • 10
Alumnae study ways to prevent child abuse and neglect among military families • 12
School of Social Work called upon to assist Baghdad psychiatric hospital • 14
Alumnus killed in Iraq military clinic shooting • 15

School News

Remembering John Turner • 16
Faculty spotlight • 18
Faculty publish two new books on innovative research techniques • 20
Fraser and Howard named editors of social work research journals • 21
The Jordan Institute: Looking back on 10 years of strengthening families • 22
Access to state health insurance programs vital to disabled children • 24
Parish honored for developmental disabilities research • 25
UNC program narrows the achievement gap among middle school students • 26
Carrie Pettus Davis named Outstanding Doctoral Student • 30
Clinical Lecture Series fall schedule • 31

Alumni and Development News

Alumni update • 32
Scholarship established in memory of student Joan Phillips-Trimmer • 34
Leadership fund created to honor longtime Catawba County DSS director • 34
Alumni president’s letter • 35
AHEC and Citizen Soldier train professionals to work with returning troops, PTSD

By Susan White

When North Carolina’s active-duty soldiers return home, most will lean on the Veteran’s Administration for help with physical injuries, psychological illnesses and substance abuse issues. But at least 10 percent of the state’s Reserve service and National Guard members will likely struggle to find help.

For some of these nearly 12,000 “citizen soldiers,” there will be bouts of depression or challenges with neurotic disorders. Others will abuse drugs or alcohol. Even more worrisome—many of these men and women will confront these issues alone simply because they live hours away from an active military base and in communities where few veteran services are available.

But over the last few years, UNC’s Citizen Soldier Support Program (CSSP), the North Carolina Area Health Education Centers (NCAHEC) and the N.C. Governor’s Focus on Returning Combat Veterans and Their Families have been diligently working to ensure that all service members and their families have access to resources and support.

Like many other states, North Carolina is bracing for a significant demand for mental health services from returning troops from Afghanistan and Iraq, said John Harris, the veterans’ mental health program manager for the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SAS).

According to an article in the January/February 2008 issue of the North Carolina Medical Journal, a 2007 study found that more than 20 percent of active duty U.S Army and Marine Corps soldiers and 42 percent of Reserve component soldiers returned from Iraq requiring some form of mental health treatment. Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted last year that as many as 20 percent of today’s troops may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

“The majority of soldiers coming back will have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or a traumatic brain injury (TBI), both of which may not show up for six or seven months or more,” Harris said.

“So, many of these service members are going to need our help.”

A 2008 RAND Corp. study estimated that nearly 20 percent of veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq, about 300,000, will face PTSD or some form of depression.

With such needs, medical experts say, local providers, especially social workers, mental health professionals, licensed clinical addiction specialists, case managers and others, must be trained to recognize the symptoms of PTSD and TBI, both of which are considered signature injuries.

Much of that education is ongoing throughout the state, including through the Behavioral Healthcare Resource Program (BHRP) at the School’s Jordan Institute for Families. BHRP offers training in substance abuse issues and in PTSD assessment and treatment. Participants discuss the signs and symptoms in post-deployment, coping strategies and clinical implications and challenges. Nearly 400 professionals have completed classes so far, said Worth Bolton, a BHRP clinical instructor.

Bolton also serves on the Governor’s Focus committee, which ensures that veterans and their families have access to a network of informational, supportive, clinical and administrative services to assist in post-deployment readjustment. There is special interest in the state’s civilian soldiers, he said.
“These are our citizens who live and work in our North Carolina communities,” Bolton said.

Establishing a connection with Reserve and Guard members is vital, especially because many are oftentimes reluctant to seek help on their own, said Sheryl Pacelli, director of mental health education for the South East Area Health Education Center.

“A lot of these soldiers may be going back to towns where for most people there, the war is just something they see on TV; it’s not real to them,” she said. “There’s no real support system there to help them transition from the combat environment back to the citizen environment.”

Pacelli helped develop training for mental health workers, clinical clergy and substance abuse counselors through the Citizen Soldier Support Program, which is housed at UNC’s Odom Institute for Research in Social Science. Courses are also available to physicians and primary care workers assisting returning troops. So far, more than 1,000 professionals have been trained, helping to strengthen the outreach of frontline workers to civilian soldiers and their families.

Because local providers are often the first point of contact, they can also be the key to service access, Pacelli said.

“We need to train the local mental health and primary care community about post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury because walking into that healthcare center may be the first step to treatment,” she said. “So if someone comes in and is complaining that they’re not sleeping or that they get angry quickly or that everything is bothering them, that should be a trigger to the healthcare provider to ask about military or combat experience. They’re not just going to walk in and say, ‘I just got out of combat.’ Some don’t even want to identify with the military. So if a healthcare professional doesn’t ask, ‘Have you been in combat?’ then sometimes vets won’t say that they have.

“We need to teach health care workers to ask the questions.”

Paul Overman, a staff psychologist at the counseling center at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, participated last year in a workshop on PTSD, which he described as an “invaluable” session.

“As the training emphasized, every war is different and the current wars have their unique traits and environments that create different challenges to the soldiers in the field and therefore potentially to their return,” Overman said.

Continued on p. 7

More than 20% of active duty U.S. Army and Marine Corps soldiers and 42% of Reserve component soldiers returned from Iraq requiring some form of mental health treatment

From a 2007 study according to the Jan./Feb. ’08 North Carolina Medical Journal
The latest news reports and statistics are sobering: Last year alone, 128 U.S. Army soldiers committed suicide, the most since 1980 when the Army began tracking the numbers. Potentially more troubling—that January would set a record for the first month since the start of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in which more troops died from suicides than were killed in combat.

For the School of Social Work’s Gary Bowen, who has long been on the front lines for improving services to military families, such glaring figures raise one vital question: “How do we identify people in trouble and those who are most prone to problems in the face of adversity?”

Over the last several years, Bowen has envisioned at least one possible solution. He thinks a program originally developed to assist at-risk children could also be the key to identifying vulnerable military troops and their families and could help enhance their health, welfare and combat readiness.

Developed in the early 1990s by Bowen and School Dean Jack Richman, the School Success Profile (SSP) is an online academic assessment tool that was designed to help principals and teachers better understand what young people face outside the classroom and assist in addressing their needs. The evaluation has shown success in schools across the country in identifying barriers to school performance, such as peer pressure, lack of family support and neighborhood danger.

Bowen, a Kenan Distinguished Professor, thinks the profile could show similar success in assessing the personal resilience of soldiers and their loved ones. Additionally, such an assessment tool could help service members determine if they have sufficient support networks in place—extended family, friends, neighbors and coworkers—to effectively cope during stressful times, he said.

These people are vital sources of “social capital” and become the “guardrails on the road to life” for military families, Bowen said. Given the active pattern and length of deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq over the last six years, their support has been especially needed, he said.

“The one thing we know is the value of the social support system,” he said. “If you look at what’s important to people and what helps them get through the day-to-day demands and challenges, it’s the relationships they have with others.” Bowen noted, “Formal services and programs need to be more intentional about helping service members and families develop these informal support systems.”

Using the online assessment enables the military to be “very direct in its understanding of the support systems people have in place to successfully navigate the road,” Bowen added. Having this knowledge, he said, also enables practitioners to evaluate existing resources for service members and develop additional programs and outreach services.

Bowen actually piloted the assessment tool for the U.S. Air Force several years ago, relying on the same technology built by Flying Bridge Technologies Inc., of Charlotte, to develop the School Success Profile. The “asset inventories” focus on two main areas, one that ad-

Online tool helps identify service members in need

By Susan White
addresses family, unit and community relationships and another that focuses on the respondent's success in meeting life demands. Participants are evaluated based on their responses to a variety of statements. For example, items to determine a respondent's wealth of support include:

- You maintain a healthy diet, exercise on a regular basis and would describe your overall state of health these days as very good or excellent.
- You have enough money to pay your bills each month, you have incorporated savings into your budget, and you have some extra money available in case of emergency.

Service members and civilian spouses receive summary profiles of their responses, including helpful strategies for building stronger connections with others. They also are given links to Web sites that are tailored to military members and families. Although participants' responses are recorded anonymously, Bowen said data can be used for program planning and development within individual military units and communities.

"An important aim is to assist practitioners in developing a 'community of practice' in working with military members and their families," Bowen said. "It's really about strengthening the informal system of support."

Overall interest in the military assessment model is still growing. Last year, Bowen received nearly $228,000 from the U.S. Marine Corps to develop an online “family readiness” assessment tool for the service branch and for funding for two MSW student research assistants. The assessment went live in February. Bowen worked with Flying Bridge Technologies to secure funding for the project and added that the School of Social Work's relationship with the company models an exemplary public-private partnership.

In March, he traveled to Quantico, Va., and briefed the Marine Corps Family Readiness Committee, including Lt. Gen. Dennis J. Hejlik, commanding general of the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, and Annette Conway, wife of Gen. James T. Conway, 34th commandant of the Marine Corps, on the science behind the assessment model and how the tool will be used to develop support services and programs to increase the resilience of Marines and their families.

Bowen is confident that the model has broader reaching possibilities.

"I would like to see versions of this assessment tool being used by all of the military services, including the U.S. Army and the Guard and Reserve," he added. "This work has enormous implications for informing and improving program planning and development for military members and their families."

Substance Abuse Services to create an assessment model for the state’s guard and reserve families. He is now exploring additional funding for set up.

Bowen's work also recently garnered some high-ranking attention. In March, he traveled to Quantico, Va., and briefed the Marine Corps Family Readiness Committee, including Lt. Gen. Dennis J. Hejlik, commanding general of the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, and Annette Conway, wife of Gen. James T. Conway, 34th commandant of the Marine Corps, on the science behind the assessment model and how the tool will be used to develop support services and programs to increase the resilience of Marines and their families.

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AHEC and Citizen Soldier, continued from p. 5

Clinicians should employ a “holistic” approach when working with returning soldiers, he said. “One cannot separate the social, work and relationship issues and needs from the memories and effects of the wars, whether they are emotional, physical or spiritual,” he said. “Soldiers often come back reacting to the world around them, whether at home, school or on the job. And they react the same way they were trained to react for battle.”

“It is important to assist the returning soldier to use the same physical, emotional and mental abilities to ‘recover’ from their tour of duty or from war and to adjust to the changes back home,” he said. Addressing the needs of nonmilitary family members is equally important.

When Alfreda Gee, MSW ’87, a clinical social worker for the New Hanover County Health Department, attended a workshop in January, she hoped to gain a better understanding for the deployment experience, especially its effects on military spouses. The knowledge, she said, would offer guidance in her day-to-day workings with wives from Jacksonville’s Camp Lejeune and Fayetteville’s Ft. Bragg.

Gee splits her time between high-risk maternity and the county’s health department clinics. Her training, she said, quickly taught her that a family’s resilience depends heavily on their tenure in a community. “Regardless, I try to make sure that they are all connected to what resources are available and that they are getting connected into the community,” she said.

Having had a father who served in World War II, Gee is familiar with the scars of war and knows the nation’s current veterans face similar challenges. But so do their families, she said. For the state’s mental health, social work and substance abuse providers, efforts to serve all will be great over the next few years, she added. “I think every social worker in every walk of life in North Carolina is going to need some kind of preparedness,” Gee said. “It doesn’t matter what area of social work a person works in, there is going to be a need for some kind of experience and training because these are our neighbors and friends and we have to know how to be supportive.”
With more troops expected to return to North Carolina over the next few years, mental health clinicians across the state have started to prepare for their homecoming by enrolling in training that addresses the needs of soldiers who are war weary and physically and emotionally scarred.

A vital piece of this education, according to Amelia Roberts-Lewis, an associate professor at the School of Social Work, is a lesson on military culture. Clinicians schooled on the discipline and authority of the armed services stand a much greater chance of connecting with veterans than those who are unaware of the structure, Roberts-Lewis said, especially when assisting soldiers battling mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

“Military culture shapes a world view in a different way,” she said. “And in order to provide good mental health services to the military folks who are coming home, you must understand the culture of this group. Understanding the culture will assist you in becoming a better clinician.”

Roberts-Lewis realized the importance of such lessons last year after being asked to lead a workshop on “multicultural considerations for working with veterans.” Clinicians needed more than just an education on how racially and ethnically diverse troops might react differently to depression or substance abuse, she said. To successfully establish credibility and generate effective treatment, they also needed to understand the military’s values, traditions and customs, she said.

After all, from boot camp forward, soldiers are immersed in an environment that promotes toughness. Such a mentality often means that those in trouble may be reluctant to ask for assistance for fear of jeopardizing their jobs, she said.

“There is a great stigma to these folks coming to see you,” Roberts-Lewis said. “Attitudes regarding mental health and seeking help are generally discouraged. Instead, there is an idea that you need to toughen it up and move on.”

Before teaching others, however, Roberts-Lewis needed to first educate herself. She could easily talk about race since she had a lengthy history in multicultural training, reaching back to the 1980s in Los Angeles when she worked as a psychotherapist and diversity training consultant. When the Rodney King riots occurred, businesses eager to address racial issues leaned on Roberts-Lewis for assistance. And a significant part of her training still centered on the values and experiences of different races and ethnicities, such as the role of the extended family or the importance of work.

Although she had three brothers who had served in the U.S. Army and one in the U.S. Air Force, until last year, Roberts-Lewis said she knew very little about the inner workings of the armed services. Unable to find much academic literature on the subject, Roberts-Lewis sought help from local veterans and found an abundance of information from mental health practitioners, many of whom had served in Vietnam.

She spent hours interviewing them, and they helped her navigate through the military’s myriad cultural rules and regulations, such as the emphasis on punctuality, respect and obedience to authority, physical fitness and unquestioned allegiance. Roberts-Lewis shared that wisdom with a class of about 70 clinicians in Salisbury last summer.

Helping veterans understand and address their own expectations, including for family members, is vital, she said. “You have to remember that all the values that they have learned have been integrated into their psyche,” she explained. “So you may have a soldier who comes home and expects that his kids are going to respond to authority in a certain way or that his spouse is going to respond to authority in a specific way. And at the same time, he may be dealing with PTSD.”

Exploring common considerations, such as spirituality and discrimination issues, is equally as important as discerning any differences, Roberts-Lewis noted. Clinicians would also likely establish stronger connections with clients if they reached out to primary care doctors, many of whom are a veteran’s first point of contact, she said.

Although part of the training emphasized female veterans, such as how some with PTSD may have more physical complaints, including joint problems and migraines, Roberts-Lewis said she eventually hopes to investigate “domestic violence and sexual powerlessness around women” in the military since those topics are rarely addressed.

“There’s also the issue of sexual minorities in the military and, ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ and what happens,” she said. “So this is just the tip of the iceberg for me.”
Doctoral student Martin Thomas Hall and MSW student Kim Cuomo knew very little about the Durham VA Medical Center, but their work experiences there have helped define where they would like their careers to take them. Both would love to land permanent positions serving veterans and if possible, at facilities run by the federal Veterans Administration.

Social workers have been a permanent fixture of the VA system for years, helping veterans and their families find resources, including home health, legal and community-based services, to meet their needs.

“I just think that the VA offers a good system of care for people,” Hall said.

Hall, who completed a one-year post-masters fellowship at the Durham VA in September, said he was initially drawn to the center for the opportunity to get a year’s worth of experience in several evidence-based practices. Hall worked in the center’s outpatient substance abuse clinic, where he offered group and individual counseling, and the serious mental illness clinic, where he focused on psychosocial rehabilitation.

“Psychosocial rehab is a relatively recent notion that recovery is possible for people with serious mental illnesses,” Hall explained. The treatment focuses on personal and professional goal setting, as well as developing social and independent living skills.

The VA experience also afforded him the chance to work with a wide age range of veterans, including one younger vet who recently returned from combat in Iraq. Overall, more than 200,000 veterans within a 26-county area are eligible for services at the Durham VA.

Hall said serving the health and mental health needs of so many men and women from different backgrounds helped him better understand the complexities of why some enlist in the military.

“I think what was interesting to me is that for some people who joined, they did so because they literally saw it as a chance to serve their country,” he said. “But a lot of people did so because they didn’t have any other career options or any other choices, and that’s the group that social workers should be interested in.”

For Cuomo, whose study interest is in aging, a field placement at the VA center was the perfect fit. She has spent the year mainly working with the center’s geriatric patients, including in an outpatient clinic once a week where she sees many veterans in their 80s and 90s.

“It really is a team approach here,” she said. “We try to figure out what kind of issues our patients are dealing with and then how we can help them.”

Cuomo’s work has largely focused on psychosocial assessments, in which she thoroughly examines each veteran’s military and personal history, including where and when each served and whether each currently has an adequate support system.

“Among other things, I find out if they’re married, if their spouse is still living, where their family lives and if they have children and how involved they are in their lives,” she said. “We also talk about insurance and how they are managing their finances.”

Although challenging at times, the work experience has humbled her, Cuomo said.

“You just realize that a lot of these people made a real sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy here,” she said. “And now we see this is our turn to do something for them.”
Alumni serve military members, veterans and their families around the world

Every day, School of Social Work alumni address the needs of active-duty troops, reserves, veterans and their families while working at VA hospitals, medical clinics and military bases across the United States and around the world. As dedicated and highly trained professionals, they provide preventive and clinical support services and programs. They help families prepare for and cope with the emotional and financial stresses of deployments, and they assist with the mental and physical repercussions of war. The following highlights just a few of the School’s graduates who are reaching out to our nation’s men and women in uniform.

James Condon, MSW ’01
U.S. Naval Hospital, Naples, Italy

Were it not for a classified ad for Navy social workers, Lt. James Condon might still be working in private practice in Raleigh as a child and family therapist. Instead, Condon can claim quite a unique position—he is one of only 23 Navy social workers in the world. The figure is even more impressive when you consider that the Army and Air Force have nine times the total number of social workers in each of their branches.

Condon, a mental health outpatient therapist, is stationed at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Naples, Italy, and acknowledges that he applied for the position somewhat on a whim. But the 2001 School of Social Work graduate also knew that his training and skills would greatly benefit the armed services.

“Social workers enter the military ready to go,” Condon said. “Psychologists typically complete their internships and work for a length of time under supervision. Psychologists are also limited to certain populations, depending on their licensure and training. Social workers have no such limitations.”

Social workers are also generally more seasoned in their professions than other mental health providers, he added. Like many of his peers, Condon already had experience counseling individuals, families and groups. As a mental health outpatient therapist, he works with active-duty men and women, their spouses and children. He also counsels veterans.

Condon’s patients are not that different than those seen in other mental health clinics. They struggle with depression, anxiety and adjustment disorders, he said. He is especially passionate about his work in trauma, partly because he worked in child welfare before completing his master’s degree.

“No, as a military social worker, I have the opportunity to work with patients with backgrounds of abuse, with sexual assault victims, in addition to those struggling with combat trauma.”

Condon is also there for grieving families. His duties include serving as the regional Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) for Europe, Africa and the Middle East. These officers are Navy representatives and are called upon to notify families when a loved one has died; Condon trains the region’s officers on grief and loss issues and how to make notifications.

Condon expects to remain in Italy for one more year before being transferred with his wife and three children to Okinawa, Japan. There, he expects to be a part of a Marine Corp team, working with troops in and out of combat.

Regardless of where he’s stationed, Condon said he’s thankful for the chance to serve. “I love my job,” he said. “It’s never a dull moment. I have the opportunity as a clinical social worker to gain experience I would never gain in any other environment. It is fulfilling to have an impact on people on a daily basis.” — Susan White

Lee Chaix McDonough, MSW ’03
Eglin VA Outpatient Clinic, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.

When Lee Chaix McDonough first started as an outpatient clinic social worker, she was certain most of her time would be spent working with older veterans, mainly those who served in Vietnam or perhaps the first Gulf War. But since landing in her new post in September 2008, McDonough has been primarily treating the psychological wounds of young men and women who fought in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“I see a lot of post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD), which is mostly combat related,” she said. “Another issue is military sexual trauma, mostly involving women. Unfortunately, I’ve also got veterans struggling with combat-related PTSD and sexual trauma.”

Although the outpatient clinic where McDonough works is currently serving about 3,600 total veterans or about half of its capacity, the need for services, especially in addiction issues and mental health treatment, is rapidly growing, she said.

“At the time my job was created, it was supposed to be 50% primary care and 50% mental health. But now, I’m doing 20 percent primary care and 80 percent mental health.”

In her role, McDonough also supports physicians and nursing staff and makes referrals for home health, in-home assistance and hospice care. She handles HIV counseling and prevention care and guides clients through the paperwork for advanced directives and living wills.

Over the years, McDonough said she’s gained a greater respect for all that military social workers do.

“I think because of our training and our education, we just have such a broad holistic perspective on things,” she said. “At Carolina, the emphasis was on person-in-environment—meaning, look at the individual needs, but look at the greater context where they work and live.”

“The military is such a unique environment; it really does influ-
ence the individual. Because of our skills training, we bring a unique insight into working with men and women in the military and our veterans.” — Susan White

Amanda Osborne, MSW ‘08
VA Medical Center, Durham

From the moment Amanda Osborne completed her internship at the VA Medical Center in Durham, she knew she’d found a place to serve.

“My experience here really shaped my wanting to come back to work here,” said Osborne, who started full-time at the center in June.

Osborne splits her time between the center’s inpatient medical ward, where she screens for substance abuse problems and provides intervention services, and the center’s outpatient clinic, where she offers individual and group therapy to veterans dealing with addiction issues.

The division of work allows Osborne to come into contact with a diverse mixture of vets. They are young and old and from middle and low-income households; some are even homeless. Osborne embraces the challenges in working with each group.

Many of the older vets, she said, face health complications deeply rooted in a history of substance abuse. Many of these same patients lack a family support system, she said.

The younger veterans arrive with more “family issues.” Some have been using alcohol to cope with wartime experiences.

“We try to meet all of them where they are,” Osborne said referring to their treatment needs. “For the younger vets, we talk about harm reduction and reducing and controlling their drinking. The older vets are more willing to discuss total abstinence.”

Like many of her peers, Osborne is also preparing for the oncoming wave of troops expected to return home over the next few years. The younger vets are more willing to discuss total abstinence.

“I’m just really amazed at the character of a lot of these soldiers and their desire to get back out there in the fight, despite being wounded or losing a limb or another body part,” she said. “It’s just amazing to me.

“There’s just somebody is willing to fight and defend us and that I can help the wounded when they get back.” — Susan White

Lindsay Lathinghouse Teplesky, MSW ‘04
U.S. Army, Iraq

I am very passionate about military social work,” wrote Cpt. Lindsay Teplesky of her service in Iraq. An Army social worker, she has been there 14 months as a member of the 528th Combat Stress Control Team.

Teplesky is assigned to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Summerall in Bayji, and also travels to outlying patrol bases to provide services where there is no full-time assigned mental health provider. The FOB has an office where soldiers can walk in with any kind of combat stress or mental health problem and speak to someone, similar to a regular outpatient clinic.

Two soldiers report to her and are trained by the Army as mental health specialists; they do not have advanced degrees but the Army has trained them to assist social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists.

Her team also goes around to different units and provides classes and training on stress/anger management, combat stress/PTSD, relationship issues and suicide prevention.

In recent years, the Army has begun treating PTSD in the field. Teplesky’s team does “walkabouts” or “help-in-place” where they walk around and talk to soldiers, trying to build relationships and reduce the stigma of combat stress and mental health. If there is a traumatic event such as a death or small arms fire, they respond and provide traumatic event management. They provide support and sometimes a “defusing” session for the survivors.

Teplesky is nearing the end of her deployment in Iraq and will soon return to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

— Michelle Rogers

Cheryl Thompson, MSW ’95
Womack Army Medical Center, Ft. Bragg, Fayetteville

Cheryl Thompson didn’t plan a career with the military. For years, she worked in mental health care in North Carolina until system reform forced her to seek a new professional path.

That fork in the road led her to Ft. Bragg nearly three years ago, initially as a social work contractor. She investigated domestic violence and child abuse and neglect reports for the base’s Family Advocacy Program.

Today, Thompson is assigned to the second largest of one of 37 units in the U.S. Army—the Warrior Transition Battalion. The battalion was created to help ease the recovery of wounded soldiers and to provide them with a seamless system of medical resources and services.

“The primary purpose is to help them heal,” Thompson said. “It creates a space for a soldier…to get what they need before going back into service or being released into the civilian world.”

The battalion serves nearly 700 soldiers, many of whom arrived after tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq. As an outpatient clinic social worker, Thompson spends much of her time treating troops with traumatic brain injuries, battling post-traumatic stress disorder or chronic pain.

“We do a really thorough psycho-social assessment and ongoing risk assessment with soldiers,” she said. “We offer individual therapy, couples therapy and supportive therapy.”

Although the military culture, including the abundant use of acronyms, has taken some adjustment, Thompson considers her work and renewed career gratifying.

“I’m really amazed at the character of a lot of these soldiers and their desire to get back out there in the fight, despite being wounded or losing a limb or another body part,” she said. “It’s just amazing to me.

“I’m glad somebody is willing to fight and defend us and that I can help the wounded when they get back.” — Susan White

Cpt. Lindsay Teplesky
Jennifer Hardison Walters, MSW ‘00
RTI, Research Triangle Park, N.C.

At RTI in Research Triangle Park, Hardison Walters, a 2000 MSW graduate, has spent the last several years working alongside senior health analyst and principal investigator Deborah Gibbs on a $1.4 million U.S. Department of Defense funded study exploring the co-occurrence of family violence and substance abuse among Army families.

That initial study, which began in 2004, first grabbed national attention two years ago with the publication of a report that found that civilian wives of Army soldiers were three times more likely to commit child abuse or neglect when their husbands were deployed in combat than when their spouses were at home.

Since those findings were first published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, Gibbs, Hardison Walters and co-principal investigators, Monique Clinton-Sherrod of RTI and Sandra Martin of UNC’s Gillings School of Global Public Health, have continued working on other study analyses that examine the relationship between substance use, spousal violence and child maltreatment.

Key findings that have been published or submitted for publication include:

- Among soldiers who committed child abuse or neglect, 13 percent also used alcohol or other drugs at the time of their first child maltreatment incident. Offenders typically were males under the age of 25, and were more likely to have committed child neglect or emotional abuse, rather than physical abuse.
- Among soldiers who committed spouse abuse, 25 percent reported using alcohol or illicit drugs during the abusive incidents. Offenders were more likely to be white males and more likely to have committed severe physical abuse.
- The odds that an offender abused substances nearly tripled in cases that involved child abuse or neglect along with spouse abuse.

The study was based on thousands of Army-reported incidents of child maltreatment and spouse abuse that occurred between 2002 and 2007.

Most “military parents are remarkably resilient,” Gibbs noted. “But it’s also a population that has a great number of very young married couples. They are likely to have very young children, and they are asked to deal with extraordinary stresses.

“For families that have already been struggling or are starting to struggle, many will have trouble.”

The results, Gibbs and Hardison Walters agreed, confirm the need for proper coordination of services between providers who address these problems. Part of Hardison Walters’ portion of the latest analysis involved a closer look at how well Army service providers, including family advocacy clinicians and substance abuse program counselors,
worked together to identify, assess and treat families in need.

“The results we found were very reaffirming—these providers do work well together and their relationships were very effective,” Hardison Walters said.

Overall, the most widely available services to soldiers and their families included anger management classes, counseling—including for substance abuse—crisis intervention and parenting education.

Analysis of the Army data is continuing. The researchers are currently examining the extent to which deployments and transfers between Army installations affect the treatment of soldiers and families struggling with substance abuse, domestic violence or child abuse and neglect issues.

Long-term, Hardison Walters said she thinks the entire project “has far-reaching implications for change.” “It really has the potential to change policy and practice for the better,” she said.

Rachel Foster, Ph.D. ’08
U.S. Air Force, San Antonio, Texas

More than 1,300 miles away at Port San Antonio in San Antonio, Texas, Foster, a 2008 doctoral graduate, and her Family Advocacy colleagues are also focusing on reducing the risk of child or spouse abuse.

Two separate studies look at the effects of deployments on family violence. One specifically examines partner violence before and after deployment, while the other attempts to pinpoint when during the deployment child maltreatment is most likely to occur and which parent is most likely to commit the abuse.

“These studies are important for practice and policy reasons,” Foster said, “in particular to see what’s happening in the case of child maltreatment. We’re very concerned about the period of time children are most vulnerable. Is it during the first 30 days of deployment or during the first 60 days or is it maybe during the entire period? We need to know so that we can inform practice and policies to help support our families the best way possible.”

The Air Force studies are based on thousands of incident reports collected from the military branch from 2001 to 2007.

Air Force service members generally deploy no more than four months at a time, Foster said. But with combat situations continuing in Afghanistan and Iraq, the length of a tour of duty has nearly doubled to eight months, she said. The goal is to better understand how these longer and more frequent deployments affect families, she said.

Two other Air Force projects are also examining ways to support military families.

First, the New Parent Support Program is designed to engage at-risk families in prenatal and postnatal prevention services. The voluntary prevention program uses intensive home visitation for expectant parents and parents of children from birth to 3 years of age.

Although the project is just underway, Foster and her team are beginning to conduct focus groups that engage fathers because this population is generally the most difficult to recruit for the program. The project will evaluate needed services from three different perspectives: those that prospective fathers desire from the Family Advocacy office, those young fathers didn’t receive but would have liked to have had and any barriers to seeking services.

The second project involves a relationship-enhancement program for married couples that Foster said “has the potential to reduce the risk of spouse physical abuse.”

All of the Air Force studies are funded with about $1 million annually from the U.S. Department of Defense.
School of Social Work called upon to assist Baghdad psychiatric hospital

By Susan White

When Sgt. Kevin Parra learned that staff members at Iraq’s only inpatient psychiatric hospital were desperate to discuss case studies and training techniques to better assist some of the country’s most vulnerable residents, he knew just what to do. He contacted UNC’s School of Social Work.

Parra, a Chapel Hill resident who is with the New York-based 401st Civil Affairs Battalion stationed in Iraq, is now a vital link to a potentially-developing partnership between Baghdad’s Al Rashad Psychiatric Hospital and UNC. Details of a working relationship are still being fleshed out. Discussions are underway on the creation of a UNC interdisciplinary team of mental health, psychiatric and medical experts that would possibly provide the hospital’s director and staff with training material and consultation on best practices.

Although the hospital serves 1,100 patients and is the second largest inpatient facility in the Middle East, the medical facility struggles to operate and address patients’ needs. There are only eight psychiatrists on staff, no psychologists or other mental health professionals, and nurses have the equivalent of a high school education. The hospital also relies heavily on medication—antipsychotics and antidepressants—that U.S. facilities generally haven’t used in more than 15 years.

Nearly half of the patients could be released into a community-based mental health system, if one existed. And to further complicate matters, news reports earlier this year pointed to a possible plan by al-Qaida in Iraq or other insurgents to use mentally ill patients as suicide bombers.

Parra said those reports and seeing the hospital’s needs first hand during a visit there last year motivated him to contact the School of Social Work in December. Although he wasn’t a UNC graduate, Parra said he was well aware of the “excellent reputations” the university had in social work and psychiatry. He hoped to strike up a much needed conversation on how to help improve staff training at the hospital and in social work and psychiatry. He said he was well aware of the “excellent reputations” the university had in social work and psychiatry. He hoped to strike up a much needed discussion on how to help improve staff training at the hospital and in social work and psychiatry.

“I figured (UNC) would be an excellent resource to call upon to address the broad range of issues the hospital faces,” Parra said via email.

School officials welcomed the informal invitation. In February, Dean Jack Richman and faculty members Anna Scheyett, Mimi Chapman, Gary Cuddeback, Rebecca Macy and Laurie Selz-Campbell, gathered for a phone conference with Parra and an Army psychiatrist assigned in and around Baghdad. Among other things, they discussed sharing with hospital staff a host of mental health training materials, such as brochures, manuals and fact sheets that describe illnesses such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and psychological treatments and therapies.

Discussions are still ongoing about how best to enhance the hospital’s occupational and recreational therapies. The facility recently built a fish pond to give patients another recreational outlet. Patients also have access to a gym, art therapy room and a “life room” that includes a lounge with music, bird cages and an aquarium.

Although uncertain how the potential partnership may unfold, Scheyett, the School’s associate dean for academic affairs, said a working relationship with the hospital seems fitting.

“As the School expands its connections across the global community, we have a responsibility to both learn from others and share our knowledge with providers in other nations and cultures,” she said. “Sharing mental health information with this psychiatric hospital in Iraq is one simple way we can do this. Since this request for help originated from a North Carolina soldier, it’s a perfect way to both respond to the needs of a North Carolinian and an international provider group.”

Parra also hopes that the newly formed connection could lead to a broad-based education of mental illness in the country. Currently, mental illnesses are considered taboo, with many households dumping sick family members at the hospital gates or in the streets. Parra said the hospital’s director has discussed interest in establishing community service projects that would enable patients to come into more direct contact with local residents and thus possibly break some of the stigma surrounding mental health. The director also wants to explore vocational training for some eligible patients, helping them to become more independent.

As U.S. offensive efforts wind down in Iraq and more resources shift toward the country’s ability to take care of itself, Parra said he remains anxious about those still in need, especially the mentally ill. But he also hopes that a joint relationship between UNC and the Baghdad hospital will lead to great changes and programs that he can advocate for once he returns to Chapel Hill.

“In the long run, I hope this partnership is the start of the modernization of the practice of mental health in the region,” Parra said. “Not just in the hospital, but in the (general) population’s minds in how they view mental illness and disability.”
Alumnus killed in Iraq military clinic shooting

By Susan White

Charles Keith Springle, MSW ’84, was a “kind and gentle person, just the kind of person you want in a social worker,” and he was well prepared to assist soldiers who were mentally scarred by combat.

That’s how former School of Social Work colleagues and others remembered Springle after learning that the Navy commander and UNC-Chapel Hill graduate was among five people U.S. military officials say were shot and killed at a military clinic in Baghdad on May 11. Springle, a decorated officer, husband and father of two, was 52.

Army Sgt. John Russell from Sherman, Texas, was charged in the shooting incident, which the Associated Press reported as the “deadliest case of soldier-on-soldier violence” among American forces in the six-year Iraq war. Military officials identified the other victims as an Army officer, also on the clinic staff, and three enlisted soldiers, who were at the clinic at the time of the shooting.

At time of publication, it was unclear if Springle knew Russell or if he targeted any of the victims. According to media reports, the soldier had been ordered in recent weeks to turn over his weapon and seek psychological counseling at the clinic where Springle worked.

Springle was stationed at Camp Liberty, a center that serves soldiers battling combat stress.

A licensed clinical social worker, he received a bachelor’s degree in sociology from UNC in 1979, a master’s degree in social work from UNC in 1984 and his doctorate in social work from the University of Alabama in 2003. He was assigned to the 55th Medical Company and served as the director of the Community Counseling Center at Camp Lejeune.

Those who worked closely with Springle say he demonstrated his commitment to the men and women in the military every day. Lindsay Teplesky (MSW ‘04), who worked with Springle at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany in 2007, remembers how he “fought tooth and nail” to work in the adult psychiatry clinic even though he knew this troubled population could be emotionally draining. Still, Teplesky, who is currently stationed in Iraq, said Springle “had a laid-back, calming presence that was undeniably felt by patients and colleagues alike.”

“I could always count on him for rational, sensible guidance when I had a particularly challenging case I needed to staff,” she said.

Springle was just as concerned about ensuring that returning service members received needed mental health services at home, said Sheryl Pacelli, director of mental health education for the South East Area Health Education Center. The two met last year through the North Carolina-based Citizen Soldier Support Program. Pacelli helped develop training to assist mental health workers, clinical clergy and substance abuse counselors to recognize and assess individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder. Springle led sessions around the state on that training.

“He was very excited to be a part of this,” Pacelli said, “and he always got great reviews from participants. They loved his sense of humor and thought he was so sincere and very concerned about all soldiers with PTSD.”

Springle’s training sessions were vital, Pacelli said, because often, returning soldiers, especially those in the Reserve service and National Guard, don’t seek mental health services through the Veterans Administration. Many don’t even tell their personal doctors that they have been in combat. But such information can be key to a diagnosis and proper medical attention, she said.

“That incident in itself is why this training and why treatment is so important,” Pacelli said of the Baghdad shooting. “It’s so what happened over there doesn’t happen again. So that people can get the treatment they want in a setting that they choose.”

That Springle spent much of his career in the armed services didn’t surprise Dorothy “Dee” Gamble, clinical associate professor emerita at UNC’s School of Social Work. A North Carolina native, Springle had been a commander since 2002 and had served in the Navy for 21 years.

At UNC, Springle spoke passionately for those who served, Gamble recalled, and he enjoyed engaging her on the subject, despite their differing opinions on the military. “He knew that I was associated with the local chapter of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, but it was the kind of conversation that helped us connect to each other’s perspectives,” Gamble recalled. “I thought at the time how lucky the military would be to have a social worker who deeply understood why we needed a military, but who was prepared for the tragedy and torment to young lives that an actual war could bring.

“He must have helped so many soldiers in his time. My sympathies go out to his family and all his colleagues helping other soldiers in the military.”

Jack Richman, dean of the UNC School of Social Work, echoed Gamble’s condolences and praised Springle for serving in such an important field.

“Dr. Springle was working in a critical area in terms of supporting military personnel in dealing with post-traumatic stress,” Richman said. “His loss is a great loss to the field and clearly to the profession and to the military.”

Springle is survived by his wife of 25 years, Susan; his son, Cpl. Charles K. Springle, Jr., USMC; his daughter, Sarah Monday and son-in-law, Sgt. Michael Monday, USMC; parents, Charles E. and Ruth B. Springle; sister, Tammy Mahouchick and husband, Dennis; brother, Cmdr. Thomas Springle (U.S. Navy, Ret.) and wife, Marilyn; sister, Donna Lynn Smith; and grandson, Joshua Phillip Monday.

Family and friends establish scholarship fund

Family and friends have established the Charles Keith Springle, Ph.D. Memorial Scholarship Fund for interested donors. The scholarship will support military-dependent students in the Masters of Social Work program at the University of North Carolina School of Social Work who are working with military families or have an interest in mental health care for veterans and their families.

Contributions may be made using the envelope enclosed in this magazine.
John B. Turner, Ph.D., whose career in social work spanned more than 40 years and whose efforts and leadership helped earn national recognition for the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, died on Jan. 30. He was 86.

Turner, a writer, scholar and teacher who devoted his life to community organization, social activism and social work education, had been recovering from a fall last year.

Turner joined the UNC faculty in 1974 as the William Rand Kenan Jr. Professor of Social Work. He was named school dean in 1981—becoming the first African-American dean at the University—and remained in the position until his retirement in 1992. Turner is largely credited for mapping out the graduate program's road to prominence, including the construction of a $10 million building in Chapel Hill.

That site—the school's current home—still bears his name today and was the first academic building on campus to be named for an African-American; it also acknowledges the services of John A. "Jack" Tate, a Charlotte businessman and longtime social justice advocate who died late last year, and the late Charles Kuralt, an award-winning TV journalist.

Turner, who developed the school's first development office and worked diligently to broaden the minority student presence, earned national and international honors over the course of his career.

"John was a pioneer in social work education and at UNC in so many ways," said current social work Dean Jack Richman, who was hired by Turner in 1983 as an assistant dean. "Even through his retired years, John remained connected and involved in the School. We often met for lunch, and he offered his advice and counsel concerning the development and life of the School. I will miss Dean Turner as will everyone who had the good fortune to know and work with him."

A native of Fort Valley, Ga., Turner studied engineering, played football and sang in a quartet at Atlanta's Morehouse College, before deciding that he wanted to be a pilot. During World War II, he trained as one of the country's first black aviation cadets at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama.

According to media reports, Turner, a first pilot of a B-25 bomber crew, was never deployed overseas but still spent much of his time in the air, flying practice rounds across the country. That experience allowed him to see black communities struggling and fueled his eventual passion for social work.

Turner earned his doctoral degree in social work at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and later became Case's dean of applied social sciences. He also ventured into politics, becoming the first black city commissioner in East Cleveland.

Turner developed an illustrious career as an academic consultant, working over the years for the National Urban League as well as for international organizations, including the International Research Programs in Cairo, Egypt and as a visiting professor and consultant to the University of Minia in Egypt. He was a former member and chairman of the International Council on Social Welfare, was a charter member of the International Association of Applied Social Scientists and a member of the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine.

Over his career, Turner established himself as a "bridge builder" between government leaders and service providers, said Dennis Orthner, a UNC social work professor and the associate director for policy development and analysis at the School's Jordan Institute for Families.

"John was an incredible scholar of and advocate for high quality and effective human services," Orthner said. "I learned so much from him in watching him work all sides of the debate on welfare reform, child welfare, adult services and so on."

Respected and admired for his pioneering work and leadership, Turner was equally endeared for his warmth, eloquence and charm, said Anna Scheyett, the School's associate dean for academic affairs.

"He was dean when I was a student, and I just remember that he made a huge effort to get to know each student and make them feel special," she said.

But Turner may best be remembered for his tenacity in helping the
school develop into one of the top 10 social work graduate programs in the country. He advocated for the creation of a doctoral program, and in the late 1980s supported a $5 million fund-raising campaign—a previously unheard of amount for the school which was largely unknown at the time.

His unwavering support and joint efforts with Tate and Kuralt also helped persuade state lawmakers to approve funding for the construction of a five-story, 75,000-square-foot building, enabling the school to move its cluster of offices into one building on Pittsboro Street in the health affairs area of campus.

"John was a brilliant, caring and resourceful man," said Maeda Galinsky, a Kenan Distinguished Professor at the school. "He worked tirelessly to involve the community in the school, to raise money, and to convince campus decision makers of our need for a building which would bring all of our teaching, research and service components together."

Turner authored numerous articles and books and served as editor-in-chief of the 17th edition of the "Encyclopedia of Social Work." He was honored in 2007 with the naming of a new professorship at the School—the Sandra Reeves Spears and John B. Turner Distinguished Professorship, established by board of advisors member Sam Reeves and his wife Betsy.

Turner is survived by his wife of 61 years, Marian Wilson Turner, and their two children: son Charles Brister Turner of Carrboro and daughter Marian Turner Hopkins, and her husband Jonathan J. Hopkins of Chapel Hill; grandson Ian Turner Hopkins; Turner’s sister, Virginia Turner Dowell; and many cousins, grandnephews and nieces, and great-grandnephews and nieces.

The family would appreciate memorial contributions to the UNC School of Social Work John Turner Doctoral Fellowship Fund. Contributions may be made using the envelope enclosed in this magazine.
Oscar Barbarin

Barbarin is serving as chair of the U.S. National Committee for the International Union for Psychological Science through 2012. This committee operates under the auspices of the Policy and Global Affairs’ Board on International Scientific Organizations, a division of the National Academy of Sciences, based in Washington, D.C. The committee, which is partially funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation, represents the interests of the U.S. psychological science community to the international community.

Betsy Bledsoe

Bledsoe will be a fellow at the annual Summer Institute on Randomized Clinical Trials Involving Behavioral Interventions, Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, National Institutes of Health.

Bledsoe was part of a symposium in April called “Best Therapeutic Practices for High Risk Mothers and Very Young Children” hosted by the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Conference, in Denver, Co.

Bledsoe was given the Village Pride Award by radio station WCHL for her work helping teenagers overcome depression.

Bledsoe received a $1,000 Junior Faculty Development Award, from the UNC Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, in support of her project “Better Beginnings: Testing a Brief, Culturally Relevant Treatment for Perinatal Depression.” She also received a $7,500 Jane H. Pfouts Research Grant from the UNC School of Social Work for her project, “Understanding Perinatal Depression in Low-Income, Racial and Ethnic Minority Adolescents: Perceptions of Mood and Intervention.”

Gary Bowen


Bowen has been working with UNC’s Citizen Soldier Support Program to assist the military in effectively engaging communities in support of Reserve Component members and families. In 2008, he participated as a faculty member in four Advanced Institute building community partnership trainings that were sponsored by the Army Family Programs office. Approximately 228 Army family service providers have participated in the three-day sessions. Participants return to their home communities with knowledge and resources to strengthen community partnerships in support of Reserve component members and families. See related story on p. 6.

Bowen received $227,825 in funding from the United States Marine Corps to support the implementation of the Building Corps Families (BCF) Web site. Bowen will implement support and resiliency assessment tools for use by Marine Corps Family Team Building staff at all Marine Corps bases worldwide, train program staff in the use of these tools for intervention and prevention planning, develop online training modules, and provide on-going practice support to program staff. The structure of the Marine Corps assessment tools builds on Bowen and Jack Richman’s highly successful School Success Profile.

On October 25, Bowen delivered the keynote address at the California Association of School Social Workers and California NASW School Social Work Council’s Annual Conference, Bridges to Change: Connecting Practice to Theory & Research. Held in Oakland, Calif., Bowen discussed the “Science and Practice of School-Based Interventions.”

Bowen delivered the 2008 Gerald Seabury Memorial Lecture at the University of California at Berkeley on Oct. 27. An endowed lecture, his presentation was entitled “Conceptualizing Social Problems to Inform Assessment and Intervention Planning.”

Bowen delivered the keynote address at the 18th Annual Building Strong Families Conference on Oct. 9. Sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Council on Family Relations and held at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa., the conference focused on “Responding to Families in Trauma.” His presentation was entitled, “Military Family Resiliency and Community Capacity Building in the Shadows of War: Implications for Policy and Practice.”

Joanne Caye

Caye gave the closing plenary presentation, “Interventions from an International Perspective,” at a conference on Jan. 9 in Jerusalem. The “Crisis as an Opportunity” conference dealt with mitigation and prevention of disasters, and was sponsored by the Spitzer Department of Social Work at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, and the School of Social Work at Rutgers University.

Gina Chowa

Chowa presented two papers at the Child Development Accounts: Research and Policy Symposium in St. Louis, Nov. 12-14. Her presentations were entitled “Assets and Child Well-being in Developing Countries” and “Youth and Savings in AssetsAfrica.”

Andrew Dobelstein

Emeritus faculty member Dobelstein’s newest book, “Understanding the Social Security Act,” is being published by Oxford University Press in 2009. This is his seventh major book publication, and will be marketed to a wide audience through the OUP network.

Mark Fraser

On Feb. 16, Fraser, John A. Tate Distinguished Professor, presented “The Effectiveness of Social and Character Development Programs in Elementary Schools” at the University of Alabama School of Social Work. This event was part of the School’s 2008-09 Colloquium Series.
Michal Grinstein-Weiss

Grinstein-Weiss received a $400,000 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and a $125,000 grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to support her large-scale project, the American Dream Demonstration Wave 4 (ADD4), studying the long-term impact of individual development accounts (IDAs) and asset-building on social and economic well-being. Grinstein-Weiss has eight funders supporting the project, which is now fully funded at $1.6 million.

Grinstein-Weiss was awarded a $38,260 grant from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to design an evaluation plan for the next phase of the Assets for Independence Program evaluation (AFI). AFI provides the largest source of funding for IDAs in the U.S. Grinstein-Weiss is leading the UNC team and collaborating with a team of researchers from the Urban Institute and the Center for Social Development on this project.

Grinstein-Weiss was a featured speaker at a Washington, D.C. discussion on “Responsible Homeownership” that was televised nationally on C-SPAN.

Vanessa Hodges

Hodges was named to the National MS Society Volunteer Hall of Fame in recognition of her outstanding efforts in personally impacting those living with MS. Hodges, who lives with multiple sclerosis, is a dedicated and valuable volunteer who provides service at both the chapter and national levels.

Matthew Howard

Howard presented grand rounds at the UNC School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, on March 25 to a group of about 50 on the topic of “Inhalant Use and Inhalant Use Disorders in the United States.”

Howard prepared an invited review on the same topic for the National Institute on Drug Abuse’s journal, Addiction Science & Practice.

Rebecca Macy

Macy gave a presentation on “Preventing Family Violence” to the North Carolina Institute of Medicine’s Task Force on Prevention on Feb. 20.

Macy was named a faculty scholar by the Carolina Women’s Center. The Center appoints a faculty scholar each semester as a way to support faculty projects related to the CWC’s mission to empower women and promote their equality in all spheres of life and to celebrate the work of women that better humankind.

Dennis Orthner

Orthner received UNC’s 2009 Robert Bryan Public Service Award. The award “recognizes individuals (students, faculty or staff) who, as representatives of UNC-Chapel Hill, have demonstrated outstanding engagement and service to the state of North Carolina.” Orthner helped launch the CareerStart program four years ago, which has raised test scores and narrowed the achievement gap among North Carolina middle school students. See story on p. 27.

Orthner was elected to the 2009 edition of “Who’s Who in America,” an honor that reflects his work on welfare and education policy and research.

Jack Richman

School of Social Work Dean Richman and professor Gary Bowen gave a presentation on Feb. 25 to members of the Governor’s Focus on Returning Combat Veterans and Their Families. The group promotes best practices in the service of veterans who served in the global war on terrorism and their families. The School of Social Work and the Behavioral Healthcare Resource Program are among the state’s partners working with the Governor’s Focus to develop a referral network that will connect North Carolina residents and their families to services they need post-deployment.

Amelia Roberts-Lewis

Roberts-Lewis was awarded a 5-year, $2 million Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant to provide evidence-based practices to Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers (TROSA). This new program, Triangle Network To Engage Homeless Individuals With Substance Use Disorder or co-occurring substance use and mental health disorder living in North Carolina, by adding three evidence-based practices to include a CBT model, SAMHSA’s co-occurring disorders model and a relapse prevention model.

Anna Scheyett

Scheyett was given the Village Pride Award by radio station WCHL for her UNC study on psychiatric advance directives.

Scheyett is serving on the Chapel Hill Mayor’s Mental Health Task Force. The 15-member group will meet several times and make recommendations to municipal and county leaders about improving local mental health care.

Tina Souders

Souders presented a day-long workshop on March 4 at the Department of Social Work at Delta State University in Cleveland, Miss. Souders spoke on “Shades of Gray: Exposing the Nuances of Professional Ethical Boundaries and Dual Relationships.” Souders is the director of the Winston-Salem Distance Education MSW Program.

Lynn Usher

Usher was invited by the Board on Children, Youth, and Families of the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences to participate in a March 13 Washington, D.C. meeting to plan for a larger group meeting on “Improving the Metrics of Performance Assessment in Child Welfare Systems.”

School well represented at research conference

The Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) held its annual conference Jan. 16-18 in New Orleans. Several faculty members and doctoral students made presentations, including Betsy Bledsoe, Gary Bowen, Natasha Bowen, Pajarita Charles, Mat Despard, Johanna Greeson, Michal Grinstein-Weiss, Shenyang Guo, Matthew Howard, Susan Parish, Roderick Rose, Paul Smokowski, Kelly Williams, Yeong Yeo and Joan Yoo.
Faculty publish two new books on innovative research techniques  By Michelle Rogers

School of Social Work faculty members Mark Fraser, Jack Richman, Maeda Galinsky and Steve Day have authored a new book, “Intervention Research: Developing Social Programs.” This guide will serve as a solid reference for social workers in the field, as well as help the next generation of social workers develop skills to contribute to the evolving field of intervention research.

When social workers draw on experience, theory, or data to develop new strategies or enhance existing ones, they are conducting intervention research. This relatively new field involves program design, implementation, and evaluation and requires a theory-based, systematic approach. “Intervention Research” presents such a framework.

The five-step strategy in the book ushers the reader from an idea’s germination through the process of writing a treatment manual, assessing program efficacy and effectiveness and disseminating findings. Rich with examples drawn from child welfare, school-based prevention, medicine and juvenile justice, the authors relate each step of the process to current social work practice. The book also explains how to adapt interventions for new contexts.

To supplements this five-step process, the authors provided extensive examples of intervention research and offers insights about changes and challenges in the field.

The book is published by Oxford University Press and can be ordered online at www.oup.com.

Shenyang Guo, professor, and Mark Fraser, John A. Tate Distinguished Professor for Children in Need, have a new book coming out in July.

“Propensity Score Analysis: Statistical Methods and Applications” describes a family of new statistical techniques useful in estimating the effects of social and health programs.

Intended for social behavioral researchers who conduct intervention research and program evaluation, the book is the first of its kind to provide step-by-step instructions for running a wide range of propensity score models with the Stata software program. The book describes four cutting-edge methods: sample selection models, propensity score matching, matching estimators and kernel-based matching estimators.

The book is published by Sage Publications and can be ordered online at www.sagepub.com.

Rounds garners mentoring award from women’s leadership council  By UNC News Services

The Carolina Women’s Leadership Council honored UNC School of Social Work professor Kathleen Rounds for being a great mentor. The award was presented during the council’s annual meeting at the Carolina Inn on Feb. 26.

The award, which carries a stipend of $5,000, recognize outstanding faculty members who go the extra mile to guide, mentor and lead students or junior faculty members as they make career decisions, embark on research challenges and enrich their lives through public service, teaching and educational opportunities.

Along with her post as a professor of social work, Rounds directs the doctoral program at the School of Social Work. The school’s dean, faculty, students and friends nominated her. They described her mentorship as broad, deep, inspiring, steadfast and generous.

Dean Jack Richman said two key programs have had direct benefit of her commitment and service. They are the Master of Social Work and Master of Science in Public Health dual-degree program that she initiated in 1992, and the School of Social Work Ph.D. program, which began in 1993.

Many doctoral students wrote letters in support of Rounds’ nomination. One said this: “Kathleen lets us know that she cares about us, she is constantly available for consultations and she is ever-encouraging. Kathleen has the ability that not many teachers or bosses have to balance guidance with the provision of freedom to tap into individuals’ own skills. Her love of social work and public health and her depth of experience have truly inspired me, and I hope that someday I can be the woman and faculty member that she is.”

Another said this: “More than anything I appreciate her humor – laughter is powerful medicine for doctoral students! She is incredibly deserving of this award.”

Rounds’ nominators noted that even though this award is for faculty-student mentoring, Kathleen’s mentoring does not stop at graduation. “She helps students consider employment opportunities, reviews their curriculum vitae, conducts mock job interviews and even helps them negotiate job offers,” Richman wrote. “Many of her mentees remain in contact with her and seek ongoing counsel throughout their professional career.”

Sarah Smith Carey, who graduated from Carolina in 1969 and is a member of the council’s executive committee, said the council is pleased to sponsor these awards every year as part of its overall mission to support the University and individual students’ educational experiences.

“We created these awards to honor and recognize exceptional men and women faculty members,” Carey said. “They go above and beyond in their commitment to mentor and nurture students and junior faculty throughout their careers.”
Fraser and Howard named editors of social work research journals

By Susan White

The journal, which will be available to anyone without a subscription, is expected to publish studies and reports covering a broad range of issues, including mental and physical health, child welfare, poverty, employment, criminal justice and housing.

Most academic journals are currently printed, copyrighted and distributed by private publishing firms, although they contain material that is largely produced by public institutions. Publication often takes as much as two years.

“Even though publication processes have worked this way for years, somehow it does not seem right,” Fraser noted. “When research is funded by public agencies, knowledge should reside in the public domain.”

Fraser said the new e-journal will “strive to provide peer reviews in the astonishing time of six weeks. He plans to accomplish that goal by appointing a large number of reviewers and giving them access to manuscripts via an Internet portal, which is now under construction.

“I am committed to rapid turn-around, high quality reviews,” Fraser said. “If we can accelerate the review process, we will help authors who often need to publish findings in order to qualify for a next round of funding.”

In selecting the publication's new editor, Sarah Gehlert, president of SSWR, said the organization sought “someone who is both an intellectual leader in the field as well as a good manager.”

Fraser, who received SSWR's Distinguished Achievement Award last year, also has the experience of managing large research projects, she said. He currently serves as associate dean for research at the School of Social Work.

“Dr. Fraser’s scholarship is characterized by keen attention to every aspect of the research process, from conceptualization through analysis and publication,” Gehlert said. “He understands the issues involved in open-access publication, the challenges and merits of electronic submission and the importance of a review process that is both timely and in-depth.”

Fraser’s appointment is also a nod to UNC’s School of Social Work, said Dean Jack Richman.

“Having Dr. Fraser lead this highly accessible, innovative journal once again demonstrates how the School leads the profession in promoting research and evidence-based practice,” Richman said. “These remain the foundation of best practices for all social work professionals.”

Fraser, who has authored or edited nine books and more than 100 journal articles and chapters, said he was honored to serve as the e-journal’s first leader.

“I will do my best to make JSSWR a premiere interdisciplinary resource for both scholars and practitioners,” he said.

The first issue of the online journal is expected to be published next year.

“My goal is to make social work research more influential in health care.”

Matthew Howard, Ph.D.

Matthew Howard, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work, has been appointed editor-in-chief of Social Work Research, the flagship journal of the National Association of Social Workers.

Howard, the School’s Frank A. Daniels Distinguished Professor for Human Services Policy Information, has extensively researched youth substance abuse, particularly involving inhalants. He will oversee editorial content for the journal, which “publishes exemplary research to advance the development of knowledge and inform social work practice.”

UNC School of Social Work Dean Jack Richman praised Howard's editorial appointment. “Dr. Howard is a major figure in social work education,” Richman said. “The generation of new knowledge will flourish under his leadership and guidance.”

Social Work Research includes analytic reviews of research and theoretical articles on social work research as well as evaluation and diverse research studies that address social work issues and problems. The journal publishes four times a year.

Expected to serve as editor through 2013, Howard said his first priorities are to hire a statistical editor and to appoint 20 to 25 consulting editors, who will be responsible for reviewing the approximately 100 manuscripts submitted annually to the journal. About 60 are generally accepted for publication.

Howard also looks forward to working with the association’s publications board to fully automate manuscript submission and processing procedures via an online portal. Currently, submissions are mailed, which can delay publication.

He is most enthusiastic about pursuing a goal to have Social Work Research indexed on Medline, a comprehensive bibliographic database covering the fields of medicine, nursing, dentistry, veterinary medicine, the health care system and the preclinical sciences. The online database contains more than 16 million records that are compiled by the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

Although the Medline database does not currently index Social Work Research, Howard noted that a lot of social work study, including much of his own work, involves health-related issues that have widespread effects. Having the journal indexed would make social work research more widely accessible and raise the “impact factor” of that research, he said.
I joined the School of Social Work faculty in August 1998 as a clinical professor and executive director of the Jordan Institute for Families. One of our earliest goals was to gain support for a proposed Congressional bill establishing an annual “National Family Day” to honor and celebrate our country’s diversity of families. Our first task: to persuade then N.C. Sen. Jesse Helms of the importance and value for such a day. On the afternoon of June 10, 1999, a group of Jordan Institute representatives presented what we thought would be an easily convincing case, even to one of the nation’s most outspoken and staunch conservative Republicans.

“I like the idea,” Helms responded. “I just don’t like how you’ve defined family.”

“With all due respect, Senator,” I replied, “we feel that each person can define his or her own family, whether by birth or by choice. So we haven’t included a specific definition of family.” But Sen. Helms was unmoved.
“That’s the trouble,” he insisted. “You should define family as a man and woman joined together in holy matrimony and the offspring of their union.”

I looked around the room and quickly realized that not many within our group would fit Sen. Helms’ definition. Whether we were families by adoption, a blended marriage, or by single parenthood, we did not represent the kind of families that he would celebrate on National Family Day.

After almost a year of planning, the bill we had worked so hard for was never introduced on the Senate floor. But not all was lost. From those efforts and our encounter with Sen. Helms, those of us at the Jordan Institute clearly recognized the important ground work that lay ahead—to advocate for and fully support the wide variety of families living and working within our communities, regardless of how those relationships formed.

Today, nearly 10 years later and with the country struggling through an especially tough economy, it is appropriate that the Jordan Institute is still here and still offering support and strength to all of our state’s families.

From the beginning, my challenge from the dean, chancellor and my academic peers was to develop the needed infrastructure to increase and support externally funded proposals and projects, especially federally funded research. But I was also challenged to raise the state and national visibility of the Jordan Institute by promoting it as a source for evidence-based information to improve practices, programs and policies related to families across the lifecycle. Last, I was expected to increase the endowment and expendable funds for the institute through private fundraising activities, grant writing and appeals to the state legislature.

Now, as I prepare to depart, I can proudly say that over the last decade, the Institute has embraced these challenges and as a result, achieved many significant long-term successes.

Among the earliest accomplishments was the creation of a contract management unit to assist faculty in developing research proposals and monitoring accepted project activities. This additional support enabled our already very productive social work faculty to receive a significant increase in the amount and type of externally-funded projects.

As a public university with a deep commitment to the citizens of North Carolina, UNC continues to receive most of its funding through state contracts. Still, the School of Social Work and the Jordan Institute have diligently pursued and received federal funds over the last 10 years to support numerous worthwhile projects aimed at assisting some of our state’s most vulnerable residents. For example, successful proposals funded by the U.S. Children’s Bureau, include the Independent Living Project (2000-2003); the Child Welfare Recruitment and Retention and the Rural Success projects (2003-2008); the N.C. Collaborative Workforce Project and the National Child Welfare Workforce Project (2008-2013).

There have been difficult but vital lessons learned along the way. Efforts to acquire federal dollars from the National Institute on Drug Abuse for a Social Work Research Development Program and support from the Department of Health and Human Services for a Southern Poverty Research Center fell short in 2002. But the preparation of these proposals taught us the collaborative development skills necessary to later generate favorable projects.

Although the Jordan Institute has enjoyed a certain amount of locally, state and national recognition based on name recognition alone—the School’s research arm was named in honor of a gift from UNC alumnus and basketball great, Michael Jordan—collaborative activities, including conferences and lecture series, have also helped the institute garner additional visibility.

For example, “Race, Ethnicity and Culture in Research and Service” started in 2001-02 in cooperation with the Frank Porter Graham Institute as a two-year lecture series. The series attracted large audiences and gave national experts the chance to address issues relevant to research and practice facing families and children from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The Jordan Institute broke ground in April 2006 and 2008 when it co-sponsored sex trafficking conferences with the Carolina Women’s Center and other campus units. These conferences were the first national attempts to bring attention to the hidden problems of trafficking men, women and children for sexual exploitation. I was fortunate to be invited to attend an international meeting on human trafficking in London on behalf of the Women’s Center.

From 2003 to 2007, the Women’s Prison Writing and Performance Project (WPWPP), affiliated with the Jordan Institute, provided weekly writing and performance instruction to female inmates. As the only women’s prison performance project in the country that performed outside prison walls, the WPWPP often played to standing-room-only audiences.

Over the years, the Institute has also joined efforts to strengthen the university as a whole. In August 2003, Chancellor James Moeser appointed a 27-member Task Force for a Better Workplace to advise him on action steps to improve the workplace at Carolina. As facilitator for the task force, I met with the group and subgroups over six months to craft a set of findings and recommendations, as well as a timetable for action.

Furthermore, the institute has enabled social work faculty to learn from one another by sponsoring monthly “FYI” seminars in which members share their own experiences and findings, an activity that is also central to the institute’s mission to explore and share practices and policies that aid families. The institute also has invited faculty and doctoral students to take monthly trips to Methods and Analysis Research Seminars (MARS) to hear about advanced methodologies from School, university and national experts.

Perhaps most significant to note is the important role that the Jordan Institute for Families and the School play each year in educating and training hundreds of social workers in all 100 North Carolina counties. Many of these professionals have been served by state-funded and institute-sponsored technical assistance projects, including the N.C. Area Health Education Centers, Families and Children’s Resource Program (FCRP), Behavioral Healthcare Resource Program (BHRP), CARES: Center for Aging Research and Educational Services and the Developmental Disabilities Training Institute (DDTI).

The Institute remains equally devoted to recruiting social workers for the field and has been a key supporter of the development and implementation of the North Carolina Child Welfare Education Collaborative, an education and financial support program for MSW and BSW students committed to working in public child welfare agencies upon graduation. This 10-university collaborative is one of more than 40 state operated agency-university partnerships that have improved the quality of services for families and children in public child welfare systems across the country.

We have accomplished so much here, and I know many more successes are yet to come. So it is with mixed emotions that I will soon leave the Jordan Institute and the School of Social Work to join my husband, Rick Barth, in Baltimore, Md., where he is dean of the University of Maryland’s School of Social Work. My new position as director of the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute will afford me the opportunity to continue my interest in discovering new methods to support the child welfare workforce and improve the quality of services to families and children around the country.

My experiences as director of the Jordan Institute taught me collaborative approaches to strengthening families and communities. I will be forever grateful for the encouragement from the Jordan family, support from School of Social Work faculty and staff, and lessons learned from colleagues around the world.
The federal expansion of a children’s health insurance program should help improve disabled children’s access to services, but more needs to be done at the state level to meet their needs, according to a new study from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Susan Parish, an associate professor at the UNC School of Social Work and the study’s lead author, found that families raising children with disabilities are particularly struggling to get services in states where qualifications for the public health insurance program—formerly known as the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)—are less generous, meaning that they earn too much to qualify for the insurance program based on their state’s income limits.

According to Parish’s research, this includes families whose household income is less than three times the poverty level. Others less likely to receive needed support services include parents who speak limited English, children who are uninsured and children with severe impairments.

Nationwide, some 12 million children have special health care needs, said Parish, who has conducted extensive research on children with disabilities and their families.

“The evidence is compelling and overwhelmingly confirms the need to expand and strengthen health insurance coverage for children with disabilities and their families,” she said. “Without assistance, families face high out-of-pocket costs. The tangible support provided by the children's health insurance program materially influences the supports a family receives.”

Parish’s findings were published in the journal Children and Youth Services Review in January—just weeks before President Obama signed the Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIP). The act renewed the formerly identified “SCHIP” program and expanded its coverage to include up to 11 million children.

The program was originally created in 1997 to help families who cannot afford private insurance but also earn too much to qualify for Medicaid. In 2007, Congress passed bipartisan bills that would have expanded the program’s funding by $35 billion over five years, but President Bush vetoed the legislation twice.

Under the 2009 reauthorization act, local and federal dollars still pay for the insurance program, and states still decide how each works, including how much families can earn before their children are ineligible.

According to Parish’s study, which examined data for nearly 39,000 children from the 2002 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs, some states have been more generous than others. In Tennessee and Arkansas, for example, children were ineligible for state health insurance if their family’s household income exceeded the poverty level or $21,200 for a family of four. In New Jersey, however, a child qualified as long as their family’s income wasn’t more than three-and-a-half times the poverty level or $74,200. In North Carolina, the eligibility rate is 200 percent of the poverty level or about $35,200 for a family of three.

Furthermore, some states have spent more local dollars to ensure that a broader group of children are covered.

“The bottom line is we need some form of affordable health insurance for all children, regardless of their disabilities, which would go a long way toward solving these problems,” Parish said.

The UNC associate professor said there is an even greater need to improve access to services for children with disabilities because many of their families already face severe financial hardships. She released a study late last year that found that families across all income
levels who are raising disabled children are significantly more challenged by food, housing and health issues compared to families without disabled children.

Parish added that families in states with more generous subsidies and eligibility requirements are more likely to have better access to a professional care coordinator—a vital resource, she said, for finding needed services, providing resource referrals and advocating for children with disabilities.

“This care coordinator is really seen as the linchpin to whether a child gets everything he or she needs,” she said.

Study co-authors are Roderick Rose, a research associate at the UNC School of Social Work; Megan Andrews, clinical case manager at Raleigh’s WakeMed Rehab; and Paul Shattuck, Ph.D, an assistant professor at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, Mo.

Parish honored for developmental disabilities research

Susan Parish, Ph.D., associate professor at the UNC School of Social Work, was given the 2009 Deborah K. Padgett Early Career Award by the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR). The award recognizes Parish’s notable influence and innovative work in the area of promoting evidence-based practice within the field of developmental disabilities and her noteworthy contributions to advance the social work profession.

SSWR, an organization dedicated to the advancement of social work research, has 1,300 members internationally which include faculty in schools of social work and other professional schools, research staff in public and private agencies, and graduate students.

“I am so pleased and proud that Dr. Parish has received this prestigious award from the premier research organization in our profession,” said Dean Jack Richman. “This provides clear recognition of her cutting edge work and is indicative of the research contribution of Dr. Parish and her faculty colleagues at the UNC School of Social Work.”

Parish was presented the award on Jan. 16 at SSWR’s annual conference in New Orleans.
When Dennis Orthner, professor at the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, helped launch CareerStart four years ago, he had one primary goal in mind: to keep more students in school. Orthner saw the intervention program, which helps students connect what they are learning in school to future career opportunities, as a way to reach those most at-risk of failing.

What he didn't expect was that this same program would amount to a possible solution to raising academic performance and closing the achievement gap among students statewide. But according to a recent study of student progress in one North Carolina school system, CareerStart may hold that potential.

The success is being touted in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, where Orthner, Patrick Akos, an associate professor in UNC's School of Education, and Donald Martin, WSFC school superintendent, launched CareerStart in 2004. According to a recent analysis, eighth-graders in the school system's middle schools were more likely than other students to achieve "mastery" or proficiency on state end-of-grade (EOG) math and reading tests if they were taught by seventh and eighth-grade teachers who regularly used career examples to illustrate their classroom lessons.

Furthermore, results show that minority and low-income students who hear these career examples from their teachers were more likely to achieve state test scores similar to white students, helping to narrow the achievement gap that has long separated minority and disadvantaged children and their white peers.

“We know that students learn better if they know how they will use the information,” said Orthner, the associate director for Policy Development and Analysis at the Jordan Institute for Families at the School of Social Work. “For many low-income kids, this is particularly true, especially if they don’t yet have a sense of their future.”

These latest results follow an earlier CareerStart analysis, which found that students regularly exposed to lessons with career examples had fewer unexcused absences and school suspensions and were more likely to “find school exciting, look forward to learning new things and see school as being important in their lives.”

CareerStart now serves 15,000 students in six school systems across the state, though Orthner hopes the program will expand to

Program raises test scores, narrows the achievement gap among middle school students

By Susan White
CareerStart focuses on the core courses of math, language arts, science and social studies in sixth, seventh and eighth grades. The program is tailored to students in the middle grades, an educational turning point for many children who often begin to show a disinterest in school. According to UNC research, students who lose interest in their education in these middle grades are less likely to succeed in high school.

As the name implies, CareerStart aims to get students thinking earlier about their possible futures. Though many teachers already rely on career examples to make learning real, CareerStart also offers mini lessons online to support a school’s curriculum. For example, math and language arts lessons enable teachers to demonstrate why caterers need to know fractions when baking decadent desserts or why a marketing and advertising agent needs to understand proper grammar and the power of persuasive language.

“We want all students to feel like school has value,” Orthner said.

All of the program findings are based on a study of 3,500 middle school students whose academic performances were tracked from fifth- through eighth-grades.

Overall, 72 percent of eighth-graders who had seven to eight classes in the past two years in which teachers used career examples achieved mastery in math compared to 58 percent of students who took classes in which no job opportunities were connected to their regular lessons. In reading, 52 percent of students who were given career examples in seven to eight classes were considered proficient compared to 47 percent of those whose teachers used no job illustrations.

Reading scores likely didn’t improve as much as math scores, Orthner said, because most studies show that student performance in reading is established in earlier grades, and changing these competencies is more difficult as children age.

More promising, he said, were findings in math for low-income students, especially among Latino and black students. According to the study, 62 percent of Latino and 51 percent of black students who were exposed to career examples in seven to eight classes achieved mastery in math compared to 30 percent of Latinos and 33 percent of blacks in classes that used no job illustrations.

Nationwide, many school divisions have struggled to narrow the academic achievement gap that has persisted between low-income students and minorities and their white counterparts. The CareerStart program may help alleviate this problem, Orthner said.

Overall, according to the UNC study, minority students in core classes where teachers did not provide career examples scored about 30 percentage points lower on EOG tests than white students. But that gap nearly closed when most of their teachers provided career examples in their classrooms. White students, meanwhile, scored at about the same level, regardless of whether their teachers illustrated instruction with career examples.

“Although this program is universal and does not single out particular students, some seem to need to hear the career relevance message more than others,” Orthner said. “It appears to have the biggest impact on lower-income kids, and particularly kids of color, all of which gets to the achievement gap issue.”

The program has also shown positive effects on school attendance rates and student behavior. For example, when most teachers offered career examples with their lessons, the average number of annual unexcused absences among low-income students dropped by nearly half. Similar results were achieved among some minority students. The number of absences among Latino children declined, on average, from six per year per student, down to three, while annual absences among black children fell, on average, from nearly three per student down to one.

Suspension rates also declined by half, down from an average of one per student per year, Orthner said.

“What this tells us is if you can improve a student’s sense that school is really important, their attention improves and the number of behavior incidents decreases,” he added.
For months, individuals and families across the country have been feeling the brunt of the current economic crisis. Some have lost long-held jobs or watched retirement savings quickly dissolve. Many are still struggling to pay mortgages and other bills. Others are on the brink of homelessness.

At UNC’s School of Social Work, such scenarios of overwhelming financial instability and the repercussions of such realities often play a significant role in faculty research and study. That’s because every day —financial meltdown or not—social workers are on the front lines helping adults, children, the elderly and people with disabilities, cope with and find answers to fiscal, physical and psychological challenges.

School of Social Work faculty shore up that clinical support by assessing the effectiveness of current policies and programs, such as those related to affordable housing and violence prevention. They also search for possible solutions for individuals and families struggling to meet their own needs, said Anna Scheyett, the School’s associate dean for academic affairs.

“Our faculty are focused on research that will help people facing many of today’s big challenges—folks struggling with health problems, family stress, poverty, victimization,” Scheyett said. “During times of economic crisis, more people are at risk. Our research, and sharing our findings with students and practicing social workers, becomes even more important in helping vulnerable people and their families and communities.”

‘Fair and responsible mortgages’

For School Assistant Professor Michal Grinstein-Weiss, the current mortgage crisis emphasizes the need for increasing opportunities for homeownership among low-income households, a topic she has been researching for much of her career.

Studies have shown that families who own their own homes are happier, healthier physically and economically and that their children do better socially and academically.

Overall homeownership rates have risen nationwide, but many low-income households are still unable to purchase a home because of limited savings, bad credit scores, a shortage of affordable housing and even discrimination.

In recent years, subprime loans and questionable lending practices enabled many families who normally would not have been able to purchase a home to pursue the “American Dream.” Since the housing bubble burst, however, many homeowners now owe more on their mortgages than their houses are worth and are struggling to make payments on these high-interest, adjustable rate loans. As a result, some economists predict that the nation should brace for nearly 4 million foreclosures over the next two years. In North Carolina, the bipartisan advocacy group, First Focus, projects at least 53,000 foreclosures, displacing nearly 40,000 children.
Where others see challenges, Grinstein-Weiss sees potential solutions in helping more low-income families purchase their first homes and affordably remain in them. Individual Development Accounts may offer one answer, she said. The assistant professor is currently leading a team of researchers from UNC, the Center for Social Development and the Brookings Institution in a study that examines the effectiveness of these asset-building programs and whether participants are able to obtain affordable mortgages over the long run.

IDAs are matched savings account programs that enable low-income residents to save for a down payment on a house, college tuition or a start-up business. The programs, which are funded by federal and state grants, encourage savings by doubling and sometimes tripling every dollar a participant sets aside. Between 1998 and 2006, nearly $121 million in federal funds helped almost 50,000 individuals nationwide open IDAs. More than half of the 100 counties in North Carolina operate IDA programs that support more than 500 low-income account holders.

Eligibility is based on household income, with a maximum being a percentage of the federal poverty level. The program requires that participants receive credit counseling, enroll in financial literacy classes and work with a homeownership counselor to understand the home-buying process and how to access fair and responsible mortgage loans, instead of the subprime loans that have hurt so many families.

A paper on Grinstein-Weiss’ latest research was published in December in Housing Policy Debate, which is produced by the Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech University.

Results appear promising. According to the study, low-income families who participated in an IDA program from 1998 to 2003, were more likely than other low-income people to save for a down payment on a house, decrease debt to improve their credit scores and purchase a home within four years. The study is based on data from the American Dream Demonstration project, the first large scale test of IDAs in the country. Grinstein-Weiss and her team are now collecting additional data to examine the effects of homeownership on low-income households and to determine if recent foreclosures were less common among homeowners who were IDA participants.

Long-term, such information could further evidence that IDA programs are capable of helping low-income residents clean up their credit scores and secure more stable financing for a home, Grinstein-Weiss said.

“We would hope to be able to say, ‘Look, with fair and responsible mortgages and the appropriate financial education, low-income households will be able to do better,’” she said.
Carrie Pettus Davis named Outstanding Doctoral Student

The 2008-09 Outstanding Doctoral Student Award was presented to Carrie Pettus Davis on May 8. Nominated by her fellow doctoral students and several faculty members, Davis was praised for her academic and research skills. In particular, she is known for her expertise in statistical methods and for her writing abilities.

“Carrie is intelligent, a critical and creative thinker, and an excellent and productive writer,” Anna Scheyett wrote in her nomination letter. “She has the ability to place her research questions within a theoretical framework, then develop, design and manage her own research agenda. And, she does this with charm, grace, genuine concern for others and passion for her work.”

Davis received her BA/BSW in 1999 and MSW in 2001 from the University of Kansas. After graduating, she stayed there as an adjunct instructor and taught graduate and undergraduate social work courses in community organizing and advocacy, grant writing, fund raising, and professional issues and ethics.

Davis entered the UNC School of Social Work’s doctoral program in 2007. Her research interests include adult incarcerated and recently incarcerated populations, program development and evaluation, and translation of research to practice.

Carrie Pettus Davis

2008-09 School of Social Work MSW Scholarships and Awards

Melvarene J. Howard Adair Scholarship
Erin Whitney Bear, Moira Patricia Conlon

Jane Hall and William Johnston Armfield Scholarship
Lindsey Natasha Atkins, David Angelo DeVito, Shauneen Vanessa Morgan, Rhonda Renee Reese

Annie Kizer Bost Award
Kristie Reisig Diehn, Hayley Meredith McPhail, Blair Elizabeth Payne, Crystal Shawnette Yarborough

Chaney-Jacobs-Preyer Scholarship
Christina M. Grandstaff, Joseph Davis Jones

Culbertson Scholarship
Justin Lloyd Perry, Ashley Elizabeth Trice

William E. and Catherine M. Cummins Award
Kathryn Marie Ahrens, Stephanie A. Mazva-Cohen

Dean’s Research Award
Natasha Gough Bowditch, Suzanne Rafterman Derby, Carlie Beth Ewen, Lauren Jacqueline Hart, Joseph Davis Jones, Jessica Leigh-Ann Parker, Robin Leigh Siska, Anne Susan Wagener, Nina Marie Wyatte, Abigail Debra Zelovelo

Dean’s Scholarship
Kaara Monique DeFreitas Kiddoe, Ryan Walter Morgan, Julia Richardson Wilmer, Lisa Annette Woolrich

Martha Sherrill Dunn Scholarship
Martina Battle Baldwin

Bertie Oscar Edwards Scholarship
Angela Shirin Greene

Joanna Finkelstein Gorham Scholarship
Eileen Elizabeth Hood, Seth Evan Maid, Kimberly Michelle Reese, Rachel Laura Wertheimer, Amy Maureen Wilkinson, Alice Miller Williamson

Kirsten E. Hewitt Scholarship
Adrienne Emily Rooks

Alan Keith-Lucas Scholarship
Star Marie VonKrusze Chilton, Alyson Elizabeth Nowicki, Shanta Lavette Taylor, Crystal Shawnette Yarborough

Jeffrey Langston Scholarship
Justin Lloyd Perry, Elizabeth Anne Shandley

Lovick P. Corn Dissertation Fellowship (declined)
Johanna Katharine Peters Greeson

Council on Social Work Education NIMH Minority Research Fellowship
Sharon D. Parker, Tasanee Ross-Sheriff Walsh

Hartford Pre-dissertation Award
Susan K. Fletcher, Tiffany Renee Washington

Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award – Predoctoral Fellow
Johanna Katharine Peters Greeson

MCH – Public Health Social Work Leadership Fellowship
Tashuna Delshawn Albritton

Mental Health (START-MH) Program Fellowship
Tiffany Renee Washington

NASW Foundation Jane B. Aron Doctoral Fellowship
Kelly Ann Williams

OSI Global Society Supplementary Grant
Dari Jigjidsuren

Philanthropic Educational Organization Scholarship
Dari Jigjidsuren

Francisco J. Varela Research Grant from the Mind and Life Institute
Eric Lee Garland

Social Justice Fund Scholarship
Guadalupe Valetina Huirton, Shaunee Vanessa Morgan, Samuel Lyon Thompson

Linda Summer Scholarship
Michelle Bertuglia-Haley, Rebecca Rae Branovacki, Jennifer Lee Williams

Tannenbaum Scholarship
Teronda Lenette Beatty, Scott Griffin Kixmiller, Glenn Robinson, Danielle Yvette Whitaker

Kristen Marie TenHarmsel Anderson Scholarship
Sarah Tuttle Edgecombe

Smith P. Theimann Scholarship
Suzanne Alicia Aragona, Guadalupe Valentina Huirton, Kate Melissa Wegmann

Walsh-Cioffi Scholarship
Erin Mullins Barger, Katherine Elaine Spinney

Ellen Black Winston Scholarship
Suzanne Alicia Aragona, Jennifer Elisabeth Krider
Contact  |  UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work

The School of Social Work’s Asheville Distance Education MSW Program, housed at the UNC-Asheville campus, is moving—and expanding.

Beginning this fall, the program will relocate to Blue Ridge Community College in Flat Rock, N.C., near Hendersonville. The move is necessary because of recent changes in the University’s funding model for distance education.

This relocation brings a new and exciting opportunity to grow and strengthen our presence in the mountain area by admitting a class of students annually—rather than every other year—beginning in fall 2010.

The program’s format, curriculum and field education opportunities will remain the same.

To reflect more accurately the region served, the program will be called the Mountain Area Distance Education MSW Program.

The UNC School of Social Work has offered the distance program in Asheville for over 20 years and is committed to continuing its service to Asheville and the entire western North Carolina community while providing the same outstanding quality of education.

If you have questions about this program, contact Kelly Reath, program director, at kbreath@email.unc.edu or (828) 251-6725.

Carolina employees donate record-breaking $814,000 to charity
By Michelle Rogers

The annual State Employees Combined Campaign (SECC) ended with UNC-Chapel Hill employees raising about $814,000—the highest in the campaign’s 23-year history.

Jack Richman, dean of the School of Social Work, served as chair of the University’s arm of the statewide campaign. More than 250 team leaders and volunteers were organized across campus to facilitate the effort, themed “Carolina Cares, Carolina Shares.”

“Despite tough economic times, Carolina employees stood up and supported the community,” said Richman, adding that most of the money raised locally stays in the Triangle.

Campus volunteers gathered last month to celebrate the campaign’s success, where they were addressed by Britt Cobb, SECC state chair.

“The love that you have for helping others has not gone unnoticed,” said Cobb. “Because of the generosity and dedication of Carolina employees, many lives across North Carolina have been made better.”

The SECC is the only charitable giving program authorized for North Carolina state work sites, supporting about 900 local and national charities.

The UNC School of Social Work has offered the distance program in Asheville for over 20 years and is committed to continuing its service to Asheville and the entire western North Carolina community while providing the same outstanding quality of education.

If you have questions about this program, contact Kelly Reath, program director, at kbreath@email.unc.edu or (828) 251-6725.

Clinical Lecture Series
Fall 2009

Monday, Sept. 14, 2009
Psychological Functions of Nonsuicidal Self-injury
Mitch Prinstein, Ph.D.

Monday, Oct. 19, 2009
Grief Work for the Clinician and Client
Steven Bradley-Bull, MA, MED, LPC

Monday, Nov. 16, 2009
Treating Clients and Ourselves with Positivity
Barbara Fredrickson, Ph.D.

Two contact hours available for each lecture. All take place at the School of Social Work from noon-2 p.m. Online pre-registration is required.

Videos from some of our past lectures are now posted online.

http://ssw.unc.edu/cls

Asheville Distance Ed MSW Program renamed, relocated
By Sarah Naylor

The School of Social Work’s Asheville Distance Education MSW Program, housed at the UNC-Asheville campus, is moving—and expanding.

Beginning this fall, the program will relocate to Blue Ridge Community College in Flat Rock, N.C., near Hendersonville. The move is necessary because of recent changes in the University’s funding model for distance education.

This relocation brings a new and exciting opportunity to grow and strengthen our presence in the mountain area by admitting a class of students annually—rather than every other year—beginning in fall 2010.

The program’s format, curriculum and field education opportunities will remain the same.

To reflect more accurately the region served, the program will be called the Mountain Area Distance Education MSW Program.

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1960s

Bobby Boyd, MSW ’69, retired on Nov. 1 after almost 30 years as the director of Catawba County Dept. of Social Services. Boyd was honored at a retirement reception with 400 people in attendance and numerous presenters. Under his leadership, the DSS attracted state and national recognition for innovation and quality. He is credited with leading his staff ably through difficult times in a focused and steady manner, remaining firm in his commitment. Boyd is a member of the UNC School of Social Work's board of advisors. Friends and colleagues have created the Bobby Boyd Leadership Fund at the School to support and encourage student leadership in social work. For more information, see story on p. 34.

Howard N. Lee, MSW ’66, N.C. State Board of Education chairman, received the North Carolina Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance's 2008 Advocacy Award. He was honored for his work with the Childhood Obesity Task Force and for his continued involvement in its efforts.

Lee’s guidance and advocacy “are crucial in the fight against obesity in North Carolina. He is a key player with the In-school Prevention of Obesity and Disease (IsPOD), a comprehensive school prevention program to improve physical activity and eating habits in grades K-8 through the utilization of specialized curriculum training offered to physical educators,” according to a statement from the alliance.

He served in the state Senate from 1990-2003, and is a member of the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

Lee, newly appointed executive director of the Governor's Education Cabinet, spoke at Durham Tech's Orange County campus in Hillsborough on Feb. 23. He discussed his new memoir, “The Courage to Lead: One Man’s Journey in Public Service,” and shared his experiences growing up in a racially divided South, being the first black mayor of Chapel Hill, and the challenges in overcoming poverty and racism.

1970s

Harriet Rosser Carter, MSW ’77, received Campbell University’s Distinguished Service Award from the School of Education for her contributions as a social worker, public school counselor and humanitarian. The ’73 Campbell alumna is a veteran of 32 years in social work and educational counseling. She and husband Winslow, a former missionary in Kenya, have cared for nine foster children and welcomed numerous international students into their home.

1980s

David Covington, MSW ’82, was named Social Worker of the Year at Duke Hospital.

Susan Mann, MSW ’87, recently started a new position in the Community Transition Program at North Carolina’s newest psychiatric facility, Central Regional Hospital.

Daniel W. Rice III, MSW ’82, was given the 2008 N.C. Governor’s Award for Excellence for his contributions in public service. Rice is the director of specialized services at Caswell Developmental Center and the executive director for Caswell Center Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization serving individuals and families with developmental disabilities in eastern North Carolina.

“Danny is the ultimate example of what it means to give back to your community,” said Beverly Vinson, Caswell Developmental Center director. “He lives and breathes public service and we are very proud of what he does, not only for our center and the region that we serve, but for the Lenoir County community.”

1990s

Simona Farcas, MSW ’99, recently started a new position with the Duke Clinical Research Institute as a regulatory associate.

Lori Messinger, MSW ’96, PhD ’99, received a teaching award from the University of Kansas. Messinger, associate professor of social welfare and director of the bachelor’s in social welfare program, was given a $5,000 Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence. She joined the KU faculty in 2004.

Kerry Anne Sherrill, MSW ’90, was awarded North Carolina School Social Worker of the Year by the N.C. School Social Workers Association. She works in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School District.

Buck Zeller, MSW ’99, and his wife have relocated to Kent Island, Md. Zeller is teaching at Anne Arundel Community College in their addiction counseling program. “While Maryland is now where I live, my heart belongs in North Carolina,” added Zeller.

2000s

Ivy Dey-Johnson, MSW ’06, accepted a new position as a post-adoption clinical social worker with Children’s Home Society of North Carolina. She is based in the agency’s new Winston-Salem office and provides post-adoption services to families in Davie, Surry, Yadkin and Stokes counties. She also joined the board of I Am Now, Inc., a transitional living home for teens located in High Point. These teens have aged out of the foster care system or are otherwise homeless and have nowhere else to turn for support.
Melissa Oppen Enns, MSW ’06, welcomed a daughter, Sonia Ann, on March 19. Baby Sonia joins big brother Louis. The family resides in Ithaca, N.Y., where Oppen Enns works with a runaway and homeless youth program. She can be contacted at moenns@gmail.com.

Christopher John Flanagan, MSW, M.Div. ’05, and his wife welcomed their second child, Ian Anthony Flanagan, on Jan. 13. Ian was 8 lbs. 7 oz. and 19.5 inches Their first son, Christopher David, was born Nov. 29, 2006. Flanagan is a recovery services administrator with Recovery Innovations of North Carolina in Five County.

Tracy Hamilton, MSW ’03, and her husband Demario welcomed their son, Donovan Josiah Hamilton, on Dec. 28. Donovan weighed 8 lbs. 7 oz. and was 22 inches long.

Laura Harroun, MSW ’07, and husband Frank welcomed their first child, Adrienne Faith, on Dec. 10. She weighed 8 lbs. 6 oz. and was 21 inches long. Harroun is a geriatric social worker with Aging Family Services, Inc. in Raleigh.

Anna Elizabeth Power Heule, MSW ’05, received her LCSW in 2005, married Tim Heule in May 2007, and currently lives in Apex. She works as an adult outpatient therapist for Therapeutic Alternatives (formerly OPC) in Chatham and Randolph counties. Heule sees adults with mental illness and specializes in working with women who are diagnosed with mental illness and addiction.

Susan Moore Pinson, MSW, M.Div. ’08, is currently residing in Atlanta. Pinson was the 2008 Baccalaureate speaker for Reinhardt College (Ga.), commissioned as a minister in the United Methodist Church, and is serving as minister for children and older adults at Glenn Memorial United Methodist Church on the campus of Emory University.

Katie Rossini, MSW ’02, presented a workshop entitled “Implementing Equitable Practices in the Classroom” at the National Staff Development Council’s 40th Annual Conference. She also finished her master’s degree in education with a specialization in school administration and supervision from Johns Hopkins University.

Laura Miller Shaffner, MSW ’06, recently passed her licensure exam and earned her LCSW. She continues to work as a clinical supervisor for Dominion Day Services in Richmond. She would love to hear from other alumni living in Virginia, and can be contacted at laurashaffner@gmail.com.

Mark D. Sullivan, MSW ’02, executive director of the Mental Health Association in Orange County, received the J.B. Spillman Award at the Mental Health Association of North Carolina’s annual conference in September. The following are remarks of John Tote, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association of N.C.

“The J.B. Spillman Award is given to an MHA executive director who represents the highest ideals of his or her position within the community. All of our nominees this year were deserving of this award, but one individual’s tireless leadership stood out as he strengthened and inspired his community. This year’s winner has provided unprecedented leadership for his organization. He continues to guide the growth of his MHA affiliate, including a budget that has tripled under his direction. His motivation to be involved in programs, community initiatives, and legislative matters has inspired his staff and board members to do the same. He serves his community as a voice for mental health and consistently provides innovative solutions for the issues that non-profit organizations so often face. As his nomination states, he is the ‘definition of a dynamic leader.’”

In Memoriam

Judith Freitag Bizjak, MSW ’70, died from pancreatic cancer on Feb. 2.

Thomas B. Horne, MSW ’63, died Dec. 17 at Rex Hospital in Raleigh after a critical illness. He is survived by two children and one grandson. He retired from the N. C. Division of Facilities Services about 16 years ago.

Joan Phillips-Trimmer died Dec. 7 at age 49. She was a student in the Triangle Distance Education MSW Program, and was scheduled to graduate in May. See story on p. 34.

Charles Keith Springle, MSW ’84, died May 11 at age 52. See story on p. 15.

Debbie Willis, MSW ’95, died Dec. 31. She is survived by her husband, Daniel B. Willis, Jr.; her daughter, Dana W. Whitehead and son-in-law, Elbert; her son, Daniel B. Willis, III (Branley) and daughter-in-law, Lori. Willis was in private practice in Garner.

Do you have news to share?

If you have received an award, promotion, taken a new job, gotten married, or added a new member to the family, let us know. We would love to share your news with other alumni and the School of Social Work community. Please e-mail your alumni news and photos to sswalumni@unc.edu.

Sign up for our e-newsletter and magazine

If you aren’t receiving E-Contact, the School’s monthly online alumni newsletter, you’re missing important news and events. Send an e-mail to econtact-list@unc.edu to request that you be added to our e-news list.

Due to budget cuts, the fall 2009 issue of Contact Magazine will be published online only. We’ll notify everyone on our e-newsletter list when the new issue is posted.

Looking for a job?

Have a job to post?

Visit our alumni job board at http://ssw.unc.edu/alumniSSW/jobs
Scholarship established in memory of student Joan Phillips-Trimmer

From childhood to adulthood, Joan Phillips-Trimmer never stopped giving to others. Whether working as a counselor at a camp for disabled children, advocating for abused children, or assisting returning troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, Phillips-Trimmer committed herself to helping those in need.

Since her daughter’s sudden death in December, Carol Oettinger has been determined to see that Phillips-Trimmer’s dedication to serve those in need lives on. Earlier this year, Oettinger pledged $25,000 to the School of Social Work to establish the “Joan Phillips-Trimmer Memorial Scholarship Fund.” Revenue from the fund will be used to financially assist social work students, especially those enrolled in the School’s distance education programs.

“Joan valued education and just loved learning so much,” Oettinger said. “And she was just a very giving, loving person. So, a scholarship just seemed totally appropriate to me. I can’t think of anything I’d rather do.”

Phillips-Trimmer, who would have been 50 on March 10, was enrolled in the School’s Triangle Distance Education MSW Program and was expected to graduate in May with an advanced degree in social work. Although she had long been employed as a health educator, working for West Point Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Chatham County Health Department, Phillips-Trimmer was eager to assist the men and women serving our country, an ambition she partly attributed to her husband’s service in Vietnam.

“She also had two nephews who had been to Iraq,” Oettinger explained. “She really wanted to help returning veterans. She was just so concerned about them.”

School Dean Jack Richman noted that Phillips-Trimmer “would have made an important contribution to North Carolina’s military members and their families.”

But the scholarship established in her name is also a precious gift, he added. “It is a wonderful tribute to her and will directly benefit other students, like Joan, who seek to solve social and health problems, making our state and the world a better place,” Richman said.

Classmates and peers thought highly of Phillips-Trimmer, said Ellen Crary, MSW ’09. She was well-regarded, not only for her interest in others but for her kindness, she said. “I don’t think I ever heard her criticize anyone,” Crary said.

When she did speak, it was clear that she had given much thought into what she wanted to say, said Travis Albritten, the School’s director of the Triangle Distance Education Program.

“She was very soft spoken, but when she said something—because of who she was and the way that she presented herself—you listened to her,” he said.

“She will be greatly missed.”

In addition to her mother, Phillips-Trimmer is survived by her husband, Michael Trimmer; her father, Dr. Charles Phillips; and siblings, Janet Phillips Campbell, Charles C. Phillips, Nancy Phillips and Liz Brophy.

Contributions for the Joan Phillips-Trimmer Memorial Scholarship Fund may be sent to: The UNC School of Social Work, Office of Development, CB# 3550, 325 Pittsboro Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27599.

Leadership fund created to honor longtime Catawba County DSS director

Bobby K. Boyd, MSW ’69, is known as a visionary in the field of social work and social services. Under his leadership as director, Catawba County Social Services attracted state and national recognition for innovation and quality, and received numerous awards.

His focus on “people, principles, performance and prevention”—also known as the “Bobby brand”—resulted in the development of many programs, including group homes for at-risk children, school social work and teen pregnancy prevention programs, an adoption agency, a Children’s Advocacy Center, Meals on Wheels, a shelter for adult abuse victims, Work and Ride Car Donation Program, Job Link Center, and expansion of mental health services.

Boyd retired in October after 30 years as the agency’s leader. His years of service were highlighted in tribute at a retirement reception with over 400 people in attendance. Also that night, county officials announced the naming of a residential group facility as “Boyd Corner House II” to acknowledge his significant role in expanding residential services for children in the county.

“Public service is a noble work, and social service is a calling,” said Boyd. “I believe my life’s work to have been a well-satisfied calling, and the last 30 years in Catawba County to have produced the most satisfaction of all.”

Boyd is a dedicated alumnus of the UNC School of Social Work, and serves as a member of the School’s Board of Advisors. He is a winner of the 2009 Distinguished Alumnus Award, which was presented by Dean Jack Richman at the School’s commencement on May 9.

In honor of Boyd, his colleagues at Catawba County Social Services have established the Bobby K. Boyd Leadership Endowment Fund with the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work. The fund will provide ongoing development of leadership curricula, lectures and student scholarships to promote leadership in public social work programs.

Thus far, about $15,000 has been raised for the fund. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible contribution, please use the envelope enclosed in this magazine or contact Mary Beth Hernandez at (919) 962-6469 or marybeth@email.unc.edu.
From the Alumni President

Dear Fellow Alumni, School of Social Work Community, and Friends,

Spring in Chapel Hill is truly a magical time. On the heels of our men’s basketball national championship and with the azaleas blooming at the Old Well, it is easy to walk with joy in our step, enjoying the beauty that surrounds this town and campus. To be able to fully enjoy this though, we must acknowledge the challenges and sacrifices that make this possible; the challenges we as individuals, the School of Social Work, and our communities are facing.

Universities, colleges, agencies and towns have all been asked to find ways to sacrifice to meet ever-shrinking budgets. The sacrifices we are asked to make, however, pale in comparison to the challenges faced by military families outlined in this edition of Contact. I feel proud that the School of Social Work is highlighting the needs, challenges and focus in this area of social work.

The impact of the current economic climate cannot be ignored. The health of all of our communities is put at risk when we are no longer adequately able to care for those most vulnerable. Given the challenges our communities face and some of the budget cuts proposed by the Governor, the number of at-risk and vulnerable people in our communities is sure to increase. It can be easy to want to go into hunker-down mode or become paralyzed by fear, but if our social work training teaches us anything, this is the time we need to step up, get involved and mobilize.

All of us have something to give. For some, it may be finding creative ways to keep budgets afloat within nonprofit agencies that serve our communities. For others, it may be lending your time and energy to support the School of Social Work by volunteering your time and experience. Thanks to the time and effort of volunteers, the School hosted its first “Welcome Weekend” for admitted students this spring. For still others, it may be serving as a mentor or field instructor to current social work students, many of whom are struggling to find placements due to changes in the mental health system. Finding ways to support the School of Social work and its mission to serve the underserved is one way in which we can support the health of all of our communities. The work, research and training of social workers impact not only each of the 100 counties of North Carolina but projects that have global reaches.

Thank you for your continued involvement and support.

Sincerely,

Michelle Turner ’03

Michelle Turner ’03