

# Make Someone's Life Better

**June Weckler:**  
CPS Ground-breaker

**Innovative  
Research Through  
Service Learning**

**Developing  
Partnerships  
for Healthier  
Communities**

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## A Message from Dean Elizabeth Cada

### *Scholarship, Community Partnership, and Creating Second Chances . . .*

Reflecting on the past year in the College of Health and Human Services, I am pleased to report that the College is alive and well and flourishing.

CHHS continues to increase in student enrollment year after year, and for that I credit our fine faculty. These individuals never cease to amaze me, in terms of their energy or their level of commitment to our students.

This is an incredibly exciting time in the history of GSU. As GSU President Elaine P. Maimon has described it, we have truly entered a renaissance period in the university's 44-year history. We look forward to welcoming FC14 — our inaugural class of first-year students — in 2014.

And speaking of our students, they never cease to amaze me. You'll read about some of them in this year's issue of Make Someone's Life Better. Students like Terry Banies, a recent Bachelor of Social Work graduate (and now Master of Social Work student) who has committed himself to returning to the violent Chicago neighborhoods of his youth in order to prevent other youth from ending up like him — incarcerated. Terry was honored with the title of "Rising Star" at GSU's 2013 Student Leadership Awards Banquet in April.

So many of our students are unafraid of facing new challenges in the name of following a higher calling in their lives. Like Laura Brady Dy, a Master of Occupational Therapy graduate, wife, and mother of two, who recently enlisted in the U.S. Army. Laura and her family have moved to Texas where she is undergoing basic training and is one of only five individuals chosen from across the country to participate in the Army's highly competitive Doctor of Occupational Therapy degree program. Following graduation, Laura is looking forward to helping Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans heal from their wounds — both mental and physical. Rather than seeing their lives through a prism of disability, Laura is eager to help them discover "a new way of living and functioning."

I am proud of our Social Work faculty and students who, realizing that there were students here at GSU who were formerly incarcerated, decided to create a new support network, Generating Hope. The group is designed to help students with criminal backgrounds get the help they need to flourish here at GSU and beyond. The students who created this group recently traveled to the national meeting of the Council on Social Work Education in Dallas to present their program. It's ideas like that — big ideas — that our students and, indeed, our entire University is known for.



Second chances. Hope. I take heart in individuals like our students. They are painting a bright picture for our nation's future.

I also take heart in the research and scholarship being conducted so creatively by our faculty. Such as the work on promoting children's language and literacy skills that Assistant Professor Jennifer Armstrong of our Department of Communication Disorders is doing. You'll read about Dr. Armstrong's innovative and interdisciplinary research, which involves her graduate students and the family members of children enrolled at GSU's Family Development Center. Fascinating work.

Come spring, the Communications Disorders, Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy students will be conducting their research in brand new, state-of-the-art laboratory and science facilities. GSU science students are already enjoying the new laboratories, completed during the first phase of this impressive renovation project.

And finally, I am grateful for our College's steadfast commitment to the health and well-being of our region. We fully support, and assist any way we can, in important initiatives such as Will County's Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships, which you can also read about in this issue of our magazine.

Nurturing community partnerships, promoting scholarship, and creating second chances: it's an honor for us in the College of Health and Human Services to do this work. I thank you for supporting our efforts, especially during these exciting days of renaissance here at GSU.

Best regards,

**Elizabeth A. Cada, Ed.D., OTR/L, FAOTA**  
Dean, College of Health and Human Services  
Governors State University

**P.S.** As always, I welcome any comments or suggestions you may have regarding the College of Health and Human Services. It is, and always has been, our goal to remain responsive to the needs of the community.

## Beverly Akins: Still Plenty to Live, Plenty to Give



Photos, from top left, Bev Akins smiles broadly on graduation day from GSU, where she earned her MSW degree. Holding her granddaughter's hand, Akins poses with (left) Social Work Department Chair Dr. Gerri Outlaw and (right) Juan Reed, GSU Social Work lecturer.

**Twenty-one years ago, if you had told Beverly Akins that one day she would be:**

- a) Alive;
- b) A college graduate with a 4.0 average;
- c) The first person in her family to receive a master's degree; and
- d) The "Outstanding Graduate Student" in the Department of Social Work at GSU's College of Health and Human Services . . .

**She would have said you were crazy.**

That's because, on June 4, 1992, Akins received the "dreadful" test results that sent her world spinning. That was the day she received a phone call from her doctor telling her that she was HIV positive, sweeping her into a hole of fear, shame and despair.

At the time, HIV/AIDS services in south suburban Cook County were nonexistent. Misinformation and confusion still abounded regarding how the virus was contracted. She remembers the media calling HIV/AIDS a "gay" issue, since so many males — all gay — were dying.

"But how can a subset of the human race develop a disease that the rest of us can't get?" Akins wondered.

**Under a Death Sentence**

Thinking her life was over, Akins began giving away her possessions and asking friends to take care of her cat.

"I was positive I was going to die," Akins said. "I watched so many people die in the '80s. It was shocking for me to wake up every day, look around and realize I was still alive. I felt for sure I was under a death sentence."

Seven years later, in 1999, Akins realized she wasn't going to die, even though she had been hospitalized 16 times with pneumonia. Her health made it difficult for her to maintain her position as caseworker for the Illinois Department of Public Aid on Chicago's North Side — a position she held for 12 years.

So she decided to return to school, getting her associate degree in 2004 from Prairie State College. Akins received all A's and was on the President's List.

"Going to school was the best thing I could have done," Akins said. "Education will set you free."

After learning about scholarship availability, Akins enrolled as a Bachelor of Social Work student at Governors State University, earning her BSW degree in 2007.

Following graduation, Akins decided to take a break from school and return to Mason Court, the Chicago Heights housing project where she grew up. In her day, Akins said, "The village raised me. You always had to be good because by the time you got home, all the women who sat on their porches, or the guy behind the drugstore counter, or someone from church would have already reported on you if you did something wrong. You could never be out of line."

Returning to her old neighborhood, Akins found an entirely different scene. Mason Court had turned into "vacant lots and liquor stores." She saw children, especially young girls, with nothing to do and little respect for, or pride in, themselves. This inspired her to start a mentoring program for young girls, ages 9 – 12.

#### **Mentoring the Go-Getters**

The girls call themselves the "Go-Getters." Akins and colleague Eula Burge, Executive Director of Proactive Community Services in Hazel Crest (and fellow GSU graduate), have been attempting to secure grant funding for a permanent meeting location for the Go-Getters. In the meantime, Akins has kept the girls well-occupied. A self-described wordsmith, Akins loves writing and gives the young girls writing assignments on pertinent topics (Why Is It Important NOT to Have a Baby at Age 12?), holds writing contests, helps them with their homework, and pushes them to strive for academic excellence.

"You must be able to write and speak!" Akins tells them. As an added incentive, she awards 50 cents for each "B" grade and \$1 for each "A" on report cards. Some of Akins' girls are college-bound and doing very well; some of their mothers are following in Akins' footsteps and have enrolled at Prairie State Community College.

But most important, Akins provides the girls with accurate — and potentially life-saving — information regarding HIV and the importance of birth control.

"Straight up – no chaser. That's how I talk to these girls," Akins said. "I teach them the facts about HIV. Teens are not getting the message. Parents aren't talking to their kids, and their peers don't have the right information. But they still think 'It's not going to happen to me; it's not possible.' I try to scare them straight. Whether you're 12 or 72, HIV can happen to you if you have unprotected sex. That's a fact."

In 2010, Akins began working on a Master of Social Work degree at GSU. She graduated in 2012, and was named Outstanding Graduate Student for the Department of Social Work in the College of Health and Human Services.



#### **Not Finished 'Giving Back'**

When she introduced Akins at last year's College of Health and Human Services Recognition Banquet, GSU Social Work Department Chair Gerri Outlaw described her as "a thoughtful, reflective practitioner, with an outstanding history of working on behalf of marginalized communities. She's a woman of such substance, living a meaningful life, giving back tenfold."

And she's far from finished giving back. While studying for the Social Work licensing exam, she is keeping very busy with the Go-Getters and other civic responsibilities, including registering people to vote. She also continues her community volunteer work as an HIV outreach lecturer.

She's also considering applying to the University of Chicago Social Work doctorate program. But, ideally, she would like to find a position where she can continue her work with youth.

"I would love to be known as the advocate for those who feel worthless," Akins said. "I like to leave a place better than when I found it, and a lot better when I leave it."

## Generating Hope . . . and Second Chances



Growing up in Chicago's now leveled Robert Taylor Homes on the city's South Side, Terry Banies learned at an early age that "black men weren't supposed to live past the age of 23."

Banies "tried to prove them right," he said. Fortunately, he did not succeed. And though he has felt the "bottomless pit" of despair and hopelessness that is incarceration, today he apologizes "for the person I used to be, but I refuse to carry around that label."

In his "second life," as he describes it, Banies just completed his Bachelor of Social Work degree at Governors State University, and is enrolled in the university's advanced standing Master of Social Work program. Armed with his MSW, Banies is looking forward to returning to Chicago's troubled neighborhoods, where he was once "part of the problem," and try to help stop "the senseless killing. . . If I am able to help one person, that's all that matters," he said.

Banies was one of three panelists featured at "Generating Hope," an open forum at GSU on the challenges and struggles of the formerly incarcerated. The event was made possible by a grant



Generating Hope panelists include Social Work students (left to right), Darryl Cooke, Patricia Miller and Terry Banies.

from the GSU Intellectual Life Committee, and was sponsored by GSU's Social Work Department.

Accompanying Banies on the panel were two other BSW students, Patricia Miller and Darryl Cooke. Miller spoke from her perspective as a daughter of incarcerated parents.

### **Bound by Labels**

"The prison label is the problem," Miller said, echoing Banies' thoughts. "You're bound by the label your mother or father carried." Today Miller has a 4.0 GPA and has put herself through college. But her battles are not

over yet. One week after "Generating Hope," Miller's mother was to be paroled to her daughter's home. Miller said she was scared and hopeful by her mother's impending parole. "I can't wait to see my mom again. We've been separated for a long time. But there's a lot of healing and rehabilitation to do," Miller said.

The third panelist, Darryl Cooke, is an ex-Marine with four years of service in his background, in addition to a felony conviction. A motivational speaker today, and author of *After the Bridge was Crossed: a Journey of Thought*, Cooke grows emotional when talking about his childhood growing up in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood.

*There is another path. Rather than shaming and condemning an already deeply stigmatized group, we, collectively, can embrace them – not necessarily their behavior, but them – their humanness. This is not a mere platitude; it is a prescription for liberation. – From, The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, by Michelle Alexander*

His mother, “the most important person in my life,” was sentenced to Dwight Correctional Center for 32 years when Cooke was just six years old. Later, when Cooke was incarcerated at Menard Correctional Center, his mother wrote the warden there and asked if her son’s time could be added to her own.

“I didn’t want her to pay for my freedom,” Cooke said. And that’s when he started to visit the prison library regularly and began making his way to a better life.

Cooke’s mother was seated in the audience on the day of the forum. He hadn’t seen her for a very long time. Cooke called her down and they exchanged an emotional hug. The audience responded with a standing ovation.

#### **A Social Responsibility to Help Others**

“We presented this forum for several reasons,” noted Dr. Lorri Glass, Associate Professor of Social Work at GSU, and Program Coordinator of the BSW Program. “We’re trying to increase awareness of the issues of students with criminal backgrounds, as well as the challenges for those who have family members who have been or are incarcerated. This issue can have a significant impact on a student’s education, as well as career options.

“Our goal is to provide information, support and resources for those facing this challenge — as well as hope,” Glass said. “This is something that we should all be concerned about. This is an epidemic issue. We imprison more people than any other western nation. The U.S. incarceration rate has roughly quadrupled since the early 1970s. More youth are going to jail than college.”

Glass believes there are social, financial and collateral consequences to incarceration; former prisoners find they battle the invisible punishments of shame, exclusion, further stigmatization, marginalization and barriers to self-sufficiency. These barriers can be institutional in nature. For instance, when social work students apply for their field internship, they must obtain malpractice insurance. But certain insurance companies require applicants to answer the question: Have you ever been convicted of a felony?

“Social work is a social justice profession,” Glass said. “It’s also the profession of hope. We have a social responsibility to help others, and to advocate against laws, policies and procedures that promote exclusion.”

Since the “Generating Hope” forum, the first Generating Hope Support Network met in late March, drawing a number of interested participants. The group now meets regularly and is open to the public. Additional information about Generating Hope Support Network may be obtained from Lorri Glass at [lglass@govst.edu](mailto:lglass@govst.edu)

Most recently, Glass and three Social Work students did a presentation on Generating Hope (“Exclusion vs. Inclusion of Students with Criminal Backgrounds in Social Work Education”) at the 59th Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education in Dallas, TX, October 31-November 3. The students in attendance included Darryl Cooke, Senior BSW student, Jerry el Davis, Junior BSW student, and Terry Banies, advanced standing MSW student. GSU’s Student Life and the Social Work Student Organization provided financial support for the students’ expenses.

For a free listing of online resources for ex-offenders, email [mbrady@govst.edu](mailto:mbrady@govst.edu)

#### **Shackled to the System**

Donna R. Gordon, a student in the Master of Social Work program at Governors State University, read her poem, “Are We Shackled for Life” at the conclusion of the “Generating Hope” forum.

#### **Are We Shackled for Life**

Are we shackled to the system for life, like a husband and wife?  
Til death do us part, when we’ve paid the price in the system’s cell?  
Released into society, are we still in jail?  
How can we face life outside of incarceration?  
When on the streets we fight legal discrimination.  
Forced into the criminal system on a non-violent crime,  
Spend the rest of our lives doing Felony time.  
Was it the marijuana or the blunt we smoked?  
Excluding us from our right to vote?  
Caught with possession and possibly inhaling it,  
But studies show, we wasn’t selling it.  
Branded forever by being convicted,  
This is human life, not a traffic ticket.  
How do we integrate back into society?  
When our communities need us?  
Get a decent job, when the check box reads us?  
Denying us housing, access to education,  
Is this the old Jim Crow, just a new plantation?  
There is hope for this mass incarceration,  
Trickle down on the policies that produced this magnification.  
Don’t call it “War on Drugs” when it is a “War on the Poor,”  
Don’t call it a Felony, it was a misdemeanor before.  
We need a new narrative, a solution-focused intervention,  
Don’t lock us out for life when the alternative is prevention.  
We want to live life in spite of our past,  
Release us from this infinite under cast.  
Unleash these shackles; it’s time for change,  
I’m giving you back your number, give me back my name!  
Unpublished Work c 2013, Donna R. Gordon, Stuff from the Heart  
(Reprinted with permission from the Author)



## All in the Family – MPT Grads Make A Happy Life Together



And they all lived happily ever after . . .

### You could say that about Barbara and Daniel Gerk.

The couple got a lot more than they bargained for when they enrolled in the Master of Physical Therapy program at Governors State University. Besides a fabulous education, and finding the career of their dreams, the two therapists found each other.

Barb and Dan met as MPT students and, following their graduation in 2001, began dating. Today the couple has three daughters: 18-month-old Lily and 5-year-old Sandra. A third daughter arrived in February.

### Homegrown Healthcare Providers

Both are south suburban natives. Barb grew up in Lansing, graduating from Thornton Fractional South High School, and Dan grew up in Orland Park, graduating from Andrew High School in Tinley Park.

Dan earned a degree in kinesiology from the University of Illinois/Chicago, before heading to GSU and its brand new Physical Therapy program. Following high school graduation, Barb began working full-time as a teacher's aide. She saw how other professions — nurses, social workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists — interacted with the children in her school. Physical therapy caught

her interest the most. So after attending South Suburban College, Barb enrolled in GSU's Board of Governors program, now known as Interdisciplinary Studies.

After earning her BOG degree, Barb heard about the new PT program that GSU was beginning, and applied. Since joining the program, she has never looked back. "I have never thought of doing anything else. Physical therapy is a wonderful career," Barb said.

### 'Top-notch Learning Experience'

For Barb, working and attending classes at GSU was extremely convenient; GSU's proximity, cost-effectiveness and flexible schedule were key. Barb holds fond memories of her time at GSU. "I can't say enough nice things about GSU," she said. The PT program was rigorous and challenging, both Barb and Dan agree; they felt "very well-prepared academically and clinically."

"A top-notch learning experience" is how Dan describes his time at GSU. He remembers how approachable the faculty was, even in a program that was as intense as physical therapy.

Barb agrees. "The comfort level was high; you could approach your teachers at any time. It was OK to ask questions and seek guidance



to correct mistakes – very conducive for higher learning,” she said. With only 14 students in their cohort, close-knit camaraderie ran high. “The teachers invested themselves 100 percent in their students, and also gave 100 percent of their heart,” Barb said.

Following graduation from GSU, Dan went to work in skilled nursing and outpatient facilities. Meanwhile Barb worked for eight years for Phyllis Levine, PT, DPT, owner of Functional Therapy and Rehabilitation in Homer Glen. Levine is a member of the Department of Physical Therapy Advisory Board and the recipient of the 2012 CHHS Outstanding Field Supervisor award.

“It was obvious that GSU prepared Barb well for her profession,” Levine noted. “Even as a student, she proved to be an asset. In the years she worked with us, she further grew into an exceptional therapist. She was adept at a wide variety of treatments and made all patients feel special. Patients still ask about her, although it is almost four years since her departure. We miss her dearly.”

The feeling is mutual. “She’s my PT ‘mom,’ and my main mentor,” Barb says of Levine. “She influenced me a lot, and showed me you can have a family and work. She inspired me.”

### No Place Like Home

Longing to be closer to home and her growing family, Barb opened and incorporated a small physical therapy clinic in downtown Crete in 2007; by 2011, her patient load had increased to the point where she was able to hire her husband Dan. And most recently, the couple had to hire an additional physical therapist, Lauren Bouwman, who also happens to be a GSU graduate and former classmate.

Today the couple can walk from their home to their clinic, Independence Physical Therapy — a real benefit after the occasional 13-hour workday. The vast majority of their patients are Crete residents with orthopedic and musculoskeletal problems, or neurological and balance conditions.

“It is my goal to create the most optimal physical therapy clinic in the area by providing excellent care to patients, and by upholding the ideals of the American Physical Therapy Association,” writes Barb on the clinic’s website.

It’s apparent that Barb’s sweet and caring disposition and Dan’s sense of humor are a hit with their patients. Two highly detailed, handcrafted wall hangings, made by one particularly treasured patient, are on display in the clinic’s waiting area. “Physical Therapists are Angels at Work,” reads one wall-hanging.

Barb and Dan may not consider themselves to be angels. But as far as they are concerned, working at a career they love, and raising a family in Crete is the closest thing to heaven on earth.

## MAPP-ing a Plan for a Healthier Will County



Pictured, left to right, are Vanessa Newsome, MAPP co-facilitator and Program Coordinator for the Will County Health Department; John Cicero, Will County Health Department Executive Director and MAPP Co-Chair; and Julie Edwards, Director of Community Health Strategy for Presence Health (the combined health system of Resurrection Health Care and Provena Health) and MAPP co-facilitator.

### **There's something very exciting going on in Will County.**

Good work is being done. Many hands from many different disciplines are working collaboratively toward the common goal of creating healthier communities across Will County.

What's happening is MAPP – Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships, a community-wide strategic planning approach to assessing community needs and improving community health.

### **Following the MAPP**

Every five years local health departments are required to run a comprehensive assessment of their community's needs. According to Will County Health Department Executive Director and MAPP Co-Chair John Cicero, a GSU Master of Health Administration graduate, MAPP is about what the community needs — “not what the local health department or area hospitals say they need. It's a totally community-driven process — of, by, and for the community.”

According to Vanessa Newsome, MAPP co-facilitator and Program Coordinator for the Will County Health Department, MAPP offers a framework for bringing community partners together to first identify key issues, and then to work together to address them through collaboration.

“Everyone plays a role in making a community healthy, whether they recognize it or not,” Newsome said.

### **'A Process, More than a Thing'**

When asked to explain MAPP, Newsome replies that it is not a “what or a who. It's truly an ongoing process more than a thing sitting on a shelf somewhere gathering dust,” Newsome said.

“That's what I like about it,” she added. “The same people — academic, faith-based, social service, health care — are at the table meeting regularly to identify if there are changes needed along the way. We're not waiting for five years to pass to say, wow, what happened, now this is a major problem. We're identifying those problems along the way.”

The community benefits greatly from MAPP's collaborative nature, said Julie Edwards, Director of Community Health Strategy for Presence Health (the combined health system of Resurrection Health Care and Provena Health). She and Vanessa Newsome spearheaded the rigorous planning phase of MAPP beginning in 2008, and today are project co-facilitators.

"In the past we each have worked out of our own silos, within four walls. There hadn't been much collaboration," Edwards said. "Through MAPP, we're working together to meet goals and objectives in order to make our community a healthier place to live. Taking a multi-sector, multi-disciplinary approach broadens your horizons and makes a much bigger impact," Edwards said.

### Ready, Set . . . Action Teams!

To address the key issues facing Will County, the MAPP facilitators have established four volunteer Action Teams with the following initiatives:

- Access to Care
- Awareness of Services
- Prevention and Management of Chronic Care Issues (e.g., Diabetes, Obesity)
- Systems, Collaboration and Linkages

Some of the most pressing challenges facing Will County today, Newsome pointed out, are the lack of behavioral health care providers, especially for inpatient needs. There has also been a rise in heroin use and abuse across the northern part of the county, Newsome pointed out. MAPP Action Teams are actively working with other community organizations and collaborations to work towards a solution for these problems.

Another key challenge to be addressed by the Action Teams is the Affordable Care Act rollout, with issues such as access to care, creating medical homes for people and discerning where the primary health care providers are going to come from, Newsome said.

An extremely successful project being conducted by the Awareness of Services Action Team is the Anti-Stigma Collaboration. Led by Joliet Junior College students, this Collaboration is designed to help people become more comfortable in accessing behavioral health and substance use disorder services. From this collaboration sprang a website ([www.willfindhope.org](http://www.willfindhope.org)), videos, presentations on various anti-stigma topics, a symposium attended by 500+ people, and a Mental Health First Aid training program, according to Newsome.

The Mental Health First Aid training is a program conducted by Linden Oaks at Edward Hospital in Naperville. Linden Oaks provides trainings across the county for community and professional organizations, designed to educate people on signs and symptoms of behavioral health issues, learning how to identify a crisis and what to do until help arrives.

The Systems Action Team has successfully presented two Youth Provider Summits, bringing providers together to network and collaborate on programs addressing the needs of Will County youth, including: identity development for multiracial children, gang awareness, up-and-coming careers and promoting greater science and math engagement.

### Team Spirit: A Commitment to the Community

Funding for Will County's Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships work comes from the following participants: the Will County Health Department, Aunt Martha's Youth Services & Health Centers, Silver Cross Hospital in New Lenox, Presence Saint Joseph Medical Center in Joliet, Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital and Edwards Hospital in Naperville. MAPP also received grant funding for the first two years of assessment planning from the Will County Community Foundation.

To address the issue of obesity in Will County, the Prevention of Chronic Care Issues Team has created a prevention initiative, We WILLWork Healthy. The goal is to recognize and celebrate local businesses who are promoting wellness in the workplace through innovative programs for their employees. More information may be found at <http://tinyurl.com/WILLworkhealthy>.

### A Shared Commitment

GSU's College of Health and Human Services shares Will County's commitment to the health and well-being of the region, and especially vulnerable populations.

"The resources that Governors State University brings to the table are unique in the sense that it's more of a human resource, if you will," Newsome said.

CHHS Dean Elizabeth Cada, Ed.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, serves on the Executive Committee for Will County MAPP.

A number of CHHS faculty members at GSU have offered their expertise in data analysis and program evaluation to Will County MAPP. DeLawnia Comer-Hagans, Ph.D., MS, MBA, Assistant Professor of Health Administration at GSU, has served on the Systems, Collaboration and Linkages Action Team, but is now planning to help with program evaluation and monitoring. Carol Morrison, Executive Director of GSU's Family Development Center (a program of the College of Education), serves on the Systems, Collaboration and Linkages Action Team. Lydia Falconnier,

Assistant Professor of Social Work at GSU, has joined the MAPP Data, Monitoring and Evaluation Team.

Nancy Burley, ABD, MA, Coordinator of Academic and Support Services for the CHHS at GSU, is a member of the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Will County. Burley lost her husband of 27 years, a heavy smoker, to lung cancer. The Coalition was established before the MAPP process began.

"Tobacco was one of the major issues when we looked at management and prevention of chronic care issues," explained Newsome. "Many of the members of this Coalition are members of MAPP.

"There's a lot of work to be done, and it's never too late to join the process," Newsome added. "New partners are always welcome. All ideas are welcome." Anyone interested in participating may contact Vanessa Newsome at [vnewsome@willcountyhealth.org](mailto:vnewsome@willcountyhealth.org), or Julie Edwards at [Julie.edwards@presencehealth.org](mailto:Julie.edwards@presencehealth.org) for additional information.

"When you think about the work that's being done, on a very limited budget, it's amazing!" said Newsome.

Newsome credits the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of the volunteers who are chairing the Action Teams – none of whom are employees of the Will County Public Health Department.

"These are people from other organizations in the community who have a vested interest in Will County," Newsome said. "They give so much and are truly dedicated to making the whole collaboration work."

Julie Edwards said, "I've always known there are people who are dedicated to Will County. These Action Teams are willing to roll up their sleeves and work hard to make an impact. They're phenomenal. They're all about making a difference."

One such dedicated Action Team chair, Annie Hysaw, works full-time as a Social Emotional Consultant and Resource Coordinator for Child and Family Connections in Joliet. Hysaw is Co-Chair of the Systems, Collaboration and Linkages Action Team. The goal of this team is to "increase cohesiveness amongst systems throughout Will County

that impact families and ensure residents receive services through all stages of their life." It's a big job, considering Will County's explosive growth and development.

As Hysaw explains it, "Our goal is not to invent anything new. It's to support, enhance and expand existing systems and services. We're making good progress, helping people get connected to each other. It's definitely a community-driven process. We need their input to identify the problems and shortages."

Hysaw's team is tracking five different initiatives; team members work on initiatives suited to their personal passion, or to the work of their agencies. "All the Action Team members provide services in-kind; we feel it's important, and it's wonderful to have the full support of our agencies," Hysaw said.

Action Team members are currently all service providers, but the goal is to expand and include community residents, as well.

Anyone interested in participating may contact Vanessa Newsome at [vnewsome@willcountyhealth.org](mailto:vnewsome@willcountyhealth.org), or Julie Edwards at [Julie.edwards@presencehealth.org](mailto:Julie.edwards@presencehealth.org) for additional information.

## Will County MAPP Collaborative - Participating Agencies 2013

Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital

American Cancer Society

American Heart Association Midwest Affiliate

American Lung Association, Greater Chicago

All Our Kids (AOK) Network

Aquino Clinical Services

Aunt Martha's Youth Services

Bridges to a New Day, NFP

Catholic Charities

CASA of Will County

Center for Economical Development (Three Rivers Educational Partnership – TREP)

Chestnut Health Systems

Child Care Resource and Referral Agency

Community Service Council of Will County, Inc

Crete Monee School District 201

Crisis Line of Will and Grundy County

Easter Seals of Joliet Region, Inc.

Edward Hospital

Greater Joliet Area YMCA

Governor's State University

Guardian Angel Community Services

Harvey Brooks Foundation

Housing Authority of Joliet

Image Builders

Joliet Junior College

Joliet Township

Joliet Township High School/YESS (Youth Experiencing Success in School)

Lewis University

Linden Oaks at Edwards Hospital

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois

Mariam Village

Mount Zion Baptist Church

Morning Star Mission Ministries

NAMI (National Association of Mental Illness) Will County

National Hook-up of Black Women, Inc.

New Life Church

Northern Illinois Food Bank

Provena Home Care

Presence Health System

Presence Saint Joseph Medical Center

Presence Villa Franciscan – Presence Life Connections

Rush University

Senior Services Center of Will County

Service INC., Child and Family Connections #15

Silver Cross Hospital

Stepping Stones, Inc.

Three Rivers Manufacture's Association

Trinity Services, Inc.

U of I Extension – Kankakee, Will Grundy Co.

United Way of Will County

University of St. Francis

Warren-Sharpe Community Center

Will County Community Concerns

Will County Community Development Division

Will County Community Foundation

Will County Community Health Center

Will County EMA

Will County Executive's Office

Will County Forest Preserve District

Will County Health Department

Will County LAN

Will County Land Use Community Development

Will County Regional Office of Education

Will County Residents

Will County Sheriff's Office

Will County State's Attorney's Office

Will Grundy Medical Clinic

Workforce Investment Board of Will County

# Charting a New Course in the Army Medical Corps



As a former geography major and mapmaker, Laura Brady Dy knows what it means to chart a course.

Today, the 33-year-old wife and mother is charting a whole new course for her life — as an occupational therapist serving in the United States Army Medical Specialist Corps at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, TX.

## A Foundation in Occupational Therapy

The map of Laura Brady Dy's life begins in Chicago's Beverly neighborhood, where she grew up the youngest of three children in a household filled with the family's Irish heritage.

As a youngster, Dy remembers attending a preschool connected to Rush University and Medical Center, where her mother, Catherine Brady, worked as an occupational therapist. Dy remembers going to work with her mother, spending time in the hospital observing her mother work, and growing comfortable with the hospital environment.

Following graduation from St. Ignatius College Prep, Dy earned her undergraduate degree in geography from Northern Illinois University and was soon employed as a mapmaker for Cook County. From maps, Dy turned to massage therapy and motherhood.

But Dy never forgot those early years she spent in the hospital observing her mother. She also remembered her beloved Uncle Denny, aka Tex. Tex participated in life with enthusiasm and joy, defined by his personality, not his developmental disabilities. Dy returned to school and began working on a Master's degree in Occupational Therapy at Governors State University. She graduated from GSU in December, 2010, and then began working at the RML Specialty Hospital's west Loop location, just 10 minutes from her home at the time.

A long-term acute care hospital, RML specializes in severely ill ("ICU-level") patients, most of whom are on ventilators, require extensive wound care or are otherwise medically complex.

"As occupational therapists, we often work on helping patients regain their ability to eat, bathe, dress themselves and perform other functions of daily living. With our patients at RML, we break down those tasks even further," Dy explained. The occupational therapist helps patients develop the strength they need to sit up on their own, or to lift their arms in order to brush their teeth, comb their hair or wash their face. Patients at RML very often don't return home; many are moved to skilled nursing facilities or other acute care rehabilitation centers, she said.

### Change in Course

While Dy thoroughly loved her work at RML, it was an experience she had while studying occupational therapy at GSU that set her on a path to the Army. While attending an occupational therapy student conclave in Baltimore, MD, Dy met Army Captain Eric Johnson — a soldier turned occupational therapist.

She and her fellow OT students were immediately impressed by Captain Johnson and the tremendous difference he made in the lives of wounded soldiers like Sergeant Major (Retired) Thomas Morrissey of the U.S. Army Special Forces.

At Dy's invitation, Morrissey spoke at the 2010 Master of Occupational Therapy Pinning Ceremony at GSU, where he thanked the occupational therapists who worked so diligently with him during three years of rehabilitation (and 20 surgeries) following eight life-threatening, close-range AK-47 wounds he received during an enemy ambush in Afghanistan in 2006.

The seed was planted.

Dy never forgot the difference that occupational therapists like Captain Johnson made in the lives of wounded warriors. Two years later, she applied for an extremely competitive occupational therapy program in the Army. After a rigorous and detailed application process that took nearly half a year, Dy received the good news from her recruiter last February. She was in — one of only five individuals chosen from across the nation.

### 'A New Way of Living and Functioning'

Dy is now stationed at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, TX, working at Brooke Army Medical Center and the Army's Center for the Intrepid. She believes helping soldiers recover from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is going to be a big focus of her work in the Army.

OT is "more about rehabilitation," Dy said, and also focuses on "helping heal the mental aspect of a soldier's health. My training will be specialized, geared towards soldiers and their family members. My goal as an occupational therapist will be to help soldiers gain the

highest level of independence possible. Instead of a disability, you see a new way of living and functioning."

Dy is looking forward to having the Army's advanced resources and technology at her disposal when working with soldiers recovering from physical wounds, as well. The Center for the Intrepid is a four-story, 65,000 square foot outpatient rehabilitation facility featuring state-of-the-art technologies.

Dy has made a five-year commitment to the Army; her first two years will be spent in a doctoral occupational therapy program at Baylor University; the next three years she will be stationed at an Army medical center — stateside or elsewhere.

Dy's family is totally supportive (especially her Marine veteran husband) and are "all excited," she said. "It will be an adventure," she said. She will be following in the footsteps of her father, an Army veteran, and both her grandfathers, who served in the

U.S. Navy during World War II. She's excited about joining their ranks.

The history of occupational therapists' service in the U.S. Army dates back to World War I, when OTs served as reconstruction aides. They have been a part of the U.S. Army Medical Specialist Corps since it began in April, 1947.

While she and her family prepare for the next chapter of their life, Dy is reflecting on, and grateful for, the "go for it!" attitude that she says comes from her mother.

"She would always tell us, 'Go for it. You never know where something can lead you. You can't say no if you don't even have an offer. And you will never get an offer if they don't know who you are, so go for it.'"

**Editor's Note:** Laura Brady Dy was commissioned as a 1st Lieutenant in the U.S. Army on September 6, 2013.



Pictured with Laura Brady Dy are her family: husband John Dy, and sons Jian (left) who is in kindergarten and Ciaran (right), a first-grader.

# 'Not Just a Veteran's Issue': Trauma and the Impact on the Military Family



Dr. Lorri Glass, Associate Professor of Social Work, introduces panelist Marquell Smith at the Veteran's Forum.

## Nicole McCoy is lucky to be alive.

She was raped twice and suffered Military Sexual Assault two other times during the four years she was enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. After speaking out about the crimes against her, McCoy was invariably harassed, ignored, judged or shunned by the military. (See sidebar, page 18.)

After her medical discharge from the armed services, McCoy's life became a nightmare of drinking, drugs, depression and attempted suicide.

Today, supported by her husband and a service therapy dog that is always by her side, 22-year-old McCoy is fighting back the only way she knows how: she is petitioning the Department of Defense to create a national registry for service members convicted of sexual offenses while on active duty in the military.

## Area Veterans Invited to Join Writing Group

Area veterans are invited to discover the craft of narrative writing by joining the Veterans Writing Group, an ongoing series of workshops coordinated by Robin Thompson, GSU Senior Lecturer in the English Department.

In a small, supportive group environment, veterans will enhance and learn new skills and share camaraderie with other vets in a six-week workshop.

"Narrative writing helps veterans bridge the cultural divide between their military and civilian life," explained Thompson. "Their stories are important and may one day become a valuable family heirloom or community resource — everyone benefits."

The group is free to all American military veterans; non-GSU students are welcome.

For additional information about the Veterans Writing Group, contact Robin Thompson at [rtompson@govst.edu](mailto:rtompson@govst.edu), or 708.534.4581.

McCoy's poignant presentation was just one of several moving accounts by panelists during the three-hour public forum, "Before and After Deployment: Trauma and the Impact on the Military Family," held in Governors State University's Center for Performing Arts.

The event was sponsored by the College of Health and Human Services, the Department of Social Work, the College of Education, Governors State University Intellectual Life Committee, the University Honors Program and the Wounded Warrior Project.

Serving as key organizers of this student-driven event were Army veteran Michael Griffin and Lydia Quinones, both Bachelor of Social Work students. Other committee

members involved in this event included Gina Corona and William Schranz, both enrolled in the BSW program, and Erica Porter, a Master of Social Work student.



"Our phenomenal group of Social Work students has worked extremely hard on this program," said faculty advisor Lorri Glass, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Social Work and BSW Program Coordinator.

"Today's forum embodies the principles and values of Governors State University, the College of Health and Human Services and Social Work in that we realize it is important to advocate for social justice and to take responsibility to ensure that service members, veterans and their loved ones have access to the support they deserve," Glass said.

"The Social Work Department at GSU has taken this charge and is concerned not only with the individual veteran and his/her family, but also recognizes the importance of intervening with larger systems and policy issues. This is not just an issue for veterans; it's everyone's issue."

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USMC Navy Corpsman Michael Johnson experienced trauma for the first time in Iraq, while he was breaching a minefield.

"There was a dog maybe 10 to 15 feet away, and he took one step and wasn't there anymore. I expected to see injury and death, but the loss of basic innocence ... I saw it disappear," Johnson said.

Since then Johnson has waged a horrendous battle with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. "Recovery from PTSD is a lifetime ordeal," Johnson said. "A lot of vets are too proud to admit that anything is wrong, and so they self-medicate with drugs and alcohol." Johnson, who also has



## Update: No Longer an Unsung Hero

*(Editor's Note: The following is an update on retired U.S. Army Sergeant Michael Griffin (pictured above), a GSU Social Work graduate who was featured in the 2012 Issue of **Make Someone's Life Better**.)*

Seven years after nearly losing his life during an enemy ambush in Iraq, retired U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Griffin has received an Army Commendation Medal with Valor. A bureaucratic paperwork snafu prevented Griffin from receiving his commendation in 2006.

Griffin is a June, 2013 graduate of the Bachelor of Social Work program at GSU. The 34-year-old father of two began the Master of Social Work program at the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago in August. Upon receiving his MSW degree, Griffin is looking forward to helping his fellow veterans heal from the invisible wounds of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, a condition from which he himself suffers.

"I hope to be able to be there for them and to serve them to the best of my abilities," Griffin said.

Reflecting on all that has transpired since his life-threatening injuries, Griffin says, "Regardless of the injuries I sustained ... the challenges and the sacrifices that had to be made, I'll forever be proud that I served my country," Griffin said. "I would serve my country a thousand times over any way I could."

a therapy service dog at his side, believes soldiers need a boot camp not only before their deployment, but after they come home, in order to deprogram and process what they went through.

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Sharon Orsborn says her 26-year-old Army veteran son returned home from Iraq "broken and haunted" — tormented by PTSD. Sitting in his car in the middle of a field in Fort Worth, Texas, Orsborn's son killed himself on May 5, 2007.

"The truth is that he died on a battlefield in Iraq in 2004," Orsborn said.

After returning from the coroner's office, Orsborn sat down and composed a poem for her son's funeral. She's been writing ever since. She has been given poetry, she believes, to help her and other parents who have buried children.

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Marquell Smith experienced "a different war." In 2006, after discovering that someone he dated had tested positive for HIV, Smith confided his sexual orientation to his commanding officer, which resulted in his discharge under the now-repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

Smith fought the discharge, which was eventually upgraded to honorable. With his dreams of becoming an officer forever lost, Smith began working with several organizations that advocate for equal rights and fair treatment for gays in the military. It's an extremely "important cause," Smith believes. "There's a lot of work to be done for those who serve in silence."



Also serving on the panel was Abbie Holland Schmit, Alumni Manager of the Wounded Warrior Project. Schmit discussed some of the 14 different programs designed to promote the physical/mental health and wellness of soldiers who have returned home.

In her closing remarks, CHHS Dean Elizabeth Cada noted, "This is just the beginning of a very important discussion that must, and will, continue here at GSU... We look forward to our continued collaborations and will not forget our commitment to those who have served our nation, and their family members."

#### Panelist Featured in National Magazine

Former Marine Lance Cpl. Nicole McCoy — one of the five panelists featured at GSU's "Before and After Deployment: Trauma and the Impact on the Military Family" — was quoted in an article in the February 14, 2013 issue of Rolling Stone magazine. The following is an excerpt from the article, "The Rape of Petty Officer Blumer: Inside the Military's Culture of Sexual Abuse, Denial and Cover-up."

In the hierarchical culture of the military, there's another complicating factor. According to a recent DOD report, sexual assaults in the armed services generally involve men who outrank their victims, the vast majority of whom are women under the age of 25, who feel that as subordinates, they can't fight back.

"He was my superior," explains former Marine Nicole McCoy of why, when in April 2010 her alleged assailant groped and kissed her, it didn't occur to her to scream or, despite her combat training, to fight. "You're taught to be nothing but respectful. It makes it hard to stand up for yourself, or to report it." McCoy was able to extricate herself, but decided to report the assault attempt when she realized her assailant had the master key to her quarters. The investigating agent asked McCoy whether she sustained injuries while fighting off her superior's advances. "No," she answered. "But emotionally I felt completely violated and didn't feel I had the right to say no and have him stop." The agent persisted, asking McCoy why she'd followed the sergeant into his room, why she didn't object when he closed the door, and what she'd been wearing. Her case was swiftly closed."

## Two Colleges Collaborate to Provide First-of-its-Kind Program



More and more research studies indicate how mindfulness and meditation-based practices help clients in psychotherapy treatment achieve emotional regulation, modulate their anxiety and depression, lower their blood pressure, enhance their immune system and increase concentration and attention span.

To that end, the College of Education and College of Health and Human Services of Governors State University have joined forces to provide the first-of-its-kind program in the Midwest.

Mindfulness and Psychotherapy is a two-year, 18-credit-hour certificate program designed to teach post-master's level practitioners and advanced graduate students how to integrate mindfulness-based interventions into their clinical practice. The program combines classroom instruction, labs and weekend retreats to enhance the skills and competency of licensed professionals in the mental, physical or allied health professional fields.

Spearheading the Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Certificate Program are Maristela Zell, Ph.D., LCSW, Associate Professor of Social Work in

GSU's College of Health and Human Services, and Tim Pedigo, Ph.D., University Lecturer in Psychology from GSU's College of Education. Both academicians have received and are still undertaking extensive training in meditation and mindfulness practices; quite literally, they practice what they preach.

### First of Its Kind

"This is a unique certificate program," Zell stated. "Unlike the East and West coasts, the Midwest is a barren land for academic training programs of this nature. Our program is practical. Students are not only going to learn about these mindfulness practices, but they will also learn how to APPLY them to the populations they work with. That's a big emphasis of the program – the integration of mindfulness into the basis of their work."

*"We can spend our whole lives escaping from the monsters of our minds." — Pema Chodron (Buddhist nun, author and teacher)*

The concept of mindfulness is nothing new to Drs. Zell and Pedigo. For the past four years, they have hosted weekly meditation sessions as well as an annual symposium on Mindfulness in Higher Education for staff, faculty and students on the south suburban campus. The Psychology Department at GSU has recently developed a special



Tim Pedigo, Ph.D., University Lecturer in Psychology, GSU College of Education

concentration in mindfulness studies. Renowned psychologist and “Emotional Intelligence (EIQ)” expert Daniel Goleman also presented a seminar at GSU recently; Dr. Pedigo presented on “Mindfulness and EIQ” as part of the event.

“We were seeing a whole lot of interest in the field among social workers, psychologists, mental health professionals in general, and other allied health professionals,” Pedigo said. “When you think about the impact of mindfulness on concentration, attention, creativity, well-being, stress relief for students — you can see that this can add a whole other dimension to the work of people like us: people who work with people in pain, be it physical or emotional, as well as children and families,” Pedigo said.

“We deal with a population not just of students, but people in general — who live very stress-filled lives. It’s important they find ways to relieve their stress,” Pedigo added.

### A Holistic Approach

The Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Certificate program emphasizes a holistic approach to education, Zell noted. “It’s important to view both students and patients in a holistic way, not just in an academic way.

Education, from our perspective, isn’t just intellectual. We believe in teaching and caring for the full person, in terms of their growth and development as a human being. We’re holistic educators, in that sense.”



Maristela Zell, Ph.D., LCSW, Associate Professor of Social Work, GSU College of Health and Human Services

Currently those who are eligible to enroll in GSU’s Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Certificate Program include:

- Post-master’s level practitioners (e.g., social workers, addiction counselors, psychotherapists, marriage and family therapists), and other health-related professionals who currently work in clinical settings (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapists and nurses); and
- Current master’s level GSU students enrolled in clinically-oriented programs who are in their final year of advanced clinical practicum.

“It’s really community-focused, since it can benefit the professional community and educate them in a new and exciting area. But it’s also for our graduate students here,” Pedigo said.

Additional instructors in GSU’s Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Certificate Program include Jon Carlson, Psy.D., a Full Professor of Psychology at GSU; Barbara Gormley, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology at GSU; and David O’Donnell, MHS, a lecturer in the Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health Department at GSU.

For more information about GSU’s Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Certificate Program, contact Dr. Maristela Zell at [mzell@govst.edu](mailto:mzell@govst.edu), 708.235.2235.

## An OT at the Helm: Breaking New Ground in the CPS System



The enormity of her position doesn't really strike home until someone brings it up in conversation — and she stops to think for a moment.

**"It keeps you busy, that's for sure," she'll say.**

That's an understatement. Since April 2012, June Weckler, MOT, OTR/L has served as Manager of Occupational and Physical Therapies/Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services for Chicago Public Schools.

Weckler is in charge of approximately 160 occupational and physical therapists who care for special needs students in more than 600 Chicago schools; these students have autism, cerebral palsy and other physical or learning disabilities. She is a 2005 graduate of GSU's Master of Occupational Therapy program, and is currently enrolled in GSU's Doctor of Occupational Therapy program.

She's also breaking new ground — Weckler is the first occupational therapist who has held the manager's position, she said. In the past, only physical therapists or special education teachers have held this role.

"There is room for us to grow in our responsibility to our profession with regard to school-based practice, as well as to the students we serve," Weckler said.

### Up for Any Challenge

In her role as Manager of Occupational and Physical Therapies, no day is the same, Weckler said. "It's a problem-solving role. Whether I'm working with a clinician on clinical reasoning and decisions that affect students' access to education, or talking to parents who wonder if their child qualifies for services, or dealing with schools who have concerns about the decisions that their therapists are making — there is no one day that's the same."

Weckler is also responsible for educating school administrators, parents, and sometimes even occupational therapists themselves about the role of occupational therapy in the school system. "We need to understand the larger role that we have to play in supporting all students — from when they enter school at 3 all the way until they exit at 21," she said.

Misconceptions about OT still abound, Weckler believes. "Some teachers think the OTs are there to be paraprofessionals and that they need to be in the classroom all the time working on rote skills. That can be problematic."

Oftentimes, Weckler noted, children with bad handwriting are referred to the OT. "But it's often a much bigger issue than that the child has poor handwriting," she said. "They may have a mild learning disability that has not been identified. Let's peel away the layers of the onion and get to the root of the problem. You have to be a detective; it's very investigative in terms of the work you do."

### Collaborative Efforts

Weckler stresses the importance of working collaboratively in teams with speech pathologists, nurses, psychologists, teachers, PTs and social workers, and she wants to see even greater degrees of collaboration.

"That's when you really see success, when you take the team approach — rather than sectioning the student off: I'm just working on his motor skills, or I'm just working on speech. You have to pull it all together, if you want the child to be an independent learner ... It's about supporting the children, whatever their needs are."

The best part about her job, Weckler says, is "the problem-solving aspect. Talking to clinicians and working through situations, or talking to parents and helping them understand the role of OT and PT — reinforcing the concept that their child is coming to school for an education, not for therapy, and how the therapeutic component is supporting that education piece."

### From Vision Therapy to Occupational Therapy

A lifelong southsider from Blue Island, Weckler and her husband have been married 42 years and are the parents of three grown children and grandparents of four. Weckler found her way to occupational therapy via a circuitous route. As her children grew older and began going to school, Weckler began researching alternative school models. There was a Montessori School around the corner from her house, so Weckler took the teacher training and became a certified Montessori director.

Also, one of Weckler's daughters had been dealing with vision troubles since infancy. Ophthalmologists told Weckler her daughter would never have driving vision, and that she'd have to hold her books to the side to see well. While at Montessori, Weckler discovered behavioral

optometry, and became a vision therapist. One of her daughter's eye doctors was an adjunct occupational therapy instructor at South Suburban College in South Holland, which is how she discovered, and enrolled in, South Suburban's Certified OT Assistant program.

Weckler was soon working in the Chicago Public Schools. When she began the MOT program at GSU, Weckler's husband supported her while she returned to school full-time.

Weckler's daughter with visual problems is now a teacher for the blind and visually impaired. She recently received her driver's license.



Reflecting on her "high quality" GSU education, Weckler said she was "delighted by the collective number of years of experience of the professors." She also enjoyed "the maturity level of the students, and the diverse student body. It was fun to have classmates from Jerusalem, or Africa. It was a great opportunity to learn about different cultures and perspectives."

Weckler also enjoyed the fact that OT students take anatomy, physiology and kinesiology classes along with physical therapy students at the same time. "That was an important piece, because they (PTs) come at the program from a different perspective. To tag onto their energy level was a good motivating piece for me," she recalled.

Despite her many obligations, Weckler has served on the Advisory Board for GSU's Occupational Therapy Department for the last three years. "The (OT) professors are open to whatever we want to share," Weckler said. "They take our comments and suggestions to heart."

A member of the American Occupational Therapy Association and the Illinois Occupational Therapy Association, Weckler was recently invited to work with Nancy Richmond of the IOTA concerning proposed changes to the OT Practice Act, which would give OTs direct access in schools, allowing them to deliver services to students without a physician's referral.

## Symposium Addresses Future of Healthcare Reform in America



CHHS Dean Elizabeth Cada (at podium) offers a welcoming address to the audience. Panel presenters included (left to right) Lois Elia, MBA, Vice President of AdvocateCare; Dr. Derrick J. Robinson, MD, MBA, FACEP, Executive Director of the Illinois Hospital Association's Quality Care Institute; Dr. Terry Mason, Medical Director of the Cook County Health and Hospital System; Knitasha V. Washington, DHA (c), MHA, FACHE, Chicago Midwest Chapter President of the National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE), and a graduate of GSU's Master of Health Administration program; and Mike Wojcik, CLU, CFP, Senior Vice President of the Horton Group.

### So, now what?

Now that the Affordable Care Act has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court . . . Now that President Obama is in his second term of office . . .

### What can we expect?

These and other questions were discussed during a panel presentation, "A Healthcare Symposium: Post Election," sponsored by the Health Administration Department of the College of Health and Human Services at GSU last November. Serving as moderator for the discussion was Dr. Rupert Evans, Associate Professor, Department Chair, and Program Director of the CHHS Department of Health Administration.

Reflecting on the planning for this event, which was held just eight days after the November election, Dr. Evans said, "regardless of who ended up in the White House, we knew we wanted to have this dialogue about how the healthcare system was going to look,

moving forward," he said. "The Affordable Care Act had met the legal challenge from those who had said it was unconstitutional; now it was the law of the land. We wanted to discuss how it was going to impact healthcare providers, physicians, the insurance industry — as well as those who were traditionally underserved in our current system."

### Panel presenters included:

- Lois Elia, MBA, Vice President of AdvocateCare;
- Dr. Derrick J. Robinson, MD, MBA, FACEP, Executive Director of the Illinois Hospital Association's Quality Care Institute;
- Dr. Terry Mason, Medical Director of the Cook County Health and Hospital System;
- Knitasha V. Washington, DHA , MHA, FACHE, Chicago Midwest Chapter President of the National Association of Health Services Executives and a graduate of GSU's Master of Health Administration program, and
- Mike Wojcik, CLU, CFP, Senior Vice President of the Horton Group.

### A Tough Road Ahead

Getting a peek at the road ahead, Dr. Evans noted that "It's not going to be an easy path; everyone has a role to play. People are discovering that there are problems that not just one organization can get behind. In order to have healthy communities, you have to talk about all those things that can contribute to it, like education, public health, safety, violence prevention and mental health. The community has to work together. It takes a village to make sure that your community is healthy."

Regarding healthcare disparities among the underserved, Dr. Evans said that he is "quietly optimistic" that a decrease in disparities will occur. "A large part of the problem has been related to access to care," he said, "and with the Affordable Care Act, there should be better access, so that conditions can be better managed and treated, resulting in better outcomes. That's my hope."

From his perspective, Dr. Terry Mason sees one of the biggest challenges facing America is the need for a healthcare structure "that will deal with the real causes of disease, namely: smoking, poor diet and lack of exercise. A disease tsunami is on its way," Dr. Mason warned. "We won't be able to medicalize our way out of the problem."

Dr. Mason believes America needs to move away from a model of "sick care" to a "true healthcare system, where we're not just taking care of people who are sick," but where we are focused on illness prevention. Greater attention must be paid to providing healthy food choices to areas now considered to be "food deserts," due to their lack of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy food choices.

As Vice President of AdvocateCare, Lois Elia represents an organization that, Dr. Evans said, "has taken a leadership position among what are now referred to as Accountable Care Organizations. Advocate realized earlier than some of the other healthcare systems that they needed to take the risk of providing care across the whole continuum, from cradle to grave, and having all the necessary components as part of your system of delivery."

### Value-based Environment

As Elia described it, "We're moving into a more value-based environment, with an increased focus on improved health outcomes, improved patient care, and much more efficient, less costly care."

GSU graduate Dr. Knitasha Washington, who just received her doctorate in Health Administration from Central Michigan University, serves as Chicago Midwest Chapter President of the National Association of Health Services Executives. Dr. Washington spoke passionately about

the opportunities for innovation in the new healthcare environment. She firmly believes that healthcare reform will improve the nation's health and productivity, as well as "level the playing field" in terms of healthcare disparities across disenfranchised communities.

Mike Wojcik, CLU, CFP, is Senior Vice President of the Horton Group, a 42-year-old insurance consulting firm with 11 offices in four states. "I'm so glad to be beyond the Supreme Court and the election,"

Wojcik said. "It's time to get back to work. These are exciting times, and also nervous times . . .

"I'm honored to be a part of this panel and inspired by the passion I see," Wojcik added. "This has been a passion of mine for a long time. I've seen the impact of lack of healthcare, which affects health insurance, shifting the costs back to those who have insurance. Change is necessary."

Speaking on behalf of all hospitals in the state of Illinois, Dr. Derrick Robinson thanked the Health Administration Department "for your leadership in planning such a timely forum."



*Pictured at a special reception held prior to the Healthcare Symposium are (left to right) Dr. Rupert Evans, Dr. Derrick J. Robinson, GSU President Dr. Elaine P. Maimon, and Dr. Terry Mason.*



## D. Frank Elam: A Lifetime of Compassion for Others

D. Frank Elam, MSW, LCSW, can still remember the documentary he saw in the sixth grade that stirred something deep within his soul. The film was about migrant farm workers; the stark images — poverty, infused with human spirit and resiliency — made a lasting impression.

That same compassion for social justice was stirred during Elam's first sociology course in high school and later at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, where he earned a BA in sociology with a specialization in social work. He was elected the first president of the newly formed SIU Social Work Club during his senior year.

With a background like that, it is not surprising that Elam ended up devoting 45 years — a lifetime — to the social work field. And he's not retired yet!

In recognition of his many years of dedicated, diverse and wide range of social work service, the National Association of Social Workers, Calumet District, Illinois Chapter, selected him for the Lifetime Achievement Award. A licensed clinical social worker, and a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers, he has also been an adjunct faculty member in GSU's Department of Social Work since September, 2006.

### 'Quiet, Back-of-the-Room'

Elam describes himself as a "quiet, back-of-the-room" kind of person — the "gentle, and consistent collaborative force, whatever my position, to improve the conditions of the clients I serve on a micro or macro level."

He may be quiet and have an unassuming demeanor, but he has had far reaching impact with literally thousands of individuals through his dedicated service to people of all ages, from 3 to 83. After earning his MSW from the University of Illinois at Chicago, Elam began work as a school social worker. He continued his career as Director of Social Services at Trade Winds Rehabilitation Center in Gary, IN; at the time, this agency was the largest Easter Seal agency in the country.

Since then, Elam has worked in numerous areas of human services, including public schools, community behavioral health, domestic violence and child welfare (including foster care, developmental disabilities and group homes). Through his small private practice in the south suburbs, he treats clients dealing with depression, anxiety, attention deficit disorder, learning disabilities, self-injury, gaming and Internet addictions.

Elam has been employed as a clinician, supervisor, administrator, educator and consultant. Since 1978, he has also been a field instructor for interns in the professions of counseling and social work at all of the major graduate schools in the Chicago area. Besides teaching at GSU, he is currently a clinical consultant for the South Suburban Family Shelter, a domestic violence agency based in Homewood.

### Unplug the Clock

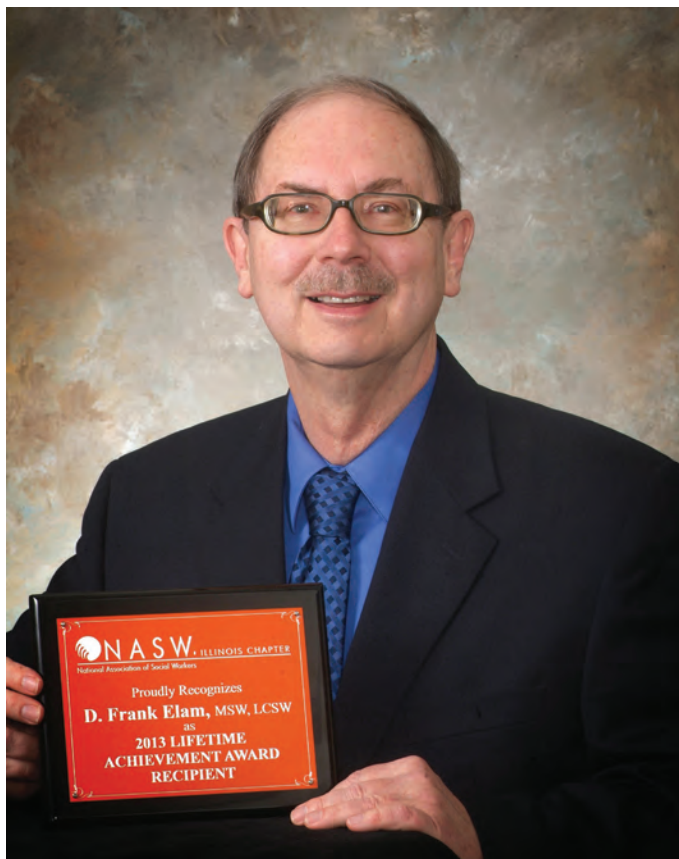
While working as a hospital janitor to put himself through college, Elam remembers looking at the clock during his shift, and thinking to himself, "I never want to look at the clock again." Since beginning his career in social work, he has never looked at the clock in boredom again.

"I've wanted to unplug the clock, because there is never enough time in the day to devote to clients, but I have never been bored," Elam said.

"You never know what you're going

to find. Every person is unique, all with special needs and wants. The field of social work opens you up to so many areas."

Elam's philosophy of social work is simple. He goes the extra mile, and believes in treating others "with the greatest amount of respect and compassion one can have for another human being." Throughout his teaching career, he has helped students "connect with the passion and compassion you need to succeed in this field." It's something that, he believes, "you can't really teach someone, you have it or you don't." Elam has it — in spades. His passion is evident from the number of cards and letters he's received over the years from people he has helped. "I have helped fathers appreciate their handicapped child,"



*Frank Elam, recipient of the 2013 Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Social Workers, Illinois Chapter.*



An avid collector of social work memorabilia, Elam found this donation box from the 1900's at a London flea market. Donations were collected for "the old and infirm, widows and orphans in our care" by the General Porter's Benevolent Association of St. Paul's Church, London.

he said. "I have helped parents become better parents by teaching parenting classes since 1976. I have helped youths returning from correctional centers integrate back into their community. I have helped seniors to not be embarrassed about applying for food stamps and medical assistance."

Even with his round-the-clock social worker's schedule over the years, Elam and his wife, Janice, managed to raise two grown sons.

"I'm still haunted by guilt over missing a play or a band concert from time to time," he said. In their spare time, the couple enjoys music, especially the Beatles, and has traveled to Liverpool and Beatles conventions. A Chicago Cubs fan, Elam is hoping for the miracle of a World Series win in his lifetime. In the meantime, he is an avid collector of tokens and interesting social work memorabilia . . . traces of the past that affirm his commitment to the present and future of the profession.

## Dr. Jennifer Armstrong: Preventing Communication Disorders through Service Learning



Carol Morrison, Executive Director of the Family Development Center (left) and Dr. Jennifer Armstrong, Assistant Professor of Communication Disorders, have formed a unique partnership resulting in valuable learning experiences for students and staff from both areas.

What if we could not only treat speech and language disorders in young children, but prevent them as well? Even better, what if we could teach future speech language pathologists to do the same?

That's a question that Jennifer Armstrong, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Assistant Professor of Communication Disorders at GSU, is pursuing through an innovative means of research she has developed.

Armstrong and her graduate Communication Disorders students have been facilitating language and literacy workshops for parents and early childhood educators in collaboration with GSU's Family Development Center.

### Communication Disorders: A Widespread Concern

As of 2008, the number of children identified with speech and language disorders is greater than 1.4 million, making communication disorders among the most common in the United States.

"We have the potential to make a difference in that statistic," Armstrong said. "As speech language pathologists, we have a responsibility to not only treat communications disorders, but to prevent them wherever possible," Armstrong said. "Early enrichment activities may help to prevent future communication and learning problems in the academic setting," she said.

Research indicates that zero to five years of age are a child's most critical years, in terms of language development, Armstrong explained.

"That's when children are learning more, their brains are more malleable, taking in more information and when they have the greatest growth spurt in terms of language, as well as the greatest interest in language. Children are excited about learning at that age; they enjoy hearing new words. They enjoy letter play and rhyming. From babbling to cooing, those are ways that children develop language; it all starts at infancy. By providing early enrichment activities for children and their family members, we have potentially the opportunity to prevent a disorder, or a delay, from occurring during those critical early years," Armstrong said.

### Language and Literacy Workshops

At the language and literacy workshops conducted by Armstrong and her students, parents learn about interactive activities they can share with their children, in order to enrich their children's early learning experience and improve their reading skills.

Approximately 40 parents, early childhood educators and speech pathologists from GSU and neighboring south suburban communities actively participated in Armstrong's most recent workshop, partially funded through a grant from GSU's Intellectual Life Committee.

Parents moved among eight different work stations, all designed and manned by 30 Communication Disorders graduate students. Workstation themes ranged from Technology, Language and Literacy to Book Reading and the Power of Why, Get Cooking with Literacy, Music, Language and Literacy, and more. Informational handouts, books, and other materials were available for parents to take home with them at the program's conclusion.

The interest is there, on the part of parents. "People want to know how to better communicate with their children," Armstrong said, "how to increase their language and literacy skills, to help their children become better learners. They want it all. I think it also speaks to the myth that there are families in underserved areas who don't really care as much about their children. And that's certainly not the case at all. All parents have an interest in their child's learning; if they have an opportunity to gain some knowledge, they will."

### Seeing Their Profession in a 'A Whole New Light'

Opportunities like Armstrong's language and literacy workshops provide Communication Disorders students with not only a valuable service learning opportunity, but also "a great chance to apply the information they are learning to real-world experience, and to empower the students to connect with — and serve — the community by working with the parents of the children at the FDC. The students are learning their profession is broad, and extends well beyond the walls of a therapy room or classroom," Armstrong said.

Traditionally, Armstrong explained, "We've been seen as a profession that goes into the classroom, takes students out and puts them in a little room where we provide treatment for their identified disorder."

The language and literacy workshop experience leads students to see their profession in "a whole new light," Armstrong said. In fact, one of her graduate students is doing her thesis on the concept that service learning projects — like the language and literacy workshops — can be used as a tool for building clinical skills and increasing student knowledge of preventing speech and language disorders.

### Building Community at the FDC

GSU's Family Development Center continues to serve as the site of numerous collaborative learning experiences for students from several departments across the College of Health and Human Services.

Located on the south side of the GSU campus, the FDC provides high quality childcare and educational programs for children, birth to 12 years of age. The FDC is accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a mark of excellence for early childhood education programs. Carol Morrison, Executive Director of the FDC, has welcomed partnerships with Assistant Professor Jennifer Armstrong, among other College of Health and Human Services faculty members.

Every fall and spring, the Communication Disorders students conduct hearing and language screenings for the 100+ preschoolers enrolled at the FDC. In some cases, the students have detected deficiencies, with medical follow-up recommended for the children.

GSU Nursing students, led by Shirley Comer, DNP, RN, have performed vision screenings for groups of preschoolers over the past several semesters. According to Comer, the screening involves assessing the appearance of the external eye structures, the visual fields, eye muscle strength, the presence of the red reflex and pupillary response, and testing visual acuity using a pediatric eye chart.

"The children were a bit hesitant at first, but soon warmed up to the Nursing students," Comer said. "We improvised kid-friendly tools such as pictures of princesses or hot wheel cars glued to a stick to encourage the children to follow the object with their eyes." The family nurse practitioner and clinical nurse specialist students received much-needed experience working with children, Comer noted.

"Many students commented on how they had to change their approach to the assessment techniques in order to meet the needs and short attention spans of the children," Comer said.

"Our students learn that they do bring something to the table," Armstrong continued. "They have knowledge they can share with others. That discovery is more heightened when they have an opportunity to work with the early childhood educators at the FDC; it's really about building that interdisciplinary, collaborative piece between two professionals."

Over the years that she has been offering these workshops, Armstrong connects with parents "because I care about children; I want to see them excel and to connect with their parents. The parents recognize that, which allows me to relate to them on a very different level. They recognize my authenticity and sincerity. The south suburban community is very diverse; we want to help meet the needs of these families," Armstrong said. "If the university can help in any way, it's important for us to do so."

### Enriched Learning Experience

The CHHS Occupational Therapy Department has been collaborating with the FDC for the past three years, according to Divya Sood, OTD, OTR/L,

Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy. Students at both the entry level master of occupational therapy and doctoral levels are gaining extensive experience at the FDC, Sood said. "We are developing relationships in a way that can benefit the children and their teachers, as well as the students. It's definitely an enriched learning experience."



Having fun at the "Cooking with Literacy" work station at the Literacy Workshop are (far left) Asma Baste and her five-year-old son, Ameen Saleh, with help from Communication Disorders students Paige Fombelle and Lesley Grobe.

As part of their coursework, entry level Master of Occupational Therapy students observe the children in their natural setting at the FDC and then assess the child's sensory processing needs and motor skills to determine how these skills impact their participation in school activities. Occupational Therapy students have also developed educational materials designed to help the FDC teachers identify sensory processing dysfunctions and concerns.

Moreover, one Doctor of Occupational Therapy graduate student designed an online coaching program to enhance the teachers' understanding of topics related to autism and its impact on class participation.

"There are benefits to crossing boundaries and breaking silos," said FDC Director Morrison. "You get different perspectives. And everyone benefits: the children and their family members, the faculty, and the students."



Everyone benefits when Dr. Jennifer Armstrong (pictured above) and her students work with the children at GSU's Family Development Center.

## Alfred Haynes Fellowship: The Research Continues ...



It's been a year since two College of Health and Human Services faculty members attended a training session for research fellows at the 2012 Dr. M. Alfred Haynes Research Training Institute for Social Equity program, based at Meharry Medical College in Nashville, TN.

Each year only 12 fellows are selected nationally for this prestigious program. Two of last year's chosen faculty members were DeLawnia Comer-HaGans, Ph.D., MS, MBA, Assistant Professor of Health Administration, and Raven James, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Addictions Studies.

The goal of the Dr. M. Alfred Haynes Research Training Institute for Social Equity is to focus on expanding the knowledge and understanding of health disparity research, while improving and enhancing skills in health services research.

### Research Focus — Determining Factors in Key Eye Exam

Over the past year, grass certainly has not grown beneath the feet of these two GSU researchers. Dr. Comer-HaGans is finishing an article for the American Journal of Ophthalmology regarding dilated eye exams. Assisting her with data are two Health Administration Department colleagues from Governors State University: Dr. Ning Lu, Ph.D.,

MPH, Associate Professor of Health Administration; and Dr. Zo Ramamonjariavelo, Ph.D., MBA, Assistant Professor of Health Administration.

"We are examining the determining factors of dilated eye exams receipt among adults with diabetes," Comer-HaGans said. "Why do some adults with diabetes have their eyes dilated annually, as suggested by the American Diabetes Association?" Working from existing data, Comer-HaGans is trying to focus on whether it is the patient's age, socio-economic status, race, education level or ethnicity that is the determining factor regarding this decision.

Comer-HaGans was drawn to her research subject for personal reasons. Her own mother is a diabetic.

"The project is also near and dear to my heart because my best friend's mother is on dialysis; her kidneys shut down. Now she's going blind. She was never told to get a full dilation eye exam, which is a preventive measure against diabetic complications, such as diabetic retinopathy. A lot of people still are unaware of the importance of this exam," Comer-HaGans said.



DeLawnia Comer-HaGans, Ph.D., MS, MBA



Raven James, Ph.D.

**Connecting the Dots — Sexual Health Disparities and Addiction**

A lot of people are also unaware of the role that a woman's sexual health and sexual self-esteem play in her propensity for substance abuse and subsequent relapse. "There's a link between sexual health and addiction," Dr. Raven James explained, "though there is a lack of information — especially about women — addressing these issues in the treatment realm."

James has been addressing the connection between sexual health esteem issues and addictions for 20 years, first as a clinician and now as a researcher. She is passionate about the need for increased awareness and sensitivity to the wide variety of sexuality-related health disparities that can affect a woman's drug and alcohol abuse treatment and recovery process.

"Sexuality education is not a standard part of substance abuse treatment, even though it is linked to dependence and relapse for clients," James said. The vast majority of substance abuse treatment centers across the country require clients to receive HIV education, she explained, or else they offer trauma-focused interventions. These approaches only touch the surface of sexual health disparities.

"But what's lacking is a real discussion of what it means to have good sexual self-esteem, and how that relates to why people drink, use drugs, get high and how they relapse," James said. "People need to be able to talk about the issues that are integral to who they are as human beings, especially in order to recover from addictions and

reduce sexual health disparities. We need to promote sexual health in substance abuse treatment."

To better assess and identify the variables related to substance abuse relapse, James conducted continuing research with more than 250 women in Illinois. Based on information retrieved from the surveys and focus groups, James has developed a 16-week sexual health intervention and treatment curriculum that will be test-piloted with women at the Haymarket Center, a comprehensive alcohol and drug treatment program in Chicago. Assisting her with data collection, curricula development and project implementation is Dr. Serena Wahdwa, Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator in Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health.

"This will be a longitudinal study that will take years to first validate the curriculum, train counselors to administer it, and then follow women down the road to see how it impacts them post-treatment," James said.

In the meantime, James has a manuscript ready for publication that looks at sexual self-esteem as "a clinical assessment tool in substance abuse treatment." She also has a book, *Sexuality and Addiction: Making Connections, Enhancing Recovery* published by Praeger (2012). The book provides an overview of sexuality issues linked to substance abuse and provides a resource for educating counselors in the substance abuse, health education and counseling fields.

## So Far, So Good: Language Research Project Showing Positive Results

Now in its final year, the Building Complex Language Project — a three-year study funded by the prestigious National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders — is producing some very interesting results.

The project is being conducted by Associate Professor Catherine Balthazar, CCC-SLP, Ph.D., chair of GSU's Department of Communication Disorders, and her colleague, Cheryl Scott, CCC-SLP, Ph.D., Professor of Communications Disorders and Sciences at Chicago's Rush University. The two speech-language pathologists are working in totally uncharted waters; little or no controlled research has been conducted up to this point on the impact of treatment on specific higher-level language skills in middle school-aged students (ages 10 to 14) with language disorders.

The study's objective is to determine how much intervention is necessary to make a significant difference in a student's understanding and use of complex sentences.

"We're also interested in how improvements in complex sentence knowledge might affect student performance more broadly, for example, in reading comprehension," Balthazar said.

### Sizable Gains

So far, two-thirds of the target 30 participants have completed the treatment. While data will not be analyzed until all participants have been through treatment, the preliminary results have indicated sizable gains from pre- to post-test on several language measures, Balthazar noted.

The project has also contributed to a more detailed understanding of the procedures for measuring and treating deficits in complex sentence knowledge for older school-aged children.

A unique feature of this study is that the treatment has been delivered by professionals in the community who work with students on their caseloads. Seventeen school and private practice speech-language pathologists have been recruited and trained to date; the students they've treated hail from a broad geographic area that includes

DeKalb, Peoria, Elmhurst, Naperville, Chicago, the south suburbs, Elgin and Plainfield. The participating clinicians "have been great collaborators because they see how much their students need support with higher level language skills," Balthazar said.

### Ongoing Research

Students with language impairments and learning disabilities account for more than 60 percent of all students served under IDEA Part B (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, formerly known as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act) in schools.

"Reduced levels of comprehension and production of complex sentences is well-documented in the population of older children and adolescents with primary language impairment, as is the impact of oral language deficits on later literacy outcomes," Balthazar said. The levels to which students reach literacy and academic achievement depends a great deal on their language skills, or lack thereof.



Catherine Balthazar, CCC-SLP, Ph.D.

The two investigators have disseminated their work in numerous places over the past two years, including two invited articles, an invited book chapter, and eight presentations to local, regional, national, and international groups.

The Building Complex Language Project is recruiting participants until mid-June. Additional information may be obtained by contacting Dr. Catherine Balthazar at [cbalthazar@govst.edu](mailto:cbalthazar@govst.edu).



# Beyond Substance Abuse: New Addictions Counseling Concentration Offered

Addiction is one of the most insidious and challenging disorders facing mental and behavioral health professionals.

In response to new research on evidence-based practices, the College of Health and Human Services' Department of Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health has added an Addictions Counseling Concentration to its already well-established Master of Health Science in Addictions Studies degree program.

Serving as Program Coordinator for the new Addictions Counseling Concentration is Serena Wadhwa, Psy.D., LCPC, CADC, Assistant Professor in the Department of Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health.

A 60-hour program, the Addictions Counseling Concentration is currently open only to students enrolled in GSU's MHS in Addictions Studies program.

## Beyond Substance Abuse

"It's important not to view counseling strictly from a substance abuse perspective," Wadhwa noted. "The Addictions Counseling Concentration is an integrated program that broadens the students' knowledge and skills. We want to expose students to a wide range of well-established clinical therapies, like Motivational Interviewing, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, among others.

"By keeping up with the latest trends in clinical counseling, our Addictions Counseling Concentration allows students to choose aspects of these approaches that work, and from there customize a treatment plan for their client.

"We're responding to all the evidence-based research on clinical practices, and helping students translate that research into clinical practice," Wadhwa continued. "Our coursework focuses on evidence-based practices, with an emphasis on improving clinical outcomes. We're preparing our students for 21st century practices, as well as additional degreed credentials. "



Serena Wadhwa, Psy.D., LCPC, CADC

Addiction, like any disease, affects the entire family, Wadhwa pointed out; students in the new Addictions Counseling Concentration gain enhanced capabilities of working with family members.

Since addiction is very often a co-occurring disorder — appearing with clinical depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder — the Addictions Counseling Concentration addresses these issues, as well.

"We are also broadening and expanding our clinical sites and experiences, so our students have skills beyond an entry-level counselor," she said.

## A Groundbreaking Program

Established in 1983, GSU's Master of Health Science in Addiction Studies degree program was one of the first programs of its kind in the entire nation, noted Cheryl Mejta, Ph.D., GSU's Chair of the Department of Addiction Studies and Behavioral Health.

But the very notion of addictions studies has changed since that time, Mejta said.

"It's not just about drug and alcohol abuse anymore. It's about food and eating disorders, sex, gambling, the Internet, pain medications, self-injury. Plus, people are living longer, so now the elderly are facing some of these same addictions."

Subsequently, the body of knowledge and clinical skills surrounding addictions studies has increased, and the need for this knowledge and skill base to deal with these issues has increased greatly, as well.

## Growing Need for Treatment Professionals

There is a definite need for more substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors across the nation. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a 27 percent increase in the number of jobs for substance abuse and behavioral disorder counselors between the years 2010 and 2020; this projected need is greater than that for other counselors.

For additional information regarding the Addictions Counseling Concentration, email Dr. Wadhwa at [swadhwa@govst.edu](mailto:swadhwa@govst.edu). For complete information and application forms, visit the MHS in Addictions Studies website, at [www.govst.edu/chhs/das](http://www.govst.edu/chhs/das).

# A New Path to Wellness: Coaching for Recovery

Of all the journeys that people can take in a lifetime, perhaps the most challenging is that of recovery from substance abuse/addiction.

Like recovery from any other chronic illness, recovery from substance abuse is a process occurring over time and through stages, explained Cheryl Mejta, Ph.D., Department Chair and Professor, Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health Department.

To ensure a successful recovery, individuals need a continuum of care from which they can derive support as they move through the stages of behavioral change.

Thankfully, a new model of care has emerged on the scene.

## Enter the Recovery Coach

This new model — Substance Abuse Recovery Oriented System of Care (ROSC) — seeks to fill a key gap in services by offering a continuum of care and comprehensive support services to people throughout the recovery process and across the person's lifespan: prior to seeking treatment, while receiving treatment, and after treatment has been completed.

But with limited resources across the board, who is going to provide these services? Unfortunately, Dr. Mejta explained, funding for substance abuse services has been significantly reduced, while states struggle to balance their budgets. Clinicians providing substance abuse interventions are limited in what services they can provide by credentialing bodies, as well as by their emphasis on providing services to people who are in treatment.

"Building upon the strong tradition of peer support within the recovery community, the role of 'Recovery Coach' has evolved," Mejta said.

## A Focus on the Individual

"The Recovery Coach is a non-professional who is in recovery for substance abuse. While a 12-step sponsor also is a recovering substance abuser, the Recovery Coach differs from a sponsor in significant ways. Unlike a sponsor who adheres to a specific philosophy of recovery-based or 12-step work, the Recovery Coach focuses on the individual, recognizing that there are many paths to recovery," Mejta said.



Cheryl Mejta, Ph.D.

*Just as despair can come to one only from other human beings, hope, too, can be given to one only by other human beings.*

— Elie Weisel

Through a grant from the Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, Governors State University's College of Health and Human Services' Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health Department has developed a Coaching for Recovery Training Program. This free training program (offered one day per week for four weeks) focuses on recovery coaching/mentoring as part of a recovery-oriented system of care for individuals and families dealing with alcohol and/or substance abuse.

## Bridge to Recovery

Unlike more traditional approaches to addictions treatment, Dr. Mejta explained, recovery-oriented systems of care place a greater emphasis on recovery than treatment, and view treatment as a bridge to recovery. This approach also emphasizes multiple

pathways to long-term recovery. Recovery coaching is extremely individualized, strength-based, gender-sensitive, culturally competent and able to address trauma within the individual's life, Dr. Mejta said. While most

addiction services have been provided within facilities over the past 50 years, recovery coaching is community-based, and focused on helping clients remain sober within their natural home and work environments.

By the end of training, Coaching for Recovery participants will have obtained key knowledge and skills pertaining to: the scientific understanding of substance abuse; the different treatment models; how to work with different cultures; recognizing the impact of trauma on recovery; knowledge of resources within the community; the use of motivational enhancement; crisis intervention; conflict resolution, and understanding of ethical issues.

Individuals interested in registering for the next Coaching for Recovery training should contact Laura Owens, Administrative Academic Support, at 708.235.2134, or [lowens@govst.edu](mailto:lowens@govst.edu). Additional information may be obtained at the Coaching for Recovery website, <http://tinyurl.com/recoverycoaching>.

## Changing Directions: Lincoln Laureate Creates New Life Path



**It's never too late to change the direction of one's life.**

### **Just ask Darwin Gordon.**

Born and raised on Chicago's South side, Gordon went to Quigley Seminary South and considered entering the priesthood for a while. But "some bad choices and decisions and some personal experience with addictions" got in the way of his plans.

Far too often, stories like Gordon's end there — unhappily. But not so for Darwin Gordon.

### **An Awakening**

In 2007, at the age of 40, Gordon decided to return to school. He enrolled in general studies at Kennedy King College in Chicago. The experience, he recalled, was "awakening."

At Kennedy King, Gordon met his mentor, the late Professor Larry E. Ross — a graduate of GSU's Social Work program and recipient of a GSU Outstanding Alumnus Award. Professor Ross, the coordinator of the Addictions Studies and Social Service programs at Kennedy King, was personally "a very powerful man who touched a lot of lives," Gordon said, "including mine."

Gordon resonated with his professor's belief that social work and addictions studies work hand-in-hand. "Along with your addiction, you may have individual mental health issues, housing issues, education issues. So you have to treat the person holistically — as well as their family since addiction is a family disease," Gordon said.

Gordon graduated as class valedictorian from Kennedy King in 2009. He then received a two-year scholarship to GSU, where, among other activities, he served as President of the Social Work Student Organization and President of Phi Theta Kappa, an international honor society for two-year community colleges.

### **Strong Student Leadership**

During his term as SWSO President, GSU's Social Work Department sent a record number (91) of BSW and MSW students to the Illinois State Capitol in Springfield for Advocacy Day. At this event, Social Work students lobby the state legislators on behalf of important social work policies, programs and services. Dr. Gerri Outlaw, Ed.D., Social Work Department Chair, congratulated Gordon and his fellow students on their "magnificent planning and organizing."

Topping off his senior year at GSU, Gordon was named Student Laureate of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois. Every year an outstanding senior from

each of the four-year, degree-granting institutions of higher learning in Illinois is named Lincoln Laureate. Recipients are chosen for their commitment to the principles of democracy and humanity as embodied by Abraham Lincoln. With his 4.0 GPA and enrollment in the University Honors Program, Gordon exemplified the outstanding academic achievement required of the Lincoln Laureate.

While at GSU, Gordon interned at the Metropolitan Area Group for Igniting Civilization, Inc., a Woodlawn-based organization designed to offer positive programming, support and empowerment for at-risk youth. He also spent a great deal of time visiting members of his church who were sick or unable to leave their homes, as well as volunteering at a homeless men's shelter and visiting the incarcerated relatives of his fellow parishioners.

#### Well-Prepared for His Next Move

Today, at age 44, Gordon is a Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor, and is pursuing his Master of Social Work degree at the University of Illinois at Chicago, with a concentration in mental health. He is doing a one-year accelerated program for advanced students and graduated this past May from the program.

Gordon is also doing an internship at the Cook County Jail, where he performs cognitive/behavioral therapy and substance abuse counseling.

"GSU prepared me beautifully for UIC," Gordon noted. "Because of the education I received at GSU, I was ready to deal with UIC. I wasn't blind-sided. I owe all that to GSU."

What Gordon remembers most about his time at GSU: "The friendliness, the smiling faces. Everyone was wonderful, and the professors, too, were

great. In a lot of universities, the student is just a number. At GSU, it was more personal. The professors took the time to acknowledge and make time for you. It made my time at GSU all the better. The professors truly do care about the success of their students," Gordon said.



*The Lincoln Academy of Illinois  
To honor individuals whose contributions  
to the betterment of humanity have been  
accomplished in or on behalf of the State  
of Illinois, or whose achievements have  
brought honor to the State of Illinois, or  
whose achievements have brought honor  
to the State because of their identity  
with it, whether by birth or residence, or  
by their dedication to those principles of  
democracy and humanity as exemplified by  
the great Illinoisan whose name we bear ...*

#### Dealing with Trauma

Gordon would like to focus his social work career on helping African American youth deal with the effects of trauma. "Trauma could include poverty, lack of education, murder, absence of a father figure, sexual abuse, child molestation," Gordon said. "Society underestimates the impact that trauma has on our youth; we don't look at the whole picture. We just see the murder, the crime on the streets, but we don't see the causes — the family strife."

Gordon's interest in trauma stemmed from a class that Dr. Lorri Glass, Associate Professor of Social Work, taught at GSU for the first time during his last semester. "It was very impactful," Gordon said. "I'd like to do trauma counseling with youth that would cover addictions, mental illness, basic life skills and how to be a better father."

"Darwin is an outstanding individual," Dr. Glass commented. "He has set goals to further his education in preparation for impacting change in his community. He is an exemplary student with outstanding leadership skills. He is an excellent model of good citizenship and leadership."

He is also a husband and father of seven daughters (ranging in age from 18 to 29), and one grandchild.

Reflecting on his life, Gordon feels he's "come a long way. Life's challenges hit me in the face hard. But I'm at a place right now in my life where I'm really focused. I feel I can make a difference in other people's lives now. Change starts with one person. I thank God for keeping me around this long."

## Greg Blevins Named GSU Professor Emeritus & Outstanding WMU Alumnus



Congratulations are owed to retired Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health Professor Gregory A. Blevins, Ph.D. At GSU's October 5, 2012 Board of Trustees meeting, Blevins was awarded Professor Emeritus status.

On that same day at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, MI, Blevins joined the select ranks of alumni to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award and be appointed to WMU's College of Health and Human Services' Outstanding Alumni Academy.

Out of more than 15,000 alumni, Blevins (Class of 1975) was appointed to the Academy on the basis of his academic and professional achievements. The commemorative plaque Blevins received also noted "recognition of leadership in academic program development and initiating international accreditation of academic substance abuse service programs."

Being a part of the College's Outstanding Alumni Academy "distinguishes you as a leader and creates inspiration for current and future students. We thank you again for making a positive difference and being integral to the College's tradition of innovation and excellence," noted WMU's College of Health and Human Services' Dean Earlie Washington.

Dr. Blevins' spouse Vicki, daughter Stacy, and son-in-law Andy were present at the awards banquet.

Dr. Blevins earned a graduate certificate in Specialty Program in Alcohol and Drug Abuse from WMU. He also received a bachelor's, master's and a doctoral degree in sociology from WMU. He joined GSU's faculty in 1982, and has been honored several times with the GSU Faculty Excellence Award.

Dr. Blevins has published and presented widely in regard to substance abuse prevention, education and counseling. The fifth edition of his co-authored book, Substance Abuse Counseling, was published in 2010.

A founding and life member of the International Consortium for Addiction Studies Education, Dr. Blevins is a reviewer for the Journal of Teaching in the Addictions and for Choice — Current Reviews for Academic Libraries.

Dr. Blevins has maintained a lifelong commitment of advocacy on behalf of the indigenous peoples of the Americas through substance abuse education and consultation. In 1996, he received the Indian Health Service Certificate of Recognition Award for that work.

## Promoting Family Fitness in Homer Township



Master of Occupational Therapy student Kimberly Tate tests a child's balance

A number of GSU Doctor of Physical Therapy students, Master of Occupational Therapy students and faculty members provided volunteer services to more than 200 students and family members at a Family Fitness Fair involving four Homer Glen grade schools (grades K through 4) last February. The event was hosted by a local registered dietitian and a four-member group of Homer Glen physical therapists.

"Our goal is to provide a fun and educational environment for children and their families in an effort to raise awareness about childhood obesity and to promote healthy lifestyles," said Dana Schultz Weith, PT, DPT, of Functional Therapy and Rehabilitation, PC, Homer Glen. "It is wonderful to see the local community members — including health professionals, students and businesses join forces to orchestrate such a remarkable event."

A total of 15 GSU DPT students volunteered for this event, including: Alex Bennett, Chris Corey, Holly Ditzler, Mike Gassett, Matt Herring, Matt Johnson, Katie Limberopoulos, Katrina Koltz, Brianna Lynch, Andrea Myles, Jenny Pate, Samantha Pickert, Tom Pocius, Traci Rzeszutko, and Amanda Schlitt. Several MOT students volunteered at the event: Rhonda Marion, Ngan Nguyen, Kimberly Tate, Bernadette Okrasinski, and Shannon Swieca.

Faculty members of the Department of Physical Therapy who participated in the event include Dale Schuit, PT, Ph.D., MS, Associate Professor; Robin Washington, PT, Ph.D., CRC, Assistant Professor; and Rebecca Wojcik, PT, Ed.D., GCS, Associate Professor and Chair. GSU alumni Jay Johnson, PT, DPT; James Donohue, PT, DPT; and Herb Deiters, PT, MPT, also volunteered.

Held in the Homer Junior High School gymnasium, the event featured fitness stations where youngsters could complete tests in four key areas: balance, coordination, strength, and flexibility. Activities were also included to help the children learn about backpack safety, bone health and nutrition.

### Putting the Fun in Fitness

Scoliosis screenings and competitive stations (jump rope, obstacle course and fitness challenge) were also included. Blood pressure screenings, Ask the Expert and the Homer Township Public Library's Wheel of Fitness were also stationed in the cafeteria. Children who completed all activities had the chance to receive health/fitness-related prizes.



Doctor of Physical Therapy students (left) Brianna Lynch and Jenny Pate test a child's flexibility.

"GSU was well-represented and much appreciated," noted Phyllis Levine, PT, DPT, owner of Functional Therapy and Rehabilitation, PC, in Homer Glen. Levine also serves on the Advisory Board for GSU's Department of Physical Therapy.

"The GSU students did a great job. They were knowledgeable and enthusiastic — a good combination. We have had several comments from participants who said the university presence made them feel like it was a really important event," Levine said.

Fitness Fair organizers hope the data they collected at this event will be helpful in establishing fitness levels that can be used in year-to-year comparisons among K through fourth graders across the Homer Township school district.

"We hope the attendees left with the message that a healthy lifestyle involves many components and that fitness-related activities can indeed be fun!" Levine said.



Doctor of Physical Therapy student Alex Bennett uses a tape measure to gain a more accurate gage of a child's posture.

## NEWS BITES

### Social Work Department Receives \$2.58 million HRSA Grant

Students in the Master of Social Work degree program in the College of Health and Human Services got a boost this year when their program received a \$2.58 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services / Health Resources and Services Administration.

The award was bestowed through the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students program, which makes scholarship funding available to full-time, financially needy students from disadvantaged backgrounds who are enrolled in health professions and nursing programs. Students in graduate-level behavioral and mental health practice (including social work) are also eligible for funding.

"This award is making the future a lot brighter for our students," noted Gerri Outlaw, Ed.D., Chair of the Social Work Department at GSU. "Ours is a rigorous and intensive graduate program. We're very grateful for this funding, which will ease the financial burden of our already hard-working students."

### Physical Therapy Associate Professor Elected to National Post

Robin D. Washington, PT, Ph.D., CRC, Assistant Professor in the College of Health and Human Services' Department of Physical Therapy, has been elected President-Elect of the National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns. Dr. Washington's term as President will begin in 2014 and run through 2016.



NAMRC is a professional association dedicated to promoting excellence and equity in rehabilitation research, education, and practice. The association's purpose is to create an understanding of the barriers, impact, and outcomes of cultural insensitivity; to ensure the provision of equitable and quality rehabilitation service; to provide professional development and enrichment

of cultural competence; to promote cultural competence and social justice in educational programs; and to advocate, propose, and support legislation that addresses the needs of culturally diverse persons with disabilities and their communities. NAMRC is a subdivision of the National Rehabilitation Association.

As President-Elect of NAMRC, Dr. Washington serves as Chairman of the Board of Directors. She also oversees the following standing committees: Membership and Coalition, Professional Development and Public Relations and Marketing. Dr. Washington also served as Conference Program Co-Chair for NAMRC's 20th annual training conference, held July 25-27, 2013, in New Orleans. This year's conference theme was "Building Communities of Cultural Inclusion in Rehabilitation."

Dr. Washington joined the GSU Physical Therapy faculty in August, 2010. In 2011, she received the Sylvia Walker Education Award from NAMRC. The award is named after the late Dr. Sylvia Walker, a professor, researcher and director of the Center for Socioeconomic and Disability Policy studies at Howard University in Washington, D.C., the first federal research and training center focused on minority issues and disability. Dr. Walker, who herself suffered from a visual impairment, was a long-time advocate for multicultural issues related to rehabilitation education.

"Selection by my peers to serve and represent such a prestigious organization as NAMRC is truly an honor," Dr. Washington said.

"Empowering individuals with disabilities and educating society on multicultural-related issues in rehabilitation are supreme to the mission of the association. I look forward to serving as NAMRC's President.

"Most importantly, I look forward to the ongoing collaboration with an array of professionals who are dynamic, innovative and focused on diversity, equity, empowerment and justice for individuals with disabilities who are engaged throughout the continuum of health care."

### Dr. Catherine P. Brady Honored for Service to Rush University

Dr. Catherine P. Brady, Ed.D., OTR/L,

Associate Professor and Interim Department Chair of GSU's Department of Occupational Therapy, was honored recently for her years of service to the Department of Occupational Therapy at Rush University.

Dr. Brady received an Outstanding Faculty Award, which reads:

"We honor and appreciate your exemplary service at Rush in multiple roles as faculty, acting co-chairperson, and Coordinator of Clinical Services. Your commitment and dedication to excellence have contributed significantly to the success of our program."



According to Dr. Brady, occupational therapy has a rich history of service to the patients of the St. Luke's and Presbyterian Hospitals, with original records dating from 1917. In her 25 years of service to the Rush Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center, now referred to as Rush Medical Center, Dr. Brady oversaw the consolidation of the various occupational therapy service areas and participated in the development and approval of both a specialty master of occupational therapy degree program and an entry level master of occupational therapy program.

Dr. Brady joined the Occupational Therapy faculty at GSU in 2001. She holds an Ed.D. in Adult and Continuing Education and a master's degree in Management and Human Resource Development from National Louis University. She received a bachelor's degree in Occupational Therapy from Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, WI.

### Physical Therapy Lecturer Recognized by National Organization

Joyce Sligar, PT, MBA, MA, CEEAA, has been named as a Certified Exercise Expert for Aging Adults by the American Physical Therapy Association's Section on Geriatrics. Physical therapists who receive the CEEAA® credential must complete three courses of two days each and demonstrate expert clinical decision-making skills in:

- Designing and applying an effective examination and exercise prescription, and
- Measuring the effectiveness and reflecting the current evidence of exercise for all aging adults.



Sligar is a University Lecturer (Senior Status) and Co-Director of Clinical Education for the



Department of Physical Therapy at Governors State University. She has been with GSU since 1996. During that time, Sligar has made presentations on older adult topics to various professional groups, including the American Physical Therapy Association and the American Society on Aging. Sligar has also had extensive patient care experience providing physical therapy services to older adults.

### Handicap This! Production Offers Unique Approach to Life with Disability

Twenty-three-year-old Mike Berkson may have been born with Cerebral Palsy, but once you meet him, you realize he is much more than his condition, or a wheelchair. He's a human being with a great sense of humor and intelligence, and an enormous amount of potential.

Berkson refuses to "dwell on limitations. Instead I ponder unlimited possibilities." And that, essentially, is the message of the live stage show, *Handicap This!* presented recently for more than 150 GSU faculty, staff, and students in the Performing Arts Center.

*Handicap This!* was spearheaded by Dr. Roberta O'Shea, PT, Ph.D., GSU Professor of Physical Therapy, and was sponsored by the Intellectual Life Committee, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Health and Human Services, the Academic Resource Center and the GSU Office of Student Life.

The show features Berkson and his former middle school aide and friend, Tim Wambach, riffing and joking about their 11-year friendship, and spreading their message of hope and determination in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

"Mike has helped make my mind handicap-accessible," Tim noted. Mike and Tim summarize their life's modus operandi in three words: *Improvise, Adapt, Overcome.*

Fielding questions from the audience following the program, Mike displayed his wicked wit when answering a student's question: "If you had full function of all your limbs, what would be the first thing you'd do?"

Mike's reply: "Well, the second thing I'd do is go for a drive."

A portion of the proceeds from *Handicap This!* goes toward the Keep On Keeping On Foundation, a nonprofit organization headed by Berkson and Wambach. Their mission is to provide support — monetary and otherwise — to those living with severe physical disabilities.

Proceeds from Wambach's book — [How We Roll: 2 Friends, 1 Wheelchair and a Lifetime of Lessons in Perseverance](#) — also go to the Foundation.

*Mike Berkson (seated) and friend Tim Wambach — stars of Handicap This! — receive congratulations on their fine performance from (kneeling) Robin Sweeney, GSU Director of Disability Services, and Dr. Roberta O'Shea, GSU Professor of Physical Therapy.*



### Joining Forces — Help for Haiti

Somewhere in Haiti, a young child is receiving a much-needed pair of crutches.

A long and winding chain of partnership and collaboration is responsible for this happy occasion.

The chain begins in Chicago, where more than 100 crutches and walkers were collected during the Occupy the Dream March held January 21, 2012, and organized as part of the Occupy the Dream Movement led by Dr. Otis Moss III, Senior Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ. Co-organizing the event were the Rev. Aaron McLeod, Director of Special Projects, and the Rev. Joan R. Harrell, Director of Public Communications for Trinity, the largest church in the United Church of Christ denomination.

According to the Rev. Harrell, the "Occupy the Dream March is an interfaith movement of churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, and social justice organizations in the Chicago area." The march was a protest against banks and unfair banking practices that are "crutching" college students with astronomical student loans, and preventing them from achieving the American Dream, Rev. Harrell said.

"Within the context of community service on Dr. King's national holiday, the members of the Occupy the Dream Movement donated the crutches to people in need in Haiti," Rev. Harrell explained.

There was only one concern. With the high cost of shipping, how were these crutches going to find their way to Haiti?

### Finding Resources, Creating Solutions

And that's where the chain of partnership and collaboration takes a turn. Phyllis West, Ph.D., University Lecturer in the Social Work Department of the College of Health and Human Services at GSU, happens to be a member of Trinity United Church of Christ.

When she learned of the crutches that needed transport, she did what all good social workers do: find resources and create solutions to problems.

The resource came in the form of Friends of the Orphans, a non-sectarian, not-for-profit organization. The Friends partner with another not-for-profit, the Children of Abraham, based in Munster, IN. Volunteers from Children of Abraham regularly ship 20-foot containers of medical supplies from their warehouse in Munster to Haiti, Honduras, and Latin America via Merrillville, IN, and Miami.

And so, just days after the third anniversary of the horrific earthquake that devastated Haiti (January 13, 2010), Todd Schultz, Chief Operating and Financial Officer of Friends of the Orphans, traveled to GSU with two volunteers to pick up the donation. Schultz is himself a former GSU student.

"I was so glad I didn't have to turn this donation down. So many times we have to, because freight costs are so prohibitive,"

Schultz said. "But with GSU's proximity to Munster, we were able to do it. We're extremely thankful to everyone involved."

"This is our first time we've worked with GSU's Social Work Student Organization," Rev. Harrell said. "We're looking forward to working with them to help people in need locally, nationally and internationally."



Wanda Abu, a GSU MSW student and member of GSU's Social Work Student Organization (SWSO); Georgina Corona, fourth year Bachelor of Social Work student, and co-President of SWSO; (seated) Dr. Phyllis West, Ph.D., M.P.H., MSW, lecturer in GSU's Social Work Department; Todd Schultz, Chief Operating Officer/ Chief Financial Officer, Friends of the Orphans; and Teena Purohit, a student in the Advanced (two-year) MSW program at GSU, and co-President of the Social Work Student Organization.

## College of Health and Human Services Faculty and Staff 2012 Service Recognition Awards

### 5 Years

Shavron Henry – Advisor: ASBH, COMH  
Ann Jaso – Dean's Office  
Ning Lu – Health Administration  
Dale Schuit – Physical Therapy  
Claire Thompson – Communication Disorders

### 10 Years

Linda Samson – Nursing  
Adelle Sanders – Social Work

## Outstanding Students 2013 Recognition Awards

### Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health (ASBH)

Graduate Tia Turner

### Community Health (COMH)

Undergraduate Gardelin Fencil

### Communication Disorders (CDIS)

Undergraduate Kinga Urban

Graduate Amanda Feragen

### Health Administration (HLAD)

Undergraduate Joshua Stuebe

Graduate Tiffany Fullerton

### Nursing (NURS)

Graduate Anne-Gillian Roska, BSN, RN

Doctoral Barbara Gawron, RNC, MSN

### Occupational Therapy (OT)

Graduate Kathleen M. Needham

Doctoral Minetta Wallingford

### Physical Therapy (PT)

Doctoral Andrea Myles

### Social Work (SOCW)

Undergraduate Georgina (Gina) Corona

Graduate Teena Purohit

## 2013 Outstanding Preceptors/Field Instructors

### Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health

Daniel Stribling

### Communication Disorders

Susan Ajdinovich, MA, CCC-SLP

### Community Health

Vanessa Newby

### Health Administration

Debra VanSchepen, MBA, CHRM

### Nursing

Valerie Royale Robinson, APN

### Occupational Therapy

Joalice Ryan, MOTR/L, CHT, WCC

### Physical Therapy

Mirab (Mickey) Shah, PT, DSc

### Social Work (BSW)

Violeta Martinez, MSW, LCSW

### Social Work (MSW)

Januari Wilson, MSW, LCSW

# Faculty and Staff Presentations, Publications, Grants/Awards

## PRESENTATIONS

### Darrin M. Aase, Ph.D.

Midwestern Psychological Association – Chicago, IL  
Presentation (Aase, D.M., Blagen, M., Brown, M., Jason, L.A., Majer, J.M. & C. Mejta): May 2013  
*Integrating Care in Community-based Treatment for Dually-diagnosed Individuals*

International Neuropsychological Society – Montreal, Quebec  
Presentation (Aase, D.M., Primeau, M., Raiman, C., Melian, E., Barton, K., Lee, J., & V. Prabhu): February 2012

*Preoperative and Early Post-operative Cognitive Functioning in Patients with Primary Brain Tumors*

Midwest Ecological-Community Psychology – Chicago, IL  
Presentation (Aase, D.M., Majer, J.M. and L.A. Jason): October 2011  
*Applications of Community Psychology in Medical Settings: Surprises and Challenges*

### Kim Boland-Prom, Ph.D., MSW, MA

Council on Social Work Education – Washington, D.C.  
Presentation (Boland-Prom, K.): November 11, 2012  
*National Study of Social Workers Sanctioned by State Licensing Boards*

Association of Social Work Boards – Lexington, Kentucky  
Invited Speaker (Boland-Prom, K.) April 29, 2012  
*Posting Information Online about Sanctioned Social Workers: Empowerment, Public Protection and Professional Development*

### DeLawnia Comer-HaGans, Ph.D., MS, MBA

Xavier University's Fifth Annual Health Disparities Conference – New Orleans, LA  
Presentation (Comer-HaGans, D.): March 2012  
*Disparities in Dilated Eye Exams Among Adults with Diabetes*

Xavier University's Fifth Annual Health Disparities Conference – New Orleans, LA  
Presentation (Knight, M. and D. Comer-HaGans): March 2012  
*Health Care Disparities Experienced by the Uninsured in Knox County*

Academy Health – Orlando, FL  
Presentation (Comer-HaGans, D.): June 2012  
*Disparities in Dilated Eye Exams Among Adults with Diabetes*

### Melanie T. Ellexson, DHSc, MBA, OTR/L, FAOTA

American Occupational Therapy Association Conference – San Diego, CA  
Presentation (Ellexson, M.): April 27, 2013  
*Do Short-Term International Service Learning Experiences Lead to the Development of Cultural Competence?*

American Occupational Therapy Association Conference – San Diego, CA  
Presentation (Brown, K., Needham, K., O'Rourke, E., Schranz, C. and M. Ellexson): April 26, 2013  
*International Service Learning: Steps Toward Cultural Competence*

Rehabilitation Center of Ukraine – Chernivtsi, Ukraine  
Presentation (Marshall-Kramer, L., Nye, J., and M. Ellexson): March 19, 2013

*Motor Learning Interventions for Children with Cerebral Palsy and Other Neurologic Conditions*

Rehabilitation Center of Ukraine – Chernivtsi, Ukraine  
Presentation (Ellexson, M.): March 18, 2013

*What is Occupational Therapy and How Does It Match the Needs of Children in Ukraine?*

Illinois Occupational Therapy Association Conference – Lisle, IL  
Presentation (Ellexson, M., Schranz, C., Needham, K., Brown, K. and E. O'Rourke): November 9, 2012  
*Tales from the Ukraine: A Service Learning Experience*

Governors State University 2nd Annual DrOT Research Symposium – University Park, IL  
Presentation (Ellexson, M.): October 13, 2012

*Do Short-Term International Service Learning Experiences Lead to the Development of Cultural Competence?*

### Rupert M. Evans, Sr., DHA, MPA, FACHE

Advocate South Suburban Hospital – Hazel Crest, IL  
Invited Speaker (Evans, R.): February 14, 2013  
*Becoming a Part of the Fabric*

### Raven James, Ph.D.

Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association Board – Governors State University  
Invited Speaker (James, R.): 2012  
*Sexuality and Addiction: Integrating Sexual Health Research to Practice*

Rainbow Show – GSH Radio.com  
Invited Speaker (James, R.): 2012  
*Sexuality and Addiction: Making Connections, Enhancing Recovery*

Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality Annual Conference – Tampa, FL  
Workshop (James, R.): 2012  
*A Stage Model of Behavioral and Integrative Treatment Research: Getting Started*

Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association Annual Conference – Lisle, IL  
Workshop (James, R.): 2012  
*Making Connections, Enhancing Recovery*

South Suburban Council on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse – East Hazel Crest, IL  
Presentation (James, R.) 2012  
*Sexual Health and Women in Substance Abuse Treatment: Results from a Mixed-Methods Study*

International Association of Relationship Research – Chicago, IL  
Presentation (James, R., Wadhwa, S. and L. Simons): 2012  
*The Relationship of Shame and Sexual Self-Esteem to Substance Abuse*

Dr. M. Alfred Haynes Research Training Institute for Social Equity, Meharry Medical College – Nashville, TN  
Presentation (James, R.): 2012  
*Sexual Health and Women in Substance Abuse Treatment: A Health Disparity Perspective*

Gender Matters Conference – Governors State University, University Park, IL  
Presentation (James, R.): 2012  
*Developing a Sexual Health Intervention for Women in Substance Abuse Treatment*

Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality Annual Conference – Houston, TX  
Presentation (James, R. and D. Braun-Harvey): 2011

*Bridging Sexual Science and Principles of Addiction Treatment: A Grounded Theory Approach for Defining Sex/Drug-Linked Patterns of Addiction*

Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependency Association Annual Conference – Lisle, IL  
Presentation (James, R. and S. Wadhwa): September 2011  
*Sexual Health for Women in Substance Abuse Treatment*

**Roberta Kuchler O'Shea, PT, Ph.D.**  
Australian Academy of Cerebral Palsy and Developmental Medicine – Brisbane, Australia  
Presentation (O'Shea, R. and P. Pidcoe): May 2012  
*Influences of Conductive Education on Movement in Children with Cerebral Palsy*

National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns – Little Rock, AR  
Presentation (O'Shea, R. and R. Washington): July 2012  
*TCE: Helping Individuals with Neuromotor Impairments Learn Functional Skills*

National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns – Little Rock, AR  
Poster Presentation (O'Shea, R. and R. Washington): July 2012  
*An Innovative Program to Teach Functional Skills to Clients with Motor Impairments*

Illinois Physical Therapy Association – Naperville, IL  
Presentation (O'Shea, R., and A. Jackson): October 2012  
*The Use of Conductive*

*Education as a Tool to Support Meeting Student's Individual Educational Plan Minutes in a Traditional Educational Setting*

Illinois Physical Therapy Association – Naperville, IL  
Presentation (O'Shea, R.): October 2012

*How Can PTs Assist Students with Mild TBI be Successful in College?*

Combined Sections Meeting of the American Physical Therapy Association – San Diego, CA  
Presentation (O'Shea, R. and R. Washington): January 2013  
*Helping College Students with Mild TBI: Issues for PTs in Clinical Care and Academia*

Section of Pediatrics Annual Conference – Anaheim, CA  
Platform and Round-Table Presentation (O'Shea, R., and T. Copeland): October 2013  
*Who Are You Calling Difficult? Providers and Families and the Dance of EI Services*

**Martha Mathews Libster, Ph.D., RN, CNS, AHN-BC**  
5th Asian-Pacific International Conference on Complementary Nursing – Bangkok, Thailand  
Keynote Presentation (Libster, M.): October 2012  
*Building Caring Community: Current Trends and Issues in Complementary Therapies and Nursing Around the World*

Blackboard Collaborate Connections Summit 2012 – New Orleans, LA  
Presentation (Nolley, C., Labriola, T. and M. Libster): July 2012  
*More than Classes and Credits – Leveraging Collaboration for Community Building and Culture Change*

International Association of Human Caring Annual Conference – Philadelphia, PA  
Symposium (Mulaudzi, M., Moss, M. and M. Libster): May 2012  
*The Global Tea House: Creating Caring Community – Elders, Earth and Elements*

Herbal Medicine Making Workshop – Chicago, IL  
Workshop (Libster, M.): May 2012

Golden Apple Healing Arts – Chicago, IL  
Continuing Ed (Libster, M.): May 2012  
*Science of Energy Flow*

**Patricia Martin, DNP, MSN, RN**  
Center for Evidence-Based Practice Conference – Purdue University, IN  
Poster Presentation (Martin, P.): October 19, 2012  
*Graduate Nursing Informatics Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach*

**Zo Ramamonjariavelo, Ph.D., MBA**  
Science of Eliminating Health Disparities – Maryland  
Abstract/Poster Presentation (Ramamonjariavelo, Z.): December 2012  
*Socioeconomic Status and Demographic Disparities in Utilizing Dilated Eye Exams*

Academy Health Annual Research Meeting – FL  
Presentation (Ramamonjariavelo, Z.): June 2012  
*The Antecedents of Public Hospitals' Financial Distress*

Academy Health Annual Research Meeting – Florida  
Presentation (Qu, H., and Z. Ramamonjariavelo): June 2012  
*Factors Influencing Acupuncture Utilization Among Adults in the United States: Results from a Socio-Behavioral Model*

Triangle Healthcare Executives Forum – North Carolina  
Presentation (Graham, K. and Z. Ramamonjariavelo): June 2012  
*Understanding globalization of healthcare through medical tourism: A resource-based view approach*

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Exposition – Washington, D.C.  
Presentation (Elder, K., and Z. Ramamonjariavelo): November 2011  
*Impact of patient and socio-demographic factors on perception of patient-centered care among people with chronic condition*

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Exposition – Washington, D.C.  
Presentation (Elder, K., and Z. Ramamonjariavelo): November 2011  
*African American Men's Rating of Health Care Quality: An Assessment of the Consumer Assessment of Health Plans*

American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and Exposition – Washington, D.C.  
Presentation (Elder, K. and Z. Ramamonjariavelo): November 2011  
*African American men's rating of healthcare and its impact on healthcare utilization*

**Linda F. Samson Ph.D., RN, BC; NEA, BC**  
Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Research Congress – Brisbane, Australia  
Presentation (Samson, L., MacMullen, N., and P. Martin): August 3, 2012  
*Defining Nursing Research in DNP Programs: Lessons Learned*

Hadassah/Hebrew University School of Nursing/Royal Canadian College of Nursing – Jerusalem, Israel  
Presentation (Samson, L., Connolly, M. and N. MacMullen): June 6, 2012  
*Nursing Research in DNP Programs*

Argonne National Laboratory – Lemont, IL  
Presentation (Samson, L.): April 19, 2012  
*Science Careers in Search of Women*

**Caren M. Schranz, DrOT, OTR/L**  
American Occupational Therapy Association Conference – San Diego, CA  
Presentation (Ellexson, M., Schranz, C., Brown, K., Needham, K. and E. O'Rourke): April 26, 2013  
*International Service Learning: Steps Towards Cultural Competence*

Illinois Occupational Therapy Association Conference – Lisle, IL  
Presentation (Ellexson, M., Schranz, C., Brown, K., Needham, K. and E. O'Rourke): November 9, 2012  
*Tales from Ukraine: A Service Learning Experience*

International Meeting for Autism Research – Toronto, Canada  
Presentation (Schranz, C. and D. Sood): May 2012  
*Effectiveness of the Collaborative Coaching Model When Working with Families of Children with Sensory Processing Dysfunction*

33rd Annual International YAI Conference on Developmental and Learning Disabilities – New York, NY  
Presentation (Schranz, C. and D. Sood): May 2012  
*Participation in Play in Children with Sensory Processing Dysfunction: Enabled by Caregiver Self-Initiated Solution Finding Skills*

Research Day: 2nd Annual Practice Scholar Research Symposium – University Park, IL  
Presentation (Schranz, C. and D. Sood): October 2012  
*Collaborative Coaching Model:*

*Creating the Best Person-Environment Fit When Working with Children and Families*

The MAGIC Foundation 18th Annual Conference – Lombard, IL  
Presentation (Schranz, C.): July 2012  
*Sensory Processing Dysfunction – Explanation and Strategies*

**Joyce Sligar, PT, MBA, MA**  
Thirteenth Annual Masters of Health Professions Education Summer Conference – University of Illinois at Chicago  
Presentation (Sligar, J.P. and R.K. Wojcik): July 26, 2012  
*The Failed Clinical Experience: A Model for School-Clinical Site Partnership for Remediation*

**Ann Vendrely, PT, Ed.D., DPT**  
APTA Educational Leadership Conference – Greenwich, CT  
Presentation (Carter, R. and A.M. Vendrely): October 5, 2012  
*Connecting Clinical and Academic Learning through Case Reports: 15 Years of Experience*

East Central District of the Illinois Physical Therapy Association – Wheaton, IL  
Presentation (Vendrely, A.M.): March 6, 2012  
*Transitioning to the Workforce: Using Generational Groups and Professional Behaviors to Create Success for Students and New Graduates*

Indiana State University, Perspectives in Medicine Series, sponsored by the Department of Applied Medicine and Rehabilitation – Terre Haute, IN  
Presentation (Diers, D., Schuit, D. and A.M. Vendrely): November 22, 2011  
*Injury Prevention and Management for Runners*

NCAA Speakers Series – Indiana State University, Host of the 2011 Division 1 Cross Country National Championship – Terre Haute, IN  
Presentation (Diers, D., Schuit, D. and A.M. Vendrely): November 20, 2011  
*Injury Prevention and Management for Runners*

Illinois Physical Therapy Association Fall Meeting – Galena, IL  
Presentation (Cirujales, T.C., and A.M. Vendrely): September 25, 2011  
*Investigation of the Use of Single Leg Standing to Improve Balance and Gait for an Elderly Resident Living in a Nursing Home: A Case Report*

Illinois Physical Therapy Association Fall Meeting – Galena, IL  
Presentation (Vendrely, A.M., Diers, D., and D. Schuit): September 24, 2011  
*Success with the Spine: Applying Current Research to the Management of Mechanical Spine Problems*

**Serena Wadhwa, Psy.D., LCPC, CADC**  
Illinois Counseling Association Conference – Springfield, IL  
Presentation (Wadhwa, S.): November, 2012  
*Loosening the Mental Grip: Mindfulness in Psychotherapy*

Chicago Ideas Week – Chicago, IL  
Presentation (Wadhwa, S.): October, 2012  
*Meditation and Stress Management*

AATP Training Academy – Naperville, IL  
Presentation (Wadhwa, S.): June, 2012  
*Counseling the Asian Client and the Art of Ending Therapy*

Wisconsin Association on Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, Inc. – Madison, WI  
Presentation (Wadhwa, S.): May 2012  
*Grief and Loss*

**Robin D. Washington, PT, Ph.D., CRC**  
National Association for Multicultural Concerns Annual Conference – Little Rock, AR  
Poster Presentation (Smith, J., Washington, R.D. and R. O'Shea): July 26, 2012  
*The Implementation of Conductive Education in the Treatment of a 5-Year-Old Girl with Cerebral Palsy: A Case Study*

National Association for Multicultural Concerns Annual Conference – Little Rock, AR  
Poster Presentation (O'Shea, R., Washington, R.D. and J. Smith): July 26, 2012  
*TCE: Helping Individuals with Neuromotor Impairments Learn Functional Skills*

National Association for Multicultural Concerns Annual Conference – Little Rock, AR  
Platform Presentation (O'Shea, R., Washington, R.D. and J. Smith): July 27, 2012  
*An Innovative Program to Teach Functional Skills to Clients with Motor Impairments*

An Evening with African American Researchers – Governors State University, University Park, IL  
Platform Presentation (Washington, R.D.): February 16, 2012  
*The Effect of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome on Daily Activities, Self-Esteem and Employment in Pre-Menopausal Women*

**Rebecca K. Wojcik, PT, Ed.D., GCS**  
Thirteenth Annual Masters of Health Professions Education Summer Conference – University of Illinois at Chicago

Presentation (Wojcik, R.K. and J. P. Sligar): July 26, 2012  
*The Failed Clinical Experience: A Model for School-Clinical Site Partnership for Remediation*

## Publications

### Darrin M. Aase, Ph.D.

Majer, J.M., Jason, L.A., Aase, D.M., Droege, J.R., and J. R. Ferrari. Categorical twelve-step involvement and continuous abstinence at two-years. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*. 44 (Jan 2013): 46-51.

Harvey, R., Mortensen, J., Aase, D.M., Jason, L.A., and J. R. Ferrari. Factors affecting the sustainability of self-run recovery homes in the United States. *International Journal of Self Help & Self Care*. 7 (Jan 2013): 99-109.

Czarlinski, J.A., Aase, D.M., and L.A. Jason. Eating disorders, normative eating self-efficacy and body image self-efficacy: Women in recovery homes. *European Eating Disorders Review* 20 (May 2013): 190-195.

Miller, J., Aase, D.M., Jason, L.A. and J. R. Ferrari. Veterans residing in self-governed recovery homes for substance abuse: Sociodemographic and psychiatric characteristics. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*. 35 (Fall 2011): 141-144.

Aase, D.M., Jason, L.A., Ferrari, J.R., Li, Y., and G. Scott (in press). Comorbid mental health and substance abuse issues among individuals in recovery homes: Prospective environmental mediators. *Mental Health & Substance Use*.

**Kim Boland-Prom, Ph.D., MSW, MA**  
Boland-Prom, K. Sanctioned Social Workers: Research Results from

Three Studies. *Executive Summary Report for the American Foundation for Research and Consumer Education in Social Work Regulation*. (2011)

Boland-Prom, K. and M. E. Alvarez (in press). School social workers sanctioned by state Departments of Education and Licensing Boards. *Children and Schools*.

Boland-Prom, K. and N. MacMullen (in press). Postpartum depression within a social work paradigm. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*.

### DeLawnia Comer-HaGans, Ph.D., MS, MBA

Knight, M. and D. Comer-HaGans Domestic Partner Benefits. *Public Personnel Management* 41 (3) (Fall 2012): 493-504.

### Melanie T. Ellexson, DHSc, MBA, OTR/L, FAOTA

Ellexson, M.T. and B.A. Larson. "Occupational Therapy Services in Facilitating Work Performance." *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 65 (6 Suppl.) 2011.

Ellexson, M.T. and B. A. Larson. "Occupational Therapy Services in Facilitating Work Performance." *Reference Manual of the Official Documents of The American Occupational Therapy Assoc., Inc.* 16th edition, 2011.

### Elizabeth Essex, Ph.D.

Li, L.W., Long, Y., Essex, E. L., Sui, Y. and L. Gao (2012) Elderly Chinese and Their Family Caregivers' Perceptions of Good Care: A Qualitative Study in Shandong, China. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*. Vol. 55, 2012: 609-625.

### Rupert M. Evans, Sr., DHA, MPA, FACHE

Evans, R. Meeting the Challenge: Career Development and Targeted Enrichment Programs Insuring a Viable Pipeline, 2013, *Sage Open*, Manuscript ID SO-11-0707.R1.

### Raven James, Ph.D.

James, R. Sexuality and Addiction: Making Connections, Enhancing Recovery. *Praeger Publishers: Westport, CT* (2012).

### Roberta Kuchler O'Shea, PT, Ph.D.

O'Shea, R.K. and K. Boyniewicz "Clinical Bottom Line: The Effect of Power Wheelchairs on Development and Function for Children with Severe Motor Impairments." *Pediatric Physical Therapy*. 24(2): 140

O'Shea, R.K. and K. Boyniewicz "Clinical Bottom Line: Concurrent Validity of the Bayley-III and the Peabody Developmental Motor Scale-2." *Pediatric Physical Therapy*, 24(4): 352.

Smith, J., Washington, R. and R. O'Shea "The Implementation of Conductive Education in the Treatment of a Five-year-old Girl with Cerebral Palsy: A Case Study." *Journal of the National Society of Allied Health*: 2013.

### Martha Mathews Libster, Ph.D., RN, CNS, AHN-BC

Libster, M. The Nurse-Herbalist: Integrative Insights for Holistic Practice. *Golden Apple Publications.com* (2012).

Libster, M. Lessons Learned from a History of Perseverance and Innovation in Academic-Practice Partnerships. *Journal of Professional Nursing*. 27 (6): e76-e81.

### Zo Ramamonjjarivelo, Ph.D., MBA

Ramamonjjarivelo, Z. "Bumrungrad: A Case Study." In Gupte, G. and Panjamapirom, A. Understanding Medical Tourism. *Health Economics Encyclopedia: Elsevier* (2013).

Elder, K., Ramamonjjarivelo, Z., Wiltshire, J.C., Horn, W.S., Hullet, S. and J. Allison. "Trust, medication adherence, and hypertension control in Southern African American men." *American Journal of Public Health*. Volume 102: 2242-2245 (2012).

Martin, D.S., Ramamonjjarivelo, Z. and W.S. Martin. "A scale for measuring medical tourism intentions." *Tourism Review*. Volume 66: 45-56 (2011).

### Linda F. Samson Ph.D., RN, BC; NEA, BC

Samson, L. F. "Provision of essential newborn care training to midwives in Zambia is a low-cost intervention that reduces neonatal mortality." *Evidenced Based Nursing*, published online first: 26 September 2011, eb Nurs-2011-100144.

### Catherine Tymkow, ND, APRN, WHNP-BC, CNE

Tymkow, C. "Clinical Scholarship and Evidence-Based Practice." In Zaccagnini and White (Eds.), *Doctor of Nursing Practice Essentials: A New Model for Advanced Practice Nursing*. 2nd Edition, Jones and Bartlett Learning, 2013: 61-132.

### Ann Vendrely, PT, Ed.D., DPT

Vendrely, A.M., Messmer, E., and J. Moseley. "Integration of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy with Gait Training for a 58-year-old Male with a Fear of Falling: A Case Report." *Physiotherapy Theory & Practice*, 28 (3), 2012: 232-237.

**Robin D. Washington, PT, Ph.D., CRC**

Washington, R.D., Patterson, N., Sager, D. and F. Ferrar. "Fluctuations in reproductive hormonal levels and its predisposition on anterior cruciate ligament tears in premenopausal women with average and above average body fat percentages." *Journal of the National Society of Allied Health* 9 (10), 2012: 15-26.

**AWARDS/APPOINTMENTS**

**DeLawnia Comer-HaGans, Ph.D., MS, MBA**

Received Dr. M. Alfred Haynes *Research Training Institute for Social Equity Scholar Award*

**Melanie T. Ellexson DHSc, MBA, OTR/L, FAOTA**

Three-year appointment, Editorial Board Member  
*Open Journal of Occupational Therapy, Western Michigan University*

One-year appointment, Item Writer for NBCOT Exam  
*National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy*

**Rupert M. Evans, Sr., DHA, MPA, FACHE**

Appointment, Board of Trustees of Roseland Community Hospital, Chicago

One-year appointment, Chairman, Corris Boyd Scholarship Committee, *the Association of University Programs in Health Administration*

**Raven James, Ph.D.**

Received Faculty Excellence Award, Governors State University, University Park, IL 2012. Received Dr. M. Alfred Haynes *Research Training Institute for Social Equity Scholar Award.*

**Martha Mathews Libster, Ph.D. RN, CNS, AHN-BC**

Awarded Research Fellowship from Winterthur, June, 2013. Research topic: *"Near and Dear Sisters – The Spirit of Nursing in Antebellum Shaker Communities."*

**Linda F. Samson Ph.D., RN, BC; NEA, BC**

Elected President and Chair, Prairie Land Regional Leadership Board, Illinois Division, American Cancer Society (Two-year term)

**Catherine Tymkow, ND, APRN, WHNP-BC, CNE**

Appointed Evaluation Review Panelist, *National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission* (Three-year term)

**Ann Vendrely, PT, Ed.D., DPT**  
Manuscript Reviewer, *Physiotherapy Theory & Practice* (An International Journal of Physical Therapy) December, 2012 – Present

**Serena Wadhwa, Psy.D., LCPC, CADC**

Appointed Chair, Webinar Task Force, Illinois Counseling Association, November, 2012 – Present

**Robin D. Washington, PT, Ph.D., CRC**

Elected President-Elect, National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns, 2013-2014

Conference Program Co-Chair, "Creating Cultural Harmony for Rehabilitation Success," *National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns*, January, 2012 to July 28, 2012

**Rebecca K. Wojcik, PT, Ed.D., GCS**

Appointed Chair, Member Services Committee, *Illinois Physical Therapy Association*, October, 2012 – Present

Elected At-Large Delegate, *Illinois Physical Therapy Association*, 2013-2014

Elected Representative, Assembly of Representatives, Eastern District, *Illinois Physical Therapy Association*, 2012-2013



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