

# connections

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## UH Investiture Engages Community

On Friday, November 7, the University of Houston celebrated the investiture of President Renu Khator as the UH System’s eighth chancellor and UH’s 13th president. The inspiring ceremony held at Cullen Performance Hall was attended by members of the university community and numerous international, federal, state and local dignitaries, and industry leaders. The ceremony was the official conferral of the symbols of the president’s office, and was marked by all the pageantry of traditional academic ceremonies.

Khator began her tenure in January 2008 vowing to take the university to Tier-One University status. In her Investiture speech, President Khator announced four strategic initiatives aimed at the pursuit of excellence and the attainment of top-tier status for the university. Among these priorities is the Star Initiative that will complement the university’s existing commitment to strengthen its centers of excellence. Khator specifically cited the Graduate College of Social Work as one of the university’s “star programs.”

“The Graduate College of Social Work is among our shining stars,” Khator says. “The university’s quest to become a top-tier research university received a significant boost when it recently was awarded the highest designation for community-engaged institutions in the nation by the prestigious Carnegie Foundation. The university’s efforts in this area have been greatly enhanced by the contributions of the Graduate College of Social Work, which

throughout its history, has applied its research expertise to issues affecting communities and has engaged in public service to improve the quality of life in Houston.”



*University of Houston Investiture Ceremony of Dr. Renu Khator  
UH System Chancellor and UH President*

“The quality of its faculty, which provides critical leadership on important issues such as children and families, health care, mental health, gerontology and political social work, is among the college’s most significant strengths,” added President Khator.

The additional initiatives outlined include the Energy Initiative which will pull together 70 faculty members from various fields to pursue research into conventional and alternative energy sources; the Health Initiative will encourage UH partnerships with institutions in the Texas Medical Center; and the Arts Initiative that will strengthen the school’s arts programs.

Khator’s inaugural address further elaborated on the goals of student success and global competitiveness. Her vision for the university is shaped by more than 12,000 suggestions offered during her first 100 days in office. To reach these goals, Khator sees the involvement of the entire community, united in the effort.

President Khator is the first Indian-born president to assume the leadership of a major research institution, the University of Houston’s second female president, and the third person to hold the dual title of UH System Chancellor and UH President. •

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## GCSW Dean's Advisory Council

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Retired, GCSW Alumna '95

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The Institute of Interfaith Dialogue

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**Victor Samuels**  
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Macy's

**Karen Winston**  
Clinical Psychotherapist

## A MESSAGE FROM DEAN COLBY



Dean Ira C. Colby

This issue of *Connections* illustrates the breadth and depth of the GCSW's programs in the University and the community. To that end, let me draw your attention to the articles on this past summer's student courses in South Africa and Turkey. Our growing international efforts offer social work students exceptional and unique opportunities to broaden their understanding and appreciation of global issues and diversity. And please note, our summer 2009 international courses include trips to Turkey, Mexico, and China.

Some question the purpose of international courses and see them as "vacations for academic credit." The GCSW international courses are much more than tours that visit historic sites. As you know seeing tourist sites, which we do on all of our travel courses, is fun but our courses are based on specific educational outcomes and opportunities. Typically our students attend an international social work conference at which time they participate, and some actually present conference papers and workshops. Through specially designed field trips our students meet with social workers in the particular country and visit a number of local social service agencies. The end result is a much richer and fuller understanding of the particular nation, region, and culture in relation to the social work profession. In turn, this allows for greater introspection and understanding of the use-of-self in our home environments.

Let me share a recent trip that I took in January 2009 that has influenced my perception and thinking around higher education and social work.

For ten days in early January I travelled around Israel as part of a five-person delegation invited by the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Other delegation members came from Harvard, Georgetown University, Virginia Commonwealth University and the University of Illinois-Chicago. We met a variety of people including Knesset members, the Minister for Social Welfare, former ambassadors, think tank professionals, educators, lawyers and leaders of social agencies. The war in Gaza was in its full fury during our visit and framed the majority of our conversations. I was particularly impacted by a meeting with a colleague who teaches at Sapir College, located in S'derot approximately 4.8 kilometers from Gaza. She described classrooms built like bomb shelters, the air raid sirens going off 15 to 20 times in a typical class; students and faculty know a siren means a rocket will hit within 15 seconds – everyone falls to the floor and waits for the rocket blast. Everyone then gets back into their chairs and resumes class until the next siren goes off. The morning of our discussion she described the College reopening after being closed for three weeks; she described the constant buzz of helicopters flying over the campus while watching smoke rising in the near distance. She said that women do not wear heels – they need to be able to run as fast as possible to a bomb shelter; or people do not use bathrooms all day simply because they are not bomb proof. My colleague noted that approximately 3,000 of the 7,000 students suffer from PTSD.

I cannot imagine teaching a class in an environment similar to my colleague in S'derot. How do you literally pick yourself off the floor and resume teaching as if nothing happened? How different my life would be knowing that at any moment a siren may go off and I would have 15 seconds to find a safe place. As our evening together concluded I said to her that I was having a very difficult time trying to fully understand what she was describing. She interrupted me and said, "I pray you never have to experience what I am in order to understand what our lives are like."

Most certainly I came away from Israel with a greater understanding of the Mideast conflict and all of its complexities. While that is important, I also no longer take for granted the safe and secure environments that many of us enjoy both at work and at home. I hope that my colleague's wish is realized and that I, we, will never have to experience an air raid siren or dive to the floor for safety.

But even more than that, this one international experience only serves to reinforce my profound respect and admiration for those who teach and work in war-torn and unsafe areas. They are true heroes and remind us all that our mission in social work, the promotion of justice for all, is important and necessary. As the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, the hopes for a livable world rest with those who strive for peace and justice.

Ira C. Colby

Dean and Professor of Social Work

## Community Engagement

In December the University of Houston was awarded the prestigious Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's highest designation for community-engaged institutions in the nation. UH is one of the only 68 public institutions recognized with Carnegie's highest classification and is the only public metropolitan university in the state to receive this bold designation. The Foundation's classification for community engagement is based on criteria that indicates the breadth and depth of service to the community and student's curricular involvement in community issues.

Elevating UH to the designation of Tier-One status and into the ranks of the nation's top research universities is one of the major goals of President Renu Khator. The designation as a community engaged institution is particularly significant, due to the emphasis from Khator, that the support of the greater Houston community is essential to achieving this status.

Throughout the application and its process the GCSW played a very significant role as a leader in community engagement contributions. In its effort to identify the significant contributions of the GCSW to the collective university efforts, an award was established within the college. "The Barbara Henley Award for Community Engagement" was created in recognition of Barbara Henley, GCSW retired faculty member, whose life-long commitment to community service and engagement sets the standard for excellence. The award recognizes one community project each year that highlights and celebrates outstanding GCSW program activities.

For the purpose of the award, community engagement is defined as "the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional, state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." Each fall nominations are to be coordinated by the Dean's office and voted on by GCSW faculty and staff. Only one project will receive the award each year, while all community projects entered will be listed in college publications.

This past fall the Barbara Henley Award was given to the David M. Underwood Chapter of American Humanics for its partnership with area social service agencies in preparing individuals for careers in the non-profit sector. The impressive list of projects that were nominated included: The Asian American Mental Health Needs Assessment; "Choosing an Academic Major and Future Career;" Freedman's Town Project; Groupwork with Alzheimer's Association Houston and Southeast Texas Chapter; HOMES-Student Run Homeless Clinic; Mediation Observation and Evaluation: Older Workers as Mentors; PeaceJam; Community Development Course Projects; Train the Trainer Certificate Program in Child Protection Special Investigation; The 24th National Social Welfare Action Alliance Conference and Meeting; The Alumni Association's Project Grad.

### Young Artist Apprenticeship Program

On November 20th, the Young Artist Apprenticeship Program (YAAP), an afterschool art-making program organized



*Exquisite Corpse, created by YAAP students (L-R) Nancy Castillo, Minelya DeLeon, Juan Martinez, artist mentors Audry Herber and Patrick Renner, Jessica Flores, Monserrat Olmos, Aida Silva, Virginia Montes, and Kristal Edwards*

by the Blaffer Gallery on the UH campus for students from partnering high schools, installed a permanent mural in the foyer of the Graduate College of Social Work building. The artwork is the culmination of the YAAP students' six week course at the museum. Held each fall and spring, the intensive art-making workshop allows 10-12 high school students to work under the direction of artist mentors in campus studios. The program concludes with a student art show at the Blaffer Gallery, where the *Martha Meier Scholarship* is awarded to two talented students for further artistic studies.

*Exquisite Corpse* is a visual representation of the power found in collaboration and cooperation. Each hand in the sculpture has its own set of talents, gifts, and insights to offer. Independently their accomplishments can be limited, but collectively they can accomplish larger things and more deeply impact the world around them. Only when all the parts reach toward the center is their greatest potential reached •



*GCSW staff members (L-R) Leticia Henry, Ellen Bui, Paula Leveston, Ann Liberman, Brunessia Wilson, Sheila Williams, and Joe Papick serve lunch to the homeless at Fishes & Loaves.*

## Summer Study and Travel in Turkey by Nadia Leibovitz, MSW Student

This past summer I traveled to Turkey on a trip sponsored by the Graduate College of Social Work and the Institute for Interfaith Dialogue. It turned out to be a trip that exceeded my expectations, and opened my mind to new ways of thinking and relating to others.

This collaborative effort on the part of the GCSW and the Gulen Institute provides social work students with the unique opportunity to discover the historical, cultural and natural beauty of Turkey, and to learn

about Muslims and the Islamic faith on a first-hand basis. Dr. Andrew Achenbaum led our group of twelve MSW and three doctoral students, and we were fortunate to be accompanied by Dean Colby, Dr. Monit Cheung, Dr. Patrick Leung, Dr. Susan Robbins and Dr. Avelardo Valdez. Our wonderful trip organizers and hosts, Dr. Alp and Delara Aslandogun and Dr. Zechariah Baskal planned every moment of each day, and took care of all our needs and wants.

We landed in Istanbul and spent the first three days there. Time was precious, so without wasting a moment we dropped our bags and a few hours later we were sitting on the deck of a small boat, cruising along the magnificent Bosphorus, gazing at Asia on one side, Europe on the other. And that was just the beginning...

Each morning we were greeted as "Fellow Travelers" by our hosts, and taken on new adventures. We visited six cities in ten days, traveling from Istanbul, with its beautiful mosques and palaces, to Urfa, an ancient town in eastern Turkey close to the Syrian border. We toured the underground churches in the sculptural rock formations of Cappadocia and visited Rumi's

tomb. In Anatalya we visited the Interfaith Garden where a Christian church, a Jewish synagogue and a Muslim mosque have been built on the same piece of ground. The highlight of Izmir was our tour of the ancient ruins of Ephesus, a marvel of archeological excavation. In Gaziantep we spoke to students at a tutoring center in a low income neighborhood about education as a means of fighting ignorance and poverty.

Our days were filled with a perfect mix of ancient history

and archeology, important religious sites, modern schools, state-of-the-art hospitals, town council meeting rooms, and fabulous food. We experienced the true meaning of "community" as local families and business leaders hosted us each evening for delicious dinners featuring regional specialties. Meals were long and leisurely, giving us the opportunity to ask our hosts questions and to talk about daily life, school, religion and values over

glasses of hot tea and sweet baklava. The hospitality, friendliness and generosity we encountered truly opened our hearts to the Turkish people. Each evening ended with an exchange of gifts, hugs and goodbyes.

Traveling with fellow students and professors of different faiths and cultures added even more depth to the experience as we were able to share our thoughts and reactions with one-another. We learned more about ourselves, about each other, and about a culture and a faith that many of us knew very little about. This experience has reinforced my sense that no matter how different we may appear to be, we are all deeply connected on a human level. •



*Summer Travel Group at the library in the ancient city of Ephesus in western Turkey*

**The Houston Alumni Organization (HAO) has formally changed its name and logo effective January 1, 2009**

The new name is:

**The University of Houston Alumni Association**



## Travel in South Africa by Lori Godwin, MSW Student

### Zebras, Elephants, and Social Workers, OH MY!

In July 2008, 13 GCSW students accompanied by Dr. Patrick Leung, Jan Leger and Dr. Monit Cheung embarked on a two week adventure in South Africa (ZA). The primary purpose of the trip was to attend the International Association of Social Work Schools (IASSW) Conference in Durban. Through this experience I learned about international social work and how social problems are addressed in other countries.

The trip began with a 14 hour flight to Dubai. Not ones to waste time, Dr. Leung and Dr. Cheung arranged a bus tour for the group to explore Dubai at night. We arrived in Johannesburg, South Africa two days after leaving Houston. I thought we would be landing in the middle of Africa, the Africa I had seen in the movie *The Lion King*. This was not the case. We were in a large metropolitan city, much like the cities in the U.S.

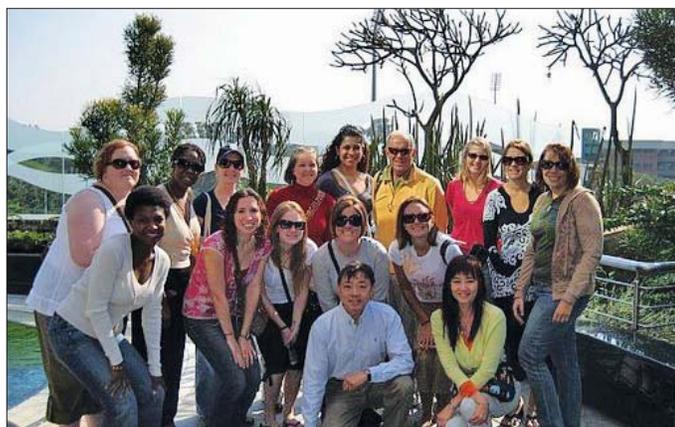
Johannesburg is an amazing city, rich in culture and diversity. The trip was planned at just the right time; it was the weekend of Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday. Visiting the Apartheid Museum was a humbling experience. Just imagine, racial segregation was outlawed in this country only 14 years ago. There were concrete pillars outside the museum with the words DEMOCRACY, RECONCILIATION, EQUALITY, and DIVERSITY. From afar, they were a group standing strong; up close they were large, daunting and overwhelming. It was a great symbol of the struggle this country had been (and still is) going through.

The IASSW conference was overwhelming and exhilarating. There were social workers from all over the world in attendance. It was a once in a lifetime experience to connect with them, share knowledge and discuss social issues. The most important take-home lesson for me was we all have our share of social problems, and they overlap. The way each country deals with them varies, but we are all the same—we are all human. As social workers, we must pay attention to cultural differences and actively take them into consideration when working with clients.

The highlight of the conference was the agency site visit. I had the pleasure of visiting the Sun Valley Trust. It operates much like the CDC does in the U.S. They take a holistic view of community struggles and ask community members what they see as their needs. At the final gathering of the conference, we had



*Apartheid Museum Pillars*



*Group at IASSW conference in Durban, South Africa*

the opportunity to try ZA cuisine and watch tribal dances.

While in ZA, Dr. Leung was an amazing tour guide. He took every opportunity to show us the country. Often we deviated from the schedule to search out little markets and take in the culture. He found tour guides that knew about the social issues of ZA and were able to describe them in detail to us. It must have been a daunting task to be a tour guide to a bus full of budding social workers!

We visited Cape Town where we found the diversity of the wildlife, climate, culture, and people to be awe-inspiring. Then, of course, we went on a game drive. We stayed in some fabulous cabins with monkeys in our backyard. They were smart too! On our two game drives, we saw a variety of animals in their natural habitats. Herds of elephants were a stones throw away from us. Hippos were lounging in the shade near a pond. Rhinos were grazing on the grasses not paying a bit of attention to us. Looking even harder we were able to spot lots of zebras, impalas, springboks, and more. For us city social workers, it was incredible!

This was an amazing, life changing experience for me. It opened my eyes to the variety of social work opportunities in other countries. It brought about a level of self-awareness I never knew existed. It brought my view of the world into focus, my social work lens now expanded. International social work is a vital area of the profession. I think once in a lifetime opportunities like this must be seized. For me, I will be a better social worker because I had the opportunity to expand my knowledge of the social work profession beyond the boundaries of the U.S. •

## Doctoral Student & Alumni Updates

**E. Lane Coco ('93)** is Vice President of Planning, Program Evaluation and Quality at DePelchin Children's Center and has been selected as a Fulbright Fellow for 2007-2008. She spent a semester at the National University of Ireland-Maynoo teaching a class in Ethics to students in the Department of Applied Social Studies, Community and Youth Worker Diploma Tract. Several seminars were presented in Program Evaluation and Ethics to the bachelor and master's students in sociology.

**Irene Korcz ('94)** is a senior social work counselor at M.D. Anderson Hospital working with breast and gynecology patients. She serves on the Domestic Violence Committee and will soon publish a paper on barriers to assessing domestic violence in a cancer hospital. Dr. Korcz conducts presentations on the expressive arts and breast cancer, and on Jane Addams and the Settlement House movement and its relevance to current medical social work practice.

**Jo Daugherty Bailey ('95)** is Associate Professor of Sociology at UH-Downtown, Department of Social Sciences where she was awarded tenure and promoted in September. Dr. Bailey and Dr. Dawn McCarty, alumni of the GCSW, are developing a BSW program which will soon be offered at the UH-Downtown campus. See the highlighted project at the college website address: <http://www.uhd.edu/academic/colleges/humanities/college/spotlight.htm>.

**Kristin Cotter-Mena ('95)** is President of Research and Evaluation at Datatude Inc. She has an extensive background in education and social service and has worked with children's mental health issues, child abuse and child development concerns in both public and private sector agencies. Dr. Cotter-Mena has conducted research in social behavior among juvenile delinquents and the impact of quality supervision and family service.

**Dawn McCarty ('97)** is Assistant Professor at the University of Houston-Downtown. Dr. McCarty has the following publications in press: "The Impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on Rural Children and Families in Mexico: Transnational Policy and Practice Implications," *Journal of Public Child Welfare*; and "The Impact of Public Housing Policy on Family Social Work Theory and Practice," *Journal of Family Social Work*.

**Jonathan Meyer ('98)** is in Moldova (Romania) to complete a model for supervision and support for all government social workers in Moldova. He has been invited to present his dissertation entitled, "Use of Medical Care by Women Who Live in U.S./Mexico Border Colonias" to university educators from various countries at a conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

**Susan C. Mapp ('00)** is Assistant Professor at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania and will be going up for tenure in the Fall. She has a book publication with Oxford on international social work and is working on a second publication on violations of children's rights around the world. The following article was

published and authored by GCSW alumni Susan C. Mapp ('00), Needha Boutte-Queen ('98), Stephen "Arch" Erich ('93) and Patricia Taylor ('99): "Evidence-Based Practice or Practice-Based Evidence: What is Happening With MEPA and Current Adoption Practices?" *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*.

**Moises Prospero ('02)** is Assistant Professor at the University of Utah, College of Social Work. He serves as Co-Director of the Utah Criminal Justice Center at the University where he evaluates criminal and juvenile justice programs throughout the state. Dr. Prospero has conducted international workshops in domestic violence and research methodology in Ghana, India and New Zealand. Published articles appear in peer-reviewed journals including *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, and *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicanos Studies*.

**Peter Kindle ('08)** relocated to Kansas City last summer after his wife, Karen, completed her Ed.D. at UH and joined the faculty at the University of Missouri. Peter has been volunteering in program development and grant writing for the Second Chance Foundation, an ex-offender re-entry collaborative and serves as an adjunct professor at UMKC in the graduate social work program. Recent publications include: Kindle, P. A., & Colby, I. (2008). "School selection preferences of public and private university MSW students: A retrospective study." *Journal of Social Work Education*, 44(3), 97-113; Karger, H. J., & Kindle, P. A. (2008). "Social welfare and economics: Redefining the welfare state in a global economy." In I. C. Colby (Ed.), *Comprehensive handbook of social work and social welfare, volume four: Social policy and policy practice* (pp. 343-361). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

**Ada Cheung and Venus Tsui (doctoral students)** presented three juried papers with Dr. Monit Cheung and Dr. Patrick Leung at the *The 54th Annual Program Meeting of CSWE* held in Philadelphia in October. The topics were around mental health issues, particularly depression and help-seeking behaviors among Chinese, Indians and Pakistanis living in the United States. Fellow **doctoral student Elena Delavega** presented a paper on day laborers at the Annual Program Meeting of CSWE with Dr. Monit Cheung.

**Josephine Tittsworth (doctoral student)** has been appointed as the GLBT Chair for the Equity Committees within the NASW-TX Chapter. She has also been selected to serve on the UH Board of Regents Chairman's Brigade Tier One Team. Josephine has published the following articles: Tittsworth, J., Erich, S., & Kanenberg, H. (2007, Issue Two). "Transgender youths in foster care." *National Association of Social Workers Special Practice Sections: Children, Adolescents & Young Adults*, 1-3. Tittsworth, J. (2007, September). "Well being and family relationships of transsexuals and need for education." Abstract accepted for presentation at the *International Foundation for Gender Expression Conference* (2008, April), Tucson, AZ.

## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

**Andrew Achenbaum**, Professor of History and Social Work, has been invited to become a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council, a non-profit organization based in Geneva, Switzerland, that engages international leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas. The Council held its inaugural summit in November in Dubai.

**Geri Adler**, Assistant Professor, received funding from The Transportation Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst to conduct a study titled, "Decision Making for Fitness to Drive in Early Stage Dementia: An Intervention Study." In addition to working with researchers at University of Massachusetts-Boston, Dr. Adler will be working locally with the Houston Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Strowmatt Rehabilitation Services.

**Monit Cheung**, Professor, has published the following articles in referee journals: Cheung, M. (Accepted 2008). "Massage therapy for Asian elderly clients: Interdisciplinary evidence-based practice." *Journal of Brief Therapy*. Cheung, M., & Boutté-Queen, N. (Accepted, 2008). "Measuring service effectiveness for families." *Family Preservation Journal*. Feng, Y., & Cheung, M. (Accepted, 2008). "Ethnic minorities and public policies in China." *China Journal of Social Work*. Belanger, K., Copeland, S., & Cheung, M. (Accepted, 2008). "The role of faith in adoption: Achieving positive adoption outcomes for African American children." *Child Welfare*. Leung, P., & Cheung, M. (Accepted, 2008). "A prevalence study on partner abuse in six Asian-American ethnic groups in the United States." *International Social Work*. Trahan, M. H., & Cheung, M. (Accepted 2008). "Fathers and traumatized youth: Key variables of gender, emotion, and recovery needs." *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma*. Leung, P., Cheung, M., Cheung, A., & Tsui, V. (2008). "Vietnamese victims of partner abuse: Prevalence rates between 2001 and 2007." Juried paper presented at the *International Association of Schools of Social Work 34th Global Social Work Congress (IASSW 2008 Congress)*, Durban, South Africa, July 20 – 24. Cheung, M., Leung, P., Tsui, V., & Cheung, A. (2008). "Mental health needs among Vietnamese immigrants in the United States: Changes from 2001 to 2007." Juried paper presented at the *International Association of Schools of Social Work 34th Global Social Work Congress (IASSW 2008*

*Congress)*, Durban, South Africa, July 20 – 24.

**Charlie Kaplan**, Associate Dean for Research, and wife Rose welcomed their son Raphael Kaplan into the world on December 14th.

**Jean Latting**, Professor, has been approved for Voluntary Modification of Employment (VMOE). In this role, Dr. Latting will shift to part-time standing and the UH Board of Regents will confer upon her "Emeritus" status.

From her initial promotion and tenure in 1988 to the establishment of the College's first endowed professorship that was named in her honor by the donor, Dr. Latting has been a significant person in the College's history. With VMOE, she will have more time to continue her work and passion to make organizations more effective, particularly in the area of cultural competence.

**Ellen Stevens-Roseman**, Associate Professor, was awarded an internal grant from the University's Small Grant Program for her research project entitled "Older & Better: Enhancing Life Satisfaction through 'Goodness-of-Fit' for Workers-in-Workplace." This project has been accepted as a paper presentation for the *Annual Meeting and Educational Leadership Conference of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education*, in February 2009, in San Antonio, TX.

**Susan Robbins**, Associate Professor, has been appointed to the inaugural Editorial Advisory Board of the *Journal of Social Work Education* and has been reappointed to the Commission on Forensic Education of the American College of Forensic Examiners. Presentations delivered include: Grossman, B., Glassman, U., Robbins, V.C., Robbins, S.P. & Mason, S. "Designing Field Curricula for Competency Based Education." *Faculty Development Institute. Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting*, Philadelphia, Oct. 30, 2008. Galambos, C., Robbins, S.P., and Gant, L. "How to Successfully Publish in Peer Reviewed Journals." *Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting*, Philadelphia, November 2, 2008.

**Avelardo Valdez**, Professor and Director of the Office for Drug and Social Policy Research, has recently been awarded University approved official "center" status for the Center for Drug and Social Policy Research. The "center" designation is a clear statement on the excellent work generated by Dr. Valdez and his staff.

### In Memory of

Kimberly Novaes Gregg passed away on October 18, 2008.

Nadine Louise Raffoul, wife of Paul R. Raffoul, passed away on August 28, 2008 after a six month battle with cancer.

Alexander G. Zaphiris, former associate dean, assistant field director, and faculty member in the 1980s passed away on September 12, 2008. Dr. Zaphiris provided important and critical leadership while at the same time opening the doors for many who otherwise would not have entered social work or a university setting.

## GCSW Happenings

### Turner Distinguished Speakers Series

Medical, economic and spiritual issues are a few of the topics that will be explored through the Turner Distinguished Speakers Series to be presented by the GCSW this Spring. The series entitled “Diversity in Aging: The Impact of Ethnicity, Family, Health, Economic Status and Spirituality on Quality of Life in the Elderly” presents Goldie Byrd Ph.D., professor and chair of the biology department at North Carolina A&T State University who will discuss “Alzheimer’s Disease in the African American Community,” as its first guest lecturer. Professor Byrd, a foremost expert on vascular diseases in African Americans, will discuss the special challenges for African American families who are affected by the disease, including family dynamics and denial, early diagnosis, care giving and financial burden. The first of three lectures in the series is planned for 6:30 pm, Tuesday, February 17th in the Rockwell Pavilion of the M.D. Anderson Library on the UH campus.

The Graduate College of Social Work is grateful to have benefited from funding from the Isla Carroll Turner Friendship Trust in support of its Weekend College. Over the past three years, funds from the Friendship Trust have allowed 22 practicing social workers from the field of gerontology to study at the GCSW as part-time students on the weekends. The cohort of Weekend College students will receive their MSWs in May 2009 as a result of the foresight and commitment to gerontology that the funds have provided.

The Speakers Series is underwritten by the Isla Carroll Turner Friendship Trust in support of its ongoing mission to support study and research in the field of gerontology. The event is free to the public. Continuing Education Units will be available to participants for a fee. For additional information, call 713-743-3599.

### Welcome New Faculty

Sharona Jacobs, LCSW, joined the GCSW in September 2008 as the Associate Director of Field Education and Clinical Assistant Professor upon her relocation from New York City. Sharona received her MSW from Adelphi University having completed field placements at Hillside Hospital and Schneider Children’s Hospital, both affiliates of the North Shore Long Island Jewish Health System. In addition, she received a Post-Master’s Certificate in Advanced Clinical Social Work from Hunter College and a Seminar in Field Instruction Certificate from Fordham University.



*Sharona Jacobs, LCSW*

After graduating from Adelphi, Sharona worked as a psychotherapist at the New Horizon Counseling Center in Queens, NY. In 2003, Sharona began working for the Federation of Employment and Guidance Services in the Intensive Psychiatric Rehabilitation Treatment program and then, in 2005 was promoted to Clinical Supervisor of that program. During her tenure at FEGS, Sharona supervised a staff of 10 employees and instructed over 20 interns training in the fields of social work, psychology, counseling, and drama therapy. She also volunteered at Beth Israel Medical Center as a Crime Victim Advocate for the Rape and Domestic Violence Program. Her interests include program planning, field education, and technology in social work. •

### PROFESSIONAL SELF-CARE & SOCIAL WORK

*Sandra A. Lopez, LCSW, ACSW, DCSW*

At the August, 2008 Delegate Assembly of the National Association of Social Workers, a formal policy statement titled “Professional Self-Care & Social Work” was reviewed and overwhelmingly adopted and endorsed by the delegates. This policy, written by Sandra A. Lopez, LCSW, Clinical Associate Professor of the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, identifies the critical challenges of helping in the social work profession and encourages social workers to practice self-care as a means of preventing, managing and addressing conditions such as stress, burnout and more significantly, compassion fatigue and secondary trauma.

The policy statement presents a thoughtful discussion of these conditions with an emphasis on self-awareness and encourages the development of self-care strategies. In addition, the NASW policy statement urges social work education programs to include content in courses to educate social work students about the natural consequences of helping and to emphasize the development of self-care practices prior to entering the profession of social work. It also emphasizes the importance and ethical responsibilities of social work employers to promote the practice of self-care with the creation of formal, organizational self-care programs for social work staff. The newly developed policy statement on “Professional Self-Care & Social Work” will appear in the upcoming NASW 2009 publication *Social Work Speaks*. •

## Back to School Again

On Saturday, November 15th, GCSW alumni, faculty, students and community social work professionals gathered at the GCSW for a day of learning through continuing education, connecting and re-connecting with one another. In partnership with the GCSW Alumni Association, the GCSW Office of Alumni and Career Services hosted **Back to School Again @ the GCSW** providing a chance for attendees to recharge their professional batteries. The event also commemorated the larger University's observance of Homecoming week. Themes of the 2008 Alumni Homecoming event included: Homeroom with Dean Colby; Ethics, Advocacy & Passion in Social Work Practice; and Recharging Your Social Work Batteries. Dean Colby spoke of the changes and current happenings at the GCSW and was passionate about the future outlook for the college. An energizing presentation delivered by Heather Kanenberg, Ph.D. reminded the audience about the importance of maintaining passion in social work practice, while noting ethical implications and the importance of advocacy for our clients.

A panel discussion, moderated by past GCSW Alumni Association president Sara Lewis (2007-08) included: Shannon Bishop, LMSW; Jan Edwards, LCSW; George Henry, LMSW; Marki McMillan, LCSW; Lillian Ortiz, MSW; and Cindy Reibenstein, LCSW, ACSW. The all-alumni panel of social work professionals spoke to the strengths and challenges each faces in daily professional roles. Panel members stressed the importance of self-care and encouraged participants to become involved in professional areas of interest which lead to and promote passion and professional fulfillment.

In addition to the continuing education opportunities, attendees were afforded the chance to develop new relationships and explore various informational booths of the organizations in attendance. Such organizations included: the HOMES Clinic, REEP, the Office for International Social Work Education, National Association of



*"Recharging Your Batteries" alumni panel members (L-R) Sara Lewis, moderator, Cynthia Reibenstein, Lillian Ortiz, Marki McMillan, George Henry, Jan Edwards and Shannon Bishop*

Social Workers-Houston Chapter, the GCSW Student Association, PeaceJam, the Nobel Women's Initiative and Service Corporation International-Dignity Memorial. A visit to the Faculty Library offered attendees a look into the research and current publications of GCSW faculty members, highlighting their accomplishments and in turn reflecting on their contributions to the college and the community at large.

The GCSW Alumni Association and the GCSW Office of Alumni and Career Services would like to note a special thanks to Service Corporation International-Dignity Memorial who provided continental breakfast to attendees at this event. •



*Recess in the GCSW Lobby provided alumni Pam Bullock, Ken Bowman and other participants time to mix and mingle with old friends.*



*CEO Alumni Dinner (L-R) Betsy Schwartz, Laurie Glaze, Glenn Urbach, Chuck Childress, Lee Wunsch, Carrie Moffitt, Candice Tuyman, and Mary Guillory. (Seated) Mel Taylor and Dean Colby.*

IN THE

# Spotlight

Margaret O'Donnell has dabbled in many areas of social work over the years. She graduated from the GCSW in 1992 and jumpstarted the American Humanics Nonprofit Certificate Program. Over the last 16 years, she has nurtured this program as it has grown from a grassroots organization (where retreats were held in her living room) to the highly regarded program seen on campus today.

Margaret has had so many hats to wear! For 14 years, she was the sole staff member of the program. She employed American Humanics students to help with the day-to-day activities and mentored them through their undergraduate careers and eventually into their nonprofit careers.

Margaret was not only the founding campus director for the program, but the key recruiter as well. Through the Introduction to Social Work class she taught, she inspired undergraduate students to become involved in not only the program but the Houston community. She understood the importance of giving back and encouraged her students to volunteer over the course of the semester. It was impossible to take her class and not be inspired to give back. Under Margaret's leadership, over 220 American Humanics students have been certified at the University of Houston!

Margaret has always been active in the Houston nonprofit community. She has served on the board of The Center for AIDS Information and Advocacy and built relationships with numerous other nonprofit agencies. She and her husband Rick are avid supporters of the GCSW.

In January 2009, Margaret retired from the GCSW having found retirement paradise on a ranch in West Texas with her husband. She is already making her mark on Fort Davis! Margaret will be missed by not only the students, but the faculty and staff of the Graduate College of Social Work. Thank you Margaret for all of your valued career contributions.

*By Lori Godwin*

## ALUMNI NOTES

**Michael Daley ('75)** was appointed Chair of the NASW National Ethics Committee. He is President of the Rural Social Work Caucus, while serving as Director of the Social Work Program at the University of South Alabama in Mobile.

**Marian Mankin ('96)** is the Assistant Program Director of Bo's Place in Houston where she manages a grief support group for families who have experienced the death of a parent and refines and expands the curriculum of grief support activities. Marian serves as a member of the board of directors of the National Alliance for Grieving Children and provides supervision of graduate level interns. She has been nominated as Field Instructor of the Year by the GCSW, and has recently been granted the honorary rank of Clinical Assistant Professor in the Smith College School for Social Work.

**Jane Hoffman Boyd ('02)** has recently married and moved to the Tampa, Florida area. She has continued the dialysis work that she loves with DaVita in Florida where she heads up a new clinic. She is doing well and is busy these days working toward her LCSW.

**Niky Joubert ('03)** is the mother of three children having married in 2004. She began working for the department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), Division of Unaccompanied Children's Services (DUCS), in Houston shortly after graduation. Niky serves in the position of Federal Program Specialist where she administers the ORR's program for the care and placement of unaccompanied undocumented children. She also assists in the development of standards and child welfare policies for facilities housing unaccompanied undocumented children with the DUCS central office staff.

**Aisha Jones ('04)** is now working in the cancer clinic at Texas Children's Hospital.

**Kimberly Lewis ('04)** and husband, Marcus, were married in September of 2004 and welcomed their son, Marcus, Jr. (M.J.) on February 19, 2007.

**Katara Butler ('07)** was promoted to Program Director over a conservatorship program at the Northpoint office of the Department of Family and Protective Services.

**Alicia LaChapelle ('07)** worked for Congressman Nick Lampson after graduating from the GCSW and is currently working as the Assistant Director of Youth Services for FUUSA.

**Stephanie Werner ('07)** moved to Plano, TX after graduation and has been working for the United Way of Metropolitan Dallas as Director of Public Policy.

**Mindy Gillian ('08)** moved to Austin where she works for the Texas HIV Connection (a division of Workers Assistance Program) as an HIV/Substance Abuse Trainer. Her work involves researching HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, STIs, TB, and substance abuse. She trains professionals all across the state of Texas whose clients deal with one or more of these problems at the same time.

**Saba Khonsari ('08)** and husband travelled to Rwanda in December to spend a year teaching in public high schools in and around Kigali, the nation's capitol city. They are volunteering through an organization called WorldTeach, a non-profit, non-governmental organization that provides opportunities for individuals to make meaningful contributions to international education by living and working as volunteer teachers in developing countries ([www.worldteach.org](http://www.worldteach.org)). They are excited to bring their combined education and experiences, as both a licensed social worker and a high school mathematics teacher, to contribute to the nation's significant efforts to improve education and aid reconciliation.

**Laura Lopez ('08)** began working with the Mental Health Mental Retardation Authority of Harris County as a Staff Services Administrator where she works within the Early Childhood Intervention division.

## Gold Banner Award Winners

The GCSW Alumni Association came together on August 20th at The Village at Tanglewood for its Annual Meeting and Silent Auction to elect the 2008-09 Slate of Officers and Alumni Board of Directors, while also raising money in support of the *Charlotte Campbell Scholarship* fund and the GCSW Alumni Association. The newly elected GCSW Alumni Board Officers include Dee Dee Parker Wright (President), Shayna Taibel (President-Elect), Sara Lewis (Past-President), Micaela Vergara (Secretary), and Shiba Crayton (Treasurer). Elected members of the Board of Directors include Demori Driver, Gene Gundersen, Adrienne LeGendre, Allison Lipnick, Nancy Jane Otto, Suki Panju, Michael Roberts, Kay Schiller, Josephine Tittsworth, Morgan Carnes, Sergio Cruz, Elena Delavega, Agnes Dulin, Lysay Landry, Amy Padgett, Jamie Parker, Telecia Rittiman, Monica Rivera, Lindy Suarez, Mark Trahan and Crystal Walter.

Dean Colby kicked off the events of the evening followed by Virginia Robbins who gave a heartfelt introduction to the keynote speaker, Patti Aldredge, Ph.D. Patti, formerly the Associate Director of Field Education and Clinical Assistant Professor, shared her "Parting Pearls of Wisdom" with attendees. Prior to beginning her new faculty position at New York University Silver School of Social Work in New York City on September 1st, she called all to action as social workers and encouraged each of us to act on our passions.

Alumni and guests enjoyed placing bids with a friendly, competitive spirit on silent auction items such as a signed photo of Houston Texans defensive end Mario Williams and a "weekend getaway" at the Westin La Cantera Resort in San Antonio. The GCSW Alumni Association successfully raised over \$4,000 that evening due to the generosity of participating alumni.



*GCSW Alumni Association accepts 2008 Gold Banner Award (L-R) Ann Liberman (GCSW), Shiba Crayton (Treasurer), Mike Baker (Chair of the Houston Alumni Organization Board of Directors), and Dee Dee Parker Wright (President)*

Thank you to the many businesses and individual donors in and around the Houston area (and beyond) who graciously donated items and services so that the GCSW Alumni Association could raise money for this worthy cause. The *Charlotte Campbell Scholarship* is awarded every spring to an upper level graduate social work student and is currently the only GCSW related award for which a full-time or part-time student is eligible. A special thank you to the folks at The Village at Tanglewood for providing a wonderful setting for this annual event.

*By Stacey Brittain*

## Greater Texas PeaceJam SLAM



*PeaceJam SLAM Participants*

On October 25th, the Greater Texas PeaceJam held its annual PeaceJam SLAM event at Pasadena High School. Over 125 youth from the Houston area attended the one-day event themed on the PeaceJam Global Call to Action "Social Justice and Human Rights for All." Participants discussed The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, watched a documentary on Darfur and participated in workshops on Human Trafficking and Immigrant Rights.

The 1992 Nobel Peace Laureate, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, was announced to be the "special guest" for the upcoming PeaceJam Youth Conference March 28-29, 2009 on the University of Houston campus. The conference theme will be the PeaceJam Global Call to Action, "Ending Racism and Hate." To find out how to get teens involved please e-mail Jamie Parker at [pjam@central.uh.edu](mailto:pjam@central.uh.edu).

To stay involved with PeaceJam visit the website at [www.sw.uh.edu/peacejam](http://www.sw.uh.edu/peacejam) or the blog at [www.greatertexaspeacejam.blogspot.com](http://www.greatertexaspeacejam.blogspot.com).

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*Connections* is a semi-annual publication of the GCSW Office of Alumni and Career Services. Its purpose is to link the GCSW with alumni and the social work community.

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**Connections can be accessed online at  
[www.sw.uh.edu/alumni/newsletter.htm](http://www.sw.uh.edu/alumni/newsletter.htm)**

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Turner Distinguished  
Speakers Series  
February 17, March 30  
& April 14

The Fifth  
Doctoral Social Work  
Research Symposium  
March 5

Social Work  
Awards Breakfast  
March 6

PeaceJam Youth Conference  
March 28-29

GCSW Commencement  
May 16



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