

# connections

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## The GCSW Celebrates 40 Years

The journey continues but the celebration of 40 remarkable years is underway at the GCSW in 2008. Joined by our new University of Houston System Chancellor and University of Houston President, Renu Khator, alumni, and community friends, GCSW faculty and staff celebrated the anniversary during the April 29th “Transcending Time” celebration dinner at the Four Seasons Hotel.

From its beginnings in 1968, the Graduate College of Social Work at the University of Houston has moved from a general curriculum of social work education to a college providing a creative, innovative curriculum designed to produce professional social workers equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively address community needs. The GCSW, which strives to advance social, economic and political justice and advance knowledge for competent, ethical practice and leadership with diverse populations, was ranked in the most recent *US News & World Report* in the top 50 of all graduate social work programs in the country.

Beginning as strictly an MSW program in the 60's, achieving accreditation in the 70's, moving into its own Social Work Building in the 80's, and adding the PhD program and the American Humanics Non-Profit Certificate program in the 90's, the GCSW has taken on impressive challenges throughout its 40 year history in support of its mission.

The current decade marks the establishment of *The Kantambu Latting College Professorship* and the addition of Jody Williams to our faculty, who was appointed as the *Sam and Cele Keeper Endowed Professor for Peace and Social Justice*.

The Legislative Internship Program was launched as was the first Doctoral Student Symposium. The GSSW became the Graduate College of Social Work in recognition of its achievements within the university system.

As the decade progresses, the GCSW continues to shape its recent initiatives which include the Weekend College Fellowship program for gerontology practitioners, the Bilingual Scholarship program that was initially funded by

the George Foundation and which has been expanded statewide by the Hogg Foundation to increase the number of bilingual social workers throughout Texas. The college is now home to bold new research initiatives including the Child and Family Innovative Research Center, the Center for Drug and Social Policy Research and the Virtual Reality Laboratory that is used for assessing and treating addictions.

Over the years the college's funding support has increased through endowments, national and local foundations, and the generosity of our many friends and alumni contributors. Thank you for being a part of our history and for your continued support as our journey continues into the future.



*UH System Chancellor and UH President Renu Khator, Mary Beth Arcidiacono ('02), Eliza Duncan ('02) and Dean Ira Colby*

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## GCSW Dean's Advisory Council

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## A MESSAGE FROM DEAN COLBY



Dean Ira C. Colby

### 40 YEARS AND COUNTING

In 1968 a small group of 26 students enrolled as the first social work class, and they were led by six faculty; the fledgling program was supported by a \$150,000 budget. And, the social work program was housed in a Quonset hut on the northeast side of the campus. Who would have thought or envisioned that in 2008 the College would have nearly 3,500 alumni in 48 states as well as in six countries? Among the ranks of the twenty-four full-time faculty are national and international social work leaders, leading researchers and scholars, but most importantly, individuals committed to a proactive educational experience. Earlier this spring, the GCSW was ranked 36th in the nation by *US News & World Report*, which, by the way, is the highest ranking of any college at the University of Houston.

There is something very exceptional about the GCSW. Our historical commitment to peace and justice efforts continues to set the College's direction. We recognize the uniqueness of PeaceJam and the Nobel Women's Initiative and the rare opportunity that our students are afforded to interact with Nobel Peace laureates. The faculty's position that global understanding is central for proactive practice pushes students to think differently. Once again this summer students will travel to points around the world - one student/faculty group will visit Turkey and a second group will travel to South Africa. The College's new Center for Drug and Social Policy Research and its Virtual Reality Laboratory illustrate the diversity of the faculty's interests and the importance of their work for the broader social services community.

Our belief that the impossible is possible is only limited by our own biases, fears, and self-constraints. There is no reason not to believe in our colleagues, our friends, and our profession. But most important is for each of us to believe in ourselves. Those 26 students in 1968 had that belief - their professional lives began on an unpaved road but they believed in each other and themselves. They were not limited to the confines of a Quonset hut but in fact saw the possibilities.

The GCSW continues to pave a very wide and open highway. We easily proclaim with pride that the College is much more than a place to get a degree. It is a place where we dare dream that the impossible is possible and that we can risk with ideas. To do otherwise does not do honor to the alumni who have dared to believe.

Ira C. Colby

Dean and Professor of Social Work



## PeaceJam 2008 with Betty Williams

On Friday, March 28th, the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work along with Greater Texas PeaceJam hosted a public lecture with Nobel Peace Prize Recipient Betty Williams on the University of Houston campus. The public lecture was supported by the Nobel Women's Initiative, Houston Peace & Justice Center, Houston Decade of Nonviolence, and the United Nations Association Houston Chapter.

Celso Baez, who attended the 2005 PeaceJam Conference in Houston and the 2006 International PeaceJam Conference in Denver, opened the public lecture by sharing with the audience what PeaceJam has meant to him. Celso not only presented on Friday but stayed throughout the weekend and served as a PeaceJam college mentor during the PeaceJam Youth Conference. Ms. Williams was then introduced by Dean Ira Colby and was warmly welcomed by a crowd of over 200 Houstonians. Ms. Williams awed the audience with her inspirational words, along with some very humorous moments.

Betty Williams is from Belfast, Northern Ireland. After witnessing the senseless deaths of three children on August 10, 1976, Betty immediately began circulating petitions against the violence occurring in her country. Within forty-eight hours she had obtained over 6,000 signatures. One day later she and the children's aunt, Mairead Corrigan, organized a peace march of 10,000 Protestant and Catholic women. The march was disrupted by members of the Irish Republican Army, and the following week the two women organized a second march. This time they were 35,000 strong.

Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan were both awarded the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their "extraordinary action to end sectarian violence and build a foundation for peace." Since receiving the Peace Prize, Betty has traveled the world working in areas where peace and the well-being of children are at risk.

Over the weekend that followed, The Greater Texas PeaceJam, housed at the Graduate College of Social Work, held

its 2008 Youth Conference with Betty Williams as its featured Nobel Laureate. The two-day event on the University of Houston campus was attended by over 150 youth, ages 14-19, from Houston, San Antonio and Nashville, Tennessee.

Prior to the conference PeaceJam youth studied the life and work of Ms. Williams and were honored and overwhelmed to be in the presence of such an influential global leader for peace. One youth wrote, "I will never forget the way I felt looking Ms. Betty Williams in the eyes and having her respond." Another youth said she would most remember, "When Betty Williams said that arms are for hugging not fighting." PeaceJammers swarmed the stage, as if at a rock concert, after each conversation with Ms. Williams to get a personal hug and picture with her.

Throughout the weekend, the diverse group of youth came together to participate in numerous team activities that explored the concepts of peace, diversity and service. Several recently resettled youth attended the conference with Alliance Multicultural Community Center. One student noted, "Every time I heard youth with limited English skills really speak out for their beliefs, it was amazing how their self-consciousness was completely overcome by their passion for peace." Another student stated what she would remember most about the weekend was, "Hearing a conversation between two students about violence in their home countries which resulted in their wanting to come up with a solution."

The overwhelming sense was that all conference participants, including the adults, came away with the sense that "if you want something to change, you've got to act and do something about it" and that "peace and love can bring everyone together no matter their race or religion." To get youth from your school or community organization involved in PeaceJam please contact Affiliate Coordinator Jamie Parker at 713.743.8039 or e-mail [pjam@central.uh.edu](mailto:pjam@central.uh.edu).



*2008 PeaceJam March and Rally*



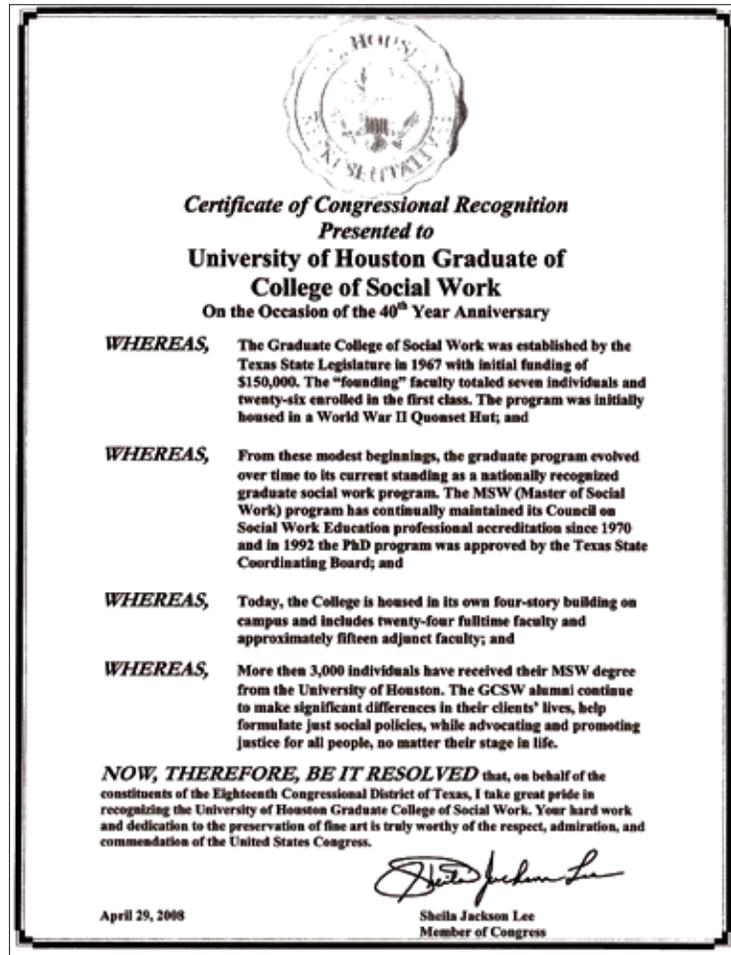
*Betty Williams and PeaceJam Youth Participant*

## Recognizing 40 Years of Excellence

The Center for Drug and Social Policy Research in the Graduate College of Social Work has just completed the first year of a five year Minority Institutions' Drug Abuse Research Development Program (MIDARP) grant funded through the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). This grant, entitled the "University of Houston Drug Abuse Research Development Program (UHDARDP)," was funded for 2.2 million dollars in the summer of 2007 and seeks to promote multidisciplinary research relating to drug abuse among older Hispanic populations.

The UHDARDP will broaden interest and promote collaborative drug abuse research across disciplines (including Sociology, Social Work, Psychology, and Pharmacy) at the University of Houston through a variety of mechanisms. Regularly scheduled workshops by nationally recognized drug abuse researchers will provide a knowledge base and networking opportunities for researchers involved with or interested in drug abuse research. In addition, graduate fellowships and undergraduate internships will stimulate student interest in drug abuse research and will foster relationships with faculty conducting research. The UHDARDP will also award several small faculty grants in order to provide preliminary data for the acquisition of NIDA funding.

The goals of the UHDARDP will also be accomplished through the implementation of research projects that investigate the long-term health and social consequences of injecting heroin use among aging Mexican American males. The focus of this research will be on the etiology and epidemiology of injecting heroin use and its implication for drug abuse prevention, intervention, and service research.



*Certificate of Congressional Recognition  
Honoring 40 Years of GCSW Service*

### PSTI Receives Top Award

The Protective Services Training Institute, a project of the Office of Community Projects, received the 2007 Quality Award from the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) at the Association's annual conference in Dallas in October. NSDTA is the largest national membership group related to professional development in human service organizations.

Marcia Sanderson, PSTI Director, and fourteen of the PSTI staff were on hand to receive the award on behalf of PSTI's 25 staff at University of Texas, University of Texas at Arlington, and University of Houston. In the presentation of the award, PSTI was noted for its history of contributions to the professional development field and its efforts to share knowledge with colleagues across the nation.

The University of Houston PSTI office is based at the GCSW Office of Community Projects under the direction of Ann McFarland, who serves as Site Manager.



*PSTI Receives NSDTA Quality Award*

# 2008 Field Instructor Awards

At the annual field instructors banquet held on June 10th, Sharon Alpert of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, was awarded the *UH-GCSW 2008 Outstanding Field Instructor of the Year* award. It was announced that Sharon has won the *2008 State of Texas Outstanding Field Instructor of the Year* award as well. The state award is administered by the Texas Field Educators' Consortium and will be presented at the NASW/Texas State Conference in November.

Donna Wotkyns of Communities in Schools won the *2007 UH-GCSW Outstanding Field Instructor of the Year* award. The award was presented this year since a field instructors banquet was not held last year due to preparations for the launch of the new MSW curriculum.

Cindy Reibenstein was honored for the creativity of her idea for placement of the Weekend College students in the Houston Housing Authority senior housing projects and for field instructing all 19 students in their first year; Phyllis Baker, Lisiane Church and Pam Schaffer were honored for their commitments to their students during organizational changes within their agencies; Patti Aldredge was also honored for her work as Associate Director of Field Education in preparation for her departure from the UH-GCSW in August.

The following field instructors were nominated by students for their outstanding work in 2007 and 2008:

## 2007 Nominees for Outstanding Field Instructor

*Katerina Hewson, Memorial Hermann Memorial City Hospital*  
*Marian Mankin, Bo's Place*  
*Lisa Osten, Baylor College of Medicine-Transition Medicine Clinic*  
*Richard Ramirez, RehabCare at Tomball Regional Hospital*  
*Alysha Roll, Family Time Foundation, Inc.*  
*Kristen Soudelier, Memorial Hermann Hospital*  
*Michael Taylor, Memorial Hermann TIRR*  
*Renee Traweek, IntraCare Hospital*  
*Donna Wotkyns, Communities in Schools-Sharpstown High School*



*Sharon Alpert*  
*2008 Outstanding Field Instructor*

## 2008 Nominees for Outstanding Field Instructor

*Sharon Alpert, TX Department of Family & Protective Services*  
*Phyllis Baker, Memorial Hermann Baptist Hospital*  
*Erica Bruce, Texas West Oaks Hospital*  
*Lisiane Church, Behavioral Hospital of Bellaire*  
*Lori Feister, Council on Alcohol and Drugs Houston*  
*Cory Greenberg, TX Department of Family & Protective Services*  
*Suzanne Hinds, United Way of Greater Houston*  
*Sheila Joseph, Yellowstone Academy*  
*Roberta Leal, Communities in Schools of Brazoria County*  
*Norma Kay Lord, Counseling Associates of South Texas*  
*Cynthia Reibenstein, Asthma and Lung Center*  
*Pamela Schaffer, Harris County Systems of Hope*  
*Mary Ellen Sherrill, Children's Assessment Center*  
*Rachelle Webster, Spaulding for Children*

## Congratulations Patti Aldredge

Patti Aldredge, Clinical Assistant Professor and Associate Director of Field, has accepted the position of Clinical Associate Professor and Deputy Director of Field Learning and Community Partnerships at New York University Silver School of Social Work, in New York City, effective September 1, 2008.

Patti has been a vital member of the GCSW community, as a colleague, in the classroom, through her work in the Field Office, as a doctoral student and as the wonderful person she is. Patti embodies a deep commitment to justice and to the social work profession.

We will miss you Patti and wish you the best New York City has to offer!

## GCSW News



*Dr. Luis R. Torres*

Luis R. Torres, Ph.D. joins the GCSW faculty as Assistant Professor this Fall. He will be relocating to Texas with his family this summer from St. Louis. Dr. Torres just completed a two year, NIDA-funded Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship at The George Warren Brown School of Social Work of Washington University. At the Brown School, Dr. Torres worked at shaping his research agenda in the NIDA-funded Comorbidities and Addictions Center, the NIMH-funded Center for Mental Health Services Research, and the newly formed Center for Latino Family Research. His research examines co-occurring disorders (mental health, substance abuse, and medical conditions including HIV/AIDS) in adolescents and young adults, with a particular focus on Latinos. His interests include the role of immigration and acculturation in the development of disorders, screening and assessment across service settings, and evidence-based integrated treatment.

Dr. Torres, a native of Puerto Rico, has a doctorate in clinical psychology from Fordham University. His clinical training was at Bronx Psychiatric Center, Bellevue Hospital and New York Hospital-Westchester Division. With over 15 years of practice experience, Dr. Torres has held clinical and administrative positions at North Central Bronx Hospital, Jacobi Medical Center, and the Bronx Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Prior to completing his doctorate, Dr. Torres served as Director of Behavioral Health for Ciatelli Associates Inc. (CAI) in New York City. Welcome to the GCSW Dr. Torres!

### The R. J. DeBottis Memorial Lecture and Scholarship Awards Dinner

The 10th Annual R.J. DeBottis Memorial Lecture & Scholarship Awards Dinner held at The Hearthstone, November 6th, featured Carmelita P. Escalante, M.D., F.A.C.P., Chair, Department of General Internal Medicine, Ambulatory Treatment and Emergency Care, The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, whose topic was "Surviving the Aftermath of Cancer."

Part of the Houston Gerontological Association's mission is to "reward educational growth through scholarships in order to strengthen and enhance current and future services for the geriatric population." Katelyn Mullen, GCSW student at the time, was awarded the 2007 *R.J. DeBottis Scholarship* which honors the late Dr. DeBottis. Ms. Mullen received her MSW from the GCSW in May 2008.

### DOCTORAL STUDENT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

This year's annual GCSW Doctoral Symposium, held at the University's Alumni Center, added an exciting new dimension to the tradition. The conference theme "Social Work Research: Embracing Diversity, Promoting Change" brought together 16 doctoral students from three distinguished social work institutions across the country (University of Houston, Clark Atlanta School of Social Work and CUNY Hunter College) to discuss their research work and ideas.

Sessions explored diverse topics including those related to child welfare: Children Adopted by Gay Men (Krishna), School-Based Interventions with the Silent Victims of Katrina (Parker), Outcome Evaluation for a School Based Parenting Program (Smith), and Impact of Cultural Competency Training on Caseworker Perception (Johnson). Other spirited sessions included results of the PhD student studies of: Male Victims of Domestic Violence (Tsui), Rural/Urban Differentials and Minimum Wage (Delavega), Influence of Culture and Religion on HIV Beliefs (Garcia), Inequality among Foreign Workers (Cheung) and Community Food Security and Social Work (Lopez). Two sessions related to mental health: An Early Mental Health Intervention Program (Hill) and practical tips to the audience of social workers about Locating Evidence-Based Practices (Kaganoff). Editors of *Perspectives*, the doctoral students' online social work journal, also shared the evolution of this unique students' peer reviewed publication (McIver, Lopez).

Participants in the symposium enjoyed lunch, courtesy of symposium sponsors, juxtaposed with an interesting panel presentation about Labels and Diversity. Panelists included Beaty, Tsui, Cheung, Fosu, Delavega, Malbrough and Tittsworth. CEUs were awarded to symposium participants.



*GCSW doctoral student presenters, Darla Beaty, Elena Delavega, and Ada Cheung are pictured with Shaun Johnson and Menyuan Smith of Clark Atlanta School of Social Work.*

## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

**Andrew Achenbaum**, Professor of History and Social Work, is the 2007 recipient of the *Donald P. Kent Award*. The honor is given by the Gerontological Society of America each year to a person who exemplifies the highest standards for professional leadership in gerontology through teaching, service and interpretation of gerontology to the larger society. The award was created in 1973 in memory of Donald P. Kent for his leadership in translating research findings into practical use.

**Geri Adler**, Assistant Professor, published the following:  
Adler, G., Schwartz, J., & Kuskowski, M. (2007). An exploratory study of older adults' participation in civic action. *Clinical Gerontologist*, 31(2), 65-75. Cummings, S. M., & Adler, G. (2007). Predictors of social workers' employment in gerontological work: A study in two states. *Educational Gerontology*, 33(11), 925-938. Dickerson, A. E., Molnar, L., Eby, D. W., Adler, G., et al. (2007). Transportation and aging: A research agenda for advancing safe mobility. *Gerontologist*, 47(5), 578-590. Adler, G. (2007). Intervention approaches to driving and dementia. *Health and Social Work*, 32(1), 70-75.

**Patrick Bordnick**, Associate Professor, published the following articles: Copp, H. L., Bordnick, P. S., Traylor, A. C., & Thyer, B. A. (2007). Evaluating wraparound services for seriously emotionally disturbed youth: Pilot study outcomes in Georgia. *Adolescence*, 42(168) Winter, 723-732. Bordnick, P. S., Copp, H. L., Traylor, A. C., Grapp, K. G., Ferrer, M., & Brooks, J. (in review). Assessing reactivity to virtual reality alcohol based cues including olfactory stimuli. *Addictive Behaviors*. Wimmer, J., Vonk, B., & Bordnick, P. S. (in press). A preliminary investigation of the effectiveness of attachment therapy for children with reactive attachment disorder, *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*.

**Monit Cheung**, Professor, has published the following:  
Cheung, M. (2008). Promoting effective interviewing of sexual abused children: A pilot study. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18(2), 137-143. Cheung, M., & Leung, P. (2008). Multicultural practice and evaluation: A case approach to evidence-based practice. Denver, CO: Love Publishing Co. Cheung, M. (In Press 2008). Project PASSPORT: Empowering young minority women through a volunteer programme. In E. Liu, M. J. Holosko & T. W. Lo (Eds.), *Youth empowerment and volunteerism: Principles, policies and practices*. Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong Press. Cheung, M. (In Press 2008). Indigenous practice in clinical social work: The IN approach. In *Social Work Symposium: Social work knowledge, practice and research in Chinese societies*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

**Kelli Connell-Carrick**, Assistant Professor, published the following: Connell-Carrick, K. & Scannapieco, M. (2007). Early interventions for young children who have been maltreated: The social worker role. *Early Childhood Services Journal*, 1(3), 189-207. Scannapieco, M. & Connell-Carrick, K. (2007). Child welfare workplace: The state of the workforce and strategies to

improve retention. *Child Welfare*. 86(6), 31-51. Scannapieco, M., Connell-Carrick, K. & Painter, K. (2007). In their own words: Challenges facing youth aging out of foster care. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 24(5), 423-425.

Dr. Connell-Carrick delivered the following presentations: "Adult Protective Services: State of the Workforce and Worker Development," *53rd Annual CSWE Program Meeting*, San Francisco, California (October 2007); "Leaving Foster Care: How Child Welfare Workers Can Make a Difference," *18th Annual Family Preservation Conference*, San Antonio, Texas (September 2007); "Youth in Transition: The Role of Caseworkers in Preparing Youth for Adult Living," *20th Annual National Independent Living Conference*, Denver, Colorado (September 2007).

**Jean Latting**, Professor, delivered the following presentations: "Intergroup Competencies," *Initiatives for Diversity Education and Action (IDEA)*, Division of Student Services, Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska (April 2008). <http://www.creighton.edu/student-services/office-of-the-vice-president/committed-to-diversity/diversity-action-team/idea/spring08-events/index.php>; "Winning Converts or Preaching to the Choir: Lessons from the Behavioral Sciences on How to Promote Social Justice to Critics," *Social Welfare Action Alliance National Meeting and Conference*, Houston, Texas (April 2008).

**Virginia Robbins**, Clinical Professor and Director of Field Education, was awarded the National Association of Social Workers "Lifetime Achievement Award" at the *8th Annual Social Work Awards Breakfast* in recognition for her numerous contributions to the community and the profession.

**Ellen Stevens-Roseman**, Associate Professor, has had the following articles accepted for publication: "Aging Workers: Achieving 'Goodness-of-Fit' for Worker-Workplace Advantage," *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health*; "Eleven Tips to Lighten the Load: Optimizing the Blessing of Family Caregiving" *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*.

**Sheara Williams**, Assistant Professor, has published the following: Araujo Dawson, B., & Williams, S. A. (2008). The impact of language status as an acculturative stressor on internalizing and externalizing behavior among Latino/Hispanic youth: A longitudinal analysis from school entry through third grade. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 37, 399-411. Williams, S. A. (2008). Violence. In T. Mizrahi & L. Davis (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Social Work* (20th ed., Vol. 4, pp. 259-265). New York: National Association of Social Workers and Oxford University Press. EDITED VOLUME includes: Williams, S. A. (Guest Editor.) (2008). Impact of natural disasters: Implications for human and social services [Special Issue]. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 34(3), 1-3.

**Avelardo Valdez**, Professor and Director of the Office for Drug and Social Policy Research, was awarded a five-year, \$2.3 million grant to create the Minority Institutions' Drug Abuse Research Development Program.

## GCSW Partnerships

### The Gulen Institute

During the spring 2008 semester the GCSW entered into a partnership with the Institute of Interfaith Dialog (IID), which is part of a worldwide, Turkish-based foundation sponsoring educational initiatives, promoting peace and justice, and creating opportunities for people of different faiths to learn about differences and similarities in their respective traditions. The Gulen Institute, named for the founder of a social movement which has helped to modernize social services and increase educational opportunities in Turkey and several dozen countries around the world, is housed on the third floor of the Social Work Building. Doctoral candidates and MSW students are eligible for scholarships to do work in areas of mutual interest to GCSW faculty and IID supporters. Faculty have been invited to attend lunches on campus and downtown, where they can build partnerships with civic, religious, as well as leaders in the social service network and health care arena. From June 14 to June 26, Dean Colby, Professors Achenbaum, Cheung, Leung, S. Robbins, and Valdez accompanied three doctoral and eight MSW students to Turkey. They visited not only important cultural sites but also met with university officials, and directors of orphanages, homeless shelters, and long-term care facilities.

### GCSW Staff Elected to UH Staff Council

The UH Staff Council, an advisory body to the University of Houston, promotes a positive and meaningful interchange among staff, faculty, and students; recognition of staff contributions to the mission of the University of Houston; and involvement of staff in decisions affecting university activities. Staff Council members participate in over 15 University wide committees and six standing committees of the Staff Council.

Staff Council has worked with Human Resources to review the Performance Communication and Development Process and to develop a new merit process; to increase and award staff tuition scholarships; to form the University System Staff Executive Council (USSEC); to hold Forums featuring the University President; to plan and organize Cougar First Impressions; and to continue to support and increase staff representation on numerous university committees.

The GCSW is proud to announce that five GCSW staff members currently serve as elected representatives on the UH Staff Council. Congratulations to Ann McFarland, Dr. Patricia Taylor, Letecia Henry, Erica Sims and Joe Papick (past Staff Council President).

### REEP

The Reciprocal Educational Exchange Program is a social work exchange program co-organized by the City University of Hong Kong and the University of Houston under the auspices of the Office of International Studies and Programs. In 2000, UH-GCSW and the City University of Hong Kong signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to facilitate the exchange program between the two universities. Between 2000-2008, 30 students from Hong Kong have been admitted to the GCSW one-semester exchange program. More than half (55%) subsequently applied to enter the GCSW's MSW program after completing the exchange semester: ten completed their MSWs, two will be graduating in Summer 2008, and four have been admitted to begin the MSW program in Fall 2008. Of the ten MSW graduates, three were admitted to the PhD program and five are now successfully employed as social workers in Houston.

The REEP program provides a bridge for the Hong Kong students to learn a new culture and experience university life in the United States. Last year two GCSW alumni families hosted the incoming exchange students in their homes for one week prior to the start of the semester. We are eager to recruit two new families (by December 2008) to host students for the Spring 2009 semester. Contact Ann Liberman [aliberman@uh.edu](mailto:aliberman@uh.edu) or Dr. Patrick Leung [pleung@uh.edu](mailto:pleung@uh.edu) if you are interested in serving as a host prior to the start of classes in January 2009.



*Welcoming party for 2008 Hong Kong Exchange Students  
(L-R) Lam Sze Nga (Celia), Leung Kin Fai (Nick), Wong Che Yau  
(Winnie), and Yu Kin Man (Mandy)*



*Dr. Patrick Leung, and Dr. Monit Cheung, GCSW Faculty  
Coordinators for REEP, and Ann Liberman, REEP Host Family.*

## Transcending Time



*Honorary Chair Eliza Duncan and  
Event Chair Mary Beth Arcidiacono*

Mary Beth Arcidiacono ('07) Event Chair and Eliza Duncan ('02) Honorary Chair provided the critical leadership that made for a spectacular and memorable 40th anniversary evening of celebration. Their opening remarks were personal and passionate; their belief in the College and commitment to the social work profession was profound.

More than 300 people attended the magnificent 40th anniversary dinner, "Transcending Time", at the Four Seasons Hotel. President Khator and her husband, faculty, staff, alumni, agency practitioners, CEOs, and friends of the GCSW joined in the celebration.

President Khator praised the work of the College and noted that a metropolitan university must have a social work program leading the way -- she called the GCSW "a jewel in the University's crown!" While congratulating the GCSW for its national ranking (she noted the GCSW as the highest ranked college at UH), she challenged the GCSW to move into the top 20.



*Travis Courville, Cele Keeper, Terri Sayles and Sandra Alanis*



*Grace Stuart, Jody Williams, Rafael Medrano, and Deborah Colby*

Dr. Patrick Bordnick, Director of the GCSW Virtual Reality Research Lab, provided a stimulating overview of his work in virtual applications in social work research and practice, while Special Guest Speaker, Jody Williams, 1997 Nobel Peace Laureate and *The Cele S. and Samuel D. Keeper Endowed Professor for Peace and Social Justice*, shared the important work of our students and staff with the Nobel Women's Initiative. Their comments illustrated the creative research and activism that is part of GCSW life.

Over \$190,000 was raised to benefit student scholarships and the American Humanics Nonprofit Certificate Program. The mission continues at the Graduate College of Social Work to advance social, economic and political justice and to advance knowledge for competent, ethical practice and leadership with diverse populations. The GCSW has a long-standing commitment of providing professional support to the Greater Houston, state, and national communities.



IN THE

# Spotlight

Pamela Bullock ('06) has recently purchased a 2008 Toyota Sienna van after five years of tedious and dedicated effort to see that the State of Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) enacted a policy change that affects many individuals with disabilities throughout Texas. She is truly a trailblazer, an untiring advocate, and an agent of social change.

For the past eight years Pam has been confined to a wheelchair as a result of Spina Bifida at birth. For many years DARS policy has been to pay for modifications to vans for wheelchair bound clients to make transportation accessible. Living in Spring, Pam is dependent on her van, but found herself frequently stuck because of the deteriorating and unreliable vehicle. Her diligent advocacy efforts resulted in a policy change for DARS that now allows for payment, not only for vehicle modifications as in the past, but for the down payment, plus assistance with the first six months of payments on a new van. Pam said, "As a Social Security income recipient there was no way that I ever could have saved enough money to make the down payment and also make the monthly payments on my own, for the greatly needed replacement vehicle."

While Pam is the first person in the state of Texas to benefit from this new policy, she will not be the last! Pam states, "The reason I persisted for five years was not only to benefit myself, but to benefit others as well." She enthusiastically comments, "Now I don't have to worry about getting stranded on the road somewhere. I can actually concentrate on working and earning a living!"

Pam is employed by Northwest Assistance Ministries Family Violence Center as a Case Manager. Her next goal is to have a grant funded for an awareness program to educate people with disabilities about abuse.

Pam's accomplishment was shared by her supervisor Donna Amtsberg who stated, "Pam really is an agent of change and I'm so proud to know her and work with her."

## ALUMNI NOTES

**Steve Hancock ('71)** established the *Make-a-Difference Scholarship* at the GCSW for students with financial need for assistance during their graduate studies.

**Annemieke Pike'-Luckey ('91)** is the new Director of Social Services at Heartland Health Center of West Houston, a Minor Care facility. She is thrilled to have re-entered the workforce after a number of years and is excited to call herself a social worker again.

**Gina Patterson ('95)** is also a 1999 graduate of the UH Law School. She is an attorney for Locke, Liddell & Sapp PLLC.

**Shiba Crayton ('00)** and husband are the proud parents of their second child, Ty James, who was born in April. Shiba works as the Compliance Coordinator for the Harris County Department of Education Head Start Program. She is an LMSW and enjoys working in an administrative capacity, where she can implement and monitor program systems.

**Donna Amtsberg ('02)** has been with Northwest Assistance Ministries since 1997 where she is the Director of the Family Violence Center and of the Counseling Center. In addition to serving as a Field Instructor she is the Chair of the Harris County Adult Violent Death Review Team and she has recently become an adjunct professor in the Human Services Technology Program at Houston Community College.

**Keishawna Harris ('02)** began working at The Methodist Hospital in March. She found the job listing on the GCSW website and is thrilled to begin her "new career" in the hospital setting.

**Annemarie Redelmeier ('02)** reports that her American Cancer Society doctoral training grant has been renewed for two more years! She has been selected to participate in and receive a scholarship for the 1st Annual Lung Cancer Advocacy Summit and the National Lung Cancer Partnership annual meeting in Chicago. Additionally, she has been selected as a delegate and received a scholarship for the LIVESTRONG Summit in Columbus, Ohio.

**Tatum Martin ('03)** is the Social Work Manager at Eagle's Trace Retirement Center where she has been for 3 years. Thank you Tatum for hosting the recent AGIFT Foundation Seminar at Eagle's Trace affording gerontology students the opportunity to tour and learn about senior living options.

**Deniece Christ-Rice ('05)** has been working in medical social work for the past 3 years and is currently at The Woman's Hospital of Texas. She has completed the requirements for clinical licensure and will be taking her exam soon. She and her husband bought a home in the downtown area, and she has recently begun work as an independent contractor conducting home studies for international adoptions.

**Sonya Heisser ('06)** returned to New Orleans and is working at Dillard University in the Division of Student Success/ Student Support Services as a counselor. She bought a home in New Orleans and is in the process of renovating it.

**Jamie Parker ('06)** is the Coordinator for PeaceJam for the UH Graduate College of Social Work.

**Dawn Choate ('07)** is living in Austin where she works for The Arc of Texas as a Governmental Affairs Specialist.

**Lauren Loyal ('07)** works as a licensed therapist at Spectrum Care which is a psychiatric partial hospitalization program. She leads the seniors group and works with elderly clients in both clinical and case management work.

**Manisha Patel, Kristin Stalnaker, JoAnn Coronado, Anne Casimir and Reshma Manjiyani ('08)** will all be moving to London, England to work as social workers through UK Pro.

## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWS

Greetings from the GCSW Alumni Association and a very special welcome to the graduating Class of 2008! Your GCSWAA has had a very productive year. We started the year off with a bang by receiving the highest honor awarded, "The Gold Banner", from the Houston Alumni Association for 2007. The banner awards are competitively awarded to HAO constituent groups based on membership, student involvement, community services, advocacy and scholarship fundraising. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Ann Liberman, Director of Alumni & Career Services whose unwavering support has enabled us to reach our goals.

At our annual meeting in August, we voted in new board members and officers for 2008-2009. Alumni and guests enjoyed a meal provided by the Village Park at Tanglewood while hearing a presentation on leadership from Paula Paust, MSW '81, Executive Director of The Women's Home. In addition to the program, we had a silent auction to raise funds for the *Charlotte Campbell Scholarship*, a scholarship awarded annually by the GCSWAA. This year marked the 10th anniversary of the CCS award. Thank you to Amber Mollhagen, Ann Liberman and Jan Leger for coordinating the auction that raised \$3,000 for the fund, reaching our \$10,000 goal to endow the scholarship. This year's Annual Alumni Association Meeting invitations will be reaching you soon.

Alumni members participated in many events throughout the year including; volunteering at Operation School Supplies' Sort and Box Day, hosting an ice-cream social at the New Student Orientation held for incoming GCSW students, teaming up with Sam Houston School's Project Grad Walk & Talk program to encourage high school students to stay in school, participating in the spirited "Back to School Again" Homecoming event, hosting a welcoming pot-luck dinner for exchange students from Hong Kong, awarding student Mindy Guillian the Charlotte Campbell Scholarship and Shannon Bishop the 2008 Outstanding Alumni Award at the annual Social Work Awards Breakfast, co-sponsoring the 4th Annual Doctoral Research Symposium, mentoring students entering field internships and networking with alumni at the 20th Annual Field Agency Marketplace, supporting GCSW students by hosting several "Mix and Mingles" on campus complete with food and treats, celebrating the college at the GCSW 40th Anniversary Celebration Dinner while raising money for student scholarships and lastly, "pinning" the Class of 2008 with UH lapel pins upon their success at graduation. As you can see, it has been a busy year of alumni activity!

As an award-winning membership organization, we look forward to your continued relationship with the GCSW through your support of the Alumni Association. If you are interested in participating on a committee or taking a leadership role with the GCSWAA contact one of your GCSWAA Board Members: Sara Lewis, President 713.308.0082, Sara.Lewis@cityofhouston.net or Dee Dee Parker-Wright, President Elect, 713.679.2512 or dwright@hcde-texas.org. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

Sara Lewis LMSW (Class of 2001)  
President/GCSW Alumni Association



GCSW Alumni Association accepts 2007 Gold Banner Award  
Front (L-R) Allison Lipnick, Shiba Crayton, Shannon Bishop, Gene Gundersen, Kay Schiller. Back (L-R) Ann Liberman, Amber Mollhagen, Dee Dee Parker-Wright, Michal Roberts and Will Dickey.

### Save the Date

GCSW Alumni Association Annual Meeting  
August 20, 2008  
The Village of Tanglewood  
5:30PM

### Honoring

Patti Aldredge, LCSW who will share her

*Parting Pearls of Wisdom*

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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

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GCSW Alumni Association  
Annual Meeting  
August 20  
Patti Aldredge LCSW  
"Parting Pearls of Wisdom"  
The Village of Tanglewood

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R. J. DeBottis  
Memorial Lecture  
November 10  
Gene D. Cohen, M.D., Ph.D.,  
Director of  
the Center on Aging, George  
Washington University

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Back to School Again  
@ the GCSW  
UH Homecoming  
November 8



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