Letter from the Department Head

Greetings!

One of the community-building activities for the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) this year has been CEHD Reads events around the question, Can one person make a difference? As I read this issue of Interactions, I am struck by the many ways our faculty and students are extending our spheres of influence and making a difference in the lives of others. I am especially pleased because our department is committed to the importance of family social science to diverse families across the globe. This issue highlights contributions by FSoS faculty, emeritus faculty, visiting scholars, and graduate and undergraduate students exploring a range of ways in which they can make a difference.

As you read specific stories, I hope it is clear to you that Family Social Science’s spheres of influence are truly global. For example, I was honored to interview David and Karen Olson about their Mano a Mano work in Bolivia. I came away from the interview with a greater understanding of their lifetime commitments to the well-being of global families.

We were enriched by having visiting scholars from Iraq and Germany in our department this fall. What a tremendous opportunity it was for Family Social Science to serve as one of the hosts for a group of Iraqi scholars who visited the University of Minnesota and the Twin Cities. As a part of activities during their visit, Drs. Batool Al-Hasson, Abed Ali Al-Khafaf, and Abdulkareem Abdullah Mahmood Al-Radhi discussed the status of women in Iraq and their hopes for future collaborations.

In addition, Rahel Windgassen, a Psychology student from Bielefeld, Germany, was a visiting scholar in our department during the summer. She was mentored by Dr. Liz Wieling who provided her with a full range of formal and informal experiences. This was Rahel’s first exposure to Family Social Science and Marriage and Family Therapy. As a result of her visit, we believe others in “back home” will come to know of our mission and work.

Throughout this issue, there are many examples of FSoS faculty and students interacting with diverse families close to home, in new environments, in new academic settings, and around the world. This issue provides a lovely example of the many ways our mission, To enhance the well-being of diverse families in a changing world through teaching, research, and outreach, is really alive and operational.

Best wishes,
Karen Olson helped to distribute school supplies to children in a Bolivian community located at 15,000 feet above sea level.

David and Karen Olson grasp Mano a Mano mission of hope

Being the owners of a successful business, David and Karen Olson quickly recognized that Mano a Mano is a well-run organization. Once they witnessed how the organization is transforming the lives of hundreds of thousands of Bolivians, their admiration quickly transformed into commitment.

David, a Family Social Science professor emeritus, and Karen own Life Innovations, a Twin Cities company whose PREPARE-ENRICH inventories are aimed at helping couples of all ages build strong marriages and healthy relationships.

They became involved with Mano a Mano, when a physician friend asked them to assist with the fundraising for one of the organization’s medical clinics. They became believers when they went to Bolivia this summer for the opening of the clinic.

Mano a Mano’s philosophy of volunteerism and empowerment, David explained, means that community members must help build the clinics and then are responsible for making them survive. Within three years, the clinics must be self-supporting, and, of the 100 that have been built, “only three or four are not making it,” he said.

The organization got its start with Segundo Velasquez’s trips from Minnesota to visit his family in Bolivia. Each trip, he carried medical supplies that were being discarded by Minnesota hospitals and clinics. Over the years, other people started to help, and, in October 1994, Mano a Mano (Spanish for Hand to Hand) was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in the United States. The organization then began to expand, first to building health clinics, then schools and housing for teachers, then roads, airplane runways and water reservoirs.

During their stay in Bolivia, the Olsons

continued on next page

“Mano a Mano has been guided by the simple yet powerful premise that groups of committed volunteers can reach across national boundaries to make a dramatic difference in the lives of others. The power of this premise has been demonstrated by [the way] the organization’s accomplishments have, in such a short time, expanded to exceed even our most ambitious dreams.”

From the Mano a Mano Web site
were impressed by what Mano a Mano could accomplish in such remote, impoverished regions. They were inspired by the Velasquez family, whose members manage the organization. "It is a family system, extremely organized and committed to giving," Karen explained.

After visiting a site where workers were using a small portable cement mixer and three wheelbarrows to build a large water reservoir for crop irrigation, the Olsons volunteered to donate a cement mixing truck. Mano a Mano launched an extensive search for an acceptable used one. When it was finally procured and put to work on the site, Mano a Mano reported to the Olsons that reservoir construction went 22 times faster.

Although the Mano a Mano clinics and schools are austere by U.S. standards, they are everything to the community members. Mano a Mano "changes their lives," Karen said.

David said the trip to Bolivia changed his life as well. "It reinforced the importance of giving to others... Seeing the impact of the small things we did was so rewarding. We were choked up a lot."

For Karen, the trip was a stark illustration of "how much we (in the United States) have, and what they (the Bolivians) don't have." It left her with a strong desire to go back and do some more of "the little things that make such a difference."

The Olson's enthusiasm has spread to Jan McCulloch, FSoS department head, who hopes graduate students will sponsor a service project for Mano a Mano. In addition, she noted, Mano a Mano fits in well with the CEHD Reads program, which builds a year of education and events around one question, which this year is "Can one person make a difference?"

For more information about Mano a Mano, visit their Web site at http://www.manoamanobolivia.org/
Big Brothers Big Sisters finds FSoS grads to be outstanding employees

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities places a high value on the skills that family social science graduates have to offer. The four FSoS graduates who are full-time employees are strong evidence of that.

Sheng Vang, Yangmee Lor, Sarah Mandile, and Desiree Price all received their bachelor’s degrees in Family Social Science and now work for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Three of them, Sheng, Yangmee, and Desiree, got their start at the organization as undergraduate interns. Emily Shea, a current FSoS undergraduate student, served an internship this summer and was hired this fall as a part-time clerical assistant.

Barb Alfrey, director of Human Resources and Volunteer Services, said she has been extremely pleased with the preparation FSoS students bring to Big Brothers Big Sisters. Especially important is that fact that FSoS students are educated about and sensitive to the many diverse families that the organization serves.

“We find that the coursework and hands-on experience that they have gained in the internships and the volunteer work they are encouraged to do” serves as “terrific training” for working at Big Brothers Big Sisters, she said.

“We appreciate all the outstanding Family Social Science students and graduates who have helped us deliver our mission,” she said. “Thank you for preparing them so well!”

$1.2 million grant to help Ambit expand child trauma work statewide

Ambit Network, a project of Family Social Science Assistant Professor Abigail Gewirtz, this fall was awarded a $1.2 million three-year implementation grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Department of Human Services. The grant will allow Ambit to expand its work helping communities meet the mental health needs of children suffering from traumatic stress.

It will fund a project with the Minnesota Department of Human Services to develop a Minnesota Continuum of Care for Child Trauma. The continuum aims to raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families and communities. It will focus on children affected by parental military deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan, refugee and immigrant children, and Native American children.

Among the project’s goals will be to build statewide consensus on the best mental health treatment practices for traumatized children, and to implement those evidence-based treatments throughout the state.

This work will be an extension of Ambit’s accomplishments in the Twin Cities area over the past four years as a member of the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.
When German psychology student Rahel Windgassen came to Family Social Science as a visiting scholar this summer, she brought an open mind and a desire to learn. She left three months later with more academic knowledge and social perspective than she could possibly fit in her suitcase.

Rahel is a psychology student at the University of Bielefeld in Germany. As part of her “diploma” program—the equivalent of a combination undergraduate and master’s degree—students are required to participate in a three-month internship. Rahel thought Family Social Science “sounded interesting,” so one of her professors, Frank Neuner, contacted his research colleague Associate Professor Liz Wieling, and Rahel’s U.S. experience was set in motion.

Rahel’s academic goal was a directed study focusing on the integration of family science and cross-cultural perspectives in clinical treatment. Her experience began with an introduction to family social science and then broadened to couple and family therapy. Among the books she read was the German translation of Loss, Trauma and Resilience, by FSoS Professor Emeritus Pauline Boss. That book study included an in-person discussion with the author.

Dr. Wieling wanted to expose Rahel to research projects and to clinical sites. Rahel visited the Minneapolis-based Center for Victims of Torture and the Emily Program for individuals with eating disorders. Within the Family Social Science Department, she talked with AMBIT Network staff about their work integrating research and practice in child trauma cases; attended research meetings with doctoral students, and discussed marriage and family therapy with students and faculty. In addition, she monitored several University classes, including Introduction to Biological Psychology and Family Therapy Practicum.

Academically, Rahel said, the biggest surprise was “how important the field of family science and family therapy is here compared to how it is in Germany.”

She managed to squeeze in trips to Chicago, New York City and California. One particularly memorable experience was the American wedding she attended. “It was more like a party compared to a German wedding,” she said with a smile and a note of wonder in her voice.

Rahel has a year of coursework remaining at Bielefeld, and then she will write her thesis. She said she would like to become a therapist or possibly get a Ph.D. in psychology.

Coming to the University of Minnesota “was one of the best decisions I ever made… It opened me up to other worlds and possibilities,” she said.

Rahel may have been an unsuspecting pioneer. Because Dr. Wieling believes so strongly in the importance of international education, she said, she wants to develop a reciprocal exchange program for international students, and Rahel’s successful visit was the first.

German scholar’s visit could be the start of an exchange program

Sara Axtell helps to organize visit by Iraqi delegation

Family Social Science faculty member Sara Axtell represented the College of Education and Human Development in planning a visit by a delegation from Najaf, Iraq, this fall.

The 14-member delegation was part of an effort to develop a sister city relationship between Najaf and Minneapolis. Other cosponsors included the University Office of International Programs, the Muslim Peacemaker Teams, and the Iraqi and American Reconciliation Project.

Many of the delegates were faculty members at the University of Kufka in Najaf, and a portion of their two-week stay was spent on the University campus. University events that Dr. Axtell helped to organize included a Water for Peace and Environmental Health in Iraq symposium, an Family Social Science colloquium, and many informal visits with faculty members and students.
**Family Social Science Colloquium: September-November 2009**

**Topic:** Gender, Women, and Family Issues in Iraq

**Presenters:** Dr. Batool Al-Hasson, Chair of Women’s NGO, Najaf, Iraq; Dr. Abed Ali Al-Khafaf, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, University of Kufa in Iraq; Dr. Abdulkareem Abdullah Mahmood Al-Radhi, Dean of College of Nursing, University of Kufa

Because of their willingness to step in, the Iraq colloquium took place despite the absence of an interpreter.

**Topic:** Making Innovative Products of Community Engaged Scholarship Count

**Presenter:** Cathy Jordan, editor CES4Health.info (pictured with Dr. Bill Doherty)

**Topic:** Multicultural Health Story Telling Project

**Presenter:** Emily Wang, Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support

**Topic:** Understanding Children With an Incarcerated Parent

**Presenter:** Zayed Lamu, Council on Crime and Justice

**Topic:** Transgender Parenting

**Presenter:** Leigh Smythe, Transparent (pictured with Dr. William Goodman)

**Topic:** A Lesson Before Dying

Dr. Jan Jan McCulloch led discussion of *A Lesson Before Dying*, which was a part of the CEHD Reads program.

Not pictured: Ruth Neubeck, widow of Professor Emeritus Gerry Neubeck, shared videotaped interviews about she and Gerry’s journeys from Nazi Germany to America.
Welcome, 2009 Graduate Student Cohort

The graduate student cohort for 2009 is pictured above. From left, Professor Jean Bauer, director of graduate studies; To Nga Minh Hoang, Ph.D./Marriage and Family Therapy; Charles Sim, Ph.D./Marriage and Family Therapy; Emily Becher, Ph.D./Marriage and Family Therapy; Nanci De Felippe, Ph.D./Family Social Science; Amy Walkner-Spaan, Ph.D./Family Social Science; Mona Fraki, Ph.D./Family Social Science; Dung Minh Mao, M.A. Plan A/Family Social Science; Jennifer Reinke, Ph.D./Family Social Science; Patrick Cheek, Ph.D./Family Social Science; Stephanie Heuring, M.A. Plan A/Family Social Science; Jessica Connell M.A./Ph.D./Family Social Science, and Professor Steven Harris, director, marriage and family therapy program.

IN THE HALLS

INTERACTIONS is three times a year by the Department of Family Social Science, University of Minnesota. It is distributed to alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of the department. We welcome your comments, ideas, suggestions, opinions, and news items, which you can send to colby041@umn.edu.

B. Jan McCulloch, Department Head
Jackie Colby, Editor and Designer

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Three FSoS Undergrads are McNair Scholars

Three Family Social Science undergraduates participated in the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program last summer. The program prepares low-income, first-generation college students for doctoral studies by having them perform research with University of Minnesota faculty mentors.

Chaltu Hassan’s mentor was School of Social Work Professor Dave Hollister. Sartu Hassan worked with Family Social Science Associate Professor Cathy Solheim, and Cassey Quach worked with FSoS Associate Professor Martha Rueter.

The students also participated in a weekly seminar on study strategies for graduate school and on graduate entrance exam preparation. They received advising services that focused on career and graduate studies issues.

The culmination of the summer was a poster session where students presented their research. The students are pictured with their posters.

Cassey Quach worked on “A Comparison of Mother-Adolescent Warm Communication Across Adoptive and Non-Adoptive Families”

Chaltu Hassan researched “Hidden Homelessness and Housing Instability: Oromo Refugees and Immigrants”

Sartu Hassan’s research was “Using Remittances to Adapt to Economic Crisis: The Case of Mexican Transnational Families”
Student News

Two Family Social Science graduate students received honors from the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) this fall. 

Kristin Schneider Dillon received the Outstanding Graduate Student Research Paper Award from the Association of Councils. She presented her paper, titled “Attachment to adoptive parents in adolescents and young adults: Influences of young adult romantic relationship attachment,” at the council’s national conference in November.

Ph.D. student Chelsea Petree was the recipient of the 2009 Wesley Burr Student Paper Award from the Family Science Section at NCFR.

Ph.D. students Jennifer Sampson and Holli Trombley received 2009-10 American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Minority Fellowships. The fellowships are directed at Marriage and Family Therapy doctoral students who are committed to research about and service to ethnic minority and underserved populations. MFT program students Kimberly Diggins, Kara Erolin, and Laurelle Olsen received fellowships last year.

Ph.D. student Johnben Teik-Cheok Loy, Ph.D. candidate, passed the Minnesota Marriage and Family Therapy Board oral licensing exam in August. He also has a master’s degree in business administration and an mts.

Ph.D. student Faten Khoury, Ph.D. student and director of clinical services in the Wayne Caron Family Caregiving Center in Family Social Science, has been selected by the Minnesota Board on Aging to serve on an Expert Team in support of the Alzheimer’s Disease Working Group process. The working group was mandated by the state Legislature to examine the needs of individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and to determine whether the state and current providers have the capacity to meet those needs.

Ph.D. student Amanda Matzek was elected secretary of the Gerontological Society of America’s Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization. The society, the nation’s largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to aging, created the emerging scholar organization in 1960 to provide students with an opportunity to be players in the field of gerontology. Over the years, the student leadership has had a role in the development of programs and activities, helped stimulate the development of student awards and established a mentorship program to link students with seasoned professionals. In 1995, the Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization helped launch the society’s Campus Ambassador Program, designed to establish a professional/social network on every campus where there is, or should be, an active gerontology curriculum. Amanda and the society’s other new officers took their positions at GSA’s 2009 Annual Scientific Meeting in November in Atlanta, Georgia.

Family Social Science student blogging for CEHD

Linda Yang, a senior majoring in Family Social Science and Human Resource Development, is one of several CEHD undergrads who have started blogging for the college this fall. Each week, the bloggers share their experiences as CEHD students inside and outside of the classroom. You can read the blog at http://blog.lib.umn.edu/cehd/students/.

Rosenblatt’s new book explores ‘shared obliviousness’

Family Social Science Professor Paul Rosenblatt has published a new book, Shared Obliviousness in Family Systems. Rosenblatt defines “shared obliviousness” as “the state of being unmindful or unaware of something, and in a family setting, it means that all family members distance themselves from information they could—and maybe should—be conscious of.”
Alumni News

Jaerim Lee (Ph.D., Family Social Science 2009) has two teaching positions in Korea: Seoul National University, Department of Child Development and Family Studies, where she is an instructor of a junior-level course titled Contemporary Family Theories, and Kyungpook National University, Department of Child Development and Family Studies, where she is an instructor of a graduate-level course titled Seminar in Family Welfare.

Dorothy Rombo (Ph.D., Family Social Science 2009) accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Brian Willoughby (Ph.D., Family Social Science 2009), accepted a position as Visiting Assistant Professor, School of Family Life, Brigham Young University.

Yvette Perry (Ph.D., Family Social Science 2006) this fall started a position as program director for student research, scholarship, and diversity at Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI). Her primary responsibility is to direct the Diversity Scholars Research Program for high achieving underserved undergrads. She also oversees the McNair Scholars program and a program designed to help recruit and transition high achieving community college students to the university. In addition, she teaches a research seminar.

Heather Haberman (Ph.D., Family Social Science 2008) began her position as an assistant professor of Family and Child Studies at Louisian Tech University on Sept. 1.

Patricia Schaber (Ph.D., Family Social Science 2004) was selected for the University of Minnesota Academic Health Center’s Academy for Excellence in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Patricia is an assistant professor in the Academic Health Center’s occupational therapy program, for which she wrote an innovative hybrid online/on-campus curriculum. She will receive $10,000 a year for five years and a lifetime membership in the academy.

Leslie Blessing (B.S., 1999) is a licensed social worker and works at St. David’s Center as a clinical supervisor for children’s mental health case management and mental health skills training.

Teri Schweiger (B.S., 2009) is employed as a credit and housing counselor at a non-profit organization in Roseville. “I really love my job,” she wrote, “but I’m finding that I miss being a student!”

Amy Seaverson (B.S., 2008) is teaching in Shanghai, China, and plans to get a graduate degree in international public health at a school in London.

In memorium: James Maddock

Family Social Science Professor Emeritus James Maddock died of cancer on July 18, 2009, at age 67.

Dr. Maddock worked at the University of Minnesota for 36 years. He was a founder of the University of Minnesota Medical School Program in Human Sexuality, former president of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists, and co-founder, with his wife, Noel Larson, of Meta Resources Psychotherapy and Training Institute in St. Paul.

A celebration of his life was held on August 16 in the atrium of McNeal Hall on the University’s St. Paul campus. Memorials are preferred. Contributions may be made to the Neubeck/Maddock Scholarship for professional development.

Your Gifts made a difference to these students

Here are just a few of the Family Social Science students who have benefitted from your donations.

With the help of scholarship funds, doctoral students Shuling Peng, left, and Xiaohuili Li were able to attend the National Council on Family Relations Annual Conference in San Francisco this fall.

Jessie Everts, left, and Jinhee Lee were the recipients of the Neubeck/Maddock Scholarship for professional development. The scholarship funds helped pay for the two doctoral students to present papers at the National Council on Family Relations conference this fall.

Karen Kramer received the David Olson Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship this year. The award will help her complete her doctoral dissertation, including presenting papers at national conferences, which will further her growth as well as the academic content of the profession.

Make a difference

Your gift is an investment in our collaborative learning community and your support will help us keep our community vital. With your donation we can continue to educate and support families, train students of all disciplines, and reach out to connect with and train professionals in your community.

Together, we can make a difference.

You may make a gift to the Department of Family Social Science through the University of Minnesota Foundation. You may choose to designate your gift to any of the funds below:

- Friends of the Family Assistantship (3911)
- Shirley Zimmerman Fund (5487)
- David Olson Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship (5816)
- FSoS Strategic Initiative (2748)
- Jan Hogan Fellowship (5734)
- Family Caregiving Program (5995)
- Neubeck/Maddock Scholarship Fund (2191)
- Wayne Caron Memorial Fund (1938)
- Ott International Student Fellowship (1883)
- David H. and Karen Olson Marriage and Family Fellowship (1920)
- Family Stress and Resilience Endowment (7645)

You may also choose to memorialize a loved one by donating in their name. Visit www.foundation.umn.edu or call 612-626-8560 or 1-800-775-2187 for more information.

Thank you,

[Signature]

Family Social Science

Our Mission
To enhance the well-being of diverse families in a changing world through teaching, research, and outreach.