Greetings!

Although you may have heard that Minnesota has had a banner winter year, here in Family Social Science the cold temperatures and snowy days have not deterred us from accomplishing meaningful and exciting initiatives. In this issue of Interactions, we celebrate the long and stellar career of Dr. Kathryn “Kathy” Rettig as well as the accomplishments of faculty, graduate students, and our McNair Scholars – a truly departmental life span snapshot.

I think we often work so hard doing our day-to-day tasks that we forget, in the end, these daily efforts do add up to something. In the case of Dr. Rettig’s career, her research and teaching have “added” up to outstanding contributions in Family Social Science and contributed to significant recognition and change in the way we view how family resources should be handled in the case of divorce. We are very proud to call Kathy a colleague and wish her the very best.

We also feature two items focused on FSoS undergraduates. First, six of our Family Social Science undergraduate majors were McNair Scholars in 2010. I congratulate each of our scholars on the success of their McNair experiences. In addition, the community service of our FSoS Roundtable is showcased. When I see the dedication and commitment these undergraduates have for tackling difficult family and community issues, my hopes for the future soar!

We also highlight the work of two FSoS faculty members – work that expresses our dedication to making a difference for families here at home and globally. First, you will read about Dr. Liz Wieling’s recent work in Uganda. We realize how difficult this work is and applaud Liz’s dedication to assist families who experience war trauma. Second, we feature a new grant award to Dr. Abi Gewirtz. As a former military wife, I know first-hand the importance of providing assistance to military families as they navigate lengthy separations – separations that carry the stress of service men and women executing their jobs in dangerous areas. Abi’s statement, “I believe that the University of Minnesota has a huge responsibility to be able to provide this (Parent Management Training). If we can’t do this, then we have no business doing science,” is an example of the department’s persistent dedication to promote the well-being of families across multiple contexts.

I hope you will celebrate with me as you read about our “winter” activities!
Developing Human Capital: Celebrating the Career of Kathy Rettig

by Dr. Jean Bauer

We honor the career of Dr. Kathryn Rettig. She has degrees from Iowa State University and Michigan State University. Her educational experiences focused on home economics education for the B.S., and Family Resource Management and Sociology for her M.A. Two years of her Ph.D. were in Sociology at Iowa State and after a break of several years, she completed her doctorate at Michigan State University in Family Ecology and Educational Psychology Counseling.

Students were often surprised at the breadth of knowledge Dr. Rettig had about children and other social issues. Some of this could be attributed to her life prior to coming to Minnesota in 1984. She held an instructor position at Iowa State University (ISU) and was responsible for the home management house (a live-in laboratory for daily life). She was an instructor in Sociology at ISU during the same time.

In addition, she was a social worker for adoptive home studies, for the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, Champaign, IL. This was followed by another social work position in the Department of Pediatrics, Child Development Clinic, College of Medicine, University of Iowa. She was also an instructor in the Department of Home Economics at Glassboro State College, Glassboro, NJ.

Her life began a new phase as the family moved to Michigan with two young children; she was Director of Parent Education in Lake Orion, MI. Following this, she was able to focus again on her Ph.D. and held teaching and research assistantships at Michigan State University until 1980. After graduation she was an assistant professor at University of Illinois in Department of Family and Consumer Economics. In 1984, she joined the faculty of Family Social Science at University of Minnesota.

During her career at University of Minnesota, she concentrated her research and teaching on building human capital. Her own career path was important, but more importantly was the development of her students and those who worked with over the years. She has served the department as a teacher, researcher, mentor, advisor, and friend to many. Her role as developer of human capital has been with students. She has published 55 referred journal articles, 41 of them with students. She has edited one book, and authored 11 book chapters. Over the years she has helped many others grow and develop.
through her service as an ad hoc reviewer for 22 different journals. She has served the University, the department, and many undergraduate and graduate students by teaching 19 different courses over her 26 years in FSoS.

Kathy Rettig, will always be remembered for her work on the economic consequences of divorce for Minnesota families. She was involved with six legislative testimonies for the Judicial Committees and subcommittees for the Minnesota House of Representatives, the Supreme Court of Minnesota, and it’s Task Force for Gender Fairness in the Courts. The research that supported this work and her other research was funded by many foundations that were interested in the fairness of child support for children.

Over the years, her research also included: (a) Interpersonal resource exchanges and quality of family life; (b) Intergenerational transfers of values, attitudes, and competencies; (c) Adjustment of farm families to economic stress; and (d) Decision making and relationship-ending transitions.

As a developer of human capital, Dr. Rettig served as adviser to 16 Ph.D. students and on another 30 Ph.D. committees in Family Social Science. She was adviser to two master’s students and served on the committees of another eight in Family Social Science. She also served on committees in Nursing, Education, Public Affairs, and Social Work. Every Ph.D. graduate over the last 11 years was guided by Kathy in their writing and preparation of manuscripts through the Integrative Research Seminar. Sixteen students chose to work independently with Dr. Rettig on their Special Research Papers and/or research projects. Many others were guided by Dr. Rettig as they prepared their own teaching projects.

Over the years, she helped faculty like me, Jean Bauer, to grow and develop. Her door was always open and she welcomed us for a conversation. Her greatest contribution as a developer of human capital is her two daughters, Kari and Heidi. Now in the future, Kathy you can enjoy the knowledge that you have done well and helped us all to have a better life.

A slideshow featuring pictures of Kathy and her family throughout the years was shown at her retirement celebration. Here are a few of the highlights.
Upper Left: Kathy in her office as new faculty.
Lower Left: With daughters Kari and Heidi at Indianwood Lake.
Lower Right: Kathy during her time at Iowa State.
The Family Social Science Undergraduate Roundtable wanted to be able to channel their ideas and goals into a mission. That mission can be summed up in three words: engage, volunteer, and network.

From a small group of around five regulars, the Roundtable has more than tripled in size this year, averaging fifteen to twenty students at their weekly meetings at the St. Paul Student Center. Though the group is based out of the department of Family Social Science, students from all majors are welcome to participate.

The group has a passion for volunteering and community service, and has decided to focus on helping out in the areas of poverty and homelessness. They specifically aimed to work with a locally focused group, instead of a larger national organization such as the Salvation Army, and chose Sharing and Caring Hands. Sharing and Caring Hands is a Minneapolis-based organization that provides a host of services including food, clothing, shelter, transportation assistance, medical and dental help and much more to the over 20,000 people who come through their facility each month.

Roundtable members will be volunteering at Sharing and Caring Hands, working on art projects with elementary-aged children, and hosting an ice cream social with teens.

One of the largest events the roundtable has organized is “Perm Out Poverty,” a hip-hop benefit concert to raise money for Sharing and Caring Hands. The title was inspired by show headliners and local music production crew Audio Perm, and their “Permed Out Wednesdays” web features with various artists. Some of these artists also performed at the event, including Mally, D’Allen, and Jay Linen.
In the fall of 2010, associate professor Liz Wieling spent time hearing stories of both tremendous heartache and astonishing resilience from Ugandans who had experienced the horrors of war.

Victim’s Voice (Vivo) Foundation has had a presence in Gulu, in northern Uganda, for close to seven years. In that time, they have trained local counselors and conducted treatments with many individuals suffering from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder using Narrative Exposure Therapy (NET). Wieling collaborates with Vivo as a member herself and as a fellow clinical research colleague.

NET is an individual-based treatment, and Wieling’s time in Uganda was spent conducting treatments and research to develop parent and family level treatments. She conducted parent-child dyadic observational interviews and a series of focus groups with both men and women. “Persistent poverty and the long-term effects of war are just some of the big issues facing these families,” she said. The heartbreaking issue of child soldiers is also something communities find difficult. These children were often abducted from their schools, and forced to commit atrocities against their own people. Many communities are at a loss as to how to reconcile returning children as both victims and perpetrators.

Though there is currently peace in Uganda, many are fearful of Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army returning. However, communities have made commitments to not only asking for help but also helping themselves. Wieling plans to continue collaborating with her Vivo colleagues to develop multi-component, culturally relevant, systemic evidence based treatments that also target building local capacity with the potential for ongoing sustainability.

Jessie Connell blogs the graduate student experience

Jessie Connell, a second year graduate student in Family Social Science, is one of CEHD’s new graduate student bloggers. Connell is interested in youth development and technology and families, and works with associate professor Jodi Dworkin on the Parenting 2.0 project.

Connell has never blogged before but takes part in other social networks, such as Facebook, and has dabbled in Twitter. “I’m excited to have a place to discuss issues that interest me professionally but might not necessarily come up in class,” she said. “For instance, if I read an article in Newsweek that really gets me thinking, I can link to it on my blog and add my thoughts.”

Connell is planning on investigating a number of topics on her blog, from the benefits of taking statistics in high school to recording thoughts and experiences after attending large conferences. “The ability to bring in other media and ideas is really exciting,” she said.

You can read Jessie’s blog at: http://blog.lib.umn.edu/cehd/jessie/
Six FSoS undergraduates named 2010 McNair Scholars

Six Family Social Science undergrads were selected to be McNair Scholars in 2010 and have research interests (and future plans) as varied and exciting as their own experiences.

The McNair Scholarship program seeks to increase doctoral program application, matriculation, and degree attainment for underrepresented and first-generation college students. Through this experience, McNair Scholars develop higher-level academic and research skills necessary to gain admission to and successfully complete graduate study.

Cherese Alcorn

Experience abroad and at home working with public health concerns has Cherese Alcorn ready to take on the challenges of graduate school and working in the community.

“I definitely feel more prepared for graduate school,” Alcorn said about her experiences as a McNair Scholar. She worked with Dr. Sonya Brady, assistant professor in the School of Public Health, on a web-based project promoting condom use and aimed at reducing HIV risk behavior among teens. Alcorn looked specifically at intimate partner violence and the correlation of condom use, participated in phone screenings of potential participants, and sat in on focus groups. “Working with a professor who was really dedicated and passionate about making sure we succeeded and felt prepared was great,” she said.

Alcorn cited “learning how to manage time” as one of the biggest benefits to her from the program. “There was so much to do over the summer and so little time to do it,” she said. “I was managing a literature review, doing work for the professor, and working on my own research and poster presentation; it was a lot to manage at once.”

Alcorn studied abroad in Kenya in 2009 and worked at the Mtwapa Dispensary clinic, run by the Kenyan Ministry of Health. She conducted screenings and tests for mothers who were at risk for HIV, and made referrals for mothers to receive medication to avoid passing HIV on to their children. She sees a deep connection between the fields of social work and public health and hopes to combine the two in her graduate studies.

Veronica Deenanath

A senior, double majoring in family social science and psychology, Veronica Deenanath isn’t slowing down because she’s due to graduate in the spring. “I’m taking seventeen credits this semester,” she said, “and will be starting graduate school in the fall.”

Deenanath was featured in the Winter 2011 issue of Connect, the college’s semi-annual magazine. She has worked on a photovoice project with associate professor Zha Blong Xiong. Photovoice is a methodology that combines photography with grassroots social action. Xiong has pre-adolescent Hmong children take photographs of their home-lives in order to gain a different perspective on their families.

Deenanath has been accepted to the Family Social Science department as a graduate student for Fall 2011, and is interested in studying a variety of issues. “Mental health in parent/child relationships really interests me,” she said. She wants to continue working with Xiong and also hopes to explore areas of family finance with associate professors Virginia Zuiker and Cathy Solheim.
McNair Scholars (cont.)

Jones worked with Brian Abery, a research associate in the Institute on Community Integration, on the Health Care Coordination for Individuals with Physical Disabilities project. The five-year, five phase study is currently in phase two, and Jones assisted in data collection, interviewing persons with disabilities.

“We’re developing a model of care coordination,” said Jones. Because of her involvement with McNair, she was able to sit in on research meetings for the project, and do graduate assistant work. She also presented her experience and her research with a poster at the UMN McNair Conference in August, 2010.

Jones is a big supporter of the McNair Scholars program, and will be continuing her education as a part of the 2011 graduate cohort in Family Social Science. She has an interest in working on family policy and promoting resilience in children from disadvantaged families, particularly those who have been emotionally or verbally abused.

Her work with FSoS lecturer Beth Magistad on a directed study has exposed Jones to the role of a teaching professor and has her looking forward to doing more work with the department.

Elizabeth Ongeri

Pairing her major in family social science with a business minor in human resources, Elizabeth Ongeri is planning on keeping her interests in working with families at the forefront in her future. “My dream is to conduct research and apply what is learned from my research to help parents and children in immigrant families build strong relationships,” she said.

Ongeri worked with FSoS associate professor Zha Blong Xiong over the summer on a project focusing on preparing children for kindergarten and the achievement gap. The project, entitled “School Readiness: Do Parenting Classes Make a Difference?” This study evaluated a parenting program that tries to get Lao children ready for kindergarten by working with Lao parents and grandparents on their parenting skills. Fifty-one parents and grandparents participated in three parenting classes for eight weeks. Results show that participants who took the classes have significantly changed their beliefs about pre-kindergarten children and become more involved in the monitoring of their children's activities.

As for her future plans, Ongeri said, “I hope that obtaining a Ph.D. in family social science will give me an opportunity to teach and research the topics of parenting and family management in immigrant families.”
More about McNair: Scholars and Research On Display

The McNair Scholars Program hosts a research symposium near the end of each summer term, where scholars display poster presentations and speak about their research. The 2011 symposium will be on August 2, 2011, in the Mississippi Room in Coffman Memorial Union.

Interested in learning more about the program and the participants? Visit the CEHD McNair Scholars page online at: http://www.cehd.umn.edu/trio/mcnair/

McNair Scholars (cont.)

Maria de Jesus Rios
With a minor in Chicano studies, FSoS senior Maria de Jesus Rios is considering her options for how to serve the community she is passionate about. “I want to take time to decide on my field,” she said, “but I want to keep working with youth.”

For her summer research work, Rios used data from the Minnesota Student Survey, which is administered by the state every three years to 6th-, 9th- and 12th-grade students. Her research focused on how often students talked with their parents about their lives and concerns, and correlations to other factors. “There was a large positive correlation,” she said, “between students who talked with their parents regularly and getting more A’s, with increased likelihood of attending college.”

“Most research tends to focus on deficits,” Rios said, speaking specifically of the Latino community, “but when you work with students, you begin to see all of the assets.” Strong family connections and a desire from many students to continue their education past high school are both prevalent, and Rios is excited to work to encourage them.

Ker Thao
Ten weeks in the summer seemed like too short a time for Ker Thao to dive into the research she wanted to pursue, but she was excited to get to work and find results.

Working with Dr. Karen Cadigan, Policy Director of the Children, Youth, and Family Consortium, Thao investigated how Hmong mothers go about selecting a kindergarten for their children. She interviewed six mothers from around the Twin Cities, and found that word of mouth and personal recommendations influenced decisions the most. “I was expecting this kind of result,” Thao said, “but the research set up a bunch of other questions for me to look into.”

In addition to majoring in Family Social Science, Thao has two minors: one in family violence (through the School of Social Work), and the other in applied psychology in educational and community settings (through the department of Educational Psychology).

After graduating in May 2011, Thao is planning on a future in counseling. “I would really love to be a counselor in a high school or middle school,” she said, but Ph.D. work is also a possibility. “Educational disparities, especially in the Asian American community and families, are really interesting to me.”
Researchers at the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis VA received a $3.2 million grant award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse to develop and test a web-enhanced parenting program for families with parents returning from deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan.

The program, “After Deployment, Adaptive Parenting Tools/ADAPT” is based on Oregon Parent Management Training, a well-validated parenting intervention. Over the 5-year grant period, researchers will work closely with MN Army National Guard (MNARNG) personnel, to develop and test the parenting program among 400 MNARNG families in which at least one parent has been deployed.

Earlier research led by one of the project’s co-investigators, Dr. Melissa Polusny, showed that worries about family were an important predictor of soldier wellbeing during deployment, and that effective parenting during the period of reintegration was diminished among soldiers suffering from symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder.

Dr. Abigail Gewirtz, assistant professor of Family Social Science and the project’s Principal Investigator, notes that, “This program builds on the considerable strengths of military families, the success of prior research among our investigative team, and our strong collaboration with the MNARNG and its nationally recognized Beyond the Yellow Ribbon reintegration campaign. This is the first National Institutes of Health-funded study that we know of to specifically address deployment-related parenting challenges and child resilience among National Guard families.”

Before deployment, all service members and their families are required to attend a one-day Family Preparation Academy. Gewirtz, along with Dr. Laurel Bidwell, a research associate in Family Social Science, have been traveling across the state, from Rochester to Bemidji to right here in St. Paul, to speak with families about parenting.

“What we discovered pretty quickly is that families had a lot more questions than we anticipated,” Gewirtz said. “We dumped our PowerPoint presentation in favor of just answering questions.”

A variety of questions came up, and every session has been different and brought new challenges. From issues of discipline in the home (and how it changes after a service member returns from deployment), to young children recognizing a parent who has been absent, families are taking in as much information as they can.

“I feel that this is an incredibly valuable public service for our service men and women,” Gewirtz said. “People are thirsty for more information. As a land-grant university, I believe that the University of Minnesota has a huge responsibility to be able to provide this. If we can’t do that, then we have no business doing science.”

Participants for the next phase of ADAPT will be recruited from MNARNG returnees, starting in the summer of 2012.
IN THE HALLS

Emily Becher (2nd Year MFT) was awarded the 2010 MAMFT Award for the Doctoral Level Outstanding Student.

Kimberly Diggles (5th year MFT) was awarded the Scholarly Excellence in Equity and Diversity (SEED) Award from the Office of Equity and Diversity.

Virginia Zuiker was elected to the AFCPE Board of Directors, beginning a three year term in January 2011. She also received the Minnesota Association of Extension Educators Scholarship Award for her work on financial literacy of college students.

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Dissertation Defenses

Monica Schmitz Frazer

Date of defense: January 14, 2011

Dissertation title: “Poverty Measurement and Depression Symptomology in the Context of Welfare Reform

Catherine Solheim and Linda Buturian (PsTL) were awarded the CEHD International Engagement Grant for their collaborative project titled “The Mekong Initiative.” The award will be used to cover a portion of their travel expenses to northern Thailand this summer, where they will explore study abroad potential along the Mekong River and cultivate contacts with NGOs, community members, and artists in order to better understand the impact of conflicting uses of the Mekong.

Paul Rosenblatt was featured on CNN on November 6, 2010, speaking about bed sharing and the impact it can have on relationships.

Do you have news? Let us know!

We in Family Social Science would love to know about your latest accomplishments and goings-on to be included in future issues of Interactions. Send your news to Amanda Brown at asbrown@umn.edu

Fall 2010 Colloquium Highlights

Family Social Science once again hosted a series of weekly colloquiums during the fall semester, highlighting a number of social issues and areas of research. Here are a few of the highlights.

Graduate students also presented summaries of their research - look on the back page of this issue for the “one sentence summary challenge” and to learn more about what they’re doing.

Dr. Louis Mendoza, associate vice provost for equity and diversity, presented “Advancing a Good IDEA: Bridging Social Justice, Disciplinary and Community Divides, and Scholarship”

Dr. Christopher Johnstone, director of international initiatives for CEHD, spoke about opportunities to integrate international opportunities into work and research.

Dr. William Goodman, associate professor of family social science, talked about his projects undertaken during a semester leave, and learning strategies to make the time effective.

Shawyn Lee, assistant director in the GLBTA programs office, spoke about the queer Korean adoptee experience.
Undergraduate Senior Portfolio Day
Family Social Science seniors gathered in McNeal Hall on December 8th, 2010, to talk about their eFolios with faculty and graduate students. The spring portfolio day will be held on April 13, 2011.

Wayne Caron Family Caregiving Center Holiday Party
Faculty, staff, students and community members gathered on December 18th for the WCFCC’s annual holiday party. The center offers support groups and educational opportunities each Saturday morning for individuals experiencing dementia and their families.
Grad Research Summary Challenge!

As part of the Fall 2010 colloquium, FSoS graduate students presented summaries of their research, and work they had done over the summer. They were challenged to boil everything down to one sentence - here are the results. Watch for exciting uses of clauses and commas ahead!

During the summer Emily Becher focused on research involving the prevention, diagnosing and treating of refugees following experiences of mass trauma including war, persecution, and natural disaster.

Patrick Cheek’s main focus was working to complete his critical review, which is a milestone of completing the Ph.D. program in Family Social Science. His topic is how nonresident fathers’ involvement influences the academic outcomes of offspring.

Jessie Connell developed an online survey to collect data for her master's thesis on how adolescents and young adults use communication technology, like texting and e-mailing, to communicate with family.

Laurel Davis presented two papers on formerly homeless children’s exposure to violence at home and in the community at the International Conference on Family Violence and Child Victimization at the University of New Hampshire.

Erica Kanewischer’s research examines childhood psychological trauma and the development of PTSD in relation to maternal parenting stress, and maternal experience of childhood abuse.

With the generous support from a Waller summer fellowship, Bibiana Koh was able to complete most of her preliminary dissertation analyses examining the relationship between parent-child personality traits and adolescent conflict, and personality traits and family communication.

Jinhee Lee’s Waller summer study examined the unique contribution that family therapists as family business systems consultants bring to an interdisciplinary consulting team through a cross-disciplinary investigation based on the logic of analytic induction.

Thanks to the 2010 Waller Fellowship, Amanda Matzek was able to spend the summer immersed in her dissertation data (Health and Retirement Study) creating her analytical dataset, cleaning data, analyzing and handling missing data, and conducting preliminary statistical analyses.

Di Samek used funding to study sibling influences on adolescent substance use.

Janet Yeats used her grant money for trainings/workshops/conferences to expand her trauma knowledge, specifically in the areas of international communities, PTSD diagnoses, and EMDR training. She also presented a poster of research she conducted in Kenya. She will be using the knowledge gathered in her clinical practice and to inform future research and work in the area of trauma. (Editor’s note: Two sentences, but we’ll allow it!)