

# Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare

School of Social Work - 400 Ford Hall - 224 Church Street SE  
Minneapolis, Minnesota - (612) 626-8202

## NEWS

Summer 1995

*Sponsored by the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare  
with Bush Foundation and IV-E funds, through the Minnesota Department of Human Services.*

### ANNOUNCEMENT:

**Annual Conference: "Defining Excellence for School-Linked Services" Thursday, September 14, 1995.  
Cowles Auditorium, Hubert H. Humphrey Center, Minneapolis.**

#### Guest speakers:

- ◆ *Paula Allen Meares, Ph.D., Dean, School of Social Work, University of Michigan;*
- ◆ *Lynn MacDonald, Ph.D., Director of Award Winning Project: Families and Schools Together;*
- ◆ *Heather Weiss, Project Director, Harvard Family Research Project.*

For registration, contact Kari Schaefer, PDCS, 210 Nolte Center, 315 Pillsbury Driver, SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455-0139; Telephone (612) 625-3840; FAX (612) 626-1632.

### **NEWLY ADMITTED SCHOLARS 1995-96**

The following students have been selected to receive Bush/IV-E Scholarships for the 1995-96 academic year:  
**Beth Alvarez, Don Bibeau, Marshall Brown, Terri Collins, Frances Dawkins-Sanders, Richard Hach, Kenneth Hanna, Dana Harrison, Lucy Hayes, Rennae Lobitz, Raven Mason, Alexis Oberdorfer, Heidi Presslein, Carolyn Reynolds, Melissa Roberts, Susan Stoterau, Chuehue Thao, Khue Thao, Chong Thor, Felicia Washington, Paula Williams-Sanders, Mao Yang, Vang Yang.**

Once again, a highly qualified and diverse pool of students was identified for these scholarships intended to improve the child welfare system and the well-being of children and families. This group was distinguished by broad

experiences working with high-risk families and children. The following is a small sample of the rich diversity of the new class of scholars.

**Don Bibeau** works as the director of Family Violence Program, Division of Indian Work, Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches. For the past eight years he has worked in the chemical dependency field, including directing New Visions Treatment Center, group therapy and case management at the Domestic Abuse Project, and a board member of credentialing of chemical dependency counselors. He also was the Executive Director of the MN Intertribal Affairs Board.

**Marshall Brown** is currently the supervisor/director of Child Welfare Services for the White Earth Reservation Tribal Council. He has worked extensively with American Indian

families and children since 1976. His background also includes work with mentally and physically handicapped people and the Peace Corps in the Philippine Islands.

**Carolyn Reynolds** has over twelve years of social work experience with children and families. She worked for Ramsey County as a Child Protection Worker primarily with African-American women and children, and is now in Family Day Care Licensing. She also has developed a training videotape called "Tuning Into the Cross-Cultural Situation" which recreates interviews between various clients and practitioners.

**Mao Yang** is presently employed as the Omsbudperson for Asian-Pacific Families for the State of Minnesota. He also is active on many boards, such as Child Abuse Council, Department of

Corrections; Child and Family Consortium, University of Minnesota; and Cultural Beginnings Project for MN Child Care Resource & Referral.

## **BUSH/IV-E GRADUATES MAKE THE NEWS**

♦ **Angela Lamb-Onayiga** is on the staff of Kofi, a widely recognized program responding to high-risk African-American boys in elementary grades.

♦ The following graduates chose to be located in a new initiative in Hennepin County, a neighborhood based child protection unit: **Rolando Martinez, Anne Dare, Ann Stein, Carol Judd, Elaine Madigan, Elaine Lamkin, Sue Gillham.**

♦ **Mark Toogood**, the director of the Guardian Ad Litem Program in Hennepin County has been a frequent editorial writer. His major Op-Ed piece on domestic violence in the Minneapolis Star/Tribune received wide attention. He is currently serving on an advisory committee to the State Department of Human Services for their fall conference:

♦ **Rebecca Anderson-Fly** is now a school social worker at Waite Park School. She published a paper on Working with Bi-Racial Teens in the first anniversary issue of the publication, *The Bi-Racial Child*.

♦ The following students prepared evaluation reports projects under **David Hollister's** course, SW 8903, Program Evaluation, seven Child Welfare Scholars designed evaluations on the following topics: Input Evaluation Plan: Program Participants at the Walk-In Counseling Center; Felony Project of the St. Paul Domestic Abuse Intervention Project; Employment Program of the Horizons Community Support Program; Relative/Kinship Placement Pilot Project, Children and Family Services Department; Cross-Cultural Pregnancy Prevention

Peer Education Program; Home-based Program, Southside Family Nurturing Center; Hennepin Initiatives for Violence-Free Families.

## **FACULTY NEWS**

♦ **Esther Wattenberg** presented a paper, 'Assessing Risk in Neglecting Families: The Search for Community Standards,' based on work completed with Laura Boisen, doctoral student, sponsored by the American Public Welfare Association in San Francisco on April 15, 1994.

♦ **Anne Ahlquist's** course, "Issues in Child Sexual Abuse," was offered by satellite to 125 people in 7 sites throughout the state.

♦ **Jean Quam**, Director of the School, was elected president of NASW, Minnesota Chapter.

♦ **David Hollister**, Professor, has been awarded a quarter leave to investigate barriers to chemical dependency treatment of parents involved in child protection.

♦ **Nancy Johnston**, Director of Graduate Studies, has been awarded a single quarter leave in winter 1996 to analyze child welfare legislation and to work with the Children's Defense Fund on their legislative agenda.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

We are pleased to announce that **Richard Barth**, Ph.D., Director Family Welfare Research Groups, Berkeley, CA, will be a guest of the Center September 15-18, 1995. He will be a speaker at the state symposium, "Preserving Families & Protecting Children: Searching for Common Ground," and a consultant to the Center on developing a research agenda for child welfare. A breakfast meeting with doctoral students has been arranged for September 18.

Please contact Laura Boisen, 624-1383, for further information.

## **TWO SUCCESSFUL WORKSHOPS**

♦ "Managing the Tasks of Supervision in a Changing Child Welfare System: Putting Socks on the Octopus", March 29, 1995. Particularly valued were the collegial discussions and presentations by Anne Gearity, 'and Now, Observations from an Additional Perspective,' and Judy Brumfield, 'Is One Pair of Eyes Enough?'. Participants recorded a range of observations to note that they had been able to acquire new information to improve their role as supervisors. Eighteen counties were represented at this workshop.

♦ Spring Workshop: "Domestic Violence and Child Welfare: A Search for Common Ground, June 8, 1995, at the Earle Brown Continuing Education Center. Standing room only. The chief presenter was **Jeffrey Edelson**, Professor in the School of Social Work.

**Maureen Green**, a veteran frontline worker in child protection, Hennepin County, provided the following summary of child protection's role in instances of domestic violence:

*Our criteria for accepting cases into child protection in Hennepin County in matters of domestic violence are as follows:*

- 1) *injury to parent or adult requiring medical care*
- 2) *deadly weapons are involved (guns, knives, tools, etc.)*
- 3) *a child intervenes or is used as a shield*
- 4) *child is left in the care of the abusive parent*
- 5) *there is a past history of domestic violence requiring CPS involvement*

*It is the philosophy of our department that the victim is capable of protecting her/his children. It would be disrespectful to say otherwise. We, as an agency, need to join with the abused parent to help them as needed to accomplish their safety plan for their children. Every action we take with a family should build on their strengths. This doesn't mean we aren't realistic. In situations where the parent is indeed unable to protect their children, society, through the law, mandates that child protection is the agency that will intervene and make decisions necessary for the safety of the children involved.*

*It is always our intent to preserve families whenever possible. We see ourselves as working with the family and the community to provide safe, nurturing environments for our children to grow in. Child protection is only one piece of the network available to accomplish this. We are very anxious to network with other helping agencies to accomplish this goal. We must remember that child protection is a result of the community's mandate that society step in and intervene in the welfare of children when it is evident that the parent can not, for whatever reason.*

*It is also important to keep in mind the reality of dwindling resources within the county social service systems. Hennepin County is very proud of it's efforts to maintain high quality services to families. We look forward to collaborating with the community in continued efforts to provide the best possible environment for all our children.*

## **PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE**

- ◆ Papers based on the proceedings from the conference Children in the Shadows: The Fate of Children in Neglecting Families.

- ◆ Highlights from the 9th National Roundtable on CPS Risk Assessment and Models of Risk Assessment.

"The Origin of the Community Social Services Act," (Minnesota's Block Grant Program for Social Services) is the title of a paper prepared by Kevin Kenney, now with the State Department of Human Services, then (1979) the Director of the Legislative Research Staff. The paper was presented at an MSSA meeting, 'Public Mandates in the Year 2000.' It is a "must" for social welfare history buffs.

## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

A new course: "Contemporary Issues in Child Welfare" is being offered this fall. This course will be co-taught in the fall quarter by Esther Wattenberg and Denise Revels Robinson, the assistant commissioner of Family and Children Services, Department of Human Services. For further information, please call Jin Hedstrom at 626-8202.

## **NEWS NOTES**

- ◆ The School of Social Work and the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare have provided small grants to the Minnesota State Universities to improve content in child welfare.
- ◆ The use of distance education for professional education of staff in rural Minnesota counties is under development with a grant submitted to the Children's Bureau, Washington D.C..

## **EDITORIAL COMMENT**

**by Esther Wattenberg**

A warm hum of approval accompanies the mantra of child welfare reform: collaborate, coordinate, prevent, decentralize, cross systems, shift paradigms, and above all, seek family support systems in the neighborhood where

children live. Child welfare reform is now enmeshed in a confusion of strategies reflecting the multiple goals that have been assigned to the agenda for change: reducing the foster home placement rates; improving risk assessment; strengthening families; preventing recurrence of maltreatment; expanding relative/kinship care; and so on. (See Hearings held by the U. S. Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, May 1995, "Child Protection: Balancing Diverging Interests.")

The recent report of the U. S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect: "A Nation's Shame: Fatal Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States," underlines the crisis nature of the state of the child welfare system. Adding to the sense of crisis is the terrible suspicion articulated by seasoned observers that we have a growing generation of children experiencing long-term chronic neglect in multiproblem families who are being disregarded by the system. Children and families are receiving inadequate, fitful or no attention at all because these children do not pass the test of admission to child protection: "imminent harm." This test has become the procedure for rationing dwindling resources. "Neglect of neglect" is the phenomenon that describes the policy which governs a child welfare system which is consumed with the cost of investigating escalating reports of child maltreatment (the beginning phase of child protection procedures), leaving little available for services.

It is doubtful that the issue of neglected children will reach the top of the agenda: physical abuse and sexual abuse crowd the investigation imperatives. The suffering of neglected children is mute, and in a triage system, the response to these children is usually inattention.

The child welfare system is in flux. Almost every state is now engaged in some aspect of reform.

Minnesota's child welfare reform efforts operate under a stern goal

established by the State's newly developed "Children's Initiative": Reduce the number of children in out-of-home placement by 50% by the year 2005.

Several task forces are at work. Meanwhile, the reduction in federal funding, the shift to block grants, the unknown effects of welfare reform, and managed health care have created an unprecedented sense of uncertainty for safeguarding the well-being of children in high risk families.

Two conferences this early fall are worth attention: September 14, the Center is sponsoring, with others, the meeting on "Defining Excellence for School-Linked Services," which will

scrutinize the collaboration between education and human services. Perhaps the conference can provide some understanding on how to keep families from being enmeshed in the formal child welfare system. Following on the heels of this conference, we have the State sponsored symposium, "Preserving Families and Protecting Children: Searching for Common Ground." This conference focuses on a wide-ranging national debate that cuts through the catch phrase, "in the best interest of the child."

In a response to the child welfare crisis that I wrote for the New York Times, the paper gave the letter the title, "The Child Welfare System, Under Fire,

Stagger On."

We shall see whether Minnesota's child welfare system will stagger on or discover a source of renewal from the concentrated attention of the State's "Children's Initiative."

Whether we can designate children in neglecting families as a top agenda item in child welfare reform efforts are yet to be disclosed.

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*This publication is available in alternative formats, upon request. Please contact the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, 431 Ford Hall, 224 Church Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455.*

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