*SIUE Department of Social Work*

*College of Arts and Sciences*

# TAC-The Alumni Connector

Volume 1, Issue 5 December 2005

## 2005 NASW Delegate Assembly

By Gerald V. O'Brien, Ph.D.

Every three years, representatives from each district of NASW gather in Washington DC to discuss and finalize policy statements for the profession. These policy statements are included in *Social Work Speaks,* the primary publication within the social work profession related to social policy issues and recommendations. During the 2003-2005 term, I had the privilege of representing the Metro-East District of Illinois on this Assembly. I felt it was important to discuss this process in part because

few social workers know about the general assembly process.

*Social Work Speaks,* now in its seventh edition, is a publication that includes approximately sixty social policy issues, related to every major concern of the profession. Each issue includes background information on the social issue or problem, followed by recommendations for policy development or revision. Every three years approximately one-third of the policies come up for review. During the three year period prior to the Delegate Assembly, a representative is elected from each region, and those individuals work in groups, principally on–line, to revise policy statements. New policy issues can also be developed, although they must gain support from the assembly as a whole. NASW members who are not elected representatives also have an opportunity to comment on any policy issues that are due to be considered, and may involve themselves within the revision process. Policy proposals are available for comment approximately four months prior to the Delegate Assembly.

The Illinois delegation, which includes ten members, works in conjunction with the Midwest Coalition, a group of approximately eight states. The Coalition meets shortly before the Delegate Assembly, in order to discuss upcoming policy statements and the Coalition's own priorities for the Assembly. The Delegate Assembly itself lasts a full weekend. Among other activities, the policy statements are further discussed in small groups, revised as necessary, and voted on individually by the full delegation. Following the standards set out in Robert's Rules of Order, delegates may speak in favor of or in opposition to various aspects of policy statements, and time-limited debates occur related to the proposals.

All in all, I was pleased to have the opportunity to be involved in the Delegate Assembly. While I found some aspects of the process to be inefficient, it was very instructive to see how policy recommendations are developed within the profession. Lastly, I would be happy to discuss the process with anyone who is interested in particular policy issues, so that members can know how to provide feedback when the next round of policy statements comes around.

(gobrien@siue.edu)

***"We should be taught not to wait for inspiration to start a thing. Action always generates inspiration. Inspiration seldom generates action."*** *Frank Tibolt*

# Social Work Students in Action Following Hurricane Katrina

**By Carl Washington-Social Work Undergrad**

My name is Carl Washington: I am a Senior at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in the Social Work program. I am currently in field placement at St. Patrick Center in downtown St. Louis, Missouri. The center's mission is to provide opportunities for self-sufficiency and dignity for persons who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, with the goal of positive change in their lives.

After the Gulf Coast was hit by Hurricane Katrina, St. Patrick Center was identified as an agency that would assist those affected and provide outreach for anyone coming to the St. Louis Metropolitan area. At St. Patrick Center, I served as part of a team that was responsible for organizing job opportunities offered by companies in the greater St. Louis area and surrounding communities, to recently displaced workers from the Gulf region. St. Patrick Center attempts to connect clients to appropriate job opportunities. Clients are allowed to use St. Patrick Center's name as a reference when applying for any position they feel qualified to fill. Once connections with employers are made, we continue to follow-up and provide as much outreach and assistance as needed for successful transition.

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**By Katie Attaway, Social Work Undergrad**

"I searched the older man's eyes directly across from mine, as the tears began to form. I wanted nothing more than to hug him, and tell him it would be okay, but I grew speechless. My demeanor screamed amateur to life's lessons, so I squeezed his hand instead. The man came from New Orleans."

In the weeks following Hurricane Katrina, the St. Louis American Red Cross began an enormous task: providing relief to some 5,490 hurricane evacuees who managed to make their way to St. Louis. The gentleman I sat with during that long day stood out to me in a waiting room packed with people, all of whom were significantly affected by one of the worst natural disasters in the history of the United States. His kind-hearted look offset his time–worn exterior. At the completion of our interview, he spiritedly expressed his profound appreciation through a simple, "thanks". This time, he embraced my hand. To me, this is what social work is all about.

Nothing surpasses the understanding that comes between two people when each has just added meaning to the other's life. Regardless of which area of social work you choose to practice, the sometimes rare, but life-altering bonuses are what keep you going. Choosing a practicum site with the American Red Cross in St. Louis could not have come at a better time.

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**By Kanoi Taylor, Social Work Undergrad**

When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, it also hit the United Way of Greater St. Louis hard. As an SIUE social work practicum student at UWGSL, I have had the awesome opportunity to work first hand with victims of this devastating disaster. Working in information and referral, it is my duty to assist clients that call for help, but also now, assist those that walk in from New Orleans. My first task was to make them feel comfortable and then actively listen to their story, assessing their current needs, and help both individuals and families complete FEMA, Red Cross and UWGSL intake forms.

Food, clothing, furniture, toiletries, child care items and much, much more was donated by people from St. Louis and Illinois surrounding areas. Clients had the ability to shop through these donated items and take what they needed, while I reviewed their intake forms and composed a list of resources that could assist them with additional needs. This list of resources was provided to the clients, and we continued to follow-up with them during their stay in our area.

To watch and hear the reports of Hurricane Katrina on television and radio was deeply moving for many of us. To work with the people directly impacted by Katrina's force, deeply touched my life. The images of their smiling faces along with the appreciation and gratitude they expressed to me for our assistance reinforced to me the reasons I chose social work as a profession.

# Recent Grad Heads for Texas in Wake of Hurricane Katrina

By Michelle Boonaerts, MSW (Summer 2005)

Most recently, I was among the first responders to provide needed social work services to hurricane victims at the AstroDome in Houston, Texas. Acting in the capacity of a rogue Social Worker, I spent two weeks working with the elderly, who, by all accounts, were regarded among the most vulnerable. My days consisted of performing assessments for the provision of medical and social services. This included counseling, linking clients with medical resources, helping victims to establish permanent housing and aiding in the acquisition of available subsidies.

Although many resources were available, due to a lack of accessibility and a wide information gap, many evacuees remained at an unnecessary disadvantage. Having noted this disparity, I spent time garnering donations for the creation of maps to be distributed among evacuees. As a result of this work with the Katrina Disaster, I was invited to speak at the University of Illinois in Springfield, and have also been featured in three newsletters; including, the ACOSA update which has recently accepted my commentary/comic, *Bitter Irony*, for publication.

Currently, I am serving as a much needed substitute teacher in an urban school district within the St. Louis Metropolitan area. Substitute teaching is providing the opportunity to work with at-risk school age children while gaining knowledge about the urban educational school system. Employment as a sub also provides the flexibility I need to accomplish my goals in Europe in summer 2006.

I have secured a three month policy and development internship in Leuven, Belgium to begin in the summer of 2006. During this time I will collaborate with Youth for Understanding (YFU), an international organization committed to the promotion of peace through cultural exchange. Through this practicum I hope to gain the experience necessary in order to qualify for an advocate level policy internship in Brussels, Belgium where I can obtain permanent employment.

# Memoirs — My Experience With Katrina Evacuees

By Carrie Schwartzkopf, MSW (Summer, 2005)

September 9: I was standing in my family room watching the news of Hurricane Katrina and the devastation the hurricane left. I turned to my husband and said, "I'm going!" Two reasons inspired me to go. 1) As a social worker, I feel obligated to help those in need.

2) I have volunteered on many disasters with the Red Cross. My husband and daughter agreed and helped me pack the car. Red Cross stipulates you must have plenty of food to sustain you for one week. I therefore raided my MRE (Meals Ready to Eat) supply and commenced to leaving for Houston, Texas.

"Houston?" You ask. Yes. Michelle, my colleague, was already in Houston at the Astrodome and asked me to come, since the need for social workers was great. During my drive, I kept in cell phone contact with Michelle. Upon arriving in Houston on September 11, Michelle told me the evacuees were moving and therefore social workers were not needed. That did not deter me. I went to the Houston Red Cross office and explained my situation. They were elated to see another volunteer, inundated as they were. I could see why.

September 11:The Red Cross Chapter of Houston sent me with ten other volunteers to Orange, Texas. You're wondering where is Orange Texas? Well….it's located right on the border between Texas and Louisiana; a small town with a big heart. You know, everything is bigger in Texas.

Our group arrived at the Red Cross office in Orange after a few times around the freeway (we got lost). I was placed in the shelter that was once an old middle school. I worked with kitchen staff that seemed to be drowning from the many people that needed food services. The shelter held over 400 people. Each classroom was converted into living spaces that held several families according to their relationships.

I was shocked at first to see police officers and the Texas National Guard standing around with M-16's guarding the facility. This was a safety precaution, but also to keep the peace. We were warned the atmosphere could change in an instant. We were instructed to take off any jewelry, watches, ID, or anything that could cause harm to our being or violate our identification. It seemed like a war zone with the guards and constant patrolling of Humvee's around the perimeter of the shelter.

(See Memoirs on page 4)

# Memoirs (continued from page 3)

I came to understand this was for everyone's protection; evacuees and volunteers. I was told two nights before my arrival a small riot broke out and patience grew to the boiling point.

September 12-21: After a sleepless night in a hotel that seemed to be a frat house for roaches, I arrived for my first official day at the shelter. I was placed on the kitchen staff as an assistant manager for food preparation and kitchen closing. This meant I came in with Laurie, another manager to set up every morning at 0500 (5:00 a.m.). Our day didn't end until 2200 (10:00 p.m.). I thought, "that's cool; this is for the people." I just went into military mode and didn't stop until my tour of duty was over. However, I realized coffee and comfortable shoes became my best friend, a requirement that should be implemented in the Red Cross manual.

A typical day for the kitchen staff:

| | |
|---|---|
| 0500 | Setup |
| 0600-0900 | Breakfast |
| 0915-1030 | Cleanup |
| 1100-1400 | Lunch |
| 1415-1600 | Cleanup and meetings; catch up and eat, plus anything to keep motivated (dancing crazy in the cafeteria-I know from personal experience). |
| 1630-1730 | Meetings with other staff members |
| 1800-2000 | Dinner |
| 2015-2130 | Thorough cleanup and preparation for morning breakfast. |
| 2200 | Crash and burn, plus talk with evacuees who wanted to talk. |

As usual, the plan looked great on paper, but we know when Murphy's law wants to come and play; he will. Murphy 's Law came to play everyday. Mainly with shortage of volunteers and food.

The days and nights seemed to run together, but I loved every minute of it. Laurie and I motivated each other, as well as our team, which consisted of wonderful volunteers from Orange Texas.

What impressed me most were the attitudes of the majority of the evacuees. Most looked at the hurricane as a blessing, it gave them an opportunity to start a new life. I saw the excitement in many faces as they were sent to South Dakota, North Carolina, Maryland, California. Regardless of the location, they saw an opportunity to start over.

Working in the kitchen was an opportunity for me, since I experienced their emotions in every way. You see, the kitchen or common area is where people sit over a cup of coffee, beverage or meal and feel relaxed. If you want to get to know a person, sitting down at mealtime is an excellent way to get to know them. The world around them seems to slip away and that's when their true feelings come out. At least that's what I noticed in the shelter. This may have been a rare incident, since it was a unique disaster situation.

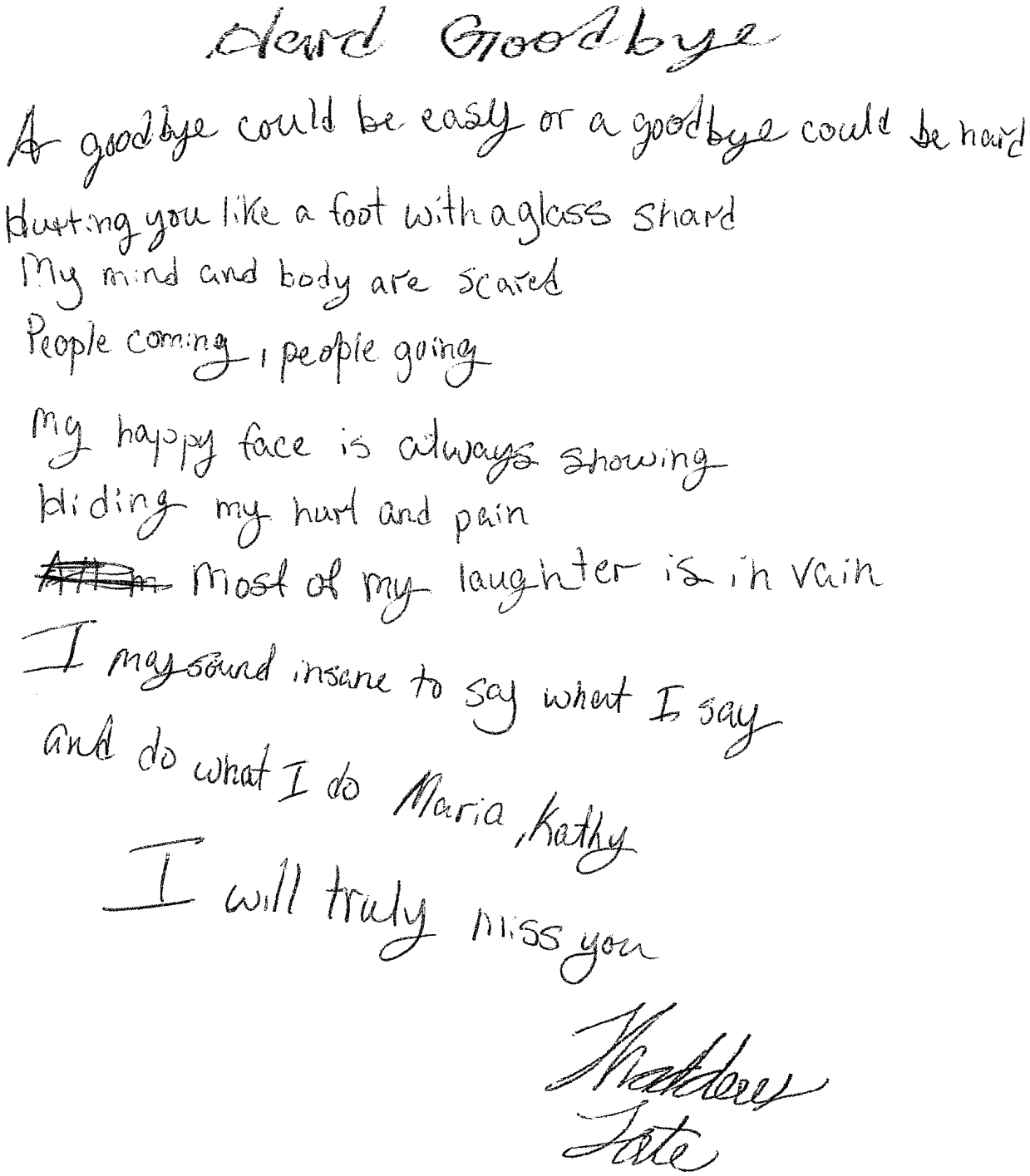
Regardless of the circumstance, it was nice to sit down with people and listen to their story. At times it was quite difficult to hold back tears, but a hug made all the difference in the world.

Some people more than others stuck out, in just the way their demeanor was. I remember one gentleman; wheelchair bound due to diabetes always had a smile on his face. At 0500, he was always ready for his coffee. He always said, "This day is great, because you're here." I smiled and was glad to see him, but I started beating him to the punch and said, "It was a great day to have him around."

Another young man made quite an impression, not only to me, but the entire staff. His name is Thaddeus, an extraordinary young man; age 14 with the intellect of a 30 year old. There was a mystery about him. He always stated his family was at the shelter, but no one ever saw them. The family was registered, but they never came around for services, only Thaddeus. Since he was persistent in nature and craved attention, the kitchen staff took him under their wings and made him an honorary volunteer. We supplied him with a vest, an Orange county pin and a hat. He stood tall like a peacock, with a smile that was a mile wide, gleaming bright and proud. He seemed like he was preparing for a military inspection. He stood there picking at his new vest, picking off particles and adjusting it to a proper fit. We were standing watching like proud parents sending our child off to school for the first time, holding back tears, but full of joy. He looked up at us, eyes full of tears. He said, "You guys are the only friends and true family I have." That's when the "*Hoover Dam*" broke. We jumped up from our stations and hugged Thaddeus; imagine a rugby scrimmage, everyone vying for the single ball, in this case Thaddeus. We were crying and laughing at the same time hugging Thaddeus, until he couldn't breathe. Laurie

# Memoirs (continued from page 4)

and I told him while crying, that we are his friends and family. A few days later, reality of the situation struck Thaddeus with great despair. Volunteers began leaving, due to time constraints and obligations. This broke his heart, but at this time, I would like to share a poem he wrote of how he felt in his own handwriting….



# New MSW Orientation Welcomes the Recruits

By Kathleen J. Tunney, Ph.D.

In mid-August of this year, the MSW program welcomed a new group of students. The orientation day included basic information on the curriculum, including field placements and the capstone course-the Integrative Project, done in SOCW 565. Faculty were also able to share with the students their philosophies of education, in terms of what's most important to remember about graduate study. At the end of the day, recent graduates and current students met with the group to share the student perspective.

If you have ideas on what students need to know to succeed in graduate school, from your perspective as an alumnus, please call us! (618-650-5758) We would be glad to include your contribution in the next orientation session.

# Deadline Changes for MSW Admissions

By Kathleen J. Tunney, Ph.D.

Applicants to the MSW program for fall 2006 are going to have a new deadline. Applicant files must now be complete by February 15 instead of March 1. This earlier deadline will allow earlier notification to applicants about the decision of the Department in terms of their application.

All application information is on the website. However, if you know of people who are interested in applying to the MSW program, please let them know that the deadline has changed. We have had a record number of inquiries already this year, and application packets are going out the door at a rapid pace, so it is important to apply early. Anticipating a record number of applicants and a limited number of slots, we urge early application.

Also applicants should be aware that the file needs to be complete by the deadline. A complete file means ALL letters of reference, GRE scores, personal statement, and transcripts from other universities, if applicable. Prospective students must also apply separately to the SIUE Graduate School. That information is available online as well.

# "A Labor of Love for Children"

By Venessa A. Brown, Ph.D.

The quilt is called "A labor of Love for Children" because of all of the thoughts of children's well-being that went into making it. In 1998, some undergraduate students asked how they could express their feelings about the rights that children have. It was at that time that I said, "how about we make a quilt". There are 38 squares to represent each student in the class. Over the years students have written to me and asked me if the quilt was completed. As difficult as it was, I had to say "no". So in 2001, I spent the summer sewing it together by hand but never finished it. In 2005, I told my graduate child welfare class, and they said "we will finish it". It is hoped that this quilt will hang in a children's hospital or somewhere in the University so it can be enjoyed by all and represent the desire of SIUE social work students that children be protected.

It is hoped that social work alumni will come and visit the quilt while it is on display here at SIUE in the Social Work Department.

***Squares made by my undergraduate child welfare class of 1998.***

***Final touches by my graduate child welfare class of 2005.***

***Quilt Consultation by: Maria Isolina Ortiz (former MSW Student)***

***Trim and Bating by: Sharon Galen (Kimmel Leadership Center)***

***Hand Sewn by Dr. Venessa A. Brown***

# Summer 2005 Graduates

**Congratulations from Faculty and Staff!**

**Masters of Social Work**
Nathan Blasa, Michelle Boonaerts, Cara Cassady, LaChelle Cypress, Venise Davis-Scott, Isabelle Dena, Susan Gholson, Kristie Grawitch, Jessica Hawkins, Amy Hemann, Jane Higgins, Jamie Klopmeyer, Jana Leneave, Willeen Liley, Carla Long, Rebecca Mercurio, Edna Norman, Brian Radzom, Melanie Sanders, Edward Schuessler, Carrie Schwartzkopf, Terri Sorger, Elizabeth Steele, Mary Williams, Rebecca Wills, Kerry Yonushonis.

**Bachelor of Arts**
Latrina Dudley

**Bachelor of Science**
Melissa Biggs, Rebecca Choate, Tiffany Darr, Deborah Edwards, Landen Hardin, Laurie Henken, Sharon Hudson, Amanda Iversen, Lisa Johnson, Kristi Kaiser, Kylie Latham, Micha Meehan, Javona Moore, Amy Pohlman, Staci Steinkamp, Carolyn Yinger.

# Social Work Department's 10th Year Anniversary

By Thomas A. Regulus, Ph.D., Chair

This year marks the tenth year anniversary of the SIUE Department of Social Work. After twenty years of association with the Department of Sociology and Social Work, in the fall of 1996, the Department of Social Work was spun off as an independent academic unit within the College of Arts and Sciences devoted to developing and implementing social work education, scholarship, and service programs in Southwestern Illinois. Many of you have and continue to play crucial roles in the life and development of the Department. Some have invigorated the Department as wonderful and engaging students. Many of you have been valued as professional colleagues and partners contributing as field instructors, adjunct teaching professors, and in advisory and consulting roles to the educational preparation of students for professional practice. Others have simply been very good friends or provocative change advocates whose insights have motivated improvements in our programs and services. Internally, our faculty has grown and developed in their teaching, scholarship, and service within and outside of the University; the Deans (Sharon Hahs and Kent Neely) of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Provosts (David Werner and Sharon Hahs), and our Chancellors (Nancy Belck, David Werner, and Vaughn Vandergrift) have been strong advocates and supporters of the Department.

In this tenth year, the articles in this issue of TAC describe some of the diverse activities of our faculty, alumni, students, and friends illustrating the breadth and substantive commitments to social work of the social work community in Southwestern Illinois-St. Louis. This is social work!! I think it speaks for itself. Certainly there have been rough spots in our maturation but averaging it out—it has been a very good ten years.

**Thank you and Happy Anniversary to all!**

# Where have all the Alumni Gone?

**Erin Griebel Heidt, BA (2000)** — Washington University, St. Louis accepted to MSW/JD program.

**Autumn Hinkle Molinari, BS (2001), MSW (2002) LCSW** — Chestnut Health Systems, Early Intervention Specialist.

**Kristie Kaiser, BSW (2005)** — Alton Catholic Charities

**Kory L. May, MSW (2001)**— Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, advanced Child Protection Service Worker (Investigator).

**Mackenzie Pherigo, MSW (2003)**—Chestnut Health Systems, Youth Outpatient Clinician.

To appear in **Where Have All the Alumni Gone ?** e-mail information to kehamil@siue.edu or send to SIUE Social Work Department, Campus Box 1450, Edwardsville, IL 62026.

# Practicum Spotlight

By Kellene M. Hamilton, MSW, LCSW, DCSW

Practicum Spotlight will feature agency field instructors who provide students with the opportunity to integrate theoretical knowledge and classroom skills with clients in a variety of practice settings. Undergraduate students enrolled in Field Instruction I and Field Instruction II are required to complete the minimum number of 200 hours in supervised field experience each semester. The graduate field education program is divided into four semesters requiring students to complete a minimum of 900 hours in supervised field experience over the four semesters. Students qualifying for advanced standing enroll in two semesters of supervised advanced field instruction in either the Health, Mental Health and Disabilities concentration or the Children and Family concentration.

With this issue of TAC, the practicum spotlight shines on Mary Ann Baumgarden, MSW, LCSW, Director of Social Services William Be-Dell Achievement Resource Center, Wood River Illinois.

Ms. Baumgarden has been Director of Social Services at William Be Dell Achievement Resource Center for the past sixteen years. She was graduated with a bachelors degree from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in 1965 and earned a

**Mary Ann Baumgarden**

Masters in Social Work from St. Louis University in 1988. Ms. Baumgarden has served as a field supervisor for SIUE Social Work students for more than ten years providing supervised field instruction to over twenty students. When asked what she likes about having field students, Ms. Baumgarden replied, "the enthusiasm of the students in being more directly involved in the profession." According to Ms. Baumgarden the most challenging aspect for her students is "their wanting to be involved in direct service and needing to be patient with the process to be ready". Ms. Baumgarden stated, "today's students are more prepared, and I find the SIUE Social Work Department doing an excellent job in this respect".

From 1994 to 1996, Ms. Baumgarden served as District Chair of the National Association of Social Workers, Illinois Chapter, Metro-East St. Louis District. In 1997, she was presented with an award as an Outstanding Social Worker from the Metro-East St. Louis District. Ms. Baumgarden is also an active member of the SIUE Social Work Department's Continuing Education Committee and the MSW Advisory Board.

The SIUE Department of Social Work and Students thank you for your commitment to excellence and continuing contributions to the education of future social work colleagues and service to the community.

# In the Classroom—Integration of Drama and Education

By Kellene M. Hamilton, MSW, LCSW, DCSW

Ms. Courtney Tierney, MSW and Chief Operating Officer, Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois, portrayed Elizabeth Edwards (the sister of Mary Todd Lincoln) to the students taking Introduction to Mental Health. During her presentation, she spoke of Mary Todd Lincoln's enduring struggle with Bipolar Disorder. Ms. Tierney talked about Mrs. Lincoln's childhood experiences, her marriage to Abraham Lincoln, and her later years.

Ms. Courtney Tierney will be featured in "Practicum Spotlight" in the next edition of TAC.

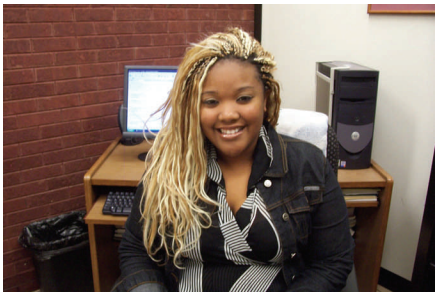
Dr. Thomas Regulus and Courtney Tierney

# SSWA 2005—2006 Officers and Fall Activities

By LaTasha Roberson, Student

The Student Social Work Association officers for 2005-2006 are as follows: President: LaTasha Roberson; Vice President: Kristen Alldredge; Secretary: Trisha Cruz; Treasurer: Claudette Williams; Liaisons: Beth Kretzer, Lisa Wienhoff and Mary Ziltz.

The Student Social Work Association's mission is to bring about a positive change in the local area by service and empowering those in our community. SSWA promotes leadership and growth in student social workers so that we are better prepared to work with our designated population, and to provide the opportunity to enliven our passion for the field of social work by doing. SSWA tries to serve a multitude of geographic areas so that many areas in need can be helped. This has been a great semester for SSWA. SSWA Activities for the fall semester included the following: donated



*LaTasha Roberson, SSWA President*

money to the American Red Cross, Noah's Wish, Catholic Programs (Alton) and Catholic Programs (Belleville); donated pizzas to Metro-East Weather Crisis Task Force of Greater East St. Louis (Holy Angels Shelter); volunteered and served food at St. Vincent DePaul and St. Luke's Parish Hall; volunteered and donated items to the Campus Bazaar; hosted a car wash, an internal fund and a pizza sale to raise money for Katrina Victims and holiday food baskets; Trick or Treated for canned goods collected for Thanksgiving dinner; volunteered and worked on a house with Habitat for Humanity; collected hats and gloves for children which will be donated to Creighton Elementary in St. Parks Place; and sponsored a Christmas Gift Drive for gifts to be given to the families SSWA adopted from CHASI. All monetary donations were of $100 or more for each organization listed above. As you can see we have been very busy, and we are excited about what's to come in serving our community next semester.

# CEU Workshop Series

By Kellene M. Hamilton, MSW, LCSW, DCSW

Gigi Dowling-Urban, was the keynote speaker for the last of a series of three continuing education fall workshops held at SIUE and co-sponsored by the Department of Social Work and the Illinois Association of School Social Workers. Ms. Dowling-Urban, Principal at Pathways School, Belleville, Illinois since 1992, presented on "*Bullying and Violence in Elementary and Secondary Schools*".

On January 27, 2006, the Spring Workshop series will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and feature a morning session from 9:00 a.m. to noon; and registration for the afternoon program beginning at 12:30 p.m. with the session being held from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The morning session will focus on current issues relevant to child welfare, co-presented by keynote speakers Larry E. Lolley, MSW, LCSW Site Administrator and Cynthia A.. Lolley, MSW, LCSW, Public Service Administrator both with the Illinois Department of Children Family Services.

The keynote speaker for the afternoon session will be Ms. Kitty Klee, LCPC, educator and private practicioner. Ms. Klee will present on the topic of "*Cutting and What is inside the Mind of a Self-Mutilator*".

Three CEUs have been approved for each session for social workers and licensed clinical professional counselors. Brochures will be forthcoming in the mail.

***"To laugh often and love much, to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics; to appreciate beauty; to give of one's self; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived — that is to have succeeded."***

*Harry Emerson Fosdick*

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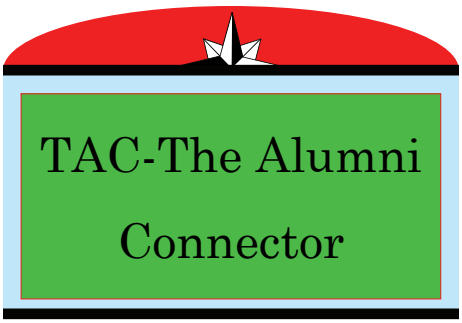
# Happy Holidays and Peace for the New Year

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