

Field Flashes

February 2003
Issue 1



From the Coordinator's Desk

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I am excited to get this first edition of Western Michigan University School of Social Work's Field Education *Field Flashes* off the ground! This is a mini-news update about the things that are happening in the Office of Field Education in the School. *Field Flashes* will eventually be sent to those field instructors that we have email addresses for. This will help us contain costs and reach a lot of people quickly. I am proud to say that the graduate assistants who work in the field office, Mr. Ashanti Bryant, 2nd year MSW candidate, and Ms. Roxanne Wyant, 1st year MSW candidate, have volunteered to put together the information for the *Field Flashes*, which we hope to send out at least four times per year. We would like to share experiences that our students and field instructors have had, share agency updates, pose questions for discussion and generate interest in networking. Please feel free to email the field office at swfield@wmich.edu or me at elizabeth.voshel@wmich.edu with any ideas you may have for *Field Flashes*. We look forward to your thoughts and input!



Agency & Career Fair 2003

You are cordially invited to attend the School of Social Work's 3rd Annual Agency & Career Fair, hosted in the WMU Fetzer Center on Wednesday, February 12, 2003 from 1:30-3:30pm (RSVP required to reserve a table). The Agency & Career Fair will provide opportunities for students and social work professionals to discuss potential field placements, employment possibilities, share community resources, and network. The process for securing field placements for BSW and 1st and 2nd Year MSW students will begin shortly, so this is a great opportunity for field instructors.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!

SPOTLIGHT ON FIELD!!



Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies

"KCMS has a strong commitment to providing social work services to its patients. There is an understanding that psychosocial issues have an impact on people's physical and mental well-being and that it is essential to treat the whole patient."

Angie Poupore (2nd Year MSW candidate, left) and Leigh Robertson, ACSW (Field Instructor, right).



Leigh Robertson, ACSW, a medical social worker at Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies (KCMS) in Internal Medicine, Med Peds, Surgery, and Surgery Orthopedics, conducts a combination of psychosocial assessments and interventions while participating in teams designed to address the different needs of patients. At KCMS, the medical social workers "step in and work with a team to help each patient and support doctors in training." Leigh, a 2nd year field instructor for 2nd year MSW Interpersonal Practice students, describes field placement at KCMS as "incredibly valuable," an opportunity for students to do a range of assessments and treatments, learn and be exposed to an array of health and human service competencies, work with varying fields and populations (newborns through

seniors, child abuse, suicide, etc.), and approach treatment from an interdisciplinary team perspective.

Another benefit to the KCMS team approach is in how the social workers address challenges. Peer review is conducted for cases and there is a trust amongst colleagues to talk about issues or frustrations, not just with client-related happenings, but also with systems. When counter transference or "compassion fatigue" issues arise, the team meets to consult with each other.

And Leigh's current student, Angela Poupore, 2nd year MSW student, thoroughly enjoys her placement. As an intern, Angela participates in 3 clinics- Diabetic Foot, Muscular Dystrophy, and Back & Neck. In addition to that, she conducts biosocial assessments, crisis intervention, helps obtain medication and insurance coverage for approximately 80% of clients, and makes referrals to other agencies and community resources. Angela describes the most beneficial part of her internship as being able to "work with the other disciplines, learn their jobs, and respect their work." The KCMS placement has not only broadened Angela's interest and experience, but also exposed her to an environment where her individual learning is made paramount. Angela describes Leigh as "a kind, caring, detailed, and balanced" field instructor who guides her toward independence, yet is always accessible as a resource and support.

Leigh articulates her own learning as well. "It's one thing to do your job and another thing to verbalize what you do." As a former faculty liaison and instructor for undergraduate social work students, Leigh appreciates how having a student challenges her to think of how to "make the job easier for a new person," affording comprehensive experiences, and essentially being "present" with the student in a different way. The learning contract that Angela designed helps keep Leigh conscious of her student's learning, while helping her process her role as the field instructor.

Finally, Leigh Robertson recognizes the maturity and depth in the types of students that she has had in field placement. Leigh stated warmly that "Angela is like a sponge, really wanting to learn." From Leigh's eyes, herself and the Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies has been fortunate in having "students that are courageous and enthusiastic" about trying and learning from a different framework and in different ways.

Are You Ready?

John Mellein & the School of SW have been coordinating fundraising efforts for the College of Health & Human Services Capital Campaign. The first exciting event will take place on Sunday, February 16, 2003 from 7-10pm at the Union Restaurant in downtown Kalamazoo. There is a \$5.00 donation at the door and the special musical guest will be The Blue Moon Blues Band, featuring two former MSW students gracing the stage, Dale Hein and Bill LaValley.



EXTRA! EXTRA! Read all about it!

We are taking suggestions for the name of the field office newsletter. Obviously, the current name is Field Flashes, but we are considering another suggestion- FIELD FORUM. If you happen to have any other creative ideas for names or just suggestions in general, please forward those to the graduate assistants, Ashanti or Roxanne, by April 23, 2003. Thank you.

Introducing ... The Field Placement Office Graduate Assistants

Ashanti J. Bryant is a 2nd year MSW Policy, Planning, and Administration candidate who is a former elementary school teacher. Roxanne Wyant is a 1st year MSW Interpersonal Practice candidate who is a retail supervisor. Interning at InterAct of MI, Roxanne has a strong interest in working with individuals with mental illness. Interning at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Ashanti plans to work in urban areas, combining community development, and youth & family services with education.

