TSSW poised to grow faculty

Spring in New Orleans is a truly lovely time. The campus is ablaze with blooming azaleas in magenta, violet and white and the temperature and humidity are near perfect. Spring has also always been associated with growth. Now, fully five and one half years after Katrina, the Tulane School of Social Work is preparing for extraordinary growth. The University budget has largely stabilized, permitting the various units on campus to create plans for this growth. I am especially delighted to report that our School is uniquely poised for expansion. Universities and schools of social work throughout the nation are struggling with, in some cases, decimating budgets.

Quite the contrary, the Tulane School of Social Work will be entering the new fiscal year as one of the most successful units on Tulane’s campus. Earlier this year, I submitted a plan to capitalize on this success. It included many new expenditures both for new staffing and other forms of support. Integral to the plan is my request for three new tenure track faculty members, one each at the assistant professor, associate professor and full professor level and two senior staff positions: a new position for an assistant dean and a replacement for the

DEAN’S UPDATE

TSSW alumna Leann Halsey (MSW ’10) greets an Indian man who benefitted from a rice donation from Pennies for Partnerships.

The food drive initiative supports not only a development with the Tibetan Organic Farmers to deliver rice to those who experience hunger issues on a regular basis.

Spring 2011

Recent Graduate discovers calling in India with Pennies for Partnerships food drive

By Joseph Halm, TSSW Marketing

After 20 years as a successful businesswoman, TSSW graduate Leann Halsey (MSW ’10) knew something was missing, and now she’s putting her recent degree to work in India.

“I would come home from work thinking there has to be more than the idea of chasing the dollar,” she said. “I knew I wanted to be helping people. Social work is a large umbrella so you can work in so many different capacities to help people. I hope to utilize my past 15 years of business experience, coupled with new social work skills to do some form of outreach or service to those in need.”

Leann earned her MSW in December, and just weeks later, she returned to India to continue her work with the Tibetan Women’s Association (the second largest Tibetan NGO located in 23 countries), Tutors for Tibetans and her newest project. Today, she focuses a lot of energy on Pennies for Partnerships.
The graduating Fall Class of 2010 was the school’s largest since Hurricane Katrina. A total of 80 students graduated in December, joining the ranks of our ever growing alumni. (Bottom left) SGA President Danielle LaRoche shares an embrace with TSSW Clinical Assistant Professor and Director of Field Education Dr. Heather Gillis, who received the SGA’s Outstanding Faculty Award. (Bottom right) Sister Helen Prejean gestures to the audience during her speech at the 2011 commencement ceremonies. Congratulations to each of our newest alumni and best of luck in your future careers.

Partnerships has delivered 5,775 pounds of rice

Continued from Page 1....

the Tibetan Refugee Organic Farmers, who are among the poorest in the community, but also helps assist the poorest of the Indian population who live on less than a dollar a day.

The most recent rice delivery occurred on March 13, when the partnership successfully distributed 2,750 pounds of Tibetan Organic Rice to an entire village that consisted of 50 homes and 80 families. Leann said the delivery was extremely rewarding. “One of the greatest encounters was with a blind woman, who is 103 years old,” she said. “She brought me to tears because she was so appreciative. She profusely thanked us, prayed over us and blessed us a million times over. The smiles on the peoples’ faces brought great joy just knowing lives were touched.”

The delivery also overcame logistical obstacles. Several poorer families lived on a footpath stashed back in the woods. The determination and perseverance of not only the Tibetan Organic Farmers’ staff but the young men from the village, who carried the rice on their backs, made it possible to deliver the food to the families’ doorsteps.

“It is because of our gift givers that the people of this tribal community will have a few days in this year of less hunger and less suffering,” Leann said. “I can assure you they are truly appreciative of the gifts, and they send a huge ‘Thank You.’”

Pennies for Partnerships is completely a volunteer initiative and is made possible through the assistance of contributors who gift money for the purchase of 55-pound bags of organic rice which cost approximately $14 each. To date, the project has delivered 5,775 pounds of rice to a total of 105 families in three villages.

This fundraising project started in 2008 as an outreach project to contribute to the organizations who first welcomed Leann for an undergraduate field internship while attending the University of Arkansas. She studied in the Tibetan community in India during both 2008 and 2009 while attending UofA and worked in two different organizations. Previously, Pennies for Partnerships supported a pilot program for a new educational initiative called Tutors for Tibetans which started in 2008 and is managed by two Arkansas professors. Leann said she is currently applying her research skills to evaluate the effectiveness of the tutoring program in hopes to assist with future grants to expand the program.

Leann’s Tulane internship has contributed to the development of the Pennies for Partnerships newest development as she became aware of such issues as diversity and community cohesion during her time spent working as Chief Operating Officer of the New Orleans-based, non-profit organization ERACE. During her time with ERACE she spearheaded a program that conducted three ERACE diversity discussions via Skype between James M. Singleton Charter Middle School in New Orleans’ Central City neighborhood and Country Day in Metairie.

It is that devotion to bring people together and to assist disadvantaged populations which drives Leann’s work in India today.

Pennies for Partnerships is in the process of partnering with U.S.-based organizations, creating an online donation process and filing for official nonprofit status. Recently, the group received a $100 gift from a sixth-grade classroom who took it upon themselves to contribute. Leann said she is working to incorporate classroom projects with schools and other community outreach opportunities for spur fundraising initiatives.

To donate, provide assistance, or to learn more about Pennies for Partnerships, visit http://indiasocialwork.wordpress.com/ or contact Leann Halsey directly at penniesforpartnerships@gmail.com or call India 011-91-9736801040.
Although our alumni are no longer roaming our halls in search of knowledge, our students are just as hungry as those more experienced hands who are reading this. Here are just a few projects going on in the community, in the classroom and in our faculty’s research arenas at the School.

More than 50 social work students took on community service projects on Saturday, Sept. 25, 2010, including a dozen students who cleaned up the Broadmoor neighborhood to help keep litter from ending up in Lake Pontchartrain.

The event was the first Day of Service held by the Tulane School of Social Work. By the end of their three-hour shift, the students filled more than eight heavy-duty trash bags with litter ranging from plastic bottles to paper products to food wrappers to car parts and screws. The group focused on the storm drains located on Napoleon Avenue and Toledano Streets between Claiborne Avenue and Earhart Boulevard. The students’ work was part of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation’s annual Beach Sweep.

The service day was sponsored by the social work Student Government Association, and organizer Sam King said it was a way for students to bond while giving back to the community.

“As social work students, we’re all working to improve the community,” King said. “The fourth-semester students are currently working in the community, and a lot of the first-semester students aren’t from here and are just getting acclimated to the city, so this is a great opportunity for new students to get to know New Orleans.”

Students also worked with Save Our Cemeteries to pick up more than 40 bags of trash at Lafayette Cemetery No. 2 in Central City as well as with the NO/AIDS Task Force, where they assembled HIV and sexual health awareness kits to be distributed to New Orleans’ high-risk and at-risk populations.

A group of more than 50 Tulane social work students were motivated to take action Wednesday, Nov. 10, 2010, after viewing a documentary about human trafficking of children in the cocoa industry.

Following a screening of The Dark Side of Chocolate, about the continued allegations of human trafficking of young boys among Ivory Coast cocoa farms, the students signed a petition urging the Hershey Co. to take steps toward ending the practice on cocoa farms in its production system.

Social work graduate students Trevor Gahafer and Lindsay Lee organized the viewing of the film, which was produced by Danish journalist Miki Mistrati. The students say it was the first screening of the documentary in the South.

Thus far, the film’s circulation has been limited in the United States, but Lee hopes the video can lead to a grassroots movement to put an end to human trafficking practices in which young boys are taken from Mali and forced to work in Ivory Coast cocoa fields for no pay.

Lee adds that people can do their part by only buying fair trade chocolate, which currently accounts for just three percent of the overall chocolate market share.

“If it increases to 15 percent, that is a tipping point where the industry as a whole will take notice,” she says. “If everyone in that room only buys fair trade chocolate from now on, that increases the market share. If we’re pushing toward that point, that is when corporations will start taking notice.”

Homecoming 2010

More than 150 alumni, friends and current MSW students attended the School of Social Work’s annual Homecoming Reception in October at the James Lounge in the Lavin-Bernick Student Center. The annual reception features food, drinks and live music as well as a silent auction. Prior to the reception, alumni and friends were invited to a special free CEU event, hosted by TSSW alumni Mindy Milan, which focused on self care for social workers. The 2011 Homecoming Reception will be held on Saturday, October 22 with more details coming soon!

Homecoming 2011 is set for Saturday, Oct. 22.

Details in the next edition of Postscripts.
It started with five simple words at the end of a phone conversation, and from that, Judy Kozonis Snider (MSW ’75) and her sister Joan Dickow created a picture book for young and old while living 700 miles apart.

“I Love You, Be Careful” is a heartwarming and uplifting 40-page, picture book for all ages that was published in Oct. 2010. The illustrations capture poignant memories and cause one to reflect on all the “Be Careful” moments in life and smile.

“We were talking on the phone one day, and we were saying that no matter how old your kids are, you worry about them,” Judy said. “It doesn’t matter what country you’re from or what language you speak, a lot of people will say I love you, be careful at the end of a call.”

Judy said it was from those words that the book’s idea was born. Judy along with sister Joan, a 20-year breast cancer survivor, started working on the book with illustrator Cady Driver and three months later it was done.

“We have kind of raised our families on the phone together,” said Joan, who lives in Berkley, Mich. “Writing a book over the phone was a lot more complicated than I thought it would be. The hardest thing was getting down our ideas on paper, but the process came so easily to both of us. We are close enough to say what we really felt.”

Judy, who also wrote “Goldy’s Baby Socks” in 2005, said the process was fun as the sisters talked on the phone every day and laughed. The book chronicles the stages of life via illustrations, starting out with a couple going to the hospital to have a baby and then it goes through a child’s first step and other important moments in life.

“It is really a full circle of life. I’m very proud of it,” Judy said. “It brought out lots of interesting discussions about our loved ones and about wanting to keep them safe.”

The work also has found a home as a children’s book because kids enjoy the repetition with “I Love You” on one page and then “Be Careful” on the next. There’s also a hidden bunny on most pages and “Be Careful” on each page.

“It wasn’t meant to be a children’s book, but we’ve talked to a lot of parents who will actually sit down with their kids and read it,” Judy said.

Besides writing books, Judy enjoys a life of volunteerism in her retirement from a list of social work and library-related employment.

After graduating from Tulane in 1975, she worked at a Catholic social services agency as well as at a Children’s Hospital in Ann Arbor, Mich. She came to Virginia in 1982 and worked for in-patient and then out-patient psychiatric services providers. For the last eight years before her retirement, she worked at a local school’s children’s library.

“I would pick books and read to children as a library assistant. That was an amazing joyful job. I loved working with children. That actually led to getting my first book published,” she said.

Judy lives in Virginia Beach, Va., with her husband, Gil. They have two adult sons, Jon and Nick. More information about the book can be found at www.iloveyoubecareful.com.
Sitting in a coffee shop on Maple St., TSSW alumna Mullady Voelker Alford (MSW ‘07) recounts how she started down her current career path. Then the Vanderbilt organizational development and business grad sums up the journey in eight words.

“It is a great job. It’s really fun,” she said matter of factly.

Her job – founding and running Gifted Nurses Official Private Duty Division – is more than just employment; it is the nearly perfect marriage of her two passions – social work and business.

Mullady said private care includes anything from sending nurses to assist clients with daily tasks as they age to offering hospice services to individuals who want to die at home with comfort and dignity.

“There are so many gaps in the healthcare system. People are left with holes in their coverage and total confusion about how to fill those holes and what to do. What we do is go in and are hired privately to care for people in their homes or in the hospital to do those things that aren’t covered by Medicare and Medicaid,” she said.

Gifted Nurses provides supplementary nurse staffing for hospitals and began its private care offerings last year. Since then, Mullady said the demand has grown significantly.

“It is much more successful than I thought it would be in a very short period of time. We’re continuing to grow to a point that I don’t have enough nurses to fill the demand. Our focus right now is on hiring nurses and CNAs.

But how did a business grad who was originally working as a researcher at a brokerage firm, create a very successful private care business? After Hurricane Katrina, Mullady felt she should be doing something more to help the community, so she enrolled at Tulane to earn her MSW.

While at TSSW, she interned at Children’s Bureau, where she still counsels part-time, and after graduation, she worked as a clinical counselor before moving to Gifted Nurses in April 2010. Mullady uses her social work skills on a daily basis and still remembers a constant debate between classmates who wanted to earn a comfortable living in social work and those who thought social work ideals trumped all.

“It kind of bothered me. There are plenty of profitable business models where you provide incredible services to those who need it,” she said. “Gifted Nurses is really the perfect place to combine my social work skills with a business model that works.”

Mullady, whose unique first name was her great grandmother’s maiden name, said she personally interviews all of her nurses, who serve most of Louisiana as well as the Gulf Coast and central regions of Mississippi and Alabama. She also meets every one of her clients and does a needs assessment before pairing them with a nurse.

“I have hundreds of nurses that work for me, and I take care of them. They’re like part of my family. I’ve had cases where our nurses might not have childcare so with everything that I know about connecting people to resources, it is a breeze to help them,” she said.

“I rely much more heavily on my social work skills than I ever thought I would in a business setting.”

As for the future, Mullady hopes to add a geriatric case management department to Gifted Nurses.

“As we’ve started to take care of people in their homes, we’ve noticed that there is a lot of uncertainty and confusion as to what resources are out there. There is such a piecemeal approach to helping someone at the end of their life that it causes all this anxiety. It is something that we could definitely help with,” she said.

Mullady also serves on the board of the Chamber of Commerce and is a co-chair of the Tour de Lis, a road cycling event and 5K walk/run that was held on April 9 and raised $300,000 for and awareness about cancer survival, support, and research.

Mullady is married to Evan Alford, and lives in Uptown New Orleans with their dog, Oscar.
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DEAN’S MESSAGE: Date for 2011 Homecoming announced

Director of international programming with increase in salary to attract a person with the highest possible credentials. I also requested additional monies for student scholarship support. I am very excited to report that this plan was accepted in its entirety.

We are now fully immersed in an extensive hiring plan based on the above which requires very careful analysis of the needs of the School to fill each of these critically important positions with the right person. Without a doubt, doing this well represents an incredible opportunity for furthering our strategic mission and providing programs which will attract the best and the brightest on a national level. I am confident we will do this.

The position of director of international programs has just recently been finalized, and Dr. Elaine Wright will be our next full-time director, joining Tulane on August 1. A full story on Dr. Wright will appear in the next issue of Postscripts. For now, let me simply say that we are very excited to welcome her to New Orleans. She is moving from Kansas City, Mo., where she is currently the chair of an undergraduate social work program and has had extensive experience working with students, professional social workers and social work faculty in many diverse parts of the world.

This year has been very busy with planning the School’s new doctoral program; another sign of the enormous success of the School overall and its general stature at the University. This opportunity emerged from an initiative from University President Scott Cowen, and similar to the new spending plan discussed above, speaks to the stabilizing of budgets post-Katrina. Two years ago, the University began accepting proposals for new doctoral programs which would be fully funded from the president’s office. Proposals were very rigorously reviewed and included external reviews from a panel of experts assembled from a national pool. Of the many proposals sent forward, our School’s offering is one of only five proposals accepted. One of the requirements is that every new program must be interdisciplinary, reflecting the complexity of issues in our contemporary world. Our program is a collaboration between the School of Social Work and the department of sociology and faculty related to urban studies. Our new program is titled “City, Culture and Community.” This year represented intense planning, curriculum development, and recruitment of new students, all of whom will be fully funded. Professors Charles Figley and Fred Buttell deserve very special mention for their tireless work on this.

It was a pleasure to see so many of our alumni at Homecoming last October. It was a lovely evening with great food and entertainment and, most important of all, a chance to visit with alumni who came from five decades of classes, who have gone on to do incredible work in their communities, and who do an excellent job representing the values and mission of Tulane to the world. We appreciate how well you carry our School’s reputation throughout the world. The date for next year’s homecoming has just been announced and will be Saturday, October 22 (much more on this in future Postscripts).

Graduation is always an exciting time of the year and at the School of Social Work we get to do this twice a year; once in December with our main graduation for our full-time class and then again in May for our part-time students. December’s graduation saw 80 full-time students become new Tulane MSW’s with Sister Helen Prejean, author of Dead Man Walking, offering a truly inspiring message to the class. May’s graduation will add 10 new MSW’s to our community.

One of the most enjoyable activities I have as Dean of the School is to visit with our alumni. I welcome these opportunities to both hear from you about the fascinating and important work in which you are engaged and to keep you informed of the exciting and creative work in which we are involved at the School. I look forward to more of these opportunities throughout the year. I hope your spring is a joyful one.

By Lou Franchina, Development

In this issue of Postscripts, I would like to share some exciting news about an exciting university initiative called Tulane Empowers. As you may have already heard, it is “a campaign to make Tulane University the leading major research university to mobilize its expertise and resources to build stronger, healthier and more dynamic communities — locally and around the world.”

For you, our students, and our faculty, this is nothing new. What it is, however, is an opportunity for the Tulane School of Social Work to raise our profile and enhance our programs. Already, the accomplishments of faculty members like Charles Figley, So’Nia Gilkey, and Jane Parker have been highlighted. From the public schools of New Orleans to the streets of Dharamsala, India, we, indeed, do work that matters.

To learn more about Tulane Empowers, please visit http://tulane.edu/empowers. Also, keep an eye open for invitations to Tulane Empowers events being held across the country; and if you are interested in attending, please let me know.

Finally, I would ask you to consider supporting our community efforts through a financial contribution. Should you choose to do so, simply mark “School of Social Work Tulane Empowers Fund” on your pledge card or on our giving web site. You may also visit the TSSW home page to learn about the school’s Tulane Empowers priorities and funding opportunities.

Lou Franchina is the school’s development officer. He may be reached directly at (504) 314-7308 or lfranch1@tulane.edu.
Mindy Appel (MSW ‘79) currently resides in Del Ray Beach, Fla., and is a LCSW, ACSW and LMFT. She works at the Orchid Recovery Center, a drug and alcohol rehab facility located in South Florida that is specifically geared to the needs of women afflicted with addiction and unresolved trauma. She along with the Orchid Center was featured on the television show 20/20 in April 2010.

Lisa Bergeron (MSW ‘05) currently is a caseworker at Gladney Center for Adoption in Fort Worth, Texas, where she works with birth parents. Lisa is passionate about adoption and educating others about the option. Among many efforts, Bergeron undertook in November, which is National Adoption Awareness Month, she wrote about adoption on various social networking sites; distributed brochures and other information at crisis pregnancy centers, doctor’s offices and schools; and conducted educational training sessions on adoption. She currently lives in Keller, Texas.

Rebecca Gibson-Wilkins, Esq., (MSW ’06) currently lives in Shaker Heights, Ohio. She is working as a Public Defender for the Cuyahoga County Public Defender’s Office in Cleveland, Ohio. Rebecca graduated from Case Western Reserve University School of Law and was elected into the Order of the Coif in May 2010. Rebecca also married Dr. Luke Wilkins, MD, a 2007 graduate of Tulane Medical School in July 2009 in Abingdon, Va.

Charlie Myers (MSW ’81) retired from Louisiana’s Office of Public Health where he was the administrator of the Genetic Diseases and Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Section for almost 27 years. He saw many advances in technology during his administration which dramatically expanded newborn screening services for the state. When he started, babies were screened for two disorders before leaving the hospital. By 2008, newborns were required to be screened for 21 metabolic diseases, two endocrine, three hemoglobinopathies and cystic fibrosis. He also was very involved in reestablishing the Genetic Diseases Section services statewide just days after Hurricane Katrina. After retiring, Charlie relocated with his wife and Tulane Public Health alumna Maureen to her hometown of Denver. He’s currently working on establishing a digital archive of his father’s industrial design career materials. He also remains interested in patient advocacy and in bicycle access and safety. He’s looking forward to joining with fellow alumni next year for their 30th class reunion in October.

Rachel Seidman (MSW ‘10) currently lives in New Orleans and is working as a medical social worker at Canon Hospice. Rachel married in October 2010 and plans to pursue a master’s degree in health care management in the future.

Tom Stagg (MSW ‘03) currently resides in New Orleans and is working as a Clinical Social Worker at the Department of Veteran Affairs in New Orleans as well as conducting a private practice. His focus is on addictions and trauma. Tom also has provided field placement supervision for the School as well as taken part in seminar and/or round table discussions about life post grad school.

Barbara Underwood-Given (PhD ’70) currently resides in Centerereach, New York, which is located on Long Island. Barbara has been long retired. She married in 1979 and retired shortly thereafter. She also lived in Florida form 1972 to 1999.

Renowned family therapist, author visits TSSW

Froma Walsh reached out to more than 200 social work students and community members during a visit to the New Orleans area in September.

She went to Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes to meet with social work professionals as part of a mental health needs assessment being conducted by TSSW and to discuss mental health care services that are needed to address the stress of the Gulf oil spill.

Walsh’s visit, sponsored by the Porter-Cason Institute at the School of Social Work, included a presentation to social work students, a discussion with social work faculty, consultation and training for agencies affected by the Gulf oil spill and a community workshop for advanced service providers.

“It is extremely encouraging to see the support families are receiving in southeast Louisiana,” Walsh said. “We were able to nail down the framework for new and innovative programs to boost family resilience in the face of this recent disaster as well as improve any existing programs to better serve the community.”

Walsh provided training at the St. Bernard Project, which creates housing opportunities and mental health services for those affected by Hurricane Katrina. She also worked with service providers at the Plaquemines Community CARES Center, which serves families, children, domestic abuse victims, the elderly and disabled.

“During the past five years, two major disasters and economic downturns continue to leave south Louisiana families reeling with stress,” said Parker Sternbergh, Porter-Cason Institute assistant director. “The family is the basic building block of the community, and we believe her visit to train practitioners, agencies and students will ultimately help shore up our communities’ families.”

Walsh, co-director of the Chicago Center for Family Health, is a professor emerita at the University of Chicago and the author of Strengthening Family Resilience and Spiritual Resources in Family Therapy.
WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Please share your thoughts, ideas, and information to be used in Postscripts. You may also visit our web site at http://tulane.edu/socialwork and click on the alumni tab to complete this form or for additional alumni updates.

Name: __________________________________________________________ Year of graduation: __________________

Address: __________________________________________ City: __________________ State: _____ Zip code: _______

E-mail address: __________________________________ Phone number: __________________

Degrees/certificates earned: ____________________________________________________________________________

1) What are you currently doing professionally?

2) Have you received any special awards or honors, or have you been published? Please specify.

3) Have you been involved with Tulane School of Social Work since graduation? If not, what events or special services would draw you to become involved?

4) Do you have special news that you would like to share with other alumni (marriage, children, relocation, hobbies, new projects)?

5) Is there anything you would like to start seeing in Postscripts? Is there anything you think should be omitted from the newsletter?

Please complete and return to:
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