



**Tulane
University**

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

POSTSCRIPTS

WINTER 2013

RWANDAN JOURNEY PROVES EYE-OPENING FOR RECENT GRADUATE

By Joseph Halm, TSSW Marketing

Recent TSSW graduate Sara Maurer (MSW '12) looks back on her time in Rwanda as one of the most challenging and enlightening three months of her life.

As a Global Social Work Certificate student, Sara participated in a three-month field placement in Kigali, Rwanda, with the Rwandan Orphans Project (ROP), an orphanage providing residential and educational services for young boys (www.rwandanorphansproject.org).

Her work was largely focused on a unique project of gathering and evaluating information on a new state policy to deinstitutionalize orphanages around Rwanda in the next two years. She visited numerous agencies

Story continues on page 7



Recent TSSW alumna Sara Maurer (MSW '12) worked with orphans in Rwanda as part of her global field placement.

DEAN'S UPDATE

DALAI LAMA VISIT IS HISTORIC

The press conference was held under the ever expanding and gracious live oak tree in front of the School of Social Work on a beautiful late fall day in mid-November with brilliant sunshine filtered through hundreds of colorful Tibetan prayer flags. It is believed that prayer flags literally bless the air passing through them. They are festive reminders of the Doctrine of Compassion, Patience and Applied Wisdom.

In attendance were television, radio and newspaper reporters, faculty, staff and students of the School of Social Work. With this as a backdrop, I was honored and thrilled,

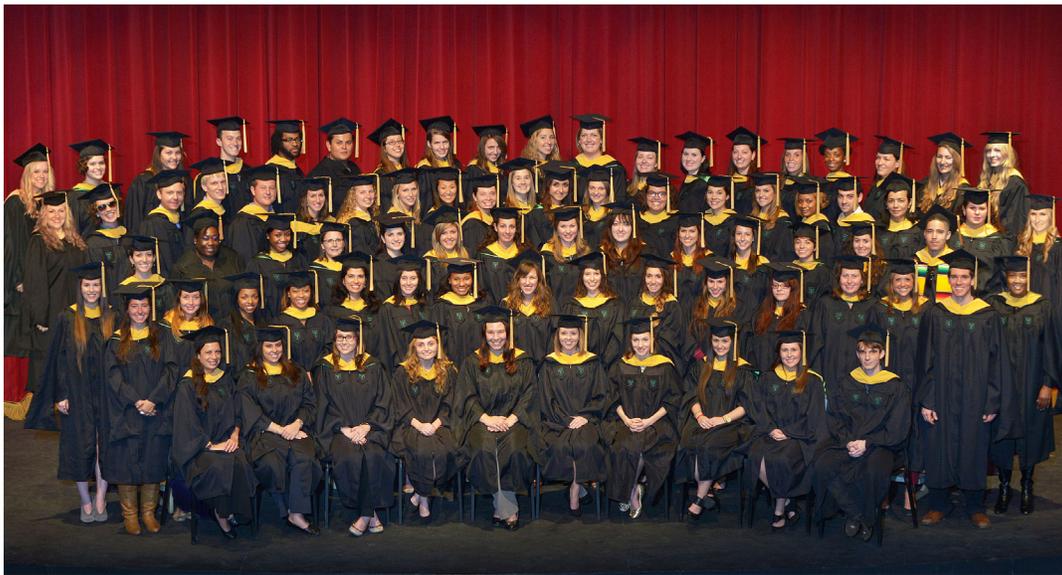


on behalf of the School of Social Work, to announce that His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama will visit New Orleans May 17-18, 2013, as a result of our invitation.

The Dalai Lama received the Nobel Peace prize in 1989. He is the author of dozens of books and recipient of more than 40 honorary doctoral degrees from prestigious universities throughout the world. With the recognition afforded him by the Nobel Prize, and through his tireless efforts not only on behalf of Tibet but of all peoples, the Dalai Lama has become identified as an international champion of human rights for

Story continues on page 4





NEWEST ALUMNI

TSSW welcomed its new cohort of alumni on Friday, December 14. The School's annual Fall Commencement featured 85 graduating students (left) including one member of the Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy Masters Program (left). During the commencement ceremonies, Dr. Lynn Pearlmuter (bottom left) was recognized as Faculty Member of the Year by Student Government President Alix Tarnowsky. (Below) Graduate Jennifer Hayes dawns her red, white and blue shades while singing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Congrats to all of our recent graduates, and best of luck in your future endeavors.

(Photos by Ken Redler)



Alumni Board elects new president, member

The Tulane School of Social Work Alumni Board is proud to welcome its newest member Vicki W. Grieshaber, LCSW, along with its new president Holly McKinney, LCSW-BACS.

Grieshaber has nearly 30 years' experience as a psychotherapist and is currently in private practice in New Orleans. She earned her Master of Social Work from Tulane in 1983 and has worked for numerous agencies since then including Hidalgo Health Associates for nearly 20 years. Her main focus has been on psychotherapy services for individuals, couples and families, but she has worked with many populations including individuals suffering from substance abuse and chronic mental illnesses.

"I was particularly interested in joining the TSSW Alumni Board as a way of staying



Grieshaber

connected to the social work community and to my Tulane roots and core social work values," she said. "I also think it's exciting to be connected to students, who will undoubtedly play an important part in the future of our communities. It will be

rewarding to be able to share some of what I have learned with aspiring social workers."

McKinney (MSW '96) recently served as board vice president and currently works as the Social Services Manager for the Care Management Department of Ochsner Health System -- Main Campus. Her career started by working with at-risk children and adolescents and family violence. She served

as the Branch Office Administrator of the St. Bernard office for Family Service of GNO for six years. In 2005, following her developing interest in health care McKinney served as Social Services Manager at Peoples Health until June 2012.



McKinney

"I am honored to be the incoming alumni board president at such an exciting time for the school particularly as we anticipate the Dalai Lama's spring visit," she said. "One of the projects I would like to take on as president is how to reach out to alumni with whom we have lost contact. I see this as an excellent opportunity to give back to the school of social work."

TSSW Notes What's Happening at Your School Today

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.

ResilientAfrica, a consortium that includes Tulane University's Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy, Makerere University in Uganda, Stanford University and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, has been awarded a \$25 million grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to apply science and technology to strengthen the resilience of African communities against natural and man-made stresses.

ResilientAfrica will unite 20 African universities in 16 countries, representing

more than 300,000 students and faculty members, to form a network to empower African communities.

"Development and humanitarian assistance have been historically addressed on a project-by-project basis with sectors (health, food, infrastructure, etc.) funded in silos. Although these efforts have saved lives and met immediate program objectives, they have not increased the capacity of affected populations to withstand future shocks and stresses," said Ky Luu, executive director of Tulane's Disaster Resilience Leadership Academy, which is housed at TSSW.

"Therefore, understanding and strengthening resilience is key to enabling Africa's increasingly educated youth to take advantage of the rapid scientific and technical advances and provide them with the tools needed to accelerate and strengthen responses to development

barriers, such as overpopulation, disease, chronic civil conflict, lack of infrastructure and poor governance."

ResilientAfrica will assist USAID and other development stakeholders in Africa to increase productivity and economic growth, promote health, stabilization and good governance and decrease vulnerability to disasters through a holistic assessment of program impact on population resilience. It will also establish a dialogue to understand the pulse of the population and allocate aid to meet the peoples' self-identified needs. It will be an innovative presence on the ground and create state of the art tools to nurture African and American student ingenuity.

These efforts will help USAID better identify needs and develop and test sustainable for-profit business solutions in Africa, while increasing the capacity of US students and investors to compete globally.

Stress managers help aid Sandy caregivers

On Nov. 16, fire chief Bob Sinnott posted the following on the web site of the Silverton (New Jersey) Volunteer Fire Department No. 1: "Our community was beautiful and now so gloomy. We are pulling together to help each other empty our homes to rebuild them. We all have lost something but will restore our community."

The Silverton fire department is located in Tom's River, N.J., an area devastated when Hurricane Sandy blew ashore in late October. Sinnott's words, evoking sadness, resignation and determination, are indicative of the complexity of emotions experienced by responders and caregivers in a disaster zone.

"Silverton's fire department is experiencing what we call primary and secondary trauma," said Kathleen Regen Figley, a master traumatologist and adjunct professor in the Tulane University School of Social Work. "These folks have lost everything themselves and also are working with people in their community who have been impacted."

Figley has been involved with the Green Cross Academy of Traumatology in coordinating the deployment of specially trained

teams to work with members of the fire department.

"There are a dozen people who will be going up there in the next two weeks," said Figley. These workers are trained traumatologists who will be focused on what she calls "compassion stress management," which involves working with responders and caregivers who are experiencing secondary trauma.

"We send the compassion stress managers to help bring them back to a stronger level of functioning," says Figley.

Green Cross responders also did house-to-house checks with the Silverton fire department to get services to the community.

The discipline of traumatology is relatively new, says Figley, and was coined by her husband, Charles Figley, founder of the Green Cross and holder of the Paul Henry



Responders in a disaster zone often suffer from "primary and secondary trauma," says Tulane traumatologist Kathleen Regen Figley. (Photo by Julie Dermansky)

Kurzweg Distinguished Chair in the Tulane School of Social Work.

"I had no idea I would enjoy working disaster," said Kathleen Figley, who worked in emergency management for a decade before working with the Green Cross. "That sounds strange, but I liken it to being an emergency room doc. You don't think about him unless you need him."

This story originally ran in the Nov. 20 issue of New Wave, and it was written by Nick Marinello.

Continued from Page 1....

DEAN'S MESSAGE: SCHOOL HONORED TO HOST WORLD LEADER

all. He is unique in the world — the single spiritual leader who consistently promotes and represents pan-religious peace and understanding. He receives thousands of invitations every year.

Since the press conference, I have been asked repeatedly, "How did you manage to get the Dalai Lama to come to New Orleans and Tulane?" For more than 12 years, I've been conducting a graduate social work class in north India where Tulane graduate social work students travel to India for several weeks in the fall. We work closely with the Tibetan refugee population and with the Louisiana Himalaya Association (LHA), a local social service organization that provides education, employment, healthcare, and housing services to Tibetan refugees in Dharamsala and in surrounding villages throughout north India. LHA has established itself as a critically important social and health service agency in this region and has been recognized as such by the Tibetan exile government. Dharamsala is the home of the Dalai Lama and his government in exile. It is the epicenter of the Tibetan exile community. Clearly, this long standing and deep relationship between the School, LHA and the Tibetan communities in India has been a mutually rewarding one and an ever expanding one. An invitation to the Dalai Lama was a natural extension

of our already more than decade-long relationship with the tireless work of the Dalai Lama in supporting the Tibetan community in north India.

His acceptance of our invitation speaks to the significance of relationship-centered practice which forms the core of our MSW program curriculum. Our work in India is a metaphor for this central pillar of our School's programs; namely, relationship centered clinical-community practice. Similarly, the title of his visit and the several events which comprise it also directly reflect our MSW program's emphasis. Our two-day conference which begins on Thursday, May 16 and continues through Friday morning is titled: "Resilience: Strength through Connection and Compassion." It, too, directly reflects our curriculum by demonstrating the significant role community plays and through specific practices that serve to strengthen us as individuals. In addition to the Dalai Lama, the conference will feature prolific author and world-renowned speaker Dr. Margaret Wheatley who will conduct a workshop titled "Whatever the Trauma, Community is the Answer." It also will feature the eminent professor of psychology and psychiatry, Dr. Richard Davidson, who will conduct a workshop, "Change Your Brain by Transforming Your Mind."

In keeping with this theme, the Dalai Lama

will also be giving two public talks. Friday afternoon, he will speak on "Strength through Compassion," and on Saturday afternoon he will offer a talk titled "Strength Through Connection" from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the UNO Lakefront Arena.

There are many, many other components to this historic visit and that will expand this visit and the message for several months prior to and after the visit. We are working to assure that the message of compassion and non-violence has the widest audience possible including public schools throughout New Orleans. A film festival is being planned as well as recommendations on relevant books and discussion groups.

It is an historic visit and I believe it is a true gift to the city. I am extremely pleased that it is the School of Social Work that is the host for this remarkable and momentous occasion and I am truly honored that my work over so many years has resulted in a visit by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama to our city. As you continue in your own important work throughout communities all over the world, you can view the entire schedule and other information about the Dalai Lama's visit at our web site -- www.dalailamanola.com.



ALUMNA 'PAYS IT FORWARD' WITH PROFESSORSHIP

By Lou Franchina, Development

In this space I often discuss ways of how you — as Tulane School of Social Work alumni — can give back to your alma mater. In this column, I would like to highlight one particular example of generosity.

I am honored to celebrate the creation of the Sonja Bilger Romanowski Professorship in Social Work — the first endowed professorship at the school. This fund was established by Sonja Bilger Romanowski, who received a B.A. in psychology from Tulane University's Newcomb College in 1962 and earned her MSW in 1964 from Tulane University's School of Social Work. Ms. Romanowski has been a longtime supporter

of her alma mater, as were her parents, Raymond E. and Elma Bilger Romanowski, and her dedication to Tulane is exemplified by her establishment of this fund.

In 1963-64, she received from the school an NIMH scholarship and is "paying forward, with interest and more" Tulane's investment in her by establishing this professorship. She paid back NIMH's non-binding expectation that she "work for two years in a state psychiatric facility" by working from 1988-90 at Terrell State Psychiatric Hospital in Texas. Since then, she has remained incredibly active in the Dallas community, both professionally and philanthropically.

The inaugural Sonja Bilger Romanowski Professor in Social Work is Dr. Madeline Lee. (You may recall that she was profiled in the Spring/Summer 2012 issue of Postscripts.) Dr. Lee's hard work has already earned a grant from the New York Community Trust's Fahs-Beck Fund, and the additional support she will receive from the Romanowski Professorship will bolster her future research.

Please join me in thanking Ms. Romanowski and in congratulating Dr. Lee.

Lou Franchina is the school's development officer. He may be reached directly at (504) 314-7308 or lfranch1@tulane.edu.

ALUMNA FONDLY REMEMBERS LEARNING EXPERIENCE AT TULANE, ESTABLISHES PROFESSORSHIP TO PROMOTE GROWTH

Sonja Bilger Romanowski (MSW '64) recounts her days at TSSW with a smile and a razor sharp memory that doesn't forget a single detail.

She said it was a life-changing experience, and now she's able to "pay it forward" with the establishment of the School's first professorship, which has been received and is now fully endowed.

The professorship will be named the "Sonja Bilger Romanowski Professorship in Social Work," and it will be used to support the research and scholarship of a faculty member in the early stages of their career. Appointments are for three-year periods.

Sonja received a B.A. in psychology from Tulane University's Newcomb College in 1962 and earned her MSW in 1964 from the TSSW. Ms. Romanowski has been a longtime supporter of Tulane, and it's easy to see why.

During a special ceremony to celebrate the professorship at the School, Sonja shared the three things she learned very quickly at Tulane.

"One of things that I learned is that bigger isn't necessarily better, and that's hard especially for people from Texas," she said. "The second is that new isn't necessarily better than old. The third one is that it is important to have music and fun and play as part of your life."

One of her most vivid memories came from her field placement during integration at the Public Welfare Department. For one of her class assignments, she had to put herself in her clients' shoes.

"One of the things that one of my professors told us to do was to go to our grocery store and buy \$25 of things that we wanted for ourselves," she said. "Then, we needed to go to our client's closest grocery store and get a pad and write down how much those things were there. Could you find them? Could you buy them?"



TSSW alumna Sonja Bilger Romanowski (MSW '64) recently established TSSW's first professorship, which Assistant Professor Dr. Madeline Lee (right) will receive to aid her research. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Perhaps her most lasting memory came when she spent an entire day at Charity Hospital in New Orleans with a client, who had recently received a letter that she was going to lose her medical care despite the fact that she had already lost two fingers to diabetes.

"I said that's ridiculous, so we went down there to see about it," she said. "We went down one morning early. There used to be two rooms with a guy there monitoring everyone. We got there, and I sat on the black side because I wanted to be with her. Halfway through the day, I went out to make a call."

This was before the invent of cell phones so each time, she would check in with the agency or the client's family via pay phone, she would go outside and then on her way back in be reminded that she should sit on the "white side of the room."

By the third time, she knew she wouldn't

be able to ignore the man's request, so she had an answer prepared.

"That third time, I knew it wouldn't be that easy," she said. "So when I came back, I had my answer prepared. He said 'You have to sit on the white side.' And I said to him 'It's hard to tell who is Mulatto and who's not.' I didn't lie, but I just told him that."

That response allowed her to stay by her client's side, and she was able to remedy the medical care issues before the end of the day.

It's those experiences of helping those in need that helped Sonja bond with her professorship's first recipient, Dr. Madeline Lee.

Dr. Lee's passion is helping vulnerable children and families who are navigating the crossroads of child welfare, mental health, and special education systems, and thanks to this new professorship, she'll have some extra support to do just that.

Lee's passion stems from her experience working with children in residential care in Los Angeles and her policy work at the Council on Accreditation in New York City. At Tulane, Lee is continuing her work on examining accreditation as a potential quality improvement tool for children and families in need. Her current research uses data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to focus on how policies impact accreditation and accreditation's impact on quality indicators.

"When I came to New Orleans a year and a half ago, I didn't know anyone," she said. "Now, I'm here in front of all of my colleagues that I feel privileged to call my friends. Professors, who are really just starting out, like me rarely get this type of opportunity. I feel so fortunate, honored and grateful. And I feel connected to Sonja through our love of social work and family. Hearing about her experience at Tulane made me understand why she's giving back."

HOMECOMING 2012



Thanks to all the alumni, who came out for our 2012 CEU event and reception. More than 100 of our former students attended both events and enjoyed an evening of music, food and even won a few raffle prizes.

Hope to see everyone again this Fall!

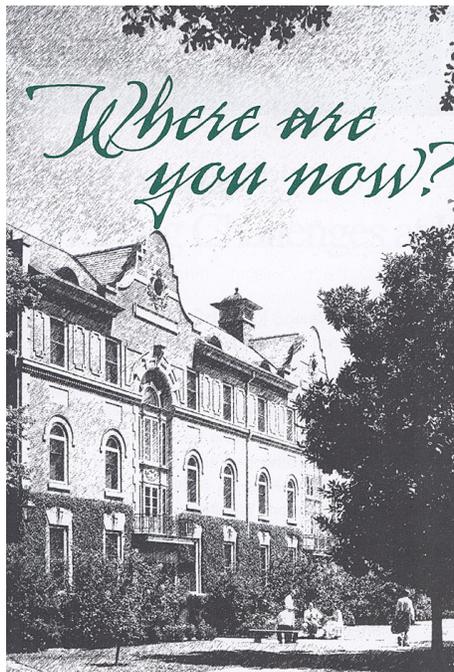


Elosie Doxie Dixon (MSW '71) currently is the Director of the Counseling and Wellness Center at Xavier University. A former member of the TSSW Alumni Board, Eloise has travelled to several countries including Israel, Egypt, South Africa, Ghana, Kenya and Italy. She has two married sons and one granddaughter.

Sara S. Rountree (MSW '59) currently resides in Pensacola, Fla. She is retired after many years of social services work.

Ken Borelli, (MSW '70) currently resides in San Jose, California, and services as a child welfare and immigration consultant. He also serves as president of the Italian American Heritage Foundation and is on the Santa Clara County Child Abuse Council.

Deborah "Deb" Henson (MSW '77) currently resides in New Orleans and works as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in private practice as well as an Attorney at Law in private practice focusing on Mental Health Law, including representing social workers and other mental health professionals in licensing board complaints and risk prevention. She also handles all types of adoptions and other child-related legal matters, like



therapeutic boarding school placements. Deb recently started a new business -- BEYOND ETHICS, LLC -- training for mental health professionals to avoid malpractice lawsuits and licensing board complaints. She offers Ethics seminars (3-hour CEUs) addressing the dilemmas

therapists find themselves in when confronted by subpoenas for records or testimony. Also, the seminars help clinicians handle high-risk clients that pose threats of licensing board complaints.

In Memoriam

Willard E. Canno (MSW '57) of Tucson, Ariz., passed away on May 30, 2012, just three months shy of his 92nd birthday. From 1957 to 1963, he served as Chief of Medical Social Services at the Gills W. Long Hansen's Disease Center of the Public Health Service in Carville, La. He lobbied extensively to have the negative term "leprosy" removed from all official documents and correspondence and the proper term "Hansen's Disease" used instead. In 1963, he move to Anchorage, Alaska, where he performed the same function for the Alaska Native Health Service. He is survived by his sons, Stephen (Barbara) of Boerne, Texas; David (Toby) of Nashville, Tenn.; and Mark of Tucson as well as five grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Continued from Page 1....

FIELD PLACEMENT EVALUATED COUNTRYWIDE POLICY

and created both a database of information about the different programs, but also resources for future collaboration and networking among the different organizations.

"I basically traveled around Rwanda and visited a bunch of different orphanages," she said. "I tried to meet with staff members to understand if they supported the new policy or what they were having trouble with. I also tried to see how they were integrating their kids back into families.

"I found that not a lot of orphanages liked the new policy, but the limited freedom of speech in Rwanda created a weird dynamic. The orphanage staff would talk to me, but they were hesitant because they didn't want me to share their negative opinions publicly."

Global Programs Director Dr. Elaine Wright said it was very exciting for Sara to see firsthand how these organizations are responding to the reintegration or lack of reintegration for the youth within families

and communities.

Sara said self-sufficiency along with her research tools proved very important as she tried to navigate a different culture.

"I learned a great deal about what it's like to be a minority," she said. "I would leave my gate in the morning and get stared at everywhere I went. It gave me a different appreciation for minority groups in the United States."

She added that dealing with Rwandan politics incorporated another level to her learning.

"I was trying to teach an organization how to advocate in a government that doesn't allow advocacy," she said. "I really had to get creative, and it was frustrating at times. That was where the self-sufficiency came in. I stayed at some of the orphanages for three or four days purely to build a relationship. A lot of times the staff answered my questions without giving an opinion. Once they grew to trust me, they would provide their feelings."

As for the future, Sara landed a job at the New Orleans Day Reporting Center (DRC), where she completed her local field placement. The DRC is an alternative to revocation program that offers rehabilitation services to criminal offenders on probation or parole.

"I could definitely still see myself working globally," she said. "But living in a developing country permanently isn't in the cards for me. I'm really glad to have had the experience in Rwanda, though, because it helped me better understand my role in global work. Eventually, I'd like to get involved in some international projects that allow me to travel back and forth."

Dr. Wright added: "International field placements are excellent opportunities for students to explore their global interests and determine whether or not they want to pursue a career outside of the USA. I'm glad Sara has had this chance, and I look forward to learning how her recent international experiences influence her work here in the States."



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Name: _____ Year of graduation: _____

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- 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?

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