

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Newsletter from Baylor University School of Social Work • Volume No. 23 • October 2008

Taking note of the School's strengths

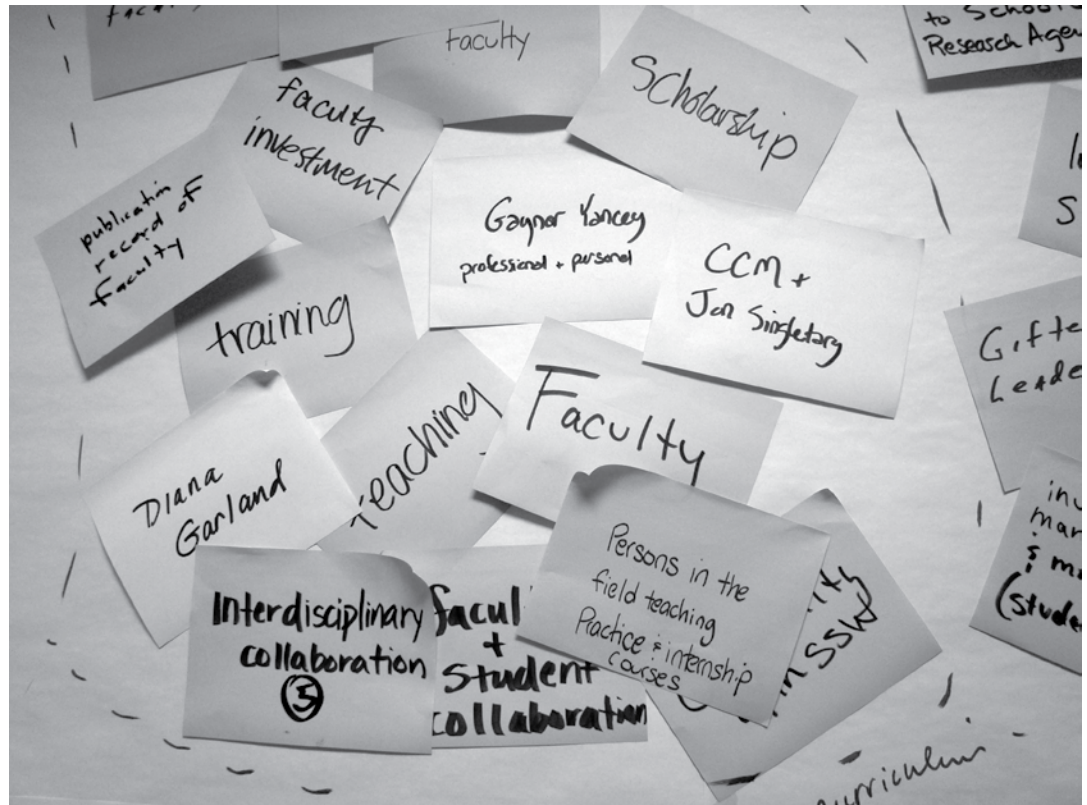
If you had one wish for the impact this School could make on the world, what would it be?

The first two or three persons through the door of the room where they would spend the next two days hesitated when they saw the brightly colored toys and gadgets scattered across the tables. "What have we gotten ourselves into?" one asked.

True, it wasn't what these professionals – more comfortable with iPhones® than Nerf® balls – were expecting, but then, neither was what they were soon to learn about the Baylor School of Social Work.

A dozen state and national social work academics and practitioners, community leaders and organizers and social work students gathered Sept. 8-9 for the School's first Visioning Summit on research and scholarship.

"I came with a blank slate in terms of the School of Social Work, but that has become a multicolored, bright picture," said the Rev. James L. McDonald, vice president for policy and programs of



The meeting room wall was covered with words that described the School's strengths.

Bread for the World. "The enthusiasm, the energy about the programs and what's going on here is really impressive; it's opened up for me an understanding of social work in a much broader sense and helped me think about that connected to faith and history."

Convened by School Dean Diana Garland, the group consisted of current and former deans of schools of social work, one of the most widely published scholars of social work research,

community organizers, a global missions director for a national denominational group, an author of congregational resources, and, among others, Waco Mayor Virginia DuPuy.

"We have asked you here to dream with us about the shape of the research and scholarship agenda of the school as a whole," Garland said. "If you had one wish for the impact this school, with its resources of faculty, students, and research, could make on the world, what would it be?"

Summit facilitator Ashley Thornton, Baylor's director for professional and organizational development, led the group in exercises to explore definitions of social work and trends in the profession in the past three decades. She then narrowed the focus to Baylor's School and its strengths.

As the walls of the room filled with large, brightly colored Post-it® notes with words to describe the School, a few common strengths

(continued on page 3)



FROM THE DEAN

We need to step forward with confidence to shape our profession

By Diana R. Garland, Dean of Baylor School of Social Work

One of the most exciting events this fall (other than my husband being named interim president!) was the Visioning Summit we held Sept. 8-9. I was deeply humbled by the willingness of this impressive group of social work administrators and professors, community leaders and organizers to set aside this time to help us dream about the scholarship and research agenda for the School. Our faculty and staff sat on the sidelines and observed, and after listening to the group's comments and dreams for us, I came away with new insight, heightened enthusiasm and a desire to work even harder to fulfill these wonderful expectations. Be sure and see the full story, beginning on page 1.

What I also realized as I listened to this group from outside the School is that we need an attitude adjustment! Our School had humble beginnings and all of us have worked hard to achieve what we have in these first 10 years here at Baylor. Too often I have referred to "our little school," but no more! I realized in listening to the comments of those at the summit that Baylor School of Social Work is perceived as a significant and unique presence within our academy – a school positioned, here within this university, to lead out in courageous ways in expanding the vision and application of our profession. As one participant said, "Baylor needs to step forward in confidence with what all of us know as professional practitioners and academic scholars and infuse the academy with new options."

As inspiring as those words are, they are equally humbling as these professional

colleagues point us to lead the way. They are waiting. Churches and congregations are waiting for the resources and practice models we can develop. Communities are waiting for the research application on motivating and retaining volunteers that we can provide. Countries are waiting for the professional education to train new cohorts of social workers to address global problems that we can teach.

As I told this group of dear friends as we concluded the summit, at the School we look at what has transpired in

this first decade and we shake our heads and laugh. We do so because we know that this

is not of our doing; we believe it comes as blessing from our Creator who continues to call us into co-creation of a world desperate for social and humane change. We try to faithfully follow that leading, and pray for the strength to do so.

I cite once again from the scripture that has become my own personal inspiration for our work here: "...that all of them may call on the name of the Lord and serve him shoulder to shoulder" (Zeph. 3:9, NIV).

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On a personal note, it is with great sadness that we say goodbye to David Wilkinson, who has served as the School's director of development for the past 15 months. He took the helm as executive director of Associate Baptist Press beginning Oct. 1. Under David's leadership the School's endowment grew from \$1.3 million to \$2.1 million and three new scholarships for students were added to our existing 16. We will miss him terribly, but we also rejoice with him for the leadership role he now has in the global Baptist movement.

**Churches, communities, countries, our profession are waiting for what we can develop, teach and provide.**

## PARTICIPANTS

**Frank Baskind**, immediate past dean at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Social Work

**Rick Chamiec-Case**, executive director of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work

**Mark Chaves**, professor of sociology, religion and divinity at Duke University

**Virginia DuPuy**, mayor of Waco

**Cynthia Franklin**, the Stiernberg/Spencer Family Professor in Mental Health at the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work Program

**Maggie McCarthy**, foundation management to help grant makers improve outcomes as investors and nonprofit organizations achieve better results

**James L. McDonald**, vice president for policy and programs for Bread for the World

**Larry D. McDowell**, family life and marriage program specialist for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

**Robert N. Nash Jr.**, coordinator of global missions for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

**Dennis Poole**, dean of the University of South Carolina College of Social Work

**Frank B. Raymond**, dean of the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina from 1980 to 2002 and former leader of the Council on Social Work Education, the profession's national accrediting agency

**Heidi Unruh**, director of the Congregations, Community Outreach and Leadership Development Project

## BAYLOR PARTICIPANTS

**Truell Hyde**, vice provost for research and overseer of the Office of Sponsored Programs and Contracts

**Rae Wright**, MSW student in the mental and physical health concentration



# VISIONING

(continued from page 1)

emerged: integration of faith and practice, strong faculty and committed students called to serve, quality research and scholarship, and emphasis on global studies.

The participants were asked to identify what they believed the School was uniquely qualified to bring to social work education and the profession.

"The School has the ability to produce quality research that is both responsive and accessible to the community, especially at the intersection of faith and practice," said Heidi Unruh, director of the Congregations, Community Outreach and Leadership Development Project, co-author of two books on church-based social ministry and co-editor of *Hope for Children in Poverty: Profiles and Possibilities* (Judson, 2007).

Frank B. Raymond, dean of the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina from 1980 to 2002, when he retired, emphasized the School's commitment to globalization and social justice. "What Baylor can offer is that so many students come here with a passion for mission work and their conviction to be Christ to a hurting world. Students here are driven on a deeper level," he said.

Many in the group emphasized the need for the School to develop and disseminate community ministry resources for practical application.

"Baylor can build opportunities for research on the intersection of religion and social work that impacts the academy," Raymond said. "We need to design practice models that can be used in congregations, equip congregations to participate in model-based research. And then we need the dissemination of knowledge in the journals and books in the vernacular that those in church community can understand and use."

Frank Baskind, dean and professor of social work at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Social Work from 1992 to 2008, echoed Raymond. "We need to equip community-based ministries, particularly the professional staff, with practice models and resources for volunteer mobilization and community engagement."

A transdisciplinary approach to social issues also was identified as a unique opportunity for the School of Social Work within the university setting of Baylor. Such an approach



*MSW student Megan Nichols (from left), Larry McDowell, Administration for Children and Families, and Virginia DuPuy, mayor of Waco, consider their ideas at the School's first Visioning Summit.*

calls upon disciplines across the academy to bring their knowledge and skills to bear on a specific social issue, such as poverty.

"Baylor and the school can transform communities through transdisciplinary scholarship," said Dennis Poole, dean of the University of South Carolina College of Social Work. He cited engineering, business and theology as an example of such a collaboration. "We shouldn't be shy about what we know as social work professionals. The academy

needs to be taken on in regard to its direction about community engagement."

Christine Browder, a BSW student interested in congregational social work, agreed with the transdisciplinary approach. "I'd like to see us expand our dual degree programs," she said. "What could we do if we put all of our specialties and resources together? Where might that take us?"

As a final exercise, the group was asked to develop prototypes for the three top wishes for the School that they had presented – ideas that ranged from impacting the high poverty level per capita in Baylor's backyard in the city of Waco to strengthening global studies and international student exchanges.

Rob Nash, director of global missions for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, pointed out that the summit had been an exercise in transdisciplinary brainstorming. "We've modeled the transdisciplinary kind of thinking we've all discussed. I come away from this with an increasing respect and gratitude for what the Baylor School of Social Work has been able to accomplish. Every time I come here, I leave more impressed."

As the notes were pulled from the walls and the gadgets packed away, Garland thanked the participants.

"You have poured yourself out for us, and we have listened, we have taken notes, the wheels are turning," Garland said. "I covenant with you that we will do our very best to see that your seed will have fallen on fertile soil, and we will pray for God's blessing on this in the years to come." – Vicki Marsh Kabat



# BACK TO SCHOOL PARTY

*Almost 150 faculty, staff, students and employees attended the Back to School Party Sept. 4 at Eastland Lake organized by the NASW-Baylor student group. Baylor Mascot Joy came to pose for photos, but new Baylor Interim President David Garland and School Dean Diana Garland kept a respectful distance (left). We enjoyed a great Mexican food buffet and then our own version of "America's Got Talent." Actually, all of our vocalists did have talent! Kohen Scott (far right), son of adjunct professor Becky Scott, seemed most mesmerized by the performance of the Faculty/Staff Kazoo Band – as were we all.*



*Lecturer Susanne Klawetter's triplets: Olivia, Zoe and Sam.*



*Vicki Northern and BSW student Chessa Baldwin and MSW student Julie Olejarski (above, from left) sang for their supper and for a new building for the School. Vené Baggett, BSW pre-social work student, (left) sang a beautiful rendition of "Amazing Grace."*







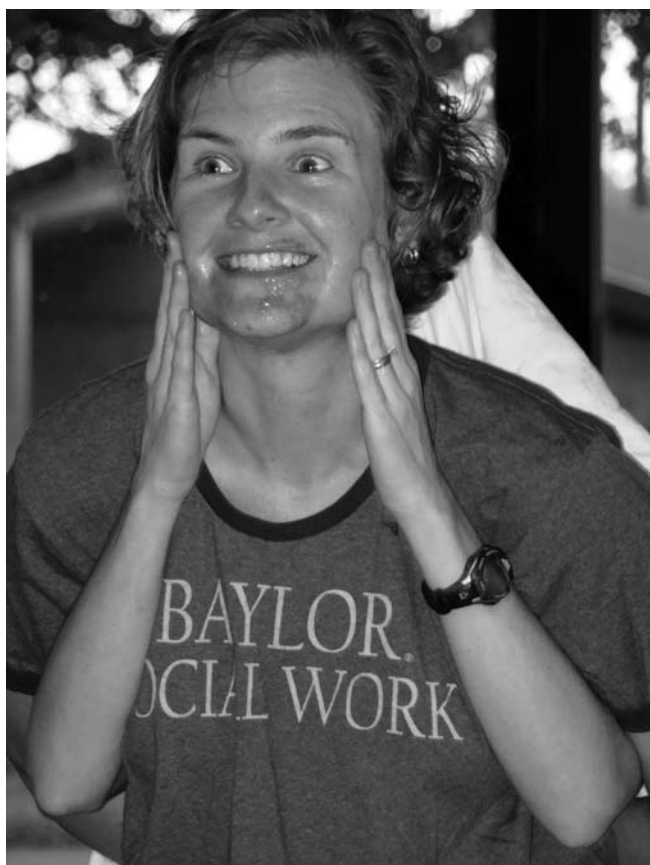
*MSW students Jerusha Brown (left) and Aurelia Pratt.*



*MSW student Courtney Holleyman.*



*Koben Scott, son of adjunct professor Becky Scott.*



*Lecturer LeAnn Gardner - with some help from a friend.*



*MSW student Megan Nichols.*

# TIMELY FINANCIAL GIFTS

By Gaynor Yancey, Associate Dean for Baccalaureate Studies

Rising unemployment rates signal a recession coming. This local newspaper headline about the state of the economy in our nation echoed comments I heard in meetings this summer regarding the financial needs of our students, who are beginning to feel the effect of the recession in their financial packages – especially the undergraduate students on Baylor's campus.

This, though, was always shared in the context of the commitment of undergraduates who wanted to receive a Baylor education. The question became then, how can we best help students receive a Baylor education by helping them meet their financial needs?

The information shared in these meetings became very real in the lives of several of our School of Social Work BSW students at the beginning of the summer. For the first time in my Baylor experience, we had several students who had to withdraw and postpone their graduation because they did not have enough money to complete their educational experience with us. If they had been able to finish, they now would be working or in graduate school. As it is, they are persevering by working in an assortment of jobs while trying to finish their undergraduate degrees.

These students have been highly frustrated by these experiences but they have maintained a "can do" attitude. They make us proud with their commitment to finish and to become the best social workers they can be.

God, however, shows us miracles every day in the School of Social Work. We see those miracles through the response of people to Diana Garland, our dean, and to David Wilkinson, the SSW's outgoing director of development. One of God's miracles happened this summer. The \$25,000 that we had for scholarship funding already had been appropriated and there was no more money. Nevertheless, we were able to spread that amount among 17 students.



Thirty-one students from across Baylor are taking this fall's elective Foundations of Social Justice class, including (from back left) Jamie McKinney, BSW student; Mallory King, Baylor undergraduate student; and Sarah Chisolm Miller, MSW foundation student.

**"For the first time in my Baylor experience, we had several students who had to withdraw and postpone their graduation because they did not have enough money."**

Uncharacteristically, more financial aid applications kept pouring in all summer.

Then, wondrously, we received news that we had been given two gifts – of \$2,500 and \$10,000 – that were to be used for the BSW students! This was a miracle, indeed, because it was at the end of the summer and that has never happened before. God had impressed several people to commit this money to our students who were in financial need.

Following are some of the comments our students shared upon receiving notice of their scholarship awards:

• *"I feel so truly blessed. Just the other night my mother and I were talking about the money I owe for the semester and she told me that God would make a*

*way. I responded with, 'I know He will; He always does.' And boy, does He!"*

• *"Thank you for notifying me of the financial award; it could not have come at a more needed time. Is there anyone that I could write a thank you note to to express how much I appreciate it?"*

• *"Just this morning, I was sharing with someone that I didn't know how in the world I could stay in school. Now this ..."*

God does show our students daily miracles in the School of Social Work. On behalf of our students who are helped to stay in school so that they can fulfill their dreams and calling to help people in every type of need, in every part of the world, thank you for acting on the tugs and nudges of your heart to help our students with your financial gifts.



# "I LIKE THE LEADERSHIP ROLE"

## *BSW senior wants to see churches help their local neighborhoods*

Paying at the gas pump isn't what kept Tiffany Purnell riding public transportation this summer. The charismatic senior BSW student loves to immerse herself in new and different experiences, not to mention the many stories she got to hear from other passengers.

"Tiffany is really down-to-earth and well rounded," says LeAnn Gardner, lecturer in social work. "She's eager to learn and to see the world with different eyes."

Purnell's appreciation of individual stories began in high school where she mentored young girls who suffered from abuse, neglect, and substance abuse within their families. She also attended a mission trip to West Virginia where she felt a calling to minister to persons who are oppressed.

"The trip allowed me to see the encouragement that people of the community received through the mission team," she says. "I want to see churches help their local neighborhoods."

Her interest in community development came to life with a recent internship at NeighborWorks Waco, a non-profit organization designed to build stronger neighborhoods through home ownership. During her time there she worked with first-time homeowners, wrote success stories for the Web site, and helped establish a neighborhood watch program in East Waco.

"We used something called a phone-tree," Purnell says. "The most effective way to stop crime is to get as many residents as possible to call the police when they witness it. We need to get everybody talking."

Planning the program was a new experience for her in rallying communities together for a common goal. She is hoping to apply that principle in her work in the future.

"I have a desire to help build stronger communities by empowering families," Purnell says. "Lack of education is a major problem within low-income families; I would like to bring educational opportunities for job training, college preparation programs and after-school programming to these communities."

She'll be doing that this fall, when she plans to teach an after-school program called "Too Cool for Trouble," organized by Youth Connection. The weekly program will be held at Lake Air Middle School to teach students character traits.

"It's a good opportunity to learn how to teach different

types of people. Expanding my knowledge base is always good, and I like the leadership role," she says.

Preaching in local churches is another leadership role she enjoys. She has preached at St. James Baptist Church, Living Word Church of God in Christ, and West Side Baptist Church. She's also mentored at the Leadership Living and Learning Center at Baylor and worked with Friends for Life, an elderly adult day center. Lately she's taken an interest in social policy and community ministries.



"She gets really animated in my class," says Tammy Woods, adjunct faculty for social work. "I can tell already that she has a heart for serving others, and she'll go far."

Purnell also is dedicated to her church, Greater New Light Baptist in Waco. She interned there for three months teaching a Bible study, learning about church administration, and building connections in local neighborhoods.

This fall she applied to the Peace Corps hoping to go where people are most in need of positive leaders among the youth. Gardner, who teaches Purnell in her practice courses, says she is open to all the world brings to her. "She wants to be changed and moved by her experiences."

"Social work is a great fit for me because it involves a lot of disciplines I'm interested in like sociology and psychology," Purnell says. "I love the diversity of the field." — *Tricia Herrmann, Communication Specialist*

# TO GO HOME AND SERVE

*Fleeing the civil war of her native Liberia,  
Gracie Brownell's journey to Baylor a 'miracle'*

*By Dennis Myers, Associate Dean for Graduate Studies*

Homelessness, starvation, fear, and disease – these are the great plagues of civil war and unrest that force children and families to become wanderers and refugees from provision, safety, and place. Gracie Brownell knows all about the horror of forced removal from all that is known, secure, and permanent.

Gracie, a current concentration student in the MSW program, experienced the full brunt of Liberia's 14-year civil war, one of the bloodiest wars in Africa. More than 200,000 Liberians died and a million others were displaced into refugee camps in neighboring countries. This tragedy marked each day of Gracie's childhood. She knew nothing of playgrounds, a room of her own, or snacks in abundance. She describes it this way:

*As a result of the war, I experienced hunger; most times during the war, my parents did not know where our next meal could come from. I experienced homelessness when we were asked to leave our home by rebels and had to sleep in abandoned buildings or other people's homes. We learned to live without safe drinking water and electricity, and I lost a lot of relatives and friends as the result of the war. At the peak of the war, my family fled to Ghana for safety and lived as refugees until the war subsided in 1993.*

This devastating storm of human suffering finally ended in 2003 when President Charles Taylor, a former rebel leader, accepted asylum and moved to Nigeria. Gracie and her family were able to return to their home in Monrovia, Liberia.

Gracie's return was a time of thanksgiving and hope and also the beginning of

her resolve to transform places of fear and insecurity into sacred places of healing and justice. Changed by what she saw and heard, Gracie knew that fulfilling that resolve required education. She graduated from St. Teresa's Convent High School in Monrovia and received an academic scholarship to attend Shorter College in Rome, GA. In 2006, she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology and sociology.

Prior to graduation from Shorter, Gracie became interested in social work and applied to the Baylor School of Social Work. She was accepted into the MSW 2006/2007 foundation class

**“God has made it possible for me to be here and learn as much as I can so that I can help others.”**

*Gracie Brownell, MSW student*

program but had to defer enrollment for a year due to lack of finances. Fortunately, the next year the School was able to provide the resources she needed to enroll in the graduate program, and she is on target to graduate in May 2009.

Gracie sees her vision unfolding and says, “I can summarize my journey from Liberia to Waco as a miracle because God has made it possible for me to be here and learn as much as I can so that I can help others. It is my hope to one day practice social work in Liberia and other African countries.”

Notice the grand theme in Gracie's



*Brownell is the first recipient of the School of Social Work's C. Anne Davis Scholarship fund.*

story. The world is suffering. God is raising up young people who hear the cries of the refugee and the hungry. They are coming to the Baylor School of Social Work for the education they need so they can return home to deliver justice and hope for a sustainable and secure life.

In response, the School must reconsider how it educates and supports these students.

These future leaders require levels of financial help far in excess of their ability to pay: \$48,000 in tuition expenses and \$16,000 per year in daily living costs. As they study and prepare, they need help to translate what they are learning into meaningful applications for their home country while adjusting to life in a new and different land.

Recognizing the unusual opportunity and need at the doorstep of the School, Dean Diana Garland envisioned an initiative wherein the School would lead the nation in preparing American and international leaders for social work missions and ministries around the world. The Henry Luce Foundation accepted her invitation to work with the School

*continued on page 11*



## Garlands Obtain \$300,000 Global Missions Grant

Husband and wife deans at Baylor University, David and Diana Garland, have joined forces and been awarded a \$300,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation to educate and equip indigenous church leaders for effective, holistic ministry in their home cultures.

"We believe that such an approach to church leadership is more respectful and sensitive to diverse cultures, is more effective than sending Americans to attempt to provide such leadership as cultural outsiders, and also is far more efficient and cost-effective," the Garlands stated in their proposal.

Diana Garland, dean of Baylor's School of Social Work, and David Garland, dean of Baylor's George W. Truett Theological Seminary, said that together the academic units have the opportunity to develop global leaders for missions and ministries and to influence the vision and effectiveness of churches for worldwide ministry. Students in the program will obtain a Master of Social Work/Master of Theological Studies dual degree.

The initiative also provides a unique opportunity for individual churches to partner with the School of Social Work and Truett Seminary to cover costs for an international student.

"This is a chance for the local church to re-imagine global missions and its role in that ministry," said David Garland. "As Baptists, we have always taught and lived our missional commitment, but with the help of the Luce Foundation, we now can do that in a way that assures excellent preparation for the missionary who takes this knowledge and passion back to his or her home country and works to transform lives and communities."

The Garlands hope the program will grow with support from other donors. It costs \$18,000 annually to support an international student, which includes a \$16,000 living stipend and \$2,000 in indirect costs for Baylor University.

## GLOBAL LEADERSHIP DIRECTOR NAMED

Jennifer Smyer (BASW 1994/MSW 2008) has been named the School's Director of Global Leadership Development effective immediately. The position was made possible by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation (*see story at left*).



Smyer will prepare current students for worldwide leadership and service through an enriched curriculum and travel courses, bring indigenous leaders from around the world to Baylor for their education to then be applied in their home cultures, and collaborate with international education programs.

"Smyer has extensive international experience in planning and delivery of congregationally based missions programs, particularly in Southeast Asia and Africa," said Dennis Myers, associate dean for graduate studies.

"I love to build new ventures from the ground up," Smyer said, "so I'm very excited about this challenge."

The first students to enroll in this dual degree program between the School and George W. Truett Theological Seminary will begin in fall 2009.



## MOLDOVA PARTNERSHIP

The School of Social Work formalized a relationship July 17 with the College of Theology and Education in Chisinau, Moldova.

Above are then-Provost Randall O'Brien (from left); Dennis Myers, associate dean for graduate studies; Oleg Turlac, CTE professor and administrator; Preston Dyer, professor emeritus; and Gaynor Yancey, associate dean for baccalaureate studies. The collaboration will enable Baylor School of Social Work to provide resources for CTE's provision of competency-based graduate level social work education.

Three MSW students will be doing their field placements in Moldova in spring 2009 teaching at the college and also working in orphanages in partnership with Children's Emergency Relief International, a program of Baptist Child and Family Services. Each student must raise \$10,000 to meet living and airfare costs.

# SSW NEWS BRIEFS



## SCHOOL WINS STATE AWARD

The School of Social Work received the 2008 Texas Homeless Network Outstanding Community Service Award at the network's annual conference Sept. 4 in Austin, TX. The award recognizes an individual or group that has helped advance policies or innovative solutions to homelessness or worked with communities to make a difference in fighting homelessness. The School was recognized for its prisoner re-entry efforts and its participation in the annual Project Homeless Connect event. The School also provides social work students for internships and field placements in many area agencies that serve persons who are homeless or in transition. Accepting the award for the School were Gaynor Yancey, associate dean for baccalaureate studies (left), and Dennis Myers, associate dean for graduate studies (right). Terri Holtkamp (center) also received an award from the network as director of the 10-year Plan to End Homelessness Initiative for Waco.

## GERO CENTER UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP

Dean Diana Garland announced in the fall that Jim Ellor, associate professor and director of the Center for Gerontological Studies for the past four years, will step down from the center role in order to spend more time on his research and publication.

Dennis Myers, associate dean for graduate studies and former director of gerontology studies, will serve as interim center director.

"Jim has accomplished many important initiatives for the center and we will miss his leadership," Garland said. "But his scholarly contribution to the field of gerontology is also valuable, so we honor his desire to focus on that for now."

For more information about the center, visit its Web site at [www.baylor.edu/social\\_work/gerontology](http://www.baylor.edu/social_work/gerontology) or call Judith Stolz, center manager, at 254-710-6411.

## CFCM SPONSORS FALL POVERTY WORKSHOP

The Center for Family and Community Ministries will hold its second annual Walking Alongside: Addressing Poverty in Community Ministries workshop Oct. 17-18.

The weekend training event is designed to benefit small teams of church leaders committed to the transformational ministries of their congregation, said Jon Singletary, CFCM director.

This year, the event will introduce "Understanding Poverty," the second of four curricula in the Walking Alongside resource package. This six-week small group study looks at economic, social, historic and educational reasons that perpetuate generational poverty and contribute to an ever-growing class of the new poor.

This curriculum was written by Heather Deal and Courtney Drew, MSW 2008/MDiv students, who are members of the Strengthening Congregational Community Ministries grant team.

"They have provided rich content and have made complex concepts understandable," said Diana Garland, dean of the School of Social Work, which houses the CFCM.

In addition, the event will look at "Legacies of Care," the first in the curriculum series, which was introduced last year and is being field-tested in more than 20 churches.

"In our presentation of these materials at conferences, we have found that churches are hungry for resources that will help them effect meaningful community ministries," Singletary said.

For more information, visit [www.baylor.edu/cfcm](http://www.baylor.edu/cfcm) or call Kimberly Schlesinger at 254-710-3854.





*Irine Thomas, MSW 2008, visiting at a nursing facility last year.*

## **Students help Hurricane Ike evacuees with dementia**

There are moments when you are allowed to see the scripture lived out. Many times those come in times of difficulty and adversity. Recently I watched our students respond to the request of a local nursing home to visit, comfort, and help assess 17 residents with dementia who had arrived in Waco for care until their nursing home regained electricity and water. The devastation of Hurricane Ike had forced them to move once again, only a few weeks after they fled Gustav. For persons with serious dementia, numerous changes in location and caregivers are particularly stressful.

Facilities in Waco stepped up and offered a home and care for the interim. But 17 new residents in a day is a lot for one staff to manage on top of its regular patient load. The students at the Baylor School of Social Work, under the leadership of Dr. Jim Ellor, volunteered to help. At the orientation meeting before seeing the patients, they were given the brief histories that were available. "Mrs. X. deals with psychosis and she is not handling well the stress of the move. Mr. Y. is anxious that his family does not know where he is, and he worries that they may not be all right. Mrs. S. doesn't recognize anyone and is scared."

You would have been so proud of our students as they calmly and competently visited with persons who needed presence and caring and reassurance. They were skillful social workers. They were tender ministers. They met "the least of these" and saw the face of Christ. And I saw the face of Christ in them.

— Helen Harris, Lecturer

## **Greater Houston**

### **ESL Ministry Conference**

Literacy ConneXus and the Baylor Center for Literacy invite you to a conference for those who minister to internationals, immigrants and refugees through churches and universities.

**October 24 -25, 2008**

**Crosspoint Church in Houston area  
4601 Bellaire Blvd.  
Bellaire, TX**

**Friday, 6 p.m. through Saturday, 4 p.m.**

#### **TO REGISTER:**

Call Lester Meriwether at 817-696-9898 or  
Kathleen Yarborough at 713-661-2650

## **BROWNELL**

*continued from page 8*

and with George W. Truett Theological Seminary in pursuing this vision through three paths:

- preparing current students for worldwide leadership and service through travel courses;
- bringing indigenous leaders from around the globe to gain a theological and social work education to be applied in their home cultures; and
- partnering with educational programs around the world.

The more than \$250,000 in annual funding over a three-year period will provide a pilot program for three MDiv/MSW students as well as for a director and a lecturer in Global Studies, administrative support, and travel expenses for international studies. The School and Truett Seminary will offer an international certificate program for Baylor graduates (not limited to social work) designed to provide international and cross-cultural competence.

Gracie Brownell wants to transform a place of homelessness, hunger and fear into a sacred place of justice, hope and provision. It is no accident that Gracie came our way. There are many more coming. You can help. We are seeking friends and congregations that have an interest in providing prayerful, relational, and financial support for these future leaders.

Please contact Dean Garland (254-710-6223; Diana\_Garland@baylor.edu) to learn more about this new program and your opportunity to prepare global leaders who can make a world of difference.



**VISIT [WWW.BAYLOR.EDU/SOCIAL\\_WORK](http://WWW.BAYLOR.EDU/SOCIAL_WORK)**

# AMELIA EARHART AND SOCIAL WORKERS

*By David Wilkinson, outgoing Director of Development*

Recently on the car radio, Garrison Keillor noted that July 24 is the birthday of the famous pilot Amelia Earhart. She had been studying medicine when she went to her first air show. At the breathtaking sight of planes twisting and turning, looping and soaring in the bright California sky, the young, would-be doctor decided instead to become a pilot.

It's a famous story and a good story. But it got me to thinking about the students at the Baylor School of Social Work who have made a different kind of vocational decision.

These students, like the young Ms. Earhart, are impressive. They are winsome, smart, creative and immensely gifted. They come to us with compassionate hearts, inspiring ideals, and a humbling commitment to lives of service. Undoubtedly, many of them could be highly successful in careers that would be much more financially lucrative and certainly more glamorous than the vocation they have chosen.



But these remarkable women and men measure success differently than most in our society. Although many of their contemporaries are focused on climbing the ladder of success, they are following the path of "downward mobility," as Henri Nouwen called it, choosing to walk alongside the poor, the neglected, and the forgotten.

One of the attractions of flying is the thrill of being "above it all," social workers, by contrast, are committed to staying earthbound. Rather than soaring into the heavens, social workers choose to plant their feet firmly on the ground, daring to look the complex problems of our world squarely in the eye. Resisting the urge to flee to safer horizons, they stay put, daring to deal with the harsh realities of despair and hopelessness that accompany poverty, hunger, oppression and injustice.

I'm glad Amelia Earhart followed her dream and took to the skies. Her groundbreaking career – magnified by her mysterious disappearance – has captivated people worldwide. But I'm also profoundly grateful for the social work students and alumni I have met who are pursuing a different kind of dream. As they follow their calling, they too are forging new paths. Along the way, they too must overcome various hazards and obstacles, while turning a deaf ear to the naysayers and skeptics. They are unlikely to have books written about them. But through the transforming power of God's grace, they are quietly and persistently rewriting the bleak futures of individuals, families and communities.

Amelia Earhart liked to say that "preparation is rightly two-thirds of any venture." If that's the case, then it underscores the value of the education and preparation our faculty is committed to providing to generations of gifted students who are attracted to this School's distinctive approach to the integration of Christian faith and the practice of social work. It's an investment that pays immeasurable returns.

That leads me to one other Earhart quote: "Never do things others can do and will do if there are things others cannot do or will not do." She could have been writing a job description for social workers.



## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Dorothy Lamberth, here with Dean Diana Garland, is a 1938 Baylor grad who celebrated her 70th graduation anniversary this past May. She turned 93 on Oct. 1. Her late husband, Dr. Ivey Lamberth, a long-time anesthesiologist, was also a 1938 Baylor grad. She is one of a growing number of SSW supporters who have made arrangements for a planned gift to the School through a bequest in their estate. Her bequest will support the Del-lanna O'Brien Endowed Chair in Social Work, named in honor of the former executive director of the national Woman's Missionary Union.



## SUMMER CONVOCATION

*Nine students completed their degree work and were honored at the Summer Convocation Aug. 15. They are (from left) Leah Smith; Charlotte Washington; Allison Tinsley; Lesa Bowman; Gaynor Yancey, associate dean for baccalaureate studies; Jenny Adams; Laura Wilgus; Sarah Minor; Natalie O'Connor; and Nichol Evers.*



## FALL WORSHIP

*Truett Chapel was filled with faculty, staff, students, family and friends of the School of Social Work for the Fall Convocation Worship Service held Sept. 18. The Rev. Dr. Larry Haun, pastor of Fredericksburg (VA) Baptist Church, brought the message titled "Living the Yes." BSW student Kyle Knighton (at left) and lecturer LeAnn Gardner (with fellow lecturer Susanne Klawetter's son Sam) enjoy the reception. Below left, Board of Advocate members Laura Ann Vick (left) and Laura Cadena visit following the service. Below, Baylor Interim President David Garland and Dean of the School of Social Work Diana Garland visit with Dr. Haun at the reception in the Truett Great Hall.*



Come by the School  
after the parade for  
Homecoming goodies!

# ALUMNI NEWS FOR HOMECOMING

## MSW alumna “catching God’s vision” for her work

By Cini Bretzlaff, MSW 2006

*“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do”  
(Ephesians 2:10, NIV).*

Four years ago when I started the first of my two years in the Baylor University School of Social Work, I knew little about the social work profession. I did know, however, that the Lord was cultivating in me a heart to work with the local church. I also knew that attending graduate school to get my MSW was just the beginning of catching His vision and purpose for my life in relation to that desire.



In the two years since completing my MSW, I have been living and working in Chicago. For a season, the Lord placed me in a position at Lydia Home Association, which is a faith-based, non-profit, child welfare agency where I worked with the Safe Families for Children program. This is a crisis intervention program that provides temporary care for children whose parent(s) find themselves in difficult circumstances (risk of homelessness, unemployment, substance abuse treatment, etc.). The families that take in these children for a short period of time are predominately Christian and are recruited from local churches. It was by work-

ing and serving with these families that the Lord began to teach me more about unity in the body of Christ (Ephesians 4) and my role of encouraging the Church (big C and little c) to be the Church to a world in need of hope.

Recently, my season at Lydia Home came to an end and the Lord has opened a door for me to step into a position at Buckner Children and Family Services. Through the collaborative partnership between Buckner in Dallas and the Department of Social Work at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, IL, I will be working as the Community Ministry Coordinator for Buckner in the Chicago area. In addition, I will also serve as an adjunct professor for the Department of Social Work at Trinity teaching one undergraduate social work class per semester.

I am excited to begin a new stage in my journey as I continue to join the Lord as one of His fellow workers to do His redemptive work on earth. More specifically, I will be doing church social work by building relationships with local churches in order to assist in the development of community ministries. The cry of my heart echoes that of Christ, “...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10, NIV). As author Jack Deere writes: “This has always been the best way to live and to minister – to see it in heaven and copy it on earth. It is the essence of all sincere prayer...”

## Carver grad/Navy chaplain relied on ‘constant prayer’ in combat

A year ago last April, Chaplain Lt. Bennett Sandford, who attended Carver School of Church Social Work in 1994-1995, was traveling with the 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion’s Marines Personal Security Detachment in Fallujah, Iraq, when an IED exploded just to the right of their Humvee vehicle.

Most inside the vehicle escaped serious injury, but the gunner was bleeding profusely from a shrapnel wound. As Sandford and others tended to the injured man, the shooting outside the vehicle continued. When the firing stopped, a corpsman was able to help carry the gunner to another vehicle for transport to Fallujah Surgical.

Sandford says when he was able to look at the Humvee later, he saw that it was heavily punctured by shrapnel. Approximately nine pieces of shrapnel had slammed into the glass on his door alone, one directly above where his head was.

“I believe I was constantly praying throughout the entire ordeal even while doing other things,” Sandford says. “God certainly gave me the courage and strength to appropriately respond to the gunner and his injuries.” The gunner returned to duty within a month.



## CALENDAR

|            |            |                                              |
|------------|------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>OCT</b> | <b>2</b>   | <b>Dyer Ethics Workshop</b>                  |
|            | <b>30</b>  | <b>CSWE Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA</b> |
|            | <b>31</b>  | <b>Baylor Homecoming</b>                     |
| <b>NOV</b> | <b>1</b>   | <b>Baylor Homecoming</b>                     |
|            | <b>2-4</b> | <b>Moldova Summit</b>                        |
|            | <b>6-8</b> | <b>NASW-TX Annual Conf., Galveston, TX</b>   |
| <b>DEC</b> | <b>19</b>  | <b>Fall Convocation</b>                      |
|            | <b>20</b>  | <b>Fall Commencement</b>                     |



# SSW ALUMNI

**Nicole Back** (MSW 2007) is co-author with Jim Ellor and Howard Gruetzner of "Grief and Dementia" for *Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience*. Nicole was in the first group of students in the GSI grant, which began in 2006-2007.

## Shannon Barkwell

(BASW 1999) was named the Shattered Dreams Passionate Educator of the Year, which is given by the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. Shannon works at Hillcrest Hospital Trauma Services as the Teensafe Coordinator.



**Celeste "CC" Chervenka** (BASW 2004) is working at the Mayo Clinic in Arizona for the American Cancer Society. She earned her MSW in 2005 from Our Lady

of the Lake University. This past October she married Ben Bales and they reside in Mesa, AZ.

**Rebecca Fredricks** (MSW 2008) recently started work as the admissions director at Oak Crest Manor in Michigan, where her duties include resident assessments, tours, answering questions regarding living there, health fairs, networking, and marketing.

## Courtney Burdick

(BASW 2003/MSW 2005) and husband, Joseph, welcomed Caleb Justice Burdick July 20, weighing in at 6 lbs., 11 ounces and 20.5 inches.



**Irine Thomas** (MSW 2008) married Shiju Abraham in June. Two of her bridesmaids were **Rebecca Fredricks** (MSW 2008) and **Linsey Helm Curry** (MSW 2008).

## Gerontology alumna finds fulfilling career in dementia care

**Elizabeth Christmas**, (BA Sociology 1996/MGS 1998) is the director of Sheltering Arms Day Center, a dementia specific day center and part of Sheltering Arms Senior Services in Houston, TX, which provides Sheltering Arms Home Health, the Hospital to Home program, and is a host site for area programs.

"My passion and heart are in a couple of areas: long term care and dementia," Christmas says. "There is no dollar amount or numerical value I can place on the degree. The education I was provided allowed me to jump into long-term care with a better understanding and knowledge base than most, and it equipped me to graduate and become part of many families' daily lives who I would not have had contact with before."

Sheltering Arms Home Health allows caregivers for those with dementia to receive training that qualifies for reimbursement through Medicare. The Hospital to Home program follows congestive heart failure patients from hospital admission through discharge and beyond. Sheltering Arms Senior Services hosts the CMS Caregiver series and an assortment of Care for Elders programs.

Christmas says that some of her biggest challenges are "overcoming stereotypes of what aging looks like and dispelling myths." The greatest reward for her is the extended family the older adults and their families provide her. — *Patty Miller, MSW student*



## CALLING ALL ALUMNI

### Let us hear from you!

Please complete the information below and provide a photo, if possible. (Photos cannot be returned.) Mail to: Krista Barrett, managing editor, School of Social Work, Baylor University, One Bear Place #97320, Waco, TX 76798-7320.

Or send via e-mail to [Krista\\_Barrett@baylor.edu](mailto:Krista_Barrett@baylor.edu) or fax this form to (254) 710-6455.

Name (at graduation and now) \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Graduation/Degree \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Baylor or Carver School graduate? \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Title or Position/Updates (career, family, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

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|                      |   |                 |    |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|----|
| Visioning Summit     | 1 | News Briefs     | 10 |
| From the Dean        | 2 | Personal Essay  | 12 |
| Back to School Party | 4 | Convocations    | 13 |
| BSW Report           | 6 | Homecoming News |    |
| BSW Student Profile  | 7 | from our Alumni | 14 |
| MSW Report           | 8 | Calendar        | 14 |
| Global Studies Grant | 9 |                 |    |



## COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Volume No. 23 - October 2008

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