

# COMMUNITY CONNECTION

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## Taking back the neighborhood

### Alumnus helping to organize for change in inner-city

By Walker Moore,  
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Community Organizer, Waco  
Community Development Corp.

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“Want some weed?” It’s not a question one is asked every day, but it was a logical question to ask me. I was a white guy walking into the “Green Store,” a store known as a “million dollar spot” because millions of dollars had been sold there, and most white people walking into the store were there to buy drugs. Little did the drug dealer know that I was a Baylor School of Social Work intern at Waco Community Development and literally had no idea what I was doing.

It all seemed so simple when I formed my community organizing strategy. I would organize a residents’ council in Parkside, a 200-unit, low-income, drug-infested apartment complex. It is located in a North Waco neighborhood of roughly 6,000 (60 percent African-American, 33 percent Hispanic, and 7 percent White) with a median household income of \$16,189. It was one of early Waco’s finest neighborhoods, but like many

older communities the ravages of time began to take a toll. Houses were not maintained and began to decay. Eventually, many of these homes burned or were torn down leaving more than 200 empty lots in the neighborhood and a 16 percent reduction of housing units from 1990 to 2000. Like the neighborhood, Parkside was once a nice place to live. Its first residents moved there, in the 1970s, with a sense of pride, but by 2007 it was the center of north Waco’s drug

**“I was scared of Parkside. I was scared of the color difference. I was scared of being mugged. I was scared of being rejected. I was just plain scared.”**

traffic. Parkside has the well-deserved street reputation as the toughest of all of Waco’s low-income apartment complexes.

In large part, Parkside’s law-abiding residents have ceded community areas to drug dealers, and the fact that the Green Store is one block away, only exasperates internal problems. After years of watching outsiders try to mandate changes in Parkside, Waco Community Development decided to organize the residents so that solutions would come

from the residents themselves.

When I started in January 2007, I felt confident that within a few short months I would form great relationships, establish a residents’ council, and Parkside would be a safe place for families. Although I knew relationships would take time to form, I failed to realize the internal difficulties I would have as a white male working in a predominantly African-American context.

These difficulties very quickly emerged. I spent all of January and the first part of February hiding in my office. Although I did not realize it at the time, I was scared of Parkside, specifically its culture. I was scared of the color difference. I was scared of being mugged. I was scared of being rejected. I was just plain scared. Instead of building relationships with Parkside residents, I read books about African-American culture, met with non-profit leaders about Parkside, and wrote grants to fund the work I was doing in Parkside. In short, I did everything except organize the residents because I was scared. It quickly became apparent that my seclusion was not going to change anything in the neighborhood.

*(continued on page 2)*



PHOTOS BY DALE CAFFEY

*Darrell Abercrombie, program administrator at Waco Community Development and a long-time resident of the neighborhood, takes on grill duty for a Back-to-School Bash.*

## FROM THE DEAN

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

In this issue of *Community Connection*, we bring you profiles of two alumni who are living and working their passion for inner-city transformation – Walker Moore in Waco and Jason Pittman in Miami. We’re focusing on community organization and alumni in this issue for two reasons.



Last fall we introduced in our graduate degree a concentration in community development. Although a new concentration for us, the work has always been intrinsic in our academic scope and you can see that in Walker and Jason’s work. Second, we want to continue our efforts to build community among our alumni, a group that now numbers more than 1,500 dating from the beginning of the undergraduate BASW program in 1969.

At the May 5 MSW Practice Colloquium, we held an alumni luncheon for 85 that officially kicked off our new Alumni Council. We also nominated, voted and elected permanent class officers for 2009 and preceding years. It was a fun event for us all!

You’ll also see reference to links on our website connecting you to student and alumni profiles. I hope you’ll take the time to read those and share them with friends and colleagues.

I am astonished sometimes when I stop to think of the places and ways our alumni are changing our world for the better. In Liberia, Thailand, Japan, Africa, Moldova ... the list goes on. This fall, three students from Southeast Asia will begin graduate work with us as our first Global Mission Leadership Scholars (*see story on page 14*).

There are blessings rare and wonderful all around us, and I am grateful.

Diana



Volunteers from different community organizations joined to prepare snacks for the neighborhood’s Back-to-School Bash.

## INNER CITY

(continued from page 1)

My fear came to a head on Feb. 7, 2007, when Gaynor Yancey, my internship supervisor, helped me admit that I was scared. After discussing my fear, she asked me what I was going to do about it, and I told her that I was going to walk through Parkside. That afternoon I walked through Parkside, and on that day, I lost my fear. I realized that the residents were people just like me. On the Independence Day of sorts, I gained the freedom to begin organizing in Parkside. In retrospect, I was suffering from culture shock. As a white male from a rural middle-class background, I did not know how to enter an African-American urban low-income community. Yet, even after I lost my fear, I struggled to develop relationships.

### LEARNING COMMUNITY CULTURE

I thought that I would be able to walk through Parkside, strike up conversations, build relationships, and then organize the residents. Through much trial and error, I discovered the meandering through Parkside was not a culturally acceptable way to enter the community. Instead of building relationships, I built misconceptions. Some thought I was buying drugs. For example, this miscon-

ception once led to the police stopping and searching me for drugs. Drug dealers thought I was an undercover policeman, leading to a couple of verbal altercations, and at least one resident thought I was a pedophile. After a month of fruitless meandering, I discovered two culturally acceptable ways for a White person to enter the Parkside community.

The first was through King’s Club. For 15 to 20 years, Mission Waco, a local non-profit organization, has sent Baylor students to Parkside on Saturday mornings for King’s Club, a time of games, songs, and Bible stories. Parkside residents expect and look forward to seeing the Baylor students. I began volunteering with King’s Club, giving me the opportunity to meet children and their parents. I now had a reason to be at Parkside every Saturday morning. Two, I began leading a behavior modification group at Brook Avenue Elementary, one of two neighborhood schools that Parkside students attend. Five of the six boys lived in Parkside, and after establishing relationships with the boys at school, I began to visit them at their apartments and meet their families. The children I met through King’s Club and the school gave me the cover and credibility I needed to meet families without raising the suspicion of the drug dealers.

## SUCCESS AND STARTING OVER

After four months of building relationships and talking to people about a residents' council, three women came together on May 25, 2007, for the first Parkside Residents' Council meeting in years. Over the next four months the council met eight times, and two more residents became active members. They worked with the police to shut down a "trap house" operating on Parkside property. A trap house is a vacant house or apartment used to sell drugs. They helped organize a school supply give-a-way, and advocated for and obtained better lighting. Although the council experienced some initial success, problems began to minimize its effectiveness.

Foremost of these problems was fear of retaliation. Fear was the primary reason that law-abiding citizens did not participate in the council. The members lived in continuous worry that drug dealers would retaliate against them or their families. This fear was only intensified when a group of about 15 drug dealers and their cohorts verbally assaulted one of the members. On top of this, there were serious conflicts between the council and management that prevented any type of collaborative work. The manager felt threatened by the council, and the council felt like the manager treated them and the other residents with disrespect.

Plus, change was painstakingly slow, and the members struggled to see the effectiveness of their work, especially when the summer of 2007 was extremely violent, highlighted by serious drive-by shootings. Even with these issues, the council was functioning, but then everything began to fall apart.

In September, one of the core members moved from Parkside because she did not want her family to be around the violence. She was the glue that held the council together, and after she left there was only one more meeting. Three more meetings were scheduled, but no one attended. In fact, the most vocal of the residents suddenly moved before a meeting with management and the owners to discuss issues that she had with Parkside. With these two key members gone, the Residents' Council was dead.

**They viewed it as a place that had always been bad and had no chance of becoming better. They just wanted to leave as soon as possible.**

I spent September, October and November trying to drum up support for the Residents' Council, but found nary a soul willing to join. After two and a half months of treading water, my executive director asked me to evaluate the progress of organizing in Parkside. Although it was painful to admit, it became increasingly obvious that a Residents' Council was not feasible for three reasons:

- One, many of the residents were connected with drug trafficking. Some were users, and others had friends and/or relatives using or selling. These residents were unable and unwilling to come together against the drug dealers.
- Two, residents who were unconnected were fearful of retaliation from the drug dealers.
- Three, residents did not feel that Parkside was worth their time and energy. They viewed it as a place that had always been bad and had no chance of becoming better. They just wanted to leave as soon as possible.

With this knowledge we went back to the drawing board and began crafting a community organizing strategic plan.

## ENGAGING, ENRICHING PARENTS

As I began to craft the new plan, I took stock of what a year of community organizing had accomplished. Although the Residents' Council fizzled, my work had given me the opportunity to build solid relationships with several residents and key neighborhood leaders, including the Brook Oaks Neighborhood Association, both neighborhood schools (Brook Avenue Elementary and West Avenue Elementary), community organizations, and some of the local pastors. I also began to realize that the people who were unable to join the Residents' Council would jump at the opportunity to make the schools better. I felt confident that this would include people connected to drug trafficking because everyone cares about their kids. Out of this time of reflection came the Parental Engagement Project, or PEP.

The PEP began in January 2008, with a focus on strengthening the relationships between schools, parents and community. This approach to community organizing showed immediate results.

For example, Brook Avenue Elementary began actively inviting parents to participate in Learning Walks. Once a month parents visit each classroom during times of instruction and provide feedback on what they like and do not like. Parents who felt marginalized by the school are now given an opportunity to

*(continued on page 4)*



*Members of "God's Precious Angels," a dance group from Living Witness Church, provided entertainment at the neighborhood Back-to-School Bash.*

## Parkside Update

For years at Parkside Village, drug dealers controlled public spaces and law-abiding citizens hid in their apartments, afraid to take a stand because of the all-too-real threat of retaliation. Yet in the midst of this dreadful situation, hope is emerging.

It all started in summer 2007 when a small group of women decided that they had had enough. They came together to take a stand against the drug dealers and substandard housing. They did this knowing full well they were putting their lives and their families' lives in danger. In the midst of this threat, they persevered and shut down a "crack house," advocated for and received better lighting, and helped organize a school supply giveaway. Sadly, this residents' council dissolved, but these women would not be denied in their pursuit of justice.

These women began attending Brook Oaks Neighborhood Association (BONA) meetings and shared the Parkside Village story with association members, neighborhood churches, community non-profits, schools, Waco Police Department (Waco PD), and the city councilman. Their stories galvanized these groups to take action. What started as a small group of women became a coalition of neighborhood organizations committed to bringing safety to Parkside Village.

Then American Housing Foundation (AHF), the owners of Parkside Village, came forward and said that they too were sick and tired of the situation. At the March BONA meeting, the air was cleared and the foundation for a new tomorrow was laid. AHF apologized for past mismanagement and presented a compelling vision for the future. They also reported on their recent improvements to the property, including better lighting, cameras to monitor drug hot spots, painting, guard rails, and new kitchen cabinets. In turn, the coalition presented a set of expectations and target dates that AHF willingly accepted.

Waco PD talked about AHF's efforts to join the Crime Free Multi-Housing program, which significantly reduces crime in certified apartment communities, and AHF committed to having Parkside Village fully certified as a Crime Free Multi-Housing community in the coming months. Finally, churches and non-profits discussed ways to use their resources to support positive changes at Parkside Village. Truly, hope was emerging.

After the meeting, one of the Parkside Village residents beamed with hope. She had been at the first residents' council meeting and had continued to work for a better Parkside Village. In the midst of adversity, she had persevered, and now she saw the fruit of her work. She simply could not contain her contagious smile as she recalled the journey that had led her to this point. The journey will not be easy, but this group of women and their neighborhood partners will not stop until Parkside Village is a place anyone can be proud to call home.

To learn more: [www.wacocdc.org](http://www.wacocdc.org)  
Recent CDC news at:  
[www.baylor.edu/social\\_work/news](http://www.baylor.edu/social_work/news)



Walker Moore

## INNER CITY

(continued from page 3)

voice their opinion, and teachers who once feared parents now realize that the parents just want a quality education for their children. The Learning Walks have allowed a great diversity of parents to participate in their child's education, including Black, White, Hispanic, unemployed, employed, and drug users. These Learning Walks changed the culture of parent/teacher relationships from one of negativity to one of partners in education.

A group of Spanish-speaking parents once felt cut off from the school but have been meeting regularly. To date, they have improved the safety around the school and worked with the principal to have a bilingual computer class for parents and their children. For their latest project, they are planning a parent meeting that will reach out to Hispanic and African American parents to engage them in the change process. The Learning Walks and this group of Spanish-speaking parents were a significant reason that Brook Avenue Elementary received an "Academically Acceptable" rating from the state of Texas for the 2007-08 school year.

West Avenue Elementary recognized that parents were not receiving enough positive comments about their children and took the initiative to correct this. The school made a list of the more troublesome kids and their positive attributes. Then they recruited one of the student's grandmas to call the parents of these students and share the ever-so-important positive comments. The

*"The people were caught up in the amazement of what this community could be."*

*– The Rev. Maurice Walker*

parents loved hearing the good news about their children and began feeling better about the school. In part, because of these phone calls, more parents have participated in PTA meetings than ever before. As a result of the school's "Recognized" rating, the second highest in Texas, for the 2007-2008 school year and the school's parental outreach, Andreia Foster, the school's principal was named Principal of the Year for the Waco Independent School District.

### UNITY IN DREAMS

Another part of the PEP was to rally the community around the two schools. In May 2008, pastors from five neighborhood churches came together to begin reaming about what they could do jointly.

Out of this time of dreaming came the Back to School Bash. Seven different neighborhood churches, both neighborhood schools, and three neighborhood organizations came together for this event. The Back to School Bash was an outstanding success. In fact, Melvin Carter, a long-time community leader, stated that the bash was one of the best things to ever happen to the neighborhood. This was not the first time

that an event like this has taken place in the neighborhood, but it was the first time that so many different parts of the community participated and acted on one accord. This event demonstrated what the community can do.

The Rev. Maurice Walker, pastor of Living Witness Missionary Church and a fifth-grade teacher at West Avenue Elementary School, said, "The people were caught up in the amazement of what this community could be." This event helped the community see that it was "one." It showed this community that if we continue to come together then, as "one" we can overcome the obstacles that prevent this community from thriving and make it become even more alive.

### HOPE WINS OUT

Community organizing in North Waco has been a slow process, but there is definite progress. In the beginning, my network of relationships was extremely limited. Now, that network includes a city councilman, drug dealers, church pastors, "crack-heads," and regular people who want to see their community transformed.

I still struggle to understand the culture, but I take great pride that one Parkside resident told me, "I think your soul is Black. You're white on the outside, but Black everywhere else."

The drug dealers still control Parkside, but they no longer ask me if I want to buy weed. Nor do they sell drugs at the Green Store because of police pressure on the store owner. There is an exciting sense of hope that was but a dream two years ago, a hope that this community will become better. The neighborhood is beginning to come together, and I envision the day when the loose network forms into a tight-knit coalition that stands shoulder-to-shoulder against the ills of this neighborhood and champions the cures at every turn.

# A TOUCH OF LOVE

## Pittmans' inner-city ministry a life-long commitment

Jason Pittman and his wife, Angel, have lived and worked with nonprofits in inner cities since their undergraduate school days at Baylor. Inner city work for them is a long-term commitment that they lived out in Waco, Detroit and now Miami, where for the past four years

Jason has been executive director of Touching Miami with Love (TML), an initiative of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship that began 15 years ago.

Jason also has worked as field personnel with CBF for the past seven years.

"Helping a community and being part of a community that has, in most places, seen 40 or 50 years of deterioration, that's what keeps me involved," said Pittman, an MDiv/MSW graduate.

"Right now almost every single youth that we have grew up in our programs as little kids. We are just on the cusp of getting them into schools

and adjusted to being adults. Part of that success in the inner city is getting kids to realize that they can stay here and be part of a positive."

Much of Pittman's work with TML has been in fundraising as the program moves toward financial independence

from CBF. He engages a variety of activities from grant writing to directing and leading the staff to coordinating the strategic planning. But he also pas-

tors a small church in the neighborhood and works with other local churches in specific ministries.

"We serve about 500 every Sunday in the church that I pastor," he said. "It's a downtown church and we provide two meals, breakfast and lunch, showers and clothing and a worship service. It's primarily a ministry for the homeless."

Other churches join in this ministry  
*(continued on page 15)*

*"Part of that success in the inner city is getting kids to realize that they can stay here and be part of a positive."*



Jason Pittman and his 5-year-old son, Lucas, play with the children at a parent community meeting at Touching Miami with Love.



## FAMILY DINNER

*The annual Family Dinner is always one of the highlights of the academic year for the School of Social Work, held this year on April 23 in the Cashion Banquet Center on campus. Buddy Edwards, top left, with Dean Diana Garland, was the Alumnus of the Year. Above, Sam Oakley, associate director of the Center for Family and Community Ministries (standing), visits with friends and fellow alumni. At left, MSW student and May graduate Courtney Drew, center, hosts a table. Below, Dennis Myers, associate dean for graduate studies, center, greets Board of Advocate members Jim Williams, left, and William O'Brien.*

*See profiles and photos of all our student award recipients online at: [www.baylor.edu/social\\_work/index.php?id=63901](http://www.baylor.edu/social_work/index.php?id=63901)*



*Shirl Brown, MSW foundation year student, shares dinner conversation with Johnny and Tricia Mankin. Tricia is a new Board of Advocates member.*



# SCHOOL RESTRUCTURES CENTERS

## *Aging and literacy focus to be integrated into degree programs*

The Visioning Summit the School of Social Work held last fall began an extended review process of the School's administrative and academic structures. One of the decisions that emerged from this process was to reassign responsibilities of the Center for Literacy and the Center for Gerontological Studies so both interests could receive more research and scholarship attention. The Board of Advocates approved this decision at its April meeting.

"After lengthy review, it was our belief that by changing the internal structure, we could give literacy and aging issues a greater emphasis, while also more efficiently benefiting from our staff and faculty's strengths," said Dean Diana Garland.

Resources and research projects housed in the two centers will be consolidated into the School's Center for Family and Community Ministries, a natural transition given that center's scope and mission of strengthening ministries within congregations, Garland said: "We are changing our structure, not our mission."

Concurrently, the administration is exploring ways to incorporate attention to aging and literacy across the degree programs. Rob Rogers, CFL director, and Jim Ellor, CGS director, will return to title of tenured faculty and, instead of having to focus on the management of centers, will be able to focus more of their energies on the integration of content on literacy and aging into the School's degree programs.

The Center for Literacy had its roots at Baylor in the Laubach Literacy Center established in 1957. It fell inactive from 1968 to 1987 but reopened in 1988 in partnership with the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT). Organizationally, the center moved into the School of Social Work in 2005. Recently it has offered training to support local church programs of English language literacy, such as English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language and Adult Reading and Writing. Many of these programs will continue to be provided through Literacy ConneXus under director Lester Merriwether ([www.literacyconexus.org/](http://www.literacyconexus.org/)).

The Center for Gerontological Studies began at Baylor in 1977 as the Institute for Gerontological Studies. Directors Ben Dickerson and Connie Beran left Baylor in 2002, and Dennis Myers, associate dean for graduate studies at the School of Social Work, continued the institute's work until the arrival of Jim Ellor at Baylor in 2004, when he assumed leadership. This center was unique among the three at the School because it also offered a minor in gerontological studies. It also created and coordinated the Heart of Texas Waco Area Gerontological Society (HOT-WAGS), which continues to provide monthly luncheon meetings. The minor in gerontology will continue, and the School is currently exploring additional degree programs in aging studies.

The Center for Family and Community Ministries has been independently funded, in large part, since its origin in 1998, receiving a steady flow of externally funded grants. As such, it



*The CFCM staff, by their new office suite, are (from left): Kimberly Schlesinger, administrative associate; Jeremy Everett, director of Texas Hunger Initiative; Sam Oakley, associate director; Angela Dennison, associate director; Tammy Woods, research associate; Jon Singletary, director; and Jamie McKinney, assistant for the Journal of Family and Community Ministry.*

### **Upcoming CFCM Events:**

- **No Need Among You, Sept. 24-27**  
To help and empower the poor, mentally ill, deaf and other marginalized persons (*read more on page 8*).
- **Senior Adult Ministry Leadership Conference, Oct. 3**  
To encourage, equip and challenge those who work with aging adults in congregations
- **Walking Alongside: Addressing Poverty in Community Ministries, Oct. 16-17**  
To introduce congregational members to the basics of societal poverty with curriculum written to educate and facilitate response

**Call 254-710-3854 for more information**

has greater capability of providing stipends and tuition remission awards to baccalaureate and graduate students. It recently partnered with the BGCT's Christian Life Commission to hire a director for the new Texas Hunger Initiative, which seeks to make the state food-secure by 2015.

Jon Singletary, CFCM director and associate professor at the School, operates a five-person staff in a newly acquired office site adjacent to the School of Social Work in the Speight Avenue Parking Plaza.

"Jim, Rob, Diana and I have had long discussions about how best to transition the resources and information from the other two centers into the work of this center," Singletary said. "We are committed to making this a seamless transition for all the constituencies who depend upon the School to lead out in strengthening ministries around family, community, literacy and aging." — *Vicki Marsh Kabat*

# "NO NEED AMONG YOU"

School to host Christian Community Development Conference Sept. 24-27

The School of Social Work will co-sponsor a Christian community development conference in Waco Sept. 24-27. Titled "No Need Among You," the event will focus on practical skills related to a variety of broad-based community issues, especially designed to help pastors, church staff, and non-profits.

The event begins on Thursday night with a banquet and keynote speaker Ray Rivera, the executive director of the Latino Pastoral Action Center in New York City.

The topics to be addressed include addiction and mental illness, high-risk children and teens, hunger and poverty, and human trafficking. Several workshops will be taught by SSW faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

The event, modeled after the national Christian Community Development Association's annual conference, resulted from a planning meeting Jon Singletary, director of the Center for Family and Community Ministries at the School, called with Gerald

Davis of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, Rene Maciel of Baptist University of the Americas, and Jimmy Dorrell of Mission Waco to host a similar event locally.

The School of Social Work began a community concentration in fall 2008, and several students attended the CCDA conference last October in Miami. They had recently read the life story of John Perkins and his role in starting CCDA in Charles Marsh's *The Beloved Community*.

"CCDA became a lived expression of the gospel for Perkins, whose life was shaped by genuine call to community that he heard in Jesus' teachings and that he hoped for as part of the Civil Rights Movement," said Singletary, instructor of that class.

The total cost for all events is \$60. For more information, please contact Kimberly\_Schlesinger@baylor.edu or call 254-710-3854.

## CALENDAR

<b>AUG 14</b>	Summer Convocation
<b>15</b>	Summer Commencement
<b>SEPT 17</b>	Fall Worship Service
<b>18</b>	BOA Fall Meeting
<b>24-27</b>	CFCM Community Development Conference
<b>29</b>	Dyer Ethics Workshop
<b>OCT 15-17</b>	NASW/TX Annual Conf., Fort Worth
<b>OCT 23-24</b>	<b>Baylor Homecoming</b>
<b>9-NOV 1</b>	NACSW Conference Indianapolis, IN
<b>NOV 6-9</b>	CSWE Annual Program Meeting, San Antonio
<b>DEC 18</b>	Fall Convocation
<b>19</b>	Fall Commencement



## SSW ALUMNI UPDATES

**Jennifer Washington** (BASW 1999, MSW 2001), was awarded the Regional Commissioner's Citation May 6, the highest award given in the five-state Dallas region of the Social Security Administration, which includes Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and New Mexico. She was chosen based on her accomplishments and excellence in service and initiative in the area of service to the public and the SSA.

**Hilary Marsh Blackketter** (BASW 2005) received her Master's of Social Work from Abilene Christian College this past May.

**Melanie Mims Curtis** (MSW 2006) is working as a child and adolescent therapist at the DePaul Center. Previously she worked at the Family Abuse Center where she helped build a children's program. Melanie got married March 7.

**Corey Heidt** (BSW 2008/MSW 2009) will begin work in July as the youth and family director at St. Martin's Lutheran Church in Sugar Land, TX. He hopes to keep families involved in the community and the church.

**Nicole McAninch** (BSW 2004/MSW 2006) accepted a lecturer position at Baylor University in the Family and Consumer Sciences Department and will begin in the fall. She has completed coursework for her doctoral program at Texas Woman's University and will sit for comps in September.

**Taylor Payne** (BSW 2009) received an award for outstanding service as the Steppin' Out director for Baylor University during the 2008-2009 academic year.

**Katie Robinson** (BSW 2009) has been hired at Catholic Charities in Fort Worth as the Home Developer of the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program. This position will include interviewing potential foster parents, assessing their abilities to foster a refugee child and educating them on refugee children.

**Shamethia Webb** (BSW 2007) will be entering Texas Woman's University in the fall to start a graduate degree in Women's Studies.

# Loss

## Bereavement

# GRIEF

# MOURNING

*Students prepare curriculum to address variety of losses over lifetime*

*By Helen Harris,  
Senior Lecturer*

Loss. Bereavement. Grief. Mourning. These words are used almost interchangeably in our society. They are certainly experienced universally. The students in the School of Social Work encounter the loss, bereavement, grief and mourning of their clients in settings from schools to hospitals to adoption agencies to churches to hospice programs. While the impact of death and the impact of divorce or retirement or amputation are not the same, the experience of loss and the resultant grief are variables in many if not most of the psychosocial challenges faced by the clients our students serve. Social workers sometimes help clients with their loss experiences. Other times, social workers prepare and equip teachers, nurses, Sunday School teachers, doctors, ministers, and other professionals to support and respond to those experiencing loss.

Consequently, the Baylor School of Social Work offers an elective course entitled: Loss and Mourning. This three hour course is not designed to be another death and dying course. Instead, the course is structured to address a variety of losses across the lifespan, to normalize the experience of loss, to connect to helping theory, and to apply that theory to a variety of practice settings. Students come to the course with specific practice interests including foster care and adoption, children with developmental disabilities, women who have experienced the losses associated with domestic violence, clients who have lost a breast or a limb to cancer, soldiers who are living with traumatic brain injury, and the list goes on. Students are motivated to learn both the general precepts and skills for responding to loss and specific knowledge and skills for working with particular population groups.

In that vein, the primary assignment for the Loss and Mourning

course is the development of a grief curriculum for a specific population and/or loss issue. Once students have worked together through the major theoretical frameworks on grief and mourning starting with Freud and Lindemann and focusing on Kubler-Ross, Worden, Rando and Wolfelt, they are ready to make particular application. Students choose a population or loss issue and research best practices for responding to that. They then develop a presentation or curriculum for either direct service clients or for helping professionals who work with those clients. This product is available for them then as they enter internships and practice.

This past academic year several students were able to implement the curricula they developed. Sara Karnes, BSW student, developed a curriculum entitled: Helping Youth Pastors Interact with their Students Experiencing Loss. She was able to use the information about teenagers and grief with the interdisciplinary team in her internship with hospice. She expects to use the curriculum with her church in the future. Klista Bomberger, MSW student, provided foster parent training on the losses experienced by foster children, by foster parents, and by the birth children of foster parents. Both students reported their agency and client appreciation for their preparation and delivery of useful information. Another student developed a grief support group for children with psychiatric disorders who experience a loss. Still another prepared a grief group curriculum for survivors of major trauma or disaster. One graduate is using the curriculum she developed in her work with soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Loss....Adaptation. Bereavement....Survival. Grief.....Healing. Mourning....Hope: More than words, social work practice in action.

# SCHOOL NEWS BRIEFS



## A HAND FOR THE KITCHEN HELP

Jon Singletary, associate professor (second from right) and Gaynor Yancey, associate dean for baccalaureate studies (far right), received a Team Award for their work, with Rosemary Townsend of the Student Life Division (second from left), on the Baylor University Campus Kitchen Project. The award recognizes a team from the Division of Student Life that has performed an outstanding service for students, the division or the university. The Campus Kitchen is part of Student Life's Baylor Interdisciplinary Poverty Initiative. Far left is Dub Oliver, outgoing vice president for Student Life.

## BEAN NAMED TO NACSW BOARD

Kate Bean, a Master's of Divinity/Master's of Social Work dual degree student at Baylor University, has been elected to the Board of Directors of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW), headquartered in Botsford, CT. She is the first student representative from Baylor to serve on the board.

Bean, who received her BS in mathematics from West Texas A&M University in Canyon, is in the School's community practice concentration. She assumes her responsibilities with the NACSW board officially at its Oct. 28-29

meeting in Indianapolis and will serve a two-year term. A BSW student representative also will be appointed.

"I am excited about being a student voice, as well as a voice for Baylor, on this professional international board," Bean said. "I believe it will be an excellent opportunity to combine both my Christian service and social work with people who live out their faith in ways that impact our world with Christ's love and justice."



## GARLAND HONORED FOR HER ONGOING WORK TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES

At The Orange Conference in Atlanta April 30, Baylor School of Social Work Dean Diana Garland was honored for her seminal work *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide* (InterVarsity Press, 1999), which was named 2000 Book of the Year by the Academy of Parish Clergy.

"We are grateful to Diana Garland for the way she pioneered the concept of partnering with parents and for the seeds she planted to raise a generation of Christian leaders who would dare to do ministry differently," said Reggie Joiner, author of *Think Orange*, which describes the group's philosophy. "Her work should be studied by anyone who is serious about combining the influence of church and family. In some ways, she is one of the Orange pioneers."

Nearly 3,500 church leaders in children's, youth, adult and family ministries gathered at the three-day event to celebrate and embrace new ways of engaging the next generation. The ecumenical group calls itself Orange to represent integration and change: a blending of yellow (the church as the light of the world) and red (the home and the heart). The organization's premise is that children need home and church working together.

"There is a different kind of culture that is established when the church understands the value of a true partnership with the family. When church staff members step out of their silo-style departmental thinking and start playing together, it creates synergy," according to the Orange website at [www.theorange-conference.org](http://www.theorange-conference.org).

Garland's other books include *Sacred Stories of Ordinary Families: Living the Faith in Daily Life* (Jossey-Bass, 2003) and *Flawed Families of the Bible: How God's Grace Works through Imperfect Relationships* (Brazos Press, 2007), which she co-authored with husband, David Garland, interim president of Baylor.

## TWOGETHER TEXAS FREE PREMARITAL ED CLASSES OFFERED IN JULY AND AUGUST

Two faculty members in the Baylor School of Social Work—Cindy Harr and Kim Kotrla—in conjunction with the Center for Family and Community Ministries, have received a grant from the state to provide free premarital education courses for McLennan, Hill, Bosque, and Coryell counties.

The initiative has been honored with city proclamations of support from Waco and Hillsboro.

In an effort to promote healthy, committed marriages the State of Texas recently passed legislation that provides free premarital education courses across the state. Couples who complete the 8-hour marital education and enhancement seminar will receive \$60 off their marriage license fee and may waive the 72-hour



waiting period to be married. The seminars are completely free of charge—all of the materials and lunch are provided. The curriculum used is research-based and offers solid support for strong foundations promoting healthy relationships.

The skills-based curriculum covers such topics as healthy communication, conflict-resolution, expectations, commitment, finances and keys to a successful marriage.

Upcoming premarital education classes will be held July 11 and Aug. 8, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the McLennan County Public Health District, 225 W. Waco Dr., Waco, TX.

For more information, call 254-710-3854.



## MSW COLLOQUIUM DRAWS 200-PLUS

This year's colloquium drew a record crowd of 233, a 33 percent increase over attendance last year. Fifty-seven MSW candidates presented their capstone research or practice presentations on a variety of topics. For a sample of the quality and relevance of the topics presented, go on the School of Social Work website at:

[www.baylor.edu/social\\_work/index.php?id=63998](http://www.baylor.edu/social_work/index.php?id=63998)

## NEW FACES AT SSW

### KRISTEN BOX

is the School's new Director of Development. She has a BS with a double major in psychology and sociology from the University of Houston, an MSSW from the University of Texas at Austin and is an LCSW. She worked as a social worker at Texas Baptist Children's Home in Round Rock and Buckner in Dallas. She most recently has worked at an executive search firm in Dallas. She and husband, Barry, live in Whitney, TX, and enjoy taking their three dogs for boat rides on Lake Whitney.



### MELODY YORK

**ZUNIGA** began June 1 as a lecturer and Director of Baccalaureate Field Education. She received her BA in Spanish and her MSW, both from Baylor, and has worked since that time as a counselor and forensic interviewer for the Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children in Waco. She also has served as a field instructor and seminar faculty member for the School. She is married to Jose Zuniga who works for the City of Waco.



### KATHY BARTLETTE

joins us as our MSW Admissions Coordinator. She is a former Air Force "brat," as she says, whose family is originally from Mineral Wells, TX. She is married (to a tenure-track, music theory professor) and has one daughter who is entering third grade. Kathy has an AAS degree in Fire Technology and Administration, and was an EMT before starting a family. Her interests are reading, yoga, eating chocolate, and watching scary movies.



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# ALUMNI LUNCHEON

Eighty-five people attended the School's first Alumni Luncheon May 5, including students graduating in May from the BSW and MSW programs. The luncheon is part of the School's ongoing efforts to build community among the alumni. Permanent class officers to comprise the Alumni Council were elected. They include: At right, for past classes, Sam Oakley, MSW 2007/MDiv 2008; Christen Argueta, MSW 2008; and Tammy Woods, MSW 2006; (not pictured) Brooke Rasco, BSW 2009, and Flor Avellaneda, MSW 2009, pictured below right with Helen Harris, senior lecturer. Enjoying the luncheon below are MSW foundation students Ryne Pulido, left, and Alan Ngwyen.



# FIELD LUNCHEON APRIL 28



Also well-attended was the Field Luncheon on April 28, held in the Hilton Banquet Room. Van Jones, at left, was honored as Field Instructor of the Year by Ester Flores, director of baccalaureate field education. Below, Preston Dyer, far left, Erma Ballenger, center, and Flores, visit with some of the 150 guests

who attended. Also honored was Eddie Greenfield, Waco Center for Youth, as Field Administrator of the Year. Student awards at the event included: Arnold Hider, BSW Field Intern; Beth Kilpatrick, MSW Field Intern; Gracie Brownell (MSW) and Sally Neeley (MSW), Excellence in Research.



# CONVOCATION MAY 2009

*Dean Diana Garland, right, and the faculty and staff welcome family and friends. Below, middle right, Garland poses with happy MSW graduate Jane Upsbarw. Bottom right, MSW graduates Jennifer Scarborough, left, and Rae Wright, right, pose with lecturer Susanne Klawetter. Below left, Arnold Hider, and Raquel Salinas, BSW students, take a moment to celebrate. Below middle, Angela DeLaney, BSW, leads the processional.*



BAYLOR PHOTOGRAPHY

# GLOBAL LEADERS

Three scholars from Southeast Asia begin MSW/MTS program this fall

The first three scholars in the School of Social Work's new Global Mission Leadership Initiative will travel from Southeast Asia to begin graduate work this fall at Baylor University.

The GML initiative, funded initially by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, is a dual-degree Master's of Social Work/Master's of Theological Studies scholarship program. Scholars will begin study in fall 2009 and will complete the graduate program with a four-month internship in his/her own homeland.

"We had more than 30 inquiries and nine qualified applicants for the three positions we could offer this fall," said Jennifer Smyer, GML director. "We are delighted with that response and with

those who have been chosen for the initial year of the program."

Sambo Klauth and Sovannara Moch from Cambodia and Soo Han Yeoh

from Malaysia will return to their homelands after graduation to use their graduate education from Baylor to implement holistic change in those nations.

"I trust God and strongly believe



Sambo Klauth, second from right, conducts a workshop on training methodologies for children in the shelter who have psychological problems.

that, with God's help, my graduate education at Baylor University will empower me to create solutions in my country of Cambodia," said Klauth, who currently works in Cambodia as a case manager for girls who have been victimized in the human trafficking industry.

Yeoh is committed to empowering the church to change her society's perspective toward persons with disabilities. She has served as a member of the management team of Malaysian Care, a nonprofit Christian organization committed to serving those in need.

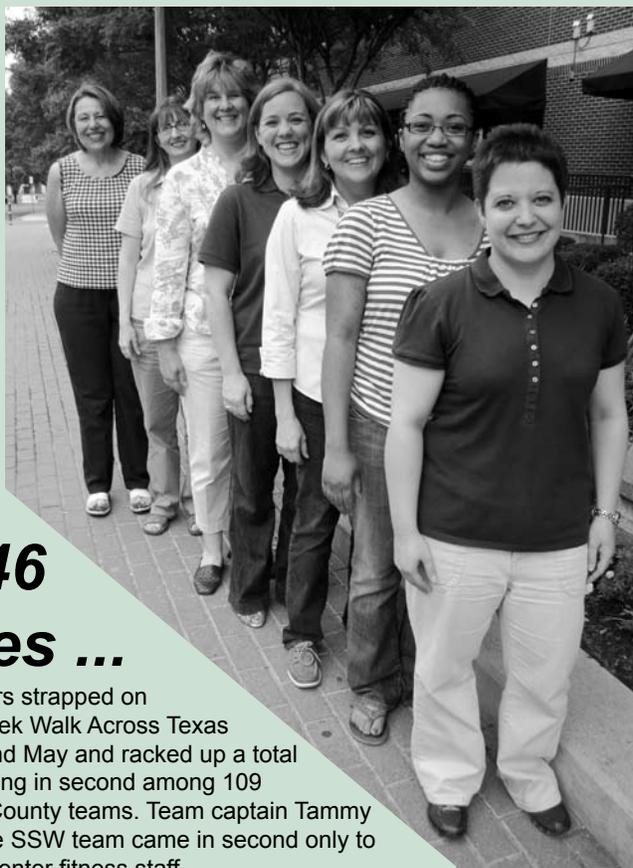
"The study of social policy will provide me the knowledge base to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of social policies in addressing grass-root issues and how change can be facilitated," Yeoh said.

Moch wants to pursue a doctoral degree in coming years but says she would do so while she continued "to serve the oppressed and abused children and their families through counseling." She wants to be able to train or teach younger generations in universities in Cambodia about social work and mental health.

"A graduate degree in social work ... will enable me to find more ways to advocate for the oppressed and to be a part of strengthening the practice of legal systems," Moch said.

For more information about the GML Initiative, contact Jennifer\_Smyer@baylor.edu or call 254-710-1246.

The "More Social, Less Work" team, front to back: Tammy Woods, captain, Jamie McKinney, Angela Fields, Tracey Kelley, Angela Dennison, Krista Barrett and Judith Stolz. (Not pictured: Marilyn Gusukuma).



**4,036.46  
miles ...**

Eight staff members strapped on pedometers in an 8-week Walk Across Texas program during April and May and racked up a total of 4,036.46 miles, coming in second among 109 registered McLennan County teams. Team captain Tammy Woods (front) notes the SSW team came in second only to Baylor's Student Life Center fitness staff.

The program was created by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and sponsored locally by the Waco-McLennan County Public Health District. To learn more: <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>.

# PITTMAN

(continued from page 5)

to help serve and cook. Worship attendance is not required to receive the meal or amenities, but Pittman says about 100 do attend. "For a lot them it's their church. They feel welcome. It doesn't matter if they stink or if they're still hung over, they are accepted for who they are."

Recently, Pittman and TML are moving more toward community organizing and working with parents, which is something he is really enjoying. It began with a summer barbecue and people just talking together.

Now they have a monthly potluck meal with parents of children in the TML programs.

"We talk a lot about what our neighborhood would look like. We ask them what would a good neighbor be and what would a good neighborhood be. This has been a lot of fun," Pittman said.

The neighborhood is primarily African-American, but the larger community is a mix of African-Americans, Haitians, Latinos and Cubans, and each culture has a different work ethic and cultural sensitivity, Pittman said. "The racial tensions are different" than in Detroit where the tensions were primarily between Whites and African-Americans and came out of the politically charged Sixties.

But in his parent meetings, where he often is the only White, he says the people talk about how they would all share duties: the Latinos would help with babysitting and the Blacks would go to the grocery store and the Whites would clean.

"It was great. That's the way it should be, and it's so fun to get some ideas out there on how we can work together to make this the kind of neighborhood we want it to be."

Jason and Angel and their two children are immersed in Overtown, the neighborhood where they live and work. He talks about how the teenagers swarm their 4-year-old at events, eager to hold

him and watch over him. Angel serves as TML's director of development, working with volunteers. The Pittmans fostered a 14-year-old boy from the neighborhood for a year. Jason mentions this to explain how social work and pastoring roles can sometimes blur. "When you mix church, community and social service, your roles kind of mix. You just try to do the right thing. Always protect the children, but it can be challenging."

Another MDiv/MSW graduate, Christy Craddock, works

with Jason at TML primarily with the youth. When she took the youth on a museum trip, one girl told Christy that TML was her family.

"She has a place that she goes and

sleeps but it's not a place that particularly cares for her and nurtures her," Pittman said. "So that's very encouraging to hear kids say that they are being loved and that they have a place they belong."

Pittman credits the education he received at Baylor for equipping him for his ministry. "I can't imagine doing what I'm doing without the education that I had. It was instrumental." Equally important for him, he says, were the conversations he had with faculty and administrators. "You were really modeling how you should do things and how you should handle things. It was a great experience."

"We are not the answer, we are not the great white hope, but we are a part of that catalyst that's giving people here the opportunity to succeed." — Vicki

Marsh Kabat

***"You just try to do the right thing. Always protect the children; but it can be challenging."***

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Baylor or Carver School graduate? \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Employer \_\_\_\_\_

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

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# COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Volume No. 26 - July 2009

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## Table Talk

Gaynor Yancey, from left, associate dean for baccalaureate studies; Lance Summey, MSW 2008, and Mallory Homeyer, BSW 2006/MSW 2008/MDiv candidate, catch up on news at the Family Dinner.

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