



The Advocate

The Newsletter for the MSW Student Organization

September 2000

Rhode Island College School of Social Work www.ric.edu/mswso

Welcome MSW Students!!

Dear New Student:

On behalf of the **MSW Student Organization**, congratulations and welcome to Rhode Island College School of Social Work!

The MSWSO was formed in 1980 to promote student involvement in the Rhode Island College social work program. It later grew into a forum for professional development training, student advocacy, and social work organizing. A focus for the organization this year will be to strengthen communication both among students and between the student body and the School of Social Work faculty and staff. We are currently planning the following activities:

- Sponsor a Welcome Picnic for all School of Social Work students on August 31, 2000
- Reach out to minority and English as a second language (ESL) students to support their unique needs
- Collaborate with the BSWO (undergraduate social work organization) to sponsor a symposium related to a diversity or social justice issue
- Plan a graduation theme
- Facilitate regular meetings between Dean Metrey and MSW students to address any concerns or problems throughout the year
- Continue the Student Mentor Program in which second-year students provide one-on-one support and guidance to first-year students

In keeping with our commitment to strengthening communication, this year we expanding *The Advocate*, the MSWSO monthly newsletter. We have also developed a new MSWSO website to provide up-to-date information regarding events, policy issues, news, and meetings. The site includes e-mail links to MSWSO officers and members, the *MSW Café* (an online chat room for students) and *Q & A* (a message board that will allow students to post questions and obtain school and career-related information from peers).

Please look for future editions of *The Advocate* and meeting notices in your mailbox (located in the School of Social Work student lounge). Meetings will be held on a monthly basis, on various days and times, to maximize student involvement. (Please fill out and hand in the enclosed questionnaire so that we may schedule meetings to meet to meet student's needs!). The MSWSO is *not* a large time commitment. Students may attend meetings and participate in activities as much or as little as they wish. Many students in the program have found that the MSWSO is an important vehicle for student advocacy, and that it offers members a unique way to connect with other students and get the most out of your graduate school experience. **Remember: the MSWSO is your organization. We need your voice!**

Feel free to contact me by phone (508) 478-3066 or by e-mail: jadc@earthlink.net with any questions. Once again, on behalf of the MSWSO officers and members, welcome to Rhode Island College! We look forward to meeting you.

Dianne P. Corbin MSWSO President

□ MSWSO Officers □

Dianne Corbin, *President* Mary De Ruosi *Vice President* Pauline Carlson *co-Treasurer* Deborah Forcelli *co-Treasurer*
Michael Pay *co-Secretary* Sarah Holmander *co-Secretary* Randy Oftedahl *Newsletter editor* Nancy Gewirtz, *Faculty Advisor*



MSWSO ONLINE!

The MSW Student Organization now has a website at <http://www.ric.edu/mswso>. The site contains a database of MSWSO information and resources, contact info on MSW students, events of interest, a threaded discussion group, the MSW Cafe™ (see page 4), and MUCH MORE! Check it out!

Academic Standing Committee

Volunteers are needed for the **Academic Standing Committee**. This is a formal RIC committee where students with grievances meet with BSW and MSW faculty, and selected students. The student volunteers offer important input at the hearings. See Nancy Gewirtz for more information.

MSWSO Representation at Faculty Meetings

At the May MSWSO meeting Nancy Gewirtz recommended 2 student volunteers attend the monthly MSW Faculty meetings. See Dianne Corbin or Mary DeRousi if you are interested in volunteering.



Hit and Run

Phil Akien's car was damaged in the School of Social Work parking lot while he was attending the MSWSO meeting on May 8. While we certainly hope this was not the work of a social work student (!), Phil would also appreciate any information anyone has, since he had to cover the \$250 loss. Drop a note in Phil's mailbox if you have any information. *Thanks!*



Encyclopedia of Social Work for sale through MSWSO

The MSW Student Organization is selling the 4 volume **ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOCIAL WORK** for \$95 (retail cost: \$129 plus shipping). A small amount of the sale price helps benefit the MSWSO. This important resource is used for MSW courses and serves as a lasting tool in your social work career. See any of the MSWSO officers or drop a note in the MSWSO mailbox for more details.



Student Organizations Establish Scholarship Fund

This summer members of the RIC School of Social Work student organizations voted to establish a permanently-endowed scholarship fund in memory of Cheryl Ann Metrey, Dean George Metrey's wife. Cheryl was tragically killed in a car accident in May.

The scholarship fund will enable future RIC social work students to purchase educational books. The memorial fund also represents a gift to Dean Metrey, a token of students' appreciation and affection to our mentor, advocate, and friend.

Pledge letters with attached donation cards can be found in the School of Social Work student lounge or please contact an MSWSO officer for more information about this fund.



OUTSIDE EVENTS is an opportunity to post information on off-campus activities of interest to MSW students. Drop off your items in the MSWSO mailbox.

NASW Annual Conference

The NASW conference will be held on November 1-4, 2000 at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Maryland. Student volunteers receive \$50 off their registration. Visit the NASW website for more information. www.nasw.org



Looking for Ideas?...
on how you can tell the Presidential candidates to **START TALKING ABOUT SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES!**

G.W.

Demonstrations are planned for the Presidential debate in Boston on October 3...join other Rhode Islanders to call on Bush and Gore to address **POVERTY, INEQUALITY, RACISM, CORPORATE WELFARE, OUR HEALTH CARE MESS** and lots more. Contact Randy Oftedahl (randy@oftedahl.com) for details.

*All MSW students are encouraged to submit items for **OUTSIDE EVENTS** or **SOUND OFF** to the **Advocate.***



Sharing The Gift of Friendship

For those of us who knew Kathleen (Marurono) Gifford her passing came as quite a shock. Kathy was a 1999 Magna Cum Laude graduate from the Rhode Island College with a bachelor degree in Social Work and was inducted into the National Honor Society, Alpha Delphi Mu. The completion of her BSW was one dream Kathy was able to achieve, before losing her 14 month battle with cancer on July 31, 2000. Kathy had been accepted into the Rhode Island College Masters of Social Work Advanced Standing program, she took a year off to try and muster the strength to fight this illness. She worked as a substance abuse practitioner prior to and during her BSW program. During her battle Kathy became very visible as an advocate in several health care issues the major one being complete health care for everyone in our state. Kathy was a very spiritual person and active member of Hillsgrove United Methodist Church.

Kathy leaves a thirteen year old son, Nicholas Gifford who has lost both his parents at this very young age. There is a fund set up by the Warwick Boy Scout troop for her son. I will be accepting donations here at the College to contribute to that fund. I can be reached by phone at 353-4673, at any MSWSO meeting, by e-mail at MDDABSW@aol.com, or in my mail box in the student lounge.

Kathy epitomized Social Work and what it should be. Her passion, enthusiasm, and excitement for life impacted everyone whom she knew. I had the privilege of calling her my friend. She never wasted time, energy or life with worry. She didn't ask "what if?," she asked, "What Now?" Kathy lived life fully in the moment and now the moment lives forever.

-Mary DeRousi

