



The Advocate

The Newsletter for the MSW Student Organization

November/December 2000

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

Semester End!!

Reflections from a Generalist

Just ask Mary—I was really looking forward to attending the 2000 National Association of Social Workers (NASW) conference, “Strategies to Succeed in the New Market Economy.” I had never attended the annual event, and I heard many positive things about it. It is considered by many “the” conference for social workers—a chance to meet fellow professionals from across the country, and an opportunity to learn “the latest” information, trends, and practice strategies in the field. For me, the NASW conference was an opportunity to be with other socially-conscious practitioners, honorable individuals who dedicated their lives to serving disadvantaged people. I expected to connect with these social workers and, perhaps, have the opportunity to slow down, remember why I entered this field, and re-energize in the midst of this stressful semester. As I reflect upon my experiences at this event, to say the least, these expectations were not met. To say the most, I was greatly disappointed.

One workshop I attended discussed money versus mission as the “motivating force” behind a human service agency’s success. I learned that managed care has decreased the profitability of community-based outpatient clinics, and so agencies are shifting to a fee-for-service model and profit sharing incentives in order to increase clinicians’ “motivation” to maintain their caseloads.

Another presenter (who was in private practice) joked about “the lighter side of managed care” and then bitterly told workshop attendees how she had “dropped” certain providers because they did not reimburse her at her requested rate of pay. “After 33 years of practice, I have the right to charge a certain fee. It’s insulting to be denied what I’m worth!”

Other messages offered: “Responsibility and accountability will only get you so far without profitability” and “It doesn’t matter if the glass is ½ full or ½ empty: it matters who owns the glass.” And my personal favorite, in reference to managed care: “Adjust yourself to the realities of life.” I wonder what “the reality of life” would be like for people of color if Martin Luther King, Jr. had made this statement?

Accepting “what is,” bottom-line profits, risk-management, “justified treatment,” private practice, and referring to the people we serve as “patients.” This was the language used by the majority of social workers at this event. How disappointing, considering that in my social work education I am taught to question “what is,” care about the client’s needs first, participate in and help influence larger social issues, and refer to the people I serve as “clients.

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□ MSWSO Officers □

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



Graduation is Right Around the Corner...

The MSW Student Organization will be discussing ideas for graduation (events, themes, etc.) at our January meeting. We need your input! Please share your thoughts with a MSWSO member or officer or drop a note in Dianne Corbin's mailbox. Visit the MSW Student Organization website www.ric.edu/mswso for future graduation news updates.

Wow! Fabulous Holiday Giveaway!
Go to our website for details
www.ric.edu/mswso

New co-Secretary is Elected

The MSWSO would like to welcome Greta Collins Brown, a first-year student, as our new co-secretary. Welcome aboard, Greta!

Search for Director of Field Education

The MSWSO has appointed Christine O'Malley as the student representative to serve on the search committee for a new director of field education. She will be attending meetings and updating the organization on a monthly basis.

MSWSO members will also be developing a questionnaire to be used when students interview potential candidates for this position. If you would like to become involved, please contact Mary DeRuosi, vice president, at mddabsw@aol.com



MSW Holiday Party!



Come One Come All!

First and second-year RIC MSW students

Date: Sunday, December 17, 2000

Time: Cocktails and Hors D'oeuvres
6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Dinner 7:30 p.m.

Price: \$16.00 per person. Price includes the following:

- ◆ Hot and cold hors d'oeuvres
- ◆ Garden salad
- Choice of 1 entrée:
 - ◆ *Chicken Marsala*: Boneless breast of chicken sautéed in a light marsala wine sauce with mushrooms
 - ◆ *Veal Cutlet Parmigiana*: Breaded veal cutlet with melted mozzarella cheese and sauce
 - ◆ *Baked Scrod*: Fresh scrod baked with butter, lemon and wine, then topped with seasoned cracker crumbs
 - ◆ *Fussili Pasta Primavera*: Fresh pasta with a variety of seasonal vegetables
- Potato and vegetable
- Fresh baked rolls and butter
- Chocolate mousse
- Coffee and tea

Luigi's Restaurant, 1357 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, RI (401) 861-3850

reservation forms are available in the Student Lounge – for more information, Visit our website party page:
www.ric.edu/mswso/party.htm

Hurry: No registrations accepted after Monday, December 11!



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.

Are you a part of a community, religious, labor, non-profit or student group and you want economic development in Rhode Island that creates a strong economic climate and good jobs with living wages along with strong systems of education and health care?

SUPPORT THE PROVIDENCE JOBS AND LIVING WAGE ORDINANCE!

Sign a Petition for Good Jobs and Living Wages in Providence: <http://www.petitiononline.com/rijwj/petition.html> Contact RI Jobs with Justice for more information: 401.454.4766 or email rijwj@truthpower.org.

KATHY KELLY of Voices in the Wilderness

-- nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by the American Friends Service Committee for her work to end the sanctions on Iraq --will be in Rhode Island to speak about the growing movement to end the embargo on Iraq, which has claimed the lives of more than 500,000 children under the age of five in Iraq, according to Unicef.

- ◆ at Brown University 7 PM, Thursday, November 30 Wilson Hall Room 102 Main Green, corner of Waterman and Brown Streets, Providence
 - ◆ at the Friends Meeting House 7 PM, Friday, December 1, 99 Morris Avenue (at Olney Street), Providence near Hope High School
 - ◆ And at the Central Baptist Church Noon, Friday, December 1 372 Wayland Avenue, Providence
- \$5 for a Mediterranean/Middle Eastern Luncheon To reserve a space, call 456-4032 by November 28 For more information, contact the Emergency Response Network. Call Anthony at 401-272-2450 or e-mail iraqernri@hotmail.com



- Reflections (continued from page 1) -

So, what happens when you challenge their viewpoint, you ask? Introducing myself as a second year graduate student (I later learned this was a mistake), I told workshop participants that I was confused as to how managed care fit into a generalist, strengths-based approach to practice (what I consider the foundation of “true social work”), given that managed care is based on profits and the medical model. I added that I felt uncomfortable giving clients a diagnosis after only a single session. One participant became very indignant (she happened to work for a large managed care company), and questioned my abilities as a social worker: “If you don’t feel comfortable with this process, maybe you are not qualified to do so.” Another attendee suggested that I speak to my supervisor about “my problem.” In other words, **they just didn’t get it.** And I knew, at that moment, that I had become a member of the generalist minority.

I am glad I attended the NASW conference. I went to a few quality workshops, gained valuable resources, and met some interesting people. But mostly what I learned is that I am proud to be a generalist practitioner—and to be labeled an “idealist” who speaks out for what she believes is right—giving a voice to disenfranchised and disempowered people who continue to be cut short within our “new market economy.”

I wanted to write this article to remind my fellow generalists that we have a tough road ahead of us. But take heart and be strong, selfless souls...and please know that you are not alone.

-Dianne Corbin

Cartoon Commentary



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phone: (216) 371-8600 / e-mail: ft@funnytimes.com

NEXT MEETING OF THE MSWSO

Thursday, December 7 at 7 PM
School of Social Work
*Everyone is welcome and
ENCOURAGED to attend!*

Your ideas, feedback, and comments are always WELCOME!!

Send us your comments on **The Advocate**, MSWSO, or life as an MSW Student. Contact an MSWSO officer, or send e-mail to our Newsletter Coordinator at randy@oftedahl.com and/or put a note in the MSWSO mailbox (located in the School of Social Work building, 2nd floor, across from faculty mailboxes)



**Get
Involved!!**

Petition Circulating

Have you signed the petition circulating among MSW students? Students are petitioning to increase the size of our diplomas: from 5 x 7 to 8 ½ x 11, because we feel that our diplomas should be comparable to other MSW graduate programs. Dean Metrey has already agreed to take this petition to the president of RIC before the end of the semester. Please speak to Michelle Culpan for more information.

The MSWSO Victory List!!

The MSW Student Organization has accomplished a great deal so far this school year...and we're just getting started! Join us in celebrating our many victories!!!

- Participated in decisions and gave input into the new MSW curriculum
- Appointed representatives to attend MSW faculty meetings so that students can have a voice in important school-related decisions
- Successfully advocated for students who wanted their course to be classroom-based versus on-line.
- Established the Cheryl Ann Metrey Memorial Fund, a scholarship fund that will provide financial support to future social work students
- Created an MSWSO website (www.ric.edu/mswso) with a direct link from the Rhode Island College School of Social Work home page.
- Co-sponsored a picnic for all School of Social Work students on August 31st
- Provided input into the MSW/BSW Evaluation Standards Survey (to be distributed to students soon!)
- Expanded upon "THE ADVOCATE," a monthly newsletter for all MSW students at Rhode Island College

Be part of a SUCCESSFUL organization!
Have YOUR voice heard!