



# Viewing Social Work

An occasional newsletter from the Viterbo University Undergraduate Social Work Program

FALL 2011

ISSUE #9

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- 2010-11 Highlights
- New Faculty

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## From the Director: 2010-11 Highlights

Deb Daehn Zellmer, ACSW, CISW

As I review the past year, I am excited about the many accomplishments of our social work students, graduates, and faculty. Here are some highlights from 2010-2011:

- ◆ The Social Work Program celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October 2010.
- ◆ Janet Holter, MSW, joined our faculty this fall. Janet was previously a supervisor at La Crosse County Family and Children's Unit and brings many years of social work practice experience to the classroom. This additional

faculty position was approved to support our growing social work program.

- ◆ In April thirty five social work students participated in the NASW Social Work Lobby Day joining with hundreds of other social workers for a day at the capitol in Madison.
- ◆ Social work students provided 1,500 hours of service to meet individual and community needs in La Crosse and the Coulee Region.
- ◆ The Saint Louise de Marillac Endowed Scholarship for social work was established.

The first social work scholarship was granted to senior Desiree Parker.

- ◆ 18 seniors graduated in May.
- ◆ 100% of seniors who applied to MSW programs were accepted.
- ◆ 93% employment placement in 2010.

The Viterbo Social Work Program is poised for an exciting year. I hope you will enjoy reading about the many activities of our faculty, students, and alumni.



### Welcome to Janet Holter, New Social Work Faculty!

While interning as a University of Wisconsin-La Crosse psychology major at La Crosse County Human Services (LCCHS)

Janet became excited about becoming a social worker once she saw what they really do. She went on for her BSW at Winona State University and her MSW from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



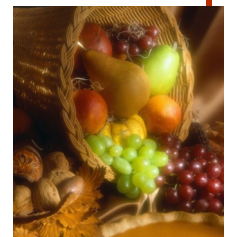
Services to families and children became her passion. "Social Workers have such an impact.

Their direct work with families can really affect change." As an initial assessment worker for nine years at LCCHS Janet conducted over 2000 child abuse interviews. She specialized in child sexual and forensic interviews and eventually became a trainer in these areas. She has been a social work supervisor for the past three and a half years in the Family Service Unit.

Janet began teaching as an adjunct instructor at Winona State University and liked the energy of working with students. "Students are invigorating and challenge you to be your best at all times. Teaching is a way for me to continue to

grow personally and professionally and also give back to the profession."

Janet says she has been amazed by the sense of community at Viterbo. "The Franciscan values are obvious here- the Viterbo faculty, staff and students truly want to serve. It is clear that the social work program is committed to student learning and developing capable and ethical social workers." We are delighted to welcome Janet Holter to our faculty!



### Viterbo University Social Work Program Mission Statement

The mission of the Viterbo University Social Work Program is to prepare baccalaureate students for entry level generalist social work practice. In an atmosphere of integrity and respect, students will develop professional knowledge, values, and skills for service provision and social change. The program is guided by the Franciscan values of human dignity, social justice, strengths of diverse populations, and respect for disenfranchised members of our global society.

## Faculty Updates



“Speak up for the people who can not speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. Speak for them and be a righteous judge. Protect the rights of the poor and needy.”

Proverbs 31: 8 & 9



**Jennifer Anderson-Meger,  
Associate Professor**

Jennie continues her full time teaching and advising responsibilities in the Social Work Program. Over the past year she has been developing a new course to help focus on student writing and introduction to research methods. The current research course will become the second in a sequence of two courses. Jennie and Connie have been working to revise the current service learning course into a university-wide mission seminar. The course will be open to all students at Viterbo who are interested in the helping professions. Jennie’s scholarship is developing

along with her work on the Doctorate of Social Work degree. Last April Jennie presented at the International Conference on Teaching and Learning in Toronto, Canada. Jennie authored *Critical Thinking and E-Learning in Social Work Education* which was recently accepted for publication in the International Journal of Business, Humanities, and Technology. The Social Work club and Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society are student organizations that Jennie coordinates. New projects for the summer include mentoring undergraduate collaborative research and beginning the dissertation phase of the DSW. Jennie also serves on the Institutional Review Board, a faculty search committee, and a mission seminar work group at Viterbo.



**Connie Fossen,  
Associate Professor**

Fossen continues as Field Director redesigning the Field Learning Contract in alignment with CSWE Standards. Connie is revising the course, working with Mexicans in the US into a Viterbo diversity seminar. The course will be open to all students at Viterbo who are interested in learning about cross cultural issues through the study of Mexican migrants in our region. Jennie and Connie continue to offer Boundaries and Ethics Trainings to regional groups including La Crosse County Human Services, Western Wisconsin Cares, and the

Wisconsin Juvenile Court Intake Workers Association. Connie completed 18 of the 30 hours of training required to be certified as a Social Work Supervisor under the Minnesota Social Work Board. For Cengage Learning, Fossen completed a second written review of the new edition of *Developing Helping Skills* for the publisher and authors in April of 2011.

In March of 2012, Fossen, Jennifer Anderson Meger and Deb Daehn Zellmer will present a workshop at the *Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors, National Conference*, titled, “Infusing new ethical decision making model throughout BSW Program curriculum.”



**Deb Daehn Zellmer,  
Professor**

Deb continues to provide leadership to the University as Director of the Social Work Program and Chair of the Department of Social Work, Sociology, and Criminal Justice. In February, Deb presented two papers at the annual meeting of the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors in Cincinnati, OH. One paper was entitled “Background Checks: What are Social Work Programs doing?” and the other presented along with Dr. James Stafford, University of Mississippi and

Dr. Wayne Evans, Bradley University, was entitled “Conflicts between Social Work and Religious Values Reported by Undergraduates”. The article “Using Criminal Background Checks in Social Work Education” authored by Deb Daehn Zellmer and Thomas Knothe (School of Business) was published in the *Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work Education* in October, 2011. Deb was promoted to Full Professor in August and in October will be the recipient of the YWCA Tribute to Outstanding Women award for her work in social justice. She serves on the advisory board for the Women’s Clothes Closet and the Political Action Committee for the Wisconsin Chapter of National Association of Social Workers.



## Alumni Spotlight

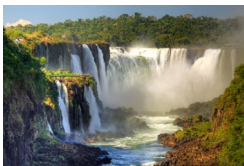
*It has been almost 5 years since the class of 2007 graduated from Viterbo University; we caught up with a few Social Work Alumni for an update and thoughts on their experience at Viterbo.*

### Va Thao '07

Va is currently working at La Crosse County Human Services Aging Unit as their Hmong Caregiver and Hmong Elder Specialist. Va focuses her time on the needs of La Crosse County's Hmong Elders, and has established and coordinates weekly gatherings for Hmong Elders. Va coordinates the Hmong Elders nutrition site as well as organizing events such as the Hmong Elders Health fair, and events for caregivers of elders. Va has presented at national conferences and state conferences on her research, assessments, work, and services provided to Hmong Elders.

Va serves on many area committees including: the Hmong Advocacy Committee, the La Crosse County Diversity workgroup, and the La Crosse County Advisory Council, and is involved with grant writing in order to find funding for the services that she is developing.

When asked about her Viterbo University experience, Va states "the faculty was truly invested and cared about my success". Va suggests that students take advantage of their opportunities to learn and ask questions while they are here, and to "take advantage of your practicum, this is a safe time to learn, explore, and ask questions".



### Kelly Kjos '07

Kelly is currently transitioning into a new position at the YWCA where she has worked as a case manager for the past three years in the Women's Community Based Program (Ophelia's house). As their new Transitional Housing Case Manager, Kelly will work with 6 different families, consisting of women and their children who are homeless. These women will be provided housing through the YWCA, and in a 24 month time period, Kelly will work with these women to increase their self sufficiency through finding and maintaining employment, support groups, budgeting assistance, mentoring and providing any other resources that will aid them in meeting their goals.

After graduation, Kelly worked part-time for the La Crosse County Mobile Crisis program, provided social work services on the in-patient behavioral health unit at Mayo Health Systems, and worked for Safe Path at Mayo Health working with sexual assault and domestic violence victims.

Kelly recently graduated with her Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a focus in children, youth and families.

*Thank you to our featured alumni, and to all of our graduates for the work that you do everyday! Keep those updates coming!*

### Claire Murphy '07

Claire Murphy has worked for St. Mary's Care Center in Madison for the past 3 years. Claire's case load consists of patients in Rehabilitation and Palliative care, which means that they are usually short-term cases. Claire conducts assessments, and coordinates family, discharge, palliative care, and plan of care team meetings. She also provides linkages to community resources such as home health, and private caregivers and is a resource for health care providers at St. Mary's in relation to behavioral and mental health issues.

Claire is highly versed in Medicare and Medicaid as well as private insurance in order to help patients and their families navigate these systems and get the services and equipment that they need. Claire states that this is a "fast-paced, dynamic position, where you work with many different professionals...as well as a diverse patient population." Claire has worked with patients ranging in age from 35-99 years, and notes that this part of social work is "taking off" as our elderly population increases in the United States.

Claire states that she has a great deal of pride in the Social Work program at Viterbo University. "My field practicum pushed me out of my comfort zone and prepared me for the reality of practice." Claire advises students to be "open to working with different populations as you never know" where your fit will be.



## New—The Saint Louise de Marillac Endowed Scholarship for Social Work

The Saint Louise de Marillac Endowed Scholarship for Social Work is now accepting contributions! To contribute to the scholarship please click on [form](#) to view. Then print and mail along with check to:

Viterbo University  
Attn: Institutional Advancement  
900 Viterbo Dr  
La Crosse, WI 54601  
To make a donation online use the secure [online form](#)

Please designate your gift is for the Social Work Endowed Scholarship.

Each year you will be contacted during Viterbo's annual phone-a-thon.



**Thank you, your generosity will ensure continued financial support for future social work students.**

President's Society Giving Levels	
St. Francis Circle	\$20,000 or more
St. Clare Circle	\$5,000 to \$19,999
St. Rose Circle	\$1,000 to \$4,999
	\$300 to \$999
	\$100 and below



## Field Education Update

Connie Fossen, Field Director



The 2011-2012 Field Education Program began the year with Connie Fossen, Field Director, training field instructors in the use of the new Field Education Learning Contract. The revised contract centers on CSWE Standards for 41 practice behaviors that all students must demonstrate by the end of their social work education. Field Instructors discussed agency activities that will give students the opportunity to learn and practice these essential social work skills.

In January 2012, 14 seniors will begin Field Education. Joining the Field Program this year are Western Wisconsin Cares - Blair and Mayo System Franciscan Skemp Social Services.

The growing number of social work majors has prompted a discussion of the number of students the Field Education Program can serve in one year. The Field Director will certify new practicum sites over the spring and summer. We are in discussion regarding capping the number of students

in field and offering a summer or fall field practicum in addition to spring placements. **Interested agencies should contact Connie if interested in Field Education.**



## Spotlight on Students!

### Student Representation on Great Rivers 2-1-1 Board

When students were asked if they would be interested in serving on the Great Rivers 2-1-1 Board, junior Emily Aerts saw an opportunity to network in the community. Using a resource database, this agency provides telephone referrals to help people find resources to prevent personal challenges from becoming more serious. Emily sees the benefit as a student being connected with the information available through 2-1-1. Serving on the board will also be personally and professionally beneficial. This is a one year commitment and Emily is the second student from our program to be appointed to this board.

### Viterbo Student Elected to State NASW Board Again!

Last spring junior Nicole Lairson was elected to be the BSW representative on the WI National Association (NASW) Board. This board reviews emerging issues facing social workers in Wisconsin and directs the work of the state association. Nicole is using her board experience to talk with other students about joining NASW. Nicole follows in a long line of Viterbo University students who have been elected

to this board. In the past six years, Viterbo University students have won this state election five times!

### 2011 Research Fellow

Senior Kelsey Nottestad has a dream to one day run a ranching facility for at-risk youth that would utilize nature, animals, and agricultural experiences therapeutically. When information about the Viterbo Summer Research Fellowship came out, Kelsey jumped at the opportunity. Kelsey conducted an exploratory research project to determine the need for such a program in area where she lives. "Being part of the Summer Fellowship allowed me to explore a research question that impacts my future. I found that many social service professionals have limited knowledge of these types of programs." Deb Daehn Zellmer was the faculty mentor for Kelsey's research. "The background from my social work research course and the support of my faculty mentor made this an amazing experience allowing me to grow as a researcher, a social work student, and as an intellectual." Kelsey will be presenting her research at a poster session for the Seven Rivers Undergraduate Research Symposium at Viterbo in November.

### Congressional Intern

Last summer, Desiree Parker was selected and served as one of 15 interns with the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute in Washington DC. This is a competitive national internship for former foster care youth. She had the opportunity to advocate for child welfare issues directly with representatives and committees on Capitol Hill.

Desiree returned to campus this fall and is sharing her experiences in policy development and political change. Ms. Parker will present a poster of her internship research at the Seven Rivers Undergraduate Research Symposium. Desiree previously, had volunteered as a Youth Advisory Council Member advocating for services for youth aging out of foster care. For her efforts Desiree was recognized by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker as an "Exceptional Foster Care Youth" in 2010.



### Cancer Survivor! Alexandria Behringer

I was diagnosed with Stage III breast cancer last winter at the age of 29. It came as quite a shock in the middle of my junior year. My priorities shifted from graduating to living. I took a semester off to undergo treatment and surgery, losing my hair and breasts in a matter of months. After surgery and chemo, I received 33 treatments of radiation. Besides focusing on my health, I spent my time researching how to start a non-profit. I am developing a business plan for a treatment home for pregnant women with AODA issues. My husband and I plan to buy a farm and remodel the barn into a safe place for mothers to recover. I've met some awesome

(cont. p.5)

(Ali, cont. from p.4)

people through inspiring cancer support programs. I want to thank everyone for caring about me and joining "Rally for Ali." Thanks to all of you who raised money by buying or selling first aid kits! Thanks to the professors who worked with me and to Penny for uplifting my spirits with your art! Thanks to Aimee, Nikki, and Connie for joining in on the "Steppin' Out in Pink" walk; it was a blast! I am currently receiving chemo every 3 weeks, and will take an oral medication for the next 5 years. Other than that, they will be monitoring me but as far as I'm concerned... "I'm a Survivor!"



## Social Work Club

**Club Officers:** Pres.— Jennifer Walker, VP – Sadye Birkholz, Sec.—Emily Aerts, Treas. – Jenni Moris, PR—Hannah Johnson

HELLO from the Social Work Club ! We're off to a great start with Club this year and it's only going to get better! We were able to successfully plan a candidate forum for those that were running in the Democratic primary for the 95<sup>th</sup> Assembly Seat. The event was held in the auditorium of the new Nursing Building and it was no small feat to put this together with such a limited amount of time. We were able to get all four candidates in attendance as well as the media and many people from the community.

During the forum, each candidate was given the chance to respond to pre-selected questions before questioning was opened to the audience. It was beneficial for students and members of the public to hear where the candidates stood on certain issues. Attendance maxed out at 150 people and WXOW had reported that we had 100 in attend-

We are looking forward to another great year for Social Work Club. We are planning many different events and activities this year and would LOVE for you to be a part of this with us. Examples of potential activities for this year include the annual chili sale, trick or treat for Place of Grace, an event with one of the long-term care facilities for holiday cheer, t-shirts, and clothing drives.

The club also plans on holding more social gatherings this year to allow time for members to relax, relieve stress, and enjoy themselves. Meetings are held once a month to discuss possible events, planning, etc. Anyone is welcome to join social work club. If you can't make it to a meeting check out the club's page on Facebook. Search "Viterbo Social Work Club" or the blackboard site. You will find minutes from meetings and information.



## Alumni Updates

### 1999

**Megan (Hayes) Forrestal** is a pool social worker at Mayo Clinic Health System in Sparta in Patient and Family Services.

### 2001

**Shelley Gabrielson** is working at Western Wisconsin Cares in La Crosse.

### 2004

**Elizabeth Faulkner-Baldwin** serves Monroe County DHS as an Aging & Disability Resource Social Worker.

**Katie (Kubista) Thormodsgaard** is working at Behavior Therapy Solutions of Minnesota and has received her masters degree from St. Thomas.

**Angel Lee** is a medical social worker at Gundersen Lutheran.

### 2005

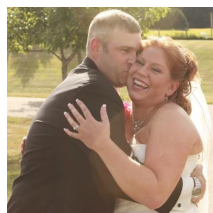
**Arlene Schwartz** is employed as an AODA Counselor employed at Madison Health Services in Madison. She and Loran bought a house on three acres in Cambridge and look forward to building a stable and adding horses.

**Nicole Sundboom** works with youth in Treatment Foster Care at Lutheran Social Services in Eau Claire. She also volunteers youth in Global Partners through Gundersen Lutheran to create a sustainable community in Santa Celia, Nicaragua. Nicole travels regularly to assist Nicaraguans achieve positive change for rural, poor community on the macro level. She teaches crochet and other crafts for economics sustainability. Nicole's next trip will include creating a day care center.



### 2006

**Danielle (Olson) Puccetti** married Stephen on August 27, 2011. She received her masters from UW-Madison in 2007 and is working on her PhD in Health Administration through Capella University with a 2015 projected graduation date. Danielle works as a caregiver support coordinator at Tomah VA Medical Center.



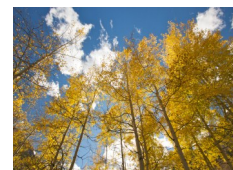
**Shao Vue** started a new position with Gundersen Lutheran Behavioral Health, last February, as a psychotherapist. She serves victims of violent personal crimes in La Crosse, Monroe, Jackson, Trempealeau and Vernon Counties. In June 2011 she attended a National Conference in Washington DC with the National Center for Victims of Crime.

### 2007

**Theresa (Kirchoff) Berger** is working at Vernon County DHS in Viroqua. She and Tom celebrated the birth of a son, Gabe, on March 9, 2011.

**Claire Murphy** works at St. Mary's Care Center in Madison as a Rehabilitation Social Worker. She resides in Lake Mills, Wis.

**Jennie Putnam** is working at REM Ramsey in St. Paul. She is pursuing her masters in Special Education at University of St. Thomas. She and her fiancé are engaged and planning a June 30, 2012 wedding.



## 2008

**Margaux Carrimon** is pursuing a masters of business degree at Viterbo. She would like to incorporate her business skills to develop a non-profit organization in the future.

**Linnea Fiser** is working for Western Wisconsin Cares and recently became a Social Worker II. In August her office moved from Tomah to Sparta.

**Rachel Thomas-Miller** has been working as an Autism Support and Service coordinator at Lutheran Social Services of WI and Upper MI. She and Joe married in June and purchased a house near Appleton, Wis. They recently started the application process to adopt a baby domestically.

**Jessica Elizabeth Wallace** is working as a social worker at Morrow Memorial Home in Sparta since April. She and finance, Andrew Bialecki will celebrate their wedding on May 11, 2012.

**Irene (Sundboom) TenEyck** has completed her masters program!

**Lindsay Weber** has had an exciting year! She and Cory recently became engaged and have planned their wedding for September 15, 2012. She was also promoted to Director of Social Services at Morrow Home in April.

## 2009

**Jessica Andre** is working as a social worker and AODA counselor for Trempealeau County Health Care Center in Whitehall, Wis. She began her master's program through UW-Madison on the Eau Claire campus.

**Rachel Forer** is working as a social worker for Bethany St. Joseph Care Center. It is a small Social Service department with three social workers located in a nursing home licensed for 160 beds. Rachel cannot believe how fast time goes since graduation!

**Billi Gander** states, "Life is great! Jerrod, Cori Jo, Kennedy and I are all doing well." She recently graduated from the part-time master's program through UW-Madison. She is now working as a Treatment Foster Care Social Worker through Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (where she completed her MSW Internship). Billi believes her education at Viterbo prepared her for her MSW.



**Scott Grosskopf** is currently a Relative Outreach Social Worker with La Crosse County DHS. He conducts home studies and licensing of relative homes for placement within the Child Welfare system. He started his masters' degree through the UW-Madison, Eau Claire Program. Things are moving along great in his career, despite the ever rough waters in the world of public service.

**Stacy (Harmon-Hart) Hoban** and her husband married last October at the family farm in Mindoro. They have been living on San Juan Island in Washington State for a year and a half now and "Love it out here!" She does private in-home care with three elderly clients and Eric works at a wild-life re-habitation center as a maintenance man. Their schedules are flexible allowing a lot of time to enjoy their beautiful island surroundings. Stacy is content and happy with her life and plans to further her education in Metaphysics, sometime in the future.

**Emily Nolte** is in the Addiction Program at Viterbo and completing an internship with Mayo Clinic Healthcare for La Crosse Residential Treatment Programs with Siena Hall, Group Home I and Scarseth House.

**Noelle Sander** is working at Family Works in Madison. She resides in Middleton.

**Ashley (Wagner) Trautsch** is working at Southwest Family Care Alliance in Prairie du Chien. She and Brian celebrated the birth of a daughter, Breileigh Josephine, on March 26, 2011.

**Tiffany (Tubbs) Dolesy** is a social worker at Sagen Centre through St. Joseph's Rehabilitation Center.

## 2010

**Abby Breitung** started a new position in June working for a company called Intrepid. She is an independent living service in which she travels from house to house and "Loves

it!". She and Kyle Dreger are planning a June 2, 2012 wedding. Kyle is attending law school.

**Vanessa Pooley** is working for MedCenter One in North Dakota. She and Lynden Verser are getting married January 28, 2012. They are settling in to their new city, Mandan, North Dakota. She is currently looking at graduate schools.

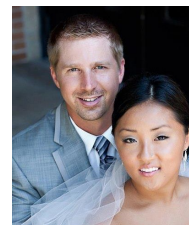
**Kelly Jessen** is working as a crisis advocate for New Horizons Shelter and Women's Outreach Center.

## 2011

**Michlene Lavender** started her new position at Western Wisconsin Cares in La Crosse in September.

**Ashley Martyniuk** is attending graduate school in Milwaukee. Ashley has started a youth group and has twelve students ranging in age from 5th to 9th grade. Ashley loves working with them and getting to know their strengths and attributes as well as their chaotic home lives.

**Bethany (Zellmer) Meiners** and Brandon were married July 23, 2011. She is working at Lutheran Social Services in La Crosse as a special needs adoption social worker.



**Vanessa (Bablitch) Weisbrod** is working as an information and referral specialist at Gundersen Lutheran Behavioral Health. She has passed her exams and is officially licensed. Her temporary position has been extended and she is currently seeking a full-time position. She is attending graduate school through UW Madison for Clinical Social Work and plans on graduating in 2013. She and her husband have been making home improvements and enjoying a more "normal" schedule together.

<http://www.viterbo.edu/sowk>

- **Update Alumni Records — stay in touch!**  
*Marriage, birth, address/phone changes, employment, awards*
- **Field Agencies — linked**
- **Photo Gallery — watch throughout the year for new photos**
- **Social Work—webpage**



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