

Siena College Social Work Department

Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of *The Talking Circle*, the Siena Social Work Program newsletter for alumni, students, social work practitioners and others. The term *Talking Circle* comes from Native American traditions of teaching and symbolizes open hearts to understand and connect with each other. This newsletter is the result of a committed partnership between members of the Social Work Program Advisory Board and the social work faculty.

We hope this newsletter serves as just one of many ways we may all stay in touch and reconnect. Do you have news you would like to share? Drop us an email or a letter. You can see there are updates from



some of our alumni since they graduated from Siena. We would love to hear from you – whether you stayed in social work or not! We also want to share with all of you updates from faculty, students, and alumni, as well as trends in the field of social work.

Please put October 23, 2004 in your calendars and come join us for the 30th Anniversary Celebration of the Social Work Program. It's more than celebrating a Program—it's a celebration of each of you and all of us together.

Donna McIntosh
Department Chair

What Interesting Faculty!

Ever wonder what faculty do outside of the classroom? Here is a quick thumbnail sketch of some of the “doings” of our folks at the social work house.

Carla Sofka: The Remains of the day

Carla has been busy cataloguing memorials of 9/11 sent from across the United States as part of her project with the NYS Museum. This research project has afforded several students opportunities to be a part of this important historical research.

Bob Rivas: Footsteps near the Artic Circle

Bob's recent sabbatical found him in the wilds of Alaska where he consulted with the University of Anchorage and Fairbanks helping plan and start the first state-wide distance education MSW in Alaska. He was made an honorary member of the Alaska social work faculty.

Donna McIntosh: FUNd Raising

During the nine years Donna has been at Siena, she has successfully written and secured more than 3 million dollars in grants for agencies implementing exemplary mental health service models or community services for homeless youth.

Joe Zoske: Men Have Health Needs too

Joe is our resident expert on issues of Men's Health. He has published in several arenas and has been asked to speak at several conferences about his area of expertise.

Diane Strock Lynskey: Sabbatical Project

Diane has been on sabbatical leave for the 2003-04 year. She has been busy doing research and compiling archival information on Kendra's Law. She as also continued consulting with several organizations on strategic planning.

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Alumni Profile

Collette Panis '97

Collette graduated from Hudson Valley Community College in 1995 with a degree in Early Childhood Education. During a short but positive field placement at Head Start, she decided that she would like to pursue a degree in social work and in her words, "change the world."

Collette notes, "I began my social work studies, and as many social work students, I had no idea about the magnitude of what I was undertaking." She further notes that "each employer I have worked for since graduation has always conveyed to me how well prepared they have found Siena's social work students."

She completed her senior field placement at Schenectady County Department of Juvenile Probation, and she reports that her placement brought much of what her instructors had been teaching in the classroom into real-life practice. After graduating from Siena, she worked as a Habilitation Specialist with individuals with developmental disabilities at Schenectady ARC's Day

Treatment Program. In 1999, she accepted her current position at Catholic Charities Disabilities Services as a Service Coordinator for individuals with developmental disabilities. She has since expanded her caseload and now works with survivors of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). "I have found my niche. Every day I use many of the principles that were introduced in the social work classrooms at Siena, so much so that it is now second nature to me."

Collette reports that she assists people in problem solving, prioritizing and goal planning. She also adds that she has understood how differences in people based on race, culture and financial status can influence an endless number of factors in a person's life. "When I think of all the lives that I have touched over the past five years since graduating from Siena, it is an overwhelming feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction. I have made my mark on this world and although I may not have changed it as I once thought I would, in my own way, I have accomplished what I set out to do. And I did it with a BSW degree!"

"When I think of all the lives I have touched since graduating from Siena, it is an overwhelming feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction."

Class of 2004 on Ropes Course



Thirtieth Anniversary Gala Planned

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, October 23, 2004

Come celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Social Work Program. It will be a great opportunity to reconnect with the Siena community and fellow alumni.

There will be music, a decadent buffet of desserts and the opportunity to participate in a silent auction. Proceeds from the auction will go to the Scholarship Fund to benefit a current student in the program.

Would you be interested in helping organize this event? Please contact Donna McIntosh at 518-783-4261 or at McIntosh@Siena.edu



Alumni Profile

Frank Daly, '96

Frank Daly '96 is a school social worker at Bethlehem High School where he works counseling special education and "at risk" youth. He reports that much of the work he does is focused on social skill development and crisis intervention. Frank reports that the Bethlehem community is a great place to work. This year, Frank is also a field instructor for one of our current seniors.

During his studies at Siena, Frank worked at Parsons Child and Family Center as a child care worker at the Orissa Healy House. After graduating from Siena, he continued to work for Parsons until he was accepted into the School of Social work at the University at Albany, where he earned his MSW degree. During graduate school, he worked as the Family Support Coordinator at School's Out, Inc., a non-profit before and after school program serving the Town of Bethlehem.

Frank's experiences in social work are diverse and interesting. He completed an internship through Hudson Valley Community College at St. Peters Addiction Recovery Center and his field placement at Siena was at TASC, Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime, an alternative to incarceration program. His MSW field placement was at Project Momentum of the Adult Learning Center, a GED program for parents living in the South End of Albany community.

After graduating from SUNY, he worked as a clinician at Eagleton School in Great Barrington, MA, a private residential school for teen boys with emotional disturbance. During this time he worked with adolescents who displayed "sexually reactive" and challenging behavior at home and school. After working there for a year and a half, he moved to his current position with Bethlehem Central School District.

Brief Bios

Clara DeSanctis Johnson '97

Clara currently works as the Training and Marketing Coordinator of HIV Education and Training Programs for the NY State Department of Health, AIDS Institute. She previously worked as a community educator at the AIDS Council of NENY and as a counselor at Planned Parenthood of NENY. While at Siena, Clara completed here field placement at BOCES Shaker High and at Maple Hill Middle School. Clara is also a member of our Advisory Board.

Andrea Pavlis '01

Andrea currently works as the Director of Social Work at the Villa Mary Immaculate Nursing Home. She completed her Masters in Social Work with a specialization in aging at the University of Albany. Andrea has also received her certification in social work. While at Siena, Andrea's field placements were at Albany Medical Center and Eddy Memorial Nursing Home. Andrea currently serves as a member of Siena's Advisory Board.



Students protesting NASW's refusal to include BSW's in the NYS licensure bill, Fall 2002





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**Social Work
Department**
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Save the Date

Saturday October 23, 2004
will be the Thirtieth Anniversary
Reception for the Social Work
Program including silent auction to
benefit the Scholarship Fund.

Check out the new Social Work
Program website. It is located at
<http://www.siena.edu/socialwork/>



Advisory Board

The Advisory Board of Siena College's Social Work Program is composed of a wide variety of persons whose input and assistance is important to the Program. These include social work practitioners, field instructors, students, alumni, college staff, state legislative staff, a MSW program representative and other members of the community.

The Advisory Board supports the program's mission to prepare undergraduate baccalaureate students for competent generalist social work practice by:

- providing consultation to faculty in developing and maintaining a comprehensive curriculum
- planning and carrying out activities that develop the resources and supports needed by the Social Work Program to meet student needs
- serving as a link between the academic and practice components of the Social Work profession

Are you interested in serving on the Advisory Board? Contact Donna McIntosh at 518-783-4261.

Social Work Scholarship Fund Established

On May 10th 2002, the Faculty and Advisory Board established a student scholarship fund for the Social Work Program. The goal of the Fund Raising Committee of the Advisory Board was to establish this fund (a 501.c3 Endowment Fund) and develop a core endowment of \$25,000 to be raised by May 2007. It is intended that scholarships will be paid from the investment income of this endowment fund.

We are pleased to announce that through the generosity of Janet Jones of our Advisory Board, three \$1,000 scholarships have been awarded to students for academic years 2002, 2003, and 2004. In addition, Janet has been an integral part of our fundraising committee.

Class of 2004

