

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In 2006-2007 the Social Work Program will seek reaccreditation from the Council on Social Work Education.

Peter Lacy, LMSW was hired for the 2006-2007 academic year to teach the Social Work Elective, Drugs and Alcohol. Peter currently works in the Saratoga Mental Health System.

Joe Zoske, LMSW, Administrative Coordinator now offers a Social Work Elective, Men's Health

Carla Sofka, Faculty, received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.

Donna McIntosh, Faculty received promotion to Professor.

## *Siena College Social Work Department*

### **Professor Robert Rivas 25 years of Social Work at Siena**



(Bob at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary reception with his wife, Donna and daughter, Heather.)

## Remembrances

I will always remember how thoughtful people were about contributing to my twenty-fifth anniversary at Siena. Family, faculty colleagues, students, alumni and guests made this a very special day in my life. In so many years there is so much to remember!

Designing and starting the major and achieving the program's initial accreditation were my earliest challenges. Support from colleagues and the college made these tasks possible. In the early days of the program we often struggled with defining social work's "turf" within the college. I enjoyed working with colleagues and students who helped us to refine our place at Siena. I am also proud that my social work colleagues and I have risen to leadership positions in professional social work organizations like CSWE, NASW and BPD. Together, we have moved from "defining out turf" to providing leadership to the profession at local, state and national levels.

I received support from Siena for scholarship and career development. I still find it puzzling how I could have had ten editions of two books published over the years, including Japanese and Chinese Translations. I also remember three sabbatical leaves as highlights of my professional career: Working at Joseph's House Homeless Services, living and teaching at a Tribal College in North Dakota, and helping to design a distance education MSW degree for the state of Alaska. Some great learning took place for me through these activities.

I have been fortunate to work in a college and program that has offered diverse challenges and great rewards. **Bob Rivas**

## Alumni Profiles and News



In 1989 Beth accepted an Associate Social Worker position, in Pediatrics, at Albany Medical Center (AMC). She worked mainly in the Cystic Fibrosis Clinic where she helped patients and families adjust to life with chronic illness. While in Pediatrics Beth worked with Siena students fulfilling their service requirements.

After receiving her MSW in 2001 Beth started working as a Psychiatric Social Worker on the inpatient psychiatry unit. Her role was as a Primary therapist and discharge planning coordinator/ consultant for an interdisciplinary treatment team. She maintained a case load of five to eight patients and facilitated group therapy sessions. Beth was also a field instructor for a Siena student whose field placement was on the AMC Psychiatry Unit.

In October of 2004 Beth took a position at Empire Blue Cross/ Blue Shield as a Social Work Case Manager in National Accounts. She coordinates community resources for BC/BS members and is responsible for staff education.

In 2002 Beth joined the Siena Social Work Program Advisory Board. In 2005 she started a two year position as Chair of the Board.

### Once a Student, Now an Instructor Beth Pacini- Class of 1987

Beth taught Interpersonal Communications (SWRK 200) in the spring of 2006 and she is scheduled to teach again in the fall. Beth also taught, Children and Grief, at Maria College in 2002.

After graduating with her BSW, Beth started working at Unity House- Families in Crisis, a domestic violence shelter.



### Once a Student, Now an Instructor Leslie Grossmann-Brown, Class of 1998

I graduated in 1998 from the social work program and realized early on in grad school that Siena had given me an exemplary education. Soon after graduation from Siena I was invited to be on the Social Work Advisory Board. The advisory board for Siena Social Work Department is an active group that has given me a different and interesting perspective to the decision making process and the faculty's dedication to the students they serve. I served as co-chair for the board for a number of years and was able to work more closely with the faculty. This further enforced my understanding of Siena as a teaching school with students as the number one priority. 1 1/2 years ago I was offered the position of adjunct professor to teach Intro to Social Work and Social Welfare. I was, at first intimidated to live up to the standards of the department and felt that these were very big shoes to fill. I am honored to again be part of an organization that I have seen from many perspectives. I feel fortunate to have mentors who have helped me grow as a professional and as a person. The department exemplifies the ethics and vision that began social work so many years ago. Each professor brings their own style and expertise to the team for which I hope to be associated with for many years to come.



Katy McKeon, Class of 2006 is awarded BSW student of the Year from the NYS Social Work Education Association.

### BSW Student of the Year - Katy McKeon

#### Named by the NYS Social Work Education Association

After spending the summer in Boston working as an advocate for victim's of Domestic Violence out of Northeastern University I developed an understanding of what my role will be in my future practice. I worked as an advocate in the Boston Medical Center working in the emergency room and in Dorchester District Court helping victims get restraining orders and referring them to appropriate services. It was such an amazing experience to have and contributed greatly I think to receiving the award for BSW student of the year from the NYSSEA. I then spent the remainder of my summer working for Cayuga County Mental Health as a consumer assistant to those in a social club type setting. I provided them with crisis intervention and support. Since the award I have had the opportunity to talk with several people about my experiences in every setting and population I have worked in. While it is amazing to be recognized for the things I do, it is also a chance for me to reflect on what I have done thus far and continue to remind myself of what I did to get here and what I will need to do in the future. **Katy McKeon, Class of 2006**

## Alumni Profiles

### SISTERS in SOCIAL WORK

#### Mary Kate Schneider, Class of 1998 & Anne Schneider, Class of 2006

**Reflections from Mary Kate:** In my teenage years I had the opportunity to interact with a number of family friends who were practicing in the field of social work. I recall being drawn to the stories they shared about their professional experiences, and compelled that a degree in social work could allow you to work with so many different populations and have a positive impact on various social systems. I knew from a young age that I wanted to become a social worker!

When I began my college search, I began exploring schools that offered BSW programs and field hockey, as I had a strong interest in continuing my athletic career at the college level. In speaking with students who were enrolled in Siena's social work program at that time, I immediately knew that this was a program where I would gain a quality education with the guidance of dedicated faculty who came from diverse professional backgrounds. There was one consistent theme that I uncovered in my research about the social work program - the knowledge of social work practice and the history of social welfare that I would acquire while obtaining my Bachelor's degree would far surpass that of any other BSW program in the Northeast. While writing one of my many lengthy papers in the second semester of my junior year at Siena, I remember feeling pushed to my absolute limit and I wondered how this would all pay off. Having graduated from the social work program almost 8 years ago, I now look back at that time in my college life and appreciate what I went through as a student.....because of the education I obtained, and individualized attention and never ending support I received from the faculty in the department, I now enjoy a rewarding career practicing in the field. And I could not have been happier when my younger sister decided to apply to the program, because I knew she would benefit from the same exceptional education that I had received.

**Reflections from Anne:** What drew me to the Siena program was definitely influenced by my sister Mary Kate. For my first few years at Siena I had no direction and could not find what my future would hold. I spent many nights talking with my sister about her profession as a social worker and the types of professional attributes that I would acquire. I decided to enroll in the introduction class, and was immediately interested in the history of social welfare and the various systems that social workers work within. I knew the type of education that my sister received from Siena and decided this was the choice for me. I saw the relationships she had with the staff members in the program and understood how unique this major was, aside from all others. I found this in my first meeting with Donna McIntosh, and experienced just what my sister did. A warm environment filled with individuals all working towards the same purpose of assisting others in need. Having a sister who has gone through this program allows me to realize the tremendous experience I will get out of a BSW at Siena, and leads me to look forward to what professional choices I have in the future.

## Alumni Profiles and News

### One Big Siena Social Work Family

My name is Andrea Pavlis and I am a 2001 alumni of the Social Work Program. After graduation, I pursued my Masters in Social Work at the University of Albany with a special concentration in geriatrics. Soon after I graduated with my Masters, I was employed by St. Peter's Nursing & Rehabilitation Center as the Manager of Social Work Department. In early 2005, I was approached by Siena's Social Work Department about becoming a Field Educator for a senior social work major. As I was listening to the details of becoming a Field Educator, I had flashbacks to my own senior internship and how much I learned from my Field Educator.

Soon after accepting the role of Field Educator, one of my social workers had unexpectedly left the agency. As the beginning of the school semester approached fast, I was nervous about whether I could host a student intern having a vacant social work position. By chances, a resume came across my desk. The applicant was a 2005 Siena Social Work graduate looking for a job in the field of geriatrics. As I was reading her resume, a sign of relief came over me. I interviewed Amie Bull for the position of rehab social worker. After interviewing her, I was pleasantly surprised because Amie was not only the best interviewee, but also had excellent work experience through her internship. Shortly after interviewing Amie, I quickly offered her the position and she accepted.

As Amie became oriented to the agency and her patients, the first day with my student intern approached fast. I was assigned to Amy Olenych, an eager senior social work major ready to learn about the geriatric and healthcare system. I have to say that the first day was really fun to talk about our own experiences at Siena and the Social Work Program. Between all of us, we represented three very different perspectives; an alumni who graduated 5 years ago, a recent graduate of the program, and a current student.

This year has truly been an amazing experience as a Field Educator and a Supervisor of a recent social work graduate. Through these roles, I was able watch my student intern excel in her social work skills and become impressed with my employee's understanding of social work issues. I am proud to be an alumnus of Siena's Social Work Program. I encourage everyone to either hire Siena social work majors or become a Field Educator. If anyone is interested in becoming a Field Educator, please contact Carla Sofka at [CSofka@siena.edu](mailto:CSofka@siena.edu)

Andrea Pavlis, 2001



Amy Olenych, 2006



Amie Bull, 2005



**Alumni Profiles: 2006 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first class to graduate from Siena with a Concentration in Social Work. Our very own Diane Strock-Lynskey, Professor of Social Work was one of those graduates. We salute the Class of 1976!**

### **We Need TECH HELP!**

Are you someone proficient in computer technology or do you know someone who is? We need someone to help us finish the Social Work Program's webpage. This would require coming in to the Social Work House and working on the computer, working with Advisory Board and faculty members. This can be time limited, or if you would like, you might consider a nomination to become an Advisory Board member (terms are two years). If you are interested in helping, please contact Carla Sofka at 518-786-5046 or email her at [CSofka@siena.edu](mailto:CSofka@siena.edu)



### **Social Work Program Advisory Board**

#### **Members for 2005-2006**

Beth Pacini, Chair  
Carrie Towle, Secretary  
Janet Jones  
Lisa Britton  
Mary Lynne Hamilton  
Randy Brown  
Stuart Gitlin  
Andrea Pavlis  
Cobra Cox  
Julie Brennan  
Stephen Farina

Student Reps:  
Liz Rende  
Katy McKeon  
Shannon Wales  
Tess Morgan

**Interest in being an Advisory Board member? Contact Donna McIntosh at [McIntosh@siena.edu](mailto:McIntosh@siena.edu)**

### **Program Changes and Revisions**

In addition to the numerous forms of outcome data the Program gathers to continually update the curriculum and program, four years ago the Program instituted year end focus groups with our seniors and juniors.

The following are just some examples of ways the program has changed as a result of feedback from students and other outcome data:

- \* A change in the field site selection process for the juniors in order to streamline the process. This has included a field site fair where field educators come to campus to meet with students.
- \*Changes to the length and format of both the junior orientation and senior field orientation.
- \*Adding in a transfer student luncheon with the members of the department as a way to further help transfer students adjust to Siena and the Program.
- \*Helping to add a stronger career focus for our students which includes Lunch and Learn presentations by Carla and Joe, inclusion of career options at the student development workshop at the annual conference for the NYSSWEA, posting of job announcements in emails to students and at the office and work to include these options as part of the Program webpage development for the future. We continue to work on this one!

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***Social Work  
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***Donna McIntosh  
Dept Chair***

***Robert Rivas***

***Diane Strock-  
Lynskey***

***Carla Sofka  
Coordinator of  
Field***

***Joseph Zoske  
Administrative  
Coordinator***

***Adjunct Instructors***

***Karla DiGirolamo  
Leslie Grossmann-  
Brown  
Peter Lacy  
Beth Pacini***



**Graduating Class of 2006:** (back row left to right) Jill Comley, Patricia (Trish) Lyons, Amy Holzhauser, Elizabeth Ebert, Amy Olenych, Elizabeth Rende, and Kathleen McCormack (front row left to right) Anne Schneider, Susan Owen, Andrea Rubin, Kimberly (KB) Burns, Jennifer Jeffs, Kathryn (Katy) McKeon

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