

# The Talking Circle

Summer 2011

Issue 8

## Social Work

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

**Interested in serving on the Advisory Board as a voting member or as part of a particular committee or project?**

**Contact Joe Zoske at  
518-783-4123**

### Resources at Siena

**Career Center  
783-2339**

**Office of Alumni  
Relations  
783-2340**

**Registrar  
783-2368**

## Social Work Student to the Rescue



By Chelsea Platt '13

Saint Francis of Assisi once said “For it is in giving that we receive.” Over 800 years later, Jessica Fama '11, a social work major, is providing help to families in need via her internship at the Roarke Center in Troy, N.Y. Fama serves at the neighborhood multi-service poverty program, meeting several clients with various needs two days per week. There was one particular case of a single mother with six children, who was desperately trying to explain her situation through broken English, that hit home for Fama.

“Her apartment was infested with bed bugs and she was in serious need of new mattresses,” Fama said. Unemployed, the woman couldn't afford new mattresses so she contacted the Department of Social Services for help. Her request was denied as she was already receiving a stipend of \$65 every two weeks for unemployment, as well as food stamps. Fama realized the woman's need was too overwhelming to wait.

After a discussion with some of her Siena College roommates, Fama came up with a creative solution. She contacted Chris Burdo, moving and events foreman at Siena College, to see if Siena would consider donating mattresses.

“When Jessica contacted me, it felt like a great opportunity for us to help someone in need, something the college prides itself on,” Burdo said. Soon after the request, the college delivered seven mattresses to the woman's home.

“I was really proud of myself for helping a family that was in need and realized this is the career I want to pursue,” said Fama who was recently accepted into New York University's MSW program. St. Francis would be pretty proud too.

*This article was also published in Siena news Spring 2011, pg. 17*  
[www.siena.edu/siena\\_news](http://www.siena.edu/siena_news)



## Scholarship at Siena...Giving Back

Siena was founded with the mission to provide an affordable liberal arts education to students of modest means. Endowed scholarships are crucial to this commitment to assist young men and women who are full of academic promise and eager to learn, but who lack the financial resources to attend college.

Endowed scholarships have made - and continue to make - a difference in the lives of countless Siena students. Because more than 85% of Siena students receive financial assistance, providing ample financial aid is essential to maintaining Siena's reputation for academic excellence and value. The Social Work Scholarship/Program Endowment Fund was established by the Social Work Advisory Board with gifts from friends and supporters of the program. The purpose of the scholarship is to support student admitted to the Social Work program, who maintain a 3.0 GPA, who have demonstrated commitment to the values of social work, and who have financial need. The Social Work Scholarship has already positively impacted 8 students in the 5 years of its existence. These students are now using their Siena education to make a difference in the lives of others. Below are remarks of three of the awardees.



**Amy McCarthy '09, LCSW**

“Receiving the scholarship provided me with financial relief, and allowed me to focus on my studies. Since graduating from Siena in May 2009, I have received my MSW from Wheelock College in Boston, Massachusetts. I have been working to help implement an overhaul in the Commonwealth's Children Mental Health system and have been promoted to a leadership role within my agency, The Home for Little Wanderers. It is without a doubt that my time at Siena prepared me to become a young, passionate professional, and I hope to be able to give back to the Siena community in the same way past donors and alumni did for me.”



**Erica Stevens '11, BSW**

“The Social Work Endowed Scholarship helped ease my anxiety and stress about finances in my senior year, having returned to the program after a year sabbatical, following the birth of my son, Austin. The scholarship came at a time of financial hardship, and allowed me to graduate with many academic honors, including the highest GPA in the social work major. I learned so much in the last two years of my Siena career... the most intense years in the Social Work Program. Today, I am searching for a bachelor's social work position and feel my Siena education has prepared me for this endeavor.”





**Theresa Wojtecki, '10 MSW**

“I felt honored to receive the social work scholarship, which gave me the extra funds to participate in an international study course in Spain. I had traveled to South America as a sophomore and learned that International social work is my passion. I recently completed the MSW Program at Columbia University, and my field of practice was international immigrants and refugees. Since graduation, I have opened my job search internationally and will be taking some time in Ecuador. I am working part time at a drop in health service center in Newark NJ, and am thinking about AmeriCorps for the upcoming year.

I'm looking forward to my future and will always remember Siena's role in my life!”

**To make a contribution to the scholarship, contact the Development Office at Siena College at [development@siena.edu](mailto:development@siena.edu), 518-783-2432.**

**Contributions can also be sent by mail:**

**Siena College Development Office, 515 Loudon Rd., Loudonville, NY 12211.  
(Please reference 'Social Work scholarship' on your check).**

## **Program updates:**

The Council on Social Work Education's new competency-based accreditation standards led us to re-name several courses to better reflect course content. The new course names are as follows: Social Work Practice Skills; Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families; Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations. In addition, a new course will be added beginning in the Fall of 2012: Social Work Practice with Groups. Students have previously requested such a course and the faculty are excited to provide more in-depth training in group work.

**BIG NEWS!** In May, the College Board of Trustees approved the design phase for a new Social Sciences Building to house the Departments of Social Work, Sociology, and Education. If all proceeds well, this could be a reality within two years! Look for next year's update.



## Many Ways of Giving Back

There are many ways to contribute to the Social Work Department!

- **Scholarship Contribution**
- **Volunteer Work**
- **Advisory Board Membership**
- **Social Work Internship**
- **Mentoring Current Students**

If you have an interest in any of these, or other Ways of Giving Back, contact  
Joe Zoske:  
**518-783-4123**

*We want to partner with you!*

**Sign on to the Siena College Social Work Alumni Facebook Page. Stay in touch, post jobs and network. Reconnect!**  
<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Siena-College-Social-Work-Alumni/12844044383947?v=wall&ref=ts>

## CLASS OF 2011



Seated, L to R: Kim Holtermann, Shauna Davis, Molly Chamberlain, Kathy Romero, Mercy Kyeremeh, Erica Stevens, Amanda Ricciardi, Jessica Fama.  
Standing, L to R: Natalee Gumbs, Aubrey Bobo, Karen Martinez, Samantha Donahue, Megan Higgins, Jennifer Austin.

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If you wish to be removed from the mailing list or have other inquiries about the Department please contact Joe at [jzoske@siena.edu](mailto:jzoske@siena.edu) or at 518-783-4261

