Director's Corner

Dear CWTAP Community,

CWTAP recently held the 17th annual Student Institute, this year’s Institute was hosted by our partners at the University of Washington Seattle and University of Washington Tacoma. Students from all three schools attended at the DoubleTree in Seattle, and many presented on a variety of timely and relevant child welfare topics. Our Institute theme was “Rejuvenating Child Welfare,” with a focus on learning about and sharing information on the new Family Assessment Response (FAR). Our keynote speaker was Randy Hart, Deputy Assistant Secretary.

This year our Speed Interviewing session was held immediately following Randy’s presentation. We were delighted when Randy and his wife Sandy agreed to join our group of interviewers. Sandy is a CWTAP graduate from UW Tacoma and a former CA manager. Speed Interviewing is for our non-employee students, it gives them an opportunity to interview with 15-18 different interviewers in quick succession. Each interviewer has their own unique style and interview questions, and offers feedback to the students. The event is part of student preparation for securing employment with Children’s Administration following graduation. The event is very fast-paced and lively. Randy stated recently, “That was the most fun I’ve had on a Saturday afternoon in a long time!”

Eastern looks forward to hosting next year's Student Institute in Spokane.

Sincerely,
Diana Patterson

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Each year in April, the President of the United States issues a proclamation to announce National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Many state governors also issue proclamations to encourage public awareness of child abuse and neglect, recommit state resources to the cause, and promote community involvement through state and local activities.

National Child Abuse Prevention Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect, and to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families. During the month of April and throughout the year communities are encouraged to share child abuse and neglect prevention awareness strategies and activities and promote prevention across the country.

For more information please visit the Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of the Children’s Bureau, at www.childwelfare.gov.

Important Winter Quarter Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>Instruction begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 26</td>
<td>Memorial Day Holiday, EWU closed</td>
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<td>June 13</td>
<td>Last day of quarter</td>
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Save the Date

22nd Annual **Children’s Justice Conference**

May 12 &13, 2014
To be held in Spokane, Washington

For more information go to: [www.dshscjc.com](http://www.dshscjc.com)
I recently had the honor of interviewing Chris Thompson, a Cheney full-time student. Chris is in CWTAP and is completing his practicum in the Adolescent CFWS unit with Agency Field Instructor Mike Dixon. Chris graduates in June and is hoping to continue to work with adolescents in the Spokane DCFS office. Chris’ exposure to social work at DCFS started early in his life, his mother Penny Oliver was a much beloved social worker who worked with Children’s Administration for thirty years. Ms. Oliver concluded her career as a Supervisor for the Department of Licensed Resources.

Chris credits his mother for demonstrating social work values in her professional and private life. Chris mentioned how he often went to public meetings in the community with his mom that dealt with child abuse, racism, and other social issues. As a youngster, Chris would ask his mother to tell him about her work. She related stories about children who did not have enough food and how she and her friends would go out and make sure the children got what they needed. Chris said, “In my mind, my mother was a hero.” Chris credits other role models such as his mentor from the Big Brothers program who helped him through his sometimes troubled teenage years. Chris’ decision to go into social work was a logical extension of the positive role models he had and his strong desire to make a positive difference in people’s lives. Chris’ journey to the School of Social Work included working with at-risk youth at the YWCA in Spokane where he discovered he had a passion for working with troubled youth.

Chris graduated with his BSW in Social Work in 2010; his undergraduate practicum was at Morning Star Boys Ranch in Spokane where he was hired following graduation. At Morning Star his work included youth assessments and case management, assisting youth with their treatment plans, program coordination, family reunification, and parenting assistance. Chris was recently hired at DCFS in Spokane on a short term basis helping with adoptions.

Chris told me he is excited to be part of an organization which implements evidenced-based programs aimed at at-risk youth populations. Chris and his wife, Claire are proud new parents of Sawyer, born only a few weeks ago. According to Chris, his mother is a very proud grandmother indeed.

Helpful Links

National Association of Social Workers: www.nasw.png
Child Welfare League of America: www.cwla.png
Children’s Defense Fund: www.childrensdefense.png
Child Welfare Information Gateway: www.childwelfare.png
Casey Family Programs: www.casey.png
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families: www.acf.hhs.png
National Resource Center for Child Protective Services: www.nrccps.png
Site News

Cheney: The Cheney full-time 1st year cohort is starting their second quarter of foundation practicum. The Cheney full-time 2nd year cohort will graduate at the end of this quarter. Congratulations graduates!

Spokane Hybrid: The new Spokane Hybrid program will begin summer quarter 2014. The hybrid program is designed to accommodate students throughout Eastern Washington. Students will do much of their learning on-line and in their local communities, attending classes in Spokane 2-3 weekends per quarter.

Everett: Students will graduate at the end of this quarter. Congratulations graduates! A new cohort will start this summer.

Vancouver: The Vancouver MSW program is starting advanced practicum this quarter.

Alumni Spotlight

Maria Polyak - CFWS Supervisor - Vancouver
by Carl Duman

Maria Polyak is one of the many outstanding CWTAP graduates of EWU’s 2012 Vancouver part-time program. She is currently supervising a CFWS unit in the Vancouver DCFS office. Maria has a very solid background in social services. At the same time Maria was pursuing her undergraduate degree at PSU she was serving as a CASA in Clackamas County, Oregon. After receiving her Bachelor’s degree, Maria became a supervisor in that program. When Maria began the part-time MSW program, she continued as CASA supervisor at the Clackamas County program. Maria’s initial practicum placement was in the Vancouver office. She worked in the CFWS unit that specialized in Family Treatment Court cases. In 2010 Maria was hired as a CPS social worker in the Kelso DCFS office and completed her advanced practicum there. As a CPS social worker Maria earned rave reviews from her supervisor and her colleagues. In 2012 Maria took a CFWS position in the Vancouver office. Again Maria was recognized as a very compassionate and effective social worker. Earlier this year Maria was appointed supervisor of the CFWS unit.

Maria reports that she loves her work. She recalls the first time she took a child to an adoptive home. The significance of what this placement could mean for this child's life impressed her deeply. Maria said that to be a part of that process is a privilege. Maria is especially interested in helping children develop resiliency. This is critical for their growth while in the child welfare system. Establishing positive relationships with clients, co-workers and community partners helps everyone, especially the children and Maria focuses on this aspect of the work. Maria says that helping people to make important changes is both gratifying and enriching. She points out that it is the arranging of many small pieces into a whole that helps create a climate for change. As a supervisor Maria feels she has the opportunity and ability to positively impact the lives of the children in her unit and to foster that climate for change. The learning curve is steep but Maria welcomes the challenge and responsibility. Maria is definitely a stellar CWTAP graduate!

Everett and Spokane Hybrid Part-Time Programs

The Everett and Spokane Hybrid part-time programs begin new cohorts summer quarter. Students accepted into these programs, who possess a desire to work in public child welfare are encouraged to apply to CWTAP. Application deadline is May 12th, for more information please visit ewu.edu/cwtap.
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