



WWW.UML.EDU/CSP

The C.C. Staff:

Michelle Holmberg
Elizabeth Looney
Sharon Wasco, PhD

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Alumni Spotlight**
- **CSP Students in the Community: A response to Homelessness**
- **CSP Class of 2009**
- **Save the Date**

“If you don’t like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time.”

-Marian Wright Edelman

The Community Connection

The official newsletter of the Community Social Psychology Graduate Program
Department of Psychology
University of Massachusetts Lowell

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

SPRING, 2009



Alumna Spotlight: Kate Tyndall, CSP '94

By Elizabeth Looney



Kate Tyndall (CSP '94) is this year's CSP Distinguished Alumna award recipient. Kate's entrance into the CSP Program may seem a little unconventional. Ready to come back to school, Kate was paging through the UML catalogue and didn't find anything that appealed to her. "Finally," she said, "I threw the catalogue on the floor, and it opened to Community Psych. From that moment, all I saw were possibilities."

During her time in the program, Kate focused on women and HIV/AIDS. Kate remembers working with Professor Anne Mulvey, who introduced her to the leading theorists on women and HIV. The real work though, was bringing awareness to the public. "My biggest challenge was getting people to see the person, and not the issue," Kate said. Through her efforts, the first World AIDS Day was observed in

Lowell, and is still commemorated every December 1. In recognition of her work, Kate was awarded both the Chancellor's Medal and University Award for Distinguished Public Service by UML.

After graduation, Kate brought her passion for community work to a number of settings. Kate's contributions have included substance abuse counseling and HIV/AIDS prevention and education at Lowell House, Inc., where she was eventually promoted to Associate Executive Director, volunteering as a mental health/trauma intervention specialist and hospice care worker, as well as serving on various Boards of Directors for civic, cultural, and social service agencies. In 2003, Kate co-founded the Greater Lowell Equality Alliance (GLEA), to advocate for equal marriage rights. The organization has evolved into a resource which helps to connect people with health, social and education services around gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender issues. In 2006 Kate became a Justice of the Peace. Much of her work up until this point was about "turning a negative into a posi-

tive." But being a Justice of the Peace, she said, "is all about joy." "Officiating at weddings is a way to find balance, and it has been wonderful."

One important lesson Kate has learned is to let her interests change with time. "At least that is the way my path has gone - things ebb and flow." Additionally, community work isn't always about a 9-5. "Community Psychology is about the desire to make changes, to improve the quality of life in the community [which means] different initiatives, that may be short-lived sometimes." Her advice for current grads? Keep your eyes and ears open, and be willing to put yourself out there. Accept the challenge. Make a difference. "Our goals and what we think is on the horizon isn't even a fraction of what's actually there, if you're willing. So if a situation presents itself and you're not sure if your qualifications are appropriate, or it's too challenging, go for it. What's the worst that could happen? In terms of Community Psychology, look at the flip side of that question: what is the best that could happen?" Imagine the possibilities!

Community Issue: Homelessness

By Michelle Holmberg

Enacting the spirit and principles of community social psychology, several members of the CSP program are exemplifying a commitment to social justice and empowerment within the local community. Since November 20, 2008, when the city of Lowell evicted homeless persons living in a tent city downtown, Allegra Williams '09 and others have been advocating for the rights of homeless people through community organizing, direct action, and coalition building. The eviction came abruptly, and appeared to many as particularly harsh considering the impending winter cold, and the lack of space at the local shelter.



Sandra Mangado Garcia and Allegra Williams

Allegra first met and connected with many of the people who lived in the tent city while working on a film project about the creation of a bike path along the Concord River greenway (September 2008 - present). Allegra remembers, "As soon as I met them that first day in the camp I was

struck by this vase of flowers on a table. They felt it was important to pick fresh flowers every day and put them in that vase for everyone to enjoy. That small act was so beautifully human to me." She spent time talking to them about their use of solar lights, how they recycled, and how they worked together to make sure there was always a fire and food for everyone. Because of the emotional connection and friendships she had formed with members of this special community, Allegra was particularly shocked and enraged by the eviction. In response, Allegra helped create the Tent City Homeless Coalition, which works alongside the homeless to address immediate needs (continued on page two)

Looking Back, Moving Forward: Thoughts and Reflections from the Class of 2009 By Elizabeth Looney

In each endeavor, the challenge and invitation is always to find balance: balance between our hopes and fears, strengths and weaknesses, need for growth and need for rest. At graduation time, balancing our rush towards the future with reflection on the past is one way to pause for grounding. Graduating students in this year's Practicum class, taught by Professor Meg Bond, were recently asked what their most valuable CSP experiences were. Here are their thoughts.

Students like Matt Jones, Ka-Ryn Escovedo, Jennifer McCabe and Kris Tuttle valued their community work "[Being in the program] has provided a great training ground for working in communities," Ka-Ryn stated. Kris was leaving with "a tremendous appreciation for social justice, and how individuals and communities are impacted by it." Jen added that her experiences have helped her "to understand the importance

of empowerment, and that involving members of the community in all aspects of work is the only way to truly inspire change."

Some students, including Danielle Curley and Erin Carney, pointed to the Practicum Capstone specifically as their most valuable community work experience. Emily Makrez said, "In practicum I was able to implement the skills I have learned from the program, while networking with future employers."

Denise and Mark Umphrey brought special perspectives to the table: "The overall experiences of attending college as an older 'non-traditional' student – meeting people from different countries, wide exposure to community partnerships and community anchors and [developing skills in] grant writing and program evaluation – have been exceptional," Denise reports. Coming from a business background,



Practicum Class of 2009

Mark appreciated coming to understand "the non-profit and community organizations that serve our society and citizens."

Interdisciplinary collaborations have benefitted students like Michele Pagliarulo and Rebecca Edwards, who have been able to work with departments such as Regional, Economic and Social Development (RESD) and Engineering on fair trade and community development projects.

Other students will mark their time by the relationships they have made. Students like Nataliya Poto and Krista Paduchowski were

grateful for the mentorship CSP faculty have provided. Kelly Davis, Colin Forbes and Allegra Williams described the experience of community among students as important. The spirit of camaraderie is often exemplified in the graduate student office where, Williams wrote, "there is often a shortage of ink, but never of kindness, support, curiosity and laughter."

Those of us leaving need to find a balance between looking back and moving forward. Hopefully through remembering what we've gained through our time here, we will realize that there is a lot to look forward to: new communities, new experiences and new relationships to build on. Those memories and realizations just might help us achieve a little more balance, feel more grounded and navigate the months to come more assuredly.

Homeless Coalition, continued...

and create long-term solutions for alleviating homelessness in Lowell.

Sandra Mangado Garcia '10 attended the first meeting of the coalition, and says, "it was a meeting where they actually included homeless people...and I felt the solidarity." This first meeting spurred her into action, and she is now taking a strong leadership position in the coalition. "Even though I was just getting to know the city, I still really felt like a part of the community," says Sandra, adding, "I felt like I had a responsibility...I could not ignore what was happening."

People in Lowell, including members of the CSP program, organized to

make sure that this issue was not ignored. The December 2008 meeting of city councilors was filled with concerned citizens, the homeless, CSP students, and other UML staff and faculty who came to demonstrate their outrage for what had happened. In a show of solidarity, those who attended wore a blanket around their shoulders. Brandon Hingel '10 will always remember being part of the support "for those who really needed our help." He also says "it was overall just a huge reinforcement of what the mission of our program is."

In terms of the future for the Tent City Coalition, both Allegra and Sandra hope to see more people get involved. "There is such a strong social

justice aura," says Allegra, speaking of the CSP program, "and just having this solidarity here is something really unique and meaningful." Sandra adds, "there are other students from UML who are involved...and you can see that they respond, and are responsible, and we are all working together on this. These connections that we build spread in a way so that everyone who feels that they have to do something, comes together." Sandra echoes the sentiments of many in regards to the support shown on this issue when she says, "I am not only a UML student, I also live in the community."

"I am not only a UML student, I also live in the community."

-Sandra Mangado Garcia



Save The Date!!



- **April 16**— Leda Lanes Bowling, 7:00pm
- **April 19** – Earth Day at Community Gardens Greenhouse, 12:00pm
- **April 22** – CSP Guest Speaker, Ronelle Carolissen from South Africa, 6:00pm
- **April 28** — 12th annual Student Research Symposium
- **May 2** - GSA Spring Banquet, 5:30pm
- **May 7** – CSP awards ceremony, 5:30pm
- **May 30** – Commencement, Tsongas Arena, 10:00am
- **June 18-21** – SCRA Conference