Community Social Psychology Practicum Placements 2012-13

Placement: Framingham Council on Aging, located at the Callahan Center, 535 Union Avenue, Framingham, MA.

Website: http://www.framinghamma.gov

Overview: The organization provides a variety of programs and services to the senior population of Framingham to promote their independence and well-being. Programs include exercise and socialization activities, travel excursions, educational presentations and other events throughout the year. In addition, the Center employs Social Services staff to refer seniors and their families to resources to assist with emotional and financial issues and various medical conditions they encounter.

Student: Hemali Patel; hemali_patel@student.uml.edu
Supervisor: Grace O'Donnell; gto@framinghamma.gov

Working at the Framingham Council of Aging has been a great experience. I have had the opportunity to work with people from various professional backgrounds. This site has also provided with the ability to engage with seniors from diverse racial backgrounds helping me create new relationships and network opportunities. My supervisor has been really kind in letting me work in my own way and time. Her leniency has helped me be creative and think outside of the box for the different events I facilitated. There are many skills that I have learned working here that will help me in the future.

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Placement: Hyde Park YMCA: Teen Center

Website: http://www.ymcaboston.org/hydepark

Overview: Hyde Park YMCA is a charitable; community based nonprofit organization in compliance with IRS code 501(c) (3). It is part of the Greater Boston YMCA which is visible in the Suffolk County neighborhoods. As the community’s leading nonprofit, staff are dedicated to nurturing the potential of every child and teen, improving our community’s health and well-being and providing opportunities to give back and support our neighbors. Each year the YMCA enables more than 100,000 youth, adults, and seniors to be healthy, confident, connected and secure. Today the YMCA of Greater Boston ranks as one of the largest urban Y’s in the nation, staying true to its roots as a values-driven, volunteer-led, human service organization strengthening children, families and communities. The Hyde Park YMCA mission is to provide a healthy mind, body and spirit to individuals and families in our communities. The Teen Center serves the entire community and gives everyone the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive regardless of age, income or background.

Student: Gineaud Louis; gineaud.louis@gmail.com
Supervisor: Reginal Jean: Teen Center Director, Hyde Park YMCA. rjean@ymcaboston.org.

During my practicum, I had the opportunity to be involved in Teen Healthy Eating program and volunteerism at Rosie’s Place. I developed partnership collaboration with the Whole Foods Market. In two occasions, I facilitated Whole Foods Market healthy specialists to present two workshops on healthy food for the youth. I wrote a grant for the summer cooking program to enable the Teen Center to have money for implementing a new cooking healthy program that will enable 30 youth to learn how to prepare healthy meals and to serve about 30 meals per day during the summer. I took community outreach initiatives to strengthen sense of community and to enhance social responsibility of the youth by connecting them with Rosie’s place volunteer program. During the end of the year and the winter recess, youth went to Rosie’s Place to serve lunch to homeless and low-income women. My community outreaches lead me to help the Teen Center to organize a coats drive for the Rosie’s Place. I evaluated the Senior Pathways Program to identify its strengths and needs with recommendations for changes. I also created a program evaluation questionnaire that will help the Teen Center to evaluate the Senior Pathways Program.

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Placement: Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers – MAPS

Website: http://www.maps-inc.org/

Overview: The Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS) is a private, non-profit, community-based organization that has provided a wide range of health and social services to Portuguese and Cape Verdean Creole speakers and others in Massachusetts since 1970. Maps’ mission is to improve the lives of Portuguese-speaking families from Massachusetts and help them become contributing, active participants in American society while maintaining a strong ethnic identity and a sense of community. MAPS works with and for the Brazilian, Cape Verdean, Portuguese and other communities to increase access and remove barriers to health, education and social services through direct services, advocacy, leadership and community development.

Student: Gabriela Silva Pinto; Gabriela_SilvaPinto@student.uml.edu
Supervisor: Osvalda Rodrigues, orodrigues@maps-inc.org

During my practicum experience, I had the opportunity to work at MAPS and become fully become a member of the organization. I had the opportunity to participate in staff as well as Board of Directors meetings, actively participate in decisions and give my input in projects. Working at MAPS I was part of Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Team, and started working with the Women’s support Group, facilitating the meetings. MAPS develops a very unique service, working with key community paraprofessionals such as Faith Leader’s as well as Hairdressers training them to recognize and refer to services at MAPS, as well as to the Center for Hope and Healing. As part of this project I had the opportunity to organize and present workshops working with the Domestic Violence Advocate and with the CHH to offer training for paraprofessionals expanding the services offered to our community.
I also had the opportunity to work in different projects to better understand the dynamics and needs of the non-profit organization regarding grants. During the time I worked at MAPS, I became familiar with the community we were providing services, as well as expanded my network within the community.

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Placement: Community and Cultural affairs, Center for Arts and Ideas

Website: http://www.uml.edu/artsandideas/

Overview: The Center for Arts and Ideas is a program under the Division of Fine Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, led by co-directors Prof. Jehanne-Marie Gavarini of the Art department and Paul Marion the Executive Director of Community and Cultural Affairs. This co-partnership allows UMass Lowell to maintain positive relationships within the community and coordinate activities that enrich campus and community life.

Student: Aysha Mirie; Aysha_mirie@student.uml.edu
Supervisor: Paul Marion: Co-Director of the Center for Arts and Ideas; Paul_Marion@uml.edu

My practicum experience at the Center for Arts and Ideas allowed personal and professional growth in facilitating meetings with outreach organizations, as well as preparing research findings in an organized, yet efficient deliverable for the office. During the year I was able to connect with over 6 organizations in the cities of Lawrence and Haverhill, out of which 2 organizations have been selected to conduct a pilot program for youth in the arts. By working with the staff at the Center, utilizing their community resources and networks, and researching on my own, I was able to enhance community programs offered to youth by the non-profit organizations by linking faculty resources.

This program involved building community partnerships with local organizations and facilitating meetings with Directors. The Center for Arts and Ideas allowed me to develop considerable skills that will be valuable for future development as a community leader.

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Placement: Center for Community Research and Engagement (formerly the Center for Family, Work and Community)

Website: http://www.uml.edu/Research/Centers/CFWC/About-Us.aspx

Overview: The Center for Community Research and Engagement promotes healthy, productive, and sustainable communities through research and scholarship, technical assistance, program development, partnership formation, and funding from public and private sources. Since its inception in 1994, it has carried out research and action aimed at improving higher education engagement with diverse families, organizations and communities. Through community grant partnerships, CCRE has played a central role in facilitating partnership development and
problem solving with schools, police departments, health agencies, nonprofit coalitions and planning offices.

**Student:** Tracey Jackson; Tracey_Jackson@student.uml.edu

**Supervisor:** Robin Toof, Co-Director of the Center for Community Research and Engagement

By completing my practicum requirements at the Center for Community Research and Engagement, I was able utilize my existing professional skills while also further developing my academic knowledge and hands on learning experiences. My goal at the beginning of the year was to apply what I have learned in the Community Social Psychology program in a real world setting. Thus, taking what I have learned in courses such as Program Evaluation, Research Methods, Working with Groups, and Solving Community Problems from theory to practice. During the academic year, I worked on two community projects. The first project was related to the Second Chance Act Grant for the Greater Lowell Ex-Offender Reentry Partnership. For this project, a community partnership was established to connect ex-offenders reentering the city of Lowell with essential social services and community resources. The center’s role in this partnership was to assist with identified goals, 1) Increase involvement from relevant community stakeholders; 2) Create a five-year Reentry Strategic Plan; and 3) Develop a comprehensive evaluation plan to determine if the project is achieving its goals and objectives. During the year I assisted in the facilitation of monthly partnership meetings, communicating with stakeholders, and creating a 5 year strategic plan.

The second project I was directly involved with was the Centralville Friends for Improvement, Revitalization and Enforcement (C-FIRE) program. The primary goals of C-FIRE are to lower crime and delinquency and improve public safety, economic vitality, and the quality of life for Centralville residents by addressing chronic crime hotspots and indicators of neighborhood distress. This was done through partnering with the Lowell Police Department, after school agencies, service providers, and local organizations and businesses. For this project, my role was to work with the Law Enforcement subcommittee to develop and implement strategies using evidenced based programs such as Smart policing and Problem Oriented Policing.

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**Placement:** East Pawtucketville Neighborhood Group

**Website:** https://www.facebook.com/pages/East-Pawtucketville-Neighborhood-Group

**Overview:** EPNG (East Pawtucketville Neighborhood Group) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan group whose mission is to improve the quality of life of the citizens of the east Pawtucketville community of Lowell Massachusetts. The group is made up of volunteers who care deeply about the east Pawtucketville community and Lowell; who work to enhance partnerships with the local government officials, local businesses and other community leaders to address hardship, increase awareness of neighborhood concerns and to build a compassionate, sustainable community. EPNG’s goal is to develop into a sustainable, productive entity whose members feel a sense of purpose and maintain the core mission of the group.
Student: Kristy Shockley; kristy_shockley@student.uml.edu
Supervisor: Nataliya Poto: Co-founder of the East Pawtucketville Neighborhood Group; eastpawtucketville@gmail.com

During my practicum placement I had the opportunity to get involved with neighborhood planning on a grassroots level. My work in the neighborhood involved waking around door-to-door to speak with residents and inform them of news in the neighborhood. I even worked on two small projects for the neighborhood: one campaign reminding residents when to call for help and developing a packet for new members to the neighborhood. I also had the opportunity to be involved in large-scale projects and organized two festivals, Green Day and Franco-American Festival (FAF), during my year with the neighborhood group. One festival (FAF) was possible because of a grant, Neighborhood Innovation Grant, which I successfully wrote for the neighborhood group. Planning these festivals allowed me to become familiar with the networking side of community organizing as well as the more legal side of obtaining the appropriate city permits. Hopefully, the events I planned will continue in future years and help to promote a real sense of community in that neighborhood.

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Placement: Children’s Aid and Family Service of the Seven Hills Foundation

Website: http://www.sevenhills.org/affiliates/childrens-aid-family-services/

Overview: Children’s Aid and Family Service (CAFS) is an affiliate of the Seven Hills Foundation and provides child care services primarily for at risk and low income families. They provide child care for up to 87 children daily from the ages of 15 months through 5 years at the ChildCareCenter and about 120 children in the Family Child Care program from the age of 8 weeks to 10 years. The Child Care Resources Program provides vouchers and information and referral to the Central Massachusetts area for child care. CAFS runs programs such as the Strengthening Families Initiative, which engages parents and children in activities to promote relationships and healthy behaviors and encourages them to seek support when they need it. The programs at CAFS are funded by contracts with the State of Massachusetts, as well as through Early Education and Care (EEC), and grants from United Way.

Student: Hayley Armstrong, hayley_armstrong@student.uml.edu
Supervisor: Cheryl Trant, Assistant Vice President/ Family Day Care Director; ctrant@sevenhills.org

My experience at Children’s Aid and Family Service has been focused on event planning and management, understanding the larger organization of Seven Hills, learning about the local area and its people, and making children smile. I have worked most directly with the Strengthening Families program, which is aimed at reducing child maltreatment in the Fitchburg and Leominster areas and uses family friendly events and learning experiences to encourage healthy interactions in families. Strengthening Families embodies Community Psychology principles.
through a strengths-based approach; the five protective factors the program pushes are nurturing and attachment, knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development, parental resilience, social connections, and concrete supports for parents. One of the challenges inherent in creating family events is to be sure to include as many of these factors as possible while maintaining the integrity of the event outcomes. Finding that balance can be tricky, but my practicum experience has been teaching me how to effectively implement grant programs like Strengthening Families. I would recommend this site to those who wish to work in a wonderful environment with a laid back, professional atmosphere and all around great people. If you would like to really dig your hands into how to learn about a community and successfully bring about healthier changes for it, then this practicum site is for you.

Placement: Merrimack Valley Small Business Center

Website: http://www.merrimackvalleysmallbusiness.com/

Overview: The Merrimack Valley Small Business Assistance Center is a program through Community Teamwork, Inc. that provides support and services to a wide range of small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Merrimack Valley. Examples of their services include microloans, workshops, and one-on-one counseling.

Student: Susie Paterson; susan_paterson@student.uml.edu
Supervisor: Stacie Hargis: Director of the Merrimack Valley Small Business Center; shargis@comteam.org

My practicum experience at the Merrimack Valley Small Business Center allowed me to take on a number of roles in the community. In my first semester I took a lead role planning and organizing a local workshop for creative entrepreneurs titled “The Engine Room”. In this role, I collaborated with other interns at the Cultural Organization of Lowell to recruit local artists and small business owners to speak on panels at the event, plan a mini-workshop on pricing for artists, and advertise the event throughout the city of Lowell. In addition, I gave feedback to a local artist who created a poster for the event. After the event’s completion, I added all materials and presentations to a Wordpress site that is easily accessible from the MVSBC website.

In the second semester, I focused on conducting a client assessment of the Center’s services to make sure MVSBC is meeting client needs. Part of this included interviewing current and former clients to see what they believe the strengths and weaknesses of the organization are. Client feedback will be used to inform the creation of Action Plan sheets focused on giving clients a step-by-step process to follow based on the current state of the client’s business/business plan. In addition, I attended a number of the Center’s meetings and workshops to see what services are currently offered and how they are being received by clients.
Placement: Budget Buddies, Inc.

Website: www.budget-buddies.org

Overview: Budget Buddies supports the financial self-sufficiency and empowerment of socio-economically disadvantaged women within Greater Lowell, MA area by offering a comprehensive program that is designed specifically to meet the needs, wants and demands of the different group of clients. Budget Buddies’ financial literacy program also provides assurance that basic financial education is applied in a highly practical and sustainable way. Socio-economically disadvantaged women – who typically have limited, if any, access to the financial advisors that educate higher-income households – are able to get personalized help with their own specific financial issues that have been keeping them from overcoming poverty, such as excessive debt or poor consumer habits.

Student: Henry Anne Velysia; henryanne_velysia@student.uml.edu
Supervisor: Anita Saville (Executive Director); a.saville@budget-buddies.org

My practicum experience at the Budget Buddies has allowed me to become a valuable contributor to Budget Buddies as a non-profit organization but also to the community as well as the socio-economically disadvantaged women population that is served by Budget Buddies. I took on leadership and collaborative roles for various projects, including: reaching out to the community through the use of social media, assisting in grant writing projects, one-year follow-up evaluation project, program evaluation project, and more. During the first half of my practicum, I have developed a blog website for Budget Buddies, a series of steps to do when searching for potential funders or open grants and also for searching for articles or materials to tweet about. Additionally, I was also given a few chances to work on my own goals one of which is to be better in public speaking. During the second half of my practicum, I focused more on being more involved in the program in order for me to understand and get better insight of how it works as I have also started to help Budget Buddies with their program evaluation project. Furthermore, by getting more involved (i.e. attend workshops, orientations) with Budget Buddies’ programs and activities it enables me to build relationships with the coaches, buddies as well as Budget Buddies’ staff and helps me to build my organizational and interpersonal skills. At the same time, I continue working to assist Budget Buddies both in grant searching and volunteer recruitment. Overall, my practicum experience has exceeded what I had expected. It has helped me to learn, grow, reach my goals, and then some.

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Placement: Lowell Community Health Center Teen BLOCK

Website: http://www.lchealth.org/

Overview: The Teen Outreach Program has been implemented in Lowell since 2004. The program targets approximately 50 adolescents ages 14-18, from Southeast Asian and Latina backgrounds, as well as emerging populations such as Portuguese speakers (from Portugal and
Brazil) and Africans. The mission is to provide caring, quality, and culturally appropriate health services to the people of Greater Lowell, regardless of their financial status and to enhance the health of our community and to empower each individual to maximize their overall well-being. Teens are able to be a part of projects and programs such as Teen Pregnancy Prevention, substance abuse awareness and prevention, Cambodian and African cultural programs, HIV/STD education, and more.

**Student:** Alessandra Cecala; accecala@gmail.com

**Supervisor:** Stephanie Buccholz; program manager; stephaniebu@lchealth.org

Though my practicum work I was able to work on a study for teen pregnancy prevention, a workshop as well as awareness month for LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender), to work on grants with the director Linda Sou, to create aids for and be a resource for college preparation and work readiness, and more. At my internship I was able to have a direct connection with and a direct impact on the teens in our community of Lowell. The staff was fun and friendly; I was able to learn a lot from many of them about leadership, program development, grant writing, and more. This is a wonderful site to work in, I highly recommend it!

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**Placement:** Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC): Community Health Education Center (CHEC)

**Website:** http://www.lchealth.org/CHEC.shtml

**Overview:** Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC) is a non-profit health care agency that serves diverse populations in Greater Lowell. As part of LCHC’s health services, the Community Health Education Center (CHEC) provides outreach, training, and education to assist in promoting outreach education as an implemented process in public health. By offering certificate programs, community health education, seminars, and workshops, CHEC supports networking among outreach educators to share resources and information. CHEC approaches outreach education using a participatory model by incorporating outreach educators in planning, development, and implementation process.

**Student:** Marlene Abreu; Marlene_Abreu@student.uml.edu

**Supervisor:** Mercy Anampiu, Health Promotion and Education Manager, Health Promotion Department

Throughout my practicum at LCHC, I have taken the lead on several projects involving curriculum development and program planning. I worked on enhancing the existing curricula from CHEC’s Comprehensive Outreach Education Certificate program by modifying lesson plans and additional educational materials. These projects were part of a larger effort to certify Community Health Workers (CHWs), who are unique public health workers who provide culturally appropriate health education at the community level. To understand the policy aspect associated with certifying CHWs, I attended several monthly State Board meetings at the
Department of Public Health. By attending these meetings, I witnessed the discussion surrounding the competencies potential certifying programs must meet in addition to the importance of having CHWs serve as members of the State Board. To support the notion of involving CHWs in process of updating the curricula, I began forming a Northeast Region CHW Advisory Group. This involved writing a description of the Advisory Group, creating a nomination form, and identifying recruitment opportunities. Furthermore, I had opportunities to engage in outreach education and interact with members of the community at various health education events. Collectively, my experiences at LCHC allowed me to practice existing skills and encouraged personal and professional growth that is important as a future health educator.

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Placement: Community Teamwork Inc. (CTI)

Website: http://www.comteam.org/

Overview: Community Teamwork, Inc. is a non-profit community action agency in Lowell. CTI’s mission is assist low-income people become self-sufficient by providing resources to lessen the effects of poverty, and give people the tools to be part of making decisions in their life. CTI serves over 62 cities and towns in Massachusetts. Some of the services they provide to the community include housing and fuel assistance, childcare services, educational and job training, and financial literacy training.

Student: Hannah Johnson; Hannah_johnson@student.uml.edu
Supervisor: Cheryl Amey; Chief Planning Officer, Community Teamwork, Inc; CAmey@comteam.org

At my practicum site, I worked with the Planning department on various project. The planning department aim is to develop and assess the ways CTI functions. The Planning Department is in charge of the agencies strategic planning, government relations, compliance, and grant writing. Through my practicum experience, I was able to work on various projects related to these topics. I developed and strengthened many Community Psychology competencies like resource development, professional development, community assessment and program evaluation, and advocacy and public policy. Examples of how I developed and strengthened these competencies are I helped the agency develop resources to share with their clients and other programs by creating a stock power point presentation of all the programs CTI has to offer. I developed a follow-up questionnaire assessing how other community action agencies in the Massachusetts address workforce development and training. A self-assessment and strategic plan was taking place at the agency and I had the opportunity to observe and take part in these meetings. In addition, I engaged in building government relations with legislative leaders in the CTI communities.

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Placement: Rebecca Spoerri-Bowman, D.O. (Family Practice)

Website: www.drspoerribowman.com

Overview: Family Medicine Private Practice located in Burlington, Massachusetts (Rebecca Spoerri-Bowman) which is currently in the process of creating and developing an Integrative Wellness/Preventive Medicine Center. Rebecca’s areas of specialties include: General Dermatology & Aesthetic Dermatology, Sports Medicine, Women's Health, Preventive Medicine, Health Psychology/Lifestyle Behavior Change, Nutrition, Weight Management, OMM (Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine) and Integrative Medicine.

Student: Kristin Viveiros; Kristin_Viveiros@student.uml.edu
Supervisor: Rebecca Spoerri-Bowman, D.O. (Family Doctor & Owner)

In the beginning of my practicum I implemented a program for this private practice to meet the Guidelines of the NEQCA AQC program for Blue Cross Blue Shield and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care. This comprehensive program helps communicate with patients in necessary follow up and ensures that they are receiving all the required testing that was ordered on their behalf. The program confirms that the patients are being placed into appropriate programs required to meet the patient needs, such as nutrition counseling, scheduling dietary and fitness programs, along with any special need circumstances presented on a case by case situation.

I am working directly with our staff to gear up and facilitate the advancement of this unique program. The goals and objectives of this program are designed to educate the patient, and at the same time, seek to decrease diabetes, hypertension, obesity, hypercholesterolemia and other debilitating diseases within the community.

Outreach to the community would include setting up workshops that will promote and teach people how they can live a healthier lifestyle. Teaching those in the community how small changes in your everyday lifestyle can make a huge difference in their health and wellbeing as a whole which will include researching previous outreach programs that have been used in the past as well as what this practice would like to offer to their patients and community in the future. I represent Rebecca’s practice when creating these partnerships and programs. Rebecca would like to focus on healthy lifestyles within her current family practice in hopes to someday open her own wellness center within the community she serves today.

I am in charge of creating workshops can help people quit smoking, improve diet, become more active, have more energy, improve management of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes, lose weight, manage stress, improve self-esteem, and create a more balanced life. Promoting a healthier lifestyle can create healthier communities over all. Within these workshops, I also want to explore what barriers exist for this community and find ways to knock these barriers down that are preventing them from living a healthier lifestyle. Providing these patients and member of the community with informational packets and resources available to them, I feel that they could maintain a healthier life.
Ultimately, Rebecca’s dream is to open up a wellness center. I think that by reaching out to the local businesses in her community can help to open doors and design programs which she can implement within her very own office today as well as for her future plans. Offering workshops to her patients can be beneficial to improving the health of her patients, overall. Researching other wellness programs and business plans, I will work with Rebecca to help her create and hopefully build a successful wellness center.

If you are interested in health promotion and organizational development, this is the type of practicum I suggest you look into!

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Placement: The Child Advocacy Project at the YWCA of Greater Lawrence

Website: http://www.ywcalawrence.org

Overview: The Child Advocacy Project (CAP) group is designed to help child victims feel more comfortable being around others as well as help one another in the process of healing. Activities center around social interaction, boundaries, self-worth, trust-building, positive coping strategies, and safety.

Student: Mirakel G. Mayoral; mirakel_mayoral@student.uml.edu

Supervisor: Susan Staples Co-Director of Women’s Services sstaples@ywcalawrence.org

My practicum at the YWCA for Greater Lawrence Child Advocacy Project (CAP) was an enlightening and rewarding exercise in program evaluation, intervention building and conceptualization, and collaboration. I developed a survey for parents in the Child Advocacy Project to address their expectations of the program within the first two sessions with the family counselor. I then developed a post-program satisfaction survey for the CAP, which addressed any changes they observed with their children over the course of the program's 12-week intervention. Additionally, the satisfaction survey addressed the question of agency-wide satisfaction with all YWCA services utilized while the parent's child was working with the CAP. I also planned and implemented an after-school program for children between the ages of 7-12, which addressed self-esteem and building a sense of community. The after-school program would have a resource binder with explicit instructions, exercises, and reasons why each lesson promote the overall theme of building self-esteem and community through art and art therapy. The surveys, the materials for the art project, and all the subsequent data analysis for the program are all to assist the program in continuing its effort by providing empirical data for potential donors to sustain the Child Advocacy Project's services.
**Placement:** Girls Inc of Greater Lowell

**Website:** http://www.girlsinclowell.org/

**Overview:** Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold. Through creative programs in a safe and nurturing environment, we strive to teach the independence and personal responsibility girls need to succeed.

**Student:** Pascale Jean-Jacques

**Supervisor:** Jennifer Demers, Program Director

During my practicum at Girls Inc, I work closely with the teen coordinator in the teen center. I have been involved with helping to create intentional, hands on programs for the teens which vary each month. Essentially, my role is to support the coordinator in all endeavors of the teen center. Additionally, I have been working to help create collaboration between Girls Inc and an undergraduate organization here at UMass Lowell. I have also had the pleasure of assisting to plan events such as an Open House for the newly opened teen center. Lastly, I have been able to develop on core skills such as grant writing, community building through serving on the Lowell Women’s Week committee in behalf of Girls Inc as well as program planning. My experience at Girls Inc has been a good, well rounded experience.

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**Placement:** New Hampshire Department of Corrections; Family Connections Center (FCC) at the New Hampshire State Prison for Men

**Website:** http://www.nh.gov/nhdoc/fcc/

**Overview:** To meet the need of supporting incarcerated families in New Hampshire, the Family Connections Center was created in 1998 at the Lakes Region Facility. At that time, this State prison in Laconia was a co-ed medium and minimum-security prison. The initial family support program was created as a partnership with the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Family Studies Department. The Center has remained a part of the NH Department of Corrections since its inception. Approximately half of the funding comes from the NH DOC, the other half comes from various grants and donations.

The Family Connections Center (FCC) has formed additional collaborations with many community agencies and programs to expand to other correctional facilities. In 2006, FCC partnered with Child and Family Services of NH to collaborate on a grant from the Federal government for a Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Initiative. This partnership has allowed FCC to expand programming to the NH State Prison for men in Concord, NH and the Northern NH Correctional Facility in Berlin, NH. This initiative strives to support families affected by incarceration through support, referrals, relationship classes and family re-entry planning available to eligible incarcerated fathers and their partners.

**Student:** Nadine Sacco; nadine_sacco@student.uml.edu
**Supervisor:** Kristina Toth, Program Administrator for FCC

My experience with the FCC allowed me to apply a lot of the skills and competencies learned throughout the course of my time as a Community Social Psych student. I wrote and/or helped to write several grants, collaborated on the creation of surveys, distributed those surveys, and completed data entry for a large amount of surveys as well. I was able to assist in day-to-day tasks and lighten the load of FCC staff, which freed them up to take on more tasks in assisting the participants. I attended many parenting classes, healthy relationships classes, and support groups. I facilitated my own support group, and monitored video visits between inmates and their children as well. Because FCC collaborates with other agencies, I also got to make connections with several other agencies including DCYF (Division of Children, Youth, and Families), CFS (Child and Family Services), and the Webster House in Manchester, NH. My other responsibilities included accessing community resources to offer the inmates and their families in need of specific services or education regarding an issue they were up against (e.g., termination of parental rights, issues with the foster care system, access to housing, etc.). I was able to become part of a strong, tight-knit group of intelligent women who strongly encouraged my academic and professional growth across the board.

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