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Graduate School of Humanities & Social Sciences

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SHSS - A New Name

We have grown significantly as a school. Our expanded applications of the principles for effective relationships on every level of social experience give us a more expansive mission. We therefore changed our name in 2001 to the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Studies (SHSS).

Our programs in conflict analysis and resolution, family therapy, and peace studies reach across academic disciplines and fields of practice. We support multidisciplinary and multi-professional career advancement through the humanities, social sciences, helping professions, and other developing fields.

The school's new name offers a more complete statement of the scope and depth of our collaborations with other NSU centers and universities. In appreciation of the diversity of the South Florida and global communities, this change also supports new partnerships with local and international groups, opening fresh arenas for our students to practice what we teach.

As another marker of our center's growth, our Department of Dispute Resolution is now the Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution (DCAR) to accurately reflect the scope of theory and practice in the department and in the field as a whole.

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The State of the School by Dean Yang

SHSS is a community of diverse learners who bring together theory, practice, and research from multidisciplinary, multi-professional, and multicultural perspectives. Our rich diversity is a natural asset and an invaluable resource for all of us. It defines humanity in every way: socially, historically, culturally, biologically, artistically, intellectually, and spiritually. We treasure each other's talents, skills, and experiences. We empower each other by going after our passions and sharing our stories and insights.

2000-2001 was a productive year for us. We instituted our new school name and new mission statement. Our current academic programs have been enhanced through innovations such as our learner-centered orientation, AAMFT accreditation, and our new department name of DCAR. Also, SHSS has expanded our teaching innovations and learning creativity through use of online learning components and technologies in campus-based classes.

Building on our successes, we stabilized the work loads of our full-time faculty and better organized our adjunct faculty teams. And now we offer new enrollment schedules beginning in January and April for mid-career working adults

As a result, we enrolled 341 students of remarkable diversity according to gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, and training background, which gives us great pride. Also, we moved our classes and 8 offices to new quarters the Tower Building near the front of the East Campus. As an institution, SHSS has dramatically increased its contribution to NSU over this past fiscal year.

Reaching out into the community, SHSS has provided multidisciplinary and multi-professional services in municipal government civility, community policing, the ChildFit school program, family business assistance and resources, marriage and family therapy, facilitation support for the Broward Charter Review summit, assistance with the innovative urban community planning Transit Greenway, and offered action research, peace building and violence prevention to many.

SHSS has created our first office of enrollment and student affairs, first marketing office, first student career resource program, and first online search program for external scholarships.

Congratulations to all involved for these impressive achievements and student-focused accomplishments. This is a solid foundation for our continued efforts and steady initiatives in establishing SHSS as a distinguished academic institution in this country and overseas.

Our scope of action has expanded considerably. We have launched new programs in Peace Studies, Family Studies, DCAR master's and graduate certificates on line, College Student Personnel Administration in cooperation with NSU's Division of Student Affairs, Family Systems Health Care on line, and Health Care Conflict Resolution on line

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Rebirth of the Online Newsletter

This issue you're reading marks the rebirth of the SHSS online newsletter. SHSS Dialogues has been created to maintain the lines of communication that connect us to you.

We train professionals to provide services for the spectrum of human-to-human relationships, from the personal to the international. Our graduates emerge from SHSS able to contribute effective service in community, business, and academic positions.

SHSS Dialogues will keep you informed not only of the productive things we do to fulfill the promise of the fields we teach, but also of who is doing them.

Our location on NSU's East campus might be the most rustic site in Ft. Lauderdale. But our calm demeanor tells only part of the story. Our faculty, staff, students and graduates are accomplishing many great things -- we only have room to introduce you to a representative few in each issue. But in these pages you'll see what we're doing to fulfill the human capability for productive change.

Please feel free to respond to what you read here. Tell us who you are and what else you want from us. If you're already part of the SHSS community as a student, graduate or staff member, tell us what you're doing. If you're not part of our community yet, this newsletter will open a door for you into what we do and who are.

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Our Resident Knight

Doctoral students, by nature of their academic obligations, are a busy breed. The outgoing and energetic Guy Jeanty, a family therapy doctoral student, has taken on an additional school commitment guaranteed to keep him even busier.

In his fieldwork, he has been providing hospice services for Vitas Health Care Corporation. for nine years. In the family therapy department at SHSS, Guy (pronounced "Ghee") is developing his theoretical and clinical skills to foster a deeper understanding about, and new ways of working with, patients & families in the hospice setting. For example, he mentions that the hospice field is changing its focus. "Instead of calling it hospice, we now call it palliative care, to suggest the sense of comfort and pain control more than focusing on end of life care."

The subject of Guy's doctoral research is hospice care with people of African and/or Caribbean descent. Most research available on hospice is quantitative in nature, while Guy sees a need for more qualitative investigations. "With this particular population, their voices and stories get lost in all the numbers and ways that quantitative researchers make the numbers fit. Instead of conversations with other academic types, I want to find out if patients are getting the care they need, and

"I didn't know it existed," Guy insists, "until Dean Yang nominated me for it. I completed an application, then was interviewed on my interests in school and work. I didn't know what to expect before I went into it, but the application process was thorough in its range of questions. They wanted to see whether or not I was a good people person. Then, a couple of months later, I was accepted."

A bright and lively conversationalist, Guy seems born to this role. "A Presidential Knight represents the university to the public. We talk about NSU and the opportunities the school offers, and we promote its offerings." As an example, Guy mentions, "SBE hosted a program on e-commerce at Broward Convention Center. I handed out information and spoke with people about the components of programs the university runs, representing the entire university as a knight."

why us?

Why would the university use knights for these duties instead of their public relations people?

"Knights aren't hired, we're not paid, so we're credible," Guy explains. "When people hear positive things from us, they can feel more confident we're not just giving them a party line or a sales pitch."

Presidential Knights are also effective for promoting a useful flow of information between the

I want to get their stories heard about how race and color affect their health care delivery."

knighthood comes knocking

In such a project, Guy sounds like a typically creative family therapy doctoral student. One responsibility that makes him unique, however, is his role as an NSU Presidential Knight - a position many at NSU don't know about, and few understand.

president's office to the student body. "We report to the President about what works and what doesn't work at the university. President Ferrero has been very forthcoming, so we have been able to have a real dialog. We're ambassadors representing the vision of the university to students and the community. The flip side is that we also represent the expectations, concerns and gripes of the student body to the people who can do something about them."

Guy grows thoughtful about what he has said. "Other knights might articulate different views, but this is how I see what we do and have been asked to do."

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The Steep Path of Student Publishing

It can be very difficult for graduate students to publish in prestigious journals. A successful effort, however, contributes to one's chosen field before graduation, reaches professional peers, and demonstrates exceptional achievement to potential employers.

Jacqueline Sparks, an SHSS family therapy doctoral student, has met the uphill challenge of student publishing. Her articles have been accepted by the two premier family therapy journals in the same year.

"The Deconstruction of Magic" came out in the Fall 2000 issue of *Family Process*. **Barry Duncan**, Psy.D., an SHSS family therapy professor, calls it "one of the best articles I've read in the last ten years." This piece brings a unique perspective to the work of Dr. Milton Erickson, a founding father of family therapy.

"Taking a Stand: An Adolescent Girl's Resistance to Medication" is currently in press with the *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*. A critique of the practice of prescribing anti-depressants to adolescent girls, which often leads to over-prescribing, this article is timely because such prescriptions have become standard practice in many fields of mental health.

student publishing

Writers can feel encouraged that they've at least entered the publishing loop once they receive a response letter that says, in so many words, "Thanks for your submission but it needs some changes. Enclosed are reviewers' comments." These revisions can demand some rewriting, but such a request to revise and submit the new, improved version is not a rejection.

"Getting in the loop with *Family Process* was a big deal for me. While I addressed the reviewers' concerns, I was determined to maintain the integrity of the original piece. That meant not revising anything in a particular way just to please a reviewer, just to get in the journal. I addressed some concerns while putting my own twist on them, so I could meet their expectations and still make sure my original purpose was clear."

The reviewers helped Jacqueline see things in her articles that she hadn't originally noticed, things that could be improved, "possible blind spots. I couldn't meet all the reviewers' demands, but as long as I handled a majority of them, and had the journal editor's support, then I could be successful. I had far more confidence in the final product with each article because it had passed muster with prominent people in the field. I don't know the actual identity of those readers, but they were clearly capable and respected voices in the field."

To put Ms. Spark's publishing achievement in perspective, Barry Duncan points out that these journals have the largest number of subscribers in the field, and are the most difficult for an author to get into. Their rejection rates for submissions are over 95%.

"Our program is strongly oriented to getting students to publish, particularly when they have very original ideas," says Dr. Duncan. "We want to train leaders in family therapy, and Jackie Sparks is an exceptional student. Both articles are scholarly, self-reflective critiques of the field we practice. Her work is refreshing, since most published articles focus on advancing ideas that are already accepted."

Ms. Sparks explains, "I've followed these journals throughout my career. Family Process has been the home of many pivotal articles that have shaped the field, so getting accepted there was a special event for me."

persistence

Publishing a well-written, well-thought out article is not an easy journey. "You can start with the top journals, but when you get your rejections, you then try the next level of journals, and so on until your article finds a home."

what next

Fame and fortune, however, don't follow hard on the heels of initial successes in academic publishing. "After publishing these articles, life goes on. The satisfaction is more personal, giving me confidence that I can write and publish at that level. I felt the way the way a high jumper feels when she clears a bar she doubted she could clear. She then believes she can clear that same height again. Once you do something like this, no one can take it away from you. Before you've done it once, there's always the doubt, so you need to take a leap of faith and go for it. And once you've done it, you try again."

Apparently so. Jacqueline Sparks is now working with faculty members and students on a manual for social service agencies that want to work in a more collaborative way with their clients. All this while writing her dissertation. Does literary multi-tasking make her life crazy? "No, it gives my life more form. The topics are similar enough that each project helps pull ideas together for all of them."

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Never Too Young for Conflict Resolution

Morrisville, PA's Middle-Senior High School's students are learning about the issues and solutions that conflict resolution practices are designed to address, thanks to a Leadership Development Program developed by the Bucks County Peace Center.

The Peace Center has promoted peace and social justice in Buck's County since 1982 through a multicultural, community-based approach. Their programs are designed to help reduce violence and conflict in our schools, homes and communities through understanding and managing conflict at every social level. Staff members provide the community with camps, support groups, trainings, mediations, workshops and a web site (<http://www.comcat.com/~peace/#PJ>).

Holly Williams, a 2000 graduate of the DCAR master's program, facilitates student discussions with her colleague, Oona Gilles-Weil. Together, they prepare students to deal with real world issues in productive ways.

The seventh to tenth graders meet weekly with Holly. Their topics include racism, sexism, bullying, peer pressure, and any related concerns they want to raise. The program helps the students recognize the power they have within them, express themselves freely and deliberately, and discuss concerns directly relevant and significant to their age group.

These students shared what they

Holly says, "I had forgotten how difficult it was, when I was 13, to pick up the phone and talk to an adult with whom I wasn't familiar. Our middle school students learn not only how to successfully complete a project, but also how to talk to adults with authority.

"The number one issue of importance for these young people is to be heard by adults," Holly has found. "They need to feel important and they need to know that adults respect their opinions and ideas." As fifteen-year-old participant Jaeson Howard told a reporter from the Bucks County Courier Times, the Leadership Development Program has encouraged him to "express myself freely without worrying about what everyone else thinks."

According to Holly, "Our criteria for participants is simple: they need to be interested in and committed to the program. We do not want only the top students or those already involved in several after-school activities or sports. We want the most diverse group we can find to stimulate great discussions within a safe environment."

Holly first asks the students what it would take for them to feel safe enough to say whatever is on their minds. Their responses include, "no interrupting," "be respectful," "don't talk about people who are not present". Once the students have created their own rules, they decide on the topics they

learned on a "Kids Corner" public service radio program on Radio Disney in May, 2001. Local DJ "Crazy Karen" Nicolo, who uses her Philadelphia area forum to spotlight issues that matter to kids, included these future experts as guests in a four-part broadcast series on conflict resolution.

steps for success

The Leadership Development Program, also available at Poquessing Middle School in Lower Southampton, encourages each student to accomplish a defined community-oriented goal by offering support through discussions and role-plays that demonstrate aspects of conflict resolution.

want to discuss.

tips for DCAR graduates

Holly has some advice for future graduates of our DCAR programs. "I had a hard time finding work when I first graduated," she shares, "but I was looking in the wrong places. Look under mediation in the phone book and you come across a dozen law firms. Programs are out there that incorporate everything we've learned. You just have to be diligent and committed to finding them.

"I eventually found The Peace Center, which is specifically a conflict resolution organization focused on prevention, not intervention. Since working for The Peace Center, I have made contacts with several other organizations committed to similar visions of peace, empowerment and prevention. I encourage upcoming graduates to look into non-profit organizations for career opportunities."

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Fulfilling Promise with Action

Many students from the SHSS family therapy program don't choose to step into a traditional client practice. Some go into business, others into training, and some supervise programs that apply the theories and techniques of family therapy to social service agencies.

Sharon Ryalls is a family therapy doctoral student at SHSS who has finished her classes and is working on her dissertation. During this challenging, culminating period of her academic career, she is also Program Supervisor for Palm Beach County's Focus on Promise, an agency that is part of the Children's Home Society system.

At first meeting, though, you can tell that she is a people-oriented administrator. Sharon begins a description of her organization's functions by describing her staff's capabilities for serving clients. "Our roving practitioners are funded through the Children Services Council to serve children and their families in Palm Beach County," she explains.

levels of service

Bachelor's level counselors provide groups at aftercare and daycare centers to teach children about social skills. "We show them how to be good listeners, respect

Sharon says, "Once you start practicing the solution focused model on a daily basis, you can notice a shift in your thinking. Professionally, this puts a therapist into a productive relationship with clients. And personally too, you start to see possibilities instead of problems. Our people practice in their careers and personal lives what they're teaching, which creates a sense of optimism and hope."

the SHSS support system

For the Fall 2001 semester, Focus on Promise will have three interns from the SHSS family therapy program. "We've had students from FSU and FAU too. As a student oriented site, we look forward to the enthusiasm and energy they bring. And as a doctoral student, I'm very sympathetic to their challenges."

Graduates of the SHSS family therapy doctoral program have played an important role in supporting Focus on Promise. The training curriculum was written by **Arlene Brett Gordon, Ph.D.**, whose dissertation researched the application of solution focused approaches to training programs. "I'm thrilled with our curriculum," Sharon insists. "The solution focused social skills curriculum really attends to the children's strengths. Arlene wrote it with **Angelina Wilda** from our organization. It's activity based and fun and developmentally appropriate. The curriculum is

others, how to deal with bullies, all the things kids need to learn."

For older children, master's level counselors offer smaller groups at aftercare sites. These children learn to acquire and apply support from their parents, their peers and the community at large. Participants also explore topics such as grief and loss, conflict resolution and divorce.

The third tier of services offers private sessions with licensed counselors to families and children. These are designed to fit each family's unique challenges, opportunities and possibilities.

"The cornerstone of the program is the solution focused model," Sharon says. "Instead of focusing on problems, we focus on the child's and family's strengths. This opens a space for change, because if you key in on the problem instead, you can get stuck on problem talk. Considering strengths and opportunities helps identify little changes the family can make. Those first changes can lead to further useful changes."

Program expansion

These services are thriving under the guidance of Sharon and her staff, who expect to open three offices by October 2001, in Boynton Beach, West Palm Beach and Belle Glade.

"We expanded from eight to sixteen sites this year, so our budget has doubled. Now we're hiring for positions that start this October, two bachelor's level counselors and two state licensed counselors to work with children and families through a solution focused model. We provide training, so if applicants have only a basic knowledge of the solution

successful because Arlene and Angelina both brought wisdom from their years of working with children to this project." Angelina herself began our doctoral family therapy program this Fall.

Another SHSS graduate has played a crucial part in Focus on Promise's development. "Our program wouldn't even be in existence if not for Children's Services Council and their program specialist, **Cindy Bradley**, who was a family therapy student with Arlene. Cindy describes us as a program of 'prevention intervention' because of our solution focused work and roving practitioner components."

putting the academic into practice

Sharon's dissertation, on program site development for social services, focuses on her own agency's efforts. "My study is tied to this program's expansion, which is exciting because I get to write about what I live. I've poured my heart and soul into the program, so it's wonderful to write about this." Dissertations are challenging and rigorous journeys to begin with, but studying her own program adds another level of challenge. "It'll be interesting to keep my roles of program supervisor and action researcher clear and distinct."

The methodology she's chosen fits with Sharon's convictions about how social service programs can be most effective. "Action research is democratic and empowering. You're not doing research on people, but by, for, and with people. For me, action research is a marriage of theory and practice, a chance to jump into a situation, work with the

focused model, they'll receive what they need."

stakeholders, and come up with solutions together."

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Systemic Strategies for a Successful Summit

Every six years, Broward County officials review their charter. This South Florida county has been one of the fastest growing in the country for several consecutive years, facing new challenges as its demographics and needs change. This year, the Broward County Charter Review Commission decided to open their review process to the public for citizen input.

Dan Lewis, the commission's chair, asked NSU for support. Because Broward is home to NSU's main campus, the February 2001 Millennium Summit Conference was held at Nova Southeastern University. Thanks to Fred Lippmann, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost at the Health Professions Division and a member of Broward's first-ever Charter Review Commission, meetings took place at the HPD auditorium.

Fred Lippmann recommended SHSS family therapy professor Chris Burnett, Psy.D., to the commission because of his successful consulting work with educational and private enterprise organizations. Chris then helped to facilitate this gathering of government officials and concerned citizens who sought to define, anticipate and meet Broward County's challenges for the next decade.

Chris led the planning committee that designed the summit's format. "We looked at other models of town meetings and such," Chris says, "to design a situation where the same people wouldn't just say the same old things to the same audience. We sought instead to create a level playing field that citizens and their representatives could share for a day and a half."

First, the committee had to decide who to invite to the summit. The auditorium held only 250 people, while there were over 2000 names on the

The conference facilitators designed a system of ten groups that ensured each topic would be discussed three separate times by three different groups. At the end of the first day's session, the team of facilitators held their own mini-summit to further distill the collected data. A list emerged of the top six challenges that Broward County faced regarding each of the topics. This totaled ten primary topics with six challenges each at the end of the summit's first day.

"The second day, we brought all the participants back together for a networking lunch. Another of our goals had been to increase communication and familiarity among various county constituencies, so we designed a small game for the participants. This required them to get signatures of a dozen different specified county officials, representatives and community activists, which increased communication between participants. We saw typically fractious groups cooperate with each other in the process."

The small groups then reconvened in the large room and used a newly developed software program, called Con-Census, for guiding the voting on challenge priorities. "We posed the various challenges for each topic area. Participants voted item by item on which choice was the greater challenge facing the county until all six of the identified challenges for each topic were rank ordered in terms of importance." Finally, participants rank ordered the ten central challenges by importance as well.

Chris led the facilitation team, so he didn't vote. "It would have compromised my neutrality if I'd voted. Just as in a family therapy session, if I had a rooting interest, I'd have been sunk as a facilitator."

A background in family therapy supported other successful strategies as well. "Applying systems thinking to larger contexts can have the same dramatic effects we see in family systems. Unanticipated changes in perception and context can lead to dramatic changes in behaviors in social structures such as municipal government, county government, public-private partnerships,

original mailing list. So the group sent a questionnaire to all potential participants. The questionnaire asked respondents to name the most important issues Broward was likely to face in the coming decade. This prevented the creation of a pre-imposed agenda, initiating instead a democratic process for program design.

"We narrowed the final pool of participants by telling everyone that only respondents to the initial questionnaire could become conference members. We received over 120 responses - none from politicians. The politicians who wanted to attend were added later in the process."

The facilitation group gathered the initial set of responses. Chris tabulated these through a qualitative analysis, from which ten general topics of discussion emerged.

The next challenge organizers faced was to utilize participants' responses while maintaining balanced discussions. Chris says, "We were concerned that people with vested interests in particular topics might dominate certain discussions, so we created a system to assign participants randomly, blindly, to the small group discussions on the first day. To soothe the people who were upset or felt left out, on the second day everyone had an opportunity to cast a vote on the relative importance of every topic discussed."

All areas of the county were represented, as were different special interest groups. However, no more than one representative of the charter review commission took part in each group. As Chris explains, "We looked to create a balance among competing interests as best we could."

"The facilitation team had to create a system designed to minimize the impact of any one person in the process. My job through the small group sessions was to monitor those groups, then offer advice to the facilitation team on ways to keep the process balanced. It was great fun but very intense."

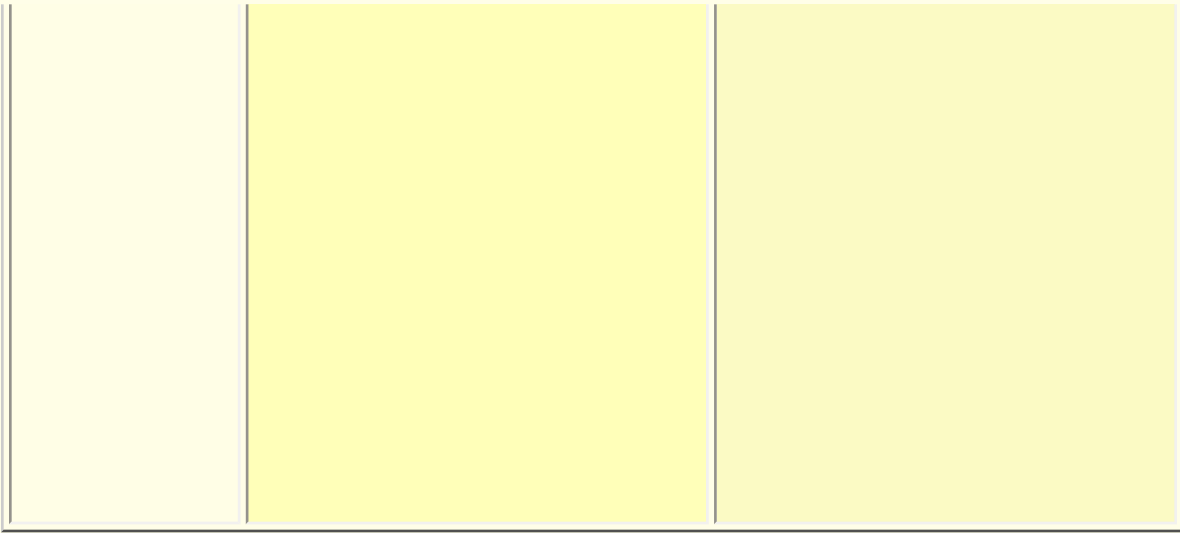
and education."

The facilitation team could not have accomplished their task without a great deal of support and assistance. The summit weekend was entirely volunteer, including students from SHSS, and the facilities were contributed for free.

"We had great help from Lisa Aronson of the county charter commission," Chris explains. "Everyone was impressed by the facilities at HPD, which have been used for other charter commission meetings since then. This also identified NSU as a place where county government can turn for help with things such as facilitation, conflict management and applications of systems thinking to complex problems. These are central practice abilities for the faculty and students of SHSS."

Chris envisions further possible government facilitation projects. "We hope that through the Civility Project, our services at NSU can be utilized by municipal and community activist groups who want facilitation, mediation and planning activities. We have the facilities here at Alumni Hall on the East Campus. I want to see where else applied systems thinking can have an effect. I'm on a great experiment to find out where family systems thinking doesn't apply. And I haven't found that place yet."

The charter review commission now has a documented basis for pursuing their mission to redefine county government to best meet the needs of Broward County citizens. And what was the number one concern reported? The group voted education as Broward's most important challenge.



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COMMUNITY PEACE DIALOGUES: a response to 9/11/01

On the afternoon of September 17, 2001, SHSS hosted a unique event in Alumni Hall on the East Campus. Called Community Peace Dialogues, this forum attempted not only to address the consequences and implications of the September 11th tragedy but also to establish a blueprint for future community partnerships and cooperative efforts.

Community, civic, religious, educational, and law enforcement leaders were invited to attend this peace building forum to elicit observations and productive suggestions to help South Floridians deal with new challenges in a positive and reflective way.

Through panel and small group discussions, participants explored issues such as preventing violence through knowledge, understanding, and peaceful solutions; strengthening community bonds; and appreciating diversity. Faculty members who specialize in the areas of conflict analysis and resolution, family therapy, and peace studies facilitated the discussions.

SHSS faculty members Chris Burnett and Judith McKay designed and co-facilitated the program, organizing the format and discussion topics. Together, they then facilitated a larger group

Afterward, Chris observed, "Every one spoke sincerely, and respectfully, about the magnitude and impact of the events of September 11. I was impressed with the powerful sense of everyone reaching out and creating a larger community amongst ourselves. It helped reaffirm the need we all had to feel like we were part of something larger than ourselves. On the verge of what felt like impending war and overwhelming grief, people who all held overriding interests in peace and healing were finding each other, and reaffirming the goodness and necessity of that kind of thinking, and the need to turn that kind of thinking into tangible action."

Several other faculty members contributed to the proceedings. Shelley Greene, who participated in the storytelling/narrative group with Jessica Senehi and Michele Rice, mentioned that "some of us were moved to tears by the stories of everyday people struggling to integrate the unimaginable into their world. My sense was that everyone walked away with a sense of community, simply from sharing the space of an hour and a small room to talk about our grief, our loss, and our commitment to moving forward."

Anne Rambo also shared suggestions about helping children through these challenging events, including: turning off the television so children aren't overwhelmed by countless repetitions of tragic images; choosing words carefully to keep

discussion at the event's closing to brainstorm the next steps to take in the process. Once the proceedings began, however, faculty, staff, students and community members acted as equal partners in creating discussions and strategies that would help all involved to cope with what had changed suddenly in our lives and what was likely to come

from inspiring misleading generalizations about whole groups of people; recognizing that children at different ages have different needs from those of the adults around them; and returning to family routines as soon as possible to replace the effects of shock and stress with the reassurances and rhythms of the familiar.

The event's result was a sense that we can cope - as individuals, a society, and a planetary community - with the challenges we face. Those gathered at Community Peace Dialogues were able to not only share information but also to help initiate work toward a potentially safer future.

Further useful information can be found on the NSU website dedicated to the 9/11/01 tragedies at www.nova.edu/cwis/ia/pubaffairs/special-info/index.htm.

Of particular interest is Anne Rambo's article, "Talking to Your Children About Sudden Tragedy", which is available at www.nova.edu/cwis/ia/pubaffairs/special-info/Talking-to-Children.html.

Another useful source of advice is a brochure on Bereavement and Loss written by Family Therapy assistant professor Margo Weiss at www.aamft.org/Clinical_Updates/Bereavement.htm.

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Studying the Real Haiti

An NSU doctoral student currently working on her dissertation, **Karen Jenkins** is no ivory tower academic. Her studies in Conflict Resolution, at the School for Humanities and Social Sciences, have inspired her to investigate international applications of conflict resolution skills and theories. Her research has led her to on-site projects in Northern Ireland and Haiti.

Karen's current research focuses on non-governmental organizations (NGO's). NGO's provide services and development activities to a community or country, but they are not government agencies. These organizations, originally formed to provide relief supplies, evolved into handling human rights and environmental and developmental issues as well, providing services that governments may not be able to offer.

When Karen learned that the University of Massachusetts at Boston offered a program called *Haiti Today* through their Haitian Studies Program, she enrolled in the group with fellow doctoral students **Nadine Hankerson** and **Margaret Armand**, who is from Haiti.

learning through immersion

Karen was glad to first visit the country in a study group. "It's the

Weekends were given to field trips. "We covered a good portion of the country, from Port au Prince to Cap Haitien to Jacmel. Haiti was a double-edged experience, both a very beautiful and very devastated place. Pristine white sand beaches, and in the countryside and cities the devastation was incredible. In the mountains, people lived in straw houses, or even just under canopies."

As Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, struggles with its transition toward democracy, it needs ample help with conflict resolution and development. "As elections geared up, old conflicts have also geared up again," Karen notes. "Haiti's only had three democratic elections for president, so there's lots of political tension right now."

successes from challenges

The troubles of Haitian life and the strength of its citizens were both in abundant evidence. "In Port au Prince, I saw the rubble of unfinished buildings. A very expensive house right next to a shanty. No infrastructure. Streets looked like they hadn't been paved for at least a couple of decades, so drivers took the route of least potholes. The only stoplight I saw in the city wasn't working. Traffic there is organized chaos, everyone going in every direction all the time. But I never saw an accident the whole time I was there. So it works. Everyone cooperates."

best way to go to a new country. There were people to talk with about the politics and culture at a depth and detail than a tourist would likely never discover. Others in the group specialized in art, music, and other subjects I wouldn't have been able to learn as well without their insights."

"We were immersed in Haiti for 3 weeks. Our group looked at the political situation there, the history and social systems, as well as cultural concerns like music and literature. We had readings, plus a lecture from a staff member in the morning, and a guest lecturer in the afternoon. And we stayed in a very rural area, rather than in a nice hotel or nice dorm. It was rough and real."

The city was a giant flea market. Everywhere, someone was trying to sell food or other goods. "Sadly, most of them were selling the same things, and competing with each other for the lowest prices, so the market competition didn't really work in the seller's favor."

Life in Haiti is harsh, yet also inspirational. "You have to be strong to survive. But I didn't run into anyone who was unpleasant. The children were always trying to teach us Creole and even they were incredibly patient with us while we tried to learn."

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Re: 9/11/01: Speaking and Listening in Extreme Times

On Thursday, September 13, two days after the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., members of SHSS gathered to discuss the impact this tragedy has had on ourselves, our loved ones, our nation and the world.

Colleagues from our administration, faculty, staff and student body shared their feelings and thoughts on any aspect of the crisis they felt inspired to express. Opinions ranged from tolerance to anger, from personal feelings to geopolitical observations, reflecting our multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural makeup.

We heard from colleagues who have lived in societies where terrorism has been a daily presence - and who were the most emphatic among us in recommending we take the least reactive stance, recommending the widest historical view of events instead. Others spoke as concerned parents. The voices we heard included those for whom war has never seemed so personal before, as well as those who could remember the traumas of the Vietnam War.

Sorrow, shock, anger, indignation, and historical insight all informed the conversation. Our discussion elicited the voices of real people, not academic pronouncements from an ivory tower. Not everyone agreed with each other, and not everyone felt comfortable with the reactions they aroused in others.

"What made the event memorable for me," said Richard Toumey, "was that we were not all in agreement about everything. We weren't a one-dimensional culture. That gave me a depth of perspective I could draw on for further insight. The many individual opinions informed my own reactions to such a horrible tragedy. Most encouraging for me was the sense that we were people who could lean on each other for honest support in very hard times."

The SHSS community successfully represented a diversity of perspectives at this gathering. No one left the discussion with renewed faith in simplistic solutions, or the conviction that any individual had all the answers. When we grapple with our individual viewpoints on crucial matters, it can be deeply rewarding to recognize the value of vital insights from diverse perspectives. In this, we demonstrated the common strengths of the fields of family therapy and conflict resolution, and how timely our work is for today's world.

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Re: 9/11/01: A special statement from Dean Yang

How can our school go on in a climate of national emergency?

The current crisis has tremendous social complexities both in this country and overseas. I urge us all to challenge ourselves to prevent close-minded dogmatism and utilitarian pragmatism from narrowing the scope of inquiry in our learning communities. A true leader has the confidence to stand alone, and has the courage to change as time changes.

I ask that we all look around at SHSS, at our distinguished faculty, dedicated staff, open-minded learners, skillful practitioners, and enthusiastic supporters.

We must stand together and do our utmost to provide mutual support and caring assistance during this extraordinarily difficult period of time.

SHSS is not only a learning community but also a healing community. We have students and graduates throughout the country and overseas. It will be helpful if we take a role in providing needed support and professional assistance for our communities.

We have also started to strategize how to help wage a non-violent, peace building movement that is grass-rooted and global-connected.

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