Juniors Study Human Behavior and the Social Environment with Sister Shirley Fineran

Standing above from left: Sister Shirley Fineran, Jan Britton, Taije DeRocher, LaDonna Wright, Jade Meier, Minerva Valenzuela, Alejandra Olais, Nitausha Williams, and Hollie Schroeder. Seated from left: Corey Schink, Monica Mondragon, and Amy Meyer (Brittany Parker missing - Junior Chris Denny has completed SWRK 320.)

Juniors bring fresh perspectives to Briar Cliff this year, with most of the students having transferred to BCU from other universities and colleges.

Jan Britton is the mother of a 24 year old son and a married 21 year old daughter. She’s been married to husband Mike, who loves motorcycles, for 24 years. With an Umbrella Cockatoo, two rescued cats, and two Mastiffs, their house is full. Jan hoes to work with children with behavioral problems.

Chris Denny adopted his ten year old daughter and is guardian of his 17 year old granddaughter. Chris enjoyed doing bead work and Northern Traditional dance. Studying child welfare Chris is also interested in alcohol recovery. He is a member of the Santee Sioux Tribe, Mdewakanton Dakota.

Jade Meier is a non-enrolled member of the Santee Sioux Tribe, studying child welfare. Her parents are both graduates of Briar Cliff and her sister, Whitney, is attending now.

Amy Meyer, transferred to BCU from Western Iowa Tech and combines parenting with attending Briar Cliff. With two daughters and three step children, Amy is busy.

Social justice is Monica Mondragon’s passion. She believes that family is the most valuable aspect of her life, providing her with support, love, and motivation. She works at First Premier Bancard and enjoys tennis, dancing, swimming, and friends.

Alejandra Olais is from Orange City, Iowa, and is the oldest of three children and is the first one to go to college. First interested in nursing, Alejandra has found her niche in social work and thinks she wants to work with children.

Brittany Parker is a member of the Omaha Tribe, where she works as a protective services worker. Brittany is studying child welfare. Brit is the mother of four children - Christi, Jalen, Ethan and Katie.

Corey Schink transferred from Western Iowa Technical College and is already busy as an officer in the Social Work Club. Besides playing music and working with metals, Corey is interested in stress management.

Hollie Schroeder is interested in drug and alcohol rehabilitation or adoption services. She is the youngest of five children, having three brothers and one sister in Coon Rapids, Iowa. She has worked at Hy-Vee for five years and enjoys her friends, iPad, and golfing.

Nitausha Williams is a Yankton Sioux Native American born and raised on the Yankton Sioux reservation. She and her husband have two daughters and a Shih Tzu named Pnut. Nitausha is employed at the Indian Health Services in Winnebago. Nitausha describes herself as a “Gardner for God,” working especially with adolescent girls. Nitausha is studying child welfare.

LaDonna Wright is a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe who currently works for the Ponca Tribe. She is the foster parent of a young relative and is studying child welfare.
Siouxland Indian Child Welfare Traineeship Project (SICWTP) Receives Additional Funding

Briar Cliff University’s social work department has received a $45,000 grant to supplement its Siouxland Indian Child Welfare Traineeship Project (SICWTP) program goals.

Awarded by the U.S. Children’s Bureau, in collaboration with the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute, Briar Cliff is one of five university programs to receive the federal funding.

Heather Craig-Oldsen, chair of the social work department, states, “These funds were awarded because of the unique focus of our stipend program. Only four other universities in the United States are systematically working with Native American undergraduate social work students to develop their leadership skills in child welfare programs. Ours is the only program to work exclusively with undergraduate students.”

According to Craig-Oldsen, American Indian students are among the most financially challenged students in the national child welfare traineeship program, given home and tribal responsibilities.

“Increases in student financial support will relieve some of the burdens our Native American students face as they study social work and child welfare at the university level,” Craig-Oldsen explains.

Besides adding a sixth stipend scholarship to the Briar Cliff program, funds will also support student attendance at the National Indian Child Welfare Conference in Arizona in April, as well as to the Iowa National Association of Social Workers Annual Symposium in Des Moines.

To increase community understanding, the social work department will use some of the funding to bring Native American scholars and social work practitioners to Siouxland.

Briar Cliff University’s Siouxland Indian Child Welfare Traineeship Project (SICWTP) co-sponsored The Great Hurt, a performance of the Indian Boarding School experience, October 10 at the Orpheum Theater in Sioux City.

The Great Hurt is a readers’ theater dramatic presentation of historical materials from the Indian Boarding School era from multiple perspectives. Presented by people from a variety of backgrounds, including BCU students and alumni, the performers read brief descriptions of boarding school life set in different time periods.

One of the 2011 social work graduates, Gwen Vargas-Porter, first saw The Great Hurt at the 2011 National Indian Child Welfare Association Conference in Anchorage, Alaska. The performance sheds light on the continuing effects the boarding schools still have today on the Native American school dropout rate, the loss of native languages, high rates of unemployment and substance abuse among native peoples.

The presentation was produced by artist and historian Carl Gawboy, a former teacher of Indian studies at College of St. Scholastica and the University of Minnesota. Gawboy is a member of the Bois Forte Band Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

In addition to Briar Cliff University, other local sponsors of the public performance included Humanities Iowa and the National Endowment for the Humanities, Mercy Child Advocacy Center and the University of Iowa Social Work Program.
Busy SWRK Students and Alumni

BCU alumna, Tonya Meier BSW ‘94, opened her own counseling office in Sioux City in September. Counseling and Support houses several MSW counselors. Tonya and BCU graduate, Will, are parents of junior, Jade Meier. Pictured below Chelli Flood Jones ’02 with Tonya at her open house.

Below: Briar Cliff’s Mental Health and Mental Illness class made a trip to the IDHS Mental Health Institute in Cherokee on October 13. A visit to the MHI museum of mental health treatment since 1902 was a special part of the visit. Students toured and learned about the Civil Commitment Sexual Offender Unit in a section of the unit. Lunch was at Spring Lake, where the following students are pictured, from left to right: Cecilia Woods, Charlotte Schumacher, Katie Boekholt, Chantelle Worcester, Charlee Jorgenson, Jan Britton, Jade Meier, Amber Martin, Juana Medina-Navarro, Benn Peterson, Kashe Manley, Morgan Davis, Kindra Sanchez, and Jenny Henscheid.

Seniors Prepare for Field Work

Seniors are busy preparing for second semester field work and completing their community organization course.


Social Work Club Decorates Pumpkins and Feeds Children

The Social Work Club celebrated the Halloween season decorating and selling pumpkins. Proceeds will help provide medicine to poor families in Juarez, Mexico. Club members also filled weekend backpacks with food for the Food Bank.

Right top: SWRK Club members and families at the Food Bank on October 19.

Below: Jenny Henscheid, multitasks with her iPad and a decorated pumpkin.
Advising Begins November 7

Advising for J-Term and spring semester 2012 begins Monday, November 7. Please check the schedule carefully and then sign up for an appointment on the list posted on your advisor's door. Complete a draft schedule using ideas from the social work student handbook, catalog, and this newsletter. Plan your schedule carefully and make sure you schedule all your required courses.

Sign up with your advisor and arrive prepared. Following are advisees for Sister Shirley Fineran and for Heather Craig-Oldsen:

Sister Shirley Fineran’s Advisees: Katie Boeckholt, Maddie Borer, Charlee Jorgensen, Lizzie Krog, Kashe Manley, Abigail Buckhouse, Britney Copple, Deena Baker, Maria Cancino, Priscila Diaz, Jennifer Hofer, Asia Lahn, Amy Meyer, Audra Mills, Monica Mondragon, Jamie Rusch, Hollie Schroeder, Charlotte Schumacher, Corey Schink

Heather Craig-Oldsen’s Advisees: Jan Britton, Morgan Davis, Chris Denny, Jenny Henscheid, Jade Meier, Brittany Parker, Amber Martin, Juana Medina-Navarro, Benn Peterson, Kindra Sanchez, Nitausha Williams, Cecilia Woods, Chantelle Worcester, LaDonna Wright

Consider traveling south during J-Term! Help build a house with and for a poor family – plus MUCH more! Past students have described this course as life changing.

Ideas for Course Registration

First Year Students: Spring semester is a great time to take SWRK 130 Introduction to Social Work, offered T/Th at 1:00 – 2:15 by Sister Shirley Fineran. This is a good course for non-majors too, so tell your friends. BIOL 102 is offered for non-biology majors at 10:00 MWF. Complete other required general education requirements. PSYC 110 Introduction to Psychology is offered at 8:00 or 10:00 MWF.

Sophomores: Check your Student Handbook for required courses you might need. PSYC 280 Developmental Psychology is offered at 9:30 T/Th, as well as from 6:00 – 8:45 Wednesday evenings. SOCY 240 Race, Gender, Ethnic Inequality is offered at 9:00 am MWF. Complete theology, ethics and PSCI 101 or HIST 232 requirements.

Juniors: Juniors will have Heather Craig-Oldsen for two required social work courses every MWF. SWRK 360 Social Issues and Policy is scheduled at 9:00 with SWRK 370 Practice I scheduled for 10:00. The required SWRK 370L Practice I Lab is scheduled from 10:00 – 11:50 on Tuesdays. SOCY 341 Statistical Analysis will be offered at 11:00 MWF. Consider taking the elective SWRK 350 Corrections at 12:30 – 1:45 on T/Th, which will be taught by Sylvia Kuennen.

Seniors: There are two sections of the required Field Seminar. Choose from SWRK 444-01 on Tuesday or SWRK 444-02 on Wednesday, both meeting from 8:00 – 9:50 and taught by Sister Shirley Fineran. SWRK 380 Practice III will be taught by Sister Shirley Fineran on Fridays from 9:00 – 11:50. The two-credit SWRK 390 Grant Writing, taught by Heather Craig-Oldsen on Fridays from 1:00 – 2:50, is best for seniors who have field placements, but is open to non-majors and junior social work majors. If you have not yet completed the required LIBA 410 course, register for one of the J-Term options (online, Italy, or the social work department’s Guatemala course).

J-Term ideas for all students: Consider SOCY 124 Principles of Sociology 12:00 – 2:50 MTWThF, which is required of all social work majors. The one-hour SWRK 35 IS Attitudes Toward Disabilities will be taught by Sylvia Kuennen from 12:30 – 2:00 MWF. This course includes agency visits and guest speakers.

Heather Craig-Oldsen will teach the Guatemala service learning course with Dr. Carlos Vargas-Salgado. The course may be taken for LIBA 410, SWRK 275, or SPAN 450 credit. Travel will be January 8 – 21, with research completed on campus between January 3 – 6 prior to departure.