ANNOUNCEMENTS

World Autism Awareness Day: Please wear blue on April 2nd to raise awareness for Autism
Contact: www.autismspeaks.org

Women’s Hope Medical Clinic Walk The Walk: Women’s Hope Medical Clinic on April 11th at 9:00 a.m.
Contact: Jessica Vickery at jessica@womenshope.org

BraveHearts Final Performance: Opelika Sportsplex on April 13th from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Contact: Dr. Danilea Werner at dww0004@auburn.edu or Angie Burque at aburqua@auburn.edu

Phil Alpha Induction: Bio-Ethics Building at Tuskegee University on April 14th at 6:00 p.m.
Contact: Delaine Gibson at dzm0013@auburn.edu

Taste of East Alabama: The Marriott at Grand National on April 16th from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Domestic Violence Intervention Center at dvic2@yahoo.com or (334) 749-9284 or Dr. Danilea Werner at dww0004@auburn.edu

Sexual Assault Awareness Month Musical Festival: The green space at Auburn University on April 17th from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Hallie Feldman at hfb0006@auburn.edu or Belle Brooks at bbb0001@auburn.edu

NASW Alabama | American Red Cross: Disaster Mental Health Volunteer Training: American Red Cross Building on April 18th from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Contact: Dr. Danilea Werner at dww0004@auburn.edu or www.naswde.org

Walk For Autism: Auburn High School on April 25th from 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Contact: www.walkforautismal.org

STRENGTHS

Striving for Sustainability

Students should create ideas that will continue to benefit their field placements

By: Rachel Morrell

In the fall of 2014, social work student Rachel McLain completed a 90-hour practicum at the Boys and Girls Club of the Greater Lee County Area. As each week passed, she noticed the need for assistance and new materials for the Club and made small notes as she observed the day-to-day activities.

Within the last month of her placement approached, McLain made a connection between her spiritual and work life. Church of the Highlands, located on East Samford Avenue, has a local group of youth attendees that participate in community outreach on the first Saturday of each month. Groups of 5 to 10 individuals meet at 8:00 a.m. and spend their day working at various sites within the Auburn-Opelika area.

After the connection was made, McLain quickly moved to introduce the two organizations and set up a date for volunteers to come and work on the “Teen Room” at the club. When asked about what made her start this process, McLain stated, “the Teen Director, Tabitha Pitts, expressed to me how she wanted the membership numbers to increase because they currently only have 4 teen students consistently, and they are all girls. She implemented Fun Fridays to get more students involved, but also hoped that in remodeling the “Teen Room”, more students would feel invited to join the Club.”

Although her practicum ended before the Saturday could be set, McLain continued to communicate with Boys and Girls Club and Church of the Highlands well after her time was done. McLain said, “I felt like if I started something, I should be involved in the process of finishing it. I wanted to make sure that both parties knew that I was there and was going to be a continuous part of the process. It was so important to me that the teens got their new space.”

After repainting the entire room and cleaning it from top to bottom, it was ready for Monday. Students would come for their regular after-school program to find a stunning new home. McLain received more information about the planning of the room after it was completed. “I found out that the teens were an integral part of designing the room and they are hoping to put a chalk wall up next. I know they are going to be so excited to see how much progress has already been made.” In addition to the new “Teen Room”, the “Reading Corner” received a new bookshelf and tidying up that will be sure to entice younger participants into starting a new book.

This is a perfect example of a sustainable idea that will continue to benefit the community well after a student has gone. In finality, McLain stated, “I really encourage practicum students to refuse to set limits for themselves. Go into it with an open mind, think about who you’re trying to help, and go all in.”

After all was said and done, McLain left a footprint that meant something – a task that is often hard to do. But once the idea has bloomed, with some sunshine and a helping hand, it can continue to spread and share it’s beauty with the world.
Prefering for your First Social Work Job Interview

Prefering for your first internship or job opportunity can be anxiety producing. Below is a list to help you prepare before and during your interview. This list is not exhaustive. There may be other helpful tips not included, but hopefully these below will help ease some of your anxiety.

By: Dr. Hilary Joyce

Before the Interview...

- Do your homework by researching the agency/organization’s mission, goals, services provided, population served, etc.
- Dress professionally.
- Seek out advice/suggestions from your social work advisor.
- Role-play with a friend.
- Arrive on time by making sure you know how to get to the agency, anticipating traffic delays, and setting two alarms if needed.

During the Interview...

- Make sure your body language is open, engaged, and relaxed. Sit up straight, lean forward.
- Make eye contact. If more than one person is conducting the interview, make eye contact with each person as you answer the questions.
- Be confident in your answers.
- Don’t hesitate to take time to answer a question or ask for a question to be clarified. While you think, say, “That’s a really good question. Let me think about that.” Obviously, you should not spend too much time thinking, but it’s okay to pause. It demonstrates that you are thoughtful and really considering the question.
- Use examples when appropriate. For example, if asked about how you handle pressure, offer an example of a time you successfully juggled multiple priorities.

At the end of the Interview...

- Thank the interviewers for their time.
- Send a follow up email thanking the person or people for their time. Tell them you enjoyed learning more about their organization/agency.

Questions to prepare for...

- Why are you interested in working for this organization/agency?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Tell me how you handled a difficult situation.
- How did you decide to become a social work major?
- Why are you interested in this area of social work?
- How do you handle conflict/confrontation?
- How do you handle pressure?
- What questions do you have for me?
- Have a couple questions for the interviewers. This demonstrates interest in the organization/agency.

Thank you to Dr. Hilary Joyce for her contribution to “Strengths,” and constant support of students and their pursuit of knowledge

---

Inquiring Minds Want To Know...

What’s your favorite place you’ve ever traveled to?

I am currently in my senior internship at East Alabama Mental Health Center - Family and Children Services in Opelika, Alabama in the Prevention Department. My field instructor is Celeste Bradshaw, who is the director of prevention services for the department. Prevention is a grant funded organization housed under the mental health center that helps to educate middle school through high school age students about the effects and consequences of using and abusing drugs and/or alcohol. Our organization goes into the local schools and uses an evidence-based curriculum to educate the students.

Throughout my social work education I believed that I wanted to continue my career by doing micro and mezzo level social work. However, this internship has shown me the importance of macro level social work in an agency setting. You don’t realize how much community norms and policies affect individuals or groups. The best advice I can give to any current student is to keep your options and minds open when choosing your internship and career.

“Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”—Joshua J. Marine

---

Intern Spotlight: Kara Duke

Dr. Carole Zugazaga: Spain
Dr. Danilea Werner: Cayman Islands
Dr. Hilary Joyce: London, England

I am currently in my senior internship at East Alabama Mental Health Center - Family and Children Services in Opelika, Alabama in the Prevention Department. My field instructor is Celeste Bradshaw, who is the director of prevention services for the department. Prevention is a grant funded organization housed under the mental health center that helps to educate middle school through high school age students about the effects and consequences of using and abusing drugs and/or alcohol. Our organization goes into the local schools and uses an evidence-based curriculum to educate the students.

Throughout my social work education I believed that I wanted to continue my career by doing micro and mezzo level social work. However, this internship has shown me the importance of macro level social work in an agency setting. You don’t realize how much community norms and policies affect individuals or groups. The best advice I can give to any current student is to keep your options and minds open when choosing your internship and career.

“Challenges are what make life interesting and overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.”—Joshua J. Marine

---

Update: Kara will be moving away from Auburn with her fiancé after graduation and hopes to explore employment opportunities wherever they land! She will pursue her Masters of Social Work after one year of fieldwork.
Journeying Through Grief and Joy

A personal experience at Camp Good Grief

By: Morgan Knight

On March 14, 2015 I attended the 11th annual Camp Good Grief. As this was my first year helping with the camp, which aims to help children 5-18 cope with the grief of a significant loss in their family, I was really pumped up. However, as the days passed and camp came closer, I became increasingly overwhelmed. I didn’t think that I was prepared and that I wouldn’t know what to say or do. I was consumed with nerves the night before the camp while we completed our final orientation at the Opelika Sportsplex. The leader of my group asked if I wanted to lead an activity within our group the next day. My first reaction: “No way, I’m not ready for that!”

However, the next day as the campers trickled in, I became more comfortable each minute. By the time the afternoon arrived I felt I was ready to lead the group in an activity. When I started asking the kids questions it felt so natural to me. It was emotional and heart warming to communicate with them and know that they trusted me.

Now that the camp is over with, I feel that I have gained more confidence in being a leader and working with people. As a social work major, we all have to work through uncomfortable circumstances, but we can learn something because of our experiences. I would encourage everyone who has the chance to participate in Camp Good Grief to get in touch with Jenny Filush who runs the camp! You won’t regret it, I promise.

Left: Young campers from a previous Camp Good Grief share stories about their losses in small group sessions with other children who have had similar experiences.

For more information about Camp Good Grief, please contact Jenny Filush at jfilush@hospiceadvantage.com or visit www.hospiceangels.org

Art Changing Lives

Art therapy rewards participants living with dementia, as well as student volunteers

By: Quenton Ford

Dementia is a growing public health concern and nowhere escapes its touch; not even Auburn, Alabama. Prior to starting Emily Myers’ Methods III course this semester; dementia was probably the last thing I thought about on a daily basis. However, Ms. Myers introduced me to “Art Changing Lives,” a collaboration between various community organizations that provide art therapy to those who live with dementia. Between participating in the art therapy sessions and conducting a research project for the Methods class, I began to learn about dementia: thousands of elderly individuals in Lee County alone live with dementia, and the effects of this illness reverberate through their friends and loved ones.

That’s probably why I think that “Art Changing Lives” is so special: it provides a unique service to a population that is extremely needful. Not only do I get the satisfaction of meeting some interesting (and very funny) people during the therapy sessions, but also I feel more comfortable working with older individuals now. This program has had its ups and downs, but overall has been a great experience. There is a second session during the summer semester, and I would recommend that anyone who wants to work with older individuals participate.

Photo credit: www.hospiceangels.org

5 Misconceptions About Child Abuse

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month: here are some myth busting facts about children and their abusers

By: Madison Goodwin

1 Myth: Most physical abuse is carried out by men, especially fathers.
Reality: Physically abusive acts towards children are just as likely to be carried out by mothers as fathers.

2 Myth: Abused children hate their parents and want to get away from them.
Reality: Most children who have been abused by their parents still love their parents and want to remain living with them. What the children really want is for the abuse to stop.

3 Myth: Children with disabilities are less likely to become victims of abuse than children without disabilities.
Reality: Children with disabilities are at a significantly increased risk of abuse than those without disabilities. Research shows that they are 3.4 times more likely to be abused than children without disabilities.

4 Myth: Parents who abuse their children do not love their children. These parents want to hurt or get rid of their children.
Reality: Most parents who are abusers really do love their children and feel guilty after abusing them. More often, the problem is that these parents do not know how to raise and discipline children in a non-abusive manner or know how and who to ask for help.

5 Myth: Remove a child from the adults who abuse him or her and the problem is solved for the adults and child.
Reality: It may be necessary to remove a child from his or her parents or usual caregiver in a time of crisis to ensure safety and wellbeing. However, removing a child from their parents can have significant emotional effects. The goal should be to return the child to his or her parents or other family members when their safety can be assured.


The Auburn University Social Work Program mission is to make a positive impact on the social problems within the State of Alabama by training generalist social work personnel who are capable of addressing the problems unique to Alabama’s poor, advocating on behalf of the disenfranchised, including children and families at risk, and dealing with diverse populations, by establishing and maintaining community partnerships, and by developing and implementing research techniques and evaluative strategies designed to address these problems in a collaborative manner.

If you would like to contribute to Strengths, please contact Rachel Morrell at ram0036@auburn.edu

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform students of the happenings around campus and provide articles detailing events the social work department hosts each month. This newsletter is written and edited by current social work students.

Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Social Work

7030 Haley Center
Auburn University, AL 36849-5049
Phone: (334) 844-5049
Fax: (334) 844-2851