Message from Dean Cathryn Potter

Dear School of Social Work alumni and friends,

Hello to all and thank you for your continued readership. I am pleased to highlight a few stories in this issue of E-News.

Campus sexual assault is at the forefront of national discussion. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that 1 in 5 women are targets of sexual assault while they are college students. The School of Social Work recently presented a screening of THE HUNTING GROUND, a discussion-provoking documentary that exposes the issue of rape on college campuses and institutional responses to those assaults. I am pleased to share a follow-up interview with Amy Zierling, one of the film’s producers, in this month’s issue. Zierling has been interviewed extensively in national media since the release of the film, and we are fortunate to have a special discussion to offer our readers. This documentary calls into question the administrative framework that has failed victims of college sexual assault and we, as social workers on the frontline, can learn much from this outstanding film.

This month I would also like to highlight the research efforts of Dr. Stephen Crystal who received a grant to study and improve medication safety for seniors in residential care. Rutgers will take the lead in this three-year study that will investigate the effectiveness of federal and state initiatives to address overprescribing of antipsychotic medications for dementia patients in nursing homes.

Please enjoy this month’s issue of E-News and continue to reconnect with our school by visiting our alumni web page.

Cathryn Potter, Ph.D.
Dean and Professor
Dr. Michael MacKenzie joins Rutgers School of Social Work

Rutgers School of Social Work is pleased to announce that Michael MacKenzie, Ph.D., has joined the faculty as an associate professor of Social Work. "I am delighted to be joining a public university with such a long record of research deeply rooted in a sense of responsibility to give back to the families of the state of New Jersey. This new state child welfare data partnership will also have the potential to inform foster care policy and practice across the country and globally," says MacKenzie. Learn more here.

Presenting our New Faculty Members

These scholars have graduated from top programs nationwide and bring to Rutgers both exciting research and varied life experience. They are a diverse group, which reflects the unique diversity found in our student body. Learn more.

- Emily Bosk, MSW, Ph.D.
- Marla Blunt-Carter, MSW
- Laura Cuesta, MA, Ph.D.
- Michael MacKenzie, Ph.D.
- Felix Muchomba, MPH, Ph.D.
- Emmy Tiderington, MSW, Ph.D.

Interview with Producer of the Documentary THE HUNTING GROUND

The Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) sponsored a screening of the documentary, THE HUNTING GROUND on March 10 at the Douglass Campus Center. THE HUNTING GROUND is a discussion-provoking documentary that exposes the issue of rape on U.S. college campuses, institutional responses, and the complex toll rape culture has on students and their families. Following the screening, the School of Social Work arranged an interview with Amy Zierling, producer of the documentary, to share her commentary with social work alumni. Read the interview here.

Photo caption: Amy Zierling, left, and Kirby Dick pose for a portrait to promote the film.
Stephen Crystal Receives Grant to Improve Medication Safety in Nursing Homes

Rutgers will take the lead in a three-year study that will investigate the effectiveness of federal and state initiatives to address overprescribing of antipsychotic medications for dementia patients in nursing homes. Stephen Crystal, Board of Governors professor and associate director for Health Services Research at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research, is the principal investigator for the study, “Improving Medication Safety in Nursing Home Dementia Care.” Crystal will work with regulators, patient advocates and other groups to track the progress of medication safety in each state. Learn more here.

A Movement Only Requires a Little Bit of CHANGE

To our social work students, scholarships can mean the difference between staying in school and dropping out, spending more time studying and less time at their part time jobs, and graduating with a reasonable or unreasonable amount of debt. However, far too many of our students do not have access to scholarships. With only 5% of alumni giving back, it’s no surprise that our scholarship funds are running dry. Our students need your help! Now through May 18th, new alumni donors can DOUBLE their gift to support student scholarships, thanks to a generous matching gift from Professor Kathleen J. Pottick. Learn more and join the movement today at socialwork.rutgers.edu/GIVE.

Rutgers Selected by U.S. Department of State to Host Mandela Washington Fellows

Rutgers is proud to announce that it has been selected as a “Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders” partner for the second year in a row. On June 19, 2015, Rutgers will welcome 25 of Africa’s brightest emerging civic leaders for a six-week academic and leadership institute. Learn more here.

SSW Students Attend Clinton Global Initiative University

Seven Rutgers students attended the Clinton Global Initiative University invitation only conference in March, including SSW student Lisa Lawson. The conference brought together university students, thought leaders and celebrities from across the globe to discuss and develop solutions to the world’s most pressing global challenges. Learn more here.
Alum in Focus: Helena D. Lewis

What do you get when you combine a social worker, poet and a playwright? You get Helena D. Lewis, Intensive Weekend and Continuing Education Class of 2014 alum. Lewis received her Bachelors of Biology degree from Rutgers Newark, but was always interested in advocacy work from her time as a sexual health advocate on campus, as well as a family history of HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. Lewis applied to a position as an HIV/AIDS health educator at Integrity, Inc. in Newark. She stayed there from 1995-2001, learning about HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and how to be an effective social worker. Lewis decided that she wanted to earn a Masters of Social Work. From there, she went on to pursue more knowledge, and is now working towards a Certificate in Nonprofit and Public Management from Rutgers SSW Continuing Education program. Learn more about Lewis here.

Good News: SSW Faculty and Staff Bulletin

Edward Alessi was awarded a $6000 International Collaborative Research Grant for tenure-track faculty funded by Rutgers Centers for Global Advancement and International Affairs (GAIA). His study, "Stress, Mental Health, and Resilience among LGBT Forced Migrants in the US and Canada" will be conducted with Sarilee Kahn, assistant professor of social work at McGill University. For more Good News about Faculty and staff, visit here.

Students Give Back

These juniors and seniors worked on creating prize baskets for the Krystal Skinner Ball on Saturday, March 28 in Camden from 5-9 p.m. The Krystal Ball is the culmination and celebration of the life of Krystal Skinner, a Rutgers SSW student, mother and DCP&P intern. She lost her life during a domestic violence dispute. In commemoration of her life and service, the Krystal Ball was held to raise money for SSW scholarships.

For more information and updates, please like the SSW Facebook, follow the SSW on Twitter, or subscribe to the SSW Youtube channel.