

## Field Focus

**Field Work**—The signature pedagogy of social work education. Preparing the next generation of social workers.

- Integrating Theory with Practice
- Empowering Clients
- Promoting Social Justice



**Giesela Grumbach** is the new Director of Field Education



**Social Work**  
**ROOTED IN**  
**SOCIAL JUSTICE**

## Practice Wisdom

### Become culturally curious!

According to Sweitzer and King (2009), it is very likely that you will meet people whose cultural backgrounds are different from your own, based on factors such as race, class, gender and sexual orientation. There is a natural human tendency to react with some suspicion to differences, and for some people their first response is to equate difference with being somehow wrong (Sweitzer & King). Others are tolerant of differences, but assume that their way of doing things is really the best, so their goal becomes getting others to change. Sweitzer and King further assert that others take a “live-and-let-live” approach, appearing to accept diversity but not showing any real interest in it. All of those instances result in lost opportunities for growth. Be willing to interact with others and learn about them to enhance all aspects of your practice. Embrace others with curiosity, become an active learner and look for strengths and assets in their norms and values. Once you do this, you can allow diversity to enrich your experience and make you a better professional and a better global citizen (Sweitzer & King).

Sweitzer, H.F., and King, M. (2009). *The successful internship: Personal, professional and civic development in experiential learning*. (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.

By: Jessica Hudson

## Cornerstone of Experience

I am coordinator of the **school social work concentration**, one of three advanced specializations in our MSW program. This concentration prepares students to become Illinois licensed school social workers. Schools provide a wide array of experiences ranging from micro to macro, such as: *comprehensive assessments; Individual Educational Program (IEP) development; individual and group counseling; family consultation; multidisciplinary teamwork; linkage to community services; and program planning and development*. School social workers play a pivotal role in connecting students, schools, families and communities.

Contact me at [eessex@govst.edu](mailto:eessex@govst.edu) if you would like further information about the concentration. Students often have questions about:

- Testing requirements for admission to the concentration
- Test taking resources
- Concentration curriculum
- Other aspects of the concentration

By: Dr. Elizabeth Essex

## Voices from the Field: (1<sup>st</sup> student)



**Edward Moore** is a BSW Student and Public Relations Officer of the Social Work Student Organization (SWSO) and current intern at Catholic Charities Diocese of Joliet, Division of Aging and Disabilities (Kankakee Office). Ed has had a well-rounded experience in the field and reflects on those experiences. He's learned that "social work services extend beyond classroom and textbook learning." Ed's passion for serving and protecting the elderly is a perfect match to his long-term professional interest in social work.

Because of Ed's positive attitude, strong work ethic and commitment to helping others he has landed a part time position at his field agency. Upon graduation Ed will work full time in their money management program. This program concentrates on meeting the basic needs of seniors by assisting them in organizing and managing their finances. An additional goal of the program is to protect seniors from financial exploitation.

When asked what he has learned from his experience in the money management program Ed stated:

"When people think about social work, especially for the elderly, they envision assisting with their physical or emotional needs or assisting their families ... Rarely [do we] consider how to assist them in maintaining their own home, helping them organize their utility bills which still have to be paid despite their *[diminishing]* physical abilities such as their eyesight *[which makes them unable]* to read those bills when they are unable to do that or write a check for themselves. [W]ho is there to do that? Not everyone has a family member who is at home to assist them with bills or writing checks."

Ed explained that he now realizes how much the money management program connects with the needs of seniors and just how essential the program is to clients. Ed further states, "Money management probably has more realistic application than a lot of the other assistance programs that are offered to seniors." In particular, he notes that the advocacy component of the program underscores the need to work with vulnerable populations around financial stability.

Ed is inspired by his internship: "I like the agency itself, I like the people. I especially like my director in management, I feel that they have given me great opportunities and given me tremendous latitude to explore learning experiences. While there are some necessary boundary lines obviously they allowed me to reach out as far as I can reach out without going over those necessary policy boundaries."

Ed credits his internship with offering a variety of opportunities to expand his view of senior services. He has increased his ability to address the social problems of seniors. His work has enhanced his people skills and expanded his understanding of working with diverse cultures.

Mr. Moore concludes by saying, the social work department (field education) has done a lot for me and I feel that they have been right on the money with my placement. "I couldn't have asked for a better experience, my experience with GSU in general has been wonderful – I couldn't have picked a better University."

Interviewed by: Jessica Hudson

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## Voices from the Field: (2<sup>nd</sup> student)

Brittany Terrell, MSW social work student, says that she has learned so much at Branch Family Institute and really thinks it's a great learning opportunity for any social work or counseling intern. Brittany has learned new therapeutic interventions, how to do process recordings correctly, applying theory, the importance of case management and paperwork, how to handle difficult clients, improving her writing skills (i.e., important court reports) as well as how to advocate for families.

More importantly, Brittany has learned to be more assertive in her professional life. She has also learned the skill of advocating for herself and has learned to express herself. Britany recommends this agency to anyone interested in seriously honing their clinical skills and professionalism.

Interviewed by: Prof. Grumbach

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## A Few New Agencies:

- The Safer Foundation (serving formerly incarcerated individuals)
- Charleston Transition Facility (serving people with developmental disabilities)
- ALSO (serving the community and individuals involved in domestic violence)

**For more information – email the Director of Field**

## Voices from the Field: (3<sup>rd</sup> student)

Julia Luke, BSW social work student, enjoys interacting with the patients at Lexington Healthcare in LaGrange, IL. She has learned to prepare advanced directives, care plans and Minimum Data Set's (MDS's), as well as other types of reports. Julia credits her satisfaction with the hands-on experience she has with clients. She also has the opportunity to apply concepts in the NASW Code of Ethics to her work.

Additionally, Julia has learned how to work on a multidisciplinary team, as well as with department managers. Julia is inspired by her patients' overall improvement. She believes this placement has prepared her for a career as a future social work professional.

### Credits:

**Giesela Grumbach**, ABD, MSW, LCSW  
Director of Field Education

**Jessica Hudson**, BSW Student  
Student Worker

**College of Health & Human Services**  
Social Work Department

## To the 2014 Graduating Class

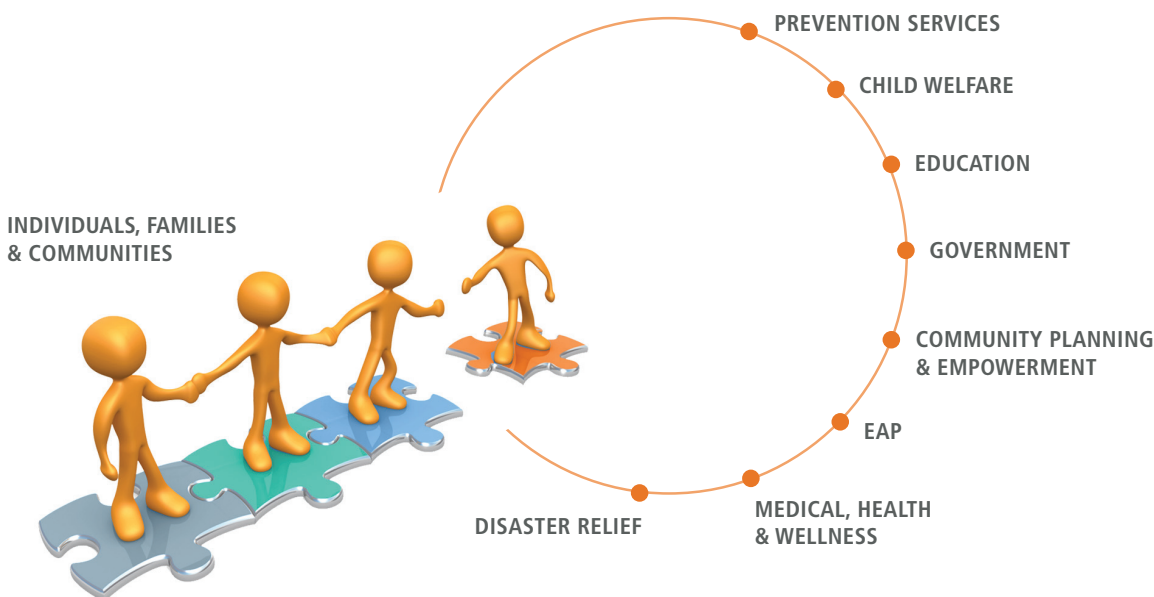
If you see anything in this world, in this nation that needs changing – take it on with a vengeance. Remember, you must get involved. Elie Wiesel (Russian born Jewish political activist and author), stated “Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.” As violence torments urban areas, especially Chicago, I challenge you to think about your response.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. challenged us to be agents of change: “The ultimate measure of a man is **not** where *he stands in moments of comfort and convenience*, but **where he stands at times of challenge and controversy**.” Where will you stand when hegemony is the (mainstream) standard of the day? Where will you stand when politicians vote against programs that help vulnerable people? Where will you stand when these judgments are made without fully understanding the context of people who live in dire economic circumstances?

*“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”*  
-Mahatma Gandhi

**GSU wishes you all the best in your careers as future social work professionals.**

## Social Workers Touch Many Lives



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