

CHADvocates

The Newsletter from the Center for Child Advocacy of
Montclair State University

SPRING 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NJCWTP	1
INTERVIEW DR. MCCORMICK	1
COURSE BY PROF. CURCIO	2
CAPSTONE PROJECT	2
ONLINE PROGRAM	4
CONTACT INFO	4

New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership

The Center for Child Advocacy at Montclair State University under the direction of Dr. Robert McCormick has been awarded a grant in the amount of 1.2 million dollars by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in conjunction with the Division of Youth and Family Child Services (DYFS). The award creates a New Jersey Welfare Training Partnership with Rutgers University, Stockton College, and Kean University. The Center will be providing training for all levels of DYFS workers in Essex, Union, Hudson, Bergen and Passaic Counties. The Project Manager for the Training Partnership, northern region, is Claudine Chiarmonte, MSW of the Center for Child Advocacy. Additional team members includes: Adrienne Millican, Training and Development Coordinator; Training Coordinators Sharon Turley and Barbara Rookey; Gloria Rodriguez, Program Assistant; Matt Jenkins, Program Technical Support, and two graduate students, Mecca Lewis and Miguel Rodriguez. In addition, we have 4 part time trainers responsible for curricula delivery.

Beginning in January 2007, through

the partnering relationships with the other universities/colleges, the NJCWTP offers training courses at locations in the northern, central and southern regions of the state. The NJCWTP features an extensive quality assurance program to facilitate the identification of future training needs, assess trainee satisfaction with course offerings, and provide a feedback loop for continual course improvements.

As of December 2008, Montclair State University Trainers have successfully delivered the first two curriculums; Building Trusting Relationships and Making Visits Matter to more than 1500 NJ DYFS case workers, supervisors and office leadership.

Our trainers have also delivered training on Concurrent Planning to approximately 175 additional workers and Working with and Supporting Families to approximately 100 Assistant Family Service Workers.



The Bond House, home of the Center for Child Advocacy and the New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership



Dr. Robert McCormick
Program Director

Interview with Dr. Robert McCormick, Center Director

What would you like our readers to know about the Center for Child Advocacy, and its mission?

R.: The Center for Child Advocacy was established in 2001; and primarily the mission is to professionalize the field of child advocacy; professionalize positions within the field of child advocacy. So for example, right now we are focusing on

academic programs related to children in the public child welfare system. The Center offers a Post-BA Certificate in Child Advocacy, a Masters degree, and an Undergraduate Certificate and our soon to be offered, Major in Child Advocacy – which I believe is the first in the country. We are expanding our lens and hopefully, we are going to offer more courses and/

or programs in educational advocacy and in other fields related to children. We really believe that there are a lot of people out there working with kids whose heart is in the right place, but may lack the kind of academic rigor that we feel is important in working with children. We hope to provide that to them. (Cont. page 3)

THE INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL OF CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN

Montclair State University's Center for Child Advocacy presents a course for investigators and assistant prosecutors.

The course will teach the current state of the law and best practices for the investigation and trial of crimes against children. It will be presented at an educational facility in the southern region of the state after the academic year has concluded in June of 2009 and will serve 50 investigators and assistant prosecutors of the eight southern prosecutors' offices.

It has been written: "We must end the practice of on-the-job training as the primary source of education for child protection professionals. No child's life should be placed in the hands of someone who is inadequately prepared for the

task." This course is intended to be one small step toward that goal.

There will be cross training of assistant prosecutors and investigators on the most current information and best practices relevant to the investigation and prosecution of crimes against children. The topics will be addressed by experts, experienced educators and professionals currently working in the field.

Registration forms will soon be in the mail. Stay tuned! For more information about this course for investigators and assistant prosecutors, please call or write chief assistant prosecutor (ret.) for Atlantic County Professor Susan Curcio at 973-655-4089 or curcios@mail.montclair.edu.



Professor Susan Curcio

Capstone Project by Susan Esquilin PhD, ABPP

The master's program in Child Advocacy has introduced a new, final experience for students to replace the comprehensive examination: the capstone project. The capstone project gives students the opportunity to develop and assess some type of advocacy effort, utilizing the knowledge and skills they have developed through the program.

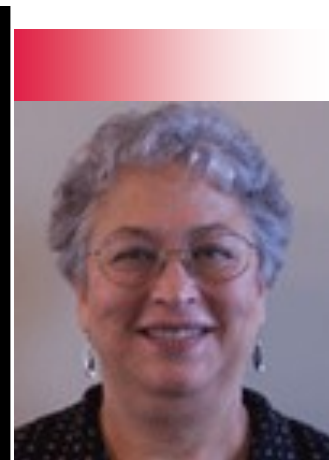
Up until now, our masters' students completed a practicum experience in an agency that is involved in child advocacy. Students worked under the supervision of a member of the agency staff, learning about the activities of the agency and accepting assignments from the supervisor. The capstone project will follow and build upon that practicum experience. In the project, the student will move one step beyond what is already being done in the agency. As a result of discussions with the agency supervisor and other personnel, the student will identify a need

area and develop a project to address this need. The student will then evaluate the impact of the project. The project will be designed so that there is a concrete product that is left with the agency for its use. However, students will be encouraged to share the results of their projects in the scholarly forum of a conference and/or a publication. So, for example, a student this year was placed in an agency that provides assistance to victims of domestic violence and maintains a hotline and a web site with links to resources. After completing her practicum and after discussion with agency supervisors, the student decided to upgrade the web site to include educational information about the dynamics of domestic violence. It is hoped that the improvement in the web site will result in more calls to the hotline. The project will be assessed by monitoring the number of those calls on a monthly basis.

The faculty of the Center for Child

Advocacy is eager to develop agreements with agencies in the community who are interested in having practicum students placed at their sites and who have ideas for projects the students might undertake that would be useful to the agencies.

For further information, contact Dr. Susan Esquilin, at 973-655-7929 or esquilins@mail.montclair.edu.



Professor Susan Esquilin

Interview with Dr. Robert McCormick, Center Director continued

Can you give us a little history about how the Center came to be?

R: We started with a Post BA Certificate in Child Advocacy. We felt that there were needs within the Division of Youth & Family Services (DYFS) to create a certificate that would be helpful for people working within the public child welfare system. We started, I believe, in 1998 gathering curricular modules from professionals working in the field of child advocacy. We spent a summer running focus groups, with DYFS workers, social workers, attorneys, psychologists and others, and out of those meetings, there were many, we developed some modules that we thought would be the foundation for our curriculum. Out of that, we developed the 5 courses that now are the Post BA Certificate in Child Advocacy. As you can see from the people around the table at those meetings, it was multi-disciplinary from the start. We felt that once you were in the system, there was not enough communication across disciplines. So social workers did their jobs very efficiently, attorneys did their jobs, psychologists did their jobs, but somehow we weren't speaking the same language and that is particularly important when

you are shepherding a child through the system or when you are in the court system. So we have tried to bring people together, we have done that with our faculty. Our faculty consist of social workers, psychologists attorneys, and our curriculum reflects what we believe is a really state-of-the-art program in child advocacy.

Besides the academics, the Certificates and the degrees, can you tell us a little bit about other projects and grants that the Center is working on?

R: We are very involved in looking for external funding, as we believe that there is a lot out there that can be done through grants that will help formulate our ideas in a way that is not only more productive, but will form the basis for a more solid curriculum. Presently we have funding for our Post BA Certificate in Child Advocacy, which is now in its 10th year of continuous funding from the Division. We have a Grant with the Hispanic Information Center in Passaic, we have another grant through the Children's Justice Act, and we have of course a very large Grant from the NJ Child Welfare Training Partnership.

We are very excited about this because that is a very broad initiative, and we are very proud of the work that we are doing in that in that area.

So, I understand there is going to be a premier kickoff of the News Letter, can you tell me what you see as the focus of the Newsletter, where do you think its future lies in the way the Center is set up now?

R: I guess the first Issue is sort of a way of letting people know who we are, so we really relied on our professional staff and faculty to write some articles for us. We wanted to let people know that these are professionals - we are very proud of our staff. These are people that are not just academicians, but are out in the field doing. We see child advocacy as very much an applied program that is informed by research, but not captive to it, so that all of us do things that will hopefully, benefit children more directly. We then hope to open it up, to get articles or brief notes from other people in the field, conferences that might want to advertise training, and anything that will be helpful to the people in Child Advocacy.

The Center for Child Advocacy at Montclair State University is proud to announce its Bachelor of Arts in Child Advocacy degree.

The Bachelor of Arts in Child Advocacy will offer students an applied course of study in child advocacy. As an emerging discipline, child advocacy includes part of several disciplines which will prepare students to advocate for children in a multitude of ways. The program offers:

- A multidisciplinary view of the field of child advocacy through course work taught through the lens of psychology, social work and law
- the opportunity for students to pursue bachelor level, entry level positions in public child welfare,

child mental health, educational advocacy, among others

- The requisite knowledge and outlook in child advocacy to help students as they pursue masters and doctoral programs in preparation for other careers as well as the emerging field of child advocacy

The major in Child Advocacy consists of 33 credits. There is a required core of 10 courses, with an additional 3 credit elective course.

Our distinguished faculty and staff, which include attorneys, psychologists, and social workers provide our program with its unique multidisciplinary approach to work as a child advocate. They bring their expertise and research interests in areas such as child abuse and neglect, forensic evaluations of children, criminal law, juvenile justice systems, social service agencies, advocacy protocols and practice into the classroom.

Anyone interested in this program can contact Program Manager Jacqueline Catalano at 973-655-6971 or send her an email at catalanoj@mail.montclair.edu.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Center for Child Advocacy
Bond House
848 Valley Road
Montclair, NJ 07043
Phone: 973-655-3290
Fax: 973-655-4088
Adrienne D Millican, MPA, Editor
millicana@mail.montclair.edu



GOING GREEN

Our next newsletter will be sent out via email. If you are interested in receiving it please email Matthew Jenkins at

jenkinsm@mail.montclair.edu

Please Note that we will only be sending you this newsletter and your email will not be forwarded to others without your permission.

We hope you enjoyed the articles and look forward to hearing from you soon!

Visit us at: <http://chss.montclair.edu/chad/>



A D V O C A C Y , C O M P A S S I O N , E X C E L L E N C E

Center For Child Advocacy Offers University's First Online Program

The Center for Child Advocacy launched its online Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Child Advocacy in September 2008. Valued for its flexibility and convenience, the Certificate is the first 15 credit program offered completely online by Montclair State. The online program is an outgrowth of Program Director Professor Robert McCormick's vision of Child Advocacy as multi-disciplinary. In partnership with the Division of Youth and Family Services, the online certificate now expands this multi-disciplinary program's reach significantly.

Students from all over New Jersey have been able to participate in the program on their own schedule from wherever they have computer access. As one student expressed after completing his coursework ... *"the best part of the CHAD 505 class was taking it on line, I was skeptical at first because I had never taken any online courses, but it was a great experience. After hearing some comments about the people attending [on] campus I'm glad I was accepted to [the] online program ... I definitely liked working at my own pace."*

Integrating the latest web technologies and distributing the course materials through the University's Blackboard Academic Suite, students are able to remotely access Podcasts, Power Point presentations, scholarly research, video presentations, discussion boards, and other communication applications. The inaugural program was designed by Professor Joseph A. Del Russo and Professor Christopher Freid with continuing support from Patricia Kahn, the University's Director of Technology Training and Integration. Professor Kahn's staff has provided critical assistance in making the course a success ... *"at my own pace."*

The online staff includes Professors Del Russo and Freid as well as Professors Susan Cohen Esquilin, Pauline Garcia-Reid, and Susan Curcio. Patricia Devine Harms, a recent graduate of the Master's Program in Child Advocacy provides technological and substantive support for both faculty and students. Although the first cohort of students are part of DYFS' continuing education initiatives, the program is planned to be offered nationwide in September 2009.

Anyone interested in this program can contact Program Manager Jacqueline Catalano at 973-655-6971 or send her an email at catalanoj@mail.montclair.edu.

The Online Program is an important addition to our course offerings that will significantly increase the accessibility of the program for a large number of potential students.