

CHADvocate

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

Winter 2009

Center for Child Advocacy — Annual National Conference

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Child abuse and neglect continues to be a serious problem facing society. The Center for Child Advocacy at Montclair State University is proud to offer a yearly national conference on child abuse and neglect.

Supported by the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS), the Center organizes this yearly conference drawing nationally known speakers and providing a multi-disciplinary forum for discussion, education, and research presentation.

Community organizations and professionals come together to discuss current issues affecting children and strategies both in prevention and protection. Participants include child advocates, child welfare professionals, psychologists, lawyers, social workers, other relevant practitioners and concerned citizens.

Our goal is to increase the understanding of abuse and neglect and empower organizations, professionals and communities to strive for positive change, preventing child abuse and neglect and promoting healthy child development.

Our previous conference themes included:

Families in Crisis: Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse and the Child (April 3, 2009)
Key note speaker: Dr. Evan Stark and Betsey McAlister Groves, MSW, LICSW.

Cultural Competence and Child Maltreatment: Theories and Application (April 11, 2008)
Keynote speakers: Dr. Lisa Aronson Fontes and Dr. Veronica Abney.

Poverty, Class, and Culture: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Child Maltreatment (April 20, 2007)
Keynote speakers: Dorothy Roberts, JD and Cecelia Zalkind, JD.

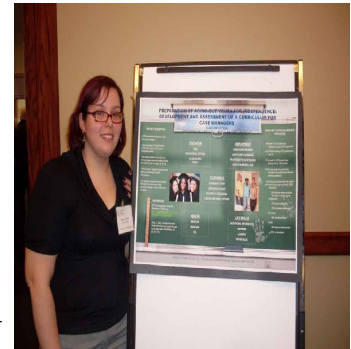
Child Maltreatment and Beyond: New Approaches and Initiatives (April 21, 2006)
Keynote speakers: Dr. David Finkelhor and Victor Vieth, JD .

As we embark on planning our 5th Annual National Conference scheduled for April 16, 2010, we will continue to strive to keep our focus on our most vulnerable citizens, our children and to increase both awareness of issues that affect them and methods to prevent and respond to their needs as a society.

This year's conference topic will be Advocating for Children—Policy and Practice. Abstracts for this year's conference are due on December 10, 2009.

Questions or suggestions about our upcoming conference should be directed to:

Jackie Catalano at 973/655-6971 or catalanoj@mail.montclair.edu



2009 CHAD Conference
Student Presentation

Letter from the Editor:

This semester has gotten off to a fast and busy start for the Center. We moved into our new location, the Legge House in July to accommodate our increase in faculty.

Our faculty grew in order to fill the demand for students in our new undergraduate certificate and bachelor of arts in child advocacy programs; and we saw an increase in enrollment in the Masters of Arts and post-BA program as well.

Our Online Post-BA Certificate enrollment has also increased to 121.

This issue contains articles on recent CHAD conferences, as well as interviews of new faculty and interviews of Post BA students as well as MA students.

Beginning with this issue, the CHADvocate is going green and only being delivered via email. If you have received a copy of this issue, please share with your colleagues. We can be notified via email to add interested parties to our mailing list for future issues care of:

jenkinsm@mail.montclair.edu



The Legge House - The new home of the Center for Child Advocacy and the New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership.

The Investigation and Trial of Crimes Against Children

From August 10th to 14th CHAD conducted a Course for Professionals on the Investigation and Trial of Crimes against Children. The Course was presented on the Campus of Cumberland County College for attorneys and investigative personnel of New Jersey's southern law enforcement community, prosecutor's offices and law guardian Offices.

The program featured lectures by speakers of national and international renown Martin Finkel D.O., FACOP, FAAP of New Jersey CARES, UMDNJ, Stratford Campus, enthralled the participants early in the program with his masterful presentation on the medical issues related to the sexual abuse of children; Chief Assistant Prosecutor Joe Del Russo and Assistant Prosecutor Chris Fried of the Passaic County Prosecutor's guided the participants through routine legal motions in lectures that were dotted with lively and interesting visual characterizations.

MSU Professor Susan Esquilin, Ph.D. fascinated the audience with description of how children experience complex trauma through exposure to domestic violence and child maltreatment, while MSU Professor and Chief Atlantic County Assistant Prosecutor (Ret.), Susan Curcio summarized legal concepts related to child exposure to domestic violence.

Professor Curcio also presented an interesting, layman's view of Hearsay, but on the legal issues it was Chief Assistant Prosecutor Jim McClain and Deputy Chief Darren Dooley of the Atlantic County Prosecutor's office, who stole the show. They delivered informative and humorous presentations on the sentencing and investigation issues of crimes against children. Jim McClain actually brought to life sentencing issues. Imagine that!

Assistant Prosecutor Jessica Oppenheim of Middlesex County presented a much needed

update on Megan's law and Deputy Attorney General Ken Sharpe was intriguing in his discussion of internet crimes against children, including child pornography and the new phenomenon of "sexting".

The last presenter of the week may have been the star of the show. Special Agent Dan Garrabrandt of the Federal Bureau of Investigation woke up his Friday morning audience addressing a topic which has not been traditionally characterized as child maltreatment. He enlightened the participating professionals on the plight of children who are lured, enticed and ultimately coerced into domestic human trafficking; a fascinating analysis.

By all accounts, the course was a resounding success. CHAD hopes to run an encore performance for the central and northern regions of the state at the first opportunity. Stay tuned!

Introduction to Advocacy class enters political forum

Earlier this year, Professor Cathy Brown's Introduction to Child Advocacy class, entered into the political forum by sending some creative and thoughtful mail to President Obama, as well as to New Jersey Senators Mandez and Lautenberg.

An assignment for the course required each student advocate to argue for or against the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ("UNCRC").

As they had learned in class, the United States is one of only two members of the United Nations which has not ratified this treaty. (The other is Somalia, which has no federal government with the requisite ratification ability). Students considered the rights espoused by the Convention, and grasped both sides of the argument regarding ratification. Understanding the American system of government was also part of the educational process, as they discussed which branches of government are involved in the ratification process and the importance of the voters who elect the relevant officials.

Having grasped the theory, students put their knowledge into practice. One group of students made t-shirts, each describing a different article of the Convention which they felt was important. After gathering signatures supporting the convention on the back of each shirt, they mailed them to the President for him to wear during his daily basketball games.

The class included two poets, one of whom read a poem she had written in support of the convention at an Open Mic event. Another wrote a hip-hop poem, which other students in the class are helping him and his son to record on a CD, to be sent to President Obama, and Senators Mendez and Lautenberg. One woman wrote a letter to Senators Mendez and Lautenberg describing the ways in which the difficulties of growing up in Paterson had influenced her support for ratification. Several students with artistic inclinations made flyers, bumper stickers, key-chains or bracelets which they handed out at various public locations. Two made posters which they hung where parents picking up children from day care or gymnastics class could see them.

Going high tech, one student started a Facebook group supporting ratification and another made a PowerPoint presentation to be shown to a church group.

While most students advocated in favor of the Convention, at least two favored ratification with reservations preserving present State or Federal law. We can only hope that our politicians manage the same sort of measured and thoughtful understanding of the Convention that Montclair University's students have shown!



New Center for Child Advocacy Faculty

Janet F. Rosenzweig, PhD joined the CHAD faculty this fall and comes to us from Harvard where she recently completed their mid-career MPA and served as a Fellow. Dr. Rosenzweig teaches Intro to Applied Child Advocacy, Family Empowerment Models in Child Advocacy and an on-line section of Forensic Interviewing of Children. She speaks passionately about Child Advocacy from a holistic point of view, sharing her belief that children's education, health, welfare, safety and protection all share equal importance. Advocates can make a real difference by being expert and caring across many disciplines. At the same time, she is fully aware that issues and interventions are non-consistent among communities. Her career, which started 30 years ago, has taken her to several states and to many positions in the public and non-profit sector. She continues to focus on families and children and to ensure that government does "the right thing", by providing services that can really make a difference in the life of children and families. She feels that the place to start is by engaging communities and bringing research based interventions that match the communities' specific strengths and needs. Professor Rosenzweig recalls being told at orientation at Harvard's Kennedy School that their mission was to 'add value to the student so upon graduation, the student could add value to their communities'. In that light, she sees her mission here at MSU as adding value to the community of child advocates and providing a skills-based foundation for our students as they learn to identify and advocate for policies and services to better support families and children.

Nydia Monagas joined MSU's faculty in September, and teaches undergraduate CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT and Introduction to Child Advocacy; and comes to MSU from St. Peter's University Hospital where she was responsible for psychological evaluations at their Regional Diagnostic Center. Professor Monagas sees several issues facing Child Advocates today. First, system limitations seen as barriers by many parents and clients due to misunderstanding on how the system works, and where to go for help. Many clients of "the system" do not understand and are not privy to or educated in how to maneuver within the system to get the help, or simply don't know what kind of help is needed. Even her own students, on a recent assignment, had difficulty identifying proper channels when needing help with services. Another limitation involves not enough staff or funding to deal with the amount of services needed statewide. In addition Professor Monagas sees ethnical issues facing Child Advocates, who are often torn between what is in the best interest of the child versus actually listening to the "child voice" of what is wanted. Her desire for the field is firmly rooted in providing more education to parents and communities, giving them the power to voice their own needs and to know what their rights are in getting their needs met. With education would come knowledge and with knowledge would come better community based organizations capable of helping clients of all languages and cultures. She feels her time here at MSU will be best served by empowering her students on how to work within the system and therefore being able to empower her students' future families in doing the same. "MSU, having the only such program in the nation, is poised with faculty and staff and national recognition to support changes needed in Child Advocacy today."



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New Faculty: Janet F. Rosenzweig, Ph.D.



New Faculty: Nydia Monagas, Psy.D.

The Center for Child Advocacy can now be found on Facebook

We are pleased to announce that information regarding our Center can now be found on Facebook. We currently have a Facebook page called "The Center for Child Advocacy at Montclair State University, Official Page".

This page contains information about upcoming and past events, our staff and general information about the Child Advocacy degrees offered at Montclair State University. In several different places on the page we make it easy for

individuals to read up on our programs and find links to more detailed information on the Montclair State webpage.

Current and Prospective Students can learn more about the degrees we offer, events that can be used for professional networking, and general Montclair State University information. Our concept is simple: to allow anyone to move through Facebook to our page and onto the Montclair State webpage to provide quick and informative updates with ease.



For questions concerning the Center's facebook, please contact: : Matt Jenkins at 973/655-6860 or at jenkinsm@mail.montclair.edu

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GONE GREEN

Our newsletter will now 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 address 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

CHAD Student thoughts

I recently spoke to a student in the Post-BA certificate program, who is also a DYFS case supervisor in an Essex County Local office; who sees the primary issue of importance facing CAs today is the conflict between doing what's best for the child and policies in place that do not allow time necessary to properly advocate for the child. An example was cited, in the current CPM training, which encourages workers to use engagement as a way to gain trust in a family in order to affect change.

Often this is not a one-time intervention, but takes time; too much time when policies and procedures are in place to deal with quicker timeframes around placement; the balance is not easy. The way to change this issue would be to never advocate for kids and families in a vacuum,

use a broader scope and remember that it really does take a village (of family, neighbors, resources) to raise a child. Since beginning in the certificate program this DYFS worker has been able to apply immediately what had been taught in class by integrating issues and topics into the daily routine. It has also caused a more "eyes opened" posture what has resulted in more than just a DYFS posture, but is now one that includes a child welfare lens, and a legal lens when dealing with children and families.

Another student in the Masters in Child Advocacy program, who is also a counselor at a CMO in Hudson County, that I spoke to, sees the primary issue of importance facing Case workers today is always remembering to put the child first. So often he says, we get caught up in our mission and need to be more client oriented and focused on families at all times.

If he had the power to change this issue, he'd begin by removing of red tape and barriers so that people wanting to make a difference can.

Often workers and other resources run into limitations or delay in services and can't meet the actual need of families; and policies would be reviewed to see what is working and what is not to insure change is thoughtful, and effective. Being a student here at MSU, learning the history of Child Advocates and the specifics about child abuse has been insightful; this, along with being in classes made up of DYFS workers as well as students from other disciplines; has lead to a vision of issues and of solutions.



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