

Sociology News

Case Western Reserve University Department of Sociology

Spring 2011

Letter from the Chair

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Greetings from the CWRU
Department of Sociology!

This past year, faculty and students alike have been involved in a faculty search process, and we will shortly be updating our website with some very good news from our search activities. Stay tuned! As is usually the case, a by-product of a faculty search has been the opportunity for students as well as faculty to meet and discuss ideas and research strategies with outstanding young sociologists from around the country.

It has also been a year of notable recognition and success for the faculty and for many graduate and undergraduate students. **Gary Deimling, Eva Kahana,** and I each delivered distinguished invited lectures this year in national or international venues. **Brian Gran** was awarded a two-year grant from the National Science Foundation to continue his work on the Children's Rights Index. **Eva Kahana** has just been awarded a \$1.2M grant from the National Cancer Institute (NCI), in collaboration with **Jessica Kelley-Moore** and **Gary Deimling.** **Sue Hinze**, a 2010 winner of the Diekhoff Award and several other honors within the university, is concluding a three-year term as director of the Women's and Gender Studies Program. We look forward to having Sue back full time.

Such recognition is not limited to faculty. This spring, several doctoral



students received awards from the university, including **Scott Adams, Christine Schneider, Rebecca Siders** and **Joshua Terchek.** In May, 11 students were inducted into Alpha Kappa Delta, and two students presented their honors projects at our annual AKD and honors ceremony.

These are only a few of the faculty and student accomplishments that you will find reviewed in detail in this issue of *Sociology News.* We hope that you find it of interest!

We are eager to expand our connections to and interactions with alumni of the Department of Sociology. Please let us hear from you about your activities. Also, please let us know of any professional positions that may be of interest to our recent graduates. Finally, if you are in the area, please stop by and visit the Department of Sociology!

Dale Dannefer
Department Chair

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NSF Funds Professor Gran to Refine and Extend Work on the *Children's Rights Index*

In what countries do children enjoy higher levels of rights than in other countries? Have children's rights improved with time, or have they actually worsened? Professor Brian Gran recently received a two-year grant from the National Science Foundation to measure and assess the global distribution of children's rights.

Past studies of children's rights have focused on violations of particular rights, and on specific countries where children's rights are frequently or severely violated. What has been lacking is systematic scholarship on the various kinds of children's rights that exist, across countries and over time. While addressing this gap in understanding, Gran's research seeks to identify factors that promote or hinder children's rights.

Systematic scholarship on the various kinds of children's rights that exist, across countries and over time, is in its infancy.

The grant will support Gran's work to refine the *Children's Rights Index (CRI)*, an innovative measure of children's rights for over 190 countries, and apply it for five-year intervals for the period 1979 to 2009. It will also explore important related questions, such as whether children who live in more ethnically diverse and religiously diverse countries have fewer rights, and whether national, independent institutions developed to promote children's rights actually achieve improvements.

One important objective of the study is to provide evidence on the status of children's rights to governments and international nongovernmental organizations, including the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child. A

long-term objective is to use the CRI to determine whether stronger rights lead to superior outcomes for children.

Dannefer Delivers Riley Distinguished Scholar Lecture at ASA Meeting

At the ASA meeting last August, Dale Dannefer had the honor of delivering the Matilda Riley Distinguished Scholar Lecture, sponsored by the Section on Aging and the Life Course. In his talk, "Age, Life Course and the Reach of Sociological Imagination," Dannefer argued for the increasing importance of intellectual vigilance in the practice of Mills' "sociological imagination." He argued that sociologists of age and the life course have often been inclined to naturalize the effects of social forces, mistaking social for individual causation and thus "containing" the effect of social forces within individual-level modes of explanation.

As points of illustration, Dannefer suggested how emerging areas of inquiry such as gene-environment interactions and efforts to apply rational choice theory in sociology may pose risks of such containment at the same time that they offer important opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. By exercising the sociological imagination more rigorously, he argued, the potential importance of the social environment could be elevated in inquiries spanning numerous disciplines.

As incoming Chair of the ASA Section on Aging and the Life Course, Dannefer used to occasion to announce "Age, Life Course and Sociological Imagination" as the SALC theme for the 2011 ASA meeting, which will be held in Las Vegas this August.

Kahana Inaugural Speaker at NIH End-of-Life Interest Group

Eva Kahana's 40 years of continuous NIH funding, and NIH grant, "Elders Marshalling Responsive Care in the Final Years of Life," recently gained special recognition from the NIH. She was invited to speak at the inaugural meeting of the End-of-Life / Palliative Care Interest Group (EOL PC SIG) last October. This group provides a forum for interdisciplinary scientists and researchers from the NIH Intramural and Extramural Research Programs to discuss current trends in end-of-life and palliative care.

When asked how it felt to be the inaugural speaker, Kahana said that she was delighted to be given the opportunity to share her research with this important audience. She presented key findings in four areas:

Successful Aging. Studies of successful aging have identified the value of having older adults take proactive action on their own behalf.

End-of-Life Care Plans and Communication with Physicians. About one-fourth of respondents in Kahana's study reported that they had no end-of-life care plans. Those who had advance directives discussed them primarily with family members and only a few directly with their physicians. Primary care physicians confirmed this pattern; only 28% of physicians whose patients reported having made advance directives were informed about their patients' wishes. Furthermore, about a third of physicians

whose patients did not provide advance directives were under the mistaken impression that such plans existed.

Health Communication. Kahana noted that many older persons are reluctant to take the initiative, ask questions and speak up to their doctors. She also learned that those elderly who are active health care consumers receive better care from their physicians than do passive patients. Interestingly, older adults who were reluctant to speak up on their own behalf advised others to take a bolder, more active stance.

Concerns of Older Adults. In the initial study waves of her ongoing research, Kahana listened to the voices of elderly respondents in order to identify their perspectives on the final years of life. She found that the very old rarely mention the fear of dying as a major fear, or the desire to live longer as a major hope. However, elders do fear frailty and suffering close to the end of life. In the meantime, they have a strong desire to remain connected to significant others in their lives.

In end-of-life discussions, elderly respondents did not focus on their preferences, fulfillment or comfort, but on their desire to ensure that their families would not be burdened. Elderly respondents also made funeral arrangements in order to leave their loved ones with minimal worry about financial responsibility.

Departmental Faculty Key Leaders in ASA Sections

CWRU sociology faculty have a long history of leadership and involvement in the American Sociological Association (ASA), and this year is no exception.

This year **Dale Dannefer** is serving as chair of the Section on Aging and the Life Course (SALC). **Jessica Kelley-Moore** has just completed a term on the SALC council, and **David Warner** has assumed the role of listserv editor. Thus, our faculty continues to maintain a lively presence in the leadership of this section.

Brian Gran, a leader in founding the Section on Human Rights, was elected treasurer of that Section-in-Formation. Several other CWRU faculty, including **Dale Dannefer**, **Susan Hinze** and **Jessica Kelley-Moore**, are also founding members of this section.

Eva Kahana (a former chair of SALC) and **Jessica Kelley-Moore** are inaugural members of the Section-in-Formation, Disability in Society. With a concerted membership drive, the fledgling section will be able to procure additional slots in the annual program.

Professor Hinze Wins Diekhoff Award

By Sarah Kennedy and Maggie Waltz

Every year, graduate students across the university honor two faculty members with the John S. Diekhoff Award in Graduate Mentoring. We recently interviewed Susan Hinze, who won the award last spring, to discuss her perspective on her role as a mentor. The Diekhoff prize is just one of many honors that Hinze has received for excellence in mentoring and teaching.

Do you think someone can learn to be a mentor? Or is some sort of innate skill or personality trait required?

Yes, you can learn to be a mentor. Case Western Reserve is placing more emphasis on mentoring to obtain tenure, and UCITE [University Center for Innovation in Teaching and Education] has developed a mentoring fellowship where professors can learn skills that can help them be better mentors. And I could learn more skills because mentoring changes over time. As experience and seniority changes, you have more to offer students. As sociologists, we tend not to believe in innate skills!

Is there a difference between mentoring undergraduate students and graduate students?

Yes, it is very different. For undergraduates, the whole world is open to them, and I help them see how sociology fits into their field of interest. For graduate students, there is more responsibility because they chose this as their career path, and you have to make sure they have the skills

necessary to get a job, publish, and succeed in the real world.

What is the most rewarding part of teaching and mentoring students?

The most rewarding part is assisting students on their journey and feeling like you are helping them find their path. You get to see where students end up, and you know that something you did contributed to how they got there.

What does winning the award mean to you?

It is nice to be recognized for invisible labor that often goes unnoticed. Mentoring normally takes place behind the scenes, so it's great to know that the work is being valued. And the monetary award didn't hurt!



In her spare time, Sue Hinze enjoys hanging out on broken ski lifts.

Faculty Updates

With coauthors **Robin Shura** (PhD '10) and doctoral student **Rebecca Siders**, **Dale Dannefer** published "Culture Change in Long-term Care: Participatory Action Research and the Role of the Resident," in *The Gerontologist*. His other publications include the theory chapter in the 7th edition of the *Handbook of Aging and the Social Sciences* and the co-edited *SAGE Handbook of Social Gerontology* (see page 6). Dannefer also presented a paper on gene-environment interactions and modeling aging at the Gerontological Society of America.

Gary Deimling has published several papers, including "Primary Care Physicians' Involvement in the Cancer Care of Older Long-Term Survivors," coauthored with **Karen Bowman**, **Julia Rose**, doctoral student **George Kyriotakis** and **Elizabeth O'Toole**, in the *Journal of Aging and Health* 22(5), 673-686. Deimling also presented at the annual Ohio Association for Gerontology and Education conference at The Ohio State University.

Faculty Updates (continued from page 4)

His talks were titled "Physician-Patient Communication Regarding Remission Status, Identity, and Psychological Well-Being" and "How Self-Reported Disability and Functional Limitations Influence Older, Adult Long-term Cancer Survivors' Body Satisfaction and Continuity of Self."

Brian Gran published "Comparing Children's Rights: Introducing the Children's Rights Index" in *The International Journal of Children's Rights* and a second article on children's rights in an international journal. In December, he gave two invited presentations at the Institut Universitaire Kurt Bösch, "Children's Rights and Policies in the Americas" and "Children's Ombudspersons and the Implementation of the UNCRC." This spring, Gran is using a sabbatical leave to move his research on global children's rights forward.

Susan Hinze was invited to be a founding member of the newly established Work and Family Researchers Network. Recent talks include an invited university-wide lecture through the CWRU Office of Inclusion, Diversity and Equal Opportunity titled "The Power of Diversity or the Diversity of Power?" Recent papers include the Preface (with Atwood Gaines) to *Les Assises Du Corps Transformé: Regards Croisés sur le Genre (Congress on the Transformed Body: Intersecting Perspectives on Gender)* and "Physician Specialization and Gender" for the *Multimedia Encyclopedia of Women in Today's World*. She organized and presided over two sessions at the Eastern Sociological Society meetings: "Intersectional Approaches to Physical and Mental Health and Well-Being" and "Social Movements, Organizations and Health." Hinze served as critic at a Southern Sociological Society "Author Meets Critic" session for *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans' Definitions of Family*. She was awarded a UCITE Mentoring Fellowship. Hinze was also interviewed and featured in a *Forbes* magazine article on work and family, she conducted a live television interview on changing family size (WKYC/NBC), and she participated in a live radio interview about changing American families on *The Regina Brett Show* (WKSU/NPR).

Eva Kahana's grant "Health Care Partners in Cancer Prevention & Care of Aged" has been funded through

the National Cancer Institute for an additional 5 years. The focus of the new grant is an intervention designed to help older adults enhance communication with their doctors. Last summer, Kahana gave a distinguished address at the University of Cologne in Germany and traveled to the XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology in Gethenburg, Sweden, where she spoke on "Perceived stigma and altered life perspectives among elderly cancer survivors." Kahana recently published several articles, including "Determinants of Altered Life Perspectives Among Older Long-Term Cancer Survivors" (*Cancer Nursing*) with **Boaz Kahana, Gary Deimling, Samantha Sterns** (PhD '07) and **Madeline van Gunten** (BA '11). In addition, she coauthored two handbook chapters.

Among several papers published by **Jessica Kelley-Moore** this year is "Widening the View: Capturing 'Unobserved' Heterogeneity in Studies of Age and the Life Course," coauthored with doctoral student **Jielu Lin** and prepared as the methods chapter for the *Handbook of Sociology of Aging*. Kelley-Moore was also awarded a one-year Advancing Careers in Engineering and Sciences (ACES) Advance Opportunity grant titled "How Does Inequality Accumulate over the Life Course? Characterizing Heterogeneity in Health Status During Mid- and Late-Life." In addition, she made a number of local, regional and national presentations concerning the *FreshLink* project and the work of the Prevention Research Center.

Emilia McGucken continued her research on school bullying and on a study titled "Healthcare Providers' Attitudes toward Substance-Abusing Persons," which was originally funded through ACES. She also developed a new course on world criminal justice systems that will be taught next year.

David Warner was appointed to the editorial board of the *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. Along with Mark Hayward and Melissa Hardy, he co-authored an article in the *Population Research & Policy Review* ("The Retirement Life Course in America at the Dawn of the 21st Century"). In October, Warner visited the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for an invited presentation titled "Exploring How Race/Ethnicity and Gender Define Age-Trajectories of Disability: An Intersectionality Approach."

Cancer Survivors Research Project Update

By Gary Deimling

The Cancer Survivors Research Program is now in its thirteenth year of investigating the quality of life of older adult cancer survivors. Since the last *Sociology News*, we have launched the interview phase of our pilot project, which is funded by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in conjunction with the Case Comprehensive Cancer Center. In this project, we ask our original study participants their preferences for specific coping-communication support services. The information we collect will be used in an application to NCI to support a clinical trial of an intervention study that will provide support services for cancer survivors. **Sherri Brown** has served as project coordinator and has had valuable assistance from **Melinda Laroco-Boehm** (who recently cycled off our program to start her new fellowship) and the most recent additions to our staff, research assistants **Cory Cronin** and **Holly Renzhofer**.

REPORTING OUR FINDINGS

Sherri Brown assisted me this past summer in completing our final report to NCI on our 12-year study of nearly 500 older-adult, long-term survivors. That report is available on request, along with our bibliography of 22 peer-reviewed articles and nearly 100 published abstracts and presentations. Our article "Adaptation and adjustment to cancer in later life: a conceptual model" will appear in *Cancer and Aging*, Keith M. Bellizzi and Margot Gosney, eds., Wiley-Blackwell (in press).

We presented some of our most recent findings at the recent Gerontological Society of America (GSA) meetings in New Orleans. Our first presentation, "Personality and Coping Among Older Adult, Long-term Cancer Survivors" (Deimling, Laroco-Boehm, Brown and Renzhofer, co-authors) indicated the importance of considering the role that survivors' personality characteristics play in determining the coping strategies they utilize, which in turn affect psychosocial distress outcomes.

Our second GSA presentation, "Distress and Coping Among Older Adults: The Influence of Meaning and Identity in Confronting a Chronic Illness" (Brown, Deimling, Laroco-Boehm and Cronin, co-authors), examined how illness meaning and the adoption of cancer-related identities influence the relationship between illness, coping and the distress older adult cancer survivors report. Overall, these findings suggest that the meaning given to illness and the type of illness identity adopted by survivors influences their adaptation to cancer.

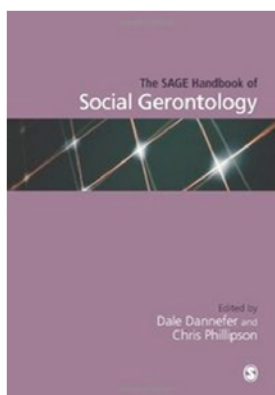
CONTINUING COLLABORATION WITH NCI

Recently, I was invited to make a special colloquium presentation to NCI's Cancer Prevention Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. In addition to my formal presentation of research findings, I will have the opportunity to spend two days working with the fellows and staff of that section on areas of mutual interest and exploring future funding opportunities.

Dannefer and Phillipson Publish *The SAGE Handbook of Social Gerontology*

Sage Publishing recently released *The SAGE Handbook of Social Gerontology*, edited by **Dale Dannefer** and **Chris Phillipson** (Keele University, UK).

This 50-chapter, 685-page volume is credited by reviewers with breaking new ground in the international scope of its coverage and its introduction of a number of innovative topics. Several such topics



(e.g., critical analysis of mild cognitive impairment, the differentiation of age from disability, the culture and politics of the anti-aging movement) are based on contributions from our faculty, including **Robert Binstock**, **Eva Kahana** and **Jessica Kelley-Moore** from the Department of Sociology, and, from the School of Medicine, **Peter Whitehouse**.

Congrats to Our Recent PhDs

In October, **Lynn Falletta** defended her dissertation, "It's Not Just Pure Science: Federal Funding of Children's Mental Health Research through the Request for Applications (RFA) Process." Her findings,



which she presented at the ASA meeting last August, documented the role of ideology, social background and extra-scientific factors in shaping the federal mental health funding agenda. Falletta is currently a research associate at the Institute for the Study and Prevention of Violence at Kent State University.

Noah Webster defended his dissertation, "The Embodiment of Diabetes and the Influence on Self-Care Strategies," in April. Webster was the first to test in a quantitative model the role that specific diabetes complications play in shaping self-care behavior. Webster is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan.



Sociology Graduate Student Association

Last fall, just in time for Halloween, the Sociology Graduate Student Association (SGSA) hosted a seminar titled "Handling Panel Attrition: A Trick or a Treat?" with a presentation by **Jielu Lin** and **Scott Adams**. In her opening remarks, **Jessica Kelley-Moore** noted that handling panel attrition was one of the frontier questions in the field and that this seminar was designed to expose all graduate students to this scientific puzzle. Presenters Lin and Adams shared their experiences in detecting, examining and handling nonrandom attrition in panel studies, using Heckman selection bias models and propensity scores. Following the main presentation, **David Warner** provided a thought-

By Scott Adams & Jielu Lin

provoking discussion, urging students to evaluate critically these statistical tools and to explore conceptual frameworks that may guide future research on this topic. He also encouraged all students to collaborate with each other and think creatively about potential research opportunities.



From left: Jessica Kelley-Moore, Jielu Lin, Scott Adams, David Warner

SGSA received great support for the seminar from **Brian Gran** and **Jessica Kelley-Moore**, Co-directors of Graduate Studies, and **Dale Dannefer**, the department chair. The association will continue to work on facilitating such opportunities.

Alpha Kappa Delta Initiates 11

This year CWRU was pleased to initiate 11 students into Alpha Kappa Delta, the International Honor Society in Sociology, in a ceremony in Mather Memorial. As



members of AKD, these students have become part of a tradition that began in 1920. The Iota of Ohio Chapter at CWRU is one of more than 600 AKD chapters throughout the United States and six other countries, with more than 92,000 members.

Undergraduate majors with junior or senior standing with a sociology GPA of 3.0 or above and an overall GPA of 3.3 or above qualify for AKD membership, provided that they have completed at least three sociology courses. Graduate student inductees must have completed one semester or two quarters of graduate study and maintained at least a B average.

Among other activities, AKD provides funding for student travel to regional sociological meetings and sponsors an annual undergraduate student paper competition. Members have the right to wear AKD honor cords at graduation, and their selection will be an impressive addition to their resumes.

For more information about AKD, please contact Professor Emilia McGucken, faculty advisor.

2011 Initiates

Casey Lynn Albitz

Cory E. Cronin

Anna Eva Czekaj

Jeffrey Nicholas Gaba

Johnathan Allen Kostic

Chrissy Makariou-Pikis

Jerome Curt Priest II

Lusai Qiu

Mary Ellen Stone

Traci Marie-Rosalia Termini

Konstantinos Theoharides

Department Awards and Nominations

During the past academic year, our faculty, undergraduates and graduate students were recognized for a variety of accomplishments.

FACULTY

Susan Hinze won the Faculty Excellence Award from the Inclusion, Diversity and Equal Opportunity Office. The award recognizes exceptional contributions or efforts made toward enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion and multiculturalism at the university. Sue received her award at the 2011 Achievement Awards Luncheon.

Jessica Kelley-Moore and **Dale Dannefer** were nominated for the John S. Diekhoff Award for Graduate Teaching and Mentoring.

Sue Hinze and graduate student **Joshua Terchek** were nominated for the Carl F. Wittke Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. (Continued on p. 9)



Rebecca Siders, Susan Hinze, Josh Terchek

Awards and Nominations (continued from page 8)

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Joshua Tercheck won the Graduate Instructor Excellence Award from the School of Graduate Studies and the SAGE/Pine Forge Teaching Innovations and Professional Development Award. Inspired by authors of *Our Social World: Introduction to Sociology*, SAGE and Pine Forge publishers established the award in 2007 to help graduate students and pre-tenure faculty attend the annual American Sociological Association preconference workshop on Preparing Future Faculty.

Rebecca Sidors won the Ruth Barber Moon Award for students with academic promise, leadership ability and financial need.

Christine Schneider was awarded the newly created Graduate Student Appreciation Award, which recognizes students who make a difference on our campus or in the Cleveland community, for her work on the FreshLink research project.

Scott Adams received the Marie Haug Student Award from the University Center on Aging and Health. The award is presented each year to students who are completing their studies and have demonstrated excellence in aging studies.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

During awards ceremonies held at the end of the semester, our undergraduate students also received special recognition and awards.

Ellen Alexander and **Brittany Castle** both received the Schermerhorn Award for outstanding undergraduate students in sociology.

Alyssa Kerr and **Jinny Ye** were awarded the Mark Lefton Award for excellence in sociological studies.

The Stella Berkeley-Friedman Award to a graduating senior for the highest academic achievement in the study of sociology went to **Michael Schmid**.

The Robert C. Davis Award for demonstrated



Tanetta Andersson and Nadra Williams

commitment to sociological studies was awarded to graduating seniors **Nadra Williams** and **Michael Maul**.

The following two students graduated with Honors in Sociology, and presented the results of their two-semester research projects at the Honors Dinner:

Cody Howell - *Social Integration of Isolation: A Study of Hikikormori, Its Causes and Its Significance*

After graduating with majors in sociology and psychology, Cody plans to continue research in the neuroscience department here at CWRU and to work on publishing. He will be applying to PhD programs in neuroscience the following fall.

Alyssa Kerr - *Summer Activities and the Summer Achievement Gap*

Alyssa graduated with dual majors in sociology and statistics in May. The previous summer she worked for American Institutes for Research as a Research Assistant doing projects for the Department of Education's Early Childhood Longitudinal Study and the National Household Education Surveys Program. She will be taking time off for travel before attending graduate school beginning in the fall of 2012.

We want to hear from you!

We are proud of the accomplishments of our faculty, students and alumni. Let us know about job changes, awards, honors and life events. Please email your news and contact information updates to contact-cas@cwru.edu.

PhD First-Year Cohort



Tirth Bhatta

Tirth Bhatta received a master's degree in gerontology at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, in 2010. Before coming to the United States, he completed a master's degree in statistics at Tribhuvan University, Nepal, in 2004. Tirth has worked as a research intern at the Oxford

Institute of Aging, University of Oxford, UK, and was a graduate assistant on several research projects while at Miami University. He considers learning an adventure, and is happy to continue this adventure at CWRU. His personal interests include reading books and articles related to spirituality, philosophy, and religion.

Cory Cronin graduated from Ohio University with a BS in health services administration and earned a master's degree in health administration from Xavier University in Cincinnati.



Cory Cronin

Before entering our program, Cory was Director of Business and Operations at St. Francis Medical Center in Monroe, LA, and later worked at a consulting firm in Northwest Ohio.



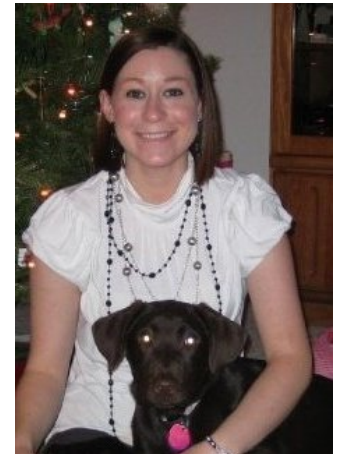
Lebo Morojele

Relebohile (Lebo) Morojele holds a BA in sociology and demography from the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and an MPhil in social sciences methods from

Stellenbosch University in South Africa. She worked in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work at NUL, where she assisted undergraduates who were researching issues related to migration in Southern Africa before earning a Fullbright Fellowship to pursue doctoral study.

She is excited to be in the PhD program at CWRU and is looking forward to establishing new relationships in Cleveland.

Holly Renzhofer graduated from the University of Toledo with a bachelor's degree in social work and an MA in sociology. Holly was also a research assistant at the University of Toledo and has been an adjunct faculty member at Owens Community College. She looks forward to continuing her research at CWRU. In her free time, Holly enjoys spending time with friends and family, with her dog Lucy, and with horses.



Holly Renzhofer

Margaret (Maggie) Waltz graduated from the University of Dayton this past May with a BA in English. In her spare time, Maggie enjoys watching movies and hanging out with friends and family. She is excited to be back in her hometown of Cleveland and to be part of the PhD program at CWRU.



Sociology Doctoral Students Making a Difference in Cleveland

By Jessica Kelley-Moore



It has been a very productive year for the students working with us on *FreshLink*, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) project that aims to increase access to healthy foods in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Cleveland. As the core project of the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods, this study involves partnerships with four neighborhoods to improve the food environment via four major points of entry—schools, food retail, community gardens and community centers. Unlike a traditional intervention study that focuses on changing individual eating and shopping behaviors, *FreshLink* focuses on changing the social space in which food choices are made. The project was recently featured in the Case Western Reserve University Annual Report and in *art/sci*, the magazine for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Several of our doctoral students are playing a critical role in *FreshLink*. Data manager **Christine Schneider** has partnered with several area organizations to create the most comprehensive database of food resources in our neighborhoods. These partners include Cleveland Foodbank, Bureau of Nutrition Services, Cleveland Department of City Planning and Development, United Way and the Children's Hunger Alliance. The database of food resources includes not just food retail, but available services (e.g., afterschool snack programs), local benefits (e.g., market gardens that accept senior produce vouchers) and elements of the informal food economy (e.g., churches that provide free meals). Christine recently received a university Graduate Student Appreciation Award for her work, and the results were presented at the annual Prevention Research Center conference in April 2011.

Melinda Laroco Boehm, recipient of a CDC doctoral fellowship, is embarking on a qualitative project to study the active and positive role that low-income Black older adults play in the nutritional intake of their families and their senior neighbors. Our preliminary work indicates that these older adults are actually consuming *more* fruits and vegetables than their children and grandchildren. Yet, as part-time and periodically full-time caregivers for their grandchildren, these older adults recognize that they play an important role in the nutritional intake of children. Since many of these elders are more financially stable and time-flexible than their children, they are able to

plan menus that integrate fruits, vegetables and meat more regularly. In these neighborhoods low-income older adults also have developed an informal food economy with their neighbors, sharing excess food and participating in community eating activities (e.g., rotating potlucks).



From left: Christine Schneider, Kelly Melvin, Melinda Laroco Boehm

Kelly Melvin has been instrumental in our partnerships with the neighborhoods. She works closely with our Neighborhood Working Groups—groups of residents who help plan and implement the intervention programming in each neighborhood. Kelly plans the meetings and checks in with the residents regularly. She also records the minutes from each meeting, which will be used later for qualitative coding regarding the process of establishing sustainable solutions to the healthy food gap in these neighborhoods. When sociologists engage the residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods, it is important to recognize barriers to participation. To address those challenges, Kelly coordinates childcare so parents are able to participate. She also plans healthy snacks and offers transportation to anyone who needs it.

Sociology Does Indeed Rock: NCSA Annual Meeting in Cleveland

By Josh Tercheck

Sociology rocked Cleveland when the North Central Sociological Association (NCSA) held its annual meeting here March 31-April 3. The conference hosted sociologists from across the region, from Indiana to the province of Ontario. With plenary addresses from Hans Bakker, Bernice Pescosolido and Brian Powell, a keynote from Jack A. Goldstone, and a wide range of seminars and workshops, the conference provided learning and networking opportunities



for the CWRU faculty, graduate students and undergraduates who attended. CWRU faculty and graduate students presenting at the conference included Tanetta Andersson, Sherri Brown, Cory Cronin, Sandra Dunkin, Gary Deimling, Jessica Kelley-Moore, Holly Renzhofer, Mary Ellen Stone and Joshua Tercheck.

Next year's NCSA conference will take place in Pittsburgh. For more information, please visit www.ncsanet.org or "like" NSCA on Facebook.

Support the Department of Sociology

You can contribute to our success by making a gift to the department. Your donation will allow us to continue to offer opportunities for our students to excel academically and to conduct cutting-edge research. Make a gift online at giving.cwr.edu or call 216-368-3549. Thank you for your support.



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