

The MHC Celebrates Its Many Friendships Both Near and Far

An old proverb wisely counsels: "You know a person by the friends he keeps."

Similarly, one knows the Mid-Hudson Coalition for Direct Care Practice (MHC) by the friends with whom we spend time. The MHC is, first of all, a coalition of like-minded people from agencies, educational institutions and the business community who are dedicated to continuous quality improvement of services for persons with special needs through a highly developed workforce.

The MHC is drawn to people outside of our immediate family circle who also have a passion for professional self-improvement in the areas of principles, ethics, and skills.

The Mid-Hudson Coalition—a Look at Our History

In the late 1980's, human service agencies in the northern Hudson Valley met regularly to discuss strategies for improving staff recruitment and retention, specifically in direct care.

Agencies were faced with high turnover rates, low retention, and fierce competition for a shrinking pool of potential employees. There was deep concern over the ability of agencies to deliver quality services with an unreliable and ever-changing direct care workforce. At the same time, state licensing agencies were increasing their demands for greater accountability and quality assurance.

In 1989, several agencies held a press conference at the Anderson School to publicly declare their desperate need for a reliable, educated, and well-compensated direct care workforce. Led by MHC founder, Frank Mulhern, this pioneer group outlined a formula for improving and strengthening the workforce.

This formula established a four-prong

(Continued on page 3)



We have made friends with national pioneers in the educational development of direct care, standard bearers of inspiring servant leadership, and international beacons of time-tested programs and practices.

We have searched for and found friends in our backyard and around the world who get it right, who bravely put their

collective resources at the point of service where quality is defined, who honor direct care with cultural status, who remunerate the everyday heroes of human services with a living wage, who declare direct care a bona fide profession and career, who foster personal honor and competence that flatten organizational structures, and who fundamentally understand that services are as remarkable as those on the front line.

At our international conference on June 13-15—"MAKING A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE"—we welcome our friends from our region, our state, our nation, and the international community. The participants and presenters at this unique conference bring a treasure of good will, expertise, inspiration and proven practice.

Thanks to these gifts offered to us by our friends over the years, the Mid-Hudson Coalition is inspired to continue our mission with enthusiasm.

Executive Roundtable on Workforce Issues Held at 2002 International Conference

One special event being held at the *Direct Care: Making a World of Difference* Conference will address what is generically referred to as the workforce crisis in the U.S.

Specifically, this topic focuses on the problems regarding the recruitment and retention of frontline workers in the human services field.

Twenty executive directors from Mid-Hudson Coalition member agencies will be in attendance to hear Floyd Alwon, Division Director for Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), speak about his organization's research, findings, and recommendations regarding the workforce crisis in the child welfare field.

CWLA initiated a taskforce in December 2000 to focus on this issue and to provide information for human service agencies so that they might better understand and respond to this serious situation.

In addition, the executive roundtable will provide detailed information on a new and unique initiative currently underway in New York State for frontline workers in the disabilities field.

William Ebenstein, Executive Director of the JFK, Jr., Institute for Worker Education at the City University of New York, will share information on this initiative which has support from the JFK, Jr., Institute, the New York State Association of Community and Residential Agencies (NYSACRA), the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD), and the Governor's Office of New York State.

The MHC will publish the proceedings of this event in its next newsletter.

The MHC and its Member Agencies Welcome all Conference Participants!

SUNY CDCP Graduate Uses Her Skills with Families in Crisis

In 1992, I joined the Concentration in Direct Care Practice (CDCP) program at SUNY New Paltz. We were the first cohort of the CDCP program. The program was comprised of both Danish and American teachers who taught us social pedagogy and human services.

This decision to apply and join the program made a significant impact on my life. I knew that I had wanted to work with people. In what context remained unclear, but this opportunity was going to give me a chance to do three internships where I could learn through hands-on experience. I thoroughly enjoyed the CDCP program, largely because of its emphasis on learning through doing, exploring ideas, and dialogues with my peers.

However, when I graduated in 1994, I felt the need to practice and gain knowledge of social pedagogy from its source. So, I decided to try and find a job in Denmark as a social pedagogue. I began to learn Danish while looking for a job and assimilating the Danish culture.

While in Denmark, I worked at Vangede Huset, a residential institution that served people with various disabilities. Thinking back, what struck me most about working in Denmark was the collaboration and respect between client and staff. In addition, pedagogy was a respected and valued profession in the culture.

When I returned to the States, I worked at the Anderson School first in the community residential program and then in the day habilitation program. I found I enjoyed my work with the people in the two programs. But with time, I felt that I struggled to retain and effectively utilize the practical skills I had gained working abroad.

I knew that I wanted to continue doing hands-on work. I decided that an additional professional degree would provide me with more tools to work creatively with clients. I completed a master's degree at Columbia's School of Social Work. I now work at Families

First, a home-based family preservation program in Ulster County. Families First is a short term intervention (4-8 weeks) that provides intense 24-hour services to families in crisis and at risk of having a child placed out of the home.

The job encourages us to work with families using a holistic framework and to be creative in how we help families. We incorporate recreational activities, games, art, traditional therapy, transportation, connection to additional programs, advocacy, and case management. For example, an intervention might include helping a child join a martial arts school or facilitate his or her getting an apprenticeship at a bike shop to build

self-esteem and mastery of skills.

Hands-on care or direct care remains important and rewarding

for me. One lesson I have retained from my days as a student in the CDCP program is the belief that people are entitled to quality, compassionate and thoughtful care.



*Anna Millenson, CSW
Ulster Prevention—Families First
6 Adams Street, Kingston, NY 12401*

Dutchess Community College's Human Services Program Offerings

The Human Services programs at Dutchess Community College are designed to prepare direct care generalists to work in community-based or residential settings with children, adolescents, or adults with special needs.

Our three A.A.S. degree programs in Community Mental Health, Recreation Leadership, and Child Care offer students many exciting career options. We also offer one year certificate programs in Direct Care Practice, Youth Work, and Chemical Dependency Counseling.

Students learn therapeutic interventions, such as Behavior Modification and Cognitive/Behavioral

techniques, and Milieu Therapy. Students make valuable connections between theory and practice because of the wide spectrum of Psychology courses they participate in, and the fact that they are well grounded in the Community Support Skill Standards. These are practiced in all four levels of practicum that students experience. The program seems to attract traditional as well as non-traditional students, many of whom are currently employed in the field. This allows for an enriching, diverse classroom.

Whether students choose to go directly into the workforce, or transfer on to a four year college, they get a solid foundation at Dutchess Community College.

**The time is now
to become a member of the
Mid-Hudson Coalition**

Join Today!

UCCC Provides Three Distinct Human Services Programs

Ulster County Community College offers three Human Services programs including the Direct Care Practice, the Human Services Career Program and the Human Services Transfer Program.

The Direct Care Practice is an 18-credit certificate program that trains practitioners to provide direct care to individuals, families, and groups from various populations and in a variety of human services settings in the community. Students learn about the multiple roles direct care workers in public and private sectors are asked to play. Through courses and a practicum provided at a community agency, students gain confidence and competence in specific skill areas identified by potential employers and the national standards established by the Community Support Skills Standards Project.

Development of the program was prompted by the need identified by community employers for individuals trained in direct care practice. Students who complete this program find numerous opportunities for employment.

The curriculum includes the following courses: College English I, Introduction to Human Services, Aspects of Aging, Persons with Special Needs, Generalist Practice with Children, Families, and Institutions, and Human Services Field Practicum.

Students who wish to pursue a higher level of education can apply these courses to an Associates Degree in Human Services.

The Human Services Career-Oriented Program is a two-year Associate in Science Degree program that provides students with the education and skills to qualify for a variety of entry-level positions in public and private sector human services agencies.

Depending on personal interests and career plans, students in this program may elect to take specialized courses and supervised field work in areas of children's services, developmental disabilities, mental health prevention and treatment, crisis intervention, and gerontology.

An important component of this program is the Field Experience in which students do two internships in local human services agencies. This affords students the opportunity to experience working in human services settings of their choice, apply the knowledge and skills they are gaining in the classroom, and better determine the direction they wish to pursue in the human services field.

The Human Services Transfer-Oriented Degree Program is a two-year Associate in Science Degree Program that provides students with the necessary course work to transfer to a four-year college and pursue a baccalaureate degree. Graduates of this program who complete a baccalaureate or higher degree will be qualified for supervisory and administrative positions in such fields as social work, counseling, education, and mental health.



Mid-Hudson Coalition—A Look at Our History *(continued)*

(Continued from page 1)
strategy (higher education, agency development, educating government leaders and the public, and self-advocacy) that still guides the MHC today.

The concept of a coalition of agencies in shared collaboration with local colleges was proposed and adopted. This new coalition, entitled The Mid-Hudson Coalition for the Development of Direct Care Practice (MHC), would take on the shared responsibility of supporting workforce development through the establishment of college programs, support of worker education and public declaration of the connection between a reliable workforce and quality care for consumers.

This initiative essentially launched the MHC, with a founding board consisting of Frank Mulhern (Anderson School), Margaret Calista (Marist College), Regis Obijiski (New Horizons), Frank Dwyer (Children's Home of Poughkeepsie), Carl Denti (Dutchess Community College), Hal Jacobs (SUNY New Paltz), and Carolyn

Harris (Office of Workforce Planning, OMR/DD).

Initial efforts focused on the development of a Concentration in Direct Care Practice (CDCP) within the Sociology Department at SUNY New Paltz. This development had an exciting beginning since it involved direct collaboration between SUNY New Paltz, the MHC, and social pedagogical colleges in Denmark.

Working closely with an existing human services program at Dutchess Community College, the program began in 1992. Danish professors, Peter Harrit and Margot Lieberkind, led the first two cohorts in the CDCP. In 1994, the CDCP was "Americanized" and today is led by Mette Christiansen, who has the unique distinction of being both a Danish educated social pedagogue and a US social worker. The program has grown considerably. The initial cohort began with 17 students. In May of 2002, the program held its eighth graduation and now has 50 students.

Ten-plus years later, the MHC is renowned locally, nationally and internationally for its many accomplishments and enduring support of worker education. Comprised now of 30 human service agencies, the MHC is still growing and serves as a model for other regional initiatives to develop their respective direct care workforce.

Unfortunately, the conditions for direct care workers today are actually worse than they were in 1989. Few would argue that recruiting and retaining a competent workforce is the number one crisis facing human service agencies at the start of the 21st century. More than ever, the need for collaboration among agencies, public entities, colleges, and communities is evident.

Over the past decade, the MHC has:

- Supported hundreds of front-line workers in their pursuit of training and education;
- Stimulated college level programs not only

(Continued on page 6)

The Concentration in Human Services at SUNY New Paltz

It has been an exciting past year for the Concentration in Human Services at SUNY New Paltz, formerly known as the Concentration in Direct Care Practice. The program has undergone a name change, enrollment has almost doubled and we have added more agencies to our list of field education sites.



The new cohorts in the Concentration in Human Services participate in a "listen and trust" exercise at the Green Chimneys Children's Services' ropes course.

The upcoming international conference, *Direct Care: Making a World of Difference*, hosted at SUNY New Paltz, has also made students and faculty greatly inspired to be involved in the development of the improving the quality of direct care practice. This conference was initiated by faculty in the concentration and by the Mid-Hudson Coalition.

Our program not only has a history of international collaboration, it was inspired by Danish social pedagogy and has expanded to also include collaboration with Germany. This collaboration has continued throughout the years and there are currently numerous Danish and German social pedagogical students doing internships in local human service agencies. Every year, students from both countries are involved in bilateral exchanges and internship experiences. We visit Denmark and Germany frequently with students as part of an elective comparative social welfare course offered at SUNY New Paltz.

Social work students from Germany representing the University of Freiburg/Evangelische Fachhochschule, recently visited the Hudson Valley and SUNY New Paltz in April. Eight students, and the Dean from the Fachhochschule, toured almost one dozen human service agencies, including many members of the Mid Hudson Coalition.

Several Human Services Concentration students hosted German students during the April social welfare exchange program between SUNY New Paltz and the University of Freiburg/Evangelische Fachhochschule. The students from Germany visited various Mid-Hudson Coalition agencies including: Green Chimney's Brewster Campus and Triangle Tribe Program, Pius XII Beacon School, Office of Children's and Family Services/Highland Residential Campus, Greystone, and other various organizations and agencies.

The exchange trip is part of an agreement that SUNY has with the University of Freiburg. Students go to Germany to visit human service agencies in order to make a comparative analysis of the social welfare systems between the two cultures, economies and political environments. The American students are hosted by German students. The program is, then, duplicated in reverse when the German students come to the Hudson Valley.

In September of 2001, the Department of Sociology voted to change the name of the Concentration in Direct Care Practice to the Concentration in Human Services, shifting the nomenclature and titles of the courses to accurately reflect the current literature and philosophy supporting human services education.

There is a definite nostalgia and connection associated with the former name of the concentration (direct care) but, we are inclined to move ahead with the times and "human services" as a concentration title accurately depicts the educational philosophy imparted in the curriculum at

New Paltz. The new names of the core courses within the concentration are Human Services Practice 1, 2 and 3. We hope the new name will attract more students to the human services and direct care field and continue to serve our movement to professionalize the workforce.

We continue to embrace the philosophy of having students experience one continuous cohort. The students and the faculty get to know each other very well. We have various extracurricular activities to promote student-faculty interaction such as participation in a ropes course and parties designed and run by students with some faculty input.

The concentration has seen a dramatic increase in enrollment these past six months. There are 28 students in the new cohort and 21 students in the May 2002 graduating cohort. This is a wonderful, yet challenging, development in the program. The faculty office that is home to instructors Mette Christiansen and John



High ropes challenges with encouragement from below.



The cohorts' all here! After completing the ropes course at Green Chimneys, the new students in the Concentration in Human Services at SUNY New Paltz gather for a group picture with their instructors.

Raffaele is often teeming with students. There seems to be constant activity and

(Continued on page 5)

The Circle of Courage, Direct Care and South Africa

The opening plenary session, entitled *Circle of Courage: Philosophy and Practice*, for the *Direct Care: Making a World of Difference* Conference has two presenters. Dr. Martin Brokenleg, a Professor of Native American Studies at Augustana College and Dean of the Black Hills Seminars on Youth at Risk, is also a member of the Rosebud Sioux tribe. He is highly regarded and well known internationally for his dynamic speeches and writings on Native American childrearing practices. Lesley Du Toit, a social worker and policy maker from South Africa, served as a special advisor on child and youth care to the Minister of Welfare in the Nelson Mandela government from 1995 to 1999.

So what do these two speakers have in common? Why are they sharing the same platform?

The answer is quite interesting. Essentially, when Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa in 1994, he took over a nation in which many children were being raised in abject poverty, infant mortality rates were high, homelessness was rampant and the number of youth in prison was overwhelming. In order to respond to this crisis, Mandela went in search of a model that could stimulate healthy development of South African policies on children and youth.

Through the Minister of Welfare, Lesley Du Toit and her staff sought assistance from outside their country. Martin Brokenleg was contacted and became one of the more influential advisors to the

South African government. He offered the core concepts of the Lakota Circle of Courage, a native American symbol which emphasized respect for children through four key elements: mastery, independence, generosity, and belonging. The symbol and core elements of the Circle of Courage were adopted as a unifying vision for the standards of youth and child welfare in South Africa.



Eight years later, the Circle of Courage has become so essential in South Africa that its principles are evident everywhere. Judges, social workers, special educators, and child and youth care workers in South Africa are taught the four elements of the Circle of Courage, and they use these four functions to guide them in their assessment, planning, and empowerment of children and families.

In fact, a four-year degree program for child and youth care workers has been established throughout South Africa. Lesley Du Toit is one of the main authors

of the college curriculum for this special program. It is interesting to note that South Africa has a four-year college degree for frontline workers and the U.S. is still glaringly absent of higher education for frontline workers.

Last summer, several members of the Mid-Hudson Coalition attended the bi-annual conference of the National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers (NACCW) in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The Coalition members, along with six U.S. youth from after-school programs and residential children's agencies, traveled to South Africa to "live" the Circle of Courage by presenting at the conference (mastery), by broadening the horizons for a group of inner-city youth (independence), by volunteerism with various groups of African youth (generosity), and by recognizing, discussing and sharing their respective cultural roots and journeys (belonging).

These travelers were tremendously impressed with how the Circle of Courage has been utilized in South Africa to serve not only as a symbol but also as a unifying vision for improving the lives of children and youth.

The opening session to the 2002 conference is an opportunity for people to hear how a vision of youth development, regenerated by ancient wisdom, can be utilized to mobilize a nation's policies, practices, and services for the betterment of its young people.

The Concentration in Human Services at SUNY New Paltz *(continued)*

(Continued from page 4)

supervision taking place in the office. Mette and John often joke that even though they share an office, they never get an opportunity to talk with each other, except through e-mail or phone conferences!

This is good news because it means that there are many students and potential new members to the direct care/human services workforce being educated and influenced by the concentration.

There have been some agency/organization

additions to the list that the concentration uses for field education. We have expanded field sites in Orange County, and are utilizing placements that serve people with developmental disabilities, alcoholism, youth and the elderly. The increase in Orange County representation is associated with the increase in students from that part of our region. We have also expanded agencies in Ulster, Dutchess, and Columbia counties as well.

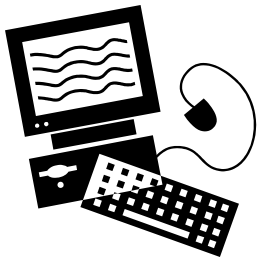
There are now over 80 agencies contained within our revised field site manual. We are pleased to see so many

agencies devoted to the development of the improvement of human service practice.

This has been, and continues to be, a busy and productive year for the Concentration in Human Services at SUNY New Paltz. We hope the growth and interest in our program continues. As more students graduate and emerge from educational programs like ours, the hope is that more qualified human service professionals will populate the ranks of the agencies of the Mid-Hudson Coalition and beyond.

Mid-Hudson Coalition, Inc.
24 DeLavernge Avenue
Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
845/297-8800 x101
www.midhudsoncoalition.org

Address Correction Requested



**Visit the
Mid-
Hudson
Coalition
online!**

Our recently-redesigned website includes .pdf files of the Application for Tuition Assistance, past issues of the MHC Newsletter, membership information, a directory of MHC Member Agencies, a list of the current MHC Board Members with email contact information, and much more.

Please pay us a visit at www.midhudsoncoalition.org!

MHC History - A Look Back with an Eye on the Future

(Continued from page 3)

at SUNY New Paltz but also at three local community colleges;

-Collaborated with other organizations dedicated to the support of front-line workers, such as the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP), The International Association of Child and Youth Care Workers (IACYCP), and the JFK Jr. Institute for Worker Education at CUNY;

-Continued to hold quarterly public forums to educate the public and legislative leaders to the integral relationship between an educated direct care workforce and quality care for consumers of human service;

-Held 12 successful annual conferences increasing participation from 70 to over 400 attendees, attracting major keynote speakers, workshop presenters, consumers, and organized consumer groups.

The history of the MHC is filled with exciting events and milestones, but the mission is not yet complete. The current MHC leadership, spearheaded by MHC Board Chair, Elizabeth Connolly (St. Agatha's Home for Children), is determined to continue to strategically shape the future of human services and quality care through the professionalization of the direct care workforce.

The 2002 International Conference on Practice and Professionalism, entitled *Direct Care: Making a World of Difference* is merely the latest example of the importance of the work of the MHC and the networks that it has generated in a very short period of time.