

Child Welfare Education Project CWEP NewsLine

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UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**
GRADUATE COLLEGE of SOCIAL WORK

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Arnitia Walker



November is National Adoption Month across the country. This is being done to raise awareness for children who are currently waiting for permanent homes. In the state of Texas, many activities, events and programs are being held in honor of the adoptions that are being legalized. The Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, along with other community agencies, are ensuring that children do not linger in the foster care system and they are given the opportunity to grow up with stability.

We, as professionals, must do our part in recruiting, training and providing support for adoptive parents. Careful consideration must be given regarding the selection process and the placement of children in these homes to avoid future disruptions.

Planned activities for Region 6 counties include the following:

- Harris County Juvenile Justice Center – Nov. 18 with a reception immediately following
- Montgomery County Montgomery County Courthouse – Nov. 9
- Liberty/Chambers Liberty County Courthouse – Nov. 21
- Galveston- - Galveston County Courthouse – Nov. 19
- Brazoria, Matagorda, Fort Bend – Nov. 16 in the courthouse in their county
- Austin, Waller, Colorado, Wharton – not doing a special day, but will follow regular docket



ANNOUNCEMENTS



SUPPORT AND SELF-CARE GROUP (SSG)

Mission: To give students the support team necessary for success & provide a safe space for students to process GCSW experiences to receive resources for practicing effective self-care. There will be regular meetings to allow students to connect with fellow colleagues, staff, faculty, alumni, & SW professionals.

Purpose: To enhance overall well-being of SW students at the GCSW. The aim is to help connect with others to better skill sets academically, professionally, & emotionally.

Follow:

http://www.uh.edu/socialwork/New_research/cwep/title-iv-e (scroll down to “Self-Care Center” & click the SSG link for their video)

*Amanda Rhodes, SSG President
Monit Cheung & Micol Rosen, Advisors*

CWEP MENTORS

2016 – 2017

Tovie Davis
Shaunquette Garrett
Elizabeth Wade



The stipend process can sometimes be delayed due to circumstances beyond our control. In some instances, students may have to apply for emergency loans to cover tuition & books until CWEP funds are available.

FIELD TIPS

FROM

VANESSA SHIPPARD

- ✓ Clarify internship expectations & meet regularly with your supervisor to get feedback & keep track with assignments.
- ✓ First impressions & maintaining them are important! Dress, speak, write, & behave like a professional.
- ✓ Focus on communication skills. Proofread written work carefully. When communicating with coworkers, choose respectful, tactful, & professional language at all times.

ADVISING TIP

FROM

BRUNESSIA LEWIS

Register on Time! Prior to your registration date, select your courses and place them in your basket. This strategy will save you time at registration. Good luck!

CONGRATULATIONS TO DECEMBER 2016 CWEP GRADUATES!



DeAndrea C. Brown

I started CWEP in 2014, & since then, I've had a journey that I will never forget. I learned so much, stepped out of my comfort zone, & most of all met some amazing people. Being a part of CWEP was a great support for me when I often thought I couldn't make it through. In Spring 2016, I took 15 HRS, & was honored to be amongst the few accepted to study abroad in London & Swansea. The semester was very challenging, but I completed with all A's. I pushed myself, & completed the GCSW program in 2 ½ years while maintaining outstanding stats with CPS as an adoption worker. I 'm a member of the CWEP Student & Alumni Organization & plan to reestablish the organization on campus.

After receiving my MSW, I want to gain experience in different areas of CPS. Then I'll move towards the school environment as a HS social worker. I believe it's important to be well-rounded & grow in different areas as a SW. I ultimately want to become a life coach.



DeEdra Powell

Over the past 2 years I've had the astounding opportunity to learn some great things & meet people that would forever change my life. From sleepless nights & long papers to early morning classes, I can truly say this has been a rewarding & humbling experience. Being involved with CWEP allowed me to receive an education in exchange for doing something I love – serving children & families. A special thanks to the GCSW staff for teaching me things I can use for years to come – hopefully in hospital social work. I also want to thank all involved in CWEP for being amazing & supporting me. As a result of this collaboration, I'm proud to say I'll be a graduate of the GCSW by way of hard work & team effort.

One of the many things learned in SW is that it takes a network of individuals to help you succeed. I want to thank my direct supervisor CPS Angela Rhoden, field instructors Cindy Ribenstein & Bella Alex. I can't forget Prof. Brunessia Lewis, Dr. Ada Cheung, & Prof. Donna Amtsberg. Last but not least, thank you to my amazing husband for supporting me through this entire process & my mother for encouraging me to push through. Most importantly, I thank my son for continuously motivating me to be better! And to anyone else who has provided me with words of encouragement or a listening ear, I thank you.

WHY FIELD I & II ARE NOT AT CPS

BY VANESSA SHIPPARD

- ❖ It is important for CWEP students to experience Social Work from a comprehensive perspective and how the framework applies to their work at CPS.
- ❖ CWEP students gain invaluable professional experience outside of DFPS that you might not have otherwise have a change to obtain.
- ❖ An outside agency internship makes abstract theories and classroom examples concrete by allowing CWEP students to test them in different real life work situations.
- ❖ Outside placements serve as a toll of networking resources for your clients at DFPS and gives better insight on interdisciplinary fields in child welfare.
- ❖ Field practicum settings include:
 - State Social Services
 - Community Mental Health
 - School Social Work
 - Medical Social Work
 - Immigration and Refugee Resettlement
 - Veteran Services
 - Housing and Employment Initiatives
 - Criminal Justice
 - Residential Treatment
 - Advocacy and Civil Rights Organizations
 - Services for Elderly and Disabled Persons
 - Domestic Violence Intervention and Support
 - Faith-Based Initiatives
 - Global Relief

BENEFITS OF THE WRITING CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

BY FAKIYA BLADE

CWEP STUDENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Greetings fellow CWEP colleagues, I'm a 3rd year, 2014 WEC student. I hope all of you are hanging in there and being successful in your studies. I know balancing work, school, and your personal lives is very hectic and seems impossible, but I'm here to tell you that you can do it! For many of you, I know that going back to school several years later was unplanned and you may be a little rusty on your writing skills. So I want to share that help is available and it is absolutely free! Yes, I did say free!



The GCSW grants every student access to assistance with writing skills through The Writing Center. The Writing Center offers face-to-face, one-on-one consultations and online consultations with trained Writing Consultants to work on graduate-level assignments. The consultants, who are either former UH graduates or current UH graduate students, work with you to develop, structure, and organize your thoughts and ideas into an example of academic excellence and creative expression of writing. Writing Consultants only encourage students to engage more in-depth into their writing skills and that they **DO NOT** proofread, edit, dictate, correct course-specific content, or predict what grade an assignment might earn if you utilize their services.

Writing Consultants are available for consultation through appointments either in-person or online on Mondays – Thursdays from 8am-7pm, Fridays from 8am to 4pm, and on Saturdays from 10am to 1pm. To access Writing Center services, log into your CougarNet Account and click on the Blackboard icon, then select the Writing Center tab.

I have used their online consultation services for several assignments throughout my time as a GCSW student, and I'm especially grateful for their feedback. The online consultations are the best and most convenient because you can upload your paper before the scheduled session time and the consultant will read through your paper and make suggestions, recommendations, and comments about your writing on the screen, at the same time chatting with you about their comments. You cannot get any more convenient than that!

As a fellow CWEP student, I would highly encourage you to take advantage of this service at least once during your time here. The Center is free, the consultants are APA – trained, and are experts on graduate-level papers. I wish you all much success in your academic career!

CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION GATEWAY PODCAST SERIES

CONNECTS PROFESSIONALS TO NEW IDEAS, INNOVATIONS, AND TIPS
TO IMPROVE CHILD WELFARE PRACTICES

We know that child welfare and other human service professionals are busy. But lack of time shouldn't hinder our access to new information. To connect busy professionals to unique perspectives, success stories, and tips to improve outcomes, Child Welfare Information Gateway has launched the CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION GATEWAY PODCAST SERIES. It will feature interviews and conversations that share lessons learned and advice for enhancing services to protect children and strengthen families.

Information Gateway will launch a new audio-only podcast every month. Each podcast is only 30 minutes – perfect for quick downloading for your daily commute. The podcasts will provide listeners with valuable insight on implementing new programs and innovations, collaborating with other agencies and organizations, addressing new issues and trends in child welfare, and building capacity.

The first two podcasts are available at the links below. Both feature perspectives and stories from those on the front lines of child welfare that can enhance our ability to serve. Future podcasts will include topics like Engaging Fathers and Paternal Families and Recognizing and Mitigating Secondary Traumatic Stress. We'll also feature an interview with Rafael Lopez, Commission of the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families.

“Engaging Youth in Foster Care”: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/child-welfare-podcast-engaging-youth>

“Developing and Sustaining a Parent Partner Program”:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/child-welfare-podcast-parent-partner>

Information Gateway Podcast Series: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/capacity/child-welfare-podcast-series>

For more information, visit our website: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/>

Email us: info@childwelfare.gov

Call us toll-free: 1-800-394-3366

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Heather Norcross



What is your current job position?

Hi, I'm Heather, LBSW. I'm 32-years-old and married with one son who is almost 5-years-old. We have one cat, dog, and two gerbils. All of our pets were rescued/adopted animals from Citizens for Animal Protection. I grew up in Fort Bend County, where my family resides today. I'm currently working in DFPS/CPS Adoption Prep as a CVS Specialist III.

What motivated you to join the MSW program?

I've had my LBSW since 2007, but CPS pays for the graduate program through CWEP! My son is older now and my husband and all my family are really supportive. Going to school on the weekends was a plus because it lets me have time for my family life!

Tell us about your achievements in Child Welfare?

I've worked for the State since 2008. I've worked with kiddos with special needs for five years before transferring to CPS Adoption Prep in 2013. I love working with children who are harder to place, but still search for their forever family. For example, I have a young lady who is turning 17-years-old and she was just matched with a single mother as a potential forever family!

DFPS STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Noble Smith



**What is your current job position with CPS?
How long have you been working in this
position? What prior experience(s) did you
bring with you to this position?**

Currently, I am the Interim Academy Manager for the CPS Training Academy. I have been assigned to train new CPS caseworkers and CWEP students. A job that I really enjoy! Prior to being assigned to the training academy, I was a Family Based Safety Services worker. In that position, I worked with families to reduce the risk of abuse to their children so that they may remain in the home. In this position, I got to see how families were different in many ways but all their “needs” being so similar. Their challenges to meet these needs also became my challenges!

What have been the greatest rewards working in the CPS family?

To help families realize their potential through learning new skills and how to cope with life changing situations. Usually, this is what it takes to reduce the risk of abuse to their children. Even though there are times when a child must be removed from a home and it hurts to see the pain it causes, one still knows that a good deed was done for that child. There are times when I think about a case where I rescued a child (who couldn’t speak) from an abusive home. Surprisingly, she gave me a big smile and a hug. Needless to say, this may my coming to work on that day worth every minute!! It is so gratifying to know that you made a difference in a child’s life.

What advice do you have for our CWEP students?

Approach this work with a burning desire to make a difference. Always, I repeat, “ALWAYS” remember that the decisions you make concerning a family could have a lifetime effect. Give them your best, give them your all!

CWEP STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Trang-Thu (Mimi) Duong



What is your current job position?

I'm a research assistant under the CWEP director, Arnitia Walker, and I'm the current *NewsLine* editor. I'm also the teaching assistant for CWEP courses Child Abuse and Neglect and Brief Transtheoretical Interventions. I edit, research, and support all CWEP staff members with their various projects.

What have been the greatest rewards working in the CWEP family?

So many wonderful things! But I think the most important is that I get to learn from child welfare experts. CWEP staff has worked in DFPS for many years or extensively researched DFPS and child welfare systems. CWEP staff have encouraged and supported me to use critical thinking skills and to think on my feet. It's been such a welcoming and active work environment because everyone collaborates to do a hundred different things at once. I love being a part of the CWEP team, because I get to learn about best practices and new child welfare research.

What advice do you have for our current CWEP students?

Talk to CWEP staff and alumni! They're great resources – and not just for support or networking – the people who've been through CWEP and the staff that work here have great personalities and a real passion for serving children.

CELEBRATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH (OCTOBER)

On October 14, 2016, CWEP and the GCSW Career and Professional Development Department co-sponsored a training called Assessing Domestic Violence. This training was offered to CPS employees and the general public. The speakers were GCSW Clinical Professor, Donna Amtsborg, and the actor/author, Denisha Hardeman.



Denisha Raychelle Hardeman is a professional actress, author, screenplay writer, & producer, who worked on many indie films, commercials, & television shows including “Glee” & “CSI”. She has also appeared in “Straight Outta Compton” and “Django Unchained”.

Denisha published her first book recently, “8 Lanes”, loosely based on her early years in college as a track star dealing with domestic violence, sexual assault, suicidal tendencies, addiction, & depression. This sparked the creation of a new charity, “The Un-hushed Foundation”, created to help those going through the darkness into light & to help those in need finding ways to cope with their past & follow their dreams.



Donna K. Amtsborg, LCSW is a Clinical Assistant Professor at UH GCSW & the Director of the Child Trauma Program. Donna began working with survivors of domestic violence at the Houston Area Women’s Center in the 1990’s. In 1994, she joined the District Attorneys Family Criminal Law Division as a caseworker. In 1997, she began working with the Family Violence Center of Northwest Assistance Ministries & became the Program Director in 2000.

Also in 1997, her article, *Cruelty to Animals... A Communication Form in Family Violence* was published in the Texas Speech Communication Journal. Donna is the co-founder of the county-wide PetSafe Program with the SPCA. She currently serves on the board of the Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council & was chair of the Harris County Adult Violent Death Review Team from 2005-2015.

Assistant Professor Amtsborg is in private practice specializing in equine-assisted psychotherapy & is certified in the EAGALA model. She also serves on the University Committee for EAGALA & is a Texas Stated Board-Approved Clinical Supervisor.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS CHILD WELFARE CONTRIBUTIONS CORNER

Child Welfare Contributions Corner

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

NewsLine is looking for creative, beautiful, and new interpretations of topics that intersect with child welfare.

SUBMIT FICTION, POETRY, SONG, ART, PHOTOS, ARTICLES, OR ANY OTHER CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Deadline: January 20, 2017

Prizes:

The Winner will be recognized at the Annual Celebrating CWEP Ceremony in May 2017!



Best entries will be published in CWEP's *NewsLine*.



CWCC is a program under the Title IV-E Child Welfare Education Project at the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work.



TAKING CARE OF CHILDREN'S SGT. DAVIS

WITH THE JUVENILE DIVISION AND THE SEX CRIMES UNIT

**Sergeant Bill Davis of Taking Care of Children invites you to
indulge in his new crime novel,**

Imperfect Love – Imperfect Justice

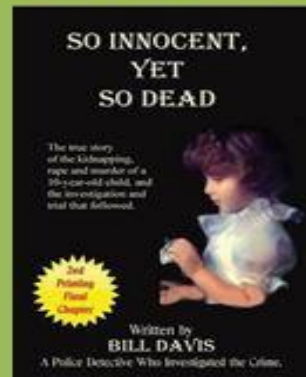
\$27.00 (including tax & shipping)



And don't forget to buy his first novel,

So Innocent, Yet So Dead

\$25.00 (including tax & shipping)



Buy both for \$46.00!

Sgt. Bill Davis can include an autograph by request!

By check: Send to Bill Davis at 8820 Blaylock Lane, Beaumont, Texas 77707.

By debit card: Call Sgt. Davis at 409-781-5726 or 409-866-0490.

NEW RESOURCES ON THE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INVENTORY



New Resources Added to the Family Engagement Inventory

Child Welfare Information Gateway updated information and resources on the Family Engagement Inventory (FEI). The FEI is an interactive web-based tool designed to provide professionals in child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, education, and early childhood education with a rich inventory of resources about family engagement and how it is defined and implemented across these fields of practice. The FEI aims to help practitioners, managers, and system leaders understand the commonalities and differences in family engagement in order to support cross-system collaboration among multiple systems often working with the same families.

Visit and explore the updated [Family Engagement Inventory](#), which features:

- The most recent information and resources about family engagement
- Up-to-date information pertaining to engaging incarcerated parents
- Current information on culturally responsive family and youth engagement
- Effective ways to use the FEI across disciplines

Download and share the updated Bulletin for Professionals [Family Engagement: Partnering With Families to Improve Child Welfare Outcomes](#).

Your feedback is important to us! Please [take the survey](#) on the FEI website and give us your input. For more information on the FEI, contact [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) at [1.800.394.3366](tel:18003943366) or info@childwelfare.gov.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
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ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

