

# Liaison

A Periodic Newsletter for Psy.D. and M.A.  
Psychology Programs at Wheaton College

Fall/Winter 2006

## Introducing *Liaison*

This is the fourth publication of *Liaison* and is designed for alumni and friends of graduate psychology programs at Wheaton College, including doctoral and master's level curriculums.

## Facts

- The Psy.D. program in clinical psychology was established in 1993 and has been continuously accredited by the American Psychological Association since 1998. This five-year program admits some 18-20 students annually.
- The M.A. program in clinical psychology, a two-year program, was established in 1977 and admits approximately 30 students each year.
- Four years ago, an additional master's degree was added in Counseling Ministries, a one-year degree for individuals who primarily work through churches or mission agencies.



Wheaton College  
For Christ and His Kingdom

## Graduate Psychology Partners with Outreach Community Center to Serve Older Adults

Although demographic data indicates that adults over the age of 65 are the fastest growing segment of the population, few graduate psychology programs offer academic or clinical training experiences to prepare students to work with this community. While Wheaton's Psy.D. Program does offer several courses relevant to serving older adults (e.g., geropsychology, neuropsychology, community psychology), no practicum or clerkship sites that focused specifically on clinical training with older adults were available for students who wanted to develop competence in this arena.

Outreach Community Center (OCC) serves an economically disadvantaged community in southeast Carol Stream. Its focus has been to address the needs of children and their families. However, OCC recognized the need to provide case management and psychological

services to older residents after several suicides of isolated and depressed seniors in their neighborhood occurred. These tragic events emphasized the critical need to expand their services to this older population.

A partnership between the Psy.D. program and OCC seemed a promising way to address both sets of concerns: expansion of services to older adults in the OCC neighborhood and establishment of a practicum/ clerkship site focusing specifically on training students to work with older adults. A grant from the Retirement Research Foundation in 2002 provided funding to develop the Older Adult Program at OCC and helped to make this partnership a reality.



*Older Adult Program outing to Morton Arboretum*

The purpose of the Older Adult Program is to identify "at risk" older adults, carry out assessment of needs and functioning of clients, provide them with linkage to existing services, and ensure continuum of care.

The partnership between the doctoral program and OCC focuses on the provision of three major types of services to seniors: 1) case management services provide assistance in the areas of finances, food, housing, medical needs, transportation, and referral for mental health issues; 2) psychological services (Mood & Memory Clinic)



Older Adult Program Weekly Shopping Trip

include psychological and neuropsychological assessments as well as individual and group therapy and prevention programs. Supervision of clinical work is provided by Dr. Helen DeVries; and 3) social and educational activities include weekly shopping trips, monthly Lunch & Learn gatherings at OCC, craft groups, exercise groups, and other periodic outings and activities.

The partnership functions from a community-based model and operates within this philosophy of service delivery. Prevention and early intervention are a focus of the program. For example, over the past two years students have provided the opportunity for interested clients to participate in an "in apartment" exercise

program, to attend chronic pain management classes, and to participate in depression prevention support groups. Services are often provided within a resident's home, and a full-time licensed clinical social worker (Linda Hawkins) provides case management services and oversees the program on site to ensure continuum of care.

The Older Adult Program has provided services

to over 200 residents since it began, with the average client age being 78.2 years. The average income of clients in the program is approximately \$750 per month, with many having significant financial



Older Adult Program Picnic

needs. Clients tend to be isolated, have chronic medical problems, and one third of clients have no one to call in an emergency. Four doctoral students have completed practicum or clerkships in the program (Malissa Kraft, Megan Oetinger, Erin Jenkins Baker, Pamela Strening), one doctoral

student (Jane Jung) and one MA student (Bernice Clark). In addition, two students have completed dissertations related to the program (Malissa and Erin), and one of these students began a full-time postdoctoral fellowship in geropsychology at the Boston VA Hospital this fall (Malissa).

## Student Perspective

Working with older adults through OCC has been a rich and meaningful experience. It has given me a unique perspective on the challenges and joys of working in a community-based setting, and has prepared me well for future service to this underserved population.

– Erin Jenkins Baker  
Psy.D. Candidate

College Community  
Partnerships for Serving  
Older Adults

## Graduate Psychology “Puente” Reaches Out to Churches in the Dominican Republic

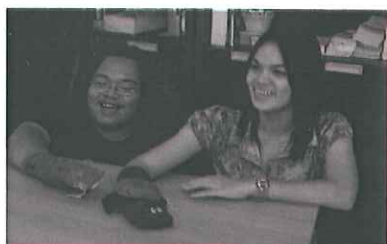
In March of 2006, a Wheaton Psy.D student, Eiko Komuro Venovic, and two Psy.D. alumni, Dr. Janelle Kwee and Dr. Alicia La Hoz, along with Dr. La Hoz's husband, Arturo, facilitated two interdenominational workshops for clergy and lay counselors on counseling skills in the Dominican Republic. Both workshops, which took place in Santo Domingo and Santiago, were attended by approximately 100 people each, and feedback from the participants and local hosts was consistently positive. The workshops were organized by local church leaders in both cities, and took place at a Catholic Convent and at an Evangelical church. Participants were awarded a certificate for completion of the workshop. The training curriculum implemented in these workshops was developed by Kwee and LaHoz in 2004 and has been continually modified to better meet the needs of participants as a result of feedback from previous workshops conducted in Nicaragua, Bolivia, Honduras, and among Latino pastors, mental health professionals, and lay counselors in Chicagoland. For the first time since Puente has been involved in facilitating counseling training workshops for Latinos in ministry, the team this year was able to provide a packet of additional readings by Kwee and LaHoz, which was specifically designed to accompany the presentations and provide further information and resources to the participants. The group also began to collect data to study perceptions of competence among clergy and church-based lay counselors. Upon further analysis, this data will be utilized to improve the training unit on ethics for paraprofessional caregivers.

## Alumni Profile: Storytelling with Sock Puppets in Thailand

Tricia Sykes, M.A. graduate of 2000, spent the last year in Thailand where she served as a counseling consultant for a Thai not-for-profit group that exists to meet the psycho-social needs of children tsunami survivors. The organization called “Saidek Caravan” (translated “Children’s Caravan”), travels in mobile play therapy vans to schools in the three hardest tsunami-hit areas in southern Thailand, doing play and art therapy with traumatized children. The picture below depicts two children engaged in play therapy with sock puppets. In the picture, the children are telling a story with puppets in which the shark is chasing the turtle away. As Tricia processed the story later with the children, they talked about how they had felt similar to the puppets in their own tragedies. If you are interested in learning more about this type of opportunity, feel free to contact Tricia at [burlapsand@juno.com](mailto:burlapsand@juno.com).



*Eiko Komuro Venovic, M.A., Arturo La Hoz, and Alicia La Hoz, Psy.D. presenting to churches in the Dominican Republic on marriage counseling.*



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*Tricia Sykes, M.A. '00 using sock puppets to tell stories with Thai children who were survivors of the 2004 tsunami.*

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### Alumni News Corner

- Congratulations to Greg Ryan, Psy.D. and his wife Joy who had a baby boy, James Gregory Ryan II on June 1, 2006. Greg is continuing his work as a psychologist in the public schools. He has also started a part time private practice dubbed Charis (Greek word for grace) Counseling Center. He partners with local churches to provide affordable counseling for parishioners.
- Congratulations to Tracy Lee, Psy.D., who was married to Bill Bemister August 2, 2006. She has changed her name to Tracy Bemister.
- Congratulations to Thomas Knudsen, Psy.D., who recently received ABPP credentialing.

\*\*Alumni please send news and announcement for the next Liaison to [tracy.w.lee@wheaton.edu](mailto:tracy.w.lee@wheaton.edu).

## Announcements

- Special thanks to Dr. Carlos Pozzi who served 11 years at Wheaton College as Director of Clinical Training. He moved to Pennsylvania over the summer to take a job as Director of Psychological Services at the Hershey School. Dr. Tracy Lee Bemister is acting Director of Clinical Training for this year while the department engages in a national search to fill the position.
- Welcome to Dr. Jennifer Gorham who is serving as the Assistant Director of Clinical Training for this year.
- Welcome to Dr. Janelle Nelson Kwee and Dr. JoAnn Nishimoto who are serving one year appointments as graduate psychology professors.

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