

MEDIAWATCH

July-August 2007



BLACK ENTERPRISE

FRIENDS CAN WORK TOGETHER

By Stephanie Young
August 6, 2007

For **Rachelle “Shelly” Hutchinson** and **Vanessa Robinson-Dooley**, it was only a matter of time before their personal and professional lives intertwined. The two met at the University of Georgia, where they took most of their classes together. At the time, Hutchinson was working for the Department of Family and Children Services in the Child Protective Services Department and Robinson-Dooley spent long hours running her own consulting firm catering to social service and nonprofit agencies.

In 2002, the Atlanta-based social workers joined forces to create the Social Empowerment Center, a multifaceted organization that provides a wealth of services, including child and family assessments, in-home family therapy, and cultural diversity training for private organizations and for Georgia's Division of Family and Children Services Department of Juvenile Justice.

Still, the path to success wasn't an easy one. The women knew they had chosen a particularly competitive field, one where finding qualified, experienced employees would be just as challenging as bringing in stable income. Robinson-Dooley, who has a doctorate in social work, and Hutchinson, who has a master's in social work, made sure to find professional, well-educated staffers to represent their growing company, including students working toward their doctorate.

After billing just \$2,000 the first year, the partners realized that the best way to grow was through word of mouth. And it grew-fast. Currently, the center is listed as an approved Comprehensive Child and Family Assessment/Wrap-Around Provider for the state of Georgia. The exposure on the state's website has given the company an exceptional boost in profits and reputation. Last year the organization grossed \$250,000 and is on track to bring in \$350,000 this year.

Hutchinson and Robinson-Dooley chalk up their success to a willingness to cater to their clients' specific needs. “We have provided supportive services to our well-established clients when their staff is overwhelmed,” says Hutchinson.

“There are about five counties that we are billing on a monthly basis,” Hutchinson explains. “The state doesn't really have the time to complete family assessments, to see why the child is in foster care, what the family history is, what resources the family has, if they should just jump toward adoption, etc.”

In this niche, the longtime friends have found a formula that works.

Hutchinson, a New Orleans native, emphasizes the desire to keep the organization home-based to allow staff members to spend ample time at home with their families. Both women are married with young children.

“We were looking for something where we could use the skills and education that we had, but we also didn't want a traditional nine-to-five job either,” says Hutchinson. “It was completely workable from home, and we made it so that the people who work for us can do the same.” However, the duo maintains an office in Lilburn, Georgia, for meetings and central visits.

These days, Hutchinson, 36, and Robinson-Dooley, 38, can add a new title to their relationship: first friends, then co-workers, and now neighbors. The two women live around the corner from each other in Lawrenceville, Georgia.

TOP HEADLINES

The New York Times

SECOND ACTS: STAGE TO SOCIAL WORK

By Roberta Hershenson • July 29, 2007

Patricia Ben Peterson has the stage-filling charisma of a Broadway veteran. For years she was a Broadway actress, but she gave up acting nearly four years ago to go back to school for a master's in social work. At an open house at Fordham University, she heard about the field of geriatric social work and remembered her close relationship with her grandmother. Over the years people have returned to their original career pursuits in hopes of finding deeper meaning. People are entering the field later – at an average age of 34 (from 2000 to 2004), compared with 26 (before 1960), says **Tracy Whitaker**, director of the Center for Workforce Studies of the National Association of Social Work. Dr. Whitaker also notes that demand is expected to grow as the number of elderly Americans increases.

To read the entire article, please visit:
www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/education/edlife/socialwork.html (login required).

BACK TO SCHOOL – ARE YOUR KIDS TOO SCHEDULED?

August 29, 2007



“Extra curricular activities are an excellent pursuit for children,” says **Tony Piro**, a social worker at Mount Auburn Hospital. “But, like anything else, there needs to be a balance and overdoing it can be harmful. We see this in particular with teenagers.” He says that parents and children need to keep their priorities straight – school, family, work, social activities. Parents need to keep an eye on their children’s stress levels and talk to them about how they’re feeling about all they have going on in their lives. And remember that just like adults, children need down time too. Make sure that there is the chance to read a book or see a movie. Extra curricular activities can help children develop social skills, but it can also add stress to their lives.

SOCIAL WORKER WINS WORLD SERIES OF POKER

July 18, 2007



California social worker **Jerry Yang** battled his way through thousands of competitors to win the World Series of Poker. Jerry notes he used his professional skills to read

his opponents. He says that he will donate 10 percent of his \$8.25 million purse to charities like the Make-A-Wish Foundation and the Ronald McDonald House.

DEATH AND DYING: WHEN IS IT TIME TO LET GO?

August 1, 2007



End of life issues top the list of ethical dilemmas hospitals face as medical progress enables doctors to extend an endangered life to the hard-to-determine point where they may actually only be dragging out death. At Georgetown University, health care professionals are trained on bioethics. But, determining futility can be a challenge for the family and for the professional. “Our hospital attempted a few years ago to write a policy on futility,” **Mary Ruckdeschel**, a social worker from Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, said at the Georgetown course. “We were never able to do this because people could not agree on the definition of futility.”

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HELP DURING THE HOT DAYS OF SUMMER?

By Mark Strassmann • August 14, 2007



Social worker **Erica Mason** carries a pair of life savers – a gift of two fans – to people in Atlanta who have no air conditioning. Mason is worried about the rising heat in an apartment – up to 100 degrees. Ms. Mason notes that many times, when people cannot afford their bills, they have to cut back on running high electricity appliances like air conditioners. She works with her clients to understand that they will get sick or worse – they could die if their apartment temperatures rise too much.

The New York Times

AS LOVED ONES FIGHT ON, WAR DOUBTS ARISE

By Ian Urbina • July 15, 2007

Many military families are experiencing eroding morale because of several factors: longer and multiple deployments, the continued chaos in Iraq, and the growing death toll. Many families have stopped supporting President Bush and this entire war. However, that doesn't mean that they stop supporting their loved ones. “Many of these soldiers feel they can't leave Iraq because the job isn't done,” notes **Jaine Darwin**, director of Strategic Outreach to Families. “But they still feel like it's time to get out.” Strategic Outreach to Families helps families manage their stress and help prepare for deployment.

SOCIAL WORKERS MAKE LOCAL NEWS

MARRIAGE CLASS LAW HAS COUNSELOR IN ITS CORNER

Houston Chronicle

By Polly Ross Hughes • July 3, 2007

Carol Miller, director of government relations for the National Association of Social Workers, Texas Chapter, has some reservations about a bill before the Texas legislature calling for couples to take pre-nuptial classes prior to marriage. “I have reservations about the data and research used to suggest if we just get low-income Texans married, they won’t be poor anymore. I think that’s an unrealistic expectation. The causes of poverty and unemployment and underemployment are more complex than ‘Let’s get them married and keep them married.’”

FOR YOUNG CANCER PATIENTS, A REGULAR PROM

The Associated Press

By Chelsea J. Carter • July 22, 2007

The music wafted out of the ballroom and down the hallway as the prom-goers broke away for portraits against the backdrop of a medieval castle. At this dance at the Children’s Hospital of Orange County, patients became dancers and everything was normal for one night. Patients 15 and older were allowed to invite dates and friends. Parents could bring their son or daughter and take a look around, but then they had to leave. “That’s a hard one for some parents. I’ve had a couple get angry with me when I tell them they can’t come,” says **Mitzi Bennett**, a clinical social worker who organizes the prom. “You know they go through this together, and they share everything. So they often want to share this with their child, too.”

COUNCIL ORGANIZES TO ATTACK CHILDHOOD POVERTY

The Burlington Free Press

By Nancy Remsen • July 26, 2007

Half of the babies born in Vermont each year begin life in low-income households. The Vermont Child Poverty Council’s plan is to cut the child poverty rate in half within 10 years. “We know poverty is a barrier,” said **Rep. Ann Pugh**, D-South Burlington, a social worker. “I just want to remove all the barriers we can so kids in Vermont can grow up and be as productive as they can be.”

OVERCOMING FINANCIAL INFIDELITY

KSDK News Channel 5 (MO)

July 26, 2007

Deceit can take on many forms in a relationship and some experts believe that financial infidelity can be more harmful than a sexual affair. **Arlene Miller**, a licensed clinical social worker who counsels people with money and gambling problems, says financial infidelity is not like a drug or alcohol addiction. “Typically what happens in addiction with drugs and alcohol is once you stop the drinking or drugging, the damages stop. Once you stop the financial infidelity, it doesn’t stop. The credit card bill still rolls in...the bills still come in.”

TOILING FOR HOPE, FAMILY

Lexington Herald-Leader

By Valarie Honeycutt Spears • July 29, 2007

Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates, said social workers who contact his agency are looking for the basic tools to do their job. They want accessible, quality technology to keep track of cases. Given the recent tragedies in Kentucky, there is a real opportunity for legislators and administrators to let the voices of front-line social workers influence policy.

IT TAKES MANY PIECES TO BUILD A BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN FOR A LITTLE GIRL WITH AUTISM

The Pittsburgh Post Gazette

By Tina Calabro • August 22, 2007

All children need assistance with their transition to kindergarten, but especially those with special needs. “Parents of children with special needs have lots of anxiety about kindergarten,” explained **Lisa Tagmyer**, social worker for elementary schools in Shaler, PA. Each school year, Ms. Tagmyer helps about 30 students make the transition from early intervention services to kindergarten. “Parents are not sure of what to expect and I can appreciate and help with that.”

HEALING HEARTS

The Salt Lake Tribune

By Glenda Galbraith • August 23, 2007

In Salt Lake County last year, more than 1,400 accounts of abuse were reported to the Children’s Justice Centers of Salt Lake County. This facility works to protect the interests of the child, the family and society, tracking the progress and outcome of those interests over time. “The goal of treatment is to integrate the experience into the tapestry of who they are, learn from it but not have it define who they are,” says social worker **Julie Bradshaw**.

TIMELY NEWS



HEALTH CARE CRISIS

Health care is an issue that cuts across all areas of social work practice. It wields great influence in politics and will play a large role in the 2008 presidential elections. NASW chose *Hope and Health – Help Starts Here* as the theme for Social Work Month 2007 because someone’s health makes all the difference.

HEALTH CARE IN CRISIS

By Fran Smith • July 2007



In America, we treasure the freedom to care for ourselves and our families as we see fit. But the ever-escalating costs of health care – and the shrinking number of employers that provide coverage – are chipping away at that freedom, and shaking the confidence that you can protect your family’s health, in wellness and in illness. Every day brings headlines about the soaring costs of treatment and the plight of the 45 million Americans – one in six – who have no insurance. Congress considers legislation to give coverage to the 9 million children who don’t have it. Everyone recognizes that the current system is a mess and getting worse.

“Uninsured folks are just like everyone else,” says **Sarah Penna**, a hospital social worker and an activist with the Maryland Health Care for All! Coalition, a grassroots advocacy group. “The have jobs. They live in your neighborhoods. They shop at your grocery store.” As part of a push for state reform, Penna recently documented the struggles of Maryland’s uninsured. “This is not an issue of poverty. It’s an issue for everyone.”

To read more of Redbook’s analysis of the health care crisis, visit: www.redbookmag.com.

HEALTH INSURANCE IS A LUXURY FOR SOME



By Dianna M. Nanez • August 20, 2007

An April report by the Arizona Hospital and Health Care Association stated that nearly 1 million Arizonans, including 262,350 children, do not have health insurance. **Stephanie Handy**, a social worker from Mesa, said that health care is one of her biggest personal and political concerns. “I have seen so many of my clients without health insurance. I never thought I would be one of them too,” she said. Handy said that a few years ago she left the job market to care for her grandparents and the financial strain prohibits her from affording health insurance. While working residents are struggling with health-care costs, Arizona continues to see the number of people relying on AHCCCS, the state’s health-care program for low-income residents, rise. AHCCCS reported paying for the delivery of more than half of the babies born last year in Arizona.

GRANT TO EASE HEALTH WOES

By Mary Gail Hare • July 8, 2007



A \$625,000 federal grant has been awarded to Harford and Baltimore counties to help address health problems among the homeless. “We will work with the hospital system to provide a primary care clinic through its mobile van several times a month at least six sites,” said **Pat Balducci**, a clinical social worker who is supervisor of health services for the Harford County Health Department. “It will mean we can do thorough medical assessments. Many homeless have serious health issues that have never been attended to.” Ms. Balducci notes that many times this is an invisible population that includes veterans, women, children and ex-offenders.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR/OP-EDS

DENTAL PROGRAM IS GREATLY APPRECIATED

Fond du Lac Reporter • July 5, 2007

Thank you, Fond du Lac County Board for helping to protect the children of our community by providing a safety net for families on Medical Assistance.

The lack of dental care for children on Medical Assistance comes up at every turn. It has been exasperating for all involved.

I am proud of our local government today as a citizen of this community and as a social worker.

-**Bethany Rusch**, executive director, Family Resource Center of Fond du Lac County

COMMUNITY INPUT IS NEEDED TO PROTECT KIDS

Honolulu Advertiser • July 27, 2007

I am responding to the letter that felt it was inappropriate for community members to be the first eyes and ears of the child protective system.

When I was a medical social worker, I found that people waited far too long to call an ambulance. The same is true with calling Child Welfare Services. It is an organization staffed by social workers and human services professionals precisely because its first mission is to assess the situation, protect the child and help the family solve their problems so that they can resume effective parenting. As the saying goes, "it takes a village to raise a child." It also takes a community to protect one.

- **Mary S. Sheridan**, professor and program chair, social work, Hawai'i Pacific University

EFFECT OF CONVERSION THERAPIES QUESTIONED

Maryland Gazette • August 2, 2007

High school is terrifying enough for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people without divisive groups like Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays challenging a curriculum that may make it easier for them to be accepted by their peers.

The National Association of Social Workers, in its policy statement on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender issues states: Sexual orientation conversion therapies assume that homosexual orientation is both pathological and freely chosen. No data demonstrates that reparative conversion therapies are effective, and in fact they may be harmful.

- **Sean Lawlor**, Baltimore

TURNING TRAGEDY INTO HOPE

The Washington Post • August 14, 2007

The beautifully written August 5 Close to Home response to the Virginia Tech tragedy stood out in my mind. I appreciate Michael Bishop's compassion, not only for the innocent victims lost but for the "33rd victim, the paranoid young man."

As a mental health worker in the public mental health system for 22 years, I applaud Bishop's suggestion that two or three classrooms in Norris Hall be devoted to international peace and crime prevention. I respectfully suggest an additional dimension, perhaps a corner devoted to education, awareness and advocacy regarding the mentally ill in our society who so often go unnoticed and untreated until a tragedy occurs.

- **Martha Skinker**, Warrenton. The writer is a licensed clinical social worker at Fauquier Behavioral Healthcare.

MEDIA TIPS

GUIDELINES FOR WRITING OP-ED PIECES

An op-ed combines the timeliness of a news story with a personal voice. Op-eds should be readable and engaging. These are opinion pieces. They usually run 750-800 words (although can be up to 1500 words for a weekend section or magazine). As op-eds are short, they are usually limited to making just a few main points.

The following are some tips:

TAKE A STAND

Op-ed editors prefer submissions that are strong in their viewpoint. An op-ed is likely to be published if the stand or opinion is unique, rather than just adding to the chorus of similar viewpoints. Any time an op-ed can shatter the prevailing wisdom on any given issue, editors will be more interested.

KEEP THE WRITING SIMPLE

Short, declarative sentences work best. Try to use a natural voice, as though you were talking to a good friend. Paragraphs should usually contain no more than two or three sentences.

KEEP IT CURRENT AND FIND A NEWS HOOK

The news cycle is becoming faster and shorter than ever. It used to be that op-ed pages lagged about one week behind the news pages. Now the analysis of a significant news story is usually one to three days behind. A unique take on an older news story also has a good chance of being published. Anniversaries or pending legislation that is being hotly debated in the press, for example, can make good news hooks.

PROVIDE SOLUTIONS

Editorials that criticize current practices and policies but offer no solutions or new ideas are much less likely to get published. Editors look for creative solutions from academics who are researching public policy issues.

USE EXAMPLES

Make your piece visceral, human and memorable. Use a few good examples.

STRUCTURE

Move from a specific problem to a broader public issue. A good place to start is with the personal impact a given policy or problem has on people. Personalization is more likely to get people interested in a topic that might otherwise be seen as esoteric and not connected to their daily lives.

-From Harvard University Press Office

PRESS RELEASES

NASW PRESS RELEASES (JULY/AUGUST 2007)

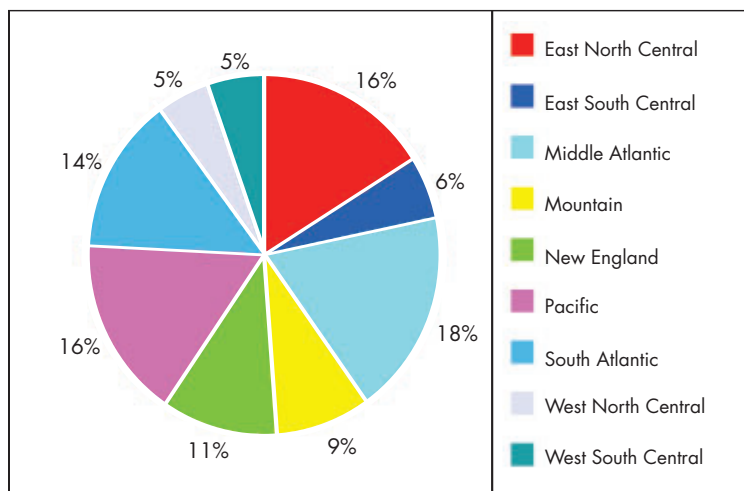
- Hill Briefing Explores Social Work Safety Issues (July 17, 2007)
- NASW and CMSA Seek Comments on Factors Impacting Case Loads (August 15, 2007)
- Social Work Student Amy Krentzman Receives Jane B. Aron Doctoral Fellowship (August 24, 2007)
- Social Work Student Anna Zendell Receives Eileen Blackey Doctoral Fellowship (August 24, 2007)
- NASW Foundation Announces Consuelo W. Gosnell Memorial Scholarship (August 24, 2007)
- Social Work Student Pamela Smith Receives Verne LaMarr Lyons Memorial Scholarship (August 24, 2007)
- Social Workers Support Human Rights and Social Justice for Detainees (August 30, 2007)

Individual Story Pitches/Press Requests

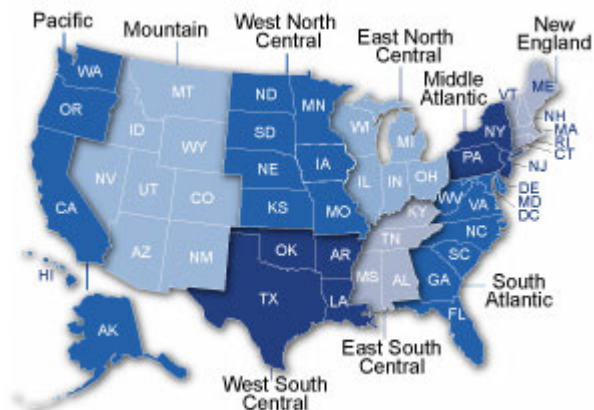
- **Lynn Hagan** was interviewed for a story in *Health Magazine* about beating holiday stress. This article will run in the December issue.
- **Daniel Buccino** was interviewed by *Univision* about addiction rehabilitation programs.
- **Judith Matz** was interviewed for *WebMD* about body image and overeating.
- **Joanne Baum** offered parents tips on embracing the toddler and preschool stage of parenthood in a radio interview with *The Parent's Journal*.
- **Caitlin Ryan** is consulting *ABC 20/20* on a show they are producing called "How Young is too Young?" relating to young children and homosexuality.

COVERAGE STATISTICS

July/August 2007



Source: Bacon's MediaSource



Total Articles for July – August 2007
466 articles

Reminder – Additional media coverage of the social work profession can be found in the Social Work in the Public Eye section of the NASW News, on www.HelpStartsHere.org and on the Social Workers in the News page of www.socialworkers.org.