

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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This Spring Volume 17, Number 2 issue is the first of our two general issues of *Reflections* for 2011. Instead of focusing on a specific theme, the general issues are collections of manuscripts that have been submitted, reviewed, sometimes revised, and then accepted by our volunteer executive and editorial board. Our board members are listed on the inside cover.

Our Spring 2011 issue begins with an article that has the unusual title, "Getting to No." This is Nicholas Singman's compelling narrative of a therapeutic relationship with a client he suspects may have tried to run him over with a car. He describes how he was nonetheless seized by a hope to be present with her, as he enables us to be present with him in a story he describes as quite possibly being about love and hope.

While working at a youth and family agency, Arlene Reilly-Sandoval becomes friends with a colleague who is diagnosed with end-stage liver disease. We've all been in the situation where someone says in passing, "How are you?" and walks away before we can reply. Her article, "Uncommon Strength: A Tale of the Art of Living," puts that dynamic into context, revealing courage, humor, and compassion.

From interpersonal relationships we move to one woman's challenge to find her place in a religious community. Carla Naumberg is a patrilineal Jew, because she has a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother. This gives her a religious and cultural identity, but not a religious status. She takes us through her confrontation with *halakha* (Jewish law) about who can be a Jew, her identity as a social worker framed by the NASW Code of Ethics, and how she found her own values through the struggle.

Master of Social Work student Elizabeth Mitchell and Professor Regina T. P. Aguirre teach us the meaningful concept of "dar a la

luz," which in Spanish means "to give birth" and literally means "give to the light." This is a remarkable story of growth of a graduate social work student whose practicum required the integration of clinical skills and research skills in a phenomenological study with people bereaved by suicide. The complex lessons learned and painstakingly shared by student and faculty provide us with new ways of thinking about turning losses into gains in their article on "The Birthing of a Social Worker through a Phenomenological Study of Suicide Research."

Melissa Hensley's article on "Creating Conditions for Client and Self-Empowerment: My Experience with a Consumer Advisory Board" describes the numerous roles she experienced as a social worker, doctoral student, leadership consultant, and mental health peer-helper. Her narrative validates my suggestion that the turtle should be the official mascot of the social work profession: we are soft on the inside, tough on the outside, our progress is slow, and we make progress only when we stick our necks out. Hensley's description of resiliency on both micro and macro levels is compelling.

Staying with macro perspectives, Suzanne Michael and Julie Cooper Altman describe "University and Community Partnerships: The Challenges of Collaborative Knowledge Creation." Collaboration is well-intentioned, but often it becomes more like competition when the stakes may be too high for mutuality to be realized in a meaningful way. When the goal is emotionally charged, such as their focus on serving diverse immigrant populations, collaboration can be even more complex and perplexing. Michael and Cooper detail their challenges and offer specific lessons learned that are recognizable and replicable.

Joanne Riebschleger and Brittany Fila Anderson share the multi-level impact of a three-month MSW field experience in India.

Student Anderson reports her own growth through the privilege of working with rural women in an isolated, impoverished, mountain area, while her faculty advisor describes the power of the learning experience on her professional growth as an educator. The individual experiences grow experientially and exponentially when the professor has the opportunity to advocate for program expansion, as described in "The Learning Impact of a Social Work Student's International Education Experience."

In "A Matter of the Heart/The Heart of the Matter: A Social Worker in Cardio-Rehab Group Work," Gregory Gross details the aftermath of a surviving a massive arterial blockage. Part of his recovery is participation in a group that is quite different from anything this experienced leader of social work with groups had ever experienced. He shares with us the lessons he learned about group work and about hearts.

On the subject of social work with groups, perhaps you are reading this issue either at or after attending the 33<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Social Work with Groups in Long Beach, California. *Reflections* is inviting guest editors or co-guest editors for a special issue on Social Work with Groups. Please contact us if you are interested in guest editing. We are also seeking manuscripts and guest editors for topics related to bullying and working with military families.

We are delighted with the positive responses to our January 2011 call for guest editors for special issues on Field Education and on Kinship Care. Please see page 13 in this issue for the Field Education call for papers, with thanks to Professor Denice Goodrich Liley and Professor Martha Kirkendall Wilson for their leadership.

For our special issue on Kinship Care, we have a unique team to guest edit. CSULB School of Social Work Professor Yolanda Green, who contributed to the 2008 *Reflections* special issue on end of life caregiving, will be joined by Professor Emeritus Donna D. Petras (see Editorial Board). For the first time, we're including a third person on our guest editing team: Valerie Lee is a new M.S.W., who is a kinship caregiver raising

her young brother. The call for papers will be published in our Summer 2011 special issue focusing on social work in Ghana, guest edited by Professor Brenda McGadney from Sienna Heights University.

For this Spring issue, our illustrator CSULB Art Professor Robin Richesson created a series of watercolor and gouache paintings. While the imagery is not intended to have a specific representational interpretation, the use of vibrant color and organic form is meant to be evocative of renewal and transformation.

We hope you find *Reflections*, from the cover through the last page, to be valuable. And when you get to the subscription page at the end, please subscribe if you don't already, or purchase a subscription as a gift for someone special.

As always, your comments are welcomed. Please e-mail: [epasztor@csulb.edu](mailto:epasztor@csulb.edu). Best wishes, and thanks!

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