

Child Welfare Education Project: CWEP NewsLine

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National Adoption Month

Theme of 2017: TEENS NEED FAMILIES, NO MATTER WHAT

The theme highlighted the importance of identifying well-prepared and committed families for the thousands of teenagers in foster care. Many of these young people are less likely to be adopted, often because of their age, and will too often age out of the system without a stable support system. Securing lifelong connections for these teens, legally and emotionally, is an urgent need and critical component of their future achievement and overall well-being.

For 2017, we have pulled together valuable resources to help child welfare agencies build an effective response system, which is a vital component of ensuring a strong pool of adoptive families who are equipped and prepared to parent teenagers.



What is National Adoption Month?

National Adoption Month is an initiative of the Children's Bureau with a goal to increase national awareness and bring attention to the need for permanent families for children and youth in the U.S. foster care system.

History of National Adoption Month

For over two decades, National Adoption Month has been promoted and celebrated every November in communities across the country. Many national, State, and local agencies as well as foster, kinship care, and adoptive family groups will help spread the word through programs, events, and activities that help raise awareness for thousands of children and youth in foster care who are waiting for permanent, loving families.

1976:
Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis announced an Adoption Week to promote awareness of the need for adoptive families for children in foster care.

1995:
President Clinton expanded the awareness week to the entire month of November

2008:
President Bush provides an explanation of National Adoption Month in Spanish.

1984:
President Reagan proclaimed the first National Adoption Week.

1998:
President Clinton directed the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop a plan to expand the use of the Internet as a tool to find homes for children waiting to be adopted from foster care.

Director's Corner



Arnitia Walker
CWEP Director

In light of the recent storms in our area, many social workers took on the tasks of helping others rebuild and regroup from overwhelming crisis situations. Many volunteered in areas of the social work profession where clients may have lacked knowledge or skills, however, thanks to their high level of commitment and desire to help others, they were able to provide adequate services to clients in need. A number of these social workers were also personally affected by the storms and their damage.

In the field of social work, we oftentimes tend to look after others while not taking out the time to take care of ourselves. Social workers handle stressful situations and care for others, not only during storms and their aftermath but in the work that they do on a daily basis. Research shows that professionals in the social work field suffer emotionally and physically which is most likely caused by the nature of the work that they do.

That is why self-care is critical and necessary. Ways to take care of yourself include regular exercise, sleep and meditation. Because social work can tend to be intense and fast-paced, most may feel that self-care can sometimes be unrealistic. As social work professionals, our skills, i.e. decision making, critical thinking, etc. may not be as effective if we are on the verge of burnout or are suffering from compassion fatigue. It is important that you take care of yourself so that you will not only provide much needed services and resources to the clients that you serve, but so that you can do so with a healthy mind and body.

Announcements & Staff Tips

Congratulations!

Graduate List:

December 2017

Kathryn Barrackman
Angela Mason
Heather Norcross



May 2018

Erika Estey (Settles)



Staff Tips ☺

Advising Tips:

Being proactive will save time in the long run!

Brunessia Lewis

Field Placement Tips:

- ✓ Be Confident
- ✓ Be humble
- ✓ Network
- ✓ Learn as much as you can
- ✓ Address issues/concerns immediately
- ✓ Know expectations

Vanessa Shippard

Student Spotlight:



Cari Schroeder
CWEP Student

I have been employed with DFPS for 17 years with the last 12 of those years being in the Foster and Adoptive Home Development (FAD) program. My primary job functions are the licensing and monitoring foster and adoptive homes for child safety & compliance and matching adoptive families with children who are free for adoption. I love my job and enjoy not only being a support to the family's I serve, I am proud to ensure that children placed in our foster and adoptive homes have a safe, nurturing, and stable family setting where all of their needs are met and receiving the best possible care. Over the years I have always had an interest in the MSW program but due to having small children and living in an outlying county, attending evening classes at the UH main campus was not feasible. When I learned that that the GCSW began offering a hybrid program, I jumped at the opportunity to join the MSW program. Being a newly single parent I knew this new endeavor would be challenging, but my children have been more supportive than I could have imagined and are my motivation. Throughout my tenure with the agency I have served on work groups, mentored incoming workers, worked with hundreds of families and children, but the most rewarding aspect of my job is seeing permanency achieved for foster children and being a part in creating a "forever" family. Participating in this program this first year has already taught me so much about social work that I did not know previously. I am grateful for the opportunity to expand my knowledge in order to better serve the clients I will work with in the future.

Alumni Spotlight: Fakiya Blade



Fakiya Blade
CWEP Alumni

1. What is your current job position?

My current job position is a Preparation for Adult Living Specialist IV with TDFPS/CPS.

2. How did CWEP or your MSW program prepare you for your job?

Due to my many years of tenure with the agency, my six and a half years of field experience really seemed to help me easily understand the coursework within the MSW program. It appears that did the program in reverse and now began learning about the coursework, methods, principles and skills, and how, why and when they were used in the field with our clients. The MSW program also assisted me on how to confidently utilize critical thinking skills, apply appropriate theory methods and effectively apply crisis intervention skills when necessary in difficult situations.

3. Tell us about your achievements in your work.

This past May 2017, I was honored with the Jane Addams Unity Award for the GCSW Student Association Awards at my graduation ceremony. In May 2015, I was honored and recognized by DFPS as a Shining Star and a short bio about myself and why I was selected was published in the DFPS weekly newsletter on 05/06/2015. I was also awarded with a gold star pin by our former DFPS Commissioner, Judge Specia.

4. What advice do you have for our current CWEP students?

Some points of advice that I would like to pass along to current CWEP students is that:

- You cannot do this program along! Please develop some strong support systems especially with someone or a few students from your cohort. They will be your backbone and support through the trying and tough times.
- Try to complete assignments early and do not procrastinate! Due to your careers with the agency and personal life things are always going to pop up but the assignments, tests, papers, projects, etc. are not going to disappear. Life happens!
- Do not be afraid or too ashamed to ask for help. Our professors and GCSW Staff are very polite and understanding and will try their best to work with you, but just do not wait until the last minute!

Staff Spotlight



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

I am currently working as a Graduate Research Assistant for CWEP, a position I have had for about a year and a half now. Prior to working in this position, I had been a part-time junior research assistant in the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies for two years. Being a RA with the CWEP has been a wonderful experience for me to grow personally and professionally.

2. What have been the greatest rewards working with CWEP?

Working in CWEP has been a rewarding journey. Through assisting in research projects, I can confidently apply classroom knowledge into practice. I enjoy the process of learning different research techniques, such as research design, SPSS, and data analysis. It is my honor to learn from Dr. Cheung and to be part of the CWEP team.

3. What advice do you have for our CWEP students?

I want to thank my fellow social workers who devote to work for the wellbeing of vulnerable children and families. My advice for CWEP students is to utilize the resource offered by the GCSW. Besides learning about social work in classroom, it is a great idea to attend conferences, workshops, networking events, and even study abroad programs to learn more about different aspects of social work.