



## **International Network for School Social Work**

<http://internationalnetwork-schoolsocialwork.htmlplanet.com>

Contact [mhuxtable@olympus.net](mailto:mhuxtable@olympus.net)

### **Electronic Newsletter April 2015**

Editor: Marion Huxtable

### **What do school social workers do?**

In about 50 countries school social workers help school children succeed in school, but how do they do this? A wide range of problems prevents children succeeding in school. Typically the problems show up as poor behavior, poor achievement and poor daily attendance. Far from having a single cause, these problems develop out of a combination of troubles in the child's life including situations at home, at school, in the community and within the child. The school social

#### **Ana Bonilla-Galdamez NASW Virginia 2014 social worker of the year**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SxDCBDVajU>

A school social worker describes her work with youth who face many obstacles in schools. The video shows how her belief in the students conveys a confident attitude towards them that is the crucial ingredient in helping them to overcome serious obstacles in their lives.

worker must be flexible in her approach and have varied skills for handling every kind of 21<sup>st</sup> Century problem that can lead to lack of success at school. The fundamental approach consists of using strengths in the client's social system to resolve problems. Since there is no single solution to complex problems, the school social worker selects and adapts interventions that suit the situation. Recent news items from around the world show school social work interventions and highlight the importance of having faith in the child's ability to overcome life's difficulties.

### **New Zealand: Social Workers in Schools**

<http://www.edgazette.govt.nz/Articles/Article.aspx?ArticleId=8765>

An article in the New Zealand Education Gazette gives a detailed account of how a school social worker in Wairarapa helped an angry 8-year old boy who was on the brink of being kicked out of school. Social worker Viv Lyster used creative techniques that are practical and suited to the age of the child. She visited the home, sent text messages to the child's parents, talked daily with the teacher and she got results. The boy was not suspended or "stood down" again. Viv works in four schools, so like school social workers everywhere she juggles many cases and works with many teachers. Like the other school social workers in this newsletter issue, the key to success is her attitude of believing in the child and

*In New Zealand, Social Work in Schools (SWiS) is a school-based community social work service that places a community social worker in low-decile primary and intermediate schools. Child, Youth and Family fund NGOs to run the SWiS service, so that children and families who are struggling can get the help they need early. The aim is to see safe, socialised children with improved wellbeing, a strong sense of identity, and who are fully engaged in school.*

working with the whole system, rather than expecting the child to do all the changing. Schools appreciate school social workers who work closely with them. Viv's school Principal said, "Viv works alongside the parents and has a relationship with home ... She creates relationships with parents that's hard for us to do because often we are seen as the 'authority' which goes back to the parents' own experience of school. Viv breaks those barriers down and they tell her things. She's able to effect a great deal of change." The article describes some programs that Viv has instituted.

## **Singapore: Ten schools to get officers trained in social work**

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/10-schools-to-get/1663722.html>

Starting this year ten schools in Singapore have their own student welfare officer to help keep troubled children and youth engaged in school. These social work trained professionals will reach out to the youth and work with them on personal issues, such as obsessive video-gaming, a current issue that is interfering with student's success in school. The social workers will work closely with families and assist them in obtaining community resources and social services for family problems, while helping the family to support the youth's education.

### **Mrs. Stacy Colgan Named National 2015 Social Worker of the Year**

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/naperville-sun/community/chi-ugc-article-mrs-stacy-colgan-named-national-2015-social-2015-04-13-story.html>

*Mrs. Beth Lind, Schiesher Principal, said of Mrs. Colgan, "Stacy Colgan is a remarkable social worker. She has the genuine ability to connect with students, families, and staff that goes beyond a job description. Mrs. Colgan's dedication and commitment to ensuring that all she comes in contact with are provided a safe haven to increase their personal capacities to build perseverance skills, positive social skills, and emotional attributes is outstanding."*

## **Saudi Arabia**

<http://www.arabnews.com/saudi-arabia/news/727611>

In Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Education is urging the government to place more social workers in schools to handle cases of violence that require child protection. The National Society for Human Rights is involved with the issue of children's rights and sees the need for schools to be involved in protecting children. In many countries schools are mandated to report suspected child abuse, and school social workers often have an important role in helping schools carry out this obligation. It seems this could be a significant role for school social workers in Saudi Arabia.

### **Midlands schools fill larger roles in students' lives by offering assistance in crisis home situations**

<http://www.thestate.com/news/local/education/article13942583.html>

*When children face stressful circumstances in their home lives, the consequences spill over into the classroom – they're hungry, tired, distressed, distracted – and that's when schools step in to fill a much larger role than academic teaching. "We know that when students are in a situation like that ... they can't come to and perform in school and be focused academically," said Carroll, Irmo's school social worker. "So we want to try to alleviate as much of that stress, take it off from them as much as we possibly can so they can focus and do what they need to do in school."*

### **Social Worker of the Year recipient takes pride in students, Weslaco ISD**

[http://www.themonitor.com/news/local/social-worker-of-the-year-recipient-takes-pride-in-students/article\\_2c4c8bfa-e319-11e4-80b1-7f2507692fc0.html](http://www.themonitor.com/news/local/social-worker-of-the-year-recipient-takes-pride-in-students/article_2c4c8bfa-e319-11e4-80b1-7f2507692fc0.html)

*After serving the Weslaco school district for 20 years as a migrant and parent specialist, not to mention managing the Safe & Drug-Free Schools federal program, Mendoza has developed a reputation among her colleagues as a social worker who "goes above and beyond" for her migrant students and their families. As much is evident in the programs Mendoza has either created or helmed in an effort to accommodate migrant students' unique needs.*