



International Network for School Social Work

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

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Snapshots of School Social Work Practice in the US

Many versions of school social work practice have been based on a western model, often the US model. There is much to learn from practice in the US, where school social work has a long history, is widely accepted in the school system and is relatively well organized. At its best, US school social work implements the core values of social work including protection of human rights and social justice, advocacy for inclusion, respect, caring and compassion.

This issue of the newsletter showcases the practice of school social work in the US. It presents an opportunity for readers to consider how this model fits different societies with varied cultures, local agendas and bureaucratic demands, and how different interpretations may be needed in different contexts. However school social work is interpreted, it is essential in every country for making education accessible to all. School children and youth everywhere present similar problems (disabilities, poverty, marginalization, emotional problems and family stress). They have the same rights in every country (respect for their views, protection from violence, the right to health and education and the right to know about their rights). Read the attached news article and view 3 videos to get a snapshot of the variety of ways US school social workers meet students' needs and defend their rights.

A School Social Worker who Speaks Kids' Language

<http://www.indystar.com/article/20120204/NEWS1003/202040324/Emma-Donnan-social-worker-speaks-kids-language?odyssey=nav|head>

Reported in Indystar.com, February 4, 2012

Boushehry, a social worker at a middle school in Indiana, sees as many as 35 students a day bringing with them a steady stream of pain and trouble covering every adolescent issue, from students who need tutoring, students grieving from the loss of siblings or of parents, students who may be victims of abuse or neglect, students who harm themselves, miss school, are disruptive or withdrawn. They are described as weighed down "by more than a backpack". The article describes Boushehry's own history and some of the daily dilemmas of a typical school social worker, including a summary of his attempts to help a 14 year-old girl with a marijuana habit, cuts on her arm and a frightening story of suicidal thoughts on New Year's Eve, a situation with a host of challenges.

A Specialized Role with Emotionally Disabled Students

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZH6urr-Jw&feature=related>

In this 3-minute video school social worker Marie Armantrout speaks about her specialized job in 12 Florida middle schools working in classrooms with emotionally disabled students.

Day in the Life of a School Social Worker

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ggsz7qtPcoY>

This 8-minute video features Tauchiana Vanderbilt, MSW '05, a young school social worker in North Carolina. She describes her passion for encouraging children and her commitment to working as a partner with families and the school to solve school problems. Her manner shows the value she places on working with strengths, empowering families, and partnering with teachers with respect, trust and caring. The video has insights into the resources that Tachiana has such as a well-equipped office and a supportive School Principal.

School Social Work – What is it really like?

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8S_IrBjOjtg&feature=related

In this 3-minute video Sue Smith, a school social worker in Iowa, introduces colleagues who describe the rewards and challenges in their work. Their comments show some of the highlights of being a school social worker in the US.

- The variety offered by working with both the school system and the child
- The holistic approach of working with a child, family, school and community agencies
- The opportunity to work with students with disabilities such as autism
- Working on system-wide change
- Working with the most difficult children
- Working as a mediator with teachers and administrators

Some of these Iowa school social workers work for the Iowa Area Education Agencies, a division of the school system providing services for students with special needs. A video <http://www.iowapartnersineducation.org/> shows professionals from different disciplines providing services and resources to both struggling students and the entire school population through the AEA, plus feedback from a student and parent who received service.

The **Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP)** has recently graduated its first class of 22 social work students in the first college-level social work course in Cambodia. <http://www.phnompenhpost.com/index.php/2012062556984/Lifestyle/cambodias-social-work-grads.html>

40 organizations including local, international and overseas agencies joined in a partnership to make this possible. One of these partnerships involves technical assistance from the School of Social Work at the University of Washington <http://socialwork.uw.edu/programs/global-reach/building-human-capacity>.