

# TRANSITIONS

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Department of Human Development and Family Studies

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Spring 2004

Issue 2

## A message from the chair



Dear Alumni,

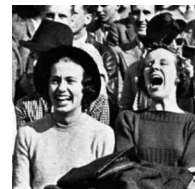
I am amazed at how quickly the year has passed. Soon we will be holding the second annual HDF alumni reunion and Alumni Achievement Awards program. I want to take this opportunity to fill you in on some of the accomplishments that have brought visibility and distinction to our department.

HDF is an extremely popular undergraduate program, with almost 500 majors on the Kingston and Providence campuses. We also have one of the largest graduate enrollments with almost 70 students in our three masters degree programs. And we consistently provide excellent teaching and advising as well as remarkable opportunities for our students to have hands-on experiences in clinics, educational settings, internships, and research projects.

- In April, 2002, the Department held its first Alumni Reunion including Career Conversations with students and alumni award recipients, the presentation of four Alumni Achievement Awards, and an alumni dinner. The next Alumni Reunion is on April 24, 2004- we hope to see many of you there.
- The Early Childhood Education Teacher Certificate program was reviewed for reaccreditation by NCATE and the Rhode Island Board of Education. Both teams gave the program an excellent review.
- Professor Diane Horm was appointed as Associate Dean of the College of Human Science and Services.
- Dr. Katie Branch was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor; Sandra Saunders was promoted to Associate Professor.
- The Department initiated a program of luncheon portfolio presentations for students completing their HDF 480/481 field work. Agency supervisors, faculty, and students were present.
- The Department hosted a team of visiting scholars from the China Youth and Children Research Center. Professor Jing Xiao was the primary contact for this international exchange.
- In 2002-2003, our HDF faculty had 17 articles published or in press in peer-reviewed journals, 3 books, 1 book chapter, and 1 annotated bibliography.
- The Family Therapy Clinic provided therapy services to 50 families.
- The staff of the Child Development Centers made 11 presentations at the Rhode Island Early Childhood State Conference.
- The Center for Personal Financial Education delivered 24 workshops for employees of the State of Rhode Island to assess effectiveness of workplace delivery of financial education.

Please feel free to contact me with any new information you would like to share with other alums (bnewman@uri.edu). We are always looking for new ways to connect alums with our current students, and to brag about your accomplishments.

Warm wishes,  
Barbara M. Newman



## Alumni events

**NEXT EVENT** Join us for our upcoming alumni dinner.  
**When:** Saturday, April 24, 2004, 6:00p.m. - cocktail hour followed by dinner and presentations  
**Where:** The Hyatt Regency Newport  
**Cost:** \$50 per person  
**How to register:** online at [www.advance.uri.edu/alumni/events/special](http://www.advance.uri.edu/alumni/events/special) or call or e-mail David Nicolato at 401-874-4604 or [rhodygrad@uri.edu](mailto:rhodygrad@uri.edu)



## Alumni award winners

**ROSEMARY BOWERS** Rosemary Bower's lifelong commitment to children began as an undergraduate majoring in Child Development and Family Relations at the University of Rhode Island. In her early career, the 1978 URI graduate was a teacher and director of preschool programs and eventually opened her own preschool. In 1982, she founded A Wish Come True, Inc. This nonprofit organization grants wishes to children ages 3 through 18 who have life-threatening illnesses. As the executive director, Bowers and her staff of volunteers have granted 1,129 wishes during the past two decades and now averages more than "a wish a week." She lives in Tiverton

**KAREN GAUTNEY** Karen Gautney began her career with a five-year stint in federal law enforcement before enrolling in the Marriage and Family Therapy master's degree program at the University of Rhode Island. After graduation in 1991, she accepted a position at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) in Washington, D.C., where she is currently the AAMFT deputy executive director and coordinates all programs and staff operations for the association. In addition to her 12 years of experience at the AAMFT, Gautney earned the Certified Association Executive designation from the American Society of Association Executives and completed the association management track of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Organization Management at the University of Notre Dame.

**MICHAEL JENSEN** Mike Jensen grew up in Staten Island where he excelled in baseball and football at Tottenville High School. He was recruited to URI on a football scholarship starting as an offensive lineman during his four years at URI. A member of Phi Kappa Psi fraternity, he served as its president his senior year. Following completion of his degree in Consumer Affairs in 1986, Jensen sold commercial real estate for 10 years. He is president of U.S. Home Med, a durable medical equipment company that manufactures products for patients in home-care settings in the mid-Atlantic region. His life revolves around his family, golf, skiing, basketball, and supporting the URI football program. He lives with his wife, Deborah, and their two sons, Ryan and Devin, ages 5 and 4, in Brielle, N.J.

**MARILYN  
SWIERK**

Marilyn Swierk, president of MS - Innovations, is certified in Family and Consumer Sciences and Family Life Education, and was recently elected to the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) National Board of Directors. She is the recipient of numerous state and national awards, including the AAFCS 2001 Leader Award, the 1993 AAFCS National Teacher of the Year and the 1996 recipient of the University of Rhode Island Alumni Excellence Award in Education. Well known for her innovative programs, she is currently a consultant, a featured speaker at national and state conferences, and the author or contributing author of numerous books, booklets, and articles on a variety of topics. Swierk, a resident of North Kingstown, holds both the B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Rhode Island

## New courses

**HDF471**



After two pilot semesters, the University approved HDF471 - Responding to Grief, a new permanent elective course in HDF at the upper-class/grad level. The course will be taught this coming semester by Prof. Gene Knott on Tuesdays at 4 p.m. The 3-credit class demands prerequisite basic knowledge in thanatology--the study of death and bereavement--via HDF 421 or a similar survey course or experiential background. Its catalog description says the class "...examines conceptual, psychosocial, somatic and pragmatic issues faced when grieving, and how to cope or assist others accommodating imminent or realized loss due to death." It is also an optional elective course for undergrads in the Thanatology minor at URI. For more information, contact from Dr. Knott at gknott@uri.edu or 874-7426.

**HDF533**

Family Policy and Program Evaluation examines the development and impact of policies and programs designed to support families. Through the analysis of process studies, outcome evaluations, literature reviews and meta-analyses, students will evaluate: 1) the influence of social science research on policies related to families such as child abuse, marriage, divorce, poverty, etc., and 2) the success of these policies in promoting healthy family growth and development.



## Information of Interest

**ASSOCIA-  
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- The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC); this organization also has a regional (New England Association for the Education of Young Children) and state (Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children) affiliates. Their website is NAEYC.org.
- The National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE). Their website is NAECTE.org.
- American Association for Marital and Family Therapy (AAMFT). Their web site address is [www.aamft.org](http://www.aamft.org)
- The Consumer Interests group. Their e-mail address is <http://consumer-interests.org/>
- The National Council on Family Relations. Their web site address is [www.ncfr.org](http://www.ncfr.org)
- Society for Research on Adolescence. Their web site address is [www.s-r-a.or](http://www.s-r-a.or)