LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DAYS
February 19 & 20, 2006
JOIN US!

The Honorable Senator Roy Herron will be the keynote speaker at this year’s Legislative Advocacy Days. His fascinating keynote will be on “The Bible and Politics”. Now the Democratic Floor Leader in the Tennessee Senate, he has authored numerous laws enabling health care, attacking crime, helping victims, protecting children, empowering whistleblowers and defending freedoms, while for 18 years attending every legislative session except the day his youngest son was born.

Senator Herron is a former minister, an attorney, author and businessman who also teaches at Vanderbilt University’s Law and Divinity Schools. He has written Things Held Dear: Soul Stories for My Sons, Tennessee Political Humor: Some of These Jokes You Voted For and How Can a Christian be in Politics?

After graduating from the University of Tennessee with highest honors, Senator Herron studied New Testament and ethics in Scotland at St. Andrews as a Rotary Scholar, then became one of Vanderbilt University’s first two joint divinity and law graduates.

Senator Herron resides in the county where his family settled in 1819. He enjoys the outdoors, marathons, triathlons, Scouting and time with his sons John and Rick (14) and Ben (11) and his bride of 18 years, Nancy.

We are also honored to have Joseph R. Brunson, Deputy Director of the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare as a speaker on February 19th. He will address the participants about social workers and the role of ethics.

Check www.naswidaho.org for the most current information about the schedule for Legislative Advocacy Days, registration form and special rates for lodging accommodations.

The Gatekeeper
Unlocking Resources for Idahoans

NASW-Idaho Branches Hold Social Events to Celebrate Social Work Month!

During March 2006 all of NASW-Idaho Branches will host social events to celebrate Social Work Month and recognize Idaho’s hard-working social workers. Check the Branch News on page __ of this newsletter for time and place near you. Please join us. Let other social workers know about this celebration. All social workers are invited!
Idaho Chapter

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Submission Deadlines
January 21st Winter Issue
March 21st Spring Issue
June 21st Summer Issue
October 21st Fall issue

Submission of Materials/Articles
Contact NASW Idaho Chapter at P.O. Box 7393, Boise, Idaho 83707 or call (208) 345-4060.

Editor’s Note
In the interest of unbiased and accurate communications, THE GATEKEEPER subscribes to the importance of avoiding materials that might imply discriminatory language, sexual, racial, ethnic, or other kinds of stereotyping or bias. THE GATEKEEPER is committed to the fair and equal treatment of individuals and groups. Materials submitted should not promote discriminatory attitudes or assumptions about people. Views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of NASW.

NASW Idaho Chapter Leadership

Elected Board Members – (voting)

President: JR Seaman, PhD, ACSW (208) 345-4060 (jr@jrseaman.com)
Vice President: Don Pierson, DSW, ACSW (208) 282-2170 (pierdana@isu.edu)
Secretary: Wendy Perez, LSW (wendy_hs31@hotmail.com)
Treasurer: Jacquie Drake, LMSW (208) 344-5442 (jacquie@jhecker.com)
Treasurer-Elect: Shelley Holmes, LMSW (208) 319-0760 (saholmessw@yahoo.com)
Far North Branch Chair (Coeur d’Alene area): Chris Hartley, LSW (208) 699-4486 (chartryc1@cs.com)
North Branch Chair (Lewiston area): Seeking Branch Chair
Southwest Branch Chair (Boise area): Lorrie Sloan Breshears, LMSW (208) 841-8256 cell (lorrie@apebomkeygirl.com)
South Central Branch Chair (Twin Falls area): Seeking Branch Chair
Southeast Branch Chair (Pocatello area): Linda Sharp, LCSW (208) 478-2050 (lindamoemom@cableone.net)
MSW Student Representative: Kimberly Bickley, BS (208) 426-4259 (kimberlybickley@boisestate.edu)
BSW Student Representative: Sarah Knott (208) 651-1788 (jazzlifeup@yahoo.com)
Legislative Committee Chair: Sunny Reed, LMSW (208) 424-0943 (legiscom@qwest.net)

Elected Leadership – (non-voting)

Chapter Committee on Nominations & Leadership Identification (CCNLI) Chair: Cheryl Simpson-Whitaker, MSW (208) 429-1205 (cheryls-w@cableone.net)
CCNLI Far North Representative: Christine Bunton, MSW (chrisr12@hotmail.com)
CCNLI North Branch Representative: Wendy Nunez, MSW (208) 843-7330 ext 2123 (wendyn@nezperce.org)
CCNLI Southwest Branch Representative: Jim Knapp, LCSW (208) 426-1782
CCNLI South Central Branch Representative: Ruth Bondurant, LCSW, QCSW (208) 423-4934
CCNLI Southeast Branch Representative: Judy Deffinger, LCSW (208) 239-1631
Alternate Delegate to 2005 Delegate Assembly: Andrea Leeds, LCSW, ACSW (208) 322-6775 (aleeds@msn.com)

Appointed Leadership

CEU Committee Chair: Loretta Constantinidis, LCSW (208) 381-3958 (constanl@slrmc.org)
United Vision for Idaho Representatives: Bill Simpson-Whitaker, Ph.D., ACSW (208) 426-2579 (wwhitak@boisestate.edu) and Shelisa Miller, BSW Student
Idaho Women’s Network Delegates: Sunny Reed, LMSW (208) 424-0943 (smreed@ideasforyou.com); Linda Vermette, Ph.D. (208) 345-4060 (naswid@qwest.net)
Better Way Coalition Representative: Kenneth McWilliams, LMSW, LSW (208) 381-2721
Mentoring Program Chair: Maureen O’Leary, LMSW (208) 347-0826
Committee on Ethics Chair: Kevin Geraghty, LCSW, kevingera@sarmc.org (208) 367-2556
End-of-Life Committee Chair: Cheryl Simpson-Whitaker, MSW (208) 429-1203 (cheryls@cableone.net)
PACE Committee Chair: Ralph Shay, LSW rshay@adelphi.net numeric pager (208) 444-7747
You and Your Opinions Matter!!!

by Linda L. Vermette, Ph.D.
NASW-Idaho Chapter, Executive Director

So much is happening in today’s political arena that impacts our profession and our clients. Fundamentally important issues are being brought before state legislatures, local, state and regional courts even the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court. Hardly a day goes by without hearing on the news or reading in the newspapers about issues impacting the very fabric of our Nation.

Social justice issues are constantly grabbing headlines. Individual rights and responsibilities are being debated not only among government officials but within families, churches, communities and schools. No matter what your position on an issue it is important at this juncture in our Nation’s development that you make your voice heard. You can do this in so many ways. Maybe contacting political officials is not your way of doing things. Fine! There are other ways of making your voice heard. You can donate to organizations which represent your views and convictions. You can donate to candidates who stand for positions in which you believe. Volunteer your time. Write letters to the editor. The list goes on and on.

The frightening truth is that at a time when a critical mass of issues has come to the forefront, people seem to have opted out. Membership in grassroots organizations is dwindling. The number of people who turn out to vote on Election Day has become a national embarrassment.

You and your opinions matter and not only on issues of national importance. The NASW-Idaho Chapter represents nearly 4,000 Idaho social workers. We at the NASW-Idaho Chapter want and need to hear from you. We need to know what is important to you. What issues do you feel we should champion? What do you want from your professional organization?

Take a few minutes to fill out the form below and mail your input to us or you can e-mail us at naswid@qwest.com. In addition, please visit www.naswidaho.org where you can complete the form below and send it to us electronically.

Thank you.

Name: ________________________________________________________
License level: __________________________________________________
E-mail address: _________________________________________________
The 3 most important issues NASW-Idaho Chapter should address:
1. ____________________________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________________________
The most important reason why I am a member of the NASW-Idaho Chapter is:
______________________________________________________________
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Idaho Legislature 2006: A Sneak Peek into Children’s Issues

More than 100 concerned citizens and organizational representatives attended the first annual legislative educational forum sponsored by Idaho Voices for Children. Presentations on four legislative issues affecting children were given and then participants were provided the opportunity to give important feedback which will direct Idaho Voices for Children’s and its members’ activities during the 2006 legislative session. The day began with the following presentations.

Overview of General Funds, Trends and Projections

Jeff Youtz, Budget Director, Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC), provided an overview and budget projections for coming years, stating that 51.6% of the general funds benefit children in our state. One of the biggest concerns impacting the Idaho budget is that current trends indicate spending in Medicaid and corrections will surpass spending on public education within the next 10-15 years.

Representative Margaret Henbest, District 16-Boise and JFAC member, addressed the growing concern that the growth in corrections creates growth elsewhere such as foster care usage and the Infant Toddler Program. Representative Henbest does see some positive trends including front-focused actions by members of the government rather than end-focused actions. She also sees more accountability in government.

Community Resource Workers

Senator Joe Stegner, District 7-Lewiston, reported that a new Mental Health Subcommittee of the Health Care Task Force is going to re-emphasize Community Resource Workers in public schools. They will be recommending restoration of funding for this program throughout the state. In addition to determining funding sources, details that need to be worked out include who would employ these workers (Health and Welfare or the School District) and what qualifications will be necessary.

Child Care Licensing

Representative George Sayler, District 4-Coeur d’Alene, proposed changes to the Idaho Code regarding child care standards including: extending current licensing guidelines to child care programs that provide day care services; requiring child care providers to be trained in pediatric CPR and first aid; clarification within the code to include a variety of regulations related to establishing a minimum age for day care providers; requiring criminal background checks, disclosure of any registered sex offenders who may be on the premises; requiring that a telephone remain on the premises during hours of operation; establishing a staff/child ration of 1 to 5 for children under the age of 24 months; prohibiting smoking and/or alcohol consumption during operating hours, and ensuring that employees receive eight (8) hours of training in child development and/or health safety each year.

Children’s Health Insurance Program

Representative Kathie Garrett, District 17-Boise, reported that Idaho is one of four states that require asset testing for S-CHIP. Assets include balances in checking, savings and CD accounts. The majority of states see the administrative cost to implement asset testing as not cost-effective. The majority of states also see asset testing as countering their message of encouraging self-sufficiency and responsibility among their citizens. Adults are not subject to asset testing to qualify for the Adult Access Card but children are subject to asset testing to qualify for CHIP-B and the Children’s Access Card. Representative Garrett is sponsoring a rule-change to the CHIP-B and Access Card legislation that would remove the asset test as a qualifier for (family) income-eligible children to enroll in these programs.

Early Childhood Education

Larry Koomler represented the Idaho Business Coalition for Excellence in Education (IBCEE), a coalition of CEOs and Presidents from businesses throughout Idaho concerned about better education and its contribution to the economic strength of the state. They are currently concentrating on early childhood noting that investing in quality early learning programs increases student performance and closes the gap for low income children. Proposed legislation would eliminate the barrier of school-age enrollment limits (presently age 5) voluntarily for schools to create early childhood programs that are also voluntary for parents. Under this proposal, schools may offer the program, attending would be optional, and there would be no use of general funds. Idaho is one of nine states that does not fund preschool programs.

Senator Mike Burkett, District 19-Boise, explained that proposed legislation would define program standards yet allow flexibility for local community needs. Coordination of pre-kindergarten and child care programs could take place in public schools, private child care, charter schools, private preschools and church-based preschools. The program could also be integrated with other 0-5 child development programs. Senator Burkett’s proposal does propose using state, federal and school district funds for the preschool programs. Parent contributions may also be used. While such a program may save in the long run there will need to be an initial allocation of funding from the state’s general funds or a reallocation of the cigarette tax.

Following these presentations, attendees were asked to join in special breakout sessions to further discuss the merits and clarify points for each proposal and to provide feedback to Idaho Voices for Children as to specific action steps needed for each proposal to be successful.
B E H A V I O R A L  H E A L T H  T R A I N I N G  A N D  E N T E R P R I S E S  p r e s e n t s

T h e  F o u r t h  A n n u a l  A d d i c t i o n  &  T r a u m a  C o n f e r e n c e

F e m a l e  S e x  O f f e n d e r s ,  S e x u a l  C o m p u s i v i t y  a n d

I n t e n s i v e  T h e r a p e u t i c  T e c h n i q u e s

A p r i l  1 2 - 1 4 ,  2 0 0 6

T h e  S a l t  P a l a c e  C o n v e n t i o n  C e n t e r

S a l t  L a k e  C i t y ,  U t a h

P R E S E N T E R S  I N C L U D E :

R o b e r t  W e i s s ,  L C S W
S e x u a l  R e c o v e r y  I n s t i t u t e
L o s  A n g e l e s ,  C a l i f o r n i a

P r e s e n t a t i o n  w i l l  c o v e r
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J u l i a  H i s l o p ,  P h .  D .
F e m a l e  S e x  O f f e n d e r  R e s e a r c h e r  a n d  a u t h o r  o f
F e m a l e  S e x  O f f e n d e r s  W h a t  T h e r a p i s t s ,
L a w  E n f o r c e m e n t  &  C h i l d  P r o t e c t i v e  S e r v i c e s
N e e d  t o  K n o w

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i n t e n s i v e  t h e r a p e u t i c  t e c h n i q u e s .

A .  T o d d  F r e e s t o n e ,  P s y .  D . ,  L C S W
L e c t u r e r  a n d  C l i n i c a l  D i r e c t o r  o f
C o m p r e h e n s i v e  T r e a t m e n t  C l i n i c

P r e s e n t a t i o n  w i l l  c o v e r
i n t e n s i v e  t h e r a p e u t i c  t e c h n i q u e s .

R E G I S T E R  T o l l  F r e e
o r  c a l l  f o r  m o r e  i n f o r m a t i o n
1 - 8 6 6 - 7 8 7 - 2 2 7 2

R e g u l a r  T r a c k  —  1 6  C E U s  f o r  A p r i l  1 3 - 1 4 ,  2 0 0 6
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I n t e n s i v e  T r a c k  —  2 4  C E U s  f o r  A p r i l  1 2 - 1 4 ,  2 0 0 6
R e g i s t r a t i o n :  $ 3 0 5  p e r  p e r s o n .  I n c l u d e s  t w o  m e a l s  o n  A p r i l  1 3 & 1 4 ,  2 0 0 6 .
Feedback Reports

Education (early childhood development and education proposals)

The group discussed the two proposed bills and decided the bill proposed by IBCEE was actually a first step for the bill proposed by Senator Burkett. The group did feel that their #1 action item would be to send a delegation to the IBCEE group to ask them to remove the funding line from the bill which would not limit future bills from asking for state funding. The long-range priority is Senator Burkett’s more comprehensive bill.

The second action would be to bring information on research and the experience of other states that have pre-K programs to the Legislature. The third action would be to educate the public about the benefits of a voluntary quality pre-K program.

JFAC (Community Resource Workers)

In fighting among agencies over funds unanimously emerged as the single, greatest obstacle which resulted in the first order of business being to identify a mediator to resolve this issue. Organizing and scheduling the needed conversations, their order and level of priority and who should be at each conversation to systematically solve the satellite issues were core. Parents, providers, clients, and community resource workers need a forum for getting what they know to legislators.

The group strongly felt that a grassroots approach would be most effective. They could contact legislators, volunteer, and monitor committees and votes, but they would like help in getting information, such as email blasts or information updates on who needs to be contacted and what is happening.

It was also recognized that service providers had valuable information for legislators and need better avenues to convey their expertise and knowledge. The break out group determined that more collaboration is needed to reduce the duplication of services and gaps in resource workers’ reach and scope. There is also a need to establish a universal naming and terminology. Questions remain about the proper placement of CRW personnel and the fiscal and managing agent. Should they be Health and Welfare or school district employees?

Health and Welfare (child care legislation and CHIP)

Rep. George Sayler proposed that individuals call and write legislators and get more co-sponsors for the bill; get letters of support from various organizations that support this legislation; and copy the chair of the committee on any letters written to legislators.

To ensure the removal of the asset test for CHIP eligibility, Rep. Kathie Garrett suggested that individuals write stories and scenarios of children who have been denied access to health care and send it to their legislators, specifically targeting the rural areas and get the word out to have people re-apply for CHIP-B and the Access Card after the asset test is removed.

Conclusion and Follow-Up

The first annual legislative educational forum concluded with attendees voting to determine the priority order of these proposals. The resulting priorities, in rank order, were: to restore funding for community resource workers; early childhood development and education; and the third priority was a tie between removing the asset test from CHIP and strengthening regulations for child care licensing.

Idaho Voices Public Policy Committee reviewed the summaries, suggested action steps and is developing a plan of action. The group Idaho Voices for Children will focus on three areas, with an emphasis on the first area for the upcoming 2006 session: 1) legislative monitoring and reporting; 2) grassroots action and support; and 3) issue and legislation development.

Idaho Legislature 2006: A Sneak Peek into Children’s Issues was free and open to anyone interested in the well-being of children. Beginning in 2006, voting at the Idaho Voices for Children annual legislative agenda-setting forum and receipt of detailed summaries (such as this report) and legislative updates will be limited to members of Idaho Voices for Children. Membership forms may be located at www.idahovoicesforchildren.org.
NASW Idaho PACE Committee Endorses Jerry Brady for Governor

by Delmar Stone, LMSW
NASW-Idaho Chapter, Lobbyist/Member Mobilizer

The PACE Committee, Chaired by Far North Branch member, Ralph Shay, endorsed Jerry Brady who was sent a letter of endorsement. Mr. Brady was presented with a $250 campaign contribution on November 11, 2005 at the Southeast Branch’s workshop. Mr. Brady also spoke to the group regarding Idaho’s laws on ethics and their relevance to social workers.

Mr. Brady is a fourth generation Idahoan. His great-grandfather, a Republican, became Idaho’s ninth governor in 1909 and its first popularly elected U. S. Senator in 1913.

Mr. Brady is a 1954 graduate of Idaho Falls High School, a 1958 honors graduate of the University of Notre Dame, and a 1962 graduate in law from the University of California – Berkeley. At Notre Dame, he was student body president and received the Dome Award for the outstanding student.

He served as a U. S. Army infantry officer on active duty and in the infantry and Judge Advocate General’s office in the reserves from 1959 to 1971. He began his professional career as legislative assistant to Senator Frank Church of Idaho in 1963. He was assistant director and director of public affairs of the Peace Corps from 1969 to 1972.

Mr. Brady has launched many successful new organizations in his career. Between 1972 and 1974, he founded and managed University Year in Action, a Nixon Administration initiative in which universities and their students aided nearby low-income communities. He was a co-founder in 1960 of ACCION International, the largest provider in the Western hemisphere of small business loans for low-income people – more than $500,000 a year.

In 1992, he founded Idaho Falls’ economic development initiative and served as its chairman for four years, creating more than 2,000 jobs. In 2003, he began organizing programs to benefit pre-school children in eastern Idaho, leading to a $1 million initiative today to improve child care, promote literacy, and prepare children for school.

Jerry Brady is married to Rickie Orchin Brady. They have five children and five grandchildren.

To learn more about Jerry Brady’s position on issues facing Idaho, go to www.bradyforidaho.org or call his campaign headquarters, (208) 424-8800. You can donate directly to his campaign. If you wish to make a contribution to the NASW-Idaho Chapter PACE Committee, which will be endorsing other excellent candidates in the coming months before the general election, send it to: IDA-PACE, P.O. Box 7393, Boise, Idaho 83707.

You can also contact the NASW-Idaho Chapter PACE Committee by calling (208) 345-4060, sending a fax to (208) 345-4062, or sending an e-mail to Ralph Shay, PACE Chair at rshay@adelphia.net.

The NASW-Idaho Chapter PACE Committee’s website is www.social-workers.org/pace/default.asp.

Branch News

Branch activities are increasing now that the holidays have passed. Please remember to check the NASW-Idaho Chapter website www.naswida-ho.org for up-to-date CEU offerings in your area.

At the last Board meeting, the Board discussed ways to recognize social workers throughout the state for the hard work they do and to let you know that you are valued and appreciated. As a result of this discussion, each Branch is planning a social event during the Social Work Month which is March 2006. Watch your mail and the NASW-Idaho Chapter website for time and place. Please join us and bring a fellow social worker. Non-NASW members are welcome!

NASW-Idaho Chapter Members Develop On-line Course for Boston University

Cheryl Simpson-Whitaker (left) and Carol Taylor (right), members of NASW Idaho, are co-authors of a new on-line continuing education course for social workers on end of life care.

The course will be released in February by Boston University Institute for Geriatric Social Work (IGSW) www.bu.edu/igsw/index.html. Sponsored by IGSW, this Social Workers and End of Life Care course addresses issues, concerns, skills and knowledge relevant to professionals engaged with people of all ages. The following statement is a core belief which guided the development of this course and continues to guide Cheryl and Carol’s practice with people completing life:

“Social workers have a key role to play in the movement back to caring for people nearing the end of life. We have an opportunity to make life-changing contributions to improve the quality of end-of-life decision-making and end-of-life care. The social work profession is uniquely suited to this task because of our systems approach, our role on interdisciplinary care teams, sensitivity to cultural issues and knowledge that self-awareness is a key element in all our interactions. A core value of social work is the right to self-determination. There are few practice areas where self-determination is as important as end-of-life. There are no second chances on the last journey.”

If you and your organization are interested in more training or dialogue about end-of-life issues, please contact Cheryl Simpson-Whitaker (tconsulting@cableone.net) or Carol Taylor (cthrive@aol.com).
NASW-Idaho Chapter’s EOL Committee Contributes to the End-of-Life Statewide Survey Project

by Cheryl Simpson-Whitaker, MSW
NASW-Idaho Chapter
End-of-Life Committee Chair

The NASW Idaho End-of-Life Committee is excited to support a statewide survey to ask people in Idaho what issues matter most related to the end of life.

The goal of the End-of-Life Statewide Survey Project is to better understand how people in Idaho deal with end of life issues, both privately and within their communities. Survey results will provide valuable information to healthcare providers, hospice caregivers, educators, legislators, public policy makers and others providing end-of-life care in Idaho. The report will be of particular interest to social workers involved in family support, medical social work, hospice care and bereavement.

Three thousand adults living in Idaho will receive a random sample mailed survey asking them to respond to questions on:
- thoughts about death and dying;
- preparation and planning for death;
- opinions about physical, psychological, financial and spiritual aspects of dying;
- need for support from people or organizations at the end of life; and
- awareness of hospice care as an option at the end of life.

Please encourage your family, friends, colleagues and clients to complete the survey if they are part of the random sample. It is time we learned more about what matters most to people in Idaho! The information collected in the survey project will enable organizations in Idaho to do a better job of addressing important end-of-life issues.

Questions? Contact: Cheryl Simpson-Whitaker, Executive Director, A Better Way Coalition: Life on Our Own Terms at (208) 429-1203, E-mail director@abetterwaycoalition.org or Annette Totten, Director, Boise State University Center for the Study of Aging at (208) 426-5899, E-mail AnnetteTotten@boisestate.edu.

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Chapter Announces 2006 Preliminary Slate and Petition Process

by Wendy Perez, LSW
NASW-Idaho Chapter, Secretary of the Board of Directors

The Idaho Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers is pleased to announce the preliminary slate of candidates for board and elected committee positions for the coming year. The final slate will be selected after the close of the petition process and elections will be held spring 2006. The preliminary slate meets the chapter’s affirmative action goals. Nominees for Branch elected position can be single slated.

Petition Process

Any member wishing to have her or his name added to the ballot by petition has 30 days from the date of the publication of this article to submit a petition. To be successful, a petition for a position elected by the membership statewide must include the signatures and the printed legal names of 13 current members, which represents 2% of the total chapter membership as of January 3, 2006, the most recent update of the chapter’s membership database by the national office. Petitions for a statewide position must include signatures from all branches. For a branch position, signatures of 2% of the total number of members of the branch are needed. These numbers can be obtained on request from the chapter office. Official petition forms are available from the chapter office and questions about the petition process may be addressed to Cheryl Simpson-Whitaker, Chair of the CCNLI, or in care of the chapter office.

Preliminary Slate

Board of Directors

South Central Branch Chairperson
Seeking a Candidate

South West Branch Chairperson
Jessica Brazil-Deboi

MSW Student Rep
Elizabeth Williams
Marla Vanskiver

BSW Student Rep
Maria Torres
Brynn Neibaur

Delegate Assembly

Delegate
(Chapter President 2008)
Lori Watts
Sunny Reed

Chapter Committee for Nominations and Leadership Identification

Chairperson
Lesa Huff
Cara Snyder

South East Branch Rep
Steve Proctor

NASW Idaho continues to encourage women and people of color to run for elected office and other leadership positions.

THE GATEKEEPER

February 2006
What can we as students of social work do to improve the image and understanding of social work in our communities? As students we find ourselves learning how to think outside-the-box when confronted with challenging situations. A core social work class that inspires creativity by learning how to work with individuals and families is Microinterventions. We learn how to be sensitive to values, ethics and diversity and how to integrate the skills and theory we have learned to empower people and families. Micro and the other core classes teach us how to assess biospsychosocial aspects and how those aspects affect the person. It becomes apparent a person’s social environment influences how he or she functions. This empowers us to work with challenging situations and turn apples into oranges.

The National Social Work Public Education Campaign is working hard to do just that, turn apples into oranges. The purpose of the campaign is to increase the positive perception of social workers through five specific goals: to increase awareness and respect for the social work profession; to educate the public on the depth and breadth of social work practice; to expand perceptions of who can benefit from social work services, to attract young people to the profession; and to improve employment opportunities for professional social workers. As students how can we support this campaign? How can these goals be integrated into our school and community experiences? A review of the Code of Ethics and the mission of social work is a good place to start.

Our understanding of the Code of Ethics and the mission of social work will be vital to our personal and professional experience of social work. Our experience of social work will be what we model to our peers, family and friends and our community. As we grow and practice our personal understanding of social work, our voices and actions will become the instruments we use to educate those around us on the primary mission of social work. We must continually remind ourselves our actions speak louder than our voices.

Now is the time to tap into that creativity and knowledge we have been building in school and in our practicum settings. If your campus has a social work club, come together and brainstorm how your club could take part in working towards the goals set forth by the National Social Work Public Education Campaign. As students we have many resources: our knowledge and skills, energy and passion, the library, internet, instructors, practicum settings, community organizations, the newspaper, body of students, etc. Our resources can be used in numerous ways: community service to social service agencies in our community, contacting legislators regarding policies and laws affecting social work, and the list goes on.

As inspiration, I want to share with you how the social work club I belong to recently tapped into and used our creativity. The Student Organization of Social Workers at Lewis-Clark State College in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho decided to raise money to buy a pin from the website, www.naswfoundation.org/imagecampaign which sells the pins to fund the campaign as well as celebrate NASW’s 50th Anniversary. The pin costs $50.00 and as you know, one resource that is often limited for students is money. Creativity called and now every time our club meets, a pocket-change-fund cup floats around the room and willing and able members drop in coins from their pockets or wallets. Soon, our club will be able to purchase a pin to show support and help fund the campaign. We plan to proudly place our pin on our social work club banner. This action increased the awareness of and educated the social work students involved in the club of the campaign’s goals. What is around the corner for our club? Perhaps we can write a letter to the editor about the code of ethics that social workers adhere to when practicing social work or the benefits of social work services in the community we live in.

I hope that you are inspired to discuss with others what your class or social work club can do to take part in the campaign’s goals. Student involvement will be a powerful part of helping others understand social work’s purpose. Our imagination is infinite! As Eleanor Roosevelt said, “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”
The Idaho Methamphetamine Abuse Dilemma

Criminal persecution of pregnant substance abusing women vs. substance abuse treatment, what’s best for Idaho’s citizens?

by Sunny Reed, LMSW
NASW-Idaho Chapter, Legislative Chair

It is an age-old story, really: since illicit drugs are... well... illicit, those who buy, use or abuse these substances should be put in prison. Right? On its surface it sounds like the right solution. But in reality it is misguided and ignores the root problem of substance abuse.

On December 14, 2005, the Idaho Statesman reported a Legislative audit found “Idaho has been breaking its own laws... in the way it provides drug abuse treatment.” The poor drug abuse treatment systems in this state are the result of many decisions by state leaders and have created a disjointed and unorganized “system” of care for our state’s substance abusers. Millions of dollars have been allocated to treatment of prisoners, but budget cuts removed the funding and the oversight of those programs. As a result, there is no clear indication of whether the few programs that do exist in this state are even effective. Yet about one of every four Idaho prisoners and more than one-third of all probationers committed substance abuse crimes. The article in the Idaho Statesman also reported that around 85% of the 18,000 offenders in this state say they have drug problems.

So what is the solution? That is a difficult question to answer since no one in this state is really seeking a different answer. Senator Darrington of Declo has suggested that he will continue with his senate bill titled “Use of Controlled Substances Endangering Children.” This bill was drafted during the last legislative session but was not formerly presented. It is assumed that he will not be able to gather the necessary votes this year, but is intending to present this piece anyway.

This presents a tough debate as Senator Darrington has his focus on an issue we all care about: the effect of substance abuse on the unborn and future generations. Yet his solution will clearly exacerbate the issue written about in the Statesman. Sending pregnant women who use controlled substances to prison will only add to the number of Idahoans receiving inadequate substance abuse treatment, if they receive treatment at all. There appear to be no other solutions since there is no statewide plan to provide substance treatment or even a clear coordination of efforts to create a plan.

The NASW-Idaho Legislative Committee has made this issue a top priority this year because its solution, or lack thereof, will affect all social workers, no matter what your focus is. It is well documented that substance abuse, and methamphetamine use specifically, has had a direct impact on the number of children in foster care. Many children are placed in the care of their grandparents, which impacts those working in geriatrics. The lack of appropriate treatment avenues affects our health care system as Idahoans who are going through detox tend to do so in their local emergency room, if a bed is open.

Hospital social workers are often the only persons available for follow up in these situations. And let us not forget those who work in juvenile justice, the correctional system, or within housing and unemployment settings and who often see the direct effects of methamphetamine use. It seems the best solution is to make provision of appropriate substance use treatment a priority. This solution is expensive, however, and will likely reduce funding to other much needed programs. Understanding that the lack of appropriate treatment options and the resulting criminalization of those who need help has a huge impact on the social work profession is just the beginning. This is an issue we should all weigh in on.

Do you have a solution you haven’t heard presented yet? If so, e-mail me at legiscom@qwest.net. I’d love to hear your ideas.

A Better Way Coalition: Life on Our Own Terms offers a wide variety of information for professionals and the public about issues related to end-of-life on their content rich website. Advance Directives (living will and durable power of attorney for health care) forms in English and Spanish are available at no cost. A calendar of events, speaker’s bureau and opportunities to share your opinion on critical issues facing people in Idaho nearing the end of life are a few of the highlights.

Check it out! www.abetterwaycoalition.org
“The conservative assault on social programs reached its zenith during the 1990s when Republicans attained control of Congress and President Bill Clinton capitulated to their power by signing a welfare reform act that many liberals bitterly opposed. Thus, the retreat of the welfare state liberalism and the rise of the traditionalist Right have had a profound effect on social policy, an influence that has been contrary to the mission of social work.”

Historically, the American welfare state arose out of the values of work, strong families, and caring for veterans. The earliest social welfare programs were creations of the Republican Party. In the ‘80s, however, that same party began to significantly dismantle the American safety-net. The Bush Administration has been using an ideology of “compassionate conservatism” to create “the third stage of combating poverty in America.” [Note: The faith-based initiative has allowed Idaho to be awarded a $22.8 million grant from the federal government for addiction treatment and recovery support services. The majority of the faith-based services portion of the money will go to socially conservative Christian churches which are allowed to discriminate against persons who do not believe in Evangelical Christianity or who are gay/lesbian. To read NASW’s statement on the faith-based initiative, go to www.socialworkers.org/advocacy/positions/faith.asp.]

“Consistent with residual welfare, conservatives prefer that the disadvantaged rely on the labor market, family and friends, and civic associations for assistance, not federal social programs.” It is interesting that the same conservatives advocate for spending billions of tax-payers’ dollars on building military weapons and waging war for the interests of multinational corporations. The oil industry recently had its most profitable quarter in history – the same industry responsible for funding the campaigns of George W. Bush.

What kind of values strip funding for equitable social services for the poor and allow the waste of resources by the ultra-wealthy?

Conservative social policy analysts would like to see “bootstrap capitalism” implemented in the form of wage supplements, asset building, and community capitalism. Wage supplements would be given in a graduated scale where the subsidy declines as the person’s wage increases. Funding for this proposal would come from eliminating the Earned Income Tax Credit, employer tax credits, and welfare programs. Liberals wonder why social conservatives find it acceptable to have a graduated pay scale for the poor but not a fully graduated income tax on the wealthy and on multinational corporations. [Note: The divide between the richest and poorest Americans has skyrocketed under the Bush Administration – shrinking the middle class and pushing more children into poverty than ever.]

Asset building would increase a person’s worth and dignity by allowing her/him to buy a home, finish college or vocational school, and have a growing savings account. Micro-loans are helping the poor to start their own businesses. This promising idea is still in its infancy in the United States. [Note: Jerry Brady, 2006 Democratic candidate for governor of Idaho, started the largest micro-loan program in Latin America.]

Neighborhood-based capitalism is another promising idea that would create financial institutions in poor neighborhoods. These community development corporations would use their profits for the benefit of the neighborhoods where they are located.

These programs, although mostly promising, are not yet broadly funded by the Bush Administration. However, this administration has produced large cuts to social services; tax cuts for the wealthiest; and ever increasing spending on military programs.

The continued devolution of welfare from the constitutional role of the federal government to the private industry and/or to Christian churches is alarming for the future of human rights and the existence of professional social work in the United States.
Mark Your Calendars!

NASW-Idaho Chapter Board of Directors’ Meetings:
Saturday, March 25, 2006
Perkins Family Restaurant, Boise

Saturday, June 24, 2006
Perkins Family Restaurant, Boise

Mark Your Calendar!

May 6, 2006
Northwest Nazarene University
Nampa, Idaho

Plan to attend and earn quality CEUs. Topics will range from
children’s issues to social justice to end-of-life.
Watch the mail for the registration flyer in March and check
www.naswidaho.org for updates!