

Behavioral Health

The Alumni Magazine of the Loma Linda University School of Behavioral Health

Volume 2, Number 1 | 2019



- MEND Program Helps Restore Hope
- Community Connection: Dr. Veronica Kelley
- Culture of Research Continues to Expand



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The mission of the School of Behavioral Health is "to provide a spiritually supportive context for teaching, clinical practice, and research innovation that pursues integrative behavioral health aimed at reducing health disparities and promoting social justice in a global context locally and globally." The mission of the School of Behavioral Health is underpinned by Loma Linda University's commitment to the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ to transform lives through whole person care.



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From Dean Beverly Buckles

Let's Stay Connected

Dear Alumni:

I am pleased to share with you the second issue of *Behavioral Health*, a School of Behavioral Health publication designed to celebrate the accomplishments of our alumni and share what's happening in our School.

Over the past years, we've been actively engaging and dialoguing with our graduates to solicit their ideas on continuing program development. Given their input, we have updated program curricula, as well as research and clinical opportunities for our students and future graduates. As an example, students have asked for more content specific to addressing the needs of active duty military, veterans, and their families. To address this request, each department has identified courses that support clinical service. These course lists are now available on the SBH website. New courses will also be added to address important area of practice.

Another initiative has been the expansion of global practice opportunities to our students. Over the years, most global outreach for our students has been through the Students in Mission Service (SIMS) program, which we have worked to augment with the increased integration of behavioral health interventions. In addition, for the last five years our Child Life Specialist program has taken their students to China to support the expansion of specialty services in the country's largest children's hospitals, including, the Children's Hospital of Zhejiang University, the Quzhou Women and Children's Hospital, and the Nanjing Children's Hospital.

Further expansion of our School's global practice outreach occurred this past year with our first trip to Samoa. This trip built on the work of our International Behavioral Health Trauma Team, and engaged faculty and students from all departments in the delivery of resiliency- and trauma-informed community education and interventions. This July, another team of SBH faculty and students travelled back to Samoa to expand on the community training and resiliency interventions provided last year. Additional international sites are now being explored, along with the development of scholarships that will enable more students to participate in these life-changing opportunities.

Earlier this year, our Trauma Team was called to support the survivors of the Camp Fire. As you may recall, the Camp Fire occurred on November 8, 2018, in Paradise, CA, and was the worst forest fire in California's history. The devastation took the lives of nearly 100 individuals, destroyed over 15,000 structures, and displaced 50,000 citizens of the once picturesque community. In response, a group of ten SBH faculty, students, and alumni provided three days of community resiliency skills support to over 60 individuals, couples, and families.

Although the people of Paradise have been through severe trauma, they are resilient and strong. It was an honor to support them in recognizing their resilience. But I must admit that even more moving was the experience of witnessing the selfless and extraordinary generosity of the people of Paradise and Chico who have clothed themselves in God's compassion—reaching out to help strangers, neighbors and friends. I left reminded of my favorite verses from Philippians 2:2-4 NIV: "Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose...doing nothing out of selfish ambition... rather, in humility value others...not looking to your own interests but...to the interests of others" (paraphrased). This passage brings to mind the mission of our institution and the unseen work of our alumni—all of you—who daily make a difference in the lives of others.

Finally, I'd like to remind you that as you receive this publication we are already planning for our next issue—and we'd like to hear from you! So please contact us any time through the School of Behavioral Health alumni email at llualumni.sbh@llu.edu, and let us know what you are doing. Similarly, we can let you know of events in our School and at Loma Linda University that you may want to attend. When emailing us, please provide updated contact information so we can stay in touch.

Best wishes, and thank you for living to make a difference in the lives of those you serve.

Dr. Bev Buckles, Dean
School of Behavioral Health



Digital Connections



Innovative MEND program helps local kids improve mental health for better physical well-being

Therapist finds key to keeping children organ transplant candidates healthy — alter the family dynamics

Doctors at Loma Linda University Children’s Hospital were facing a frustrating problem back in 2006. Because of behavioral and family issues, children were not staying healthy enough to qualify for a vital organ transplant and were having their names removed from waiting lists. Children’s Hospital physicians ultimately reached out to the Behavioral Medicine Center’s youth outpatient services department for help.

Daniel Tapanes, a family therapist at the Behavioral Medicine Center and then-doctoral student in the School of Behavioral Health, spent a year researching solutions, but couldn’t find anything that fit the need.

He spent some time with diabetes and heart programs, seeing how children and families dealt with interwoven physical and behavioral issues, and how those experiences shaped them. He soon began piecing together ideas from different programs he thought had potential.

What Dr. Tapanes went on to develop is what is now known as Mastering Each New Direction, or MEND. The first group were referrals from the Children’s Hospital. As these families came into the group, Dr. Tapanes saw specific concepts fall into place.

“When a family has a single member with a chronic illness, that person ends up with a lot of power,” Dr. Tapanes says. “Most family decisions need to be made in concert with the needs of the ill member. Rather than having direct relationships, the family relates with the illness. We realized that relationships needed to be readjusted within the family system.”

Sick children also had not reached developmental milestones

through lack of school attendance, while at the same time these children were very articulate from their regular dealings with doctors and nurses.

“These patients have a lot of fear because of their uncertain futures,” Dr. Tapanes says. “They may live with the beliefs, ‘I won’t finish school; I won’t live long enough to graduate from high school or college; no one will love me; or I’ll never get married.’ Parents have the same types of concerns.”

These psychosocial issues eventually affect the child’s nervous system, creating many biological changes — lowered immune system, changed cognitive processes, interrupted sleep patterns, increased blood sugar levels, and more. These physical issues were causing sick children to be removed from the Children’s Hospital transplant waiting list.

Researchers began examining the whole stress level umbrella to see if they could bring about health improvements in the whole person through talk therapy.

What Dr. Tapanes found was that by easing stress and lowering physical reactions, children began thriving.

MEND is conducted as an intensive outpatient program — patients come for several hours per day for 24 sessions over a six- to eight-week period. The program also requires each child’s family to participate.

“Research is pretty clear that depression levels in supporting family members are greater, while siblings of chronically ill kids tend to have behavioral difficulties themselves,” Dr. Tapanes says.

MEND has attracted the notice of other healthcare providers across the country. In 2016, the Illinois Children’s Healthcare Foundation (ICHF) contacted MEND to discuss a plan to help Chicago-based families struggling with chronic



A ribbon cutting event marks the opening of MEND’s new location. The event also honored Ken Ramirez, (third from left), whose interest in and generous scholarship support for participants in MEND has been an important factor in the program’s growth.



(Above) Daniel Tapanes, DMFT, developed much of the MEND program’s approach while he was a student in the School of Behavioral Health.

(Left) Brian Distelberg, PhD, serves as MEND program director.



Locally, lack of space has capped the number of patients MEND could help at any one time. “We look at our waiting list of kids right now, and know we can get many of them back on the transplant list,” Dr. Distelberg said. Last June, the MEND program relocated to new offices on Park Avenue in Redlands, less than a mile from its previous home in the Behavioral Medical Center. Dr. Distelberg estimates that the larger space will ultimately allow MEND to serve more than 500 patients and their families annually.

Many School of Behavioral Health students have completed practicums through the MEND program. Some of them have joined the MEND team after graduation.

“From the beginning the people at the School have been very supportive. This model was my final research project for my doctoral program,” Dr. Tapanes says. “The MEND program grew up in those rooms. I appreciate the support from Dr. Beverly Buckles and Dr. Susan Montgomery, who offered wise advice about making sure our program was evidence based.”

Ken Ramirez, Tribal Secretary for the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, was an early supporter of MEND, providing scholarships for children to enroll in the program. His support played a role in MEND’s growth according to both Dr. Tapanes and Dr. Distelberg.

“Ken’s support is helping children and was invaluable in getting us to this point,” Dr. Distelberg says.

illnesses. As a result of these meetings, ICHF and the Cook County Department of Health and Hospital Systems agreed to a plan with the aim of improving healthcare for Chicago pediatric patients.

Last March, Drs. Distelberg and Tapanes began working with the Cook County Health system to implement the MEND program at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, the largest County-operated hospital in Chicago. This is a significant undertaking due to the unique challenges involved when transferring the known outcomes of a behavioral health program to other settings. The coming two-year implementation process requires ongoing support from the MEND team, and Dr. Tapanes will be onsite in Chicago for extended periods of time. In addition, Dr. Distelberg will provide quality assurance support as well as helping ICHF access Medicaid funding to support the long-term sustainability of the Chicago-based MEND model.

Psychology faculty member publishes significant findings on issue of video game addiction

Studies confirm ADHD severity is associated with video game addiction severity

Up to 23% of people who play video games may experience symptoms of gaming addiction. With the advent of technology it's becoming much easier for anyone to access games on their iPad, telephone, computer, or other electronic devices. Video game developers use a variety of sophisticated reinforcement techniques and realistic graphics to encourage continued play. As a result, some people can't regulate the amount of time spent on playing video games, which can impact both their physical and psychological health. Specifically, addiction can lead to negative effects on health, well-being, sleep, academics and socialization. Males reported greater addiction severity than females.

Dr. Holly Morrell, Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology, has published two studies with her

students on the relationship between video game addiction and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. In May 2018, she published a study titled "Smoking, ADHD, and Problematic Video Game Use: A Structural Modeling Approach" in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*. She and her co-authors investigated frequency of video game play, cigarette smoking, and ADHD as predictors of video game addiction. They found that, together, these predictors were strongly associated with video game addiction.

In June 2018, Dr. Morrell and her co-authors published a related study titled "Video game addiction, ADHD symptomatology, and video game reinforcement" in *The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse*. They tested nearly 3,000 video game players between the ages of 18-57 for this

study, and found that ADHD symptoms predict video game addiction symptoms, regardless of the type of video game being played.

In addition to studying video game addiction, Dr. Morrell is also a researcher in the area of smoking addiction. She is currently the director for the Smoking Cessation and Prevention Laboratory in the Loma Linda University Department of Psychology. She recently completed a study with one of her students on the relationship between





Dr. Holly Morrell

mindfulness and e-cigarette use, and is developing a study on psychosocial predictors of video game addiction with another student. Dr. Morrell and her students are currently working on publishing research on adverse childhood experiences and smoking in the general population and among veterans. Dr. Morrell and her collaborators are also analyzing data on the relationships among body image, body dissatisfaction, and both traditional and e-cigarette use.

Dr. Morrell has been a faculty member in the Department of Psychology for more than seven years, and was appointed as Director of the Clinical Psychology PhD program two years ago. She completed her undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of California San Diego, later earning both her master's and doctoral degrees at Texas Tech University. After receiving her PhD, she worked as a research scientist at the University of California at San Francisco.

In between her busy work schedule, Dr. Morrell relaxes by gardening, reading primarily non-fiction books, and traveling. She recently provided an interview for CNN on her gaming addiction research.

Holly Morrell has recently published two studies with her students on the relationship between video game addiction and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Child life specialists make hospital seem less scary to the smallest patients

Child life specialist career allows SBH alumna to fulfill her desire to help children

For Heather Wolf, it has always been about helping children. A child life specialist at Loma Linda University Children's Hospital, Heather educates and supports young patients and their families during their treatments.

"A hospital can be a scary and unknown place," Heather says. "Child life specialists are there to help alleviate as much of the stress and anxiety as we can."

Heather has always had a strong desire to work with children, particularly offering them support through vulnerable times. While she never wanted to be a doctor or nurse, Heather's introduction to the child life field in college offered her the blend of working in a medical field while being able to educate and support children and families.

Many tools available

Child life specialists work with patients that range in age from newborn to 21. They use a wide range of developmentally appropriate tools and language to help children understand what they are experiencing in the hospital.

"Teaching dolls, pictures, videos, even the language we use are all important to helping children understand step-by-step what to expect," Heather says. Distraction can be another useful tool.

"Many treatments, procedures and pokes can induce anxiety or pain," Heather says. "We can use distraction and relaxation techniques that help children cope and the medical team to accomplish what they need."

There are 20 full-time and 15 part-time child life specialists

on the Loma Linda University Children's Hospital staff. They play a key role on the health care team.

"One of the things I love about working here is that not only do I have other child life specialists nearby I can call on, I also have the entire pediatric intensive care unit staff for support," Heather says. "We work together constantly with daily planning sessions and weekly meetings. The collaboration of ideas across the disciplines is the foundation of Loma Linda's vision for whole person care."

Heather completed her Child Life Specialist MS degree at the Loma Linda University School of Behavioral Health. Launched 13 years ago, the program enrolls 14 to 15 students annually, and typically has a waiting list. More than 100 students have graduated from the program.

"Child life specialists have an ability to engage with children and their families in a warm, appropriate fashion," says Michelle Minyard-Widmann, MS, CCLS, Child Life Specialist MS Program Director and Assistant Professor in the School of Behavioral Health. "Our ideal students are creative, self-reflective, flexible and able to work in a team setting. This is a career with high levels of burnout, so successful child life specialists learn self-care techniques as well."

One Loma Linda strong

The Children's Hospital and School of Behavioral Health are located on the same campus, which continues to support a strong partnership between the two entities.

“Seeing children who start out timid or overwhelmed, and helping them overcome their fears and their unique challenges is incredible.”

—Heather Wolf



“We are able to provide many hands-on clinical opportunities for students, which is a unique component of our program,” says Professor Minyard-Widmann. “Children’s Hospital also offers a fellowship program exclusively for our graduates, where they hire one graduate each summer for a one-year program.”

Heather says compassion is an additional trait of successful child life specialists. “We walk our patients and their families through difficult medical experiences. Seeing children who start out timid or overwhelmed, and helping them overcome their fears and their unique challenges is incredible.” Seeing former patients come back to the hospital for a visit has provided Heather some of her favorite memories.

Working in the pediatric intensive care unit can also lead to sad, difficult moments for Heather. Bereavement support is a key piece of her work.

“I feel strongly about creating opportunities for siblings to understand and come to say goodbye,” she says. “Children grieve differently from adults and there is no step-by-step

‘handbook’ on how to navigate all that comes with grief.” Heather says one way child life specialists can partner with families during those difficult times is helping to provide legacy items such as handprints and grief books.

Each day a different challenge

For a child life specialist, every day can look very different. One day will be devoted to accompanying patients to surgery, working to distract the child as IVs and anesthesia are begun. Another day can be spent teaching children about their diagnosis, and the medical equipment around them in developmentally appropriate language. The next day might be spent in a hospital playroom.

“The part that sold me on child life, and still drives me, is that the hospital can be such a scary and unknown place,” Heather says. “Child life specialists walk with patients and families through hospitalization and all that comes with it and are there to help alleviate as much of that stress and anxiety as we can.”

Helping children by helping parents

SBH research shows parents can best help their child's mental health by first caring for themselves

How a person copes with stress has a major impact on biological, familial, social, and emotional functioning. Research conducted by the School of Behavioral Health at Loma Linda University Health is establishing that teaching parents ways of addressing stressful situations in their lives can play a key role in helping children deal with their developing mental health issues.

Cameron Neece, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychology in the School of Behavioral Health, is a lead researcher for two ongoing studies that are examining how a child's disruptive behavior can impact the stress interactions within families, and is developing processes and treatments that can improve a family's mental health profile. Much of Dr. Neece's research career has focused on working with families of children with developmental delays and autism spectrum disorders.

The largest of the two studies is known as Partnerships in Research for Optimizing Parenting or PRO-Parenting. Supported by a significant four-year R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health, PRO-Parenting teaches parents how to best deal with their child's problem behaviors, and provides tools that allow them to become more effective parents.

"Parents in our study have clinical levels of depression, and when parents have high levels of stress and depression, their children don't improve," Dr. Neece says. "It makes sense. And when a child pushes back on the parents, a family's situation can get worse before it gets better."

Parents participating in the project are divided into two groups, both of which go through 16 weeks of intervention and training, one night per week for two hours. Researchers follow up with the families at six and 12 months after the training concludes.

During the program's first six weeks, parents from as many as 20 families are formed into groups and are either taught mindfulness techniques or go through an educational curriculum. The remaining ten weeks focus on training parents to use the skills they learned. Most of the parents come from Inland Empire communities close to Loma Linda. A sub-group is in operation at the University of Oregon, directed by collaborat-

ing researcher Dr. Laura Lee McIntyre.

"Parents who come to us want to help their child, but what they learn is that to help their child they first need to help themselves," Dr. Neece says. "Many people assume that parental stress doesn't automatically cause behavioral issues in their children."

Dealing with a child with behavioral issues can be an overwhelming time for these families, Dr. Neece says. Sometimes these parents forget about their need for self-care. Many likely need mental health treatment, but few are actually able to receive this help for a variety of reasons.

"Our data show that parents who receive mindfulness education, and continue to practice those strategies, are able to maintain lower levels of stress in their lives. And as a result, their child benefits too," Dr. Neece says.

Neece defines mindfulness as a way to allow people to control where they focus their attention, using nonjudgmental techniques. Through training and practice, when a person notices their attention wandering, they recognize the need to recenter their mental state.

"Most people spend too much time anticipating the future or rehashing the past," Dr. Neece says. "Anxiety, depression, and physical pain grow from that. By learning to focus on what is happening to them in the moment, a lot of times parents come to realize that the present isn't as bad as they think it is."

Dr. Neece's second research study utilizes mindfulness-based stress reduction trainers and educators, and is cooperating with the Center for Autism at California State University Fullerton to look specifically at families with children dealing with autism spectrum disorder. Many of the participants are from minority communities, and many live below the poverty line. After eight weeks of training sessions, daily homework assignments, and attendance at a daylong meditation retreat, the parents began to show greater satisfaction with their lives, and the children began to show behavioral improvements.

"One biomarker of stress is a person's cortisol level, and our measurements pre- and post-study showed real improvement in our parent participants," Dr. Neece says. "We also followed up

with the children's school teachers, who reported improved behaviors as well. The data lines up across the board."

Dr. Neece's interest in the family dynamics of child mental health issues was sparked by a close childhood friendship with Chris, a boy who had Down syndrome.

"We were on the same swim teams growing up," Dr. Neece recalls. "My mom tried to temper my expectations for my friend. But he often beat my mom's expectations. He's doing well now as an adult. In high school, I started to wonder why Chris did so well."

Dr. Neece's mother pointed out that Chris's family played a key role in his successes. They traveled frequently, enjoyed some economic advantages, and served as a great support system and advocate for Chris.

"I remember saying to my mom that I wanted all families to have that opportunity," Dr. Neece says. During her undergraduate program at UC Berkeley, Dr. Neece worked extensively with developmentally disabled students. Recognizing her desire to serve disabled children, Neece's Berkeley advisor suggested she do graduate study at UCLA. While there, she participated in a multi-

university study on children with mental health problems. Dr. Neece's role was looking at family factors that might be contributing the children's issues.

"We understood that parental stress was a significant predictor for children develop mental health issues," Dr. Neece said. "But found that parents' stress has a stronger impact on the child than the child's stress impacts the family. We didn't expect to find this."

Dr. Neece realized that the traditional model for child psychotherapy didn't align with this concept. Treating parental stress is not something child psychologists do. Child psychologists treat children.

"What intervention

would we use if parent stress was the key factor in these outcomes?" Neece said. "Back in 2010 or 2011, there was no evidence-based intervention for reducing parental stress."



"Most people spend too much time anticipating the future or rehashing the past. By learning to focus on what is happening to them in the moment, a lot of times parents come to realize that the present isn't as bad as they think it is."

—Cameron Neece

Joining the Loma Linda University Health faculty in 2011, Dr. Neece began some early studies designed to find or develop an evidenced-based treatment that could address this issue. She focused on mindfulness techniques.

According to Dr. Neece, "Mindfulness-based stress reduction is a well-researched and effective treatment for stress, but these techniques had not been used in families with children with developmental disabilities." However, these early studies showed promising results, and served as the foundation to the two major research studies presently underway.

Dr. Neece hopes that at the conclusion of her studies there will be sufficient data to show mindfulness as an evidence-based therapy option for parents. She believes that when a child comes to a mental health professional for help, it could become standard practice to evaluate how the parent is doing, and intervene with training when necessary.

"Adding mindfulness interventions makes other processes more effective," Dr. Neece says. "Our next study will be a dissemination trial, working with implementation scientists to get this information into other practice situations. We also need to look at public policy and insurance billing issues, so clinicians could be paid to do these types of interventions."

International Trauma Team, joined by SBH students, teaches community resiliency skills in Samoa

Loma Linda University's School of Behavioral Health offers a unique opportunity for students to travel internationally as part of completing their required advanced practicums and applied research opportunities.

Summer 2019 was the second year that master's and doctoral students in clinical programs from Marital and Family Therapy, Counseling, Psychology, and Social Work traveled to Samoa, where they partnered with local organizations, the University of Samoa and the Samoan government to address significant social issues. The students also supported members of the LLU International Behavioral Health Trauma Team to provide community resiliency training for University and community leaders, and the staff of the Samoan Victims Support Group.

The LLU International Behavioral Health Trauma Team partnered with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency to teach resiliency skills to dozens of community leaders in Samoa during the summer of 2019.



The trainees consisted of five SBH faculty and 13 students in the group trained local Samoan frontline service providers, community leaders and clinicians. Some of the group's goals included:

- Teaching biologically-based skills, rooted in current research, to help individuals and communities learn how to techniques to regulate the central nervous system.
- Educating about common reactions resulting from individual or communal traumas such as poverty, racism, family violence, natural and human-made disasters.
- Helping people understand that the common reactions after traumatic experiences are biological responses and not the result of mental weakness.
- Training individuals to be Community Resiliency Model® skills facilitators so that they can share the Community Resiliency Model® with their families and communities.

"As a son of Samoa, I have witnessed our people suffering with domestic and community violence, substance abuse, school dropout, disparate incarceration, and avoidable healthcare issues such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer," says Talolo Lepale, Director of Field Education and Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology. Professor Lepale reports that the resulting cycle of generational trauma often overwhelms local Samoan resources.

"It is my belief that a key component in the promotion of mental health and wellness for our islander communities lies in what we call Fāa Samoa, which translated means 'the Samoan way,'" says Mr. Lepale. "Samoan families and social structures are tightly woven together, forming the foundation for society. Through our shared experiences, Loma Linda University students and faculty were able to work toward



developing and advancing innovative care for all Samoans.”

Along with this year’s efforts, the School has established a longer term global practice experience for individual students. During the 2018 trip, Kaylin Miller, a doctoral psychology student, remained on the island for two additional months to help address behavioral health concerns through services at Samoan organizations. This included working with the counseling team at the National University of Samoa (NUS), where clinicians assisted with clinical supervision and consultation on practice delivery within the context of Samoan culture.

As the collaboration with Samoan organizations

Psychology student completes first ever SBH summer practicum in Samoa

Kaylin Miller, a doctoral student in Psychology who plans to work with children and adolescents, spent a total of seven weeks in Samoa during the summer of 2018. Following two weeks working with a group of School of Behavioral Health faculty and students, Miller remained for five additional weeks on an internship with the Adventist Disaster Relief Agency, observing the humanitarian work the group provides throughout Samoa. Part of her internship involved volunteering at the National University of Samoa, where she worked with medical students who struggled with self-care, time management and English literacy.

“I held two groups per week for the medical students, allowing them to vent about their personal life and provide time to share specific strategies to tackle each of their issues,” Kaylin says.

Miller also volunteered with Samoa Victim Support Group (SVSG), a non-profit organization that works with infants, children, and adolescents that have survived domestic abuse (physical or sexual).

“I worked with a group of about ten students ages 10-15, who had been removed from their homes because of suspected abuse. While in the shelter they attend school as they await placement in a new home,” Kaylin says.

Cultural differences between Samoa and the United States proved to be a significant learning experience for Kaylin.

“When I enter society, work, or school in the U.S., I enjoy the protection of privileges such as my family status, my native language of English, and my education,” Kaylin says. “In Samoa

continues, it is hoped that the shared efforts will result in more learning and engagement opportunities for faculty and students to support participating Samoan organizations through:

- Identifying and promoting evidenced-based practice approaches grounded in the Aiga (the values and heritage of the Samoan family).
- Integrating greater inclusion of behavioral health in Samoan health care systems.
- Furthering development of mental health services within Samoan communities, located both in Samoa and in Southern California.



I was constantly aware of how I stood out so obviously for the first time in my life. All the privileges I have here in the U.S. were irrelevant.”

Kaylin found significant inspiration as she learned about the Samoan culture. Many families live off of land passed down through generations. At the same time, many family homes have been damaged by natural disasters as a result of inadequate building materials.

“I learned humility because things I thought I could never tolerate, many Samoans do every day to survive. And they do it with gratitude and a smile on their face,” Kaylin says. “This experience was not something I could have had while interning in America.”

Looking back on her experiences, Kaylin believes her practicum in Samoa has opened potential new directions for her career in behavioral health.

“There is no way I could have ever pictured the incredible experiences I had in Samoa,” she says. “This experience further confirmed to me that part of my purpose in life is to travel as much as possible and give any bit of help I can to those who want behavioral health support where mental health services are not currently available.”

Blowing Up the Airwaves

Alisha Saavedra, Director of Clinical Training for the Child Life Specialist MS program, catches up with an alumna who hosts a podcast about the child life profession

Q: Who is the School of Behavioral Health student behind the mic?

A: My name is Ciara (Esse) Sprague, and I was a student in the MS Child Life Specialist Program. I grew up knowing that I wanted to help others, but never could figure out the right calling. After trying to figure out where I wanted to be for college and my future, I ended up at California State University Fullerton. I landed on child and adolescent development by accident, but I'm so thankful that I did. It was during my undergraduate work that I was introduced to the world of child life, and I feel as though I never really looked back because of how inclusive it was of all the things I wanted out of a career. After CSUF, I decided to further my education in the field of child life, which is why I went to Loma Linda University. Over the years I've worked with children in so many different settings, such as hospice, elementary to high school, and of course in hospitals. A few other fun facts about myself are that I married my high school sweetheart during my first quarter of graduate school, I've been a server for five years now, and I love to teach yoga whenever I have the time. Yes, I have an extremely busy schedule — but why not add on a podcast, right?!

Q: What prompted you to start a podcast?

A: There were actually a few different factors that prompted me to start this podcast. First, I was so tired of explaining what child life was over and over to family members. So I thought that if they could hear from myself and others in the field, they could have a better understanding of what it is that I actually do with children. Second, the field is very impacted right now, which has made it extremely competitive to meet certain requirements — such as an internship. I worked very hard the first time around on my internship applications, but unfortunately I didn't get placed and needed to make a second round of applications. I was trying to find a way to stand out, and a podcast for the field on my résumé seemed like it could grab the attention of internship supervisors. I had had the idea for quite some time already when I started applying for internships again, but getting it on my résumé was the push I needed to put everything into full gear. Third, I love hearing stories of other child life specialists and I absolutely

love listening to podcasts, which is why I decided to combine the two! I've always known that I wanted to add to the field of child life in some way, but I was never sure how I could or what it would be. *Bigger Than Bubbles* seemed like the answer to how I could contribute to the field that I'm so passionate about.

Q: When did the podcast begin?

A: The podcast launched during the first week of January in 2019. I started with the "Teaser Episode" on January 6 and then "#1: Bubbler Michelle Parker, MA, CCLS" launched on January 8! However, it was on a drive home from my summer child life practicum in 2018 that I first had the idea of creating this podcast. It took so many months of research, planning, and communication with others to really make my idea a reality. However, like I am with most things, once I set my mind to something, I always make it happen!

Q: Before we hear more, I have to ask, where did the name *Bigger Than Bubbles* come from?

A: If you're in the field of child life, you know it's a profession that's hard to explain to others. If you're not in the field, you might still have some questions about what it is we really do. You might even think that we're just people who play all day or blow bubbles constantly. As a future child life specialist who is always trying to show others that we are more than just toys or bubbles, I heard something one day that really stuck with me. It was in a class with Michelle Parker (the first guest on the podcast) and she told us, "You are more than a bubble degree, so be more than bubbles!" This eventually turned into "bigger than bubbles." Even when there are days that consist of blowing bubbles, my education has given me the tools to use simple things like bubbles in a more meaningful way than most may ever understand.

Q: Can you give us an idea about what your first season was like?

A: The entire season is a collection of 10 episodes that went up every other Tuesday, and each episode ranged from about an hour to an hour and a half-long conversation. The guests were a compilation of certified child life specialists, ed-



ucators, and a counselor. My favorite thing about the guests I had on was that they all varied in their credentials, education, and experience in their field, which is why I feel as though listeners would be able to hear something different each time and connect with them in different ways.

Q: What have you learned from your “Bubblers” and listeners?

A: I have truly learned so much through this experience! As for my guests, aka Bubblers, I love listening to their stories and learning different intervention ideas or ways to go about something in our field. I also love being reminded about different

aspects of the development of children and how we can help them during certain scenarios. As for my listeners, I’ve learned that many of us have had similar experiences in finding it difficult to navigate through this field. This has made me so grateful though, because I now have this platform where students can reach out, ask questions, and connect with me whenever they want. Lastly, I’ve also been reminded that the individuals in this field, certified child life specialists and students, are incredibly creative, passionate, and determined individuals, which makes me proud to be considered a part of this group of people.

Q: What can listeners anticipate during Season 2 of Bigger Than Bubbles?

A: From the very start I mentioned that this podcast will adapt and change as my life adapts and changes. I was able to earn an internship with Sutter Medical

Center, Children’s Center in Northern California. For this reason, I knew I wouldn’t have as much time to give to the podcast and would need to downsize somehow. I was lucky enough to be placed with a fellow LLU classmate for internship, which had me thinking that it would be really fun to do something with her for the podcast. Listeners can now tune into episodes that revolve around an internship!

WHERE TO FIND BIGGER THAN BUBBLES

Ciara’s podcast is available on the SoundCloud, Spotify, Apple, and iHeartRadio Podcast sites. Bigger Than Bubbles is also on the web at biggerthanbubbles.com.

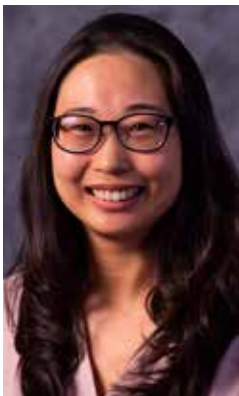
SBH Research

A Commitment to Excellence



While the School of Behavioral Health has a long honored tradition of excellence in teaching and clinical practice, we are also deeply committed to advancing knowledge through translational research in the US and abroad. We feel strongly that effective teaching is supported by engaged and well-informed faculty who are familiar with emerging knowledge and trends in their respective fields. The School values a balance between teaching, clinical engagement, service, and research.

As the Associate Dean for Research, Dr. Susanne Montgomery (left) has been instrumental in assisting faculty in their respective areas of interest. Her areas of specialty include research design and analyses, translational research, community involved research, health disparities and program evaluation. Under her guidance, faculty have been prolific in both funded and unfunded research. Elsewhere in this issue you can find reports about the MEND program and the PRO-Parenting initiative. Many additional areas of research are currently being investigated by our faculty. Read on for a glimpse into this exciting work!



Kelly Baek, PhD, MSW

Dr. Baek is originally from Michigan, where she received her BA in Sociology from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and her MSW from Wayne State University. Before pursuing her PhD, she worked at various non-profits (family services, therapeutic foster care agencies, volunteer services) where she focused on program/resource development, policy, and evaluation. She received her PhD in Social Policy and Social Research at Loma Linda University, focusing her dissertation on Korean American (KA) mental health challenges and help-seeking behavior. Her areas of interest are mental health, culturally appropriate interventions, critical theory, and developing culturally sensitive social work curriculum. She is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology.

Dr. Baek's current research focus is on developing culturally-aligned mental health interventions based on the results of her dissertation research on mental distress and help-seeking behavior in KAs. She plans to partner with the KA community to assist them by using the Community Resiliency Model®, a biologically based intervention, and Mental Health First Aid, a triage for mental health crises to develop culturally-adapted, sustainable interventions. Her goal is to increase access to resources that are sustainable, culturally appropriate, and non-stigmatizing.



Zephon Lister, PhD, LMFT

Dr. Lister is an associate professor in the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences as well as the Director of the PhD Program in Systems, Families, and Couples. After graduating from Loma Linda University, he took on the position of Director for Collaborative Care in the Department of Family Medicine and Public Health at the University of California, San Diego. He also completed a Fellowship in Integrated Behavioral Health at the University of Chicago, Center for Family Health. Dr. Lister's interests concern the integration of behavioral health into health care settings, in particular the behavioral management of chronic illness and provision of brief interventions for anxiety, depression and trauma. He has published and presented nationally and internationally in these areas. He is also interested in the use of a family systems approach to address diabetes health disparities in African American men, who are rarely engaged in primary or secondary interventions but are at high risk for diabetes related morbidity and mortality. Using a resilience approach embedded in partnered interventions, he plans to engage this usually hard-to-access group and help improve their lives sustainably by changing families' lifestyles.

Tori Van Dyk, PhD

Dr. Van Dyk obtained her PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She completed specialized clinical and research training in pediatric health psychology during her internship and fellowship at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. She is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, where she provides mentorship and supervision to clinical psychology graduate students, teaches courses in child, adolescent, and health psychology, and conducts pediatric health research. As a pediatric health psychologist, Dr. Van Dyk's research is focused on modifiable health behaviors such as sleep, diet, and physical activity in youth. She is interested in these behaviors as targets for health promotion and intervention, and studies how they relate to each other and other important health outcomes. She partners with JamTime, an obesity intervention run by the Loma Linda University Health Pediatric Residency program, to determine the impact of motivational interviewing on healthy weight behaviors. Dr. Van Dyk also collaborates with her colleagues in the Department of Psychology to explore the connections between sleep, food insecurity, and video game use.

Dr. Van Dyk is also interested in the intersection between mental and physical health and how health behaviors and outcomes impact emotional and behavioral functioning in youth. She investigates these relationships using observational, longitudinal, and experimental methods. Further, she believes that collaboration within and between disciplines is vital when exploring these important health outcomes.



Maya Boustani, PhD, MS

Dr. Boustani, an assistant professor of psychology, received her PhD from the Child Clinical Science program at Florida International University. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the University of Texas medical center in Houston and her postdoctoral fellowship at UCLA. She is currently pursuing a program of community-based research focused on reducing mental health disparities for vulnerable youth and families. Her research rests on three principles: (a) prioritizing research-practice partnerships in the design and delivery of services; (b) identifying low-cost ways to disseminate evidence-based practices in communities of need, using indigenous resources; and (c) attending closely to workforce and organizational factors that support feasibility, effective implementation, and sustainability of evidence-based practice.

Currently, Dr. Boustani is partnering with the San Bernardino City Unified School District to enhance school-based mental health services. Separately, she is also partnering with Florida International University's Department of Computer Science to test a digital health avatar that will be able to deliver brief interventions.



Qais Alemi, PhD, MPH, MBA

Dr. Alemi is a researcher and an associate professor of research methods in the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology. Dr. Alemi completed his doctoral education in Social Policy and Social Research, along with earning an MPH in Global Health and an MBA in Health Care Administration at Loma Linda University.

Dr. Alemi's research focuses on global mental health issues--specifically, investigating the psychosocial well-being of conflict-affected populations along with exploring methods for improving "cultural fit" within health and mental health care delivery systems. While several of his studies have focused on the needs of refugees in Europe and the United States, Dr. Alemi recently conducted an observational study in Afghanistan examining help-seeking patterns within both biomedical and traditional healing systems of care. He intends to pursue funding from the National Institutes of Health Fogarty International Center (FIC) in order to build collaborative relationships between Loma Linda University and institutions of higher education in Afghanistan. Through FIC funding, Dr. Alemi envisions increasing the research capacity of academic institutions in Afghanistan, which he sees as integral to developing and implementing culturally competent interventions needed to address the psychosocial needs of war-affected Afghans.



Alumna authors book about pathway to launching marriage and family therapy careers

Following a presentation at a major national convention, Jessica ChenFeng, LMFT, PhD, an alumna of the School of Behavioral Health's Counseling and Family Sciences Department, was invited to write a book on her journey to becoming a marriage and family therapist.

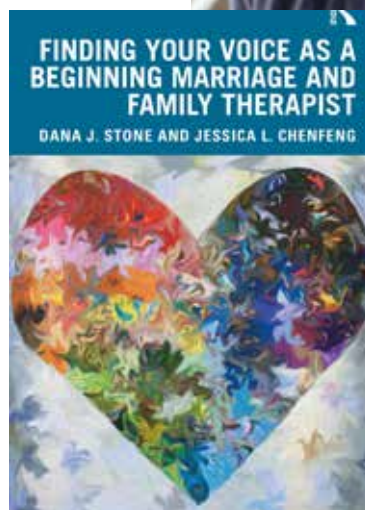
Dr. ChenFeng and Dr. Dana Stone, a fellow professor from California State University, Northridge (CSUN), made the presentation at the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy on the process of becoming a marital and family therapist. The editor from Routledge Publications was so impressed that she requested the pair write a book on this subject. The resulting work, "Finding Your Voice as a Beginning Marriage and Family Therapist," was released in July 2019. Dr. ChenFeng and co-author Dr. Stone worked on the book over the course of almost three years. They would each write chapters for the book and then swap chapters, having enriching dialogue along the way and making any necessary edits. Several universities have now incorporated the book into their curriculum.

Dr. ChenFeng's journey as a therapist began when she received her MFT degree from Fuller Seminary in 2007. Then, while pursuing her doctoral degree at LLU, she worked at the Loma Linda University Behavioral Health Institute, seeing clients and also supervising trainees. There, she was supervised by Assistant Professor Randall Walker, MS, LMFT.

"I enjoyed his mentorship and appreciated the quality of supervision that Professor Walker provided," Dr. ChenFeng says. "Loma Linda University was a 'healing environment' for me both professionally and personally."

Through the mentorship of Dr. Carmen Knudson-Martin and Dr. Douglas Huenergardt, Dr. ChenFeng focused her doctoral research on issues of race, gender, spirituality and power within relationships. After graduating in 2014, she began teaching at CSUN.

Through her clinical and teaching experiences at both CSUN and LLU, Dr. ChenFeng developed a personal understanding of the many issues involved in becoming a marital and family therapist, particularly from a cultural perspective. She understood that students at



Jessica ChenFeng, PhD, is a graduate of the Counseling and Family Sciences Department. She is co-author of a recently published book on becoming a marriage and family therapist.

times feel marginalized, depending on their background and work experiences. Dr. ChenFeng felt that it was important to help students feel empowered, and the book, in part, discusses this issue.

In June 2018, Dr. ChenFeng came to Loma Linda University Health to serve as Associate Director of Physician Vitality and Associate Professor in the School of Medicine. The Office of Physician Vitality offers support for physicians, ranging from medical students to residents and attendings.

SB County Department of Behavioral Health

building enduring partnerships to serve others

Loma Linda University and the School of Behavioral Health have a long history of strong collaborative partnerships with a wide range of local, regional and worldwide agencies and communities. One of the most long-standing and enduring relationships has been with the

as the assistant director for three years. Prior to that, she had worked as a cultural competency officer for the department.

In addition to her full time duties at the department, Dr. Kelley serves as an adjunct professor in the School of Behavioral Health's Department of Social Work and Social Ecology, where she has taught

policy classes for the past three years. She initially taught classes with the previous Director of the Department of Behavioral Health — Allan Rawland, now retired. She also serves as an adjunct professor at Mount Saint Mary's College in Los Angeles, teaching courses in medical sociology and case management.


Further, she teaches a social work and alcohol and drug abuse class at California State University, San Bernardino.

Her commitment to enhancing quality services for the community can be seen in the drive and energy she brings each day to the job.

While growing up in Huntington Beach, Dr. Kelley saw the impact of mental illness and alcohol abuse in the community. She developed a passion for working on a macro

level to implement needed changes in order to positively influence the community. She recently received her doctoral degree in Social Work from Capella University, focusing on the use of technology with clients suffering from mental illness. She received her MSW from USC and her undergraduate degree in psychology from Mount Saint Mary's in Los Angeles.

Dr. Kelley believes that one of the greatest challenges to providing services is the stigma of mental issues within both the professional and lay communities. She is committed to helping the public better understand the many challenges that confront clients suffering from mental illness or substance abuse disorders.



Dr. Veronica Kelley is committed to helping the public better understand the many challenges that confront people suffering from mental illness or substance abuse disorders.

San Bernardino Department of Behavioral Health. The department's director, Dr. Veronica Kelley, has an incredible commitment and drive to work with local organizations and universities to serve those in need. Dr. Kelley directs the administrative and financial activities of the department, evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of department processes and programs, and maximizing staff productivity. She is responsible for a \$464 million dollar budget of which \$200 million is received through the Mental Health Services Act. Dr. Kelley was appointed as the department director in October 2016, after serving

School recognizes 2019 honored faculty, alumnus

Janet L. Sonne, PhD, is the recipient of the 2019 School of Behavioral Health Distinguished Service Award.

One of four psychologists who founded the graduate clinical psychology programs at Loma Linda University, Dr. Sonne achieved the rank of Professor in 1999 and served as the Director of Clinical Psychology for the PhD program from 2001 to 2004.

After retiring in 2005, she continued to teach courses for the department. From 2010-2018, she returned to Loma Linda in order

to develop and coordinate the doctoral clinical psychology training program at the Behavioral Medicine Center.

In addition to many other roles, Sonne is the former chair and member of the CPA Ethics Committee and has served twice as a member of the APA Ethics Committee. She helped develop the UCLA Post-Therapy Support Group, one of the first intervention programs for psychotherapy patients who had been involved in sexual relationships with their previous therapists. Among numerous publications, Sonne authored a general resource book for mental health clinicians (*PsycEssentials: A Pocket Resource for Mental Health Practitioners*) with the American Psychological Association.



Dr. Carlos A. Escoto is the 2019 School of Behavioral Health Alumnus of the Year.

Dr. Escoto was accepted into the Clinical Psychology PhD program with the first group of Psychology students at Loma Linda University. While in the program, he taught courses at several local colleges and universities. Since 2002, he has retained faculty appointments at Eastern



Connecticut State University, receiving a teaching award in 2007. As a faculty member, he initiated a major curricular change for his department, created a course for student success, and created the first global field course to Nepal.

The majority of his time is now spent as Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Coordinator, a position he has held since 2013. During that time, he has increased the number of students presenting their research at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research from 3 to 48. Alongside his duties to numerous other boards and committees, Dr. Escoto recently served on the planning committee for the 2nd World Congress on Undergraduate Research, where 300 students from around the world presented their research in May.

Dr. Escoto also serves as regional trainer for the American Psychological Association's HOPE program as well as an Associate Editor for the *Psi Chi Journal of Psychology* and as a Reviewer for the *Journal of American College Health*.

Two join SBH faculty for 2019-20 school year

SBH would like to welcome its two newest faculty members: Dr. Bridgette Peteet and Dr. Nicholas Rockwood.

Dr. Peteet is an associate professor in the Department of Psychology. She comes to LLU from the University of Cincinnati, where she became an associate professor after completing both her master's and doctoral degrees. Dr. Peteet was instrumental in securing numerous research grants, authoring and co-authoring several professional research publications, and serving as an editor for journal publications. She has also served as the secretary of the American Psychological Association, Division 45 Society for the Psychological Student of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race, and Treasurer for the Association of Black Psychologists (Cincinnati Chapter).



Dr. Rockwood is an assistant professor within the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, specializing in quantitative research. He completed his PhD at Ohio State University, where he wrote his dissertation on the "Estimation of multilevel structural equation models with random slopes for latent covariates."



His areas of specialization include multilevel modeling, structural equation modeling, item response theory, statistical mediation and moderation analysis as well as computational statistics. He will be working closely with Dr. Susanne Montgomery, who is Head of the

Interdisciplinary Studies Division as well as the Associate Dean for Research within the School.

Alumni reconnect with friends, faculty during Homecoming weekend

A special mixer for alumni from the School of Behavioral Health took place February 28 during Loma Linda University Health's annual Homecoming weekend. Hosted in the Department of Psychology, alumni, faculty, and family turned out to enjoy a photo booth, a variety of door prizes as well as hors d'oeuvres and hot beverages.

Adam Aréchiga, Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, served as the event's master of ceremonies. Alumni enjoyed the relaxed atmosphere and the opportunities to reconnect with one another and their professors. Dr. Buckles met with many of the alumni to hear the latest news on their careers and families.

The setting provided a wonderful opportunity for alumni to learn about the many exciting developments in their respective departments. Some of these changes include the DMFT program going online in 2019-20, the expansion of a hybrid online MSW program beginning Fall 2019, the infusion of military content throughout all licensable degree programs in SBH, and a summer mental health academy offered to high school seniors and community college students that focuses on careers in mental health.

The mixer was just one of many activities held on campus during the university's Homecoming weekend. Held February 28 to March 4, the weekend featured continuing education courses, research presentations, social events and worship services.

School sponsored presentations included Dean Beverly Buckles moderating an interdisciplinary panel discussing suicide and prevention, Dr. Adam Aréchiga presenting on social and behavioral isolation, and alumna Dr. Vanessa Quintana training attendees in basic mental health first aid.

Social Work alumna Gabriela Navarro, MSW says, "Homecoming has become an event I really look forward to since graduating from the School of Behavioral Health. It provides an opportunity to reconnect with and celebrate my alma mater. It was great to reacquaint myself with old classmates. We shared professional experiences and encouraged one another to continue forward in our calling within the field of social work. It was a joy to laugh as we shared stories that make our lives as social workers so unique. Our experience at Loma Linda University as students was such a positive one that coming back 'home' triggered again those feelings of happiness."



Planning for next year's Homecoming is already in progress. The event will be held from March 5 to 9, 2020. Mark your calendars for a great opportunity to reconnect with your fellow alumni and professors.

Social Work graduate works to ensure seniors receive needed services

One of the major demographic shifts occurring in the United States is the aging of our population. Within a couple of decades, older people are projected to outnumber children in the U.S. for the first time in history. By the year 2035 there will be 78 million people aged 65 years and older. By 2030, all baby boomers will be older than age 65. Given this change in demographics, there will be a need for increasing services to seniors.

Alumna Lori Delagrammatikas has long recognized the importance of providing services to seniors. She was recently selected to serve as Executive Director of the National Adult Protective Services Association, a national organization based in Washington, DC, formed to improve the quality of services for victims of elder abuse and vulnerable adult mistreatment.

Prior to joining NAPSA, Lori served for more than three years as an Adult Protective Services Liaison. Selected for this post by the Governor of California, Lori's role was multi-faceted. She worked at a statewide level reviewing and updating APS policies, provided technical assistance to county programs, collaborated with state and county agencies to improve coordination of services, developed quality assurance measures, and ensured the development of comprehensive training programs. She managed \$5.5 million in training contracts.

School of Behavioral Health alumna Lori Delagrammatikas has long recognized the importance of providing needed service to seniors.

Lori was also previously involved with the Academy for Professional Excellence operated through the San Diego State University Research Foundation. From roughly 2006 to 2015, she was responsible for developing, planning, and implementing training programs for adult protective services workers and other

professionals providing services to victims of elder and dependent adult abuse. She conducted statewide needs assessments, recruited and trained developers, and presented program reports to national stakeholder groups.

Lori received her MSW at Loma Linda University in 2009, concentrating in policy with a gerontology specialization. While in the program, she particularly enjoyed the emphasis on assessing clients from a bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective and the opportunity to secure a field internship experience at the National Center for Elderly Abuse. She found the faculty extremely helpful in accommodating her learning needs and long term goals.





Bucking Tradition

It takes an incredible amount of courage to leave your homeland. Yet that is exactly what Ann Nguyen's family did when she was only 3½ years of age, leaving Saigon, Vietnam and immigrating to the United States. First the family had to stay in a refugee camp in Thailand before finally journeying to the United States two months later. When they arrived in California, it was a brave new world.

Ann spent her early years in the Anaheim area, at first being "bounced" from house to house. Her parents didn't know any English and relied on relatives to assist them. Her father had been a captain in the Vietnamese army, and upon relocating to California he worked making food deliveries and providing cleaning services. Her mother secured employment as a seamstress in a warehouse.

Ann had a commitment to education and understood the opportunities a degree would provide for her. Having come from a very traditional family background, Ann created a new path and tradition in her family by pursuing an undergraduate degree in Psychology from the University of California, Riverside.

After completing her undergraduate degree, Ann took three years off and secured employment working in an autism clinic, providing therapy for adults with disabilities, and serving as a case manager at an outpatient clinic for clients with schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. Working

with chronic mental illness fueled her passion for studying neuropsychology.

Ann continued to have a very strong desire to enhance her education and skills and decided to enroll in the Loma Linda University Department of Psychology's PhD program in 2014. She is currently in the process of completing her degree within the next two years. She is now serving as a neuropsychology extern at University of California, Los Angeles and will be an extern next year at the VA Long Beach Healthcare System. Her ultimate goal is to either work in a VA or rehabilitation hospital. Ann has felt called to help serve veterans particularly, given the experiences of her own family.

A Healthy Lifestyle

Danielle (Dowling) Huntsman is an alumna of Loma Linda University, having graduated with an MSW in 1999. While in the MSW program she pursued a policy concentration while working full time. As an advanced standing student, she effectively juggled the responsibilities of her academic coursework, field practicum at the Inland AIDS Project, and her full-time job at the Riverside County Public Health department.

After receiving her MSW, Danielle continued in her passion and commitment to providing case management and clinical services. She worked for Orange County Child Protective Services, as well as at the Hoag Hospital, both full-time and per diem on various units. She then returned to the Riverside County Public Health department at the urging of her previous supervisor.

Danielle has worked at the Public Health department for over 18 years. She initially provided direct services to clients suffering from HIV and STDs. Subsequently, she managed an HIV/STD clinic and then became a Program Chief. She was appointed as the Deputy Director in May of 2017, and her responsibilities now include direct supervision of five managers as well as overseeing the work of more than 200 employees. Further, she meets weekly with Riverside County's Board of Supervisors.

Danielle also now teaches for the SBH Department of Social Work and Social Ecology. Her classes include Integrated Behavioral Health and Supervision. She is also working on developing a class through the LLU School of Public Health as it relates to the provision of both social work and public health services to help optimize patient outcomes. The department's Phi Alpha Honor Society recently honored her as a distinguished alumna.

As a child, Danielle grew up in Long Beach and Colton with four siblings. These days Danielle is a busy mother to two children, ages nine and twelve. Her husband, after working in human resources for various health care companies, later opened up his own business assisting seniors who are transitioning into different living arrangements.



Psychology alum's firm provides forensic mental health services across California

Tony Angelo's unique business background, combined with academic achievements, results in leadership role in forensic field

A strong affinity for business and management combined with a doctoral degree in psychology from the School of Behavioral Health have proven to be the perfect background for Tony Angelo's work as President and co-owner of Sharper Future, one of the largest

use highly structured specialized treatments to reduce relapse by convicted sex offenders. The firm also offers programs that combine therapy for substance abuse and mental health problems.

Specializing in forensic psychology was not something Dr. Angelo anticipated during his professional education and training. He expected to be working closely with families. But a practicum placement at Sharper Future changed his focus and the course of his life.

"After graduation from Loma Linda and an internship at the VA, I returned to Sharper Future and have remained there ever since," Dr. Angelo says. "I've literally held every clinical position in the company since coming here."

While Dr. Angelo's career background uniquely prepared him for the challenges of operating a large statewide psychological services corporation, he remembers the early days of his work life as somewhat of a fluke.

"I was just married, and was looking for any work," Dr. Angelo says. "I wandered into a plant that produced manufactured housing and RV's,

and found myself working on the manufacturing line."

Manufacturing line work turned out to not be Dr. Angelo's calling. But he spent his breaks and lunches chatting with the quality assurance manager.

"We discussed everything from religion to process control and warranty rates," Dr. Angelo says. "Apparently I made an impression." After two weeks of working on the line, Dr. Angelo was approached by the plant manager, who told him his skills would be optimized in a management role.



Tony Angelo's background uniquely prepared him for the challenges of operating a large statewide psychological services corporation, but he remembers the early days of his work life as somewhat of a fluke.

providers of forensic psychology in California.

Dr. Angelo's company operates ten offices throughout the state, and his corporate team of more than 100 provides forensic psychological services to the legal justice system. Sharper Future seeks to

"I was named Assistant Quality Manager," Dr. Angelo says. "It was an amazing opportunity that gave me a chance to learn about process improvement, budgeting and finance and human relations liaison work." Dr. Angelo later became manager of a sign manufacturing company, giving him additional experiences in running and managing a business.

Dr. Angelo's childhood was spent as part of a family that focused on serving others. His father was a preacher and counselor. The family ultimately became missionaries to Jamaica. Dr. Angelo initially stayed in the U.S. to attend college, but soon found that academic life was not a good fit. He moved to Jamaica, working with a residents of a mountain village. He also met the woman he would later marry.

"She was driven, successful, and determined," Dr. Angelo says. "After a year or so, realizing I was beyond lucky, I proposed." The couple moved to southern California and decided to resume their education.

"Frankly, I had never taken academics that seriously," Dr. Angelo says. "But while she was taking classes at a community college, I took a class as well. Then I took another. Frankly, through her example I wound up completing my degree at University of Cal-

ifornia, Riverside. We decided I would pursue my doctorate in Psychology, while she transferred to UCR to take biochemistry, and ultimately pursue medicine."

Dr. Angelo was drawn to Loma Linda University because of the way faith is integrated into the curriculum. At the same time, he appreciates the strong science foundation offered in the clinical psychology program.

"Loma Linda was actually a perfect choice for me. It's faith integration fit my worldview," Angelo says. "I received a good education as a psychologist, and we had opportunities to develop in the art of therapy, tethered to sound research and techniques."

As president of Sharper Future, Dr. Angelo's clinical load has been greatly diminished. However, he stays involved in the company's training programs. Dr. Angelo's future plans for Sharper Future include looking at expanding into new treatment areas, and further establishing the company as a premiere behavioral health agency.

"I believe we can do both," Dr. Angelo says. "It's a daunting task, but we have a host of dedicated employees throughout the state to accomplish these goals."

SAVE THE DATE



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
HEALTH

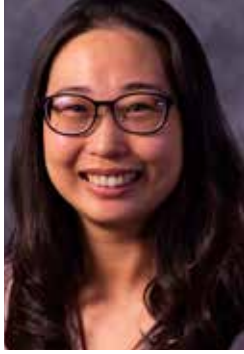
homecoming

Thursday, March 5 – Monday, March 9

2020

President's Award

Dr. Kelly Baek began her doctoral program in Social Policy and Social Research in 2013 and successfully defended her dissertation in 2018. Her dissertation was a cross-sectional study on Korean American mental health distress and help-seeking behavior in the greater Los Angeles area.



Her pilot study began using qualitative analysis and then extended into a quantitative project sampling multiple K-A church congregants.

As a PhD student, she contributed significantly to the program serving as a student representative. She helped organize the student colloquia for three years in addition to publishing a program newsletter four times a year.

Further, she worked as a teaching assistant lecturing in theory classes on topics such as social construction and intersectionality. During her time as a student, she assisted both students and faculty in their areas of research. This resulted in five publications and ten conference presentations.

Dr. Baek is now a full-time assistant professor in the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology. She has a very engaging style with students and is described as an "excellent educator" and "a very hard worker." She is also involved in her Korean-American Seventh-day Adventist community and serves as a behavioral health consultant for her church.

Dean's Award for Doctoral Degree Students

As a PhD student in the Department of Psychology, Catherine Sanner had a passion for providing clinical services and conducting research in the area of pediatric psychology. Catherine began her studies at Loma Linda University in 2012 after having attended Walla Walla University, where she received a BS in Health Science in 2011.



Walla University, where she received a BS in Health Science in 2011.

Dr. Sanner served as a pre-intern clinical supervisor, student clinical supervisor, and peer mentor. In addition, she has worked as a lead research assistant with Dr. Cameron Neece in her lab on the Mindful Awareness for Parenting Stress Project, which examines the efficacy of mindfulness stress reduction for parents of children with developmental delays and

autism spectrum disorders. She has also worked on another project examining the interrelationships between parent mental health and infant development in families admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit at LLU's Children's Hospital. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the Phoenix Children's Hospital, providing evaluations and treatment to children with a medical diagnosis.

Dr. Sanner recently had four publications in manuscript preparation and presented at a symposium for the Society for Research in Child Development biennial meeting. Her faculty mentor recalled that Dr. Sanner "has been exceptionally bright, interpersonally gifted, and a true joy to work with."

Dean's Award for Master's Degree Students

Tori Dinkfeld entered into the graduate social work program in the fall of 2017 after having completed an undergraduate degree in Mass Communication Broadcast Journalism in May 2015 from West Texas A&M University. She received several statewide journalism awards for her writings on the acculturation and experiences of foreign exchange students seeking an education in the U.S. Her interest in social work developed through her desire to do more than tell stories, but rather to work directly with people on a micro, mezzo, and macro level.



As a student she not only maintained an exceptional GPA but was also involved in many service projects. She served as the vice-president for the Phi Alpha honor society, engaging in numerous community fundraising events. She also participated in SIMS, teaching wellness skills to at-risk children in Peru. In 2018 she completed her church's leadership program and was also involved in serving ten hours per week at outreach sites in San Bernardino.

Tori's commitment to her clients, colleagues, community define her as a true humanitarian. Her future goals are to work on both national and international policy with the aim of addressing social injustices particularly centered on women's rights and access to education.

Dual master's program, online options part of new Behavioral Health degree programs

Loma Linda University's School of Behavioral Health has announced new academic program options designed to offer students alternative pathways to degrees.

The Department of Counseling and Family Sciences will offer a dual master's program, allowing students to obtain both an MS in Counseling and an MS in Marital and Family Therapy as well as a School Counseling Certificate, (a certificate which prepares students to apply for the Pupil Personnel Services credential in the State of California.) This program is designed to be completed in three years on a full time basis and adds just an additional 29 units to the single 90-unit master's degree. Loma Linda University is the only institution in California offering this unique dual master's program.

The Department of Counseling and Family Sciences is now offering their Doctorate in Marital and Family Therapy (DMFT) program fully online starting in the 2019-2020 academic year. The DMFT is the only COAMFTE accredited program in the United States. Going online will help facilitate the educational and career goals of students combining synchronous and asynchronous learning components. Graduates from a COAMFTE accredited master's degree program will be able to complete the online DMFT with just two years of full time study.

The CFS Drug and Alcohol Counseling certificate program is also now taught online. The 13 quarter unit program is designed to be completed in one year on a full-time basis. Students enrolled in the MS Counseling or MS in Marital and Family Therapy programs are able to graduate with this certificate by adding just four practicum units to their program. Graduates of the certificate program will be equipped to achieve three national certifications: Master Addiction Counselor, Licensed Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor, and Certified Addiction Specialist.

The Department of Social Work and Social Ecology announced changes to their MSW degree and options available to students. The program traditionally has offered the availability of full-time or part-time study. However, starting in 2016 an online-hybrid program was developed for Riverside County employees only. Now beginning in the fall of 2019-2020, the online-hybrid program option will be provided to students throughout southern California (specific conditions apply). The online-hybrid program is a part-time option that allows students to complete the MSW degree in three years.

The PhD in Social Policy and Social Research has now been renamed to Social Welfare and Social Research, with the number of units for completion being reduced from 103 to 92.

Finally, within the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies, the Play Therapy certificate has reduced the number of academic units for completion from 30 to 13. This program is now also online. The program is specifically targeted toward individuals who have already completed or are in the process of completing a licensable mental health degree.

Alumni present at national child life annual conference

Two alumni from our Child Life Specialist MS program presented their latest innovations and research at the annual Association of Child Life Professionals conference, which was held in Chicago in April.

Colleen Cherry, Certified Child Life Specialist (Class of 2013) presented work titled "Introduction to Working with Insurance Companies: the American and Canadian Experience in Successful Billing for Child Life Services in the Community."

Now in private practice, Colleen supports children experiencing medical issues (and related diagnostics and procedures), divorce, and loss/grief/bereavement. She also contracts with a hospice facility, providing in-home support to children and teens in palliative hospice care, along with their siblings. She also provides services to the grandchildren of adult patients.

Colleen has served on the ACLP's Community Based/Non-Traditional Role Private Practice Subcommittee. Members of this group contributed to the 2019 Beryl Institute's White Paper on Child Life, which includes recommendations for community child life positions, including private practice.

Kayleigh Chang, Certified Child Life Specialist II, (Class of 2015) gave a presentation titled "Why Can't I Go Home with Mom?: Child Life's Role in Supporting Children of Abuse."

Currently working as a child life specialist in the Emergency Department at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University, Kayleigh is a member of the Lucile Packard SCAN (Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect) Team, where she advocates for children of abuse. Kayleigh balances her clinical work by teaching an online grief and loss course to child life students at UC Santa Barbara Extension.

Kayleigh serves on the Certification Commission for ACLP, working on content for future child life certification exams. She was also a participant in the ACLP Child Life Job Analysis in 2018.

Growing by Leaps and Bounds

*Providing Health Care
Play for Children and
Siblings in a Pediatric
Therapy Setting*

Students and clinical supervisors from the child life specialist program provided their first “Pony Clinic” last April at Leaps & Bounds Pediatric Therapy in Norco, CA. This unique pediatric therapy setting provides a variety of services, including physical, occupational, and speech therapy. Hippotherapy (the use of horseback riding as a therapeutic or rehabilitative treatment), adaptive riding, and horsemanship activities are also utilized.

Leaps & Bounds is distinctive in that their clinical facility are on the same grounds as the ranch where patients experience hippotherapy and adaptive riding. Evidence shows that the use of horses in hippotherapy is highly beneficial for children with neuromuscular dysfunction and other medical conditions. This form of treatment strategy can support children in their development of balance, postural strength, motor skills, sequencing, and social skills.

Jo Flores, a Child Life Specialist alumna, is part of the Leaps & Bounds’ ranch team as an adaptive riding instructor. Not only is she a Certified Child Life Specialist, but she is also certified by the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.). Utilizing equine-assisted activities, Jo continues to help children and adults with disabilities in their cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well-being. Jo is also a strong advocate for parent and sibling support.

In an effort to provide an activity where siblings could also be involved and see where their brother or sister receives therapy services, the Pony Clinic was created. Very similar to a Teddy Bear Clinic, children were provided with a stuffed pony who would then visit various stations where they learned about health through a pretend doctor’s visit. The children also had the opportunity to discover the difference between human versus horse bones and were able to get a pretend cast on their finger if they felt comfortable doing so.

In all, 20 children and their families who receive services from Leaps & Bounds registered for and attended the event. Siblings could be overheard saying things like, “Wow!” or “This is so cool!” The excitement and inclusion of the whole family was appreciated by those who attended as well as the staff of Leaps & Bounds. This was also a great opportunity for our Child Life Specialist students to expand and adapt their skill set as well as be a

part of providing family centered care.

“I think Teddy Bear/Pony Clinics are fun, important, and educational,” says Maritsa Garcia-Rios, a current Child Life Specialist student. “They can be incorporated in any setting involving children, and it’s a great opportunity to teach children about immunizations, casts, blood pressure, and taking their weight which can help ease their anxiety when going to the doctor’s office.”

Future collaborations with Leaps & Bounds to provide another Pony Clinic are possible, along with the invitation to families from the local community to participate.



SBH alum holds key leadership role in Riverside County senior programs

Dr. Gary Robbins has had a long standing passion for serving others, and advocating for those in vulnerable positions.

His mother, who served for 40 years as a mental health nurse, had a major influence on Dr. Robbins' decision to pursue a counseling psychology degree at Columbia Union College in Maryland (now known as Washington Adventist University). He also wanted to have a strong background in accounting, recognizing its importance on a personal and professional level. Robbins received an associate degree in accounting which would be put to good use in his future supervising and administrative positions within the County of Riverside.

During his early years growing up in a Seventh-day Adventist family, Dr. Robbins regularly heard about Loma Linda University and the quality of its behavioral health programs. After his undergraduate education in Maryland, he decided to pursue a DMFT to advance both his clinical skills, and just as importantly, skills in the areas of program development, program evaluation, and grant writing.

While a student in the DMFT program, Dr. Robbins began his career by providing services to children in an intensive in-home therapy program. Later he worked for Catholic Charities, providing clinical services and writing grants.

He eventually became an associate director for this agency due to his expertise in these areas.

Dr. Robbins went on to become a research and systems specialist for Riverside County. For three years he also served in the position as an administrative analyst and regional manager. He was then appointed to his current position as the Deputy Director for the Office on Aging. In this position, Dr. Robbins' responsibilities include writing project plans, securing contracts, addressing staff issues, and advocating for policy issues. He also interfaces with a number of local and state partners on various committees.

"Riverside County has seen a 200% increase in people over the age of 60 from 2016 to 2020," Dr. Robbins says. "Further, by 2030 it is projected there will be a need for an additional 3.5 million health care workers in the U.S. to serve this population. Within just the next ten years, approximately 70,000 geriatric social workers will be required." Dr. Robbins sees not only the need for more qualified professionals, but also the development of plans to help ensure integrated health care so services can be both more efficient and more effective.

Reflecting on his choice to attend Loma Linda University, Dr. Robbins appreciates the education and mentoring he received from the faculty in the Department of Counseling and Family Sciences. He looks forward to working with current graduate students to pursue publishing opportunities.

Gary Robbins believes thousands more skilled practitioners will be needed in the next decade.





Phi Alpha honor society members join Talolo Lepale, society faculty advisor, to display some of the many national awards SBH students have earned during their time as students.

Social Work student honor society again earns national recognition for their commitment to service

Iota Pi, the Department of Social Work and Social Ecology's chapter of the Phi Alpha national honor society, has received the 2019 national Chapter Service Award from Phi Alpha for Social Work. This is the fifth straight year and sixth time overall that the Loma Linda University student group has received this award.

One of 450 university chapters affiliated with Phi Alpha, Iota Pi has a rich history of promoting academic excellence and humanitarian work in the Inland Empire. Iota Pi members actively involve themselves in programs such as Loma Linda University's Community Academic Partners in Service (CAPS) programs, Human Trafficking Awareness Walk, Women's March, and the LLU Health Fair.

"This award is a testimony to the work these students do in the community and the classroom," says Talolo Lepale, LCSW, MBA, faculty advisor for Iota Pi. "Their commitment to service certainly embraces Loma Linda University Health's commitment to 'Make Man Whole.'"

Many of Iota Pi's projects require multiple volunteers, providing opportunities for chapter members to bond. One popular set of outreaches includes participation in a variety of local organization fund raising walks. Iota Pi members participated in the National Alliance on Mental Illness' local walk to raise awareness of mental health issues.

Other local events receiving Iota Pi member support included:

- Warm coat collection in coordination with the University of Redlands.
- A Winter Wonderland project at the Loma Linda Ronald McDonalds House, providing activities for families there at Christmas time.
- A Christmas event at the Social Action Community Health System clinic, helping 300 children have a happier holiday.

Iota Pi also organizes and promotes 'wholeness hours' for Department of Social Work and Social Ecology students. Approximately four to five events are held each quarter. Designed to encourage students' professional and spiritual growth, the sessions often feature speakers who share how they incorporate spirituality into their professional activities.

"These are all student initiatives," Professor Lepale says. "Participation in this is not required. But outside of some mentoring and feedback, it's the students who make these things happen. Our students want to serve the community from a wholistic perspective."

| SOCIAL MEDIA



FACEBOOK
LLUSBH



Systems, Families, and Couples PhD students and alumni were well-represented at the American Family Therapy Academy, Inc. Annual Conference.



The Department of Counseling & Family Sciences and its Student Advisory Committee held a spring quarter socialization luncheon with pizza, activities, and prizes.



SBH helped sponsor the 3rd annual Stand Up to Stigma 5K Walk/Run. Though temperatures were in the 50s, that didn't stop hundreds of participants from enjoying the day.



INSTAGRAM
LLUSBH

Less than 34% of the mental health needs in California are currently being met.



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Hello from our Child Life students, who just visited Nanjing Children's Hospital in Nanjing, China!



Happy Summer from Noah the SBH puppy! Okay, he's Dr. Boustani's puppy, but we want to keep him!

Keep up to date by following the School of Behavioral Health's blog

sbh.llu.edu/blog



Your gift matters to

Monica Vejar

Attending Loma Linda University has helped me understand my own faith and has brought me closer to finding myself through my faith. Loma Linda was my choice because it is a prestigious, rigorous, and well-established University.

Hometown:

San Diego, California

Program:

Psychology, PsyD

Why she chose Loma Linda University School of Behavioral Health:

There were so many admirable qualities that made me want to come to Loma Linda University. Loma Linda has a great medical program, a beautiful campus, and great research staff in the Department of Psychology. It's also close to my hometown and has so many amazing opportunities for practicum and internship placement.

Career Goals:

I want to make an impact on lower income families lives and make more of a difference for people who might not have access to the best services. Currently, I work as a research assistant for Dr. Neece, a clinical psychologist, and am assisting with the PRO-Parenting and STEPS projects to serve low-income families by providing intervention to parents who have a child with a developmental delay or autism spectrum disorder. This type of service is exactly the goal I have for work after graduation.

The Impact of a Scholarship:

I am a first-generation college student and the first person in my family to attend a doctoral program. My mission in graduate school is to make a positive impact on people's lives, but often the burden of finances can get in the way of making this impact. While focusing on my degree to better the lives of others, I sometimes forget about myself and put my own self-care on the back-burner. With this extra financial award, I will be able to prioritize my self-care while also focusing on building my career as a professional. Thank you so much for helping me develop further as a training professional clinical psychologist.

Monica is a recipient of a special Selma Andrews Scholarship awarded in recognition of her outstanding academic and research achievements.

For information on how you can provide scholarship support for future School of Behavioral Health students, contact Kemi Adeoye at oladeoye@llu.edu or 909-558-3585. Or donate to SBH online at www.giving.lluh.org/SBH