Celebrating Our 20th Anniversary 1990-2010

Students Discover Health Disparities Among American Indian Children with Special Health Care Needs

Asthma, migraines, and mental retardation all affect a significantly greater percentage of American Indian children with special health care needs than their white counterparts, according to an analysis completed by MSW students Electa Hare and Amanda Blackhorse, with guidance from Assistant Professor Paul Shattuck.

Historically, very little research has documented the prevalence and health status of children with special health care needs who are American Indian/Alaskan Native, a socioeconomically disadvantaged ethnic group where even typically developing children tend to have elevated rates of health problems.

Hare, Blackhorse, and Shattuck analyzed data collected within the 2005-2006 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs, a nationally representative telephone survey of households with a child age 0-17 with significant health problems. They examined data from seven states where the American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/IN) population is over 5%.

The students presented their findings in Denver, Colorado at the 2009 Indian Health Summit, a national gathering of Indian Health professionals, community health advocates and activists, and tribal leadership. Hare and Blackhorse presented their data with the aim of providing baseline information to aid in the development and evaluation of services for this vulnerable population.

The research, which was supported by the Brown School's Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies, suggests that the high prevalence rates of problems with health and functioning indicate more resources need to be allocated to serve this population.

“If we as researchers are cognizant of health disparities, perhaps we can contribute to social policy that positively honors the federal trust relationship of sovereign Indian nations”, said Hare. “We can develop a better awareness of the way we approach research in terms of social, economic, political efforts.”

Honoring Kathryn M. Buder’s Vision: Listening to the Native Voice

On September 11, 2009 Stan Holder, Special Assistant to the Deputy Director of Policy at the Bureau of Indian Education and Dr. Virginia Drywater-Whitekiller, Chair of Professional Studies at Northeastern State University, spoke in Brown Lounge. The topic of discussion was the overwhelming need for institutions of higher education to recruit and retain students of Native American heritage, just as Kathryn M. Buder envisioned.

Mr. Holder informed the audience of the socialization processes which occur within native communities. He stated that most native communities are operating in a state of chaos due to the imposition of culturally unfit social structures. Therefore, the traditional social structures are undermined and the positive norms and values are lost. The weight of the dysfunction of the community thus allows for the acceptance of maladaptive behaviors. Holder professed many solutions to these issues including: awareness, programmatic development and longitudinal continuum of services. Holder emphasized Indian country's need for assessing objective data, using data appropriately, focusing on achievable goals, tracking program outcomes, and utilizing periodic reassessment to ensure sustainable change.

Next, Virginia Drywater-Whitekiller, a Buder Alum, spoke to the audience about the recruitment and retention of native students to institutions of higher learning. She spoke to some of the unique cultural aspects related to native students. For example, Dr. Drywater-Whitekiller explained that native individuals are extremely place-bound and it is very hard for them to leave home. She suggested universities and colleges reach out to the parents of the prospective native students and offer culturally appropriate support programs on campus. Overall, the presenters revealed the needs in Indian Country and the role institutions of higher education can play.

By Lakota Mower

Numerous scholarships and other financial assistance including tuition remission, work-study positions and low-interest loans are available through the George Warren Brown School of Social Work.

In addition, the independent G.A., Jr. and Kathryn M. Buder Charitable Foundation offers full scholarships to American Indians who intend to practice social work in American Indian communities. These foundation scholarships cover tuition, living expenses and books for two years of full-time study. Information on these scholarships is available by contacting the Buder Center.
Buder Center’s Alumni Conference & Pow Wow

In 2010 the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies will be celebrating its 20th Anniversary. The Buder Center was established in 1990 with a generous gift from Kathryn M. Buder to advance the education of American Indians and to address social issues within the American Indian community. Originally founded to provide scholarships for American Indians, the Buder Center has grown into one of the most respected centers in the nation for academic advancement and study of American Indian issues related to social work. The Center seeks to prepare scholars and practitioners whose passion is to educate and share new developments in American Indian Studies and to practice social work in and throughout Indian Country.

In honor of Kathryn Buder’s vision, the Buder Center will host an Alumni Conference in St. Louis on April 8 and 9, 2010. Our goal is to bring together Buder alumni, (currently comprised of over 85 Native Americans who are practitioners, educators, social workers, community organizers, licensed medical practitioners, and researchers) for the broader purpose to provide: 1) Professional development and education: networking, sharing new data and best practices occurring within Indian Country; make available current publications, datasets, and articles; 2) Personal interaction: to link academia with practice and practice with academia; sustain relationships and support social work issues; 3) Serve as a resource for the current Buder Scholars, as well as all MSW and MPH students, faculty and staff of the Brown School; 4) A reunion that provides time to collaborate and connect with former colleagues and social work professionals, and more importantly, 5) Create and sustain a collaborative voice within Indian Country that will allow the Buder Center to retain its place as the premier center in the nation for academic advancement and the study of American Indian issues related to social work.

The 20th Annual Pow Wow is scheduled for Saturday, April 10, 2010 following the Alumni Conference. This year’s theme is, Celebrating 20 Years of American Indian Education and Community Success. The Pow Wow will be held in the Washington University Field House located on the Danforth campus. Last year, the Pow Wow drew an estimated crowd of over 4,500 participants, and provided an excellent opportunity for students, community members and guests to interact and learn more about American Indian culture.

To view photos of the 2009 Pow Wow, please visit our website buder.wustl.edu

For more information call 314-935-4510 or e-mail bcais@wustl.edu.

Film “Passing Poston - An American Story” and Panel Discussion

During World War II, almost 120,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans were forcibly relocated and spent the war years in one of ten internment camps located in some of the nation’s most inhospitable and desolate places. One such camp, situated on an Indian Reservation in the Arizona desert, was the Poston Relocation Center. Weaving personal stories and moving archival footage, Passing Poston tells the untold story of how Japanese internees were used by the U.S. government to help develop an impoverished Native American reservation. It is the story of four former Poston internees still searching for their identity and still questioning what their place is in America. For Ruth Okimoto, the need to confront the past brings her back to the desert of Arizona where she spent her childhood years behind barbed wire. It is a journey Ruth takes to find meaning as she searches to discover the true story of how the Poston camps came into being.

We are honored to present the film PASSING POSTON in Brown Lounge at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work. Following the film there will be a panel discussion with: Joe Fox, Director, Writer and Producer, Dr. Ruth Okimoto, former internee and Dr. Michael Tsosie, Director of the Colorado River Indian Tribe Museum

Thursday, November 19, 6:30-9:00 p.m., Brown Lounge, George Warren Brown School of Social Work

Community Development Class Visit to the Osage Nation

As part of the American Indian course offered this fall, Community Development with American Indian and other Indigenous Communities ten Brown School students (seven of whom were Buder Scholars), one PhD student from the School of Education, Professor Miriam Jorgensen, Amy Hertel, Buder PhD Candidate, and Stephanie Kettler, Interim Director, visited the Osage Nation in Pawhuska, OK. In December 2004, the nation embarked on a two-year process of constitutional reform, convened a constitutional commission, engaged in a substantial process of community engagement, and worked to develop new governing forms. Culminating in the passage of the Osage National Constitution, the new government began operating in June 2006, implementing new laws to govern the nation's environment, redirecting social service delivery, operating in June 2006, implementing new laws to govern the Osage Nation in Pawhuska, OK. In December 2004, the nation embarked on a two-year process of constitutional reform, convened a constitutional commission, engaged in community engagement, and worked to develop new governing forms. Culminating in the passage of the Osage National Constitution, the new government began operating in June 2006, implementing new laws to govern the nation’s environment, redirecting social service delivery, economic structure, etc. The trip to the Osage Nation framed both the process and growing pains of how this very old nation - whose territory used to stretch as far east as St. Louis – is now an “emerging nation.” The visit also showcased citizen mobilization, community development, and critically, how social and economic policy is developed and implemented for a nation that grew in citizenship overnight. The trip was hosted by tribal members in their social service program, political leaders (Chief Jim Gray, Chief of Staff Hepsi Barnett, and Osage Congressman Eddy Red Eagle), and other congressional leaders.

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Introducing the 2008 - 2009 Buder Scholars

Jessica Black is Gwich'in Athabascan from the villages of Fort Yukon and Nenana, AK and is pursuing her doctorate in the Ph.D. program on the Kathryn M. Buder Doctoral Fellowship. Jessica received her BSW from the University of Alaska in Fairbanks in 2001 and her MSW from Washington University in 2004 as a Buder Scholar. She taught for the last 2 years at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the BSW program. Jessica is appreciative of the financial aid and encouragement provided by the Brown School as she pushes to reach her potential in higher education.

Shayne Dickenson–Hall is a first year MSW candidate and an enrolled member of the Oneida Tribes of Wisconsin, of Blackfeet descent and hails from the Blackfeet Reservation in Browning, MT. Shayne is a graduate of Montana State University in Bozeman in 2004 with a BS in Health and Human Development. Upon completion of her MSW, she plans to pursue her doctoral degree. As a Buder Scholar, Shayne is thankful for the opportunity to grow academically and give back to her Native community.

Margaux Carrimon is a second year MSW candidate. Her concentration is in Social and Economic development. Margaux is an enrolled member of the Ho-Chunk tribe. She was raised in La Crosse, WI and began the pursuit of a Bachelor of Social Work at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay where she completed most of her degree work. She completed her Bachelor of Science in Social Work at Viterbo University in La Crosse with a minor in Sociology. Margaux is grateful for the Buder Center support.

Amy Locklear Hertei is a member of the Lumbee tribe and is in the Ph.D. program on the Kathryn M. Buder Doctoral Fellowship. Home is Fayetteville, N.C. for this graduate of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. In addition to her BA (1997) in Interpersonal Communications, Amy also holds both an MSW (1999) and JD (2002) from Washington University. Amy and her husband Johann have a beautiful baby girl, Ava Bell. Amy is interested in asset building and community development with Native American communities.

Mary Elizabeth Jager is a first year MSW candidate, a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and grew up in Bend, OR. In 2006, she graduated with a BA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from Carroll College in Helena, MT. Also in 2006, Mary Beth married her husband, Jedediah, an Episcopal Priest. Mary Beth is a transfer student from Fordham University with a concentration in Social and Economic Development. Her special interest is in various policy areas. Mary Beth is grateful for the assistance of the Buder Foundation and Citizen Potawatomi Nation, as well as the supportive welcome she received from the Buder Center staff and scholars.

Jessica Laughlin is a member of the United Houma Nation and grew up in Dulac, Louisiana. She graduated from Stanford University in 2006 with a BS Psychology and Native American Studies. She is currently a third year Buder Scholar specializing in mental health and is also working on the dual Degree in Law and Social Work. The Buder Center for American Indian Studies is what attracted Jessica to the Brown School.

Lakota Mowrer is a first year MSW candidate and a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. Lakota graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2006 with a BA in Sociology. She joined Teach for America and moved to the Rosebud Sioux Reservation in Mission, SD working within the special education department of Todd County High School. Upon graduation, Lakota plans to serve Native American families and individuals with special needs via health care systems. She is honored to be a Buder Scholar.

Laura Rice is a second year MSW candidate and an enrolled member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi tribe and of Yurok tribes. Laura graduated from Stanford University with a BA in Native American Studies. While Laura was raised in California and Washington State, she also lived in Topeka, Kansas where she enjoyed being in close proximity to the Prairie Band Potawatomi reservation. Laura's most recent employment was with the State of Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services where she worked as a caseworker for employment and economic support programs. Laura is very thankful for the opportunity to continue her education so that she can serve the Native American community.

Sheila Rivera is a second year MSW candidate from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians tribe in Choctaw, Mississippi. Her concentration is in Children, Youth, and Family. She has worked as a Family Preservationist, a Police Officer, and a Female Probation Officer for her tribe. She is married to Noland Rivera and they have a wonderful son, Isaiah. Her hope is to work for the Chicago Police Department in the Domestic Violence Unit, Human Trafficking Unit, or the Department of Children and Family Services in Chicago, IL. She would like to thank the Buder Center and all the Buder students who offer support and guidance.

Kellie Szczepanicki is a second year MSW candidate and an enrolled member of the Seneca Nation of Indians, Hawk Clan. She is originally from Niagara Falls, New York. Kellie graduated in 2008 from the University of Notre Dame, receiving a BS in Psychology and Gender Studies. While in school she was an active participant in the campus Native American club and also worked for the local YWCA. At the Brown School, her concentration is in Social and Economic Development. Upon graduation, Kellie plans on returning to the Western NY area to work for her people. She is extremely thankful to the Buder Center and all the members of the Seneca Nation who have assisted her in her pursuit of higher education.

Willeen Whipple is a second year MSW candidate and an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Nation in Browning, Montana. She is from the Sicangu Lakota Tetuwan Oyate, also known as the Rosebud Sioux Reservation. Willeen is employed by the National Tribal Development Association with the National FSA American Indian Credit Outreach Initiative program. Willeen holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Sociology from Maryville University, St. Louis and a Master of Arts degree from Webster University, St. Louis. She and husband Sam are the proud parents of three children; Sam Jr., Dacotah and Wyatt. Willeen enjoys collecting Northern Plains artwork as well as designing and quilting traditional and non-traditional Star Quilts. She would like to thank the Buder Foundation for this wonderful opportunity which will allow her to continue working with tribal people.
The donor and founder of the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies respected and admired American Indians from childhood. Kathryn Buder’s belief that education is a key factor in empowering American Indian communities and her commitment to an education that honors the American Indian culture led her to establish the Center in 1990. Originally founded to provide scholarships for American Indians, the Buder Center has grown into one of the most respected centers in the nation for the academic advancement and study of American Indian issues related to social work. The Center offers one American Indian course per semester, which Buder Scholars are required to take. Additionally, the Center is charged with developing Buder Scholars into leaders who will serve Indian Country.