

Heller Alumni

News and Views

A magazine for the alumni of the Heller School for Social Policy and Management

Fall 2007

Special Issue on Disaster Relief

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Hold the Date

The Heller School will be celebrating its fiftieth anniversary in the fall of 2009. If you are interested in helping with the planning, contact Norma DeMattos at 781-736-4827 or ndemat@brandeis.edu.

Melissa Kizildemir, MA'07, works with young children outside a collapsed elementary school dorm immediately after an earthquake in Bingol, Turkey. See story on page 4.



First to Arrive, Last to Leave

A house fire will never garner the humanitarian response and media attention of a major earthquake, but for the family left shivering in their pajamas beside the smoldering remains of their home the devastation is still earth-shattering. The Red Cross, the world's first responder, is well known for its large-scale relief efforts, but the organization also responds to everyday disasters that are anything but mundane to those affected.

As the chief executive officer of the Puerto Rico chapter of the American Red Cross (la Cruz Roja), Carmen Canino, MMHS'78, has seen firsthand how concrete assistance in a disaster provides pure relief. Whether helping victims of hurricanes, floods, or fires, the Red Cross is the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Not surprisingly, being the first responder can exact a physical and emotional toll on its volunteers. "Most of the volunteers from my chapter



went to Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina," says Canino. "What television showed wasn't the half of it. No one thinks of the devastation for volunteers themselves. They were real heroes, but they needed considerable support."

Beginning where you end

Forty years before becoming chief executive of la Cruz Roja, Canino was a volunteer herself. While her husband was stationed in Italy during the Vietnam era, she volunteered for the Armed Forces Emergency Program of the American Red Cross, helping to deliver emergency communications from home to members of the armed forces. Today, she manages 1,435 volunteers within Puerto Rico.

Throughout Canino's career, her professional reputation has caught the attention of influential people, beginning with Tom Glynn, PhD'77, who developed the master's program in human service management at the Heller School and recruited Canino to join the first class of students in 1977. At the time, she was working for the Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation in Boston, helping inner-city kids navigate the tricky path to college. Torn between getting a traditional MBA and continuing to work in the nonprofit sector, Canino felt the Heller program was the perfect solution, combining management and social policy.

"The Heller School had a huge impact on my career," says Canino. "The thinking was that if you were Hispanic, then you worked only with other Hispanics." Her experience at Heller showed her this was not the case. After completing a required internship project at Boston's Department of Health and Hospitals, Canino was hired to work there following graduation.

Soon after, Glynn came calling again, this time tapping her for a job at the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare (DPW). Canino became the first Hispanic woman to direct DPW.

Canino, who was born and raised in San Juan, worked her way back to Puerto Rico when former Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation Fred Salvucci asked her to help build San Juan's first rail system. "I told him I knew nothing about transportation, and his response was, 'I'll teach you.' When the man credited with the idea for depressing Boston's central artery says he'll teach you about transportation, it's hard to say no!" says Canino.

In 2001, when the rail project was successfully completed and the Red Cross needed someone to lead its Puerto Rico chapter, Canino's diverse management experience made her an ideal candidate. "Working for the Red Cross is an interesting management challenge," says Canino. "Volunteers are the heart and soul of the organization, and we have to continuously train them to keep them engaged."

With 736 chapters in eight service areas throughout Puerto Rico, la Cruz Roja has to be very focused to stay true to its mission of being the first responder. Despite its challenges, the job has many satisfying moments.

"Every day, there is an event, whether it's a flood, fire, or worse, where we make a difference," says Canino. Recently la Cruz Roja helped sixty refugee families en route from Lebanon to Colombia. "They left Lebanon with only the clothes on their backs. We provided food and diapers for the children to make their trip to Colombia more comfortable. It's very satisfying to help one family or one human being every day."

In the Eye of the Storm

When Frank Opelka traded in doctoring in Boston to head Louisiana State University's (LSU) Health Care Network two months before Hurricane Katrina hit, he couldn't have known what awaited him there. Still, he did have his own version of the Bible with him—the Heller executive education binder for health-care leaders.

Opelka says that the large but modest-looking binder, coupled with his ability to define a problem and listen, saw him through one of the worst natural disasters in our country's history, not to mention a career-defining challenge.

Opelka shared the Heller binder with a close colleague. It was the quickest way to transfer the knowledge he had recently acquired on planning and decision-making. There wasn't a moment to lose in the immediate aftermath of Katrina. Hospitals and medical records had vanished; new rules and regulations had to be established. But like the calm in the eye of the storm, Opelka systematically and quickly formulated plans for patients and located physicians who had been evacuated. "The Heller program taught me, above all else, that I needed to know what I was going to do *today*," Opelka says.

To locate 400,000 patients scattered by the hurricane, Opelka took out newspaper ads. Using a toll-free number set up to collect patient information, patients were asked to name their doctors and their medications. From these data, new medical records were created. Within ten days, Opelka had a directory that included locations of medical personnel who had fled as far afield as Montana and New York. New cell phones were



distributed to the doctors, and a center of operations was established in Baton Rouge. Opelka, who is also an Army special operations veteran of the Gulf War, acted quickly to save lives and stabilize the situation.

Opelka developed a system of urgent hospitals even as he instinctively knew that he had to think in equal measure about the short- and longer-term strategies that would stabilize the situation. In a headline-grabbing move that displayed both his brilliance and his chutzpah, Opelka commandeered a cruise ship and docked it in Baton Rouge. The "Love Boat" housed LSU medical residents and became a darling of the media because of the unique approach to temporary housing. These medical residents, including Opelka's own daughter, took on the moniker "Katrina residents."

Opelka's quick thinking not only saved lives but inspired hope, which is key for any leader in a disaster relief situation. "A leader needs to market hope," says Opelka. "But in addition one needs myriad leadership skills to deal with resistance inherent in organizational change. Figuring out what makes

others tick and maximizing the virtues of others are as important as finding out the specifics of what you need in order to get where you are going. Influencing this kind of culture shift is not a task for the faint-hearted or thin-skinned," he says.

For example, Opelka had to make sure that a functioning hospital would be available for Mardi Gras 2006. No one thought it could be done. Despite the naysayers, Opelka managed to site and build a temporary hospital to handle injuries, illnesses, and medical crises during the annual New Orleans festivities notorious for their excesses. Then he dismantled it and returned the site to its original use, all within budget.

Though most graduates of Heller's health-care leaders program probably never will face an adversary like Katrina, Opelka says the policy and management skills he acquired in the program would provide essential guidance for any health-care leader. Summing up one of the lessons of the Heller program, he says, "Leading is all about serving, vision, and handling the curve ball."

Wrong Place, Right Time

Earthquakes, hurricanes, war zones. These are things from which most people flee. But not Melissa Kizildemir, MA'07. She rushes to the scene of devastation, or at least she tries to.

Case in point: In 1999 in Izmit, Turkey, fifty-five miles east of Istanbul, a massive earthquake killed 17,000 people. Kizildemir, then eighteen, was visiting her family in Istanbul, though they were sleeping on the street out of fear that their house would be hit by aftershocks. Only her parents' refusal to let her go kept her from rushing to Izmit to help victims of the quake. So she did the next best thing: she joined a fleet of workers at McDonald's assembling 10,000 cheese sandwiches to ship to survivors.

But the next time Kizildemir wanted to rush to a danger zone her parents relented, moved by her desire to help. Kizildemir was hired to work for the Turkish Red Crescent Society (akin to the Red Cross), providing psychosocial

support for disaster workers at the Turkish-Iraqi border just after the United States invaded Iraq in 2003. One of her accomplishments was organizing a "best in field" soccer tournament between the United Nations workers and the Red Crescent Society to defuse mounting tensions between the two organizations. The stakes? The losing team had to serve baklava pastry to the winners. "I knew it was important to establish a relationship before disaster hit," says Kizildemir. The two organizations forged a new cooperative relationship.

Kizildemir then set her sights on working for UNICEF. She spent the next year visiting more than 4,700 villages throughout Turkey, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the Advocacy Campaign for Girls' Education in Turkey. "Up until then, my disaster experience was very individual—for example, comforting a mother who had lost children in an earthquake," says Kizildemir. "What I discovered was that providing real assistance was more than just an issue of helping individuals; it was a development issue. My interests started to shift from a micro to a macro approach."

Before her work with the Red Crescent and the UN overseas, Kizildemir had graduated from Tulane University in 2002. She returned to New Orleans in 2005 and then decided to attend the Heller School to pursue her interests in policy and sustainable development. But before her belongings could be shipped to Waltham, Hurricane Katrina hit. She lost everything.

In the past, Kizildemir had placed herself in a post-disaster setting as a volunteer. Fleeing disaster was antithetical to her nature, and she struggled with the right thing to do.

Despite a great desire to return to New Orleans to help, she stayed put at Brandeis; administrators from the Sustainable International Development (SID) program helped her realize that she could ultimately bring about more change by continuing her studies.

"Heller understood I could help more people in the long run by acquiring new competencies in the SID program," says Kizildemir. She's glad she followed the advice. "At Heller, I learned so much from the real and practical experiences of my professors and fellow students."

To fulfill SID's internship requirement, Kizildemir worked at Oxfam America in Boston, focusing on disaster preparedness for the Gulf Coast in communities where residents were most vulnerable. For example, she assessed the number of disabled people living alone or the number of Vietnamese who needed translation services in order to predict the resources needed in a disaster and to triage those resources effectively. Since graduation, Kizildemir has continued to work with Oxfam as a humanitarian program officer, building partnerships among human service organizations in the Gulf Coast region that will serve as models for disaster preparedness.

In the future, Kizildemir wishes to continue humanitarian work. She has already passed the exams to be an international professional with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Kizildemir dreams of someday studying international humanitarian law.

"I see myself wherever I can make the most impact," says Kizildemir. Which often means being in the wrong place at the right time.



Giving—and Getting Back



In classrooms at Heller, students eagerly learn about corporate social responsibility and organizational behavior. They examine and analyze development models to evaluate their ability to reduce poverty, hunger, and human inequality. They study the emerging challenges developing countries are facing and how these might affect health systems.

Thanks to the generous donations of Heller alumni, they are also able to travel beyond the classroom to apply what they have learned. This past spring, as part of Heller's annual alternative spring break program, seventeen students from the MA, MBA, and MS programs "donated" their spring break to help rebuild two Louisiana communities hit by Hurricane Katrina. "This trip to Louisiana really complemented our education. It gave us a new perspective, not just theory, but practical knowledge," says Martha Morales, a student in the Sustainable International Development program.

Heller students traveled to Buras, the town in southeastern Louisiana where Katrina made landfall August 29, 2005. More than two years later, the town and its citizens are still struggling. Many families who lost their homes during the storm live in two-bedroom

trailers provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), with some of the trailers housing six or seven people.

Working with Emergency Communities, a nonprofit organization operating five disaster relief sites in Louisiana, one group of Heller students spent ten days cooking, painting churches, gutting homes, and cleaning up yards. Two Heller students from Vietnam helped translate for local Vietnamese fishermen and their families. Other students assisted with the afterschool programs held in the FEMA trailer park, helping children with their schoolwork and listening to the families tell their stories.

The Heller students also brought the classroom to Buras, convening a community-planning meeting and leaving behind a report of their findings and recommendations. "After the second or third day our Heller brains started to kick in," says MBA student Tammie Warmus. "We had ideas of ways Emergency Communities could do things better by involving the community more. So we called a community meeting, but we facilitated the meeting in such a way that the Emergency Communities staff and community members arrived at their

own conclusions, which turned out to be very similar to our own."

A second group of students worked with the International Association for Human Values, meeting with school principals and teachers and visiting classrooms to build awareness of and rally support for youth service learning opportunities in New Orleans.

The experience had a powerful impact on Dr. Alombah Richard Fozo, a student in the MS program. "One older gentleman, whose property we helped clean up, was very reserved until the day we left. Then he broke down in tears and told us we were the first people who had helped him. Then we all shared in his tears," says Fozo. MBA student Amanda Cochrane was also moved. "This experience is something that will stick with me my whole life," she says. "It made my Heller experience that much more important and meaningful."

To see a short video clip on Heller students speaking about their experience, go to heller.brandeis.edu and follow the "Heller Students Help Katrina Victims" link.

If You Know One, You Should Teach One



Photo by Nina Berman

the globe. Thousands of disadvantaged youth could be offered a future—in a completely self-sustaining way.

It was Bermas's education, along with his unique experience after Heller, that gave him the perfect credentials to accomplish this. His work as a management consultant led him to consulting internationally in the hospitality world, working with high-profile companies such as Disney, Sheraton, and Le Meridien. In addition to his consulting practice, he is a partner in an award-winning restaurant in Colorado and lectures at New York University in the management and food studies program.

To accomplish his goal of expanding the initial KOTO concept, earlier this year, Bermas, along with a group of hospitality professionals and educators, founded KOTO USA (www.koto-usa.org), a nonprofit organization that will replicate the original KOTO model. Maintaining his ties with Heller, Bermas has worked closely with Laurence Simon, associate dean and director of the Sustainable International Development program, and Professor Don Shepard.

KOTO USA was recently joined by some of the top restaurant groups in New York to launch its first fundraising event in New York City. Following this event, Bermas returned to Southeast Asia, where he has already successfully gained support and funding for replicating the program in Hue, Vietnam, and Manila, Philippines.

The KOTO motto, "If you know one, you should teach one," provides a great example of true sustainability. Says Bermas, "KOTO has proven to be a social enterprise model that works."

Neal Bermas, left, introduces Jimmy Pham at a fundraising event in New York City.

Like many of his generation, Neal Bermas, PhD'81, harbored guilt about the legacy the United States left after the war in Vietnam. Having traveled there, he saw that this was a country of surprisingly gentle, warm, and welcoming people, mostly agrarian. He was drawn to Vietnam; its beautiful landscape and exotic marketplaces intoxicated him. Returning there repeatedly, he explored everything from the burgeoning cities to the rural ethnic villages. Most importantly, he connected with the people.

One man in particular, Australian-Vietnamese Jimmy Pham, caught his attention. Pham was troubled by an unfortunate byproduct of the war, the estimated 19,000 young people living on the streets in Hanoi. These kids had little hope of finishing school, let alone finding a job. Pham was doing something about this. Starting with a small sandwich shop he funded to help street kids in Hanoi, Pham subsequently enlisted a team of volunteers from

Australia and set up a nonprofit restaurant and culinary training program for street kids in Hanoi called KOTO (Know One, Teach One).

Students in the internationally accredited KOTO training program spend eighteen months studying hospitality skills, cooking, and English. They take part in an essential life-skills program to learn about health, reproduction, and hygiene. Students receive room and board, health insurance, supplies, and a small allowance. Most importantly, this program is achieving virtually a one hundred percent success rate with job placement for kids who had not known much more than hawking post cards, shining shoes, or worse.

Bermas found the program's success and potential compelling. This social enterprise model was undeniable. He recognized the possibilities for replication in other developing countries in Southeast Asia and around

After Tsunami, Alternative Livelihood

By Elizabeth Petheo, MA'06

Elizabeth Petheo, MA'06, is working for the American Refugee Committee in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, helping residents regain economic independence.

For the people of northeast Sri Lanka, economic volatility exists because of the tsunami of December 2004 and the ongoing civil war. The result has been what is often described as a complex emergency: in addition to ongoing efforts of reconstruction, the civil war itself has made development in the northeast a profound challenge as conflict is entrenched in existing political, economic, cultural, and social structures.

In May, we completed two days of "Start and Improve Your Own Business" training, a curriculum originally created by the International Labour Organization. The beneficiaries of this project were part of a resettled fishing community who were displaced by the 2004 tsunami. In addition to being unable to return to their homes, they could no longer fish due to security and access issues resulting from the war. Since the men were unable to fish and the women had no individual source of income, poverty levels in the resettled village were high.

Therefore, we decided to work with the women to develop small

businesses aimed at addressing needs in the community and tailored to their individual interests. The business ideas ranged from selling cool drinks to sewing and selling firewood. The training was then followed by three cash grants to buy additional supplies and expand the businesses.

After two months, the women's average income had increased by 37 percent. In addition to developing new skills in business management and basic accounting, most of the women expressed satisfaction with their new financial situation and had started to save money for the first time in their lives.

Relief Is Just Around the Corner

When the devastating Peruvian earthquake hit last August and Hurricane Dean picked up momentum in the eastern Caribbean, Kathleen Martin, MA'06, knew that relief was just around the corner. Situated in Panama City as the interim head of the Pan American Disaster Response Unit (PADRU), Martin led the Red Cross response from PADRU, dispatching trained staff and relief supplies to help survivors of both disasters.

Martin's work on behalf of the American Red Cross in Panama serves a unique function—PADRU is the place where personnel and supplies are strategically positioned so they can be of use

immediately when disasters strike in Latin America and the Caribbean. More than 25 percent of PADRU's stocks were used during the concurrent disasters.

"The skills and knowledge I gained at the Heller School have been critical in my work for the Red Cross," says Martin. "My graduate studies in sustainable international development provided a strong foundation to further advance my humanitarian assistance work."

Even before Martin attended the Heller School, she demonstrated a passion to serve when and where disaster strikes. After terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001,

Martin helped more than four hundred international families learn news of their loved ones through the American Red Cross's international family tracing program. When the Southeast Asian tsunami hit in December 2004, Martin supported the relief work of the American Red Cross recovery program in Thailand and Indonesia.

"Nothing brings me more satisfaction than my work with the Red Cross," says Martin. "The Heller School helped me prepare for a career that I love and that allows me to help people throughout the world."

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Welcome to Our Newest Alumni



On May 20, 2007, the ranks of Heller alumni swelled by 145 as graduates from Heller's four academic programs crossed the stage to receive their diplomas. After the keynote address from Brandeis trustee Linda Whitlock, the Nicholas president and CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Boston, class representatives spoke about what their Heller experience meant to them. Excerpts from their speeches are below. Pictured clockwise from top left are: Farai Charasika, MS'07; Alexandra Pineros Shields, PhD'07; Miriam Lipson, MBA'07; and Donna Mae Knights, MA/SID'07.



Alexandra Pineros Shields, PhD'07

Many of us came to the Heller School because the school's motto, "Knowledge advancing social justice," represented both a commitment and a challenge. Each of us leaves here today with transformative lessons. These are more than lessons on the process of doing research or analyzing policies. They are principles of how to be an intellectual in a world that suffers. They are signs of hope for the possibility of effecting change in the world.

Farai Charasika, MS'07

As a physician in Zimbabwe, during a week in which I wrote twelve death certificates, I realized that something had to be done. The malnourished six-year-old girl who died because there were no nurses at her rural health center, the mother of five who passed away because she could not access AIDS medicine, the three-year-old boy who died because he did not have a bed net to prevent malaria and the ambulance was not available to bring him to the hospital in time—these are some of the untold stories that many of us have faced. These are some of the reasons we came to Heller. We had technical know-how, but not management and policy know-how.

The MS program is about saving lives. It is about making health care accessible to the people whom we serve, the people who would otherwise die unnecessarily. Our graduation is not about getting a master's degree. It is about making sure that there are mechanisms for the poor to access treatment. It is about us making a difference in this world.

Miriam Lipson, MBA'07

Two years ago I was working in New Orleans managing projects and events for a museum. Two days before Hurricane Katrina, I left my home and my job and traversed the country, unable to go back home. With no idea of what the future would bring, I decided then to go back to school. I decided that blaming others for injustice and betrayal of a city took only *words*, but I needed to take *action* and educate myself to lead others toward social change.

Donna Mae Knights, MA/SID'07

The SID experience has been such a rich opportunity. This assembly of eighty-three development ambassadors from thirty-two countries created a surreal learning environment. This caused us to perceive the issues in a more real way and therefore to engage not only with our heads but with our hearts. The commitment of our lives to social justice is the only fitting tribute we can pay to this great institution. Let us be the leaders of new social movements that revolutionize the practice of development and so bring real freedom to the world that awaits us.

Viewpoints is a regular column in Heller Alumni News and Views featuring alumni responses to current policy and management issues. Want to chime in on a Viewpoints debate? Send your name and areas of expertise to Norma DeMattos at ndemat@brandeis.edu.

In keeping with this issue's theme about Heller alumni roles in disasters and their aftermath, we asked alumni positioned in the field, How can communities prepare better for natural disasters?



Barbara Ferrer, PhD'94
Director
Boston Public Health Commission
Boston, Massachusetts

Perhaps the best way for communities to prepare for large-scale disasters is for public safety and public health agencies to work closely with residents and neighborhood organizations to develop and test coordinated plans that could be implemented in response to any emergency. Along with this, there is a critical need for training for public safety workers, health-care providers, and volunteers who can assist in that coordinated response. A primary role for the health department is ensuring that the public is involved and informed of all planning efforts and that individuals are told what they can do to protect themselves and their families in the event of a major disaster.



Leonard Marcus, PhD'83
Health-Care Negotiator
Harvard School of Public Health
Cambridge, Massachusetts

There are several key steps. First, there is the question of supplies, equipment, and training. These basics are the responsibility of everyone: public officials, private citizens, communities, and employers. Next—and here is where the Harvard School of Public Health and its partners have focused their work—there needs to be a connectivity of effort that extends across the public, business, and nonprofit sector out to the community. We call people able to achieve this connectivity “meta-leaders.”

Marcus delivered a talk on meta-leadership at the White House in May to senior government officials with responsibilities for homeland security.



Elizabeth Petheo, MA'06
Chief of Party
American Refugee Committee
Sri Lanka

One way to approach disaster preparedness is to decrease vulnerability by increasing individual self-sufficiency and resilience through education. Disasters are, by their very nature, unpredictable. Preparedness means strengthening the coping mechanisms of individuals to respond to a changing environment through the acquisition of new skills. In northeast Sri Lanka, for example, building knowledge through creative programming that stresses participation and choice has gone a long way to decreasing overall vulnerability to emergency situations.

See page 7 for a firsthand account of how Petheo is using a livelihood approach in her work with the American Refugee Committee in northeast Sri Lanka.

New Jobs, Degrees, Directions

Laura Alpert '96, MM'98, graduated from Leadership Tech Valley, a nine-month leadership class sponsored by the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Schenectady County. The program has identified and trained 866 leaders in the Capitol Region of New York (lbalpert@yahoo.com).

Bruce Dembling, PhD'93, recently retired from the University of Virginia School of Medicine after ten years of epidemiology research work across various health areas. Dembling will be taking a break from academics to visit with his eighteen-month-old granddaughter and to teach blacksmithing at a local craft school in Charlottesville (bpd6n@cms.mail.virginia.edu).

Beth Felker, MA'06, is coordinator for community awareness and outreach at the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (bethfelker@hotmail.com).

Mary Gilfus, PhD'88, was promoted to full professor at Simmons College School of Social Work and elected president of the Simmons College Faculty Senate. Gilfus studies domestic violence-related homicides and suicides in collaboration with Jane Doe Inc., the Massachusetts Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. She also chairs the School of Social Work's course sequence on human behavior and the social environment (gilfus@simmons.edu).

Shirley Girouard, PhD'88, is professor and director of the School of Nursing in the College of Health and Human Services at San Francisco State University (sgirouard@aol.com).

Mario Gutierrez, MA'06, is a research fellow in the Integration, Trade, and Hemispheric Issues Division at the Inter-American Development Bank in

Washington, D.C. He works on research for the planning and implementation of trade-related policies for poverty alleviation in Central America (mariogu@iadb.org).

Surabhi Jain, MA'06, has moved from Washington, D.C., to Chicago, where she is working with the National Council of La Raza. She married Reshmal Ponmudiyan in India on August 19 (surabhi.jain@gmail.com).

Armand Lauffer, PhD'69, moved to Jerusalem after retiring from the University of Michigan. He is a frequent visiting professor at Israeli universities and serves on the boards of a number of international and Israeli nonprofits. Lauffer chairs the new Sage Publications Editorial Board for the Human Services and has designed a number of Web sites for nonprofit educators, students, and managers (alauffer@umich.edu).

Katharine Kranz Lewis, PhD'07, is a full-time adjunct professor in the Department of Nursing at the University of Hartford (kkranzlewis@comcast.net).

Amelia Marquez de Perez, PhD'96, has been the coordinator of the Mentoring, Evaluation, and Strategic Services Unit in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Panama since 2004. She is the happy grandmother of two boys and two girls. De Perez recently hosted **Hammad Masood, MA'07**, whose job with UNICEF in Egypt brought him to Panama (amperez@cwpanama.net).



Rhonda Neuhaus, MA'99, graduated from the University of Maryland School of Law in May.

Esosa Odigie, MS'06, recently began residency training in internal medicine at Interfaith Medical Center in New York. Prior to that, she was a research associate at the Health Institute at Tufts–New England Medical Center (sesky146@yahoo.com).

Heather Poehler, MBA'05, was promoted to vice president and regional manager at Quaker Funds in Malvern, Pennsylvania (hking@quakerfunds.com).

Mali Ionascu Reimer, MM'02, is the individual giving officer at Physicians for Human Rights in Cambridge, Massachusetts (mreimer@phrusa.org).

Cedric Schuster, MA'99, is a director at Pacific Environment Consultants Ltd., an environmental consulting firm he established with two partners in 2003. He and his wife have four children and live in Samoa (cschuster@conservation.ws).



Cedric Schuster poses with his wife and four children in Samoa.

Janet Scott-Harris, PhD'06, recently became vice president of cultural health initiatives for the American Heart Association (AHA) with affiliate offices throughout the United States. Her office is located at the AHA



Heller Senior Scientist Joan Kaufman and Xiaoqing Lu, MA'05, were part of a delegation that traveled to China to explore the capacity of civil society and non-governmental organizations to address HIV/AIDS in China. The delegation was organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., where Lu is a research associate.

Senior Lecturer Marion Howard, MA'04, and Professor Andy Hahn, PhD'78, received the Teaching and Mentoring Awards respectively. The winners of these awards are nominated and voted on by Heller students.

National Center in Dallas, Texas. Previously, she served for sixteen years as the regional program consultant for minority health for the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health for the New England region (janet.scott-harris@heart.org).

Rob Seidner '98, MBA'03, is being detailed to the University of Illinois at Chicago from his job at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management to complete the coursework for a PhD. He will also be working for the vice chancellor of human resources at the university, where his area of focus will be on human capital initiatives, and he will return to his federal post in May 2008. Seidner was recently featured as one of ten young federal employees making a difference by the Partnership for Public Service (rbseidner@juno.com).

In Memoriam

Frederick Inkley, MMHS'83, passed away on July 28, 2007, at age seventy-three. Inkley retired as the executive director of the Northern New Hampshire Council on Alcoholism in 1993. His proudest accomplishment was the establishment of Friendship House in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, the first long-term total rehabilitation program in that state.

Publications

The *Journal of Aging & Social Policy* has published a collection of essays remembering the work and contributions of Robert Morris, a longtime professor of social planning at Heller. Morris cofounded the *Journal of Aging & Social Policy* in 1989 and continued as coeditor until his death in October 2005. Contributors include former Heller professors Bob Binstock and **Jim Callahan, PhD'68**, as well as **Jack Hansan, PhD'80**. To purchase a copy, contact Haworth Press at orders@haworthpress.com; be sure to ask for Volume 19, No. 3.

Brenda Bond, PhD'06, published "Taking Action on Safety" in the *Lowell Sun*. Bond is an action research partner in the Shannon Community Safety Initiative in Lowell, Massachusetts, and serves on the city of Lowell's Gang Advisory Board (bbond@suffolk.edu).

Surabhi Jain, MA'06, published "New Directions in Workforce Development: Do They Lead to Gains for Women?" in a special edition of the *New England Journal of Public Policy* (surabhi.jain@gmail.com).

Karen Melillo, PhD'90, cowrote several articles for *Rehabilitation Nursing* on managing problem behaviors associated with dementia and interpreting laboratory values in the rehabilitation setting. She also wrote a chapter titled "Psychological and Social Impact of Age-Related Vision Loss" in

Vision Loss in Older Adults: Nursing Assessment and Care Management, edited by **Susan Crocker Houde, PhD'96**, and published by Springer Publishing (karen_melillo@uml.edu).

Awards, Honors, Boards, Grants

Diane Disney, PhD'89, was appointed to a panel advising the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on its award and senior-level compensation programs. Disney is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration and also serves on the human resources subpanel of the FBI Transformation Panel (Disney@gv.psu.edu).

Jim Gorman, MSW'73, PhD'78, received a cultural exchange stipend from the Goethe Institute in Freiburg, Germany, to improve his German and develop professional contacts in the areas of pastoral theology, social ethics, and social services (jcgorma@attglobal.net).

Jim Kelly, PhD'75, was elected president of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).

Karen Melillo, PhD'90, was elected to the 2008 Nominating Committee of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the national accrediting organization for undergraduate and graduate nursing programs. She serves as a trustee of D'Youville Senior Care in Lowell, Massachusetts (karen_melillo@uml.edu).

Susan Moscou, PhD'06, presented her dissertation research at the Honor Society of Nursing's annual meeting in Vienna. Her dissertation had been nominated for the Society's 2007 Dissertation Research Award. Moscou is an associate professor of nursing at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, New York (smoscou@mercy.edu).

David Portowicz, PhD'80, received the President of Israel Award for outstanding volunteer organization. Portowicz is chairman and founder of the Jaffa Institute, one of Israel's largest nonprofit institutions, serving thousands of disadvantaged children (david717@012.net.il).

Nina Silverstein, PhD'80, was elected member at large to the executive committee of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) (nina.silverstein@umb.edu).

Ione Dugger Vargus, PhD'71, was chosen as an African American History Maker by the HistoryMakers, a national nonprofit educational institution committed to creating a collection of oral histories showcasing African Americans who have made significant strides. As part of this honor Vargus was presented with a sculpture at the 16th National Family Reunion Conference, which was organized by Vargus in her role as founder and volunteer director of the Family Reunion Institute at the School of Social Administration at Temple University (ivargus@temple.edu).

Births, Marriages

Leslie Davis Met, MM/MA'98, and husband Mike welcomed their second child, Lauren Rose, in March (ldmet@yahoo.com).

Faculty, Staff Notes

Janet Boguslaw, program director in the Institute on Assets and Social Policy, cowrote "Business, Poverty, and Corporate Citizenship: Naming the Issues and Framing Solutions," published in the *Journal for Corporate Citizenship*.

Career Services for Students and Alumni Assume Prominent Role at Heller

Recognizing how important career services are to students at a professional school, Heller created a new position—assistant dean for career services—to lead efforts in that area. Creating the position at the assistant dean level emphasizes the enormous commitment Heller is making to this aspect of student services. As the first person to fill this role, Tom Broussard, PhD'06, is tasked with providing a new strategic direction for career services. The office will mainly work with students, but assistance is available for alumni as well.

When Broussard left Waltham last year to return to his home state of Maine, he had no idea how quickly he would return. The story actually began in 1998 when Broussard's daughter, Josie, enrolled at Brandeis University as an undergraduate. Josie worked in the Heller Development and Alumni Relations Office for three years. She shared information about Heller's PhD program with her dad, enthusiastically describing the Work, Inequality, and Social Change concentration specifically.

In 1995, Broussard, an engineer by training, had started Career

Prospects, Inc., in Maine, a staffing, training, and career counseling company. The organization assisted low-income, displaced workers and returning-to-work welfare recipients with finding work. By 1998, Broussard was entertaining the idea of attending graduate school. In 1999, with his daughter's urging, he enrolled at Heller as a special student.

After graduation, Broussard started looking for new challenges. By fall 2006 he had begun to think about trading in his career-counseling job for one in higher education career advising. He accepted a position at Vassar College for the winter semester and also made career presentations at Heller, Clark University, Tufts, and the College of the Atlantic. Shortly thereafter he was offered the role as the new assistant dean for career services at Heller.

Broussard has also recently begun a term on the Heller Alumni Association Board, where he will focus his efforts on building connections between current students and alumni. While Broussard's primary focus is providing career services to current students, he is also available to meet with alumni. Feel free to contact him at tbroussa@brandeis.edu.

EASE Couldn't Be Easier

EASE is the new system for capturing and displaying employment information and job opportunities. But you must sign up to have access to this resource. The more alumni and prospective employers that sign up, the more useful the resource is. Visit heller.brandeis.edu/careers and follow the links for logging in to EASE. Questions? E-mail Tom at tbroussa@brandeis.edu.

How You Can Be Involved

- Attend networking events at Heller
- Provide informational interviews
- Sign up in EASE so students can "find" you
- Assist with career panels and job fairs
- Provide jobs and internships to Heller students
- Use the career services office for your own career development support
- Be a resource to students with career questions

Tom Shapiro is the Pokross Professor of Law and Social Policy and director of Heller's Institute on Assets and Social Policy. A national expert on racial disparity and public policy, Shapiro recently participated in a live town meeting in New Orleans, joining community members, other policy experts, and public officials to discuss alleviating poverty in the United States. The event was broadcast on the Web.



What inspired your long-standing interest in racial inequalities?

Growing up in Los Angeles I had two memorable experiences that pushed me in this direction. As a teenager I visited a citrus ranch my dad owned on the Mexican border. I saw the horrendous living conditions of the migrant workers and started thinking about what it took to bring an orange to my plate. Right before I left for college in the summer of 1965, riots erupted in LA in the South Central and Watts neighborhoods as a result of police brutality toward African Americans. Listening to the police scanner, I heard the hateful language that police officers used to talk about residents of those communities. It opened my eyes to how African Americans were treated, creating a lifelong impression and sense of outrage that have provided motivation for this work.

What prompted your involvement in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina?

Immediately after Hurricane Katrina, the Russell Sage Foundation funded a study on Katrina, race, and poverty. I was asked to explore the impact of race and wealth on the rebuilding process. It was the first scholarly report published post-Katrina to look at the rebuilding process.

What did you discover about the relationship between race and wealth and the rebuilding process?

Traditionally impoverished communities, predominantly African American, are not being rebuilt. When I visited New Orleans in June, I toured the lower Ninth Ward. Over a fifty-block area, there were only three or four houses left standing per block. The abandoned houses were spray-painted with a grid of numbers indicating the number of animals found dead, the number of humans found dead, and the number of people living in the home before Katrina. This highlighted not just the devastation to property but the human toll as well. The proliferation of FEMA trailers shows how little rebuilding is occurring. Power lines remain strewn on the ground, and residents must wear hazmat boots when walking outside. Kids have not returned to school. For those residents brave enough to return, there are no shopping centers and few neighbors, making daily life challenging.

The infrastructure in downtown New Orleans was up and running long before there was any activity in the lower Ninth Ward. Harrah's Casino, a very complex structure, was reopened quickly. As we know, it is a question of resources and priorities, not the will to rebuild, that determines how quickly things are accomplished.

What are the lessons of Katrina?

It's a mistake to think of Hurricane Katrina entirely as a natural disaster. The response and the resulting consequences of that response are man-made. Sure, you can't prevent a hurricane, but two years after the fact I saw people put coffee cans on their front porches for donations. That's not going to get the job done.

I think the government learned the importance of having an evacuation plan that takes into account the conditions of the people who live there. Since twenty-five percent of poor African Americans don't have cars, it doesn't make sense to tell people to just get in their cars and drive away.

Can disasters ever provide opportunity?

Hurricane Katrina pushed poverty back onto the public agenda. People became engaged with social justice again. But sadly, I do not think we learned enough from the mistakes of Katrina to prevent the consequences that natural disasters visit disproportionately on the poor.

We may have missed the most important opportunity that Katrina presented—it took centuries to create segregation in Louisiana, and when rebuilding there is a chance for politicians, community leaders, urban planners, and business owners to deal with that reality and pay attention to social issues.

There is also a great opportunity to identify and train a skilled workforce—carpentry and plumbing are professions that are in greater demand than ever, and both earn a living wage.

Districts can be created so that schools draw students from diverse communities, near where people work. Investments in public transportation would create improved access to work opportunities for the segment of the population who cannot afford cars. Zoning laws can be created that address regional equity and support environmental solutions. The theory and data are there—it's largely a question of will, leverage, and politics. What better time than now to experiment with de facto integration and progressive urban planning?

Heller School Receives Major Support to Advance Philanthropy

In August, the Heller School for Social Policy and Management opened the doors connecting the Irving Schneider and Family Building to the newly renovated Heller/Brown Building, transforming the school and doubling its size. The expanded space will be home to a new institute* and a new center substantially enhancing Heller's research and policy activity.

The Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy will help empower a growing generation of philanthropists to become social entrepreneurs—individuals who use philanthropy to advance social change. Robert F. X. Sillerman '69 and his wife, Laura, have made a \$10 million gift through their family charity, the Tomorrow Foundation, to establish the center at the Heller School. Dean Stuart Altman has appointed Heller faculty member and alumnus Andrew Hahn, PhD'78, to lead the center. Hahn's experience in program evaluation and evidence-based practice, as well as his extensive experience with foundations, made him a natural choice. The center will convene roundtables and develop graduate-level and nondegree curricula.

The center also hopes to help family foundations become more effective philanthropic organizations and to support Brandeis alumni seeking advice and assistance with their own philanthropic plans.

"In an era of declining government support for initiatives that benefit the disadvantaged, the Sillerman Center will promote an understanding of the importance of philanthropy and define new mechanisms for achieving lasting positive change in society," says Altman.

Of the gift, Sillerman says, "I was immensely fortunate to be a child of the 1960s at Brandeis, where I formed a strong sense of social consciousness. Laura and I hope that this gift inspires others from our generation to make similar donations. Our generation has the responsibility to follow through on the ideals we voiced in our youth and to attempt to change the world in ways we could only imagine in the 1960s. It is our time now to give generously and decisively."

* In the next issue of *Heller Alumni News and Views*, a new Institute for Disability Policy, also endowed by a generous gift, will be featured.

Heller Alumni

News and Views

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