

THE *Community Psychologist*

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From the President

Patricia O'Connor
*The Sage Colleges,
Troy, New York*



Small but Mighty

It is probably the typical refrain but here it is: it's hard to believe that my year as SCRA president is

almost over -- and will be over by the time you read this! During this year we have solidified the relationship with our management firm who provides us with a better, more efficient and effective system to maintain our membership list (among other things). This has resulted in what may appear as a reduction in our membership, but actually is a more accurate list of those who have paid their appropriate dues and wish to be engaged with SCRA. The only conclusion is that we are small – but mighty! We are strong, engaged and influential!

As a measure of our strength, we have many members very involved in our various councils, committees and interest groups – in fact, if

you are not, you might want to reconsider and join with others who share your interests. There is a list of committees and interest groups inside this newsletter, with columns by most. Our 2011 Biennial (in June) – hopefully you were able to be there – will be an excellent opportunity for engagement. But if you missed that opportunity you can still meet up with active SCRA members at APA (in D.C. this year) and at the various regional meetings. Of course, the SCRA Executive Committee, which I described in my last column, is very active, with monthly conference calls, a mid-winter meeting, and meetings at the Biennial and APA. Our strength, what makes us mighty, is in that engagement.

In my first column I noted the three critical factors: membership, visibility within APA, and organizational structure. We have made some progress in clarifying membership though much remains to be done to increase our numbers. We have participated with and increased our visibility in APA through representatives on APA committees and task forces, through a workshop on advocacy for the EC in conjunction with our mid-winter meeting, and continue to make our presence known through our effective (though single) representative on the APA Council of Representatives. Finally,

addressing the third critical factor, we are (slowly) moving forward with enhancing and strengthening our organizational structure.

By the time you read this, I expect that the EC will have voted to put an executive director in place; at least in function, if not in exact title. That person will likely have responsibilities that include membership recruitment and maintenance. I am hopeful that we can also give serious consideration to modifying our presidential role to have presidents who serve two-year terms. The complexity of our organization, in my opinion, seems to demand a more stable organizational leadership structure. Appropriately, there has been much discussion as we have moved closer to the executive director position and much discussion will precede any modifications in the length or scope of the presidency. One challenge both for the person taking on the presidency and for the organization is the issue of transition with a one-year term (the full term is three years: one as president-elect, one as president, and one as past-president). Although there is clear communication between the past-, current, and –elect presidents, there is expected transitional issues that would be minimized through both the addition of an executive director and the expansion of the presidential term by one year.

Meyers, President and CEO of the Children's Fund of Connecticut. And the third article is by Jeff Usher, Program Officer at the Kansas Health Foundation in collaboration with Greg Meissen at Wichita State University. These three articles provide a good overview of the benefits of working for foundations, different types of positions, and the impact community psychologists can have in such positions.

Engaging a Foundation in Community Partnerships

Written by Annette Rickel, Founder, Annette Urso Rickel Foundation, Inc.

I entered the foundation world when I left Georgetown University for New York City to become Education Program Officer for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. My background as a community psychologist was very helpful in assuming this role and in learning philanthropy.

Upon leaving Rockefeller, five years ago I established a small family foundation with a big mission, which is to support motivated college students to become exemplary teachers. Research has repeatedly shown that teacher quality is a primary determinant of student achievement. So helping talented students pursue their dream to be teachers – and selecting students who will teach in public schools was simply common sense to me.

But the Foundation went a step further. I decided to tackle an even bigger job and choose to focus the scholarships on encouraging students to become math and science teachers, in chronically short supply across the nation. Nationally, eighty-four percent of math and science teachers in grades 5 – 12 did not major in these fields, and Federal test scores for large urban districts show no significant progress in these subjects.

The global competitiveness of the U.S. depends on having citizens highly trained in math and science,

and the technology that is based on these subjects. However, the U.S. lags behind other countries such as China and India in the number of undergraduates earning degrees in these areas. A recent study released by the Program for International Student Assessment ranked our nation 21st out of 30 in scientific literacy (just above the Slovak Republic), and 25th in math literacy (between Spain and Portugal). Well-prepared and committed teachers are the key to reversing this trend.

Therefore, by giving motivated students interested in math and science teaching these scholarships, we are helping to raise achievement levels and national test scores in these critical subjects, as well as improve math and science education in America's schools.

So far, over 100 deserving students have been honored as Rickel Teaching

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Scholars and are on their way to becoming exceptional teachers. They attend colleges that are part of the City University of New York, a large public urban education system where we established a partnership; several are students who have received a Rickel scholarship for the second or third year in a row; and a significant number are already employed as school teachers.

Most of the Teaching Scholars are the first generation in their families to go to college, many are foreign born, some had previously dropped out of college because of financial and other pressures, and several have young children and are struggling to get a college degree while raising a family and working. For these

students, the scholarships make the critical difference in whether or not they continue their education.

College presidents and their staff identify talented students and help them through the application process found on our website (teachingscholars.org). Once a student is awarded a Rickel scholarship, he or she must have people to go to for mentoring, coaching or tutoring because pursuing careers in such demanding fields requires more than financial support. Thus, math, science and education faculty play active roles in these students' academic lives. As a result of these efforts, we attract a wonderfully diverse and motivated group of students which assures that these students can become the teachers of tomorrow. The future of our nation rests in their hands.

A Community Psychologist in the World of Philanthropy

Written by Judith C. Meyers, President and CEO, Children's Fund of Connecticut

Throughout my career I have worked in many settings including clinical, academic, and government at the federal, state and local levels. I have also had the opportunity to work in foundations - earlier in my career as a Senior Associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation and for the past seven years as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Fund of Connecticut. Although a career in philanthropy is not one usually envisioned when in training to be a community psychologist, in point of fact there is no better match for the skills, knowledge and values that encompass community psychology. Foundations come in many shapes and sizes, but at their core, they are about using resources to promote the public good and improve social or human conditions and the quality of life in communities.

The Children's Fund is what is known as a public charitable foundation and is dedicated to ensuring that children in Connecticut who are disadvantaged have access to and make use of a comprehensive, effective, community-based health and mental health care system. To fulfill its mission, the Children's Fund champions sustainable improvements in primary and preventive care practices through innovative grant making. Through its subsidiary, the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut, which I also direct, we support or conduct research and evaluation, education and training, facilitation

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and convening, and advocacy. Our work is research and information-based and much of our efforts are devoted to identifying, supporting, evaluating and disseminating evidence-based interventions and breaking down silos between systems by facilitating people working together in an integrated, mission-driven direction, whether between academia and government, state government and local communities, or among public agencies such as education, health, child welfare,

and mental health. Ultimately the work is to support, catalyze, facilitate, promote, and advocate for change, and reform the systems and policies needed to sustain change over the long haul, which should sound very familiar to any community psychologist.

The excitement of working in a foundation emanates from the breadth of issues and ranges of organizations with which one has the chance to engage. As an example, some of the initiatives on which I am involved include: 1) enhancing the ability of primary care providers to address the mental health concerns of children and their families; 2) improving the health and safety of early care and education programs through supporting research and working with key constituencies to build a health and mental health consultation system for childcare programs; 3) assisting with the design of the state's approach to pediatric medical homes as Connecticut undertakes a reform of its Medicaid program, in light of federal health care reform; 4) working with 15 community collaboratives to assure a broad developmental approach (cognitive, physical, social and emotional) in their comprehensive plans to assure children are ready for school; and 5) supporting the replication of an early childhood mental health evidence-based intervention known as Child FIRST.

With a staff of a dozen people, we carry out our work through partnering with over 30 academic and community-based organizations and key state agencies related to children as well as members of the legislature. We work in particularly close partnership with Yale University, the University of Connecticut, and the Connecticut Children's Medical Center to bring their resources to bear on improving child health outcomes.

This work draws heavily on my roots in community psychology, with its focus on primary prevention, social change, and understanding of individual, organizational, and

societal behavior, and what it takes to foster systems change. Skills in public policy, applying research to real world problems, program evaluation, facilitation, as well as content expertise in health and mental health care systems, child development, and the policy process, all come into play.

Part of the joy of working in philanthropy, unlike many other settings where community psychologists may be employed, is the ability to mobilize money and expertise, and the opportunity to take risks in trying out new ideas as champions of social change. Between 1990 and 2008, the number of active grantmaking foundations more than doubled from approximately 32,000 to over 75,000. Of these, 3,200 foundations employ paid staff, and they account for roughly 20,000 staff positions.¹ Foundations are increasingly looking for people with experience in research and evaluation as well as program staff with skills that are a match for those trained in community psychology. The Chronicle of Philanthropy and the Council on Foundation websites are good places to start to explore job opportunities.^{2,3}

Community Psychologist as Grant Maker

*Written by Jeff Usher,
Program Officer,
Kansas Health Foundation
and Greg Meissen,
Wichita State University*

I have the best job of anyone I know and I know lots of people with meaningful and significant positions in all kinds of organizations. Much of my satisfaction comes from being a community psychologist in my role as Program Officer at the Kansas Health Foundation which has allowed me to work on prevention oriented community and system change in a variety of domains including youth development, growing Kansas leadership, enhancing local philanthropy and increasing physical

ABOUT THE *Community Psychologist*:

The Community Psychologist is published four times a year to provide information to members of the **SOCIETY FOR COMMUNITY RESEARCH AND ACTION**. A fifth *Membership Directory* issue is published approximately every three years. Opinions expressed in *The Community Psychologist* are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect official positions taken by SCRA. Materials that appear in *The Community Psychologist* may be reproduced for educational and training purposes. Citation of source is appreciated.

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Articles, columns, features, Letters to the Editor, and announcements should be submitted as Word attachments in an e-mail message to the Associate Editor at: dj5775@yahoo.com. You may also reach the Editor by e-mail at mariachu@hawaii.edu or by postal mail at Maria B. J. Chun, UH Department of Surgery, 1356 Lusitana Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, HI 96813. Authors should adhere to the following guidelines when submitting materials:

- **Length:** Five pages, double-spaced
- **Images:** Images are highly recommended, but please limit to two images per article. Images should be higher than 300 dpi. Photo image files straight from the camera are acceptable. If images need to be scanned, please scan them at 300 dpi and save them as JPEGs. Submit the image(s) as a separate file. Please note that images will be in black and white when published.
- **Margins:** 1" margins on all four sides
- **Text:** Times New Roman, 12-point font
- **Alignment:** All text should be aligned to the left (including titles).
- **Color:** Make sure that all text (including links, e-mails, etc.) are set in standard black.
- **Punctuation Spacing:** Per APA guidelines, make sure that there is only one space after periods, question marks, etc.
- **Graphs & Tables:** These should be in separate Word documents (one for each table/graphs if multiple). Convert all text in the graph into the consistent font and font size.
- **Footnotes:** Footnotes should be placed at the end of the article as regular text (do not use Word footnote function).
- **References:** Follow APA guidelines. These should also be justified to the left with a hanging indent of .25".
- **Headers/Footers:** Do not use headers and footers.
- **Long quotes:** Follow APA guidelines for quoted materials.

UPCOMING DEADLINES:

Fall 2011 – August 31, 2011 | Winter 2012 – November 30, 2011 | Spring 2012 – February 29, 2012 | Summer 2012 – May 31, 2012

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION:

The Community Psychologist and the *American Journal of Community Psychology* are mailed to all SCRA members. To join SCRA and receive these publications, send membership dues to SCRA (Div 27), 4440 PGA Blvd., #600, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410. Membership dues are \$30 for student members, \$75 for United States members, \$60 for international members, and \$15 for senior members (must be 65 or over, retired, and a member of SCRA/Division 27 for 25 years; senior members will receive *TCP* but not *AJCP*). The membership application is on the inside back cover.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Address changes may be made online through the SCRA website www.scra27.org. Address changes may also be sent to SCRA(Div 27), 4440 PGA Blvd., #600, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410. Email: office@scra27.org. APA members should also send changes to the APA Central Office, Data Processing Manager for revision of the APA mailing lists, 750 First St., NE, Washington, DC 20002-4422.

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