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CHHS and COE to Offer Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Certificate Program

The [College of Health and Human Services](#) and [College of Education](#) have joined forces to present an exciting new program — the first of its kind in the Midwest.

An open house for the new, two-year, 18-credit-hour **Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Certificate Program** was recently presented. The program is scheduled to be offered in the Spring of 2013.



The new Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Certificate Program is being offered in response to the increasingly important role that mindfulness can play in psychotherapeutic practice.

More and more research studies indicate how mindfulness and meditation-based practices help clients achieve emotional regulation, modulate anxiety and depression, lower blood pressure, enhance the immune system, and increase concentration and attention span.

Students eligible to enroll in this program include:

- Post-master's level practitioners with a degree in mental health or allied health professions who have access to clinical populations and;
- Current master's level GSU students enrolled in clinically-oriented programs who are in their final year of advanced clinical practicum.

For more information about GSU's Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Certificate program, contact Dr. Maristela Zell at mzell@govst.edu

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Symposium Addresses Future of Healthcare Reform in America



The [College of Health and Human Services \(CHHS\)](#) recently presented "**A Healthcare Symposium: Post Election**," in the Center for Performing Arts at GSU. Serving as moderator for the event was [Dr. Rupert Evans](#), Associate Professor, Department Chair, and Program Director of the CHHS Department of Health Administration.

*In photo above, CHHS [Dean Elizabeth Cada](#) (at podium) offers a welcoming address to the audience. Panel presenters included (left to right) **Lois Elia**, MBA, Vice President of AdvocateCare; **Dr. Derrick J. Robinson**, MD, MBA, FACEP, Executive Director of the Illinois Hospital Association's Quality Care Institute; **Dr. Terry Mason**, Medical Director of the Cook County Health and Hospital System; **Knitasha V. Washington**, DHA (c), MHA, FACHE, Chicago Midwest Chapter President of the National Association of Health Services Executives (NAHSE), and a graduate of GSU's Master of Health Administration program; and **Mike Wojcik**, CLU, CFP, Senior Vice President of the Horton Group.*



Pictured at a special reception held prior to the Healthcare Symposium are (left to right) Dr. Rupert Evans, Dr. Derrick J. Robinson, President Dr. Elaine P. Maimon, and Dr. Terry Mason.

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'Not Just a Veteran's Issue': Trauma and the Impact on the Military Family

Nicole McCoy is lucky to be alive.

She was raped twice and suffered Military Sexual Assault (MST) two other times during the four years she was enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. After speaking out about the crimes against her, McCoy was invariably harassed, ignored, judged, or shunned by the military.

After her medical discharge from the armed services, McCoy's life became a nightmare of drinking, drugs, depression, and suicide attempts.

Today, supported by her husband and a service therapy dog that is always by her side, 22-year-old McCoy is fighting back the only way she knows how: she is petitioning the Department of Defense to create a national registry for service members convicted of sexual offenses while on active duty in the military. Individuals can [sign the petition here](#).

McCoy's poignant presentation was just one of several moving accounts by panelists during the three-hour public forum, "**Before and After Deployment: Trauma and the Impact on the Military Family**," held recently in the Center for Performing Arts.

The event was sponsored by the College of Health and Human Services, the Department of Social Work, the College of Education, Governors State University Intellectual Life Committee, the University Honors Program, and the Wounded Warrior Project.

Serving as key organizers of this student-driven event were Army veteran **Michael Griffin** and **Lydia Quinones**, both of whom are in their fourth semester of the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program at GSU. Other committee members involved in this event included **Gina Corona** and **William Schranz**, both enrolled in the BSW program, and **Erica Porter**, a Master of Social Work (MSW) student.

"Our phenomenal group of Social Work students have worked extremely hard on this program," said faculty advisor [Lorri Glass, Ph.D.](#), Associate Professor of Social Work and BSW Program Coordinator.

"Today's forum embodies the principles and values of Governors State University, the College of Health and Human Services, and Social Work in that we realize it is important to advocate for social justice and to take responsibility to ensure that service members, veterans, and their loved ones have access to the support they deserve," Dr. Glass said. "This is NOT just an issue for veterans; it's everyone's issue."

* * *

The first trauma USMC Navy Corpsman Michael Johnson experienced was in Iraq, while he was breaching a minefield.

"There was a dog maybe 10 to 15 feet away, and he took one step and wasn't there anymore. I expected to see injury and death, but the loss of basic innocence . . . I saw it disappear," Johnson said.

Since then Johnson has waged a horrendous battle with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). "Recovery from PTSD is a lifetime ordeal," Johnson said. "A lot of vets are too proud to admit that anything is wrong, and so they self-medicate with drugs and alcohol."

Johnson, who also has a therapy service dog at his side, believes soldiers need a boot camp not only before their deployment, but after they come home, in order to deprogram and process what they went through.

* * *

Sharon Orsborn says her 26-year-old Army veteran son returned home from Iraq "broken and haunted" — tormented by PTSD. Sitting in his car in the middle of a field in Fort Worth, Texas, Orsborn's son killed himself on May 5, 2007.

"The truth is that he died on a battlefield in Iraq in 2004," Orsborn said.

After returning from the coroner's office, Orsborn sat down and composed a poem for her son's funeral. She's been writing ever since. She has been given poetry, she believes, to help herself and other parents who have buried children.

Marquell Smith experienced "a different war." In 2006, after discovering that someone he dated had tested positive for HIV, Smith confided his sexual orientation to his commanding officer, which resulted in his discharge under the now-repealed "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

Smith fought the discharge, which was eventually upgraded to honorable. With his dreams of becoming an officer forever lost, Smith began working with several organizations that advocate for equal rights and fair treatment for gays in the military. It's an extremely "important cause," Smith believes. "There's a lot of work to be done for those who serve in silence."

Also serving on the panel was Abbie Holland Schmit, Alumni Manager of the Wounded Warrior Project. Schmit discussed some of the 14 different programs designed to promote the physical/mental health and wellness of soldiers who have returned home.

In closing remarks, [CHHS Dean Elizabeth Cada](#) noted, "This is just the beginning of a very important discussion that must, and will, continue here at GSU ... We look forward to our continued collaborations and will not forget our commitment to those who have served our nation, and their family members."

Veterans Invited to Join Writing Group

GSU veterans are invited to discover the craft of narrative writing by joining the **Veterans Writing Group**, a new organization coordinated by GSU English professor Robin Thompson.

Veterans are invited to write about their military and war experiences in a small, supportive group environment. The group is free to all American war veterans.

For additional information about the Veterans Writing Group, contact Robin Thompson at rthompson@govst.edu, or 708.534.4581.



Panelists for "**Before and After Deployment: Trauma and the Impact on the Military Family**," include (pictured left to right) Michael Johnson; Dr. Lorri Glass (panel moderator); Nicole McCoy (at podium), Marquell Smith; Sharon Orsborn, and Abbie Holland Schmit. McCoy's service dog, Dakota, is seated next to Dr. Glass.

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Congratulations to CHHS!



GSU's [College of Health and Human Services](#) (CHHS) just received some wonderful news!

Our College has been ranked ninth in the nation for producing graduate degrees for African American students in health professions and health-related programs.

The ranking appeared in *Diverse Magazine* (October 26, 2012).

In an e-mail announcement to CHHS department chairs, Dean Elizabeth Cada noted, "I am so proud of our programs and commitment to our mission."

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Greg Blevins Named GSU Professor Emeritus & Outstanding WMU Alumnus

Congratulations are owed to retired Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health Professor [Gregory A. Blevins, Ph.D.](#) At GSU's October 5 Board of Trustees meeting, Blevins was awarded **Professor Emeritus** status.

On that same day at Western Michigan University (WMU) in Kalamazoo, MI, Dr. Blevins joined the select ranks of alumni to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award and be appointed to WMU's College of Health and Human Services' Outstanding Alumni Academy.

Out of more than 15,000 alumni, Dr. Blevins (Class of 1975) was appointed to the Academy on the basis of his academic and professional achievements. The commemorative plaque Dr. Blevins received also noted "recognition of leadership in academic program development and initiating international accreditation of academic substance abuse service programs."



Being a part of the College's Outstanding Alumni Academy "distinguishes you as a leader and creates inspiration for current and future students. We thank you again for making a positive difference and being integral to the College's tradition of innovation and excellence," noted WMU's College of Health and Human Services' Dean Earlie Washington.

Dr. Blevins' spouse Vicki, daughter Stacy, and son-in-law Andy were present at the awards banquet.

Dr. Blevins earned a graduate certificate in Specialty Program in Alcohol and Drug Abuse from WMU. He also received a bachelor's, master's and a doctoral degree in sociology from WMU. He joined GSU's faculty in 1982, and has been honored several times with the GSU Faculty Excellence Award.

Dr. Blevins has published and presented widely in regard to substance abuse prevention, education, and counseling. The fifth edition of his co-authored book, [Substance Abuse Counseling](#), was published in 2010.

A founding and life member of the International Consortium for Addiction Studies Education, Dr. Blevins is a reviewer for the *Journal of Teaching in the Addictions* and for *Choice — Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*.

Dr. Blevins has maintained a lifelong commitment of advocacy on behalf of the indigenous peoples of the Americas through substance abuse education and consultation. In 1996, he received the Indian Health Service Certificate of Recognition Award for that work.

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Having Fun — While Enriching Children's Language and Literacy Skills

"Language and literacy is everywhere and all around us," believes [Dr. Jennifer Armstrong, Ph.D., CCC-SLP](#), Assistant Professor of Communication Disorders at GSU. "Learning can be fun."

And there was plenty of fun — and learning — going on at a recent interactive workshop designed to teach parents how to promote language and literacy skill development in their children. The program was led by Dr. Armstrong and graduate students from GSU's Department of Communication Disorders (CDIS).



The two-hour workshop provided parents with examples of interactive activities they can share with their children, as well as tips for improving their child's reading skills.

Parents had the opportunity to move among eight different work stations, all manned by CDIS students. The workstation themes ranged from *Technology, Language and Literacy*, to *Phonological Awareness* and *Book Reading and the Power of Why*, among others.

"As of 2008, the number of children identified with speech and language disorders is greater than 1.4 million, making communication disorders among the most common in the United States," noted Dr. Armstrong. "As Speech Language Pathologists, we have a responsibility to not only treat communication disorders, but to prevent them wherever possible. Early enrichment activities such as the ones that we are going to demonstrate this evening may help to prevent future communication and learning problems in the academic setting."

Informational handouts, books, and other materials were available for parents to take home with them at the program's conclusion.

This event was partially funded through a GSU Intellectual Life Grant.



Having fun at the "Cooking with Literacy" work station are (far left) Asma Baste and her five-year-old son, Ameen Saleh, with help from Communication Disorders students Paige Fombelle and Lesley Grobe.

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Handicap This! Production Offers Unique Approach to Life with Disability

Twenty-three-year-old Mike Berkson may have been born with Cerebral Palsy, but once you meet him, you realize he is much more than his condition, or a wheelchair. He's a human being with a great sense of humor and intelligence, and an enormous amount of potential.

Berkson refuses to "dwell on limitations. Instead I ponder unlimited possibilities."

And that, essentially, is the message of the live stage show, **Handicap This!** presented recently for more than 150 GSU faculty, staff, and students in the Performing Arts Center.

Handicap This! was spearheaded by [Dr. Roberta O'Shea, PT, Ph.D.](#), GSU Professor of Physical Therapy, and was sponsored by the Intellectual Life Committee, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Health and Human Services, the Academic Resource Center, and the GSU Office of Student Life.

The show features Berkson and his former middle school aide and friend, Tim Wambach, riffing and joking about their 11-year friendship, and spreading their message of hope and determination in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

"Mike has helped make my mind handicap-accessible," Tim noted. Mike and Tim summarize their life's modus operandi in three words: *Improvise, Adapt, Overcome.*

Fielding questions from the audience following the program, Mike displayed his wicked wit when answering a student's question: "If you had full function of all your limbs, what would be the *first* thing you'd do?"

Mike's reply: "Well, the *second* thing I'd do is go for a drive."

A portion of the proceeds from Handicap This! goes toward the [Keep On Keeping](#)

[On Foundation](#), a nonprofit organization headed by Berkson and Wambach. Their mission is to provide support — monetary and otherwise — to those living with severe physical disabilities.

Proceeds from Wambach's book — [How We Roll: 2 Friends, 1 Wheelchair and a Lifetime of Lessons in Perseverance](#) — also go to the Foundation.

*Mike Berkson (seated) and friend Tim Wambach — stars of **Handicap This!** — receive congratulations on their fine performance from (kneeling) Robin Sweeney, GSU Director of Disability Services, and Dr. Roberta O'Shea, GSU Professor of Physical Therapy.*



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First-Time Walk for Recovery a Big Success

In celebration of **National Recovery Month**, the **GSU Addictions Studies Alumni Club** sponsored a Walk for Recovery on September 22. The event was designed to honor individuals in recovery or who are seeking recovery. The event also celebrated the treatment and support service providers who are committed to helping them, and to increasing awareness surrounding addiction issues.

According to event organizer Cheri Garey, Director of Alumni Relations, a total of 117 individuals participated in the two-mile walk portion of the event. A sum of \$242 was raised for the Addictions Studies Alumni Club Scholarship.

Featured speakers at the event included [Peter Palanca](#), Executive Vice President and COO of TASC, Inc., and a Senior Lecturer in GSU's Addiction Studies Department; Theodore Binion, Director of the [Illinois Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse](#); Dr. Groove, an inspirational spoken word artist; and comedian [Jay Washington](#).

A number of organizations set up information tables at the Resource Fair, including: TASC, Inc.; Chicago Lakeshore Hospital; Recovery Concepts; Haymarket Center - Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood; the Illinois Chapter of NAADAC; Jackson Park Hospital; Illinois Institute of Addictions Recovery - Ingalls Hospital; Heroin Epidemic Relief Organization (HERO), and GSU's Addictions Studies program.

"I've dreamed of having a Recovery Walk at GSU for the past three years," stated Reggie Owens, President of the Addictions Studies Alumni Club. "The Recovery Walk was a dream that came true, and turned out much better than I imagined it could be."

Owens added, "It could have never happened without the hard work and dedication of Jamelia Hand, Husain Abdul Aziz, Joseph Thomas, Marie Hawkins, and Peter Bradley. These are the members, on the executive board, of The Addictions Studies Alumni Club. Cheri Gary was very instrumental in giving us the support we needed, and helping us with acquiring the resources to have the walk.

"I would also like to thank Governors State University, and the Addiction Studies Program, and its faculty, for preparing us to work in this field. The faculty gave us the tools and skills necessary, to help suffering souls, and helped us with understanding that long road to recovery, and a happy life.

"I would also like to thank GSU for bringing us all together. Thank You GSU," Owens concluded.

"I'm very proud of the Addictions Studies Alumni Club officers," stated Garey.

"They spent a great deal of time and energy putting on this wonderful event. We invite everyone to attend the second annual Recovery Walk at GSU on Saturday, September 21, 2013."



Pictured above (left to right) are board members of the GSU Addictions Studies Alumni Club, Joe Thomas, Jamelia Hand, Reggie Owens, Cheri Garey (Alumni Relations Director), Peter Bradley, and Husain Abdul Aziz. Reggie Owens is the President of the Addictions Studies Alumni Club.

Participating in the Walk for Recovery (in the photo below) are Mark Sanders (left), former GSU lecturer in the Addictions Studies Department, and Dave O'Donnell, a lecturer in the GSU Addictions Studies Department.



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Faculty Spotlight: Addictions Studies Faculty Member Pens Book

[Raven James, Ph.D.](#), Assistant Professor in the Department of Addictions Studies and Behavioral Health at GSU, has been working with sexual health issues and addictions for more than 20 years.

She is very serious — you could call her passionate — about the need for increased awareness and sensitivity to the wide variety of sexuality-related issues that can affect an individual's drug and alcohol abuse treatment and recovery process.

Recently, Dr. James took her academic passion one step further by authoring a book, [Sexuality and Addiction: Making Connections. Enhancing Recovery](#), published by Praeger (2012). The book, Dr. James explained, "is an overview of sexuality issues linked to substance abuse, and not about sexual addiction, which is a flawed concept."



"Sexuality education is not a standard part of treatment, even though it is linked to relapse for clients," she said. "We need to promote sexual health in substance abuse treatment, and this book is a great resource for educating counselors in the substance abuse field. People need to be able to talk about the issues that are integral to who they are as human beings, especially in order to recover from addictions."

Dr. James was recently one of three faculty recipients of an Excellence in Teaching award presented by President Dr. Elaine P. Maimon at GSU's fall 2012 convocation. Since her arrival at GSU four years ago, Dr. James has been extremely active in the areas of research and academic presentations, in addition to teaching and grant projects.

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