INCLUSIVE URBAN EDUCATION

How Syracuse educators are staying at the leading edge of research and practice in urban school improvement
SociaL Sculpture
In Inclusive Urban Education

Editor and Director of Marketing
Jennifer Russo

Design
Amy McVey

Contributing Writers
Jay Cox, Nicole M. DeClouette '08, Sapna Kollali '01,
G'09, Casey Reutemann G'10, Jennifer Russo

Copy Editors
Kathleen Haley, Valentina Palladino

Photography
Douglas Biklen, Robert Mescavage, Jennifer Russo, Steve
Sartori, SU Photo & Imaging Center, Chuck Wainwright

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comments. Please direct all
correspondence to: Editor,
Education Exchange, School of
Education, Syracuse University,
230 Huntington Hall, Syracuse, NY
13244, or edex@syr.edu.

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DEAR FRIENDS,

While the crisis in public education continues to make national headlines, here at the Syracuse University School of Education we continue to respond to today’s most critical societal issues by preparing the best educators, school leaders, practitioners, and researchers in the country, and even around the world. In this issue of the Education Exchange you will read about the strength in our legacy of inclusion and access, and how pairing that with the needs of urban schools has made our School of Education a national leader in the research and practice of inclusive urban education.

Programs such as Say Yes to Education and the Early College High School are creating accessible pathways to higher education for Syracuse youth. The Smart Kids, M-Lab, and 601 Tully projects infuse the curricula with arts and culture in innovative ways, using the latest technology.

On a national scale, the Inclusion Institutes are becoming models of research and service for people with disabilities across the lifespan. From preparing school leaders to create inclusive learning environments, to empowering college students with disabilities to become leaders on their campuses, the institutes’ reach is expanding, but without losing the hands-on approach to research and instruction our faculty and students are known for.

Our greatest strength lies not only in our philosophy, but also in our people. The School of Education faculty and students come from all over the world, and travel the world, each journey advancing the mission of the School: to create accessible learning environments, promote health and wellness, push against the boundaries of technology in research and learning, and explore other cultures and history through the arts.

I hope you will enjoy reading this issue of Education Exchange to learn about examples of this work and more. It is an exciting time here at the School of Education, and I invite you to stay involved. Attend alumni events in Syracuse or in the city where you live, visit campus for a weekend of arts and scholarly events, and connect with us through our social media outlets.

We look forward to hearing from you soon,

DOUGLAS BIKLEN, DEAN
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School of Education students benefit from direct interaction with the people and education systems of other cultures. Here are snapshots of some of their international research and service projects.

JOANNE O’TOOLE

Hometown: Liverpool, NY

Program of Study: Ph.D., Teaching and Curriculum

Focus: Joanne taught foreign language methods classes to U.S. teachers working in Costa Rica.

FROM JUNE 24TH TO JULY 10TH, I WAS IN COSTA RICA TEACHING a second language methods course to U.S. Spanish teachers. The Costa Rican cultural context served as the basis of class activities, presentations, assignments, and lesson plans. As a result, it was a very dynamic and fluid course that stretched me professionally and was responsive to the students and what they were learning and experiencing.

The learning curve is always great in a foreign context! This experience has added greatly to my understanding of Costa Rican culture and has allowed me to engage in cross-cultural comparisons with the U.S. culture as well as the other Spanish-speaking cultures that I know.

Although my role was that of a teacher, I believe that I learned as much as my students. In particular, I constantly and actively sought to learn new cultural information so that I could integrate it into my lessons and model how my students might incorporate culture into their teaching in meaningful and authentic ways.

This experience will deepen my cultural understandings and add to my repertoire of teaching practices and resources. I know that the foreign language methods courses I teach in the future will take into consideration what I learned from teaching in Costa Rica.

Photo courtesy of Joanne O’Toole
My research considers how Malagasy youth, who are still in high school and anticipate going to university, conceptualize their identity and cultural practices through narrative photography. My collaborative research is a publically engaged, or a Scholarship in Action project that engages arts-based research methodologies.

Malagasy youth have a lot to say. Their stories as they transition from adolescence to adulthood are layered with poignant and vivid memories and experiences surrounding family (both in terms of previous and the future generations) and community (extended family, neighbors, friends, the market, school and even the country in general) and self-expression.

Our collaborative group discussions surrounding their photographs were lively, to say the least. The photographs taken and discussed by the participants are narrative in nature, and they elicited great discussions over individual perspectives and experiences. Family participation, location, mentorship, and cultural capital are significant to circumventing barriers to education. The role of motivation, determination, reflection, and a bit of luck have also played a significant role in their ability to stay in school and to consider the possibility of going on to university.

This experience has helped to clarify my professional goals to work internationally in education in some capacity. Further, it has underscored my understanding of the immense and significant role that education plays in self-identity, families and communities. Education is the thread that ties personal achievement to the foundations of a country’s development.

International research is filled with unexpected challenges but has immense and far-reaching rewards. Arts-based research methodologies enabled me to conduct my research as both an educator and researcher. As an educator, I look forward to hearing how my groups fair in university; as a researcher, I look forward to hearing how my participants experienced this time of transition and transformation. Moreover, I am grateful to my participants that they will continue to share their experiences and stories with me with their narrative photographs.

Lisa R. Pye

Hometown: Syracuse, NY
Program of Study: Cultural Foundations of Education
Focus: Lisa conducted her doctoral research in Madagascar working with Malagasy teenagers using narrative photography.

Photo courtesy of Lisa Pye
WE SPENT THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF JULY AT ASSUMPTION COLLEGE, BANGKOK, THAILAND, conducting research and professional development under the direction of Tiffany A. Koszalka, Professor, IDD&E.

In the summer of 2009, a Memorandum of Understanding was established between Assumption College and the School of Education at Syracuse University to promote an ongoing exchange between the two institutions. Professor Koszalka and Brother Anant Prichavudhi G’89 the director/principal of Assumption College, coordinated this research experience. The purpose was to better understand large class sizes through observational research. The classes of approximately 50 students were usually taught in Thai, so we had to rely on and develop our observational research skills to learn about the interaction between the teacher and their students, and the level of student engagement in the classroom. We also prepared and conducted a workshop about instructional strategies for the teachers that we were observing; half of them participated in the workshop the first week, and the other half the next week. We are comparing the two groups to determine if the workshop intervention resulted in any change in teaching practice.

While we both had significant experiences in K-12 schools in the United States prior to going to Thailand, working with teachers and students for whom English was not their primary language created some new challenges. We learned a lot about how to best communicate with people, lessons that will translate even to working with people who already speak English!

As both instructional designer novices and research novices, we were familiar with the overall instructional design process and basic research skills, but putting these skills into practice was extremely important. Up to this point, our only audience for our work had been our professors. Now, we had to consider our intended audience as we were designing instruments and training materials that we would use, and constantly making adjustments as we discovered new information and as we became familiar with the school, the teachers and students, and education in Thailand. Even as we implemented our plan, we still needed to consistently and frequently evaluate our data collection methods, our presentation of information, and the overall research design in order to understand this study as both researchers and instructional designers, and to best meet the needs of the staff at Assumption College.

Our experiences with Assumption College have helped us to develop and hone our instructional design and research skills, which will continue to grow as we progress as doctoral students. This first-hand exposure and immersion in the research and instructional design processes will be extremely beneficial to us as we work towards our dissertations and our careers as instructional designers.

Any student in the School of Education should take advantage of opportunities where they can conduct research with the guidance of a mentor. Rather than simply reading about instructional design and research techniques and methods, using them in a variety of contexts can give you a lot more insight into how the research and theory translates into practice. We were able to implement and develop these skills from an entirely different point of view by immersion in Thai culture. Being immersed in a culture where we did not even speak the language caused us to look at what we have learned in our program in a different way, giving us both a richer and more global view of how instruction is created and delivered.
QuERI, a think tank affiliated with the School of Education’s Cultural Foundations of Education department, conducts research, offers professional development, and provides student and teacher support in the area of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer studies.

During the fall 2010 semester, QuERI published its first evaluation of its Reduction of Stigma in Schools Program, detailing the experiences of participating educators, counselors, administrators, and school support staff. QuERI has run targeted training workshops for these groups for the past five years.

In addition, QuERI has launched a new set of workshops to educate and collaborate with Central New York teachers to improve the experience of LGBTQ youth in schools, including:

**Gallery 2 Go project (G2G)**—This is a touring exhibition designed to stimulate discussion around the issues of diversity and inclusion in school through the presence of the art created by youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, questioning, and ally.

**Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) Support**—A QuERI Research Fellow works with advisors to establish GSA programming that empowers young people to be active participants in their school environment and engage in creating cultural change.

**Story Time**—This project offers schools the opportunity to bring in a Syracuse University student to read and discuss age-appropriate, non-heteronormative representative literature in elementary school classrooms. Teachers and administrators can review and select possible texts, and the Story Time facilitator will collaborate with educators to design activities around the chosen text.

**Theatre for Change**—Stories collected from LGBTQ students are developed into theater pieces about these school experiences then performed for schools by a troupe of young LGBTQ actors, with the intent of educating their peers about the various ways that LGBTQ students are limited in their opportunities to participate in the school environment.

The institute has launched several new research projects that will likely find their way to Central New York schools and community spaces. These include a study of Safe Space stickers and LGBTQ support in a Central New York suburban school district; the relationship between school policy and school culture related to LGBT harassment in a rural school district; the heteronormative structure of sex education curricula in Syracuse-area schools; a study of the sexual health messages communicated to area youth by service providers; and a study of arts education with LGBTQ youth.

At the 2010 Annual Conference of the American Educational Studies Association held in October in Denver, QuERI staff led a panel discussion and presented three of their research papers on LGBTQ youth issues in schools. For titles and abstracts, visit www.queeringeducation.org.

In keeping with its mission to bridge the gap between research and practice in the teaching of LGBTQ students, the Queering Education Research Institute (QuERI) has taken a number of its research projects and research-based workshops into area classrooms during the past year.
The Inclusion Institutes are a consortium of research and service projects based in the School of Education. The institutes each have a distinct focus and serve different populations, but they share a common goal of leading the way toward greater inclusion for individuals with disabilities and other students who have historically been marginalized in the educational system.

The School of Education first packaged these research centers and educational institutes together four years ago. At the time, the Facilitated Communication Institute (now the Institute on Communication and Inclusion) had been a leader providing communication options for persons with disabilities for 15 years. New, but already making waves in the School of Education and the Syracuse City School District, was the Schools of Promise initiative, meant to open doors for elementary school learners by taking a school-wide approach to inclusion. The newest kid on the block is the Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education, a research-based project dedicated to increasing post-secondary educational opportunities for students with developmental, intellectual, or physical disabilities.

The School of Education has a host of research projects and initiatives that are rooted in the inclusion philosophy. However, these three were chosen to pilot the Inclusion Institutes’ moniker based upon their potential to become national models in the services and instruction they provide.

Read the following updates from the institutes to learn about the significant accomplishments each has made, and what plans are in store as they seek to strengthen their influence regionally and nationally to improve and empower the lives of people with disabilities.
Since Professor Douglas Biklen introduced facilitated communication to the United States in the early 1990s and founded the institute at Syracuse University in 1992, thousands of individuals with disabilities have been given a means to communicate and have access to meaningful educational, social, and professional experiences. For almost 20 years, the institute has demonstrated an unwavering support for the rights of all persons to access suitable means of communication, and has championed the validity of those methods, despite intense scrutiny and controversy.

The move toward the broadened focus of the institute and the newly adopted moniker is a reflection of its 20-year quest to develop a solid base of individuals around the country who communicate through supported typing, and individuals who are highly qualified to train others in this method.

“We have done a really good job in setting the standard for what we want training to look like for folks, how you get typing up and going,” says assistant professor Christy Ashby G’01, G’09, research director of the ICI.

“What we want to do now is recognize that teaching people how to communicate devoid of context isn’t enough,” she says. “We need to make sure that communication makes its way into helping folks have access to meaningful lives. That was always a goal of the Facilitated Communication Institute. We’re making it a stated focus of the Institute on Communication and Inclusion.”

The ICI will be working harder at driving forward the principles that have been at play since 1992. In addition to the ICI’s mission to provide access to communication, they are also emphasizing that communication is essential for inclusion in life, inclusion in school, and inclusion in community. And the ICI is preparing to educate families, schools, administrators, and professionals about how to bring those elements together.

“I’ve seen way too many kids that we work with through the institute type beautifully and then sit in classrooms with no curriculum in front of them, no access to communication, because in their school systems their form of communication isn’t accepted as valid,” Ashby says.

Ashby explains that schools often exhibit resistance to supported typing, due to misunderstanding of the method, or lack of resources. “We’re trying to make this much more normative,” she says. “This is something we want to be pretty common place—to see a kid typing on a computer in school.”

As research director for the ICI, Ashby oversees many of the ongoing research projects, in addition to managing the business aspects of the organization, including coordinating conferences and trainings. Ashby is pleased that the change in the institute’s name is coinciding with a time of prosperity for the institute. There is strong support in research funding, thanks to generous support from the John P. Hussman Foundation and NLM Foundation; a boost in the institute’s technology library; a staff of dedicated doctoral students and a clinical consultant; and a newly redesigned website to reflect all of these updates to the operations of the ICI.

>> FOR MORE INFORMATION, visit ici.syr.edu
>> “LIKE” the Institute on Communication and Inclusion” on Facebook
In addition, the Taishoff Center received a three-year $195,000 development grant from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) for its Peer-to-Peer Project. The project will establish a network of undergraduate students from the School of Education to provide peer supports to students with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities who are auditing classes at SU. The pilot phase will begin this spring.

Taishoff Center Executive Director Wendy Harbour says she hopes these initiatives will help fill gaps in knowledge and inclusion of people with disabilities.

“We hope to set an exemplary standard for other projects about the importance of flexible and effective approaches to fully include people with disabilities in all phases of development, research and evaluation, and dissemination,” she says.

The U.S. Department of Education grant partners SU with the University of the District of Columbia, Howard University, the D.C. Public Schools system, the D.C. Department of Disability Services, and the Association of Higher Education and Disability. UDC will house the service provider consortium during the grant period.
The Taishoff Center is working with higher education institutions, students, and families to achieve full and equal participation of all college students with disabilities: in academics, the arts, campus life, career-related opportunities, and the vibrant social communities and cultures campuses can offer.

Harbour says the project’s goal is to go beyond general research and to begin “establishing ideas about culturally relevant universal design.”

The NIDRR grant will fund the Peer-to-Peer Project, a direct response to the increasing number of students with disabilities auditing courses on campus, attending transition and employment programs in a collegiate environment, and participating in campus life activities. It will also help fill the void of comprehensive literature on the impact of peer support.

“Though higher education programs for students with significant disabilities typically do not lead to full matriculation, students and their families are demanding greater inclusion in these settings,” Harbour says.

School of Education undergraduates will be recruited and trained, and they will receive academic credit for their participation. They will use a variety of innovative methods and technologies that promote both universal design—such as web sites, cell phones, and texting—and full accessibility, including translating materials into American Sign Language and Braille, providing large print text, and captioning digital videos.

The center is also planning its first national conference for August 2011. “disAbled and Proud: A Call to Lead” will engage students with disabilities from across the nation to think about leadership in disability in higher education and social change. The conference planning committee includes 12 undergraduate students with disabilities from colleges and universities around the country. They have been working with Taishoff Center faculty and School of Education students since spring 2010 to develop a detailed vision of the conference, the first of its kind. Topics will address social and cultural issues relevant to any college student, but with the added focus of fostering disability pride in the next generation of leaders, as they become agents of change on their college campuses and in their chosen careers.

For more information about the Taishoff Center, visit taishoffcenter.syr.edu.

“LIKE” the Lawrence B. Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education on Facebook.

Watch the Taishoff Center video, “All Of Us” on YouTube.
Schools of Promise are all they set out to be...AND MORE
Schools of Promise (SOP), a reform effort designed and launched by School of Education professors George Theoharis and Julie Causton-Theoharis, works with schools to create more inclusive learning environments for students of all ability levels. The initiative seeks to eliminate “pull-out” sessions for students requiring academic supports and services, like speech therapy, for example. Instead, existing teachers and support staff are encouraged to change their school culture and teaching methods to allow all students to learn together in a traditional classroom setting for the entire day.

“We don’t ask them to add additional staff or spend additional money. Instead, it’s a matter of reallocating resources so that all kids are meaningfully included and have a sense of authentic belonging,” said SOP co-director Christy Ashby, Ph.D., who leads professional development for participating teachers. “Schools are able to better serve the needs of all kids in inclusive classrooms.”

For their efforts, two of the schools that have embraced the initiative—Roberts K-8 School and Salem Hyde Elementary School, both in Syracuse—have earned recognition from the New York State Education Department’s S3TAIR Project as “Validated Effective Practice Schools.” In addition, the Sandy Creek school district in Oswego County has not only received Validated Effective Practice recognition but was also named one of the state’s 13 “Effective Practice Mentor Schools.”

S3TAIR Project (Supporting Successful Strategies to Achieve Improved Results) is a statewide effort to improve outcomes for students with disabilities by helping educators increase skills in literacy, positive behavior intervention, and special education instruction. Schools cited for model practices and efforts will help mentor other schools looking to implement similar practices. The effort is funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs.

Tom Bull (G’90), a doctoral student in the School of Education’s Teaching and Leadership program, helped implement Schools of Promise in the Syracuse and Sandy Creek schools and was recently named mid-state regional field facilitator for the S3TAIR Project. He says the SOP directors and staff are seeing many successes in the schools that have been using these practices.

“We’ve been seeing more collaboration and cohesion between teachers and staff,” says Bull. “There seems to be a more accepting and responsive attitude toward meeting the needs of all students within the general education setting. Additionally there have been improved academic and behavioral student outcomes supported by both quantitative and qualitative data.”

Bull says the SOP staff is now working to continue building capacity in schools seeing successes, strengthening the inclusive model they are using, and expanding inclusion efforts to additional sites.
Inclusive urban education programs provide learning opportunities for Syracuse and New York City youth.

Combining focus areas of improving urban education, increasing community partnerships, and raising awareness of higher education opportunities, Syracuse University’s School of Education is working on a number of education and literacy initiatives with students from the Syracuse City School District. The School of Education is also helping to attract talented urban youth from Syracuse and New York City to the SU campus.
Smart Kids

The School of Education has partnered with SU's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and Syracuse City 4-7th graders to explore the urban youth experience using cutting-edge technology.

Smart Kids—Visual Stories, a Chancellor's Leadership Grant Project led by cultural foundations of education professor Sari Biklen and television-radio-film professor Michael Schoonmaker, engages students in grades 4-7 to create digital videos about their experiences in urban schools and their insights into the quality of their education. In June 2010, students from Levy K-8 School had the opportunity to work in the Newhouse television studios to produce their videos and add voice and music tracks.

Biklen says it is important to engage and collaborate with students the schools are supposed to serve in efforts to examine and reform education. “Teachers, principals, and school district administrators must take advantage of the insights students have about their schools,” she says. “Most of the research on American students’ perspectives in urban schools uses high school students. This project works with a younger population. Our data already show that students have significant understandings of how schools work, how the bodies of urban students are read as dangerous, and why they need teachers’ respect to learn.” Biklen added that, “positioning urban students as experts raises methodological challenges. We have had to learn different ways of listening to young voices as well as new methods of asking questions to get their neglected views.”

Smart Kids began at Levy School three years ago, and has expanded to four other Syracuse city schools—Roberts School (part of the Schools of Promise program), ELMS (Expeditionary Learning Middle School), Ed Smith, and Percy Hughes—as a result of Levy’s closure in summer 2010. Future plans for the project include the launch of a web site to host information about the scope and history of the project as well as student films and expert commentary. The students will also have a chance to report their findings to school district leaders and show their films in a local public venue. The interdisciplinary team working with Biklen and Schoonmaker includes graduate students from CFE and TRF who are collaborating on this work. Team faculty members also plan to write a book on the project.

>> WATCH the Smart Kids in action at www.youtube.com/suschoolofed.
Early College High School (ECHS), based in Princeton, New Jersey, helps schools partner with a college or community agency to implement rigorous academic programming so students can simultaneously earn a high school diploma and up to two years of college credit—an associate’s degree or the first two years of a bachelor’s degree—tuition free.

“The model of Early College High School is that a university collaborates with a school or school district. We’re going to collaborate with a quadrant,” says School of Education professor Jeff Mangram, director of ECHS at Nottingham. “I’m going to try to put as many resources as possible into the east side quadrant to make the education experiences of K-12 students better.”

The national program focuses on helping low-income youth, first-generation college-goers, English language learners, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education.
A $120,000 grant from the Charles Hayden Foundation helped revamp and relaunch an academic summer program that allows select high school juniors from New York City public schools to earn six college credits from Syracuse University.

The Syracuse University Summer College New York City Scholarship Program is a six-week intensive college experience for motivated high school juniors who excel academically and show maturity, self-discipline, and potential for college-level work. Students receive a full scholarship to cover tuition, books, room, board, and transportation from Manhattan to the SU campus, where they take two courses: Media Literacy: Media Education and Contemporary Culture, and Introduction to College-Level Writing. The courses are taught by faculty from the School of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences' Writing Program.

In addition to academics, the program incorporates career awareness work, including information about working in education and other public service professions. Students also take field trips, attend special events, and network with students on campus for other Summer College programs.

The program was formerly known as the Summer College in the City when it operated in 2007 and 2008, and students took SU faculty-taught courses at the High School for Leadership and Public Service in Manhattan.

School of Education faculty members Jeff Mangram and Kelly Chandler-Olcott began the program this summer with more than 60 freshmen at Nottingham, and the effort has continued into the school year. Mangram and Chandler-Olcott are working with Nottingham English and writing teachers and students to help them better understand what will be expected of them in college.

“Before we actually did the Writing Institute, we brought the kids in two days earlier and we talked about nothing but culture and the culture of excellence. What does that mean?” Mangram says. “We talked about respect and discipline. But there’s also work ethic, courage, and self-sacrifice.”

School of Education professor Marcelle Haddix also helped Mangram pilot a four-week summer writing program for 30 boys in grades 5-8 from Levy K-8 School in Syracuse titled “Writers = Superheroes, MCs, Jedis, and Warriors.” The program challenged boys to engage with writing and improve their literacy skills in preparation for high school and college. Instruction included texting, spoken word, documentaries, digital stories, and a variety of other writing forms.

“I wanted to figure out what we needed to do to bridge from grade five to eight, eight to nine, and to the institutes of the future,” Mangram says. “What do we need to do for Nottingham students for them to be able to thrive as freshmen at Syracuse University?”

Mangram says he hopes to also establish math institutes for Nottingham students.
LAUREN MARFO ’11
Hometown: Brooklyn, NY
Program of Study: English Textual Studies/English Education
Inclusive Urban Education snapshot: Working with the Say Yes to Education summer program in Harlem, NY

I worked as an assistant in a photography classroom and a computer classroom. In both classrooms, the students worked on culminating projects. The work in photography really resonated with me; the students went out in the community surrounding the camp and took pictures of their surroundings and told stories with those pictures. I was with the students assisting them on this project, and it really hit me how much technology is an integral part of the classroom in the 21st century.

Most of the students in the classroom already knew how to use a computer or a camera, but these classes helped to supplement their knowledge of these technologies, and augment them in ways that I saw the students really benefit from by the end of those classes. What that did for me personally was add to the knowledge I have gained at SOE about literacy constantly expanding in the 21st century. Because of that, I feel it has made me a better educator, because no, I don’t take technology for granted, and I make sure that I find ways for students to enhance their literacy in all mediums.

SAY YES TO EDUCATION

THE SYRACUSE CHAPTER OF SAY YES TO EDUCATION, THE LARGEST SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM OF ITS KIND IN THE NATION, CONTINUES TO THRIVE AS A PREMIERE URBAN EDUCATION COLLEGE PREPARATION PROGRAM. Committed to drastically increasing high school and college graduation rates for urban youth, Say Yes to Education centers on the provision of supports, beginning in kindergarten, such as after-school and summer programming, tutoring, family outreach, scholarship opportunities, and more. These supports continue through high school and culminate in the provision of college tuition to any of dozens of participating institutions for students that meet residency, graduation, and admission requirements.

Say Yes to Education Syracuse boasts six legal clinics, staffed by legal professionals who volunteer their time and services to work with families on matters relating to their children’s educational opportunities and success. Additionally, Say Yes Syracuse partners with Huntington Family Centers to offer Family Support, a program that works to ensure all students have access to engaging educational environments.

Say Yes to Education has run successful school improvement programs in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Hartford, Connecticut; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Harlem, New York. The Syracuse chapter represents the first district-wide implementation of the Say Yes to Education model, making Syracuse the nation’s first “Say Yes” city.
I taught two photography classes titled, “Roberts through the Lens.” It wasn’t just about the students using the cameras, but they were also discovering their environment by examining meaning and representation in pictures.

I have learned that students will succeed and be creative when you set high standards, accept nothing less, and give them a push in the right direction.

Students’ ideas and responses bring out so much about who they are as people, and they often bring viewpoints and perspectives I do not think about. I saw this in the photography class when they interpreted the pictures and shared what they believe to be the meaning. Not only did they identify small details I may not have realized, but they also came up with creative ways of writing or drawing about their observations and connections.

This experience has certainly changed me by clearing my stereotypes and false ideas about urban schools.

BRITTANY KRAMER ’11
Hometown: Sharon, MA
Programs of Study: Secondary Education/ Social Studies, History
Inclusive urban education snapshot: Working as a tutor for SU Literacy Corps, in collaboration with Say Yes to Education, at John T. Roberts School (K-8).
Say Yes to Education summer campers are all smiles as they brainstorm ideas for their rap song about their favorite things, as part of their three-day writing and music recording workshop in the M-Lab.
Marion Wilson’s interests as an artist have always been in “life in the margins.” The themes of mobility, community, and sustainability have appeared in much of her work, from studies of the homeless in New Orleans who live out of push-carts, to a series of paintings of the Solvay waste beds. As the instructor of Social Sculpture, an interdisciplinary course at Syracuse University offered through the School of Education and the College of Visual and Performing Arts, renovating a 1984 RV bus into a mobile arts and literacy classroom for the community’s benefit was a logical and an attainable class project. That was just the beginning. When houses on Syracuse’s Near West Side became available for purchase for $1, Wilson and her talented team of student workers saw an opportunity to renovate a neighborhood.
The Mobile Literacy Arts Bus (MLAB) was the brainchild of Wilson’s Social Sculpture course, from start to finish. The concept, procurement, demolition, scrounging for new and recycled materials, and reassembly into a gleaming and multifunctional classroom and mobile gallery space was the handiwork of Syracuse students in the 2007-08 academic year.

“The one thing you always hear about when you talk to people in the schools is transportation problems: how do you get people in the city schools onto campus, how do we move around this city,” says Wilson. “So we—my students and I—said why don’t we just make our own bus or gallery on wheels and bring the resources around.”

The MLAB student team gained experience working with SU and community partners, including the Partnership for Better Education, and secured grant funding from the Kauffman Foundation’s Enitiative program, which ultimately gave the project wheels. Since the MLAB’s unveiling in spring 2008, it has made regular stops at the elementary schools in the Syracuse City School District to provide arts instruction, and it has been a highlight of the 2009 and 2010 Say Yes to Education summer camp program. When not operating as classroom space, the MLAB can serve as flexible gallery and performance space. In fall 2010, the MLAB hosted a show outside a New York City art gallery with its versatile team of young artists, performers, and teachers at the helm; including Wilson, who is now director of community initiatives in the visual arts in the School of Education; MLAB Coordinator Michael Heagerty; and Imagining America fellow Samantha Harmon.

MLAB: ROAD WARRIORS OF ART INSTRUCTION

The Mobile Literacy Arts Bus (MLAB) was the brainchild of Wilson’s Social Sculpture course, from start to finish. The concept, procurement, demolition, scrounging for new and recycled materials, and reassembly into a gleaming and multifunctional classroom and mobile gallery space was the handiwork of Syracuse students in the 2007-08 academic year.

“The one thing you always hear about when you talk to people in the schools is transportation problems: how do you get people in the city schools onto campus, how do we move around this city,” says Wilson. “So we—my students and I—said why don’t we just make our own bus or gallery on wheels and bring the resources around.”

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AND THEN CAME TULLY

MLAB had hardly spun its first mile around town before the Social Sculpture team had their sights set on the next project. The University’s interest in the revitalization of the city’s Near West Side and the
Social Sculpture team’s desire to create community art space met opportunity when an abandoned house across from Blodgett School, at 601 Tully Street, came up for sale for $1. Wilson and her students launched into action again, this time preparing zoning applications and collecting neighbors’ signatures on petitions. The Social Sculpture team was careful to listen to the ideas and needs of the neighborhood while aiming to fulfill their own goals for the project by holding focus groups and community forums to discuss ideas and review concept drawings. Ultimately, everyone was pleased with the plans for an accessible community space that could be used for instruction, commerce, and reflection.

While the building is under construction, the class is working on creating furniture and fixtures that will befit the renovated space. “We are making a movable wall,” Wilson explains. “We are sculpting the floor boards and working with different laser cutters and nails to take some other salvageable woods and engrave letters, poems, texts, and drawings in them.”

What was once a vacant home, a shelter for squatters and crime, is now being transformed into a gathering place for the creative youth of the neighborhood. When renovation is complete, 601 Tully will contain a café, art gallery, classroom, and office space, as well as a teaching garden. SU classes and community art workshops will be held at the site, and the business operations, including the café and gallery, will be run with the help of students from the Fowler High School Business Academy.

“601 Tully is meant to be very porous between artists, architects, designers, community members, and teachers to meet and gather, and bring the neighborhood to life,” Wilson says.
A GLOBAL QUEST BEGINS IN SYRACUSE

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION DEAN DOUGLAS BIKLEN IS ONCE AGAIN HELPING TO BRING WORLDWIDE ATTENTION TO PEOPLE WITH AUTISM AND EDUCATE OTHERS ABOUT THE LIVES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

Biklen has produced his second documentary with Academy Award-winning director Gerardine Wurzburg, Wretches & Jabberers: And Stories From the Road, the story of two middle-aged men with autism who embark on an international journey to change people’s attitudes about disability and intelligence.

The film made its world premiere at the Syracuse International Film Festival on Syracuse University Orange Central weekend in September 2010. From there, the tour moved to Burlington, Vermont; Boston; Washington, D.C. Denver; and Houston. Since the beginning of 2011, it has branched out from screenings at conferences and disability-related summits, and has been invited to film festivals throughout the United States and Europe.

As part of the national observance for Autism Awareness Month, AMC Theatres entertainment company premiered Wretches & Jabberers on April 1 at its Times Square theater in New York City, the busiest AMC theater in the country, where it ran for a week. The company also launched a theatrical run of the film in Los Angeles beginning April 22 and marketed the film through a public service announcement made with the Autism Society.

In addition, the film opened across the United States as part of a 40-city tour at AMC theaters in major markets—including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston—on World Autism Awareness Day, April 2, with a portion of ticket sales going to the Autism Society.

Wretches & Jabberers is a “two buddies on a road trip” film, but with a powerful message. Its importance has drawn a legion of fans to follow its stars, Tracy Thresher and Larry Bissonnette, two men from Vermont with autism, as they travel the world, challenging public opinion and share their thoughts on alternative communication, competence, politics, and the best local cuisine.

In the film, Thresher and Bissonnette’s journey brings them to Sri Lanka, Japan
and Finland. At each stop, they meet with local media, visit schools, and attend conferences to dissect public attitudes about autism and issue a hopeful challenge to reconsider competency and the future.

Growing up, Thresher and Bissonnette were presumed “retarded” and excluded from normal schooling. With limited speech, they both faced lives of social isolation in mental institutions or adult disability centers. When they learned as adults to communicate by typing, their lives changed dramatically. Their world tour message is that the same possibility exists for others like themselves.

Between moving and transformative encounters with young men and women with autism, parents and students, Thresher and Bissonnette take time to explore local sights and culture: weaving through Colombo city traffic in motorized tuk-tuks, discussing the purpose of life with a Buddhist monk, and relaxing in a traditional Finnish sauna. Along the way, they reunite with old friends and pen-pals, expand the isolated world of a talented young painter and make new allies in their cause. From beginning to end, their poignant narrative of personal struggle rings with intelligence, humor, hope, and courage.

**THE MUSIC OF WRETCHES & JABBERERS**

J. Ralph, acclaimed composer, songwriter, and producer known for his scores to the Academy Award-winning documentaries *The Cove* and *Man On Wire*, wrote or co-wrote 20 original songs for the *Wretches & Jabberers Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* which was released on iTunes in January 2011. A portion of the proceeds from sales of the soundtrack will go to the Institute on Communication and Inclusion at the School of Education.

The musical journey that created the soundtrack is compelling, spanning multiple continents and drawing on some of the greatest musical talent from the last five decades. Joining J. Ralph on the album are Norah Jones, Carly Simon, Ben Harper, Antony, Vashti Bunyan, Ben Taylor, Bob Weir, Devendra Banhart, Judy Collins, Stephen Stills, Scarlett Johansson, Paul Brady, Vincent Gallo, David Garza, Bonnie Bramlett, Nic Jones, Martin Cathy, Lila Downs, and Leah Siegel.

**STORIES FROM THE ROAD**

The final cut of the film marked the beginning of another adventure for Bissonnette, Thresher, and the film’s production. Since the beginning of their travels to share the film and present to audiences, Thresher and Bissonnette have been blogging about their experiences as they become familiar with their new lives as celebrities. Through their weekly posts, they offer advice, humor, and gratitude for the thousands of fans who keep up with their news through the Wretches and Jabberers web site, Facebook, and Twitter. Their blog posts have become messages of hope for those who are learning to communicate by typing as they do.

Tracy writes, “I have the necessary communication to make friends. I like being able to let people in on my inner thoughts and feelings. Without my typing, people do not know me. I could not make friends or connect with the world.”

Larry types, “Let me either inspire or encourage others who support people with limited power of expression to foster forcefully their creative use of imagination-driven language. It is like posting totems of speed limits on a super highway with ten lanes to limit people’s creative use of language.”

>> Stay connected with *Wretches & Jabberers*! Visit [www.wretchesandjabberers.org](http://www.wretchesandjabberers.org).

“Like” *Wretches & Jabberers* on Facebook. Follow Jabberboxdoc on Twitter.
iPhone app allows parents of children with disabilities fast access to their rights and regulations
PROFESSOR ALAN FOLEY, OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT, AND EVALUATION, IS MAKING IT EASIER FOR PARENTS OF SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES TO ACCESS IMPORTANT INFORMATION AS ADVOCATES FOR THEIR CHILDREN—AND GET IT FAST. HERE'S A SNAPSHOT OF HIS RESEARCH AND CREATION.

PROJECT: Developing iAdvocate, a free iPhone application (app) that serves as an information resource for parents of school-age children with disabilities.

ISSUE: Parents of children with disabilities can be overwhelmed in interactions with teachers and other school professionals, especially if they are not familiar with their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that ensures services to children with disabilities, and with appropriate resources.

FOCUS: Foley is an expert on assistive technologies, instructional and learning space design, and web accessibility/usability, with an expanding interest in mobile apps. iAdvocate is designed to provide readily accessible information that will help parents build advocacy skills, enhancing interactions with school professionals.

FEATURES: The app, contains three sections: strategies, a compilation of approaches that parents can pursue as advocates; resources, which lists and, where possible, links to such references as laws, books, articles, web sites, video presentations, and organizations that provide information on inclusive education; and, responses, which features simulated interactions, such as replies to common statements made by school professionals regarding services and accommodations for children.

PARTNERS: Foley received support from and collaborated with the School of Education, the Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies (CHPLDS), and the SU Parent Advocacy Center (SUPAC), an affiliate of CHPLDS that promotes parental involvement in the inclusive education of their children with disabilities. Foley incorporated the project into his classes last spring and fall and, working with a team of School of Education graduate students, conducted focus group studies with SUPAC parents, developed content, designed a prototype, and used feedback to improve the final product.

IMPACT: The idea behind iAdvocate, Foley says, is to empower and engage parents, making them aware of their rights.

The idea behind iAdvocate is to empower and engage parents, making them aware of their rights.

—Jay Cox
IT IS A BRIGHT AND STEAMY MORNING, EVEN BY Syracuse’s July standards. On day 4 of a 19-day summer program at Levy K-8 School, Professor Marcelle Haddix prepares for her class.

“This week’s theme is about superheroes. That’s neutral enough to build trust, then next week we will really dig in,” she explains. She talks excitedly about her lesson plans for the next few weeks, but her eyes and hands are busy looking over the materials for the day, cutting, sorting, stacking, organizing. Moments later, the door flies open and 13 adolescent boys, in grades 5-8, explode into the room. “All boys,” she says. “These are the kids that have been identified as struggling or ‘at risk.’ So what we’re trying to do here is get them interested in the material, get them talking.”

Professor Haddix is not one to shy away from a challenging class, or from a little bit of extra work. Entering her third year as an assistant professor in the department of reading and language arts, Haddix has become known for her innovative teaching of adolescent literature, and her ability to inspire young people to engage in writing activities. Her leadership of the writing intensive at Levy is one of several examples of Haddix’s commitment to creating opportunities for urban youth to develop and improve their writing abilities.

After living in Boston and having taught in its public schools, Haddix accepted a faculty position at Syracuse University, but it meant more than a job and relocation for her. She was prepared to get to know her new community, listen to the issues that are important to the people here, and assist where there are needs.

In the winter of 2009, she sat on the panel at a community forum on the education of African American children, held on the South Side of Syracuse. “I was hearing a lot of, ‘Kids are failing. Kids just aren’t doing anything. Black boys, they don’t read. They don’t write.’ I’m hearing this kind of discourse coming from the community, and that really alarmed me.”

Haddix heard frustration and confusion among the community members about schools and perceptions that the district’s initiatives come and go. When she asked what she could do, parents asked her to take the lead and start a writing program for the kids. So, she teamed up with the local library to provide the

“These are the kids that have been identified as struggling or ‘at risk.’ So what we’re trying to do here is get them interested in the material, get them talking.”
space, and in the summer of 2009 she offered a one-week writing program for local youth. About 10 kids showed up each day, mostly boys. Sensing the need for this kind of opportunity for urban youth to express themselves and be mentored, she asked Verbal Blend, SU’s spoken word poetry group directed by Cedric Bolton in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and some of her graduate students to help facilitate a one-day writing workshop in fall 2009. More than 100 Syracuse youth in grades 6-12 attended.

Now called the “Writing Our Lives” project, this urban youth writing initiative has spawned several smaller projects with the same mission: to encourage young people to express themselves through writing and to improve their literacy skills in the process. Some of the ongoing activities include after-school writing clubs at Nottingham High School and a Twitter Book Club, which extends to all five Syracuse city high schools.

The Writing Our Lives conference was offered again in fall 2010, this time with attendance of more than 160 youth, and contributions from Syracuse University faculty in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, College of Arts and Sciences, and the School of Education, in addition to the Verbal Blend and Underground Poets spoken word groups.

Haddix is also involved in adult literacy programs in Syracuse. She is co-creator of a group called Mothers Offering Youth Opportunity. The focus is on empowering young mothers to be advocates for their children, but the group has a strong literacy component. The group holds regular book club meetings and reads socially relevant material to discuss.

“I feel like I’m talking all over the place,” she says. “But there are a lot of different initiatives that are connected, and they all came from deciding where I can help fill a need.”
THE DEPARTMENT OF EXERCISE SCIENCE PROSPERS UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP, IN UPDATED FACILITIES

THE GREATEST RESOURCE OF THE EXERCISE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ITS people. The talent of our Syracuse faculty is a difficult secret to keep, and from time to time, other prestigious institutions will present opportunities that are difficult to refuse. We have to look at this at an opportunity for change and exploration of new perspectives. After a successful search and a year under the interim leadership of School of Education veteran team-builder and strategic planner professor emeritus Phil Doughty, the Exercise Science Department handed the reins over to a new chair, Professor Tom Brutsaert, in fall 2010.

This is Brutsaert’s second year in the department, but there is plenty of “newness” to his position, and not just because of his new responsibilities as chair. The Exercise Science Department is enjoying new facilities, new research labs, and has welcomed a new faculty member, Luis Columna, Ph.D.

Brutsaert, who worked in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Albany, was hired as a tenured associate professor. His research interests are in high altitude and hypoxia, an inadequate oxygen supply to the cells and tissues of the body. One of the department’s lab renovation projects includes the refitting of a space to include a hypoxia chamber that can replicate high altitude conditions.

“I do a lot of fieldwork at high altitudes, and I’ve worked extensively in Bolivia and Peru, so there we actually drive up into the mountains. But in Syracuse we don’t have...
that sort of altitude, so we’re going to do it artificially,” he explains.

For the last three years, Brutsaert has been working on an epidemiology study in Costa Rica, called a field of origin study. The study is looking at obesity and physical activity, and testing if adult risk for chronic disease traces back to early life experience. In Costa Rica, Brutsaert and his research team have been monitoring a group of children with Native American ancestry.

“The larger context here is that Hispanic or Native American populations in the United States are at much higher risk for obesity—four-fold higher prevalence of obesity and diabetes and heart disease,” Brutsaert says.

The study focuses on four villages, two very remote and rural with traditional lifestyles and diets. The other villages are along the Inter-American Highway, where families have access to modern conveniences and children are exposed to snack shops and food kiosks on the way home from school. However, this is not a dietary or socioeconomic study.

“We’re looking at this from the perspective of physical activity,” Brutsaert says. “Because if you’re going to go from being born small to being a slightly fatter adult at risk for health problems, this has to work through the energy balance equation. This means that a person may not be physically active enough (energy out) to burn the calories that person has consumed (energy in). Maintaining a balance of energy out and energy in over an extended period of time is what helps stabilize body weight in the long term,” he explains. “There have to be these energetic mediating variables. And so we’re looking at physical activity.”

On his most recent trip, Brutsaert’s field research team, including undergraduate health and exercise science students, took a series of baseline measures: height, weight, and blood samples from the children in each of the participating villages. Then, the children were fitted with physical activity monitors, small devices that are worn on the belt and record precise measurements of energy expenditure. The kids wore these devices all day, every day for a week, and then the field research team returned, collected the monitors, and downloaded the data.

“My purpose is to expose students to possibilities,” Brutsaert says. “And one possibility is to get excited about physical activity and to try to do the same sort of research study in the Syracuse City School District. So I’m trying to build toward that goal.”

Inclusive physical activity expert
LUIS COLUMNA JOINS EXERCISE SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Luis Columna, Ph.D., joined the Exercise Science Department as an associate professor in January. A native of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Columna was an associate professor of physical education at the State University of New York at Cortland, where he also facilitated physical activities to children and their families in the Migrant Education Outreach Program. He holds a Ph.D. in kinesiology from Texas Woman’s University in Denton, Texas. Throughout his doctoral studies, he taught adapted physical education in the Denton public schools.

Columna’s research interests relate to the physical, emotional, and cognitive well-being of individuals with and without disabilities and their families, including those from a minority background. Columna also infuses Spanish and sign language into his courses so that students will develop important cross-cultural communication skills.

In January 2011, Columna received the 2011 Social Justice and Diversity Young Professional Award from the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, a national professional organization of more than 20,000 members.
NEW TO THE BOOKSHELF

Recent works by School of Education faculty

**Travel on and on:**
*Interdisciplinary Lessons on the Music of World Cultures*
By Elisa Dekaney and Deborah Alane Cunningham
Publisher: Rowman & Littlefield Education, December 2010

This text merges both traditional and newly composed music with existing content material to create ready-to-use lesson plans for incorporating global music into a variety of classroom settings. With an emphasis on collaboration and creativity, the lesson plans transcend their intended audience—teachers of grades 4-8—and boast adaptability and promise for students of all ages to learn about multicultural music.

**Handbook of Asian Education:**
*A Cultural Perspective*
By: Yong Zhao, Jing Lei, Guofang Li, Ming Fang He, Kaori Okano, David Gamage, Hema Ramanathan, Megahed Nagwa (Editors)
Publisher: Routledge, December 2010

This handbook thoroughly examines educational systems, practices, and policies in Asian countries and interprets these structures through cultural, historical, social, and economic lenses. With its distinctive balance between explanation and analysis, this text provides researchers, graduate students, educational administrators, and policy makers with a comprehensive resource on Asia’s educational practices.

**Beauty and the Beast:**
*Human-Animal Relations as Revealed in Real Photo Postcards, 1905-1935*
By Robert Bogdan and Arnold Arluke
Publisher: Syracuse University Press, October 2010

Through an unparalleled use of photo postcards, this text explores and exposes the intricacies of human-animal relationships in the United States from approximately 1905-1935. During this vivid journey through more than 350 illustrations, Bogdan and Arluke consider the varied and contradictory roles played by animals in the early 20th century.

**Elisa Macedo Dekaney, Ph.D.,** is a dual associate professor of music education in Teaching and Leadership Programs and the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

**Jing Lei, Ph.D.,** is an associate professor in the department of Instructional Design, Development, and Evaluation.

**Robert Bogdan, Ph.D.,** is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Social Science at Syracuse University.

By Corinne Roth Smith and Lisa Strick
Publisher: Free Press, September 2010

Intended for use by parents of children with learning disabilities, educators, and clinicians, this revised and updated guide, originally published in 1999, offers practical suggestions and strategies, as well as informative resources, about detecting and accommodating learning disabilities in children. Incorporating several case studies, Smith and Strick emphasize the importance of enhancing a child’s strengths and creating environments to support their needs.

CORINNE ROTH SMITH, PH.D., is a professor of education and chair of Teaching and Leadership Programs.


By Barbara Applebaum
Publisher: Lexington Books, April 2010

This text explores the notion of white complicity and introduces an approach to social justice pedagogy called “white complicity pedagogy.” Through her recommendations, Applebaum emphasizes a shift toward teaching white students the importance of acknowledging and owning the complexities of their own uncertainty, vulnerability, and vigilance, to cultivate a more effective way to dialogue with and listen to their systematically marginalized peers.

BARBARA APPLEBAUM, PH.D., is an associate professor in Cultural Foundations of Education.

Cinderella Story: A Scholarly Sketchbook about Race, Identity, Barack Obama, the Human Spirit, and Other Stuff that Matters

By James Haywood Rolling Jr.
Publisher: AltaMira Press, March 2010

An experimental autoethnography, Cinderella Story employs media language and images, as well as a deep look into the author’s own life, to examine the evolution and perpetuation of critical race issues in America. With his text, Rolling challenges the reader with questions such as, “How do words and images—involving stories and paradigms, past and future, perceptions of beauty and ugliness—become flesh? How are they done and undone?” He urges them to further explore, with him, the notions of identity and truth, fact and fiction in their lives and in this nation’s history.

JAMES HAYWOOD ROLLING JR. is a dual associate professor and chair of art education in Teaching and Leadership Programs and the College of Visual and Performing Arts.
Parents are key to student achievement and success

**Syracuse University is** committed to helping students from all walks of life have the most successful college experience possible. Neither the students nor the University can make that happen alone. Parents and family members also play a critical role in helping children cope with the social and academic challenges of college life.

Project Transition was created to help students who may be from low-income families or first in their family to attend college, and their parents. With your support, this unique program will continue to make sure all SU parents—regardless of socioeconomic or other barriers—have a firm connection to the University and gain the insight and confidence they need to coach, counsel, and cheer on their children to academic success.

**Maximizing Parent Power**

The realization that parents are key to student achievement hit home for SU alumna Jan Raymond ’68 when she was running a learning disabilities program for families in New York City. “These parents want their children to go to college,” says Raymond, an active volunteer and longtime champion of New York City youth. “But none of them had ever seen a college and didn’t know they lived just two subway stops away from Columbia, one of America’s great universities. Without personal experience, it would be hard for them to help their children with the admissions process or motivate them to complete their college education.”

Raymond’s vision for Project Transition was to maximize parent power to help students make a smooth transition from high school to college, stay in school once they get there, and thrive. This approach has proven to be successful. Project Transition students boast a 94 percent graduation rate and consistently equal or surpass the general Syracuse University student population in academic achievement—a significant accomplishment, considering most students from low-income families have less than a 10 percent chance of earning a college degree.

**Boosting Points of Contact**

Project Transition offers eligible New York City School District students and their parents many points of contact throughout the year. Following the first spring information meeting at Lubin House, they are encouraged to participate in a series of free events both on and off campus. Events include the following:

>> **Parent Orientation:**
Families are brought to campus for move-in day of SummerStart, a six-week summer program designed to help entering students earn college credits and become familiar with academic, social, and cultural life before the fast-paced fall semester begins.

>> **Opening Weekend:**
The fall semester kicks off with an on-campus orientation session for first-year students and their parents to review academic expectations, transition issues, and services offered by the Parents Office.

>> **Family Weekend:**
A chance for parents of first-year students to come to campus for a fall weekend and become more familiar with the challenges and opportunities their children will face.
You may remember visiting the Syracuse campus as an admitted student, or you could be at the stage where you are on the road with your child visiting colleges near and far. Either way, you can appreciate how exploring a campus and developing a level of comfort with a new culture is an important part of the process that ultimately leads to the goal of attaining a college degree. Won’t you help another family have these same experiences?

Project Transition—currently sustained through generous financial support from SU alumni Jan and Charles Raymond, SU parents Barbara and Eric Bodner, and funding from the School of Education—has the capacity to serve 45 families annually. But demand for the program is increasing dramatically. To continue to serve these students and their families, the project’s core operating budget must be stabilized.

For less than $1,000 per student per year, you can help Project Transition continue to strengthen this vital link.

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TO LEARN MORE...
For more information on the many ways you can support Project Transition, contact:
Victoria Kohl
Assistant Dean for Advancement
School of Education
315-443-7773
vfkohl@syr.edu

Or to make an online gift today, visit campaign.syr.edu/give-now.

>> New York City Informational Meeting: An annual parents’ meeting at Lubin House to review fall semester grades and discuss academic goals with program counselors.

>> Capstone Dinner: A special commencement weekend event for seniors and their parents to celebrate the achievement of earning a college degree.

One grateful parent remarked, “Family Weekend was a wonderful experience filled with many activities, such as Dean’s Breakfasts, a concert, study abroad information sessions, and sports events. Now, I’m a happier parent because I personally know my daughter’s college life. Sending your child away to school is difficult, and I thank you for making it a bit easier!”

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You may remember visiting the Syracuse campus as an admitted student, or you could be at the stage where you are on the road with your child visiting colleges near and far. Either way, you can appreciate how exploring a campus and developing a level of comfort with a new culture is an important part of the process that ultimately leads to the goal of attaining a college degree. Won’t you help another family have these same experiences?

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OCTOBER 2010 WAS THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY of the opening of the North Side Learning Center (NSLC), a grassroots, not-for-profit organization located on the residential North Side of the City of Syracuse, started by teaching and leadership alumnus Yusuf Soule G’08. Sensing a real need in the community, the founders used the scientific method of inquiry and then methodically worked to fill the need. The NSLC offers English classes for resettled adult refugees in the Syracuse area.

Soule drew on his training as an educator and researcher at the School of Education when he was motivated to take action in the North Side community. He met with groups of people from the neighborhood to find out what their needs were. “We thought it would be down blankets and wool socks, but they looked at me and said, through a translator, ‘Help us with our children,’” he says. Having taught pre-K through graduate school, Yusuf decided, “This is something I can work out.”

Soule began reading newspaper articles about relocated refugees in the Syracuse area. He was particularly concerned that the Burmese and Bhutanese children and teenagers—partly because they are diminutive in stature and partly because they speak a different language and
look different—were often the victims of violence.

He asked himself, “As an educator, what do you do about that? What do people need the most? They came here seeking refuge, what are you going to do to provide that?”

Soule met with organizations that were already working with refugees: the Refugee Assistance Program, Interfaith Works Refugee Resettlement Program at the Center for New Americans, and Catholic Charities. When he asked what they needed help with, he was told that they have a four-month waiting list for adult English learners.

“I was given the advice that to create a learning center, you have to offer classes at night,” Soule says. “You also have to take care of their children and you have to target the women.” He thought, “Okay. I can do that.”

Soule and his collaborators signed the lease for a convenient neighborhood location and began recruiting teachers. When the NSLC doors finally opened, 42 students were signed up, and another 26 students showed up wanting to learn. Many of the refugees had only been in the United States for two days before finding the learning center.

“Our students are super hungry,” Soule says. “You could teach them anything. They have eyes as big as saucers and will eat it up all day long.”

Part of the challenge for NSLC teachers is the range of backgrounds and skills students bring with them. Yusuf personally conducts intakes and assessments of each student’s reading, writing, and speaking skills to determine which of the five-leveled classes fits best. On one end of the spectrum has been a Burmese girl who speaks little English and has spent the past 12 years in a refugee camp. On the other end, they have had a highly educated man from Mogadishu. The goal is to do an individualized education plan for each student.

As part of the intake process, Yusuf asks each student, “What is your dream?” For some, he must explain what it means to have a dream. Some NSLC students have gone on to Onondaga Community College and others have sought GED programs. The goal is to help the resettled refugees find employment.

On any given night, more than 25 volunteers show up at the NSLC, including doctors from Upstate Medical University, a writer from Cornell University, two Syracuse City School district teachers, two engineers, and some retired teachers. School of Education teaching and leadership students taking Perspectives on Disability regularly volunteer at the center because there are some adult English language learners with disabilities. For example, there are Iraqi refugees with physical disabilities and some with mental trauma. Literacy Corp, through the Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public and Community Service, is another group that consistently sends volunteers. In an SU writing course, students had to focus this year on refugees. These are only some of the ways in which the community is involved.

Part of the lure of the NSLC is that it creates a sense of belonging. “All Are Welcome” is the first sign students and volunteers see upon entering the building. “It’s about connecting with people and rebuilding this economy together,” Soule says. “The economy is becoming more and more global. The world is changing and people are coming here.”

For more information visit http://www.northsidelearning.org
Syracuse University celebrated the 20th anniversary of this landmark legislation and the University’s work in inclusive education with a weekend full of special programs and events for alumni and friends. See highlights from the School of Education’s celebrations.

**HOLocaust Education**
(Spector/Warren Fellows)
Alumni Affinity Group Reception
Past participants of the Spector/Warren Fellowship for Future Educators met with Helen Spector ’68, G’72, to discuss new initiatives in the School’s Holocaust Education program. Holocaust survivor Naomi Warren, Spector’s mother, for whom the program is named, participated in the reunion by telephone from her home in Houston.

**Annual School of Education Dean’s Breakfast**
School of Education alumni, friends, and tailgaters joined the dean and faculty for a hot breakfast and reminiscing.

**Panel Discussion:**
“Higher Expectations for Higher Education”
Former news correspondent and The Early Show weatherman Mark McEwen fought his way back from a massive stroke and has become a crusader for stroke victims and their families. In “Higher Expectations for Higher Education,” he moderated a panel discussion about SU’s efforts to make college campuses accessible to all, featuring John Robinson ’90; Wendy Harbour, executive director of the Lawrence B. Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education; author and Harvard professor of practice Tom Hehir G’73; and sociology doctoral student Liat Ben-Moshe.
WORLD PREMIERE FILM SCREENING
WRETCHES & JABBERERS: AND STORIES FROM THE ROAD
—A film by Gerardine Wurzburg

Wretches & Jabberers premiered to an audience of more than 500 as part of the Syracuse International Film Festival during Orange Central Weekend. The documentary follows Tracy Thresher and Larry Bissonnette, two men with autism, and their global quest to change attitudes about disability and intelligence. Following the screening, NPR News anchor and Orange Central co-chair Lakshmi Singh ’94 (shown above) interviewed Thresher and Bissonnette, along with director Gerardine Wurzburg, and School of Education Dean Douglas Biklen, who produced the film with Wurzburg.

SUSAA SCHOLARSHIP FUND KICKOFF RECEPTION

The Syracuse University Superintendents Alumni Association (SUSAA), a consortium of School of Education alumni who have worked in school leadership roles, gathered for their annual reunion, with the added goal of developing a scholarship fund at the School of Education for a student with a promising future in educational leadership.

A HAPPY HOMECOMING

In December 2010, doctoral graduate John Kiweewa was welcomed home to his native Uganda where a special graduation celebration was held in his honor.

Kiweewa lived in Syracuse for five years while working on his doctorate. Prior to that, he completed two master’s degrees (M.A. theology and M.S. community counseling) at the University of Scranton in Pennsylvania. His undergraduate studies were completed at Makerere University in Uganda.

“To my friends and family, I describe Syracuse University as a first-class institution, which offers individuals like me an opportunity to pursue academic dreams. Syracuse University, I tell my family, remains a second home to me because I was treated not simply as another student, but as an important member of the institution.”

John is currently a visiting professor of mental health counseling at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, NY. He resides in Fairport, New York with his family, and hopes to stay in the United States for at least three more years.
Randi Wolfson lives in New York City where she teaches in an inclusive pre-kindergarten classroom at a private school. She is currently working on her master’s degree. “I love teaching because no two days are the same, the impact made on my students is life changing, and the influence of loving to learn is a powerful tool I get to further imprint upon others.”

What are some of the most valuable lessons or learning experiences you had at the SU School of Education (SOE)? How are they relevant in your work today?

RW: The teaching experiences I gained as a student at SU will be in my mind for the rest of my life. I think to myself, “Randi, today is a new day. What are my students’ best interests and how can I help them succeed to the best of their ability?” This thought came from a professor I had while at SU who believed in me when I still questioned how I would be as a teacher. She knew I would succeed with the proper support. We are all very different and come from very different places, but we can most definitely all learn from one another. By putting my students first and teaching the best I can, anything can be accomplished.

What do you enjoy most about visiting campus as an alumnus and staying involved with the School of Education?

RW: Stepping onto the SU campus as an alumnus has been such a pleasure. So many amazing memories were made during those four years and all of those feelings come rushing back instantly. Immediately, I start to reminisce about some of the best college experiences I’ve had—from walking through the Quad, to meeting up with friends for a quick snack break at Schine, and even that homey smell of my sorority house. Time has quickly passed, but staying involved with the School of Education has allowed me to continue growing this bond I have so deeply appreciated and respected.

What advice can you give to young alumni of Syracuse University, especially those in the education field?

RW: All of your hard earned work will pay off. Your professors, particularly at the SOE, are some of the most renowned leading educators this country has to offer. I’ve realized how lucky I was, being exposed to their progressive ideas, because those ideas are being used in the New York City classrooms today. The SOE continues to excel in the education field with many new and exciting programs aimed to reach a variety of students in and around Syracuse, New York. It is our duty as alumni to help these programs thrive, and continually aid students to learn.

Please share your ideas for a School of Education young alumni board. What are the goals? Why are young alumni so important to the mission of the school’s advancement strategies?

RW: Our idea for an SOE young alumni board is to reach out and grow those connecting relationships, which were started or influenced by the SOE. We hope from incoming freshman students to those recently graduated (no more than 15 years) to become active and help continue to grow the outreach programs and fund-raise for scholarships—and hopefully one day an updated Huntington Hall. As young alumni, we are so important to the mission of the school’s advancement strategies because if we don’t get involved, stay involved, and keep in-touch with the school, it will lose our visions and lessons from life. There is no better way for Syracuse University to stay pertinent, timely, and up-to-date with our ever-changing world.
The support the Syracuse University School of Education has received from alumni and friends has made a tremendous impact. On behalf of the Board of Visitors, thank you for your generosity and your involvement with the School’s dynamic faculty, its exceptional students, and outstanding staff. We are grateful for your commitment to education and for all you do to improve it.”

LYNN DUNCAN KREISCHER
CHAIR, BOARD OF VISITORS
There are 22,000 reasons to Say Yes.
And I’m one of them.

VOLUNTEER. MENTOR. DONATE. Go to www.sayyessyracuse.org to find out how.