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WELCOME MAC STUDENTS

First, I hope you all are managing the best way you can during these uncertain times and are remaining safe and being well! We are experiencing an unprecedented public health crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic. Our lives have changed in many ways. Secondly, it may be hard to recognize now, but know we are all in this together. We at Rollins are here for every one of you. A gentle reminder – there is no right way to feel right now. Whatever way your feelings are presenting, it is valid. I hope you find this newsletter refreshing from the day to day news, numbers, and concerns throughout the world.

Best wishes to you all!

Your editor, Natalia Richards Counseling Department Graduate Assistant
From the desk of Dr. Alicia Homrich

Dear Graduate Studies in Counseling Community:

Twenty-two years have rolled by so quickly it seems more like 22 months! The opportunity to serve as a faculty member in the Rollins College Graduate Studies in Counseling program has been an amazing honor, and one that I have and will continue to cherish. My mission statement has always been to inspire graduate students to become ethical and effective therapists, and I have done my best to fulfill this goal.

My career began in the field now known as Family and Consumer Sciences where I facilitated family life education programs as an off-campus faculty member of the University of Florida in the role of a county extension agent. There is a Cooperative Extension Service office located in almost every county in the United States. The agents extend research from the university to educate those working primarily in the field of agriculture, but also for families, consumers, and youth (4-H). Our mission was to improve the quality of life for Florida families through the educational programs we designed and conducted across a variety of home and family-related topics. To me, the most valuable and interesting parts of my work had to do with enhancing family functioning via community programs about parenting, child development, communication building, etc. I loved direct education but after 16 years working in three different Florida counties, I longed to do more to help families strengthen their bonds with each other. I believe this career experience, accompanied by growing up in a large and close family with six siblings and many first cousins, was the impetus for pursuing a counseling degree with a strong emphasis in family and relationship therapy. I spent a few years “testing” myself with experiences to clarify whether this was the right career change for me. In 1989, I enrolled in the Rollins program as a graduate student. I loved what I was studying, and very quickly was encouraged by faculty to pursue a doctoral degree. Family therapy was my niche and I thrived in the learning experience.

Although my first plan was to pursue a doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy, I became intrigued by the field of counseling psychology after the guidance one of my Rollins professors. Psychology was another view of the world and I have always liked variety! I applied only to counseling psychology programs with very strong offerings in family therapy and found my home at the University of Georgia. After graduation and a post-doc position, I had offers for an administrative position at the University of Florida and a one-year visiting position in the Rollins Graduate Studies in Counseling program as a fill-in for Dr. Kathryn Norsworthy, who was taking a year-long sabbatical. I decided that although it was only for one year, I would take the job that I really wanted to do, even if it meant finding another job a year later. Unexpectedly, a faculty position came open and, after a national search, I was offered the job permanently. It was a dream come true for me and one for which I have been ever grateful.

My most memorable moments have been working with students in their journeys to become mental health professionals. I have loved teaching and supervising counselors-in-training. As I search my memory, I have many warm and fulfilling recollections of students whose paths I have crossed over the past 22 years. The memories of those individual faces and interactions are sweet and funny, but mostly remain inspiring. I hope that I have touched each student I’ve taught in ways that encouraged them to become their best selves as therapists; to cherish the precious lives of the people with whom they work; and, to maintain their passion for facilitating their clients’ positive personal journeys. It is a parallel process and witnessing this energy develop and applied by students and graduates has been the highlight of my career at Rollins!
And, the time has come to shift gears and enter a new chapter of my life, just like I did when at age 40 I switched professional direction. I am looking forward to the freedom of not having a schedule, to not having the constant shadow of assignments to grade or papers to write hanging over me! I am looking forward to fostering my right brain longings to design and create beautiful things that are pleasing to the soul, whether that be through quilting, woodworking, writing, or something yet undiscovered. I am excited to spend more time with my growing family, particularly my Mom who is a brilliant, interesting, and person who I enjoy. She now needs my support physically and I want to be readily available to her during these years, and I want to continue to benefit from her insight, character, and wisdom. Our family has birthed 9 grandnieces and nephews over the past five years. They are all delightful and I am looking forward to spending more quality time with them and their parents. I am also looking forward to more time traveling without having to worry about return deadlines. Road trip anyone?! And, if I can possibly make it happen, just resting more and engaging in the enchantment of living mindfully, deliberately, and more s-l-o-w-l-y!

In ending, I would like to express my deep gratitude to those with whom I have crossed paths in this journey: To my Rollins community of colleagues, particularly those in our department; to the 530 students who have graduated during my time—so many of you have gone on to engage in careers in the helping profession and have made an amazing and inspirational difference in the lives of countless clients—I am deeply touched to witness your work; to my professional community colleagues for their comradery and friendship; and to the mentors who have lovingly supported my professional and personal development with encouragement and guidance. My accomplishments have been a reflection of your support, your energy, and the belief that we can make a difference. Thank you for sharing this precious chapter of my life.

- Alicia M. Homrich
Congratulations Sarah Moore! Sarah received the Generation to Generation Student Scholarship from the Central Florida Association for Marriage and Family Therapy in December at the group’s annual holiday breakfast at the Alfond Inn. She is the third Rollins student in the past four years to receive this honor for her essay. Great job Sarah!

Barb Dos Santos and Michelle Ilugbusi completed a training workshop with Dr. Rivera-Clonch in Seattle, WA. The Institute for Sustainable Diversity and Inclusion held this workshop through their series called Northwest Diversity Learning Series (NWDLS) and their session titled Intersectionality: Confronting the Tensions of our Overlapping Identities was for professionals from numerous Fortune 500 companies.

Recent graduate Taylor Sweet, current students Barb dos Santos, and Meagan Seago with Professor Dr. Paladino presented Understanding and supporting the transition of marginalized students entering college at the Annual National Cross-Cultural Counseling and Education Conference for Research, Action, and Change in Savannah, GA.

Current students Sarah Moore and Cory Walsh with Professor Dr. DeLorenzi presented Get over it: How cultural trauma transmit to future generations through genetic memory also at the Annual National Cross-Cultural Counseling and Education Conference for Research, Action, and Change in Savannah, GA.

SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO:
Dania Fakhro who was accepted into the University of Central Florida, Counselor in Education Ph.D. program; Robert Ryan who was accepted into the University of Montana, Counselor in Education and Supervision Ph.D. program; and former student Taylor Sweet who was accepted into the University of Florida, Counseling and Counselor Education Ph.D. program! We wish you all the best!

Former students Caiti Bradbury and Muhammad Bilal were published in "The Asian American Psychologist!! The article is called "Empowering Asian Voices" for those interested in checking it out!
A SPECIAL MESSAGE TO OUR GRADUATES!

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2020, you made it through this incredibly challenging, enlightening, and empowering program. The hours of studying, the late nights writing papers, and all of the sacrifices you have made throughout this program have paid off. We are proud of you! We support you. We all are wishing you the best! But remember, graduation isn't the end of a chapter, it's the beginning of another, so make your way with courage and conviction. Go class of 2020!

What's on your desk?

My home desk has a couple of things that I enjoy looking at every day. One is a card from my niece that features teacups with positive scenes and affirmations. She got it from Trader Joe’s, and she knows that I like tea as well as uplifting messages. I thought that was very sweet of her to send it to me. The other is the bird-feeder outside my window. I watch it every day and today they’re been at least three different birds, including a cardinal family. One of the baby Cardinals has a bad leg and even though it has to balance on the perch to eat the sunflower seeds, it manages. It has been out there every day with the daddy cardinal on the lookout!
Coping with Uncertainty

There's no easy way to cope with the day to day changes we are experiencing during these uncertain times; however, it is important to remember the skills we have learned throughout this program and life that can assist us in any way possible. Here are some mental health wellness tips to stay grounded through uncertainty from a Psychologist in NY and a checklist created by a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Seattle, Washington. Also, check out the hashtag COVIDKINDNESS to brighten up your days!

1. Stick to a routine.
2. Dress for the social life you want, not the social life you have.
3. Get out at least once a day, for at least thirty minutes.
4. Find some time to move each day for at least thirty minutes.
5. Reach out to others, you guessed it, daily for at least thirty minutes.
6. Stay hydrated and eat well.
7. Develop a self-care toolkit.
8. Spend extra time playing with children.
9. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt.
10. Everyone find their own retreat space.
11. Expect behavioral issues in children, and respond gently.
12. Focus on safety and attachment.
13. Lower expectations and practice radical self-acceptance.
14. Limit social media and COVID conversation, especially around children.
15. Notice the good in the world, the helpers.
16. Help others.
17. Find something you can control, and control the heck out of it.
18. Find a long-term project to dive into.
19. Engage in repetitive movements and left-right movements.
20. Find an expressive art and go for it.
21. Find lightness and humor in each day.
22. Reach out for help—your team is there for you.
23. “Chunk” your quarantine, take it moment by moment.
24. Remind yourself daily that this is temporary.
25. Find the lesson.

And remember, do what's best for YOU. Some or all of these tips may not be best for you and where you are, and that's okay. Be kind, be gentle, and, more importantly, be understanding!

#COVIDKINDNESS
SPECIAL WELCOME TO DR. CAITLYN BENNETT WHO HAS ACCEPTED A FULL TIME FACULTY POSITION BEGINNING AUGUST 2020!

Caitlyn McKinzie Bennett, Ph.D., LMHC, LPC, NCC is a board certified counselor and a licensed counselor in Florida and Texas. Her clinical areas of expertise include providing holistic counseling to adolescents, young adults, and couples experiencing anxiety, depression, stress, adjustment, and family issues. She is also passionate about providing affirming care to queer and gender diverse individuals, couples, and families. Caitlyn's research interests include evidence-based interventions such as mindfulness-based practices, acceptance and commitment therapy, and neurofeedback training to address anxiety, stress, and depression amongst diverse populations. Caitlyn is an avid tea drinker, animal lover, and advocate for others.