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# Career Center News

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## Pursuing Growth at Park and Internationally: Dr. Kisthardt

By Nancy Crane

What Dr. Kisthardt enjoys most about the field of social work are the many opportunities that the profession allows one to help other people and to enhance a sense of community. He believes the biggest challenge facing the field of social work is to work for more equitable social welfare policies. The gap between the rich and poor in the United States is growing increasingly higher. Consequently, there are growing numbers of people requiring assistance from social workers. In high school, Dr. Kisthardt had the opportunity to participate in a Federal Jobs Program to work at a sheltered workshop with people suffering from developmental disabilities. He found this work to be such a gratifying experience that he knew his career calling would be social work. When Dr. Kisthardt was working as a mental health therapist he began to deliver Prevention Programs for middle school youth to more effectively deal with stress. He was then bitten by the bug and decided he could affect the lives of many more people by teaching undergraduate and graduate students. Dr. Kisthardt says, "I am very proud of being able to develop research and provide training in the field on the Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice. It is amazing to me how this concept has caught on in the field and has gone as far as New Zealand in training with this approach. It is one of the highlights of my career." Dr. Kisthardt's vision is to expand the Bachelor of Social Work Program (BSW) at Parkville. There are currently sixty-two majors, and is expected to continue growing as word of the program spreads, and people become more aware of the many opportunities in the social work field. Dr. Kisthardt has proposed a Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree at Park University. The administration is very supportive of this goal, and he hopes to petition the Council on Social Work Education within the next five years to enter candidacy for accreditation of the MSW at Park University. Dr. Kisthardt wants to say, "I am very proud of the faculty and adjuncts in the Social Work Program. I am also proud of the students who have gone on for their MSW, and those who are working in the field affecting the daily lives of so many."

## Matthew Burton Found a Comfortable Fit in Social Work

By Nancy Crane

President of the Social Work Club, Matthew Burton always knew he wanted to be in the helping field. After learning about social work, Matt decided to sit down with Dr. Kisthardt and investigate the program offered at Park. After their talk, Matt decided that social work was a perfect fit for him. The story Matt tells is that the actual deciding factor was when he noticed Dr. Kisthardt's top button on his shirt was open and he had a guitar in his office. This made Matt realize that since he is a laid back kind of guy who does not enjoy wearing ties, social work was definitely the best fit for him. Another main deciding factor for Matt's choice was the realization of all of the great work he could do with a BSW. A friend of Matt's suggested to him that he would enjoy working his practicum at Tri-County Mental Health. He found it was close to his home and decided that Tri-County would be his best choice; he is very happy there and is gaining many new experiences every day. Matt is also the Peace Ambassador at Park University. If you are interested in being a Peace Ambassador please contact Matt at: [matthew.burton@park.edu](mailto:matthew.burton@park.edu).



## Tri-County Mental Health

By Samantha Gross

Tri-County Mental Health offers behavioral health services for the Kansas City Northland community as well as prevention, assessment and treatment services for individuals and families throughout Clay, Platte and Ray counties. Accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), Tri-County Mental Health offers an array of services to the community such as crisis intervention, outpatient service, inpatient/crisis stabilization, substance abuse treatment, compulsive gambling counseling, and employment services to aid those re-entering the workforce.

For more information on Tri-County Mental Health and their opportunities please visit their website at [www.tricountymhs.org](http://www.tricountymhs.org)

## Rachel Geary Experiences both Social Work and Social Welfare Policy

By Nancy Crane

In 2008 Rachel Geary was attending Metropolitan Community College (MCC), earning her Drug Addiction, AAS. Her goal to become a drug addiction counselor grew to a larger goal during her Introduction to Human Services class. Her professor suggested to those who were interested in continuing on to a four year school that social work would be a good field, as it is so diverse. This appealed to Rachel because she was interested in a position that would not lock her into one specific field. Rachel states that, "I fell in love with the human services subject matter while at MCC, and found I was passionate about issues of social justice and social welfare policy." Rachel is interested in working with the homeless, so she chose the Salvation Army Northland Corps as her practicum. She states that, "I have already learned there is a great need for social services in the area. After talking with employees at the Northland Corps, I understand that there is increased need for assistance, but reduced funding to provide services. We hear about the economy daily on the news and radio, but within the context of a social service organization, it really hits home that we as a society need to change the way we respond to social problems. While policy is made in a macro arena, it affects people individually."



"I fell in love with the human services subject matter...and found I was passionate about issues of social justice and social welfare policy"

### The Salvation Army

By Samantha Gross

The Salvation Army is the single largest provider of social services of its kind in the United States. It arrived in Kansas and Missouri more than 125 years ago to feed the hungry, clothe the poor and bring hope to the dispirited. Today, The Salvation Army helps more than 750,000 Kansans and Missourians, who have nowhere else to turn for help, providing nearly one million meals, 250,000 nights of shelter and a wide range of other critical services for the less fortunate each year. In addition, they offer addiction recovery programs, prisoner rehabilitation, utility assistance and emergency services.

For more information on The Salvation Army's services and opportunities and to find a local office go to, [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)

### From Family and a Passion, Social Work is Found: Moriah Steffek

By Nancy Crane



A nontraditional student, Moriah Steffek is majoring in social work at Park University. She has a strong heritage of family members in the helping fields, and knew this was what she wanted to do. Moriah's quest to find the perfect helping field for herself has been an eighteen year-long journey. After a few bumps along the road, Moriah realized that her calling was to work with youth in crisis through social work. By then, Moriah was married and had a family to care for. So she decided to invest four years of part time attendance in a junior college; then come to Park University to earn her BSW, also attending part time. When it came time to choose her practicum she and her advisor, Gary Bachman, searched for one that would meet Moriah's desire to work with youth in crisis. They determined that Synergy would be the best fit for her to fulfill her ambitions to help those she has such a caring heart for. Synergy now has new facilities offering many more services than it used to, so Moriah is able to work with a wide range of needs and feels a great sense of satisfaction. She says she is exhausted by her hectic schedule, but sees how much she is helping those in need and becomes energized by her work at Synergy.

### Synergy Services, Inc

By Samantha Gross

Synergy Services, Inc. began in 1970 as the first organization in western Missouri to offer shelter for homeless youth. Through their vision to have a world without violence, abuse or neglect they have provided safe housing for women and children in need and developed programs in the areas of residential services, clinical services and community education that managed to touch more than 40,000 people last year.

Some of these programs include the STOP Violence program focused on overcoming bullying and teen dating violence; the Bridge S.P.A.N program aimed at training healthcare personnel to provide universal screening for domestic violence and appropriate patient care; the Batterers Intervention Program which equips participants with the tools they need to stop abusive behavior. Furthermore, the Street Outreach team canvases Greater Kansas City helping homeless youth by providing basic necessities like food, water, clothing, blankets and hygiene products.

For more information on Synergy's services and their opportunities visit [www.synergyservices.org](http://www.synergyservices.org)