



# SWPAG NEWSLETTER

VOLUME IV, ISSUE I

MARCH 2012

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### 2012 SWPAG Meetings

March 14

June 27

September 12

December 12

SWPAG Newsletter  
created by  
LCDR Julie Niven, LCSW

**CDR Carol Ivy Simmons**, MSW, LCSW-C, Project Officer-Region VI in the office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR) Hospital Preparedness Programs (HPP) Patriots Plaza Washington, DC received an award during a recent visit to Arkansas. CDR Simmons was acknowledged and recognized for her work with the HPP Program in support of the state of Arkansas and for the inclusion of rural communities who are challenged by limited resources, geographic distances from larger institutions and have counties without hospitals.

The Mayor of the city of Camden, AR presented CDR Simmons with a very impressive key to the city.

The full article of the event can be found at: <http://www.camdenarknews.com/news/localnews/2012/01/29/funding-discussed-at-ouachita-county-med-97.php>



CONGRATULATIONS  
To  
CDR  
Simmons!



# from the *SWPAG Chair*

I am honored to serve you as chair of the Social Work Professional Advisory Group (SWPAG) this year. Throughout the year I will use this space to share news updates and my thoughts about our profession and our unique role within the Commissioned Corps. For this edition I thought I would use the space to share my vision for SWPAG's activities this year and to tell you a little about myself.

### Raising our profile

If you have been paying attention in recent years, you know that several policies affecting social workers were promulgated, informed by a lack of knowledge about our profession. Over those years SWPAG has provided information and consultation, but the information was not understood or disregarded. I think the bigger problem is that social work and SWPAG have a low profile and is often overlooked.

This year we are going to issue a white paper on the profession of social work in the Commissioned Corps. Among other points, this white paper will clearly explain that: social work does not equal behavioral health; that advanced licensure is available to cover many practice areas; and social workers of all practice areas make significant contributions to the mission of the Corps. It will explain what social workers do, what public health social workers do, and what social workers in the Corps do. I hope that this white paper will be the final word on social work and will inform good policy in the future.



### Building community

My perception is that the SWPAG of today is not the same as it was when

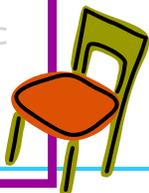
### *Greetings from the Communications Chair!*

*HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope everyone's year is off to a happy, healthy start. I feel honored to have been chosen as the Communications Chair for 2012. I really love putting together the Newsletter and strive to make it visually appealing to everyone. We are indeed a very visual society, aren't we? But without submissions from you all, there would be no substance behind the visuals. In all we do, communication is the key - whether we're communicating to our children, our supervisor, our significant other, our higher power, or to a larger audience - such as this one. I am asking each one of you to communicate with me throughout the coming year. Let me know how I can make **our** Newsletter better. Send me your articles and ideas. I look forward to a productive and communicative year with everyone in the SWPAG!*

*Oh, and Happy Social Work Month in March! (see page 10)*

*Yours in service, LCDR Julie A. Niven*

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...Continued from page 2

I became involved in 2005. I remember at that time feeling like I was part of a family. Maybe that's a hard feeling to maintain because we have so many more social workers spread out across so many different agencies across the world. Who knows?

So one of the things I would like to see is to see what we can do to continue to foster a sense of community among our members. We need to look out for each other, get to know one another on various levels, and share professional and personal experiences to help one another appreciate our family members.

### **Moving forward**

I have met with the SWPAG subcommittee chairs and shared this vision with them. They have agreed with the goals of raising our profession's profile and building community. All of our activities this year will be geared toward serving our members and achieving these goals.

Did you know that one of the three HSO flag officers is a social worker? I am happy to inform you that RADM Pete Delany—a former SWPAG chair—has graciously agreed to serve as our senior advisor. He is providing valuable guidance on the white paper and licensure issues.

We are going to change the format of the quarterly SWPAG meetings this year. While I am still thinking about the content, it's likely to be less focused on subcommittee reports and more on sharing about what's going on in practice settings, deployments, latest news, white paper concepts, and so on. Stay tuned for announcements.

There is much more I can share, but space does not allow. Please attend our next SWPAG meeting for updates.

### **About me**

I work on emergency preparedness and continuity of operations issues at the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in Rockville, MD. Before HRSA I worked on behavioral health and at-risk issues in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response. Prior to joining the Commissioned Corps I served 18 years on staff at the Council on Social Work Education. So my entire professional social work life has been in policy practice settings.

I earned my BSW from the University of Wyoming in 1987 and my MSSW from the University of Louisville in 1988. In what I now know was a weak moment, I began a doctoral program in health science at Nova Southeastern University in January.

But I am fond of saying that I go to work so that I can go home and do what really matters. My wife Winona and I celebrated our 20<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last year. I am the proud father of three beautiful daughters. After our second adoption in 2010 Winona and I thought we were done building our family. God thought otherwise. Winona is expected to deliver our fourth daughter in March.

I hope you can sense my excitement for what we will accomplish this year. I hope you get a sense for my desire to be accessible to you and serve you in the most excellent way possible. Please give me a call or write a note just because I'm looking forward to hearing from you! ...LCDR Todd Lennon



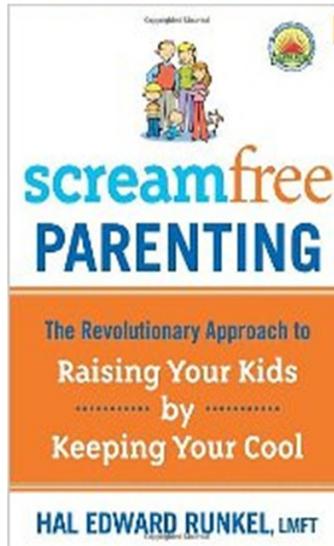
Winona, Chloe (4), Kendra (13), Amy (4), and Todd Lennon

# Scream Free Parenting Partners with Military Families

LT Tricia Booker, LCSW, BCD

The number of reports of family violence has increased significantly over the last two years, and the largest Army installations, Ft. Bragg and maltreatment are among the highest often reactive, and only become inactive members coming home from deployment could go from bad to worse. To combat this, the Army partnered with Hal Runkel, LMFT, and his Scream Free Parenting organization, to travel to multiple Army installations and teach the concept of Scream Free parenting directly to parents on those installations. Ft. Bragg was their first stop. I attended a practical and helpful approach to parenting as well as use in my own family.

Scream Free parenting is not about earning privileges, and consequences, books teach. The concept of Scream Free parenting, and learning how to control their behavior, not their child's behavior. Runkel contends that, in many instances, it isn't the children acting foolish, it is the parents. How are parents teaching self control, when they themselves become a raving lunatic when their children misbehave? Becoming a Scream Free parent isn't about becoming a perfect parent, with the perfect techniques, and raising perfect kids. It teaches that parents don't have to have all the right answers; they just have to learn to calm down. The bottom line is, no matter how hard we try, we can't control what our children do. Children are born with a mind of their own. Runkel teaches that parents need focus on controlling what they can actually control, themselves. Parents cannot be present and available for their children, if they are not in control of their emotions. As parents, success can be measured in keeping ourselves cool and calm, especially when your children have pushed every single button.



ily violence within the military has been on reports of child abuse and domestic violence. As a social worker assigned to one of Ft. Bragg, whose rates of domestic violence are the highest, it often feels that social workers are involved after a crisis. With thousands of deployments, there was a fear that things could get worse. But this, the Army partnered with Hal Runkel's Scream Free Parenting organization, to travel to multiple Army installations. Not surprisingly, Ft. Bragg was the first stop. I attended a train the trainer workshop and found a concept that I can pass on to my patients, as

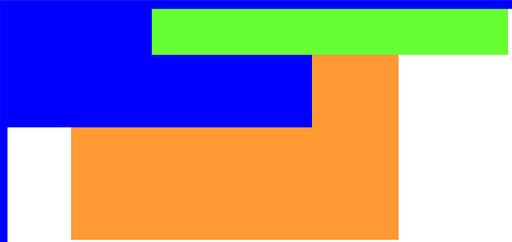
about check lists, token economy systems, which are what the majority of parenting books teach. Scream Free parenting is simple. It focuses on their emotional reactions and focus on

*There are six keys to being a Scream Free parent:*

1. Give your child physical and emotional space – see children as individuals in their own right, with their own lives, decisions and futures.
2. Don't preach or threaten – let the consequences of a child's choice do the screaming.
3. Be an advocate for your child's development.
4. Change your vocabulary – don't label children. Labels can be very destructive and should be avoided at all costs.
5. See yourself as being responsible to your children - not for them. For example, when your child throws a temper tantrum in Wal-Mart, you're not responsible for it, but you are responsible for how you handle it. Know that the greatest thing you as a parent can do for your kids is learn to focus on yourself, or "Put on Your Own Oxygen Mask First."

Hal Runkel outlines these basic steps in his book, called [Scream Free Parenting: The Revolutionary Approach to Raising Your Children](#) in straight forward and conversational tone, often weaving in many stories and antidotes from his own, humorous, parenting mishaps. There is also more information on the website, [www.screamfree.com](http://www.screamfree.com).

Sounds easy, right?? As a working parent of three young and, might I add, energetic boys, these techniques really do work. I am far from perfect, but in just changing how I approach stressful parenting situations, I have seen firsthand how it improved the relationship with my own children.



## National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program (LRP)

*LCDR Scott Conner*

*The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) is a federally-funded program dedicated to matching highly qualified health professionals with facilities and communities designated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as underserved. A new CFR was implemented on January 10, 2012, that significantly changes how correctional facilities are HPSA designated, allowing LCSWs with the Bureau of Prisons to be eligible for loan repayment. Please refer below for the most current information.*

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is the National Health Service Corps?**

The NHSC is a network of 10,000 primary health care professionals and 19,000 sites as of January 2012, working in underserved communities across the country. To support their service, the NHSC provides clinicians with financial support in the form of loan repayment and scholarships.

#### **Who funds the NHSC Loan Repayment Program?**

The Loan Repayment Program is funded by the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Institutions do not incur costs for NHSC LRP beyond the normal expenses of bringing an employee on duty.

#### **What is the HPSA Score?**

The Health Professionals Shortage Area (HPSA) Score is a number calculated by the NHSC to determine whether a site will qualify for placement of a Scholar for a particular category. For correctional facilities it is based on the average number of inmates, the number of new inmates per year, the average length of stay for inmates, and the number of clinical providers in a given category, i.e. physician. As of January 10, 2012, an additional calculation is required of all correctional facilities; a Geographic HPSA score has been added as an additional determinant.

#### **How does the new scoring affect LRP eligibility?**

This year's awards (2011-12 cycle) are split based on the facility's HPSA score. Facilities with HPSA scores of 14 and higher are eligible for \$60,000/per two year commitment and are awarded in the first round of consideration. Clinicians at sites with a HPSA of 13 or lower will qualify for a lower amount of \$40,000/per two year commitment after the higher level awards are paid out.

#### **Does the HPSA designation expire?**

HPSA scores must be re-evaluated every 4 years. So if an institution submits paperwork to obtain designation in 2011, it will need to submit updated information in 2015 in order to maintain its designation. If updated information is not submitted by the deadline, the institution will lose its designation and will no longer be eligible for awarding of Loan Repayment. Staff in the Health Services Division, Staffing and Recruitment Section will be monitoring the designations of all BOP institutions and notifying them in advance of the expiration date of the need to re-designate.

#### **Which BOP institutions are eligible sites for NHSC LRP participation?**

Site eligibility can be verified on the NHSC website: <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/sites/index.html>. Stand-alone prison camps are not eligible.

*Continued from previous page....*

**How does an applicant/employee request LRP?**

NHSC LRP is administered directly by the NHSC. The applicant must first complete the regular BOP employment process first. Once BOP employment is confirmed (a tentative employment letter suffices), they would go directly to the NHSC website: <http://nhsc.hrsa.gov/index.html> to apply for a Loan Repayment Program award.

**Is there additional paperwork once an employee who seeks LRP is hired?**

The NHSC will advise on any additional paperwork that must be submitted. Failure to submit all documents as requested may jeopardize the LRP. Please include LCDR Dorinda Ball, Staffing and Recruitment, Health Services Division, Central Office (202) 353-4110, on all communications with the NHSC.

**To be eligible for NHSC LRP, do you need to be Civil Service or a PHS employee?**

LRP employees may be either Civil Service or Commissioned Officers of the US Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps.

**Are NHSC LRP employees eligible for bonuses or special pays?**

NHSC LRP employees cannot be “dually obligated”; which means those who are USPHS Commissioned Corps officers cannot receive an Accession Bonus. And per Program Statement 6010.02 “Health Services Administration”, Civil Service LRP employees are not eligible for PCAP/DCAP, but are eligible for above the minimum rate, recruitment bonuses and retention allowances while in payback status.



## *Licensure Update*

In early February the Office of the Surgeon General (OSG) contacted the Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HS PAC) for assistance with identifying social workers who do not hold a license that allows for independent clinical social work practice in a U.S. State pursuant to the requirements of [CCI 231.03](#) §6-11.d.(9). OSG’s intention was to issue a restricted waiver (see [CCI 251.01](#) §8-3) for all Commissioned Corps social workers who do not meet the requirement for advanced licensure. Through the efforts of HS PAC, the licensing coordinator at the Office of Commissioned Corps Officer Support, and SWPAG, a list of 30 social workers was referred to OSG for the blanket waiver. SWPAG sent an e-mail to officers on that list informing them of the action.

This is a positive first step, but only a temporary fix to the larger problem. SWPAG is going to address the problem this year by issuing a white paper on the profession of social work in the Commissioned Corps. See “From the Chair” for more on the white paper. It is hoped that this educational effort will inform future policy decisions that benefit individual officers (i.e., no more waivers) and bring in a more diverse pool of public health social work professionals.

# DISCOVER YOUR BEST LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

**What is a leader?** How do we recognize good leadership? Can there be more than one leader in a group? What determines when a leader is needed? Do you see yourself as a leader? Why or why not?

I think everyone has the opportunity *and* responsibility to be a leader at least sometime during each day. *But I'm not in a leadership position* you might say. Maybe your title does not designate you as a leader in your organization, but I believe we each can find the opportunity to lead daily. Maybe if you stop and think about the following leadership qualities, you will see ways – large or small- in which you can have a positive impact on those around you regardless of your job title.

## Leadership Qualities

What qualities make up a great leader? I found the following to be some of the most commonly listed when I was doing the research for this article...

1) Leaders foster **TEAMWORK** and buy in from all involved. Leaders understand that all those throughout an organization have something to offer, a role to play, and a voice that needs to be heard. A supervisor needs to ask for opinions from his or her staff members about proposed changes in the workplace. Two (or many more) heads are better than the supervisor's one. By asking for everyone's input, the proposed plan can develop into an even more comprehensive and inclusive one than originally planned. By taking into account all staff members' thoughts and opinions, a leader is demonstrating leadership quality number 2...

2) Leaders **DON'T CONSIDER THEMSELVES BETTER** than others around them. Yes, the supervisor may have been put in his position because he has supervisory experience, but he is still only one individual – and one individual is equally valuable to all other individuals. No one can do their jobs as well if housekeeping doesn't come after hours to clean and take out the trash! Humility is something that helps us see our place in the system without losing sight of the importance of other people's places in the same system. When leaders seek and value all staff input, there is flexibility in decision making every step of the way.

3) Leaders **CARE** about those who work around them. A caring attitude helps people feel valued. A valued employee is a happy employee, a more productive employee, and an employee that calls in sick less often. Leaders encourage individual development in those they lead. Leaders ask for loyalty from their staff. Loyalty comes from leaders demonstrating loyalty to those they supervise.

4) Leaders **COMMUNICATE** to those in their organization. Have you ever felt like the last to know something or even made a mistake because you weren't told about a new policy or departmental change? Communication to ALL is paramount to keeping a department running smoothly and free of grumpiness, confusion and a "don't care" attitude.

5) Leaders can be **TRUSTED**. Do you listen and follow directions given by someone you don't trust? Not nearly as closely as you do from someone you do trust. Leaders build trust through transparency, communication, and by encouraging buy-in from all involved. Leaders develop trust when they are seen as taking a genuine interest in those around them.

6) Leaders are **OBJECTIVE**. Leaders don't favor one person's opinion over another's. An open mind and a willingness to listen are key to objectivity. Leaders don't pigeonhole their staff. They show interest while listening when others bring ideas or problems their way. Leaders maintain their objectivity through frequent self-assessment and by seeking feedback from others.

7) Leaders earn **RESPECT**. A good reputation is everything and originates from a place of integrity within a person. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "What you do speaks so loud I cannot hear what you say." A good reputation takes daily work to build and maintain. Respect is most easily earned when it's given.

Lastly, leaders are not just employees in a company or agency. Leaders are parents, older siblings - even younger siblings. Leaders are friends, co-workers, junior staff/supervisees - even clients or patients. I challenge each and every one of you – seek out the leader within yourself; watch for and emulate the leaders you see around you – no matter at what level of responsibility you find them. It is not so important to say that we make policy or change systems. It is most important that we do our best - everyday. Lead by example. Lead in all you do. Someone is always watching and you have no idea what impact you might have on an individual or group by practicing these and a multitude of other leadership principles in whatever setting you find yourself.

# **Call for Nominations: 2012 Social Worker of the Year Award:**

## **Senior Officer Nomination**

### **Submission Deadline, Friday, February 24, 2012**

**Applicants:** Any active duty USPHS Senior Commissioned Officer (O-5 to O-10) Social Worker. One person will be chosen for the 2012 award. The Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary and Awards Subcommittee Members of the Social Work Professional Advisory Group (SWPAG) are not eligible to compete.

**Nominations:** Nominations may be made by civil servants or Commissioned Officers who are familiar with the Officers' accomplishments.

**Criteria:** Candidates must demonstrate:

Positive USPHS professional image;  
Outstanding Leadership; **and**  
Must meet **one** of the following criteria:

- Specific notable accomplishment that impacts the public or the field of public health and or social work;
- High quality and initiative in leadership;
- Sustained high quality work performance demonstrated by significant accomplishments throughout one's career;
- Application of unique skill or creative imagination to the approach or solution of a problem(s);
- Technical and/or professional contributions that are significant to an Office, Center, Bureau, Agency, Public Health Service Mission, department; and/or
- Exhibition of great courage in hazardous work, emergency or deployment settings.

**Please see the attached Submission Package and return nominations by Friday, February 24, 2011 via electronic mail to:**

LCDR Christine Nemeti  
Social Work PAG Awards Subcommittee Chair  
cnemeti@bop.gov

**A complete submission consists of the following three sections: the Cover Page, the Nomination Page and the C.V.**

#### **COVER PAGE...**

**Candidate:**

Name, rank and PHS number of candidate  
Candidate's position title  
Work address, telephone, facsimile and e-mail  
Supervisor's name, address, e-mail and phone number

**Nominator:**

Nominator's name (can be self-nominating) and position title  
Work address, telephone, facsimile and e-mail Nominator signature and date

**Citation:**

A summary of the praiseworthy act or achievement made by the nominee

#### **NOMINATION PAGE...**

On the second page (and third page if needed) describe the following:

The first paragraph should state the reason for the nomination and mention the areas of practice.

The body of the submission must describe how the candidate demonstrates the three criteria mentioned earlier and how the candidate has brought about substantial professional impact/results.

The last paragraph should encompass key elements (also may be used as the citation).

**Attach Curriculum Vitae for the nominated individual that includes a brief description of their current assignment.**

# **Call for Nominations: 2012 Social Worker of the Year Award:**

## ***Junior Officer Nomination***

### **Submission Deadline, Friday, February 24, 2012**

**Applicants:** Any active duty USPHS Senior Commissioned Officer (O-1 to O-4) Social Worker. One person will be chosen for the 2012 award. The Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary and Awards Subcommittee Members of the Social Work Professional Advisory Group (SWPAG) are not eligible to compete.

**Nominations:** Nominations may be made by civil servants or Commissioned Officers who are familiar with the Officers' accomplishments.

**Criteria:** Candidates must demonstrate:

Positive USPHS professional image;  
Outstanding Leadership; **and**  
Must meet **one** of the following criteria:

- Specific notable accomplishment that impacts the public or the field of public health and or social work;
- High quality and initiative in leadership;
- Sustained high quality work performance demonstrated by significant accomplishments throughout one's career;
- Application of unique skill or creative imagination to the approach or solution of a problem(s);
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Name, rank and PHS number of candidate  
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Work address, telephone, facsimile and e-mail  
Supervisor's name, address, e-mail and phone number

**Nominator:**

Nominator's name (can be self-nominating) and position title  
Work address, telephone, facsimile and e-mail Nominator signature and date

**Citation:**

A summary of the praiseworthy act or achievement made by the nominee

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The first paragraph should state the reason for the nomination and mention the areas of practice.

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The last paragraph should encompass key elements (also may be used as the citation).

**Attach Curriculum Vitae for the nominated individual that includes a brief description of their current assignment.**

**Happy Social Work Month: March 2012**



*social work*  
**MATTERS**

# ...Other News...



The SWPAG challenge coin promotes esprit de corps and are a source of pride for Corps social workers. Coins also spread goodwill to members of other uniformed services and can be a great recruiting tool. One hundred new SWPAG challenge coins were struck late last year so we have plenty for officers to purchase for themselves or as gifts. Please use the order form in this issue of the newsletter or in the SWPAG section of the HS PAC website: [http://www.usphs-hso.org/pags/swpag/swpag\\_coin.shtml](http://www.usphs-hso.org/pags/swpag/swpag_coin.shtml).

### SOCIAL WORK PAG COIN ORDER FORM

Ship to (please print)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Order

Number of coins \_\_\_\_ x \$12.00 per coin = \_\_\_\_\_ payment enclosed

Payment accepted

- Cash
- Check or Money Order made payable to COF
- No credit cards accepted



Mail this order form and payment to:  
Social Work Professional Advisory Group  
c/o LCDR Todd Lennon  
14403 Oakvale Street  
Rockville, MD 20853  
E-mail: [tlennon@hrs.gov](mailto:tlennon@hrs.gov)

Please allow time for processing and delivery.



*The Mission of the U.S. Public Health Service  
 Commissioned Corps is to  
 protect, promote, and advance the health and safety  
 of our Nation.*

For more information about our PAG, visit the SWPAG website at  
[http://usphs-hso.org/pags/swpag/swpag\\_main.shtml](http://usphs-hso.org/pags/swpag/swpag_main.shtml)

**2012 SWPAG Meetings**

March 14

June 27

September 12

December 12

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*From 1500 to 1600 ET*

*1-866-561-3692*

*Participant code: 3556504*

***SWPAG Colleagues:***

*The Communications Committee encourages officers to submit any news/events information about fellow social workers, something you've accomplished, clinical issues, job/agency opportunities, recruiting ideas or strategies, career enhancement suggestions, educational opportunities (CEU's), publicity events, deployment/OFRD training experiences, CCA events etc. for publication in the SWPAG newsletter. Please have submissions cut-and-paste ready.*

*Thank you!*

*Please respond to LCDR Niven at:  
 julie.a.niven@us.army.mil with submissions.*