



Adler Graduate School Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2

February, 2005

Adler Graduate
School
1001W. Hwy. 7
Suite 311
Hopkins, MN
55305

952.988.4170

February's Faculty Spotlight: Gladys Folkers and Dan Zenga

Living an Adlerian Life

by Kate Moore

Inside this issue:

Gladys Folkers	1
Dan Zenga	3
AGS Student Association	4
President's Corner	5
Social Interest	5
Announcements	6

Gladys Folkers has always worked with teenagers. She began as a girls' high school Physical Education teacher and swimming and tennis coach. She didn't know that someday her work with teens would take an entirely different path. "If somebody would've told me that, within a very short time, I'd have my own thriving, counseling practice serving teenagers, I wouldn't have believed them," says Folkers.

In 1989, Gladys happened upon (what was then) the Alfred Adler Institute where she enrolled in a Human Relations class as part of a requirement to renew her teacher's license. She was very impressed that the program matched her theory of life. "I would come home at night and say to my husband, 'there's this whole theory of psychology that's exactly what I believe and they offer a Master's degree in it.'" With her husband's encouragement, Gladys enrolled in the Adler program. While

she was pursuing her graduate degree, Gladys decided she would change her focus to working with individual adults and couples. When she was accepted for an internship at Minnetonka Junior High, she found she loved counseling students that age. "I just fell back into working with youth," she says. "Adler fit like a glove and gave me concrete tools for applying a theory and created a natural flow for working with teenagers."

After graduating from the Adler Graduate School (AGS) in 1991, Folkers began a private practice where she served pre-teens, high-schoolers and young adults "By the time the clients got to me," she says, "they were really reacting to everything." The youth saw themselves as powerless and as pawns in adults' lives. The most important thing that clients learned, according to Folkers, was that, although they didn't always have a choice as to what was hap-

pening in their lives, they did have a choice about how they responded to those events.

Folkers worked with her young clients to restore a sense of power to their lives. "That is huge for kids," she says. She notes that, often her clients were in power struggles with their parents, but once the teens understood that they could respond differently, it empowered them by showing them they had options. "The teens learned that if you don't like what's going on in a relationship," says Folkers, "you can't change the other person, but you can change how you deal with it." Sometimes parents wanted their child to change, but did not want to change themselves. Folkers taught the child how to succeed in spite of what was going on in his or her family. "To watch that happen was really exciting," she says.

(continued on Page 2)

Gladys Folkers

(continued from Page 1)

Once Folkers earned her degree, she also began to teach at the Adler Graduate School. Her former instructor, Dan Zenga, asked her to co-teach *Counseling Children and Adolescents* and to act as a back-up instructor. Folkers credits Zenga for much of her development as a teacher and counselor. "Dan is incredibly knowledgeable and has such an ability to connect with youth," she says. "He is very, very encouraging." She also notes that he gave her the opportunity to believe that she could do it. "That built my self-confidence and allowed me to really believe in myself," says Folkers.

Folkers also worked with Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC) to develop a class called *Working with Youth*. It evolved into two courses which became co-requisites for the Human Services A.A. degree at MCTC. The first class is academic in which students learn theory and techniques. The second is the field component which requires that students volunteer at an agency for six hours per week during a semester.

When the Adler Graduate School expressed an interest in offering a similar class, Folkers adapted the class to fit the master's level program. The AGS course, which is an academic offering, is entitled *Working with Youth through Encouragement*

and *Advocacy*.

Folkers talks about role modeling what she teaches. "That doesn't mean I'm a perfect parent," she says. "It does mean that if I make a mistake, I then role model how to make amends or correct the mistake." Folkers believes strongly that it is important that we all provide the opportunity for children to make mistakes and that we create a safety net where children can learn to problem-solve. She asserts that we must ask children what they would do differently and what it is that they've learned.

"I truly believe the most important job on the face of the earth is parenting," says Folkers, who with her husband Bud, has raised three children. She recalls that when her children were toddlers, someone gave her a copy of Dreikurs' *Children: The Challenge*. "I underlined and dog-eared it until it was falling apart," she notes. "It just fit the way I thought children should be raised," she says, noting that her own mother, who was unaware of either Adler or Dreikurs, raised Folkers and her siblings using the same techniques. Each of the Folkers' adult children now quotes Adler. "All three practice social interest and are in service professions," she says. "It's very gratifying."

Folkers has authored a book with Jeanne Engelmann enti-

led: *Taking Charge of My Mind and Body: A Girls' Guide to Outsmarting Alcohol, Drugs, Smoking, and Eating Problems* which won the Minnesota Book Award in 1997. The book consists of true stories that supply information and tools for girls to deal with issues in their lives. "It is organized," says Folkers, "so a girl could open the book to any page and be able to get something from it." There are facts, hints, checklists and "what ifs" with answers throughout the book. There are also resources such as phone numbers and websites the reader can access.

The reach of her book has astonished Folkers. "I've received emails from across the United States," she notes. "The book has reached many more girls than I ever could have on a one-to-one basis." The book, originally published through Free Spirit Publishing, has had three printings and is now being revised with a new edition scheduled for publication in April of 2005.

Folkers' book has created many other opportunities in her life. She's been interviewed on radio programs and by such popular magazines as *Teen People*, *Teen Magazine* and *Cosmo Girl*. Folkers has also become a sought-after speaker. She presents at PTO's, churches and professional organizations on a number (continued on back page)

Dan Zenga, Ed.D.

by Kate Moore

It's no surprise that Dan Zenga became an Adlerian. The Adlerian concepts of encouragement and Social Interest were present in his early life.

He remembers being strongly encouraged by the staff at a boys' club where he spent a lot of time as a child. Through his family, he learned the concept of Social Interest. "My parents encouraged us to make connections with others," he says "and to be helpful and supportive of folks."

Over time Zenga developed an academic interest in studying people and what makes them tick. In graduate school, he was studying various psychological theories, when he realized that some of those theories really didn't resonate with who he is as a person. "I stumbled onto Adlerian Psychology," he says, "and found it was a complementary theory to who I am and how I was raised."

Zenga became a licensed psychologist and, since 1981, has worked for Blue Earth County Human Services in a community mental health center serving adults and children with Serious and Persistent Mental Illness (SPMI). He is responsible for the clinical supervision of many of the staff and does custody studies, mediation and performs court-ordered psychological evaluations. He has also run a group for batterers.

Zenga's caseload consists of both adults with SPMI and boys whose issues may include disruptive behaviors, depression and family and school problems. Children with medical problems are also referred to Zenga for help in learning how to cope with and adjust to their illnesses.

In the early 1990's, Zenga supervised two students from the Adler Graduate School (AGS) and through that connection, was asked to begin teaching at the school. "I wanted to teach a class involving children," says Zenga, "and that's how the *Counseling Children and Adolescents* course evolved."

There was so much material concerning children and adolescents, he broke the classes into two sections.

The first section is an academic class focusing on theory. It reviews how to develop relationships with children, the goals of discouraged behavior, logical consequences and the importance of encouragement. "I also put in a developmental piece," he notes, "which teaches the student how to assess a child to see if that child is where he should be in his development."

The second course concerns the application of the theory. Zenga teaches strategies and techniques that might help with children who may be oppositionally defiant, depressed or suicidal.

"Any of the acting out behaviors," he says. Zenga also spends some time doing play therapy. "Kids will often tell you what's going on with them through their play," he says, noting that it's important for therapists to know how to play and join a child in that experience.

Respect plays a big part in Zenga's approach to working with children. "Kids respond to you when you demonstrate respect and equality instead of talking down to them or patronizing them," he says. "Most kids only get to talk to an adult when there is some kind of problem."

A child who is brought to Zenga may be leery of him, wondering if he will treat them the way other adults have. Zenga works through that by establishing the relationship, being encouraging and by staying aware of how the child views him. He notes that children try to place therapists in the place of other authority figures and says, "It is important that we avoid power struggles and the end maneuvers that leave the kids feeling discouraged or fearful."

Adlerian Psychology, Zenga asserts, works well with children and adolescents because of its basic precepts of respect, equality and social interest. He also says that identifying the purpose of a child's behavior is a crucial piece of the therapeutic process. "There is absolutely a purpose behind the behavior," he says.

(Continued on Page 4)

Dan Zenga, Ed.D.**(continued from Page 3)**

“When I ask little kids, ‘how do you get your own way with mom and dad?’, ninety percent of them have a ready answer.” Zenga says that creating a safe environment for the child will allow that child to tell you whatever you want to know.

Zenga demonstrates Adlerian principles in the work he does as a supervisor by asking his employees to examine their own behavior and the principles they’re operating from when they are feeling “stuck”.

Keeping parents involved in the process is another part of Zenga’s job. “It’s a big step for parents to acknowledge that their child needs help,” he says. “What they’ve been doing might not have been successful, so it is important to encourage

the parents.”

He is gratified as he watches children grow and learn to believe in themselves.

Through the work he does, he sees children develop an appreciation for who they are and a respect for other people. “It’s rewarding to see that when the therapeutic relationship ends, kids who came into therapy with real problems, return to the world with a renewed sense of self-confidence that they’ll be able to meet and deal with life.”

Zenga also believes that counselors create a mindset for children who receive mental health services that will carry over into adulthood and keep the door open for them to seek help should they need it .

“Educating kids about

mental health services,” says Zenga, “makes them more open and willing to go back into counseling.”

Dan Zenga has been doing this work for years and often hears from former clients when they are adults. “It’s deeply gratifying when kids that I saw 15 or 20 years ago who recognize the usefulness of therapy, call me to ask if I would be willing to see their child,” he says. Acknowledging the multi-generational benefit of successful therapy, Zenga says, “That really speaks to me of the long term impact we can have with kids.”

Dan Zenga is the co-author of a book entitled: *It’s About Change ... It’s About You*. (Kendall Hunt, 2001)

AGS Student Association

The Adler Graduate School Student Association has elected the following officers for 2005: President -- Kim Smisek (kimsmisek@comcast.net), Vice President -- Erin Jauret (elj10_4@hotmail.com), Secretary -- Kira Rice (Ricer31@aol.com), Treasurer -- Tim Gluszak (timgluszak@yahoo.com)

The new student officers are enthusiastic about bringing fresh ideas to the Adler Graduate School and are working to create opportunities for students to get to know one another and to establish a greater sense of community. To further those aims, the association will host an informal lunch on Saturday, February 26th at noon. All students are invited and encouraged to attend. It will be a great opportunity to socialize and to talk about student issues.

We welcome your creative input as we plan the coming year. Some ideas being considered are volunteering together in a community project, selling Adler sweatshirts and t-shirts, composing a new student survey and holding a student-sponsored party. Also, watch for the new and improved bulletin board in Room 319 where student photos and bios will be posted.

If you have any ideas, suggestions, or concerns please email one of the student association officers at the email addresses listed above. Your comments will remain anonymous.

Kim Smisek, President, AGS Student Association

President's Corner

Dennis Rislove, Ph.D.

Special Opportunity for Students Interested in LPC Licensure

The Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy is attempting to clarify the licensure statute by proposing a rule to change the way the post-degree requirements may be satisfied.

Originally, the statute read that as soon as a candidate passed the exam they would be licensed. Then the candidate would have to meet the post-degree requirement of 2000 supervised hours over a two-year period including 18 more master's level credits to bring the total to 90 credits.

The problem is that classes taken after graduation do not qualify for financial aid. The proposed rule reads that the license will not be granted until after the two-year supervised period and that the additional 18 credits may be taken before graduation which will allow a student to finance them through the Stafford loan program.

At Adler Graduate School, we have a policy that allows any AGS graduate to take courses at half-price which will be helpful to those who wish to add the 18 credits post-graduation.

To assist current students, AGS has decided that any student who declares an intention to finish a 72

credit M.A. and wants to pursue LPC licensure, may finish the additional 18 credits (pre-degree) at half-price. You must declare the LPC track and pay full price for the first 72 credits of your 90 credit total. Hopefully, being able to fund these classes with your student loans will allow more of you to choose the LPC option. If you have questions, call Evelyn Haas at 952-988-4170.

Dennis Rislove, Ph.D.
President,
Adler Graduate School

Practicing Social Interest

Nikki Thompson, M.A., a faculty member at Adler Graduate School, left on January 29th for Sri Lanka to join in the relief effort for victims of December's tsunami.

Thompson joins 33 others including doctors, nurses, educators and construction workers who will spend one month in the devastated area of Andiambalama.

The volunteers will provide medical attention to people and will attempt to rebuild a

small fishing village.

Thompson, an art therapist and educator, will stay at an orphanage working with children on trauma resolution. She will also work with volunteers on team building and stress reduction.

People have been very eager to help. "Talk about social interest," Thompson says. "One woman came to my door with four beautiful puppets from the Rainforest Café that I'll be able to use in my work with the

children."

For those who would like to make a financial donation or who may be interested in joining the second group of volunteers scheduled to leave in March, please go to www.helpsrilanka.us

**Contact
Information:**

Adler Graduate School
1001W. Hwy. 7
Suite 311
Hopkins, MN 55305

952.988.4170

We're on the Web!
alfredadler.edu

Adler Open House

When:
First Wednesday of every month.
Coming up: February 2nd & March 2nd

Where:
Adler Graduate School
1001 Highway 7,
Hopkins, MN

Time:
6:00-7:30 p.m.

Find out about our M.A. in
Counseling and Psychotherapy
and our two certificate series,
Personal and Professional Life Coaching
and Coaching and Consulting in
Organizations.

Call 952-988-4327 for directions.

Life Coaching Seminar

Paula Hemming, M.A., Coordinator
of Personal and Professional Life
Coaching Education, offers a
no-cost Life Coaching Seminar
the second Wednesday of every
month at the Adler Graduate
School.

The next two opportunities are
February 9th & March 9th
from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Observe a live, one-to-one coaching
demonstration and find out what
life coaching is all about.

To sign up for either workshop, call
Ev at 952-988-4327 or email her at
ev@alfredadler.edu

Gladys Folkers

(continued from Page 2)

of topics including, *How to Connect with Youth, Adolescent Depression, Raising Adolescent Boys, Raising Adolescent Girls, Raising Responsible Children and Communicating with Your Child*. She has also presented breakout sessions and has been a keynote speaker for various mental health and counseling conferences.

Now retired from private practice, Folkers says, "I know that I've closed one door, though there is a

great need (for people who counsel teens)." "I absolutely love to teach," she says, "and I believe that through my teaching I will be reaching more young people through my students." With a couple more books in their embryonic stages, she believes her writing will do the same.

Folkers knows that there are even more doors waiting to be opened and says, "I'm both excited and a bit anxious about which door it

will be." Whichever is next, she says, "It will be Adlerian. It's the basis of everything I do."

Gladys Folkers will be the keynote speaker at the Minnetonka Parent Fair this February 12th at 8:15 a.m. Her presentation is entitled, *Our Children are Watching Us, but are They Listening?*

Adler Graduate School Mission Statement

The mission of the Adler Graduate School is to educate ethical, reflective, highly competent, comprehensively informed, continually learning, Adlerian-based professionals who are prepared to improve the interactions and conditions of the people, organizations, and/or communities they serve.