

Garcia Takes on Tough Problems

Research on swallowing and liquids improves people's lives

F
S
T
S

SCHOOL OF
FAMILY
STUDIES
&
HUMAN
SERVICES

2006
ALUMNI
NEWSLETTER

Jane Garcia and student

Smells of roasted turkey, seasoned stuffing and sweet pumpkin pie are wafting through the air. You hear the familiar sounds of family members reacquainting and cheering for their favorite football team. It's Thanksgiving Day, the traditions are endless, and most of them revolve around food and drink.

Now imagine that you can't easily eat the Thanksgiving dinner. Or drink a cup of coffee with your friends. Or even go to school with other kids — all because you don't have the ability to swallow correctly. Jane Garcia, associate professor in communication sciences and disorders (CSD) and speech-language pathologist, has devoted her career to helping people who struggle with these frustrations every day.

Jody Kenney, whose son Sean underwent surgery for a brain tumor, remembers wondering where to go to seek help for her son's swallowing complications.

"After the surgery, we were sitting there in the hospital thinking, 'What are we going to do now?'" Kenney said. "We decided to start with K-State,

not really thinking they would be able to help. I thought we would need to go to a 'major' place because his problems were so devastating and all-encompassing."

But K-State turned out to be the Kenneys' answer. Sean, an 11-year-old who was unable to speak or swallow after his surgery, began to work with Garcia at the Speech and Hearing Center. With meticulous research and treatment, Garcia was able to help Sean tackle his problems one by one.

"Jane really reviewed the literature and did all she could to discover the newest techniques and apply them to his case," Kenney said.

Through Garcia's help and the dedication of many CSD graduate students, Sean — now 19 years old and heading off to college — has regained his ability to speak and swallow correctly.

"Jane was wonderful and always professional," Jody said. "She included my husband and me in all of Sean's therapy, so we felt like part of the team. She had a lot of respect for Sean, and was creative with her teaching styles."

• Continued on back page

COLLEGE OF
HUMAN
ECOLOGY
— KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY —

Greetings!

This past year was a busy one for the faculty, staff and students in the School of Family Studies and Human Services. I hope you will enjoy reading the articles in this newsletter. We always strive to help our graduates provide new solutions to the problems individuals and families face by offering new programs and supporting important research initiatives.

We are exceedingly grateful to all of our alumni and friends who have invested in our work. The School would not be where it is today without the generous support we have received from alumni and friends. Two new buildings completed in recent years (the Stone House Hoefflin Early Childhood Education Center



Dr. Bill Meredith
Director, School of Family Studies & Human Services

and C.Q. and Georgia Chandler Institute for Child and Family Studies, and the Campus Creek Complex) are a testament to the contributions of our friends, as neither building was completed with any state funding. These state-of-the-art facilities would simply not exist without the help of our alumni. But thanks to you, we now have two wonderful buildings that greatly enhance student learning and faculty research opportunities.

The School now benefits greatly from our enhanced facilities, but huge needs remain that will not be met by ever-decreasing state funding. We have a significant need for investments in graduate assistantships and for endowed faculty positions. In addition, funding for ever-changing technology — such as equipment for faculty offices, labs and student computer labs — is an ongoing necessity. We are engaged in important work that directly impacts individuals and their families, and we need the people and tools to do the very best work we can do.

We are excited about what will be happening in Family Studies and Human Services in the coming year. Please let us know how you are using your FSHS degree and visit us the next time you are in Manhattan.

News Briefs



Dr. Joyce Baptist has joined FSHS as an assistant professor in marriage and family therapy. Baptist was previously a faculty member at California State Sacramento.

Dr. Debra Sellers has joined FSHS and the Center on Aging in July as an assistant professor and Extension specialist for aging. She was previously a faculty member at Oregon State University in Bend.



2006 Awards to FSHS Faculty

Dr. Mike Bradshaw, associate professor, was honored with the College of Human Ecology Faculty Extension Excellence Award for the development of *Walk Kansas: A Fitness Challenge*. This award goes to an Extension specialist who has made a significant contribution to the well-being of Kansans.

Dr. Jane Mertz Garcia was honored with the College of Human Ecology Faculty Research Excellence Award (see cover story).

Dr. John Grable won the International Association of Registered Financial Consultants Founder's Award. This award is for individuals who have made a significant impact in the field of financial consulting.

STRONG ROOTS

Early childhood grad finds entrepreneurial success



“There’s a foundation here, a track record. If a student wants to excel, they have all the tools here.”

— Marlyn Conrow

Marlyn Conrow, B.S. '73, family and child development, was born and raised on a farm near Belleville, Kan., and now owns one of the top-ranked early education programs in Dallas, Texas. In fact, she was recently named the 2006 College of Human Ecology Entrepreneur Award winner. Since Conrow credits her own college preparation with much of her success, she is firmly convinced that K-State early childhood education graduates suit her business needs perfectly. And she tries diligently to hire K-Staters whenever she can.

“There’s a foundation here, a track record. If a student wants to excel, they have all the tools here,” Conrow said.

Becoming a K-Stater herself wasn’t even really a decision. It was rather inevitable.

“When I came to K-State, I didn’t even think of it as a choice. I was one of six children and we all came here. I think I paid \$238 per semester in tuition!” she marveled. “I always knew I wanted to work with children so I was an absolute glove-fit with family and child development. But I didn’t know I was in a world-renowned program while I was in it!”

She began summer school right after she graduated from high school, and graduated from K-State in three years.

“We were raised to have a strong work ethic. We worked from sun-up to sundown and we didn’t know any different. My mother had a strong desire for all her children to get a good education and my dad expected us all to do our best. It was a great combination.”

One of Conrow’s most vivid memories of her time at K-State was her practicum experience during her senior year and her advisor’s remarkably swift response to a less-than-ideal situation.

“I was originally placed in a childcare center in Kansas City where my first impression was of little children standing at the window crying. There were a lot of other problems as well. I was a brand new student and not very sure of myself, but I didn’t think this was the way it was supposed to be,” Conrow remembered. “I called my advisor, Dr. Ivalee McCord (professor of family and child development), and left a message about what I was seeing. She called me back and said, ‘Marlyn, I’ll be there in the morning.’ I was amazed that she’d do that, just based on what a student said. She took me out of there immediately and placed me in a wonderful practicum in a center that served children with developmental and physical disabilities.”

Conrow eventually settled in Kansas City, where she met her husband Jim, a real estate developer. Their family — including children James, Sarah and Elizabeth — settled in Texas and in the mid-1980’s they moved to Dallas, in the midst of tough times for real estate and the entire state economy.

“When we came to Dallas, we were really looking for regrouping. I hadn’t worked since the children were born and I was a little afraid that I had forgotten how. However, I decided that I could start using my early childhood education and work a little.”

Answering an ad, she began a stint training childcare providers on best

practices, and then moved into helping major corporations set up on-site childcare facilities or enhance community childcare opportunities. In the late 1980’s, Conrow began seriously thinking of opening her own center. She absorbed all she could about running a small business from seminars and classes, and then

found the perfect site — a closed branch bank in a handy location. She and her husband knew the owner, who was willing to let them use the building, rent-free, until Conrow had some income.

Money to finance remodeling, however, remained an obstacle. Six bankers turned Conrow down, but the seventh was a working mother with small children who said yes because “she knew what I was trying to do, she could see it, and she was living it every day,” Conrow recalled.

Bent Tree Child Development Center opened in 1991 with Conrow, a part-time assistant and one student, the child of a teacher who was impressed with Conrow’s philosophies and practices. Bent Tree now boasts a big percentage of teachers’ children.

In 1994 the center moved across the street to a new building and in 1998 Conrow completed the second phase of the 20,000-square-foot facility. 35 staff members now serve 250 children in 22 classrooms. The facility is equipped with observation windows for parents and has its own kitchen that serves meals family-style in the classrooms.

Conrow knows that when she adds a K-State grad to her team, the new employee will be well prepared.

“I know I won’t go wrong with a K-State grad. The lengthy practicum is key. Some other programs have short practicum experiences, but that’s not nearly good enough. This program is far above the caliber of others in its depth and insight. The students have all the qualities and knowledge I want in my staff.”

Program Prepares Students to Use Crucial Skills



Terrie McCants and students

The need to resolve conflicts peacefully is a hot topic in the world right now. Responding to this need, Kansas State University and FSHS, through the Division of Continuing Education (DCE), now offer both undergraduate and graduate certificate programs in conflict resolution, giving adult learners the chance to gain valuable workplace and life skills. Along with business people and community leaders, some of the most enthusiastic participants in these programs have been military personnel and their families stationed at Fort Riley, a large Army installation near Manhattan.

"We met with representatives of Fort Riley in 2004 and this topic was one the group identified as something they'd like to see K-State offer," said Terrie McCants, instructor in the School of Family Studies and Human Services and coordinator of the conflict resolution program. "They see value in the program because of the peacekeeping role our troops in Iraq have. They also believe it will help military families deal with the stress of deployment and re-entry."

She said conflict resolution courses are now available on post at Fort Riley and through Evening College on the K-State campus, and starting in fall 2006, both the undergraduate and graduate certificate programs will also be offered through distance education.

McCants, who has a master's degree in conflict analysis and resolution, is a state-approved mediator and mediation trainer. She is emphatic about the practical value of her discipline.

"People who learn how to manage and resolve conflict can better handle different demands, personalities and behaviors. They're also a positive role model for others, like their kids," she said.

Capt. Jen Kirk, Delta Company commander, 1st Engineer Battalion, will deploy with her unit to Iraq in the fall from Fort Riley. She has nothing but accolades for the program and the value it provides her in leading her company.

"There's a lot of conflict and stress among the soldiers and their families, and I help them with all aspects of their life," Kirk said. "I needed something offered at night and I knew the program would be great for personal and professional development. I had nothing to lose, so I signed up."

One of the techniques Kirk has found to be most effective at dispelling conflict is to visualize the conflict in terms of a bar graph. As emotions start to rise in intensity, the participants should

acknowledge their mutual tension while also describing their feelings to each other. The purpose of the bar graph is to mentally picture a leveling effect while appreciating the other person's point of view.

"This technique sounds so silly, but it works if you're in conflict. To the other person, you would say, 'OK, I see what you're saying that bothers you, but I also don't like this.'"

Of course, it's not only military personnel who benefit from the program. Roy Crenshaw, executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Manhattan, is another enthusiastic participant.

Crenshaw began taking the courses while he was still working in the corporate world. In his current position, he works with about 300 youth and matches them with

mentors. He sees that many families need techniques to solve disputes constructively before the disputes spiral into bigger problems. Crenshaw believes almost everyone would benefit from learning more about conflict resolution.

"I think it ought to be a requirement," he said. "We need to retool our thinking on problem solving. People get unhappy with each other about little things and they can't resolve them and they don't go away. You need a model to resolve that conflict. But people want shortcuts. They want to solve it without first understanding it."

Contact the K-State Division of Continuing Education at 1-800-432-8222 or visit www.dce.k-state.edu/conflictresolution for more information about the conflict resolution certificate program.



Terrie McCants

Stone House

part of family's
life for years



Renate Vovk Harvey and childhood friend during the 1970's

Few families have closer ties to FSHS and Stone House than do the ladies of the Vovk family. Sigrid Vovk works there, Renate Vovk Harvey attended Stone House as a child and Renate's daughter, six-month-old Samantha, is a new "family member." Renate is also an FSHS alumna, earning her bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders in 2001. But it all began with Sigrid.

"In the 1970's, I enrolled Renate in Stone House while I worked on campus and needed good child care," Sigrid said. "I then worked in the School of Family Studies and Human Services from 1983 to 2001, when I retired. I still work one day a week in Stone House, handling the billing."



Renate Vovk Harvey,
Sigrid Vovk and
Samantha Harvey today

Renate remembers Stone House warmly. "I have a very distinctive memory of sitting with a small group in Lou West's office and learning how to tie my shoes. To this day I can still picture it! I can also remember Lou standing out on the playground watching us," Renate recalled.

She said that her decision to pursue a bachelor's in CSD was not a tough one because she always wanted to work with small children and knew CSD would be a great foundation. Renate went on to earn her master's degree in early childhood special education from K-State in 2003. She now works with pre-schoolers in the Geary County School District in Junction City, Kan.

"As a special education teacher, I'm grateful to have a speech and language background. I work with lots of speech and language-challenged children, and I find myself using my therapy background in the classroom."

And to continue the family tradition, Renate's daughter Samantha will begin attending Stone House this fall.

"As soon as Samantha was born, I applied to the various programs at Stone House, and I'm so excited she can go! I have nothing but fabulous memories of that place as a child and as a student."

Join Us in Cat Town!

Enjoy food and hospitality at the KSU Stadium two hours before kick-off for the home games listed below. The College of Human Ecology invites alumni, faculty and friends to our Hospitality Tent. Stop by, say hello and have a bite to eat before you root the Cats on to victory! (Kick-off times to be announced. Please check www.k-statesports.com for times.)

October 7, vs. Oklahoma State University

October 14, vs. University of Nebraska (Harley Day)

October 28, vs. Iowa State University (Homecoming)

November 11, vs. University of Texas (Senior Day)

Produced by
New Boston
Creative Group, LLC
newbostoncreative.com

Lisa Sisley,
K-State '92

Kristin Brighton,
K-State '97, '99

Samantha Howard
K-State '05

Contributing Writer
Amber Weaver
K-State '05

Graduate Student Seizes the Day, Creates opportunities for himself



Jared DuPree

In an era when many young adults don't even move out of the house until they're 30, Jared DuPree, Ph.D. candidate in family studies and human services with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy, is a little different. At the age of 29, he has devised a new theory of creativity, started his family, become a ballroom dance champion and survived a terrible car crash. He has accomplished all this through a combination of his own gifts and the freedom to find his own niche afforded by FSHS.

"When I was looking for a Ph.D. program, I wanted flexibility and independence, and that was available here. The faculty have given me the opportunity to do what I wanted to do with my research and interests. I chose and designed most of my classes—there was no rigid curriculum here. I took a lot of my classes as independent studies."

Bill Meredith, director of FSHS, is impressed with DuPree's ability to see what is needed and to organize his time and priorities to accomplish those things.

"Jared will come into my office and ask, 'How about if I do this or that?' He's always thinking. For instance, he gathered

all of the data for the School's assessment plan and wrote the final report. He worked with the School's priority-setting committee and put together an impressive report. Jared has been a total lifesaver for me."

DuPree, who came to K-State in 2004, earned his associate's degree in English and psychology at a two-year college in Rexburg, Idaho. After serving a mission in Argentina for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, he finished his bachelor's degree in 1999 in family and human development at Utah State University. He earned his master's in marriage and family therapy from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2003.

DuPree consistently gets top marks from students in the classes he teaches, who write things like "He's the best professor I've had at K-State," not realizing he hasn't quite finished his Ph.D.

"I'm amazed at his teaching ability. I went in to observe him teaching once and he walked in the classroom with no notes or anything," Meredith recalled. "He proceeded to write an extremely elaborate model on the board and explained it

beautifully to the students."

DuPree, who will finish his Ph.D. this December, is writing his dissertation on creativity theory, his own combination of several models about how people produce innovations.

"Multiple processes impact a person's potential. The pieces to develop a holistic theory of creativity are out there, but not the whole picture yet. I'm working on that."

DuPree will next pursue an international MBA at the University of South Carolina.

"I want to do research that applies to business and cultural issues. I see this as a natural evolution. I'll be using my MFT skills and processes because relationships are crucial in business too. We all need to be creative in cross-cultural dealings and we need to reduce our fear in dealing with new people."

DuPree has produced or is in the process of producing eight publications, including an article about how supervisors of trainee therapists deal with ethical breaches, an article about infidelity and how couples cope when they wish to remain married, and an article about

how Latino couples form and maintain strong relationships.

DuPree gets so much done because he has a personal time management system that serves him extremely well.

“I don’t work before eight or after five. I protect my family time. Of course, there are exceptions, but this is the rule. I start with what I have to do like teaching and research, and then I prioritize my free time so I can exercise and spend time with my family. I don’t waste my time on mundane stuff like watching TV.”

DuPree is also a champion ballroom dancer. He met his wife when he lived briefly in Arizona and took her swing dancing at a local Lindy Hop club. He and his wife now have a business selling dance posters and books on the Internet.

“I got into ballroom dance at BYU Idaho when I walked by a class and saw about a hundred girls and ten guys. I thought to myself, ‘Hey, that’s for me!’” DuPree laughs.

A year ago, the DuPrees and their two daughters—Sienna, then four, and Bella, then three months—survived a terrible crash near Jetmore, Kan., as they traveled to Garden City, Kan., so Jared could conduct research interviews with Hispanic couples.

“We came over a little hill at dusk, and right in the middle of the road, on a bridge, was a huge bull. I had no time to react, and there was a ravine on either side of the bridge. I braked and turned, took my foot off the brake, braked again...It all happened in an instant. But somehow I spun our car clear around the bull without hitting it. However, we hit the bridge and the car flipped.”

Bella was thrown from her car seat and out the back windshield, which had shattered. Her father searched for her, convinced that she must have died.

“She hit the side of the ravine and rolled. I guess the slope slowed her down. I was searching around for her, and then I heard her crying. The car was totaled. Sienna was actually hurt worse, with cuts on her head.”

Meredith says the most amazing part of the story is what happened the next morning.

“Jared called Charlotte Shoup Olsen, associate professor in FSHS, and told her he wouldn’t be able to get as many interviews completed as planned, but he would get as many as he could. He didn’t even mention the accident to anyone until later.”

K-State’s Financial Planning Team Wins a Fourth National Competition

For the fourth time in seven years, Kansas State University’s financial planning team has won the Ameriprise Planning Invitational.

The competition, formerly called the American Express Planning Invitational, was April 19-22 in Minneapolis, Minn. This is the seventh year that a K-State team has participated in the competition finals. K-State also won the national title in 2000, 2003 and 2005.

Team members, all spring grads in family studies and human services with an emphasis in personal financial planning, were: Julie Fletcher, Lenexa; Audrea Youngers, Viola; and Jamie Mager, Lincoln, Neb.

“The K-State Financial Planning team has once again proven that K-State’s personal financial planning program is one of the top such programs in the country,” said Bill Meredith, director of K-State’s School of Family Studies and Human Services. “Four national championships in seven

years...it doesn’t get much better than that.”

Between 30 and 40 schools began the competition, but were narrowed to eight for the finals, said John Grable, associate professor of family studies and human services.

Over the years, Grable said judges have remarked to him that K-State students appear to have a strong work ethic and commitment to serving the needs of others.

“It says a lot about the University and a lot about the individual students,” he said. “We hope it also reflects well on the personal financial planning program and helps students prepare for their professional career.”



Stay Involved!

We love to hear from former students, regardless of what you’re doing.

Send a note to Dr. Bill Meredith (meredith@humecksu.edu) to let him know how you’re doing.

Let faculty members know if you are in a position to hire a graduating senior.

Keep our students in mind for internship opportunities.

Designate resources toward the creation of a new faculty position.

Thanks for everything you do to support FSHS!

Please contact Jennifer Rettele-Thomas, Associate Director of Development, at 785-532-7592 or jenniferr@found.k-state.edu to discuss ways you can invest in the future of FSHS.

The life of a speech-language pathologist

Jane Garcia didn't stumble into her profession. Born and raised on a farm, and actively involved in 4-H, her interest in a service-oriented profession was generated early in life.

"Looking back, the opportunity to grow up in a rural setting and be an active community member provided me with skills and a perspective that has helped me in my career in speech-language pathology," Garcia said.

A 1978 graduate of K-State in speech-language pathology, Garcia earned her master's degree at the University of Nebraska and her doctorate at the University of South Alabama.

"My blood runs purple," Garcia said. "I love being at K-State, and I enjoy the service-oriented profession. As a speech-language pathologist, you can do many different things with people across the lifespan. Being able to help people and make a difference in their lives is a great thing."

Garcia assists patients like Sean in their recovery from neurological conditions that impact their communication or swallowing. A wide range of conditions such as a stroke, car accident, cancer, cerebral palsy or even a surgical procedure can impact motor control enough to affect a person's day-to-day life.

"Eating and drinking are very socially important," Garcia said. "As a speech-language pathologist, it is my hope that we can help clients back to their typical eating and drinking pattern after an injury."

Research impact at K-State

Patient recovery is not the only aspect of Garcia's work. She is also involved in extensive research involving thickened liquids.

Imagine drinking a cup of coffee. The thin liquid moves easily down your throat, and you don't think twice about swallowing it. Now imagine having a neurological disorder that impacts your ability to swallow. The coffee moves too quickly, making it difficult for your throat muscles to coordinate, and you aspirate the fluid into your lungs because you cannot swallow correctly.

In order for patients with impaired swallowing to be able to stay nourished and hydrated, they often add commercial products, such as powdered or gel thickeners, to thin liquids. However, little research exists about their effects.

Garcia's research involves the viscosity — or thickness — measurements of thickened liquids for people with swallowing disorders. Her research can be used by healthcare providers in their clinical decision making for their patients' nutritional needs.

Garcia is quick to mention that her research is collaborative. With the help of faculty in the Department of Human Nutrition and student researchers, Garcia works to ensure that a patient's nutritional needs are balanced with recommendations for safe swallowing.

"The ability to test thickened liquids with sensory analysis testing (at the K-State Sensory Analysis Center) showed that the addition of a thickening product to a beverage altered its typical taste and texture characteristics," Garcia said. "Another important aspect of my research is the involvement of KSU undergraduate and graduate students in communication sciences and disorders. This research will help them acquire the knowledge they need for their own practices of assessment and intervention."

Recently, Garcia received the College of Human Ecology's Faculty Research Excellence Award for her research on thickened liquids.

"Jane is always willing to do what is needed," said Bill Meredith, FSHS department head. "Her work on thickening products for swallowing disorders has had a direct impact on the lives of the many people suffering from these medical problems."

Please contact Jennifer Rettele-Thomas, associate director of development, at 785-532-7592 or jenniferr@found.k-state.edu, to discuss ways you can enhance research and teaching in FSHS.

Check out our new website!
www.humec.k-state.edu/fshs



College of Human Ecology
School of Family Studies & Human Services
303 Justin Hall
Manhattan, KS 66506-1403

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 525
Manhattan, Kan. 66502

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Kansas State University is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or other nonmerit reasons, in admissions, educational programs or activities and employment (including employment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era), as required by applicable laws and regulations. Responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, has been delegated to Clyde Howard, Director of Affirmative Action, Kansas State University, 214 Anderson Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-0124, 785-532-6220