

The GrASP Gazette

Nova Southeastern University's School
Psychology Program Newsletter

School Psychologists



Fall

Spring

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Dear Readers,

Happy summer! The board members of Nova Southeastern University's Graduate Association of School Psychology are excited to present the newest edition of the GrASP Gazette! We have been able to share even more experiences and memories with each other and are extremely proud of our graduating class and our new interns.

Congratulations to everyone for getting through another semester. You all put your best effort into this program and we are so proud! Please enjoy this issue of the GrASP Gazette.

Stephanie Wietrzykowski and Angela Garcia

GrASP Co-Chairs



Be sure to read until the end for
important information and opportunities
to help you gain experience and
improve your CV!

Community Impact



1

\$348.13 was donated to the **Hal's Children's Fund** at Women in Distress (WID)! These funds will help provide critical support for children, including shelter, food, clothing, and therapy services.

WID is the only provider of early childhood therapy for domestic violence survivors under the age of 4 years old in Broward and Florida. Individual and group counseling and therapy services are also available for children and teens ages 4 to 17.



3

Chair-Elect Christina Kamien beat her own fundraising goal at this year's NSU's Relay for Life by raising more than \$2,000!



2

Approximately **\$450** was collected to support CSFI's mission! In this manner, GrASP seeks to support their mission to "provide services that promote educational and psychological well-being to needy Florida's families and children."

Amy Saravia and her sister supported BIAF's efforts to raise awareness and advocacy about TBI by joining their walk and raising \$65. Thank you!



4

Walk About Brain Injury 2017

5

Mekdes Damenu represented GrASP at the 3rd Kick for a Cause fundraiser benefiting the Muscular Dystrophy Association, which raised more than \$4000!

“13 Reasons Why” in the Words of a High School Student

1) *What is your overall impression of the Netflix series "13 Reasons Why"?*

I have mixed feelings about the show. Personally, knowing someone who has attempted suicide, the show did a great job of capturing the depression of a person in that situation, and they also made a really great storyline. Due to that, the show wasn't really about suicide prevention/ signs of suicide, and according to producer Selena Gomez, that was the show's supposed theme.

2) *What potential negative effects do you believe can result from the show?*

I believe that suicide could possibly be taken less seriously. When people use such serious issues as topics for a tv show, it causes people to think about the topic, but then disregard it because "it's only T.V."

3) *Has the show helped create awareness about mental health and suicide? If so, how?*

Yes and no, it's caused people to think about what they say to one another, and they may be able to better identify some of the signs of suicide. On the other hand, people consider this show as "pop culture", so people reference the show in negative ways. A lot of teenagers say things like "ugh kms [kill myself]" when they are stressed or don't like something. Now people say, "I'm going to Hanna Baker myself."

4) *What would you have done differently in the show?*

I would've made it more about identifying the signs of a suicidal person and ways they could've helped Hanna before she died.

5) *What impact has your school had in helping you learn about mental health and suicide?*

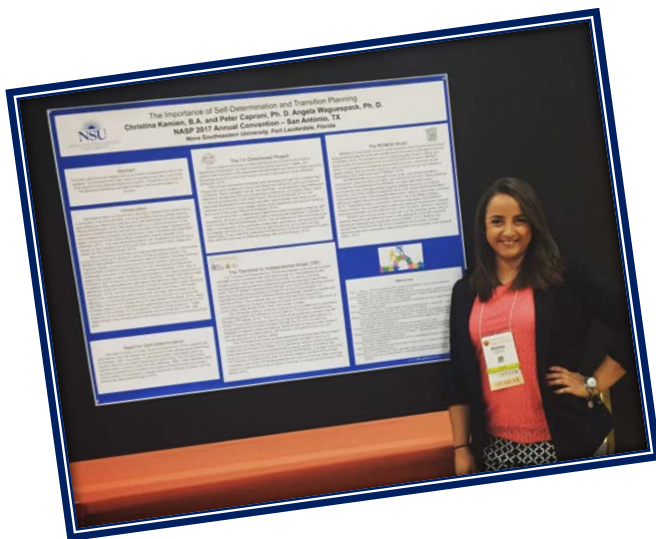
They have posters around the school with the suicide hotline phone number, they also have suicide prevention pamphlets in the offices.

6) *What recommendations would you give schools to create more awareness of teen suicide and to support improvements in students' mental health?*

I believe we should have a club that is specifically for people in under the "mental health" umbrella (depression, anxiety, suicidal, etc.) that they can go to for support and a way for them to make friends with people who have similar issues/ feelings. I also think that the school should hold an informational school-wide assembly discussing ways to identify/help people in a suicidal situation, and to also help students realize what they say or do could be reason for a suicide.

NASP Highlights

Some of our NSU students attended the National Association of School Psychologists' annual conference in San Antonio, TX this past February. We are extremely proud to have our students attend and present at the conference.



Second year doctoral student Christina Kamien stands in front of her poster on *"The Importance of Self-Determination and Transition Planning"*



Second year doctoral student Mekdes Damenu presents on *"School-based Intervention for GAD in Adolescent Families"*

Social Spot: Picnic in the Park

School Psychology students attended the weekly Food Truck event on a Tuesday night at Plantation Heritage Park. This event occurs every Tuesday and has a great variety of foods to choose from!



Social Spot # 2: BBQ @ Dr. Cash's House!



Doctoral and specialist students (right to left) Vidhi Thakkar, Emma Greco, Pam Hirsh, Jenna Lalia, Rachael Doyon, and Stephen Beard.



Doctoral students (left to right) Melissa Koniver, Kelli Dari, Alyssa Catuogno, Mylissa Fraser, and Davisha Scudder show their internship gitts.

Congratulations to all our Graduates!



Alexandra Alfonso (Psy.D.)
and Riley Higgins (Psy.S)



Elysse Demestichas (Psy.S), Tiara Bland
(Psy.S.), Marjorie Mattioli-Sanchez
(Psy.S), and Lauren Zakaib (Psy.S)



Mylissa Fraser (Psy.D.) and
Alyssa Catuogno (Psy.D)

Psy.D. Sharon Pedrosa

Psy.S. Jennifer Brait
Jonathan Chasin
Cherice Greco
Kourtney Taylor
Gina Walters
Gabriela Zadoff



Student Spotlight

Pam Hirsh
1st year
Specialist program

What do you like most about the School Psychology program?

The choice of content and faculty/professors. All the professors I have had so far have so much great and varied experience that makes the content of the courses and program that much more real and interesting. To me, it is one thing to learn from a textbook, but to hear recent accounts of what happens in the field is something one will never learn from a book.

Why did you choose School Psychology?

I knew I wanted to work with children as all my previous employment has been with children (mostly child care settings) and I loved it! I wasn't exactly sure of what I wanted to do, though, but I knew I did not want to be a teacher.

My undergraduate experience at the University of Central Florida was where I found my interests. I realized that the only classes I was motivated to study for and learn about were my psychology classes. From there on, I knew I had to go into a field that combined children and psychology. As I was thinking about a possible field, the memory of being tested for gifted in 9th grade popped into my head. After some research of the school psychology field and shadowing a school psychologist in Orlando, I knew that's what I wanted to do!

What is something we might not know about you?

I have never seen snow before. Yes, I have been to places like New York and Alaska where it often snows in the winter, but I just have never been there at the right time! Call me a true Floridian! I hope I get to see it at the upcoming NASP conference in Chicago!

What are some of your future goals?

To finish school successfully, have a family one day, and be successful in my career, wherever it may take me.

Name your favorite pet, snack, or song/musician.

Fun fact: the only pet I've ever had is a fish!

What would you be doing if you were not in the School Psychology field?

Maybe a different psychology field... not sure!

What are some of your involvements? (Clubs, research, presentations, conferences, practicum, internship, job, etc.)

School related involvements include being involved in GRASP. I also went to the FASP conference last year and can't wait to go to more conferences. It is such an incredible experience! I hope to be more involved in other things soon as well!

Otherwise, I currently work at the Mailman Segal Center Preschool and love it!



Student Spotlight

Aline Milfort 1st Year Specialist program

What do you like most about the School Psychology program?

Honestly, everything! But mainly learning about different disorders, assessments, cultural diversity, and hearing about the experiences of practicing school psychologists.

Why did you choose School Psychology?

I believe in the saying “Stand up for those who can’t stand up for themselves”, and in this field, I feel I have the ability to do that for students and families, specifically for minority and immigrant populations.

What are some of your future goals?

My future goals include presenting at a conference, such as FASP or NASP. After graduation, I would like to work in schools with low socioeconomic status (SES) and start an educational program within a low SES community.

What is something we might not know about you?

I’m a Christian author. In 2015, I published a book called “Tears Turned into Purpose”. It is a mini memoir about my personal, medical, and spiritual challenges. Through these experiences, I have developed a sense of triumph and wisdom that I believe would be helpful to others.

What would you be doing if you were not in the School Psychology field?

Great question. Possibly still working at the Center for Children and Families at Florida International University and missionary work around the world.

What are some of your involvements? (Clubs, research, presentations, conferences, practicum, internship, job, etc.)

I am a FASP Student Ambassador, a teacher’s aide at Mailman Segal Center for Human Development (our on-campus preschool), and an assistant at Connections Research Lab led by Dr. Diana Formoso.

Name your favorite pet, snack, or song/musician.

Oh, my goodness. Give me a pack of skittles or plantain chips and we are best friends ☺.



Student Spotlight

Sully Colón

4th Year

Doctoral Student

What do you like most about the School Psychology program?

The thing I like the most about our program is that we afforded the opportunity to specialize in our area of interest. Personally, during one of my annual reviews, Dr. Poland suggested I join a group of my interest because that will further guide me in the right direction. I was already part of NASP, FASP and PBASP, therefore I set out to find a group in positive psychology and signed up for Students of the International Positive Psychology Association (SIPPA).

Why did you choose School Psychology?

I chose school psychology because I find that with prevention and intervention we can turn a child's world around. Whether academics is affecting them socio-emotionally or their emotions are affecting their academics, it is all intertwined.

Even as a child I always knew my career would involve working with children. During my elementary school days, I would often finish my work early and was given the option to go help preschoolers or to go play in the art center. Of course, I always chose the preschoolers where I could "teach" the little ones. On my journey, I've received my M.S. in Mental Health Counseling and B.S. in Elementary Education. Working in these fields allowed me to have experiences that provided me with different perspectives. I had always planned to obtain a doctoral degree, and one day, to my amazement, I was searching the net and found that NSU was offering a Psy.D in School Psychology. The rest is history.

What are some of your future goals?

My goal is to someday have a private practice where I can provide assessments and evaluations for all children. I would also like to develop a program at free clinics or community mental health centers to provide psychoeducational evaluations and interventions for the underserved. More specifically, since I am a bilingual clinician, I aim to work with ELL students to assist in deciphering learning disabilities from their IQ and recommend targeted individualized evidence-based interventions. Finally, I enjoy early intervention in literacy. I believe I can make the most impact on a child's future by assisting them with tools in which they will be able to utilize to help themselves in the future.

What is something we might not know about you?

I was in marching and concert band (played clarinet) in middle/high school, and I was in Chorus (soprano) from elementary to undergrad. You could say I love music. I also have a daughter, Sarah, who is 6 years old, I truly appreciate this program because it has given me deeper understanding of my daughter.

What would you be doing if you were not in the School Psychology field?

I would choose to be a Pediatrician. Definitely something with children.

What are some of your involvements? (Clubs, research, presentations, conferences, practicum, internship, job, etc.)

I am the U.S. Membership and Recruitment Chair for the Student International Positive Psychology Association, Vice President for the Graduate Association of School Psychology (GrASP), and Public Policy Chair for Children's Services Fund, Inc.

I've presented at NASP and FASP in research involving early literacy. I enjoyed working on the Summer Reading Explorers Program (SREP) and witnessing the children increase their reading skills before my eyes in such a short amount of time. Practicum in SPACI has been the place where I've gained the most knowledge, including learning new assessments, integrating data, creating recommendations and finding resources all over South Florida for children and families.

Name your favorite pet, snack, or song/musician.

My favorite pets are dogs. As a child, I had a Pomeranian named Poka and a mixed Golden Retriever, Moosie. I love chocolate. I enjoy most music ranging from classical to heavy metal (this changes with my mood).



Student Spotlight

Stephen Beard

1st year

Doctoral Program

What do you like most about the School Psychology program?

What I like most is the ability to impact students at such an early age. By being involved in schools, and not simply in clinical settings, we have the opportunity to work with children from a very young age. The earlier we can provide services, the better the outcome for the child. I love being able to participate in—and contribute—to that effort.

What are some of your future goals?

My future goals include working in schools, working in private practice after earning licensure, and, finally, I hope to teach and work at a university level. I also hope to move back to the Pacific Northwest where I grew up.

Why did you choose School Psychology?

I chose School Psychology because I love the idea of being able to do more than assessment and therapy. Before graduate school, I was torn between education administration and psychology. School Psychology seems to allow me to be involved in both worlds. Along with therapy and assessment, we also are expected to consult and collaborate with teachers and administrators. This versatility and involvement in the education system is incredibly important to me.

What is something we might not know about you?

I am a huge sports fan and love to watch basketball. Also, I was supposed to be a twin!

What would you be doing if you were not in the School Psychology field?

Were I not in School Psychology, I am not sure where I would be. While I used to be in pursuit of a performance career in New York City, I do not think I would end up back in that realm. Rather, I think I would be either more involved in Education—either as a teacher or administrator—or more involved in Clinical Psychology and psychotherapy.

What are some of your involvements? (Clubs, research, presentations, conferences, practicum, internship, job, etc.)

I am involved in several student groups. I am the Advocacy Chair-elect of the Teaching of Psychology Division of Graduate Students (Top DoGS), the Treasurer-elect of the Graduate Association of School Psychology (GrASP), and an active member in NSU Students for Prevention, Intervention, and Response to Emergencies (NSPIRE). I am very interested and involved in developing public policy advocacy programs within the field of School Psychology as well the study of Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention. I also look forward to getting involved in consultation with both school administrators and legislators to advocate for both students and school psychologists.

Name your favorite pet, snack, or song/musician.

In terms of favorites, my favorite pet is any dog that is too big to be a lapdog, but is convinced they are a lapdog.

School and clinical psychology students join Dr. Cash and Dr. Caproni in their annual advocacy trip to Tallahassee. Along many other professionals, they advocated for mental health, students, school, diversity, and the educational system.

“As a future school psychologist, I know I can make a difference in the lives of students, families, and the schools where I am placed at. However, through public advocacy, I can make a difference at a systems level. Instead of reaching one student at a time, we can all affect thousands of students through policies. The Tallahassee public advocacy trip experience has made a permanent impact in my views as a citizen, a student, and a professional. I hope you will join me and many others on this journey next year!”

-Leticia Barbosa Soares
2nd year doctoral student



Food

- ✓ Rok BRGR
- ✓ Tap 42
- ✓ Kaluz
- ✓ Market 17
- ✓ Canyon Restaurant
- ✓ Bento
- ✓ Levy's Kosher of Hollywood

Arts and Entertainment

- ✓ Philip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science
- ✓ Rhythm and Vine
- ✓ VIBE
- ✓ Dicey's
- ✓ Riverside Market
- ✓ Lagnaippe

**Arts and Entertainment**

- ✓ Safari Adventure
- ✓ Morikami Japanese and Gardens
- ✓ Bonnet House
- ✓ Secret Woods Nature Center

Self-care Corner

Research suggests that burn-out is a large problem in the field of mental health and education.

Consider visiting these places to clear your mind for a bit and to get a better taste of the culture of South Florida.

You got this!

To Keep in Mind

Want to Publish?

- Special Focus Edition on Early Childhood Gender Identity. Deadline is **August 15, 2017**. More information at <http://apadivision16.org/2017/06/call-for-papers-special-focus-edition-of-perspectives-on-early-childhood-psychology-and-education-pecpe/>
- The School Psychologist ([here](#))
- School Psychology Quaterly ([here](#))
- FASP's *The Florida School Psychologist* (calls for its new edition will be made available soon)

Suicide Postvention: The Role of the School Community After a Suicide

By Dr. Scott Poland and Dr. Richard Lieberman

When: August 1st and August 2nd, 2017

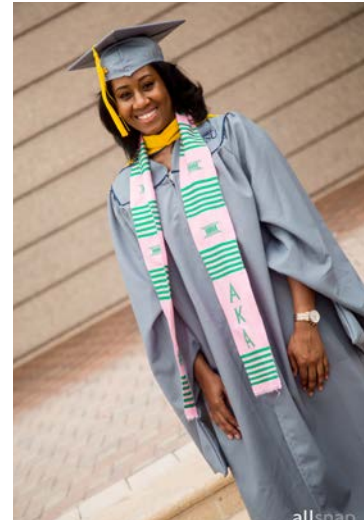
To register, click [here](#).

Alumni Spotlight

Tiara Bland

Psy.S.

Graduated in 2017



What do you like most about the School Psychology program?

I really liked the small class sizes, which allowed me to get to know my cohort and professors well. The program allows for you to get involved with many activities and to serve in various leadership roles. I also liked the practicum experiences (school-based and clinic-based). Overall, the school psychology program had me well-prepared for internship due to the vigorous training and experiences.

Why did you choose School Psychology?

I was originally an education major in undergrad, but wanted to find a way to do something with psychology as well. After researching what school psychology was, I knew that it would be good field for me to explore since I have a passion for both education and psychology. With choosing school psychology, I realized that I could help students to succeed in school with regards to their academics and behavior.

What are some of your future goals?

One of my goals is to become a nationally certified school psychologist. I desire to go back to graduate school within the next five years to earn my doctorate degree in school psychology and to become a professor in the near future.

What would you be doing if you weren't in the school psychology field?

If I wasn't in the school psychology field, I think I would be in law enforcement working with the FBI.

Name a favorite pet, snack, or song.

My favorite snack is KIND Bars.

What were some of your involvements?

I was involved on and off campus while in the program. I was a member of GrASP and served as the Alumni Relations and Mentorship chair for two years. I was a NASP student leader. I presented twice at FASP conferences. My presentations focused on working with visually impaired students in the classroom and facilitating family-school partnerships with ethnic minority families. Off-campus, I started a women's community service group called Women United to Serve, which did monthly projects that focused on social justice issues such as homelessness and hunger in the Fort Lauderdale area.

What advice would you give to those going on internship soon?

I strongly encourage interns to practice self-care during internship to prevent burnout. Don't be afraid to ask your supervisor questions on things that you are unsure about. Ensure that you are punctual at your schools and communicate with your supervisor. Don't be afraid to explore and try new assessments that are available in your school district. Think of internship as a yearlong interview process. Find ways to make yourself stand out from other interns or job applicants (E.g. presenting at your schools, FASP, or NASP, volunteering with a community organization that works with special needs, getting involved in your district's school psychology association, etc.).

We are excited to announce that Tiara will be working for Baltimore City Public Schools! Congrats!!!



What are some of your main interests?

I'm very interested in public policy advocacy because I believe school psychologists are very good at advocating for individual children and families but not so good at advocating for themselves as professionals and for the specialty of school psychology. I'm also very interested in suicide prevention and part of that is because two of my brothers died by suicide. It's very personal for me but I also worked with many potential suicidal individuals over the course of my career. Knowing that I helped them survive has been deeply gratifying. I'm interested in and have written a lot about depression and the treatment of depression in children and adolescents. Currently, I am interested in doing research on the use of simulated patients to train psychology students in interviewing and psychotherapeutic skills.

Faculty Spotlight

Gene Cash, Ph.D.
Professor

What would you be doing if you weren't in the school psychology field?

If I had never gone into school psychology, I always thought I would like to be an airline pilot. If I weren't doing school psychology right now, I'm too old to be an airline pilot, so I would probably be retired and traveling all around the world and soaking up many cultures. I'm also interested in the field of allergies because my wife is an allergist and she and I do joint talks on food allergies and bullying. So, you can tell from my alternate choice that I love traveling.

What do you like most about the School Psychology program here at NSU?

Always the students. They are vitalizing, interesting, challenging. The program exists for the students and through students I have an opportunity for a kind of professional immortality. I also think that we have a really good faculty. We have people whom I believe set a good example for the students in association involvement, such as presentations and research and we just have a lot of amazing people in the school psychology program. I also love taking groups of students to Tally each year for the advocacy trip.

What is one interesting fact that people may not know about you?

In my youth, I was very poor at athletics---gangly, uncoordinated. However, when I was in the Army, I was a member of the first Army softball and volleyball teams.

If you could have dinner with one celebrity/ famous person who would it be?

I would like him to be alive when I have dinner with him--- Leonardo DiVinci. He was the epitome of a renaissance man--- probably the greatest thinker of his time and accomplished in so many different fields. I would love to talk to him about almost anything and have him share with me his insights. It would be fascinating to share with him what we have accomplished since he was alive.

What is your favorite snack?

Peeps, of course.

What is your all-time, favorite movie?

Citizen Kane

Tips for The Field

1. You will not get bored once you are out there!
2. Learn on your own and within the setting you are working in. Be creative when searching for resources.
3. While in school, what you do outside the classroom is what helps you stand out.
4. Focus on social emotional learning and know different types of interventions and ways to implement them when working with low incidence (e.g. congenital malformations, verbally/physically aggressive, highly sexualized) and severe EBD (e.g. significant behavior act, borderline, histrionic) students.
5. In reevaluations, explain how behavior and cognitive functioning change due to medication. Take an objective approach (i.e., then vs now).
6. Finger netting is a great way to teach students different skills (e.g. emotional regulation, attention, problem solving, socialization) via explicit learning. Talk about different topics while doing it and allow students to help each other to further promote these skills.
7. Task differentiation is very important when working with low incidence populations. It will help you identify strengths that can be used to achieve goals aimed at facilitating students functioning within their community.
8. Take an opportunity to volunteer with any population you are interested in (e.g., juvenile detention center).
9. Set rules with tough kids with psychopathology. For example, "we are going to do things that are tough and you are going to be frustrating. You just need to say I'm done." It has always worked for me.
10. Find ways to connect students with their community (e.g., making scarfs for the nursing home).
11. Most places will allow you to do more if you take the initiative, so don't hesitate!
12. You need to perfect your organizational skills. This means scheduling time for writing your reports as well.
13. Be flexible and confident!
14. Audiobooks are a great way to help with long commutes.
15. Understand reading disabilities and how they present in kids.
16. Find an area of interest and pursue it!
17. Conceptualize each case (performance and pattern of scores) and explain it to the team. You're a detective, an investigator! Nontraditional observations help explain the big picture.
18. During feedbacks with parents, think about what's more relevant to them. Come up with ways to surprise them and provide them with information on where their kids are at and what they can do.
19. Perfect your poker face! Mine saved me when asked by another accomplished school employee, "So you can tell if a child has dyslexia by the way they make their 8's? You know, if it's in one motion, they don't have it, but if they draw two circles then it is dyslexia." Hahahaha You can't make this stuff up! :)

BY Kelly
Miller

NSU
Alumni

Co-Founder
of GrASP

Don't
hesitate to
contact her
with any
questions
you might
have at

kmckenziemiller@gmail.com

You can also
access some
resources she
has used in
the past here.