

# The Educator's Voice NEWSLETTER

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## The Educator's Voice

This newsletter is a combined effort of the Friends of the School of Education (Friends), the Salem State College Alumni Association and the college's School of Education. It is our goal to bring news of the programs, events, contributions, and achievements of the Friends and the college's School of Education. Dr. **Neal DeChillo**, dean of the School of Human Services, **Jackie Coogan '70**, president of the Friends of the School of Education, Dr. **Mary-Lou Breitborde**, associate dean of the School of Education and **Eileen O'Brien '01, '09G**, director of alumni affairs and annual giving, approved the newsletter plan. The organization and preparation of the newsletter was done by **Sheila Kearney '54, '67G**, **Dr. Ann Murray**, **Jackie Rapisardi '76G**, **Merle Schell '03G** and **Rachel Sturma**. We plan to publish a newsletter two times during the academic school year, once in the fall and again in the spring. Look for the introduction of the Friends of the School of Education book club and other topics in the fall edition of the newsletter! Have a wonderful summer!

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION NEWS

### GREETINGS FROM THE ASSOCIATE DEAN

*Mary-Lou Breitborde, Ed.D.*



Mary-Lou Breitborde

Greetings to alumni, faculty, students, campus administrators, and other friends of education! I am delighted to help inaugurate this first issue of the Friends of the School of Education newsletter, and bring you news from the School of Education.

I am a 20-year veteran of Salem State's education community, and proud of what we continue to offer the region's children. Each year, we endorse some 400 well-prepared teachers, leaders and support personnel. Our active faculty contribute to local schools and

community organizations as consultants, on-site researchers and professional development providers. They publish articles and books, and present nationally. They secure grants to advance their fields; and model lifelong learning and development. Our strong relationships with local districts have earned us the status of lead institution for the new Northeast Regional Readiness Centers, a collaborative of colleges, school districts and organizations sharing resources and 'best practices' to improve teaching, learning and educational policy.

I'm happy to hear from our alumni, and learn how you're doing, what you'd like to know about your alma mater and what you remember about your own education here. Please join me in congratulating the Friends for helping us stay connected.

## FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION NEWS

### GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Jackie Coogan '70, President,  
Friends of the School of Education Board*

"Be the change you wish to see in the world." — *Gandhi*



Jackie Coogan '70

As the new president of the Friends of the School of Education, I am very excited and honored to hold this position. For more than a decade, the full Friends board

has sponsored and presented several extremely worthy and informative programs that enhance the professional development of educators across this Commonwealth, especially for active and retired educators as well as undergraduate and graduate students in the Salem State College School of Education. Many programs are steadfast traditions, like the highly successful outstanding educator awards and the student, faculty and alumni student brunch. In the late fall of the last four years, a program that has been both productive and a highly successful

*continues on page 2*

cooperative partnership with the Friends is the Best Practices Conference. This endeavor has given us additional opportunities to work closely with all of you.

New programs this year include an educator's book club, which will be a collaborative effort between us and the Salem State bookstore. This will be a very exciting, sharing and fun activity to be involved with right here on campus. Educators News Blast/Newsletter has its origin with this first edition. This will be a very useful communication vehicle for all of us to keep in touch and informed. It is very important for us to stay connected, knowledgeable and have our voices heard.

As president of this board, and over my thirty-seven year career in education and now as a retired educator, I continue to be strongly committed and dedicated to education, especially public education from pre-school to higher education. Together, we need to always be there advocating, achieving and anticipating the highest quality for our schools, the field of education, educators, and most of all for our students. I invite and welcome all of you and your participation, and encourage you to become involved with the Friends of the School of Education Board of Directors and the greater Salem State College Alumni Association.

Margaret Meade tells us that, "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." In this greater universe, we are that small group of people. I encourage all of you to become the change that we strive for in education and for future generations.

Please get involved and join us!

## AND NOW THERE ARE THREE

*Dr. Ann Murray, School of Education*

In order to better meet the needs of the more than 2300 students enrolled in 50 distinct education programs at Salem State, the School of Education has reorganized into three distinct departments.

1. Childhood education focuses on early childhood and elementary education
2. Adolescent education and leadership addresses middle and secondary teaching and school leadership; and
3. Literacy, counseling and learning development services graduate programs in reading, special education, school counseling, English as a second language, technology, and library/media.

This restructuring was instituted after two years of data collection and assessment. The effort was headed up by the School of Education Restructuring Committee, with the involvement and endorsement of all full-time faculty. A proposal was submitted, and received final approval from the college administration last summer.

Faculty with similar areas of academic expertise can now work closely together on matters related to student services, advising and curriculum development. In addition, the incorporation of both undergraduate and graduate faculty and courses into these newly established departments has resulted in more efficient and coherent service.

Michelle Pierce, associate professor and chairperson of the adolescent education and leadership department, is a former high school educator who received her doctoral degree from Boston University. Dr. Pierce teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in content-area literacy, and the literacy development of English language learners. She was awarded a Fulbright fellowship last spring to teach at the Universidad de Tarapacá in Arica, Chile, and was a recent discussant at the National Reading Conference. Contact information: phone: 978.542.7093; email: mpierce@salemstate.edu

Francesca Pomerantz, associate professor and chair of the literacy, counseling and learner development department, teaches literacy methods courses for undergraduate students in the teacher preparation program, and graduate courses in reading, children's literature and writing. Dr. Pomerantz is also the coordinator of the M.Ed. program in reading. She received her doctoral degree from Boston University in literacy, language and cultural studies. Her research focuses on preparing teachers to teach literacy and she has presented numerous times at the National Reading Conference and the American Educational Research Association. Most recently, Dr. Pomerantz, in conjunction with the Lynn public schools, received a Literacy K-12 Partnership grant from the state Office of Literacy to provide professional development at the Connery School in Lynn. Contact information: phone: 978.542.7042; email: fpomerantz@salemstate.edu

Cleti Cervoni is an associate professor and chair of the childhood education department in the School of Education at Salem State. She teaches science methods courses for undergraduates and graduates in the teacher preparation program, and graduate courses in qualitative research and curriculum and assessment. Dr. Cervoni received her doctoral degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Her research centers on the social construction of gender in elementary science classrooms. She is a U.K. Fulbright research scholar. Contact information: phone: 978.542.7066; email: ccervoni@salemstate.edu.



From left to right are the Salem State School of Education Chairs, Dr. Michelle Pierce, Dr. Francesca Pomerantz and Dr. Cleti Cervoni.

# HAITI: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

*Dr. Ann Murray, School of Education*

Nicole (Nikki) Filostin, a 2008 Salem State School of Education graduate, had a goal for as long as she can remember of teaching children who had little or no opportunity for a good education. Through a contact which her parents had with an orphanage in Haiti, Nikki first went to that country in 2007, where she spent the summer teaching English and basic computer classes to 60 orphans. "I fell in love with the culture," she states, "and the joy of the Haitian people. Despite all the hardships they were facing, there was a sense of community."

That feeling of connection led to Nikki's return to Haiti in December 2007, and to her exploring job opportunities with elementary schools scheduled to start up in September 2008. Just two weeks after her college graduation, Nikki moved to Merger, Haiti, which is located half way between the cities of Port-au-Prince and Leogane. She was hired as director of a school that "had no name, no prospective students, no furnishings, and no staff." There is no public education in Haiti, but through scholarship money donated by US citizens, money that covered tuition, uniforms and books, the school opened in September with 17 students.

Traditionally, Haitian schools are teacher-centered and, according to Nikki, are places where, "Students are bombarded with age-inappropriate materials they are required to memorize in order to pass." However, inspired by teaching methodology she learned at Salem State, and particularly by the book *The World We Created* at Hamilton High by Gerald Grant, which was assigned



reading in a course taught by Dr. Thomas Billings, Nikki wanted this school to be different. Teacher "toolboxes," multimedia, song, movement, and art were introduced as part of the curriculum, and instruction gradually became more open and interactive. Nikki admits change is very difficult, but witnessed real progress at the school, whose enrollment grew to 37 by the end of the first school year. In August, Nikki facilitated Haiti's "first-ever" professional development training, and when the school opened for its second year in September 2009, enrollment had grown to 140!

At this point, Nikki, recognized the importance of bringing her school model to other needy areas. The school was turned over to the Institute of Grace, a nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C., committed to continuing the established educational model.

In January 2010, as Nikki was in

the process of building relationships with other schools seeking change, the earthquake hit. After initially helping with first aid in the street clinics, she soon found that her most valuable gift was serving as a translator at a clinic established by Heartline Ministries, a missionary organization from Boston. In the weeks following the quake, Nikki witnessed and worked alongside many dedicated doctors and nurses to provide trauma and in-patient care.

Although just recently returned to her family's home in Colorado for a visit and some rest, Nikki has yet another new adventure ahead. She and her husband, Jemps Filostin, a Haitian police officer, celebrated their first wedding anniversary this past February, and are expecting their first child. Nikki is also considering her next step, including when to return to Haiti and in what role, and whether she might first pursue more education.

# FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION NEWS

## ALUMNI BRUNCH: MARCH 8, 2010

### PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

*Carla Guarnieri '75,  
Friends of the School of Education Board*

For close to 10 years the Friends have sponsored a student/faculty/alumni brunch. This year's brunch was held in the Martin Luther King Jr. Room at the Ellison Campus Center on March 8. Jackie Coogan '70, president of the Friends of the School of Education, greeted the fifty guests, and made special note of the students who attended, our "future educators" who will continue to give inspiration and hope to education.

Dr. Mary Lou Breitborde, associate dean of the School of Education, added an historical perspective when she began her greeting with some facts about our 156-year-old institution; an institution that began with a one-year program in 1854. This same school became Salem Normal School, and in 1932 became Salem Teachers College. Salem Teachers College became a comprehensive instructional institution in 1960 and we are now hoping for university status in 2010.

Karen McNamara, 1969 graduate and a recently retired special education teacher from Salisbury, described her entrance to student teaching, the prevailing feeling that "hippies can't become teachers," her ease of employment, and her dedication

and satisfaction with her career in special education. As a special grace note, Mrs. McNamara thanked Dr. Edna Mauriello '44 for her patience as dean and for her teaching ability in the classroom. Mrs. McNamara is a Walmart Teacher of the Year award winner at the state level.

Mike Vella '05, '08G, represented the present, and described his transition from student and student body president to teacher, and then to community development coordinator at Brandeis University. He said that with education as it is right now, one needs to work hard, adapt, network, and apply for jobs. When looking at graduate courses, he found courses in student development theory and earned his master's degree in education in 2008. He invited listeners to find information about his career on his Facebook page.

Leslie Danielson, who received her bachelor's degree in elementary education (with a dual major in sociology) from Salem State this year, represented the future of education. In her presentation, Leslie emphasized that what it takes for success in education is the real passion that drives us as educators to do everything we can for our students no matter the circumstances. In order to teach our students effectively we have to first reach them. This takes patience, perseverance and passion. It also takes real commitment to build a better

future for tomorrow's education and, most importantly a better future for the students of today. Knowledge is power, but knowledge is most powerful when we share it. In her previous career, Mrs. Danielson was a pastry chef at Walt Disney. She is now the mother of two children and a wife, and is active in community work in Woburn.

Faculty member Johanna Morgan came to the podium, and acknowledged Leslie's hard work on behalf of Pi Lambda Theta, the education honor society. Leslie recently helped organize a book fair which netted \$1,237.06 for Early Intervention Services of the North Shore.

A faculty member who attended made this comment after the Friends brunch: "It's a good-for-the-soul brunch, and reminds me how glad I am to be part of education and of Salem State."

### HISTORY IN THE MAKING

*Dr. Marilyn Flaherty '54,  
Friends of the School of Education Board*

In 2007, Dr. Erik Champy '89, '94G, president of the Friends of the School of Education Board, formed a history committee for the purpose of writing the history of the Friends from its conception in 1993 to the present (2009). The committee, comprised of Sheila Kearney '54, '67G, Julie Murray '99, Dr. Edna Mauriello '44, and Dr. Marilyn Flaherty '54, chair, has been busy finding, collecting, organizing, and collating materials that highlight the terms of office of the past presidents of the Friends of the School of Education.

Dr. Thomas Billings '72, '75G, Sandra Purcell '59 and Dr. Erik Champy '89, '94G served as presidents from 1993-2009. The agendas, minutes, brochures, pamphlets, and other memorabilia of their terms are now housed in folders. Committee members are reading them, and writing summaries of their years in office as presidents.

These summaries will then be used to write the history of the Friends from 1993-2009. It is hoped that as each president completes his or her term of office, the term will be summarized and appended to the history.



*Pictured above are our speakers at the alumni brunch: Leslie Danielson '10, Michael Vella '05, '08G and Karen McNamara '69*

## 2010 OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARDS

Jackie Rapisardi '76G,  
Friends of the School of Education Board

The ceremony at which we bestow our very prestigious outstanding educator awards will take place on May 26, 2010, at the Danversport Yacht Club in Danvers, Mass. The Friends established this award in 1995 to recognize and celebrate individuals who have made outstanding contributions to education. The outstanding educator award recognizes Salem State graduates with a major, minor or masters' degree in education, and honors individuals who through dedication, contribution or service promote the goals of the Friends of the School of Education. Members of the Salem State College faculty, staff and administration, along with friends of the community who have made outstanding contributions to education, may also be considered for this award. The Friend of the School of Education Friend of Education Award acknowledges a person who has not attended Salem State College, but through his/her contributions has made an impact on education.

This year, more than fifteen nominations were reviewed, along with letters of support. After much deliberation and discussion, the recipients for this year's awards were chosen.

### RECIPIENTS OF THE OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR AWARDS 2010

#### *Friend of the School of Education:*

Anne Wass, President of  
Massachusetts Teachers Association

#### *Outstanding Educators:*

Rebecca A. Duda '02, '04G

Charles E. Jones '61

Louise Tarricone McKenna '74, '78G

James L. Ridley '76

Thomas M. Ryan '73

### CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENTS!

## BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE HELD NOVEMBER 14, 2009

Mary-Lou Breitborde, Ed.D.  
Associate Dean of Education

On a rainy Saturday in November, some 150 teachers, counselors, school nurses, principals, and education students gathered together at the Bertolon School of Business to participate in the third annual Best Practices in Education Conference. Many were returning for the second or third time, and many of those were heard to remark, "It's raining again this year." Inside the building, participants were treated to a range of workshops on the following themes: engaging families, celebrating the arts, health and mental health, reaching all learners, critical thinking, and fostering literacy.

This annual conference, born three years ago when members of the Salem State College Friends of the School of Education Board of Directors met to brainstorm potential activities and the new associate dean sought to expand School of Education programs that were practical yet scholarly, is a convergence of good ideas. Both were in favor of a conference for practicing educators and both wanted to forge closer relationships between alumni and the School of Education, faculty and students. What developed was a strong working committee of alumni, faculty and students. They have been responsible for best practices conferences held in 2007, 2008 and 2009. Presenters, who represent colleges, local schools and community organizations, offer their time for a very small remuneration, and have fun themselves on a day of learning, sharing and networking.

At the 2009 conference, participants continued to find excellent variety in the presentations, approachable presenters and new ways to teach and reach their students. Typical of comments made on evaluations were, "My first BPEC and it was great! I will recommend it to friends!" and "I've always benefited from any workshops sponsored by Salem State, this one included. Very prepared!" Planning has already begun for the fourth annual Best Practices in Education Conference, scheduled for fall 2010. Plan to come, but remember to bring your umbrella!

# Stay Connected!

## SAVE THE DATE

**2010 Best Practices Conference  
Saturday, November 14, 2010**

More information available soon

Alumni Affairs  
[salemstate.edu/alumni](http://salemstate.edu/alumni)  
978.542.7530

School of Education  
[salemstate.edu/education](http://salemstate.edu/education)  
978.542.7523



## FRIENDS OF EDUCATION 2009-2010

Jacqueline M. Coogan '70, President  
Jo-Anne D. Murphy '77G, Vice President  
Rosemarie R. Theberge '07, Secretary  
Karen A. McNamara '69, Treasurer

Kimberly A. Auger '92  
Kathleen A. Billings-McLaughlin '73, '75G  
Erik J. Champy '89, '94G  
Marilyn E. Flaherty '54  
Dorothy M. Foley '48  
Stephen L. Grace '73  
Carla A. Guarnieri '75  
Sheila P. Kearney '54, '67G  
Andrea C. Liftman '75G  
Edna A. Mauriello '44  
Cynthia A. McFarlane '59  
Julie A. Murray '99  
Jacqueline A. Rapisardi '76G  
Merle R. Schell '03G  
Theresa M. Smith '04, '08G  
Michael J. Vella '05, '08G  
Rudolph L. Weekes '96

## DONATE TO EDUCATION

The Friends of Education and the School of Education request your support as they continue to provide quality education and programming to our students and alumni.

A gift to the School of Education will support its goal to develop intellectual and ethical educators who can work within a collaborative educational community and who are committed to serving the diverse needs of learners of all ages.

A gift to the Friends of Education will support its numerous programs designed to engage alumni with one another and the college, recognize outstanding contributions to education, advocate strongly for education in the Commonwealth, and serve as a resource for mentoring, networking, and professional development.

To make a contribution to either of these efforts, please visit [saalemstate.edu/donate](http://saalemstate.edu/donate) and specify your designation in the 'comments' section of the online form, or mail your donation to Salem State Development, 352 Lafayette Street, Salem MA, 01970.

Thank you for your support!

## BOOK CLUB

Would you like to join an Educators Book Club at Salem State?

The Friends of Education are polling education alumni to see if you are interested. This is a great chance to meet and network with fellow alumni. The group plans to hold meetings beginning in fall 2010 at the Salem State Bookstore.

Please answer the following questions and send responses to [alumni@saalemstate.edu](mailto:alumni@saalemstate.edu)

- Are you interested in an Educators Book Club?
- Would you like to discuss books that center around education and educational issues?
- Would you prefer novels/ biographies?

We look forward to your responses!