

Did you know?

- Twenty-one of Nebraska's 93 counties have no licensed mental health practitioners.

Makes you think...

The poorest county in America isn't in Appalachia or the Deep South. It is on the Great Plains, a region of dying ranches and struggling farm towns.

Thomas Frank
What's the Matter with Kansas
(Metropolitan Books,
2004)

Fall 2004

Volume 2, Issue 2

Big Hopes for Small Towns

Mangis Musings

Starting a not-for-profit organization and counseling center has been the biggest adventure of my life. (That's either cool or pathetic.) It has been hard work, white-knuckle anxiety and pure enjoyment all rolled into one.

We have had the chance to see God's hand in the growth of our ministry over and over again. But once in awhile something makes me stop and see how far God really has brought us in this endeavor. As I write, Jamie, our current pre-doctoral intern, just dropped twelve applications on my desk from people around the country who want to complete their predoctoral internship with CRP.

Two years ago we had two applicants. And I have already received several requests from graduate students who want to do their practica with us next year. We trust God's provision for the necessary funds to support the training, and His wisdom as we select from among these gifted future rural psychologists.

We know God has a special place in his heart for the underserved. We are thrilled to play this role in sending resources where they are desperately needed. Thank you for your prayers and support in this great adventure.

CRP Collaborates with Local Hospital

Throughout the nation rural communities suffer from a shortage of health providers, including mental health. Rural folk remain less likely than the population as a whole to have medical insurance, and when they do have insurance, they are less likely to have mental health coverage. Mental health clinics in rural areas cover larger service areas. Rural mental health clinics rely on external funding, also shrinking these days. Hard times for farmers create a domino effect—when farmers cut expenditures, the whole community suffers economically. Rural communities have to choose which services to keep and which to abandon as resources dwindle.

As a result, the cutting edge of rural mental health practice is the integration of mental health services with primary health care. Rural communities lower costs by combining a mental health clinic

with a medical clinic.

The Center for Rural Psychology has launched our first endeavor in combining these two vital services. We are thankful to have Todd Burnett, a pre-doctoral intern, serving through an agreement between Delnor Community Hospital (Geneva, Illinois) and CRP. Practicing in both settings allows Todd direct consultation with primary care physicians. This arrangement benefits both CRP and Delnor, at a lower cost to each institution.

In addition, Todd educates CRP staff in primary care psychology. Utilizing creative ways of meeting the needs of rural populations is what CRP is all about. We appreciate your continued support, helping us forge new relationships to better train our students in the most up-to-date rural mental health practice techniques.

CRP Snapshots



Todd Burnett

CRP's central mission is to train students in rural psychology. We do that at our training clinic, Heartland Counseling, located in Elburn, Illinois, about 50 miles west of Chicago. Elburn is an "Exurb," a farming community slowly succumbing to the encroaching suburbs. Heartland staff includes licensed doctoral and masters level clinicians who this year supervise 7 students at varying stages of graduate training. We hope you enjoy these glimpses into the lives of some of the excellent students serving CRP at Heartland.

Todd Burnett, MA, M.Div.

1. What is your rural background? My family has rural roots, and I spent summers of my youth on a farm in rural Oklahoma. I have served as both a minister and counselor in rural Kentucky. My counseling experience in Illinois includes serving in the rural communities of Sandwich and Yorkville.

2. What are you doing at Heartland? I am part of an innovative agreement between CRP and Delnor Community Hospital in Geneva, IL to share a pre-doctoral intern. I serve one day a week at Heartland, and 4 days at Delnor.

3. What are your hopes for the future? To continue to practice in the Elburn area and be part of CRP.

4. How is CRP contributing to the fulfillment of those hopes? By providing an opportunity for ongoing training and experience in counseling in a rural area.

Julie Whalen, BA

1. What is your rural background? While I was not raised in a rural area, both of my parents grew up in rural communities. My grandparents and great-grandparents on both sides were farmers, so rural values run deep within our family. My husband Mike grew up in rural Texas, and we have decided that rural life is the only life for us.

2. What are you doing at Heartland? I have two roles at Heartland: intern and office manager. As an intern, I am learning group, individual, and marital counseling. As office manager, I am learning how to run a counseling center.

3. What are your hopes for the future? Mike and I plan on moving near his hometown of Wimberley in the beautiful Hill Country of Texas.

4. How is CRP contributing to the fulfillment of those hopes? First, by having the dual roles of office manager and intern I feel I will be better prepared to fulfill the many tasks needed in a rural clinic. Second, Elburn is comparable to the town Mike and I plan to move to. Wimberly is an hour away from San Antonio, and many people who work there are pushing their way out toward the surrounding rural area. Heartland's clients face issues similar to those I will see in rural Texas. Finally, I feel I am receiving thorough and excellent clinical training at Heartland. My three supervisors are helping me become a competent professional, and my experience has prepared me well to meet the needs of rural communities.

Becky Preussler, Psy.D.

1. What is your rural background? I grew up in a large farming community in northeastern Ohio and the local Amish settlement allowed me to witness another different rural culture.

2. What are you doing at Heartland? I started as a Pre-doctoral intern and then had the privilege of completing my post-doctoral fellowship here. I currently work as a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor with children, adolescents, and adults. I also co-lead a social skills group and provide individual and group supervision for the students.

3. What are your hopes for the future? I plan to continue to live and work in rural communities.

4. How is CRP contributing to the fulfillment of those hopes? By providing training and work experience with rural populations. I feel affirmed in my call to work with the rural underserved.

*Editor's note: Becky and her husband Rich have accepted positions in Fargo, North Dakota and will be moving there in early 2005. Look for more of Becky's story in a future **CRP Field Report**.*



I feel affirmed in my call to work with the rural underserved.

Becky Preussler



Julie Whalen

CRP Portrait

Now that you've glimpsed the hopes of some of our current crop of students, take a look at this picture of the reverse side of the Center for Rural Psychology. Lisa Riemenschneider is a professional who dreams of bringing her specialized training to bear on the real problems facing people in small towns. She did her graduate training (MA and Psy.D.) at Wheaton College, took her pre-doctoral internship at the VA in rural Danville, Illinois, and completed postdoctoral neuropsychology fellowships at the Memphis, Tennessee, VA Medical Center (2000-2001), and at Tripler Army Medical Center in Honolulu, Hawaii (2001-2003).

Lisa Riemenschneider, Psy.D.

I grew up on a farm in southern Michigan, outside a town of 400 people. My parents were teachers but my father grew up on a cattle ranch in rural Colorado, so he wanted us to know that kind of life. We always had a half-acre garden and lots of animals—horses and cows at times, pigs, chickens, ducks, a goat for a little while—in addition to working in my Dad's greenhouse and learning how plants grow. My mom was a city girl, so when it got too quiet, we would drive into Toledo to look at the lights. I'm very grateful for my parents' decision to raise us in that setting, and I hope someday, along with my husband Hans, to provide the same thing for our little son, Teddy.

I'm a clinical neuropsychologist, and

I provide assessment, recommendations, and family education for people with brain-based disorders, including everything from stroke to Alzheimer's disease to epilepsy to traumatic brain injury. I also enjoy speaking to groups about how to avoid brain injury and how to learn more about the brain.

My hope for the future is that we can develop a strong neuropsychological model that provides effective and appropriate care for rural families. This will require creativity, innovation, and patience, because it is difficult to provide a specialty service in an area where even basic services are often not available to meet the enormous needs. My own experience in rural living made me painfully aware of the high price that is paid when one has a condition that could be helped by a doctor or counselor, but none is there to see. My hope is to "try to be part of the solution," as my Dad would say.

Heartland is the very type of practice I dreamed of—a place to provide effective specialty services to rural families. I love working with others who KNOW rural life rather than just reading about it. I value the chance to work with fellow Christian professionals. I also enjoy working in a setting that is enriched by having students present. I am pleased to be part of the Center for Rural Psychology, to collaborate and share ideas in the pursuit of a common goal, that of having *big hopes for small towns*.



Lisa, Hans, and Teddy Riemenschneider

My own experience made me aware of the high price that is paid when you have a condition but there is no specialist to see. My hope is to "be part of the solution."

Lisa Riemenschneider

YES, I Want to Help the Center for Rural Psychology Support Rural Communities!

Here is my tax-deductible contribution in the amount of

- \$58 – one day of a predoctoral intern's salary
 \$25 \$75 \$100 \$150 Other \$ _____
 I would like to pledge \$ _____ per month.

- I would like to join the "25 for \$25 club" (25 people giving \$25 a month)
 Enclosed is my check payable to *Center for Rural Psychology*
 I prefer to charge my:

Name _____

- VISA MasterCard Discover

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Card # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Exp. Date _____

Phone (_____) _____

Signature _____

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Center for Rural Psychology

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You Can Make A Difference

At CRP, we regularly meet students eager to receive specialized training in rural psychology, students willing to leave the suburbs for America's small towns. We deeply desire to mentor students who, like Becky Preussler, can be affirmed in listening to God's call to serve in areas of great need. We want to bring Community Care Teams to communities in rural northern Illinois.

We need your help to send these students out and to support rural communities. Our board has challenged us to find 25 friends who will pledge \$25 per month. Won't you prayerfully

consider becoming a charter member of the "25 for \$25 club?"

Michael attended a workshop where the instructor spoke of receiving, on the same day, a large endowment and a small gift accompanied by a personal note of support. The speaker said that the small gift with the clear support felt more rewarding.

If you doubt that, as we once did, let us assure you no gift is too small to be an encouragement to us. We are so excited to receive your support, especially when you include a note about yourself.

Our Newest Team Members – Horses!

CRP staff recently participated in a team building retreat with three of our extension team members – Pepsi, Hawkeye, and Monte, our partners in Equine Assisted Psychotherapy.

This emerging field employs horses to foster growth and insight. Like other experiential therapies, EAP takes change off of the couch. Unlike ropes courses or activity therapy, however, the "tools" of change have personalities of their own.

During his sabbatical, Michael went through training to receive his Level 1 certification as an Equine Assisted Psychotherapist through the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (www.eagala.org). This

enables him to work in partnership with an equine professional and their horses for a full course of equine therapy or as an adjunct to the traditional therapy process. We are thankful to Amy Blossom and her staff at *Reins of Change* for making this training possible.



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