Notes from the Director
by Patricia Stone Motes, Associate Director

Schools out! What plans are in place for our youth? How can the summer time (as well as other out-of-school time) be used to promote positive outcomes for our youth?

In April 1997 Former President Clinton and former President Bush as honorary co-chairmen of the President’s Summit on America’s Future, with General Colin Powell serving as general chairman, mobilized millions of citizens and thousands of organizations from all sectors in order to ensure that all our youth have access to five fundamental resources that can help them lead healthy, fulfilling and productive lives. Accordingly, all youth need:

• An ongoing relationship with a caring adult or mentor;
• Safe places to learn and grow;
• A healthy start and future;
• A marketable skill through effective education;
• An opportunity to give back through community service

There is a solid consensus among researchers, program providers, and families that participation in constructive activities during all out-of-school time is one strategy that can significantly contribute to youth’s healthy and positive development. Out-of-school opportunities complement environments created by families, schools, faith-based and community-based organizations and provide important benefits that deter failure and promote success.

Quality out-of-school time programs and environments offer safe places where youth can explore their interests, enjoy time with friends, and participate in both structured and spontaneous activities. Simply being in safer environments has a substantial impact on preventing youth from engaging in delinquent activities. Such environments help young people develop meaningful relationships with adults and peers and offer opportunities for attention to a broad range of health and safety issues affecting young people (e.g., nutrition, wellness, behavior disorders, substance abuse, child abuse). Youth can develop hobbies, strengthen their academic and social skills, and explore their career interests. Young people can have opportunities for service learning projects, as well as opportunities for paid employment. The possibilities are endless.

The Institute has a number of cross-cutting themes that inform our teaching, research and service, including a focus on nurturing well-being and healthy development throughout the lifespan. A large portfolio of that work addresses youth development. Below are a few contacts that can provide endless opportunities for supporting our youth this summer and throughout the year:

- Communities in Schools (http://www.cisnet.org/cissc/default.asp)
- America’s Promise: The Alliance for Youth (http://www.americaspromise.org)
- Urban League (http://www.nul.org/affiliates/#southcarolina)
- KOBAN (http://www.columbiasc.net/cofc_pd.html)
- Local faith-based organizations, Local schools
- Local mental health, substance abuse, social service programs

Analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data from the surveys, IFS will create reports that will be used with all Midlands planning efforts regarding homelessness issues, including plans to compensate for the loss of the Lou Holtz Winter Shelter that will occur in 2006.
**Dissertation Panel**

Dr. Patricia Stone Motes served on the Dissertation Defense Panel for PhD candidate Chamarlyn Levelle Fairley.

Title: Semi-Structured vs. Non-structured Interview Protocols in the Prosecution of Child Abuse.

Department: Psychology.

Date of Defense: April 6, 2005.

Other committee members included Herman Salzberg (chair), Cheryl Armstead, Robert Deysach, and Allison DeFelice.

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**Truancy and Other School Related Offenses: An Investigation of Disproportionate Minority Contact in South Carolina’s Juvenile Justice System**

A recent study completed by Motes and colleagues\(^1\) at the Institute for Families in Society, points out racial and ethnic disparities within South Carolina’s juvenile justice system. While the overall findings reveal that a juvenile’s legal history is the most important determinant of outcome (e.g., high numbers of prior detentions increased the chance of being detained for the current referral; high numbers of prior commitments increased the chance of being committed again), the study also revealed that after controlling for age, gender, and legal history, minority youth were more likely to be detained and committed than white youth.

The study addressed all referrals to the juvenile justice system in the state, including truancy and other school related offenses. However, it did not focus directly on these issues. In the SC Department of Juvenile Justice’s most recent annual report (2002-2003)\(^2\), truancy and creating a disturbance in school were ranked 1st and 2nd for referrals to family court. There is clearly a need to investigate the offenses that so heavily impact youth involvement in the juvenile justice system. The new study, funded by the S.C. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Juvenile Justice, described below is an extension of the previous study and will look specifically at the issue of truancy and other school related offenses.

The newly funded study will

1. Describe the overall extent of truancy and other school related offenses. This examination will address the relationship between racial/ethnic composition of schools and truancy referral rates by age, gender, academic performance, attendance, dropout rates, and graduation rates. This examination will address differences by school district, county, judicial circuit, and statewide levels.

2. Investigate whether there are differences in the manner in which minority and white youth with truancy and other school related offenses are processed through the juvenile justice system (e.g., original disposition of the case, orders for schooling [alternative, home, etc.], probation; then contempt or probation violation, then commitments.)

3. Conduct selected qualitative analyses in three communities (e.g., how are local schools and school districts adhering to policies that define how interventions and support is to be offered to youth with attendance problems; what alternatives do schools offer to youth who are truant before court referrals) to provide contextual support to the quantitative study and to support potential local planning efforts.

**Notes**


**Employee News**

**New Employees**

The Institute is honored to welcome the following new employees to its Division of Health and Family Studies. Please see the IFS website for full bios.

**April Bolin** (PhD Candidate, Educational Research and Measurement; MIS Candidate, Statistics; MCJ, Criminology; University of South Carolina) is a research associate primarily participating in Medicaid research. Her research interests include issues related child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and the corrections system, particularly the juvenile justice system.

**Maureen Petkewich** (MS, Statistics, University of South Carolina; BS, Mathematics, University of Notre Dame) brings forth a diverse programming and mathematical background to her position as a research associate. Currently, she provides statistical analysis of Medicaid claims data using the SAS programming language. Her research interests include early childhood health and well-being.

**Stephanie Watkins** (MPH, University of South Carolina) is a senior application analyst. She specializes in design, development, implementation, and installation of SAS software solutions for business and research problems.

**Alina Wyatt** (BS, Geology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) is a geographic information systems (GIS) analyst. Her areas of expertise include geographic and spatial data analysis, database management and map production.

**Xiaohui Zhang** (MPH, University of South Carolina) is a research associate/SAS programmer. Her expertise is in SAS and SPSS programming.

**Celebrations**

**Birth**

On May 23, 2005, the Institute welcomed the newest member of the IFS family - Michael Kirkland. He weighed in at a healthy 7 lbs. 12 oz. Please join us in congratulating research associate Karen Kirkland and her husband Brian on the birth of their son. We wish them and their family much joy.

**Upcoming Birthdays**

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<td>Renee Gibson</td>
<td>July 1</td>
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<td>Tricia Motes</td>
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<td>Ja-Nae Epps</td>
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<td>Van Clark</td>
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<td>Nagavalli Sudarshan</td>
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**Phillips Honored with I. DeQuincey Newman Champions of Social Justice Award**

On April 4, 2005 IFS research associate Lyn Phillips, LMSW, was awarded the 2005 *I. DeQuincey Newman Champions of Social Justice Award*, which is given annually by the I. DeQuincey Newman Institute for Peace and Social Change in the USC College of Social Work.

Ms. Phillips was nominated by South Carolina Hispanic Outreach / Acercamiento Hispano de Carolina del Sur where she serves as a board member and volunteer. Named in honor of Reverend Newman, a great humanitarian and civil rights leader, the Institute seeks to continue his mission of promoting the causes of social justice through education, service and research at the community, state, national and international levels. She was chosen because of her “28 years of service to the poor and underserved in South Carolina” and her commitment and activism for social change.

As a social worker in nonprofit, local and state agency settings, Phillips has served the mentally ill, survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence, maternal and child health clients, migrant farm workers, survivors of brain injury and their families and others. The award recognizes her accomplishments and dedication over the years. These include founding and directing Rape Crisis Network (now Sexual Trauma Services); creation of the SCDHEC “CareLine” advocacy hotline for mothers and families encountering barriers to accessing health care; mentoring social work students and others to empower and proactively advocate for oppressed and vulnerable populations; creating the first “farm-site” bilingual migrant farm worker health clinic at Granny Apple Farms in Laurens, SC; and long-term volunteerism on behalf of Latino families in the state. Ms. Phillips comments, “This award is truly special to me because I had the great fortune to work with Reverend Newman when he served in the Senate. He was a brilliant, gentle, courageous spirit—a human rights hero. I’m very grateful to the Newman Institute for this honor.”

At the IFS, Phillips has worked on projects related to Tuberculosis and African Americans, research on racial disparities, and planning/implementation of the first statewide “count” of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons in January 2005. “The Institute for Families in Society salutes Lyn Phillips and congratulates her on this well deserved accolade,” says IFS Director Arlene Bowers Andrews.