



## Discover McGill & Social Work Orientation

SWSA, with the help of two energetic BSW frosh leaders, Laura-Pearl Spivak and Nicole Rose, welcomed incoming social work students on Discover McGill and led them through icebreakers and fun activities! (See pictures on page 2) In the afternoon, after being treated to pizza and cookies under the rain, people headed to Molson Stadium,

where the sun came out just in time for McGill to put on a big show.

The next day, SWSA and SWAGS joined forces in organizing a welcome BBQ where BSW and MSW students had the opportunity to mingle with faculty.

Thank you to everyone involved in making Orientation 2012 a success!

## Town Hall

The BSW town hall on October 17th was attended by faculty, SWSA, BSW students and Q year students. We learned more about the process of accreditation and the upcoming visit from the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE). Students were given an opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns they wish to see discussed prior to the visit from CASWE. Some main issues that were raised were:

A need for anti-oppression social work earlier in the curriculum, and threaded throughout the program. This course and practice has been instrumental in building cohesion in cohorts, and

setting a platform for personal development as a social worker.

Q year students are finding it difficult to find opportunities to discuss stage in the classroom setting. Field advisors, liaisons, and general advising is always open to you! Do not fear to raise concerns. Remember the importance of self-care during this stressful time. Do you think students should start a group to talk about stage? Tell us what you think.

Remaining tensions exist from the tuition hike strikes last year. Discussions need to continue on finding space for students to come together with faculty to address these issues.

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**Find SWSA Online!**

[www.facebook.com/McGillSWSA](http://www.facebook.com/McGillSWSA)







Top left: A little rain would never keep Jill Hanley, Director of the BSW program, from pizza!

Top right: McGill kicked off Frosh Week by putting on a show for everyone.

Bottom left: New BSW students getting to know each other.





## Montreal Walks for Mental Health

As Social Workers, we will undoubtedly be faced with mental illness in some way or another, whether in our work or our personal lives. As students, we are constantly learning about ways to fight stigma, so what better way than to unite ourselves to a great cause and proudly march down the streets of Montreal shouting our support? Ok, well maybe not shouting. You get the point.

On Sunday October 14th, a few students from the BSW and MSW programs braved the not so cheery weather and joined hundreds of people at Phillips Square in downtown Montreal. The event took place in an effort to raise awareness to the fact that approximately 20% of Canadians will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime.

Margaret Trudeau, honorary president of the walk, was present and spoke to the crowd of her history with depression and urged people to get help.

New SWSA Council Members Bring Added Strength and Energy: Get to know them!

U1 Rep: Meagan Murphy

"I hope to be the voice for our class who can represent our interests, compassion, and accomplishments during our time at McGill. I believe that I can be a great advocate for those with differences."

Communication Coordinator: Susanna Millar

"I am excited to be on SWSA in my last year here in the BSW program. I think it is a great opportunity to share my experience with others and make changes we wish to see. I hope you will join me in sharing your experiences and getting involved in our social work community!"

## Graduation Dinner

ATTENTION U3s!  
GET HYPED!

A new project is on this year: a BSW Grad Dinner is in preparation!!!

A Grad Committee has been formed recently to prepare a U3 grad dinner. This committee will be meeting on a monthly basis to organize an amazing night to celebrate 3 years of social work learning :)

Stay tuned for more details...

## Story from a Summer Abroad

I was fortunate enough to spend nine weeks of this summer in Europe. I had such an amazing experience in trying new foods, visiting great places, learning about different cultures and meeting so many new people. Aside from my experience as a tourist, this summer was great in many other ways as well. I would like to share my overall experience with you.

My adventure began in Florence where I studied Italian for one month (interested? McGill offers a Summer Program in Florence. Check out <http://www.mcgill.ca/italian/summer/florence/> for more info!). I lived in an apartment not too far from central Florence with 10 other roommates. Yes you read right, 10 and we had a blast together! My Italian class was every day from 9:00am - 1:00pm. The rest of my time was spent exploring Florence, shopping, eating a minimum of one gelato per day, going for walks and discovering new restaurants. Each weekend, I visited other cities. The best experience was visiting the beautiful and breathtaking *Amalfi* coast.

The day after my final exam, I took a cab to the train station and arrived in Orvieto six hours later. I stayed with a cousin for 10 days. While she worked, I spent my time exploring the city. I enjoyed this time alone, for after living with 10 people it was nice to be with my own thoughts. I explored and went at my own pace, decided where I wanted to go, ate where I wanted to and found gelato when I craved it. When my cousin wasn't working, she brought me to visit other cities in central Italy including.

I was very nervous prior to leaving because I had never travelled alone before. I'm really glad I did. Away from school, away from work and away from all the other distractions in my Montreal life, I took time for myself. Apart from all the different food I tried, the many museums I visited and the 1000 pictures I took, I grew as a person. I usually like to plan things in advance, but this summer I learned to be spontaneous, to take things as they come and to appreciate the present moment. I visited a total of 38 cities, slept in 11 different beds and met many new people. It was an amazing experience and I'd live it again in a heartbeat.

By Sabrina Mazza

## Strike Memories?

Last spring, when the school of social work officially joined the fight against tuition hikes at our general assembly, I vividly remember a feeling of flustered communication, red cheeks, and tears of both joy and frustration. The following weeks were a period of intense learning and engagement, whether I chose to physically engage or not. Coming back to school this fall, talks of tuition fees and the spring protests are still being heard. Good. Let us acknowledge that access to education is an issue worth discussing for social work students. That being said, what would our core values think of us if we forgot to respect the inherent dignity and worth of all persons? While pointing to the elephant in the room and talking about all we went through last year, let us try to remember that this is supposed to be an environment of critical, but non-violent, equal communication. Let your fellow students and SWSA know if you are thinking about opportunities for discussion on the strike and access to education.

By Susanna Millar



## A Message from your former CASWE Student Representatives...

This past May, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the Canadian Association of Social Work for Education (CASWE) annual conference in Waterloo, Ontario as representatives of SWSA and SWAGS. This year's CASWE conference was a first time for both of us and we found it to be a very rewarding experience overall. In existence since 1967, the CASWE holds the conference to bring together hundreds of professors, administrators, field coordinators, students, practitioners, and researchers in the field of social work from all over Canada. Participants are encouraged to convene and present their work, share ideas, and engage in debates and discussions on pertinent themes such as social justice, social work education, Aboriginal social work, international social work, and creative or arts-based interventions to name a few. The CASWE Annual General Assembly (AGM) that takes place during the conference serves as a forum to pass resolutions that advance social work education standards and practices across Canada. Student members in particular also attend the student committee meeting which unites students on issues related to field placement, and learning objectives and gives them a voice within the larger association to discuss strengths and weaknesses in diverse social work curriculums. It was a whirlwind week, and we are happy to share some of the highlights of our experiences as CASWE student delegates:

- We were proud to have been part of the first cohort of students to present a motion at the CASWE AGM. On behalf of the CASWE Student Committee and students from Universities and Schools of Social Work across Canada, Andrea and a student of Université d'Ottawa, passed a resolution unanimously at the AGM that CASWE Members will enter into dialogue with concerned Students and Members alike about financial barriers to education. Find the motion and how you can participate in the action plan here: [http://www.caswe-acfts.ca/en/What%60s\\_new\\_46.html](http://www.caswe-acfts.ca/en/What%60s_new_46.html)
- We were inspired by innovative arts-based interventions such as: Cirque du Soleil's "Social Circus" program that targets various at-risk groups including street or detained youth and women survivors of violence. Learn more about Social Circus here: <http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/en/about/global-citizenship/social-circus.aspx>
- "Blue Print For Life" – a hip hop initiative as "a model for alternative education and healing" within First Nations and Inuit communities, particularly targeting youth but ensuring intergenerational participation. Check out the program at: [www.blueprintforlife.ca](http://www.blueprintforlife.ca)
- We were introduced to the MSW Aboriginal Field of Study program offered at Wilfred Laurier University and what it can look like to fully incorporate a "wholistic Indigenous world view" into social work education and practice: [http://www.wlu.ca/homepage.php?grp\\_id=1844](http://www.wlu.ca/homepage.php?grp_id=1844)

Andrea Palmer joined the steering committee of SWAN – the Social Work Action Network Canada and subsequently, RECIFS in Quebec - networks of social work professionals, students, and service users united to challenge the neo-liberal agendas and austerity measures pervasive in our current governments. Stay tuned for information when the website launches this fall or contact [andrea.palmer@mail.mcgill.ca](mailto:andrea.palmer@mail.mcgill.ca) for more info!

In the spirit of the 'Printemps Erable', we 'casseroled' down the streets of Kitchener, ON with Donna Baines, editor of 'Doing Anti-Oppressive Practice' and Colleen Lundy, author of 'Social Work and Social Justice: A Structural Approach to Practice' as part of a nation-wide demonstration in the pursuit of accessible education.

Last, but certainly not least, we are very excited to have been elected as co-chairs for the CASWE Student Committee for the 2012-2013 academic year! As co-chairs we are eager to keep the momentum going over the next year and work collaboratively with the newly hired Executive Director of CASWE, Ms. Alex Wright. Some of our plans include: recruiting student representatives from each province, expanding the Francophone network and bilingualism within the country, continuing key debates (i.e. paid versus unpaid practicums), promoting CASWE nation-wide and ensuring the student voices of McGill's School of Social work are well-represented at next year's conference in Victoria, BC.

Ultimately, the conference shed light upon some of the great work being done within our profession, and reminded us that there are countless challenges in store and avenues to explore depending on your calling as a Social Worker!

By Andrea Palmer and Victoria Burns

Learn more about CASWE at: [http://www.caswe-acfts.ca/en/CASWE\\_20.html](http://www.caswe-acfts.ca/en/CASWE_20.html)



## UPCOMING SWSA/SOCIAL WORK EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES 6

### CASWE Accreditation Visit

From November 12-13, CASWE will come to McGill to assess all facets of the social work program. Open sessions for student discussion is from 2:30-3:15 on November 12.

### Career Fair

Come meet potential employers on November 2nd in the Wendy Patrick Room, from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm. Be sure to bring your updated CV! To view the list of participants, go to <http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/services/careerfairs/#socialwork>

### Winter Party

SWSA is planning a party soon after winter break to celebrate the new year! Stay tuned, it's going to be a good one!!

### Movie Night

Come hang out with us and stop thinking about everything. Pizza, movie, relaxation...enough said. Keep your ears open for dates.

### End of Semester Pub Night

Nothing like a celebratory evening with the friends you've struggled through exams and final papers with.

### Suicide Training

"The Suicide Action Montreal training was one of the best and most intense experience I have had in my whole academic life. I highly encourage anyone who can to sign up for this three-day training." - Rachel Auclair

When: Reading Week (Exact times and dates to be determined)

### Earn Academic Credit for Research that helps Community Organizations

The Community University Research Exchange (CURE) offers community-based social justice research opportunities to undergraduate and graduate students. On their website <http://qiprgconcordia.org/cure/> you'll find 60+ research projects submitted by an array of grassroots community groups, that work around social and environmental justice issues. Working intimately with a grassroots community group, a student completes a research project. Students may submit the same project to their professor for academic credit. Students benefit by making connections in their community, gaining excellent volunteer experience, and by strengthening their skills in being highly self-directed, motivated, and accountable. Please email [cure.mtl@gmail.com](mailto:cure.mtl@gmail.com) if interested

## WILSON HALL

### NEWS

- The basement has re-opened!

- There is now a UPrint printer in the basement.

Renovations on Wilson Hall are expected to take place soon. Dates are unknown. This will require temporary relocation. Stay tuned!