Jan Yorke Receives Veterinary Social Work Research Grant

Jan Yorke, international PhD candidate and Veterinary Social Work Fellow who lives in Canada, was awarded a research grant from the Waltham Foundation. The foundation is dedicated to supporting humane scientific research into the nutrition and healthy longevity of companion animals and the relationships they have with humans. Since its inception in 2001, the foundation has received more than 500 proposals, funded projects in 20 countries, and provided over $300,000 toward research that directly improves the health and welfare of companion animals worldwide.

Yorke received $10,000 from the foundation to further her research related to equine-assisted therapy interventions. Her project, titled “The Neurobiological Impact of Equine Assisted Interventions on Therapeutic Riding Horses and Traumatized Children,” examines the benefits of therapeutic riding programs to horses as well as children. “There is a mutually rewarding human/animal relationship in therapeutic riding programs,” she states. “I am studying the relationship of the stress levels of eight- to ten-year-old children who experience trauma such as domestic violence to the stress levels of horses in the programs.”

Her study is a single case design involving a small number of participants and volunteers who will help collect data. The study will take place in a therapeutic riding program on a farm in Ontario, Canada, where Yorke lives and works. She will spend the next two years collecting data and will base her dissertation on her work.

“Jan worked tirelessly to obtain funding for this project, which is a challenge in human animal behavior studies,” states Elizabeth Small, director of the Veterinary Social Work Services program at UT. “Jan’s research topic is truly cutting edge in equine-assisted therapy interventions.”

Currently, Yorke is a faculty member at the Georgian College in policing and in the University Partnership Centre in social work. She has been riding horses for the last 25 years and has volunteered as a coach for a therapeutic riding program.

—Kirche Rogers

Dr. Sherry Cummings Awarded Fellow Status

Dr. Sherry Cummings, associate dean and associate professor at the Nashville campus, has been awarded Fellow status from the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). Fellowship status is awarded in recognition of outstanding achievement and exemplary contributions to the field of gerontology as evidenced by expansion of knowledge base in gerontology, professional activities in gerontology, and public leadership in gerontology.

The GSA is the oldest and largest interdisciplinary organization devoted to research, education, and practice in the field of aging. Its principal mission is to advance the study of aging and disseminate information among scientists, decision makers, and the general public. The Society, founded in 1945, is the driving force behind the advancement of gerontology both domestically and internationally. It has over 5,000 members from over 40 countries. To further fulfill its mission, GSA publishes the field’s preeminent peer-reviewed journals and each year assembles over 3,500 professionals from around the world at an annual scientific meeting.

“I joined the GSA my first year as a doctoral student and have gained so much over the years from participation in the annual scientific meetings, involvement with outstanding gerontological researchers, and exposure to stellar leaders in the field. I’m very pleased, and honored, to be awarded GSA Fellow status,” states Cummings.

—Kirche Rogers

SWORPS Publications Unit Receives International Davey Award

The Publications Unit of the Social Work Office of Research and Public Service (SWORPS) was honored by the International Academy of the Visual Arts with an International Davey Award.

The group received a silver award for art direction/graphic design for a College of Social Work brochure, “Social Work: The Human Profession.” The cover image depicts the human genome. It serves as a marketing tool for prospective Social Work students that encourages them to look deeper into what the college has to offer.

“In the brochure we talk about the fact that our college has really embraced the idea of being a global learning experience and that social work is a science and that it is studied pretty scientifically,” states Betsy DeGeorge, SWORPS publications manager.

A letter announcing the award said, “With over 4,000 entries from across the U.S. and around the world, the Davey Awards honors the finest creative work from the best small firms, agencies, and companies worldwide. The annual International Davey Awards honors the achievements of the ‘Creative Davids’ who derive their strength from big ideas, rather than big budgets.”

Members of the SWORPS publications group are (from top to bottom, at right) Vicky Bridgeforth, production coordinator; Betsy DeGeorge, manager; Margot Kline, graphic designer; and Kirche Rogers, editor.

“I am really proud of the work that our publications group does,” says DeGeorge. “They are consistently striving for excellence, whether it is in a small design project or a large one. In everything from editing a plan for the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services, to building online training for the Tennessee Department of Human Services, to creating a brochure for the Children’s Mental Health Services Research Center, this group of talented professionals uses its skills to serve its clients by creating products that are accurate, effective, beautifully designed, and functional in every sense of the word.”

Adds Dean Sowers, “This is a well-deserved honor. This group is highly creative and innovative, client-oriented, and energizing to work with. The quality of their work is always outstanding.”

—Kirche Rogers