



The M.Ed. In School Counseling Newsletter

Cultivating relationships, serving community



The chance to serve the community in a different way is what led cohort member Kalie Halpin to organize an outing to the Hope Gardens Project in Chapel Hill in November.

Working in the garden with Kalie were Derek Marion, Shaily Shah, Hannah Jeter, Melissa Letzler, and Dr. Meghan Walter. [Hope Gardens](#) is a completely student-run nonprofit organization that seeks to bridge the gap between UNC and the broader community on issues of food access and food security.

“It was cold, but very enjoyable to get outside and give back!” Shaily said. “I learned more about Hope Gardens and how community members can use the space for their personal gardening plots, but also how the food grown in the Community Garden is donated to those in the community who may need it. I would definitely go back!”

Melissa enjoyed spending time in nature and working with something tangible. “I loved the experience,” she said. “Gardening is very mindful and takes you to the present. I was able to focus on gardening and the conversations I was having with my cohort members.”

A little mountain air self-care

One of the strengths of the UNC school counseling program is its cohort model, in which students proceed through the program together. It allows them to collaborate and support one another through the coursework and the internship experience. Self-care is important for school counselors and for prospective counselors, so cohort members took a mountain trip together to recharge their batteries before turning toward the homestretch of the semester.

“We scheduled the mountain trip mid-semester when we were in the thick of assignments and internship,” Hannah Jeter said. “I was reminded of how important it is to take a break from obligations and do something that fills me. After seeing the mountains in all their fall glory, I felt much more motivated to give assignments and internship my all. We made a point to cook and share a meal together while we were there. It was restful to sit in each other’s company and feel gratitude for the community and friendship this program has provided us.” For more on self-care, click [here](#) for the ASCA podcast series called “I Hear You Say.”



About the program

The UNC M.Ed. in School Counseling Program trains professional school counselors in a unique 14-month cohort model and is based on the innovative Strengths-Based School Counseling framework pioneered by the program’s faculty members.

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Feb. 12, 2019: Final due date for [all applications](#).

MORE INFORMATION

To get the latest and greatest in graduate news, check out the [Carolina Graduate School Magazine](#)

Faculty corner

Cutting-edge research by Dr. Clinton S. Bolton III

This semester has been very busy for me because I have been juggling multiple research projects.

Over the past six months, I have been working on a systematic review with a public health specialist.



Bolton

Our review is titled, *“The Effectiveness of Telehealth use in Managing Anxiety and Depression in African American Adults.”* This is cutting-edge research in mental health because telehealth is a move of the future, and getting ahead of this move is monumental. Moreover, this will enhance the effectiveness of mental health services that are provided remotely. This completed review is pending publication and was accepted for presentation at the MedInfo Conference in Lyon, France, in August 2019.

Additionally, I directed mental health courses and integrated health courses for Obesity Week in Nashville, Tennessee, in November 2018 to train mental health practitioners on best practices while working with individuals who suffer from obesity. During this conference, I also served as part of the expert panel for mental health.

Moving forward, I will serve in 2019 as a member of the Diversity and Inclusion team for the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery.



Dog therapy was part of the mental health summit

Volunteering at teen mental health summit good experience for cohort members

In October, cohort members Kaia Bednar, Billy Lane, Kim Miller and Suzy Niederland volunteered to help with #TeenAnxiety: A Youth Mental Health Summit, sponsored by Stand by Me NC and Faith Connections on Mental Illness. The four helped lead small group discussions after the showing of the Indieflix documentary, “Angst: Raising Awareness About Anxiety.”

“I enjoyed serving as a group leader,” Kim said. “Initially, I was really nervous, but I had a small group that was extremely open to sharing so that made my experience easier.”



The cohort members agreed that the summit was a great place to put new skills gained from the summer’s classes to the test.

“The skills we learned in both of our summer courses - groups and theories/techniques - helped me lead my group,” Billy said. “I especially leaned on some of the “micro skills” - such as the use of silence - we learned in Dr. Bolton’s class. Dr. Griffin’s groups class definitely help me

open the session and work with group members to develop group norms and the code of cooperation.”

Because of the groups class, Kaia said, she knew what to expect with the small group.

“The typical initial session awkwardness did not throw me off, and it was neat to see the teens slowly open up and take risks while sharing,” she said. “Since it was my first group session since our groups class, there are some things I may have done differently as the facilitator but, all in all, it was a valuable learning experience.”

What I learned from Dinosaur School: Always carry stickers

By Reem Tabet

Cohort member

Before starting graduate school, I spent about two years collecting and coding data and assisting on the intervention team for a research study called the Self-Regulation Skills for Success (SRSS) Study at the UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. The SRSS Study investigates the efficacy of implementing an already-established clinical intervention program, the Incredible Years © Dina Dinosaur Small Group Program, in a school setting.



Reem

The study targeted first- and second-graders identified as having significant self-regulation difficulties at several schools in central North Carolina. As part of the intervention program, half of the participating students attended “Dinosaur School” to learn about academic engagement, friendship skills, and behavioral and emotional self-regulation. The intervention team worked closely with the school counselor at each participating school to administer biweekly small group sessions throughout the school year.

Working on the SRSS Study was what got me interested in school counseling in the first place, and I still use my Dinosaur School skills every single day when interacting with students at my internship.

One of the most important things I learned from my time on the SRSS team is that sometimes you're going to go through plans A-F before the kids even enter the room. Even if you don't cover any “meaningful” content that session, just having a space for positive adult and peer interactions can make a significant difference for a lot of students. Also, never go anywhere without stickers. Kids will almost always go wild for the chance to smack a sticker right in the middle of their foreheads, which makes for a surprisingly handy tool for behavioral reinforcement.

Here's to the spring semester and finding new ways to integrate my Dinosaur School experiences at my internship site!

PS: Here's a really cool presentation that Dr. Desiree Murray, the principal investigator of the study, gave last year about adapting clinic-based mental health programs for use in schools. Check it out if you want to learn more about the kind of work SRSS is doing! bit.ly/SRSSstudy

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK • FEB. 4-8, 2019

Schools will celebrate National School Counseling Week in February with a theme of “School Counselors: Providing Lessons for Life.” This is not only a great time to thank counselors for all they do, but also a chance for us to focus attention on the positive difference we make in the lives of students. National School Counseling Week is sponsored by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) to highlight the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping students achieve school success and plan for a career. Click [here](#) for lots of ASCA-provided resources to help you promote your work and celebrate National School Counseling Week!

Professional development

NC Counselor Association Conference - “Counselors Committed to Advocacy”
February 20-22, 2019, Durham, NC. Click [here](#) for more info.

Suicide and Bullying: Preventing Suicide
Free webinar that explores risk and protective factors among youth and reviews prevention strategies. Click [here](#) to access the webinar archive



Want more information on character education?

Subscribe to the NCDPI Character Education listserv by clicking [Sign Up for Updates](#) and checking Character Education in the list of topics.

Off to the NCSCA conference



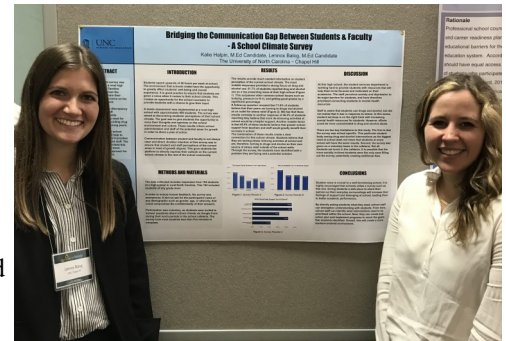
The North Carolina School Counseling Association held its annual conference in Greensboro in November. The organization encourages graduate students to create a poster on a topic of professional interest and present it to attendees. The poster presentation represents a great opportunity to collaborate with cohort members and network with other counseling professionals. Each year our program is well-represented at this event, and 2018 was no exception!

Selena Pruitt,
Brenna Lewis &
Sam Weissler:
Diversity in Gifted
Education



Selena: *We chose this topic because we were interested by the lack of diversity in CHCCS' LEAP program, wanted to know more about the selection process behind LEAP and other gifted services, and figure out what role school counselors could play in helping ensure more equitable access to AIG services for underrepresented populations.*

Lennox
Balog and
Kalie Halpin:
Bridging the
Communication
Gap Between
Students and
Faculty



Lennox: *I truly enjoyed the opportunity to share my personal interests and findings. I met new professionals and the experience sparked really great conversation.*

Interns on the job

Wall of Kindness (Melissa Letzler, E.K. Powe Elementary)

We celebrated Week of Kindness, which used to be Anti-Bullying Week, but now it more directly teaches what kindness looks like and how we can create a school community that is supportive and kind. Teachers gave their students stickers so they could share what kindness meant to them and how they show kindness to their classmates and teachers.



Gratitude Tree (Kaia Bednar, Ephesus Elementary)

The character trait for the month of November was gratitude. As a part of the classroom lesson, we asked our kindergartners and first-graders to tell us what they were thankful for by writing and drawing it out on a leaf to add to our tree.



Dates of note

January 21-25
GLSEN No Name-calling Week

February
African American History Month

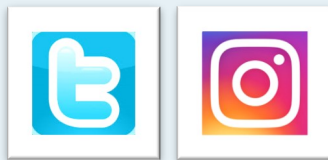
February 17
National Random Acts of Kindness Day

March
Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month



March 4-10
National School Social Work Week

March 8
International Women's Day



Follow along

Check out UNC School Counseling goings-on on Twitter and Instagram at [@uncschcounsm_ed](https://twitter.com/uncschcounsm_ed)

Who's in the 2018-2019 cohort? A look at 5



BILLY LANE

BA in History, NC State University • **Internship site** Sanderson High School • **Previous position:** Social studies teacher at Apex Friendship High • **Why school counseling?** The aspects of teaching that I most enjoyed - helping students and building relationships - match up well with the roles of school counselors • **Greatest strength** Compassion for others • **Fun fact** I'm a unicorn: red hair, blue eyes, left-handed • **Favorite musical act** Johnny Cash • **Favorite restaurant or college hangout** The Players Retreat • **Favorite vacation spot** Cinque Terre

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BRENNA LEWIS

BS in Psychology, Towson University • **Internship site** Reedy Creek Middle School • **Previous position** CCR Teacher's Assistant at Mills Park Elementary • **Why school counseling?** I love working with children and think I have the skills to be successful in this profession • **Greatest strength** I am very understanding and do my best to make people feel comfortable • **Favorite musical act** Florida Georgia Line • **Fun fact** I am getting married in November 2019!

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DEREK MARION

BA in Broadcast Journalism, Virginia Commonwealth University • **Previous position** Sports broadcaster/producer • **Internship site** Durham School of the Arts • **Why school counseling?** I enjoy working with people, students in particular. I want to help them find their own strengths so they can transition successfully into adulthood. • **Greatest strength** Patience when working with students • **Fun fact** I'm an award-winning sports broadcaster • **Favorite book** A Farewell to Arms • **Favorite musical act** blink-182 • **Favorite restaurant or hangout spot** The Crunkleton

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MELISSA LETZLER



BS in Psychology, Duke University • **Internship site** E.K. Powe Elementary School • **Previous position** Clinical research assistant • **Most looking forward to** working with kids! • **Why school counseling?** I find the school environment inspiring and uplifting, and I love how sincere and hopeful children are despite the adversities they face. Additionally, I like how school counselors collaborate and support teachers. • **Greatest strength** Empathy • **Fun fact** I'm a trained tap dancer! • **Favorite book** The Great Gatsby • **Favorite vacation spot** Jamaica!

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KIM MILLER



BA in Public Administration with a specialization in nonprofit studies, The Ohio State University • **Previous position** Special education teacher at Kinston High School • **Internship site** North Wake College and Career Academy • **Why school counseling?** I want to work with students and make them feel safe, heard, and valued • **Fun fact** I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Liberia, West Africa • **Favorite book** Gone Girl, The Girl on the Train • **Fun thing you've done** I ran a 5k in April with my best friend

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