



Fall 2014

# GRADUATE STUDENT NEWSLETTER

## WELCOME!

Welcome to the 2014-2015 school year on the WSCA Graduate Student Board! I hope all of you enjoyed relaxing, rejuvenating summers that were filled with lots of fun (and hopefully not too much studying). And congratulations on earning your position! I look forward to collaborating with you all and anticipate a wonderful year of learning and professional development! Thank you to all who contributed to the newsletter—enjoy!

-Liz Singer, University of Whitewater, WSCA Board Graduate Student Representative

## WSCA Turns 50!

WSCA 2015 Annual Conference

'Fifty Years of Commitment to Excellence'

February 17-19, 2015

At this year's conference we're going to celebrate our association! Since 1965, Wisconsin School Counselors have organized as professionals through WSCA to become the highly-qualified practitioners we are today.

A lot has changed in 50 years, especially our collective ability to speak "data." We use evidence-based practices and data to guide programming. The WSCA Board of Directors has created a strategic plan with a strong focus on helping school counselors harness the power of data in our school counseling programs. One of the ways we can show the impact of our programs is with the Wisconsin School Counseling Program Accountability Report (WSPAR-formerly the SPARC-W).

To learn more about this and other WSCA strategic plan learning initiatives, please join us at WSCA's celebratory 50th Anniversary conference on February 17-19 at the Monona Terrace Convention Center in Madison. If you plan to stay in a local hotel, please ask about the WSCA reserved block. We are always looking for presentations from practicing school counselors at all levels, so please consider submitting a session proposal.

I look forward to celebrating our 50th Anniversary with you in February in Madison!

- Kelly Curtis, WSCA President 2014-2015

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# An Unexpected Code of Life

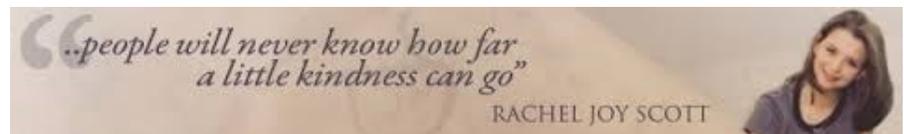
By: Katie Shultz , Concordia University 2014-2015

A few weeks ago, one of my practicum sites had an all-school assembly. At first I couldn't shake the idea of feeling that students don't need these ever-moving assemblies that impact the students in the auditorium but sneak away the moment the students walk out the doors. This assembly, I believe, was anything but that. As students were walking out of our auditorium there wasn't a dry eye, nor a soul not moved by the story this man had told. The story was about a girl named Rachel Scott. Rachel was one of the first individuals shot at the Columbine High School Shooting in Littleton, Colorado back in 1999. At the time, and for years after it, was known as the largest mass school shooting. Sadly since that time, it no longer holds that title.

What was so great about Rachel? Rachel lived her life based on the notion of kindness and if you share your kindness with others it will start a chain reaction. Rachel never had the chance to learn about the lives she saved, the attitudes she changed, and the impact she has now reached nationwide. Her actions were nothing more than what she believed to be a way of life. Rachel's story and the chain reaction she had started in her short 18 years of life is beyond anything I could dream of achieving. Kindness should be an effortless part of our everyday life.

After the assembly, we spent some time with the trainer working through how we can incorporate a stronger kindness message into our school and community; we witnessed the change start to occur. The main message given and received throughout our school was the idea that this assembly was not the traditional anti-bullying message that schools seem to promote, but rather, treating people with kindness and living with integrity, and through that we all can create a more positive climate.

From that day on, I have tried to stop and think about my actions a little more. Incorporating it into my time with students, using it as an encouraging tool. Sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the heat of the moment, but when you take the time to stop and think before you act, things seem to get a little easier. I challenge each and every one of you to take the time to check out [www.rachelschallenge.org](http://www.rachelschallenge.org) and see how you can incorporate kindness into your practice as well.



# 2014 Summer Academy

By: Katie Wells, University Wisconsin– Stout 2014-2015

UW-Stout was so excited to have been able to host WSCA's Summer Academy on Wednesday, August 6th, 2014. There was a great turn out this year and we were able to hear about WSCA updates and hot topics in school counseling from DPI's Gregg Curtis and current WSCA President Kelly Curtis. We also were able to listen to a presentation about community partnerships from Michelle Dingwall who works for Menomonie Area Chamber of Commerce. After this, we were able to choose between two sessions: WSCPAR Training with Steve Schneider or Comprehensive School Counseling and programs utilizing RAMP with Paula Haugle.

We found these topics to be extremely important for our accountability as future practicing school counselors. The WSCA Summer Academy this year was a great opportunity to meet with practicing school counselors, hearing about WSCA committee opportunities, WSCPAR, RAMP, and how to utilize Comprehensive School Counseling for our programs. We were really grateful for the opportunity to host the WSCA Board this summer and enjoyed gaining more professional development experiences. We are certain the knowledge gained will improve our ability to be effective school counselors in the field. We are looking forward to seeing everyone at this the 2015 WSCA conference in Madison!

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## UW-Stout: School Counseling Organization

Eight UW-Stout graduate students were able to attend the Academy this year and we were excited to be able to talk about our School Counseling Organization! We hope we have found some great potential guest speakers for our organization to provide us with further professional development and opportunities to learn about more hot topics in school counseling. This organization consists of mostly UW-Stout graduate students in the various school counseling program cohorts we have as well as undergraduate school counseling students who may have an interest in becoming a school counselor. We volunteer six or more hours, attend meetings, and pay dues in order to be members of this organization. We also focus on the importance of attending the WSCA conferences with our members and work hard to coordinate arrangements to make it down to Madison and make the most of our conference experience. Last semester, our board decided that what would benefit our members most would be with professional development opportunities. We meet on the first Tuesday of every month in the spring semester to come together and learn more about hot topics in school counseling. We were lucky enough to have guest

speakers to come to our meetings covering bullying in schools, PBIS/RTI, and self-care which focused on laughter yoga before finals! We hope to have more guest speakers to come and look forward to another year of meetings.



## Funding a Trip to the ASCA Conference

By: Liz Singer, University of Wisconsin–Whitewater,

2014-2015

As grad students, most of us are living on a tight budget. We're often thinking, "Do I really have to buy that brand new \$200 textbook for this class? I wonder what it'll cost on Amazon..." or, "If I cut back on groceries this month, maybe I can get a haircut somewhere better than Great Clips." Or maybe that's just me. At any rate, grad school is expensive and times can be tough during these years, so the thought of attending a national conference across the country is often an idea so crazy that it gets immediately ruled out.

But that doesn't have to be the case. I can relate to living paycheck to paycheck, to redeeming pennies at the bank, and finding the best "new" clothes at secondhand stores. And I also was able to attend the ASCA conference in Disney World this year. You might be thinking, "Say what?!" I'll explain. Here's what you can do to try to make a trip to a national conference a reality. (Next year's is in Phoenix, and the 2016 conference is in New Orleans.)

Hit up university funds. You're already paying them tuition, so why not ask for some of that money back? Most universities have funds set aside for people just like you who are seeking professional development. But you'll never find out if you don't ask. I had no idea my school might be able to help fund my trip—until I asked. Start with your advisor or department chair, and they can send you to the right person. If they aren't able to help, check with the chair of your college. My school was able to cover my registration (\$269) and \$100 towards my hotel costs. Not bad!



I was able to fund the rest of my trip by starting to save my pennies around winter break, but here are some additional tips from Franciene Sabens ([schoolcounselorspace.blogspot.com](http://schoolcounselorspace.blogspot.com)):

- Get creative. Clean out your closets & have a huge garage sale. Price items to sell, but not so low you can't take in some serious cash. You can also utilize social media like Facebook to advertise specific items to sell locally.
- Reach out to friends & family to let them know that you're raising money for a good cause. There are still a lot of people out there that like to "pay it forward," so to say.
- Dip into that tax return money you've been saving up-- this is a good reason to spend it! Invest in you when no one else will!
- Go grocery shopping. Really! Download a grocery money saving app like Ibotta and earn money back on things you already plan to buy!

# Tips for First-Year Counselors

By: Liz Singer, University Wisconsin– Whitewater, 2014-2015

Even though most of us are only in our internship year, it's not too early to start thinking about what we will be doing in our first years as school counselors. Don't let job searching occupy all your time and energy—start planning for your school year as well.

I attended a sectional at the ASCA Conference entitled, "Tips and Tidbits for the First Year Counselor," and learned a few helpful pieces of advice that we all can try to implement in our internships as well as our careers.

Start thinking about marketing. Public Relations (PR) is key to securing our jobs—and helping to create more jobs in WI, especially at the elementary level. Create a strong reputation at the beginning of the year by establishing consistent communication. If it's best to contact your school's parents through email, send regular emails. The same goes for handouts home. Know your families—learn how they best communicate, since some might not have Internet access, in which case you should not rely on communicating via email.

Make sure the kids know your role. Help create a website for your program that says more than your email address. Post a picture, a bio, and an explanation of your role. A couple of weeks into the school year, create a counseling mission statement that aligns with the school's mission, and create 3 counseling goals for the year, such as reducing discipline referrals, increasing college awareness, etc. Make your goals reasonable and attainable (with a larger goal of eventually working towards meeting ASCA standards).

Helpful Blogs:

School Counselor Blog: [www.schcounselor.com](http://www.schcounselor.com)

Elementary School Counseling: [www.elementaryschoolcounseling.org](http://www.elementaryschoolcounseling.org)

Savvy School Counselor: [www.savvyschoolcounselor.com](http://www.savvyschoolcounselor.com)

The Middle School Counselor: [www.themiddleschoolcounselor.com](http://www.themiddleschoolcounselor.com)

The Extraordinary School Counselor: <http://extraordinaryschcounselor.blogspot.com/>



# Thank you to Contributing WSCA Graduate Student Representatives!

- Liz Singer, University of Wisconsin– Whitewater
  - Katie Shultz, Concordia University
- Katie Wells, University of Wisconsin– Stout

**Graduate  
Student  
Newsletter  
Fall 2014**

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