

MAY 2010

# alumni NEWS

## Alumni Spotlight

### Interdisciplinary, multicultural approach and degree flexibility key to success

Ask Dr. Sundeeep Thinda the key to long-term success and happiness, and he will quickly reply, "Keep things exciting and refreshing. Flexibility is the key." This agile approach to clinical psychology has certainly opened many doors for Dr. Thinda and provided diverse opportunities for application of his Doctor of Psychology since graduating in 2003.

When he returned to his native Canada (Vancouver, British Columbia) for an internship with Back in Motion Rehabilitation and the Workers' Compensation Board of B.C., Dr. Thinda quickly realized the overwhelming need for trained psychologists in varying roles and in service to diverse populations.

Although his concentration studies and practicum experiences while at Forest were primarily with forensic populations, it was his internship experience performing medical legal assessments and psychological

treatment as a rehabilitation psychologist that bridged his interests and led him into a niche career in health psychology. The interdisciplinary approach to treatment he learned during the internship experience enabled him to work as part of a team of medical doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and kinesiologists.

"There is such a big need to balance physical and mental health. It is important to learn how to build connections with other experts and work on interdisciplinary teams for the best care of the patient," Dr. Thinda said. "Learning how other professions overlap, realizing when I need to engage other helping professionals, and understanding the bounds of service provision across disciplines has been empowering to my own practice."

He remains in practice with InFOCUS, a division of Back in Motion Rehab. And his attitude of embracing a professional team



**SUNDEEP S. THINDA, PSY.D.**  
REHABILITATION PSYCHOLOGIST,  
CONSULTANT, FACULTY

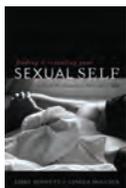
approach was just the launching board for more opportunities to come.

Dr. Thinda also sought out experiences that enabled him to share knowledge like he did as a teaching assistant at Forest. He readily accepted an adjunct faculty position with Kwantlen Polytechnic University in the Vancouver area, teaching introductory psychology courses.

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## On the bookshelf May 15, 2010

# Finding and Revealing Your Sexual Self: A Guide to Communicating about Sex

Even today, with an environment of sexual openness, people don't really talk about sex.

To the detriment of those who are having sexual difficulty, conversations about sex with partners, health care providers and therapists are not occurring. So two alumnae, Drs. Ginger Holczer and Libby Bennett set out to identify resources for clients and clinicians on how to engage these difficult dialogues.

"Many of our clients were telling us they couldn't talk to their partners, therapists, health care providers about the subject," Holczer said, "so Libby and I found ourselves sitting on the floor in the 'sexuality' aisle at Barnes and Noble, with books everywhere. We learned 'how to, where at, and who with' but not how to discuss sex with others, so we decided to write a book about sex and communication, together."

The book offers an exploration of sexuality, as well as tips and exercises, designed to assist couples and individuals with having important discussions about sex. It introduces the idea that each partner's upbringing, values, expectations, wounds, hormones and perceptions slide under the covers with

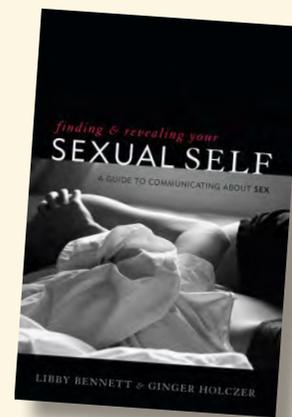
them, so effective communication skills on the subject are critical both for clinicians and clients.

"I hope other clinicians take away from our book the knowledge that our clients need us to address them as complete human beings, sexuality and all," Dr. Holczer said. "Sex is not always a mind-blowing experience, and these sexual issues can be very upsetting to our clients."

While there were some nerve-racking moments for the authors, approaching the project with a sense of humor made the writing fun.

When asked if she would recommend such a project to her fellow alumni, Dr. Holczer replied, "I say go for it! It was an exciting, wonderful, humbling, anxiety-provoking experience, and I can honestly say I am a better person for having had the experience."

To learn more about the authors, their professional interests, or upcoming workshops visit <http://psychobabbledocs.com> and [www.forest.org/cps](http://www.forest.org/cps). The book may be purchased through amazon.com or other retail outlets.



**LIBBY BENNETT, PSY.D. (1991)**



**GINGER HOLCZER (VanVOLKINBURG), PSY.D. (2002)**

### President's Passage

## Advocacy. Be the voice of the underserved, economically disadvantaged and powerless



Our vision is to be known for enriching the lives of students and the communities we serve through advancing the practice of mental health care. While Forest and its

alumni are recognized as champions of clinical training and service to the underserved, it is imperative that we develop professional values and attitudes that promote advocacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As defined by the National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology in 2004, "Advocacy as a professional value and attitude promotes the knowledge and skills of the professional psychologist toward promoting the interests of individual clients, systems of care, public health and welfare issues, and/or professional psychology itself

... the creation of a socially responsive voice for the underserved, economically disadvantaged and powerless."

We would all agree it is certainly more comfortable to engage in a process of direct advocacy for individual client welfare than to embark on a campaign for systemic change and reform through legislative action. Yet the latter is where we as a profession continue to be the most vulnerable.

Through changes to curriculum and training models we can build advocacy into the professional competency model of future cli-

**IT IS THE SEASONED, EXPERT CLINICIAN'S VOICE, WHICH POSSESSES COMPELLING INSIGHT AND WISDOM INTO CLIENT AND PRACTICE ISSUES, THAT NEEDS TO BE HEARD**

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## “The Browning of America” workshop promotes multicultural preparedness

Mental health professionals who participated in a recent workshop at Forest were challenged to become adequately prepared to effectively serve multiethnic and multiracial populations in the future.

Presenter Dr. Joseph L. White said the key to this challenge is to understand predicted majority/minority changes and the issues of power, privilege and oppression associated with the dominant culture.

For almost 50 years, Dr. White has enjoyed an illustrious career in the field of psychology and mental health. A pioneer of Black psychology, Dr. White has held more than 10 academic positions and earned 13 awards, honors and fellowships.

The Forest community was indeed honored by his recent visit to campus and presentation of a workshop titled “The Browning of America: Implications for Counseling, Psychotherapy, and Psychological Training” as part of the Diversity in Practicum Training series. Assistant professor and supervisor Dr. Kristina Brown, coordinator of the event, described her experience as “enlightening,” providing her with new perspectives on minority issues.

Dr. White’s humor, disclosure of personal struggles and use of small group discussion proved highly effective in starting conversations and providing opportunities for self-reflection.

“As an instructor and supervisor, it can be challenging to facilitate discussion on sensitive issues related to diversity and minorities,” said Dr. Brown. “Dr. White gave us a place and a framework to start those difficult conversations. People took risks in our group discussions, and we were pleased with the momentum coming out of this workshop.”



Students, interns and faculty enjoyed Dr. White’s company while dining at the Springfield Brewing Company following the workshop.

## Advancing health service programs at Murney Clinic inspires faculty practitioner

*Phillip Pegg, PsyD*

*Associate Professor and Licensed Clinical Psychologist*

The thought of working closely with medical providers to conduct pre-bariatric surgery protocols is exciting and motivating to Dr. Phil Pegg. His interest and expertise in treatment of medical concerns with psychological aspects (e.g. hypertension, diabetes, body image problems and eating disorders) is well-suited to work with the growing number of patients and physicians seeking behavioral consultation for chronic medical conditions.

As a licensed psychologist and as-

sociate professor at Forest Institute, Dr. Pegg participates in the private practice plan available through the Robert J. Murney Clinic. He enjoys one day per week in private practice, where he maintains a full client load and is available to explore other creative practice opportunities. The remainder of his time is dedicated toward

more traditional faculty roles, such as supervision, instruction, research, and advising.

“A growing number of our faculty are interested in clinical health service programs, so I’m excited to be working with clinic director, Dr. Robert King, to develop best-practices and protocols in conducting pre-surgery assessments and evaluations to benefit Murney Clinic practitioners,” said Dr. Pegg. And according to preliminary research, the need for such programs among the underserved and underinsured in the Springfield region is significant.

Success in his private practice role directly benefits practicum students in his practice group. “As a practitioner, I genuinely appreciate the school’s emphasis on opportunities for clinical skill develop-

ment and the model of intensive supervision for our students. We have great students, who come to us with diverse backgrounds and skills sets and who are able to engage in insightful conversations about clinical concerns. I’ve found them to be highly receptive to feedback and more than willing to meet the challenge of being junior colleagues. It is exciting to see their development into professionals,” said Pegg.

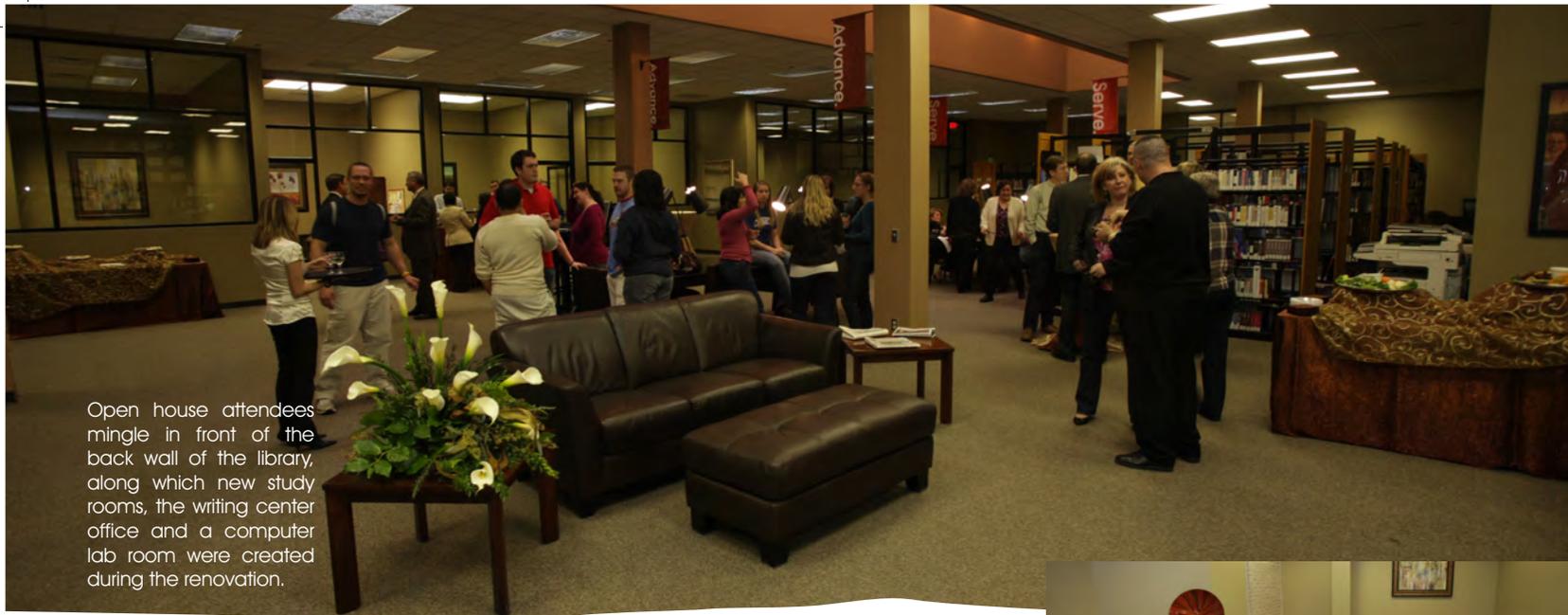
Pegg finds that clinical work enriches



not only his pedagogical pursuits but also potentiates possible avenues of research to be pursued with both students and Forest alumni as well. “The ability for faculty and students to balance clinical work with research opportunities within our institution is empowering, and, more importantly, it’s consistent with our

scholar-practitioner model,” said Pegg. “I greatly enjoy being able to serve in multiple roles in adapting to student and alumni needs.”

Opportunities for creativity guide his short term goals to develop future continuing education seminars incorporating students and alumni practitioners as part of a research team on topics such as pro-social deviance and “the creative outsider”, the experience of creative adolescents, medical anxiety, information provision in health service, interpersonal psychotherapy, and the sequellae of chronic post-traumatic stress disorder resulting from childhood sexual abuse. To learn more about Dr. Pegg and opportunities for collaboration, e-mail him at [ppegg@forest.edu](mailto:ppegg@forest.edu) or call 417-823-3477.



Open house attendees mingle in front of the back wall of the library, along which new study rooms, the writing center office and a computer lab room were created during the renovation.

## Forest community lauds ‘spectacular’ new library space

Forest recently held an open house event to commemorate the reopening of the Francis D. Jones Library and Information Commons in the heart of the academic campus in Springfield.

“The recent renovations to the library are spectacular. I still can’t figure out how they made it seem bigger just by adding more rooms,” said Michael Utoff, a second-year doctoral student. “The computer lab is extremely convenient and makes for a more private, quiet atmosphere when we’re studying. I never thought I’d say this, but the comfortable space makes me want to spend more time in the library.”

Renovations earlier this year took the existing 5,000 square feet and reallocated use to reflect the needs of modern students and faculty based on responses to a survey conducted last spring.

In addition to fresh colors, carpeting and furnishings, new study rooms and a 22-station computer teaching lab equipped with projector and research software were added. Long study tables now sit underneath the atrium skylights and comfortable reading couches and chairs pepper the space. Additionally, the circulation counter was adapted to be more accessible for those with disabilities.

When asked about her first couple of months in the new space, Library Services Manager Nan Hadley replied, “The renovation is a great investment in the research and scholarly interests of our students and fac-

ulty. The space is now both aesthetically and functionally efficient. We are very grateful to have such a nice, modern space for our students.”

Staff enjoy the new space because the daily work of the library is easier to manage, with new cataloging rooms and office spaces.

The changes are quite striking, according to alumni who attended the event. Dr. Debra Nofziger, class of 2002, was more than a little jealous of the new facility.

“When we attended Forest everything was new in the academic building, which was nice. But the computer lab and online materials these students now have access to – it’s impressive,” she said.

Renovations also created physical space for a new writing center. Currently supported through three doctoral fellowships, the center provides consultation services to students on a wide variety of writing process-related issues including, American Psychological Association style, independent research projects, literature reviews, class presentations, essays, and basic brainstorming and idea development.

Alumni are always welcome to use the resources of the library on campus any time during normal operating hours: 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays; 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays; and 1-8 p.m. Sundays. To explore the resources available in the library, visit <http://www.forest.edu/library>.



Quiet study rooms are furnished with extendable tables and comfortable seating.



Atrium seating provides natural light for studying at work tables that are equipped with power and wireless Internet access for electronic devices.



This 22-station computer lab creates optimal space for hands-on classroom instruction.



Students enjoy the new library space and free food at the open house event.

## Interdisciplinary, multicultural approach and degree flexibility key to success

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"Although I had initial anxiety of breaking into the world of academics and higher learning, I once again found that my degree in clinical psychology was so broad, general and well-known it could be applied in a number of ways, including teaching," said Thinda.

Dr. Thinda also has a life-long interest in art and a desire to blend it with his psychology training. Thus began the Sigmund Consulting Group, a consultancy group specializing in providing in-depth emotional research for marketing and brand strategy development.

"By uncovering the emotional triggers that activate brand associations held in the consumer's memory, we help make the product or brand more relevant and memorable," said Thinda. He and a friend co-founded the business, which utilizes qualitative research and creative exercises to help businesses understand their customers better, thereby

contributing to the success of their company.

Although currently a part-time venture, this is the accomplishment of which he is most pleased.

Coming from an Indian family, however understanding the client's multicultural context remains very high on his agenda. The fact that he chose psychology as a career path is very rare for someone from an Indian background; therefore, he feels it important to give back to his community. Dr. Thinda is a volunteer host of a local radio talk show broadcast in regional dialects. "I only know of six to seven therapy and assessment professionals in the Vancouver region that speak the native Punjabi and Hindi languages. Given that psychological disorders are still taboo in this and many cultures, the large Indian populations in this area need basic mental health education in a modality that is easily accessed and understood," said

Thinda.

Moreover, he believes mental health professionals benefit from ongoing multicultural education as well. "It is often a lack of exposure to what professionals don't know or understand that can create barriers in treatment of diverse populations," said Thinda. "Holistic, evidence-based practice requires we learn new ways to tweak traditional approaches to fit within a multicultural context. We must be open to this and understand where the world is going in order to impact others in new and exciting ways."

Dr. Thinda has been selected as the keynote speaker for Forest's commencement ceremonies to be held Saturday, Oct. 9, at the Gillioz Theater in downtown Springfield, Mo. You can learn more about Dr. Thinda and his consulting group by visiting [www.sigmundconsulting.com](http://www.sigmundconsulting.com) or contacting him directly at [sthinda@telus.net](mailto:sthinda@telus.net).

### The Director's Desk...

## Alumni perspectives critical to success

*Marcie Kirkup, Director of Student and Alumni Affairs  
marciej@forest.edu*

Our mission to train practice-ready professionals requires an ongoing commitment to excellence in learning and clinical environments.

Key to our success in this mission is the support of our alumni in providing feedback and evaluation of degree programs to inform academic and training improvements, as well as direct continuing education opportunities. Your feedback is also critical to ensure our stakeholders are well-positioned in the emerging practice of clinical psychology.

In order to better understand the multifaceted perspectives of alumni, Forest has developed and implemented an online comprehensive evaluation and feedback system through Qualtrics. Last summer, we introduced a pilot version of this instrument, which we requested recent graduates (2002-2008 cohorts) complete. Participation was outstanding, and we learned much from the responses.

For instance, 90 percent of alumni participants were clearly satisfied overall with the instruction and training that they received in the program and believe that it adequately prepared them for their careers; however, only 40 percent felt they had received effective

career guidance and planning as they began their professional journey. This feedback was meaningful in many ways and served as a catalyst for our current initiatives to re-connect with alumni, supporting them through information sharing and networking opportunities.

Based on the technological success and the wealth of feedback received through the pilot surveys, we are pleased to announce the launch this summer

of the Alumni Competency, Evaluation & Success (ACES) survey program. Designed to provide specific feedback to the program at specific intervals post-graduation, the ACES will provide invaluable information directly from you, our alumni, in supporting the continued excellence of our degree programs. Benchmarks for tracking professional development of alumni have been set at one, three, five, and seven years, with a more broad approach for feedback utilized once a graduate is beyond his seventh year.

In the first- and third-year post-degree instrument, questions are primarily designed to assess entry-level competency in each

of the seven National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology domain areas (relationship, assessment, intervention, diversity, research and evaluation, consultation and education, and management and supervision), as well as track post-doctoral outcomes related to licensure and career milestones.

**TAKE THE ALUMNI SURVEY  
AND YOU COULD WIN A  
\$100 VISA GIFT CARD!**

The fifth- and seventh-year instrument assesses alumni satisfaction related to degree program and

continues to track outcomes related to professional achievements and success. Beyond the seventh year, alumni complete a summary satisfaction report with expanded opportunities for reporting professional achievements and ongoing success.

We are excited to launch these surveys and are eager to hear your perspectives. Your participation in these surveys is a very meaningful way of giving back to your school and helping to maintain quality programming. Visit [www.forest.edu /alumni](http://www.forest.edu /alumni) to take the survey today!

# Financial assistance means more Forest research at conferences

Through the Student Travel Award Program started in 2006, students are able to apply for financial assistance from Forest Institute to help offset costs related to travel in presenting their research at regional and national conferences.

More than \$39,000 has been awarded to 139 students in support of their research projects since inception of the program. Student projects include a faculty sponsor and in many instances, co-authorship of a paper presented.

Be sure to look for our scholarly projects at national conferences of organizations such as the American Psychological Association, American Psychology-Law Society, Collaborative Family Healthcare Association, National Academy of Neuropsychology, Society of Behavioral Medicine, Association for Behavior and Cognitive Therapies, Association for the Behavioral Sciences and Medical Educators and Gerontological Society of America, as well as the regional Mental Health in Corrections Consortium, Missouri

Marriage and Family Therapy Association and Missouri Psychological Association.

To see a complete listing of faculty and student research projects visit <http://www.forest.edu/res-presentations.aspx>. If you would be interested in mentoring a student in a research project, please contact the director of student and alumni affairs, Marcie Kirkup, at [marciej@forest.edu](mailto:marciej@forest.edu) for more information.

## Forest-sponsored conference becomes pre-eminent national event

For more than a decade, Forest has sponsored the annual Mental Health in Corrections Conference, which is attended by a variety of health care and mental health professionals.

The conference has grown steadily to become the pre-eminent national conference devoted to correctional mental health.

This year the conference location moved to downtown Chicago in order to broaden accessibility by participants and expand opportunities for partnership with other professional schools in sponsoring the event.

Plenary sessions included concepts important to understanding sex offenders who use the Internet and the implications for



**MENTAL  
HEALTH  
IN CORRECTIONS  
CONFERENCE**

management and treatment by corrections and mental health professionals.

Visit <http://mhcc.forest.edu/> to learn more about the annual conference.

## St. Louis site prepares to welcome inaugural class

Located in the Golfview Building in the beautiful suburb of Creve Coeur, our St. Louis site will soon hold its inaugural classes. The site is easily accessible from Interstate 270 and will accommodate up to 40 full-time evening master's students.

We will celebrate this occasion by hosting an Open House event on Friday,

June 11 from 5:30-7:30 pm. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend and experience the new facility. Additionally, a summer speaker series will be launched in St. Louis to introduce a variety of speakers and topics, such as Positive Psychology in the Movies: Using Films to Build Virtues and Character Strength; Therapeutic Strategies

for Working with Teenagers; and Functional Assessment of Behaviors and Related Interventions for Students with Severe Disabilities to name but a few.

Prospective faculty, student or attendees can call 314-997-3447 to learn more about the master's program and other opportunities at Forest-St. Louis.



▲ A contemporary lobby welcomes visitors to the new site.



▲ Forest's St. Louis site is located in the first floor of the Golfview Building.

# Want help paying off your student loans?

The federal government has allocated more than \$175 million to fund as many as 4,000 new National Health Service Corps clinicians in underserved communities by September 2010. Over 40 Forest alumnus currently benefit from this program and more are in the application process.

Alumni of Forest who meet certain eligibility requirements, such as licensure, could be eligible to receive between \$50,000 and \$145,000 in loan repayment for a full-time service period ranging from two to five years. Regional coordinators for the program met with Forest administrators recently to reiterate their support and encouragement for

graduates of our program to apply for the unprecedented funding.

The application process for clinicians has been simplified and is now only four pages in length. So alumni willing to serve an underserved community can become a health care hero and receive help in paying off student loans. They must apply before July 29, 2010, at [www.nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment](http://www.nhsc.hrsa.gov/loanrepayment).

Contact alumnus and NHSC Ambassador Dr. Brad Powers who will assist you in completing your application today: [bpowers@forest.edu](mailto:bpowers@forest.edu), 417-823-3425.

## Class notes

**Ray, Ms. Ashley (2008)** recently accepted a position at McKendree University in Illinois as assistant director of career services, providing career counseling and education.

**Peters, Dr. Jeanne (1986)** is currently a psycho-oncologist with a Regional Cancer Center.

**Zeidler, Dr. Beth (2008)** is pleased to announce she will become married this Oc-

tober. She is currently working as a primary care psychologist in a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in Madison, Wisconsin; additionally she has been accepted into the NHSC loan repayment program. She also enjoys a faculty appointment as Clinical Assistant Professor teaching family medicine residents via the University of Wisconsin Department of Family Medicine.

# Advocacy. Be the voice of the underserved, economically disadvantaged and powerless

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nicians, empowering them to become agents of change. Yet it is the seasoned, expert clinician's voice, which possesses compelling insight and wisdom into client and practice issues, that needs to be heard now. My colleagues, as a profession, we can be silent no longer. Mental health professionals must find their advocacy voice through venues of grassroots activism, community service and public policy development.

Whether you reside in an urban or rural area, are self-employed or part of a federal system, engage in client therapy or are a professor in a university, you are called upon

to lift up the needs of the underserved, economically disadvantaged and powerless.

In an era of financial uncertainty and budget cuts, every state has an overwhelming need for professional volunteers on any number of public interest issues. Service on local non-legislative boards and committees often has the greatest immediate impact on vulnerable populations in your own community.

Alternatively, with elections on the horizon you may feel an increasing desire to become involved with a political campaign that seeks to advance professional goals important to

you; I encourage you to seek out such opportunities and make a difference.

Others among you may find membership on a state or national association, credentialing board or professional organization to be empowering. Associations often engage in lobbying practices that challenge human welfare issues while strengthening the voice of psychology in public policy decision-making.

No matter the path you choose, the time for mental health advocacy is upon us. Become an advocacy champion and voice of social responsibility in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Important links:

Alumni receive a 20 percent discount on study materials for the National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification and the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology study materials:

[http://forest.edu/resources/9/mft\\_prep.pdf](http://forest.edu/resources/9/mft_prep.pdf)

[http://forest.edu/resources/9/eppp\\_prep.pdf](http://forest.edu/resources/9/eppp_prep.pdf)

**Center for Professional Solutions:**

<http://forest.edu/cps-workshops.aspx>

**Update your information at:**

<http://forest.edu/form-alumni.aspx>

**View or post mental health job openings at:**

<http://forest.edu/alumni-jobs.aspx>

**Refer a student or faculty candidate at:**

<http://www.forest.edu/form-contact.aspx>

**Request access to ning community at:**

<http://forest.edu/alumni>

**Buy Forest gear at [forest.edu](http://forest.edu)**

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