



## Spring 2006 - Vol. 7

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## Message from the Chair

**JON E. KIRCHNER**

Class of 1989

Turn on the news these days and it is hard to ignore that life is changing more rapidly than ever. We've got to move ever faster just to keep up. Nowhere is the challenge of keeping up more evident than at home. Mothers, fathers, and families face a daily struggle to balance their work, family, and personal lives. That struggle hasn't gone unnoticed by leaders in business or government, and there is growing recognition that work and family issues threaten the health of our workforce, social fabric, and long-term competitiveness. It is these issues that have spurred me to become involved with the Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children, where leading research is being done to provide critical information and analysis to help foster the harmonious development of business and public policy.

When I joined the Berger Institute Advisory Board two years ago, I was unmarried and the leader of a global technology company. My primary interest in work and family issues derived from the point of view of an employer, and also as a son and brother in my immediate family. However, due to some recent changes in my life, the work being done at the Berger Institute has become even more relevant. I soon will be getting married and facing a new challenge—trying to balance work and family with two of us pursuing fast-paced careers, planning a family, supporting elderly loved ones, and serving our local community. My situation may seem familiar to many of you, which just reinforces the importance of the work being done at the Berger Institute.

As we approach the end of another academic year, I would like to share with you some of the fascinating work being done by Diane, Sherylle, and the students at the Berger Institute.

- The California Paid Family Leave Project, a survey of caregivers, new mothers, and new fathers in California that is designed to determine how Californians are using the new paid leave policy. California is the first state to implement paid family leave and this study could potentially improve the program in California, and if the results are found to be promising, may also contribute to the implementation of paid family leave as a national policy.
- The Thinking Skills for the Workforce project is aimed at local high school students and is a program designed to improve critical thinking skills. Berger Institute staff and students have implemented a curriculum to help adolescents develop important critical thinking skills that are needed in today's world, using everyday examples and interactive web-based materials.

As you can see from the highlights above, the Berger team is making great progress towards building a collective understanding of the most pressing issues surrounding work and family balance. Most importantly, the team is pursuing its mission with uncommon drive, enthusiasm, curiosity, and commitment—exactly the kind of energy needed to make a difference in these rapidly changing and challenging times.

On behalf of the Advisory Board, Diane, and Sherylle, I would like to thank you for your ongoing interest and support of the Berger Institute.



*Director's Message*  
**Everyone Loves  
 Working Families**

**DIANE F. HALPERN**

Everyone loves working families—especially politicians. I came to understand the truth of this statement when I received letters from John Kerry—his looked like it was signed by hand (are the signing machines that good?)—and Rick Santorum, within a few days of each other. Both members from far opposite sides of Congress thanked me for the materials I sent them. The mission of the Berger Institute is “to educate students, scholars, lawmakers, and the community about a wide range of work and family issues.” So, in December, all members of the legislature received a copy of “Public Policy, Work, and Families: The Report of the APA Presidential Initiative on Work and Families,” (available on-line at our web site). Although this report was written in my role as president of the American Psychological Association, I used the opportunity to build on the work we do at the Berger Institute. All recommendations in that report are nonpartisan, based strictly on a wide variety of social science data.

Several other members of Congress or their aides wrote to thank me for the report and some to offer comments. During one of my trips to “The Hill” (I still love to say “I have an appointment on ‘The Hill,’” as though I am an insider), I met with staff for Lamar Alexander, Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Education and Early Childhood Development. The Senator’s aides were eager for data and recommendations that would help them provide more options for working families. They already knew that for many families it is an economic necessity that both parents work, that many children are growing up in single-parent homes, and that there is an inadequate supply of affordable child care, so flexible work schedules, affordable child care near transportation, paid sick leave, and other policies, would substantially improve our nation’s economic and social well-being. What they did not know was that there is a large research literature documenting that such policies pay large returns-on-their investments. For example, there are many studies that show that employees with paid sick leave are less likely to leave their jobs voluntarily, which leads to lower costs to employers for hiring and training. Paid sick leave is likely to lead to productivity gains because sick workers recover faster, do not spread infectious diseases, and return to full job effectiveness more quickly.

The Congressional aides that contacted me understand the value of data-based research. Students and staff at the

*continued on page 11*



**Advisory Board Member  
 Spotlight**

**JOHN M. PRATT  
 MANAGING DIRECTOR  
 MERRILL LYNCH**

Interview by Karrie Aldrich, '06

**Q:** Your daughter has been working at the Berger Institute as a research assistant for almost a year. What made you want to get involved, too?

**A:** Because of Allison’s involvement in the Berger Institute, I became interested in learning more about it. Given my role at Merrill Lynch, I am aware of the many important work and family issues we face as a large and diverse global company. As a financial institution with roughly 55,000 employees scattered around the world, we have worked hard to offer a more family friendly workplace.

**Q:** I can see from the website that Merrill Lynch claims to be “aware of the challenge employees face to balance the demands of work, family, community and personal interests.” What are some of the challenges that employers like Merrill Lynch face when addressing these needs?

**A:** One of our challenges is being able to offer a consistent package of benefits on a regional basis. What is offered at our headquarters or in some of our large office complexes (e.g., Princeton, NJ) is sometimes difficult to offer on a more regional / local basis. For example, we have extensive on-site child care facilities at our headquarters which we are unable to offer to employees in our smaller branch offices.

**Q:** The website also lists an impressive array of benefits to employees, including paid child care leave, counseling services, and assistance in locating schools for children. Do you believe such benefits are necessary for Merrill Lynch to compete in today’s business world?

**A:** While there are many reasons why we have adopted certain employee benefits regarding work-family matters, it’s clear that our firm must be proactive in this area in order to attract and retain top talent. Competitive forces will no doubt continue to enhance and refine these benefits to meet the marketplace demands.

**Q:** What changes have you witnessed in corporate family-friendly practices over the years? Should we college students anticipate an even more accommodating workplace in the future?

**A:** I have witnessed great advancement in the benefits related to work and family. Since I joined Merrill Lynch in the early 80’s, our firm has introduced several key initiatives, including telecommuting, job sharing, flexible work hours, and paternity leave. In addition, we have developed

*continued on page 11*



2005 Take a Kid to College Day children and CMC Mentors



Professor Andrew Zanella leads students in a science demonstration



Children take a tour of the campus



Mike Oshiro, '06 leads the children and mentors on a tour of the campus

## Upcoming Event Take a Kid to College Day

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2006

CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE - CLAREMONT, CA

Maciel Hernández, '08

On April 6, 2006, the Berger Institute is sponsoring the third annual Take a Kid to College Day at Claremont McKenna College. For the past two years, this event has been a great success and a wonderful opportunity to reach out to the children of our community. These children come from a local elementary school and many come from disadvantaged neighborhoods. Some of these children have not been exposed to the college experience and through this program they will come into direct contact with the possibility of attending a college like CMC. We anticipate that twenty 5th grade students will participate in the event this year. Each child will be paired with a CMC undergraduate volunteer mentor.

Allison Pratt, '08 and I are this year's student co-coordinators. We have planned some fun activities to give the children the opportunity to learn about college and interact with college students. Here is a sneak peek:

- A science demonstration with Dr. Andrew Zanella. This is a favorite activity with both the kids and the mentors.
- A campus tour by a volunteer CMC student
- Lunch at Collins Dining Hall. Children are often amazed by the wide array of food options
- An interactive classroom activity that will cover general information about college preparation. During the class activity, students will be advised to take high school classes that fulfill college requirements, to be involved in different activities that they enjoy, and have an open communication with their college counselor. Questions about financial assistance will also be discussed in an effort to present the children with available options such as scholarships, grants, and financial aid.
- A scavenger hunt around the CMC campus.

All of the kids will be given lunch bags filled with school supplies and an activity book to remember the day.

Although these children are only in elementary school and college might seem like a long time away, it is important to encourage and expose them to the idea of going to college. Providing them a glimpse of what they can achieve can be powerful motivation.

*Special Thanks to the Kravis Leadership Institute for their generous support of this event.*

# California Paid Family Leave Studies: Research Updates

## Paid Family Leave Update

MARIEL KYGER, '06

The United States is currently among only three major industrialized countries worldwide that do not offer any kind of paid leave support, forcing workers with sick family members to exhaust their vacation days or suffer lost wages in order to take time off work. The California Paid Family Leave Insurance Program (CPFL), which took effect on July 1, 2004, is the first comprehensive paid family leave program in the nation, making California a test site for what may someday become a nationwide trend. This new law allows eligible workers up to six weeks of time off work with 55% pay to care for sick, aging, or new family members. Over the past two years, the Berger Institute has conducted a study on the ways in which California Paid Family Leave affects caregivers' ability to care for sick or elderly family members.

Overwhelmingly, the majority of the 367 caregivers surveyed were older,



White females caring for a spouse or parent. Almost all caregivers, whether working or not, were worried about their financial situation. Major concerns included lack of support from supervisors, subsequent concerns about job loss, and worry about the ability to support family members both financially and emotionally. Due to a mix

of financial and emotional stress, caregivers also experience many physical and mental health problems. Many caregivers suffer from symptoms of depression, extreme stress, and/or burnout, and they often express the wish to rest or have some "alone time." There is an overwhelming sense of responsibility among the caregivers, as many believe that the care receiver's life would be shortened if not for their help, or that the care receiver's quality of life depends upon their presence.

California's Paid Family Leave Program represents an important step forward in the progression of employee benefits and paid leave programs, and gives California the chance to act as a model or test case for the nation. About 50% of caregivers surveyed received less than half of their wages through their employer's paid leave benefits; thus, CPFL could potentially lessen the financial strain for caregivers. However, there is still room for improvement. Only 1% of the caregivers surveyed were using CPFL at the time, although 95% felt very positive about the potential effects of the benefit. Reasons given for not using CPFL benefits included concerns about work piling up; no one available to substitute; loss of clients; or desire to work as a respite from caregiving. Over half the participants stated that 55% of their salary offered by CPFL was not sufficient to live on; thus, programs such as CPFL must continue to evolve, so that caregivers may have the financial and emotional resources necessary to provide care.

## “Real Life” Moms

STACY HAWKINS, MA

Claremont Graduate University

Once upon a time, in a land far far away, there was a woman who had just given birth. She was very excited to spend time with her newborn; she had the option to spend every day with the baby, playing, eating, and napping.



This mom was able to take as much time as she wanted to spend with her infant before returning to work, and both mom and baby were happy and healthy.

In the real world, many new moms do not have the luxury of spending every day with their newborns. The mother in the fairy tale did not have to worry about paying bills, balancing the budget, or making sure there was food in the

cupboards. In today’s economy, it is not realistic for new mothers to be able to spend as much time as they want with their newborns. Typically, working mothers take 8 to 10 weeks of maternity leave, but women with little or no paid leave may take much shorter leaves. Many women do not feel they have the financial freedom to take an extended maternity leave.

One way to provide more time for new mothers is with the California Paid Family Leave (CPFL) insurance program. California is the first and only state in the nation to implement a partially paid family leave program. CPFL enables qualifying workers to receive up to 55% of their wages when they need time off either to care for a sick or injured family member or to bond with a new child. As over 80% of people using CPFL request time for bonding with a new child, our goal is to investigate the usefulness of CPFL for new mothers. This study may also point to other ways to improve the health and well-being of both mother and baby.

Thus far, nearly 100 mothers have responded to our survey. These mothers range from 20 to 40 years old and have children between one week and one year old, with the majority at approximately 3 months old. Over 75% of our respondents are married, and 15% reported being

single or never married. Participants also reported a wide range of yearly incomes, ranging from less than \$25,000 to over \$95,000.

Fifty-six of these new mothers reported their intention to return to work. Their return to the workforce, however, does not seem to be motivated by personal preference for working; rather, these mothers overwhelmingly cited financial reasons for their return to the workforce. In fact, only 3 out of 56 new moms did not include financial concerns as one of their reasons for returning to work.

In regards to California Paid Family Leave, 90% of the mothers had positive feelings about the program, and the majority of respondents (65%) had heard about CPFL prior to our survey. Of those who had heard of the program, however, only half reported that they planned to use the program’s benefits. Most mothers wrote that they were not eligible to receive benefits, either because they were not working long enough prior to pregnancy to qualify or were government employees.

These preliminary findings begin to tell the true story of new mothers. Moms do not have an unlimited amount of time to spend with their newborns; the obligations and responsibilities of real life keep new mothers from being able to live the fairy tale. Although CPFL provides an opportunity for many new moms to spend an additional six weeks with their infants, it does not yet reach everyone who could benefit from it. As we continue to collect and analyze responses from “real life” moms, we will gain a clearer understanding of the program and its usefulness in promoting the well-being of new mothers and their infants.

The next step in this research project is to investigate the role of CPFL for new fathers bonding with their children. According to the mothers who responded to our



survey, less than 10% of new fathers plan to use CPFL to supplement their paternity leave. While the mothers did not provide reasons why fathers were not planning to use the program, the next step of our program will help us understand why fathers seem to be ignoring this potentially valuable opportunity.

*The Berger Institute for Work, Family  
and Children presents:*

*Upcoming Conference*

**Biology and Beyond:  
Siblings in Adoption and Foster Care**

THURSDAY, MARCH 16 – FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2006

CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE - CLAREMONT, CA

Allison Pratt, '08

Sibling relationships are the longest-lasting and most constant intimate relationship that we form as human beings. The protection and continuation of sibling relationships can help develop a sense of stability for children in adoption or foster care. Especially in times of stress or when deprived of parental care, siblings often turn to each other for support. In 2003, 42% of children in traditional family foster care who had siblings also in care were placed without siblings. Increasingly, the question of how separation affects siblings and whether or not siblings should be separated is critically important.

These issues and many related to siblings in adoption and foster care will be addressed at the March conference, "Biology and Beyond: Siblings in Adoption and Foster Care," sponsored by the Kinship Center, Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, and the Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children. With renowned speakers and many workshops focusing on the great importance of the psychosocial and policy issues related to siblings in adoption and foster care systems, this is one conference not to miss.



**BIOLOGY & BEYOND**  
Siblings in Adoption and Foster Care

**BIOLOGY & BEYOND:  
SIBLINGS IN ADOPTION AND FOSTER CARE**

**WHAT:** A conference addressing the unique psychosocial and policy issues related to siblings in adoption and foster care systems.

**WHEN:** Thursday, March 16 and Friday, March 17, 2006

**WHERE:** Claremont McKenna College, Bauer Center South, 500 E. Ninth Street, Claremont, CA

**WHO:** Co-sponsored by Kinship Center, Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, and The Berger Institute for Work, Family & Children.

Featured Authors/Speakers include Madelyn Freundlich, MSW, MPH, JD, child welfare consultant; Diane F. Halpern, PhD, Director of the Berger Institute for Work, Family and Children at Claremont McKenna College; Adam Pertman, Executive Director, Evan B. Donaldson Institute and a Pulitzer-nominated journalist; and Sharon Roszia, MS, acclaimed child welfare author and lecturer, Program Director at Kinship Center.

**TO REGISTER AND FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

[http://www.kinshipcenter.org/biology\\_and\\_beyond\\_conference.html](http://www.kinshipcenter.org/biology_and_beyond_conference.html)

*Research You Can Use* is a translation of selected research on topics related to the intersection of work, family, and children. The research articles were selected by students in the Psychology of Work, Family, and Children class (Psyc 116) that I taught in the fall of 2005. The information in the research articles was rewritten into plain language by student assistants at the Berger Institute. We hope that readers will be able to use the research findings. The Berger Institute also has a brief listing of exemplary research that supports our conclusions about best practices for public policies, employers, communities, and working families. We invite you to log on for more information: <http://berger.claremontmckenna.edu>. Please send us your favorite research article for inclusion in future issues of our newsletter and let us know if this new feature is useful for you. --- Diane F. Halpern, Director

## Maternal Postpartum Depression and Paternal Involvement

ALEFIYAH PISHORI, '06

*Mezulis, A. H., Hyde, J. S., & Clark, R. (2004). Father involvement moderates the effect of maternal depression during a child's infancy on child behavior problems in kindergarten. Journal of Family Psychology, 18(4), 575-588.*

Postpartum depression has garnered a great deal of public attention in the last few years and the negative impact of maternal depression on a baby's development has been widely reported. For examples, studies have found that babies of depressed mothers often display more negative emotions and poor cognitive development. Maternal depression during infancy has also been found to predict internalizing and externalizing behavior problems when these children are in kindergarten.

While much of the focus has been on the impact postpartum depression has on the mother-child relationship, it is also important to consider how the father can impact the baby's healthy development in the absence of the normal mother-child bond. This study assessed the impact of paternal involvement during the infancy of a child with a mother suffering from postpartum depression.

Increased paternal involvement with children has been associated with fewer behavioral problems and better academic performance. Fathers who exhibit parenting style characterized by high levels of warmth and high levels of control have been found to lead to positive outcomes for children, including fewer behavior problems.

Paternal depression in addition to maternal depression during the child's infancy was associated with the most internalizing behaviors in kindergarten. However, absence of paternal depression, on the other hand, had little impact on the children's internalizing behaviors when the mother was depressed.

It appears that fathers cannot completely fulfill the void left when a mother is unable to form normal attachments with her newborn. However, fathers do play an important role in the development of their children. This study suggests that fathers may provide the discipline and structure during infancy that are necessary to prevent children from having behavioral problems later on. Thus, while they cannot replace the mother-child relationship, they do have their own unique role to play in the development of a healthy and well-adjusted child.

*Take-home message:* When a mother is suffering from postpartum depression, it is critical to the child's healthy development that the father spends time with his infant.

[Article submitted by Carl Marrone, CMC '06]

Research You Can Use

## Quality Afterschool Programs: More than an Alternative to Video Games

KARRIE ALDRICH, '06

*Junge, S.K., Manglallan, S., & Raskauskas, J. (2003). Building life skills through afterschool participation in experiential and cooperative learning. Child Study Journal. 33(3), 165-174.*

It is time to get your kids off the couch! Research shows that participation in afterschool programs that include frequent interaction with competent adults and experiential or cooperative learning significantly contributes to the development of children's life skills. Life skills are those which we tend to consider less academic but are also very important for success in society. An elevated sense of self-worth and competence develops as children work to attain these life skills. This concurrent development occurs through the practice of working with others, expressing feelings, and problem-solving.

Afterschool programs can also provide children with extra opportunities to interact with adults. With 69% of two-parent families and 71% of single-parent families with young children reporting work schedules that require parents to seek afterschool childcare, it is clear that quality afterschool programs can not only meet a supervisory need but can also make additional contributions to the participants' social and academic development.

This study revealed that participants in similar afterschool programs in three different California counties experienced benefits that included improvement in emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, peer relations, and conduct in school. The average child in this study was 7.5 years old and had been enrolled in the afterschool program for at least six months. Each participant showed significant improvements in life skills over the course of their participation in the program in areas such as making healthy choices and taking care of one's belongings.

Such evidence should catch the eye of public policy officials because putting an end to the notion of the "latch-key kid" would be an important step for today's society. Catching their eye is important for it is on those same policymakers that we will rely to provide the required funding for an increased availability of such programs.

*Take-home message:* High-quality afterschool programs are an important step toward developing children's life skills.

[Article submitted by Lisa Martelli, CMC '06]

## Positive Work Environments Linked to Positive Parenting

SOMOH SUPHARUKCHINDA, '06

*Costigan, C.L., Cox, M.J., & Cauce, A.M. (2003). Work-Parenting Linkages Among Dual-Earner Couples at the Transition to Parenthood. Journal of Family Psychology, 17, 397-408.*

As the number of dual-earner families has grown, debate has ensued over how these changing demographics are changing parenting. Can working mothers and fathers develop meaningful relationships with their children? Does stress at the office affect the home environment? Are children losing out when their parents work? Though the answers to such questions are complex and inconclusive, research shows that stress accumulated at work can spill over to impact a parent's relationship with his or her children.

Over time, negative interpersonal relationships at work can diminish the quality of parenting for new families. This study followed 138 families in North Carolina and found that mothers who are dissatisfied with their relationships with their coworkers or who feel low morale at the workplace are likely to experience less sensitive, stimulating, and mutually enjoyable interactions with their children. For example, mothers who reported higher job stress were found to be less responsive to their infants' expressions and less likely to encourage their children's learning.

Fathers' relationships with their children, on the other hand, may not be as directly impacted by stressful work. However, this study looked at parent-child relationships at 9 and 12 months, and research indicates that the trend seems to reverse later in the family developmental stage, such that fathers' rather than mothers' parenting is more likely to be affected by work experiences. Interestingly, the current study also indicates that although fathers' parenting is not linked to their work experiences, it is linked to their spouses' work experiences. When mothers experience more positive coworker relationships and greater independence at work, fathers tend to have more positive interactions with their children.

The results of this research should raise red flags for parents, employers, and policymakers alike, given the large numbers of working parents today. It is not simply a matter of whether or not a parent is employed that affects his or her parenting abilities, but it is also the quality of the work experience that is crucial. As such, this research underscores the need to increase efforts to develop positive work environments, with the potential to affect all levels of the family.

*Take-home message:* Due to the potential effects of stress from work on relationships at home, it is important that employers and employees work together to create a positive work environment for the sake of not only their employees but also their employees' families.

[Article submitted by Elysa Vargas, Pitzer '06]

Research You Can Use

## The Benefits of Child Health Programs for Businesses

JONI SASAKI, '06

*Major, D., Cardena, R., & Allard, C. (2004). Child health: A legitimate business concern. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 9(4), 306-321.*

Poor child health can negatively impact parents' lives at work. Business organizations should therefore consider family-friendly initiatives that address this concern. This article examines four such initiatives – prenatal programs, lactation programs, sick child care, and flexible working arrangements – and considers implications for a business' health care expenses, face time, productive time, and employer attractiveness.

Scientific and company-reported evidence support prenatal programs as a means of reducing health care costs. Considering that the lifetime cost of caring for a low-birth-weight baby can reach as high as \$500,000 while a prenatal class can be provided for as little as \$400, prenatal programs can be an important investment. Company-reported evidence also reports positive effects on employer attractiveness and a trend of reduced employee absenteeism in relation to the implementation of prenatal programs.

Research also supports lactation programs as a benefit for businesses. In these programs, mothers are encouraged to maintain breastfeeding once they return to work because breastfeeding is important in maintaining child health. Lactation programs have been shown to reduce health care costs and decrease employee absenteeism, as well as to positively impact employee commitment, recruitment, and public image.

Sick child care is a helpful benefit for parents who may not have the option of missing work to provide care for their child. Because sick child care ranks among the most desirable employer-sponsored child-care benefits, there seems to be a positive relationship between the availability of sick child care and organizational commitment. Preliminary research on health care expenses shows that sick child care costs less than an absent employee, so such programs may be well worth a business' investment.

Flexible working arrangements are important to many working parents and are much more prevalent in business organizations than sick child care benefits. Research shows that flexible working arrangements have a positive effect on employee health and well-being, and they are associated with reduced child health care expenses and employee tardiness and absenteeism. Evidence suggests that flexible working arrangements are desirable, especially for working parents, and are connected to higher employee satisfaction and employer attractiveness.

These four initiatives represent preventative and reactive programs that may ultimately impact business outcomes. Research has shown that the effects of the programs are widely positive, thus legitimizing child health as a business concern.

*Take-home message:* In the long-run, it is in an employer's best interest to offer child health programs for their employees.

[Article submitted by Socorro Christmas-Reynoso, CMC '06]

*Upcoming Conference*  
**Work and Families: Changing Realities**

**SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 2006**

**CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE - CLAREMONT, CA**

Maciel Hernández, '08

The 23rd Annual Claremont Symposium on Applied Social Psychology, "Work and Families: Changing Realities," will be held on Saturday, March 25, 2006 at the Mary Pickford Auditorium in Bauer Center at Claremont McKenna College.

This one-day conference will cover a wide array of work-family issues, including the critical, psychosocial, cultural, health, economic, legal, and political concerns tied to work and family. Distinguished speakers include

- Jane Swift, former Governor of Massachusetts, who was the first Governor in the U.S. to give birth (to twins) while in office. She will talk about work-family integration in the public realm.
- V. Sue Molina, first National Director for the Retention and Advancement of Women at Deloitte and Touche, will discuss women and the workplace.
- Joan C. Williams, distinguished legal professor and the leading authority on workplace discrimination against mothers and pregnant women. She will discuss the messages courts are giving about workplace flexibility.

- Rena Repetti, researcher whose work on parental stress includes videotaped interactions between parents and children as parents return home from work.
- Donna Klein, consultant to corporations developing workplace flexibility, with a particular focus on low-wage workers. She will discuss work flexibility and its impact on business.
- Rosalind Chaitt Barnett, prolific author and Senior Scientist of the Women's Studies Research Center at Brandeis University who has studied the stress working parents feel as their children return home after school.

Symposia with interdisciplinary experts will address questions about parental employment and children, diversity and discrimination in the workplace, and the links between work, stress, and health. This one-day conference is sponsored by the Claremont Colleges and the Berger Institute for Work, Family, and Children.

This unique conference promises to be a learning experience for all. Don't miss it! Space is limited, so register early to reserve your space.

**TO REGISTER AND FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

psych@cgu.edu • (909) 621-8084 • www.cgu.edu/realities

**WORK AND FAMILIES:  
 CHANGING REALITIES**

**Director's Message ... continued from page 2**

Berger Institute are dedicated to conducting high-quality research and disseminating our findings as a guide for public policies and other organizations. I believe that if we provide good information in a format that is easy to use, and if legislative aides can find it when they need it, and if we can frame it in a way that fits with the law makers' general political philosophy, and if the wording is clear and just "catchy" enough to get their attention, and if we are persistent and lucky (there is always some element of luck involved in any endeavor or, if you prefer "unexplained error variance"), then the work we do at the Berger Institute can make a difference in public policy and help to align the worlds of work and family in ways that are beneficial to both.

**Spotlight on John M. Pratt ... continued from page 2**

on-site child care services and recently added an expanded service to allow parents to bring older children to work during school holidays. We have also expanded our employee assistance program to include a hot-line for private counseling and referral along with a health care advocate program. I have also been impressed with the enhancement of our education assistance program and on-job training. While a great deal of progress has been made, I believe college students can expect to see these benefits to evolve further to meet the future needs of our workforce.

## The Journey After High School: Critical Thinking Paves the Way to Success

ARIANA BROOKS, MA

Claremont Graduate University

There is very little debate about the need to have a high school diploma in order to be successful in today's society. Thus, many researchers are concerned with our nation's alarmingly low graduation rates, ranging from 30-50%. But also of concern, is the preparedness of our high school graduates. Are our schools adequately preparing our students for the real world?

Recent research indicates that, unfortunately, the answer may be no. In a recent poll, 40% of the nation's high school graduates said they were not adequately prepared for the demands of employment

or college. Similarly,

research has shown that recent high school graduates feel that their high school experience did not teach them essential skills, such as how to think critically. Employers and college professors do not dispute this claim. Without critical thinking skills, how can we expect our youth to successfully navigate through the real world? These skills are imperative in helping adolescents make crucial decisions, such as how to be more effective in the workplace or how to interpret course material.

Thus, the Berger Institute has developed a project to help adolescents develop their



*Mother and daughter working together to learn about critical thinking*

critical thinking skills, which are crucial in preparing adolescents for the challenges of post-secondary education and employment.

In the first year, a total of 68 eleventh-grade students from a local high school participated in our intervention project, which involved explicit or embedded instruction on critical thinking skills such as considering and practicing fundamental reasoning, analysis, and decision-making skills. During each session, instructors lead the discussion, followed by a brief presentation outlining the topic. Most of the session's time is spent using the interactive computer program, with assistance from the instructor. This online curriculum helped students develop their critical thinking skills.



*High school students learning about critical thinking skills*



*High school students learning about critical thinking skills*



*High school students learning about critical thinking skills*

Overall, students showed significant gains on the critical thinking assessment; students who were explicitly taught critical thinking skills showed much greater gains than students receiving embedded instruction. There were high correlations between scores on the critical thinking post-test assessment and California High School Exit Exam in Math and English/Language Arts, which means that they are tapping the same skills. Similarly, baseline critical thinking test scores were positively correlated with high school grade point average suggesting that these skills can help students succeed in school. Also,

**continued on next page**

## From Figures to Faces: Understanding Variables That Make Adoptions and Long-Term Foster Care Successful

ERNEST NG

Claremont Graduate University

Sometimes as a scientist, figures matter more than faces. We get so involved in the data that we forget where the data came from. We forget that the number 21 is more than just a number; it represents a young girl that has been moved from home to home almost every 9 months since the day she was born. A 21 means 21 previous placements! Just try to imagine that. No house ever becomes a home for you. That is just one variable in a dataset with thousands of variables.

Behind each number is the face and voice of a child from the Kinship Center in Santa Ana, CA. The Kinship Center is an adoption agency and a counseling center that works with both the adoptive parent and child to increase the chances of a successful adoption. What our data represents is a collection of intake and outcome measures that gauge the progress of each child in their current placement. Finally, having the children's stories all in one place and ready to look at gives us an opportunity to hear their collective shout.

After years of gathering data and information and months of organizing the data, what once seemed like a lifeless set of data started to gain a voice as we meticulously pieced together the stories behind each line. As I started to hear the whispers from the data, each line became more than just numbers waiting to be analyzed to serve some academic purpose.

The voices in the data give a voice to the voiceless, and bring a face to the faceless. Without this mindset, the data remains contained on a screen instead of telling a living story with corresponding faces, emotions, feelings, sorrows, and life. What we study is not just data; we study the life the data represents. The more detached we become from the data, the more the semi-audible whispers fade into incoherent noise. But when we recognize the life behind the data, the stories become more and more audible. We move from mere figures to faces. As we progress in our analysis, more of the individuals' stories are revealed, allowing the investigators to find ways to better inform adoptive parents, policymakers, counselors, and the public as to how to care for these children who seem to have been left behind by our "societal progress."

The Berger Institute continues to look at increases in desired outcomes and decreases in undesirable outcomes to provide concrete evidence of overall patterns of effectiveness. One preliminary finding from the statistics has shown that short-term therapy is not the proper prescription for this population. By looking only at these statistics, however, we are not showing the human faces behind the numbers. Our work is not yet done. There are more faces to be found and more stories to be told.

participants' baseline scores on the critical thinking assessment were differentially correlated with their scores on verbal, spatial, and numerical abilities tests. In sum, results from the first year suggest that our curriculum is successfully improving adolescents' thinking skills and that these skills are related to other important measures, such as achievement and high school exit exams.

Currently, in the second year of the project, we are entering another local high school. We anticipate reproducing results from the previous year as well as improving the materials and curriculum to enhance the critical thinking gains in adolescents. It is our hope that this project will show not only that critical thinking can be taught to adolescents, but that these skills can prove to be useful beyond the classroom—most importantly as students move into the workforce.

## The Berger Institute Class of 2006

SHERYLLE J. TAN, PH.D.

Associate Director



As associate director for the last two years, I have had the privilege to work with brilliant and talented students at the Berger Institute. Each crop is different and each year is different. But what remains the same is the dedication and enthusiasm that each student who has worked at the Berger Institute brings. Students are involved in all facets of research at the Berger Institute and work closely with the staff and faculty to conduct and present our research. As we reach the end of another academic year, our Claremont McKenna College seniors look forward to graduation and moving on from the Berger Institute. We never really say goodbye to our students, but instead celebrate the new phase of their lives outside of Claremont McKenna College and the Berger Institute. This year we have five outstanding students who will rise to the ranks of Berger Institute alumni. We celebrate their accomplishments during their time as undergraduates and look forward to the new endeavors and experiences that are before them.

*Berger Institute Seniors (past and present):*

Karrie Aldrich • Mariel Kyger • Maribeth Lehoux • Roxana Mondragon • Danielle Pericas  
Alefiyah Pishori • Joni Sasaki • Somoh Supharukchinda

### Karrie Aldrich

I am proud and grateful to have been a part of the Berger Institute this past year and a half. When I look back at my involvement and contributions, I know that at the same time I was learning and making individual gains, I was also adding to an important body of knowledge that truly affects people's lives. Whether through visiting high schools to help teach critical thinking skills or talking with new mothers about what our research on California Paid Family Leave could mean for them, my analytical, communication, and organizational skills were constantly sharpened. These tremendous projects always required a strong group effort. Some of my favorite memories include creative problem-solving sessions in the office, where Dr. Halpern and Dr. Tan always treated my fellow students and me as important and equal collaborators.

This intellectual teamwork will surely prove to be an invaluable experience as I venture out from CMC. It is hard for me to believe that, as early as August, I will begin working as a Teach For America teacher in a bilingual elementary school classroom in a low-income area of Houston, Texas. The challenges ahead of me are great but I am excited to put my Berger skills to the test. I know that they will help me in whatever I do. I would like to thank each member of the Berger family for all he or she has taught me.



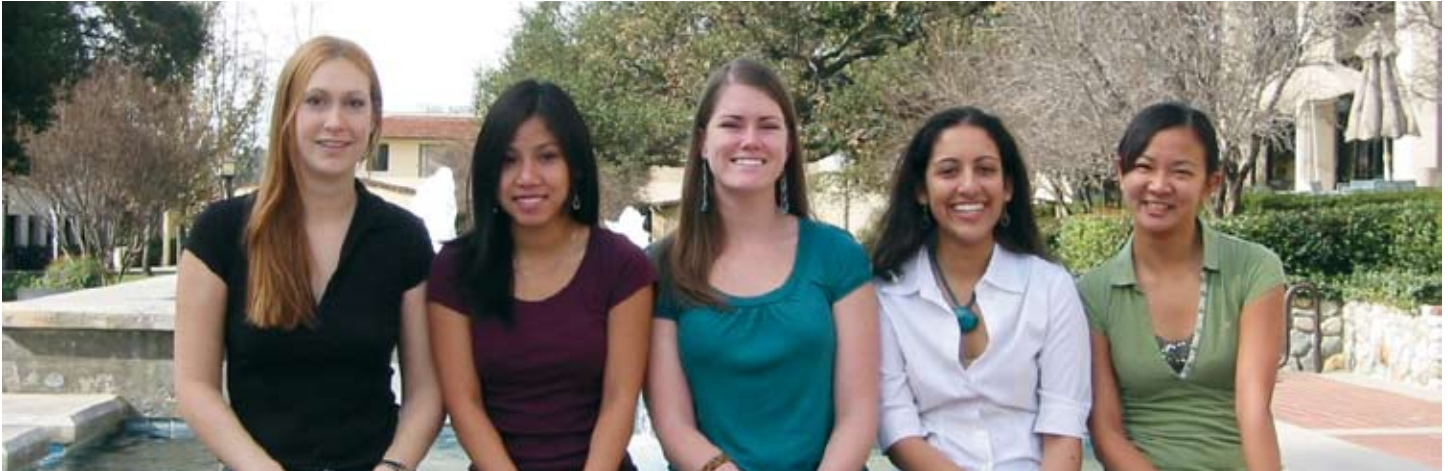
### Mariel Kyger

When I first began working at the Berger Institute in the summer of 2004, I felt so intimidated. I had not done very much previous research, and I was working with people who clearly knew what they were doing – not to mention the APA President! As it turned out, I learned so much over that summer, and once I got over my initial nervousness, I loved working with all the other students and staff. The Berger Institute has given me experience in every aspect of research, from recruiting participants to presenting results, and I know that this research experience will help me in the future. Next year, I plan to take time off from school and I hope to work with children in a cognitive or education-related field. Eventually, I hope to attend graduate school, where I know my research experience will be immensely helpful. The experiences I have gained through my work at the Berger Institute are rare in undergraduate education, and I will sincerely miss all the students and staff whom I have worked with over the years.

### Alefiyah Pishori

Working at the Berger Institute has been a great experience. I have had the opportunity to work on a variety of research projects and to learn about different topics and research methods. I've also been able to see the progression of studies through different stages of the process—from the preliminary background research and recruiting of participants to the coding and analyzing of data. My most

*Berger Institute Class of 2006*



memorable experience at the Berger Institute was during Summer 2005, when I was able to design and carry out an independent research study as the Deloitte and Touche Fellow. The experience challenged me in new ways and taught me a great deal.

I hope to work for the next two years in a mental health or public health related field, before starting a graduate program in psychology. I know that the research skills I've gained during my time at the Berger Institute will help me in the working world, as well as in graduate school.

### **Joni Sasaki**

I have had the privilege of working at the Berger Institute since my sophomore year, and now as a senior, I have much to thank them for. From the Berger Institute, I gained important skills, not only in research, but also in critical thinking, communication, professionalism, and teamwork. My experiences at the Berger Institute have made me more well-rounded in my abilities, which provides me with a solid foundation as I think about a future career. My favorite experience, however, has been working with Diane and Sherylle because their mentorship has made the greatest impact on me in terms of my future. They were constant reminders to me of the meaning behind my work, and they were always encouraging of my academic ambitions. Next year, I will have the honor of entering a Ph.D. program in social psychology either in California or Arizona, and the skills I have gained at the Berger Institute will be especially valuable as I earn this degree. I hope to continue research in work-family matters, cross-cultural psychology, and social justice issues, and I am excited for this incredible opportunity to further my education and career in psychology.

### **Somoh Supharukchinda**

It is surreal to already be writing a farewell to the Berger Institute. I joined the Berger Institute only last fall and in many ways feel like I am just getting settled. Nonetheless, I have had an incredible year with the Berger Institute. From the very beginning I have been impressed by the confidence that Dr. Halpern and Dr. Tan place in their students. Whether it is in brainstorming ideas for data collection or presenting at major conferences, they have sought and valued student contributions. I have gained important experiences as a researcher and know that the analytical skills that have been cultivated at the Berger Institute will be important in any future jobs I seek.

In addition, the work that I have done at the Berger Institute has taught me a lot about today's working families. The challenges they face are immense, and the Berger Institute's commitment to issues that affect their lives are important. As I get ready to graduate in May, I am unsure what my next steps will be, but my time at the Berger Institute has reinforced my passion for helping those most in need. I have applied for numerous non-profit positions in child protective service agencies, as well as for an assistantship to teach English in French-speaking Reunion Island off the coast of Madagascar. Eventually, I plan on attending graduate school and pursuing a career in international aid and development, focusing specifically on the needs of women and children.

I would like to thank Dr. Halpern and Dr. Tan for their support and the opportunity to be a part of the Berger family. I am honored to have been a small part of it, and grateful to have worked with an amazing team of bright (and fun!) students.



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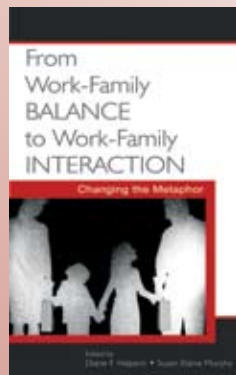
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