Mary Jane Hamann quit her job as a middle school teacher and signed up with about 100 other young people eager to taste adventure and make a difference as the first class of volunteers for the newly minted Peace Corps in 1962.

She spent two years teaching in a mission school in the West African nation of Liberia, but her real adventure started when she returned home to the family farm in Michigan after her Peace Corps stint was over.

“I was gone from my family for two years, and when I got back, they hadn’t changed a bit,” Hamann says today. But she was a different person, imbued with a sense of community engagement and a fire for working with multicultural communities. “I knew,” she says, “that I wasn’t going to stay with them anymore.”

Her next stop was Southern California and a job as an elementary school teacher in the city of Compton, which was experiencing white flight and an influx of blacks and Latinos. It was a new and challenging experience for Hamann, and
As a citizen in a democratic society, I am appalled by the vulgarity and nastiness evident in this year’s presidential primary season. It is one thing for men seeking the highest office in the land to behave like schoolyard bullies; they do no credit to themselves or to their supporters. But it is disturbing to see the large number of people who flock to candidates espousing fear and hatred of religious groups, immigrants or anyone whose views differ from theirs.

Fortunately for us, this is not the model of leadership embodied by our students, faculty or alumni. In this issue of Impact, you will read about the many ways in which serving others, embracing difference and supporting the most vulnerable among us is a part of the DNA of the Lurie College community.

As a faculty member, Thomasyn Lightfoote Wilson spent much of her time promoting community-based education. Now an emeritus professor, she and her good friend, Mary Jane Hamann, put these ideas to work in East Palo Alto.

They have dedicated their lives to ensuring that students from poor, ethnically and racially diverse communities have access to educational resources and programs that are typically reserved for more prosperous communities.

Amber Artman and Jasmeen Nijjar, two students majoring in Child and Adolescent Development, developed a website that would make it easier for the homeless to search for an available bed in a local shelter. They developed a prototype called WarmBed for the SJSU Innovation Challenge, a competition sponsored by the College of Business, where students pitch their ideas to judges drawn from Silicon Valley entrepreneurs and SJSU faculty.

Roxana Marachi, associate professor in the Department of Teacher Education, devotes her time to helping local area schools learn about how to create safer schools. Too often, school safety is framed in terms of zero-tolerance policies where harsh punishments are meted out for even single infringements of school rules. Marachi connects school personnel with the research that provides alternative ways of reducing bullying and school violence through the development of caring interpersonal relationships.

These stories highlight the importance of building community through outreach to others and care for every person’s well-being. These efforts can help us heal the divisions created by the fear mongers who would exploit the dark side of human nature.

FROM THE DEAN

Elaine Chin, Dean
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COMMUNITY CONNECTOR
An advocate for safer schools

Roxana Marachi’s Twitter handle is @ConnectEdProf. The “EdProf” portion describes her job as an associate professor in the Lurie College Department of Teacher Education. “Connect” describes her mission.

“I’m a connector,” says Marachi, who came to Lurie College 10 years ago and has immersed herself in school communities in the San José area.

“Connecting research to practice. Connecting advocates for youth. Connecting neurons to neurons in a healthy way. Connecting communities to resources. Relationships and connections are truly at the heart of progress.”

Marachi believes connecting is also the key to safer schools. While her earlier work concentrated on understanding school bullying and evaluating evidence-based violence prevention programs, Marachi’s recent research has broadened to look at the intersections between policies, practices and social climates in schools.

Evidence shows that in order for anti-bullying or school safety programs to be effective, a school must have a genuine climate of mutual respect and positive engagement.

“How we treat one another in schools—that’s really the heart of school safety,” Marachi says. “When it comes to prevention, it’s less about the programs and more about school culture and interpersonal relationships.”

Do teachers and administrators model cooperation and respect—with each other and with all members of the school community? Are students supported in creating inclusive environments? Is the school punitive or restorative when students act out?

Since the massacre at Columbine High School in 1999, many programs focused narrowly on student behavior without addressing the broader social climates and conditions.

Another result of Columbine has been the increased presence of security on school grounds, zero-tolerance discipline and heightened punishments. Where a student fight 20 years ago might have resulted in a trip to the principal’s office, Marachi says, now it may mean suspension or assault charges.

“Zero tolerance policies have led to the criminalizing of a lot of kids,” Marachi says. “There are decades of research findings showing that they do not work.”

Marachi has been working in partnership with the Santa Clara County Office of the Public Defender for the past three years with five high schools in the East Side Union High School District in San José in a program that supports alternatives to suspension and promotes restorative approaches and healing.

Growing up in Walnut Creek, Marachi remembers being keenly aware of the social dynamics of the classroom in elementary school and feeling empathy for peers she thought were being treated unfairly. “I’ve always paid attention to how people treat each other,” she says.

Reflecting on the roots of her focus on social justice and school climate, Marachi looks to her early years as an immigrant and English language learner. Having experienced the challenges of learning a new language and culture, she aims for her research to contribute to the creation of safer, healthier learning environments for youth.

Marachi majored in psychology at the University of Washington and minored in music. (Her musical instrument was the timpani.) At the University of Michigan, she earned a master’s degree in developmental psychology and a Ph.D. in educational psychology.

Research that launched her career included a study that examined whether a climate of motivation or competition within a school played a factor in whether students remained motivated in math over transitions from elementary to middle school to high school and another that explored connections between school climate and violence prevention.

At Lurie, Marachi teaches educational psychology for elementary and secondary teacher candidates, focusing on strategies and supports to promote student well-being and motivation.

“Every school level could improve,” she says. “I think it’s extremely important in the early grades to set a positive, welcoming tone for kids that they are valued and that we expect the best from them. It’s not easy to do. It’s changing a culture.” ☞
GIVING & RECEIVING
Scholarship donors and Lurie College students celebrate success

Donors establish scholarships for all sorts of reasons—to honor loved ones, to thank an alma mater, to leave a legacy of gratitude for their good fortune. Getting to meet the grateful recipient of a scholarship donation is a sweet icing on the cake.

Scholarship donors and Lurie students who benefit from their generosity spent a warm afternoon in February getting to know one another and deepening their bonds as the Lurie College hosted a reception for them in downtown San José.

There was a lot to celebrate. This year, thanks to the generosity of our donors 46 Lurie students have received more than $101,000 in scholarships.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS
2015-2016

Lurie College of Education Alumni Board Scholarship
Sarah O’Donnell, Child and Adolescent Development
Salvador Williams, Teacher Education

Phil and Eleanore Anastasia Scholarship
Cari Benefiel, Teacher Education
Zayra Diaz Vargas, Teacher Education

Elaine S. Anderson Memorial Scholarship
Michael West, Teacher Education
Bibiana Arriola, Counselor Education

Richard Campbell Baugh Scholarship
Sarah O’Donnell, Child and Adolescent Development

Michele D. Bee Education Scholarship
Wai Lee, Child and Adolescent Development
Elizabeth Sanchez, Child and Adolescent Development

Elden J. and Florence G. Belanger Scholarship
Reuben Garcia, Teacher Education

Eleanor S. and Robert L. Brady Scholarship
Gustavo Silva, Special Education

Jean Meredith Ellis Cady Scholarship
Maricarmen Alanis, Counselor Education

Hazel Cilker Smith and Marion Cilker Scholarship
Andrew Staley, Teacher Education
Yifat Bar-Dagan, Teacher Education
Anupama Wadhwa, Teacher Education

Marion Cilker Scholarship for Infusing Art into Education
Tobi Nielsen, Teacher Education
Silvia Antonelli, Teacher Education

Al and Mary DeFranco Scholarship
Lakshmi Chandran, Child and Adolescent Development
Shelby Guerrero, Child and Adolescent Development

DeVore Crumby Scholarship
Yessenia Gonzalez, Child and Adolescent Development
Zayra Diaz Vargas, Teacher Education
Gabrielle Slavin, Child and Adolescent Development
Pamela Campos, Child and Adolescent Development
Elham Sharifpour, Child and Adolescent Development
Andrea Diaz, Child and Adolescent Development

Maxine Hunt Fink and Professor Jack E. Fink Scholarship
Kali Shiloh, Teacher Education

Joseph J. Ghio Scholarship
Matthew Gordon, Teacher Education

From left, Salvador Williams and Leah Gilmore (Lurie College of Education Alumni Board Scholarship)

Special Education Department Chair Chris Hagie and Nicole Iskandar (The Claudia Greathead Scholarship)

Colleen Wilcox (Dr. Colleen Wilcox Scholarship)
Bernadine Goularte Scholarship
Zayra Diaz Vargas, Teacher Education

The Claudia Greathead Scholarship
Kali Shiloh, Teacher Education
Sharon Ungerfeld, Teacher Education
Samantha Johns, Teacher Education
Cari Benefiel, Teacher Education
Nicole Iskandar, Teacher Education

John and Peter Laznibat Scholarship
Michael Lordan, Teacher Education
Andrea Graham, Communicative Disorders and Sciences

Lurie College of Education General Scholarship
Megan Klein, Communicative Disorders and Sciences
Angela Lee, Communicative Disorders and Sciences

Marla Duino Lenz Scholarship
Deborah Clima, Teacher Education

Pam Mallory Scholarship
Cari Benefiel, Teacher Education

The Margiotta Family Scholarship in Arts Education
Samantha Johns, Teacher Education

Masterjohn Scholarship
Catherine Williams, Communicative Disorders and Sciences
Kimberly Pantoja, Child and Adolescent Development

Marion D. Meyerson Scholarship
Josephine Wu, Communicative Disorders and Sciences

Florian and Grace DeForest Niemczik Scholarship
Pamela Campos, Child and Adolescent Development

Jonathan Nobuhiro Memorial Scholarship
Wai Lee, Child and Adolescent Development
Juan Huerta, Child and Adolescent Development

Helen Newhall Pardee Scholarship
Adrian Buenrostro, Teacher Education

Robert and Lorraine Pedretti Scholarship
Maricarmen Alanis, Counselor Education

E.A. Rocky Scholarship for Education
Theresa Munoz, Teacher Education
Alejandra Portillo, Education Leadership
Thuy-Khanh (Kayla) Tran, Special Education

Doris Warren Shaw Scholarship
Maegan Bright, Special Education
Surisa Abraham, Special Education

Skelly and Stewart Family Scholarship
Theresa Munoz, Teacher Education
Adrian Buenrostro, Teacher Education

Charlotte B. Stelling Scholarship
Jacquelyn Fortner, Communicative Disorders and Sciences

Ada Louise Watters Scholarship
Curtis Lee, Teacher Education
Salvador Williams, Teacher Education
Maegan Bright, Special Education

Heidi Westmoreland Teaching Scholarship
Alejandra Portillo, Education Leadership

Dr. Colleen Wilcox Scholarship
Julia Drummond, Communicative Disorders and Sciences
Surisa Abraham, Special Education

Brian and Jennifer Cilker flank recipients of the family’s scholarships, from left to right, Amupama Wadhwa, Yifat Bar-Dagan, Tobi Nielsen, Silvia Antonelli, Andrew Staley (Hazel Cilker Smith and Marion Cilker Scholarship, Marion Cilker Scholarship for Infusing Art into Education)

From left, Paula LeBlanc, Lakshmi Chandran, Shelby Guerrero, Lisa LeBlanc (Al and Mary DeFranco Family Scholarship)
For the homeless, finding shelter for the night can be a frustrating odyssey of phone calls and bus trips and miles on foot, only to reach a shelter and find out it’s full.

Amber Artman and Jasmeen Nijjar, students in the Lurie College Child and Adolescent Development Department, looked to their smartphones for a solution to a social services problem that in the worst scenario could be deadly.

Their idea was WarmBed, an easy-to-navigate website that would pinpoint area shelters on a map, describe their services and offer real-time information on bed availability. Users could click on a shelter and put a bed on hold for two hours while they rode a bus or walked to the shelter.

They pitched the idea at the 2015 Silicon Valley Innovation Challenge, an annual event that invites SJSU students to offer innovative solutions to problems. WarmBed didn’t win the competition, but it got a lot of attention and fed the women’s drive to work in the social services.

“This is what we came to school for,” says Nijjar. “For me, social work and nonprofit work is very intrinsically motivating. That’s why I do it.”

Graduate school in social work in the fall. Artman is looking for work in the nonprofit world after she graduates this May.

“I want to work with the community and I think it’s important for people who are more affluent or more well off to help people who aren’t there yet,” says Artman. “I think that the only way to solve the problem of homelessness is not by ignoring it but tackling it head on. I was raised with kind people who wanted to give back.”

Janene Perez, a lecturer in Child and Adolescent Development who helped Artman and Nijjar develop WarmBed, calls the young women “exceptional.”

The process of getting to an innovation they could showcase at the Innovation Challenge took weeks of research and brainstorming and Perez helped them eliminate some impractical approaches—turning vacant office towers in San José into centers for homeless living, for example.

They began by looking at what services are available for the homeless in the San José area, including the 211 phone number for referrals to social services.

“So we called 211 and we were on hold for a while, half an hour or 20 minutes,” says Artman. “And that’s from our cell phones. We weren’t standing at a pay phone feeding it quarters.”

When someone answered, the only information available was a list of phone numbers for shelters. Did they accept only men? Battered women? Families with children? Did they have an available bed that night?

Artman and Nijjar settled on a simple locator map and the online equivalent of “vacancy” or “no vacancy” signs and a reservation system. A tab on the site would allow service providers to update their availability and see who had reserved a bed and was on the way.
WarmBed would be advertised at homeless shelters and meal sites, on bus shelters and in libraries, where many homeless stop in to use computers. They considered making WarmBed an app but decided that a website with mobile view was most practical.

While they’re now concentrating on school and work, Artman and Nijjar hope to develop WarmBed and bring it to the nonprofit marketplace.

Artman, who directed an after-school recreation program in San Luis Obispo before she came to San José State, saw firsthand the effects of sleeping in a car or under bridges on the children in a homeless family.

“Their school work suffered, their social skills suffered, it was hard for them to make friends,” she says. “Something so simple as having a place to sleep and take a shower can help someone so immensely.”

Have WarmBed
WILL HELP
just what she was ready for. “I came to California,” she says, “by my interest in not knowing.”

After four years she moved to the Ravenswood City School District in East Palo Alto and found her longtime professional home teaching fifth grade at what is now Cesar Chavez Elementary School.

Now, in the sunset of her life, Hamann lives on the lapping edge of the San Francisco Bay in a modest house that shares a grassy acre with the home of Thomasyne Lightfoote Wilson, a professor emeritus of the Lurie College and a lifelong friend of Hamann since they met in the Peace Corps and found they shared that spark for social justice.

Hamann is 87 now and Wilson is 80 and, sitting together in a shady gazebo on the property, they reminisce about the work they did together to join community and family as stakeholders in education in East Palo Alto.

Their outlook was called “community-family guided education” and it turned a cold shoulder toward a bureaucratic school system dictating to poor and minority students and parents. Wilson, with a Ph.D. in international development from Stanford University and a professorship at SJSU, was loaned to the school district to create a sense of extended family with an emphasis on caring and sharing relationships and horizontal decision-making.

Through her role as credentialing supervisor at San José State, Wilson brought an army of student teachers through the district to learn a community-engagement approach to the classroom.

“Creating community was something we realized we could do,” says Wilson. During the decades she taught there, East Palo Alto changed considerably, shifting from a predominantly black community to mostly Latino. The community has weathered periods of violent crime along with the pressures of gentrification as the tech boom has driven up housing prices.

But for Hamann, the challenge has always been the same no matter who walks through the school door. She calls her students “little guys” and she taught through encouragement and instilling pride.

Dianne Otterby, a student teacher under Hamann who remains a friend today, said Hamann always put her students first. “With her, it was all about her kids,” Otterby says. “It was as democratic classroom as you could have, but there was no nonsense.

It was highly disciplined but positive. And she always seemed to have time for puzzle-making, weaving looms, games.”

Like many other great teachers, Hamann was inspired by a great teacher. Hers was Miss Kiely, in a one-room schoolhouse in Michigan. After 80 years Hamann still remembers her quiet discipline and high expectations.

Inspired by her experiences teaching poor children from diverse backgrounds and by San José State’s commitment to urban multicultural education, Hamann is now poised to make her final contribution the field.

Hamann is leaving to the Lurie College a bequest in her will that will generate annual income to fund one or more full scholarships for elementary teacher credentialing students who have demonstrated a passion for teaching multiculturalism in public schools and a desire to serve in poorer schools with diverse student bodies.

The Mary Jane Hamann Endowed Scholarship for Multicultural Learning will give preference to students who are the first generation in their family to graduate from college.

Although Hamann received her teaching credential from Siena Heights University in Michigan, it was her familiarity with San José State through Wilson and dozens of student teachers that connected her with the Lurie College development office.

“I decided that I had some money that I could do something with and I would like it to do something for somebody else,” she says, “and then it was the matter of finding the right people.”

Hamann is delighted to be able to pass on the gift of teaching to future generations. “I like kids,” she says.

She never married or raised a family of her own and whenever people asked her if she had children she used to say, “Thousands—just not ones I brought home.”
NEW ASSOCIATE DEAN

Paul Cascella, whose research focuses on communication challenges faced by people with severe disabilities, has been keeping the movers busy.

First, he relocated from coast to coast, joining the SJSU Department of Communicative Disorders and Sciences in Fall 2014 from Hunter College in New York City. He soon was appointed chair of the department. And recently he was packing up again—this time to move into the dean’s office as associate dean.

Cascella, a full tenured professor, is succeeding Mary McVey who is returning to teaching.

While the communicative disorders department is losing a scholar, the Lurie College is gaining a seasoned administrator. In New York Cascella chaired Hunter’s Department of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology and he previously worked in a variety of clinical settings, from public schools, to state institutions and group homes to private practice.

BACK TO THE CLASSROOM

In her seven years as associate dean, Mary McVey led the Lurie College through assessments for state and national accreditation while also bringing the college into the 21st century in terms of learning technology.

Her legacy can be found on every floor of Sweeney Hall—in SMART Boards, iPads, modular furniture groupings and video instruction technology that she has made sure is part of each Lurie student’s education.

Her proudest achievement?
“The rooms that I’ve redesigned,” McVey says. “Learning environments that actually facilitate learning as opposed to just being rooms where classes are taught.”

McVey, with a Ph.D. from Stanford University in educational psychology, is returning to teaching as a full professor in the Child and Adolescent Development Department. Her first class (in Spring 2017) will, not surprisingly, be taught online.

FULL PROFESSOR

Rocio Dresser was recently promoted to full professor in the Department of Teacher Education In her 20-year career on the Lurie College faculty, Dresser has focused on literacy and language development, especially as it relates to second language learners.

A native of Colombia, Dresser until recently was the coordinator of the Bilingual Teacher Preparation Program. She is also teaches globalization in the Lurie College Ed.D. program. ☞

UPDATES
Faculty In Transition

Paul Cascella
Mary McVey
Rocio Dresser
FACULTY & STAFF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

FACULTY RESEARCH


REBECA BURCIAGA, with Dolores Delgado Bernal and Judith Flores Carmona, published Chicana/Latina Testimonios as Pedagogical, Methodological, and Activist Approaches to Social Justice (Austin, Texas, University of Texas Press, 2015). Her recent workshop and conference presentations include “Nuts and Bolts of Going on the Job Market – Social Sciences and Beyond” in New Orleans.


NONI M. REIS and Barbara Flores presented “Changing the Pedagogical Culture of Schools with English Learners” at the California Association of Bilingual Education in San Diego in March 2015.


ELSIE CHIN
COLETTE RABIN and GRINELL SMITH presented “Shaping Teacher Candidates’ Professional Dispositions of Caring” at the California Council on Teacher Education American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education conference in Las Vegas in February. They also presented “Teaching with the Language(s) of Science in Mind” at the National Science Teachers Association meeting in Reno, Nev., in October 2015.


FACULTY SERVICE


BRENT DUCKOR serves on the College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium, National Council for Community and Education Partnerships. He also served as an executive committee member and lead organizer of the 17th Biennial International Objective Measurement Workshop, held in April 2015 in Washington, D.C.

JASON LAKER serves as a reviewer for the American Educational Research Association’s 2016 conference program proposals. He was also appointed to the Vicente Rocaufette Lay University of Guayaquil’s Administrative Review of the Focus School of Management permanent editorial board.

KATHRYN LINDHOLM-LEARY prepared a paper for the National Academy of Science that reviews research on critical issues in the language and academic development during K-12 of English language learners. She also evaluated the Sobrato Early Academic and Literacy PreK-3rd Project for the Sobrato Foundation.

ALMA PARTIDA given by the Council on Anthropology and Education.

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Alma Partida was given by the Council on Anthropology and Education.

Emily Slusser and Teresa O’Donnell-Johnson have organized students in the Child and Adolescent Development Department to tutor struggling readers in local elementary schools for Reading Partners. Over the past three years, 75 ChAD students have given 11,250 hours of their time to tutoring with Reading Partners as a part of service-learning classes. These students complete an in-class program overview, on-site orientations, and a total of 15-20 hours of tutoring per semester.

William J. Reckmeyer serves on the Kellogg Fellows Leadership Alliance as 2016 Global Forum conference chair and as a board member.

Kudos

Allison Briceño has been named an English Language Learner Fellow by the California Association of Bilingual Educators. She also received a $5,000 grant from the Lurie College for Bilingual Students’ Reading Strategies: A Foundational Pilot Study.

Peggy Jo Davidson-Cathey, a lecturer in the Counselor Education Department for the past 21 years, recently took and passed the National Counselor Examination so that she could better assist students preparing for the exam to become licensed by the Board of Behavioral Sciences.

Jason Laker received the SJSU Center for Community Learning & Leadership’s Faculty Award for Excellence in 2015 for his commitment to community-engaged curriculum.

Henriette Langdon has been named a board certified-specialist in child language by the American Board of Child Language and Language Disorders.

Patricia D. Lopez is a recipient of the 2015 Concha Delgado Gaitan Early Career Presidential Fellowship given by the Council on Anthropology and Education.

Alma Partida, a master’s degree student in the Communicative Disorders & Sciences Department, was awarded a $1,000 scholarship to attend the Council for Exceptional Children national convention in St. Louis in April. She was one of five winners from California.

As part of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, the English Language and Literacy Integration in Subject Areas Project, which David Whitenack is principal investigator, has been named a Bright Spot in Hispanic Education for its leadership in supporting the educational progress of Hispanic students and families.
The subject of our cover story, Mary Jane Hamann, worked as a school teacher for her entire life, but she lived frugally and saved her pennies and in her sunset years she had enough money to make a sizable donation to Lurie College to fund scholarships for the next generation of teachers.

If you would like to explore how you might be able to make a similar impact on a young teacher and the future of education, contact Betty Tseng, senior director of development for Lurie College, and inquire about legacy gifts.

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