



WCSA Updates

For current happenings on the **2013 WCSA Annual Conference**, check out the WCSA website at wscaweb.org

Register Now – [Click Here](#)
*Before you miss it and miss out!

2013 Conference Credit Course through Concordia info - [Click Here](#)

Call for 2013 Graduate Poster Sessions - [Click Here](#)
* Due by FEB. 14th!
*Fantastic way to network with over 1200 counselors & create a long-lasting impression.

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK!

Feb. 4th - 8th, 2013
Let's celebrate and honor the work that school counselors do! [Click Here](#) to see what WCSA is suggesting might be some ways to emphasize National School Counseling Week. Or [Click Here](#) to see what ASCA has to say!

Here is the great news: WCSA offers a **FREE** student membership for first-year graduate students in school counseling programs here in Wisconsin! After that, each year's membership costs only \$25.00!

Comings and Goings

- The WCSA Graduate Student Committee Meeting will be held on Feb. 2nd, 2013 at Lakeland College-Madison from 10:00am-12:00pm.
 - Check with your school's WCSA Graduate Student Representative for more information!
 - WCSA President Elect, Lisa Koenecke, will be speaking!
- Connect with other students at the **Graduate Student Dinner**, Tuesday, Feb. 18th.
 - 8:00 p.m. at [Essen Haus](#), 514 East Wilson Street, Madison, WI 53703

National School Counseling Week, 2013:

What can we do?

By: Jessica Swenson, UW – River Falls

As graduate students and professionals, we continuously hear about the importance of advocating for the role of school counselors. There is no better time to show your support than during National School Counseling Week 2013. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) is again promoting this important week that will be held February 4-8, 2013. This year's tag line is, "School Counseling: Liberty and Learning for All."

National School Counseling Week serves as a platform to display the unique skill set that comes with the position. This week gives us the opportunity to celebrate school counselors and their impact on students, families, and school staff. This can be achieved in a number of ways. Both the WCSA and ASCA websites have a list of suggested ideas. Some common ideas include creating daily announcements that focus on the counselor's unique role within the school, including the week on your district's calendar of events, writing certificates of appreciation to individuals who support your program, or by creating a contest for the week to engage students in learning more about school counseling.

As an example, at UW-River Falls we celebrate by inviting a presenter at the start of National School Counseling Week to speak to the entire campus community as well as local community residents about a topic in education that impacts the work of school

counselors. Last year we had a representative from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension - Internet Crimes Against Children division speak to us about Internet safety. This year we are hosting a speaker who will present information on restorative justice in education. Along with sponsoring this event, the UWRF School Counseling Student Association is also holding a food drive during the week for the second year in a row.

Being part of the committee that puts together these events at UW-River Falls has allowed me to expand my own knowledge and skills. I encourage all of you to find some time to promote National School Counseling Week 2013 within your programs or at your practicum/internship sites. Check out the resources I have provided to find more ideas to celebrate school counselors and their supporters. Reading blogs authored by school counselors is a great way to discover what other schools have done in the past and to find out what they plan to do this year!

I hope to see all of you at the WCSA Annual Conference and I look forward to hearing about what your school counseling program or place of employment does to recognize National School Counseling Week 2013!

Resources to Explore:

Ideas from WCSA: [Click Here](#)

Ideas from the ASCA: [Click Here](#)

South Carolina Counselor Café blog: [Click Here](#)

From a School Counselor Blog: [Click Here](#)

Understanding Community: The Hmong New Year

By: Vang Lo, UW – River Falls

Understanding the community and populations school counselors serve is one of the main tenets of a strong comprehensive school counseling program. No matter the community, there is always a large spectrum of people and resources school counselors can turn to and learn more about. Each piece of information we gather builds our knowledge and understanding of the students we serve.

Wisconsin is a place that many Hmong families call home and where they celebrate the annual Hmong New Year. The Hmong community is one of several that school counselors may have an opportunity to work with and is certainly a community we should learn more about.

A Brief Hmong History

The Hmong are a peaceful ethnic minority group living in the highlands of southern China and northern Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. In the 1960s, they were recruited by the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to help fight the North Vietnamese forces in Laos. After the Vietnam War ended, many Hmong were tortured, incarcerated or killed. Some survivors fled and lived in Thailand's refugee camps for many years before immigrating to the United States or other host countries. According to the 2010 Census, there are 236,000 Hmong in the U.S. of which 41,800 live in Minnesota and another 33,791 live in Wisconsin.

The Hmong have a strong family base and a multi-generational structure that emphasizes family over self. There are 18 Hmong clans or last names: Chang/Cha, Chue, Cheng, Fang, Her, Hang, Khang, Kong, Lee, Kue, Lor/Lo, Moua, Pha, Thao, Vang, Vue, Xiong and Yang. Clans are family groups and provide the social and political organization in the Hmong culture. Some key Hmong celebrations are: Birth, Marriage, Naming, New Year and Death (Lee & Pfeifer, 2006).

The Hmong New Year

On November 17, 2012, the Lo/Lauj Family celebrated their twentieth annual family New Year at a local banquet hall in St. Paul, MN. It was filled with beautiful decorations, colorful Hmong outfits, joyful kids, lots of talented cultural performances, important speakers, authentic Asian food, and over 800 family members and guests.

“The New Year is a very important celebration for our Hmong people. It has been celebrated for many generations and symbolizes who we are as Hmong,” said Za Tsheej Lauj, elder and family leader. “It’s a family gathering, where I get to see and catch up with family members and friends,” said Choua Chang, a young mother. The New Year serves many purposes: to reflect on the past year, meet with family and

friends, eat delicious homemade food, find your potential spouse, see new artistic performances, and welcome in the new year.

Implications for School Counselors

According to Lee and Pfeifer (2006), “Most Hmong parents place a high value on their children’s education, but they lack the resources or personal background to teach their children academic skills. Communication must be established between parents and the schools so that each party can understand and respect each other’s potential role in a partnership.” School counselors can definitely help bridge the gap between the Hmong community and school. A great way is to host a Hmong New Year at your school and invite Hmong parents and students to help plan and host the event. Once a respected relationship is built through this collaboration, it will be much easier for school counselors to work with Hmong students and parents on academic, personal/social, and career development.

Wisconsin is and will continue to be a vibrant state for the Hmong community to live in and practice key celebrations. Though we are a Minnesota family, the Lauj’s will be celebrating their 21st Lauj Family New Year at the end of this year and you and your family are invited! Anytime we can all share cultural celebrations, it’s a win-win situation for everyone. For more information, you may contact Vang Lo at vanglo.family@gmail.com. Happy New Year, Nyob Zoo Xyoo Tshiab!



Being Visible

By: Katie Layman, UW – River Falls

As we prepare for our practicum and internships, it is important to be mindful of the ways to get the most out of these experiences. Becoming visible is one way to do this.

Practicum and internship experiences are new, exciting and, sometimes, frightening. We are beginning to put into practice what we have been learning in our graduate programs. Through making ourselves visible, we can begin building working relationships with those around us, which, in turn, provides us with a support network.

Discussions with current school counselors, site supervisors, etc. can be great avenues to see where and how you can become visible. Visibility not only helps you as a counselor connect with the school community, but also acts as a way to advocate for the school counseling profession. The following list provides some effective ways to become visible in the school setting, all adapted from [THIS](#) blog.

Best of luck in the journey through internships, practicum and beyond!

Introduce yourself to staff and administration at the beginning of your practicum or internship. Doing this can help build a professional relationship with those you may be in contact with not only during your time at the school, but also when you seek future employment.

Be present in the halls before, during and after school. Say hello and try to connect with students.

Become familiar with students, teachers, other school staff, parents, etc. Ways to do this may include: being present before and after school in the hallways, attending after school events (sporting events, conferences, staff and community meetings, etc.)

Have conversations with site supervisors early and often. Expressing to your supervisor what you hope to get out of the experience allows them to help make that happen. Asking for feedback throughout your time can also aid in professional development.

Embrace the many roles that school counselors take on. Do not be afraid to jump in and do lunch/recess duty now and then. This may be a great time to connect with students in an area outside of your office or the classroom and can allow a trusting relationship to continue to be built.



Preparing for Crisis: The Necessity of a Daypack

By: Ben Herman, UW – River Falls

It has been nearly two months since the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary. As school counselors in training, it must have given us all pause to contemplate the reality of what happened and what our roles might be in that community moving forward. I recently was struck by an apt parallel as my partner and I found ourselves feeling exposed on an extended day hike among some canyons in Arches National Park.

In the waning daylight, we were having trouble finding the snow-covered rock cairns that marked our trail. It was 15 degrees and dropping and we still had a two-hour hike out. Fortunately, whenever we go on a hike in an area with which we are unfamiliar, we bring a small pack full of support. As we sat contemplating our safest course of action, the concept of preparation and its necessity in regards to managing school crisis took root in my mind.

For any hike, if we've done our research, we have an idea about what to expect in terms of difficulty, duration, and weather. We've familiarized ourselves with potential hazards and have taken the necessary precautions based on material and human support at our disposal. At a minimum, we have a compass, map, watch, 30 feet of rope, small multi-tool, first-aid kit, headlamp, enough water for a journey twice as long as we expect, food and emergency food, and the requisite inclement weather gear. We may need none of those things or we may need all of them plus whatever we can find on the hike. The concept of a daypack is to prepare ourselves for what we can't foresee and don't always expect. Sounds a bit like the life of a school counselor.

We are training to be as prepared as we can be. The reality is that no matter how much effort we put in, we will be struck with something unforeseen and potentially unimaginable. Whether a school crisis happens in your school, a district affiliate, or a school far away, a crisis has the potential to impact and influence school counselors' work in support of students' growth.

The first time I was struck by the impact of a school crisis, I was serving as an AmeriCorps volunteer for an organization that helped low-income youth gain admission to college. During orientation, a fellow Corps-member shared her experience of being a student at Columbine High School during the school shooting of 1999 and how it continually impacted her life. Similarly, several students I worked with during my term of service encountered a schoolmate's unexpected death, one was diagnosed with cancer at age 17, and another dealt with the suicide of a family member.

When these events happened I did my best to support them in all the ways I knew how, but I was inexperienced. I hadn't fully packed my daypack yet. To help lead me in the right direction, I turned to and relied upon the experience of my co-worker who had gone through a similarly traumatic event, and I used the support and experience of my supervisors and the organization itself. Those avenues in turn helped support the students, and they each were able to remain engaged in school and eventually all earned admission to a college of their choice.

Experiences, training, and the critical support of others give us the best advantage when encountering and managing crisis. They are the components of our daypack. To use those components, we'll need to rely on and create institutional support from the school by way of policies and procedures. We'll need to build relationships with colleagues and families and be ready to utilize extended networks of support. We'll need to rely on professional standards for excellence in crisis response. Most importantly, we'll need to constantly evaluate, reflect upon, and change our responses according to our experiences and best ethical judgments. Lastly, we must share our knowledge among professional colleagues in order to build the strongest network of support students can have.

Expect the unexpected. Utilize your knowledge and experience and continue to seek training. Rely upon and consult with others. Prepare your daypack and bring it with you each and every day.

Here is a great sectional to check out at the WSCA Conference:
*School Safety and Security: Research, Readiness and Re-Energizing Your Program" (Pre-K - Gr.12)

*Presenter, Doug Reynolds; President of Safety Quest, Inc. & retired School Security & Safety Coordinator, School District of Beloit

