



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

BYU SCHOOL OF FAMILY LIFE
ALUMNI MAGAZINE

SPRING 2015



The Tale of a Working Family Scientist

Finding a Home in Family Law

Romanian Orphanage Program: A Legacy of Love

Message from the Director



Dear School of Family Life Alumni,

Welcome to our spring issue of Family Connections. In every issue, there are examples of alumni who are using their education from the School of Family Life in a variety of endeavors. Some are using their education primarily in the home, others in the workplace, some in their communities, and others in all three settings. In this issue I particularly enjoy the well-written descriptions about alumnae Amy and Jenette, who bring two dramatically different approaches to post-SFL life.

Over the years, I've consistently had conversations with students and alumni about where they plan to use their degrees and how they are going to balance their lives between the demands of family, work, and community. Not uncommonly, I get students or recent graduates in my office who are facing some very difficult and heart-wrenching decisions. Some of them feel like they are getting the message that it is wrong to go on to graduate school, or pressure from those around them to focus only on their family relationships. In contrast, others feel like parents are going to cut them off from financial help as soon as they marry

to encourage them to put off marriage and childrearing. Still others seem to be unrealistic about thinking they will be able to do it all. In the back of my mind I'm thinking, "Welcome to the never-ending balancing act of adult life."

I am reminded of a personal experience I had when my family was still young. My wife was crazy enough to marry a freshman right off of his mission, even though she had already graduated. As a result, she was the primary breadwinner as a school teacher for the first seven years of our marriage, while I was the stay-at-home parent who fit in school in the evenings and Spring and Summer terms as much as possible. I remember when my first son was about a year old, and was in his stranger anxiety phase. I had one evening class that I could not take without the help of a babysitter. I found someone I could trust, and I took my son over to her house for a three-hour block one afternoon each week. The very first time I dropped off my son, he clung to my leg and would not let go. Eventually he pitched such a fit that I was convinced I was destroying his life by neglecting my duty as a parent. It was difficult to concentrate in my class while I thought he was with the babysitter bawling his eyes out. It took weeks for him to feel comfortable with the babysitter, but eventually he adjusted and actually enjoyed interacting with her two kids. Still, I have never forgotten the tears that I was trying to hold back each time as I left him with the babysitter. I have also never forgotten how painful it was when later I became the primary breadwinner, and my wife replaced me as the primary caretaker. I missed my children very much. I watch women and men making similar choices in their own balancing acts today, and I have great respect and compassion for how hard it is to make these decisions without second-guessing ourselves all the time. We are

DEAN M. BUSBY
DIRECTOR
SCHOOL OF FAMILY LIFE

repeatedly reevaluating whether we have balanced our lives correctly.

It is difficult not to respond angrily when people are judgmental about our differing methods in approaching this difficult balancing act. How can we presume to know what is best for a particular family or situation with parents who have unique skills and personalities? I have known a number of men who were the best caretakers and nurturers in their families. I have known other families where both parents tried to be equal caretakers, and others still that were more traditional. Each of these different types of families had children who turned out well. It seems petty and small-minded to me when we criticize other families who may not be managing things the way we did. Perhaps, rather than criticizing, a better approach would be to support families through whatever choices they are making, and becoming real friends and neighbors. Then, if there are problems with the balancing act, they are likely to turn to us and we can be helpful rather than judgmental.

Overall, I think we do a pretty good job showing students a variety of role models in our faculty. These teachers come from many different places, all with their own methods of managing this balancing act. They are able to show, by word and deed, that there are many pathways to a healthy family, as long as sound doctrines, principles, and science about healthy relationships are followed. These same faculty also give students skills to evaluate whether a family is flourishing, and what decisions they might be able to make to improve the long-term health of everyone.

Sincerely,

DEAN M. BUSBY



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The Tale of a Working Family Scientist

BY AMY NILSSON MAUGHN

Jim Harbaugh, new head football coach for the University of Michigan, grew up with the exuberant family motto: “Who has it better than us?” To which his family would respond with emphasis: “No-bo-dy!” Over the years, Jim has passed the saying on to his football teams, and as I stand back, observing in awe my husband and children in a life that is everything I could hope for, I feel the same sentiment. Then, I keel over and collapse from exhaustion.

As a graduate from BYU’s School of Family Life, I’m pleased to report I’ve been actively working as a family scientist for fifteen years. In that time, my lab has expanded to include five children, two bunnies, a dog, a turtle, a hamster (may she rest in peace), a crazy cat (may she rest in the home of the nice family who adopted her), and a mob of wild turkeys that come around for breakfast every morning.

In a “gotcha!” twist of academic fate, my duties on a typical day include branches of science I never studied, and require expertise in nearly every field I didn’t choose. Obvious aspects of my career include the usual moms-do-it-all job descriptions of educator, accountant, administrator, psychologist, nutritionist, nurse, chauffer, chef, housekeeper, hairdresser...you know the list. My lesser known titles include entomologist, because bug identification in Florida is a full-time job in itself; geneticist, as my husband and I debate who gave which child which genes, and try to figure out what to do with those darn inherited traits; pathologist, because nobody can Google like me when it comes to diagnosing rashes and other perplexing infirmities; seismologist, predicting, of course, how big an impending tantrum is going to be; forensic scientist, ‘cause I always know whodunnit; economist, “No you can’t have the \$100 shoes unless

“In the process of all this hard labor, I’ve discovered parts of my heart I didn’t know existed.”



you plan to mortgage your scooter!"; architect, “My forts can outlast your forts!"; statistician: “Good job, you’ve gone 60% of the week without wetting the bed!"; and activist—the cause will vary, but not the length of my soapbox speeches. Nor the intensity of them. Ask my children.

In the process of all this hard labor, I’ve discovered parts of my heart I didn’t know existed. At different times and in different ways, these parts have been pumped full, drained, twisted, contorted, and pulled in every direction. Though I have several children, it only took one child, and one split second of gazing into those innocent newborn eyes to recognize the responsibility, significance, and privilege that is parenthood.

Ironically, the path that has paved the

way to such a rewarding family life does not always translate well in social circles. By way of illustration, a typical dinner party where I reside in Ponte Vedra Beach, may play out something like this:

Person A asks where I went to college and smiles politely when I say, “Brigham Young University.” But I see the gears cranking as she deduces my Mormon faith and wonders if my husband has more than one wife. Person B jumps into the conversation at this point, asking what I studied in school. Pleasant expressions turn perplexed when I answer “Family Science,” and my new acquaintances fidget as they ponder how the words ‘science’ and ‘family’ can even be paired together. Nobody questions health science, or social science, for that matter. Why, then, do people find the concept of



family science to be so baffling, especially those who are parents themselves? I have enough emotional intelligence to know quoting textbooks or passing out conference brochures is no way to win friends and influence people, but if these folks could just see the objectives in the field of family science, surely they would get the importance of it!

The real fun starts when my new friends ask what career choices came of this field. It would be easier to explain what hasn't come of this field (haven't worked in a related career, haven't been paid for my knowledge and expertise, haven't received awards or accolades for family anything...). But see, all that family education taught me my kids would benefit from my being home with them, so it was my choice not to pursue a full-time career. The stay-at-home mom answer works for some audiences, but for others, saving baby seals would command more respect than tending to small humans all day.

For those requiring a "meatier" response, I tell them I taught high school for several years before I had kids. A glimmer of hope shoots from their eyes. Maybe they can relate to me after all. "What subject?" they ask, and that's when things really get juicy, because it was full-time seminary taught through the LDS Church Educational

System. (Church again? I watch them process. A preacher? A pastor? A nun, perhaps?) The conversation dead-ends at this point, my audience unable to relate to my religious culture or passion for strong families in a world that is all about individual rights, self-actualization, and personal success. Perhaps if I were working as a professional in my field, my new friends would be more dazzled. Perhaps I would feel more dazzling, and I wouldn't have to grapple with those pesky moments of wondering if I'm enough.

I'm positive this audience of fellow SFL alumni recognizes the importance of our education; that we could share warm, knowing smiles about how it feeds everything we do in every arena of life—whether we draw a paycheck or not. It's hard, though, to maintain that level of confidence in settings like my dinner party. And to be honest, sometimes I don't. It's taken more than a few pep talks over the years to reassure me I haven't missed opportunities for wider influence, or undermined my full potential by choosing to stay at home. I don't think I'm alone in this self-reflection, either. Look how many Mormon walls (and several non-Mormon walls, thanks to Pinterest) are adorned with David O. McKay's famous words: "No other success can compensate for failure in the

home." For some, it may be a reminder of what is most important. For others, it is validation that our quiet, unrelenting efforts in the home are indeed the most important thing we can offer at this time in our lives.

But success outside the walls of the home doesn't have to sabotage success within them. Maybe that's why my self-doubt sets in at times—some women seem to do it all, and do it all so very well. In spite of my tendency to question my own choices, I don't judge anyone else for theirs. Whether it be financial necessity or personal preference, I respect women who work outside of the home, and I acknowledge the fulfillment it can bring. Some women consider themselves better equipped as mothers when they have a sense of identity outside of their children. I understand this, too, as my own identity has been so wrapped up in raising kids that my youngest turning five-years-old nearly did me in! If the prospect of all my children being in school left me buried in a mountain of soggy Kleenex, what would happen when I hit the empty nest stage?

In an effort to arm myself for that looming day in the future when all my children are out of the house, I recently made the decision to go back to school and pursue an interest of my own.



“...nobody has it better than me, just different than me, and I wouldn’t want to trade places with anyone”

Thanks to a stupendously supportive husband, children who stepped up to the challenge, an extremely helpful mother, and an infinitely gracious God, I was able to complete a low-residency graduate program in writing. This, in spite of a very definite kink in my whole sparkly plan—a surprise pregnancy in my third semester (So much for all my kids being in school). The pregnancy meant another grueling round of hyperemesis gravidarum that would require hospitalization and months of incapacitation. It meant a fifth C-section when my doctors had warned me four was already pushing it, and because I was forty, it meant a whole slew of testing and innumerable risks of a “geriatric pregnancy” (doctor’s words, not mine). It also meant giving birth on the day the rest of my class graduated—to the vivacious, wonderful caboose that completed our family in ways we couldn’t have imagined.

Setbacks aside, I earned my diploma six months later, and suddenly, I could salvage those awkward dinner conversations by mentioning my hard-fought Master’s degree. “I got an MFA in writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts!” I can now blurt after the reception of my other endeavors falls flat. Faces light up. This.

This is something we can work with, my new friends are thinking. On the one hand, I feel a sense of professional validation that I’ve never before experienced. On the other hand, I can’t help but wonder why novel writing is more impressive to people than my family crusade. The strength of our planet hinges on the well-being of families, people! Why do you find my made up worlds with made up characters so much more palatable?

The truth is, fiction circles me right back to family science anyway. My characters deal with broken families, difficult sibling relationships, and the struggle to find identity and self-worth in spite of various messy circumstances. I clearly wasn’t drawn to family science for money, fame, or job stability. My choice, then, can only be explained by a sincere passion for the subject—and that interest doesn’t wane with time or experience; it only intensifies as I observe too much heartache in a society that could be helped tremendously by healthy, stable families.

And so, even in my novel writing, I’m a certifiable family scientist. And although many may not find significance in the path I’ve chosen, the years since my graduation have been truly satisfying. I can say along

with Coach Harbaugh that nobody has it better than me, just different than me, and I wouldn’t want to trade places with anyone (even if I am a little exhausted). So when you find me comatose on my kitchen floor, please fluff me back up and send me on my way. I’ve got lots of work to tend to in my laboratory.

Jenette Turner: Finding a Home in Family Law

BY JAKE HEALEY



For Jenette Turner, attorney-at-law, it's always been about family. The children of a Navy chaplain, Jenette and her five sisters spent much of their childhood bouncing from place to place. "As a military family, we didn't have a lot of locational stability," she said. "We relied on our closeness with each other." Decades later, this focus in her life has remained constant. After graduating from BYU's School of Family Life in 1996, Jenette surprised everyone, including herself, by deciding to attend law school. Now, in the midst of a career as a practicing family lawyer, she considers her work to be "the most rewarding thing [she] could be doing."

Following her high school graduation in San Diego, Jenette traded the gorgeous beaches of Southern California for the grandeur of the Wasatch mountain range. As an undergraduate attending Brigham Young University, she planned to major in communications—but quickly discovered that wasn't her path. "I wanted to go into broadcasting," she said, "and it was right around the time of the Gulf War. Because

of [the war], we had a lot of extra work and deadlines placed on us, and as I got busier and more caught up in it, I began to realize that the field wasn't right for me."

But what was right for her? Jenette, previously working toward a minor in family science, chose to flip her course of study by majoring in family science and downgrading communications to a minor. That, she said, was the proverbial fork in the road. Jenette knew she wanted to go to grad school, but was torn between several options. Law school was not even on her radar. After graduation, Jenette spent five years doing full-time social work, another field she considered to be a bad fit for her. "I had one of those moments where I realized that wow, I need to be praying more seriously about this," said Jenette. "So I said the prayer that's always scary—'Heavenly Father, if you tell me what to do, I'll do whatever you say!' Once I had given it the thought and prayer that I needed, law school became the clear answer."

She acted on that inspiration quickly. Before long, Jenette had moved even farther east to attend Washburn University Law School in Topeka, Kansas. "BYU prepared me so [well] for law school," she said. "I always assumed that I was just getting a regular college education, but when I started to interact with people who'd gotten their undergrads at all sorts of different schools, I realized how special a BYU education really was." She continued to say, "The undergraduate schooling I received was top-

notch. Learning so much and having such a great experience really opened my eyes to the possibilities that were before me."

The quality education she received wasn't the only upside of her BYU experience, though. "The professors and the administrators at Washburn . . . they love the kids from Brigham Young," she said. "Even though it's strenuous, there's definitely a sort of frat mentality in law school, a party atmosphere. They loved getting BYU kids because we were responsible. We were hardworking and focused, and we were family-oriented. They were very impressed with us."

Having been through the experience herself, Jenette doesn't hesitate to share how a prospective student could best prepare for law school. "Write," she said. "Write, write, write. Simple as that. If you don't like to write on at least some level, you probably shouldn't go to law school. Being a lawyer who doesn't like writing is like being a pilot who doesn't like flying." That said, she adds that those who do find law school an intriguing option shouldn't let its intimidating reputation deter them. "People always say, 'Oh, you're a lawyer, you must be so smart!' I tell them, though, that it's not about brainpower. It's about hard work . . . I always got pretty average grades, I found myself at the middle of the pack. Conventional wisdom would say that somebody in the middle of the pack can't succeed in law school, but I . . . absolutely did, because I was willing to work hard for it."

"I always assumed that I was just getting a regular college education, but when I started to interact with people who'd gotten their undergrads at all sorts of different schools, I realized how special a BYU education really was."

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“The cases I deal with would be much, much sadder if there was nobody around to defend the victims. That’s where we come in.”



That hard work has paid off. Jenette acknowledges that lawyers tend to have a “shady” reputation, but when asked about the benefits of her profession, Jenette repeatedly jumps to the word “rewarding.” Legal professionals can work to help families in many different ways. Currently, Jenette represents the state of Utah in child welfare cases. That means that she finds herself dealing with child abuse and neglect in juvenile court. On the one hand, it’s difficult because the situations are so sad to witness,” she said. “It’s like society has this dark underbelly that most people don’t even consider or only hear about briefly on the news, and part of my job is to know everything there is to know about it.”

“That being said, the good outweighs the bad,” she continued. “The cases I deal with would be much, much sadder if there was nobody around to defend the victims. That’s where we come in. These children and these other victims don’t have the means to speak or stand up for themselves, even though it’s something they desperately need.” Jenette asserts that she feels truly successful in her job when justice is dealt. “So many people choose to bully, abuse, or neglect, and it’s

great to finally be the one who puts their foot down and says, ‘No, you know what? This stops here.’” According to Jenette, it’s usually hard for victims to gain closure with the wrongs that have been done unless the perpetrator has received justice. “It’s nice to see people finally come to grips with their past and begin moving forward,” she said, “and it’s rewarding to help facilitate that.”

Jenette is quick to recommend pre-law advisement (a service offered by BYU) to potential law school applicants, but stresses that it’s not necessarily a must-have. “There are so many different paths to take,” she said. “I didn’t have any advisement because I didn’t even decide I wanted to go into law until after I was done with college. The road to being a lawyer isn’t one-size-fits-all.” Of course, she adds that the sooner students decide which of the many paths to travel, the more resources will be available to them. “If you think you’re interested in law, get involved, do internships,” Jenette advises. “That way, you’ll know what you’re talking about when you get to law school. Having experience will really help you stand out as an applicant.”

“That’s definitely one thing I would go

back and change if I could,” she continued. “It’s hard, because you’re so busy—going to school, working, dating, socializing—to find the time for something that doesn’t produce an immediate reward.” The BYU Pre-Professional Advisement Center also recommends internships as a great way to gain that helpful pre-law school experience. The center offers a program in which students can work as a legal intern at a local law office for academic credit. Additionally, the law school allows undergraduates to sit in on certain first-year classes to further discover whether the field is right for them.

“Just because you like to argue doesn’t necessarily mean law is right for you,” advised Jenette. “And don’t be a lawyer just because you like *Law and Order* or courtroom dramas.” She concedes that sometimes, these interests can start the path to the pursuit of a law degree, but before making a commitment to the profession students need to be confident that the field is a good fit for them. “Do your research. Make sure that law is right for you, because you don’t want to be stuck,” she warned. “You should choose something that at the end of the day, you can look back and



like who you are and what you do.”

Looking back, Jenette is confident she made the right decision. “It’s definitely not easy,” she said. “It’s hard to see some of the terrible things that go on in the world, and it’s hard to learn how to separate your work from your personal life. But when you see the good that can be done and the difference that can be made through your work, it’s so worth it.”

“I remember one victim in particular who lived paycheck-to-paycheck for lots of years. She was a single mother and her ex-husband had been neglecting his child support. We ended up recovering over ten thousand dollars for her. Afterwards, she called me and told me how much our work meant to her. She told us, ‘I’d always promised my daughter that if she worked hard, she could go to college. I wanted the best for her, but as time went on I knew I wouldn’t be able to pay for it and she wouldn’t be able to go. That money came in right as I was about to break the news to her.’” Jenette continued, “It’s rewarding to see someone get the financial help they need, but it’s most rewarding to see a victim receive justice, for them to feel listened to,

and for the person who wronged them to be held accountable.” She paused, a smile on her face, before recalling the last thing this woman told her. “She said, ‘Finally, somebody stood up for me. That’s never happened before.’”

Some people think of lawyers as ruthless or even villainous individuals who deal with shady business transactions, high-profile celebrity prosecutions, or multi-billion dollar corporations—but for Jenette Turner, attorney-at-law, it’s always been about family. With a diploma from BYU’s School of Family Life and a law degree under her arm, she is equipped with the tools necessary to effectively serve the people she works with. Though her journey didn’t come without sacrifice, and though the road required extraordinary dedication, Jenette now makes a difference for countless families and is rewarded by the path she’s chosen.

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Romania Orphanage Program: A Legacy of Love

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On a hot summer afternoon in the small Romanian town of Iasi, ten volunteers from Brigham Young University entered a communist-era orphanage, carrying gifts. The orderlies stopped what they were doing, touched and amazed by the generosity and love of the family of one intern who is no longer with them.

What began as a charity fundraiser in memory of a deceased family member became an act of poignant love never to be forgotten by those who experienced it.

“What I realized when we opened those packages is that clothes and playground equipment won’t last forever,” said Caroline Howard. “But the love given by Ashleigh’s family, in her honor and memory, wouldn’t fade from the lives of those who witnessed it.”

On February 8, 2014, BYU student Ashleigh Cox was snowshoeing in American Fork Canyon, about 35 miles south of Salt Lake City, when she was enveloped in an avalanche. She was brought to the surface after 45 minutes, but died the next day in

the Utah Valley Regional Medical Center.

The previous summer Cox had been an intern in this orphanage, dedicating three months to caring for Romanian orphans who had been abandoned by their parents because of birth defects, special needs, or other difficulties. With the approach of summer after her passing, the Cox family decided to spend their reunion in service to the people Ashleigh loved so much.

Jeralyn Cox, Ashleigh’s aunt, rallied family and friends to raise \$4,000 to donate play equipment to the orphanage. With favorable exchange rates, the American money stretched farther than expected, allowing the donors not only to buy swings, slides, and picnic tables for the children, but also to fix broken sinks, windows, and mirrors. A water heater and food processor were also purchased.

In addition, the Cox family decided to contribute something more meaningful to them than resources purchased with money. Using the clothes that had been Ashleigh’s, her family spent their reunion hand sewing

new children’s clothes out of the fabric. These were shipped to Iasi, to Howard, who walked from room to room handing out little shorts to elated boys and spring dresses to smiling girls. Each article of clothing contained a tag stitched inside that read, “Made especially for you, in memory of Ashleigh.”

“I wish I could adequately explain the experience,” Howard said. “Everyone was feeling the same thing. These weren’t just clothes donated to an orphanage. They were Ashleigh’s clothes, made with so much love by her family. Ashleigh’s work was spreading a lot farther than we could have imagined.”

The Program, the Orphanage, and the Country

For more than 15 years BYU has been operating the Romania Internship Program in the Sfantul Andrei orphanage in Iasi, sending groups of up to 12 students three times a year. Besides helping director Dr. Ciobanu Brandusa provide care and therapy to orphans with developmental disabilities, BYU students would often perform research as well, receiving undergraduate research grants and mentoring help from professors. All majors were accepted, though most students were preparing for careers in education, family studies, communication disorders, psychology, or sociology.

“It’s an academic internship, but highly embedded with service to the people of Romania,” said Tina Dyches, associate dean of the McKay School of Education, who has been one of the program administrators. “We did it as volunteers. Some students say it’s the hardest thing

“On every front, we were definitely effecting positive change.”



they've ever done in their lives, but they're always grateful for it.”

Romania is a country known for its pastoral countrysides and rich European history, but the effects of a post-Soviet Union era can be seen everywhere. When the BYU program began, bare white walls, tile floors, and toys neatly put away on high shelves comprised the sterile institutional environment. The children had no free access to the toys, playing with them only when the overworked orderlies weren't busy running around, changing diapers, and feeding various children. Since BYU students began coming, orphanage conditions slowly began to change. Mickey Mouse designs now hang on walls that were once bare. The workers now stop to smile and talk to the little ones. Children have access to the toys. Thanks to the Cox family, children can play outside on playground equipment.

“You could see a change in the orphanage workers,” said Stephanie Williamson, one of the 2002 interns. “Some were a little more gentle [and] took the time to smile and interact with the children. Rather than going through the motions, they would show more

love to the kids. On every front, we were definitely effecting positive change.”

A Legacy of Love

Cox's story, although poignant, is only one of many stories faculty and students remember from serving in Romania. When Ashley Ludlow and Jessica Free met Marius Dasianu in early 2008, he was a nine-year-old boy who had suffered severe burns over 75 percent of his body when a boiler exploded in his home a year earlier. His parents died in the fire, leaving Dasianu orphaned and in great pain.

Ludlow and Free felt they could help in some way, so they and their families set up a website called Team Marius, raising nearly \$40,000 from generous donors across America. After months of complicated legal delays, Marius traveled in August 2008 to Shriners' Hospital in Los Angeles, California, where he received his first reconstructive surgery, a skin graft from behind his ears to create new eyelids so he could close his eyes.

Free's and Ludlow's families have taken Marius into their homes and made him

one of their own. His story became the subject of BYU student Mark Williams' documentary “I Am Not My Body,” a film that was selected second place documentary at the 33rd College Television Awards. The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation was so impressed with the documentary that they arranged for both Williams and Marius to be at the award ceremony where Williams was awarded the Seymour Bricker Family Humanitarian Award. Marius now lives with the Ludlow family in San Diego, where he goes to school—a Romanian orphan blessed by incredible opportunities as a result of kind BYU students.

Orphanage director Dr. Ciobanu “told us our BYU students taught them how to love, how to find joy in serving the children, and how to treat them as individuals,” Dyches said.

Dyches has her own story to share from Romania. Due to a lack of oxygen at birth, 14-year-old Alexandru Ursu has cerebral palsy, making him unable to speak or control his limbs. No one had been able to unlock Alex's potential until John “Robby” Jarstad

“...when you serve someone who is vulnerable and really needs you and needs your love, [...] it makes that love and bond so much stronger.”



came into his life.

Jarstad, one of the 2005 interns, connected instantly with Alex when he showed signs of intelligence with his eyes. When Jarstad returned to the United States, he raised money for a specialized electronic board that could assist Alex to communicate. Since that time Jarstad continues to travel to Romania to see Alex whenever he can, bringing with him improved electronic enablers.

Earlier this year, Dyches brought a special gift for Alex. She had adapted a bubble machine to be activated with a simple switch. By positioning the switch between his legs, Alex was able to control the machine, filling the room with bubbles.

“Alex was just ecstatic with the gift,” Dyches said. “As I saw him there, turning on and off the machine with the other kids screaming delightedly and playing with the bubbles, I realized it was one of the first times in his life Alex could help someone else. He could give others joy. He could have control over something. After a lifetime of constantly being the recipient of care, he could finally be a caregiver to the younger

children. That was something really special to see.”

Farewells and Memories

This year marks the end of the Romania Internship Program, due to declining enrollment rates, shifting program priorities, and the lack of a full-time facilitator. BYU interns, with their trademark blue scrubs and white Y badges, will no longer care for the orphans of Iasi, Romania. However, those who want to serve the orphanage will still have opportunities. International Language Programs, based in Orem, Utah, has picked up the project and is sending 11 students to Romania in January.

For those who served BYU internships, the experience will impact their lives for years to come. “It’s hard to explain the kind of connection you have with those kids,” Williamson said. “When you serve someone, you grow to love them. But when you serve someone who is vulnerable and really needs you and needs your love, and someone in whom you can see growth, it makes that love and bond so much stronger.”

The program bonds the interns not only with those they served, but also with those who served with them. “The interns grow together and create this unexplainable bond with one another,” Howard said. “As interns you may go on with your separate lives and never spend too much time together again, but you’ll always be connected because of the experience you shared in Romania. You really understand each other because you saw a side of one another that not many people get to see. Romania brings out the raw, real side of people.”

At the beginning of this summer, Dyches and colleagues Ellie Young, Dave Nelson, and Larry Nelson traveled to Romania one last time to say goodbye. As part of the celebration banquet held with program coordinators and administrators from Sf. Andrei, performers filled the room with festive music and folk dancing. At the end of their performance, the dancers thanked the faculty members individually, explaining that as children they had been orphans who were personally touched by the kindness and love of volunteers like the BYU interns.

“It’s changing lives on an individual basis,” Williamson said. “It’s the kind of change that’s really difficult to measure. You connect with these kids, and you make a bond, and you show them what it feels like to be loved. It really is not possible to measure what that love will mean to that child.”

For Cox, Jarstad, Free, Ludlow, Williamson, and dozens of others, the Romanian experience, though it lasted only three months, changed their lives. For the children they served, the workers they helped, the donors they motivated, and the people they inspired through films, news stories, fundraisers, research grants, and word of mouth, the influence for good of the Romanian Internship Program is truly immeasurable.

2014 University Award Winners

THREE SCHOOL OF FAMILY LIFE FACULTY MEMBERS RECEIVED UNIVERSITY-WIDE AWARDS AT LAST FALL'S UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE.



LARRY NELSON

received the Karl G. Maeser Excellence in Teaching Award at the BYU University Conference in

September 2014. Dr. Nelson's teaching is truly extraordinary. Since coming to BYU in 2000, he has taught nearly 10,000 students, in five courses and 93 sections, with an overall average instructor rating of 7.6 out of 8.0 and an overall average course rating of 7.4 out of 8.0. But the numbers tell only part of the story—during this time he has been very rigorous in the expectations that he has for his students (critical thinking and content mastery) and for himself (integration of the latest research findings into his teaching). At the same time he is personable and caring, and ministers to the one. Dr. Nelson's teaching accomplishments have not gone unnoticed outside BYU. He was recently named one of the top 300 professors in the United States by Princeton Review. Dr. Nelson's research accomplishments are likewise outstanding. He has published 52 peer-reviewed scholarly articles in top journals that, according to Google Scholar, have been cited 2313 times. His citizenship contributions, both in the university and the wider community of scholars, are also excellent. He has ably served on many committees and was honored to be asked by Oxford University Press to edit a series of scholarly books on his field of emerging adulthood.



JULIE H. HAUPT

received the Adjunct Faculty Excellence Award. During 27 years of continuous service Haupt

has taught more than 4,000 students in 78 sections of 11 different courses. That is a lot of students in a lot of classes! Students have given Haupt consistently high marks on all aspects of her teaching. She has demonstrated the breadth of her pedagogical mastery by teaching for significant periods in four different BYU schools or departments: the School of Family Life, the School of Education, Organizational Leadership and Strategy in the Marriott School of Management, and the Department of Psychology. Currently, she simultaneously teaches three courses in three departments and garners exceptional student ratings all around. She is highly respected by all her department chairs and colleagues. Haupt's contributions do not end in the classroom. She is known as an innovative educator, and has contributed extensively to curriculum development, including three independent study courses. In addition, she has a publication record that includes book chapters, journal articles, and responsibility as the managing editor for a Deseret Book publication on "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" that has been used as a textbook for a School of Family Life course. Haupt's citizenship is also impressive, and includes work with BYU media projects and as the president of a non-profit organization dedicated to building bridges of mutual understanding between the youth of the United States and China.



E. JEFFREY HILL

received the Jack Bailey Teaching and Learning Faculty Fellowship. Dr. Hill has taught extensively at

BYU in the School of Family Life and, on occasion, in the Marriott School of Management. He has taught approximately 5,000 students in eight distinct classes, including most of the SFL introductory classes. His teacher ratings are consistently above university, college and School of Family Life norms. Student comments are very positive with many students saying things like, "This is the best class I've had at BYU," or "Everyone should be required to take this class." Dr. Hill loves to teach; he has volunteered several times to teach overload sections without compensation. Dr. Hill will use the fellowship to improve the SFL 260 Family Finance class that he began teaching last year. Dr. Hill is also an accomplished scholar, with a well-deserved reputation as a leading scholar in blending work and family life and the impact of workplace flexibility on family life.

Brief Research Update: The Importance of Premarital Predictors of Marital Quality and Stability

BY DR. JEFFRY LARSON, PH.D., LMFT, ALUMNI PROFESSOR OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY, SCHOOL OF FAMILY LIFE



An important context for understanding the importance of premarital predictors of marital quality and stability comes from an increasing body of research

documenting that the seeds of marital struggle and divorce often are present from the beginning of a marriage.

While many think of engaged couples as having stars in their eyes, confidence in forever, and no significant problems, research paints a more complex portrait. One study found that nearly half of husbands and more than a third of wives reported they had significant doubts about marrying prior to marriage. This translates into two-thirds of marriages in which one or

both spouses had premarital doubts about the marriage.¹

One important study documents that a pattern of starting off with significant problems in marriage is much more common than a pattern of relationship deterioration in the early years of marriage.² Some newlywed couples report happiness early on despite experiencing substantial negative communication and emotional exchanges, but these early negative interaction patterns predict divorce 10 years after marriage.³

Premarital cycling, or breaking up and getting back together before marrying, also is common and predicts lower marital quality and less stability.⁴

Research also shows that many individuals have relatively low levels of relationship commitment and slide into a marriage

rather than make a clear decision and commitment.⁵

Of course, researchers have long identified demographic premarital factors associated with later marital quality and stability.⁶ These include education and income (before) marriage, leading to a new “marriage gap” that is producing an additional source of inequality in society.⁷

So, as evidence continues to accumulate that the seeds of marital success or failure are planted largely before the marriage begins, we need to stress wise mate selection processes and effective marriage preparation efforts to prevent marital breakdown.

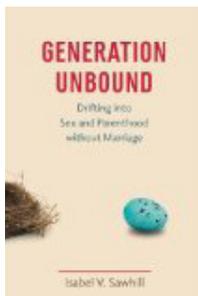
Endnotes:

- 1 - Lavner, J. A., & Bradbury, T. N. (2012). Why do even satisfied newlyweds eventually go on to divorce? *Journal of Family Psychology*, 26, 1–10.
- 2 - Lavner, J. A., & Bradbury, T. N. (2012). Why do even satisfied newlyweds eventually go on to divorce? *Journal of Family Psychology*, 26, 1–10.
- 3 - Jackson, J. B., Larson, J.H., Hawkins, A. J., & Roundy, G. T. (2015) Premarital predictors of marital relationship distress and instability: A meta-analysis of couple factors. Manuscript under review; Lavner, J. A., & Bradbury, T. N. (2012). Why do even satisfied newlyweds eventually go on to divorce? *Journal of Family Psychology*, 26, 1–10.
- 4 - Vennun, A., & Johnson, M. D. (2014). The impact of premarital cycling on early marriage. *Family Relations*, 63, 439-452.
- 5 - Stanley, S. M., Rhoades, G. K., & Whitton, S. W. (2010). Commitment: Functions, formation, and the securing of romantic attachment. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 2, 243-257.
- 6 - Larson, J. H., & Holman, T. B. (1994). Premarital predictors of marital quality and stability. *Family Relations*, 43, 228-237.; Jackson, J. B., Larson, J.H., Hawkins, A. J., & Roundy, G. T. (2015) Premarital predictors of marital relationship distress and instability: A meta-analysis of couple factors. Manuscript under review.
- 7 - Wilcox, W. B. (2010). *When marriage disappears: The new middle America*. Charlottesville, VA: The National Marriage Project.

Life-long Learning

A BYU education should be spiritually strengthening, intellectually enlarging, character building, leading to lifelong learning and service. In that spirit, the School of Family Life faculty have suggested some recent publications and resources of potential interest to SFL alumni to help them stay current in the field.

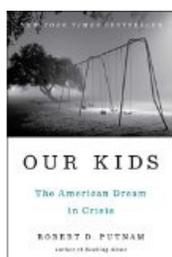
Here are two recent books by excellent scholars looking at the effects of changing families on society:



Generation Unbound: Drifting into Sex and Parenthood without Marriage

BY ISABEL V. SAWHILL

Over half of all births to young adults in the United States now occur outside of marriage, and many are unplanned. The result is increased poverty and inequality for children. In *Generation Unbound*, Isabel V. Sawhill argues for social policy to change “drifters” into “planners.” In a well-written and accessible review of the impact of family structure on child well-being, Sawhill contrasts “planners,” who are delaying parenthood until after they marry, with “drifters,” who are having unplanned children early and outside of marriage. These two distinct patterns are contributing to an emerging class divide and threatening social mobility in the United States. Sawhill attempts to show that it is possible, by changing the default, to move from a culture that accepts a high number of unplanned pregnancies to a culture in which adults only have children when they are ready to be a parent.



Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis

BY ROBERT D. PUTNAM

This book is a groundbreaking examination of why fewer Americans today have the opportunity for upward mobility. It's the American dream: get a good education, work hard, buy a house, and achieve prosperity and success. But during the last twenty-five years we have seen a disturbing “opportunity gap” emerge. Putnam begins with his high school class of 1959 in Port Clinton, Ohio. By and large the vast majority of those students—“our kids”—went on to lives better than those of their parents. But their children and grandchildren have had harder lives amid diminishing prospects. Putnam tells the tale of lessening opportunity through poignant life stories of rich and poor kids from cities and suburbs across the country, drawing on a formidable body of research done especially for this book. Putnam provides a disturbing account of the American dream that should initiate a deep examination of the future of our country.

Here are two valuable websites by SFL professors:



americanfamiliesoffaith.byu.edu

BY DAVID C. DOLLAHITE AND LOREN D. MARKS

The American Families of Faith Project is a national research project led by SFL professor David C. Dollahite and Loren D. Marks, associate professor of family studies at Louisiana State University, who will be joining the BYU SFL faculty Fall 2015. This website summarizes some of their key findings and makes available their published research for those who want to explore the findings in more depth.



YourDivorceQuestions.org

BY ALAN J. HAWKINS

This website was designed by SFL professor Alan J. Hawkins and some of his students. The website is designed to be a resource for individuals who may be thinking about getting a divorce, or who may be trying to avoid getting a divorce. The website contains solid information about important questions that people thinking about divorce often have. Dr. Hawkins and his students will be building more content on the website over time.



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

BYU SCHOOL OF FAMILY LIFE

