



*The Insider*

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*Parsons Research Center (PRC)*

*and the*

*Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities (KUCDD)*

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*September 2002*

*Pat White, Editor*

## **Honors and Awards**

Kate Saunders has been named a Fellow of the American Psychological Association. Great!

Patty Ibbetson (Bear Hugs) Kansas Child Care Training Opportunities (KCCTO) received her 60-hour pin for “trainer.” Congratulations!

## **United Way Recognition**

At the annual United Way kick-off campaign on September 4, 2002 the University of Kansas—Life Span Institute at Parsons was recognized by the United Way of Labette County with the presentation of the “Pacesetter” award for outstanding contributions. If you would like to contribute to the United Way to help the various agencies they represent for the residents of Labette County, please contact Laura Hanigan (or your personnel office) to either enroll in payroll deduction or make a donation to the United Way of Labette County.

## **Newly Funded Project**

Kathy Olson has just received funding for a project entitled “Kansas Mobilizing for Change: Comprehensive Workforce Development Initiative.” The Kansas Mobilizing for Change project will develop comprehensive statewide workforce development infrastructure and implement research based recruitment and retention interventions for community developmental disability service providers. The project is funded from Oct 1, 2002 to Sept 30, 2004. Kansas is collaborating with the University of Minnesota, the Human Services Research Institute, and MC Strategies, Inc. to support the development of this system. Kansas funding will be \$125,000 over the course of the project.

## **Grants and Project Activities**

Projects Renewed for July, 2002 – June, 2003

Dave Lindeman, Principal Investigator

- Child Care Focus – Resource and Referral Center, funded by the Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Child Care Focus – Infant/Toddler Initiative, funded by the Kansas Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Kansas Inservice Training System, funded by the Kansas State Department of Education

## Presentations

In K. Saunders (Chair), *Research in stimulus control*. Symposium conducted at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.

- Bejarano, R. (2002, August). Using percentile schedules to train successive discriminations.
- Saunders, K. (2002, August). Abstraction and recombinative generalization within syllables.
- Williams, D. C., Perone, M., Galuska, C., & Bejarano, R. (2002, August). Stimulus control of escape behavior in schedules of positive reinforcement: A lab model for aberrant behavior.

Simmons, S. (2002, August). *Assistive technology resources for employment*. Kansas Workforce Development Taskforce. Topeka, KS.

## Publications

Steve Mills has recently published *Technology Tools for Teachers: A Microsoft Office Tutorial*, along with M. D. Roblyer, online professor for the Graduate School of Management and Technology, University of Maryland University College. The book was published by Prentice Hall and provides step-by-step tutorials blended with teaching examples and activities to help preservice and inservice teachers improve classroom pedagogy and enhance professional productivity by gaining a thorough understanding of *Microsoft Office* applications.

Valdovinos, M. G., Napolitano, D. A., Zarcone, J. R., Hellings, J. A., Williams, D. C., & Schroeder, S. R. (2002). Multimodal evaluation of risperidone for destructive behavior: Functional analysis, direct observations, rating scales, and psychiatric impressions. *Journal of Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, *10*, 268-275.

## Project Highlight

### *Microswitch Use in Persons with Profound Multiple Impairments Seattle, WA "Raindrops Keep Falling"*

Richard and Muriel Saunders

Raincoats are regular attire for Richard and Muriel Saunders when they travel to Seattle. Seattle is a research site for a research project funded by the National Institutes of Health on microswitch use in persons with profound multiple impairments. The research is conducted at Fircrest, a residential facility that is home to approximately 200 individuals with mental retardation. The Saunders work with staff and residents in the Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF), although parts of the facility also have ICF-MR funding. The individuals served in the SNF require 24-hour nursing care. All residents have multiple impairments: 74% have severe orthopedic impairments including contractures, scoliosis, quadriplegia, and so forth; 72% are blind or severely visually impaired; 23% are deaf or hearing impaired; 95% have a diagnosed seizure disorder; and 46% are fed by tube. None of the participants have the ability to reach and grasp objects. None have the ability to communicate either by spoken word, communication devices, gestures, or in many cases, by facial expression.

The Saunders are investigating ways to enable these individuals to control their personal environments and to request attention through the use of a microswitch. A microswitch may be a pressure-sensitive disk, joy-stick, mercury filled tube, or motion detector. When the switch is closed, moved, or otherwise enabled, it causes electricity to flow to an electrical device. Leisure items that can be controlled by Fircrest residents include audio tape players, fans, vibrators, mechanical toys, and computer-delivered entertainment. The signal devices are usually those that buzz or “ding dong” when the switch is closed.

Microswitches are prevalent in schools serving children with multiple impairments, so why did the Saunders choose Seattle as a research site? SNF staff typically are not aggressive about providing training in areas of communication and learning. Fircrest staff began making microswitches around 1985 and before switches were commercially available. Staff also designed and produced a databox that automatically measured the number and length of switch closures. Although staff no longer make switches, they are able to repair them. They also have refined their databox. Therefore, the site offered a knowledgeable and eager staff who were interested in continuing their ongoing switch program. Dr. Leslie Olswang, Associate Director of the Speech and Hearing Department, also showed an interest in the research and was willing to provide graduate students to act as research assistants.

The project is currently in its third year of funding. Three Masters-level students and one Ph.D.-level student have worked on the project. In addition, 5 speech-language pathologists, 1 psychologist, 3 recreation therapists, and 3 program coordinators from Fircrest have assisted with the project. Muriel and Dick communicate regularly by phone and email as well as access to a common website.

Visits to Seattle occur every 6-8 weeks, and yes, it always rains except in the middle of summer. The temperature is typically around 55° all year. As some of you may know, the Saunders have acted as consultants to the Fircrest program for a number of years. Seattle has had two major snowstorms in the last decade and both occurred during their visits. Unfortunately, Fircrest staff think of the Saunders as harbingers of snow to their rainy city.

## **Staff News**

Richard Shores will be retiring. There will be a retirement party for him at the Parsons Country Club September 28, 2002. We wish Dick the best of luck for his retirement. He will be missed.

Jeanne Fiscus, Infant/Toddler Specialist, has a new grandson (Tristan, 05/31/02).