

NASW – Indiana Chapter

## **Meet the New Chapter President – Marie Opatrny**

August 2010

First of all I would like to take this opportunity to say that I am honored to be your new president, Marie Opatrny, and look forward to all of us working together as Indiana NASW Chapter members.

Josephine Hughes the Executive Director wants to ask me a few questions about who I am as she knows already that I do not like to take about myself.

*Jo* - Marie, first off I want to thank you for supporting your professional association and the Indiana Chapter by serving as president over the next two years.

*Marie* - I am very much looking forward to serving as President of NASW-IN

*What is it you do as a social worker?*

I am currently a faculty member at the University of Southern Indiana in the Department of Social Work. In addition I am the Director of Field Education. This is my seventh year at USI.

*Tell us a little bit about your social work journey?*

I worked for 13 years as a case manager for with individuals' diagnosis with severe and persistent mental illness before receiving my MSW from Loyola University Chicago in 1992. After that, I worked as a program manager while maintaining a small case load at Trilogy Inc, in Chicago IL. In 1996 I started the journey toward my PhD in Social Work while working as a psychiatric social worker at Vencor Hospital in Chicago IL. At this time I also had a small independent private practice working with my favorite type of client, those with severe and persistent mental illness. After receiving my PhD in 2003 I continued with my private practice until I started teaching at USI in August 2004.

*What has been your involvement with NASW?*

I have been a member since 1994 and became actively involved in 2004 when a colleague dragged me to an Indiana Chapter board meeting. Since that I have been hooked. Even after making us leave Evansville at 4:30 a.m. to be on time for that first meeting.

Since then I have been an active member of the Public Policy and Social Action Committee. And I served as the Region 8 Representative from 2006 to 2008. Presently I am also serving as a member of the Political Action Candidate Election Committee known as PACE.

*Jo - Wow what a role model you are for your students in being part of NASW*

*With all that you are doing do you have time for anything else?*

After feeding and walking my three dogs which two are mixed breeds from the shelter and my old Australian cattle dog I still find time with renewed energy to actively participate in the community. Currently I am one of the lead faculty working with students from Iraq who have spent this past month at USI in a leadership program. Also, I have done a number of applied social research projects partnering with community agencies, including Habitat for Humanity homeowners, generational poverty and mental health needs of children under the age five.

*What is your vision for the Chapter?*

As you are already aware, there are numerous issues and ongoing challenges that impact service delivery and affect us as social workers. It is my belief that many of the issues are not insurmountable, if we commit to systematically working together.

The NASW-Indiana Chapter and its board have developed an action plan designed to unify and advance the social work profession in Indiana. Membership input was utilized to develop the goals that are included in *The Social Work Strategic Initiative*. You can find the plan on the web at [www.naswin.org](http://www.naswin.org). Go to the "About Us" tab at the top of the screen and select from the drop down menu the 2010 Indiana Strategic Initiative.

This initiative is a living document for the next three years. It contains valuable information about social work education, statistics, and practice in the state of Indiana. The board updates this plan in the fall of each year.

Just few excerpts from the plan to capture your interest –  
There are 10,000 social workers in the state of Indiana of these 3,387 are Licensed Social Workers and 3,775 are Licensed Clinical Social Workers.

Average pay...

- Medical Social Worker (LCSW) \$51,750
- Individual and Family Services (MSW/LCSW) \$35,720
- Residential Mental Retardation, Mental Health Substance Abuse Facilities (BSW) \$31,550

As you read through, you will find at the end of the document the eight goals and strategies for goal accomplishment that support this initiative. After goals you will find the feedback form. This can be highlighted and copied for your feedback which you email or mail to the chapter office.

Let's continue to work together in this endeavor. Your feedback is vitality important to the profession and to me and I look forward to reading your comments. Your voice will provide us with your perspective regarding the goals and strategies that have been set forth in this Strategic Initiative.

Thank you for your support and your continued efforts on behalf of the social work profession.

Will talk to you soon!

Marie Opatrny