President’s Column

Sharon G. Portwood, J.D., Ph.D

The designation of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month is becoming routine. Rather than allowing Child Abuse Prevention Month to slip into the mundane, we must be diligent in ensuring that it serves as a prompt for all of us to reflect on where we have come with prevention, as well as where we need to go. The Section offers access to numerous resources through which members can remain current on advances in research, prevention programs, and evolving best practices, all of which are central to our efforts to prevent child maltreatment. Even those of us who are not actively involved in research or direct service provision can do much to prevent child abuse. It is critical that all of us serve as advocates for children.

The role of advocacy in preventing child maltreatment cannot be overstated. Simply, it is policy that establishes the context in which all efforts can – or cannot – move forward. Although children’s interests are featured prominently in political campaigns at all levels, a sustained commitment to children is often not reflected in public policy. Despite Kempe’s 1962 landmark paper identifying the “battered child syndrome”, it was not until 1974 that Congress enacted the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Over 30 years later, CAPTA remains the sole federal program aimed specifically at child abuse prevention and its impact has been seriously limited by inadequate funding. The funding appropriated for CAPTA has always fallen far short of the amount authorized – which is further still from the amount that would be required to fund prevention efforts fully. Thus, each year, advocates must be mobilized to fight not only to increase CAPTA funding, but simply to maintain current levels of support.

Advocacy around the prevention of child maltreatment is not limited to CAPTA; rather, the astute observer will recognize that there is a wealth of policies that impact child maltreatment. For example, health care reform focused on making health care affordable and accessible to all families could prevent infant mortality and medical neglect. The development of policies that ensure the availability of affordable, quality child care could also help to reduce maltreatment. Provision of high quality care for children can assist in the prevention of child maltreatment both directly and indirectly, by reducing parental stress. Advocacy for measures aimed at helping families to escape poverty also serves the goal of preventing child abuse and neglect.

In contrast with countries such as Sweden that have experienced notable success with national initiatives that strengthen families and thus serve to protect children, the United States has instead diluted accountability by shifting legislative responsibility back and forth from the national to the state level. Currently, the trend is toward increasing responsibility for child-related programs at the state level. But, the majority of states are experiencing severe financial problems resulting in a reduction of social programs. In part, this has prompted the formation of the Division 37 and Section on Child Maltreatment joint Task Force for Child and Advocacy Training whose goal is to enhance advocacy at the state and national level by providing advocacy training, leveraging the advocacy expertise within State psychological associations, and facilitating the translation of research into policy. While, more information on this exciting initiative will be available at the APA Annual Meeting in New Orleans, it is not too late to get involved! Please contact Alison Redlich (AREdlich@prainc.com) or Sandra Bishop-Josef (sandra.bishopjosef@gmail.com).
Case Notes

Putting Away Childish Things: Baseball, Murder, and Juvenile Justice?

Bradley D. McAuliff, J.D., Ph.D.
California State University, Northridge

A CALIFORNIA MURDER involving two teenage boys and a game of baseball sparked national media attention last spring. Today, almost one year later, questions still linger about what caused a good kid by all accounts to do such a bad thing and whether justice was served for the parties involved. Social scientific research on bullying and adolescent psychosocial development can help shed light on these and other emerging issues in juvenile crime.

On April 14, 2005, 13 year-old Greg Harris Jr. was charged with the second-degree murder of 15 year-old Jeremy Rourke after striking him in the head with a baseball bat. The two boys were in line at a concession stand after a game in which Greg had pitched three innings. Greg’s team, previously undefeated, had suffered a loss to a much weaker team with a 1-7 win/loss record. Although eyewitness accounts cited by local media varied somewhat, the boys exchanged words about the loss or cutting in line and violence ensued. Greg took out an aluminum baseball bat from his gear bag and struck Jeremy twice: once in the leg and once in the head. Jeremy was pronounced dead two hours later.

Greg was taken into custody and eventually tried in juvenile court for Jeremy’s murder. Under California law, defendants younger than 14 years old cannot be tried as adults. Three months later, a juvenile court judge found the petition against Greg to be true (the equivalent of guilt in a criminal case) and sentenced Greg to a youth detention facility until he is 25 years old. Although Greg may be eligible for parole earlier, this sentence was the maximum allowed by law.

In the wake of this tragedy and trial that followed, many have questioned what provoked Greg, an honor roll student with no history of violence, to strike out so unexpectedly and violently against Jeremy. Whether “relentless bullying” (as characterized by the defense) or “mere teasing” (as characterized by the prosecution), many teammates and parents believe that comments made by Jeremy, combined with a dramatic difference in size (Greg weighed 87 pounds, Jeremy weighed 190), fueled Greg’s explosive reaction. Others instead have focused on the outcome of the trial and whether the judge’s sentence was too severe or too lenient given the nature and circumstances of the crime.

What does this case and the questions it raises mean for psychologists? First, it highlights the need for continued research on bullying behavior. Achieving a better understanding of what contributes to and moderates the effects of bullying on children can inform society’s efforts to prevent its occurrence. Children’s psychological and behavioral reactions to bullying behavior are also very important. Greg’s behavior, atypical as it may be, serves as an unsettling reminder that what on the surface may appear to be “kids being kids” or some adolescent rite of passage can have life-altering consequences.

What on the surface may appear to be “kids being kids” can have life-altering consequences. Additional information about more typical reactions to bullying behavior, such as feelings of stress, depression, and isolation can help us identify and intervene before situations escalate to such devastating proportions.

Second, whether one agrees with the sentence or not, this case illustrates the problems inherent in the law’s treatment of juvenile offenders. We must remind ourselves that committing an “adult” crime does not somehow transform a juvenile into an adult. Critical differences in psychosocial development and impulse control still exist and must be considered when contemplating legal decisions such as the mental state required for a particular crime or waiver to adult
We must remind ourselves that committing an “adult” crime does not somehow transform a juvenile into an adult. Moreover, without undermining the tragic loss of Jeremy’s life in this case, one must question what “rehabilitative” function 12 years in a juvenile detention center will serve for Greg. Continued longitudinal research on the effects of placements such as this on juveniles’ development, rehabilitation, and recidivism are necessary. To what extent does bullying exist in these centers and what effect does this have on juvenile offenders like Greg?

Finally, psychologists conducting applied research on children and the law must continue to expand their traditional focus on child victims to children accused of victimizing others. How can research on certain topics such as interviewing and children’s suggestibility help improve the legal system’s treatment of alleged juvenile offenders? Might certain innovative procedures commonly used with child victims such as the presence of support persons also benefit juvenile defendants? In my lab, a recent national survey of victim advocates revealed that despite the common use and perceived benefits of support persons on child victims’ stress and accuracy, this procedure is virtually never used with juveniles accused of crimes. Research aimed at understanding differences between child victims and defendants is critical, but so too is research focusing on the similarities between these two groups. Only then will psychologists be able to meet the developmental, social, and cognitive needs of child victims and defendants alike.

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**Tentative Hospitality Suite Schedule for Section on Child Maltreatment 2006 APA Convention, New Orleans**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thurs. Aug. 10</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 - 10:00 AM</td>
<td>Division 37 Executive Committee Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 - 11:00</td>
<td>Advocacy Training Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 - 6:00 PM</td>
<td>Division 37 Business Meeting in the New Orleans Marriott</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 - 8:00</td>
<td>Mardi Gras Ballroom C Child and Family Advocacy Social Hour</td>
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<td><strong>Friday Aug. 11</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 - 11:00 AM</td>
<td>Interdivisional Task Force on Child and Adolescent Mental</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 - 1:00 PM</td>
<td>Section Executive Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 - 2:00</td>
<td>Section Business Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 - 4:00</td>
<td>Corporal Punishment Committee **</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interdivisional Task Force on Child and Adolescent Mental</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Health subcommittee meeting on national summit**</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 - 8:00</td>
<td>Research Connections and Student Mentoring Meeting / Social Hour**</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mailman Institute – Childcare &amp; Early Education Research Connections**</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sat. Aug. 12</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 - 9:00 AM</td>
<td>Social Policy Committee</td>
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</tbody>
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**To be confirmed / finalized.**

For more information please contact Section Program Chair Susan Finch at Susan.Hall@pepperdine.edu
CONGRESS IS AT it again, fighting the President’s budget proposal. It has been just three months since the House moderate Republicans challenged the House Republican leaders over the 2006 budget. Despite the efforts of the moderates, the 2006 budget adopted deep cuts in children’s programs. Legislators are back in the fray. The politics of the congressional battle over the 2007 budget resolution reflect the frustrated desire of moderate Republicans and most Democrats to maintain support for popular domestic programs in the face of the President’s cuts in his budget proposal for the coming fiscal year. The White House calls for a cap on discretionary domestic spending, which actually amounts to cuts in most programs while funds would be increased for defense and security spending. The President’s spending plan proposes to continue squeezing funds out of that one-sixth of the budget outside of defense and homeland security that is subject to annual appropriations. Total discretionary spending for the Department of Health and Human Services would fall by $1.5 billion, with an overall cut of 2.3 percent in HHS funds. With an inflation rate of 3.2 percent since 2005, level funding proposed by the President in child welfare means that child abuse prevention, family support and child protective services continue to suffer cuts in available spending. The assault on domestic programs sits against a backdrop of the $285 billion in additional upper-bracket tax cuts the President aims to achieve across the next five years.

The Senate passed its version of the budget in March and rejected the President’s cap on domestic spending. By a 73-27 vote on March 16 — with 28 Republicans joining all Democrats – the Senate passed an amendment offered by Senators Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Tom Harkin (D-IA) to add $7 billion in extra spending authority above the President’s benchmark for discretionary programs in labor, education and human services. The Senate showed further dissatisfaction with proposed spending cuts by voting down proposals to reduce funds in Medicare and Medicaid.

In the House, appropriations leaders from both parties say they intend to follow the Senate’s lead by adding money into the budget over the spending levels requested by the White House. Rep. Ralph Regula (R-OH), who chairs the House appropriations subcommittee for the Departments of Labor, Education and Health and Human Services, plans to push for a larger allocation for his subcommittee. Another member of his subcommittee, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), had intended to offer in the House the same $7 billion Specter-Harkin amendment approved by the Senate. That amendment would restore funding in the subcommittee’s appropriations bill to

entitlement to the states has been floated by the Bush administration for the past few years without any congressional action taking place.

With the President’s $2.77 trillion spending plan for 2007, the deficit is expected to rise to an all-time high of $423 billion due to increased outlays for the Iraq war and hurricane relief. Describing the deficit picture, Donald Marron, CBO director and recently a senior economist in the Bush White House, said, “The current structure we have on taxes and spending is simply unsustainable.” Defense spending would account for more than half of the federal budgets discretionary funds, representing a 45 percent increase in the Pentagon’s budget since President Bush took office five years ago. Even so, the FY07 budget request for the Defense Department does not include the costs of fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, for which the administration will ask Congress to appropriate an additional $120 billion – “off-budget” — to cover fighting for the rest of this year.

The 2006 budget adopted deep cuts in children’s programs

Included in the budget narrative sent to Congress, the administration again proposes to introduce legislation offering Title IV-E foster care assistance to states in the form of “flexible grants” as an option available to all states to participate in an alternative financing system for child welfare that will better meet the needs of each state’s foster care population.” The proposal to offer foster care funding to states as a block grant rather than currently provided as an

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Public Policy

Congress Demands Spending Room in Tight Budget Plan for 2007

Thomas L. Birch, J.D.
National Child Abuse Coalition
The House cleared the bill for the President’s signature on February 1, passing the measure by a slim majority of 50 percent plus two members of the House of Representatives (216-214). The package of cuts in entitlement spending, pushed through as necessary for budgetary discipline, takes less than one-half of one percent from the total federal spending expected over the next five years, but puts a significant check on the lives of children and families in need.

The spending cuts bill takes particular aim at federally funded foster care services, eliminating $397 million over five years — $879 million over 10 years — in foster care assistance for at least 4,000 abused and neglected children who are not able to live safely with their parents and who have been placed in low-income homes with their grandparents or other relatives. Rep. Heather Wilson (R-NM), one of 13 Republicans in the House voting against the bill, was quoted by the Washington Post saying, “Why would we want to do anything to discourage a family member from taking in a child who has been abused or neglected by his birth parent?”

In cutting the funds, the bill repeals the Rosales decision by the Ninth Circuit that expanded Title IV-E foster care eligibility to children placed in the care of grandparents or other relatives. The new law, which makes it less likely that states would place children with relatives, undercuts a preference for placing children with relatives required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). Because of the ASFA preference, state child welfare agencies in recent years have chosen to place abused and neglected children with relatives, respecting family ties and recognizing the difficulty of recruiting foster parents.

The bill sets the Title IV-E income eligibility for federal foster care assistance to the criteria used before the Rosales ruling: determined by looking to the home — usually the parents — from which the child was removed for abuse and neglect allegations. According to HHS, relatives have become the fastest growing source of permanent adoptive homes for foster children. In some states, the majority of foster children are placed in relatives’ homes.

The reconciliation bill further harms protections for abused and neglected children by restricting the use of Title IV-E administrative case management funding for the placement of children in unlicensed kinship homes, and for children leaving some institutional care and moving to foster care. These changes cut federal spending on Title IV-E by $180 million over five years and $411 million over ten years. These administrative and child placement funds pay for the casework that links children and families to services.

**2006 BUDGET CUTS BILL HARMs ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN**

On February 8, 2006, President Bush, invoking “a commitment to fiscal responsibility,” signed into law the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. At the bill signing, the President explained that the legislation “reduces unnecessary spending of taxpayer dollars.” In fact, the new law reduces spending for a range of necessary services that have helped protect and treat abused and neglected children. The budget cutting measure would appear to do little for deficit reduction. According to a January report from the Congressional Budget Office, the federal budget deficits are projected to continue through the decade.

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**Relatives have become the fastest growing source of permanent adoptive homes for foster children**

Under the new budget provisions, states may not claim federal IV-E funds for children placed “temporarily” in foster care with unlicensed relatives for more than 12 months. The new law also limits federal support for casework provided to children transitioning into foster care from certain institutional settings, such as psychiatric hospitals or juvenile detention centers. Rather than pay for ongoing casework to help children move out of a facility into another foster care setting, the new law limits federal support for only one month prior to the transition.

Finally, the so-called deficit reduction bill cuts Medicaid funding used to provide services to children in foster care to address disabilities and other special needs. The bill limits access to Medicaid Targeted Case Management for children in the child welfare system. These cuts are estimated to total $760 million over five years and $2.1 billion over ten years. Restricting access to these services will mean that more abused and neglected children do not get the treatment they need.
Two Awards Offered by the APA Division 37
Section on Child Maltreatment

1. 2006 EARLY CAREER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO PRACTICE IN THE FIELD OF CHILD MALTREATMENT

The Section on Child Maltreatment of Division 37 (Child, Youth, and Family Services) of the American Psychological Association announces its fifth annual Early Career Award. This year, nominations are sought for an Early Career Award for Practice. The award will be presented at the APA convention in 2006. Self-nominations are welcome.

Eligibility: Nominees should be professionals who have made substantial contributions to practice relevant to child maltreatment within eight years of receiving a terminal degree (e.g., Ph.D., J.D., D.S.W., M.S.W.) and who have demonstrated the potential to continue such contributions. Nominees need not be current Section on Child Maltreatment members.

To Nominate: Send 4 copies of:
1. A cover letter (3 pages or less) outlining the nominee’s accomplishments to date and anticipated future contributions. This letter should describe the nominee’s major accomplishments related to the field of child maltreatment and how the nominee’s work has had an impact on the field;
2. The nominee’s current curriculum vitae;
3. One letter of support; and
4. If possible, other relevant supporting material, as appropriate (e.g., no more than two articles authored by the nominee).

Nomination Deadline: Postmarked by June 1, 2006.

Send Nominations or Direct Questions to:
Thomas D. Lyon, University of Southern California Law School, 699 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90089-0071. Email: tlyon@law.usc.edu.

2. 2006 DISSERTATION GRANT AWARD

The Section on Child Maltreatment (Section 1 of Division 37, APA) announces its seventh annual dissertation award. A $400 prize will be awarded to one successful graduate student applicant to assist with expenses in conducting dissertation research on the topic of child maltreatment. The award will be presented at the APA convention in 2006.

To Apply: Applicants are requested to submit:
1. a letter of interest, indicating how the applicant would use the award funds toward the completion of the dissertation research,
2. a 100-word abstract, and
3. a proposal (five pages or less) summarizing the research to be conducted.

Nomination Deadline: Postmarked by June 1, 2006.

Send Applications or Direct Questions to:
Thomas D. Lyon, University of Southern California Law School, 699 Exposition Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90089-0071. Email: tlyon@law.usc.edu.
Two weekends ago I slapped on a white tee, khaki shorts and dark, almost violet, sunglasses. Walking in a pair of Chaco sandals I was heading to a rally downtown to support the cause of my people. With a skip in my step I noticed others walking towards the Capitol building. And although seeing some gangster looking guys in baggy, sports team shirts, and crew cuts nixed the bounce in my step (hey, I’m not a big guy), I saw other people too. There were some Tejano, cowboy looking guys in pick ups; I saw kids running along their parents’ strides who electrified the air with their white smiles. I saw teens and groups of men and women wearing sandals, shorts and sunglasses, walking along like they were part of a family. Most carried Stars and Stripes.

So for the next hour and a half, we rallied and registered to vote. We shouted, “Si se puede” or “Yes, we can.” We exclaimed that we were not felons, just trying to work to make a decent living. I shouted too. I was with them. They were my people. So the various speakers spoke. We cheered, yelled, and whooped. Often the translations were somewhat poor. But I cheered anyway. We were working together on this, with different roles to play. Even Anglo looking boyfriends and girlfriends hung around, holding the waists of more typically Hispanic looking individuals, looking bored, but supportive.

I didn’t stay long, having to drop off some Koss headphones at a satellite data collection site. But when I passed back through that area of downtown I thought about the rally. And I knew that I would have to write something about it because there I was celebrating and rallying for something that doesn’t necessarily touch my daily life. For one, I live on the University campus. My friends and family who are Hispanic are citizens. But the cause of the immigrant feels like something I have to fight for because these are my people. It may not make any sense to attend the rally while I am preparing my dissertation prospectus, but I felt like I had to go. Emotionally, I didn’t have a choice. I had to be with my people in their need.

At the same time I know children who have been maltreated. Yet I’ve never rallied on Capitol Hill for their cause. Never carried signs before the Congress or even the OKC capitol building for the kids I serve. Why not? As I think about it, I think it’s because even though I have empathy with the struggles of parents and kids and want to increase field knowledge of maltreatment, I have never considered the cause, a cause of my people. But what if, I started to consider that our Section, our cause, is something that does affect our people: Our uncles, mom, dads, cousins and siblings? These are the people who will be affected by the disseminated knowledge that comes from our Section and is poured into articles, presentations, and media, trickling down until it touches our families.

As a student then, to other students, I encourage you to sit down and think about your family. Your people. Think about how this work we do affects them. How your pen, the articles you review, the gopher work you do for advisors in this area, are your weapons to combat what threatens your people. Ignorance and maltreatment threatens your future kids, your cousins, nieces, nephews, and community. Although we may not wield fancy initials at the ends of our names, and we may not be the speakers of the movement we can get involved. And even though the translations can go bad, we can cheer. We can demonstrate!

For Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and in favor with his many kinsmen, one who sought the good of his people and one who spoke for the welfare of his whole nation.

Esther 10: 3
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