



The Heart of Social Work Winner: George Baboila

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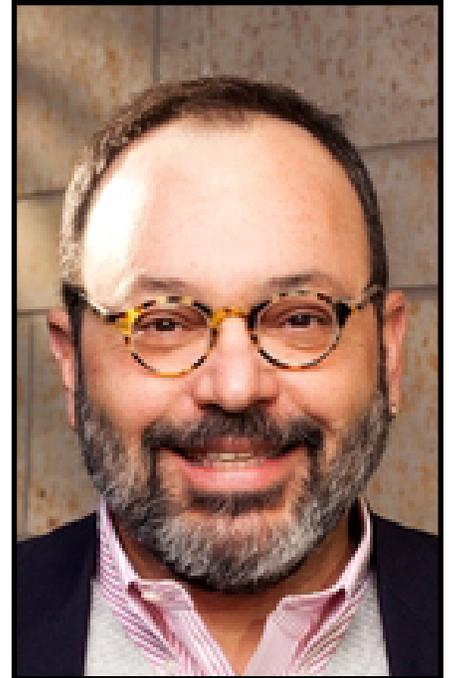
Lisa Richardson, MSS

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George Baboila is the recipient of the 2011 “Heart of Social Work Award” from the North American Network of Field Educators and Directors (NANFED) for excellence in field instruction. Mr. Baboila is one of three co-directors at the Interprofessional Center for Counseling and Legal Services (IPC). He received the award due to his contribution to inter-professional supervision, his teaching at St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas School of Social Work, his leadership in the social work community and, above all, his ability to supervise students with complex needs.

Interprofessional Collaboration in Supervision

The Interprofessional Center for Counseling and Legal Services (IPC) serves an incredibly diverse community, and requires creative responses to new and emerging issues in the delivery of culturally relevant care. The clinic is a training center for students from law, psychology and social work programs at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota. Annually, Mr. Baboila is the field instructor at the BSW Senior, MSW foundation, and MSW clinical levels, for nearly twenty social work students who are placed at the center. Along with his two co-directors at the IPC, he has developed innovative models both to serve clients and to train students, including DBT training and a model for teaching forensic skills, such as how to testify in court. The co-directors have shared the success of this teaching model in presentations at regional and national conferences, and they are currently considering ways to meet the needs of an increasingly wide range of non-English language speakers while also developing training models for interpreters. Additional training opportunities that have been developed by Mr. Baboila and his colleagues include case consultation, group supervision, and grand rounds. Each of these activities offers opportunities for students to learn about differential assessment, best practices, and inter-professional collaboration. A colleague said that Mr. Baboila models “the essentials of inter-professional collaboration: how to educate professionals to work using the best that other professions have to offer.”



Teaching Ability

Mr. Baboila has a great deal of experience as an educator. He has taught as an adjunct for St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas School of Social Work for many years, and his current role as co-director of the IPC is a clinical faculty appointment. He teaches courses in social work policy and in clinical supervision. He has previously taught with the University of Minnesota Medical School in the Family Residency Program. He is currently chair of the policy curriculum committee within the MSW program of St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas, and serves on the School of Social Work Dean's Council.

Leadership Roles

Mr Baboila is a leader in the Minnesota social work community; he is the current president of the Minnesota Chapter of NASW. As such, he engages in constant advocacy for social work practice within the state, as well as representing Minnesota nationally. Each year, hundreds of social work students and professionals from around the state attend Social Work Day at the Capitol, organized by the Minnesota NASW; Mr. Baboila is a major presence at this event, speaking annually during a rally at the capitol rotunda. Mr. Baboila is also a board member of the Minnesota Coalition of Licensed Social Workers, where he leads the supervision task force. His leadership of this group has led to significant expansion of the information available to social workers on major changes in the state licensure law, particularly in the area of supervision. Mr. Baboila is a resource for students, practitioners, and faculty colleagues about a wide range of practice, advocacy, and regulatory issues and their histories. He was one of the social work volunteers who joined the Minnesota Lifeline Team and traveled to Louisiana in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina.

Innovation and Flexibility in Field Instruction

Mr. Baboila's greatest strength is his ability to provide transformative experiences for students who face barriers to learning. He enhances the supervisory relationship by providing a number of different methods of individual supervision, including direct observation, live supervision behind a one-way mirror, and review of videotapes. He and his colleagues are attuned to the needs of students from different cultures; as one liaison put it, "He did a beautiful job working in a cross-cultural supervisory relationship with my student." He is a particularly valuable resource for students whose placements have ended prematurely, responding with willingness, flexibility, and investment in student success. A field educator described his talent as a supervisor:

He makes every attempt to assess each student in terms of their development and will make the necessary accommodations for their individual needs and learning styles. He is able to maintain the delicate balance between support and accountability. He uses a strengths-based perspective along with his good nature and sense of humor to increase engagement and build necessary rapport for a positive supervisory relationship.

Mr. Baboila works with a wide range of student capacities, each time starting “where the student is” and ending with tangible development of social work competence. One liaison said, “I have seen in George the reflection of pure joy when a student with challenges breaks through and is successful.”

Mr. Baboila is, in the truest sense of the phrase, a “community partner,” willing to collaborate with students and field educators to create successful field learning experiences. As one field educator put it,

He is passionate about the ethical and accessible services students can provide as they learn; he is open to learning from and with students and clients; he treats the Universities and the School of Social Work like a gourmet restaurant where he continues to select from the many choices of service he might enjoy; and he treats challenges as opportunities for learning and growth in himself and for those around him.

As an innovative practitioner, a social work leader, and especially a champion of field education, Mr. Baboila is a worthy recipient of the 2011 “Heart of Social Work Award.”