

How I Learned to...

USE ART FOR



Social Justice

BY KT FINCH



The University of New England
Master of Social Work Degree (M.S.W.)
with the Applied Arts and Social Justice Certificate

UNE.EDU/SOCIALWORK



IT'S A PROGRAM THAT IS TOTALLY UNIQUE IN AMERICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

NO OTHER MSW PROGRAM HAS ANYTHING LIKE IT.

AND IT'S OFFERED AT ABSOLUTELY NO EXTRA COST!



YOU GO THROUGH UNE'S MSW PROGRAM LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE - YOU JUST LOOK AT EVERYTHING THROUGH A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT LENS.

AND YOU TAKE THE ELECTIVE "USE OF CREATIVE ARTS IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE" AND LEARN FROM...



YOU RESEARCH BOTH INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY BASED MODALITIES.



AND CREATE...



YOUR OWN PROJECT.



THIS INVOLVES DEVELOPING SOME TYPE OF ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE OR EXHIBITION RELATED TO HEALING AND SOCIAL CHANGE.

I'VE SEEN A LOT OF THESE PROJECTS, AND THE CREATIVE WORK AND (COM)PASSION THAT GOES INTO THEM IS SIMPLY MIND BOGGLING.

CHECK IT

PSST - DON'T WORRY. YOU GET TONS OF HELP



"RETELLING OUR STORIES OF RACE"

A STORYTELLING NIGHT ORGANIZED BY STUDENTS KELLY DELL'AGULLA M.S.W '16 AND BLANCA SANTIAGO, M.S.W. '16, WHOSE GOALS WERE TO CREATE A SPACE WHERE PEOPLE CAN EXPLORE THE CONCEPT OF RACE AS A STORY THAT WE CAN, AND MUST RE-WRITE



"MORE THAN A RAP SHEET"

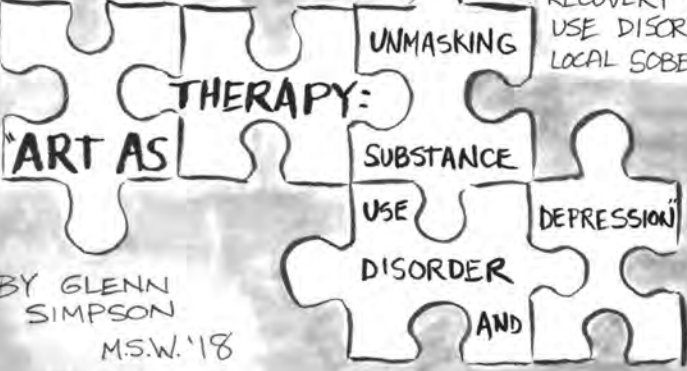
PUT TOGETHER BY LORI POWER, COORDINATOR OF THE AAST CERTIFICATE PROGRAM, THE EVENT CELEBRATED THE WRITINGS OF INCARCERATED WOMEN, AND SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS HAD BEEN RELEASED BY THE TIME OF THE EXHIBITION, SO THEY WERE ABLE TO ATTEND THE OPENING NIGHT EVENT AND TALK ABOUT THEIR OWN WORK.



The truth about me is ...
I carry guilt
I carry pride
I carry anger
and hurt
I carry love
I carry devotion
Most of the time
I will want to
carry you

AN ART EXHIBIT

...WHICH STUDIED THE EFFECT OF USING ART AS THERAPY WITH MEN IN EARLY RECOVERY FROM SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER AT A LOCAL SOBER HOUSE.



BY GLENN SIMPSON
M.S.W. '18

AND A STAGED READING OF A PLAY BY BOSTON-BASED PLAYWRIGHT DEBORAH LAKE FORSTEN CALLED 'BODY AND SOLD,' ABOUT SEX TRAFFICKING, ORGANIZED BY STUDENTS MEGHAN MORASH, M.S.W. '18 AND ABIGAIL MAYCOCK (SOCIAL WORK '19)

HE SAID HE WOULD TAKE CARE OF ME.

IT WAS FOLLOWED BY A DISCUSSION ABOUT HOW TRAFFICKING OCCURS RIGHT HERE IN MAINE.

I WAS SO SCARED.



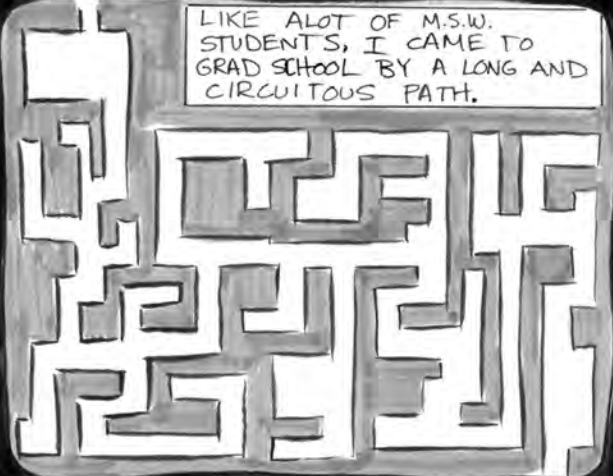
AND I KNOW THAT FOR A FACT, BECAUSE I WAS IN THAT PLAY AS A READER.

MAYBE YOU'RE WONDERING HOW I KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT THE APPLIED ARTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM.

IT'S BECAUSE I'M AN ALUM OF THE AAST PROGRAM

KATY FINCH
U.N.E
M.S.W.
CLASS OF 2018

LIKE A LOT OF M.S.W. STUDENTS, I CAME TO GRAD SCHOOL BY A LONG AND CIRCUITOUS PATH.



I WORKED IN A LOT OF RESTAURANTS...



ON FILM AND TELEVISION SETS IN NEW YORK CITY



AS A TEACHER ...



I EVEN SELF-PUBLISHED SOME COMICS!

BUT I WAS ALWAYS INTERESTED IN APPLYING ART AS A TOOL FOR OUTREACH AND AS A PLATFORM FOR MARGINALIZED VOICES



... SO I TOOK THE LEAP AND APPLIED TO THE UNE M.S.W. PROGRAM

THEN I CAME TO AN OPEN HOUSE AT U.N.E. AND HEARD LORI POWER SPEAK ABOUT THE AAST CERTIFICATE AND THE WHEELS STARTED TO TURN...

THE WAYS TO USE THE ARTS IN SOCIAL WORK ARE LIMITLESS!



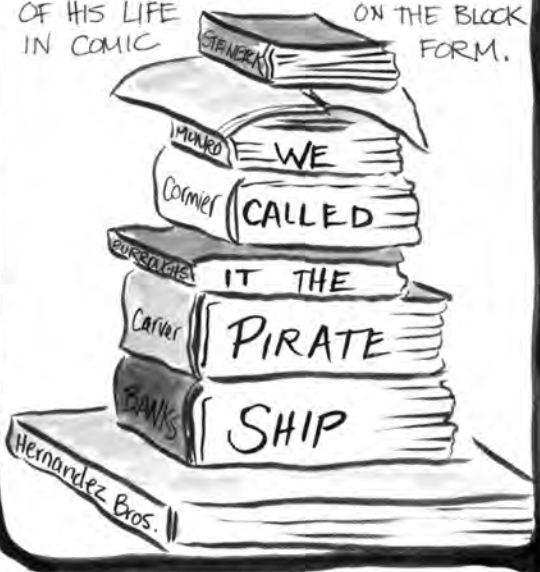
LITTLE DID I KNOW HOW SOON I WOULD GET THAT CHANCE!

I REALIZED THAT I WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REALLY DIG DEEP AND EXPLORE THE IDEA OF COLLABORATION WITH CLIENTS TO TELL STORIES USING SOME KIND OF SHARED VISUAL EXPRESSION...

SOON AFTER I STARTED IN THE M.S.W. PROGRAM, I MET A MAN ON A BENCH AT THE LOCAL HOMELESS SHELTER. I WAS DOING MY FIRST YEAR FIELD WORK THERE, AND WE STRUCK UP A CONVERSATION. HE WAS TECHNICALLY A CLIENT. HE EVENTUALLY BECAME MY ARTISTIC COLLABORATOR.



THROUGHOUT THAT YEAR WE KEPT TALKING, AND STARTED SHARING BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS, WHICH LED TO SHARING OUR WRITING AND DRAWINGS WITH EACH OTHER, AND WE BEGAN TO DOCUMENT HIS STORIES OF HIS LIFE ON THE BLOCK IN COMIC FORM.



WE CONTINUE TO MEET AND MAKE COMICS, AND HAVE PUBLISHED THREE COLLECTIONS - AND ALSO CREATE A MONTHLY STRIP FOR A LOCAL PAPER, 'THE BOLLARD'.

I WAS ABLE TO INTEGRATE THIS WORK INTO THE AAST CERTIFICATE AND UNE SPONSORED AN EXHIBIT OF OUR ARTWORK.

AND NOW...



I HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT TELLING STORIES AND MAKING ART IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE — PERHAPS NECESSARY — FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AS THEY SUPPORT IN-NEED INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES. AND THE ACT OF USING ART AS A SHARED LANGUAGE CAN BECOME THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH A COMMITMENT IS MADE BETWEEN A CLIENT AND A SOCIAL WORKER.

AND YOU REALLY DON'T NEED TO BE A PRACTICING ARTIST — ALL YOU NEED IS AN ARTISTIC SPIRIT.

MY CLASSMATES CAME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE...

WHAT WE HAD IN COMMON WAS A WILLINGNESS TO LOOK AT THINGS CREATIVELY AND A DESIRE TO DO SOME GOOD IN THE WORLD.

WHATEVER ANGLE YOU'RE APPROACHING IT FROM —

THE ARTS,
SOCIAL JUSTICE,
OR
THERAPEUTIC
ENGAGEMENT

THE AASTJ CERTIFICATE PROGRAM HELPS YOU PUT IT ALL TOGETHER AND LEADS YOU INTO A FULFILLING SOCIAL WORK CAREER.

I AM SO THANKFUL THAT UNE CREATED A SPACE FOR ME AND MY FELLOW CLASSMATES TO EXPLORE THIS IDEA AND APPLY IT PRACTICALLY — AND PROVIDED LIMITLESS SUPPORT OF OUR ENDEAVORS, SO THAT WE COULD BECOME THE MOST INNOVATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE PRACTITIONERS POSSIBLE.

Call or email
Meg Webster
at the U.N.E
School of
Social Work
to learn more!

207-221-4508
mwebster4@UNE.EDU
or visit us at
UNE.EDU/socialwork

2018

*SF



UNIVERSITY OF
NEW ENGLAND

INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET