

from the field of gerontological social work practice



From all of us at SBWPartners

A wish for a Happy Holiday Season and health, peace, and joy in the New Year.



Holiday letters are a traditional way of summing up activities of the past year. As SBW reflects on the highs and lows of 2008, we share one of each:

Our work with the Alliance of Children and Families in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (previously the Family Service Association of America based in New York City) has been an on-going source of pride and pleasure, of teaching and learning. The Alliance is an umbrella for over 370 nonprofit human service agencies throughout the country and Canada - offering us the privilege of continuing involvement in two national programs: the New Age of Aging initiative and the Executive Consultant Select Group.

Through one of the New Age of Aging activities 10 Mentor agencies with well developed programs in aging are paired with 10 Mentee agencies who wish to create or expand such services. SBW trains and consults with 2 staff members from each Mentor agency as they work with their opposite numbers in Mentee agencies to promote organizational change. Such interesting pairings! To name a few, Oregon and Minnesota, Tennessee and Maine, New York and Illinois. Such fine professionals doing such innovative work! It has been a joy to watch peer relationships develop between individual mentors and mentees and the creative programming ideas that have resulted.

Through the Executive Consultant Select Group, SBW Partners is presenting webinars on aging-related topics. Participants from the far reaches of our country simultaneously following a power-point on their computers, listening and verbally responding to the instructor on a conference call or by "instant messaging". We were greeted with "Aloha from Honolulu" at the start of our first seminar entitled Meeting the Challenges of Gerontological Supervision. Our second webinar on Helping Families to Confront Dementia, led by SBW Associate Daniel Kaplan, also found that sharing experiences thousands of miles apart added immeasurably to the richness of the program.

A low point of 2008 was the drastic cut of several programs on which older adults in New York City depend. The loss of important services is matched by the job loss of many of our colleagues who have served their aging clients with dedication and skill. We are saddened by these losses and hopeful that the amazing resources of the aging network will mitigate their sting.

SBW Partners is a fee-for-service firm devoted to advancing social work practice in aging. Services are provided by Dr. Barbara Silverstone and Dr. Ann Burack-Weiss, the firm's founding partners, and a group of associates. For more information, please visit www.sbwpartners.com or call 212.337.2555.