The overall prevalence of disability among non-institutionalized people age 5 and older in the United States is 15 percent – more than 41 million people, according to the 2006 Disability Status Report from Cornell University. This statistic brings home the importance of providing services with the collective goal of assisting those with disabilities to be productive and contributing members of society.

The College of Applied Human Sciences has a long history of advocating support to those with disabilities in a variety of disciplines through research and outreach.

Nancy Hartley, a previous director of the School of Education and dean, spent many years doing research in the area of special education. Ellie Gilfoyle, who became dean after heading the Department of Occupational Therapy, was instrumental in the founding of the Assistive Technology Resource Center and an early supporter of the Center for Community Partnerships, which assists those with disabilities in finding work. Helen McHugh, dean of one of the colleges merged to form our College in 1986, has had a personal interest in supporting those with disabilities: for many years she has volunteered assisting a woman with multiple sclerosis. I am pleased to support this important work championed by my colleagues.

People with disabilities are achieving high levels of successful participation in higher education, athletics, and the workplace as technology improves and attitudes about their abilities are positively influenced by images in the alternative and mainstream media.

Erin Popovich, a health and exercise science graduate and paralympic and world champion swimmer, proves that having a physical disability need not be a barrier to athletic excellence.

The advent of federal legislation in the 1970s to mandate inclusion of children with disabilities in schools has helped change beliefs about what those with disabilities are capable of achieving. The Individuals with Disabilities Act authorizes Individual Education Plans (IEPs), which allow educators to employ learning strategies to meet pupils’ needs.

In this issue, Jean Lehmann and Brian Cobb discuss their research on self-determination and the importance of involving individuals with disabilities in decisions about their futures.

Deborah Fidler, associate professor of human development and family studies, focuses her research on children with Down syndrome and has identified ways in which they learn.

Students with disabilities are entering colleges in record numbers, but they still fall below the national enrollment averages compared to those without disabilities. Services provided by the Assistive Technology Resource Center are a lifeline for many with all types of disabilities.

The value of including those with disabilities goes beyond our interest in acting as good citizens or being responsive to federal legal mandates. Knowing how to effectively teach and support students with disabilities provides us with insights about improving the quality of education and training for all students.

Ultimately, we believe that all people have the right to participate to the fullest and to make choices about their futures – discovering their own talents, loves, and yes, their abilities.
Self Determination
Linking Research and Practice

By Jean Lehmann and Brian Cobb

During the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) in the U. S. Department of Education funded initiatives to increase the degree to which students with disabilities participate in decisions that affect their lives.

The purpose of the initiatives was to improve outcomes some students experienced when they completed high school. They were not becoming contributing members of society. Instead they remained at home and were much more likely than their peers to be either underemployed or unemployed.

The term student “self-determination” was coined. Policy makers and researchers hoped that by training students to be self-determined, they would exert more control over their own futures and engage in more productive lives.

It quickly became clear that teaching self-determination was complex, encompassing a broad range of skills such as goal setting, communication, self awareness, and advocacy within the contexts of school, home, and community. The self-determination initiative was designed to assure students could choose whether to continue their education or go to work, and what living arrangements are desirable.

Students with disabilities have had less opportunity than their peers to voice their preferences and needed training in order to gain confidence to do so. Chief architect of the self-determination initiative at OSERS, Mike Ward, noted in an article, “Self-determination just doesn’t happen; it requires a great deal of preparation and practice.” What should be taught and what opportunities exist for students to practice these skills?

By law, Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) listing students’ annual goals and objectives are written and implemented in schools. Involving students in their own education and planning is not just a good idea, it is their right. By the time students become adolescents, schools and special education teams are required to invite them to their IEP and transition planning meetings, which provide students with opportunities to practice self-determination skills. The key is identifying ways to integrate self-determination lessons into the general academic curriculum or into regularly occurring processes instead of teaching these skills as separate content.

The importance for students to be able to consider many possibilities and to identify steps for progress cannot be overestimated. Students who go on to post-secondary education assume an even greater ownership of their educational programs. The onus of responsibility for disclosing their disability, providing documentation, and requesting accommodations shifts to them when they are admitted into college.

Students accustomed to being special education recipients must become proactive self-advocates if they want to receive support services. If students are going to be active participants, they need to know what their preferred learning styles are, how to describe their disability, and what it means in terms of instructional needs. Communication and self-advocacy are essential skills for students to be able to ask questions, listen alertly to the conversation, negotiate with others, and request assistance.

Our $1.8 million grant, the What Works in Transition Systematic Review Project, was funded by OSERS in 2001. Before this grant, no systematic attempt had ever been made to integrate project reports, journal articles, evaluations, and other literature from the last 20 years into a collective picture of “what works” for youth with disabilities in transition to post-school.

Our purpose was to summarize what was written during this period of growth in self-determination. Our team collected and screened 6,500 articles and project reports from which we identified six classroom based intervention areas: transition planning, vocational and employment preparation, social skills, self-determination, life skill curricula, and counseling.

Our conclusions: All studies argued that the ability to self-manage and monitor personal or academic behaviors through goal setting or strategy instruction was integral to students’ success. Our project reports provide a foundation for organizing research into a manageable format that can influence policy, fuel debates among scholars about future educational research directions, and provide a justification for prioritizing and funding initiatives that will ultimately improve the lives of those with disabilities.
Erin Popovich is the picture of a typical college graduate. Dressed casually in jeans and a sweater, Popovich had just finished her morning swim workout. But there are two things that set Popovich apart – she was born with achondroplasia, a genetic disorder and the most common form of dwarfism; and at just under 4 feet 5 inches, she is a world and paralympic champion swimmer. In December 2007, she graduated from Health and Exercise Science in the sports medicine concentration.

Popovich is quick to smile and laugh, and her sense of humor shines through as she describes growing up with a disability in Butte, Mont. She describes Butte as a great place to grow up – full of down-to-earth people where everybody knows everybody. Popovich learned to ride a horse at an early age on the 80 acres of land her family owns. “I just shortened the stirrups, got a leg up, and off I went,” she says with a laugh. Showing horses was one of many athletic pursuits she took part in as a child.

The youngest of three children, Popovich describes a typical childhood with sibling arguments and a family who never made special exceptions for her. She was diagnosed at six months and went through several treatments that helped her develop physically. She wore a cast around her trunk for a few months when she was only six months old to keep her back straight.

When she was five years old, she was prescribed hard plastic braces to prevent her legs from becoming bowlegged. She chose hot pink for the color. In the summer they were horribly hot and uncomfortable and she would resort to wearing tights or using baby powder to ease the sticking. “To this day, I hate tights and the smell of baby powder,” Popovich says laughing again.

When the other children on her team started hitting growth spurts, Popovich decided to quit playing competitive soccer, one of her favorite sports.
Getting kicked in the face was becoming a likelier prospect, so she decided to join the swim club in 1998 at age 12. She went to swim meets around the state, and soon she achieved qualifying times for the national disability championships. In June 1998, she swam at the nationals in Minneapolis after swimming competitively for only six months.

“The best thing about the Paralympic Games is that stereotypes are dispelled. You see someone in a wheelchair or with a certain disability and instead of dwelling on their problems, you see that they are focused on what they can achieve. I’m blown away by their abilities.”

Popovich describes the nationals as an eye-opening experience. She says, “Everyone was either on crutches, in a wheelchair, or had a prosthetic. But they were fast! I walked in focusing on disabilities, but came away amazed at what people can accomplish.” In spite of being terribly nervous, she qualified for the world championships.

Popovich’s achievements since she began swimming are nothing short of phenomenal. At her first International Paralympic Committee (IPC) World Championships in New Zealand in 1998, she won four gold medals and a bronze. At the Paralympic Games in Sydney in 2000, she won three gold medals, three silver medals, and set four world records.

But her most inspired performance was at the 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens, where she competed in seven events (five individual and two relays) and brought home an astounding seven gold medals. In 2006, she came close to topping that at the IPC World Championships in Durban, South Africa, setting two world records and winning six gold medals and two silver medals.

In 2005, Popovich was recognized for her dominance in paralympic swimming. She won an ESPY Award for Best Female Athlete with a Disability from ESPN, and was named Individual Sportswoman of the Year by the Women’s Sports Foundation.

Growing up, Popovich always loved Colorado, and when she visited CSU, she fell in love with Fort Collins. After learning about the Department of Health and Exercise Science and talking with swim coach John Mattos, she decided to attend CSU. The potential to train with a Division I swim team, ski, and be outdoors sealed her decision.

Mattos says, “Erin is not your typical collegiate student-athlete. She is determined to succeed, works hard, and displays a positive ‘can do’ attitude. She’s respected, admired, and loved by her teammates because she trains tall even though she walks small. She is an inspiration to all of us.”

Next up for Popovich in April is the U.S. Paralympic Trials in Minneapolis, where she will attempt to qualify for her third Paralympic Games in Beijing this September. She participated in a goodwill tour in Beijing last summer in anticipation of the 2008 Games.

“The best thing about the Paralympic Games is that stereotypes are dispelled,” says Popovich. “You see someone in a wheelchair or with a certain disability and instead of dwelling on their problems, you see they are focused on what they can achieve. I’m blown away by their abilities.”

As far as accommodations, Popovich says she has pedal extenders in her car so she can drive, and often uses a foot stool at home. But in a world designed for taller people, kitchen cabinets and grocery store shelves provide a particular challenge, which she manages with laughter and optimism.

“I know I can’t reach everything in life; my friends tease me, but I’m not afraid to ask for help! I’ve learned a lot through my experiences. Some people are open about their disability and some are not. I want to be open and in the process open people’s eyes to new experiences.”
The hopes and dreams of those with Down syndrome are becoming reality as researchers focus on children’s positive achievements.

“We’ve come a long way,” says Deborah Fidler, associate professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, who has developed an award-winning research program to study how children with Down syndrome learn.

Down syndrome is a genetic disorder associated with intellectual disability affecting more than 350,000 individuals in the United States.

Fidler’s research seeks to describe the earliest measurable patterns of developmental strength and challenge in young children with Down syndrome. She has looked at the early manifestations of later, more pronounced behavioral outcomes in toddlers, evaluating behaviors as they relate to problem solving, information processing, and social relatedness.

Wanda and Larry Werth are the Fort Collins area support group leaders of the Mile High Down Syndrome Association. Their daughter, Alaya, 6 and now in kindergarten, has Down syndrome. Larry says, “Using the information and techniques from Alaya’s participation in the CSU studies, we have designed her Individual Education Plan, implemented helpful supports at school, and function more smoothly as a family.

“Debbie’s inspirational message brings hope to many new families who attend our support group. Families who have participated in her research studies are given valuable tools to incorporate into their daily lives. It has been a win-win relationship for everyone.”

With her discoveries in hand, Fidler is applying for funding to develop specific techniques and interventions to target early development in children with Down syndrome. She says, “We now understand so much more about the profile of Down syndrome in young children – what their strengths are and where they need support. We are looking at special education for this group from a different angle now.”

Through the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a “free and appropriate public education” is guaranteed to all children. The original law passed in 1975, resulting in the inclusion of children with both physical and intellectual disabilities into public education.

With her research, Fidler is working to improve the quality of education for young children with Down syndrome.
She says, “The techniques in the special education world are wonderful. We have made great strides and they have taken us to a new place in which people with Down syndrome can live independently, succeed in a job, and participate in society. But we can do better.

“What we want to avoid is taking a cookie-cutter approach in which children with an intellectual disability are all treated the same. If we know specifics of how children with Down syndrome process information, relate to their peers, and express themselves using language, we can give educators additional information and techniques for working with a particular child with a particular disorder.”

Fidler’s current grant, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, provides funding for a team of researchers to investigate how common it is for other disorders, such as autism, to co-occur with Down syndrome. After a telephone screen with parents of children with Down syndrome who volunteer for the study, researchers offer parents full assessments of their children if they are determined to be at risk for other co-occurring disabilities.

Fidler attributes the inspiration for her research to a summer camp experience. At Camp Ramah in New England, children with special needs are integrated with children without disabilities. Fidler attended the camp, served as a counselor, and eventually became the director of the special needs program. “Living in a community where children with disabilities were a valued – and even treasured – part of the larger social group inspired me to help make this happen in the daily lives of individuals with disabilities.”

Fidler went on to earn her Ph.D. in psychological studies in education from UCLA. She has been recognized for her research with the Charles J. Epstein Down Syndrome Research Award from the National Down Syndrome Society, and she won the College of Applied Human Sciences Tenure-Track Faculty Research Excellence Award.

Werth says, “With the knowledge gained from Debbie’s work, we move forward as empowered parents and support group leaders into a positive future for our child and families.”
Alan Godwin was a young assistant professor at the University of Kansas with a Ph.D. from Yale in genetics and a National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded research program when he got what he describes as the worst headache of his life. Two days later, Godwin’s colleagues discovered him on the floor of his apartment and rushed him to the emergency room where he was diagnosed with a brain aneurysm.

He underwent major surgery that saved his life, but the aneurysm caused a brain injury. Damage from the aneurysm left him with cognitive deficits and caused paralysis in Godwin’s right side. He was not expected to walk again.

After several years of physical therapy and neurorehabilitation, Godwin now lives in Fort Collins, surrounded by his parents and sister (a physician) who assist in his care. He is able to walk and navigate the local bus system on his own, and he lives semi-independently in an apartment in the basement of his parents’ home.

Godwin says he remembers everything that happened before his brain injury, but he still has problems with short term memory and planning because of the damaged left frontal lobe. While he did not expect to have his own research program again, Godwin wanted to go back to work.

In collaboration with the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Center for Neurorehabilitation Services (CNS), he turned to the Center for Community Partnerships (CCP) in the Department of Occupational Therapy (OT), where he received assistance that resulted in him getting a job offer in a CSU laboratory as a technician.

Visits to CCP and CNS by Godwin’s parents during his rehabilitation at Craig Hospital in Denver weighed heavily in their decision to relocate to Fort Collins.

“CCP helped me by providing a support system, accompanying me on job interviews, and trying to find a job that’s a good fit. I’m happy to be back at work!”

CCP provides services for youth and adults with disabilities as they pursue employment and independent living, assisting people with physical, developmental and learning disabilities, brain injury, and mental health challenges, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

Participants are referred from multiple sources, including the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Colorado Brain Injury Medicaid Waiver program, the Workforce Center, Foothills Gateway, Inc., and the Larimer County Community Centered Board for people with developmental disabilities.

Tim O’Neill, executive director of Foothills Gateway, says, “Our partnership with CCP allows Foothills Gateway to provide a more diverse array of services. CCP has an excellent track record of placing clients in competitive jobs that are well suited to each individual. The staff is cutting edge, aware of best practices, and second to none in this area. We are richer as a community having CCP work with our clients.”

Cathy Schelly, the CCP director, says, “When we meet with a participant, one of our professional staff does a functional assessment. We don’t assume anything. We would never tell a person they aren’t capable of doing something. For instance, the best way to assist participants in finding ideal jobs is to complete a functional assessment in the community, allowing them to try different job situations and learn firsthand what would be a good match for them. In this way, the participant can make an informed decision about an ideal employment setting.”

CCP networks with hundreds of employers across the Front Range of Colorado. They work with the participant and employer to find a good match based on interests, abilities and skills needed, and make sure the needs of both parties are addressed. Schelly says, “We don’t want employers to hire someone just because it’s a good thing to do, but of equal importance, we want them to hire a participant because they are qualified and will do a great job.”

CCP also helps with adaptations and accommodations that an individual might need to be successful in the workplace. Schelly says, “For someone
With a brain injury, it might mean helping the individual put in place compensatory strategies to assist with remembering instructions and completing tasks, or providing a job coach to assist with skill development with new tasks and assignments. For someone with a physical disability, there are many things we can do to customize a workspace to ensure accessibility.”

Schelly also teaches a class that pairs college students with disabilities with OT student mentors. Many of the students have a brain injury, a learning disability, autism spectrum disorder, or a mental illness such as bi-polar disorder. “With help from OT student mentors, college students with disabilities develop and practice strong self-advocacy skills, which will serve them well as they pursue their studies and prepare for careers,” says Schelly.

Godwin says, “CCP helped me by providing a support system, accompanying me on job interviews, and trying to find a job that’s a good fit. It’s been a long recovery and my condition is still slowly improving, but I’m happy to be back at work!”

Funded by grants, donations, and fees, CCP has 14 employees. CCP is also a site for OT student interns to receive hands-on training in community-based support for those with disabilities. If you would like to make a gift to the Center for Community Partnerships to help those with disabilities achieve full participation in the community, please contact Lori Sims, director of development, at Lori.Sims@colostate.edu or (970) 491-5669.

With CCP’s assistance, Alan Godwin was able to return to work after his brain injury.

Universal Design for Learning

Cathy Schelly, Center for Community Partnerships director, received a three-year, $745,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education, to provide technical assistance and professional development for university faculty. The goal of the grant is to assist them as they teach courses in ways that are accessible to a diverse student body, including international students, students with atypical learning needs, and students who have disabilities.

The project, ACCESS to Postsecondary Education through Universal Design for Learning (UDL), employs several principles with the goal of making it easier for diverse learners to succeed and improve academic achievement and retention. “The philosophy of Universal Design was developed to make environments accessible to all people without unique adaptations. UDL applies this concept to the academic environment. It can be as simple as providing publications and web pages in more accessible formats,” says Schelly.

More tips for instructors include providing instructions both verbally and in writing, representing key concepts both graphically and verbally, and making learning both active and participatory.

Instructors of some large introductory courses at Colorado State University have introduced the UDL principles, and Schelly’s research team is currently examining data from before and after to determine if it has resulted in increased student success.

Schelly has also applied for funding to take UDL into a local high school in Fort Collins to see if students with disabilities can succeed in the regular classroom without a specific special education curriculum.
Justin Shaffer was in sixth grade and attended multiple schools before learning to read. In third grade, after failing both first and second grades, he was diagnosed with dyslexia, a learning disability causing individuals to have difficulty with written language, including reading and spelling. He changed schools often because his mother desperately searched for a solution, but the answer was not soon found.

Shaffer’s mother persisted by enrolling Justin in a different private school every year between third and eighth grades. The family lived in the Washington, D.C., area where there were many schools to choose from. Finally she chose a public school with services to help him. Federal law mandating Individualized Education Plans for all students with disabilities allowed him to get special help. His family also hired a private tutor to help him with remedial phonics.

With assistance, Shaffer graduated from high school and also from the University of Colorado in 2001 with a degree in philosophy. Yet Shaffer had a much harder time with academic success than his peers. Shaffer says, “My graduation from college was a miracle in itself. Philosophy was the one department where the professors emphasized content. The professors made accommodations for me so I could demonstrate what I knew, and I passed my classes.”

A new graduate social work student at Colorado State, Shaffer discovered resources to assist him on his next educational journey. “In the late 1990s, I was introduced to software programs, but they were too clunky and not time effective. It’s easier now for people to work around learning disabilities. It takes time to figure out the adaptive skills that you need, but the resources are available.”

At Colorado State, with the assistance of Resources for Disabled Students and the Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC), Shaffer is thriving. He says, “For the first time I turned in a paper and got an ‘A’ without having someone else proofread it for me. I feel lucky to have access to such comprehensive and cutting edge services.”

Resources for Disabled Students is a clearinghouse where all students with disabilities (visual, hearing, learning, or mobility disabilities), receive referrals for services on campus. As long as students have an official diagnosis and documentation from a health or education professional, they are able to receive services free of charge.

Many students are referred to the ATRC in the Department of Occupational Therapy (OT). The ATRC was established in the early 1990s with a Department of Education grant aimed at training OT students in assistive technology applications. In the mid 1990s, the University formally charged the ATRC to provide assistive technology accommodations and support for students and employees with disabilities at CSU.

Under the leadership of its current director, Marla Roll, the center has evolved from a model where a handful of computers with adapted hardware and software in a segregated lab to a state-of-the-art center. Now, all assis-
trying out software programs, Shaffer chose Read and Write. Using the program, he can have scanned documents and textbooks read to him out loud. For writing, the program has several features such as a homophone checker for picking up common mistakes such as mixing up “too,” “to,” and “two.”

Keller, a graduate of the OT department, says, “A student with dyslexia experiences difficulty reading and writing. Common symptoms students will report when reading are fatigue, difficulty tracking, poor sequencing, and poor comprehension. When writing they experience word, number, and letter reversals and poor grammar and spelling. This program will read any type of format, allowing the user to hear text aloud and edit writing errors. Students with dyslexia tend to write and spell phonetically. Read and Write has multiple writing features such as a phonetic spell checker to catch mistakes that universal programs don’t yet have. In addition, this program allows users to select any text and convert it to MP3 format. This allows students to listen to their required readings on their MP3 players. They love this because it’s an extremely portable way to learn.”

Students with physical disabilities can try out a range of options in the ARTC, including adaptive mice, alternative keyboards, voice recognition programs, head trackers for moving the mouse, and sip-and-puff technology—all provided on loan at no cost to the student. Disabilities range from sensory impairments such as low vision and blindness, to neurological conditions such as cerebral palsy and spinal cord injuries. In recent years, the ATRC has seen an increase in need for assistive technology for students with cognitive impairments such as traumatic brain injury and learning disabilities.

Keller says, “Before we introduce students to software or hardware, we first talk with them about presenting problems that interfere with their academic success. We look at an array of academic skills that are needed to participate in a college setting: reading, writing, computing, and note taking, as well as their physical learning environment, body positioning, and any other concerns. We then brainstorm solutions and strategies, including software programs that assist with the learning process and hardware that allows easier access to computing or that provides a better ergonomic work station.”

Shaffer plans to earn a Master of Social Work degree. He wants to help people who have struggled and failed in the traditional academic system and have ended up in prison. “I’ve had to take a difficult situation and overcome it. I’ve learned to be resilient. I want to motivate others to take control and make positive changes in their lives, one person at a time.”

“IT’S EASIER NOW FOR PEOPLE TO WORK AROUND LEARNING DISABILITIES. IT TAKES TIME TO FIGURE OUT THE ADAPTIVE SKILLS THAT YOU NEED, BUT THE RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE.”

Sherrí Keller demonstrates a Telenext Scholar Digital Talking Book Player for the visually impaired.
Maggie Ireland’s college scrapbook is filled with rare accolades. She won the title of Miss Colorado, graduated a semester early from Colorado State with perfect grades, and was named the College of Applied Human Sciences Outstanding Senior. But the greatest honor of all for Maggie is having a positive impact on people who need her.

As Miss Colorado, Ireland brings her message of optimism to Colorado State University and to people throughout the state through multiple appearances and her volunteer activities. She believes we can find optimism even in the midst of adversity. Her pageant platform “Opening the Door to Optimism” is a tribute to her brother, Patrick, and the power of keeping a positive attitude.

When Ireland was in 7th grade, Patrick was critically injured in the 1999 Columbine High School shootings in Littleton, Colo. The national media often referred to Patrick as “the boy in the window” because he was rescued from a second story window at the school. Patrick is also a graduate of Colorado State.

Ireland’s life was thrown into turmoil after the shootings. She says, “It was not until my life was turned upside down that I realized the difference I could make by helping others. After my brother survived a traumatic brain injury as a result of being shot at Columbine, I became inspired. The therapists believed in him, challenging his physical ability as well as his mind throughout the healing process. The environment at Craig Hospital in Denver was like one big family, everyone rooting for the recovery of everyone else. The impact of this common goal cannot be underestimated.”

All of the positive aspects of the therapeutic setting influenced Ireland to spend additional time volunteering at Craig Hospital, one of the top rehabilitation centers in the world. She says, “The opportunities I have had at Craig and through my other volunteer work experiences have led me to the decision that I want to make a difference, and I have found that my true passion lies in influencing the lives of survivors of brain and spinal cord injuries.”

Ireland came to CSU to major in health and exercise science in the challenging sports medicine concentration where she never earned a grade lower than A and graduated in December 2007. Next, she’s headed to graduate school. “My plan is to earn a doctorate of physical therapy and continue stressing the importance of activity in the rehabilitation of people who have encountered physical setbacks in life,” says Ireland.

Ireland represented Colorado at the Miss America Pageant in January. Although not selected as Miss America, Ireland says, “It was an honor and privilege to represent the state of Colorado. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, especially having the opportunity to meet and become friends with so many exemplary young women.”

Suzi Doland, executive director of the Miss Colorado Organization says, “Maggie captivated the judges in winning the title of Miss Colorado with her beauty, grace, and intelligence. Most importantly, however, is that she continues to positively impact the lives of everyone she meets.”

Ireland says, “My favorite quotation has always been, ‘The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart.’ These words from Helen Keller have had a significant influence on upholding my charge in life to help others. My time at CSU as a student of health and exercise science has prepared me for a future in the field of rehabilitation. My goal of leaving ‘heart prints’ on the lives of others will be fulfilled.”
Occupational Therapy (OT) graduate student Lorie Fike aims to help injured soldiers with their transition back to optimal health after serving in wartime duty. Fike, a captain in the U.S. Army, is attending Colorado State University to get her master’s degree after serving as an occupational therapist in the Army for the past eight years.

Since Fike completed her bachelor’s degree in OT at Texas Women’s University, the field has transitioned to only offering master’s degrees to train OTs. The Department of Occupational Therapy has tailored its degree so that OTs currently in the field can obtain a post-professional master’s degree.

Ranked in the top ten in the country, Colorado State’s OT department is also designated a Program of Research and Scholarly Excellence, making it highly competitive for student applicants.

Sponsored by the Army, Fike’s goal in obtaining her master’s is to gain new skills in conducting research, and to use evidence-based practice to make sure injured soldiers are getting the best care possible.

Fike came from Fort Riley in Kansas and is not sure where she will be stationed after she completes her two-year degree. Fike says the Army has many OTs deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, where they have various roles such as working in combat support hospitals. OTs also evaluate soldiers and make sure they can function after traumatic experiences.

As a practicing OT in the Army, Fike was responsible for evaluating function such as range of motion, strength, and abilities of her patients who are recovering from injuries such as multiple fractures, shoulder and arm injuries, and severe nerve damage. She works on rehabilitation plus training the patient to use the non-dominant limb.

OTs at the large army hospitals treat soldiers with severe injuries such as burns and amputations. “OTs also look at the whole person. We deal with psychological issues and make sure that the soldier is getting appropriate services to help,” says Fike.

She is beginning work on her thesis, which will be a qualitative study describing the experiences of soldiers with traumatic brain injury as they leave Army rehabilitation units and strive to reintegrate into their communities. Fike expects to interact with some of the new Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) in collecting data.

Pat Sample, professor of OT says, “Lorie has an excellent understanding of qualitative research because of her many years in the Army spent observing soldiers as they healed. She has a friendly, inquisitive, and warm personality that will help the soldier participants in her research feel safe and valued.”

WTUs were established recently by the Army in response to criticisms about substandard care for injured returning war veterans. “Each base will have a small WTU,” says Fike. “Larger ones will be established at the two major Army hospitals. They are just getting started, but the goal is to make the transition back into the community easier for wounded soldiers and also provide seamless transition to VA care. They are focused on the soldier’s needs.

“The WTU can also get injured soldiers released from their original Army unit, so the base can get a replacement and the soldiers’ primary job then becomes healing. OTs have taken a leadership role in the formation of the WTUs and what role OT should play in those units.”

Fike says, “In spite of negative publicity, there are also many positive stories and lots of excellent care providers in the U.S. Army.”
Planting Seeds of Farm Safety

Portions originally appeared in the Fort Collins Coloradoan.

The School of Social Work’s Vicky Buchan is working to improve safety on farms with a new computer program that educates and tests kids on everything from riding ATVs to working around livestock.

The program was created by faculty from the College of Applied Human Sciences and the College of Engineering through the federally funded High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (HICAHS) at CSU. It’s being tested nationally and will be distributed to 4-H participants in third through sixth grades. Funding is provided by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Buchan, the HICAHS deputy director, helped create the program after seeing so many young people follow in their parents’ footsteps in agriculture but who never got any formal safety training.

“What we’re hoping is that by targeting youth, we can change their behaviors before they take over the farm,” Buchan said. “Knowledge is the first step.”

Federal workplace safety officials say about 22,000 people under the age of 20 are injured on farms annually. Buchan said both nonfatal and fatal injury statistics indicate that farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in the country.

It’s considered especially troublesome because of the high potential for family members working side-by-side to get hurt simultaneously.

The new safety program, contained on a CD-ROM, covers five areas: tractor safety, chemicals, large animals, grain handling, and ATVs. Children are guided through the program by three characters, Daisy, Duke, and Dusty, and then quizzed after watching several short videos in each section. She said the program also might help improve overall safety just by getting farm families to talk. “If children stimulate the conversation, the parents pay attention,” Buchan said.

Buchan said the CD will be tested nationally to also address behavior change in the kids who watch it. It’s not enough just for them to learn about safety; they need to put what they learn into practice, she said. “Often injuries, particularly if they are on family farms, aren’t discovered until it’s too late for treatment, due to the distances between fields and home.”

Museum Gets New Space

The University Center for the Arts (UCA) will be the new home for the Design and Merchandising Museum beginning this summer. The UCA brings together programs in art, music, theatre, dance, and apparel and interior design, and is housed in the remodeled former Fort Collins High School. The Museum collection houses over 14,000 artifacts, which will be the source for year-round exhibitions in the new gallery space.

The significantly enlarged storage space includes proper temperature, humidity, and lighting to ensure appropriate conservation of the collection. Examples of items that apparel design and merchandising students can access to enhance their study include a significant lace collection, large Japanese Kimono collection, and fashions donated by designers Calvin Klein and Mr. Blackwell.

Linda Carlson, museum curator, says, “The new collection storage and gallery space provides us with an outstanding opportunity to reach a broader audience and provides a unique opportunity for students to work with real artifacts in a professional museum setting.”

While many objectives are in place for the move, the department has several funding initiatives in order for the museum to be functional next fall. Interest in volunteering or sustaining the museum are always welcome. Watch for more information about the move soon.
Training Trainers in the Gaza Strip

Last fall, Construction Management (CM) professors from Colorado State conducted a week-long training workshop in Jordan for 20-25 local trainers from the Gaza Strip and West Bank. The workshop, funded by a $165,000 Education for Employment Foundation grant, prepared trainers to teach unemployed engineering graduates in the West Bank and Gaza practical and application-oriented construction management skills.

The project team from Colorado State provided the construction management curriculum, instructional support materials, and a workshop to train the trainers.

CM faculty members, including Angela Guggemos, Mostafa Khattab, Brad Johnson, Ron Holt, and workshop coordinator Becky Bell, provided the trainers with a 120-hour construction management training module, which the trainers will teach to the end users over the course of three months.

While there are a large number of engineers in the Gaza Strip, many are unemployed and don’t have knowledge or experience in construction management. A minimum of 45 students who complete the training will have guaranteed jobs with construction companies in the Middle East. “The engineers who take this curriculum will be guaranteed jobs by companies that are ready and waiting to hire these graduates,” says Mostafa Khattab, department head. “By helping people become employed, we’re contributing to the area’s economic security.”

School of Education Expands Adult Program

This semester, the School of Education launched a new Adult Education and Training (AET) master’s degree at CSU’s Denver Center. This Denver Center offering complements an on-campus program, a hybrid delivery program, and a fully online version – all based at CSU’s Main Campus in Fort Collins. The new Denver Center AET program enables students to complete 33 credit hours in four semesters and two summer terms. The curriculum has a business and corporate focus designed to meet the training and program facilitation needs of professionals involved in training and development.

While the new Denver-based program is focused specifically on the training aspects of adult education, the other AET programs serve a broad range of adult educators including community college faculty, health care educators and trainers, grades 9-12 public educators, community and non-profit educators, Adult Basic Education instructors, GED and ESL instructors, as well as business and corporate trainers. Students who complete the program have gained new positions in the field or moved into training coordinator and supervisory positions. A number of students have continued on to earn their Ph.D. in related fields.

Karen Kaminski, assistant professor and coordinator of the AET program says, “The Denver Center master’s degree will allow us to reach a large group of professionals in the Denver area who otherwise wouldn’t have access to this type of program. Students will have the benefit of collaborating with peers in their field while participating in classes delivered locally.”
What Will My Legacy Be?

This is often an important question as people consider their personal and estate plans. For this reason, the College hosts annual Legacy Seminars in Fort Collins, Denver, and other areas as a service to alumni and friends to introduce important topics such as bequests, wills, charitable gift annuities, family and remainder trusts, and other life income planning tools.

It’s also a time to hear a college expert talk about a relevant topic. This year’s event in Fort Collins centered on healthy aging and living longer and healthier.

The first speaker was Manfred Diehl from the College’s Center on Aging, who spoke about aging from a holistic point of view. He touted the benefits of exercise and a healthy diet and the importance of environmental and lifestyle factors to maintaining health and youthfulness. He also stressed the importance of nurturing ourselves through emotional bonds with friends, family, and other meaningful relationships as a way to stay feeling young and engaged.

The keynote speaker, local attorney Jan Lord, spoke about senior law issues and the transfer of wealth, and provided suggestions to people on what to keep in mind when considering estate, legacy, and disability planning. Bill Sheets from the CSU Office of Gift Planning was on hand to provide an emotional and inspiring conclusion that centered on the importance of sharing legacy plans with your family.

If you have questions about how you can identify and achieve your legacy plans, or to learn more about making a planned gift to Colorado State University, please contact Bill Sheets at (970) 491-4679 or Bill.Sheets@colostate.edu; or Marianne Blackwell, director of gift planning, at (970) 591-7862 or Marianne.Blackwell@colostate.edu.

‘People First’: A Core Value of Development

Much has been written about the value of giving – not only in dollars and cents but the intrinsic value shared between the donor and the recipient. Philanthropy changes both the giver and the receiver in immeasurable ways. People step forward with gifts to change the life of an individual, create a program that didn’t exist before, or transform an organization to carry out its mission.

In a college whose underpinning philosophy is “people first,” you can be part of a growing group of alumni and friends who want to change lives and shape lives in ways that matter to you. If you would like to discuss an idea for your support in the College of Applied Human Sciences, please contact any of us below. Whether it be a scholarship, planned gift, program support or professorship, your interest will be met with a people-first attitude.

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When Elizabeth (Young) Davis ’41 grew up in Fort Collins in the 1920s, Colorado A & M was then a small entity in a thriving agricultural community.

Attending college was more or less an expectation for Davis and her five siblings, and she chose a degree in home economics, one of the most popular majors for women then.

“My father and mother both were teachers and we grew up with education,” she said. Her father started the only junior high at the time, now Lincoln Junior High, and was principal there. Her mother had taught in a small school on Colorado’s Western Slope but quit teaching once she started a family.

After graduating, Davis married Frank B. Davis, Ph.D., who taught speech at CSU and later at Auburn University. The Davis couple had three children, one of whom followed in her father’s footsteps. Sue (Davis) Pendell is now a speech professor at CSU.

Davis later received a master’s in textiles with a minor in nutrition from Auburn University. Not until she embarked upon a doctorate in nutritional biochemistry did she realize, “Nutrition was where I belonged all along.” In 1973, after serving on the faculty of Tuskegee Institute and Auburn University, Davis became an administrator with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative State Research Service. There, she and her colleagues monitored funds allocated for critical nutrition and social sciences research at land-grant universities. In 1978 Davis received the CSU Honor Alumna Award. She retired in 1983.

Davis has been a loyal donor since 1975, with consistent support to research and outreach in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition. The department recently unveiled its new Nutrition Center that provides outreach to Larimer County residents as well as the University community.

Located in the Gifford Building, the Nutrition Center offers individual nutrition counseling, diet intake analysis, body composition measurements, and meal planning. The center also features a TV cooking show-inspired kitchen that equips visitors with the skills needed to create healthy meals and snacks. Monthly classes include portable breakfasts, fast food makeovers, vegetables and grains, desserts, and other cuisine.

“We don’t put people on diets, because for the last 20 years we’ve seen that diets don’t work,” said Melissa Wdowik, registered dietitian and director of the Nutrition Center. “We teach people about nutrition as well as how to make real behavior changes.”

Instead of diets, the Nutrition Center offers lessons on portion control, mindful eating, balancing food choices, eating out, and incorporating physical activity.

Since its opening in January, the center has also been home to graduate students taking an advanced nutrition counseling course. Students spend the first half of the semester shadowing Wdowik while she counsels visitors and conducts classes. During the second half, students work directly with visitors under her supervision.

“Before the opening of the Nutrition Center, they didn’t have this as part of their graduate education,” Wdowik said. “Now they can get the hands-on experience they need while providing important service to the community.”

“Elizabeth’s gifts are helping the new Center provide a valuable service to people by giving them an opportunity to assess their nutritional status, as well as provide educational programs for weight management, heart disease prevention, and healthy cooking,” says Chris Melby, department head.

After 10 years in Washington, D.C., Davis and her husband (deceased in 1988), returned to Auburn, Ala., where she currently lives.

“CSU changed Elizabeth’s life, and she continues to pass on that life-changing legacy through her generous gifts,” said Lori Sims, director of development. “She is helping to create something that didn’t exist before – the Nutrition Center.”
"I am an exhibitionist," says an amused Jack Curfman with a Cheshire cat grin on his face when asked what he does. Jack Curfman is indeed a local legend at CSU and in Fort Collins, as a design exhibitionist! He has designed exhibits in Colorado and throughout the country, such as in Seattle and Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, and even internationally, in Nairobi, Kenya. He has played a significant role in developing and nurturing a vibrant Fort Collins arts and cultural community, helping to create the Fort Collins Pioneer Museum, and designing the first exhibits in the Lincoln Center and in other venues in the region.

Curfman’s connection to Fort Collins dates back several generations. His mother was raised in Fort Collins, and his grandfather, Horace Greeley Petty, was an early jeweler in town and was leader of the first big band. Curfman grew up in Maryville, Mo., and later spent two years in World War II in North Africa and Italy. He got his start in designing in high school where he designed and built stage sets for the drama department.

After the war, Curfman returned home and soon moved to Colorado to study at CSU. He graduated in 1949 and began teaching in 1950 under Clara Hatton, for whom the Clara Hatton Gallery in CSU’s Visual Arts Building is named. He retired in 2001 from the Department of Design and Merchandising and remains involved in the College.

The Jack Curfman Creative and Visual Design Scholarship Endowment was established upon his retirement, providing scholarships to design students who show creative promise.

Curfman has played a pivotal role in the success of the Design and Merchandising Museum and the Gustafson Gallery in the department. According to Linda Carlson, curator, “Working with Jack for the last 20 years has been a joy. To watch Jack create and design an exhibit space so that it supports the story, is to watch a genius at work. Our success as a museum, along with the move to the University Center for the Arts, is attributable to Jack’s passion for what he does.”

The Lory Student Center Gallery opened in 1968 and was renamed the Curfman Gallery in 1985. Since that time, the gallery has played host to exhibits by artists known throughout the world and has become the premier space for exhibitions of Colorado State student artwork. In January 2006, the 20th anniversary of the gallery was celebrated with a rededication and a tribute to Curfman’s life and work. The exhibit included items from his eclectic personal collection and a video vignette with highlights of his career.

Curfman is a passionate purveyor of the arts to this day. His eyes sparkle at the mention of the theater, and he loves to talk about how Fort Collins is home to some great galleries and art houses. He credits his mother for instilling his artistic confidence and encouraging him to trust his passions. She gave him the freedom to do what made him happy, and everything sprouted from there. Said Curfman recently, “I am very fortunate to have been able to work with many wonderful people and to have had the freedom and opportunity to do what I wanted.”
DON’T
“Little Old Lady” Me!

It may be destiny that Maribell White was born in a town that matches her nature: Independence. From her earliest days of living in this southeast Kansas community, White has fostered an independent spirit throughout her life and career.

Celebrating her 81st birthday on April 8, White is helping to break down stereotypical attitudes of seniors and people with disabilities. Sometimes even well-intentioned people offer help or make wrong assumptions about her ability. “While crossing the street, someone grabbed my arm, presuming I needed help,” she said. A clerk in a store treated her like she was simple minded. She even has a term for it: being “little old ladied.”

Now living in Versailles, Ky., White is writing and recording some of her own experiences under the title, “I’ve Been Little Old Ladied, Again.”

A panorama of life events started after graduating high school in 1945. She studied one year at a junior college, then enrolled at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in Independence. Since she already had some college education before coming to CSU, she entered the occupational therapy (OT) program as a sophomore in 1949 at what was then Colorado A & M. When she arrived on campus after WWII, it was “flooded with men. But I didn’t manage to catch a one,” she chuckled.

While in college, White nurtured her interest in the theater by performing in several plays. The Collegian billed her as the “daffy Mrs. Savage” lead role in The Curious Savage, and she played the mother of the bride in Blood Wedding. She also played Amanda in The Glass Menagerie and spent summers performing at playhouses in Michigan and Maine.

White completed the baccalaureate program in three years, graduating in 1952, the first class after OT became accredited.

White’s clinical training was at Children’s Hospital in Denver; Hines, Ill.; Virginia; and the University of Minnesota Hospitals at Minneapolis. Her first job was at the Jacksonville (Ill.) State Mental Hospital, then at the American Legion Hospital in Battle Creek, Mich. After almost five years, she moved back to Kansas and worked at The Institute of Logopedice in Wichita, where many of the residents had speech and physical impairments.

In 1963 she moved from Kansas to Kentucky to work at the Frankfort State Hospital and School. When that school closed in the early 1970s, she moved to the Diagnostic and Evaluation facility, which closed in 1975. In order to stay in Versailles, she accepted a job at Eastern State Hospital in nearby Lexington, where she worked as a nurse until retiring in 1987.

Lori Sims, director of development, says, “Maribell is one of the college’s most loyal donors, sending gifts nearly every month over the past decade.”

Reconnecting with her alma mater occurred quite naturally. “I had been gone from Colorado for about 12 years,” said White. “Then, there was a special course offered under Miss (Marjorie) Ball which I took and after that got involved again.” Ball was the department head between 1951 and 1972.

“If there’s anyone who embodies the spirit of youth and vitality, it’s Maribell,” said Sims. “She brings goodness, humor, and generosity at every turn. And one never knows if she’ll be on the back of a motorcycle around the next corner!”

Never turning down an opportunity to demonstrate her independent spirit, Maribell has ridden on the back of a motorcycle twice—so far. The driver, good friend John Range, said “hop on” when Maribell casually asked about getting a ride. Now she plans to do it every year!
Alumnus Don Fels Speaks on Global, Social Responsibility

Don Fels ’76 came to campus and spoke to a class earlier this year on corporate and social responsibility in the global marketplace.

Fels knows a lot about the subject. He currently works for Graves Imports, a company that specializes in private label shoes, based in Nashville, Tenn. He has been involved in the manufacturing and importing of footwear from Asia for the past 30 years. He became involved in researching this issue as the roles of corporate and social responsibility developed.

A year ago, the College featured stories about social responsibility in this newsletter. Fels wrote to Molly Eckman, professor of design and merchandising, who teaches a class on international production and trade in the apparel industry. Eckman’s class addresses corporate and social responsibility, which includes the need for sensitivity to cultural norms and religious practices in the global production of apparel and footwear products.

The conversation led to Fels being a guest lecturer in her class last fall. Fels believes that an understanding of corporate and social responsibility is imperative for students who are going into the design and merchandising field to learn prior to holding managerial positions in which important decisions are made.

In his lecture, Fels said that social responsibility has become more relevant over the last ten years since an increasing number of U.S. based companies decided to outsource.

“Social responsibility wasn’t in people’s minds when I started,” said Fels. “It was not uncommon to see people in Asia, workers in the factories, with one or two fingers missing. But no one really cared. The concept of social responsibility just wasn’t there.”

Issues related to corporate and social responsibility were uncovered in the mid-1990s.

“The media turned on to working conditions for foreign laborers,” he said. “Every major company adopted terms of engagement with their overseas operations.” As this topic became more relevant, companies quickly improved conditions in order to bring their standards into compliance.

“In the beginning, efforts were focused specifically on lighting, emergency exits, fire extinguishers, ventilation, noise, bathrooms, and dorms,” he said. “Those didn’t take very long to correct. Then came more ‘transparency,’ and companies hired compliance officers at many places to look at all the working conditions, including environmental issues.”

“Don’s presentation to the class contributed immensely to setting the stage for the entire course,” said Eckman. “He really brought to life for the students many of the topics that we discussed in the course and we continually referred back to his comments throughout the semester.”

The College welcomes interest from alumni and friends who would like to come to campus and speak to students or other assembled groups on professional topics that relate to our curriculum. To suggest an idea, please contact Lori Sims at (970) 491-5669 or e-mail Lori.Sims@colostate.edu.