



## Preceptor Profile: Robin Lewy

By Laura K. Guyer



One vital component of our Health Disparities minor is the capstone

service-learning practicum.

Students in the

practicum participate in local community programs for underserved populations, including women, children, migrant workers, residents of rural communities, and LGBT people. The experience pairs students with mentors and preceptors that direct health clinics, education centers, and social service organizations.

This issue's Preceptor Profile is **Robin G. Lewy**, co-founder and Director of Education for The Rural Women's Health Project (RWHP), a health justice organization that works with rural and immigrant communities to strengthen their capacity to overcome health barriers. As Director of Education, Ms. Lewy is responsible for developing innovative education strategies, health worker training, and advocacy programming. Her primary areas of focus are women's reproductive rights, access to domestic violence services and HIV prevention. While working to enable communities to bridge the gap to needed services, she has developed peer education programs that bring information directly to community women. To

complement this work, she has educated health and social service professionals about immigrant and farmworker culture, cultural relevancy and health disparities.

Since earning her MA in Social Development and Popular Theatre, 30 years ago, Ms. Lewy has advocated for health justice, emphasizing community education and mobilization. Prior to establishing the RWHP, she worked in Central America on health and development programming. Most recently, her community work has focused on certifying Peer Advocates

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-RWHP Practicum Student

through the RWHP's *Lets Talk About It* program. This program serves women in North Central Florida who are HIV positive or are caregivers of those who are HIV positive. Ms. Lewy also coordinated the Latina/o community-focused *Voices of Immigrants in Action*. This initiative promotes dynamic communication among providers, service organizations and Latina/o immigrant communities on such issues

as HIV/AIDS and immigration.

Locally, Ms. Lewy is co-founder of the North Central Florida Social Service/Hispanic Alliance and the North Central Florida Farmworker Corridor HIV Task Force. At the state level she has advocated on behalf of the DREAM Act for undocumented youth and the WE ARE FLORIDA! Campaign, which defeated proposed anti-immigrant laws in 2011 and has continued its advocacy ever since. Regionally, she is on the Board of the Southern AIDS Coalition and the Southern AIDS Strategy Initiative; both organizations work to strengthen the National HIV/AIDS Strategy with approaches and funding to address the epidemic in the Southeastern United States.

Students interning with the RWHP consistently give the organization high evaluations. One noted, "I learned about many disparities, such as cultural competence and language barriers, especially [those faced by] the Hispanic community. I developed extremely valuable skills and was able to help others." Another student "learned about advocacy and health justice from the different vantage points of race, gender, social class and more."

North Central Florida benefits tremendously from Robin Lewy's generosity and selflessness. Our students are indeed fortunate to learn from her experience, successes and leadership!

