

In this  
issue...

- Exercise and Sport Psychology!
- Volunteer Opportunities Information!
- Cheat Sheet for Freshman!
- Psychology Coordinator's Corner!

Get to  
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Cost: a pretty penny

## Natural Disasters: The Psychological Effects of Hurricane Katrina

By Collette Fischer

The headlines alone are overwhelming. On August 29th, 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast and destroyed nearly everything in its path. Thousands are feared dead, and more than 1 million people are left temporarily homeless. For those individuals who have lived through the violent storm and subsequent mayhem, the psychological effects are extensive and potentially severe. Not only did these victims witness the loss of their loved ones and homes, they also lived through the dangerous rescues and reported violent crimes, sexual abuse, and looting that followed. These victims, and the rescue workers who worked tirelessly to save them, are now at risk of developing psychological conditions that include Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, and other anxiety disorders.

According to the National Center for PTSD, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder is the most commonly reported condition attributed to natural disasters. This disorder can develop after an individual experiences or witnesses a life-threatening situation and it is marked by clear biological and physiological symptoms. Patients

who suffer from PTSD re-experience the traumatic events through reoccurring images, thoughts, dreams, illusions, and/or, flashback episodes.

Treatment for PTSD can be a lengthy and complicated process. The extent of the recovery varies and is typically contingent on the degree of the trauma. Often times, people who suffer from PTSD do not seek out professional help. After the traumatic events of September 11th, more than 9,000 grief and crisis counselors were sent to work with survivors, family



members, and rescue workers. There were, however, an *underwhelming* number of people who sought help from these professionals. According to an article found in *Psychological Science in Public Interest*, failure to seek professional help is attributed to three main factors:

1. Many victims develop avoidance behavior or denial (which is, coincidentally, a symptom of PTSD).
2. Survivors are too preoccupied with putting their lives back together and they don't make the time to seek help.
3. Victims of PTSD have a tendency to rely on family and friends for support, rather than professional help.

It is too soon to judge the mental response, and recovery time, of the victims from August's Hurricane Katrina, but the signs of psychological damage are already surfacing. To date, there have been multiple reports of civilian suicides, and at least two rescue worker suicides. Many are also concerned about the effect that the storm has had on the children who witnessed it.

According to the National Center for PTSD, people who suffer from trauma-related psychological conditions typically see improvements as time passes. Without a doubt, the process of rebuilding the communities and lives damaged by Hurricane Katrina is expected to take time, but officials are paying close attention to the victims and are optimistic that there will be calm after this storm.



The *Handbook for Psychology Students* can be found at either campus' Psych. Department

“Have you heard that the Psychology Department has student researchers during the summer?”



The Freudian Slip

## Cheat Sheet for First-Years

By Michelle Flicker

It's your first year at college, and that means you're new at everything. So, in your honor, here is a little compiled list of information that will help satisfy your increasing understanding of your Psychology major/minor, as well as benefit you in your next few years at CSB/SJU:

- Professors are not scary people: They are here to help you and are an excellent source of information. Check online for their office hours, or stop on by for a chit chat.
- Located at both Psych. Departments are bulletin boards with posters and vast information on specific disciplines of Psychology for Graduate school purposes.
- Pick up a *Handbook for Psychology Students*. This will be a tremendous help to you in that it has sample four-year schedules, checklists for classes, class descriptions, internship and research possibilities, as well as an abundance of other information.
- From 8am - 4pm, there are Psychology Student workers at each campus. They can be a quality resource and are there to answer any questions that you may have! Remember, they were once first-years, and understand the questions and concerns you may have yourself.
- Don't delete your emails right away! Read all emails from the Psych. Dept. and Meghan Orgeman, the Psych. Department Coordinator. Meghan is a great resource for any questions you may have. Check out her column on page 4.
- Be on the lookout for seminars such as, *What Can Your Major Do For You?* and *What Can I Do With A Psychology Major?* There you will find opportunities to expand your knowledge and understanding of your major, as well as ask questions.
- And of course, read every issue of *The Freudian Slip!*

## Summer Research Opportunities

By Lisa Egan

Have you heard that the Psychology Department has student researchers during the summer? Are you wondering what they do? Meet the summer research students from this past summer and read a description of the projects they worked on.

### Sarah Ahlfs, Senior Psychology Major

Sarah worked with both Dr. Pam Bacon and Dr. Rodger Narloch on their research this past summer. She also spent a lot of time working on her honors thesis. Her senior thesis is on the topic of implicit egotism, which is the idea that people like things that remind them of themselves and that this can influence their choices, preferences, and evaluations. Using an archival study of some of Minnesota's private colleges, Sarah is interested in seeing if implicit egotism plays a role

in the colleges individual students choose to attend (such as if more “John’s” attend St. John’s and more “Tom’s” attend the University of Saint Thomas than you would expect by chance). Sarah is continuing her research this school year.

### Evan Creed Senior Psychology Major

Evan worked on his honors thesis this summer, which is advised by Dr. Linda Tennison. Evan's thesis is a study designed to explore the long-term effects of the interaction between stressful environments early in life and the exposure to cannabinoids (the class of drugs that includes THC — the active drug in marijuana) during development on memory and learning. In order to test this, Evan worked in the laboratory using rats as subjects and the Morris Water Maze, a method used to test

memory. Evan is also continuing his research this school year.

### Lisa Egan Junior Psychology Major, & Shayne Kuster Senior Psychology Major

Lisa and Shayne worked together with Dr. Narloch on the Vocation Project. They entered and organized data into SPSS files, coded and analyzed data, and wrote up reports based on their analyses. Lisa, Shayne, and Sarah Ahlfs also submitted a proposal to the Society for Research on Adolescence conference based on some of the data they analyzed from the Vocation Project.

Any of this seem interesting to you? Look for more summer student research positions in the psychology department next summer!

# A Closer Look at Exercise & Sport Psychology

By Alicia Reif

As a psychology major, there are many options out there for you when it comes to finding a career. One option that you have is a career in Exercise and Sport Psychology. The American Psychological Association defines Sport Psychology as “the study of behavioral factors that influence and are influenced by participation and performance in sport, exercise, and physical activity,” and how those factors influence and “enhance personal development and well-being,” throughout life.

Once the sport psychologist obtains their degree, there are essentially four tracks to which one can follow throughout a career. The first path contains teaching and researching

in the field, as well as working with athletes on performance enhancement. The next option would be, along with teaching and researching, working specifically with athletes in all aspects of their sport, whether it is through coaching or other such involvement. The third path entails providing clinical or counseling services to various populations, including athletes. The fourth and final path is comprised of health promotion and direct work with athletes.

Sport psychologists may work with people who lose focus during competition, lack confidence during games, choke during competitive events, and get angry easily if they do not perform to their expectations,

among other afflictions. They can also deal with athletes with substance abuse problems, eating disorders, and other mental disorders that may affect their performance.

This field contains options for two advanced degrees beyond the baccalaureate degree. One can obtain their masters degree or Ph.D. at many institutions. John F. Kennedy University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Ball State University are a few examples of those programs only offering a masters degree. Those offering a doctorate include Florida State University and the University of Iowa, among many others.



For more information regarding this field, check the psychology department website for important links or go to any of those listed below:

- [www.psyc.umt.edu/apadiv47/gradtrain.htm](http://www.psyc.umt.edu/apadiv47/gradtrain.htm)
- [www.psyc.umt.edu/apadiv47/choosing.htm](http://www.psyc.umt.edu/apadiv47/choosing.htm)

## So You've Decided to Be a Psych Major... Now What?

By Nicole Fritz

So you've decided to be a psych major.... All the fascinating coursework the major has to offer will certainly have you analyzing your family and friends, but did you ever think of really putting that knowledge into practice? CSB/SJU offers countless opportunities to enhance your education by getting involved in volunteer projects that incorporate what you learn in class to a real-life experience.

Some courses in the psychology department offer volunteer experience through service learning. Service learning uses volunteer experiences as an integral part of the course curriculum. Professor Stelzner uses service learning in his Developmental Psychology, Community Psychology, and Theories of Organizational Behavior. Students volunteer in local organizations and then use their experiences for course projects. Currently

students volunteer at Madison Kidstop, Arlington Place, TEAM UP!, and FastForward.

Students do not have to be enrolled in a source to participate in the volunteer projects. Most places welcome help from anyone willing to give their time. The Career Resource Center at St. Ben's has files on-hand of sites that students have volunteered with in the past. The files give information about the volunteer experience and contact information for the site.

Here are a few helpful suggestions to help in your volunteer search:

- Find volunteer work that fits your interests. If there is a site you would love to help out at, call and get more information. Even if the site has never had a volunteer from CSB/SJU

before, it doesn't mean they won't be open to the idea. It never hurts to ask!

- Take a good look at the sites—they may offer more than you think. A volunteer position in Legal Services may expose you to abuse victims, disabled persons, and children. Ask questions of the site supervisor. You may be surprised!
- Check out these two websites for more information:  
VISTO: [www.csbsju.edu/sjucampusministry/visto.htm](http://www.csbsju.edu/sjucampusministry/visto.htm)  
Career Resource Center: [www.csbsju.edu/career](http://www.csbsju.edu/career)



# Meghan's Corner

By Meghan Orgeman

Contact us!

psychstud@  
csbsju.edu

## CSB/SJU Psychology Departments

### St. Bens...

**Location:**

Richarda P331/2

**Campus Ext.:** 5139

**Professor's Offices:**

Holtz, Jan

Immelman, Aubrey

Rau, Renee

Stelzner, Steve

Wielkiewicz, Richard

### St. John's...

**Location:** Pengl 123

**Campus Ext.:** 3195

**Professor's Offices:**

Andrews, Marty

Bacon, Pam

Helfritz, Laura

Livingston, Michael

Narloch, Rodger

Seibennbruner, Jessica

Tennison, Linda

Welcome back to campus Psychology Majors! I hope you all had a refreshing summer and are now energized for another year. Who knows what this year could bring?? As the new Psych. Coordinator I am also excited to uncover what this year holds for me. This unique



position has only a year-long duration and is only available for freshly graduated Psychology Majors. It is a great opportunity to get to know more about the field of Psychology, to discover what it is like on the "inside" of the department, to get some teaching experience, and to simply get to know the professors and current students better! So far I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience and I'm hoping it will continue along this path.

Another person experiencing the excitement of stepping into a new year is our newest faculty member Laura Helfritz, Ph.D. Please join me in extending a warm welcome to her! Laura is currently teaching two sections of Introduction to Psychology and a Psychology Seminar course. In the spring, look for Laura in Physiological Psychology as well as Research Methods. She has come with a head full of knowledge and a lot of excitement to be teaching at CSB/SJU.

Some of you may be starting your first semester of college, while some of you may plan to graduate in December. No matter where you are at, as the Coordinator, I would be glad to sit down and answer any questions you may have. I was one of you just a year ago so I can relate

to some of the worries, excitements and uncertainties you may be experiencing! I am almost always in my office and I love the advising component of my job (any chance to have actual human interaction is a plus!)

Another area I would like to highlight is the resources the Psych. Department has that are just waiting for you to access. Some of these opportunities include: research experiences that Professors are currently involved with; internship opportunities for you during your Junior and Senior years; a teaching internship experience where you get to actually teach Introduction to Psychology labs; teaching assistant opportunities and many, many more. There are also resources regarding Graduate School and the steps you should be taking to make sure you are prepared as possible for that transition, if you chose to use your psychology major that way! These are all here for YOU, so be sure to use them! They helped me incredibly during my undergraduate career and I know they would do the same for you.

If you have questions feel free to contact me. I'm at my CSB office - Richarda P34 - on Even mornings and Odd afternoons, and you can find me at my SJU office - Pengl 133 - on Odd mornings and Even afternoons. Also be sure to check out our webpage, [www.csbsju.edu/psychology](http://www.csbsju.edu/psychology), and continue to read the *Freudian Slip*.

As a personal plug, I will be organizing an event next month that will be designed specifically for Psych. Majors. Stay tuned for more info!