

New Study Focuses on Employment of Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders

As children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders grow into adulthood, many face an especially large hurdle: finding and keeping a job. Adults with ASDs may have difficulty communicating, thinking abstractly or changing routines, and there are very limited services available to support their movement into the workplace.

“People with ASDs experience lower employment rates than other persons with disabilities,” said Chad Nye, professor of communication sciences and disorders and executive director of UCF’s Center for Autism and Related Disabilities. According to Cameto’s 2003 article “Youth employment” in *NLTS2 Data Brief (volume 2, issue 2)*, just 15 percent of all individuals diagnosed with ASDs gain employment.

To help improve these rates, Nye and CARD Coordinator Karen Wesley recently began a five-year study to identify the most effective and efficient ways to successfully place adults with ASDs in employment. “And by employment, we mean full-fledged, real jobs that pay the same amount earned by a person without a disability,” Wesley stressed. “Those jobs are certainly doable by individuals with autism.”

Nye and Wesley are conducting the study in partnership with the nonprofit organization

SEDL (formerly Southwest Educational Development Laboratory) with grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education’s National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. An advisory panel of national experts is helping to guide the project.

Nye is currently identifying, collecting and systematically analyzing the best available research to date using systematic review and meta-analytic procedures. A lot has already been done, but there is a need to tap into it to assess “what we really know,” he explained. This systematic review should also reveal gaps of knowledge that need to be addressed by new research.

A goal of the study is to identify the competencies needed for individuals with ASDs to be successful in the workplace. “Sometimes you think of trying to do away with the behaviors that are characteristic of autism,” Wesley said.

“But in fact, what we really ought to be doing is improving the competency.”

Working with the advisory panel, Nye and Wesley also plan to identify state-of-the-art vocational rehabilitation programs nationwide that have demonstrated success in placing adults with ASDs in jobs to validate “best practices” in the field.

(continued on p. 2)

New Federal Grant to Support Graduate Education



Principal Investigator
Rosa-Lugo

A new \$785,800 grant from the U.S. Department of Education will provide enough funding to prepare 40 UCF graduate students for work with school-age children who are learning English and have a disability.

“There is a national shortage of school

speech-language pathologists qualified to assess and serve the needs of English Language Learners with language, learning and literacy disabilities,” said Linda I. Rosa-Lugo, associate professor of communication sciences and disorders and principal investigator for the grant.

“We want to address this need by providing an educationally relevant experience for our students interested in this specialized field.”

Each year over the next four years, 10 students will be recruited to participate in a master’s degree program in communication sciences and disorders that focuses on school speech-language pathology and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). A goal of the program is to recruit students who represent diversity in culture and language.

Rosa-Lugo noted that faculty members from three colleges at UCF — Health and Public Affairs, Education, and Arts and Humanities — collaborated to create the specialized graduate program. “They are all deeply committed to this cross-college collaboration.”

For information about the program, which begins in January 2010, visit www.cohpa.ucf.edu/comdis/ma.cfm or write Rosa-Lugo at Irosa@mail.ucf.edu.

What are Autism Spectrum Disorders?

ASDs include a range of neurological disorders marked by impairment in societal functioning, communication, and repetitive and unusual patterns of behavior, according to the Autism Society of America. They include classic autism, Asperger syndrome, Rett Syndrome and pervasive developmental disorder — not otherwise specified, or PDD-NOS. Learn more at www.autism-society.org.

Students Use Wii and Yoga to Help Alzheimer's Patients

Eighty-nine-year-old Fred Tombros calls the therapy sessions he attends with UCF graduate students a "godsend."

Tombros is one of 12 people who attends sessions of Brain Fitness, a program aimed at helping those with early symptoms of Alzheimer's disease or other dementia keep their cognitive skills sharp.

Communication sciences and disorders students provide individual evaluations and therapy sessions. Then the students work with the participants to sharpen their cognitive skills by playing games on the Wii, along with ping-pong, pool, Scrabble and other games.

"I'd be at home doing nothing," said Tombros, a former glassmaker who has been coming to the program at First United Methodist Church in Winter Park, Fla., for two years. "Here I learn some things, help out the students and enjoy myself. I can't complain about a thing."



Tombros (left) and LaTesta play Wii Bowling in a Brain Fitness session.

Nancy Gerrity founded Brain Fitness in 2007 for a very personal reason. Her husband, Tom, in his early 50s, was diagnosed with early onset of Alzheimer's disease. At the time, there were no local day facilities that provided appropriate stimulation for persons with early onset dementia, so she began advocating for one.

"What I found was a real gap in what was provided and what was needed," said Gerrity, who works full time at an engineering firm. "So, with the help of a few people, we created Brain Fitness."

Peggy Bargmann, a registered nurse and the director of a support group Gerrity attended, directs the two-day-a-week program. Clinical Instructor Janet Whiteside at the UCF Communication Disorders Clinic supervises the graduate students during the weekly visits to Brain Fitness.

"Each game, everything we do here has a purpose," Bargmann said. "It's not just entertainment; it helps keep certain cognitive skills sharp."

Tombros, for example, loves to play pool. So, as part of his therapy, he teaches others the game. Another participant is learning to play ping-pong, which is helping her process new information and coordination. Group activities include yoga, drawing and walking.

Graduate student Tonia LaTesta said she is learning as much or more than some of the



clients. "I had no idea what to expect," LaTesta remarked. "I had these ideas of what dementia patients were like — that they stayed at home and couldn't do much. Now I know better. Consistency can help maintain and even improve their abilities."

Nancy Slay, another graduate student, said she finds the experience invaluable. "It really prepares you because there's one thing to learn it in a book and then there's real practice when you have a real client and you have to specialize what you are doing to meet that person's need," she explained.

The Communication Disorders Clinic maintains many partnerships with community groups to benefit local residents and give students practical experience.

The program is funded through grants and private donations. First United Methodist Church provides the space for free and recently agreed to take on the program as one of its ministries. Still, the program can always use financial support, Gerrity said.

The cost for participants is \$35 per day. Because UCF students provide the therapy sessions, the program is run on a semester basis and takes breaks during the holidays. "I'm so grateful for all the help we've received," Gerrity said. "The church has been supportive, and the partnership with UCF is great. It has benefited our family personally, and to know this helps so many others, it's so rewarding."

For information on the program, call Brain Fitness at 407-927-4380.

Employment of Adults with ASDs *(continued from p. 1)*

Further along, they will put together case studies of adults with ASDs who have successfully maintained employment for 12 months or longer, as well as those who have been unable to sustain employment. In addition, Wesley will lead a study of existing models of service provision for individuals with ASDs, such as the network of university-based CARDS in Florida.

UCF's CARD and the SEDL plan to share the study results with adults with ASDs and their

families, vocational rehabilitation counselors and supervisors, researchers, and others through plain-language summaries, case studies and reports, Webcasts, scholarly journal articles, and a submission to the Campbell Collaboration.

"Our goal is to substantially increase awareness of the best ways to promote the successful employment of adults with ASDs," Nye said.



Honors and Awards

Assistant Professor

Jennifer Kent-Walsh was recommended for tenure and promotion this spring. In addition, she received a UCF Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award, a UCF Research Incentive Award and a UCF Teaching Incentive Award. She also received this year's University Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award at the university's Founders' Day ceremony on April 1. "In 30 years of university teaching and administration, I have not encountered another individual whose contributions to the three-part mission of the professorate surpass those of Dr. Kent-Walsh," said department Chair Jane Lieberman. "She's so deserving of the honor and recognition that accompany each of these awards."



Kent-Walsh

Associate Professor **Linda I. Rosa-Lugo** and Assistant Professor **Jennifer Kent-Walsh** received the 2008 Editor's Award from *Communication Disorders Quarterly* for their November 2008 article, "Effects of Parent Instruction on Communication Turns of Latino Children Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication During Reading." They received the award at the annual convention of the Council of Exceptional Children in Seattle on April 2. "This is an important contribution to the profession in several key areas: AAC, family/parent support, literacy and research design," wrote Editor-in-Chief Judy Montgomery. "We have all gained from your wonderful contribution to the *Communication Disorders Quarterly* journal."

Associate Professor

Linda I. Rosa-Lugo's contributions to education in the region were recognized at the Second Annual "Hispanic Women Who Make the Difference Awards" 2009 Luncheon, held March 7 at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando. Twenty-seven women received awards and five



Rosa-Lugo (left) with her mother, Iris M. Lugo

of these awards were given for contributions to education. The event was coordinated by the media company La Prensa.

Professor **Chad Nye** was inducted into the newest UCF Millionaires Club. The UCF Office of Research and



College Dean Michael Frumkin (left) with Nye

Commercialization annually bestows the honor to researchers who receive \$1 million or more in external support in a fiscal year. Nye was one of 32 researchers at UCF to earn the honor for 2007-2008. He secured funding to provide support and assistance for individuals with autism and to investigate vocational rehabilitation service models for those with autism spectrum disorders.

Two students in the master's degree program in communication sciences and disorders



(Left to right) Associate Professor Kenyatta Rivers, Nunez, Wooley and Professor Martine Vanryckeghem

received fellowships this year: **Ivoriann Wooley** was awarded a Provost's Graduate Fellowship and **Claudia Nunez** received a Graduate RAMP (Research and Mentoring Program) Fellowship.

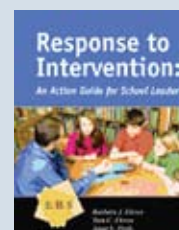
Professor **Martine Vanryckeghem** received the prestigious UCF Research Incentive Award this spring. "This is the second RIA she has received in recognition of her continuously excellent and world-recognized line of research on fluency and fluency disorders," said department Chair Jane Lieberman.



Vanryckeghem

New Books and Other Creative Works

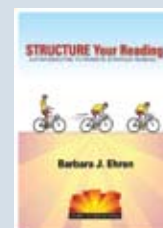
Faculty members and a student in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders (names are in **bold** below) have authored several new books and other creative works of interest to clinicians, researchers and students.



Response to Intervention: An Action Guide for School Leaders (2009)
By **Barbara J. Ehren**, **Tom C. Ehren** and **Janet L. Proly**
Alexandria, VA:

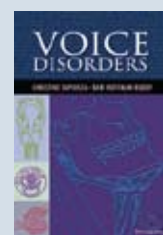
Educational Research Service

▶ RTI is a nationwide initiative designed to meet the needs of all students in public schools, with a focus on addressing the needs of struggling learners.



STRUCTURE Your Reading (2008)
By **Barbara J. Ehren**
Winter Springs, FL:
Student Success Initiatives

▶ This book provides an explicit approach to teaching strategic reading and is the result of six years of research by Ehren.



Voice Disorders (2008)
By Christine Sapienza and **Bari Hoffman Ruddy**
San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing

▶ This book "captures the science and art of clinical voice" and "provides a level of detail needed to assess and treat those with voice disorders."

Voice Disorders DVD (in press)
By Christine Sapienza, **Bari Hoffman Ruddy**, Jeffrey Lehman and Neal Musson
San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing
▶ This video atlas provides a source for "digital images of laryngoscopic, videostroboscopic, high-speed imaging examinations and phonosurgical procedures."

Doctoral Students: Off to a Great Start

Five UCF students are currently working their way through the new communication sciences and disorders track of the doctoral program in education: Melissa Malani, Kimberly Murza, Stacey Pavelko, Janet Proly and Cheran Zadroga. And according to program Director Barbara Ehren, they are excelling.

“This is a fabulous group of high-energy students dedicated to adding to the knowledge base in language and literacy,” Ehren remarked. “They ask excellent research questions and pursue opportunities to be involved in the profession as scholars.” The evidence is in the long list of their scholarly presentations and publications for just the first five months of 2009 (see list below; doctoral student names are in **bold**).

Proly was the first to join the program and will be the first to graduate, Ehren said. She is now fully engaged in both academics and research.

This semester, Proly coordinated the production of videotaped responses by the track’s doctoral students to questions about speech-language pathology issues in the schools. The questions were posed by undergraduates in an exceptional education course and the taped responses were shown in their class.

Also this spring, Proly won a best-in-category award — and \$500 prize — for her “Education” poster presentation, “Graphic Organizer Use with Elementary

Post-Secondary Students for Reading Comprehension of Expository Text” at UCF’s 2009 Graduate Research Forum, held April 3. She conducted the systematic review that is the basis of the poster with two communication sciences and disorders master’s degree students, Jessica Rivers and Kara Delaney.



Proly with her award

Proly recently learned that the graphic organizer systematic review project has been accepted for presentation this May at the Campbell Collaboration Colloquium 2009 in Oslo, Norway. “I’m ecstatic about the opportunity to represent UCF and present the systematic review at an international meeting that promotes evidence-based practice,” she said.

Further evidence of Proly’s growth as a scholar is reflected in her co-authorship, with Director Ehren and Clinical Instructor Tom Ehren, of the 2009 book, *Response to Intervention: An Action Guide for School Leaders*.

“I call Janet a harbinger of good things to come from a new program,” Director Ehren said proudly.

Presentations by Doctoral Students

Kent-Walsh, J., Binger, C., **Malani, M.**, **Proly, J.**, Quevedo, J. & **Zadroga, C.** (2009, January). *Effects of Partner Instruction on AAC Use & Natural Speech*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Assistive Technology Industry Association, Orlando.

Malani, M., & Kent-Walsh, J. (2009, April). *Effects of Partner Instruction on Augmentative and Alternative Communication Use of Children with Developmental Disabilities*. Paper presented at the UCF Graduate Research Forum, Orlando.

Murza, K., Montemurro, A., Nye, C., & Schwartz, J. (2009, April). *Story Grammar Instruction to Improve Narrative Comprehension and Production in Children*. Paper presented at the UCF Graduate Research Forum, Orlando.

Murza, K., Montemurro, A., Nye, C., & Schwartz, J. (2009, May). *Story Grammar Instruction: The Results of a Systematic Review*. Paper to be presented at the Annual Convention of the Florida Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, Marco Island, Fla.

Murza, K., Montemurro, A., Nye, C., & Schwartz, J. (2009, May). *Story Grammar Instruction to Improve Narrative Comprehension and Production in Children*. Paper to be presented at the Campbell Collaboration Colloquium, Oslo, Norway.

Pavelko, S.L., Johnson, J., O’Brien, K., Nye, C., & Schwartz, J. (2009, May). *Does Storybook Reading Increase Vocabulary Skills in At-Risk Preschoolers?* Paper to be presented at the Campbell Collaboration Colloquium, Oslo, Norway.

Pavelko, S.L., Johnson, J., O’Brien, K., Schwartz, J., & Nye, C. (2009, April). *Reviewing*

the Effectiveness of Storybook Reading on At-Risk Preschool Students. Poster presented at the UCF Graduate Research Forum, Orlando.

Proly, J.L., Delaney, K., & Rivers, J., Nye, C., & Schwartz, J. (2009, May). *Systematic Review of Graphic Organizer Use in Reading Comprehension of Expository Text*. Paper to be presented at the Campbell Collaboration Colloquium, Oslo, Norway.

Proly, J.L., Nye, C., Delaney, K., Rivers, J. & Schwartz, J. (2009, April). *Graphic Organizer Use with Elementary Through Post-secondary Students for Reading Comprehension of Expository Text*. Poster presented at the UCF Graduate Research Forum, Orlando.

Zadroga, C., Schwartz, J., & Nye, C. (2009, April). *How to Conduct a Systematic Review*. Poster presented at the UCF Graduate Research Forum, Orlando.

Publications by Doctoral Students

Ehren, B.J., Ehren, T.C., & **Proly, J.L.** (2009). *Response to Intervention: An Action Guide for School Leaders*. Educational Research Service.

Murza, K., Montemurro, A., Nye, C., & Schwartz, J. (2009). *Story Grammar Instruction to Improve Narrative Comprehension and Production in Children*. Campbell Collaboration Title Registration, www.campbellcollaboration.org.

Murza, K.A. & Nye, C. (2008). A clinical language/literacy decision: Evidence-based story grammar instruction. *EBP Briefs*, 3(4), 1-14.

Murza, K.A. & Nye, C. (in press). The Lidcombe program demonstrates positive results for German preschoolers who stutter. *Evidence-Based Communication Assessment and Intervention*.

Pavelko, S.L., Johnson, J., O’Brien, K., & Schwartz, J. (2009). Does Storybook Reading Increase Vocabulary Skills in At-Risk Preschoolers? Campbell Collaboration Title Registration, www.campbellcollaboration.org.

Proly, J.L. (2008). Response to Intervention and Current Implementation. *Perspectives on School-Based Issues*, 9(3), 116-121, <http://div16perspectives.asha.org/cgi/content/abstract/9/3/116>.

Proly, J.L., Delaney, K., & Rivers, J. (2009). *Graphic Organizer Use with Elementary Through Post-secondary Students for Reading Comprehension of Expository Text*. Campbell Collaboration Title Registration, www.campbellcollaboration.org.

Schwartz, B., Hahs-Vaughn, D., **Zadroga, C.**, & Rivera, A.M. (2008). Finding, analyzing, and implementing a phonemic awareness intervention: Guidelines to a decision-making process. *EBP Briefs*, 3(3), 1-7.



NSSLHA Students Give the Gift of Hearing

Thanks to a generous gift from UCF students, a Communication Disorders Clinic patient has had a “dramatic improvement” in her ability to understand spoken words. Previously, she reported hearing just “mumbling,” according to the clinic’s audiologist, Associate Professor Emeritus Tom Mullin.

The patient was fitted in March with new digital hearing aids purchased with money donated by the UCF Chapter of NSSLHA (National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association).

“The group didn’t hesitate to provide support,” said Clinical Instructor Charlotte Harvey, who told the student association about the patient’s need for hearing aids and lack of resources to purchase them.

Treasurer Giselle Lugo said NSSLHA donated about \$850 to obtain the hearing aids. Members of the group voted to make the donation because they felt it was important to help someone with a need related to their area of study. The funds came from membership dues and sales of NSSLHA T-shirts and bags.



The patient’s new hearing aids are small and “totally automatic,” relayed Mullin. “As soon as the patient enters a loud room, the volume is greatly reduced automatically.” They are ideal for understanding speech in noisy environments, such as restaurants, parties and classrooms, he added.

Academy Launched to Cultivate Speech-Language Pathology Leaders in Florida

With an eye on increasing the number of speech-language pathology leaders in the state, the Florida Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services and several partners recently launched a two-year professional development academy. Its goal is to cultivate SLP leaders who will assume a shared responsibility for the success of all Florida students — especially those who struggle, said Barbara Ehren, professor of communication sciences and disorders at UCF and one of the academy’s designers.

Some 70 SLP leaders from 48 school districts throughout Florida, as well as university professors with an interest and expertise in school practice, are enrolled in the academy. They first gathered at a two-day “Launching Institute” in February. “The enthusiasm of the participants was palpable,” Ehren recalled. “One participant called it ‘life-changing.’”

Over the course of the program, the participants will attend four two-day institutes in Orlando and complete four other modules back in their school districts. The district-based modules will require data gathering and analysis, independent reading, and discussions using SKYPE and Google Group discussion boards.

Ehren and Beth Rivera of Orange County Public Schools are co-ordinating the academy. They

are also members of its core faculty, along with UCF Clinical Instructor Tom Ehren and Associate Professor Linda Rosa Lugo and several other professionals. Helping to run the academy are members of the Central Florida Speech-Language Consortium, which includes UCF, 10 Central Florida school districts and community agencies. The academy is sponsored by the Florida Department of Education with the support of federal grant funding.

“We are thrilled to have so many SLP leaders willing to engage in an on-going professional learning community on behalf of Florida’s students,” Ehren remarked. “As we continue to work together to improve the quality of speech-language services in schools, we look forward to Florida’s providing a model to the nation for high-quality professional development.”



Faculty members at the academy’s first institute, named “Leadership and Beyond,” wore Star-Trek attire: (left to right) Barbara Ehren, Julia Jackson from Palm Beach County Public Schools, Beth Rivera and Tom Ehren.

New on UCF TV

Later this spring, episodes of UCF TV’s “For Your Health” show will feature interviews of three faculty members from the department. Visit www.ucftv.ucf.edu/shows/for_your_health to watch these episodes online in the coming months:



Episode 25 Professor **Martine Vanryckeghem** discusses fluency disorders.

Episode 27 Professor **Chad Nye** speaks about the employment of adults with autism spectrum disorders.

Episode 28 Professor **Barbara Ehren** discusses language and literacy disorders.

Class Notes

All degrees in **bold text** were awarded by UCF, either in communicative disorders, communication sciences and disorders (after May 2006), or another program as noted.

Class notes are reported annually in the spring issue. If you would like us to include your information in a future issue, visit www.cohpa.ucf.edu/alumni and click on "Stay Connected."

1986

Valerie Feuerstein Andrews James, B.A., M.A. ('88), currently lives in Phoenix, Ariz., where she works as a 619 coordinator and director of early childhood special education in the School Effectiveness Division of the Arizona Department of Education. She has also earned an educational leadership degree from Northern Arizona State University. Val wrote that her son, Kevin, is 21 and that she has a step-daughter, 19, and a step-son, 22. She enjoys hiking and horseback riding and recently adopted her first horse, a 10-year-old Tennessee Walker. Contact Val at vandrewsjames@aol.com.

1990

Amy Ballot, M.A., is employed as a speech-language pathologist (SLP) at Supplemental Healthcare. She previously held full-time positions, but currently does "travel assignments" in and around Orlando. She has been a tri-athlete for the past four years and has completed two bike rides for charities: Bike MS in 2007 for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society (165 miles over two days) and the 2008 Diabetes Tour de Cure (102 miles in one day).

1991

Marcy Shapiro-Nardone, M.A., went on to earn her Ph.D. in speech pathology and Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology (CCC-SLP). She has also become VitalStim certified in pediatrics. Marcy has been employed as director of speech pathology at Florida Hospital Waterman in Tavares for 14 years. For two years, she served as the vice president of continuing education for the Florida Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists. In 2006, she received a professional achievement award from UCF's Burnett Honors College.

1996

Andria (Rosa) Tichy, B.S., is employed as an exceptional-student education teacher at St. Augustine High School, Fla. She earned a Master of Education in special education/intensive special needs from Fitchburg State College in 2002. She married Nicholas Tichy in December 2007.

1997

Jennifer Lynn (Leffert) Emery, M.A., has worked in skilled nursing facilities, private practice and school settings. She is currently employed as an SLP with Alachua County Public Schools. She wrote: "I love being a speech therapist and appreciate all that UCF did to prepare me for such a rewarding career!" Jennifer married Tyson Emery on May 6, 1997, and they have two daughters, Darby, 9 and Devyn, 5.

1998

Paul Askin, B.S., M.A. ('01), earned his CCC-SLP in 2001. He is employed by the School Board of Broward County and Holy Cross Hospital, and he has his own "home health" business. He and his wife, Kari, and their children, Ethan, born April 16, 2006, and Gabriel, born Oct. 23, 2008, reside in Tamarac, Fla.

Kellie (Spencer) Meyer, B.S., M.A. ('02), currently works as an SLP for St. Catherine's

Rehabilitation Hospital in North Miami, Fla. She has been traveling the country with her husband, who is in the U.S. Coast Guard. They are enjoying their baby boy, born in August 2008.

2000

Andrea (Schearer) Beames, B.S., is a self-employed and contract-employed pediatric SLP who offers home visits and focuses on early intervention for children from birth to age three. She earned a Master of Arts from the University of Maryland College Park and her CCC-SLP.

Benjamin R. Brown, B.S., M.A. ('03), works as a "travelling speech-language-swallowing pathologist" with Cross Country Travcorps. He is "practicing speech therapy around the United States and running marathons around the world."

Michelle (Noplis) Nascimento, B.A., is employed as a kindergarten teacher at West Oaks Elementary School in Orlando. She

In Memoriam

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders received the sad news of the passing of two alumni.

▼ **Kari Myers Cameron (B.S., '92)** passed away on May 22, 2007, after a two-year battle with colon cancer. She is survived by her husband, Scott, and their three children, Tyler, Alex and Savannah, pictured here. Kari is remembered for her "love for life and family," "kind and generous spirit," and "beautiful smile" in an online memorial to her at <http://buchholzclassof88memorial.wikispaces.com/Kari+Myers>.



Kari (second from left) with her husband and children



Janina and her husband

▲ **Janina Cereska-Sygitowicz (M.S. '02)** passed away on Feb. 26, 2009, after a "long and courageous" battle with bladder cancer. She is survived by her husband, Tomasz Sygitowicz, pictured here. In an online memorial to Janina at <http://sistersinphimu.blogspot.com/>, she is remembered as an "amazing woman" who "was beautiful, intelligent, had a great sense of humor and a contagious laugh." Janina was employed as a speech-language pathologist in the rehabilitation department at Life Care Center in Melbourne, Fla.



earned a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Phoenix in 2005.

Edgard Antonio Robelo, B.A., M.A. ('06), is a bilingual SLP at Chickasaw Elementary School in Orlando. He works full-time for Orange County Public Schools and part-time for Simply Speaking, a private speech-language pathology practice. He married Melodie Plummer (now Robelo), a UCF communication sciences and disorders alumna, on July 20, 2007. Their first child, Jonas Antonio, was born on Sept. 17, 2008.

2001

Rhonda Lewis Bethea, B.A., M.A. ('03), works as an SLP for Orange County Public Schools, Fla., and K&L Therapy Services, Inc. **Kimberly Winkler Delaney, B.S., M.A. ('03)**, is a director of rehabilitation at a skilled nursing facility for Salus Rehabilitation.

2002

Cristina (Fernandez) Hartman, M.A., has been employed as an SLP at Florida Hospital for four years. She works with adult and geriatric patients with speech-language, cognition and swallowing disorders. Cristina is currently working part-time following the birth of her son. She worked at several skilled-nursing facilities before joining the hospital staff. **Rebecca (Jackson) Iwanczyk, B.S., M.A. ('04)**, is an SLP at the Speech Language Reading Center in Chattanooga, Tenn.

2003

Kathleen A. Franzen, B.A., M.A. ('05), works as an SLP at Holmes Regional Medical Center and Sea Pines Rehabilitation Hospital in Melbourne, Fla.

Jessica (Stewart) Keller, B.A., M.A. ('05), is employed as an SLP at All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, Fla. She is also a member of the Children's Medical Services' Cleft and Craniofacial Team for the Tampa/St. Petersburg area.

Shereen (Shaikh) Levenson, B.S., M.A. ('05), works as an SLP at In-Motion Rehab, Inc. She is also a provider with the Early Steps program, VitalStim certified and trained in Beckman Oral Motor therapy.

Holly Hubbard Nover, B.S., M.A. ('05), holds several positions at Shands Jacksonville Medical Center, Fla. She works as an SLP, a neonatal development therapist, and a neonatal intensive care unit feeding specialist and parent support group coordinator. She married Phil Nover on April 17, 2009, in Riviera Maya, Mexico, with 75 family and friends in attendance, including UCF alumna Tina Hartley Waters B.S. ('03), M.A. ('05).

Carol Santangelo, B.S., M.A. ('05), is employed as an SLP with Palm Beach County School District, Fla.

Jacquelyn (Cuaresma) Tabony, B.A., M.A. ('05), works as an SLP for Orange County Public Schools, Fla.

2004

Dalymar del Llano, B.A., is employed as a speech-language clinician with Orange County Public Schools, Fla. She is also pursuing a master's degree in communicative disorders at Nova Southeastern University and anticipates graduating in the summer of 2010.

Alyson Marie Fay, B.A., M.A. ('06), works as a full-time SLP in the School for Autism and Adult Day Program at Helping Hand Rehabilitation in Countryside, Ill. She recently worked with Dynavox to have all of the school's SLPs "Dream Team Certified" so that they can rent the company's augmentative and alternative communication devices to assess the needs of their students. In addition, she worked with a local school district to purchase a Dynavox V device for a student who went on to win an "Outstanding Technology Award." Alyson is also a member of the "Total Communication Project" grant team through Helping Hand Rehabilitation, which focuses on finding the best mode of functional communication for adults with autism and on training for staff, family and community members to help increase independence and functional communication for these adults. She married Eric Maldonado on April 26, 2009, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Cheryl (Ramirez) Hammond, M.A., is employed as an SLP for Special Communications, LLC, a Gainesville, Fla.-based company that provides services across the state.

Carl Herder, B.S., M.A. ('06), works as an SLP at the American Institute for Stuttering in New York City. According to his online profile, at <http://stutteringtreatment.org/aboutstaff.php>, Carl "has made appearances on national TV programs, including an episode of MTV's True Life (I Stutter), and the CBS Evening News with Katie Couric."

Lauren Weiss, B.S., is an SLP at Life Care Center of Palm Bay, Fla. She earned her master's degree in communication disorders from Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C.

2005

Courtney Soloff, B.S., works as a drug safety associate for Johnson & Johnson.

2006

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Are you interested in starting an alumni chapter?

The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders would like to become more involved with its alumni and wants to know if you are interested in helping to start a Communication Sciences and Disorders Alumni Chapter at UCF. If so, please contact Katie Korkosz, assistant director of development and alumni relations, at 407-823-1600 or cohpa@ucfalumni.com.

master's degree in speech-language pathology from the University of Virginia in 2008.

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Katie Hess, B.S., works as a part-time speech and language therapist at Apollo Elementary for Brevard County Public Schools, Fla. She is also a full-time student in UCF's master's degree program in communication sciences and disorders and anticipates graduating in the summer of 2010.

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Communication Sciences and Disorders

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