

PERSON PROFILE

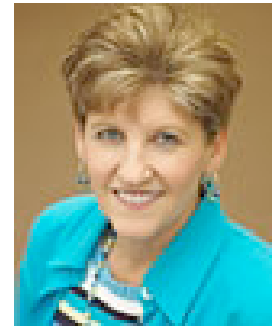
Robin Kohn

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It is with pleasure and humility that I introduce you to AASCIPSW Board Member, Robin M. Kohn, MSW, LCSW. Her commitment to her vocation, to social work education, and even her avocation: SCI advocacy and empowerment, are nothing short of admirable. Her friend and colleague, Lester Butt, said, “Robin combines the best of clinical and academic worlds. She blends intellectual curiosity with a practical approach to issues.” Robin is currently the BSW Program Coordinator and Clinical Instructor at the School of Social Work in the College of Health and Public Affairs at the University of Central Florida (UCF). Many of us in the Association are mentoring social work and psychology interns or fellows in the field prior to them receiving their degrees; Robin, however, is recruiting, teaching and preparing prospective social workers much earlier in their learning process. She oversees a program of 170 Bachelor of Social Work students at UCF and clearly loves what she does. While speaking with Robin, I was struck by her love of knowledge and her passion to share it with others. Her enthusiasm about social work and helping those in need undoubtedly motivates her students to emulate her commitment.

Robin is not only dedicated to her students but to the School of Social Work and the University of Central Florida as well. She takes an active role in student recruitment, chairs the BSW and Ethics Committees, and is a member of the Student Conduct Board as well as the Practice Sequence Committee. She strongly supports Social Work Lobby Day each spring in Tallahassee, and accompanied 142 students, the school’s largest group to date, to the state capitol for a first-hand view of how policy impacts social work practice. When speaking to Robin about her students at UCF, her dedication to them is clearly evident. Her students in 2007, in recognition of her endless commitment to them and the profession, presented her

with a beautiful ring at the graduation while the advisors in Undergraduate Student Services identified her as the “Energizer Bunny Advisor”. In May of 2009, Robin was recognized by the Director of the School of Social Work at UCF, Dr. John Ronnau, as an “Unsung Hero” for “extraordinary and outstanding service to the students, program, college and university



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for the year 2008-2009. Dr. Ronnau stated “Robin Kohn is the school’s unsung faculty hero because of her unwavering dedication to the program and the school.... “In the community Robin is known for her achievements in advocating for persons with disabilities. She is known for her work and dedication to the spinal cord injury community and recently celebrated the opening of a transitional facility in Avalon Park.”

In addition to her work in academia, Robin maintains a strong commitment to those with spinal cord injuries. Cindy Hennig, her friend and colleague in Orlando, shared, “Most people when they change jobs and job focus...also change their extracurricular activities to be more in line with their new position. Not Robin. Even though she has not worked directly with the SCI population for some time, she continues to be very active with AASCIPSW and continues to head up the Greater Orlando SCI Community Network”. Ms. Hennig underscores the values that drive Robin’s work with, and for, individuals with SCI/D.

Robin began working as a rehab social worker in 1986. At that time she also founded, and continues to coordinate, the Greater Orlando SCI Community Network. Through Robin’s efforts, residents with SCI/D in the Orlando area have the opportunity to gather and to participate in dinners, picnics, sporting activities and educational programs. The highlight of the year’s events is always a Holiday karaoke party. According to Robin’s

friend, Cindy, Robin has a secret love - karaoke. Maybe Robin will serenade us in Dallas—though Cindy was quick to add, “I would tell her not to quit her day job!”

Robin continues to be a strong proponent of peer mentoring for individuals with SCI/D. In my own work, I see first-hand the value of these mentors to individuals with new injuries and those with older injuries facing a change in baseline functioning. Not only has she coordinated peer mentor training programs, but she co-authored a manual for Paul Tobin of United Spinal Association entitled *Train the Trainer’s Manual*.

Robin has been a well respected member and major contributor to AASCIPSW. Not only is she currently a member of the Board of Directors, but she is also an active participant in the Program and Membership Committees. You can probably guess that this is not the only association Robin belongs to. She finds time for NASW, and chaired this year’s State Conference in Florida. In fact, she was named Florida’s Social Worker of the Year in 2002. Robin is also an active member of the Association of Baccalaureate Program Directors where she chairs the Committee on Disability and Persons with Disabilities.

Robin grew up in New Jersey. She graduated from High School in Puerto Rico but has lived in Florida since 1973. Moving was not part of Robin’s life plan when she was a freshman in high school. She was NOT happy to leave all of her friends and her dog behind when her father was offered a great employment opportunity in Puerto Rico. Robin said, “I was angry until I became accustomed to living on the beach, attending after football game parties in the mountains at a teacher’s home, and being on the dance drill team. I attended an American school which

helped but unfortunately being a rebellious teenager, never learned Spanish which I so regret now. “Attending college in Florida offered her the opportunity to return to the States while remaining close to her parents in Puerto Rico. She earned her Bachelor’s Degree at the University of Tampa and her MSW at Florida State in Tallahassee. Robin is a single parent and has two children: her 20 year-old daughter, Alyssa, who recently made Robin a grandmother for the first time, and her 16 year old son, Justin, an avid and talented bowler. She is very excited about her new granddaughter, Kyla Madison, and I’m certain will enjoy sharing stories.

I asked Robin that should she ever manage to eke out some free time, what does she like to do to relax? Frankly, I was secretly wondering whether she finds the time for sleep. Robin said that she thoroughly enjoys any time that she can spend with the new baby, Kyla, and savors the time with her family, including her parents. One of the summer pleasures that Robin is looking forward to this year is spending time at the beach with all four generations of her family. She finds play time with her dog, Jazz, who is part Akita and part Chow, relaxing. Robin also has exercise equipment in her home, allowing her to work out at her convenience.

Robin is a dedicated member of AASCIPSW and a dedicated professor at the University of Central Florida. Her friend and colleague in the Association, Lester Butt, describes her best, saying, “I have found Robin to always be true to her commitments and responsibilities. Most importantly, she has a sensitive and compassionate soul. I feel fortunate to call her a colleague and friend.”