

University of Maryland Baltimore Graduate School

# Announcement of Doctoral Dissertation Defense\*

Candidate: Renee C. Collins

Date, Time, and Place: April 14, 2008 @ 11:30 AM, University of Maryland School of Social Work

Dissertation Title: Raising an Autistic Child: Subjective Experiences of Fathers

## Dissertation Abstract\*\*:

Using the grounded theory approach, this study examines fathers' experiences of raising a child diagnosed with autism. Fathers identified specific concerns and needs of their children as well as discussed their personal methods of coping and providing care. Fathers in this study see themselves as very "hands-on" in providing care for their child and school needs. Fathers attributed their ability to accept and cope with the day-to-day struggles to the strength of their marriage. Fathers also expressed a desire to have a male support group enabling them to have others to confide in as well as to be able to mentor other fathers entering the world of autism. Although worried about the future of their children when they are no longer able to provide care, the fathers' immediate concern is advocating for current services that are known to all families caring for a child diagnosed with autism.

Dissertation Committee Chair (name and title): John R. Belcher, M.Div., Ph.D., LCSW-C.

## Dissertation Committee Members (names and titles):

Caroline Long Burry, LCSW-C, Ph.D, Associate Professor

Susan Cunnup, Ph.D., Psychologist, Director of Pupil Services, Mars, PA School District

Frederick A. DiBlasio Ph.D., LCSW-C, Professor

Geoffrey Greif, Ph.D., Associate Dean of Academics

*\*The Open Presentation is open to the university community and invitees of the candidate. Any member of the Graduate Faculty may observe the Final Examination. Only committee members may vote. For more information, see Procedures for Examination of the Doctoral Dissertation.*

*\*\*You must type your abstract on this form in the space provided.*

*Updated: February 24, 2006*