Spring 2022 | Speech-Language Pathology Newsletter

MISERICORDIA UNIVERSITY

Articulator

www.misericordia.edu/slp

Letter FROM THE EDITORS

'25 Samantha Delmar and '25 Kaitlyn Van Etten

Thank you for taking the time to read the 13th edition of our department's annual newsletter, "*The Articulator.*" In this edition we are ecstatic to share the many achievements of our alumni, students, faculty, and department.

Throughout this publication you will be updated on the happenings of our chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association (NSSLHA), be introduced to several new members of our faculty, and learn about the incredible accomplishments that our students have made to improve the department, local community, and the field.

We would like to thank our undergraduate student contributors who spent weeks researching, interviewing, and writing articles. We are so thankful for your time and efforts! We would also like to extend our gratitude to our graduate students, faculty, and alumni who have contributed to this newsletter.

As you read this 13th edition of "*The Articulator,*" we hope you understand why we are proud to be a part of Misericordia University's Speech-Language Pathology Department and show our cougar pride.



Letter FROM THE CHAIR

Glen Tellis, Ph.D. Professor and Department Chair

This is the 13th year of our newsletter and our student editors have shared several interesting articles for this edition. After a two year hiatus because of the pandemic, I was pleased that the students decided to continue with the newsletter. Every spring semester when I receive the newsletter I am amazed at all that has taken place in the department during the previous year.

Our department has been in existence for 19 years and we have still managed to improve the quality of our program. Our incoming first year students were again in the top 10% of their high school graduating class, and the majority of our students excelled in the program. NSSLHA held many fundraisers and events and achieved great success. Our 2022 graduating class also received 100% passing scores on the PRAXIS-SLP national examination. Many of our students presented numerous papers with faculty members at state, national, and international conferences. In 2021 **Jillian Scanlon** and in 2022 **Quinn Kelly**, two of our graduate students, received the PSHA Von Drach Memorial Scholarship, awarded to the outstanding graduate student from the entire state of Pennsylvania. During the past two years, we welcomed four faculty members including **Reethee Antony**, **Erin Roberts**, **Chitrali Mamlekar**, and **Tia Spagnuolo**.

The faculty have presented at numerous conferences, published papers, and written books. Faculty also served as reviewers and editorial consultants for premier journals in our discipline. Our faculty received several grants in 2021-2022. We received funding from various sources, including, Commonwealth Charitable Management, Fidelity Deposit & Discount Bank, Lackawanna Casualty Company, M&T Bank, Memco Realty, Philadelphia Insurance Companies, Straub Metal, and Weis Markets, Inc. Funding has allowed us to provide cutting-edge services and maintain state-of-the art clinic and research facilities.

The Speech-Language and Hearing Center continues to provide a valuable service to the community. We continue our partnerships with numerous agencies including the Hazleton Area School District's Office of Special Education Early Intervention Program. Our department was also featured in several newspaper articles and radio and television interviews, raising the profile of the program locally and nationally. This publicity has increased the awareness of the department in the community and has resulted in a significant increase in the number of clients who receive services in our Speech-Language and Hearing Center.



I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter. Please take a moment to browse through our department website (**www.misericordia.edu/slp**) and learn more about our program.

Glen Tellis, Ph.D
Professor and Department Chair

Art Gallery of Speech-Language Pathology:

A CAPSTONE PROJECT BY ALLIE WOODWARD

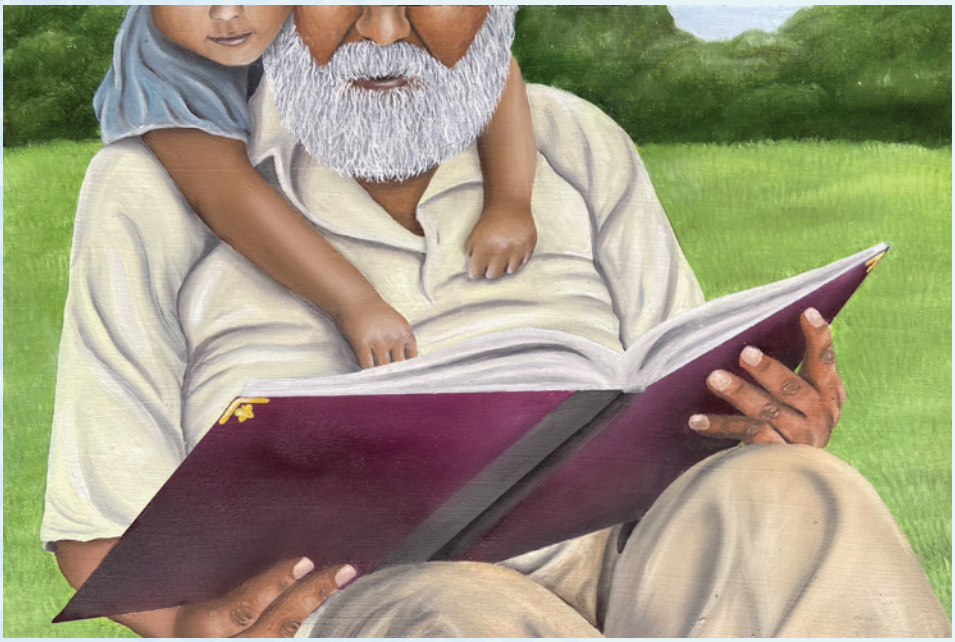
'24 Rebecca Smith

In completing her capstone project for Misericordia's Honors Program, **Allie Woodward** wanted to merge her passion for art and the field of speech-language pathology. Her project involved five different paintings that depict the human lifespan in areas of our field. Through her project, Allie wanted to break down negative stigmas surrounding speech-language pathology and the impact therapy can have on clients.

The five portraits—Nursing, Playing, Eating, Singing, and Reading – represent the daily activities that require speech, language or swallowing abilities that many individuals take for granted. Notably, the absence of faces in the portraits depicts universality in patients. Allie chose to include a butterfly in each portrait to illustrate the similarity between butterflies and patients. Just like a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly, patients transform throughout the course of therapy to become confident individuals who are not characterized by their disorder.

The paintings do not depict the scientific side of the field, but rather portray the emotional side of speech-language pathology, such as the insecurity and fear that individuals with speech, language, or swallowing deficits encounter when socializing with peers. One of the key aspects that Allie wanted to convey was the emotion behind the ability of speech-language pathologists to change lives. Allie says that there is not one piece from the collection that holds more significance than another; the importance lies in our extensive scope of practice and the different outcomes of speech-language therapy. You can look at one portrait and observe one facet of speech-language pathology, but it is when all the paintings are viewed together that a person obtains a sense of our scope of the practice.

By completing this project, Allie was happy to return to one of her hobbies, as she had not been able to devote as much time to art in college due to her commitment to academics. She says that it was an adjustment getting back into art for this project, but it still felt seamless and natural. Upon completion of these paintings, Allie Woodward presented her capstone project for the honors program. She also presented this work at the 2021 Pennsylvania Speech Language Hearing Association Convention. As she works with her own clients, Allie will use these paintings to remind herself of the impact that she would like to make on their lives.



Meet the Faculty: Dr. Reethee Antony

'25 Stephanie Fazio

Dr. Reethee Antony is an Assistant Professor in the speech-language pathology department at Misericordia University. She completed her masters in speech-language pathology and audiology from Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute in India, and her Ph.D. at the City University of New York. She specializes in speech perception and the brain's response to speech sounds in the auditory cortex. Dr. Antony not only has experience in the field of speech-language pathology, but she also has clinical experience in the field of audiology. At Misericordia, she has taught many different classes and is also the director of the Neurophysiology Lab.

In the Neurophysiology Lab, she and her team use electroencephalography (EEG) to study behavioral responses and brain waves to observe the neural activity in the brain when presented with certain stimuli. Dr. Antony decided to specialize in this area because it was fascinating to her as we still do not know all the neural signatures of speech sounds. Dr. Antony explained that examining neural signatures in the normal population has implications for pedagogical purposes as well as in the clinical population—including for individuals with strokes, hearing loss, and processing deficits

Dr. Antony has a family that she always makes a priority, and she emphasizes that having a work-life balance is very important. She balances her personal and work life by not keeping her email on her phone, giving her children her undivided attention when she is with them, working while her children are sleeping, and starting her workdays early so that she is more productive.



Student Spotlight:

'23 JENNA-LEIGH MARRONE AND THE IMPACT OF ASL

'25 Samantha Delmar

Jenna-Leigh Marrone is a first-year graduate student in the Speech-Language Pathology Department and the President of the American Sign Language Club (ASL). Jenna first started learning sign language simultaneously with English because when she was just two months old, her parents learned that her older sister, Brianna, had profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss.

Despite their parents' sadness, they immediately began to do anything they could to help—such as enrolling Brianna in an early intervention school for the deaf and trying to learn sign language themselves. When communicating at home, the family practiced their signs and began to use sign language and spoken language.

In witnessing her sister's struggles trying to communicate and her parents' difficulties to obtain the best services for her sister, Jenna became inspired to become a speech-language pathologist. She watched her parents struggle trying to find a speech-language pathologist who knew how to teach and reinforce Brianna when she used sign language. Jenna wants to be the speech-language pathologist that her parents yearned for, to ensure that no other families go through the same struggles.

After signing ASL to a song in the talent show her freshman year at Misericordia, Jenna was approached to start a sign language club on campus. She was immediately intrigued because she wanted to help those who were interested in learning sign language and help spread awareness and advocate on behalf of the deaf and hard of hearing communities. Today, the club has over a hundred members who are invested in learning ASL and the impact the members can create on the deaf and hard of hearing communities.

The ASL club meets twice per month and goes over basic signs such as the alphabet, basic phrases, questions, and activities of daily living. Jenna constantly asks members which signs they are interested in learning to structure future meetings around the members' interests. The club participates in many service projects such as teaching residents in the Mercy Center Nursing Home, developing Pen Pals projects with these nursing home residents, creating ASL door tags, teaching the ASL alphabet, and sending over 70 ASL "thank you" cards to the hospital staff at Geisinger South Wilkes Barre and Geisinger Wyoming Valley for their work on the frontlines during the pandemic.

The club runs fundraisers such as selling deaf awareness t-shirts and Pura Vida bracelets with the colors that represent the deaf and hard of hearing awareness ribbon. These fundraisers all give back to the local community. In the future, Jenna and the club are looking forward to making a meaningful impact and spreading awareness of sign language and the hearing loss communities.



Meet the Faculty:

PROFESSOR SPAGNUOLO

'24 Chloe Hain



Through a chance encounter at the Misericordia Speech-Language and Hearing Center, **Tia Spagnuolo** discovered the wide variety of services speech therapists offer. She then decided to attend Misericordia University's five-year speech-language pathology master's program. While Tia excelled in her courses, student research was where she discovered her passion for voice therapy. The opportunity to participate in student research as an undergraduate was one of the aspects Tia loved most about Misericordia University's program, which she says opened many doors for her as she is now working toward her Ph.D.

Professor Spagnuolo is in the second semester of her Ph.D. program at Binghamton University in New York. Combining her enthusiasm for research with her interest in social equality, Professor Spagnuolo was driven to pursue her Ph.D. by her desire to make a difference. At the beginning of her career, this impact was made primarily through providing services directly to her clients; however, she strives to make a far-reaching impact on the profession. Her Community Research and Action program within Binghamton University's College of Community and Public Affairs provides her with the opportunity to combine her love for speech-language pathology and social justice—a clear step towards her goal to better her world.

While starting her doctoral program, Professor Spagnuolo also became a full-time faculty member in the Misericordia University Speech-Language Pathology Department. Through her experiences with tutoring and research as a student, she felt called to continue serving as a professor at Misericordia University. At

(Continued on page 4)

Dr. Glen Tellis Continues Swallowing Researcher's Legacy in New Textbook

'24 REBECCA REHREY

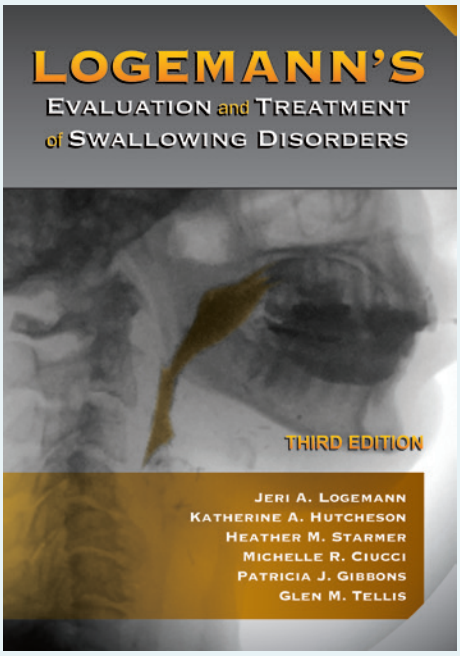
As speech-language pathology students approach graduation, there is one question that always follows them—where do you think you want to work after graduation? Trying to choose between a variety of medical settings or becoming a school speech-language pathologist is a daunting decision, and many students are faced with this question by those around them.

To answer this question, students must consider many factors, one being the caseload of the speech-language pathologist. In a medical setting, individuals with dysphagia or swallowing disorders usually make up the majority of the caseload for speech-language pathologists. **Jerri Logemann** was a pioneer in this field, and developed the Modified Barium Swallow Protocol, also known as the "Cookie Swallow," for the assessment of swallowing. Dr. Logemann was a highly respected professional in the discipline, becoming the President of ASHA twice and earning Honors of the Association. Prior to her passing in 2014, she began writing the third edition of her textbook. After her death, a group of researchers, clinicians, and her former students were tasked with completing the textbook and continuing Logemann's legacy.

The textbook, titled "*Logemann's Evaluation and Treatment of Swallowing Disorders, 3rd Edition*" is the newest version of this influential work. It was published by PRO-ED, Inc., in 2022. Our very own **Dr. Glen Tellis** contributed to the textbook, along with a forward from **Dr. Cathy Lazarus** from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. Other major contributing authors included **Dr. Katherine Hutcheson** from the University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center; **Heather Starmer** from Stanford University; **Dr. Michelle Ciucci** from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health; and **Dr. Patricia J. Gibbons** from Midwestern in Illinois.

This team of authors provided updates of new assessment techniques and research, while maintaining the style of Logemann's original chapters. Their goal was to build information for graduate students and clinicians about new techniques and treatments, while keeping Logemann's originality. Co-author Dr. Glen Tellis emphasized how important this textbook has been to the field of swallowing and swallowing disorders, as well as how impactful this new version will be for students and clinicians. Says Tellis, "We were interested in providing graduate students and clinicians with the latest updates in the field. This was the benchmark textbook for years, but it needed to be revised with current information."

One update that separates this textbook from others is the addition of an online resource that accompanies the physical copy. Using a code provided in each book, students gain access to a variety of study tools and resources on the website. There is a vast image library that provides supplemental material for students. There is even a built-in search engine for students to locate specific images.



The online materials incorporate videos accompanied by in-depth explanations and flashcards or image quizzes. Each chapter of the book has an online chapter exam. This online resource is an outstanding tool for students to further their education of swallowing procedures and prepare for tests and clinical practicum.

Overall, this textbook is a fantastic resource for graduate students who are preparing for their future careers as speech-language pathologists. It will also be invaluable for practicing clinicians. This textbook will provide students and clinicians with a deeper understanding of the normal swallow and swallowing disorders. This textbook is available for purchase directly from the publisher and is available in both hardcover and electronic form. After reviewing the book and online resources, I am intrigued by dysphagia and may consider working in a hospital setting in the future.

(Continued on page 4)

Misericordia, she has previously taught as an adjunct professor and was welcomed as an assistant professor in Fall '21. Professor Spagnuolo is a passionate and determined professional, and her tenacity and strength for teaching future speech-language pathologists is evident. She has taught freshman through graduate level classes and believes "it is a privilege for [her] to be able to give people their first taste of what the rest of their life will look like." Professor Spagnuolo loves the small, close-knit community within the department. She believes that it provides many more opportunities for students' growth through research, classes, and meaningful relationships with professors and peers. As she reflected on her shift from student to professor at Misericordia University, Professor Spagnuolo expressed that getting involved with research as a student "has completely changed the trajectory of [her] life."

Alongside teaching, Professor Spagnuolo has begun planning her own research projects, which are reflective of her doctorate program, and include investigating diversity and intersectional topics, such as race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. We are excited to see where her research goes!

Meet the Faculty: Dr. Mamlekar

'25 LAUREN DIMARTINO



Dr. Chitrali Mamlekar received her bachelor's and master's degree in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology from Maharashtra University of Health Sciences in India. She worked as a speech-language pathologist in different medical settings in India. She treated many stroke survivors before earning her Ph.D. at the University of Cincinnati. In 2021, Dr. Mamlekar became an Assistant Professor in the Speech-Language Pathology department at Misericordia University. She teaches anatomy and physiology of speech and hearing as well as medical speech-language pathology.

Dr. Mamlekar came from teaching at a big university, which she said was a good experience teaching-wise, but noted there was a lack of connection with the students. Knowing each student is important to Dr. Mamlekar and a smaller school setting, such as Misericordia, would give her the opportunity to do so; it is one of the reasons she chose to teach here! Now, she can learn all her students' names, their strengths and weaknesses, talk to them during office hours—which helps build relationships with them.

The excellent research, support system, and opportunities also led Dr. Mamlekar to Misericordia. She enjoys the positive atmosphere and support system throughout the program. Dr. Mamlekar's research interests are aphasia and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), and her current studies focus on the utilization of AAC-based treatments for people with aphasia.

Dr. Mamlekar was faced with a few challenges posed by COVID-19, including completing part of her clinical fellowship online. Transitioning to teletherapy and virtual instruction was a big learning curve for her, as it was for many in speech-language pathology. Dr. Mamlekar had to be creative to design virtual treatment sessions, and mentioned that it was also crucial to have family members or aides present during the sessions so that they could learn strategies to work with the client at home.

When asked for her best advice to students, Dr. Mamlekar said that it is important to get as much as one can from their experience as students. She said that it will get overwhelming at times, but students should know that they are going to cross the bridge and succeed. Dr. Mamlekar's mentor gave her advice that she likes to pass on: The biggest thing is to be the best version of yourself or the best speech-language pathologist you can be that day—and it is okay to rest.

An Interview with Ph.D. Student Ryan Burdick

'24 CECILIA HEIDELBERGER



The decision of what to do with your life is one of the hardest choices 17-year-olds are faced with as they begin the process of college applications. Picking a major and setting the trajectory of their lives is a difficult choice for anyone, much less a teenager. While this can seem like an unchangeable decision at the time, this is not true. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Education, about one-third of undergraduate students change their major.

Before **Ryan Burdick** began pursuing his Ph.D. in the specialty of dysphagia at University of Wisconsin-Madison, he did not always know what he wanted to do with his life. As an undergraduate student, he began his college career set on becoming a pharmacist. As time went on, he realized that this was not the path for him. "When I dropped my pharmacy major, it was one of the most liberating experiences, because I realized that I was free to find what drives me as a person and a professional," said Burdick, but even after this realization, his future was still unclear.

It was not until he completed his undergraduate years and enrolled as a Speech-Language Pathology master's student at Misericordia University that Burdick found his true interest in the specialty of dysphagia. Although he initially intended to pursue linguistics and phonology, during his studies he became interested in the field of swallowing and started diving deeper into the material, but he soon realized that there were many gaps in the research. After graduating, he entered the workforce and practiced in acute care and skilled nursing facilities, but it was here that these unanswered questions about dysphagia became truly apparent. Although the process of earning a Ph.D. is a demanding and lengthy process, Burdick said, "It'll ultimately be worth the sacrifice to be able to spend my time answering important questions, but it certainly was a difficult adjustment." Burdick is currently focusing on "better understanding swallowing physiology and its interaction with aspects of aging such as sarcopenia, cognitive impairment, feeding dependence, and salivary disturbances." He is taking a two-pronged approach to this by not only looking at the current standards for assessing swallowing, but also by going further to investigate how the process of swallowing occurs and affects the outcome. He plans to use his research to create new tools for dysphagia assessment and treatment.

Although it took Burdick a couple of tries and many years to discover his true passion, his willingness to put himself out there and try new things is ultimately what allowed him to figure his future out. "College is the best time to explore different situations and perspectives," said Burdick, "You do not need to have your entire life figured out in undergrad!" The field of speech-language pathology offers a broad selection of specializations and treatment settings, but there is no rush to plan out the future immediately. Trying different options until the right one stands out is often the best thing to do.

NSSLHA Update

'25 ISABEL FALGUERA

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, Misericordia's NSSLHA Chapter has continued to find a way to gather and serve our community. The chapter's NSSLHA officers, **Isabella Kropiewnicki**, **Isabel Falguera**, **Stephanie Maines**, and **Samantha Delmar**, organized many events over the course of the 2021-2022 school year.



In October, our chapter participated in National NSSLHA's Student Advocacy Day, where students met in person to virtually send letters to their legislators advocating for different topics relating to the field of speech-language pathology. In total, over 50 letters were sent to advocate for topics such as insurance coverage of telehealth services, Medicare coverage for audiology, and promoting diversity in our field.

Our chapter held a Krispy Kreme fundraiser in November. Over 120 dozen doughnuts were sold, which raised over 500 dollars. The proceeds from this fundraiser were divided and donated to the Deutsch Institute, which helps individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Northeast Pennsylvania, and the ASHFoundation, which provides scholarships to students, researchers, and clinicians in the field of Communicative Sciences and Disorders.

For Valentine's Day, our chapter decided that we wanted to do something special for those in our community. For our monthly meeting in February, our members wrote and sent Valentines cards to the residents at the Meadows Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. For World Hearing Day, on March 3rd, our NSSLHA chapter teamed up with Misericordia's American Sign Language club to create a banner for the student population to sign, to raise awareness and advocate for hearing health and care.

The main initiative set in place for this year's NSSLHA officers was to give back to the community. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, our chapter has stressed giving back to those around us which informed the choice of the organization to support this year's benefit concert that was held on May 1st 2022. This concert raised funds for Cori's Place—a local day program for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The benefit concert included raffle baskets containing donated items from businesses in the community, encouraging those who receive the basket to support local restaurants and businesses.

This was a productive year for our NSSLHA chapter and we are excited to continue to support our community and serve others.



Meet the Faculty: Professor Roberts

'25 ERIN BOSSLER



Most people would consider themselves lucky if they find and are able to pursue their passion. That is why **Erin Roberts**, Assistant Professor of speech-language pathology and alumna of Misericordia University, considers herself one of the lucky few. Erin said that she believes that she has found her place in the speech-language pathology world through her involvement in research and teaching.

Erin is also in a doctoral program at John Hopkins, in the School of Education, choosing to continue her education past her time at Misericordia. She added that she finds research as one of the most rewarding areas of practice, specifically her research into the brain and how the brain changes when learning. Through her research in brain imaging techniques, Erin said she was able to travel nationally and internationally and present her findings, which was something that she really missed when working solely as a clinician.

Although Erin said research was one of the key factors that led to her going back to school, she mentioned that she really values her clinical experience. Originally, Erin said that she was most interested in working as a speech-language pathologist with children in a school-based setting; however, through her clinical experience, she realized that the field of speech-language pathology has a lot more to offer. After working with infants in early intervention, school-aged kids, and adults, Erin said that "there's just so many things to love that it's really never boring."

Erin said that teaching was not something that she intended on doing, but it was something that she always enjoyed. Erin explained that when she was given the offer to be an adjunct instructor in some courses in her areas of specialization, she saw it as an opportunity to explore that passion. Erin said, "It was kind of by chance, but it was really lucky for me and I really love what I do."

Erin is not only a student, professor, and clinician, but she also spends a lot of her remaining time coaching soccer and volunteering with performing arts groups. Similarly, during Erin's time as a student at Misericordia, she liked to keep herself busy by participating in NSSLHA and playing on the school's soccer team for all four years—captaining the team for her final two seasons.

Erin said her advice to someone considering majoring in speech-language pathology is to take advantage of the experience gathered through observations and added that seeing clinical practice in action is what led her to believe that the field was right for her. Erin said, "if you're even curious about it, make it happen. Get that observation in. From my experience, it's so rewarding."

Thank you

WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE FOLLOWING FOR PROVIDING GRANTS TO THE SLP DEPARTMENT:

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WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR GIVING GENEROUSLY TO THE SLP STUDENT FUND:

Maria Kushner '13
Erik Raj '08
Mrs. Pamela Rogers
Tara Helwig Vining '10

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YOU CAN GIVE A GIFT IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- On-line at www.misericordia.edu/makeagift - please put SLP Student Fund in the designation section under "Other."
- Call 570-674-6354 between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to make a gift over the phone.
- Send a check made out to: Misericordia University, by mail to Development Office, SLP Student Fund, 301 Lake Street, Dallas, PA 18612.
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