ASA Awards Community Action Research Initiative Grants

The American Sociological Association’s Spivack Program in Applied Social Research and Social Policy announced the 2002 winners of the Community Action Research Initiative (CARI). These small grants are designed to encourage sociologists to undertake community action projects that bring social science knowledge, methods, and expertise to bear in addressing community problems and concerns. Each applicant proposed a project of pro bono work with a local community organization that tapped sociological expertise (e.g., needs assessment, evaluation research, training, and so forth). The five 2002 CARI projects selected and funded for 2002-03 are:

- Mary Danzico, California State Polytechnic University-Pomona, will work on a project titled Orange County Low-Income Asian American Youth Needs Assessment. She will work with the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance to survey low-income Asian-American youth in Orange County on their educational experience, education, and family well-being in order to develop a needs assessment. The goal of the project is to develop a strategic plan and recommendations to improve the social, health, and economic opportunities for the youth of the community.

- Pamela Fenell, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, will build on the common concerns related to the balance of work and family issues among women of different socio-economic backgrounds with the New Hope Project. Her goal is to educate community leaders about issues facing low-income women in the Milwaukee area through a participatory research approach. In order to affect public policy, she plans to teach researchers in community development and low-income women about participatory research and then use the information to develop an action plan of long-term goals.

- Jeffrey Leiter, North Carolina State University-Raleigh, will work with the North Carolina State AFL-CIO to design a collaborative internet website that will act as a labor center. The site will offer information on unions, workplace issues, and organizing strategies in order to offer the services of a labor project through the internet. Through the New Hope Project, he plans to expand North Carolina union capacity, connect workers with work-related problems to solutions, and use applied research to improve labor union effectiveness.

- Kelly E. Smith, University of Arizona, will use her CARI grant to work with the Primera Foundation to study the state of day laborers in Tucson and effects of recent policy changes in the area. She will specifically address advocacy needs of day laborers by surveying changes in their conditions and whether they are able to access local legal resources. This will be done with University of Arizona’s Department of Sociology and Center for Applied Sociology through 200 interviews with day laborers. The project connects the school and its students with the community in order to provide mutual benefits.

- Caleb Southworth, University of Oregon, applied to study the Municipal Government of Komsomolsk, Ukraine. The city was a center for iron ore extraction during the Soviet period as part of a military industrial complex. The post-Soviet sociologist in Komsomolsk is trying to solve major social, environmental, and health problems. Southworth will work with city managers to assess the social and economic problems in the city through survey methods and indepth interviews about citizens’ current employment, health problems, and city needs. The CARI funds will be used to produce the survey and maintain student and community leaders in survey methods, and conduct interviews.

The deadline for the next application process to receive the CARI grant is February 1, 2003. All logistical information is on the homepage at http://www.asanet.org/student/commact.html.

Teaching Enhancement Fund Supports New Projects

The American Sociological Association made three awards to advance teaching from the Teaching Enhancement Fund. The Fund supports innovative projects on teaching sociology, which can be transportable to other settings. The three projects center on active learning strategies. The funded projects are:

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The Teaching Enhancement Fund is supported by contributions. Watch for details about a fundraising event at the 2002 Annual Meeting.