



Humanitarian Assistance Program

Josef Korbel School of International Studies

Fall 2016 Quarterly Newsletter

Speaker Review

Every Quarter, the Humanitarian Assistance Program strives to bring relevant guest speakers and other humanitarian assistance related events to the Josef Korbel School. See below for a recap of events from the Fall Quarter.

Karen Stewart Career Path Talk



On October 27th, Karen Stewart spoke to students about her career working in the humanitarian field. As a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Specialist, Karen has over twenty-five years working in the fields of mental health, HIV/AIDS and addiction.

For ten years, Karen Stewart worked with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)/Doctors Without Borders throughout Asia and Africa as a Mental Health Officer and Coach, and still works with them for short term projects. During this Career Path talk, Karen spoke about her work with MSF, including the wide range of challenges in the field as a mental health coach and as a manager. A large portion of Karen Stewart's job involved training MSF staff members who were new to the field.

Karen's talk addressed many of the issues she saw in the field, such as staff attempting to manage from the office instead of monitoring in the field. She discussed how the largest issue in the field was a lack of appropriate management, as many experts on staff lacked the softer skills needed to properly organize a staff. She described the need for a work life balance, that was challenging for many to maintain. Karen also spoke about the positive aspects of the field, including the camaraderie among humanitarian workers. She described how the bonds created, and importance of the work were invaluable to her overall career and life experiences.