



**Center for Human Environments**

**Annual Report: July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2006**

**Professor Susan Saegert, Director**

# CENTER FOR HUMAN ENVIRONMENTS

## ANNUAL REPORT 2005-2006

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### **A. – B. ACTIVITIES & PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

In 2005 **Roger Hart**, Director of the **Children's Environments Research Group**, was awarded a 3-year National Science Foundation grant for his project "The Changing Geography of Childhood." This study follows up on his original work from three decades ago, which looked at the free time and play activities of children in a Vermont town. In addition to his own research, Professor Hart has been engaged during the past year in editing a special volume of the journal *Children, Youth and Environments*, entitled "Pushing the Boundaries: Critical International Perspectives on Child and Youth Participation." The special issue will showcase a dialog on participatory action research with children from researchers, youth workers and child rights advocates from around the world. As in the past, **CERG** continues to benefit from collaboration with Graduate Center alumni: Co-Director Selim Iltus (a 1994 Ph.D. in Environmental Psychology) is involved with UN projects on children in Central Asia and elsewhere; and Caitlin Cahill, a 2005 graduate of the Environmental Psychology program, is acting as a co-editor for the *Children, Youth and Environments* special issue.

Throughout 2005-2006 the **Housing Environments Research Group** under the direction of **Susan Saegert** has continued its study of homeownership education services provided by nonprofit counseling agencies. This research originated in 2004, when the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, a nonprofit created by Congress, awarded **HERG** a grant to conduct a survey of clients receiving homeownership education from its national network of counseling agencies. In its second year (2005), the **HERG** project established an Advisory Board to explore issues uncovered by the survey, including trends in post-purchase difficulties encountered by home buyers. Year 3 (2006) of the **HERG** project involves a series of focus groups in five representative communities to understand the barriers that prevent low- and moderate-income home buyers from taking greater advantage of post-purchase counseling and support services. For this focus group research, the initial major sponsor, Neighborhood Reinvestment, has been joined by Freddie Mac, the federally-chartered agency charged with stabilizing and improving home mortgage markets. (For a complete listing of the project's sponsors, see "Active Grants" in Section D.)

Because the 2004-2005 homeownership education survey included a nonprofit counseling agency

serving New Orleans, it was natural that in the wake of Hurricane Katrina **HERG** should turn its attention to formulating projects that would aid the rebuilding process. Working in collaboration with the New Orleans nonprofit, **HERG** researchers have prepared several proposals that are under consideration or will soon be submitted to a variety of funding agencies, including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Humana Foundation, and the NIH/National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. Saegert is also a Co-PI on an NSF proposal initiated by the Earth Institute at Columbia to identify the components of ecologically and socially sustainable neighborhoods to put in place for the rebuilding of New Orleans and a member of the team selected to participate in the development of the Unified New Orleans plan.

In June 2006, **HERG** received funding from MIT to cover the traveling expenses of an exhibition entitled “The Urban Development Corporation: Policy & Design for Housing.” Originally created for a symposium held at the Graduate Center in 2005, the exhibition will be installed at MIT’s Wolk Gallery from September to December, 2006. **Susan Saegert**, who was a member of the organizing committee for the GC symposium, is the manager of this funding.

A **Public Space Research Group** team directed by **Setha Low** has completed an ethnographic study of the Fire Island National Seashore, which was funded by a multi-year award from the National Park Service. The ethnographic study will serve as a reference point for the National Park Service’s long-term management plan, and includes recommendations for resolving conflicts among the different users of the seashore, as well as for protecting and making better use of its historic assets. In 2005-2006, two other long-term **PSRG** projects reached publication: a collection of essays, *The Politics of Public Space* (Routledge, 2006), edited by Professor Low and Neil Smith (who directs the GC’s Center for Place, Culture, and Politics); and a study of policies and practices aimed at maintaining and managing cultural diversity in urban parks, *Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity* (University of Texas Press, 2005), authored by Professor Low, Dana Taplin (Co-director of **PSRG**), and Suzanne Scheld. During the past year, Professor Low also held a PSC-CUNY award for her public space research work, which has recently encompassed topics such as gated communities and co-op housing.

In 2005-2006, **Youth Studies Research Group** Co-Director **Michelle Fine** obtained renewal funding from the Glass Foundation to support work on teen women’s sexuality, including an essay for the *Harvard Education Review* that follows up on a 1988 piece by her in that journal. Glass Foundation funds also supported graduate fellowships in areas such as the development of expert testimony for cases dealing with reproductive rights. Additional graduate student support in the **YSRG** area came from the “Echoes” project account, which is managed by Professor Fine. Among the research topics currently being supported are: an examination of Muslim-American Youth in the US after 9/11; and a study of sexually exploited youth, undertaken in collaboration with a New York City nonprofit, Girls Educational and Mentoring Services.

In the past year, **Colette Daiute**, co-Director of **YSRG**, completed a PSC-CUNY-funded study of Croatian youth and the process of identity recovery in the aftermath of war. She has now received a second year of PSC-CUNY funding for additional research, which receives consulting assistance from Maja Turniški, a CUNY doctoral student in Psychology who currently resides in Croatia and works with local youth groups.

The Center for Human Environments continues its active involvement with the **CUNY Urban Health Collaborative**, a cross-campus, trans-disciplinary effort to strengthen teaching, research and practice in urban health throughout the CUNY system. In the past year, topics such as “Immigration and Alternative Healing Systems” and “Occupational Safety and Health Priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century City” were featured at symposia at the GC jointly sponsored by the **UHC** and by CHE. In March 2006, CHE Director **Susan Saegert** and other UHC faculty secured approval from the CUNY Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to organize a five-year CUNY campaign against diabetes; a policy conference on diabetes education and prevention is set for the Fall, while pilot projects are already under development. Professor Saegert also serves as co-chair of the UHC, is a Co-PI on an NIH Roadmap Curriculum Development Award to UHC faculty (which runs from 2005 to 2009), and contributor to, and co-editor of, the forthcoming book *Interdisciplinary Urban Health Research and Practice*.

In 2005-2006, **Tracey A. Revenson** has continued her work as a Co-Investigator on a National Cancer Institute/NIH study entitled “Expressive Writing & Adjustment to Colorectal Cancer,” a clinical trial examining the effectiveness of a behavioral intervention (journal writing) to increase psychological adjustment to colorectal cancer. This project began in 2005 and is scheduled for completion in 2007. In the past year, Professor Revenson has also submitted to the NIH a proposal entitled “Systematic Review of Measures of Sexual Quality of Life for Female Cancer Survivors.”

Since Fall 2005, CHE has administered a sub-award of an NIH/National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute project entitled “Racism, Coping and Ambulatory Blood Pressure,” the parent grant of which is located at St. Johns University. Professor **William Cross** serves as the PI of the CUNY sub-award, while Danielle Beatty, a doctoral student in Developmental Psychology, is the Co-Investigator.

Together with Co-PIs at the University of Maryland and Georgetown, **Martin Ruck** has concluded a three-year investigation of children’s views of exclusion, rights and discrimination. The project was funded by the NIH/National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Professor Ruck also serves on the NIH Social Psychology, Personality and Interpersonal Processes Study Section at the Center for Scientific Review, which helps evaluate proposals submitted to the federal agency. In the past year, Professor Ruck’s research activities have also included acting as the mentor for an American Educational Research Association post-doctoral fellowship award. The post-doctoral fellow, Malcolm Woodland, is now in the second year of his examination of after-school programs in New York City and Washington DC. The AERA grant provides support for research and travel funds for both the fellow and the mentor, and is renewable for up to three years.

In Spring 2006, the Robert Bowne Foundation renewed its funding for the “Evaluation Institute,” a multi-year project to train staff members and administrators of after-school programs in planning and carrying out evaluations of their own services. The training sessions are designed to enhance the professional level of after-school program staff, and to improve the quality and consistency of program offerings. Robert Bowne funding is managed by **Susan Saegert**.

In the past year, Center for Human Environments affiliate organization **ActKnowledge** has undertaken projects relating to schools, community development, and housing. Among the sponsors of these projects are the California Endowment and the Children's Aid Society. ActKnowledge also maintains a web-based resource, "Theories of Change," which is designed to help develop and evaluate social change projects. This interactive website, found at <http://www.theoryofchange.org>, was produced with assistance from the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, and has been underwritten by a grant from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Throughout 2005-2006, ActKnowledge continued to employ a number of GC students as research assistants, and is also pleased to have on staff Drs. Kira Krenichyn and Josephine Imbimbo, graduates of the GC's Environmental Psychology Program.

In March 2006, the **New York City Non-Profits Project** issued another in its series of reports: *Financial Health and Distress among New York City's Non-Profits*. Supported by the Atlantic Philanthropies, J. P. Morgan Chase, and the Booth Ferris Foundation, the report focuses on patterns of growth and challenges for NYC's nonprofit sector in the period 1992-2002. The NYC Non-Profits Project also maintains a website at <http://www.nycnonprofits.org>, where it archives reports and technical documents, and also provides a service atlas of the metropolitan area's extensive not-for-profit resources.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Below is a selection of recent publications and presentations reflecting research conducted by Center for Human Environment affiliates:

### *1. Books*

**Daiute, Colette.**, Beykont, Z., Nucci, L. (eds.) (2006) *International Perspectives on Youth Conflict and Development*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Weis, L, and **Fine, Michelle**. (2005) *Beyond Silenced Voices: Class, Race, and Gender in United States Schools*. Revised Edition. Albany: SUNY Press.

**Low, Setha**, Taplin, D., Scheld, S. (2005) *Rethinking Urban Parks: Public Space and Cultural Diversity*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

**Low, Setha**, and Smith, Neil (eds.) (2006) *The Politics of Public Space*. New York: Routledge.

**Saegert, Susan**, Thompson, J. Phillip, and Warren, Mark R. (2001, reissued in paper 2005) *Social Capital in Poor Communities*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

### *2. Book Chapters*

**Fine, M.**, Tuck, J.E. and Zeller-Berkman, S. (forthcoming) Do you believe in Geneva? In N. Denzin, L.T. Smith and Y. Lincoln, *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Knowledges*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

**Fine, M.** and Torre, M.E. (2006) Working toward difference, democracy and action in Participatory Action Research in P. Reason, *Handbook of Action Research*.

**Fine, M.** (2005) Contesting Research: Rearticulation and "thick democracy" as political projects of method. In G. Dimitriadis, C. McCarthy and L. Weis (Eds.), *Ideology, Curriculum, and the New Sociology of Education: Revisiting the Work of Michael Apple* New York: Routledge Publishers.

**Fine, M.** & Torre, M. (2005) Researching and resisting: Democratic policy research by and for youth. In S. Ginwright, P. Noguera, & J. Cammarota (Eds.) *Beyond Resistance! Youth activism and community change*. (pp. 269-285). New York, NY: Routledge.

**Saegert, S.** & Clark, H. (2006). Women and housing. In *Housing: Foundation of a New Social Agenda*. Bratt, R., Hartman, C., & Stone, M. (Eds.), (pp.296-315). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

### 3. Articles

**Daiute, C.** and Turniški, M. (2005) "Young People's Stories of Conflict and Development in post-War Croatia." *Narrative Inquiry*, 15:2, 217-240.

**Fine, M.** and Torre, M.E. (2006) "Intimate Details: Participatory Action Research in Prison." *Action Research*, 4, 3.

**Fine, M.** (2006) "Bearing witness: Methods for researching oppression and resistance. A textbook for critical research methods." *Social Justice Research*, 29, 1, January 2006.

**Fine, M.** (2005) "Not in our name." *Rethinking schools*, 19, 4, 11 - 14.

**Fine, M.**, Bloom, J., Burns, A., Chajet, L., Guishard, M., Payne, Y., Perkins-Munn, T. and Torre, M. E. (2005) "Dear Zora: A letter to Zora Neale Hurston Fifty years after Brown." *Teachers College Record*. 107, 3, 496-528.

Abraído-Lanza, A.F., & **Revenson, T.A.** (2006). Illness intrusion and psychological adjustment to rheumatic diseases: A social identity framework. *Arthritis and Rheumatism: Arthritis Care & Research*, 55 (2), 224-232.

Lepore, S. J, **Revenson, T. A.**, Weinberger, S., Weston, P., Frisina, P. Robertson, R., Mentor-Portillo, M., Jones, H., & **Cross, W.** (2006). Effects of social stressors on cardiovascular reactivity in Black and White women. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 31(2), 120-127

Lepore, S.J., & **Revenson, T.A.** (2006). Resilience and posttraumatic growth: Recovery,

resistance, & reconfiguration. In L. Calhoun R. G. Tedeschi (Eds.), *The Handbook of Posttraumatic Growth: Research and Practice* (pp. 24-46). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Stanton, A., & **Revenson, T.A.** (2006). Progress and promise in research on adaptation to chronic illness. In H.S. Friedman & R.C. Silver (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Health Psychology*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Pedersen, S.A., & **Revenson, T.A.** (2005). Parental illness, family functioning and adolescent adjustment: A family ecology framework. *Journal of Family Psychology, 19* (3), 404-419.

Danoff-Burg, S., & **Revenson, T.A.** (2006). Psychosocial aspects of rheumatic diseases. In S. A. Paget, A Gibofsky, J.F. Beary, III, & Sculco, T. (Eds.), *Manual of Rheumatology and Outpatient Orthopedic Disorders: Diagnosis and Therapy*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (pp. 70-79). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, Williams, & Wilkins.

**Revenson, T.A.**, & Pranikoff, J.R. (2005). A contextual approach to treatment decision making in long-term breast cancer survivorship. *Health Psychology, 25* (4), 593-598.

**Revenson, T.A.**, Kayser, K., & Bodenmann, G. (Eds.) (2005). *Couples coping with stress: Emerging perspectives on dyadic coping*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Danoff-Burg, S., & **Revenson, T.A.** (2005). Benefit-finding among patients with rheumatoid arthritis: Positive effects on interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 28* (1), 91-103.

Petrie, K.J., & **Revenson, T.A.** (2005). New psychological interventions in chronic illness: Towards examining mechanisms of action and improved targeting. *Journal of Health Psychology, 10* (2), 179-184.

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Day, D., Peterson-Badali, M., & **Ruck, M.** (2006). The Relationship between maternal attitudes and adolescents' attitudes toward their rights. *Journal of Adolescence, 29*, 193-207.

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Menna, R., & **Ruck, M.** (2005). Adolescent help seeking behavior: How can we encourage it? *Guidance and Counselling, 19*(4), 176-183.

**Ruck, M.**, Harris, A., Fine, M., & Freudenberg, N. (in press). Youth experiences of surveillance: A cross-national analysis. In M. Flynn (Ed.), *Cross-cultural perspectives on youth, social control and empowerment in the new millennium*. New York: Columbia University Press.

**Ruck, M.**, Killen, M., & Crystal, D. (2006, April). Intergroup contact and evaluations of

exclusion: A developmental approach. In G. Orfield (Chair), *Lessons in integration: Realizing the promise of racial diversity in America's schools*. Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

**Saegert, S. & Benitez, L.** (2005) Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives: Defining a Niche in the Low Income Housing Market . *Journal of Planning Literature*.

**Saegert, S.** (2006) Building Civic Capacity in Urban Neighborhoods: An Empirically Grounded Anatomy. *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 28 (3):275-294

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#### 4. Conferences and meetings

Reading and Q & A with the authors of *Letters from Young Activists: Today's Rebels Speak Out* (2005, Nation Books/Avalon). The Graduate Center, December, 2005. Sponsored by the Youth Studies Research Group of CHE.

Second annual Forum on New York City Community Gardens, sponsored by CHE. The Graduate Center, April 2006. Organized by the New York City Community Gardens Coalition and coordinated by Efrat Eizenberg, a doctoral student in Environmental Psychology at the GC. The meeting was addressed by New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer.

#### 5. Websites

**ActKnowledge**, with the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change. Theory of Change website: <http://www.theoryofchange.org>

**New York City Nonprofits Project** website, including discussion papers, service atlas, and other resources: <http://www.nycnonprofits.org>

Participatory Action Research website hosting work by Professor **Michelle Fine**, GC doctoral students, and alumni: <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/che/start.htm>

#### 6. Reports and monographs

**Low, S.**, and Taplin, D, with Mara Heppen and Andrew Kirby. (2006) *Ethnographic Overview and Assessment: Fire Island National Seashore*. Prepared for the National Park Service by the Public Space Research Group at the Graduate School and University Center, CUNY.

Sutton, S.E., Kemp, S. P., Gutiérrez, L., & **Saegert, S.** (2006) *Urban Youth Programs in*

*America: A Study of Youth, Community, and Social Justice Conducted for the Ford Foundation.*  
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### **C. GRADUATE STUDENT EMPLOYMENT**

During 2005-2006, 47 graduate students received compensation or fellowship support from research projects administered by the Center for Human Environments. CHE's Student Employment report for 2005-2006 has been submitted to ORSP.

### **D. GRANTS AND INCOME**

#### 1. Grants Proposed

Project Title: Child Development in a Transitional Nation (Year 2)  
Principal Investigator: Colette Daiute  
Funding Agency: PSC-CUNY  
Status: Funded

Project Title: Young People's Understandings of Conflict and Collective Action in the Former Yugoslavia: Case Study in Post-War Croatia  
Principal Investigator: Colette Daiute  
Funding Agency: US Institute of Peace  
Status: Pending

Project Title: Muslim and Arab Youth in America: A Longitudinal Study of Contextual Engagement  
Co-Principal Investigator: Michelle Fine  
Funding Agency: W. T. Grant Foundation (subcontract with NYU)  
Status: Pending

Project Title: Children's Play Gardens  
Principal Investigator: Roger Hart  
Funding Agency: Lemberg Foundation  
Status: Pending

Project Title: Children's Play Gardens  
Principal Investigator: Roger Hart  
Funding Agency: Lily Auchincloss Foundation  
Status: Pending

Project Title: Children's Play Gardens  
Principal Investigator: Roger Hart  
Funding Agency: George Gund Foundation  
Status: Pending

Project Title: Systematic Review: Measures of Sexual Quality of Life for Female Cancer Survivors  
Principal Investigator: Tracey Revenson  
Funding Agency: NIH  
Status: Pending

Project Title: After Katrina: Rebuilding Lives and Communities  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: Humana Foundation (sub-award from NHS of New Orleans)  
Status: Pending

Project Title: Collaborative Research: Post-Disaster Resettlement Decisions of Low-Income Neighborhoods  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: National Science Foundation - Collaborative Proposal with Columbia University  
Status: Pending

## 2. Active Grants 2005-2006

Project Title: Child Development in a Transitional Nation  
Principal Investigator: Colette Daiute  
Funding Agency: PSC-CUNY

Project Title: The Changing Geography of Childhood  
Principal Investigator: Roger Hart  
Funding Agency: NSF

Project Title: Graduate Student Support: Studies in Critical Consciousness and Social Activism  
Principal Investigator: Michelle Fine  
Funding Agency: Leslie Glass Foundation

Project Title: Assessing the Importance of the Fulton Street Development  
Principal Investigator: Setha Low  
Funding Agency: PSC-CUNY

Project Title: Ethnographic Study of Fire Island  
Principal Investigator: Setha Low  
Funding Agency: National Park Service/ Fire Island National Seashore

Project Title: Expressive Writing & Adjustment to Colorectal Cancer  
Co-Principal Investigator: Tracey Revenson  
Funding Agency: NCI/NIH

Project Title: Understanding Sexuality Concerns...

Principal Investigator: Tracey Revenson  
Funding Agency: PSC-CUNY

Project Title: American Educational Research Association/IES postdoctoral fellow  
Principal Investigator: Martin Ruck  
Funding Agency: US Department of Education

Project Title: Racism, Coping, and Ambulatory Blood Pressure/Minority Supplement  
Principal Investigator: William Cross; Co-Investigator: Danielle Beatty  
Funding Agency: NIH (parent grant at St Johns)

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: Freddie Mac

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: F. B. Heron Foundation

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: State Farm Insurance

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: St. Paul Travelers Foundation

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: Washington Mutual

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: Amalgamated Bank

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff

Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agencies: M & T Charitable Trust

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agencies: BPD Bank

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agencies: Federal Home Loan Bank of New York

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agencies: Sterling Bank

Project Title: Enhancing the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Homeownership Education Services:  
Focus Group Research with Post-Purchase Clients and NWO Staff  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agencies: Ridgewood Savings Bank

Project Title: Evaluation Institute  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agencies: Robert Bowne Foundation

Project Title: “Policy and Design for Housing”: Traveling Exhibition to MIT’s Wolk Gallery  
Principal Investigator: Susan Saegert  
Funding Agency: Massachusetts Institute of Technology