Paul Bolter knew he wanted to return to UMass Boston to finish his bachelor’s degree, even though he had an established career as a Program Director. For the longest time, Bolter wanted to return to school and the program at CPCS in Human Services was what he needed to advance his career. As a non-traditional student, he sat in the front row of each class, eager to facilitate discussion and get the most out of the university experience.

Beyond the curriculum, he didn’t expect to experience such a leap in personal growth, a boost of confidence and increased sense of empathy for his fellow students and clients. With a diverse student body ranging in age from 20-80, they drew from life experience, professionally and personally. "I put everything I knew aside," learning from his new peers, among them, a 78 year-old Gerontology student. He began to attend outside study groups, took advantage of tutoring and all the student services that were available. There was a level of respect in his cohort of students, a sense of camaraderie. The faculty was supportive and approachable setting a tone of respect and openness. There was a level of tolerance of different points of view, which made him internalize a sense of compassion for himself and others. A skill set that he is using in his career today. In Cuf Ferguson’s class, he learned that delivery of services relied on cultural sensitivity and a mind-body connection. It was important to treat the “whole person.” In Anna Madison’s class, "Community Portraits," he learned to sift through US Census data to uncover “what mattered” to a community. Though all his personal drive to complete the degree, the study groups and tutoring, what made the difference for him to succeed was that he could count on his instructors to expect him to "stick with it" when challenges or fears got in his way.

Upon graduation, Bolter saw an opportunity to apply for a position at the American Liver Foundation (ALF) as a Community Outreach and Education Manager in their New York office. A big shift change occurred for him in recognizing this leap in his career, relocating from Boston and leaving behind his support system. Now, working with a diverse population of consumers, he applies his CPCS studies to meet new challenges. Recognizing the needs of the community and educating groups about liver wellness cuts across all boundaries, populations and defies stereotypes or classifications. The ALF New York office states: "Liver disease mirrors the New York population—it cuts across ethnic, racial, and gender lines. The Greater New York Chapter is dedicated to our diverse community.” Bolter has blossomed in his New York life, never imagining he would have been profiled in a magazine article, representing the ALF to urge legislators to make liver disease research a funding priority at the Liver Capitol Hill Day in Washington D.C., and even finding a creative passion in photography—exhibiting in a Chelsea gallery group show!

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**Front Row Student**
Possibilities abound for CPCS Human Services alum

**May 2014: Alumni Success**

Paul Bolter

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