

# Social worker shortfall

Agencies face 'desperate' need to fill licensed positions



STAFF PHOTO BY DAN HENRY

Adam Kilgore, a University of Tennessee at Chattanooga social work student, stands in St. Barnabas Senior Living Services' Parkside Hall, a long-term care residence hall, Monday afternoon.



**Online:** Hear Karen Franklin discuss the need for social workers in Tennessee. Read statistics on the growing need for social workers. Comment on this story.

BY JOAN GARRETT  
STAFF WRITER

Adam Kilgore doesn't mind sharing a desk with his boss or working nearly 100 cases at a time.

He also doesn't mind the low pay or the pressure on the job, he said.

You just accept those things when you're a social worker.

"It's a calling," said the 34-year-old University of Tennessee at Chattanooga social work major. "The financial rewards aren't there, but there are so many other rewards."

Mr. Kilgore, who will graduate from UTC in May and now interns at St. Barnabas Senior Living Services, is a member of a shrinking fraternity of social work hopefuls, and state organizations, local educators and service agencies are concerned about dwindling interest in the field.

Competition, poor pay and

the high cost of education have driven students away from social work programs at a time when many social workers are retiring, causing a shortfall among state and local agencies, according to the National Association of Social Workers.

"There is a desperate need

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