



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY State University of New York

STRONG FOUNDATIONS, *new frontiers*

Celebrating 50 years of
Scholarship, Leadership and Innovation
2015

*Dr. Katharine Briar-Lawson
Dean Emeritus and Professor
School of Social Welfare*

*Dr. Darrell P. Wheeler
Dean and Professor
School of Social Welfare*

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



human experiences around the world are marked by complex social, economic, political and physical interactions. The challenge for social work educational institutions today is to create learning environments that enable students to develop a mastery of skills to address these issues, while holding fast to the tenets of social and economic justice. The enormity of this challenge is daunting, yet year after year students enter educational training with the passion and desire to produce impactful and sustainable changes, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized in our society.

At the University at Albany School of Social Welfare we continue to evolve as a community of educators, scholars, practitioners and community partners seeking to contribute to the development, evaluation and dissemination of the most current innovations and methods for social work practice. In this, our Golden Anniversary year, I am pleased to have the distinct honor of assuming a leadership role in a school with a rich and demonstrated history for community-engaged professional practice, scholarship and public service. Throughout these first 50 years, the core mission of the school has been solidly established in the enhancement of human well-being for individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.

As we move into our next 50 years of development and evolution, we do so with a firm historical grounding and an enlivened commitment to social justice through rigorous scholarship, innovations in value-based professional practice, and through the promotion of leadership in social work practice, locally and globally. This his-

torical commitment and future-oriented approach can be seen throughout this issue of our School’s magazine. I encourage you to read further and learn more about the rich contributions being made by faculty, students, staff, alumni and community partners. In the following pages, you will learn more about the approach we take to assure a “value added” conceptualization of the social work contribution. Whether that contribution is in health navigation, field education, aging and life-span care, child welfare or community engagement with law enforcement, our faculty and partners are keen to use the most rigorous approaches to practice, research and policy to meet this goal. In these pages, we can only highlight some of the many outstanding works being done by our colleagues, efforts that typify the rich and exciting work that portends a promising future.

I would like to recognize the many academic leaders before me who have each made University at Albany a special place for social work education, research and practice. In particular I wish to thank Dr. Katharine Briar-Lawson who served as dean for more than 15 years. Her leadership and passion for excellence have, and will continue to have, a great impact on our beloved program.

I thank each of you for taking time to review our magazine and we look forward to working with you as we take on the great challenges of today with an eye towards a brighter tomorrow.

Respectfully,

Darrell P. Wheeler, PHD, MPH, ACSW
Dean and Professor
Vice-Provost for Public Engagement

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Health Disparities Among Minorities

INCREASING SURVIVAL RATES AMONG BLACK GAY MEN WITH HIV/AIDS

While great strides have been made in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Associate Professor Dr. Robert L. Miller, Jr. knows that the most at-risk populations are those who are least likely to benefit from marketing campaigns and drugs to stop HIV/AIDS transmissions. Dr. Miller – an associate professor in the School of Social Welfare and the director for research, training and education at the Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities – knows that HIV/AIDS will most negatively impact black men who have sex with men. Gay men, along with bisexual men and transgender black women, have disproportionately higher rates of infection than other populations.

Building on the work of social psychologist Albert Bandura, Dr. Miller's research has shown that spirituality has been a major factor in those surviving and managing HIV/AIDS.



His focus, therefore, is to address spirituality as a resiliency factor and to build “spiritual agency” among those at risk. Spiritual agency is defined as the organization and utilization of spiritual behaviors in the service of the adherent's desired outcomes.

From his preliminary research, Dr. Miller found those with greater access to spiritual agency have significant religious histo-

ries and significant ties to their biological families. These attributes increase the adherents' sense of well-being and further organizes their self-efficacy, which supports their spiritual agency. His research has implications for illicit drug abstinence and recovery, greater adherence to HIV medication regimens, and more condom use among black men who have sex with men.

Dr. Miller is addressing these HIV-related health disparities in his work with “The White House Summit on HIV among Gay and Bisexual Men: Focus, Action and Impact.” And through a grant from New York State's AIDS Institute, along with additional work in South Africa, Dr. Miller will be examining and building spiritual agency with populations most at risk. ■

BETTER CARE FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS SUFFERING FROM DIABETES, DEPRESSION



Assistant Professor and APHA Public Health Social Work Chair Dr. Julia Hastings wants to know exactly why healthcare disparities exist among African-Americans and other minority patients. While poverty is the single-most important factor that negatively affects the healthcare of an individual in America, Dr. Hastings' research examines many

other reasons: vestiges of racism, lack of education, living in a rural community, lack of transportation, lack of health insurance and not understanding how to use health insurance benefits.

Funded by the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, Dr. Hastings addresses the mental and physical health among black populations

suffering from diabetes and depression. Her study consists of both qualitative and quantitative components. After years of work in social welfare, epidemiology and public health, she is a firm believer in empowering underserved people to be active players in optimizing their healthcare maintenance. Giving a voice to the people who have participated in her

research is one of Dr. Hastings' most cherished goals. "In a study like this," she says, "face-to-face interviews are needed to understand social and health service needs overlooked by busy agencies."

The findings of Dr. Hastings' study on combined conditions in physical and mental health in the United States are irrefutable: class and race impact how healthcare is experienced. Supporting the conclusions gained by detailed interviews with healthcare consumers are data from the National Survey of American Life as well as Dr. Hastings' independent national data set of information on African-Americans.

Dr. Hastings has a busy life of teaching, speaking engagements, mentoring graduate students in research, and writing. She is the lead author of "African-Americans and Depression." ■

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR LATINA VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Imagine a world free of domestic violence, or at least a world where every victim is supported, protected and receives necessary services. Associate Professor Dr. Blanca Ramos holds onto this vision as she examines domestic violence among women of Latin-American heritage living in the U.S. Some Latinas are immigrant victims who flee their home countries, seeking safety, health services and a life free of fear. Too often, oppression, resettlement and minority status in their new homeland increase their risk for partner violence.

Dr. Ramos' scholarly focus is important to the understanding of the negative mental health consequences of

domestic violence among Latinas. In a study Dr. Ramos conducted with Dr. Bonnie Carlson, long-term abuse increased the risk for mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety and somatization among Latina women. Dr. Ramos emphasizes that while domestic violence affects people of all races, ethnicities, socioeconomic classes and religions, Latinas have been historically underserved. She notes that social workers can play an important role assisting victims when they come forward. Dr. Ramos also examines stress and coping among Latinas and underscores the need to address their disparities in healthcare utilization and outcomes. ■



ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF IMMIGRANT AGING POPULATIONS



Assistant Professor Dr. Keith Chan examines the impact of acculturation on Asian elders and other minority immigrant groups. Specifically, he looks at how ethnicity is associated with health outcomes like chronic disease, disability, depression and stress. Work by Dr. Chan examines immigrants who

arrive in the U.S. healthy, but end up sick and with fewer resources than native-born persons. Asian elders are a paradoxical population group: people who are typically long-lived but have real health disparities that manifest as they age due to isolation and low socioeconomic status.

As a health disparity researcher and social worker, Dr. Chan explores questions related to individual factors, such as health behaviors, and structural factors, such as discrimination and culturally based barriers, that inhibit access and utilization of services. His projects have examined why Asian elders may

experience poorer mental health due to cultural conflict and discrimination, and reasons why those with a disability are less likely to use assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, canes and hearing aids.

Dr. Chan argues that social workers, as social justice change agents who understand the system's perspective, can play a leadership role in guiding policy, practice and research to address inequalities in health along micro, mezzo and macro levels. The National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities is currently funding Dr. Chan's work. Past support has come from SAMHSA through the Council for Social Work Education's Minority Fellowship Program and the John A. Hartford Foundation through the Gerontological Society of America. ■

Health and Aging

HEALTHCARE REFORM AND THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-BASED AGENCIES



As programs like the Balancing Incentives Program and the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment program advance Medicaid reform in New York, and as accountable-care organizations and patient-centered medical homes respond to health

management with holistic, person-in-environment and patient-as-partner emphases, it seems like social work, community-based agencies, person-centered care and multidisciplinary approaches are being discovered – sometimes as if they are new concepts.

Distinguished Professor Dr. Phil McCallion and Research Assistant Professor Lisa Ferretti, co-directors of the Center for Excellence in Aging and Community Wellness, are driving and evaluating key innovations that are fundamental to these change processes and to the inclu-

sion of the person and the services delivered by community-based agencies. They are also building, implementing and evaluating change strategies for community-based agencies to ensure such inclusion is long-term and attracts resources to this service sector.

Ten years of work by the Center for Excellence in Aging and Community Wellness and more recently by the New York State Quality and Technical Assistance Center – both based in the School of Social Welfare – have been building infrastructure for evidence-based health promotion and self-management programs. Funding has been from the Prevention and Public Health Fund, the U.S. Administration on Community Living/Administration on Aging, the Centers for Disease Control, the New York State Health Foundation, the New York State Office for the Aging and the New York State Department of Health. The work has built readiness for community-clinical linkages between healthcare and community-based services agencies, better aligned their respective quality assurance strategies and goals, emphasized capacity development in health disparities and otherwise-challenged communities (where the consequences of chronic conditions are often greater but availability of interventions is less), and built cross-system referral processes.

Two significant challenges remain: the sharing of information and the

sharing of healthcare resources with community-based agencies. Currently being developed is an online-based and HIPAA-compliant data management system. Direct-referral systems and bidirectional electronic feedback between community-based providers and health partners are currently being implemented. The next major phase will be piloting a centralized model for health code-driven reimbursement for community-based organizations delivering programs in support of health-driven needs.

Healthcare reform, to be true reform, must find new ways of working, include new partners, support health rather than respond to health concerns, and be delivered in systematic ways that are properly resourced. The Center for Excellence in Aging and Community Wellness and the New York State Quality and Technical Assistance Center are taking translational research and public engagement in new directions by being both a catalyst for change and demonstrating the value of evidence-based, intervention-led approaches to realizing relevant and resourced roles for community-based agencies. ■



QTAC-NY: IMPROVING DIABETIC HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR THOUSANDS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME



The name of the organization sounds prosaic: Quality Technical Assistance Center, or QTAC-NY. But the work it does is life-enhancing, life-extending, and life-saving for New Yorkers living with diabetes and those at risk for it. Based in the School of Social Welfare and led by Research Assistant Professor Lisa A. Ferretti, QTAC makes evidence-based health promotion and self-management programs available to diabetic New Yorkers in nearly every community. Working with 80 community partners at more than 1,000 sites, two important programs have reached more than 12,500 people seeking information about how to prevent or manage diabetes: the National Diabetes Prevention Program and the Diabetes Self-Management Program.

The National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP)

NDPP is an evidence-based, lifestyle-change program designed for people diagnosed with pre-diabetes or who are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Trained Lifestyle Coaches facilitate 16 one-hour weekly sessions and help participants set and achieve personal lifestyle goals. Each session covers eating plans, exercise ideas and lifestyle changes to help participants achieve two primary goals:

1. Reduce and maintain a modest individual weight loss of 5-7 percent.
2. Participate in regular lifestyle activity.

The program also provides six to eight months of follow-up to help participants maintain lifestyle changes. Randomized control trials demonstrated that participants in the DPP Lifestyle Intervention:

- prevented or delayed type 2 diabetes by losing a modest amount of weight through diet and physical activity,
- reduced their risk of developing the disease by an average of 58 percent (all adults), and
- reduced their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by an average of 71 percent if the participant was aged 60-plus.

In addition, participants who attended nine or more classes lost a greater percentage of their body weight as compared to other participants. Self-reported general health status improved by the end of the program and was sustained at the six-month follow-up.

The Diabetes Self-Management Program

This program, developed by Stanford University's Patient Education Research Center, is a six-week workshop that takes place once a week for two and a half hours and is facilitated by two trained Peer Leaders and/or Master Trainers. The workshop is designed to help people gain self-confidence in their ability to control their symptoms and how diabetes affects their lives.

Peer leaders and trainers teach the skills needed in the day-to-day management of diabetes in order to maintain and/or increase an active and fulfilling lifestyle. The curriculum teaches self-managed lifestyle change and coping strategies to help participants manage their diabetes and medications; increase physical activity levels; learn techniques to handle fatigue, stress, pain and emotions; assume healthy eating habits; and practice healthy skin and foot care habits.

People with type 2 diabetes attend this highly participative and supportive workshop.

The original Diabetes Self-Management Program was developed in Spanish. Results from the Spanish program showed that the program participants, as compared with usual-care control subjects, demonstrated improved health status, health behavior and self-efficacy, as well as fewer emergency room visits at four months. At one year, the improvements were maintained and remained significantly different from baseline conditions.

Broad Support for QTAC-NY

QTAC-NY is a leader in social work macropractice and translational research as it relates to diabetes and pre-diabetes. It is a champion for greater reliance on community resources in the redesign of healthcare, a proponent of population-level and healthcare environment change, and an advocate for the genuine engagement of people in the management of their own diseases and wellbeing. The importance and positive impact of QTAC-NY is evidenced by its broad level of support from a wide range of funding sources: The Administration on Community Living, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Prevention & Public Health Fund, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, Centers for Medicaid & Medicare, the New York State Office for the Aging, the New York State Department of Health, the New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene and the New York State Health Foundation. ■



The Diabetes Epidemic

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:



29.1 million

people – about one person in eleven – have diabetes. Yet one in four does not know he or she has diabetes.



86 million

people – more than one in three people – have pre-diabetes. The fact that nine out of ten don't know they are at risk carries a high cost: without weight loss and moderate physical activity, 15-30 percent of those with pre-diabetes will develop type 2 diabetes within five years. The good news is that pre-diabetes can be prevented or delayed, and type 2 diabetes, when it does occur, can be managed.

The impact of diabetes on individuals is dire.

Risk of death is **50 percent**

higher, and there are elevated risks for blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, stroke and loss of toes, feet or legs.

Diabetes has an immense cost to society. Total medical and wage costs from diabetes are estimated at

\$245 billion.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. RONALD TOSELAND



*d*istinguished Professor Dr. Ronald W. Toseland has been the director of the Institute of Gerontology at the University at Albany's School of Social Welfare since 1990. The Institute of Gerontology was established in the late 1960s to promote principles of engagement and social responsibility by joining with community and state agencies to improve services for the most vulnerable older persons. The Institute's mission is to stimulate interest in gerontological research, education and practice in the School of Social Welfare and other departments at the University.

Dr. Toseland, a noted author, and has been at the University at Albany since 1979. He has written over 100 books, articles and book chapters that focus on gerontology and group work. Many of the publications are reports of randomized field trials of group interventions for caregivers of frail, older adults. His published books and articles focus on clinical practice with frail and chronically ill older adults and their family caregivers.

His most recent book, "An Introduction to Group Work Practice" (6th.ed.) has been translated into

Japanese and Chinese. An edited book (with David Haigler and Deborah Monahan), "Education and Support Group Programs for Family Caregivers: Implications for Practice, Research and Policy," is in press (N.Y.: Springer).

Dr. Toseland is internationally recognized for his research on social work practice with groups and effective interventions for problems faced by aging individuals. His findings, based on \$10 million in grants, help to guide the delivery of evidence-based social and healthcare services to older persons and have been featured in Congressional hearings and across the globe.

In 2007, Dr. Toseland was awarded the Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work Career Achievement Award for outstanding lifelong contributions in gerontological social work. In 2008, he received the Society for Social Work and Research Distinguished Achievement Award.


Dr. Toseland's work squarely addresses the gap

between research findings and their practical application toward providing effective and efficient social and healthcare services to older persons. He also is one of the only researchers who has studied and integrated the role of professional social services and self-help initiatives in serving the elderly and has received an "Investigator Initiated" award from the National Institutes of Mental Health for comprehensive work in that area.

In addition to teaching, research and private practice, Dr. Toseland is traveling internationally to discuss topics on mental illness, human rights, older people with disabilities and group work with the mentally ill. Most recently, Dr. Toseland was hired by the University of Hong Kong as an external examiner to oversee the curriculum for psychology, sociology and social work programs. He was also invited as a keynote speaker at a conference being held in Taiwan where he will speak on behalf of human rights for people with disabilities. ■

Ending Homelessness

ON A MISSION: THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN HOMELESSNESS SERVICES



John Records, former director of the California-based Committee on the Shelterless (COTS), knows how to address trauma among those seeking shelter. Associate Professor Dr. Heather Larkin, a School of Social Welfare faculty member, guides the way on research on the rate of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) among the homeless. In an effort to replicate Records' work on a national level, they joined forces to launch the National Center for Excellence in Homelessness Services.

Over the years, Dr. Larkin's work with Records has led to studies of the rate of ACEs and trauma among the homeless. Such research found risk factors of four or more ACEs in residents in homeless shelters in New York and California, and ACEs were associated with behavioral health service use prior to becoming homeless. Together, Larkin and Records co-developed the Restorative Integral Support (RIS) model for a whole-person, ACE-informed service delivery approach. This was documented in an empirical case study of COTS and highlighted by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Now, the National Center for Excellence in Homeless Services is informed by the RIS model, which synthesizes research on adverse ACEs, resilience and recovery into a holistic, multi-system method that supports consumers and staff while strengthening systems within communities.

Working in Partnership

Dr. Larkin and Records' work to advance this national center involves partnerships with several key schools of social work to foster regional hubs of excellence. In California, this led the design and implementation of a Northern California Leadership Academy, which grew out of a leadership symposium involving partners from California State Universities at Long Beach and Sacramento. In response to the needs of homeless service leaders involved in the learning community, the national center acquired funds for leadership training and evaluation to support this group and develop a prototype for homeless service leadership training in other regions. Homeless service leaders also requested a briefing on innovative funding strategies made possible under the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion, which was developed by the national center and disseminated nationally.

Partners in each region share a range of areas of expertise:

- At Hunter College, Dan Herman developed an evidence-based practice known as Critical Time Intervention to support people who are homeless and at risk during times of transition.

- In Texas at the University of Houston, former dean Ira Coby and his faculty address homelessness among street youth. Many may be victims of abuse, of intolerance involving their sexual orientation, of human trafficking, and of sexual exploitation. Some may find the streets a safer place than their own or substitute homes, such as foster care.
- At Indiana University, Mike Patchner and his faculty work closely with a highly coordinated system of care in Indianapolis to prevent and address homelessness. The National Center is working with Indiana University to highlight and share this example of innovation community collaboration.
- In Washington, D.C., the National Catholic School of Social Service created a series of meetings to bring together agencies addressing homelessness to identify gaps, services and changes needed in the region.

Together, these national partners presented a "hot topic" session at the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 2014 where they emphasized our ethical obligation to prioritize the most vulnerable and disadvantaged populations and called on

the social work profession to lead the way in addressing homelessness.

The National Homelessness Social Work Initiative

To build on these partnerships and accomplishments, the New York Community Trust has now funded the center to carry out a National Homelessness Social Work Initiative. The Initiative highlights and shares examples of homeless service innovations that have grown out of the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion to support homeless service leaders and engage policymakers. The center sees social workers as uniquely positioned to develop and apply knowledge for multifaceted policy, program and practice solutions to ultimately end homelessness. A goal is to support social workers as design leaders to create new community-based care systems that include medical and behavioral health, community health workers, family-centered teams and creative use of peers.

Multi-year social work initiatives in aging and child welfare reveal change elements for social work education, policy and practice: workforce development, university-agency partnerships, funding streams supporting social



Taking the "Grand Challenge"

Multiple problems – including health, mental health, substance abuse, and trauma – contribute to homelessness. While homeless people are those at highest risk across categories of concern, they are outside of core service delivery. Responding to homelessness involves integrating micro, macro and policy perspectives while including and transcending existing categories such as child welfare, mental health, disabilities, substance abuse and aging. We believe the social work profession can do much more to reduce and ultimately eliminate homelessness. It is critical that we strengthen social work's ability to prepare and support leaders in the field of homelessness and effectively deliver social services to people experiencing homelessness. In fact, the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare has now set forth a "Grand Challenge," calling on the social work profession to end homelessness.

work education, and new service model usage. Social work professionals now seek to strengthen the workforce in order to meet the Grand Challenge (see sidebar on previous page) of ending homelessness. Through broad-based partnerships across schools of social work and homeless services, professionals can take steps to better understand the needs of homeless people, foster treatment solutions resulting in more stabilized functioning and deliver more effective services for reductions in homelessness.

A Growing Movement

To carry this out, more social work schools and programs are coming on board as national center partners. Our regional partners serving as flagship schools now include the University of Denver, the University of Maryland and the University of Texas at Austin along with California State Universities at Long Beach and Sacramento, Catholic University of America, Hunter College (CUNY), Indiana University, University of Houston, University of Southern California and University at Albany (SUNY). Steps are also being taken toward a saturation model that engages all

New York schools of social work as well as the innovations of each flagship school. CSWE is a partner assisting in government outreach and highlighting partner-school innovations in homelessness through their monthly newsletter.

While capturing the work of each school's knowledge generators for national dissemination to strengthen homeless services, each national center partner is taking steps to strengthen supportive relationships with homeless service leaders and share examples of homeless service delivery innovations in diverse regions. The synthesis of policy, program and practice developments with research from schools across the country will inform an array of curricular enhancements to create social work student leadership paths into the homelessness field.

These national teams of social work educators will present their work at CSWE in a new hot topics session for 2015. They hope to bring many more schools of social work into the movement to build deeper partnerships to address and eliminate homelessness. Together it is hoped that such a movement will be as powerful



as the movement to build social work as the backbone of child welfare or to infuse social workers into aging services.

End Homelessness, Save Lives

In our lifetime homelessness has become a national problem. In our lifetime it is possible to solve, if not eliminate, this problem. As social work looks to address grand challenges facing our nation, the work of the National Center is exemplary in its work to end homelessness. Dr. Heather Larkin and John Records hope to attract funders to invest in this vision and to help advance substantive life-changing (if not lifesaving) outcomes for the millions who remain outside of core services and supports for their wellbeing. Perhaps the focus on wellbeing in the Affordable Care Act will catapult more

partners into the homeless arena, as the solutions may be multifaceted and require skills in addictions, mental health, disabilities, abuse, trauma and health concerns. Because of the multifaceted causes and correlations of homelessness, RIS, as a holistic intervention, is promoted by Dr. Larkin and Records along with related leadership and practice innovations. ■

Disaster Recovery

RESEARCH FINDINGS LEAD TO DISASTER RECOVERY RECOMMENDATIONS



When a disaster strikes, its aftermath can seem very much like a second disaster. Individuals, communities, governments (local, national and/or international) and private disaster relief organizations often collide, approaching relief efforts from different cultural perspectives. Associate Professor Dr. Loretta Pyles has addressed disasters and their aftermaths in her comparative research that involved Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf Coast and, more recently, the earthquake that leveled much of Port-au-Prince, Haiti and its environs.

With funds from the National Science Foundation's Disaster Resilience in Rural Communities Program, Dr. Pyles has addressed the challenge of community-driven recovery and local participation through a study of the communications and activities of local actors in relation to that of external actors, such as international non-governmental organizations (INGOS). The study involved

both empirical field research in disaster-affected communities, as well as discourse analysis of key documents such as media, state policy and INGOs. Recent Ph.D. graduate Juliana Svistova has contributed extensively to this research and focused her own dissertation on the discourses of disaster, disaster recovery and recovery actors.

Their report, "Disaster Recovery in Post-Earthquake Rural Haiti: Research Findings and Recommendations for Participatory, Sustainable Recovery," was issued in April and presents research findings and recommendations that emerged from their three-year study of disaster recovery following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. A key focus of the research was the interplay between the communications and practices of local efforts at recovery in rural areas relative to that of outside actors.

The findings included a critique of sensationalist reporting (even by such respected news organizations as The New York Times), a lack of recognition of individual and local community resilience, a lack of long-term recovery and rebuilding planning, and a lack of attention to rural Haiti as opposed to that given to Port-au-Prince.

Recommendations that emerged from the findings of the Haiti research are geared toward practitioners and policymakers engaged in Haiti and other similar settings, offering ways to build on the collectivist orientation of local culture, and to work to transform the economic and environmental conditions that contributed to the impact of the disaster.

Contact Dr. Pyles or see the School of Social Welfare's website for a copy of her report. ■

Behavioral Health Challenges

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 20 percent of Americans – 42.5 million people – suffer from mental illness. And according to The National Institute of Mental Health, 6 percent of the adult population is suffering from serious mental illness. The cost of treating mental illness nationally is estimated to be \$300 billion annually. Yet the social work profession knows that even that staggering amount should be even greater since the data do not include individuals who are not receiving mental health services.

OUTREACH TO THE UNDERSERVED



Social workers provide more than half of the mental health services in the U.S. Reaching those least likely to access or seek care is a critical mission of the social work agenda. Such outreach work is well underway in Upstate New York, thanks to the leadership of Dr. Lynn Warner, a professor and associate dean for research. Six upstate social work education programs have joined forces to address this hidden need for services. With a grant funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, each social

work program has undertaken capacity-building projects in some of the most underserved areas, such as rural communities. Many served are veterans and high-need youth.

One component of capacity-building is the availability of highly skilled social workers who are prepared for the stresses of working with trauma survivors. To address this issue, this Upstate-based behavioral health consortium is training master's students with enriched and systematically co-created curricula delivered online, and is providing special training

in trauma-informed practice. This data-informed and evidence-based project is preparing master's-level social workers to be at the forefront of outreach mental health services in areas historically underserved.

"Keeping qualified clinical social workers in the mental health field is difficult due to burnout and worker dissatisfaction," Dr. Warner says. "In essence, worker retention is a problem. In creating educational services and training for clinical social workers to practice in high-need areas, we can help close the gap."

Dr. Warner brings her many years of research on mental health and addictions to the consortium. Her work has focused on disparities in substance abuse treatment, especially among immigrants and racial minorities, and reasons for disparities in psychotropic medication usage among youth with serious emotional disturbance. Her current projects examine the impact of policy changes, such as Medicaid expansion, on the use of behavioral health services among minorities. ■

PEER-BASED SUPPORTS FOR VETERANS

When formal helping systems seem out of reach, aversive or even threatening, peer-based services offer a natural avenue for meaningful support. Associate Professor Dr. Eric Hardiman, a leader in research on the delivery of peer-based services, is conducting an ongoing, statewide evaluation of the Joseph P. Dwyer Peer-to-Peer Program for veterans. The program, funded by the New York State Senate and Office of Mental Health, started in 2012 with four pilot counties and has now expanded across the state.

The Dwyer Program was designed in response to the high number of suicides among the veteran population in New York. Peer supports offered through the program meet a large array of needs experienced by veterans as they reintegrate into civilian life. The program provides non-clinical supports delivered by veterans, including stress reduction and the processing of service-related trauma, as well as assistance with employment, housing, relationships, and emotional and educational support.

Many veterans avoid professional helping services because of the stigma of being labeled, or fear or being misunderstood by civilian practitioners. With a unique approach to outreach and support delivered by other veterans who share the lived experience and various struggles of reintegration, the Dwyer program seeks to improve the quality of life and prevent negative outcomes, including suicide, for veterans in need. Program strategies and specific approaches to peer support vary by county, allowing for flexible implementation and creative service innovation based on local context, demographics and community needs. Some counties provide one-to-one peer mentorship, while others focus on group support or networking group interventions. One county operates a drop-in center for veterans, and several use a combination of strategies to reach veterans within their respective communities.

Particularly for those veterans struggling with the impact of social isolation and post-traumatic stress disorders, peer-delivered supports can be a life-saving means of connecting veterans to others who have experienced similar life challenges. The unique nature of military culture makes peer support a logical intervention for veterans because it is rooted in shared experience and language, trust and credibility. Perhaps most importantly, involvement in peer-delivered services can provide veterans with naturally occurring supportive relationships similar to those formed in the service, giving veterans a renewed sense of purpose and shared mission, even in civilian life.

Dr. Hardiman's statewide evaluation will identify best practices in peer support for veterans and seek to create model components that can be used for replication in other areas. ■



SERVICE NEEDS FOR THE DEAF AND MENTALLY ILL



Like most communities, the Deaf community includes members who are affected by mental illness. Compared with the mainstream population, however, Deaf people often face extra challenges when seeking diagnostic evaluations and treatment. Associate Professor Dr. Heather Horton is a leader in addressing these co-occurring issues. “Learning about how mental illness manifests in the context of people who use American Sign Language (ASL), and the particular service needs of Deaf people, motivates my work,” she says.

Studying schizophrenia is one example. Dr. Horton is exploring relationships between language, cognition and face processing in order to understand how schizophrenia influences social functioning differently for Deaf and hearing people. Schizophrenia typically disrupts basic cognitive skills, like attention and memory, and the ways in which abilities are compromised in the Deaf may reveal interesting information about the nature of the disorder. In terms of social cognition, people with schizophrenia often

experience a weakening of the ability to decipher facial expressions, such that a happy face may be misinterpreted as neutral or even angry. According to Dr. Horton, because the face is a primary articulator of ASL, Deaf people are adept at interpreting certain kinds of facial expressions (e.g., understanding the difference between raised eyebrows and a furrowed brow).

In addition to basic research regarding cognition and schizophrenia, Dr. Horton has also conduct-

ed intervention research with the goal of improving quality of life for Deaf consumers. Specifically, she believes that intervention research is important because it may help reduce service disparities affecting Deaf consumers. Typical psychosocial interventions for people with schizophrenia require modifications in order to be culturally and linguistically accessible to the population. For example, Dr. Horton and a colleague recently modified and delivered to Deaf mental health consumers a Social Cognitive Interaction Training program. Dr. Horton says of the group-based intervention, “It is very satisfying to administer because the consumers had limited opportunities to engage with other fluent signers. Many Deaf people with serious mental illness reside in institutions wherein they might be the only Deaf person.” The structured activities (e.g., understanding emotions, interpreting facial affect, role plays) were evaluated in terms of improvements in cognition and social cognition. They proved promising. Now that she

has learned which program components were most effective with people who are Deaf, Dr. Horton plans to conduct a larger study of the intervention.

Dr. Horton’s work will increase understanding of how serious mental illness manifests in Deaf populations, help address service disparities affecting Deaf consumers and, in general, give voice to mental health consumers who are often overlooked, discriminated against and inappropriately institutionalized. Dr. Horton finds inappropriate institutionalization as “perhaps the worst offense to Deaf people.” To combat ineffective and often non-existent treatment of Deaf mental health consumers, Dr. Horton, along with several community members, initiated a task force to address the lack of services for the population in New York’s Capital Region. Some of Dr. Horton’s findings have helped to inform the work of the task force, whose current goal is to demonstrate the need for accessible services. “I receive calls monthly from parents and family members who have nowhere to turn,” she says. “By documenting the need for services, we hope to create an environment in this region where any Deaf person can easily receive the help he or she needs.” ■

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. JIANG YU



Dr. Jiang Yu is a visiting associate professor who serves as director of the new Center for Addictions Research at the School of Social Welfare. Before arriving at the University, Dr. Yu served as a senior research scientist with the State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services, where he directed the agency’s efforts in research and development, grants management and policy studies.

In addition to his expertise and research interests, Dr. Yu is working with Dr. Michael O’Leary, an adjunct faculty member, to establish an educational program for students who are interested in working in the field of substance

abuse and addiction.

“This program will create a platform for people to do research in the field of substance abuse and provide courses to meet educational requirements for the credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor (CASAC),” Dr. Yu says. CASAC certification will provide social workers and others in health and social services with credentials in diagnostic assessment, evaluation, intervention, referral, and alcoholism and substance abuse counseling in both individual and group settings.

In collaboration with a major treatment provider in the New York City area, Dr. Yu is currently working

on a research study, “Pathways to Treatment for Veterans.” The study aims to understand the factors that influence veterans seeking treatment in community-based programs rather than VA-sponsored programs. “I want to learn more about veterans’ and returning soldiers’ experiences as they face alcohol and substance abuse and through that examine the benefits and barriers to receiving treatment,” he says. The methodology includes structured and open-ended questions during face-to-face interviews. This mixed-methods approach will provide important information about the current needs and service delivery to veterans.

Dr. Yu’s work has a global reach, as he works with the University’s Global Institute for Health and Human Rights. With an award from the Presidential Research Funds, he will study substance users in Turkey, their stigma, and their experience in seeking HIV testing and other services. ■

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH



“Children who have a serious mental illness, including anxiety, depression, Attention-Deficient Disorder-Hyper Active and bipolar disorder, are at risk for dropping out of school,” says Dr. Mansoor Kazi, assistant professor at the School of Social Welfare. To help identify students who have mental

illnesses, Dr. Kazi is pursuing a cost-efficient means to achieve a highly reliable and universal screening tool.

His methodology is to use the readily available data from schools to reach out to the most vulnerable populations, which he identifies as African-American, Hispanic, and low-in-

come populations. In using existing databases, Dr. Kazi is able to help schools and agencies evaluate their programs. Data include mental and physical health indicators, school assessments, state test scores, psychological assessments, special education services, in-school suspensions, grade point averages, free or reduced school lunch

eligibility, behavioral reports and information about parents, including occupation and income. Building on these data Dr. Kazi is able to help school districts and human service agencies better target and develop effective programs for children and families.

Dr. Kazi has also been the principal investigator in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Tapestry of Chautauqua’s System of Care. This grant addresses children with mental health problems and co-occurring challenges such as school problems, child welfare involvement and related probation, and health and disability concerns. The Chautauqua project has been the flagship operation for the state as this research and ongoing systems improvements have resulted in better outcomes for children and families and improved functioning of systems. Dr. Mansoor Kazi received SAMHSA’s Gold Award for Outstanding Local Evaluation in July 2010. ■

Equity and Excellence in Education

SUPPORTS, OPPORTUNITIES KEY FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS



Associate Professor Dr. Lani Jones' mission is to increase knowledge about the inequalities that permeate mental health services, substance abuse services, employment organizations and educational institutions that serve ethnic, racial and linguistic minorities. Developing programs that support students who are at risk for dropping out of school is an important part of Dr. Jones' work. Two of these programs – the Opportunity Youth Network and

the Liberty Partnership Program-Rising Stars – are discussed below.

The Opportunity Youth Network

Dr. Jones leads the Opportunity Youth Network (OYN), a group that works with youth and youth-serving organizations. OYN ensures that supports are provided to Albany's younger residents (individuals ages 16-24) who are disconnected

from education and/or employment. The program is funded by a grant from Knowledge Works, a national foundation that provides innovative tools, training and assistance to school leaders, teachers and community stakeholders. The mission is to connect youth to opportunities that will motivate them to meet their goals and dreams by achieving competitive skills necessary to become successful citizens within their communities.

Additionally, OYN empowers local communities by encouraging teachers, school leaders and community organizations to stand together as one team in support of young men and women who are struggling to stay in school.

Liberty Partnership Program-Rising Stars

The School of Social Welfare has expanded its definition of students in higher education to embrace the high school and middle school youth of the Liberty Partnership Program-Rising Stars (LPP). Also led by Dr. Jones, this program addresses the fact that almost half of the population at Albany High School fails to graduate. "Programs such as LPP become a place where healthy academic and social habits are nurtured, and where dreams for college and career go un-deferred," says Jones. LPP seeks to enhance traditional learning opportunities through culturally relevant, educational, emotional and social supports

that advance the dreams of urban youth. These supports increase their ability to graduate from high school, attend college or vocational training and engage in a chosen career path.

LPP was established in 1988 after Governor Mario Cuomo signed legislation to address the significant dropout rate among youth throughout New York State. The original bill, supported by a permanent

appropriation, states that "the failure of many young New Yorkers to complete their secondary education limits their opportunity for a life of fulfillment, prevents them from advancing into postsecondary education and hinders the State's efforts to provide a well-trained workforce for business and industry in New York."

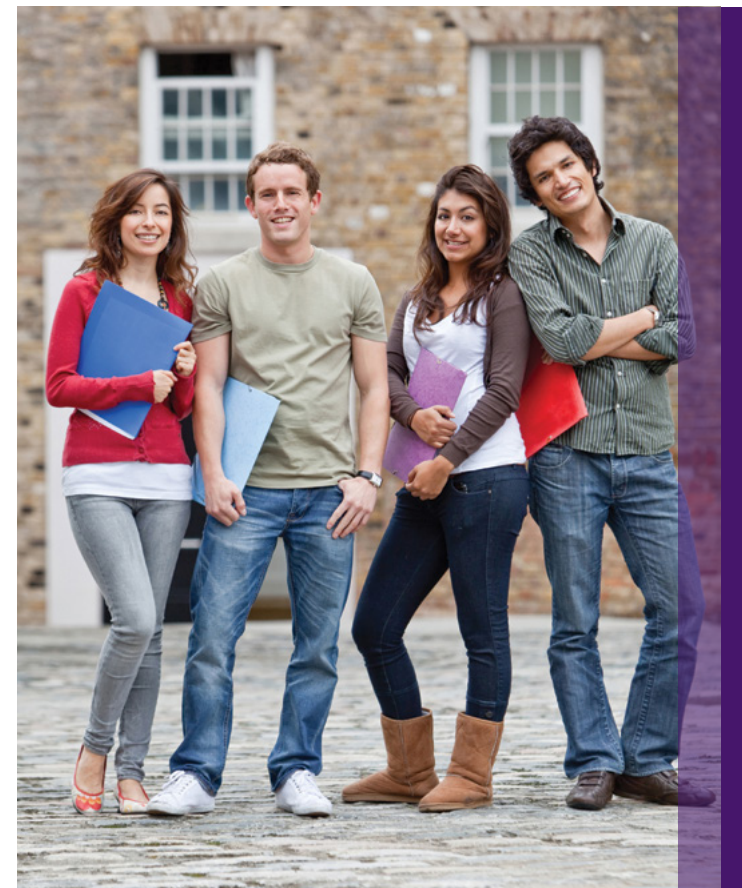
LPP Program Director Richard Smith, a Ph.D. student at the School of Social Welfare, knows very well the barriers that young African-American males face when there is no social, family or structural support. His mission is to support and empower today's youth through a

collaboration between families, communities and society. "Today's youth should be treated as tomorrow's leaders," he says.

Mr. Smith manages a staff of 15 people, many of them School of Social Welfare students, to work with students in Albany

"Youth today need to be inspired and motivated to become productive men and women in society."
- Dr. Lani Jones

County with a heavy focus on students from Albany High School. The staff provide afterschool tutoring, mentoring, college preparation, individual and group counseling, resume writing help and job skills training. LPP also works in collaboration with the City of Albany's Department of Youth and Workforce Services to provide high school students with paid internships during a five-week Summer Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy emphasizes professional and career development, communication skills, computer skills, team building and community service projects. ■



UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE OF EDUCATION REFORM



Six years ago, New York State was selected in a national competition to become a policy pilot for Race to the Top (RTTT), a federal education reform agenda rooted in concerns about having a U.S. workforce that can compete in the global economy. Notwithstanding RTTT's manifest economic development orientation, this agenda promotes and combines educational excellence and educational equity. This important combination of equity and excellence

gives rise to the idea of *educational justice*. Growing concentrations of high-needs children and families – in identifiable urban neighborhoods, inner ring suburbs and isolated rural communities – add to the RTTT challenges. These same challenges invite now-missing social work policy and practice leadership for RTTT.

The State Education Department (NYSED) has proceeded, in concert with the Board of Regents, SUNY Central Adminis-

tration and the Governor's Office, to develop multiple innovations designed to make schools excellent throughout the state – regardless of the relative wealth of communities.

These policy innovations include core state learning standards (CCSS), the annual professional performance reviews of teachers and principals (APPR), and data-driven instruction (DDI). Together they are designed to achieve an outcome that has eluded educational reformers for decades.

These three innovations are designed to penetrate classrooms in every New York school, resulting in changes in each school's core technologies – i.e., what and how teachers teach and what and how students learn. With explicit allowances for local adaptations, the policy goal in support of equity and excellence remains firm: where a child goes to school should not determine the quality of his or her educational experiences.

NYSED commissioned research to determine whether common standards, teacher evaluations and data-driven instruction are meeting the goal of excellence and equity in education. Researchers at the City University of New York were assigned responsibilities for their mega-city geography, while researchers at UAlbany were charged with completing research throughout the rest of New York State.

Dr. Hal Lawson, professor in the School of Social

Welfare and in the School of Education, has been a major part of the research team led by Dr. Kristen Wilcox, the co-director of the Just for the Kids NY research initiative. Other education faculty members include Dr. Kathryn Schiller and Dr. Francesca Durand (Sage Colleges). They elected a comparative case study design with multiple methods (e.g., document reviews, key informant interviews of superintendents and principals, focus group interviews, and classroom observations).

For the past two years, this team has traveled extensively to diverse parts of New York State to complete site visits in two sets of sample schools. In round one, they focused on nine elementary schools. In round two, they focused on nine middle schools. Both samples were drawn to enable the team to address the main research question and also to develop much needed knowledge and understanding about educational equity and excellence.

Using New York State data, they drew two purposive samples – one set of elementary schools and one set of middle schools. In both cohorts, they sought six schools that met two criteria: 1. they enrolled and served a significant number of students who were eligi-

ble for free and reduced lunch, and 2. overall these schools scored higher than predicted on the state's common core learning assessments, given their student populations. Schools having these two features were termed "odds-beaters" because of their higher-than-predicted performances.

They further stratified these two samples (the six elementary and six middle schools) by selecting two rural schools, two suburban schools and two urban schools scattered throughout the state. These schools were contrasted with non-studied schools having comparable demographic profiles. Significantly, these comparison schools had comparable student populations, but did not exceed predicted performances on the state assessments.

Over the past two years the team has provided multiple research reports to NYSED. These reports include detailed case studies of representative odds-beating elementary schools and middle schools, cross-case analyses that provide comparative knowledge and understanding about the two sets of odds-beaters and their differences from typical schools, a policy brief focused on performance adaptations and systems change, and two briefs

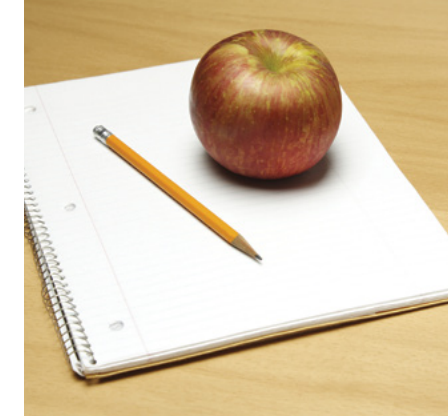
that depict these schools' collective theories of action. These theories of action provide empirically based, theoretical accounts for how and why these odds-beating schools were able to adopt and implement three consequential innovations (CCSS, APPR and DDI) without performance declines.

Recently, this team also presented examples of its elementary school findings at the national meetings of the American Educational Research Association, including a special, refereed research symposium. Book proposals are under development, and refereed journal articles are in varying stages of preparation. The team will continue to mine their research findings in the quest for knowledge and understanding regarding what works in the RTTT environment, particularly in schools that serve high-needs populations in rural, suburban and urban school communities.

In the near future, the team will conduct a formal briefing for invited NYSED officials. Shortly thereafter, their aim is to share research conclusions with multiple audiences, starting with local colleagues and other interested parties. ■

America's Race-to-the-Top (RTTT) educational reform agenda is rooted in four main assumptions:

1. To compete in the global economy, the U.S. needs to be first in the world in the number of postsecondary education graduates.
2. To regain this international rank, states need to develop cradle-to-career education systems that unite now-separate preschools, K-12 schools, community colleges and universities.
3. Postsecondary education credentials, including college degrees and career/technical education certifications, are hollow without demonstrated, advanced competence with 21st century skills.
4. Demography should not be destiny, i.e., the circumstances surrounding a child's birth, place of residence and school attendance zone should not determine her or his educational experiences and life chances.



Police-Community Relations

THE CENTER FOR HUMAN SERVICES RESEARCH

*d*ue to recent high-profile interactions between the police and underserved communities of color, there is a great deal of attention on police-community relations. The School of Social Welfare's Center for Human Services Research (CHSR) has been a leader in advancing research and evaluation of programs that seek to address and inform effective relations between the police and the community.

CHSR was established in 1991 by the New York State Department of Social Services as a partner to handle the increased demand for departmental research. CHSR became affiliated with the School of Social Welfare as the research portfolio grew to include a broad array of human service studies aligned with the School's priorities and expertise.

CHSR is dedicated to developing empirically based knowledge to improve the design and delivery of services that address social issues and meet community needs. CHSR researchers and programmers conduct evaluation studies and design information systems to inform policymakers and service providers across a broad spectrum of fields. CHSR is dedicated to providing timely, accurate and non-partisan information to guide best practices in the human services.

Since inception, CHSR had grown substantially. Areas of study now include children and family services,

children's mental health, education and early childhood development, health behavior and services, criminal justice, domestic violence, substance abuse, youth development and juvenile justice. CHSR, under the leadership of Director Rose Greene, supports an interdisciplinary team of more than 30 staff, faculty and graduate students with sophisticated research, technical and management skills. CHSR has also broadened its internal and external partnerships.

CHSR has recently expanded its research portfolio to include studies of justice systems and community relations, areas that are reflecting national issues and



concerns. Recent justice projects, led by Principal Investigator and CHSR Senior Research Scientist Dr. Brad Watts, include studies of the Albany Citizen Police Review Board and the North American Family Institute's Youth and Police Initiative, as well as a study of police domestic violence home visiting programs in New York State.

The Albany Citizens' Police Review Board

The Albany Citizens' Police Review Board (CPRB) is an independent body established by the city of Albany in 2000 to improve communication between the police department and the community, to increase police accountability and credibility with the public, and to create a complaint review process that is free from bias and informed of actual police practice.

CHSR is conducting a formative evaluation and developing a performance-monitoring system that provides the CPRB with regular feedback that will allow them to identify problems, take timely action, and subsequently measure the success of the board as a means of generating positive outcomes in situations of community conflict.

North American Family Institute's Youth and Police Initiative

With support from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, CHSR conducted an evaluability study on the North American Family Institute's Youth and Police Initiative (YPI). YPI brings at-risk youth and local beat officers together to spend time sharing meals and personal stories. As relationships grow, the goal is for both officers and youth to develop enough trust to have the difficult and honest discussions that are necessary to promote positive police-youth relationship. The focus of the program is to address the dual challenge in high-crime neighborhoods of teaching youth the skills to resolve daily conflicts with authority, while also teaching police officers to have genuine conversations with youth.

To assess the evaluability of YPI, CHSR examined how the program has been developed and implemented during its initial years of operation, observed the fidelity of training delivery, assessed the organization's data collection capacity, and compared initial performance evidence with the outcomes that

might be measured during a full, summative program evaluation. The results assisted the YPI program in preparing for future evaluation and seeking establishment as an "evidence-based" practice.

Police Domestic Violence Follow-up Home Visiting Program

CHSR worked with the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV) to conduct a formative evaluation of 11 grant-funded police departments across New York State that had designed and implemented domestic violence home visiting programs, supported by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

Participating departments were chosen by DCJS based on an analysis of domestic violence crime statistics. The police departments received the grants to enhance their response to domestic violence by allowing specially trained police officers to conduct follow-up home visits to homes where they have responded to domestic-violence incident calls. Officers used these follow-up visits to enhance their criminal investigations and to ensure that victims had the information they needed

to seek help from local domestic violence providers and other needed services. OPDV and DCJS encouraged the departments to work with domestic violence advocates, local district attorneys' offices and others in their communities.

The study culminated in a research brief with recommendations for future practice. ■

Child Welfare

THE IMPORTANCE OF KINSHIP CARE



According to U.S. census data, approximately 2.7 million children are being raised by grandparents, other relatives or family friends because their parents can no longer care for them. In many states, counties and tribal jurisdictions, kinship care is preferred over non-relative foster parents, group care and residential care. This is because the risks of non-kinship care are many, as some children in foster care drift from home to home, while others may be on the run. And when youths “age out” of foster care, they often do so without support, sometimes resulting in homelessness and its many consequences.

The New York State Kinship Navigator Program

Dr. Eunju Lee, an assistant professor in the School of Social Welfare, and Gerald Wallace, Esq., a public service professor, have joined forces to promote kinship care in child welfare as an alternative to the use of foster parents. The New York State Kinship Navigator

program operates a statewide information, referral and advocacy network for kinship caregivers and coordinates its services with local kinship programs.

With funding from the Children’s Bureau, Kinship Navigator expanded its services, providing leadership to other kinship programs and strengthening collaborations with state and local agencies. Evaluation – a critical part of this federal demonstration project – found that many kinship families are poor and have high needs, including mental health services for children and parenting support for grandparent caregivers.

To date, the project has succeeded in substantially expanding access to services for kinship families. These include referrals to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families non-parent caregiver grants, legal assistance, health and mental health services, and other general services. Additionally, the partnership has led to New York State adopting policy measures that will lead to improvements in the wellbeing of kinship caregivers and kinship children. ■

WORKFORCE WELLNESS IN THE NONPROFIT CHILD WELFARE COMMUNITY

Across the nation, nonprofit agencies are providing many of the services once delivered exclusively by public child welfare systems. These nonprofits provide services including child protective services, family preservation, foster care and adoption, along with group care and residential treatment. Nonetheless, few have addressed the workforce needs of the nonprofit community providing these critical child welfare services.

With funds from the Children’s Bureau, Professor Dr. Nancy Claiborne and Assistant Professor Dr. Catherine Lawrence have advanced the first-of-its-kind work in the nation to address recruitment and retention, workforce capacity building and the climate issues that impede or ensure workforce wellbeing and innovation. In their work with nonprofit organizations in New York State, their comprehensive workforce intervention has provided support to workers, supervisors and managers. Dr. Claiborne

emphasizes that “agency-wide interventions and leadership support at all agency levels is crucial for successful innovation.”

To date, the team has addressed a range of workforce needs, including agency-specific initiatives to develop value and outcome-based employee job descriptions and performance evaluations, implemented evidenced-based practices across multiple agency partners, and established a CQI system and expanded its dissemination. “All human service agencies, whether public or nonprofit, rely on a stable, supported workforce to meet the needs of clients,” says Dr. Lawrence. “We believe this work at the organizational level translates into a more effective workforce on the ground.”

The National Child Welfare Workforce Institute

The importance of the workforce in achieving an agency’s core mission is unquestionable. Yet child welfare agencies across

the country struggle to recruit, hire, train, support and retain committed and high-performing staff reflective of the diversity of communities and of the families served.

To address these issues, the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI) has, since 2008, been funded through a cooperative agreement with the Children’s Bureau to design and deliver capacity-building activities across the country.



NCWWI aims to increase child welfare practice effectiveness through diverse partnerships that focus on workforce systems development and organizational interventions, and change leadership by using data-driven capacity building, education

and professional development. UAlbany Director of the Social Work Education Consortium Dr. Mary McCarthy and School of Social Welfare Dean Emeritus Katharine Briar-Lawson lead the Institute. They work in partnership with the University of Denver, the University of Maryland, Michigan State University, Portland State University and the University of Southern Maine. Other School of Social Welfare

faculty and staff in NCWWI include Dr. Nancy Claiborne, Sharon Kollar, LMSW, and Dr. Catherine Lawrence.

Capacity-Building Efforts

NCWWI capacity-building efforts focus on four

University-Agency Partnerships

NCWWI's 13 University-Agency Partnerships help prepare the current and future child welfare workforce and strengthen child welfare practice through BSW and MSW traineeship programs, local child welfare agency engagement strategies and specialized child welfare curricula that are evidence based and trauma informed. At present, 73 students are receiving stipends (49 pursuing MSW degrees and 24 BSW degrees), while recruitment and enrollment continues in each of the following universities to support more than 450 students in the coming years:

1. University of New Hampshire (combined BSW/MSW program), in partnership with the New Hampshire Division for Children, Youth, and Families
2. University of Connecticut (MSW program), in partnership with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families
3. Case Western Reserve University (MSW program), in partnership with Cuyahoga County Division of Children and Family Services
4. Indiana University (MSW program), in partnership with the Indiana Department of Child Services
5. Wayne State University, Michigan (combined BSW/MSW program), in partnership with the Michigan Department of Human Services, Children's Services Administration
6. University of Minnesota-Duluth (Tribal program), in partnership with the St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services
7. Northeastern State University, Oklahoma (Tribal program), in partnership with Cherokee Nation Indian Child Welfare Services
8. University of Missouri-Kansas City (MSW program), in partnership with the Missouri Social Services, Children's Division
9. Missouri State University (BSW program), in partnership with the Missouri Social Services, Children's Division
10. University of North Dakota (combined BSW/MSW program), in partnership with the North Dakota Children and Family Services
11. Arizona State University (MSW program), in partnership with Navajo Nation, Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community and Gila River Indian Community
12. University of California-Berkeley (MSW program), in partnership with the San Francisco County Human Services Agency
13. University of Alaska-Anchorage (combined BSW/MSW program), in partnership with the Alaska Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Children's Services.

major stakeholder groups: social work deans/directors, agency directors (both public sector and tribal), child welfare supervisors, and managers. NCWWI integrates and applies multiple interventions at various levels of intensity designed to sustain comprehensive improvements in child welfare workforce practices.

- The Leadership Academy for Social Work Deans/Directors/Chairs and Child Welfare Agency Directors (LADD) currently includes 25 leaders representing 13 University-Agency partnerships. These leaders are participating in a range of enrichment programs for experienced leaders, which offer executive coaching and a peer-learning community to advance the preparation and support of an expert, culturally responsive and inclusive workforce that can effectively deliver high-quality services.
- The Leadership Academy for Supervisors (LAS) is a blended learning program for experienced child welfare supervisors. It provides a core curriculum of six online modules, each followed by a face-to-face or webinar activity where participants can network with facilitators and peer learners to discuss and reinforce what has been covered in the previous module. The core curriculum provides 36 contact hours of training and includes two tracks: a personal learning plan to develop leadership skills and a change initiative project to contribute to a systems change within the agency. From 2008-2013, 854 supervisors participated in LAS, and all 13 jurisdictions where NCWWI is currently working intensively have the opportunity to engage in LAS from 2013-2018. NCWWI expects to graduate approximately 300 additional supervisors, and provides development opportunities for local coaches as well as facilitators who foster networking or webinar activities. Participating jurisdictions also learn how to implement LAS on their own so that they can continue to deliver the Academy to future supervisory cohorts.
- The Leadership Academy for Middle Managers (LAMM) is a national leadership development academy for middle managers in public, tribal and privatized child welfare systems. It is based on the NCWWI leadership model, and has both residential and distance learning components. LAMM is a culturally responsive, evidence-based learning program designed to enhance the ability of middle managers to apply leadership skills for implementation of sustainable systems change to improve outcomes for children, youth

and families. From 2008-2013, 406 middle managers participated in LAMM, and eight of the 13 jurisdictions where NCWWI is currently working intensively have the opportunity to engage in LAMM from 2013-2018.

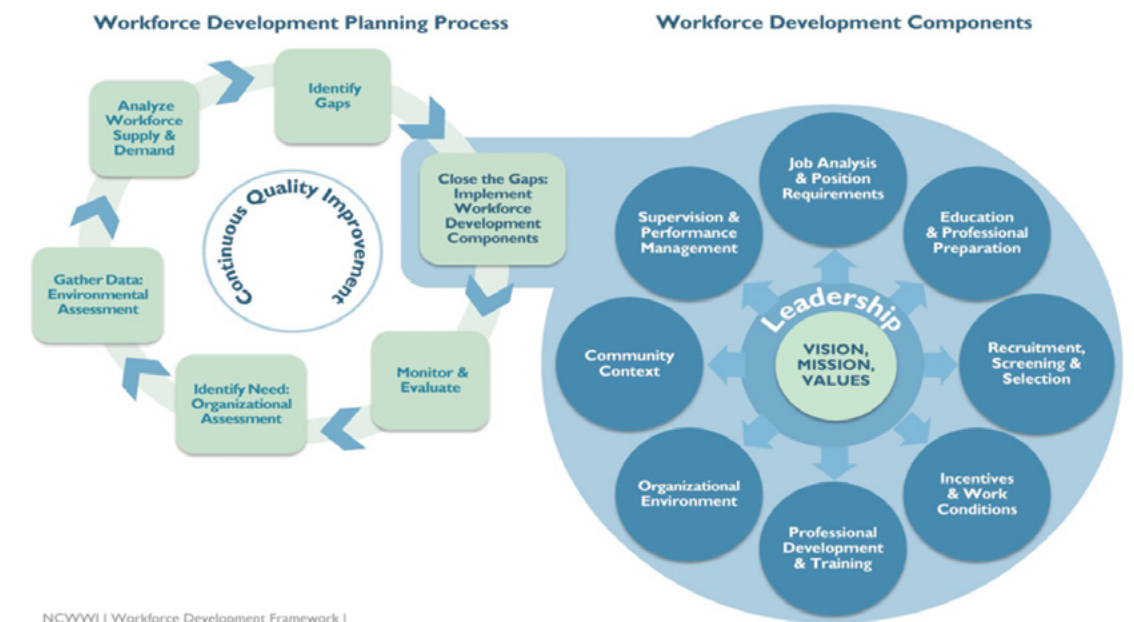
Currently, NCWWI is taking a synergistic approach and fostering the development of a shared language at all levels of an agency to build and sustain capacity. In five of the 13 University Partnership (UP) jurisdictions, both LAMM and LAS will be implemented. Three other jurisdictions (San Francisco, Missouri and Indiana) have been selected for NCWWI's Workforce Excellence (WE) intervention. WE jurisdictions identify change initiatives to address critical workforce issues, and partner with NCWWI to address them by engaging in a Comprehensive Organizational Health Assessment, an organizational intervention. It employs solution-focused, participatory decision-making design teams and the leadership academies for supervisors and middle managers. Approximately 120 frontline staff, supervisors and managers will be engaged in the design teams.

NCWWI also strives to engage its national contact list of more than 25,000 across child welfare organizations and schools of social work by ensuring that all resources, knowledge and information gained are shared in a variety of formats using multiple dissemination and marketing strategies. NCWWI's social media channels – Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn – reach more than 50,000 individuals and organizations. Their webinar series has attracted more than 12,000 registrants, and their videos and webinar recordings have been viewed more than 15,000 times. NCWWI's updated website provides information on its programs and services and hosts more than 2000 workforce development resources for child welfare practitioners, supervisors, managers, leaders, students, faculty, researchers, policymakers and other professionals through its interactive portal,

MyNCWWI. Finally, a multi-phase evaluation protocol provides information for program modifications and dissemination of interventions that show both promise and emerging evidence of effectiveness.

NCWWI's Workforce Development Framework

To advance its work and provide guidance to the field, NCWWI has developed a comprehensive Workforce Development Framework (WDF).



The graphic above reflects the essential elements of the framework, including key steps in the workforce development assessment and planning process, along with the core components reflecting multiple workforce development strategies.

The overall framework includes a comprehensive listing of strategies and associated examples for all eight components, along with the core competencies needed to fully realize and implement the framework. The framework illustrates an integrated approach to consistently assess, plan and implement strategies designed to address workforce gaps and evaluate the results through continuous quality improvement. The WDF helps guide NCWWI's work (e.g., it provides structure for the NCWWI's new 16-part workforce development webinar series), and helps agency leaders understand best and promising practices in developing a competent, committed diverse workforce and inclusive workplace. ■

Social Entrepreneurship

THE SMALL ENTERPRISE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Small Enterprise Economic Development (SEED) program is a public-private micro-lending collaboration that was established in 2011. This partnership has combined the resources of the University at Albany School of Social Welfare, School of Business, and Small Business Development Center (SBDC); State Employees Federal Credit Union (SEFCU); and New York Empire State Development (ESD) to address specific needs of underserved entrepreneurs.

SEED has successfully provided access to capital using character-based lending criteria. It has generated \$1.32 million in loans from SEFCU to 40 small businesses that have created or saved 162 jobs in the Capital Region. SEFCU reviews loan requests from applicants who have completed the SEED training program and considers traditional components of credit worthiness and aspects of the applicant's character. Loans are for amounts up to \$35,000 and come from a \$2.5 million revolving

loan fund established by SEFCU for the SEED program.

The Small Business Development Center administers the program, selects program applicants and provides training and business counseling services in several areas, including business plan development, financial analysis, and in areas concerning other management and operational issues. The training includes key components of becoming a small business owner, such as business planning, basic business etiquette, legal issues, marketing, budgets and financial management, accounting basics and software, taxes, management styles and customer service.

A wide range of professionals, business leaders and UAlbany graduate students teach the classes. These teachers include the SEED program coordinator, SBDC business advisors, expert business professionals, SBDC counselors, and graduate students from the Schools of Social Welfare



and Business. Community volunteers, including business leaders, serve as mentors and provide ongoing technical assistance and social supports to the entrepreneurs during the training and after the loan is received.

SEED Peer Support Network

The School of Social Welfare provides a Peer Support Network for

SEED clients. MSW students offer individual and family support and develop goals based on client needs assessments. Peer support includes weekly group meetings after each business training class, which provide an opportunity to build stronger ties among the clients and for them to discuss their stresses, goals, fears, hopes and other issues. MSW students also supplement the work being done in the training



SEED's Mission

The mission of SEED is to foster economic development and social mobility in distressed communities in New York's Capital Region by:

- supporting entrepreneurs and the evolution of microenterprises by providing access to the SEFCU SEED loan fund;
- utilizing a new loan methodology that focuses on character rather than cash, credit and collateral for low-income persons (similar to the Grameen Bank and other micro-lending models);
- offering one-on-one counseling for entrepreneurs;
- providing a comprehensive eight-week training course as fundamental preparation for the small business enterprise; and
- implementing ongoing mentorship and peer support for entrepreneurs pre-loan and for two years post-loan.



session by reinforcing and reviewing materials and by providing written follow-up on key points. Prior to each class, MSW students have scheduled both individual meetings with SEED clients and open office time to discuss individual issues in a private setting.

The Peer Support Network also involves periodic meetings for all current SEED clients and all of those SEED clients who have received a loan. These meetings include an educational component based on expressed client interests, including budgeting, health insurance for small businesses, website development, and Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) and Minority- and/or Women-Owned business issues. There is also a component involving peer support, where clients share and discuss important issues like hiring good employees, reducing stress and networking with other service providers.

Program evaluation and client data-collection tools are being implemented to assess the overall effectiveness of all aspects of the SEED program. The program evaluation includes questions about SEED training and the School of Social Welfare Peer Support Network, data from our clients about business plans, and selected individual information. This information, collected from the most recent SEED class, will provide a foundation for future research and program assessment and improvement.

SEED and the Immigrant Experience

Assistant Professor Dr. Wonhyung Lee, one of the newest faculty members at the School of Social Welfare, conducts research that combines issues of social entrepreneurship and minority/marginalized groups. With a doctorate degree in urban planning, Dr. Lee's recent re-

search focuses on the self-help efforts to improve commercial areas, particularly those in local business improvement districts (BIDs).

Her case studies of BIDs in inner-city Los Angeles suggest that low-income immigrant neighborhoods may experience slower progress in establishing BIDs compared to other neighborhoods. Her findings recommend that policy makers and community workers facilitate BID formation by nurturing internal leadership, multicultural community organizing, and partnership with nonprofit organizations and educational institutions. In addition, it is also important to understand and navigate the informal economic and social relationships that are embedded in these communities. Local revitalization in these neighborhoods must begin with mapping out the full range of interests that are involved: developers, small business owners, church leaders, unauthorized vendors and youth gang members – all of whom hold a stake in the economic microcosm.

Dr. Lee is building on this knowledge in her work with both local and international markets. She is examining the challenges that immigrants experience when funding their business ideas in Albany, New York, and how their experiences differ from those who are non-immigrants. This work adds to her expertise in community development and social entrepreneurship and has led to community engagement opportunities with SEED and the Community Development Loan Fund of the Capital Region.

Dr. Lee is also conducting research on borrowing opportunities for marginalized populations in the context of Indonesia as well as the role of social work for microfinance services in India and Indonesia. ■

Field Education Innovations

Field education serves as the signature pedagogy of social work education. This means that students' exposure to practice in the field is critical to their development of competencies for professional social work practice. The Field Education Program, led by Assistant Dean and Director of Field Education Estella Williamson, partners with over 400 agencies and organizations to provide quality field-learning experiences for students entering the field.

The School of Social Welfare has undertaken several new innovations to enhance the quality of field education by exposing students to new and emerging practice experiences.

PAID INTERNSHIPS AT VETERANS ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS



dr. Lynn Warner, associate dean for research, leads the Upstate New York Mental and Behavioral Health Consortium. The Consortium, which consists of five Upstate New York schools of social work, provides paid internships to MSW students doing their advanced practice field assignments in interdisciplinary behavioral healthcare settings at Veterans Administration Health Centers. Students participating in the program prepare to become leaders in the coordination of care for individuals with complex medical and behavioral health care needs. The project is funded by HRSA.

In 2013-2014, Estella Williamson led a similar interdisciplinary behavioral healthcare project funded by the Council on Social Work Education. The project provided paid internships for students interning at a federally qualified community health center in Albany, New York. Those students worked with individuals diagnosed with chronic illnesses and comorbid behavioral health disorders. ■

EVIDENCE-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



dr. Eric Hardiman, associate professor at the School of Social Welfare, leads the Center for Innovations in Mental Health Research. A key component of the project links students to mental health field placements that provide evidenced-based mental health services. Students learn about emerging practices in the field of mental health and share these experiences with peers in the classroom. ■

EARLY SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION IN CLASSROOMS

in collaboration with child welfare agencies and several schools, Estella Williamson has piloted interdisciplinary models of care for children. The goal is to provide immediate social work interventions in the classroom to minimize disruption in class and reduce out-of-classroom suspensions. Schools have also been introduced to and are implementing models for engaging parents and the community in their children's educational experiences. Dean Emeritus and Professor Katharine Briar-Lawson has shared her intervention model for use of "parent advocates" to engage parents in developing collaborative partnerships with school districts. Social work students are being used to facilitate planning meetings and implement services. ■



YOUTH, GUNS AND VIOLENCE: RISK REDUCTION



estella Williamson also co-leads a pilot program through the Albany Police Department: The Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative. The initiative relies on MSW interns to provide services to at-risk adolescent children in the community. The goal is reduce incarceration and out-of-home residential placement rates for children experiencing difficulties in school and in the community. MSW interns provide risk-reduction services to children who have had an initial contact with law enforcement, and support to the families of those children. The GIVE Initiative is funded by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. ■

THE INTEGRATED FIELD SEMINAR

The Integrated Field Seminar is a new addition to the School of Social Welfare's Field Education curriculum. MSW students beginning their Generalist (first year) field placements participate in a seminar taken concurrently with their field assignments. The seminar focuses on the professional and practice issues that students encounter in the field and provides a forum for seeking guidance and addressing concerns from their field liaisons. ■



FIELD LIAISONS PROVIDE REAL-TIME SUPPORT

To enhance the quality of field learning experiences for students, the Field Office has been, since 2013, using a new field liaison model. The model uses community-based social work professionals to provide more timely support to students and field instructors. Liaisons are accessible through on-site field visits, serving as immediate responders to field challenges and as facilitators of the Integrated Field Seminar.

The Field Liaison position serves as a beneficial transition for social work professional retirees looking for part-time opportunities to utilize their social work skills. Liaisons get to accomplish this by being educators in the field to students and collaborators with field agencies in upholding quality field-learning experiences.

One of the School's field liaisons is Donna Coonley-Hotaling, who retired from the Albany City School District but has been an adjunct instructor for the School of Social Welfare for several years. Coonley-Hotaling also has years of experience as a field instructor. The liaison position was a perfect transition, as it allows her the opportunity to infuse her experiences as a practitioner, teacher and field instructor, while also allowing her to enjoy retirement. The position requires only 20 percent time commitment during the academic year. The Field Office values the important services provided by field liaisons and invests many

resources to support their success in this role. Liaisons are offered free training, check-in sessions, resource guides and direct guidance from field office staff. Field liaisons are critical to helping the Field Office preserve the quality of students' field learning experiences.

The Field Office consistently responds to the feedback received from students and field partners. For example, new field instructors who complete the School's field instructor training program have repeatedly requested advanced training in field education. The Field Office has developed a new lecture series, to begin in fall 2015, called "Special Topics in Field Instruction." There will be four sessions, providing continuing education credit that will address emerging issues in field education. ■



Community Engagement

THE COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SERVICE PROGRAM

For more than 45 years, the Community and Public Service Program (CPSP) has been central to community engagement efforts at the University at Albany. Born out of the highly turbulent student protests of the late 1960s, the first community service project was completed by University at Albany students in 1970. In 1971, CPSP offered publically engaged experiential education opportunities to undergraduates from every major.

CPSP offers students the opportunity to serve at a nonprofit or public organization of their choosing for either 60 or 100 hours. Upon completion of their service, a learning contract and a series of required reflective activities, students earn two or three credits, respectively. This unique service model includes peer feedback on all student reflections, provided by a team of trained work-study students. Those who wish to can take a follow-up course with a more rigorous academic component. That course requires a leadership

project that clearly defines the students' definition of leadership, the leadership skills they possess, and those they need to acquire in order to become 21st century leaders.

While CPSP partners with over 400 organizations in and around the Greater Capital Region, students have the option of serving in their home communities, in University departments or abroad. In the 2014-15 academic year over 1,300 undergraduates served at more than 175 different partner organizations.

In addition to administering its credit-bearing courses, CPSP serves as a hub for community service and experiential education across the University. Program staff collaborate with student organizations working to facilitate opportunities for partnerships between student and community organizations. They support professors interested in service-learning and work with departments, offices and schools to promote service and to provide diverse opportunities. The Community Service Fair, held every

semester, allows students to interact with the 50 to 100 community partners in attendance.

The World of Social Justice and Service Living and Learning Community

CPSP Director Sheri Stevens, a Ph.D. student in the School of Social Welfare, is also the lead professor for the World of Social Justice and Service Living and Learning Community (L-LC), a freshman retention initiative that provides an introduction to service opportunities available in the Albany community while tackling concepts of social justice in a freshman seminar. L-LC participants serve at a variety of community organizations; their signature event is a multi-store food drive each semester that consistently results in over 2,000 food items and hundreds of dollars for perishable items. These drives support an unfunded dinner program at a local organization that provides a safe space and enrichment activities to middle and high school

students in one of Albany's high-opportunity neighborhoods.

In the fall of 2015, CPSP will launch a new one-credit option specifically targeting freshmen in hopes of engaging them in experiential learning opportunities from the beginning of their University at Albany journey. The one-credit option could also become an opportunity for professors interested in exploring service-learning to offer a one-credit add-on to their existing courses.

Also in the works for the 2015-16 academic year is the expanding of opportunities for pre-health students to work more closely with area physicians and other medical practitioners in order to gain valuable observation hours critical to graduate school applications. ■

The Public as Client

MEDIA-SAVVY SOCIAL WORK AND THE SOCIAL WORKERS RADIO TALK SHOW

When people envision social workers, many picture an individual working one-on-one with clients or organizing communities. Very few, even those within the social work community, see social workers as experts with the potential to use the media to advocate, raise awareness and inform the public about social work issues and the profession. This idea of “the public” as a target client, accessible through the media, is a powerful shift that acknowledges and capitalizes on our plugged-in world.

The School of Social Welfare is seeking to advance the power of the media-savvy social worker in two ways: airing its own student-involved live radio show, and offering a course for social work students to become media savvy. The School of Social Welfare is one of the few schools in the country that have a student-involved live radio show and is a pioneer in having students learn how

to use and navigate the medium of radio and the power of voice as tools for advocacy. Students interview guests who are nationally known authors, CEOs of nonprofits and other individuals with whom they would otherwise never have had the chance to engage. Students are also guests on the show, sharing their growing knowledge and expertise in the social work field. This radio talk show was inspired and originally led by alum Kathryn Zox, whose own radio show, “Your Social Worker with a Microphone™,” is broadcast on Voice America/World Talk Radio.

Even for the most knowledgeable student, being live on the air – as either a host or guest – requires practice and a certain comfort level. That need led to the development of the Media-Savvy Social Work course. The class covers the theory of seeing the public as the client and teaches the importance of using the

media to reach those who may never have had considered seeing (or using) a social worker. The course also teaches on-air communication skills, which are valuable even to students who may never be on the air. Speaking with potential funders regarding why they should donate to an agency, effectively communicating to community members about how policies will affect them, and concisely explaining new client interventions to coworkers all require the same skills that one needs to host one’s own radio show or podcast.

The goal of the course, which debuted in the summer of 2014, is to have students become more comfortable using radio to get their message out and to have the opportunity to practice their skills in an educational setting. Self and peer critique, as well as instructor feedback, provide for skill building in a non-threatening setting. Students are also exposed to the basics of using social media as a

tool to disseminate their content to the larger audience. The popularity of the course and the positive feedback from students demonstrate the desire for social workers to utilize technology to reach those in the communities they serve and beyond.

The co-hosts of the Social Workers Radio Talk show, Alyssa Lotmore and Dr. Eric Hardiman, are also the instructors of the Media-Savvy Social Work course. They’ve shared their skills and expertise more broadly by holding a Media-Savvy Social Work workshop that was open to the public. Topics included advocacy through social media, social media ethics and using the medium of radio – not only as a tool for activism, but as an instrument for clients who can be empowered by telling their own stories. ■

UAlbany Navigator Program

MSW STUDENT NAVIGATORS: ON THE FRONT LINE

MSW students at the School of Social Welfare are helping individuals, families and small businesses sign up for health insurance through the New York State health insurance marketplace. They're also helping people understand what health insurance is, why it's important and how being covered can make a big difference in their lives. The students aren't performing these services as volunteers, but as fully funded employees of the University's Navigator Program, a unique and innovative program that is the only one of its kind in New York State.

These student "Navigators" are learning skills and gaining insights that can often take years and multiple field experiences to master. They're interviewing clients, providing customer service, handling administrative and organizational tasks, performing outreach and engaging in public speaking, among other responsibilities. The Navigators manage

these tasks by being on the front line of helping many first-time consumers get educated about and enrolled in health insurance coverage.

The specialization of Navigators is notable not only because they're enrolling people into health plans, but because of the way in which they engage with each individual, family or small business owner. While they're not providing social work services through the conventional method, they're bringing a skill set to those seeking health insurance in a way that emulates the work social workers do every day in the real world. Navigators are listening, asking open-ended questions, becoming knowledgeable of the systems each person might be involved with and creating a conversation that engages each person to learn what health insurance is and what it can mean to his or her life moving forward. These are the steps required to help each customer think about health-care in a different way.



The Navigator Process

Navigators help their clients compare insurance plans, understand which doctors are offered under which plans, learn what services are offered and determine which plan best meets their needs. For many people, choosing a health insurance plan that supports them and their families can be stressful – even more so when they've never attempted it before. For example, for those who have never had health coverage, having a Navigator to explain all the "lingo" of health insurance would be a huge benefit alone. Time and time again, Navigators recall how their client needed help understanding words like "deductible," "co-

insurance" and "in-plan coverage" – all terms new to those not previously insured or those who were underinsured. Navigators ease the process, taking the time to help consumers know what they are buying, how to choose what they are buying and understand how much of a life-changing decision this will be.

The value added from the Navigators is that each client meets someone who ultimately wants to help him or her make the best choice through appropriate education and understanding of options, while also spending the time looking at the available choices. In addition, while Navigators work with individuals and families

from all socio-economic backgrounds, the individuals they come into contact with most frequently are those who have multiple barriers to getting health insurance, those who use the emergency room for healthcare and those who have not seen evidence of the importance of preventive care. MSW students, because of their unique social work skill set, are ideally suited to help these populations.

Learning In and Out of the Classroom

For MSW students, there are many available graduate assistantships or jobs in the social service field that can supplement what they're learning and help defray the costs associated with being a student. However, the Navigator program is one that allows students to use both micro- and macro-practice skills – and they get to do it nine hours per week, seven days a week with all types of populations. They work on community organizing skills, marketing and outreach, individual interviewing, public speaking, and they work within a complex, changing system.

Madeline Knopfler, a second-year MSW student and a second-year Navigator, says that the skills she has learned as a Navigator

helped her bring what she was learning from class into the field, and vice versa. "It allowed me to be the expert in class on health-insurance related issues," she says. "In addition, this experience allowed me to bring into my field placement a different set of skills from my peers and also allowed me to apply my experiences as a Navigator into field and during class."

Caroline Margolis, a second-year Navigator and recent MSW graduate, says she's worked with clients who have come from "all over" and see time here as "starting over" – getting their feet on the ground and building their lives back up. "Being a part of that is a really good feeling," she says. "Some people are receiving healthcare coverage for the first time in their lives. We're allowing access to medical care, educating about how the process works and empowering people to take care of their physical health as they work towards greater well-being in the community."

Margolis adds that no matter what their first language is, clients have no problem communicating gratitude. "Their resilience, hopefulness and patience with the process never cease to amaze me," she says. "I've had numerous clients thank me profusely for taking the time to provide the service,

though I know they must be waiting hours at each location where they are receiving social services."

Margolis also sees the benefits to small business owners. This group of people can take a significant amount of time to enroll but are in just as much need of help. "I really see how this is helping folks who have their own businesses," she says. "I've had numerous clients who either hadn't had insurance while running their business, or who had been paying a significant amount through a private insurer. Some of the most challenging times are when we attempt to review expenses and tax records to determine income." She adds that when small business owners are able to enroll in coverage they can afford, they're better able to contribute to their community's economy.

Navigators also share what it's been like working with varied populations. Emily Vivyan, a first-year Navigator, finds this aspect of the program to be of particular value. "I can be scheduled on a shift in the morning working with youth and then that afternoon with homeless individuals," she says. "The ability to change hats and engage with customers from such varied backgrounds is an experience I would be hard pressed to find anywhere else."

For other Navigators, it's the "personal touch" the students in the program bring to their clients that matters most. Emma Horvath, another first-year Navigator and Spanish speaker, says that the relief shown on an individual's face when he or she becomes enrolled in health insurance, and the gratitude that customers show, is overwhelming. "This is a complicated process and the win-win is that they are enrolled in something they feel confident in, since we all help to understand their healthcare needs and then enroll them in a health plan that best meets their needs," she says. "I use my interpersonal skills to work both with the client and with the call center at the marketplace to provide best practice and best outcomes for the clients."

UAlbany's MSW Navigators all agree that what they've learned during their time with the Navigator program has given them expert knowledge on health insurance and other social work skills that will help them as they enter the field. Through the testimonials above, it's clear that social work can and does add true value to a client's experience as he or she enrolls in health insurance. It is where customer service and being a good social worker come together. ■

Social Workers as Agents for Change

THE GATHERING: A FORUM TO EXAMINE PERSONAL VALUES, BIASES AND BELIEFS



Social work is a profession that has, since its inception, been grounded in a commitment to social justice and change for oppressed populations. The importance of this value orientation has become notable once again as issues of race and social injustice are resurging in the United States. Two School of Social Welfare leaders believe that, in order for social workers to critically address biases in society, they must first do the hard work of examining their own biases, values and beliefs. Only then can social workers be collaborative change agents in their communities.

To facilitate this, Dawn Knight-Thomas, assistant dean for student academic affairs, and Samantha Fletcher, a Ph.D. student at the School of Social Welfare, founded

The Gathering – a series of interactive activities, discussions, training, presentations from guest speakers and multimedia presentations – during the 2014-2015 academic year. The Gathering is open to all social work students, staff and faculty and is the first venture in the School of Social Welfare to engage BSSW, MSW and Ph.D. students in social justice conversations. By promoting a sense of responsibility for all participants to become change agents, participation in The Gathering can help those entering the social work profession make inclusiveness a habit in their practice and everyday life.

Topics during the first Gathering included addressing racism, sexism, heterosexism, able-ism, classism, religious oppression and microaggressions through bystander inter-

ventions and social activism. Members were able to challenge existing assumptions and beliefs in a safe space and share experiences on how to safely and effectively address inequality in their personal and professional lives.

Response to The Gathering has been overwhelmingly positive. One faculty member reported that the meetings “give students permission to engage in discussions on hard topics.” Several students from the BSSW and MSW programs discussed how The Gathering supplements in-class discussions on social justice. An MSW student described how “the vibe” at The Gathering allows participants to examine their beliefs without being judged. Other students commented on how The Gathering gave them the confidence to intervene in difficult situations and have a better understanding of people different from themselves.

Knight-Thomas and Fletcher, along with Dr. Keith Chan, also at the School of Social Welfare, have begun to take The Gathering to the next level. They recently received a grant from the University at Albany Office of Diversity and Inclusion to expand The Gathering to all departments on campus in the next school year. They will assemble four groups of students who will be mentored by senior social scientists, and each group will produce a video project that highlights an issue related to social justice. In October 2015, Knight-Thomas, Fletcher and Chan led a discussion group at the Annual Program Meeting for the Council for Social Work Education in Denver, in order to engage researchers, educators and professionals in a dialogue on social justice at the national level. ■

Microaggression

Since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, overt and obvious forms of racism and discrimination have been outlawed and condemned in American society. Yet, as we set forth into the 21st century, outcomes in health and wealth continue to be divided for racial minorities and other historically oppressed groups. Modern racism has become insidious and hidden, but continues to be systemic and oppressive. Subtler forms of racism, known as **microaggressions**, refer to everyday, commonplace exchanges – intentional or unintentional – which suggest that people of color and those from historically oppressed groups are less intelligent, less deserving, or are aberrant or pathological if they call attention to unfair treatment. Examples range from President Obama being repeatedly pressured to release his birth certificate during his election campaign and presidency, to when persons from marginalized groups are followed in stores or treated poorly by health professionals and, in some cases, social workers.

Research from prominent scholars (Sue, 2010; Spencer, 2015) who have examined microaggressions suggest that they are more difficult to address than overt acts of racism because they are often subconscious and ambiguous. Like those overt acts of racism, however, microaggressions take a definite toll on people from marginalized populations.

Although the concept of microaggressions began with people of color, all people who are not members of the dominant culture – women, people with disabilities, the LGBT community, and many others – experience microaggressions in their lives. No one is immune to the powerful effects of microaggressions, and as social workers, we must address this modern form of racism by deconstructing the ways it impacts how we allocate resources, provide services to those we serve, and communicate and act in the cause of social justice.

International Outreach

Engaging with countries outside U.S. borders is in direct alignment with UAlbany's tagline, "The World Within Reach." Over the years, the School of Social Welfare has been host to many faculty and student visitors from other countries, and has sent many faculty and student delegations abroad. Recent international exchanges have continued this ongoing commitment to a global exchange of ideas and programs that better our world.

A DREAM PARTNERSHIP

A new partnership between the School of Social Welfare, the Dominican Republic Education and Mentoring (DREAM) Project, and Global Mental Health Initiatives (GMHI) brought MSW students Rosanna Garcia and Laila Wahdani to the Dominican Republic during the 2015 spring break. Accompanied by Julissa Tejada, DREAM psychologist, and Barbara Rio-Glick, one of the leaders in the School of Social Welfare field office, the students participated in home visits, sexual health education groups, art therapy groups and individual sessions to learn about mental health service provisions to youth and families in the Dominican Republic.

This emerging partnership enabled additional MSW students to complete an international field practicum this summer where they designed, implemented and evaluated intervention programs for DREAM's summer program. In addition, they worked with their field



instructor, John McInerney, executive director of GMHI, to further implement the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment tool designed to identify youth in need of mental health intervention. ■

SOUTH KOREA COMES TO ALBANY (AND VICE VERSA)

For the past 15 years, the School of Social Welfare has hosted faculty and students from South Korea's Hallym University through a study tour exchange. In the summer of 2014, Dr. Yojin Kim and four social work students from Hallym participated in the program. While they were here they visited a variety of agencies in the Capital Region, including the New York State Office of Mental Health, the Center for Disabilities, the Alzheimer's Association, The Whitney M. Young Jr. Health Center, Senior Hope, Daughters of Sarah Nursing Home, The Addictions Center of Albany, Inc. and Hospitality House. At each venue, they had the opportunity to learn about best practices in social work. Each agency conducted a presentation and tour, enabling the Hallym group to acquire a better understanding of each agency's service delivery system and the programs they offer. In addition, UAlbany faculty conducted lectures in their area of expertise.



The formal contract between the School of Social Welfare and Hallym University encourages annual one- to two-week student and faculty exchanges. Some Hallym faculty members have spent a sabbatical semester at UAlbany and, in turn, UAlbany faculty members have been guest lecturers at Hallym, addressing such topics as child welfare, family violence, aging, social service interventions, and social work education. The Hallym visits to the Capital Region involve a strong community partnership as well, since many agencies in the area have hosted the Hallym students during their stays in Albany. ■

EXPLORING SOCIAL SERVICES, POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICA



During their visit they examined social policies in the areas of HIV, gender rights and child welfare.

The trips to Africa utilize small groups and individual experiences to help each student learn how to develop collaborative partnerships for social work policy practice. Participants have met with African national leaders, including President of Liberia Ellen Johnson Sirleaf – the first woman elected as president in Africa – and Justice Edwin Cameron of the South African Supreme Court. The delegations have researched issues including HIV/AIDS, gender rights and child welfare. This research and experiential learning has helped students understand the political, economic and historical context in which relevant social service provision occurs. The students make visits and contributions to orphanages, hospitals and HIV service organizations in the countries that they tour. They have supplied homemade quilts and blankets to hospitals, foster homes and child-headed households, and educational supplies to schools.

The tours have also allowed for UAlbany students and faculty to conduct collaborative research with officials and professors at African universities. For his fall 2015 sabbatical, Dr. Miller is a visiting professor at the University of The Western Cape and a research fellow for the Desmond Tutu Center for Spirituality and Society. The relationships that led to these appointments were fostered through the study tours.

Distinguished Professor Dr. Shirley Jones, the originator of these partnerships and trips, says that the “pressures and concerns

of our global society require educational institutions to prepare their students with appropriate skills so they

Every summer, a delegation of students, faculty, scholars and community practitioners travels to South Africa and other African countries on a study tour organized by the U.S.-Africa Partnership for Stronger Communities Project. Dr. Robert Miller, Jr., associate professor and director of the Research Training and Mentoring Core of the Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities, recently led a team of students on one such tour. The group, which also included Assistant Dean and Field Director Estella Williamson, traveled to South Africa, Tanzania and Zanzibar where they visited many social service agencies and schools of social work.

“It was not only the trip of a lifetime; it was the trip that will forever define my life.”

“My education was exemplary, but going to Africa gave me the unflappable belief that if I reached out a genuine hand to people in great need, I could have an impact.”

can work for effective change and peace.” As the cost of participating in these study tours is out of reach for many students, Dr. Jones has, for nine years, spearheaded an annual fundraising event in Rhinebeck, New York. Through the efforts of this special fundraising committee, more than 60 social work students – who otherwise would not be able to afford it – gain hands-on learning about cultural and religious diversity, while studying international social and economic policies and programs that help to promote change and development. Students who have participated in the study tour continue to be engaged with the local fundraising committee as they help secure funds for future student scholarships. ■

FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE WITH SOCIAL WELFARE IN SCOTLAND

School of Social Welfare faculty Assistant Professor Dr. Mansoor Kazi and Associate Professor Dr. Eric Hardiman recently organized a successful two-week study abroad tour in Scotland for 16 MSW students. The three-credit course, “Scotland: Policy, Practice and Program Evaluation,” provided students the opportunity to become immersed in Scotland’s culture while learning about the country’s national and local social welfare problems, policies and programs.

The first week of the tour was in Edinburgh and was hosted by Dr. Mark Smith, head of social work at the University of Edinburgh, and Trisha Hall, manager of the Scottish Association of Social Workers. The program began with an overview of social work education in Scotland, followed by visits to several social work agencies, including People First, Criminal Justice Services, Fife Council and the Scottish Prison Service. The group also had the exciting opportunity to meet with Alain Baird, chief social work adviser to the Scottish government.

The second week was in Elgin, where the Moray Council local government is based, covering a largely rural area in the far north of Scotland. The program in Elgin included two days with the Moray Youth Justice (MYJ)

team, learning about their services for young people involved in crime. The group had an opportunity to take part in the process of realist evaluation (developed by UAlbany’s Kazi and used in Moray since 2001), carrying out data analysis with the agency’s management information systems in order to investigate what programs work and for whom. For example, in the analysis of the last 13 years’ data at MYJ, it was found that 59 percent of youth did not offend during an MYJ intervention, and that young people with alcohol issues were seven times more likely to offend again during the intervention than others who did not have alcohol issues.

The study abroad group also learned about how the Moray Council’s social services and education departments are using this approach to merge the data between social services and schools, using school outcomes to evaluate social services programs for children and their families.

At the end of the two weeks, all 16 MSW students presented individual assignments to Moray senior social services and education staff. The staff said that every presentation demonstrated that UAlbany’s MSW students had gained a strong foundation in the policies and delivery of social welfare in Scotland. ■

Transitions

KATHARINE BRIAR-LAWSON JOINS FACULTY AFTER 16 YEARS AS DEAN

a note from Katharine Briar-Lawson:

This is a time of transition for the School of Social Welfare. I am honored to become a member of the faculty while, at the same time, I welcome our new Dean, Dr. Darrell Wheeler. It has been a privilege to serve as dean for 16 years.

As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the School this year, we feature in this magazine some of the vibrant work of our faculty, staff, students, centers, institutes and alumni. Their work truly is life-extending and lifesaving, helping to build communities and advance knowledge. There can be no better benchmark for a school like ours.

As we shine light on our initiatives and research, we simultaneously must recognize our partnership-driven research, education and service. Without our partners both near and far, none of this collaboration would have been possible.

Thank you for joining me in welcoming Dean Darrell Wheeler at this historic time in our school. ■



A FAREWELL TO DR. CAROLYN SMITH



Professor Dr. Carolyn Smith has been a School of Social Welfare faculty member for 25 years. Her areas of research and publications include the family etiology of delinquency and other problem behaviors, as well as the interrelationships of high-risk behavior and family violence. She has had 15 years of international practice experience in child and family mental health and delinquency prevention. She is a long-time investigator on the Rochester Youth Develop-

ment Study, a national longitudinal and intergenerational study of delinquency that began in 1987.

Dr. Smith has over 50 publications in a wide range of interdisciplinary journals and has edited several books, including one award winner. Funding for her research has come from the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the National Institute

of Justice. Her teaching has focused on child and adolescent problems, social work theory and social work research methods.

Dr. Smith's research has been seen as groundbreaking, advancing science through her focus on a particular risk chain or developmental sequence. She has been extolled for launching the "best body of studies" on the life course consequences of child maltreatment and exerting influence on U.S. policy and practice.

Dr. Smith has also been a "senior scientist" in the School of Social Welfare, mentoring faculty and students and aiding in federal grant procurement. This includes her leadership with two school-wide NIH grant proposals and two Ph.D. NIH awards. Her University at Albany awards include the President's Award for Excellence in Research in 2008 and the School of Criminal Justice Distinguished Alumni Award in 2009. She also received the University at Albany Lumbard Award for Academic Excellence in 1986-1987.

Dr. Smith has been the chair of our Ph.D. program and a leader in the School's curriculum and re-accreditation success. Her outreach to international students and capacity-building role is unparalleled. She will remain a most cherished colleague, mentor, teacher and senior scientist. ■

STEPHANIE WACHOLDER RETIRES

Stephanie Wacholder's 50-year career encompasses extensive experience in advocacy, negotiation and consensus-building with management and administration in private industry, government, education, health-care and human services. In her position with the University at Albany's School of Social Welfare as director of Special Projects and Strategic Partnerships, she was responsible for developing, funding, implementing and sustaining innovative initiatives and collaborations.

Ms. Wacholder is a trail blazer who has always set high-impact goals and achieved each one. She has been strategic in her capacity-building and partnership work. She also became a skilled grant writer, and this positioned her to be a very high-demand partner on grants. Faculty, alums and Ph.D. students alike sought her counsel on their entrepreneurial ideas. She has a vast group of community partners who have come to trust and depend on her and she, in turn, was able to garner their ongoing support for our School, scholarships and grants.

Ms. Wacholder has demonstrated her ingenious and savvy skills to build public-private partnerships to advance new educational and research initiatives. She has been the consummate advocate for our School and University and those we serve. She is skilled in her implementation of vision-driven plans, initiating and moving multiple grant and advancement agendas forward. She is an unquestionably dedicated and gifted leader and our School has reaped the benefits of her thoughtful, strategic work and leadership.

Prior to joining the University, Ms. Wacholder was the director of state public programs and government affairs, managing a staff of over 100 for a large health management organization. One of the highlights of her career was serving as chief of staff for New York State Assemblyman William B. Hoyt, with responsibility for the oversight and management of his legislative staff and drafting, negotiating and effecting major budget and legislative initiatives.

Ms. Wacholder received a bachelor's degree in social work from the University of California at Berkeley and a master's degree from Texas A&M University. She has served on numerous boards and advisory committees of community service organizations and currently serves on the Rensselaer County FEMA Board, the United Way of the Greater Capital Region, and the advisory committees of To Life!, The Legal Project, and Parks & Trails New York.

Ms. Wacholder's dedication to the School of Social Welfare and her community has been honored through the establishment of the Stephanie Wacholder Endowed Scholarship. ■



In Memoriam

WILLIAM DAVID ROTH, 1942-2015

William David Roth, a beloved long-term professor at the School of Social Welfare, passed away in his home on the morning of March 17, 2015. A friend and mentor to many, Bill lived an extraordinary life. With a mix of humor, brilliant insight, creative genius, tenacity and grit, he created a life of meaning and action.

Bill entered public life through his opposition to the War in Vietnam. From anti-war protests in California, Vermont and Europe, Bill showed up at the front lines. After graduating with honors from Yale University, he built an impressive career as a politically engaged artist and intellectual. Bill pursued a passion for film making and earned his Ph.D. in 1970 from the University of California at Berkeley, examining the political symbolism of the Western movie genre.

Over time, Bill's politics and personal experience of neuromuscular disability merged and he became one of the founders of America's disability rights movement. He helped establish the framework for the Federal Disabilities Act and his work over the years addressed the architectural, transportation and technological barriers to living with a disability in the United States. He joined the Carnegie Council on Children and co-authored several landmark studies, including "The Unexpected Minority: Handicapped Children in America" and "The Grand Illusion: Stigma, Role Expectations, and Communication." These studies are widely acknowledged as providing the analytical basis for the disability rights movement as well as fostering a new academic discipline: disability studies.

Bill's work emphasized the disability movement's core tenet: the most socially incapacitating aspects of disability are not the inescapable consequence of biology, but the result of countless social decisions that do not acknowledge the needs of people with different bodies and, indeed, discriminate against them. Bill went on to pioneer the use of computer technology for people with disabilities and in 1984 founded the Center for Computing and Disability at the University at Albany, one of the first such centers in the nation.



As a longtime professor at the University at Albany's School of Social Welfare, Bill taught courses in social policy and disability studies. More recently, Bill's work focused on exposing the dismantling of U.S. welfare protections and includes his book, "The Assault on Social Policy" and his co-edited work, "Globalization, Social Justice, and the Helping Professions."

Bill embodied the idea that the personal is political, and shared his deepest fears and triumphs through two autobiographical books, "Letters to Daniel" and "Movement: A Memoir of Disability, Cancer, and the Holocaust." Through these books he opened up the struggles of his own body and his family for a broader discussion about the human condition. Brilliant, imaginative, inventive and utterly fearless, Bill inspired those of us who had the good fortune to know him. Funny, sincere, vulnerable, and heartfelt, Bill cherished his relationships with family, friends and colleagues.

Bill was born on June 1, 1942 in New Haven, Connecticut to Dr. Stefanie Zeimer Roth and Dr. Oscar Roth. Their escape from the Holocaust, and dedication to helping others as physicians, inspired in Bill a life-long pursuit of progressive social change. Bill is survived by his wife Carol Chisholm Roth, his son Daniel Noah Hand Roth, and a multitude of family, friends, colleagues and students. ■



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HONORING DR. BRIAR-LAWSON: *Introducing the Dr. Katharine Briar-Lawson Endowed Lecture Series*



An endowed lecture series is currently being established in honor of Dr. Katharine Briar-Lawson, who stepped down as dean this past June. This \$100,000 endowed lecture series will bring a national or international expert to Albany every year to deliver an invited lecture, build faculty research capacities and networks, and enrich students' education. This endowment is an investment in the University, local social and health service agencies, state and local government, and the community.

Experts selected for this prestigious campus- and community-serving lecture series will focus on one of the same priorities Dr. Briar-Lawson has emphasized during her tenure, including child

welfare, aging, mental health, addictions, homelessness, HIV/AIDS, health and health disparities, peer-delivered services and micro-loans and micro-enterprises. The broad benefits from this lecture series are consistent with her professional commitments and achievements locally, nationally and internationally, and they build on her contributions to the University, the greater Capital District and several New York State agencies.

We would be most grateful for your support of the lecture series, which pays tribute to Dr. Briar-Lawson for her many years of service and significant contributions.

If you would prefer to donate online or make a gift by credit card, please go

to www.albany.edu/ssw/give. Complete the required fields (*) and write "Dr. Katharine Briar-Lawson Endowed Lecture Series" in the "Comments" box.

If you would prefer to donate by mail, please make your check payable to the University at Albany Foundation and in the memo section please write, "Dr. Katharine Briar-Lawson Endowed Lecture Series." Please mail your contribution to: The University at Albany Foundation, University Administration Building Room 226, 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222.

We are most appreciative of your willingness to support this initiative. Thank you.



Saving Lives, Building Communities and Advancing Knowledge

As you have read in the preceding pages, the School of Social Welfare continues to make a profound difference in educating the next generation of social workers. Our faculty, staff and students are conducting significant research and transforming social work practice in the Capital Region and beyond. The School relies on the generosity of alumni and friends to sustain the excellence of our programs, improve outcomes for individuals and communities and help deserving students with financial support. **Every gift designated to the School of Social Welfare or to a specific scholarship fund is an investment in our students.**

If you would like to support the School of Social Welfare, please contact us for more information about the various ways you can make a difference. Thank you.

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