

THE STILLMAN

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

COVID-19 AND RACISM

THE COLLEGE OF
SOCIAL WORK RESPONDS
TO TWIN PANDEMICS

RACISM IS A VIRUS

FALL 2020



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

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The Stillman provides the latest news from The Ohio State University College of Social Work and highlights the ways in which our faculty, staff, alumni and students make a difference in our society.

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TOM TALKS



“Our challenge as a profession, and as decent human beings, is to respond to the impact of both pandemics.”

DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

When I last wrote you in 2019 for this magazine, I never imagined the world as it is today.

COVID-19 ravaged our country killing more than 230,000 thus far and shutting down our economy. The murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor gave rise to protests nationwide. The financial impact of the virus, and generations of systemic oppression, are devastating. We are in the midst of two pandemics. One is emergent—COVID-19. The other is centuries old—racism and inequity. And as is always the case, both pandemics are hardest felt by the poor, oppressed and disenfranchised members of our society.

Despite what can be overwhelming emotions so many of us are experiencing, there is a path forward. Our challenge as a profession, and as decent human beings, is to respond to the impact of both pandemics. And that is happening.

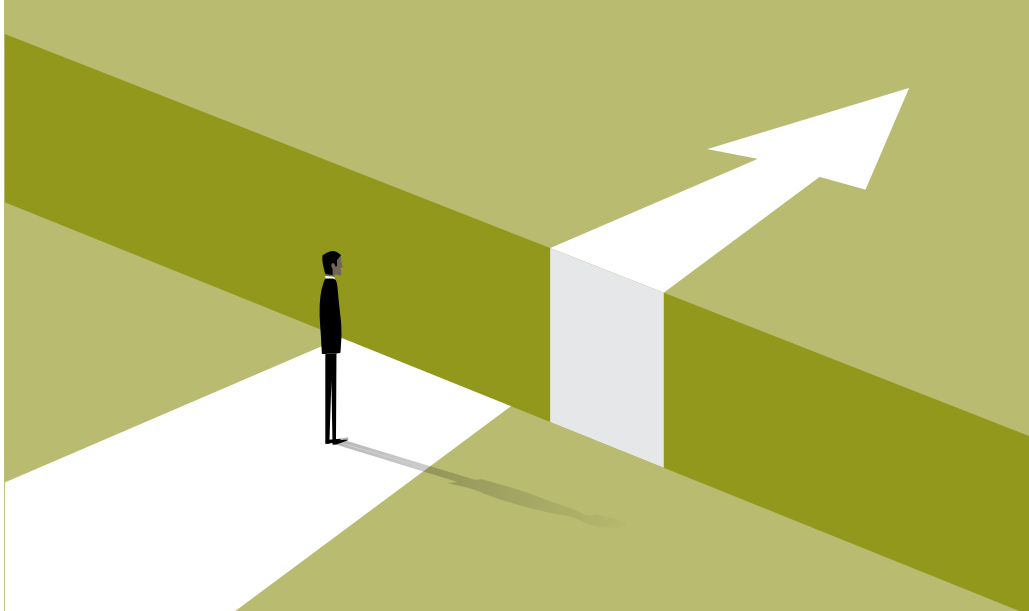
Although obscured by a host of bad news, there are powerful stories of compassion, kindness and leadership for good. Some of those stories are in this issue of *The Stillman*. And you know countless more yourselves. We are among the thousands across our country who have donated, volunteered or otherwise stepped forward to help those in need, and to call attention to injustice.

The twin pandemics are a call to create a more inclusive and just society. And social work is answering that call. Many have taken to the protest to support a Black Lives Matter movement that challenges us as individuals and institutions to explore our own and society's contributions to systemic oppression and racism. Despite reports to the contrary, the country has not descended into violence. In fact, a recent study found that 93 percent of all protests this spring and summer were nonviolent.

Ruth Bader Ginsberg invited us to “Fight for the things that you care about but do it in a way that will lead others to join you.” I encourage you to invite others to join us all in the possibility of a different world. Let me know what advocacy you've been engaged in. Your commitment to good never ceases to amaze me.

Best Wishes,

Tom Gregoire, MSW, PhD
Dean



COLLEGE COMBATS COVID-19, CALLS FOR RECONCILIATION

The College of Social Work exudes empathy and compassion. Embeds them in college culture and infuses its curriculum with them. When the confluence of COVID-19 and racial reconciliation pandemics hit, faculty, staff and students stepped up to show who they are and what they're made of to transform how learning occurs.

Just after the winter holidays, the college began creating scenarios for a vastly different world, one hampered by a potential virus. When the university closed in March, the college pivoted to continue high-quality instruction delivered via technology.

Faculty and Educational Technology staff quickly revamped undergraduate and doctoral courses to join the master's degree, which was offered both online and face to face. Trainings were created for Zoom, a video conferencing system, and Carmen, the university's learning management system. Faculty had been encouraged to move instructional content and grades into Carmen for student convenience in case of illness or a missed class, so many were comfortable with this technology. Other faculty substituted in-person classes with Zoom classes. Teaching supports were created and new tools were introduced, like Padlet, an interactive sticky note, and a tool for making quizzes, according to Byron Roush, director of educational technology.

"We're not going back," says Kelley Cupp, instructional designer. "I think our future is going to hold a lot more creative ideas and open mindedness to approaches to learning."

"This is a critical juncture where we can create national leaders for social change."

— KATHY LECHMAN

The push for technology has some additional benefits, including the college developing a robust technology-based care (telehealth) training module this summer that is available to all students entering field placement. The college, led by its Field Education team and assistant professor Lauren McInroy, has increased students' options for virtual work and are developing a suite of simulation programming so students can apply the knowledge they are acquiring. The college is using blended learning this fall with the majority of its 252 sections being offered on a fully remote basis.

As the country erupted in a loud call for racial reconciliation, the college was also already examining its curriculum—asking questions about what is taught and how it is taught. Conversations among faculty and students about the importance of an inclusive curriculum are taking place, as well as preparations for an extensive curriculum review and renewal process. Open, honest convenings and spaces were created for faculty and students to share ideas for a more inclusive curriculum, according to Ramona Denby-Brinson, professor and associate dean for academic affairs.

Moving this quickly took daily communications, long hours, and the skills and talents of compassionate people, she says. "But what we did not anticipate, which is so good and so rich, was that as we moved forward, we supported one another with healthy interpersonal relationships. We checked in with one another honoring how vulnerable we are in these hard conversations. The college has always done a good job and now we see this in action because it's sustained in our culture, built into the fabric of who we are."

All three program directors—Mo-Yee Lee, PhD program, Jennie Babcock, undergraduate program, and Theresa Hazelwood, MSW program, worked with faculty and community instructors and the Educational Technology team to move courses online.

"Many students are also caregivers for children or other family members and preferred the safety of home learning as the pandemic hit. The Educational Technology team helped us fine-tune the online program, and working with the curriculum director and faculty, we were able to share tips and resources. For our community lecturers, it lessened their stress and allowed them to feed off each other as we worked," says Hazelwood.

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity is in the process of offering a group studies course jointly with the college. Dr. Kathy Lechman, associate director of the institute, sees exciting opportunities arising.

"This is a critical juncture where we can create national leaders for social change. Most people were horrified about what happened to George Floyd and if some positive things can come from that tragedy, people may realize that while their life seems fine, it's not fine for everyone."

The institute conducts research and provides training in areas such as implicit bias, civic engagement, cultural humility and allyship. The Kirwan Institute and the college plan to expand their collaborative efforts to create a General Education course for the new "Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World" theme.

As events unfold in the United States, the college remains committed to continue adjusting the curriculum to meet the needs of today's world. ■



Mwanafunzi students (now current CSW alumni) and Co-Advisor LaVada Washington (center) attending the National Association of Black Social Workers Conference in Atlanta, April 2019.

BLACK STUDENT GROUP HELPS FUTURE SOCIAL WORKERS CARRY THE LOAD, LEAD OTHERS TOWARD CHANGE

“IT’S SO IMPORTANT to have organizations like Mwanafunzi for Black students. The oppression can be difficult to carry on your own,” says Derin Steward (MSW ’19), former Mwanafunzi president and mitigation specialist at the Office of the Ohio Public Defender.

Swahili for “student,” Mwanafunzi gives social work students of color a structure to exchange ideas, participate in and sponsor activities that provide academic support and serve as a resource. The organization strives for unity and cohesiveness while also allowing members to uplift, support and motivate each other as they continue to fight against racism and systems and practices that plague the Black community.

Mwanafunzi emerged during an earlier time of civil unrest. It was established during the 1970s, during which time Professor Charles O. Ross Jr. served as a faculty advisor for the organization. Ross was known as a candid critic of systemic issues within police departments across the country, racial profiling and excessive force toward blacks. Those who knew him said he was fearless during a time of great social upheavals and that his beliefs and actions inspired the next generation to speak up even when it might be unpopular to do so.

Never has the organization been more relevant and its racial lens more important than today.

In July, Mwanafunzi joined two key players in social work to host the webinar “Racism in Ohio social work: A conversation with the National Association of Social Workers and the National Association of Black Social Workers.” The Zoom event looked at social work from the inside and welcomed over 200 participants from various agencies across Ohio. More “courageous conversations” related to racism are slated for the fall as the organization continues to collaborate with NABSW and NASW.

“In Mwanafunzi, we continue doing the anti-racist work at our jobs, field placements and even in the classroom”

— DERIN STEWARD

“Connecting with NABSW and being a Mwanafunzi member has been wonderful,” says Mwanafunzi President and BSSW honors student Sly Worthy Jr. “It has not only given me a brave and safe space to express myself but a space where we can all enjoy and embrace one another.”

In June, Worthy, joined by Mwanafunzi members Raven Lynch and Crystal Vincent, directed a co-facilitated student and faculty panel that tackled tough questions and challenged the audience to join in conversation that pushed comfort levels and led to impassioned ideas. This student-led Zoom conversation for all college faculty, staff and students addressed racism and microaggressions, allowing students to discuss the outpouring of global support to end racial violence, systematic racism and oppressive systems. More than 100 people participated, and Dr. Michelle Kaiser and Advocacy Director Steve David served as faculty and staff facilitators.

Service projects on and off campus are part of Mwanafunzi’s mission, too. Serving as mentors for the Columbus Chapter of NABSW, providing Thanksgiving dinners at Victory Homeless Shelter and gifting Christmas Stockings for children at Godman Guild are a few examples.

In February, Mwanafunzi also partnered with the college’s Diversity Work Group to host conversations to amplify Black voices and experiences in honor and recognition of Black History Month. The topics included “Imposter Syndrome” led by Nekyla Hawkins (BSSW ’19), “History of Violence and Trauma in Communities of Color” led by Steward, “Racial Battle Fatigue: an Intersectional Lens,” led by Candace Cooper (MSW ’19), and “Hair, so what? Hair and Self-esteem in College Women” led by Jenee Lee (MSW ’19).

College staff members LaVada Washington and Bryanna Stigger serve as Mwanafunzi advisors.

“Black Lives Matter is so much more than calling out police brutality. The movement has shed light on the ways racism has been perpetuated throughout history and remains alive and well in our systems today,” says Steward. “There is systemic racism in our criminal justice, health care and education systems—and all other systems that affect our everyday lives. In Mwanafunzi, we continue doing the anti-racist work at our jobs, field placements and even in the classroom.” ■



As students returned to campus this fall, Dr. Ramona Denby-Brinson and CSW student worker Laurent Calero and others manned a welcome table in the Stillman Hall lobby to answer questions, provide directions and reinforce health precautions. Students received welcome kits complete with sanitizer, masks and a thermometer.

Campus stays safe despite COVID-19

OHIO STATE STUDENTS, staff and faculty were welcomed to campus with a mix of online, in-person and hybrid classes, multiple health and safety protocols, and a revised term schedule.

There was no autumn break or Thanksgiving break. Labor Day and Veterans Day holidays remained in place. Final exams are scheduled for December 7–11. No date or format has been announced for autumn commencement, typically held in mid-December.

“University leadership knew how vital in-person instruction is to providing a full academic experience, and we looked for scientifically sound ways to balance educational goals with policies and guidance that would best protect public health,” says Amy Fairchild, dean of Ohio State’s College of Public Health and leader of the group of experts who continue to analyze data and provide recommendations on keeping campus safe.

“We are constantly evaluating what approaches will best serve our students and broader community, understanding that our response will continue to evolve with the pandemic, and with additional scientific information about COVID-19,” she adds.

Personal protection equipment (PPE) kits, enhanced outdoor spaces, limited class sizes and additional cleaning of high-traffic areas are among the safety protocols implemented this term. Residence hall students received PPE kits as they moved in, and kits were provided free to all students, faculty and staff when they returned to campus. The kits include one disposable mask, two reusable masks, a thermometer, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.

All Ohio State community members were required to take the Buckeye Pledge to follow safe practices during the pandemic.

“Taking the training and pledge as a community represents our shared commitment that we are united in our

“University leadership knew how vital in-person instruction is to providing a full academic experience.”

– AMY FAIRCHILD

efforts to stay safe and healthy,” says Provost Bruce A. McPherson.

Additionally, six tents on campus allow outdoor classes that safely support creative courses like dance and theater.

The campus guidelines and requirements were created by the COVID-19 Transition Task Force and informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and other authorities. The university created a public dashboard providing daily updates at safeandhealthy.osu.edu/dashboard/measures-and-interpretations.

“Offering our students, staff, faculty and the public an easy-to-digest dashboard of information is critical to maintaining transparency about what is happening on and around campus, and we will continue to look for ways to refine and bolster the information found there,” Fairchild says. ■

CHANGING

WITH

THE

SOCIAL WORKERS' EFFORTS, VOICES RISE
IN RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC, PROTESTS

WORLD



Kayla Ratcliff grabbed the megaphone—quite the shocking move for the shy medical social worker—as she rallied the crowd around her. Ratcliff was originally tasked with logistics. But when one of her fellow leaders couldn't make the Black Lives Matter protest at the Ohio Statehouse, Ratcliff found her courage and her voice.

THIS MOMENT WAS TOO IMPORTANT not to be heard.

"Our message for this march was to recognize the countless numbers of Black lives who have been lost to police brutality and show our support for racial justice," says Ratcliff (BSW '13, MSW '19), who planned the June 27 social worker-specific protest with fellow 2019 MSW graduates Lauren Hitchens and Dalia Gheith. "We wanted to bring our role as social workers to the forefront, that we are agents of change and we have an obligation to use our voices to speak out against injustice."

George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis was the tinder for a racial justice awakening. Social workers, already engaged in erasing disparities, began asking themselves what more they could and should be doing. Throw in a worldwide contagion, and the questions that emerged forced social workers and the College of Social Work to rethink how to maintain their meaningful community connections.

"We care deeply and spend a great deal of time thinking about how people are, how they feel and how to promote change. That's sort of our obsession," says Dean Tom Gregoire, who praised the

hard work of the college's faculty, staff, program directors and students in facing 2020's challenges.

"Nobody has been in the moment we're currently in together. There's no map or no right next thing to do. But all that uncertainty can inspire a lot of creativity and willingness," Gregoire adds. And so it did.

LIFE ADJUSTMENT

After the pandemic shut down most human contact, the LiFEsports Initiative (Learning in Fitness and Education through Sports) tried to delay its annual summer camps with the hope that in-person activities could still happen.

When it was apparent the camps for 650 disadvantaged youth would be difficult to stage, Dr. Dawn Anderson-Butcher, professor and executive director of LiFEsports Teaching/Research; Rebecca Wade-Mdivanian, director of operations;

and Dr. Jerry Davis, director of staff development in the athletic department and executive director of LiFEsports Service/Outreach, along with their partners, refused to give up.

“The camps are a community resource, teaching kids life skills, teamwork and leadership skills in a safe, engaging space. That’s not something you want to put a cork in for a year,” Anderson-Butcher says. In fact, LiFEsports was recognized by The Aspen Institute as a 2020 Project Play Champion for supporting its vision for youth development.

Wade-Mdivanian was talking to Stephanie Infante, president of one of LiFEsports’ top funders, the Lindy Infante Foundation (LIF), about how she made sure her kids had sporting equipment to keep them busy. What if they could do the same for the campers while providing virtual guidance?

“It hit me that many families wouldn’t have that privilege of extra income to spare,” Wade-Mdivanian says. They feverishly raised \$90,000 for their new Sport in a Bag idea so 500 kids could virtually participate. Kids got their own bag of equipment to use at home (a football, basketball, jump

rope or soccer ball). Zumba, dance and healthy lifestyle lessons were part of the curriculum, and the kids created their own TikTok videos—a new element for the camp.

LIF paid for the equipment, which Davis got at cost from Nike. Other key funders included the City of Columbus, Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority, Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board of Franklin County, the Northwoods Foundation, Continental Realty, Pitney Bowes Presort Services, Ohio 4-H and individual donors.

LiFEsports’ Beatty Community Center camp, which began last year because youth were being turned away from the popular Ohio State campus-based camp, remained an in-person event. Forty-eight kids (down from 80 due to COVID-19) followed Columbus Public Health guidelines, and team activities were individualized to keep it safe. Kids had access to two meals each day and competed in the finale LiFEsports Games.

For the at-home campers, healthy boxed food was provided bi-weekly so they wouldn’t miss any meals. Food and equipment pickup was contactless, and the bags included an at-home

instructional guide to go along with the online camp programming. The more the campers participated, the more points they earned toward prizes such as T-shirts, hats and medals.

Campers practiced using sport instructional videos on a kid-friendly interface, and twice a week the kids would get on Zoom for Chalk Talk social skill sessions to keep them engaged. Ohio State sports celebrities hosted Zoom chats to motivate the kids. They included former Buckeye Football Coach Urban Meyer, two-time WNBA champion and three-time Olympic gold medalist Katie Smith (who helped distribute equipment to 200 families), and Utah Jazz guard Mike Conley Jr., a three-time NBA Sportsmanship Award winner. Parents and caregivers also had sessions.

The virtual camp expanded LiFEsports’ reach. Because proximity to Ohio State often determines participation, this was the first year any campers from Southwestern City Schools, about 20 miles south of main campus, participated. Keeping kids involved in person will always be important, but Anderson-Butcher, Wade-Mdivanian and Davis are considering a virtual element as well because of Sport in a Bag’s success.

About 60 percent of the kids who signed up participated regularly. Some of the older kids were lost to other electronic entertainment, and 10- to 12-year-olds were the most engaged.



“WE CARE DEEPLY AND SPEND A GREAT DEAL OF TIME THINKING ABOUT HOW PEOPLE ARE, HOW THEY FEEL AND HOW TO PROMOTE CHANGE. THAT’S SORT OF OUR OBSESSION.”

— TOM GREGOIRE

"We learned that everything that happens at in-person camp, happens at virtual camp, just in a slightly different format," Wade-Mdivanian says. "Relationships were built, lessons learned and friendships made."

Alongside the launch of Sport in a Bag, LiFEsports developed an academic pilot in partnership with United Way of Central Ohio, the City of Columbus and Columbus City Schools to see if second-graders could improve their academic and social skills before becoming third-graders. The One Linden Student Success Initiative worked with Hamilton and Windsor STEM academies to give 20 students the sports equipment as well as a Chromebook and WiFi hotspot to keep.

While attending the virtual sports camp, kids also had two days of academic activities that included live instructor and parent sessions. Only one student dropped out and another continued to participate even after moving to Virginia.

"They got more intensive intervention and removed all these barriers around technology," says Anderson-Butcher, who expects a full evaluation of the pilot later this year. The LiFEsports team will also be evaluating Sport in a Bag and the Beatty program data to continue researching outcomes from these efforts.

PARTICIPATING POLITICALLY

Hours after Ratcliff and the other social workers started chanting in front of the statehouse, Stephen Moore arrived with 17 high school students from LiFEsports' Youth Leadership Academy (YLA).

After the teens graduate from the sports camps, they meet twice a month in YLA. In essence, it's still teamwork, coupled with college readiness, leadership skills and career and professional development. Many students return to assist the camps as junior counselors.

In this instance, they wanted to add their voices to the call for social justice. They did all the work to plan and communicate their participation in the June 27 International March for Black Lives, sponsored by the Columbus African Council (CAC).

Some students handed out food and water to protestors; others took part in the march, and the CAC recognized their presence on the microphone and in a visit to their table.

"It's inspiring to see them grow up and take ownership in what they believe to be what's right," says Moore, the YLA program

director. "They formed their own opinions and came collectively together as a team to make an impact on the Columbus community and hopefully the world."

A VOCAL LIFELINE

Katie White (MSW '20), the director of the college's Age-Friendly Columbus and Franklin County initiative, remembers feeling concerned as soon as Ohio Governor Mike DeWine began locking down the state on March 12. What would happen to an already-isolated older adult population needing to protect itself from COVID-19?

On Friday the 13th, White met with Christine Happel (MSW '14), Clintonville-Beechwood Community Resources Center (CRC) program director, and the two hashed out a plan to provide immediate support.

By March 19, they were up and running with funding from the Columbus City Council and the Franklin County Office on Aging. Working with many others, they marshalled 63 College of Social Work students, faculty and staff to launch the Friendly Phone Line. And the college's students, faculty, staff and alumni were

"IT HIT ME THAT MANY FAMILIES WOULDN'T HAVE THAT PRIVILEGE OF EXTRA INCOME TO SPARE."

— REBECCA WADE-MDIVANIAN



among the 136 CRC volunteers to pack and distribute 200 necessity bags filled with shelf-stable food, toiletries and toilet paper weekly.

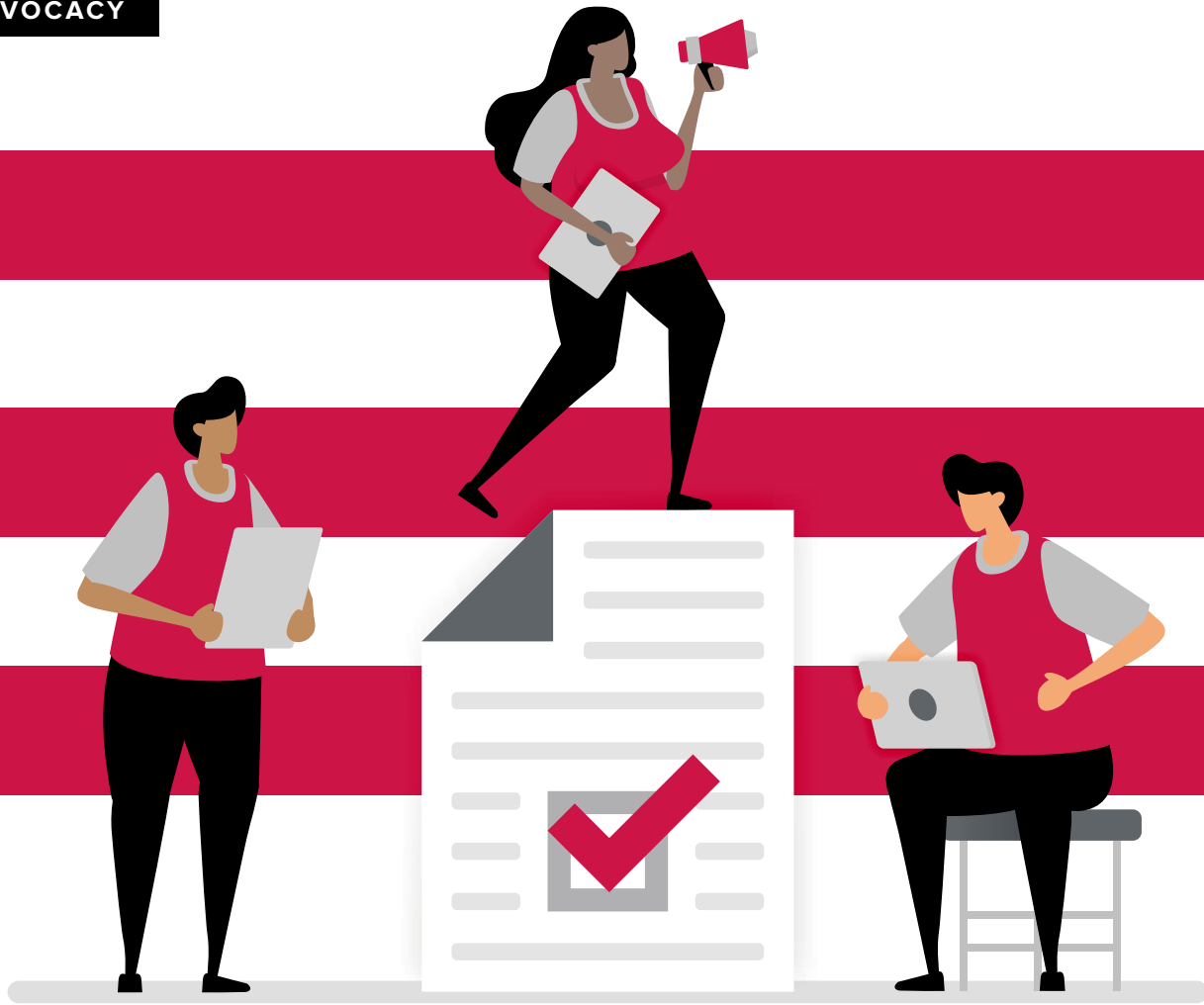
"We took a quick scan in the community to figure out what other organizations were doing," White says. "We wanted to make sure we didn't duplicate efforts, so we honed in on older adults' social isolation and the fact they weren't going to the grocery store."

Students, mostly graduate-level with previous one-on-one consultation experience, became seniors' social lifelines over the phone. Among the first calls, a gentleman shared how fearful he was because the virus was such a large-scale, invisible enemy.

The students, supervised by Age-Friendly Columbus Assistant Director Marisa Sheldon (BSSW '10, MSW '11), offered older adults conversation and connection, not case management or counseling. All students went through suicide prevention training and could transfer problematic calls to LISWs, who were always available.

"There is a decrease in students who want to work in aging, and not many of the

Continued, pg. 15



Social workers count!

ENGAGING THE 2020 CENSUS

THE 2020 CENSUS WILL help shape the next decade in America. From political representation to billions of dollars in federal funding, engaging the Census was a critical opportunity for social workers and human service agencies to lay a strong foundation for their work going forward. Recognizing this opportunity, the College of Social Work stepped in to help get out the count.

Census data helps determine how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into states and communities each year. This looks like \$675 billion across the country, and over \$33 billion for the state of Ohio to support things like Medicaid, SNAP, housing vouchers and Head Start. If social workers want communities to have access to crucial health- and safety-net programs, they

need an accurate count. Local, state and federal boundaries for representation are also drawn using Census data, and Congressional representation is apportioned using these numbers.

Despite its importance for communities across the country, the 2020 Census process was also highly politicized. The U.S. Supreme Court blocked a citizenship question from being added to the Census after documents surfaced that revealed political operatives wanted to add this question to suppress the political representation of people of color. Political appointment and operational changes have also threatened the process throughout.

Recognizing the importance and political turmoil around the Census, the College of Social Work stepped in to offer guidance and clarity to practitioners whose

work will be impacted by the 2020 count for the next 10 years. The college collaborated with partners from the Ohio Census Advocacy Coalition and All On The Line to host an in-person workshop in February on how to engage agencies and clients in completing the Census.

As the pandemic surfaced in Ohio, the college's Educational Technology team worked with these partners and a grant from the City of Columbus to develop a self-paced, online continuing education training so providers could obtain this knowledge virtually. In the end, over 200 social workers completed these trainings to help them make sure the people they work with are counted and have access to the resources and representation they are entitled to for the next decade. ■

PARENTAL STRESS IS UP AND SO IS PUNITIVE PARENTING

Parents use aggressive discipline more frequently later in the day during COVID-19 stay-at-home orders in Central Ohio.



1.22 times more likely at 3 p.m.



1.43 times more likely at 9 p.m.

when compared to the morning survey

A recent study led by faculty in the College of Social Work revealed proof of what many thought: the pandemic is causing higher levels of stress among parents. Even more troubling, the evidence shows more use of punitive parenting—more yelling, stricter punishments—with these higher stress levels.

The study included more than 300 parents who self-reported their behavior three separate times each day via an application on their smart phone for a period of six weeks. Parents were asked to report their feelings of stress and the parenting behaviors they used with their children at 10 a.m., 3 p.m., and 9 p.m. The study was designed and approved prior to the outbreak of COVID-19.

“It was easy for us to move the study online,” explains Bridget Freisthler, PhD, professor in the College of Social Work, associate dean for Research and Faculty Development and principal investigator. “We see lots of stress right now due to the changes caused by the pandemic. I want to tell people, don’t worry about more screen time [for the kids] if it helps your overall ability to cope with the changes.”

Freisthler and her research colleagues are concerned about the potential increase of child abuse during the pandemic. People who are mandated to report abuse such as teachers, doctors and nurses have less contact with children.

“We need to check in with parents,” says Freisthler. She also noted health care changes that may be permanent, such as more telehealth services. Health care professionals will need to learn how to recognize signs of at-risk children from a distance.

The study also showed that problematic parenting increases with alcohol use.

“We see lots of stress right now due to the changes caused by the pandemic.”

— BRIDGET FREISTHLER

“We all see the jokes and memes on social media about coping [with the pandemic] with a glass of wine,” she says. “We know that alcohol consumption is up and all jokes aside, this may be a real concern.”

There is a correlation with an increase in alcohol use and an increase in punitive punishment for children in the home. The good news is a correlation between leaving the house and a decrease in stress.

“A change in venue decreases stress,” says Freisthler. “I want to encourage parents to get out of the house and take a walk every day. Or just go for a drive. These things will help.” ■

CSW RESEARCH HITS NEW HEIGHTS

In the past eight years, research funding in the College of Social Work has increased from about \$400,000 to more than \$7 million.

“We are particularly proud of some major grants from the National Institutes of Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation,” says Bridget Freisthler, PhD, professor and associate dean for Research and Faculty Development.

Freisthler was appointed as the college’s associate dean for research in 2017.

“Our faculty love research, but they need support,” Freisthler says. She has developed a team that provides dedicated grant development support including copy editing and outside reviews to offer comments and suggestions that strengthen proposals.

“We have definite research strengths in the college in aging and older adults, as well as child welfare and substance abuse issues,” Freisthler says. “The newest area is food insecurity.”

The college is also an important participant in the Ohio Consortium of the National Institutes of Health Helping to End Addiction Long-term Initiative, or NIH HEAL, a national interdisciplinary \$65 million grant to reduce opioid overdose deaths. Launched in April 2018, the initiative will improve prevention and treatment strategies for opioid misuse and addiction and enhance pain management. (More information about Ohio State participants and other members of the Ohio Consortium is available at <https://news.osu.edu/ohio-state-led-consortium-aims-to-reduce-opioid-deaths-by-40-percent>.)

“Much of the research underway in the college is community-based participatory research,” adds Freisthler. “We have other faculty who are looking more theoretically at broader patterns of people’s behavior. They are trying to understand the underlying mechanisms.”

🔗 **TO LEARN MORE** about the research being conducted at the college, visit <https://csw.osu.edu/research/research-news-events>.



DEAN GREGOIRE APPOINTED TO UNIVERSITY'S RACISM TASK FORCE

ON JUNE 10, 2020, outgoing Ohio State President Michael V. Drake announced the creation of the Task Force on Racism and Racial Inequities, led by Dr. James L. Moore III, vice provost for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer, and Dr. Tom Gregoire, dean of the College of Social Work. Charged with examining racism and racial injustice across the university, the task force will make specific recommendations for changes to policies, processes and practices to make The Ohio State University an equitable institution.

Since its inception, the task force has recruited a diverse group of 15 faculty, staff and students to work toward a more equitable Ohio State. From day one, current President Kristina M. Johnson has been a stalwart supporter. She is a vocal advocate for social justice and racial equality, as is Gregoire. Over the past five years, he has been openly vocal and active on social media calling attention to the deaths and murders of black and brown men and women. He was a leader when many others were unsure of the avenues they could take.

Under Gregoire's leadership, the College of Social Work has made significant strides to increase the diversity

of its students, staff and faculty. The college has been intentional and collaborative in efforts to recruit and retain faculty and staff of color and to enroll and graduate students who are racially and ethnically diverse. For example, 45 percent of its tenure-track professors are people of color.

Additionally, 29 percent of the college's incoming MSW class are students of color; about 40 percent of its Columbus campus BSSW students identify as first generation, and 35 percent of BSSW students are underrepresented minorities.

The college has strong and trusted alliances with both internal community partners (i.e., Ohio State's Office of Diversity and Inclusion) and external community partners (i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities—HBCUs and Hispanic Serving Institutions—HSIs). These continue to be valued partnerships and the college remains committed to strengthening educational access and creating inclusive learning environments.

For a number of years the college has collaborated with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to sponsor speaker's series addressing important topics on race and equity including Dr. Ibram Kendi in 2018 and Rev. William Barber in 2020.

Also consistent with its tradition of collaborating with other campus units to provide learning opportunities for students, faculty and staff, the college is working to create and spread a climate of anti-racism which includes developing a course, "Becoming Anti-racist," to be offered to juniors, seniors and graduate students.

Beginning spring 2021, this course will explore an intersecting approach to unpacking race, cognition and structural racism with an emphasis on civic engagement, race-based trauma and healing, and becoming anti-racist. It will be facilitated by College of Social Work faculty and staff, Ohio State's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, and Ohio Voice, a non-partisan organization dedicated to providing resources and support to nonprofits working in civic and political engagement.

Additionally, the college's program offices, faculty and chief diversity officer are developing an anti-racism challenge involving a cross-sector of the college community in which growth opportunities spawned by joining to read, reflect and engage in action, will be promoted. Likewise, one of the college's faculty health experts, Dr. Lisa Raiz, co-hosted Race, Health, and Health Care, a seminar with the Ohio State's College of Medicine.

Many probably remember that Stillman Hall is centrally located on campus and is home to a bus stop. In 2016, Gregoire approved displaying a "Black Lives Matter" banner in front of the building. Never one to back down, he ensured that when it was stolen or vandalized, another went up.

It is this vision and leadership that will benefit the task force and position Ohio State as a leader in conversation and action on anti-racism, diversity and inclusion.

Gregoire believes the task force will discover, challenge and abolish institutional and personal practices and policies that perpetuate inequity. And he knows this is a life-long commitment—not a "one-and-done" solution.

"A successful task force will promote a conversation on race and equity that attracts those who have been on the sidelines thus far," says Gregoire. "An important outcome will be our ability to identify, challenge and change systemic practices and policies that build in disadvantage and bias." ■

Changing with the world

Continued from pg. 11

students had field placements with older adults before this,” Sheldon says. “With a doubling of our older adult population, we need experts in the field, and the students said it really opened their eyes.”

The CRC, which has a food bank affiliated with the Mid-Ohio Food Collective, filled the necessity bags with its regular deliveries, though the variety wasn’t always consistent. Happel and her colleagues would take regular trips to grocery stores to fill in any blanks, such as canned beans and fruit. After a request to the Ohio Lodging Association for help, toiletries poured in from hotels and motels around the county.

Both programs wrapped up on July 31 as other organizations handled the need (the Ohio Department on Aging and the American Association of Retired Persons both offer phone lines, grocery stores began hosting senior-only hours and other organizations are now delivering bags of shelf-stable food).

Students fielded 2,488 phone calls, totaling 148 hours of conversation, and 3,711 necessity bags delivered 48,622 pounds of food across 43 zip codes.

“Being lonely and isolated draws a mental toll on people,” Happel says. “Our ability to positively affect and help guide people through this shared struggle is invigorating in a way. It’s uplifting for social workers to creatively approach a problem.”

CREATING HEALTH EQUITY

While the Black community raises its national voice through protest, Lori Criss (BSSW ’91, MSW ’92), director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS), aims to amplify minority communities’ voices for better behavioral health outcomes.

The white population has long enjoyed better access to behavioral health services. The pandemic made that disparity more problematic because COVID-19 hit people of color especially hard. Coupled with racism’s chronic stress, the need to reduce health barriers has never been greater.

The good news, Criss says, is that DeWine is committed to erasing disparities. One administration initiative through OhioMHAS provides local racial and ethnic organizations \$1 million in grants to increase awareness and educate the public. With these funds, minorities living with or



(Left to right) Sharon Kreuz, Katie White (MSW '20) and Christine Happel (MSW '19) unload groceries to be delivered to older adults during COVID-19. From March to July, 48,622 pounds of food was dispatched to 43 zip codes.

recovering from addiction or mental illness are encouraged to share their stories within their local communities.

“Access is in many ways related to stigma, so empowering the voice of minority Ohioans with lived experience is an action we can take to decrease stigma and increase access to treatment,” Criss says. “These grants leverage tools and resources so everyday Ohioans can identify signs of mental health or problematic substance use.”

Overdoses and overdose deaths have been increasing among African American men in Ohio, so OhioMHAS is providing another \$30 million in federal funding through the State Opioid Response Program to help minority communities with prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery support. Funds go to local Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health boards or directly to behavioral health providers.

As few as 10 percent of those needing mental health or substance abuse treatment seek it, Criss says, and the pandemic threatened to shrink that number. OhioMHAS increased telehealth services and launched social media messaging to let Ohioans know it is OK to feel distressed and how to seek peer and professional help if needed.

“The public is really driving the conversation as they share fears, sadness and anxiety about COVID-19,” Criss says, “and that opened the door for us to make talking about mental health normal and to create pathways to help for addiction and mental illness.”

Finding help is as easy as a phone call or text. A trio of free, confidential 24-7 options is available, including:

- The Ohio Care Line (800/720-9616). Started in April, professionals provide emotional support, referrals and, sometimes, active rescues for emergency psychiatric episodes. Nearly 2,500 calls were received in the first four months.
- A crisis text line (Text 4HOPE to 741-741). Users—generally youth, high school, college-age and young adults—are connected to a trained counselor within a minute or two.
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800/273-8255).

Telehealth—a remote consultation by phone or videoconference with a behavioral health practitioner—also went from a convenience to a necessity. Criss says she expects it to remain a vital option going forward.

Also important during a crisis, no matter what form it takes: a social work education.

“Having that social work foundation helps me think about the dignity and value of each person and to consider their needs in the bigger context of society and the world around them,” Criss says. “It’s a helpful frame for me to bring to the planning and use of data to inform decisions but also to have that foundational value of social justice and human relationships.

“The quality of our relationships is going to help us have better outcomes for the people we are here to serve.” ■



A profession of hope

SOCIAL WORKERS IN OHIO should count themselves lucky. In a moment characterized by turmoil and uncertainty, they can turn to their professional association for bold and visionary leadership on the defining issues of our time. During the Coronavirus pandemic and Movement for Black Lives, the NASW Ohio Chapter has stepped forward as a resource, partner and convener for social workers across the state.

“We have offered practical resources for telehealth support for years, so we were able to respond quickly to get practical knowledge in the hands of people who never thought they were going to do telehealth,” says Colleen Dempsey (BSSW ’10, MSW ’12), practice associate at the NASW Ohio Chapter. “We also leaned into our responsibility to protect workers by hiring an attorney and getting a good FAQ on workers’ rights that was responsive at the moment.”

“Social workers need to get comfortable being uncomfortable. Even with those good intentions, we get bad outcomes.”

– PAT LYONS

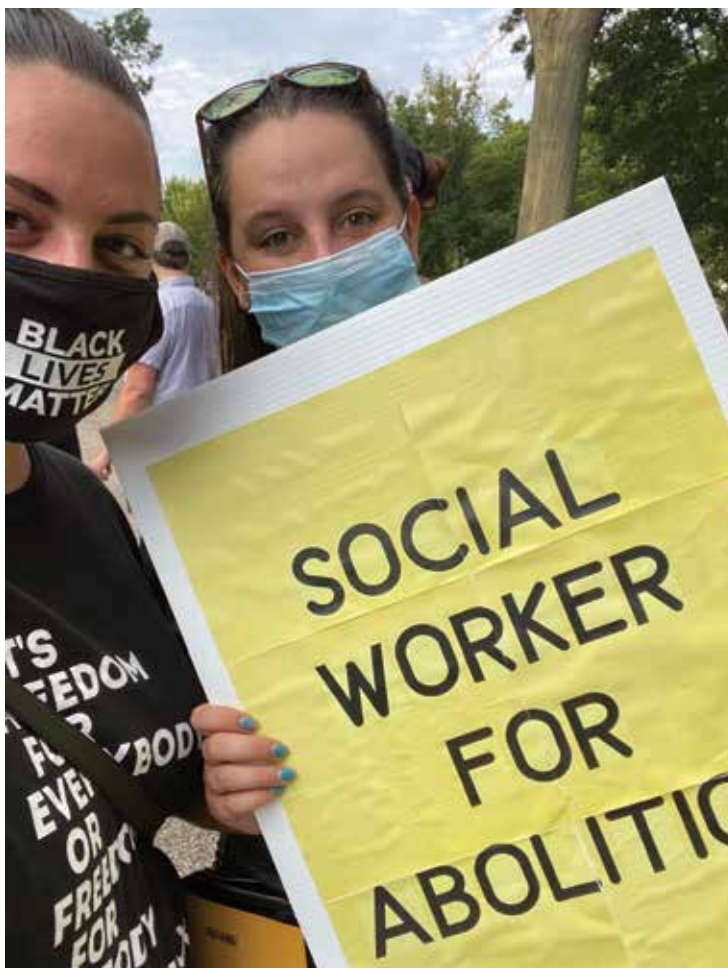
Development Associate Hannah Ware emphasized the chapter’s recent focus on worker rights as a key piece of their COVID-19 response.

“Yes, we’re frontline workers. Yes, we need to jump into action. But we are also workers,” says Ware. “Workers have few rights in many settings, but we have tools, such as unions, that we can use to our advantage.”

Executive Director Danielle Smith (BSSW ’08, MSW/MPA ’10) explained how supporting social workers requires coming together to protect both social workers and clients.

“Community strength in our profession is important for our wellbeing and our clients’ wellbeing,” she says. “By pooling our resources, we were able to hire an employment attorney, hire full-time staff to watch the licensing board and watch what the legislature does. We are often forgotten or overlooked for the value that we provide, but social workers are right there in the mix.”

NASW STAFF ALSO RECOGNIZES how supporting social workers also requires an uncomfortable look inward at how the profession itself perpetuates racist systems being called into question by the current social movement.



Dr. Pat Lyons (top left); Thousands gather during the 2020 March on Washington (bottom left), including Danielle Smith with sister Breann Smith (right).

“Social work needs to fully embrace the platform of social justice and anti-oppression as the core of what we do across practice areas,” says Smith. “Social work is so dominated by white folks, and social workers of color face the same racism in the profession that they do elsewhere.”

Dempsey points to social work ethics as the foundation for engaging with the current social uprising.

“The Code of Ethics is the foundation for our work. NASW’s Code of Ethics has historically taken up all the space in terms of what is taught in the classroom, and we are trying to share that space more,” she says. The National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) has a code of ethics that should be taught in schools too.”

To begin some of this work, the Columbus Chapter of the Association of Black Social Workers (Col. OH-ABSW) co-hosted a conversation with NASW to discuss the history of NABSW and current

racism in Ohio social work. Dr. Pat Lyons (MSW ‘88) of NABSW recognizes that the work needed to improve the profession will not be easy.

“Social workers should be very transparent about what is happening to Black lives,” says Lyons. “Those good advocates need to take a look at themselves. How much equity are you really willing to have?”

For Lyons, social work is part of an identity, not just a profession.

“My commitment to the field of social work is not based on a job. The goal is always to produce the healthiest outcomes and opportunities,” she says. “Social work as a discipline has professionalized ways of understanding how the field works. For example, the artificial boundary that we have trained people to set to not acknowledge a person outside of the therapeutic setting has never benefited communities of color.”

Lyons points out how the emotional reactions of white social workers to

difficult conversations can impede the progress needed to move these conversations to action and policy.

“Social workers need to get comfortable being uncomfortable. Even with those good intentions, we get bad outcomes,” Lyons adds. “Black and clinicians of color end up responding to the feelings of our colleagues instead of addressing the real problem of racism, marginalization, disparities and inequities.”

Given the need for discomfort, difficult conversations and deep changes, Smith ultimately sees the future of the social work profession as resting in the hands of social workers themselves.

“I keep coming back to social work as a profession of hope. This is a tool of the trade,” says Smith. “If you want a different social work, engage with NASW and NABSW. We have the privilege of being stewards of a long history of social change, but change in social work belongs to the social workers changing it.” ■



Internal conversations drive reflection, change

ABOUT A DOZEN African American and multiracial faculty and staff in the Zoom conference said absolutely nothing. And that was OK. Just having a space to be together and have a shared “I get it” moment was the needed respite as the country confronted racial tensions and the pandemic continued unabated.

Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Ramona Denby-Brinson established the virtual Brown Bags this summer to see how Black college faculty and staff were handling the stress, fears and uncertainties of the moment. It was part of a broader effort by the College of Social Work to have thought-provoking, empowering discussions where everyone finds their place and voice.

Dean Tom Gregoire opened the introspection with an all-college session. Virtual events and training for Black allies, a student-led Zoom, Denby-Brinson’s Brown Bag and a discussion around the book “How To Be an Antiracist” for the college’s Community Engagement Team soon followed.

Denby-Brinson says there is “no agenda, nothing scripted” in the virtual lunch, which moved to the first Fridays of each month. “Just having that collective strength, where you don’t have to explain anything, it’s a heart kind of connection,” she says.

Of course, discussions happen too. Poems are shared. So are community resources and events.

“...in the College of Social Work, these issues are addressed by an academic community prepared and willing to meet the challenges.”

— RAMONA DENBY-BRINSON

“While the world is experiencing two pandemics—COVID-19 and pronounced acts of racism heightened by racial division—in the College of Social Work, these issues are addressed by an academic community prepared and willing to meet the challenges,” Denby-Brinson says.

“People often think that because we are social workers, we are already anti-racist and operate through a social justice lens, but that’s not always the case... It takes a lot of continuous learning and unlearning to rise to that challenge.”

— RAVEN LYNCH

“Our college has cultivated a culture of respect, inclusion and a sense that our shared values motivate us to seek change within ourselves and among others. We value people over anything else. We are able to do this because our leadership prioritizes everyone’s health and wellbeing and respects that our college community might be struggling in this moment.”

That was apparent in 2016 when the college established a Diversity Work Group and appointed Dr. Carla Curtis chief diversity officer. Curtis retired last year, and Dr. Njeri Kagotho currently serves in this role that ensures diversity and inclusion is woven into the college’s fabric.

“Diversity is not a problem to be solved, it’s a way to be better as a community,” says Gregoire, adding it was important to create a separate office rather than just write diversity into the college’s strategic plan. Drs. Curtis and Kagotho expanded diversity among students, faculty and staff and ensured open dialogue at every Diversity Work Group meeting.

“The work of diversity belongs to all of us. And there’s no finish line; it’s always evolving,” Gregoire says.

College Advocacy Director Steve David, who also arrived in 2016, put together programs and talks this summer so non-Black faculty, staff and students could have honest discussions about affirming and lending their support.

Four hundred people attended a July screening and panel discussion of “True Justice: Bryan Stevenson’s Fight for Equality,” an HBO documentary about an Alabama attorney fighting racial inequality in the criminal justice system.



A pair of training sessions—“Introduction to Activism” and “Advocacy for Impact”—engaged people to connect with community organizers, contact elected representatives and be effective when discussing legislation. And white allies in the college held a Zoom meeting with Black colleagues to talk about working within their own networks without overpowering or derailing the Black Lives Matter message.

“White people need to do the work internally to show up for racial justice movements and to be affirming of the true effort going on,” says David.

It’s a lofty goal, to end racism and structural inequality, but the college’s open dialogue goes a long way toward continually seeding the effort, says Raven Lynch, a PhD candidate. She was part of a June 15 Zoom student panel which included master’s student Crystal Vincent, undergrad Sly Worthy Jr., David and Dr. Michelle Kaiser to discuss the college’s role in dismantling racism and what action steps students would like to see.

Out of that discussion, Gregoire says, a new course titled “Becoming Anti-racist” is being developed. Lynch said participants asked faculty and staff, but especially tenured faculty, to be accountable for addressing racism in the classroom and college.

“People often think that because we are social workers, we are already anti-racist and operate through a social justice lens, but that’s not always the case,” says Lynch. “It takes a lot of continuous learning and unlearning to rise to that challenge; it doesn’t come inherently with a job or field title.”

Director of Continuing Education Sara Friedman suggested the college’s Community Engagement team read Ibram X. Kendi’s 2019 bestseller “How to Be an Antiracist.” The hope, she says, is to better understand white privilege (nine of the 10 team members are white) and how to best use it as power for change in the Black community.

“I wanted to keep the conversations going,” says Friedman, who also plans to encourage people to vote and start racial justice conversations in what she described as her fairly conservative suburban community. “Oftentimes when injustices happen, everyone becomes enraged and things go back to normal. Having the book discussion is allowing us to do more than just be angry about it, and we see ways we can be influential.” ■

Stepping up and out!

WHEN TWO PANDEMICS HIT, THE SOCIAL WORK COMMUNITY HIT BACK

1 JESSE SCHROEDER

How do you react when facing stress? Jesse Schroeder (MSW '12) spoke to about 30 creatives at the Creative Mornings gathering via Zoom about how stress is ubiquitous now perhaps more than ever, and how to tell the difference between “good” and “bad” stress. Schroeder identified four elements of stress that can be intentionally used to reflect on experiences and adjust activities to create “good stress,” which leads to growth, purpose and transformation. Schroeder serves as an outpatient clinician at Milestone Counseling, LLC in Grove City, Ohio, and a deputy director at Franklin County Family and Children First Council in the Building Better Lives Trauma-Informed Initiative.

2 TOM GREGOIRE

Uncertain times. Unprecedented, trying times. The new normal. PPEs and social distancing. Amidst the blur of new terms and chaos, Dean Tom Gregoire offers peaceful meditation for the Ohio community during these times of unrest.

3 STEVE DAVID

Why do you vote? This is just one of the questions Advocacy Director Steve David is addressing via a video campaign that began this summer as part of his work with the college's Continuing Education department and the Nonpartisan Ohio Voter Outreach Committee. David also hosted virtual workshops titled “What can I do? An Intro to Activism” and “#DoSomething: Advocacy for Impact.” David designed these sessions for social workers and human service professionals to provide knowledge and tools to get involved with current social movements and to equip them as effective advocates for policy and legislative change.

The college also offered an online training course teaching social service providers about the importance of the 2020 Census for community resources and political representation.

4 FRANKIE JONES-HARRIS

On Saturday, May 30, CSW Communications Director Frankie Jones-Harris and daughter, Lindsay Harris, joined the thousands of protesters to first march in downtown Columbus to protest the killing of George Floyd on May 25.

5 STEWART BLAKE

A picture is worth a thousand words, and come rain or shine, Social Media and Communications Coordinator Stewart Blake is there to catch it all on camera. From protests and marches, to rallies and kick offs, Blake captures the depth and meaning of the college's activities with pristine accuracy. His work has undoubtedly impacted thousands of the college's social media followers.

6 SUE VILLILO

Sue Villilo (MSW '05) oversees Franklin County's domestic-violence shelter, LSS CHOICES for Victims of Domestic Violence. She says the health crisis has made seeking help from the shelter more difficult as families grapple with more time spent with abusers at home and organizations strive to continue offering services while adhering to social distancing guidelines. As assistant vice president of community-based services for Lutheran Social Services, which runs the shelter, Villilo says it has seen an ebb and flow in demand with an increase in April after the stay-at-home order ended, then another wave in July taking the shelter to capacity.

7 BRYANNA STIGGER

Bryanna Stigger, MSW outreach program coordinator, shares a message of self-care for all during COVID-19. “Be gentle with yourself. Check in with yourself to see what you need during this time of uncertainty and ask these questions: What do I need right now? How can I show myself love? Choose calm over chaos. Practice mindfulness and give yourself grace.”

8 MICHELLE KAISER

Tea Notes During Tough Times. That's how Dr. Michelle Kaiser is staying connected—and helping others connect as well—during the pandemics. An avid gardener, Kaiser plants a variety of seeds in her yard each spring. Then throughout the summer and fall, she harvests dry flowers, leaves and roots used in many traditional teas, such as chamomile, calendula, lemon balm, Krishna Tulsi (holy basil), Agastache Navajo sunset and lavender. Per a special request form she created, guests can request tea in several forms for themselves or someone else needing a lift. Through this meditative practice, Kaiser's hope is that each moment with a hot or cold cup of tea, which has been lovingly planted, tended, harvested and packed, will provide a moment of peace and reflection.

9 BRITTANY WARD

Brittany Ward, MSW online program manager and academic counselor, stopped by St. Stephen's Community House to volunteer in an environment that was safe and offered an immediate chance to make an impact for families across Ohio. Ward and her son, Jay, also showed support for Black Lives Matter and checked out the artwork downtown.



2020 ALUMNI HALL OF FAME



EDWARD R. CANDA
MSW '82, PHD '86
DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARD



GRETCHEN CLARK HAMMOND
MSW '00, PHD '11
DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARD



LUANN COOPERRIDER
BSSW '78
DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARD



STEPHEN MARSON
MSW '76
DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARD



CLEORA SMITH ROBERTS
MSW '64
DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARD
(POSTHUMOUS)



ELON SIMMS
MSW '10, BSSW '09
RECENT CAREER AWARD

Each year, the College of Social Work honors alumni who have gone above and beyond to make a difference in the world. These leaders were nominated by our alumni—more than 13,500 social workers living in the United States and abroad. Please join us in honoring these inspiring ambassadors.

ED CANDA is professor emeritus at the University of Kansas (KU) School of Social Welfare where he served as faculty from 1989 to 2019.

Ohio State Professor Daniel Lee mentored him in transcultural social work, and Professor Virginia Richardson chaired his dissertation framework for spiritually sensitive social work. Canda practiced primarily in the Southeast Asian refugee resettlement.

Canda first served as a professor at the University of Iowa's School of Social Work from 1986 to 1989. At KU, he established the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, which promotes respect for diverse religious and nonreligious perspectives. He was director of KU's PhD program from 2000–08.

Canda's extensive international collaborations focused on East Asia and Central Europe. He was a visiting professor or scholar in South Korea (1999, 2000) and Japan (2008, 2014, 2018), and co-taught nine study abroad courses in South Korea.

Among numerous publications, his most influential books are "Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice" and "Contemporary Human Behavior Theory."

In 2013, the Council on Social Work Education conferred Canda with the Significant Lifetime Achievement Award

for innovations about spiritual diversity and spiritual development.

GRETCHEN CLARK HAMMOND, PhD, MSW, LSW, LCDCIII, TTS, has worked in human services and addiction treatment since 1999.

In 2012, Clark Hammond became the CEO at Mighty Crow. Her company provides grant writing, development, training, project implementation, evaluation and other management services to organizations working in human service and public health.

Some of Clark Hammond's awards and recognition include: University Fellow, The Ohio State University Graduate School, 1999–2000; Administration Graduate of the Year, The Ohio State University College of Social Work, 2000; Outstanding Graduate Teaching

Associate, The Ohio State University College of Social Work, 2006; Outstanding Graduate Teaching Associate, The Ohio State University College of Social Work, 2007; Edward H. Schmidt Outstanding Young Alumni, University of Toledo, 2007; Outstanding Doctoral Student Teacher, The Ohio State University, 2008; Ernest E. Hayden Award, Ohio Association of Residential Recovery Services, 2008; Randall M. Dana Award of Excellence, Franklin County ADAMH Board Awards, 2011; and Outstanding Community Lecturer, Undergraduate Level, The Ohio State University, 2012.

Clark Hammond is a community lecturer in the College of Social Work and in the Glenn College of Public Affairs at Ohio State. She has also collaborated on projects with Ohio State's College of Public Health, College of Dentistry, and Center for Urban and Regional Analysis.

Judge **LUANN COOPERRIDER** was born and raised in Perry County, Ohio, and is the only daughter in a family of eight children. She is a graduate of Sheridan High School in Thornville, Ohio. After receiving her social work degree at Ohio State, Cooperrider attended law school at Capital University where she earned her Juris Doctorate and completed her graduate work at Loyola University in Rome.

On February 12, 1991, Cooperrider became a Perry County Probate-Juvenile judge, making her the first female judge in the county.

Her many honors include being peer-selected as president of the Ohio Association of Juvenile Judges and becoming a recipient of the Nettie Cronise Lutes Award, created by the Ohio State Bar Association Women in the Profession Section.

In 2008, Cooperrider was instrumental in starting a free legal clinic in Perry County, and in 2012, she received the Ohio State Bar Foundation's Outstanding Organization Award for her role in helping establish the clinic.

In 2017, she received the Capital University Law School Alumni Outstanding Service Award and Ohio State Newark's Distinguished Alumni Award.

Cooperrider has one son, Cooper Gillogly. She is a member of Thornville's Grace Lutheran Church, and in her spare time, enjoys bike riding, cross country skiing, boating and spending time with family.

After serving in social work positions in rehabilitation, **STEVE MARSON** was hired by the University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP) to establish a social work major and gain Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation.

In those days, MSWs were scarce and social workers with doctorates were hard to find. All degree granting programs had to be approved by the General Administration in Chapel Hill. After a year's work, the General Administration rejected the proposal due to the Carter Administration desegregation lawsuit. With Reagan's election, the social work major was immediately approved and CSWE accreditation followed.

In 1982, Marson earned his doctorate while simultaneously teaching four courses per semester, producing a CSWE self-study and gaining UNCP accreditation.

Marson has received many honors including the UNCP Scholarship Award (2000), student-nominated Outstanding Teaching Award, Student-Athletes Association Most Valuable Professor Award (2012, 2013), UNCP Community Service Award (2011).

In 2002, Marson founded the *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics* with 11,000 subscribers.

In 2019, Marson was awarded professor emeritus. He continues to publish articles, editorials and books as well as remain active on local, state and national boards.

CLEORA "CLEO" SMITH ROBERTS began her distinguished career after obtaining her MSW from Ohio State in 1964. Her career path was interrupted many times to accommodate her husband's career.

After graduation, Smith Roberts and her husband relocated to California in 1964, where she expanded her experience as a clinician and supervisor in individual and family counseling, developmental disability, child welfare and adoptions.

Smith Roberts and her family relocated to Michigan in 1972, where she accepted concurrent positions as field work instructor with the University of Michigan School of Social Work and adjunct instructor with Michigan State University's Department of Family Practice.

The family relocated to Atlanta where Smith Roberts earned her PhD from Georgia State University in 1986.

After moving to Tampa, Smith Roberts accepted a part-time position as social work researcher at Moffitt Cancer Center, the source of information and data for many of her publications. She also accepted a full-time faculty position at the University of South Florida (USF) School of Social Work. Smith Roberts was promoted to professor in 1999 and retired professor emerita in 2008.

In 2013, USF honored Smith Roberts with the Lifetime Achievement Award in Social Work Education.

ELON SIMMS currently serves as vice president of community impact at the Crane Group. In this role, he oversees the philanthropy program, community engagement, employee volunteerism and nonprofit board engagement. He is also charged with building the company's community impact investments.

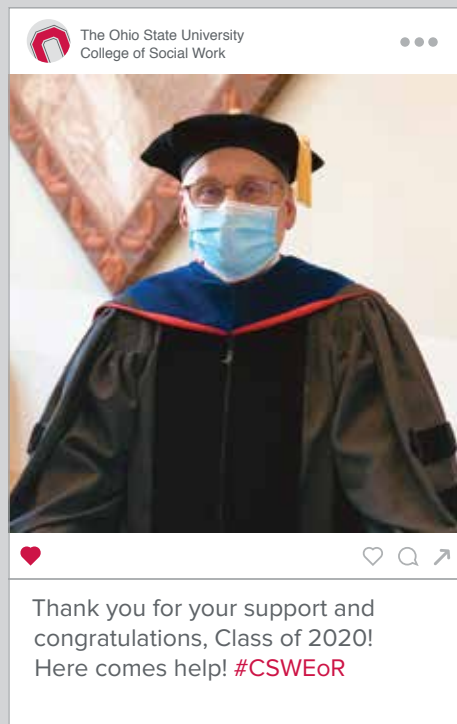
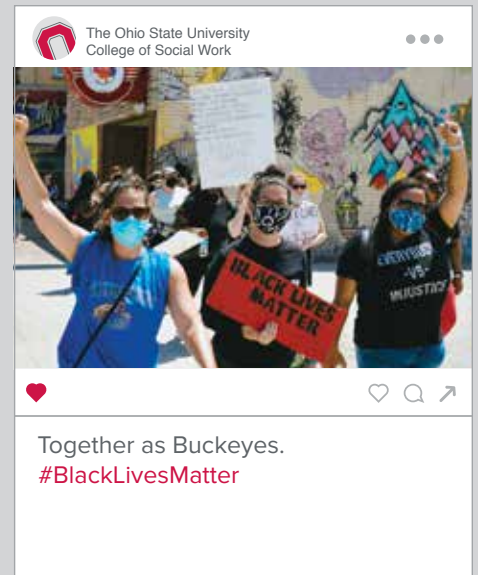
Simms began his career at Franklin County Children Services as a child welfare caseworker. He then joined The Ohio State University, serving as the director of field education in the College of Social Work. Additionally, Simms served as the director of community affairs for the City of Columbus where he oversaw initiatives of the Mayor's Office. His work specifically focused on education, faith-based initiatives, public safety, diversity and inclusion, community development, and health and human services.

Simms currently serves on the Franklin County Children Services Board, The Ohio State University College of Social Work Campaign Committee, Franklin University's Global Center for Healthcare Education Advisory Board, the United Way of Central Ohio Resource Development Committee, and the Reeb Avenue Center Advisory Council.

Because of this experience and deep commitment to the community, Simms was chosen to receive the *Columbus Business First's* 40 Under 40 Award, Class of 2020, and inducted into the Columbus CEO's 2021 Class of Future 50 leaders. ■

SOCIAL SPOTLIGHT

LIFE DURING THE PANDEMICS CAPTURED ON SOCIAL MEDIA





Lois Stepney



Bryanna Stigger



LaVada Washington

Black Girl Magic

SOCIAL WORK'S FUTURE LEADERS LEVEL UP

For three College of Social Work staffers, the 2020 academic year will offer a new journey with exciting promise. But it won't be one without growing challenges in a historic and tumultuous year for higher education.

The College of Social Work's Lois Stepney, Bryanna Stigger and LaVada Washington have all been accepted into leading university programs and are pursuing their doctorates.

Stepney serves as curriculum director, Stigger as MSW outreach program coordinator and Washington as field education coordinator, field liaison and community lecturer.

For Washington, acceptance into Ohio State's Multicultural and Equity Studies program represents much more than elevating her academic status.

"This doctorate in philosophy is important as I continue my professional journey in higher education as an African-American woman. I will use it to open doors for women who look like me," says Washington. "Women of color need to ensure we are in the room, at the table and even leading the conversation. This degree will be a gateway."

"Women of color need to ensure we are in the room, at the table and even leading the conversation. This degree will be a gateway."

—LAVADA WASHINGTON

Stepney, now a College of Social Work PhD student, describes her journey as an essential piece to continuing her "dream career" and finding new inspiration as a "lifelong learner."

"I can't take others further than where I've gone. It's very important that I model what it means to stretch oneself to the limits of personal development and to have what I call an exponential, positive impact for good in the world," says Stepney.

Stigger, accepted into Ohio State's College of Education and Human Ecology program, envisions this next chapter as a progression toward increasing diversity

BLACK GIRL MAGIC is a term created to celebrate the accomplishments, universal awesomeness and general amazingness of Black women. It is an expression of positivity, inspiration and empowerment.

Definition derived from *Dictionary.com* and *The Huffington Post*.

and fulfilling the anti-racist framework that is fundamental to improving society.

"One way to dismantle institutionalized racism is to decolonize curriculum and increase the number of diverse scholars and practitioners," says Stigger. "In the words of the incomparable Angela Davis, 'It is not enough to be non-racist; we must be anti-racist. In order to become an anti-racist society, we must work collectively to eradicate white privilege.'"

Stigger maintains the ultimate goal of one day becoming a university president. Currently, she serves as Licking County NAACP President and was recently named as honoree of *The Newark Advocate's* 20 Under 40.

And while each woman recognizes the importance of this degree for their own career, they also see the educational journey as unique and ever-changing for all.

"My grandfather's voice is in my head, telling me to 'Go get 'em, girl' meaning to pursue excellence and the highest academic achievement possible for a Black woman in America," Stepney remembers.

For all three, one thing's for sure: they will never be short on inspiration. ■

ALUMNI ACROSS THE



SUSAN DE LUCA

PHD '09

Austin, Texas

Current position:

Assistant professor at Steve Hicks School of Social Work; research associate at Population Research Center; core faculty at the Center for Women and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin

Current social work issue in your city:

Like most cities, COVID-19, with the intersection of homelessness, immigrant detainment and access to health care.

What have you or your city been doing in response to the two pandemics?

As a suicide prevention researcher, my work has centered around the social determinants of COVID-19 and potential increases in suicide rates in Austin, nationally and globally.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

All of the amazing people that make the CSW a wonderful, supportive and energizing community.



JOHN H. HAMILTON

MSW '79

Phoenix, Arizona

Current position:

Retired as vice president of programs for Big Brothers Big Sisters; volunteering as chair for Retired United, Valley of the Sun United Way affinity group; team captain of Vello; consultant for Helping Hands for Single Moms

Current social work issue in your city:

The same as most communities in America: racism/racial inequality and COVID-19.

What have you or your city been doing in response to the two pandemics?

My town of Gilbert requires masks in public settings. Our local school system is doing online learning until at least 10/1/20. Phoenix still has several groups protesting against racism and police brutality. I am searching for a group that addresses systemic racism and inequality through change to current discriminatory laws and policies.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

The excitement and comradery generated by like-minded people coming together in education and purpose at the college to change our world for the better. I also miss Ohio State football. Go Bucks!



JUAN PABLO CASIMIRO

BSSW '85

Miami, Florida

Current position:

Founder and CEO of BIZNOVATOR; founder and chairman of Casimiro Global Foundation

Current social work issue in your city:

Florida was one of the states with the highest rate of COVID-19 cases. A lot of time was spent trying to remedy this. The Miami-Dade County Public Schools' leadership took careful measures to restructure and redesign a back-to-school plan that protects all children and educators.

What have you or your city been doing in response to the two pandemics?

This summer, we had 15 BIZNOVATOR Camps booked. All were canceled due to the pandemic. We immediately shifted to an online learning model. To continue empowering children, while keeping them safe, we created the BIZNOVATOR Virtual BizTec Camp.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

I especially miss the warmth and attention I received from the CSW faculty. This time of year is special because it brings back memories of when I would prepare for my 11-hour drive to return to campus from New York City.



COUNTRY



JOHN MICHAEL "MIKE" SEELIG

MSW '76, MAPA '76

Mount Sterling, Kentucky

Current position:

Retired as dean of Caudill College of Humanities at Morehead State University; vice president of Academic Affairs at the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Current social work issue in your city:

Mount Sterling, Kentucky, is a progressive small town on the fringe of the Bluegrass and Appalachian regions. Opioid addiction, teen pregnancy and COVID-19 unemployment are present issues.

What have you or your city been doing in response to the two pandemics?

My wife, Dayna, and I have been wearing masks, social distancing (very difficult with two granddaughters ages seven and almost 12), and getting tested monthly at the public health department.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

I worked in the student services office at the college from 1977–83. It was an exciting and dynamic time since social work had just transitioned from a school to independent college status. I miss the daily interactions between administrators, faculty, staff and students, many of whom I think of often.



EBONY MCDONALD KIRKLAND

MSW '07

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Current position:

Veterans Integrated Service Network 4 Reentry Specialist with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; CEO of Kirkland Consults, LLC

Current social work issue in your city:

Reentry is a national issue, it's not just one in Pennsylvania. Finding affordable housing, employment and accessing medical and mental health care is complicated due to the stigma of incarceration.

What have you or your city been doing in response to the two pandemics?

Through Kirkland Consults, LLC, I also used my MBA education to create and implement COVID-19 policies and procedures for a community home program for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Navigating COVID-19, considering the health inequities among Blacks, along with the chronic racism exposed during this pandemic, has been challenging. As a mother of two Black boys, I ensure that I am setting an example by complying with masking and social distancing, but I also must have uncomfortable, yet important, conversations about race with my six- and three-year olds.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

Football game days and Raising Cane's.



GENE CASH JR.

MSW '05

Richmond, Virginia

Current position:

Founder and CEO of Counseling Alliance of Virginia, LLC

Current social work issue in your city:

Race matters: dismantling white supremacy in Charlottesville and Richmond, Virginia.

What have you or your city been doing in response to the two pandemics?

During COVID-19, we continued to serve our clients suffering from mental illness both virtually and in person and offered outpatient counseling for essential workers serving their communities. Regarding white supremacy and the urban lynching of George Floyd via police brutality, we have continued our Multi-Racial Racial Awareness and Sensitivity Group established after the civil unrest and white supremacy attack in Charlottesville, Virginia. We have also provided Race Matters workshops for the community with Dr. Kenneth Hardy, director of the Eklensberg Institute for Social Justice, and facilitated affinity groups for Black/African Americans called The Breathing Room, and Community Conversations with Zuri for youth.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

The academic atmosphere of learning and the mentorship from the MSW directors and professors.



“Getting admitted is the easy part, matriculating is the hard part. If there’s something I can do to help, it’s my responsibility to try.”

– CARLTON TRIOLO-SAPP

The power of possibility

CARLTON TRIOLO-SAPP ON FINDING YOUR SPACE IN SOCIAL WORK

“THERE HAVE TO BE MORE [people] like me. I’m not that original.”

Reflecting on his academic and professional journey, Carlton Triolo-Sapp (PhD ’99) lands on this simple statement, one you may not expect from somebody with such an impressive career path.

With a mother in social services, and a father who served as a minister, social work became a natural career path. From first-generation college student, to chief of staff (senior director, strategy, planning and operations, data science

and analytics) at Northwestern Mutual, Triolo-Sapp has found social work to be a bridge between the for- and non-profit sectors. After obtaining his PhD from Ohio State’s College of Social Work and spending a few years at the United Way, Triolo-Sapp transferred his skills and interests to the for-profit sector, working for companies like Spotify, Discover and Northwestern Mutual.

It was his for-profit experience that opened Triolo-Sapp’s eyes to how foundational social work is to all careers.

“There’s no activity where a social worker can’t find their place,” says Triolo-Sapp. “Follow your passions because you can find your space there.”

Triolo-Sapp’s success has led to much praise on his behalf; however, with every compliment, he’s reminded of countless others who could walk his same path if they had sufficient support. This spurred his motivation to start the Carlton Triolo-Sapp Scholarship at the College of Social Work.

“Getting admitted is the easy part, matriculating is the hard part,” he notes, reflecting on the struggles of first-generation students. “If there’s something I can do to help, it’s my responsibility to try.”

Triolo-Sapp’s approach to work and philanthropy follow a simple theme.

“It was really just someone taking the time to show me that it could be possible,” he says.

Triolo-Sapp remains humble about his ability to give back to students, something he never believed would be possible for him as a working professional.

“My eyes were opened to something I thought was beyond me,” he adds.

Beyond his philanthropic support, Triolo-Sapp has these words of encouragement for all students and social workers facing uncertain times.

“Look far and wide,” he says. “There’s a space for us. We just have to decide that we are going to pursue it.” ■



“This scholarship has not only lifted a massive weight off my shoulders but has also provided me with the opportunity to focus solely on school and my field placement.”

– ISABELLE BIGLIN, TWO-TIME BRUBAKER SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Dr. Inara Brubaker, left, poses with Provost Dr. Bruce McPherson and alumna Maggie Griffin (BSSW '17, MSW '19) at the College of Social Work's 2017 Scholarship Dinner.

A lasting impact

BELOVED DONOR INARA BRUBAKER TURNS TRAGEDY INTO SUPPORT

“It is worth remembering that the time of greatest gain in terms of wisdom and inner strength is often that of greatest difficulty.”
– Dalai Lama

THESE WORDS, while likely to resonate with many in the social work field, undoubtedly describe the strength and gift that was Dr. Inara Brubaker. Born in Latvia, Brubaker emigrated to the United States when she was just 12 years old. Soon after, she began an impressive

academic career, earning her BS in chemistry and mathematics from Ohio Northern University and her PhD in chemistry from The Ohio State University. Also, due to close family ties, Brubaker even babysat Provost Bruce McPherson when he was young.

Unfortunately, Brubaker's life was not without its challenges. In 1993, she lost both of her daughters in a tragic car accident. A decade later, she established the The Erika, Andra, and Inara Brubaker Endowed Scholarship Fund for Academic Excellence in Domestic Violence and Child Welfare in the College of Social Work. In addition to honoring her

daughters, Brubaker had a personal connection with domestic violence, which inspired her to create a scholarship for students planning to work in this field. “I feel indebted to Dr. Brubaker and the doors she opened for me. This scholarship has not only lifted a massive weight off my shoulders but has also provided me with the opportunity to focus solely on school and my field placement,” says Isabelle Biglin, a two-time Brubaker scholarship recipient. “As I progress into the field of social work, I aim to create a safe space for clients to be their authentic selves and to grow into the best versions of themselves.”

As one of the college's most loyal donors, Brubaker's generosity has already supported nearly 40 students at the College of Social Work, and her impact will surely be felt for decades to come. Beyond the scholarship, Brubaker's affection for students ran deep, as she was known to always ask about recipients, and even kept a few scholarship thank you letters close by.

Although Brubaker passed away in 2019, her kindness and legacy will live on through the lives and careers of social work students. They can be comforted and uplifted in the strength and purpose she found amongst tragedy. Her life is inspiration to leave the world better than we found it. ■

Social work goes on!

WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE PANDEMICS



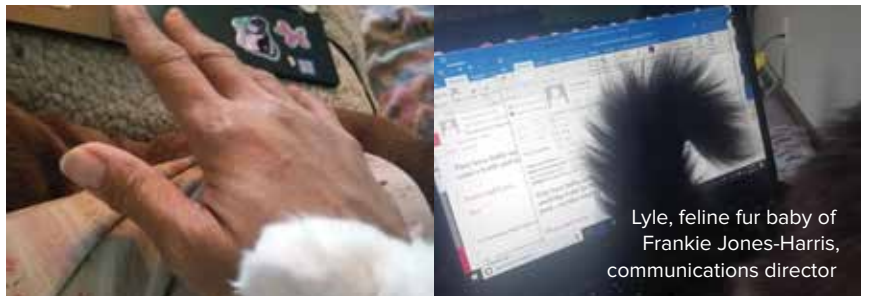
Autumn Davis
(BSSW '20)



Nicole Ramey
(BSSW '20)



BSSW student Erna Williams



Lyle, feline fur baby of
Frankie Jones-Harris,
communications director



Miki Castle (BSSW '20)



Harper, daughter
of Anna Stewart,
assistant director,
Field Education

TIME AND CHANGE

THE OHIO STATE CAMPAIGN



Rick Delaney



Cathy Levy



Dave Levy



Michael O'Sullivan



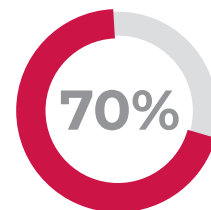
Elon Simms

Meet our team.

As we continue to advance and support our mission, students, and outreach, we also have the leadership and advocacy of our dynamic Time and Change Campaign Committee. Please take a moment to get to know the committee members—they will be an integrated part of our team as we embark on this transformative journey.

To read their full bios, please visit
go.osu.edu/committee-bios.

TIME AND CHANGE CAMPAIGN PROGRESS*



\$10,555,650 RAISED
OUT OF \$15 MILLION GOAL



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