

Social work goes to school

Making an impact in the
classroom and beyond



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

Ready to explore new avenues or advance your current career?

Our continuing education programs offer many opportunities to develop new skills, gain greater knowledge and move your career forward. Our instructors include the best minds in our community, state and nation, and trainings cover the topics most important to you.

Visit our website to learn more.

csw.osu.edu/continuing-education

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.

LEADERSHIP

David A. Jenkins, Dean
Michelle Johnson-
Motoyama
Lisa Durham
Eric Bode
Elayne M. Siegfried
Sharvari Karandikar
Jennie Babcock

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
AND WRITER

Frankie E. Jones-Harris

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Lynne M. Bonenberger

WRITERS

Adam King
Victoria Ellwood
Melissa Weber
Nate Hobbs
Elizabeth Tarry Alcalde
Alice Duncanson
Amy Prigge

DESIGN

Jason W. Duffield

PHOTOGRAPHY

Stewart Blake

WE'D LOVE TO
HEAR FROM YOU!

Letters to the editor
and alumni updates
can be sent to:

The Stillman
The Ohio State University
College of Social Work
301 Stillman Hall
1947 N. College Road
Columbus, OH 43210

614/292-5300
theStillman@osu.edu



@osucsw
csw.osu.edu



COVER STORY

10 Transforming schools, inside and out

College of Social Work alums are making a difference in the lives of students across area schools.

FEATURES

6 Advocating from the administrative suite

There's micro social work and then there's macro social work, which is what Amber Lasseigne (BSSW '03, MSW '04) practices on a very large scale.

7 A way to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline

An incident in high school led Antwan Woods to the path he's on now as he fights to keep students of color out of the school-to-prison pipeline.

16 CAYCI: Collaboration is key to supporting youth

CAYCI is a hub for positive youth development, school social work, youth sport and recreation, and family-school-community partnerships.

18 The power of collaboration

Learning has improved steadily in recent years at Hamilton STEM Academy in the Linden area of Columbus.

24 Field placements and internships benefit everyone

Seven of our alums show what it means to be part of a team.

ALSO INSIDE

NOTE FROM THE DEAN..... 4
PANDEMIC STUDY..... 5
ALUMNI HALL OF FAME..... 8
YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM..... 13
VALUABLE CONNECTIONS..... 19

BACK TO SCHOOL..... 20
DUBLIN INITIATIVE..... 22
ALUMNI ACROSS THE COUNTRY... 30
DONOR SPOTLIGHT 32
SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT..... 35



A note from the dean

Greetings, College of Social Work alumni and friends! I am pleased to share this fall edition of *The Stillman* with you.

My first year as dean has been a productive one, and I am thrilled about the great things happening in our college. One of my highlights has been meeting many of you and learning about your outstanding accomplishments. It is impressive seeing the positive ways you are changing Columbus, the state of Ohio and beyond.

One of our biggest accomplishments this year was hiring six tenure-track faculty and four of our first clinical faculty members. The clinical faculty members are our expert teachers and will help keep our curriculum nimble and current. Several folks have moved into new administrative roles, and we have created a few new positions that will help us focus on future needs. Our faculty's research, as well as the great work in our centers, continues to make our campus, our communities and systems of care even better. I was thrilled to join our D.C. Advocacy Immersion Program this year and watch our students meet with their elected officials. They prepared well, and their stories were impactful. This spring, the College of Social Work took center stage and swept the NASW-OH awards, including the Lifetime Achievement Award for our dean emeritus, Dr. Tom Gregoire. These are just a few examples of a successful year for the College of Social Work!

In this issue, you will enjoy reading about how social workers are thriving in school settings and their impact on the education system, our children

“It is impressive seeing the positive ways you are changing Columbus, the state of Ohio and beyond.”

and communities. You will learn about four graduates whose lives have intertwined throughout their educational and professional careers and how they have inspired and mentored each other along the way. There also are results from a fascinating study that outlines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on more than 13,000 health care professionals.

We are well into an exciting and busy academic year that requires our focus, passion and commitment. One of our most important initiatives ahead is to complete our strategic planning process this semester and develop a robust and innovative way for us to move forward together. I anticipate we will have another great year of teaching our students, conducting groundbreaking research, collaborating on important initiatives and learning about your successes.

Feel free to send an email to jenkins.1443@osu.edu to let me know how you're changing the world.

David A. Jenkins, PhD
Dean



Left to right: Gretchen Hammond, Rebecca McCloskey, Brienne Beaujolais

Grit, flexibility and adaptiveness to change

PANDEMIC STUDY CONFIRMS MACRO-LEVEL PROBLEMS THAT NEED INTERVENTION

How did Ohio's health care professionals fare during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic? Mighty Crow Media, led by three social work graduates, analyzed data from a 2021 survey and published the results to help guide transformational conversations among industry leaders and to potentially spark changes around employee wellness.

The researchers from Mighty Crow collaborated with a team at the Ohio Professionals Health Program (OhioPHP) to design and deploy a survey that targeted members of the state's 13 health care licensing boards to investigate the impact of the pandemic on their work and home experiences, level of stress and symptoms of burnout. The launch of the survey was supported by funding from the Federation of State Medical Boards Foundation. More than 13,000 individuals responded, including 773 social workers licensed through the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker and Family Therapist Board.

Gretchen Hammond (MSW '00, PhD '11); Rebecca J. McCloskey (MSW '02, PhD '20); Brienne

Beaujolais (MA, MSW '18, PhD '21) and their team summarized the key findings in the October 2022 issue of the *Journal of Medical Regulation*. "Overall findings suggest that the health care work force was already experiencing health and well-being challenges prior to the pandemic," said Hammond. "Since it began, things are even worse."

Social workers were no exception to these impacts. Although they were more stable in terms of employment and financial status compared to other health care professionals, 40 percent or more of them reported work, home and child-related stressors during the pandemic as moderate, significant or extreme. The number of social workers feeling emotionally drained every day increased nearly 400 percent during the pandemic.

Social workers also showed a nearly 300 percent increase in feeling down, depressed or hopeless "more than half the days" during the pandemic. Thoughts of suicide increased 86 percent and 23 percent reported an increase or significant increase in their alcohol or substance use. The number of those concerned about their

substance use increased 240 percent.

More than 41 percent of social workers sought out emotional support—nearly double that of all health care workers combined. The most satisfying emotional support came from friends and family, coworkers and therapists.

"The hope is that this research will help facilitate conversations with stakeholders about ways to reduce burnout and improve health care worker well-being and subsequently improve patient care," Hammond said. "OhioPHP is in the midst of working to improve the quality of life of health care professionals, including social workers."

Several reports and peer-reviewed publications have resulted from this work, and others are still in progress. To learn more, read the complete study: meridian.allenpress.com/jmr/article/108/3/8/488346/Ohio-Physicians-Retrospective-Pre-Post-COVID-19.

Additionally, read more in the *Ohio Journal of Public Health*: ojph.org/index.php/OJPH/article/view/9162.

To learn more about OhioPHP's work visit: ohiophp.org/about-us. ■

Advocating from the administrative suite

AMBER LASSEIGNE MEETS STUDENTS' SOCIAL NEEDS FROM THE FISCAL SIDE

There's micro social work, such as clinical one-on-ones, and then there's macro social work, which is what Amber Lasseigne (BSSW '03, MSW '04) practices on a very large scale.

Since June 2022, Lasseigne has controlled the purse strings in Texas' Lewisville Independent School District as the executive director of finance. Her work involves making sure resources are available to create the best learning environment possible for the district's 49,000 students. (By comparison, Columbus City Schools, the largest district in Ohio, has 47,000 students.)

"I knew I wanted to lead a nonprofit, which education clearly fits," Lasseigne says. "I took courses in budget development and management, grant management, leadership, change management, program evaluation and other nonprofit-related topics. The curricular content prepared me much more than traditional education leadership programs for my role in the central office. And I have always considered my MSW the backbone of my success."

Lasseigne has mountains to scale: 42 percent of Lewisville students are considered at risk of dropping out, 34 percent are economically disadvantaged, 20 percent have limited English proficiency, and 16 percent are in special education, according to 2021–22 data from the Texas Education Association.

Add the mental health crisis caused in part by the COVID pandemic and the culture wars that pit parents against schools trying to serve them, and Lasseigne says her social work skills of leadership and advocacy are invaluable.

"Education is, at its core, a political issue. Understanding advocacy has helped me better serve the district," she says. "Also, the skills around leadership,



"I have always considered my MSW the backbone of my success."

AMBER LASSEIGNE

empathy, problem solving, critical thinking and strategic management have helped me be an effective leader in each of my various positions."

Lasseigne, a first-generation college student raised by her mother, wasn't initially interested in systems change. Professor Dawn Anderson-Butcher, who hired her as an assistant when she ran out of work study hours in another role, remembers an eager student drawn to the clinical route.

But a project with the Ohio Department of Education, which hired Lasseigne as soon as she earned her MSW, showed her that fiscal governance could solve bigger social work conundrums. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant created after-school enrichment, safety, mental health and family support for kids in mainly high-poverty and low-performing schools.

"After that she was, 'How do I improve schools and advocate for kids falling through the cracks and not getting the resources they need to learn?'" Anderson-Butcher says. "She can now make a huge impact at the board and superintendent levels. And the fact she can look at federal and local dollars and maximize them with a social work lens is pretty powerful."

The biggest challenge, Lasseigne says, is convincing the community that Lewisville is an advocate for their kids. While the district prioritizes a budget for mental health services, the state does not provide one. And the district needs parental support for implementing the needed social-emotional interventions.

"With specific groups of parents, we have to regain trust and credibility, and that takes time and intentional thinking," Lasseigne says.

It's not exactly a fiscal approach. But Lasseigne can lean on her MSW backbone to meet the challenge.

"Understanding human behavior and needs is a widely underestimated leadership skill," she says. ■

A way to dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline

ANTWAN WOODS BUILDS AWARENESS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND DISCIPLINE ISSUES AMONG STUDENTS

An incident in high school led Antwan Woods to the path he's on now as he fights to keep students of color out of the school-to-prison pipeline.

Woods was labeled an aggressor when he defended himself against bullying at Mansfield Senior High. He came close to landing a criminal record, he says, because administrators hadn't answered his earlier pleas for help. They put him in special education classes when it wasn't necessary and suspended him for standing up for himself.

"On a national level, black males are twice as likely to be hyper-disciplined and sent to juvenile detention," says Woods, a PhD candidate in the College of Social Work. "Black females are three times more likely. And black and brown children who have mental or intellectual disabilities are disciplined more than their black and brown counterparts who are in regular education."

Woods plans to research ways to dissuade hyper-discipline at his high school and at Early College Academy in Columbus.

To bring awareness to the issue, he organized a conference in February 2023 sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Richland County chapter, of which he is a member. The

chapter's associate director, Aubrie Hall, was a co-organizer.

Woods and Hall secured a \$7,500 NAMI Kohl's Corporation grant to help kick-start community engagement to end the stigma of mental illness. Woods had attended conferences put on by the Coalition for Juvenile Justice and the Social Work Society for Research, which sparked his interest in hosting one for his community.

The conference drew 70 attendees and was a "huge success," Woods says. "It was a way to talk about mental health in the Black and Latino communities and how we navigate around the system that influences systemic racism."

Woods, a U.S. Army veteran who served from 2011 to 2017, gravitated to social work after he was introduced to the philosophies of Malcolm X.

"Malcolm X said, 'Nobody can give you liberty or freedom. There's no sense in begging for it. If you're a man, you take it.' That aligns with a lot of things I am doing," Woods says.

"I can vote and protest, and all those

"On a national level, black males are twice as likely to be hyper-disciplined and sent to juvenile detention."

ANTWAN WOODS

things have a place and matter. But you can't sit there and beg policymakers to change things. You have to put in the work, too."

Woods hopes to eventually work in state or federal government or become a professor and conduct research to change systemic issues.

"When you see evidence that something is problematic for students of color, that's when policymakers are willing to de-implement the harmful approaches," he says. "I credit Ohio State for expanding my mindset beyond just Black issues to minorities of multiple populations." ■





2023 SOCIAL WORK ALUMNI

HALL OF FAME



DISTINGUISHED CAREER AWARDS

1 BRANDY JEMCZURA

MSW '11

Brandy Jemczura is the founder and executive director of Seeds of Caring, a youth service organization based in Columbus. Jemczura spent her early career teaching elementary education in Virginia, Poland and Ghana. After earning dual master's degrees in social work and public policy from Ohio State, she went on to champion community engagement efforts in schools and lead teams of social workers at senior services organizations.

After she became a parent, Jemczura sought opportunities to teach her children about the needs in their community and build empathy, kindness and confidence in their ability to make a difference. Seeing few options for youngsters to volunteer, she came up with the idea of an organization to engage and empower children as a catalyst for change.

Jemczura has led Seeds of Caring's growth—engaging 285 child participants in the first year and over 26,000 in the seventh, and empowering young people to meet the critical community needs of more than 50 nonprofit organizations. Seeds of Caring recently launched programming in Indianapolis and developed a national expansion plan in response to demand for services beyond central Ohio.

2 RACHEL RAMIREZ

MSW '07

Rachel Ramirez is founder and director of health and disability programs at the Center on Partner-Inflicted Brain Injury at the Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN). Ramirez provides extensive national and international training, consultation and program support to people who work with survivors of domestic violence. She focuses on equipping these workers to better understand traumatic stress and the significant impact of brain injury from violence, which translates into more accessible and effective services.

Ramirez has co-authored several peer-reviewed journal articles, and her work has been featured on National Public Radio as well as in the *New York Times Magazine* and the *Washington Post*. A licensed independent social worker, she is a registered advocate with senior standing in the state of Ohio and has been with ODVN for 16 years.

3 NASSER ALOUD

PHD '04

Dr. Nasser Aloud is an associate professor of clinical social work in the Department of Sociology and Social Work at Al-Imam University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

In 2011, Aloud became an advisor to the Saudi minister of justice to enhance social work in the judicial system. His successes include the establishment of the social work profession in the courts. The first social work department at the Ministry of Justice began in 2018 with 350 social workers.

Aloud's efforts also contributed to the establishment in 2016 of the Women's Department in the Ministry of Justice, opening the door for Saudi females to work in the ministry for the first time in

history. In addition, Aloud contributed to creating an alimony fund to aid divorced women and children, as well as programs to help the disabled, the elderly, and divorced women and children in custody.

From 2019 through 2021, Aloud worked in the Attorney General's Office (Public Prosecution), where he introduced several programs, the most important of which was a family and juvenile department for criminal reconciliation services. About 210 social workers were employed to run these programs.

4 JAMIE MITCHELL

PHD '10

Dr. Jamie Mitchell is an associate professor at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. Her research focuses on older Black men's engagement in health decision-making, improving patient-provider communication, and maximizing opportunities for diverse research representation in scientific discoveries. She is a co-investigator with the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research, a collaboration between the University of Michigan, Wayne State University and Michigan State University that is funded by the National Institute on Aging of the National Institutes of Health.

As co-director of the collaboration's Community Liaison and Recruitment Core since 2018, Mitchell works alongside community stakeholders to provide free public health education and programming to older adults in Detroit and Flint. She also recruits older adults to two community-led research registries that refer participants to local, well-vetted studies on aging.

Mitchell has published over 40 peer-reviewed articles, shared her work on NPR and other news outlets, and develops courses for and teaches in the online MSW program at the University of Michigan. She also has been principal investigator of her own NIH-funded research grant in aging since 2020.

RECENT CAREER AWARD

5 MADISON EAGLE

MSW '18

Madison Eagle (pronouns: she, her, hers; tribal affiliation: Tsalagi [Cherokee] and Shawnee) is the coordinator for belonging and student support in the Center for Belonging and Social Change (CBSC), part of Ohio State's Office of Student Life. She also is a practicing clinical social worker with Wild Hope Therapy.

Eagle earned her undergraduate degree in anthropology with minors in American Indian studies and history in 2014. She then became the program coordinator for leadership and social justice at YWCA Columbus, where she spent two years providing professional development and mentorship programming. While earning her master's degree, Eagle worked at the Clintonville-Beechwood Community Resources Center as a youth services coordinator for Kids Club and a senior service case manager.

Eagle has been a full-time professional in the CBSC since 2018. She currently focuses on creating intentional spaces of belonging and student support for all, while centering the needs of Native American and Indigenous students. In her work as a therapist, she uses an Indigenous feminist approach to support clients in their mental health journeys.

COVER STORY

ABC

Transforming schools, inside and out

ABC





Sarah Ring (BSSW '20, MSW '22) spent the past summer developing a manual for restorative practice to be incorporated into her job as a social worker at Franklinton High School in Columbus. With only one year under her belt, Ring had already faced a staggering number of challenges working in a community where close to 97 percent of the residents live in poverty. But what stood out for her was the need for both students and families to have a safe space to be heard and to heal.

"The need for support is so great," says Ring. "I want to create a sense of belonging, a culture of care."

In her first year at Franklinton, Ring started a girls group to allow students to freely express themselves and to find

comfort in seeing that they are not alone in coping with insecurity, confusion, fear and anger. In partnership with Cornerstone of Hope Columbus, Ring also initiated a grief group, with a specialized curriculum to support students who endure drug overdoses, homicides and the constant threats of violence in their neighborhoods.

Looking ahead to her second year, Ring wants to expand her work into the community and visit her students' homes.

Sly Worthy Jr. (LSW '21, MSW '22) is heading into his second year as a social worker and assistant football coach at his alma mater, Lorain High School in northern Ohio. Worthy wanted to return to his hometown after attending Ohio State "to contribute and bring more positivity to our community."

The total minority enrollment at Lorain High School is 78 percent, and like Franklinton High School in Columbus, most of the families live at or below the federal poverty level.

Worthy takes advantage of his youth and the fact that he himself is a product of Lorain City Schools to connect with students and families. "I know that power of having a trusted adult in your corner," he says.

In his first year, Worthy enlisted the help of his high school athletes to launch a literacy program called Reading with the Titans. The program is based on 2nd & 7, a national initiative founded by three former Ohio State football players, and pairs the athletes with second-graders to promote reading.

“It is important that our young athletes see themselves as role models,” says Worthy. “It allows them to realize the positive impact they can have on others.”

The demand for social workers in schools across the country has dramatically increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Teri Kinsway, coordinator of the college’s school social work program.

“The pandemic thrust student mental health into the spotlight,” says Kinsway. “Social workers are confronting tremendous levels of stress, depression, frustration and grief stemming from closed schools, lost jobs and wages, the deaths of loved ones and prolonged uncertainty.”

The demand for help is coming equally from urban, rural, public and private schools, she says.

Casey Teeters (MPH ’10, MSW ’13) is director of the Dominican Program at Bishop Watterson High School, a Catholic school in Columbus.

“Oftentimes in private schools—and Watterson is not immune to this—there is this push for outcomes,” says Teeters. “The focus is on the GPA, grades, performance.”

With the support of administrators and teachers at Watterson, Teeters developed the Dominican Program to focus on helping students master the skills necessary to become well-rounded learners and succeed in life after high school. It uses a tiered approach to intervention, allowing all Watterson students to get the specialized support they need.

Teeters concern for his students’ well-being extends beyond the classroom and onto the basketball court.

“I make sure that my players know that they are people I care about, first and foremost, and not just basketball players,” says Teeters, who is Watterson’s assistant varsity boys coach. “The players know that for me, they exist outside of practice and game times.”

Dr. Dawn Anderson-Butcher knows that sports play a critical role in promoting positive mental health, decreasing risk for substance use, fostering healthy relationships

and increasing academic success. As co-executive director of *LiFEsports*, a nationally recognized sport-based youth development initiative at Ohio State, Anderson-Butcher leads research and programming efforts that have helped more than 15,000 underserved and vulnerable youth in central Ohio since 2009.

Thanks to *LiFEsports*, “each year we see significant growth in self-control, effort, teamwork and social responsibility among youth,” says Anderson-Butcher. “Research shows us that these young people go back to their communities and schools with the skills necessary to grow, navigate life and become leaders.”

As an MSW student, Teeters did field work with *LiFEsports* under Anderson-Butcher’s supervision.

“I learned how social work could be a professional path that would allow me to combine my passions for coaching and counseling in a way that would help at-risk adolescents achieve better outcomes, and that I could do it in a school,” he says.

Ellen Williams (BSSW ’18, MSW ’19) is team clinical supervisor of the Student Treatment Advocacy Resources Program (STAR) at NYAP (National Youth Advocate Program) Columbus. STAR provides individual, group and family psychotherapy for students in school and at home, as well as professional development to school partners, which can include behavioral management and trauma-informed teaching training. STAR partners with more than 30 schools in Columbus and Lancaster, Ohio.

Williams incorporates many of the strategies learned through her research with *LiFEsports* and in her thesis work with Anderson-Butcher. She uses play-based/sports-based interventions almost daily when working one-on-one with students to provide a more comfortable setting for them to reveal their concerns and frustrations.

“The lessons I learned through *LiFEsports* are applicable across the board,” says Williams. “It has helped everyone—teachers, staff and parents—in managing behavior in a much more effective and positive way.”

Students in the College of Social

“The pandemic thrust student mental health into the spotlight. Social workers are confronting tremendous levels of stress, depression, frustration and grief stemming from closed schools, lost jobs and wages, the deaths of loved ones and prolonged uncertainty.”

TERI KINSWAY

Work are also on the front lines of schools, responding to the needs of students and families still grappling with the effects of the pandemic.

Last year, 97 undergraduates and graduate students fulfilled their field work requirement in a school setting. Devonte McKee (MSW ’23) completed his field experience at Waggoner Road Middle School in Reynoldsburg.

“I learned so much—how to use what I had learned about crisis management, counseling and teaching coping skills to students that suffer from anxiety and depression,” McKee says.

When McKee finished his year at Waggoner, students and staff did not want to see him go.

“I could tell I had made a large impact, seeing the students I interacted with grow in their positive behaviors and coping skills,” he says.

As schools continue to grapple with the fallout from the pandemic, communities rely more than ever on social workers for guidance and support, as well as for new strategies to address the unprecedented trauma from economic, mental and academic upheaval.

Alumni, students and faculty are responding to the evolving landscape with an even more determined commitment to the well-being of those they serve. ■

NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM



The PASS-PSB team

Back row, left to right: Shayla Garman, Brooklyn Walczak, Maura Ruff, Emma Dillow. Front row: Kelly Van Sickle, Samantha Ottney. Not pictured: Jessica Saponaro, clinical supervisor, and Yasmeen Harrison, treatment advocate.

Building an internship-to-staff pipeline to serve youth and families

WHEN IT COMES TO FILLING CHALLENGING ROLES, COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS AND GRADUATES ARE UP TO THE TASK

Kelly Van Sickle (BSSW '08, MSW '09), director of clinical programs for the nonprofit National Youth Advocate Program (NYAP), has built a pipeline of Ohio State students who complete their internships with NYAP and then are hired as full-time staff. "The College of Social Work prepares students with all the relevant skills, but also to be open-minded and to reserve judgment," she says.

NYAP's numerous offerings for youth and families include the Parenting Development Team (PDT) and Practicing Alternative and Safe Solutions for Problematic Sexual Behaviors (PASS-PSB) programs.

PDT offers positive parenting education for families trying to reunite with their children. It uses the Nurturing Parenting curriculum, which

Van Sickle describes as "a model with the core belief that anybody is capable of parenting their kids, but sometimes you just need help. We meet parents wherever they are and teach them skills to keep them and their kids safe."

The PASS-PSB program serves adjudicated youth, or youth who are at risk of becoming adjudicated, for sexually problematic behaviors. Van Sickle and several colleagues recently revamped the community-based program's curriculum to be more strengths-focused rather than punitive.

Therapy interns in the college's master's program have been very involved with PASS-PSB. "Almost every single one of our staff were previously interns in the program and fell in love with it," says Van Sickle.

Brooklyn Walczak (MSW '22) is one of those former interns turned staff members. Her experience working

with youth through the PASS-PSB program has been nothing short of transformational. "We get kids who are court-ordered on probation sent against their will, and sometimes they really don't want to be here and have a lot of anger and denial," says Walczak. "It's amazing that at the end of the 26-week program they're in a totally different place. I get to see that transformation."

Alysha Kirschner (MSW '23), who experienced a number of NYAP programs as an intern, recently started a full-time job with the agency providing outpatient mental health services. "I got a well-rounded internship experience at NYAP," she says. "I was blown away by how many different programs they offered and the integration of services they could provide for families. With the closing of my internship, I knew I wanted to work for NYAP." ■



When the help comes to you

NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S AND BUCKEYE RANCH OFFER IN-SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS FOR BETTER STUDENT OUTCOMES

Supporting students who exhibit behavioral and mental health issues is no longer about what can be done after the bell rings.

It's best to bring the interventions to the kids, according to two Columbus programs that have seen success with their specific approaches.

The Buckeye Ranch, in addition to working within 22 schools in Franklin County, offers a Day Treatment program—the Bonner Academy—at its facilities. Through the program, students from schools throughout central Ohio get their four core academic classes in addition to mental health group sessions, one-on-one counseling and monthly family sessions.

Nationwide Children's Hospital, meanwhile, has clinics inside 55 schools across four major school

districts: Columbus, Bexley, Canal Winchester and Reynoldsburg. The clinics are staffed by 45 master's degree-level therapists, interns and supervisors supporting school-based behavioral and mental health services.

Both programs work closely with the College of Social Work to give its students engaging internships in a high-need area.

"Children and youth present to school each day carrying a lot more than what's in their backpack—and that's if they even have a backpack," says Nakeia Hudson (MSW '04), program manager for Nationwide Children's school-based effort.

Hudson says the issues include:

- Housing instability and homelessness,
- Community violence,
- Parental unemployment or underemployment,

- Food insecurity,
- Trauma and adverse childhood experiences,
- Poor access to services and support, and
- Unsafe or inadequate physical space.

"This affects the growth, development and well-being of children, youth and their families," she says. "Social workers can mitigate the risks associated with these factors and cultivate protective factors that will help set the student and their family up for success."

While there has always been a high need—and a wait list—for behavioral health services in schools, the crisis has expanded since the COVID pandemic, says Misti Dorsey (MSW '11). Dorsey, who started with Nationwide's School-Based Behavioral Health Services as a clinician inside Columbus City

Schools, has been the program's clinical supervisor since 2015.

A telling trend: more elementary school kids than ever before are having ideas of self-harm and suicidal ideation, Dorsey says. Also, according to the Ohio Department of Education, chronic absenteeism is up 30 percent, often doubling in some schools.

Hudson says that's why having behavioral health services inside the schools is important, so social workers and clinicians can be embedded in the culture and address at-risk students immediately.

Last year Nationwide Children's, which has been at the forefront of school-based behavioral and mental health for the past 25 years, was in 63 schools and served 1,200 students with more than 23,000 patient visits. Some of the centers offered disease management for asthma, diabetes and obesity, as well as dental, vision, sports medicine and health education services. They also allow students to receive medical evaluations and medication management, such as for ADHD or depression, and can reserve psychiatric services for acute, complex cases.

Staffing concerns prompted the pullback to 55 schools this year, although Dorsey says hiring has picked up in the last nine months.

"There is absolutely always going to be a need, and more and more schools want our services. But we also have to be careful not to spread our team too thin and over-promise something we cannot do," Dorsey says. "At this point, we are trying to cultivate our partnerships and build on the relationships we have rather than adding new ones."

Understaffing also is an issue at the Buckeye Ranch, where the Day Treatment program is open to any students who need support in reducing nonacademic barriers to success. Many of the students have experienced trauma and present with behaviors such as verbal and physical aggression. These students are working toward strengthening their social emotional

"This affects the growth, development and well-being of children, youth and their families. Social workers can mitigate the risks associated with these factors and cultivate protective factors that will help set the student and their family up for success."

NAKEIA HUDSON

learning skills to support their return to a traditional school setting, says clinician Andrea Johnson (MSW '08).

Students also can join the program at any time throughout the year, which alters the classroom dynamic. Putting out so many fires puts a strain on the everyday work that needs doing.

But those variables don't change the value of the work. School districts place students at the Bonner Academy and fund their tuition. The majority of those students remain enrolled in their districts as they go through treatment.

"Since we are such a small facility, we can build relationships with students that most are not able to in a larger setting," Johnson says. "Because of this, our success rate is higher than most."

"I enjoy watching the students make positive changes, transition back to their home schools, and even come back years later to share their success stories with us."

The Buckeye Ranch also supports 14 therapists in area school districts including Columbus, Reynoldsburg, Southwestern and Westerville. Kamilah Twymon oversees the work as vice president of community based and education services.

Twymon says communication between school and mental health

agency leaders is the key to success because it allows for adaptability and a same-page approach when facing challenges.

And those challenges are many, such as Black and Latino youth reporting higher incidences of anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation than their white counterparts. Therapists will engage the students in school, meet the families in their homes and conduct virtual sessions, which have proven effective, Twymon says.

"When you have an opportunity to strategically plan a relationship, it doesn't always feel like an uphill battle," she says. "But it is important to be realistic about the support that can be provided. Assisting schools with an identification and referral process, along with creative strategies, can reduce waitlist times" exacerbated by staffing shortages.

Having a strong relationship with the College of Social Work has been critical in maintaining staffing. Johnson, for example, was drawn to the Buckeye Ranch while doing an internship there after transferring to Ohio State from Arizona State for her MSW. And many leaders and staff have earned their undergraduate and advanced degrees from Ohio State—the product of a 20-year relationship between the ranch and the college.

"We know the quality of education the students receive, and we know we will have consistent support from the college's Practicum Office," says Pam Scott, the ranch's director of professional and clinical development. "We have been able to support our employees through fee waivers we earn when we host student interns. And that's made it possible for many of our employees to complete their education without carrying an overwhelming debt upon graduation."

"We know that the Buckeye Ranch (and more importantly our clients) benefits when our employees advance their education, becoming increasingly knowledgeable and competent social workers." ■



CAYCI: Collaboration is key to supporting youth

The College of Social Work's Community and Youth Collaborative Institute (CAYCI) is a hub of programming, teaching and research in positive youth development, school social work, youth sport and recreation, and family-school-community partnerships.

Programs such as *LiFEsports* teach life and leadership skills, while *Coach Beyond* trains coaches in how to better support student-athletes. Partnerships with schools, such as the Early College Academy in downtown Columbus,

provide placement opportunities for social work interns to support the mental health needs of socially vulnerable students. Other CAYCI partnership sites in central Ohio include the Columbus, Hilliard and Dublin school districts.

Following are examples of the innovative work happening.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCE SURVEYS
Faculty, staff and students working within CAYCI engage in consultation and evaluation with schools around

Ohio and across the country. Indeed, CAYCI has an outstanding national reputation for providing evidence-based, valid and reliable school climate survey instruments.

"We interact with schools in many different ways," says Olivia Rozsits (MSW '23), assistant director of school partnerships at CAYCI. As one example, the team collects data using the School Experience Surveys to measure what's working and to identify opportunities for improvement. Surveys are used to elevate the voices of students, teachers



and parents/caregivers at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

“We need data,” says CAYCI director Dr. Dawn Anderson-Butcher. The survey tools CAYCI uses have been developed over many years and piloted with schools in Utah and Ohio. As of today, school districts across the country, including Arizona and Connecticut for example, are working with consultants at CAYCI to implement the surveys as part of their school improvement plans.

The work is influential in schools and communities, helping to bring partners together to make positive changes in the lives of youth. “Being a part of that school’s planning and evaluation can hopefully make a big difference for their staff, students and families,” says Rozsits. “It’s an honor and privilege to be a part of this team. I appreciate getting to share the surveys and work with the schools.”

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION MODEL

Anderson-Butcher has been working with the Canyons School District in the Salt Lake City, Utah, area for more than a decade.

“Utah had the highest rate of student death by suicide in the country,” says Anderson-Butcher. Her work led to the implementation of the Canyons School District Community Schools Initiative, which uses the evidence-based Community Collaboration Model. The model is best known for expanding traditional school improvement efforts

and helping leaders identify in-school and out-of-school strategies to support students and families. School-family-community partnerships are at the core.

“Schools transform into hubs of support where families can go for help,” says Anderson-Butcher.

Services may be offered at the school or linked to an outside resource.

LIFESPORTS AND COACH BEYOND

Founded in 2009, LiFEsports, a positive youth development program, teaches life and leadership through sport. Kethan Mokadam, an undergraduate social work major and research assistant, has worked with LiFEsports for the past year. “I love going to work,” he says. “I’m grateful to be in the position I’m in, doing something I love so much.”

Mokadam is also part of the most recent extension of CAYCI and LiFEsports: Coach Beyond. This training program, developed with the Ohio High School Athletic Association, aims to educate 15,000 coaches about mental wellness and positive youth development practices by 2024.

“We’re using sport to de-stigmatize mental health,” says Samantha Bates (PhD ’18), assistant professor in the College of Social Work. “We can connect it to play and kids’ health and development. We know that having one caring adult in your corner can make a huge difference in a kid’s life.”

Coaches in schools and communities are central to CAYCI’s collaborative efforts to support the health and

“We can have so much impact. Giving kids resources and tools is incredibly helpful.”

JACOB AGOSTON

development of all youth. School districts in Ohio that are partnered with Coach Beyond include Mansfield, Akron, Hilliard, Dublin, Princeton, Newark, Elgin, Wheelersburg, Logan-Hocking, Granville, North Union and Canal Winchester.

EARLY COLLEGE ACADEMY

The Early College Academy (ECA) is another program that provides caring adults and mental health support for youth. Students working within CAYCI intern at ECA and interact with students who have been pushed or pulled out of traditional school environments.

“We are a second-chance school,” says superintendent Jonathan Stevens. “The majority of our kids are credit deficient. They may have missed school for years, often because of trauma or tragedy.”

Stevens sought assistance from leaders within CAYCI after he became superintendent. He believes the partnership and the annual placement of social work interns are central to ECA’s mission.

“They are part of our staff,” says Stevens. “They bring their own talents and gifts. They have tools teachers don’t possess, and that allows the teachers to focus on academics.”

Amber White, an MSW student, will be at ECA in the 2023–24 school year. She returned to Ohio State for her master’s degree because she wanted to work with kids.

“I want to be the person I needed when I was a teenager,” she says. She hopes that her efforts will help reduce the stigma around seeking therapy, which she witnessed in her own family.

Jacob Agoston (BSSW ’23) served as an intern last school year at ECA. “I felt like I was valued as part of the team,” he says. Prior to his work with ECA, Agoston was unaware of the importance of school social workers. “We can have so much impact,” he says. “Giving kids resources and tools is incredibly helpful.”

Stevens agrees: “Schools need a social worker.” ■



“The families and kids at the two schools are getting the extra attention that is needed for them to be able to show up and be present and do their schoolwork every day.”

PATRICE ALLEN BRADY

The power of collaboration

Learning has improved steadily in recent years at Hamilton STEM Academy in the Linden area of Columbus. Positive attitudes about attendance at the elementary school are also up. So is engagement with the school by parents.

Why? Javier Negrete Jr. believes it's largely because of the One Linden Schools Initiative (OLSI) and the key role played by the College of Social Work's Community and Youth Collaborative Institute (CAYCI) in providing technical assistance and other support. Negrete is on the staff of CAYCI and serves as school-family-community coordinator at Hamilton. Similar efforts are under way at Windsor STEM Academy, another elementary school in Linden.

“If I were to evaluate it, with one being bad and 10 being excellent, I would definitely say it's a 10,” says Patrice Allen Brady, neighborhood strategies manager in Columbus' Department of Neighborhoods. “The families and kids at the two schools are getting the extra attention that is needed for them to be able to show up and be present and do their schoolwork every day.”

Brady says that in 2017–18 the Linden community came together to develop the One Linden Community Plan. OLSI grew out of the plan as a collaboration among the city, the

College of Social Work, United Way of Central Ohio, Columbus City Schools and many other partners.

The initiative applies the Community Collaboration Model developed by Dr. Dawn Anderson-Butcher, a full professor in the college and the executive director of CAYCI. The model seeks to maximize school and community resources to support students and families.

At Hamilton, Negrete works with students, teachers, administrators, parents, guardians, community organizations and area businesses. In short, he engages the school's stakeholders and assists the school in becoming a community hub to improve conditions for learning.

For example, Negrete evaluates the needs of the school, identifies priorities, and builds systems of community partnerships to connect parents to resources like food banks and health care services.

“We convey that we care,” he says.

Negrete and social work interns from the college also compile data in areas such as student behavior, attendance and report cards, and they solicit feedback from students, teachers and parents. A review of the data shows an overall improvement in learning at Hamilton, Negrete says.

Hamilton's principal, Dr. Christopher Brady, praises OLSI. “I'm really proud

of the work that's happening in Linden and the work we're doing for Linden,” he says. “It has been a big factor in getting the schools the resources they need and deserve.”

Rachel Kline (BSSW '22, MSW '23) spent the past school year as an intern at Windsor and had a similar response. “The difference that CAYCI and One Linden have made at Windsor is immeasurable. The resources and support that we provide are appreciated by students, staff and families.”

UTAH INITIATIVE

For about a decade, CAYCI also has partnered with the Canyons School District in Salt Lake City to support student learning and development at four Title I elementary schools. The district has used the Community Collaboration Model to build out its community schools agenda.

CAYCI School Experience Surveys have found evidence of improvement, including declines in absenteeism, improvement in school climate and increases in the number of youths accessing school-based mental health services and after-school programs.

Early on, a Utah state education official said of the initiative: “While working with Canyons School District and Dr. Anderson-Butcher, I have been reminded over and over again of the power of collaboration.” ■

Valuable connections

It's not what you know, it's who you know. The old adage holds true for Aidyn Iachini (MSW '10), Annahita Ball, (PhD '12, MSW '08), Samantha Bates (PhD '18) and Tasha Childs (MSW '19).

For more than a decade the four have been students, doctoral candidates, professors and colleagues. They navigated research questions through their degree programs. Now they share tips on managing work-life balance in their faculty roles at different institutions.

Aidyn Iachini, who started at Ohio State in sports management, worked as a research assistant for Dr. Dawn Anderson-Butcher, professor in the College of Social Work and director of the Community and Youth Development Institute (CAYCI).

Recognizing that social work combined her interests in sport and mental health, Iachini decided to pursue her MSW. During her graduate studies she met Annahita Ball, who also was a research assistant in CAYCI.

"I was inspired by that work," says Ball, who was interested in improving mental health in schools. Ball accepted a faculty position at Louisiana State University after completing her doctorate. She now is an associate

professor in the School of Social Work at the University at Buffalo. Iachini took a position in the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina.

Samantha Bates attended Louisiana State for her bachelor's degree in psychology and her MSW. Her favorite professor was Annahita Ball, who recommended that Bates go to Ohio State for her doctoral degree. Bates took the advice. She then taught for three years at Texas Christian University before returning to Ohio State to lead programs in CAYCI.

The daughter of a football coach, Bates loves sport and what it can do to help kids. "School success is measured not just in test scores, but also in making school a place where kids want to go and want to learn," she says.

Dr. Tasha Childs (MSW 2019) started at Ohio State in biology. She learned about opportunities in social work when she had Anderson-Butcher as a professor. Childs completed her master's degree and worked in CAYCI alongside Bates.

At a research conference, Anderson-Butcher introduced Childs to Iachini. The two hit it off, recognizing similar research interests. Childs attended the University of South Carolina to complete her doctorate with Iachini. She started as an assistant professor at the University of Missouri in the fall of 2023.

Along with their enduring ties and their love of all things Buckeye, the four colleagues care about training the next generation of scholars who will continue to help schools succeed. ■



Tasha Childs and Aidyn Iachini

Back to school

Alumni bring about change for young students



JESSICA KAIN, MSW '21

Jessica Kain followed her parents into social work, including her mom, Lisa Durham, assistant dean of strategic initiatives and community engagement. “My undergraduate degree is in women’s studies and religion,” Kain says, “but I knew I wanted to work with kids and reach into their untapped potential. Social work made sense.”

Kain is the school social worker in the alternative education program at West Side Middle School in Elkhart, Indiana. “I work with a small population of at-risk students, most of whom have a trauma background,” she says. “They haven’t learned social skills, and many are overcoming addiction.”

Kain helped build her school’s social/emotional learning curriculum for the seventh- and eighth-graders. “I think middle school is the biggest growing time of a kid’s life,” she says. “It’s challenging because they come in as elementary-schoolers and leave as high-schoolers.

“I love this age, but it’s not for the faint of heart. The nuggets of hope are when the students start to see results of their efforts. I see the life come back in them and the good things ahead.”

TAI CORNUTE, BSSW '08

Tai Cornute, principal at the Columbus City Preparatory School for Boys, sums up how his role has impact: “I am making a difference by changing the narrative of and for Black boys.”

Cornute says his studies at Ohio State laid the groundwork for his career. “Social work is the fabric of our society; it weaves and connects all people together. My experience at Ohio State prepared me for becoming a principal. I learned a lot about my capacity for leadership and service.”

Cornute earned a bachelor’s in social work and served as an administrator in the university’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion before earning his MBA. In 2020 he was named to his current post at the preparatory school, which enrolls nearly 150 scholars in grades six through eight.

Cornute’s advice for current social work students: “Stay the course. Everything you need to be successful already exists within you. Use your degree as a springboard to go throughout the world and leave it a little better than you found it.”

JENNIFER VARGO, MSW '06

Broadening its scope beyond academics, the Office of Whole Child Supports in the Ohio Department of Education addresses an abundance of needs facing the state’s children. Jennifer Vargo headed the office for more than three years.

“We focused on helping schools support students’ physical and mental health and safety, engage parents and community organizations as partners, and meet the specific needs of vulnerable student populations,” she says.

Vargo’s office created Ohio’s Whole Child Framework and its implementation guide, which covers programs, policies, guidance and funding for districts across the state. That was in 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The framework identifies and addresses children’s needs from a holistic perspective,” Vargo says. “During the pandemic, health and well-being and the safety of children were a real concern, and the framework gave schools the guidance to address and build systems to help.”

Vargo, who now works in private practice, said it was gratifying to lead an office that focused on supporting the whole child so that students have a foundation to meet their academic potential.

JASON FULLEN, MSW '16

With an undergraduate degree in music from New York University and MSW, MPA and MBA degrees from Ohio State, Jason Fullen was well prepared to enter public school administration. But it was his stint with Teach for America that inspired him to go into school social work, leading to his current job as principal at McVay Elementary in Westerville, Ohio.

“As a principal, you wear many different hats: principal, teacher, social worker, counselor, nurse, recess aide and parent,” Fullen says. “My social work background allows me to do that, and it gives me a better understanding and perspective to connect with kids and their families and support them as we try to remove nonacademic barriers and help kids be successful academically.”

Fullen agrees with experts who say the U.S. is in a youth mental health crisis. “Leading 600 students and 70 staff members daily, it’s important I have an awareness and understanding of how to take care of people’s mental health.”



JESSICA KAIN



TAI CORNUTE



JENNIFER VARGO



JASON FULLEN



CLAIRE SOBECKI



HILARY JOYCE



TAYLOR FLETCHER



KESHAWN HARPER

CLAIRE SOBECKI, BBSW '21, MSW '22

Claire Sobecki came to Ohio State unsure about which degree would prepare her to enter a helping profession and work with kids and a diverse population. "I discovered social work and realized that was it!" she says. "The profession lets me work in my areas of interest. Plus, studying social work prepares you to be a critical thinker. It gives you a valuable whole-person lens."

Today, Sobecki is a student support specialist at Thomas Elementary School in Dublin, Ohio. She also is site director for Ohio State's LiFEsports summer program for Dublin. She directs a cohort of teachers in the program, which focuses on the positive influence of sport for elementary- and middle-school kids with lower social and emotional skills.

"My job experience helps me find connections with kids, engage with them and see them develop confidence," she says. "When I see kids start to have that spark and believe in themselves, that's really special."

HILARY JOYCE, PHD '12

Hilary Joyce earning her PhD at Ohio State after receiving her MSW from the University of Kentucky. "I felt I had the skill sets that would lend themselves to this profession. It was a good match for me," she says.

A decade later, she is director of the BSW program at Auburn University in Alabama, where she sees students striving to make a big impact. "I'm definitely seeing social work students having a more justice-minded lens," Joyce says. "They're just as interested in advocating on a macro level as they are in helping people on a one-on-one level. They are motivated to change the world, to make a difference."

She also helps students learn to understand themselves. "I encourage my students to stay curious, to be open and self-aware," she says. "I like to see their passion and energy. To see them exchange ideas and have 'aha' moments brings me a lot of joy."

TAYLOR FLETCHER, MSW '21

Taylor Fletcher provides school-based mental health services to students at Preble Shawnee High School in Camden, Ohio. She's contracted in that full-time role through the private Gebhart Counseling Services.

"I work individually with the students, addressing nonacademic barriers to their learning," Fletcher explains. "But I'm not someone who just comes into the school periodically. I work closely with the whole school's team. I'm part of the culture there."

Fletcher has seen growing acceptance of her presence. "This is a very rural population, and I think at first there was some denial about the need for a social worker," she says. "But now the administration and the community are seeing the positive impact of social work in the school. I'm more widely accepted by the administration, the faculty, the community. Now they come to me when there is an issue. I've become a go-to person for them."

KESHAWN HARPER, MSW '20

From urban Atlanta cop to school social worker—that's Keshawn Harper's career path.

Harper studied criminal justice at Ohio State, then landed a job as a police officer in Atlanta. "I was staunch into law enforcement, working in tactical field operations," he says. But he found he had a knack for talking with the teenagers he was arresting while en route to jail.

"We'd have really good talks, and they'd thank me for listening. It occurred to me if we'd had these conversations earlier, perhaps they wouldn't have ended up here."

Fast forward a few years, and Harper returned to Ohio to pursue his master's degree in social work.

"I never set out to do school social work, but the doors just kept opening up," he says. At KIPP Columbus, he works one-on-one with students and also engages more broadly with them in group settings. "In today's climate, it's important to provide them with some space to just talk. The cool thing is they know I'm here for them."

His advice to students: take a chance. "After leaving the police force, I wondered if I'd be good at anything else," he says. "Now I know I am. Looking back, all of my experiences happened because I was able to make a leap."

Innovative initiative educates Dublin teachers as social workers



The College of Social Work is partnering with Dublin City Schools to train 25 teachers and staffers in the district to become licensed social workers in order to better address the mental health needs of students.

Dublin superintendent Dr. John Marschhausen says there are not enough external mental health providers to serve the district, which encompasses about 17,000 students and 24 school buildings.

"I was hearing from parents that it was a six-to-eight-month wait before they could get in to see a counselor if their child was considering suicide, was considering self-harm or was struggling," he says.

"Rather than just complaining about a problem, our team started thinking about how we could solve the problem."

That led to the partnership between the school district and the Community and Youth Collaborative Institute (CAYCI), led by professor and executive director Dr. Dawn Anderson-Butcher. If the initiative is successful, it could become a model for other school districts in Ohio.

"There is certainly a huge shortage of behavioral mental health workers, and there is an increasing need for child and adolescent social work and mental health practice. This is one way to potentially address it," Anderson-Butcher says.

Dr. Samantha Bates, an assistant professor in the college, is co-leading the initiative. The college will train 25

"Rather than just complaining about a problem, our team started thinking about how we could solve the problem."

DR. JOHN MARSCHHAUSEN

midcareer teachers and staffers over the next two years. Each will earn a master's degree in social work with an emphasis on mental health after taking courses at Ohio State and completing field placement in the school district.

The key is that more children will get access to social workers, with a bonus that teachers should see their stress levels reduced. "They have another resource to help them," Bates says.

She noted that the initiative, which is funded by COVID relief funds, will include a rigorous research component.

The teachers and staffers were selected from a field of 45 applicants. They represent those who are most passionate about children's mental health and who voiced a strong desire to be part of the solution by returning to school to advance their careers.

Nicole Durant, a second-grade teacher at Chapman Elementary, says she signed on because "it's a great opportunity to be able to help more kids learn strategies to help them become successful."

"I think the biggest thing is that Dublin City Schools are taking the mental health of their students so seriously," she says.

Tiffany deSilva (MSW '05), a member of the Dublin City Schools board, says she has received only positive feedback from administrators and teachers. She expects the initiative to make a noticeable difference.

"One of the things people might not realize is that in having a diverse district, we have students with diverse needs," she says. "You might have one student who is struggling with stress around being an overachiever. You might have a student who is a refugee and just coming to this country and learning the language."

ANOTHER JOINT INITIATIVE

Anderson-Butcher says CAYCI previously established a partnership with the Dublin district to have graduate students complete 18-month internships as part of their field placement. There were four interns last school year, and CAYCI recently received a new contract to extend the initiative.

Current intern Allison Dorr (MSW '24) is getting to know the students at Hopewell Elementary and their needs. "We have a lot of students with anxiety right now," she says. "This school just opened in 2020, but because of COVID most of the students were not full time until this past school year. So a lot of them are lacking some social skills that we work on." ■

NEW APPOINTMENTS AT CSW!



SHANNON JARROTT

Dr. Shannon Jarrott is the college's first director of faculty development. She previously worked informally and formally at department, college and university levels in support of faculty development. Her role interfaces with related offices and committees, including Academic Affairs, Research, Development, and Promotion and Tenure. As the college welcomes 10 new faculty members, including its first four clinical faculty, Jarrott and her office will provide growth opportunities for both new and continuing faculty at each career stage, just as she benefited from 25 years of mentorship and development opportunities across her career.

Jarrott studies intergenerational relationships to support healthy development across the life course. Working with local organizations, she uses the strengths of both youths and older adults to benefit participants and the community through shared programming. She is the editor of the *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships* and was recently selected as a 2023 International Fellow by the Australian Association of Gerontology.



SHARVARI KARANDIKAR

Dr. Sharvari Karandikar is committed to fostering a culture of collegiality and shared values as the college's new associate dean of academic affairs. Karandikar has been a faculty member at the college since 2009, during which time she has conducted research, taught BSSW-, MSW- and PhD-level classes, and served on and led numerous college, university, national and international committees. She has earned recognition as a respected colleague, mentor and champion for an inclusive college community. In her new role, Karandikar aims to enhance the college's academic programs by reimagining the curriculum, designing specializations within the MSW program and increasing enrollment.



JENNIE BABCOCK

Jennie Babcock, the new assistant dean of academic affairs, joined the college in 2004 as a field education coordinator and became the BSSW program director in 2009. She earned a BA in English and an MSW from Ohio State and has worked extensively in the mental health field. Babcock is a four-time recipient of the college's Outstanding Teaching Award and in 2020 received the university's Distinguished Staff Award. In her new position, she will provide leadership and support to the BSSW, MSW and field education programs with a focus on student success strategies and initiatives.



MICHELLE JOHNSON-MOTOYAMA

Dr. Michelle Johnson-Motoyama has been appointed associate dean for research after 16 years as a faculty member at UCLA, the University of Kansas and most recently, Ohio State. Her research has been continuously funded by sponsors such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Ohio Children's Trust Fund. She enjoys mentoring students and supporting faculty to advance their research programs. Johnson-Motoyama currently is chair of the Society for Social Work and Research's Child Welfare Special Interest Group and is a member of the leadership network supporting the Grand Challenge to Build Healthy Relationships to End Violence. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley School of Social Welfare.

Part of the team

FIELD PLACEMENTS AND INTERNSHIPS BENEFIT EVERYONE



MUNA ABDI-HARROUD



SHANNON BROWN



FADUMO ADAM

MUNA ABDI-HARROUD, MSW STUDENT

Muna Abdi-Harroud was 9 when her family immigrated to the U.S. after five years in a refugee camp in Kenya. “Coming to the United States, there was a lot of support from social workers,” says Abdi-Harroud, who is originally from Somalia. “They were so kind and made sure everything was taken care of.”

Based on that experience, Abdi-Harroud says, “I wanted to pay it forward, to be in a social work field working with kids. Children are children, and if they are from a different country or different culture, they need extra resources to thrive.”

Abdi-Harroud is completing her field experience at Horizon Science Academy in Columbus. “Students are mostly from immigrant families—Ghana, Somalia, Nigeria. Their cultures at home and at school are so different,” she says.

“I want to teach them to embrace social/emotional learning, to learn empathy, to ask questions, to be self-aware and build relationships. They are children, and they are still learning critical life skills to persevere in the face of adversity.

“I will do my best to help them be the best humans they can be.”

SHANNON BROWN, MSW '23

Shannon Brown completed her field placement in the same elementary school near Cincinnati where she had been a third-grade teacher and also taught reading and math intervention. The internship allowed her to springboard from her online MSW training to an in-school counseling experience.

“I’m interested in a therapy role, so I worked with a caseload of kids in first, second and third grades,” Brown says. “We’d work on coping skills for anxiety, testing anxiety, trauma experiences and positive skills to build self-esteem.”

The 18-month internship was invaluable, she says. “As an online

student, I had done a lot of asynchronous coursework, and there were a lot of skills I had read about but not practiced in a school setting. With the help of my supervisor and that base knowledge, I was able to grow my skills. Taking things from the textbook to the classroom was really rewarding.”

Brown has been hired as a part-time school-based therapist and is hoping to be placed in an elementary school in the Cincinnati area.

FADUMO ADAM, MSW '23

Fadumo Adam started as a chemistry major as an undergrad, but a trip home to Somalia convinced her to instead pursue a social work degree and eventually her MSW. “It opened my eyes to the need for mental health professionals,” she says.

Adam completed her field placement experience at KIPP Columbus, where she worked with students impacted by trauma and saw how mental health issues can affect their academic achievement.

She points out that the most important lesson from her experience was one of cultural humility. “This came from a wonderful conversation I had with my supervisor,” she says. “Sometimes you can be overwhelmed because there’s so much to learn. But you’re never going to be done learning. You don’t need to know everything just because you’re about to graduate.

“Now I understand I’m still going to be learning even when I’m a licensed social worker. It’s all about continued learning, and that’s very important to me.”

AMY SAFFORD, MSW STUDENT

Amy Safford’s three kids go to Wynford Elementary School in Bucyrus, Ohio, and her husband is a teacher there. So it seemed natural for Safford to get involved at the school, too.

She’s been employed at Wynford since 2021 and has been



AMY SAFFORD



CORAL CIUPAK



HANNAH SAENZ



KACIE GEORGE

named its first school social worker as she completes her degree. Her field placement at Wynford allows her to step things up a notch with new programs.

One is a 20-week group for fifth-grade girls, who are at an age when self-esteem can plummet. “The program teaches skills like how to be assertive, how to stand up for yourself,” Safford says. “It’s encouraging and motivating.”

Over the summer she also put together “calm down boxes” for classrooms. “If a child is having a hard time in class, they can take five minutes to sit with this box and use the tools inside, like a squeeze stress ball, so they can reenter class.”

The best part of her job? “I love working with the kids,” Safford says. “When they give you a hug first thing in the morning, you know you’re making an impact.”

CORAL CIUPAK, MSW '23 **HANNAH SAENZ, MSW '23**

Hannah Saenz and Coral Ciupak received MSW degrees in May, after earning undergraduate degrees in psychology (Saenz) and philosophy (Ciupak). The two are now working at the Buckeye Ranch in Grove City, Ohio, which offers emotional, behavioral and mental health services for children and families.

Prior to their full-time employment, Saenz and Ciupak both served two-year internships in the Buckeye Ranch’s day treatment program. “We didn’t work alongside each other every day, but we could see each other across the gym and on the playground,” says Ciupak. “It was nice to have someone so close by that I learned with and grew with.”

Ciupak worked with elementary-age students whose school day included two to three hours of mental health services. “I loved the direct,

face-to-face interaction with the kids,” Ciupak says. “That’s where my strengths are. It’s gratifying to see their progress over time, especially when you get to send them back to their home school district.”

Saenz’s internship was with older students, grades seven through 12, in the day treatment program. Given the choice to run group sessions herself or shadow a leader, she chose to jump right in. “That was perfect for me,” she says. “I had taken as many clinical classes as I could at Ohio State, and it was awesome to be able to apply what I learned to group sessions.”

“It was a little overwhelming at first, but I quickly discovered that what this population really needs is the consistency of knowing you are there for them.”

Today, Ciupak is a group therapist and Saenz is a group specialist at Buckeye Ranch.

KACIE GEORGE, BSSW '23

Kacie George, who started her MSW studies this fall, worked with fifth- and sixth-graders at Creekview Intermediate School in Marysville, Ohio, for her field placement.

“My focus has always been working with children and their families, and my goal is to be a school social worker,” George says. “At Creekview, I worked directly with the guidance department, and I ran a few clubs like a diversity club and a board game club to help students interact with each other. I also taught social/emotional lessons in the classroom.”

The real lesson was the value of being part of an entire school team, George says. “The surprise for me was the sheer amount of work involved. It was eye-opening to learn it takes a whole school team to make the organization run. Even though you may be dealing with a student one-on-one, you have that team backing you up. It takes all of those moving parts—the teachers, the administrators, the families—to make it work.”

New faculty bring increased effort to social issues

LINKING TRAUMA EXPOSURE AND HEALTH OUTCOMES

Dr. Elinam Dellor studies the mechanisms linking traumatic experiences to poor developmental, health and behavioral outcomes over the life course. To accomplish this, she implements and evaluates evidence-based practices for child welfare-involved families, studies the biological consequences of chronic trauma exposure and uses web-based technology to address inequitable access to social services. Dellor aims to bridge research and real-world practice by taking a community-engaged approach and by grounding her work in principles of equity and anti-racism.

THE HEALING JUSTICE FRAMEWORK

Dr. Lois Stepney is excited about what a healing justice framework offers to social work education and practice today. The framework centers collective care and healing to address the biopsychosocial impacts of living in a society where racism and other “isms” of oppression exist. A healing justice framework invites intentional efforts to create a collective future free from structural and systematic oppression. Additionally, Stepney is interested in research related to social work education.

CRITICAL THINKING IN STUDENTS

Students bring knowledge and experience to the learning environment, and the professor—using evidence-based engagement strategies, practice wisdom and intentionality—encourages them to think critically and discover. This has been Mitzi Moody’s philosophy since she began teaching in 2018. Her 15-plus years of professional experience in children’s mental health, medical and school social work, program planning, grant writing, social work administration and interdisciplinary practice enhances her ability to prepare students for today’s workforce. Additionally, Moody’s education in law combines her passion for people, policy and social justice.

CLINICAL EXPERTISE IN THE CLASSROOM

Kate Roush, a licensed independent social worker and double alumna of Ohio State, joins the college as a clinical assistant professor. Her areas of focus include supporting parents, caregivers and early childhood providers as they raise the next generation; dyadic family therapy; and trauma treatment for young children. Roush is also interested in professional development for those working in early childhood mental health. She is enthusiastic about

bringing her expertise to students in the classroom to ensure that graduates are prepared for a variety of social work roles.

COLLEGE STUDENTS IN RECOVERY

Dr. Michael Broman researches systemic barriers and facilitators to substance use treatment/recovery. His dissertation research helped secure grant funding for a collegiate recovery program at Wayne State University, for which he is developing a needs assessment. Broman’s post-MSW practice experience is in substance use prevention and treatment. At Ohio State, he will collaborate to understand the needs of students in recovery here and elsewhere. Broman serves on the Michigan Opioid Task Force’s Racial Equity Workgroup and trains peer recovery coaches at the Detroit Recovery Project. These activities inform his research on recovery coaches’ work experiences as well as the barriers to substance use treatment faced by Black people.

UNVEILING INEQUITIES FACED BY MIGRANT SEX WORKERS

Dr. Ran Hu will join the College of Social Work in 2024 after completing her postdoctoral fellowship at the University of British Columbia’s



Center for Gender and Sexual Health Equity. Hu is researching the impact of socio-structural inequities on the occupational health of migrant sex workers in Vancouver. She has worked with migrant women in sex work and survivors of trafficking in New York City, as well as rural-to-urban migrant sex workers in Beijing. Informed by her transnational work, Hu's scholarship explores intersecting social-structural and epistemic inequities that contribute to gender-based violence, human trafficking and violence against sex workers.

BUILDING RAPPORT IN ORDER TO FACILITATE TREATMENT

Kelley Breidigan, assistant clinical professor, has worked extensively with individuals and families in various treatment settings, including the juvenile justice system and residential treatment. Most recently, she worked in private practice, specializing in strengths-based therapies with military populations, people with disabilities and aging populations. Breidigan values building rapport with clients and supports them in finding the best treatment based on their needs and goals. She has been a full-time lecturer at the college for 11 years and has collaborated with faculty and

educational design teams to develop curriculum for clinical courses. Breidigan also conducts community trainings and public relations interviews for the college.

SEEKING INNOVATION TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS

Dr. Katie Calhoun uses a critical lens to research community and policy responses to homelessness and poverty. She is particularly interested in understanding approaches that challenge assumptions of who is deserving of resources. Calhoun is currently studying guaranteed income (unconditional cash transfers) for people who are unhoused and safe parking lots for individuals sheltering in their vehicles. Her aim is to conduct research that is relevant to community members and can inform policy development and implementation.

RAISE FACULTY ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE

As part of Ohio State's Race, Inclusion and Social Equality initiative, Dr. Amy Krings and Dr. James Lachaud will develop and lead innovative and impactful community-based research to mitigate and prevent environmental hazards in Ohio and beyond. Environmental injustice and climate

change are urgent issues globally and disproportionately impact the well-being of vulnerable and oppressed communities. Krings explores how members of marginalized communities come together to prevent, mitigate and resist environmental injustice in ways that increase health equity and social justice. Her research reveals opportunities for political and social changes to support health equity, including action by social workers. As a leading scholar in environmental social work, Krings grounds her questions and participatory methods in her practice experience as a community organizer and nonprofit manager in Cincinnati.

Housing precarity and its most visible and cruel form—homelessness—reflect social and environmental injustices in our society and are detrimental to almost every aspect of the lives of those affected. Lachaud explores how these situations contribute to eroding mental, cognitive and physical health and create a poverty trap and community disconnectedness and isolation. He also explores how systemic biases and social and housing policies contribute to housing crises, homelessness and health inequities. Lachaud hopes to engage and contribute to policies and programs for transformational changes to address these injustices. ■

College of Social Work Award Winners



STATEWIDE SOCIAL WORKER OF THE YEAR, REGION 5

STEPHANIE K. STARKS, LISW-S, MSW '10

Owner and therapist, Starks Counseling and Consultation Services

For 19 years Stephanie Starks has built a career facilitating healing and giving back to her community. She owns Starks Counseling, which provides trauma-focused therapy, training and free mental health workshops. In partnership with the city of Columbus, she has conducted free traumatic grief workshops for parents and siblings of children who have died due to gun violence. Starks gave a TEDx talk on trauma in October 2022. She is the Region 5 director of NASW Ohio and has created programs that foster the social work community, including a book club, the conversation group Social Workers Holding Space for Social Workers, CEU trainings and more.

STATEWIDE EMERGING LEADER, REGION 5

JHUMA ACHARYA, MSW '21

Refugee resettlement case manager, Community Refugee and Immigration Services

Jhuma Acharya, who spent 19 years of his life in a Bhutanese refugee camp in Nepal, has overcome extreme hardships to pursue his education and dreams. Acharya recently graduated from the MSW program, focusing on mental health and substance use in the school social work program, and is now a PhD student in the college. He is a strong advocate for his community and for improving access to culturally appropriate mental health services for refugees and immigrants.

STATEWIDE STUDENT OF THE YEAR, REGION 5

TAINESHA OWENS, LSW

As a leader, Tainisha Owens strives to prioritize mental health and wellness. She has worked diligently in various roles to enhance the overall experiences of both Ohio State students and members of the broader Columbus community. Currently, Owens is president of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Caucus. She also is the MSW student representative for the NASW Ohio Chapter and a member of the Columbus Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, REGION 5

TOM GREGOIRE, PHD

Dean Emeritus, The Ohio State University College of Social Work
Dr. Tom Gregoire returned to the faculty after concluding his service as dean of the college in 2022. His leadership during times of great change and turmoil fostered an environment where students can grow, learn and develop into strong professionals. As a person in long-term recovery himself, Gregoire is an advocate for quality substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. Much of his research centers on SUD treatment, and he was recently appointed by governor Mike DeWine to the governing board of the OneOhio Recovery Foundation. Tom's impact on social work in Ohio through his research, teaching, mentorship and advocacy is immense.

YOON, MALEKU NAMED 2023 SSWR FELLOWS

Congratulations to Dr. Susan Yoon and Dr. Arati Maleku, who have been named Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) Fellows for 2023. SSWR Fellows serve with distinction to support the mission of the society: to advance, disseminate and translate research that addresses issues of social work practice and policy and promotes a diverse, equitable and just society. ■

RESEARCH BRIEFS

FOCUS ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

As director of the Child and Family Wellbeing Laboratory, Dr. Joyce Lee promotes child welfare and family strengthening among underserved populations, including families with school-aged children. She does so through research into preventing child maltreatment, supporting positive parenting and assuring the health of children involved in the welfare system. Her current work focuses on examining factors and mechanisms linked with child abuse and neglect risk in families with low income or other adverse contexts; fostering positive father involvement and engagement in child welfare populations; and promoting the health of school-aged children and youth in foster care. Her work is intended to inform policies and practices to improve children's health outcomes and strengthen their relationships with their families.

RESEARCH TO IMPROVE SCHOOL CLIMATES, SPORT

Dr. Dawn Anderson-Butcher's research focuses on strengthening organizations, programs and practices that support positive youth development and well-being. For the past two decades, Anderson-Butcher has worked with school districts across the country to improve school climate, family/community engagement, student mental health and academic achievement. Her research in sport is most notable in relation to the 30-plus empirical studies exploring Ohio State's nationally recognized LiFEsports program. Additionally, she and Dr. Samantha Bates recently concluded the National Coach Survey, the first of its kind in the United States and funded by Nike, the Aspen Institute's Project Play and the Susan Crown Exchange. Anderson-Butcher also is working with the Ohio High School Athletic Association and 12 partner school districts—including Mansfield, Princeton, Granville and Hilliard—to improve school sport in the state. Last year Anderson-Butcher was inducted as a Fellow in the Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare—the first Ohio State faculty member to receive the prestigious honor.

RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN WITH TRAUMA

Building on her experience as a child protective services worker in South Korea, Dr. Susan Yoon has dedicated her career to generating scientific knowledge that can promote resilience and well-being in children who have experienced abuse and neglect. Using large-scale survey data, including the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being and the Future Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Yoon has sought to identify key protective factors across multiple levels of the social ecology—individual, family, peer, school and community. At the school level, Yoon and her colleagues have found that school connectedness, positive peer relationships and school-based interventions play important roles in enhancing resilience among school-aged children following exposure to trauma.

LEVERAGING SPORT AND EDUCATION TO PROMOTE EQUITY

Dr. Samantha Bates investigates how to leverage positive youth development settings to address social inequities and promote holistic health. Her work explores how sport can serve as a context for social-emotional learning, identifies evidence-based and culturally responsive mental health interventions, and examines how adults in youth-serving organizations become race-conscious and aware of exclusionary practices in education. Bates is currently conducting several community-engaged research projects. For instance, to address the adolescent mental health crisis, she is piloting a curriculum for student-athletes called the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series in partnership with local high schools. Bates is finalizing a five-year longitudinal study on inequities in school-based mental health services for youth of color and is co-leading the Grow Your Own school social worker study in the Dublin, Ohio, City Schools. She was also recently named a cluster co-chair for school social work within the Society for Social Work and Research.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Dr. Natasha Bowen's research focuses on bringing the social work ecological perspective to schools. Using elementary and secondary versions of a survey called the School Success Profile, she has helped schools see how malleable aspects of the school environment contribute to academic and behavioral success. With input from school social workers across the country, Bowen has developed online resources and trainings that empower social workers to lead efforts to make the school environment more supportive of students. Currently, Bowen is developing resources for improving the racial climate of schools and eliminating racial disparities in discipline. She is also helping an Ohio school district effectively use its administrative data, and is providing two four-day workshops on evidence-based practice in schools, one for school teams including social workers nationwide, and one for the Ohio Department of Education.

TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING

Dr. Scottye J. Cash's research primarily focuses on how technology can support adolescents and family well-being and mental health in schools/universities, agencies and organizations. By capitalizing on her combined expertise in technology and child protective services, Cash's innovative research has examined the role of crisis text support in facilitating the disclosure and reporting of child maltreatment. She is also exploring the use of an online, peer-to-peer application to understand how adolescents disclose maltreatment to their peers and the types of responses they receive. Findings from these studies and Cash's research are being used to identify ways in which technologies can provide the right care—at the right time and in the right way—to support mental health and well-being in adolescents.

ALUMNI ACROSS THE



ASHLEY WHITE

BSSW '19, MSW '22

📍 **Riverdale, Maryland**

Current position:

Discharge planner, BridgePoint Hospital
Capitol Hill

Current social work issue in your city:

Housing in Maryland is an issue for people who may be homeless and coming out of recovery from the hospital. Sometimes when social workers are helping the patients put in applications for housing, the patients may not get accepted due to certain circumstances like finances, or they may have difficulty finding needed services.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

Studying abroad! As an undergrad in 2018, I studied in Melbourne, Australia, and had an amazing time. I wish I'd had the chance to do it again in grad school.



LUKE O'QUINN

BSSW '13

📍 **Los Angeles, California**

Current position:

Director of youth leadership at Bresee Foundation and diversity, equity and inclusion facilitator at RISE

Current social work issue in your city:

Los Angeles faces many issues like homelessness, gang violence, immigration status, food security and access to education. At Bresee, we provide free social services for community members. Additionally, my program empowers high-schoolers as leaders and mentors to younger students. Our mission is for leaders to make healthy and brave decisions.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

The Ohio State LiFEsports kids, Buckeye Donuts, and walking into Stillman Hall and seeing the friendly CSW community.



JEAN OLLIS

BSSW '92, MSW '09

📍 **Helena, Montana**

Current position:

Associate professor of social work (MSW program), Carroll College, Helena

Mental health therapist (private practice), Affinity HealthWorks, Bucyrus, Ohio

Current social work issue in your city:

The rural contexts of both my practice locations lend themselves to similar struggles. These are communities struggling with access to services. Montana is ranked second in the nation for suicide rates, and 75 percent of Montana communities do not have enough mental health providers to service residents.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

The diverse population of students, faculty and staff. The university's culture creates an environment of rich learning, both socially and academically. I value the intentionality within the College of Social Work to challenge students and alumni to engage in promoting social and economic justice.



COUNTRY



MARYANN GIRARD

BSSW '70

 **Brentwood, Tennessee**

Current position:

I am now retired and serve as a special education substitute teacher. In my career, I worked as an executive director/founder of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit social service agency; caseworker in hospitals, schools and long-term and pediatric care facilities; adjunct faculty member; project developer; and coordinator and behavior specialist for the Red Bear program.

Current social work issue in your city:

The current issue in the Nashville area is gun safety following the shooting at Covenant School in May. Other issues include LGBTQ rights, book banning and voter suppression.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

My years at Ohio State were transformational, and I miss most everything, including friends, stimulating classes, and mind-opening discussions about religion, politics and social issues. I was on campus during the protests over the war in Vietnam, which broadened my world view. And Ohio State was the national football champion my senior year!



DARRELL CRAFT

MSW '01

 **Elida, Ohio**

Current position:

After being in recovery following six strokes, I recently published my book, *Journal of a Six-Time Stroke Survivor*. I also volunteer at St. Rita's Medical Center's rehabilitation unit, where I was a patient, and at Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen and Allen-Oakwood Correctional Institution in prison ministry.

Current social work issue in your city:

One issue facing Lima is support for law enforcement. My wife and I have walked in several "pray-tests" or protests using prayer as part of "Bless the Blue." On one occasion, we were each interviewed by local news media. Hopefully, these helped lower tensions with law enforcement.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

Cutting-edge resources. For instance, early in my career I worked with someone with a rare genetic disorder. There was only one other case of the disorder in the world, and Ohio State had one of only two copies of the case study in Ohio in its library.



NUURAH PARSONS

BSSW '21

 **Honolulu, Hawaii**

Current position:

Social worker at The Villas Post Acute Care Rehab

Current social work issue in your city:

Increasing rent, limited housing stock and high cost of living force many folks into housing instability and homelessness. The 2023 Homelessness Point in Time Count recorded a 2 percent increase in the homeless population. Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders make up about 10 percent of the total population on Oahu but represent more than 35 percent of those experiencing homelessness.

What do you miss about Ohio State?

I miss the campus environment, including the Student Union, the Oval and Mirror Lake, and Chadwick Arboretum. I also miss the faculty and staff at the College of Social Work. I especially miss my advisor, Stacy Song. She is such a treasure and made herself available when I had questions about classes, career goals, and internship and work opportunities.

**SHARE
YOUR
STORY!**

Are you an alum making a difference in your community? Reach out to cswalumni@osu.edu to be featured in our next edition of Alumni Across the Country!

Proactive philanthropy



Fort Lauderdale, site of couple's generous gift.

Building on their longtime generosity to the College of Social Work, Terry Etling (BSSW '66) and partner Mark Phillips Schwamberger have made a planned commitment to support the college's future needs.

A decade ago, the couple donated their condominium in Fort Lauderdale, Florida—the largest gift in the college's history at that time. The combined value of the condo and their most recent gift is nearly \$600,000.

The two are thrilled that their previous gift is no longer the largest, particularly because Etling served on the Dean's Development Circle, where he and other members worked to inspire philanthropy to the college. "We

primed the pump, so to speak, and I'm glad that it prompted some other folks to join us," says Etling.

Etling enjoyed a lengthy social work career that included serving as deputy director of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission and policy advisor for the Florida Rehabilitation Council. He's now a retired snowbird, spending half the year in Upper Arlington and the other half in Fort Lauderdale.

Schwamberger, who graduated from Ohio State's theatre program as a nontraditional student in 2008, says that Etling's social work career influenced the ethos of the company he founded, Evolution Theatre. "Our mission is one of acceptance," he says. "Our cast and crew come from all walks of life, and

"Our cast and crew come from all walks of life, and no matter what their story is, we help people realize what they can achieve and how they can overcome barriers in their way."

MARK PHILLIPS SCHWAMBERGER

no matter what their story is, we help people realize what they can achieve and how they can overcome barriers in their way."

Being proactive in their philanthropy through their legacy gift to the college's general fund gives Etling and Schwamberger confidence that their wishes will be carried out. "Social work is important to all of us—not just the people who need the services, but the rest of the community who benefit from the services provided," says Etling.

"Terry and Mark's generous support will create such an impact for our students," says chief development officer Melanie Wehmeyer. "They both are true examples of social work values, and we are so appreciative for their relationship with the college." ■



Tom Gregoire and Christina Ray

Paying forward the joy of sobriety

THE A.T. “GREG” AND CHARLOTTE GREGOIRE FUND IN ADDICTION AND RECOVERY SCHOLARSHIP

As an undergraduate at Marymount College of Kansas in the late 1970s, Tom Gregoire got the help he needed for alcohol and drug addiction thanks to one of his professors being open about his own recovery journey. The professor’s willingness to break the stigma—a rarity at the time—inspired Gregoire to ask for help.

Still, it took him three tries to gather the courage to approach the professor. “After scheduling with him and losing my nerve the first two tries, I went to him and said, ‘I need help.’ That was all I had to say. He took me under his wing and helped me get treatment and restart my life. Now, I’m that professor.”

As dean emeritus of the College of Social Work, and throughout his career in academia and as a substance abuse clinician and administrator, Gregoire has paid forward the joy of sobriety by “recovering out loud” and connecting others to the help they need.

One of the ways he does that is through the A.T. “Greg” and Charlotte Gregoire Fund in Addiction and Recovery Scholarship. Gregoire created the scholarship in memory of his parents, who supported him through his addiction and beyond—despite, by his own admission, having “put them through hell.” Funded through generous gifts from Gregoire as well as his friends, family, and colleagues and partners in the College of Social Work, the scholarship helped its inaugural recipient attain her MSW this past spring.

Christina Ray (BSSW ’22, MSW ’23), whom Gregoire calls a “phenomenal first recipient,” has endured her own struggles with addiction. Growing up on Columbus’ west side with neighborhood friends who struggled with literacy, Ray felt like she “stuck out like a sore thumb” as a scholarship student at the elite Columbus School for Girls. Later, while a student at Ohio

“I told her, ‘You’re part of a lineage now. My helpers helped me, and you’ll help so many people. That’s how this works.’”

TOM GREGOIRE

State, she drank alcohol and smoked marijuana with those neighborhood friends and eventually became addicted to opiates, heroin and crack.

Ray dropped out of college and spent her young adulthood in and out of jail and rehab. Her addiction came to define her personality. “I hit various rock bottoms and almost prided myself on living a life that others only saw in movies—stealing big-screen TVs outside restaurants, committing all kinds of crimes to get drugs,” she says.

Eventually, Ray received a three-year prison sentence for driving the getaway car in a series of gas station robberies. In her third year of the sentence, she experienced a profound awakening as she came to know herself as a sober person.

“I was working out every day, ran a 5K, was reading self-help books, leading groups and meditating. I was the best version of myself I’d ever been,” she recalls.

“That was in spite of prison—not because of it. It was the amazing community of women who were incarcerated with me that helped me be able to do that. It’s where I found my passion and purpose, and I thought, ‘I need to get out and be a voice for these women.’”

Not long after her release, Ray re-enrolled at Ohio State in the College of Social Work. This past academic year she took full advantage of the opportunities the Gregoire Scholarship afforded her, including traveling to Washington, DC, to advocate on behalf of incarcerated people.

The best part? “Getting to know Tom and how amazing he is,” says Ray, who has been clean for three years and works for ARCH Reentry in prison advocacy reform.

Gregoire gets chills when he thinks about the enormous impact Ray will have on others. “I told her, ‘You’re part of a lineage now. My helpers helped me, and you’ll help so many people. That’s how this works.’” ■



Support our students!

Make an impact by supporting our students in their field placements. Your generous gift not only helps our students financially, it creates a ripple effect that touches the lives of countless individuals and families who benefit from the work our students and alumni do. Whether it is providing counseling services

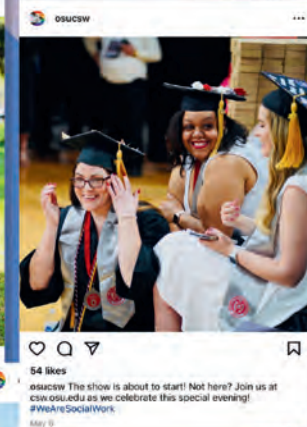
to those struggling with mental health issues, advocating for social justice and human rights or addressing critical social problems, our students are making a positive impact in our communities and beyond. Please consider making a gift to help our students as they help the community.



To give, please visit give.osu.edu/fieldfunding or scan the QR code.

#WEARESOCIAlWORK

Amplify. Advocate. Change.





THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLUMBUS, OHIO
Permit No. 711

Stillman Hall
1947 N. College Rd.
Columbus, Ohio 43210

csw.osu.edu

VOTING IS SOCIAL WORK

Most people who have never registered to vote have never been asked! Make a difference and make a plan for how you will cast your ballot this election season. Go to vote.org for rules and important dates in your state.

vote.org

