

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK NEWS

Fall 2016/Winter 2017



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Dr. Steve Anderson

School grows its focus on research, racial justice, advocacy, and community engagement

Dear Friends,

It has been another busy and exciting fall in the School of Social Work. We again welcomed strong new cohorts of BASW, MSW, and PhD students, with total enrollment in our social work programs of over 700 students. Our research presence continues to grow and is highlighted this year by the addition of three new tenure system faculty members: Associate Professor Fei Sun and Assistant Professors Carrie Moylan and Deirdre Shires (see profiles on p. 20).

Like many others, we at the School are troubled by the racially related violence that has been occurring in so many communities. We are especially concerned by ongoing difficulties in police and community relations, and the sometimes inappropriate use of force in police interactions with minority group members. As social workers, it is important to raise our voices and engage in actions to assure racial justice and equitable treatment of all members of our society, and this certainly applies to community safety. The School's Diversity Committee will focus attention on racial issues this year, and the School already has co-sponsored a speaking event with well-known pastor and author **Jim Wallis** that was attended by large numbers of students and community members (see p. 23). Stay tuned for other events related to race and racial justice in which the School will be involved during the year, and certainly feel free to send any ideas you may have.

The School is proud to participate in MSU's Empower Extraordinary capital campaign, which has the goal of raising \$1.5 billion by 2018 to enhance the University in many ways. Through the generosity of our many alumni and friends, the School has made a major contribution to this campaign and in so doing has enhanced scholarships for our students and the strength of our community service programs. One example of this is the roll-out of our new Advocacy Scholars Program, which will engage MSW students in enhanced advocacy training, including targeted field placements, new curricula, and exposure to leading social advocates. A highlight of our inaugural year has been the engagement of prominent community leaders in small group discussions with our first group of scholars (see pp. 4-5).

Again, thanks so much to everyone who is contributing to making the School of Social Work such a vibrant and growing place! I wish all of you a happy holiday season and the best in the coming year.

Best regards,

Steve Anderson
Director and Professor, School of Social Work

MBK scholars learn about **policy, race, and poverty intersections in the field**

Thanks to a grant from the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Policy Practice in Field Education Initiative, eight MSW students are engaged in work aimed at improving outcomes for young men of color throughout Michigan as part of President Barack Obama's initiative, My Brother's Keeper (MBK).

The School is collaborating with One Love Global (OLG), a Lansing-based nonprofit organization that is committed to peace, justice, and opportunity. In cooperation with **Angela Waters Austin**, OLG's director, the project has placed students in MBK sites in Flint, southeast Michigan, and Lansing. Additionally, in partnership with Western Michigan University, two students are placed with the Benton Harbor MBK site.

The goal is to train social work students to be more aware of structural racism in communities and organizational policies, as well as to develop advocacy skills to effect change as either members or allies of communities of color. Even with only a few months in training, students have already felt the impact of their work. In the words of **Frances Jackson** (Advanced Standing MSW candidate), "Having an opportunity to advocate for policy change surrounding systemic inequality for disenfranchised communities where men and women of color reside cannot compare to any other internship or employment opportunity."

This model creates a unique opportunity for students to be engaged as part of a team while working to support individual community efforts. **Keshara Mumford** (Advanced Standing MSW candidate) shared that, "Participating in conference calls with other MBK scholars all over Michigan and attending community action meetings in different cities has taught me that the advocating can't be done alone. Working with different communities on a local level and discussing some common barriers that youth experience helps MBK scholars to advocate for changes in their community on a state level."

Students receive additional support through four, 90-minute training sessions on relevant topics related to racial issues and inequality. Additionally, all MSU MSW students involved in the project receive field instruction from **Shani Saxon**, LMSW, a member of the School's Diversity Committee and presenter through continuing education on healing racial violence. Finally, students have the opportunity to attend outside trainings that are relevant to their work, with the cost of registration covered by the School.

In the end, the hope is that participating students have what Austin calls that "a-ha" moment when they realize that you can have diversity and still have inequity. With this experience, students will be better prepared to examine programs that promote diversity with a more critical eye in assessing real equity. **S**

Below: Attending a recent Inkster City Council meeting were L-R: Javion Johnson, social work student **Keshara Mumford**, **Joshua Clark**, and **Frances Jackson**, and Inkster City Council Member **Jewell Jones**.



Above: Student **Sequiu Hogan** (far right) of One Love Global attends a meeting with **Flint Mayor Karen Weaver**, **Chelsea Clinton**, **U.S. Representative Dan Kildee** and others regarding the Flint water crisis.

School launches **Advocacy** :

Beginning this fall, the School launched an exciting new program to enhance advocacy and policy training for MSW students: the Advocacy Scholars Program. The program will provide \$5,000 scholarships to MSW students interested in focusing their careers on advocacy-related practice, especially in the social policy arena. All Advocacy Scholars will engage in at least one field placement with an advocacy-related focus, receive faculty mentoring on how to build a career in policy advocacy, and will also participate in a seminar series with experienced advocacy practice leaders.

The seminars are designed to give the Advocacy Scholars an opportunity to engage firsthand with community leaders who are advocates for social justice in a variety of contexts (i.e., through positions in different branches and levels of government, think tanks, foundations, and issue-based advocacy groups). During this inaugural year, the seminar series will include sessions with:

- **Dr. Paul Elam**, president, Public Policy Associates
- **Gilda Jacobs**, president/CEO, Michigan League for Public Policy, and former Michigan State Senator and Representative
- **Stephanie Chang**, Michigan State Representative
- **Rashida Tlaib**, manager, Take On Hate Advocacy Campaign, and director, Community Partnerships and Development, Sugar Law Center
- **Lonnie Scott**, executive director, Progress Michigan
- **Rosalynn Bliss**, mayor, City of Grand Rapids
- **Karen Kavanaugh**, director, Drug Safety Project, and former director, Home Visiting Project, Pew Charitable Trusts

THE FIRST FIVE **ADVOCACY SCHOLARS**



Elizabeth Henderson
Class of 2016-17



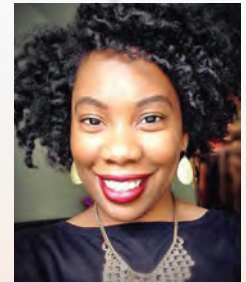
Haley Hildebrand
Class of 2016-17



Frances Jackson
Class of 2016-17



Kenneth Stetson
Class of 2016-17



Algeria Wilson
Class of 2017-18

Scholars Program for MSW students

Plans are underway to also offer Advocacy Scholars, as well as other MSW students, advanced curricula on advocacy skills and practice through a new graduate-level elective.

The program is being funded through donor support. Five Advocacy Scholars were selected the first year, and current funding will allow expansion to ten scholars each year thereafter. School Director **Dr. Steve Anderson** expressed his gratitude for the support received and expressed his hopes for future growth: “We think the Advocacy Scholars Program has great potential, and we are really thankful for the donor support that is allowing this to happen. With our location near the state capital, MSU is an ideal place to focus on social advocacy issues. We hope the program will help us attract leading students interested in advocacy and that we will be able to grow the program assuming we perform well.”

The scholars are finding this new program to be an exciting opportunity that will allow them to expand their understanding and skills related to advocacy and prepare for careers in this area. As **Algeria Wilson**, class of 2017–18, said: “Through the Advocacy Scholars Program, I saw passionate professors who were not just eager about me graduating from their program, but

they were also truly invested in helping me learn, grow, and have the career that I desire after graduation.”

Four of the scholars are currently in their advocacy-focused field placements, which include the field office of Michigan State Representative Stephanie Chang; the Michigan Federation for Children and Families; One Love Global, which is part of the My Brother’s Keeper initiative; and Citizens Alliance on Prisons and Public Spending.

The initiative is being led by School faculty member **Dr. Sacha Klein**. A skilled advocate herself who teaches both policy and advocacy-related courses at the MSW level, Dr. Klein has been instrumental in shaping the program, recruiting and selecting the scholars, and mentoring students. **Dr. Pilar Horner** and **Dr. Anderson** have assisted her in these efforts. Dr. Klein said, “Helping to build the Advocacy Scholars Program has been a highlight of my work here at MSU. We have an amazing group of gifted and passionate students in our inaugural class who are committed to becoming highly skilled, effective advocates so that they can make organizations and public policies more humane and socially just in Michigan and beyond. I can’t wait to see what they, and our future Advocacy Scholars, go on to do with their careers.” **S**



Students attend a dinner reception as part of the Advocacy Scholars seminar series with **Gilda Jacobs** (center), former state legislator and current CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy.

FACULTY
RESEARCH

Social workers improving patient care transitions after a stroke

Stroke is an acute, unexpected event that can affect patients and their families in many ways. Most patients return home not knowing what to expect. They not only face physical, emotional, and cognitive challenges from the stroke itself, but also experience the stress of coordinating care across multiple health care providers. There can also be difficulties with emotional wellbeing, role identity, and fear of stroke recurrence. Together these can lead to depression and reduced quality of life, as well as hospital readmission. Social workers are uniquely situated to help with these challenges because of their ability to navigate multiple systems and levels of care. They can also address psychosocial situations through counseling, problem-solving, and skill-building techniques.

The Michigan Stroke Transitions Trial (MISTT)—a three-year clinical study funded by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)—is testing the effectiveness of a social work case management intervention aimed at improving the transition home after stroke for both patients and their caregivers. The study, which is led by MSU Department of Epidemiology Professor **Mathew Reeves**, includes three investigators from the School of Social Work: Associate Professor **Anne Hughes**, Professor **Paul Freddolino**, and Associate Professor **Amanda Woodward**.

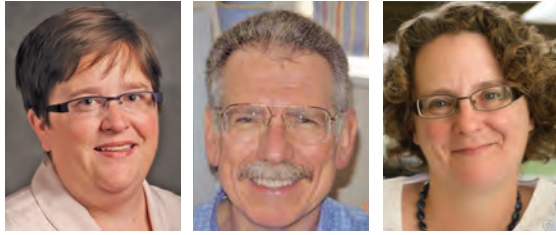
How the case management intervention works

After returning home, participants in the MISTT study are randomly assigned to one of three groups: usual care, case management services from MISTT social workers, and case management plus access to the MISTT website, a curated collection of information and resources related to stroke recovery.

For patients receiving case management, a social worker schedules a home visit within 72 hours of each patient's return home. At the first home visit, the patient and caregiver identify what unmet needs are most important to them and develop specific goals to address them. The social worker follows up at least weekly over the course of the 60-day intervention to assess progress and to provide education and support. To date, the most common unmet needs identified include: mental health issues; debilitating symptoms requiring assistance; financial difficulties; medication management; and temporary, unsafe, or inadequate housing.

The overall goals for MISTT case management include improving quality of life for patients and caregivers by decreasing stress and anxiety and increasing patient activation for managing their health conditions. These outcomes are measured

The overall goals for MISTT case management include improving quality of life for patients and caregivers by decreasing stress and anxiety and increasing patient activation for managing their health conditions.



Dr. Anne Hughes

Dr. Paul Freddolino

Dr. Amanda Woodward

during a phone interview conducted three months after returning home from the initial stroke hospitalization.

Case management challenges and successes

The MISTT study case managers have found it challenging at times to schedule the first home visit. Many patients and caregivers say they are too overwhelmed to participate and, yet, the stressful and overwhelming nature of the transition is what the intervention is trying to help them address. Others don't realize they need help until they have been home long enough to experience their "new self" within their "old environment." MISTT social workers have also found that in some areas there are not enough resources to help with housing, home repair, and financial needs. As the study moves forward, the project team hopes to collaborate with the School's community partners to find solutions to these limitations.

School faculty member Amanda Woodward stated that final results from the MISTT study will not be available until 2018. "However, anecdotally, we know the intervention has been helpful to many patients and caregivers. For example, one patient who was initially reluctant reported that he benefited from having someone to talk to during his transition. A social worker was able to help another patient manage her stress and feel more prepared for her return home after living with a family member. A third patient had trouble remembering her medications or to even eat. She had difficulty

The MISTT study is funded by the **Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute**. If you are interested in learning more about the MISTT study, visit epi.msu.edu/mistt.

MISTT study contact information:

Toll free: **844-946-4788**
Email: mistt@epi.msu.edu

MISTT leadership team at MSU:

Mathew Reeves, BVSc, PhD, FAHA (PI), professor, Department of Epidemiology

Anne Hughes, PhD (Co-I), associate professor, School of Social Work

Paul Freddolino, PhD (Co-I), professor, School of Social Work

Amanda Woodward, PhD (Co-I), associate professor, School of Social Work

Sarah J. Swierenga, PhD (Co-I), director, Usability/Accessibility Research and Consulting

Constantinos K. Coursaris, PhD (Co-I), associate professor, Department of Media and Information; Department of Advertising and Public Relations

Michele C. Fritz, LVT, MS (project manager), Department of Epidemiology

organizing everything and didn't know how to apply for benefits. 'I am so thankful you are here to help me,' she told the MISTT social worker."

After seeing positive results, Dr. Hughes stated, "I am excited that this project will generate data on the potential of social work to change the return-to-home transition experience. Too often patients are discharged with very little support, and we are working to fill that gap." **S**

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

School's Continuing Education Program serves hundreds of social workers annually

Grounded in the mission and values of the School of Social Work, the Continuing Education Program provides avenues that demonstrate how MSU is a leader in lifelong social work education by engaging in collaborative efforts, including and promoting diversity, and fostering access to premiere social work education. Our program's mission is to help social workers excel in service to their communities by offering innovative, valuable, and accessible professional development opportunities throughout Michigan and beyond.

As the largest school of social work continuing education provider in Michigan, our School's Continuing Education Program utilizes the knowledge and talents of faculty members, field instructors, field liaisons, alumni, state and organizational leaders, national and international scholars, and other experts. Our strong and positive relationships developed by the School community provide a rich pool of instructors.

Great Lakes Summer Institute

This year was the program's 8th Annual Great Lakes Summer Institute, a professional development experience comprised of two-day, one-day, and half-day intensive courses on a variety of current topics taught by experts in the field. With over 500 registrations, the 2016 institute was our biggest success to date! Each year our program grows, with a focus on innovative, valuable programming for social workers to advance their knowledge in social work practice.

Upcoming CE sessions

From January through September 2016, the CE Program provided 106 in-person training opportunities and webinars, with a total of 2,911 registrations. Continuing education strives to create relationships, bringing experts in the social work, mental health, and leadership fields to venues all over Michigan.

Several new and unique continuing education events are coming up that highlight the diversity and range of educational opportunities offered through the School of Social Work CE Program:

January 20, 10:00 am–12:00 pm

Healing Racial Violence

presented by **Shani Saxon**, LMSW, and **Marya Sosulski**, PhD

March 10–11, 9:00 am–4:30 pm

Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

presented by **Kris Buffington**, LMSW

April 6, 9:00 am–12:15 pm

Human Trafficking: Identification and Advocacy

presented by **Elizabeth Campbell**, JD, University of Michigan

April 21, 9:00 am–4:30 pm

Interventions for People Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

presented by national expert **Sally Burton-Hoyle**, PhD, Eastern Michigan University

Ruth Koehler Endowed Lectureship

March 23, 9:00 am–4:30 pm

Use of Fairytales in Working with Children of Trauma

presented by **Victoria Fitton**, PhD, LMSW, ACSW, Ruth Koehler Endowed Clinical Professor at MSU

Save these dates for our 9th Annual Great Lakes Summer Institute: July 12, 13, and 14, 2017.

Designed to blend meaningful learning with maximum relaxation, the GLSI is held in beautiful Traverse City. Minutes from the famous Grand Traverse Bay, the Institute will be held at the Great Wolf Lodge where participants can enjoy the premiere Elements Spa, play in Fort Mackenzie, a four-story interactive waterpark, and choose any of three onsite dining experiences.

Relax and learn in beautiful Traverse City, Michigan!

Interested in sponsoring this event, or registering for a vendor table? Email swcke@msu.edu for more information.



GLSI presenter **Dr. Mona Fishbane** (pictured top right), director of the Couple Therapy Training Program at the Chicago Center for Family Health, with GLSI attendees.





The Continuing Education team!

1-credit classes

We offer hybrid classes that include opportunities for currently enrolled MSW students and professionals seeking additional, challenging learning opportunities. Examples of 1-credit classes scheduled in 2017 are:

May 22-23, 9:00 am-4:30 pm in East Lansing

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

presented by **Laura Lokers**, LMSW

June 2, 9:00 am-4:30 pm in East Lansing

**Changing the World, Your Community, Your Organization:
The Power of Focused Passion**

presented by **Robert Sheehan**, LMSW, MBA

June 23-24, 9:00 am-4:30 pm in East Lansing

Cyber Social Work: Technology and the Impact on Our Profession

presented by **Janet Joiner**, PhD, LMSW

July 12-13, 8:00 am-3:45 pm in Traverse City

Dialectical Behavioral Therapy

presented by **Josh Smith**, LMSW, BCD

July 28-29, 9:00 am-4:30 pm at Oakland University

Internal Family Systems

presented by **Tina Timm**, PhD, LMSW, LMFT

Adoption Certificate for professionals

The Adoption Certificate is designed to help professionals working with adoptive families meet the unique needs of this population. Post adoption services are needed now more than ever as foster, kinship, and recruited families are adopting children from the child welfare system as well as those families completing adoptions internationally. This program contains adoption-focused courses that provide a foundation for adoption-centered practice.

In order to be eligible for the certificate, two 6-hour core courses plus one 3-hour elective must be completed from the course offerings below:

Core courses:

- **Understanding the Needs of Adopted Children and Families**
 - **Treating and Supporting Adoptive Families**
- **Assessing, Preparing, and Supporting Adoptive Families and Children to Achieve and Maintain Permanence**

Elective courses:

- **Working with Children Who Have Attachment Issues**
- **Common Diagnosis and Essentials of Medication Management for Adopted Children**
- **Intervening with Families Whose Adoptions Are in Jeopardy**
 - **Claiming Shame Resilience and Self-compassion in Adoption and Foster Care**

Distance Education

The Continuing Education Program has expanded to offer more opportunities for learning through its distance education programs, which include both webinars and online courses. These include many online on-demand courses that can be accessed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week such as pain management and ethics. Live webinars are offered throughout the year and offer a convenient, interactive option for continuing education. Look for upcoming webinars at socialwork.msu.edu/ceu/catalog.php. **S**

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What people say about the School's continuing education courses

Ninety-seven percent of our CE attendees in 2015 said they were satisfied with our programs, and 98 percent said our content was relevant to their professional practice.

"I always look forward to the MSU School of Social Work Continuing Education Program Catalog and schedule of courses. These trainings, wherever their location, are always professionally presented and provide both current research and well established material relevant to continuing education.

"As an MSU School of Social Work alumna, I am particularly proud of the program and its offerings. I often meet other social workers in these trainings who have attended other universities but who have chosen one or more outstanding CECH courses available through MSU, which is, in itself, an indication of the wide appeal MSU's School of Social Work selections have throughout the state."

—*Deanna Rosser, LMSW, LMFT*

"I have always been committed to continuing education and professional development—both before and since such became required. I am very proud that my university has provided the leadership for the provision of multiple types of educational choices for our profession. I have participated in opportunities provided by other venues but consistently find those provided by MSU to be most pertinent, affordable, accommodating, and challenging.

"In addition to the progressive topics offered, I am able to maintain connections with colleagues in our community and in our state. I have been in our field since the late 60s. Much has changed and evolved. It is critical every social worker keep themselves 'aware' of the changes, needs, opportunities, and new studies related to the work we do and/or believe in. MSU's School of Social Work Continuing Education Program does this."

—*Paula L. Clark, LMSW*

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Living our mission **through active outreach**

Unique to most schools of social work, MSU's School operates programs providing community services for otherwise unmet needs. These programs include Chance at Childhood, Fostering Academics, Mentoring Excellence (FAME), Kinship Care Resource Center, and Veterinary Social Work Services. On any given day, a grandmother is celebrating the adoption of her grandchild because of the brokering and advocacy efforts of the Kinship Care Resource Center and Chance at Childhood interns and faculty. A Veterinary Social Work Services intern is validating a widower grieving the loss of a cherished pet who eased his feelings of isolation. An MSU freshman whose foster care placement ended when she turned 18 is homeless between semesters and is connected to housing by FAME interns and faculty.

This semester, Community Programs are providing educational field placement experiences, each monitored by a social work faculty member to MSW, BASW, and College of Law students. Students have already participated in multiple individual program trainings and one large Community Programs orientation where opportunities for collaborative projects and research opportunities were highlighted. For example, FAME is reviewing how students who receive FAME services fare in regard to graduation rates and years-to-degree completion compared to FAME-eligible students who are not utilizing services. An undergraduate student is working with Chance at Childhood to assess the experience of supervised visitation from the child's point of view.

Community Programs allow the School to engage in community-engaged service and scholarship in exciting and innovative ways. We invite you to stay connected to our exciting work. Consider volunteering as a FAME mentor, donate items for FAME Finals Survival Week care packages, contribute children's books about grief and loss upon losing an animal, and join in our advocacy efforts such as Foster Care Awareness Month events. Follow us on social media to learn more. **S**

WHO WILL?

20 MSW students
3 BASW students
16 Law students
9,000 Student hours

SPARTANS WILL.

"Working with the Community Programs made me realize that as much as we are in different programs and may serve different populations,

we are all connected, and we still rely on each other every once in a while for information and referrals for our clients. It has shown me that at the end of the day, social workers will always be connected no matter how different we think our agencies are. The fact that we have a common interest in serving people and people are intertwined means we are still one big family of social workers after all. We are stronger together!"

—*Anissa Chitwanga, MSW MasterCard Scholar, who has participated with the Kinship Care Resource Center and this year with Chance at Childhood*



"Interning within the School of Social Work has been so wonderful. The skills I've learned and the networking I've done have been

paramount in my growth and have fueled my interest in working in post-secondary education administration and advising."

—*FAME intern and BASW student Ian Jacobs*

Graduate Certificate in Chicano/Latino Studies

Chicano/Latino Studies (CLS) at Michigan State University prepares graduate students

interested in the historical and current experiences of Chicanos and Latinos, with an emphasis on transdisciplinary, global, comparative, and applied approaches. The director of CLS is Dr. Eric González Juenke. More than 15 CLS-affiliated faculty members hail from a wide range of disciplines, including two from social work: Drs. Pilar Horner and Daniel Vélez Ortiz.

The CLS certificate offers outstanding resources for research such as funds for travel to present at scholarly conferences as well as the opportunity to work closely



with affiliated faculty members. In addition, the CLS office provides a "home base" for students to network,

develop community, and share ideas and perspectives across disciplines.

To earn the graduate certificate, a student must take three core courses offered by CLS for a total of nine credits: (1) Historiography and Social Science: Methods in Chicano/Latino Studies; (2) Literary and Cultural Theory in Chicano/Latino Studies; and (3) Seminar in Chicano/Latino Studies. Additionally, three credits in related content from another department as approved by the CLS director must be taken, for a total of 12 credits.

Victoria Fitton leads School's MSW Program



In fall 2015, Dr. Victoria Fitton became the new director for the School's MSW Program. This is among the most challenging jobs in the School, given the large MSW student body, involving many locations and including many specializations and certifications. The MSW graduate program is currently the largest in the College of Social Science.

Dr. Fitton has been with the School of Social Work as an instructor since 2002 and taught in the Flint program early on and for many years in distance and blended education. In fall 2008, she received an appointment as the School's first endowed faculty member through the Ruth Koehler Endowed Professorship in Children's Services. This is a particularly fulfilling role because it pulls together the disparate components of experience she has had and melds those into unique service opportunities. She continues to teach advanced clinical courses in the East Lansing MSW Program.

Dr. Fitton also was a practicing therapist until a year ago, with a specialization in complex trauma. In addition, she served as the clinical director of an agency for a period of time as well as a field instructor for the School. Now, in her free time, she provides consultation and professional development services internationally.

Having had a year of experience as director of the MSW Program, Dr. Fitton says there are three things she values most in this job: "the superlative graduate office team, exceptional School colleagues, and the uniquely satisfying responsibility with the team of admitting students to the MSW programs and empowering them through to graduation." **S**

Monaca Eaton assumes leadership of BASW Program



Monaca Eaton (MSU BASW 2003, MSW 2006) has been selected to serve as the new director for the School's BASW Program. In this position she will be responsible for leadership in the planning and operation of the BASW Program. Monaca has been teaching 11 years for the School and is a previous fellow of the Walter and Pauline Adams Academy for Instructional Excellence. She has an exemplary teaching record and a true passion for working with undergraduate students. In previous roles in the School, she has served as assistant director of the Continuing Education Program and most recently as the academic advisor for the BASW Program. She brings an intricate knowledge of academic policy and procedures, having been part of various School, College, and University committees. Most recently, she was selected to be part of the Educational Advisory Board for Undergraduate Education and a training specialist for the University-wide Student Success Initiative.

As a first-generation college student, Monaca has a particular interest in supporting students in the areas of professionalism and self-care.

"As a student, learning the ropes in an institution as large as MSU can be incredibly challenging for all students, but especially for our non-traditional, first-generation, and transfer students. Social work is an incredibly rigorous and demanding bachelor's degree. I look at our BASW students as my colleagues in training. The process of professional development and accountability begins upon entrance into a social work program. Students are expected to commit to learning and modeling professional social work behavior, values, and ethics in the classroom, field education, and beyond."

"We have a great curriculum that prepares our students for generalist social work practice. I want to enrich that with workshops, trainings, and opportunities for research, presentations, career development, building professional skills for field, workshops for resumes, job interviewing, and graduate school applications, community building around self-care, and social awareness. I want our students to be prepared academically, emotionally, and professionally to become change agents and to become my colleagues." **S**

CLC courses offered to PhD students

Social work PhD students interested in Chicano/Latino studies can earn the certificate by taking these CLS courses toward their electives requirement (i.e., their focused cognate, which must include at least 12 credits outside of social work). This allows a student to earn a PhD in social work and at the same time complete the Graduate Certificate in Chicano/Latino Studies. This is an exciting opportunity for social work doctoral students!

For more information, contact Dr. Angie Kennedy, director of the PhD Program in Social Work (kenne258@msu.edu) or visit the CLS website at clstudies.msu.edu. **S**

Taking Big Risks to Solve Big Problems

“I’M BLOWN AWAY, **EVERY DAY**,
BY WHAT WE WATCH AND READ...”

Combat Veterans: The Physical, Emotional & Social Costs of War is an immersive online learning experience in which students embark on a unique 15-week journey through the military deployment cycle. This 2-credit course utilizes the power of transmedia storytelling to shape an experience designed to deepen empathy and understanding of the challenges facing our combat veterans.

Inspired by the issues her husband, Kevin Thompson (MSU MSW 2016), continues to endure as a result of his combat deployment to Iraq in 2006, Tina Blaschke-Thompson (Clinical Instructor and Coordinator of Statewide Blended and Weekend MSW Programs), enlisted the help of a very talented team of people to help design and implement an innovative approach to teaching and learning: Glenn Stutzky (School of Social Work) and Creative Designers Emily Brozovic, Keesa Johnson, and Christopher Irvin (MSU IT Services Teaching and Learning Division), as well as six veterans who served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan as consultants and storytellers; Frank Lombard, one of these veterans and a student in the Statewide Blended MSW Program, is currently serving as the course assistant as well.

“An average of 22 veterans commit suicide every day. An important step in addressing this epidemic is greater awareness among those in a position to help. I don’t want my husband to become one of these 22 because people don’t understand what he has gone through,” said Blaschke-Thompson.

The School of Social Work is exploring the possibility of turning this course into a certificate program for MSW students to specialize in military social work—it would be the first of its kind in the state of Michigan.

“THIS CLASS IS **SO WORTH** ITS EMOTIONAL RIDE.”



Summer exchange with social work counterparts in China

On June 15, 2016, School of Social Work faculty members Drs. **Steven Anderson** and **Fei Sun** were invited to present at the International Conference on Aging hosted by the College of Sociology at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST) in Wuhan, China. Other represented institutions included the Gerontological Society of America, Duke University, Arizona State University, Howard University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Nanyang Technological University. Officials from Chinese governmental agencies also attended the conference.

Presenters each addressed a specific topic related to an aging issue that faces their community and has implications for other societies. Dr. Anderson presented opening remarks, congratulating the College and its new dean, **Dr. Jianding Ding**, on achieving College status, and later delivered a speech on the challenges faced by American elders as family caregivers. Dr. Sun presented his research on Chinese American elders in Phoenix and introduced a body-mind movement

intervention developed to improve brain health in this group.

HUST, located in Wuhan of Hubei Province, is among the most well-known universities in China. The College of Sociology at HUST consists of three departments: Social Work, Social Security and Policy, and Sociology. College of Sociology Dean **Dr. Jianding Ding** expressed a strong interest in establishing a formal collaborative relationship with the MSU School of Social Work. **Dr. Huibing Ke**, an associate professor at the College, will come to our School this December to spend one year as a visiting scholar, marking the beginning of this collaboration.

Drs. Anderson and Sun both have extensive experience working on social work issues in China. Commenting on this most recent experience, Dr. Anderson said, "It is an exciting time to be working on social issues and social work development in China, and our growing collaboration with HUST will open new educational and research opportunities not only in aging but in other areas as well." **S**



Last June, faculty from around the world, including MSU School of Social Work's **Dr. Steven Anderson** and **Dr. Fei Sun**, presented at the International Conference on Aging hosted by the College of Sociology at the Huazhong University of Science and Technology in Wuhan, China.

Kenya's Macheo Children's Centre supported by U.S. fundraising, sponsors

Macheo Children's Centre outside of Thika, Kenya, is a non-governmental organization that serves children through a multi-domain approach to health (nutritional, physical, behavioral, emotional, financial, educational, and mental), with a heavy emphasis on the first 1,000 days of life. With a \$500,000 budget and assistance from the Kenyan government, the Centre serves 14,000 school children an enhanced nutritional breakfast and 8,000 children lunch.

The Centre created an orphanage in the Kiandutu Slum, an area with 25,000 people, and it offers a similar multi-domain program for pregnant teen moms in the Slum. It also operates group homes on the Macheo grounds for rescued children and is building a successful empowerment program to help families of young children determine a sustainable entrepreneurial pursuit to support their families (from buying and selling goats to baking and delivering cakes). There are field workers, social workers, and counselors to meet the varying needs of children and their families.

For the past five years, **Dr. Victoria Fitton**, director of the School's MSW Program, and a friend have worked to

raise private funds through their own nonprofit, Macheo U.S., to support around 35 infants and young children in the orphanage. They have raised nearly \$35,000 and also have recruited U.S. sponsors for children who have been rescued from severe abuse and neglect to pay for their housing and education. Dr. Fitton is working to build a library for the social workers and counselors, a stocked art and sensory center (which helps infants and young children meet developmental milestones), and assessment tools for counselors who have no access to these means.

This summer Dr. Fitton spent three weeks at Macheo and in the Kiandutu Slum, visiting and playing in the orphanage, listening to teen moms talk about their experiences with the mentoring program, meeting children and teachers at rural schools, visiting families in rural areas preparing for empowerment employment, and training counselors through seven days of professional development. She continues to work with the counselors via Skype and plans to return next year to do more trainings and to deliver more much-needed supplies. You can visit the Macheo website at macheo.org.

Said Dr. Fitton, "I grew up in Western poverty; nothing prepared me for knowing a mother and her children who were slowly fading into death by starvation." **S**



Clockwise starting at top left: Some of the eager 14,000 children served by the Macheo Children's Centre near Thika, Kenya; Macheo Centre counselors creating assessment tools for the children; **Dr. Victoria Fitton** embracing one of the many children served by the centre; Dr. Victoria Fitton showing the Macheo children the possibilities of new technology; and despite difficult circumstances, the joy in the faces of the Macheo children is inspiring.

School of Social Work: International research presentation in Switzerland

In August of 2016, scholars from the MSU School of Social Work participated in the Fifth International Conference on Families and Children with Parental Mental Health Challenges in Basel, Switzerland. This team, led by faculty member **Dr. Joanne Riebschleger**, was comprised of BASW student **Angela Terranova**, PhD student **Daniel Cavanaugh**, and Waverly Community Schools school social worker **Kristen Hood**. At the conference, they shared two poster presentations and delivered a workshop on prevention work for children of parents diagnosed with a mental illness (COPMI).

For the first poster presentation, Terranova and Cavanaugh completed a thematic content analysis of mental health literacy websites for COPMI. They examined the information the websites contained, what these websites were missing, and the perspectives that guided website development.

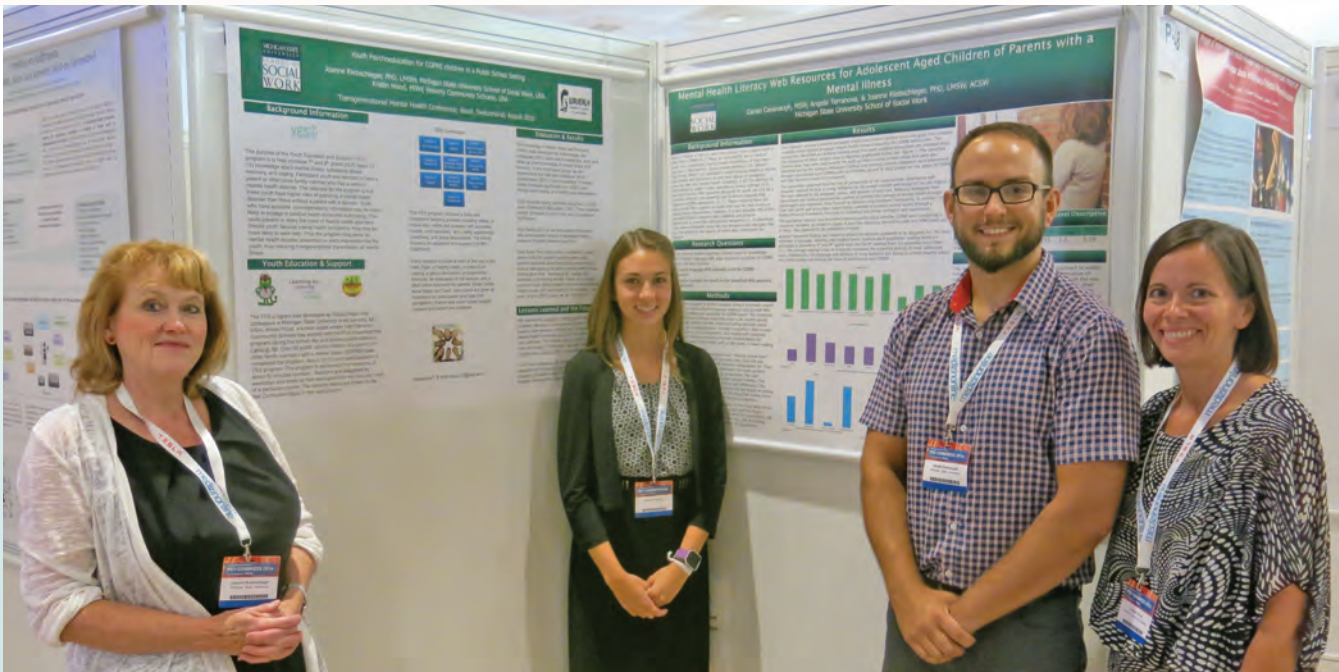
The second poster presented was a collaboration between Dr. Riebschleger and Hood. This poster discussed Youth Education and Support (YES!), an innovative prevention program for COPMI teens developed by Dr. Riebschleger that has been implemented with Hood's assistance at Waverly Community Schools in Lansing.

The workshop that the team presented was drawn from an international research collaboration called "Knowledge

to Children," consisting of Dr. Riebschleger, Cavanaugh, and researchers from The Netherlands and Australia. This project was focused on how to identify and assess the mental health knowledge needs of COPMI youth when building mental health and substance abuse prevention programs.

At the conference, the team attended presentations and workshops related to their research and academic interests, while also networking with professionals from across the world. Terranova explained that one of her favorite parts of the conference was being able to listen to a presentation given by three researchers from Australia and Canada, whose work she had read when conducting her literature review. Terranova proudly stated, "Being a part of the Provost's Undergraduate Research Initiative has been one of my best experiences at MSU. I have been able to connect with faculty throughout MSU and develop skills necessary for graduate school and my future as a social worker. I have been given so many opportunities through this experience that I am so grateful for. I am excited to continue my work this year."

Terranova further added, "Being able to attend this conference was a great experience, and I know it will benefit me in the future. It gave me the opportunity to share my knowledge and also learn from professionals in the field. I believe this will help me tremendously in my graduate studies and future in social work." **S**



L-R: **Dr. Joanne Riebschleger**, BASW student **Angela Terranova**, PhD student **Daniel Cavanaugh**, and school social worker **Kristen Hood** presented at the Fifth International Conference on Families and Children with Parental Mental Health Challenges in Basel, Switzerland, over the summer.

Meet the new PhD students:

- Melanie Carlson
- Ann Nicole Ripberger
- Erik Wittrup



Melanie Carlson is a first-year doctoral student in the School of Social Work. Her research interests encompass the phenomenon of gender-based violence and how to create impactful preventative tools as well as evidence-based interventions. Of particular interest is the exploration of

the impact of trauma-informed social services when there is compounded trauma over a survivor's life span. Additionally, Carlson is interested in creating interventions for survivors that account for structural barriers and multimorbidity from an intersectional perspective that fosters optimum resiliency in survivors.

Prior to joining the PhD Program, Carlson worked for three years as a safehouse client services counselor at Doorways for Women and Families in Arlington, VA, serving survivors of domestic violence and/or homelessness. In total, Carlson has served clients in various shelters for nearly five years and provided support in multiple capacities.

Initially, Carlson will work with Dr. Carrie Moylan to explore effective interdisciplinary professional collaboration for victims of crime. **S**



Ann Nicole Ripberger earned her bachelor's degree from Miami University and immediately followed that with her MSW from the University of Michigan. Her research interests have focused on geriatrics and access to quality long-term care options including private duty home care. She

is especially concerned about the lack of affordable long-term care choices and the effect that this has on the poor and middle class. Other areas of interest include caregiver burden, end-of-life care, and LGBT aging.

After graduating with her MSW in 2007, Ripberger was hired as a social worker and discharge planner for a nursing home and rehabilitation center in southeast Michigan. From there, Ripberger joined Saint Joseph Mercy Hospice and was a hospice social worker for over five years. Most recently, Ripberger was a stroke case manager for the Michigan Stroke Transitions Trial, a study being conducted at Michigan State University by the School of Social Work and the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics (see pp. 6-7).

Currently, Ripberger is working with Dr. Steven Anderson on a project that is examining the health of kinship foster caregivers and the foster children they care for. **S**



Erik Wittrup earned his bachelor's degree in sociology from Oakland University. Following graduation, he taught psychology at Oakland Community College. He then obtained his MSW from Western Michigan University. Wittrup has significant volunteer experience at places such as Habitat for Humanity, HAVEN, Baldwin Soup Kitchen, among others. Wittrup is a two-time recipient of the *Nita Lou Walbridge Scholarship*, which is awarded for exemplary work in the field of social work. Wittrup has a passion for working in child welfare and addressing the trauma experienced by families, communities, and service providers.

Before entering the PhD Program, Wittrup served for over five years as a Children's Protective Services specialist for the State of Michigan, investigating abuse and neglect of children and providing services to families. He additionally worked on several grassroots projects at the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). His most notable projects included the Child Trauma Case Management Project and his co-facilitation of psychological first-aid debriefings to DHHS staff following traumatic incidents.

As MSU continues to research child welfare, Wittrup enrolled in the PhD Program at MSU. Wittrup's research interests include child welfare, childhood trauma, secondary trauma, and resiliency building. He is currently a research assistant with Dr. Anna Maria Santiago, researching housing tenure and children's life chances. **S**

Have you ever considered earning your

PhD in social work?

- Does it sound exciting to become an expert on a topic that's important to you?
- Are you interested in research that can be used to address practice issues or social problems?
- Do you think you might enjoy teaching and mentoring students?

If you would like to learn more about a PhD in social work, including coursework, financial support, and working with a faculty mentor, please contact Dr. Angie Kennedy at kenne258@msu.edu.

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

School of Social Work

“I truly love what I do, and the rewards far outweigh any difficulty. My clients are extremely intelligent, resilient, and inspiring, and I have grown immensely as a professional in this role and am honored to work with this population.”

Marilyn Beardslee is passionate about **serving refugees**



Marilyn Beardslee graduated with an MSW from the MSU School of Social Work in May 2013 with a clinical concentration, and she also received the Evidenced Based Trauma Treatment Certificate. She then worked as a mental health therapist with Samaritas (formerly Lutheran Social Services of Michigan) serving refugee foster youth for about two years. She currently serves as a therapist at a group home for 12 male unaccompanied children and refugee minors ages 16–18. In addition, she is a field instructor for the School and supervises one MSW intern who is working to earn the trauma certificate.

In discussing her work, Beardslee said, “I am passionate about my job and about the refugee population I serve. The youth in the refugee foster care programs at Samaritas have come to the United States seeking refuge from dangerous or neglectful situations in their home countries. While working with Samaritas, I have served about 50 refugee clients originating from Central America, Africa, and the Middle East who speak a multitude of different languages and come from many different cultures.”

Beardslee also talked about the special skills and resources critical in interacting with these youth. “I utilize an interpreter with non-English speakers and have to consider the client’s culture constantly during the therapeutic process. I mainly use elements of trauma-focused cognitive behavior therapy (TF-CBT), as all of my clients have faced a difficult experience or adversity, and I assess all clients through the lens of trauma. I also train and educate the staff in the group home, so all staff can work with the youth from a trauma perspective. Although there are some challenges when delivering services to this population, I truly love what I do, and the rewards far outweigh any difficulty. My clients are extremely intelligent, resilient, and inspiring, and I have grown immensely as a professional in this role and am honored to work with this population.”

Congratulations to Beardslee on the outstanding work she is doing with a population with great needs! **S**

A Mission of Social Justice and Positive Change: The MSU School of Social Work is dedicated to educating students for innovative, competent, responsive, and ethical social work practice, and to conducting and disseminating research that contributes to the well-being of the most vulnerable in society. Our teaching, research, and outreach are mutually reinforcing, with the common purpose of promoting positive change, social justice, and solutions to the problems facing diverse communities, organizations, groups, families, and individuals.

FACULTY RETIREMENTS



Among her numerous roles, **Sue Bowden** served as faculty advisor for the Phi Alpha Honor Society. Pictured with Sue (center) are **Adriana Flores** (left) and **Lindsey Michalik**.

Sue Bowden retires, legacy lives on in BASW Program

Sue Bowden started with the School in 1979 and in 1996 began as the coordinator of the BASW Program. She transitioned to become the BASW Program Director, a position she occupied until her retirement in June of 2016. During that time, Bowden also served as president of the Michigan Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Educators and contributed to countless committees and other organizations.

The BASW Program has flourished under Bowden's leadership. From creating nationally recognized diversity programs to leading field trips to the Zibiwing Center of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe and Chicago museums, Bowden was always striving to provide our students with a well-rounded education to prepare them for life beyond MSU. Bowden also enhanced the BASW Program by leading the faculty development of an online section of each required BASW course. Bowden's passion for the undergraduate research program resulted in the BASW Program consistently leading College of Social Science participation in the Provost's Undergraduate Research Initiative (PURI).

Said School Associate Director John Mooradian, "Sue Bowden shaped our undergraduate program over several decades. She worked closely with colleagues to maintain high quality programming and inspired generations of social workers. Her contributions are numerous and rich, and her legacy will live on in the work of our alumni."

Bowden will be missed within the School but is now enjoying the sunny weather of Florida. We wish her all the best in retirement and thank her for the time and care she dedicated to making the undergraduate program what it is today! **S**

Veterinary Social Work Services founder Linda Lawrence retires

Linda Lawrence, LMSW, who joined the School in 1994 as the undergraduate advisor, retired this past summer from her most recent position as coordinator of the Veterinary Social Work Services (VSWS) Program. Lawrence founded the VSWS in collaboration with the College of Veterinary Medicine's Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH), and she has provided grief and loss counseling to clients of the VTH since its inception.

Lawrence raised the recognition of VSWS through extensive community involvement, including speaking with countless community organizations and working across academic units to bring awareness and education about the effects of pet loss on families across the area.

While VSWS has been an ongoing passion for Lawrence, it was certainly not her only contribution to the School. Through her years as the undergraduate advisor, she counseled numerous undergraduate students through the rigors and adjustments of college life.

Other areas of focus included emergency mental health needs and crisis intervention, study abroad programs, and

"Linda is the pioneer for Veterinary Social Work Services (VSWS) at Michigan State University. Because of her dedication and quality care, the partnership between the School of Social Work and Veterinary Medical Center, College of Veterinary Medicine, developed a full-time, dedicated social work position. We are grateful for Linda's many contributions."

—Michele Brock

serving as a liaison between the School and the social service agencies where students were engaged in field placements.

We wish the best in retirement for Lawrence, although at present she continues to help to make a smooth transition for her replacement in VSWS. **S**



School of Social Work news **when, where, and how you want it**

The MSU School of Social Work is expanding its social media presence in order to reach more people with more relevant information in less time. We are expanding not just our content, but the places where you can be connected to that content. More of our faculty will be involved in posting content as our online presence grows.

The School will be posting upcoming events, such as continuing education offerings, guest lectures, and special advocacy opportunities. When there is a need to widely disseminate information, such as with responses to the Flint water crisis or announcing a new program, social media is the most effective way to keep people up to date or steer them to pertinent information on our website. Currently, our Facebook fans exceed 2,500, Twitter followers are over 1,600, and both are growing every month.

Our Facebook content has been reorganized onto one main School site, and Continuing Education and the Community Programs (see pp. 8–10) also have their own Facebook sites. The School and the FAME Program also have Instagram and Twitter accounts. It is our intent to expand content on all of these media sites.

We hope to “see” you all online! **S**



On Facebook look for:

MSUSocialWork
MSUVSW
MIKinship
MSUSocialWorkContinuingEducation
MSUChanceatChildhood
MSUFAME



On Instagram look for:

MSU_SocialWork
MSU_FAME



On LinkedIn look in “groups” for:

MSU School of Social Work



On Twitter look for:

MSUSocialWork
MSUFAME

Faculty, students present at **CSWE** annual event

The MSU School of Social Work had a strong presence at the Council on Social Work Education 62nd Annual Program Meeting—*Advancing Collaborative Practice Through Social Work Education*—held in Atlanta, GA, November 3–6, 2016. The conference, the premier national meeting of the social work education field, provides a showcase for scholarship in social work education through a variety of competitive peer-reviewed presentations.



FACULTY & STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Ethnic Disparities in Economic Well-being on Self-esteem Among the Baby Boomer Generation
Jaewon Lee

Evaluation of a Project-based Field Placement Model for Macro Social Work Students
Cheryl Williams-Hecksel & Julie Navarre

Enhancing Social Work Field Education: Perspectives from Students and Faculty Members in China
Dr. Fei Sun, Meirong Liu, Dr. Steven Anderson & Jiang Guohe

Fairy Tales, Fantasy, Fables: Enhancing Clinical Child Skills in an Online Format
Dr. Victoria Fitton

Mental Health Literacy for Children of Mentally Ill Parents: An International Presentation
Daniel Cavanaugh & Dr. Joanne Riebschleger

No One Talked About It: Sexual Harassment in Field Placements
Leila Wood & Dr. Carrie Moylan

Addressing the Needs of Vulnerable Populations Through Interprofessional Education, Research, and Practice
Dr. Daniel Vèlez Ortiz

Criminal Justice Reform: Anti-Oppressive Policy and Advocacy in Social Work Education
Lydia P. Ogden, Ashley Austin, Denise McLane-Davison, Michael A. Robinson & Dr. Pilar Horner

The Effects of Cumulative Risk and Protective Factors on Adolescent Substance Use
Eun Lye Lee & Dr. Anna Maria Santiago

Is Being Gay Good Enough? Who Should Teach LGBTQ Content and How?
Kristen A. Prock, Daniel L. Cavanaugh & Dr. Rena D. Harold

Integrating Collaborative Practice Into the Curriculum of Quality Rural Social Work Education
Scott Sorensen & Dr. Joanne Riebschleger

Help-seeking Patterns Among Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence and Associated Factors
Dr. Hyunkag Cho & Ilan Kwon

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION THROUGH CSWE

Dr. Steven Anderson, commissioner
Commission on Global Education

Dr. Rena Harold, commissioner
Commission on Membership and Professional Development

Dr. Pilar Horner, commissioner
Commission for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice

Dr. Anna Maria Santiago, ally
Special Commission to Advance Macro Practice in Social Work

Dr. Daniel Vèlez Ortiz, councilor
Council on Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Diversity

CSWE is the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the U.S.

NEW FACULTY

Carrie Moylan specializes in **gender-based violence**

Dr. Carrie Moylan joined the School of Social Work in August 2016. Having grown up in Michigan, Dr. Moylan earned her MSW at the University of Michigan and worked at Safe House Center in Ann Arbor. She then moved to Seattle to earn her PhD in social welfare at the University of Washington. Most

recently, Dr. Moylan was on the faculty of the Department of Social Work at Binghamton University (State University of New York), where she was awarded a State University of New York *Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching*.

After moving across the country several times, Dr. Moylan said, "I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to return to my home state and join the MSU School of Social Work where I have the opportunity to work with top experts in the

field of gender-based violence and be part of a dynamic and growing social work educational program."

Dr. Moylan has 17 years of experience in the gender-based violence field, both as a practitioner and as a researcher, making her affiliation with MSU's Research Consortium on Gender-Based Violence a natural fit.

Currently, Dr. Moylan is engaged in research examining campus sexual assault policy implementation at colleges and universities. She also serves as the evaluator for the Region 6 Center for Sexual Violence Prevention, a five-year, \$975,000 grant to provide community-based sexual assault prevention in western New York state. She has conducted research on the functioning of multidisciplinary Sexual Assault Response Teams—for which she was awarded the *Society for Social Work and Research Outstanding Social Work Doctoral Dissertation Award*—and research on outcomes associated with childhood exposure to domestic violence in the home. **S**

Deirdre Shires to focus on **health care for sexual and gender minority populations**

Dr. Deirdre Shires, newly hired assistant professor in the School of Social Work, is thrilled to be returning to MSU. She is an alumna of MSU's College of Social Science and began her research career as an undergraduate volunteer in the basement (oops, garden level) of Baker Hall nearly 20 years ago.

In the interim, Dr. Shires completed her MSW at the University of Michigan and earned a master of public health degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago. While working at the Center for Health Policy and Health Services Research at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, she completed her PhD in social work at Wayne State University this past May. Upon arriving at the School, Dr. Shires expressed, "I'm thrilled to join MSU's School of Social Work, where the faculty, staff, and students are not only welcoming and collaborative, but also talented and making significant contributions to our field."

Dr. Shire's research focuses on finding ways to improve health care access and quality for the sexual and gender minority (SGM) population, including studying how prepared and willing health care providers are to treat transgender patients. Future projects include examining pediatricians' experiences with transgender youth and studying cancer screening and cancer care experiences among sexual and gender minority older adults in southeast Michigan. **S**

Fei Sun to focus on **aging and mental health**

Dr. Fei Sun joined the School of Social Work as associate professor this fall. Originally from China, he received his MSW and PhD from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Upon his graduation, he became a faculty member at the School of Social Work at Arizona State University. Dr. Sun also was selected as a Hartford Geriatric Social Work Faculty Scholar.

Dr. Sun's research focuses on aging and mental health, with an emphasis on developing and testing psychosocial interventions to minimize the impact of Alzheimer's disease on individuals, families, and communities. He has published 50 peer-reviewed articles, mainly in this area. His research has been funded by the Department of Justice, the John Hartford Foundation, and the Department Health and Human Services, among others. He currently is involved in two ongoing research projects. One is testing a mixed-component intervention that consists of mind-body movement and education to enhance brain health among older adults. The other is a collaborative project with Arizona Adult Protective Services to develop an assessment tool to better identify and then address elder abuse and neglect.

Said Dr. Sun, "I encountered many snowbirds from Michigan while I was conducting research in Phoenix. Joining the School of Social Work at MSU will allow me to conduct research on older Michigan residents who choose to stay and age in place. I am looking forward to work that will promote a fulfilling, joyful, and healthy life for older Michigan residents, particularly for those who are frail and suffering from memory problems or other chronic illnesses." **S**

NEW FACULTY

Rebecca Wiersma to lead **Oakland MSW field placements**

Dr. Rebecca Wiersma joined the School of Social Work as the Oakland MSW Program field coordinator in August. She earned her MSW in 2002 and her doctorate degree in 2010 from Wayne State University and is a licensed clinical social worker with just over a decade of clinical experience.

Early in her career, she developed and obtained funding for a program that provided infant mental health services to rural families in Minnesota. Prior to joining Michigan State University, she spent four years as coordinator of the distance learning program at Madonna University.

Wiersma said, "I graduated from Michigan State's BASW Program a number of years ago and have such good memories of being a student at this institution. So it is such a pleasure to return to MSU and to be a part of the field team." **S**

Pilar Horner and Daniel Vélez Ortiz awarded **tenure and promotion**

Dr. Pilar Horner, who holds a joint appointment in the School of Social Work and the Julian Samora Research Institute, received promotion with tenure to associate professor in May. A qualitative researcher, her research interests include prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS among Spanish-speaking populations, health disparities with regard to access to care, and quality-of-life issues among undocumented families and immigrants. Her research examines how culture impacts health outcomes for disadvantaged populations.

More recently, her work has focused on patterns of migration and the impact of health prior, during, and post U.S. settlement. Upon receiving her tenure promotion, Dr. Horner said, "Tenure really is a group effort, and I am both proud and grateful to have an excellent group of colleagues to work with, exciting and meaningful work, and strong inspiring students." **S**



Dr. Daniel Vélez Ortiz, who holds a joint appointment in the School of Social Work and the Julian Samora Research Institute, received tenure and promotion to associate professor in May. His areas of research center around Latino older adults, cultural disparities in mental health services, migration, community service integration, and organizational factors relating to service delivery.

His longer-term work goals are to integrate community mental health literacy and services into community spaces where older adults, particularly Latino groups, naturally gather. He would like to develop a link between disconnected systems of care using technology and other available resources.

He is also active in outreach to educate and support communities on aging and Latino mental health issues through continuing education workshops and trainings. He holds leadership roles in developing and promoting cultural, racial/ethnic, and diversity social justice as a councilor in the Council on Social Work

Education (CSWE) Council on Racial, Ethnic and Cultural Diversity and as chair of the School of Social Work Diversity Committee.

"I am honored and delighted to engage with this new stage in my academic career. It comes with much excitement and many responsibilities. I am very grateful for all the support and encouragement I have received from family, friends, and colleagues. I look forward to further develop my scholarship to new levels with continued dedication to improving engagement of Latinos into formal services and institutions, with emphasis on older adults. I will also continue to focus on developing community research partnerships and opportunities that examine cultural pathways to improve the lives of Latino older adults and family interactions." **S**



Dr. Hawkins receives NIH grant to explore how gender influences diabetes health behavior in men



Dr. Jaclynn Hawkins has received a \$20,000 National Institutes of Health (NIH) training grant for a project titled “Barriers and Facilitators to Type 2 Self-management in Older African American Men: Moving Towards a Pilot Intervention.” The project through the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging will explore how gender influences diabetes health behavior in men, while also developing a pilot intervention to address the unique needs of older men of color with diabetes.

Gender role norms derived from masculinity can conflict with healthy behaviors. For instance, men receive messages emphasizing self-reliance, and they are affected by commonly held masculine beliefs in mainstream society such as autonomy, risk-taking, dominance, and the need to suppress pain. These messages and beliefs can

create barriers to seeking out a health professional, asking for help, relying on others, and following health guidelines given by authority figures.

Part one of the study will explore how gender may influence self-management among African American men while also exploring influences related to self-management. Part two of the study will assess which aspects of an intervention may be more effective in improving diabetes self-management and outcomes in men versus women with Type II Diabetes. Each study will contribute to the adaptation of an existing diabetes intervention model and the development of a pilot intervention to meet the needs of older African American men with Type II Diabetes. **S**



Rachel Croson appointed as new dean of the College of Social Science

Rachel Croson joined MSU as the dean of the College of Social Science on August 1, 2016. In this role, she will provide overarching leadership to the School of Social Work and all other academic units and centers within the College.

Croson previously was the John and Judy Goolsby–Virginia and Paul Dorman Endowed Chair and professor of economics and dean of the College of Business at the University of Texas Arlington.

She also previously served as professor and director of the Negotiations Center at the University of Texas at Dallas and as associate professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, she served for two years as the National Science Foundation's division director for Social and Economic Sciences.

Croson has held a number of professional leadership roles, including serving on the board of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Economics Profession, where she was pivotal in developing and running mentoring workshops for female junior faculty.

Croson earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania, with a double major in economics and philosophy, and a minor in political science. She earned her doctorate in economics from Harvard University.

“I am honored to have been chosen for this position, and I am excited to work with the outstanding faculty, staff, and students in the College of Social Science, as well as with the senior leadership team at MSU. The scope and diversity of both educational and research activities taking place in the College is truly amazing. I have been especially impressed with the School of Social Work, which is engaged in impactful research, teaching, and outreach. Efforts like this will positively transform the human experience and improve our society.” **S**



Social justice author Jim Wallis returns, speaks to School students and community

Jim Wallis is a progressive Christian author and commentator who has championed issues associated with social justice for decades. His organization's magazine, *Sojourners*, has been a leading voice for social justice issues from a faith-based perspective.

School of Social Work Professor **Dr. Gary Anderson** learned of his writing and work and also learned that Wallis was an alumnus of the Michigan State University College of Social Science. A community group that included Dr. Anderson and **Robert Sheehan**, then director of the Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Community Mental Health Agency, invited Wallis to speak at MSU in 2006 about his book on politics, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*. His speech drew a crowd of about 1,000 attendees to The Peoples Church in East Lansing.

Jim Wallis returned to campus for another presentation four years later.



Author **Jim Wallis'** social justice message has energized MSU audiences, starting with his first visit to campus in 2006, then in 2010, and again this fall.

Dr. Anderson nominated him for an MSU honorary doctorate, and this was awarded by President **Lou Anna Simon** at the December 2014 commencement ceremony.

Wallis requested the opportunity to return to MSU and talk about his new book, *America's Original Sin*, and his recent campus visit included both talks with students and a broader community presentation. This event was hosted by **Drs. Gary Anderson** and **Lee June**, former vice president for student services, and co-sponsored by the School of Social Work, College of Social Science, and MSU Office on Inclusion.

After Wallis' most recent visit, Dr. Anderson said, "I was impressed with Jim Wallis' call to prioritize social justice and his consistent support for gender and racial equality. His example of advocacy through writing and speaking communicated effectively to a university audience, and his engagement with MSU was energizing and enjoyable. I also appreciated his recognition that a commitment to social justice could be grounded in faith-based traditions." **S**

Blanck and Pline join School staff



Kelley Blanck

As a 1996 graduate of the MSU School of Social Work, **Kelley Blanck** has returned to MSU to join the continuing education team as a professional development specialist. Prior to this position, she spent 20 years working in various clinical and administrative capacities, including clinical work in adoption, foster care, residential treatment, and schools, as well as macro-

level work at both the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority (OCCMHA) and the Saginaw County Community Mental Health Authority (SCCMHA). She was a contracted consultant for both SCCMHA and OCCMHA, providing program development in supported employment, respite, skill-build programming, and a national system of care SAMHSA grant implementation. She has conducted strategic planning initiatives, successful grant writing and fund procurement, training development for staff and caregivers, and in the past two years became a certified trauma trainer for the Resource Parent Training Curriculum. Blanck is excited to join the continuing education and faculty teams to further expand her skills in training and college-level instruction.

Brooke Pline

Brooke Pline recently joined the School as secretary. In this role, she serves as the receptionist for the main second floor office and also performs other support functions needed to assure the smooth functioning of the main office. In addition, Pline will provide support to the School's associate director, and she also will complete special assignments from the associate director and business manager as needed.

Pline graduated from Lansing Community College with a general education associate's degree and massage therapy certificate and earned her massage therapy state license. She is interested in attending MSU in the future. The School of Social Work is already having a positive influence: Pline is considering social work as a focus for her studies. **S**



Leigh Rauk represents the School on Dean's Student Advisory Council

Last year, Leigh Rauk was given the opportunity to be the junior School of Social Work representative for the Dean's Student Advisory Council (DSAC). The main role of DSAC is to choose the student speaker for commencement, but it also serves as a representative group that provides the dean of the College of Social Science with support and decision-making guidance. Rauk took this role one step further by leading a subcommittee of DSAC that put together the First Annual College of Social Science Achievement Gala, which provided an opportunity to honor student achievement within the College of Social Science. This year, as a senior, Rauk has become president of DSAC. In describing her new role as president, Rauk said, "It is a position I feel very honored to hold. My role as president is to lead the group while also ensuring we reach our goal of uniting the College for social science betterment." **S**



Legislative Education and Advocacy Day hosted by NASW

The Michigan Chapter of NASW held its annual Legislative Education and Advocacy Day in October, and it was well attended by MSU School of Social Work students and many others from around the state. This all-day event featured advocacy-oriented keynote addresses, networking opportunities, social justice forums, and over 20 workshops on legislative issues, political action, and advocacy efforts. The forums included topics such as Black Lives Matter in Social Work, Islamophobia: Politics, Priorities and Prejudice in 2016, and The Social Worker's Role in the Development of Public Policy.

Also at the event, Advanced Standing MSW student **Adriana Flores** was presented with the *Student Leadership in Diversity Scholarship*, which recognizes and promotes leaders among social work students who are working on projects, research, or advocacy initiatives that promote diversity and social justice. Flores held a leadership role in our special human trafficking event last spring, has engaged in multiple Phi Alpha Honor Society service projects, and contributed to the reorganization of the Student Organization of Latino and Latina Social Workers. **S**

Phi Alpha Honor Society elects new officers

The Phi Alpha Honor Society was formed by a group of undergraduate social work students at Michigan State University in 1960. With over 450 local chapters today, Phi Alpha offers social work students and educators a national network to encourage a closer bond, promote humanitarian goals, and foster high standards of education.

The current MSU chapter of Phi Alpha Honor Society has 55 new members this year! At the first meeting on September 9, Phi Alpha elected its officers for the school year. President **Toya Russell** is working on her MSW in clinical social work

at the Flint MSW Program site and is interested in a career providing mental illness and substance use services. Vice President **Marwa Mallah** is a BASW senior and is interested in working as a medical social worker in a pediatric oncology unit. Secretary and Treasurer **Amy Schaafsma** is an MSW organizational and community leadership student and wants to work as an advocate for reducing educational disparities.

Members currently are involved in planning the Phi Alpha service project for the year. MSW Program Director **Dr. Victoria Fitton** is Phi Alpha's new faculty advisor. **S**



The MSU Chapter of the Phi Alpha Honor Society, including President **Toya Russell**, Vice-President **Marwa Mallah**, Secretary and Treasurer **Amy Schaafsma**, and faculty adviser **Dr. Victoria Fitton**.

PhD student Liz Sharda awarded Summer Research Fellowship, will focus on foster parents



Liz Sharda, LMSW, a second-year PhD student in the School of Social Work, was recently awarded the School's Summer Research Fellowship. This fellowship will fund Sharda's research on social support and role satisfaction among foster parents. The research will utilize a survey methodology to investigate the following questions with licensed foster parents in one Michigan county:

- What is the level of support experienced by foster parents in their role?
- How satisfied are foster parents with their role?
- What is the relationship between support and retention among foster parents?
- Does satisfaction mediate the relationship between support and retention?

Sharda spent over a decade in the child welfare field prior to starting the PhD Program at MSU. Her work has primarily been with children and families in the foster care

system, including direct work as well as program development and training. In her role as a trainer, Sharda noticed that the support foster parents received from each other seemed to be as valuable as the information and skills offered by trainers.

Sharda also has firsthand experience as a foster parent. She and her husband have been licensed foster parents for eight years. In this challenging role, they have experienced support from a wide range of sources: their foster care agency, extended family, church community, friends, and fellow foster parents.

Drawing from both professional and personal experience, Sharda is passionate about equipping foster parents for their role and is especially interested in the impact social support can have. She is excited for the opportunity to dig into this important topic through the School of Social Work Summer Research Fellowship. **S**

Student intern aids food sustainability project for Flint

Almost everyone is aware of the Flint water crisis, but less is known about the work being done there to create sustainable food systems that will help counter the negative effects on community health of not only lead but also the lack of access to healthy foods. **Adriana Flores**, a second-year student in the School's part-time Advanced Standing MSW Program (organizational and community leadership concentration) is a part of this effort through her internship with the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED).

Flores' supervisor in the field, CCED Associate Director **Robert Brown**, has provided a great opportunity for Flores to build her knowledge and skills in research, community engagement, and sustainable foods through an aquaponic project (a self-sustaining eco-structure for fish and plant life).

The long-term goal of the project is to create aquaponics connected to a grocery store, community house, and an elementary school. This is crucial because Flint is a food desert, with all the grocery stores that were once in the city of Flint closed, leaving drug stores as the only source for groceries. This has dramatically affected the availability of food, especially healthy

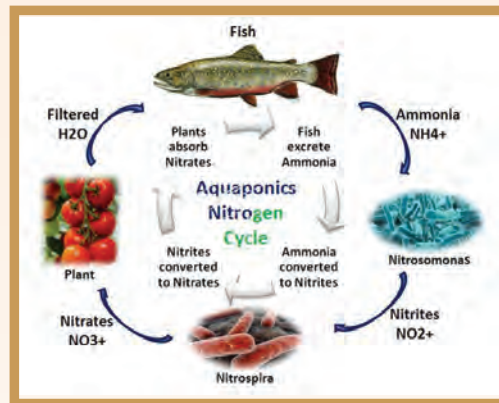


options, for residents. The aquaponics systems will not only create food but also strengthen communal ties, offer a means for the community to support itself economically, and create healthy and lead-mitigating food options for residents.

As a social work intern, Flores has been researching and writing a concept paper on trust, editing the business plan on the aquaponic project, and researching and writing grants for funding. A case study on the aquaponics project, including interviews with partners from the Aquaponics Learning and Distribution Center, North Flint Food and Aquaponics Co-op, North Flint Grocery and Aquaponics Store, North Flint Greenhouse, and Aquaponic Market was also completed.

These opportunities have allowed Flores to interweave community practice and politics in the development of programs, research, and environmental alternatives to facilitate community progress.

Flores: "Flint has been afflicted with numerous traumas, but my supervisor, Robert Brown, was quick to show me the passion, kindness, and ambition that exists in this community. This aquaponic project proves that a community is far more than its tragedy." **S**



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It is in this spirit that the School seeks any support that inspires you. The School currently is actively engaged in the MSU Empower Extraordinary Capital Campaign, which is seeking at least \$1.5 billion campus-wide to empower critical initiatives. Thanks to the generous donations of countless alumni and friends, the School has created many different scholarship funds to support students in diverse areas of social work. You can find descriptions of these giving opportunities at:

socialwork.msu.edu/Alumni-and-Giving/Endowments

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If you have ideas for new scholarships or other initiatives you would like to support, please contact School Director **Dr. Steve Anderson** at stevea@msu.edu or 517-355-7515.

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