



School of Social Work  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

# SOCIAL WORK IN ACTION

Fall 2019/Winter 2020



FOCUS ON **EDUCATION** AND **ENGAGEMENT**





## Educating excellent social work practitioners and **engaging** communities in collaborative problem-solving

Dear Friends of the MSU School of Social Work,

**A**s Spartans, we are dedicated to advancing knowledge and transforming lives. The College of Social Science, of which the School of Social Work is a part, generates science that transforms the human experience and inspires leaders.

These identities ground our School mission of social justice and positive change. Our strategic directions include educating cutting-edge social work practitioners and engaging communities in collaborative problem-solving and mutual support, with the ultimate goal of providing real solutions to problems facing individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. We are explicit in our commitment to expand the reach of our degree and certificate programs, develop educational specializations and community programs that meet social work practice needs and distinguish the School in areas of high impact, and lead the development of high quality technology in social work education.

In order to advance our strategic directions, educate students, and empower faculty and community partners, we continually revitalize our education and outreach efforts. Our recent accomplishments employ and apply educational technology in innovative ways, engage community partners with students in a simultaneous process of teaching/learning and social change, and build future capacity through collaboration and asset enhancement.

We are continually exploring and incorporating new ways to engage students throughout Michigan, to embed education in the lives and locales of our students and community partners, and to deploy instructional technology to fortify learning experiences.

In this issue of the School of Social Work newsletter *Social Work in Action*, you will read stories of teaching, learning, and living the skills of the social work profession and the ways in which we integrate our educational opportunities into the communities with which we engage.

We view access to education and community engagement as matters of social justice.

In prior times, education required physical proximity, so our School took degrees to people. We still do that, but we also use technology to offer more opportunities and more choices. Students who want a traditional classroom experience can have one. Students who thrive in web-based learning environments can take one or most of their classes online. Students who want an optimal balance of synchronous and asynchronous learning can select that option. Today, access also means that all learners can receive, process, and apply digital content. To that end, we are investing in developing fully accessible digital material for inclusive education.

Our programs respect the dignity of community members and engage them directly in community change. We have operated community programs that serve and advocate for the needs of a variety of populations for many years. We continually examine and update our models and methods to ensure that we adapt to evolving needs. We are also investing in study-abroad and study-away programs that integrate service learning with cultural humility and inter-professional education.

I hope this issue demonstrates how our education and outreach advance our mission of social justice and positive change and that it stimulates your own efforts to engage your community and contribute to continual learning.

Take care and do great work.

John Mooradian, PhD, MSW, LMFT  
Director and Associate Professor  
School of Social Work  
Michigan State University

# Student opportunity for service-learning and community engagement in Flint

The MSU School of Social Work and the College of Social Science partnered with Flint community leaders to develop the Flint Community Initiative (FCI). This summer program, which was launched in 2019, is open to upper undergraduate and graduate students from every major and college in the University and combines service learning with an internship experience.

At the core of the FCI mission is the belief that revitalizing distressed areas is not best done by focusing on neighborhood and community deficits. Rather, the key is to identify assets already present in a community and amplify their impact. The FCI paired students with leaders of nonprofit community and civic organizations to engage in five collaborative, community-driven projects that help to expand community assets and contribute to a thriving future for Flint residents.

The FCI prepares and invests MSU’s most vital resource—the time, gifts, and talents of students passionate to make a difference—in meaningful work in nonprofit community organizations in Flint while providing our students with a unique opportunity to develop skills in hands-on, collaborative community development projects while earning college credit.

The FCI furthers the School’s engagement in the Flint community, where we have been training professional MSW social workers and partnering with the service community since 2001. It exemplifies Michigan State University’s long history of service learning and community engagement in alignment with our land grant mission and expands the College of Social Science’s long-standing commitment to experiential learning.

“The Flint Community Initiative is transforming leaders and community”

—Monica Villarreal  
Flint Community Initiative  
Program Coordinator

See Student reflections  
on page 5.

Photo below: At the end of the 10-week program, the interns successfully presented their summer projects at a Scholars Showcase hosted by the Applewood Estate in front of program leaders, community organizers, University partners, and their fellow students. In partnership with MSU’s Community Engagement Scholars Program, each intern also was designated as a Community Engaged Scholar in recognition of their work. Pictured L-R: **Madison “Maddie” Kuhn, Alexis “Lexie” Smith, Shelby Brejnak, Adriyonna Fields, Francesca Del Monte, Madeline “Maddie” Elliot, Ben Hendrickson, and Munzer Elsir.**







Computer Science Junior **Munzer Elsir** (left) and International Relations Senior **Ben Hendrickson** present the results of their project at the Scholars Showcase.

## What is **service-learning**?

Service-learning prepares students for lifelong civic and social responsibility in an increasingly diverse and complex global society through a variety of learning opportunities and resources. Students who participate in service-learning contribute to the public good, enrich their academic knowledge with beyond-the-classroom real-world applications, and have an opportunity to develop personal, professional, leadership, and citizenship skills.

## The **program** in brief

Students engaged with community partners for 10 weeks after an intensive weekend orientation. Students were provided housing and received a scholarship award to defray living, work, and transportation expenses, and also attended exciting cultural, professional, recreational, or social events around the city. They earned 3 credits in the project-based skills course SW 492 (*Flint Community Initiative: Asset-Based Approaches to Community Work*) and 3 to 6 internship credits.



More detailed information regarding the Flint Community Initiative is available at [socialwork.msu.edu/News-Stories/Flint-Community-Initiative](https://socialwork.msu.edu/News-Stories/Flint-Community-Initiative) and [socialwork.msu.edu/Flint-Community-Initiative-Internship-Program](https://socialwork.msu.edu/Flint-Community-Initiative-Internship-Program)

# Student reflections

## Flint Eastside Connector Program

Asbury Community Development Corporation

### International Relations Senior Ben Hendrickson:

“After this project, I realized the importance of community strength. Focusing on existing assets and allowing residents to lead community development is much more effective than outside help. While outside organizations may provide some help, the community takes pride in their existing gifts. With the right opportunities, community members can lead the way.”

### Computer Science Junior Munzer Elsir:

“[My favorite moments were when] I got to talk with the residents, hear their stories, and see how things are going. The best part is when they thank you. Thank you for doing this. Thank you for your work. Thank you for being here. That meant a lot to both of us because that reinforced in our heads that what we are doing is important and showed us that the world is a place of caring for one another.”

## Resource Development for Neighborhood Groups

Neighborhood Engagement Hub  
City of Flint Planning and Zoning Division  
City of Flint Blight Elimination Division

### Interdisciplinary Studies Senior Shelby Brejnak:

“I was unfamiliar and out of touch with what constitutes a community. Did I really feel that I belonged to any community at all? Today, I can tell you that I am a part of and surrounded by community, just about anywhere I go. A community has no universal form or expectation; it holds no set boundary or limit. Community is rooted in caring connections and trusting relationships. Flint has demonstrated to me true passion and dedication in their commitment to caring for their communities.”

## Neighborhood Mapping and Directory Development

Neighborhood Engagement Hub  
Flint Neighborhoods United  
Community Foundation of Greater Flint  
Ruth Mott Foundation

### Social Work Junior and Social Science Scholar Madeline “Maddie” Elliot:

“We have over 50 neighborhood associations in the directory, which showcases the incredible commitment that Flint residents have to their community. At a time when other communities are becoming disjointed, I am inspired by the dedication that these groups and individuals give to their community.”



## FCI lead faculty

### Dr. Anna Maria Santiago (left)

Professor of Social Work, College of Social Science  
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, and chair of the  
Flint Community Initiative Work Group

### Monica Villarreal, MSW, MDiv

Flint Community Initiative Program Coordinator, faculty  
co-instructor, and community leader and resident of Flint

## Keep Genesee County Beautiful

Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission

### Kinesiology Junior Adriyonna Fields:

“The learning for this course is a process of discovery. [It] will give you the chance to develop your own reason and thought from personal experiences and the readings. You have to put more thought and effort into most of your responses, rather than repeat what someone else says.”

### Comparative Cultures & Politics and Political Science Pre-Law Senior Alexis “Lexie” Smith:

“The most important lesson I learned was actually a mindset. The asset-based approach imprints a new way of thinking about and looking at the happenings in a community.”

## Share Your Story Project

Ruth Mott Foundation

### Human Development and Family Studies Senior Madison “Maddie” Kuhn:

“I will carry forward that everybody can participate in their community to attempt to make it a better place for everybody to be a part of.”

### Social Relations and Policy Senior Francesca Del Monte:

“Throughout my internship in Flint, there were a variety of people I was able to meet that changed my perception of the community and taught me how to approach leadership. Additionally, I was able to adapt certain skills throughout my internship that I will confidently use throughout the remainder of my undergraduate career and professional experience.”



# Access to a quality MSW education across Michigan

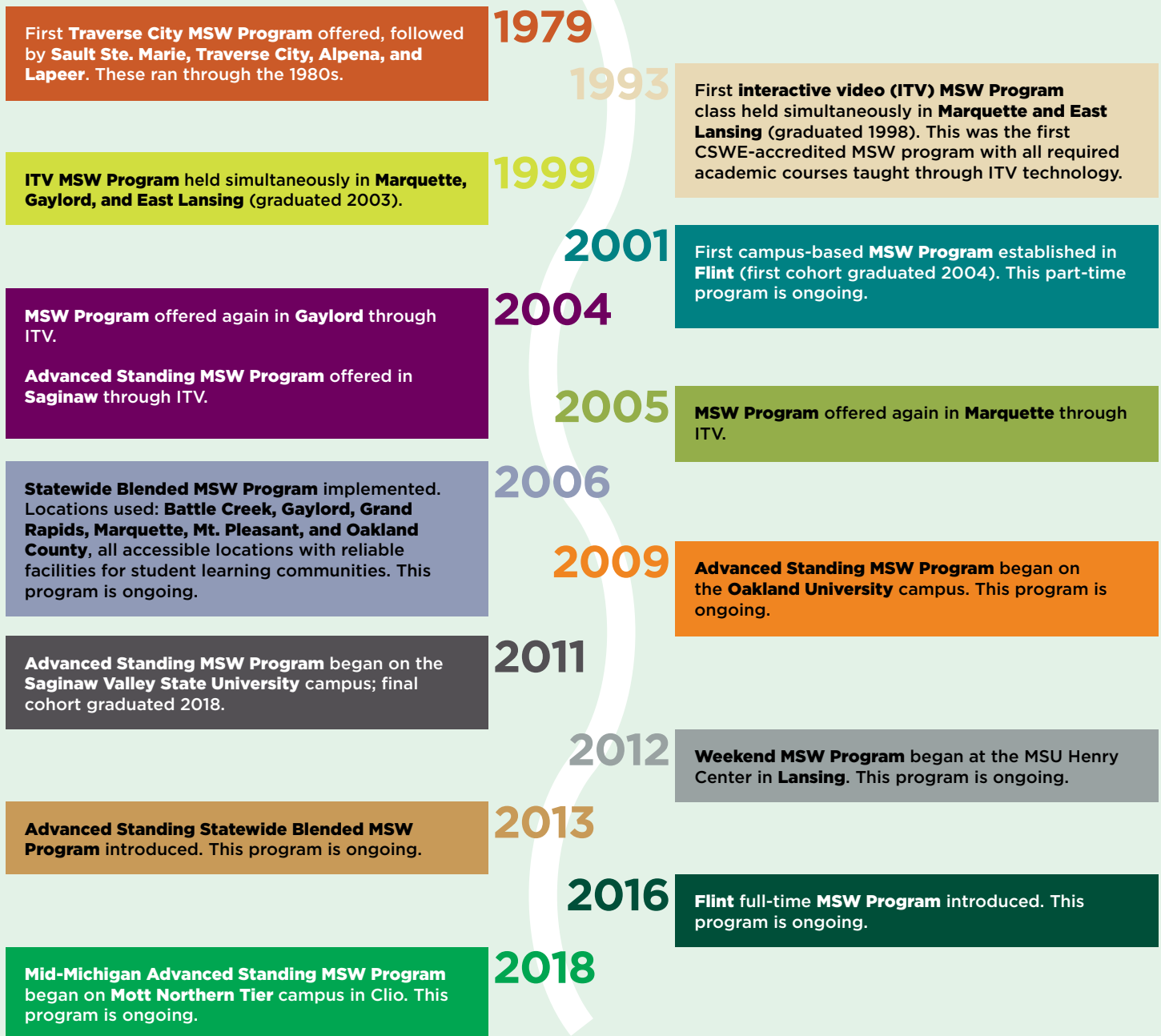
Michigan State University, considered to be the pioneer land-grant college, was established in 1855 and served as a model for the 1862 *Morrill Act*. MSU emphasizes the land-grant value of access to quality education for the people of Michigan, overcoming geographical barriers and improving opportunities for part-time and non-traditional students. The School of Social Work sees this as a social justice issue.

At MSU, social service field work was first offered in 1920. An undergraduate curriculum was offered in 1930,

followed by a two-year master’s-level program in 1950. We became the School of Social Work in 1956. The land-grant identity and mission are central to the School’s mission, values, and goals.

Below is a chronology of the School’s MSW programs offered across the state of Michigan through distance education. The stories on the following pages reference these programs and our long-term commitment to distance education. The map shows the distribution of our distance education sites over the years.

## MSW Distance Education Timeline



## ◆ MSW Program sites:

- Alpena
- Clio
- East Lansing
- Flint
- Gaylord
- Lansing
- Lapeer
- Marquette
- Oakland
- Saginaw
- Sault Ste. Marie
- Traverse City

## \* Statewide Blended sites:

- Battle Creek
- Gaylord
- Grand Rapids
- Marquette
- Mt. Pleasant
- Oakland



Classroom in Marquette with East Lansing visible on the monitors at 20th anniversary of first Marquette program.

## Paul Freddolino: 40 years of technology advances

### Phase one: No technology

I joined the MSU School of Social Work as assistant professor in September 1979, the same semester the first distance cohort began. Instructors actually drove to Traverse City to teach, or videotaped lectures were delivered, followed by telephone conference calls with faculty.

Our second cohort met in Sault Ste. Marie (substitute “flew” for “drove”). Then we returned to Traverse City, followed by Alpena and then Lapeer. In some instances, we hired local instructors as adjuncts. After Lapeer, we put a halt to off-campus programming for a while because it was challenging to enroll the number of students necessary to make the program financially viable, and it was difficult to find faculty with the time to commute to the locations.

### Phase two: Instructional Television (ITV)

In 1992, the School began exploring the relatively new technology of interactive video when there was an opportunity to begin an MSW Program in Marquette.

We developed one MSW Program in two locations: A classroom of students in Marquette and a classroom of students on the MSU campus were linked together by ITV, taking the same class at the same time as if they were all in the same place. This included a local advisory committee to support the program and new local field placement sites. Every faculty member was required to teach at least one ITV course so we would all become familiar with both the technology and our model.

### Phase three: Expansion

Next, we added a site in Gaylord to make it a three-way program, with our faculty teaching on campus as well as seeing both Marquette and Gaylord students on TV screens in the classroom. As with the original program in Marquette, instructors visited both Gaylord and Marquette at least once during the semester.

Unfortunately, it was still difficult to recruit the necessary number of students in each location for the program to be practical. In addition, emerging technologies were making it possible to consider different models for providing coursework.

### Phase four: Statewide Blended

In summer 2004, the School worked with MSU ITV staff on a model using a combination (“blending”) of face-to-face, videoconference, and online tools.

We envisioned five local learning communities around the state, with five students each, meeting with a “mentor” hired by the School who would also become field liaison for the group. Each learning community would meet in person locally once per month, at which time they would all be connected with each other and with the course instructor(s) teaching from campus using videoconference technology. The remaining course content would be delivered online.

The first Statewide Blended cohort enrolled in June 2006. The program continues, although the 2019 model has been slightly revised to reflect advances in MSU technology and in student preferences. Now the monthly sessions are held using Zoom video communications software, enabling individual students to participate wherever they are.



*Paul Freddolino, PhD, is professor and director of distance education and technology in the School.*

## Julie Farman: A social work educator's journey

**From Flint to Saginaw:** I had a professional social work career in Flint, my home town, since 1992. In 2004, I reconnected with the MSU School of Social Work through the School's annual Flint Community Breakfast (which became the Mary B. Barron Memorial Breakfast). Here, **Dr. Paul Freddolino** invited me to co-teach a course in the Saginaw Advanced Standing Distance Ed MSW Program, serving in the classroom at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) with the MSW students in summer 2004; this program only ran one year.

**To Flint:** In fall 2004, I taught my first class in the School's Flint MSW Program, which at the time was located in the MSU Extension Office; I remember noticing the "fertilizer" smell! **Dr. Mary Barron**, the first coordinator of the Flint MSW Program, was in charge. When Mary asked to step down from this role in 2005, I was asked to become program coordinator.

In 2006, we moved the Flint program to Mott Community College, which has a University Center group that hosts other colleges and universities with off-campus programs. Today, we are still a part of this group. The MSW Program in Flint has always been an evening-only program; all courses begin at 6:00 PM.

**Driving to Marquette:** Also in fall 2006, I was assigned to teach SW 840 (practice methods) in the Marquette ITV program. I always planned my in-person visits for early fall to get there before the snow flew! My first trips up there I recall driving that long stretch of M-28 near Seney, known by some as "the most boring road in the state." So true! The first time I drove into Marquette, it seemed like a wonderful oasis! Seeing the students in

person, rather than only online, was a real bonus. They no longer looked like tiny life forms trying to avoid the camera!

**And online:** In spring 2007, I taught the same course for the first Statewide Blended MSW Program cohort.

**Coordinating Oakland:** In summer 2009, the Oakland Advanced Standing MSW Program began. I became coordinator of this program, too, due to my Flint experience. They welcomed our offering the MSW Program at their campus in exchange for helping them get their BSW program accredited.

**Plus Saginaw:** The Saginaw Advanced Standing MSW Program began in summer 2011. SVSU also had a strong BSW program, and we were invited to hold an MSW Program at their campus by their BSW director, **Dr. Lucy Mercier**, who had also taught for the School for many years. Now I was coordinating three off-campus programs!

**And now: Mid-Michigan Advanced Standing:** In fall 2018, when SVSU began its own MSW Program, we opened our Mid-Michigan MSW Program on Mott's Northern Tier Campus in Clio.



*Julie K. Farman, ACSW, LMSW, (MSW '95), currently serves as coordinator of all MSW face-to-face program options: East Lansing, Flint, Oakland, and Mid-Michigan.*

## Sharon Tipton Andringa: First distance education cohort

**T**hree years after receiving my bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University in 1975, I had decided two things: my work as a case manager in community mental health programs was a good occupational fit for me, and Traverse City was where I wanted to make my permanent home. Because my interests were more focused on community development, coalition building, and program development—and after consulting with mentors—I realized I needed to get a master's degree, and an MSW was the most versatile degree. Also, I needed a part-time program where I could continue to work in order to pay for school.



When MSU announced the establishment of its off-campus MSW Program in Traverse City, it was a perfect option. Twenty of us received our MSWs in the first cohort in 1981. Most, if not all of us, were working full-time in human service positions during the day.

It would probably be startling to students now, but distance learning was primitive by today's standards. Sometimes professors would drive up to Traverse City to deliver lectures in person, or campus lectures would be taped on VHS and mailed or sometimes even driven up to Traverse City. We would all watch the tape, and then a telephone call would be placed to the professor whose lecture we



## Joanne Riebschleger: From student to faculty

When I was earning my MSW degree from MSU in the mid-1980s, I took several classes in Alpena. These were face-to-face classes, and the instructors either flew or drove a long way to get there. Back then, distance education meant actually traveling a long distance! One winter day after sliding on glare ice for three hours to get to class, I decided to transfer to the East Lansing campus. I figured with less risky travel I might be able to finish sooner. I graduated in spring 1990 and was proud to be the MSW graduation speaker.

In the early 1990s, I became an MSW instructor for ITV, a model of distance education with two classrooms (Gaylord and Marquette) connected by underground T3 cable lines. When the weather was cooperating, each classroom could see the other classroom on the television. The main instructor was on MSU's East Lansing campus. I think I gave my first planned lecture at Gaylord, something about attachment theory applied to the *Wizard of Oz*.

My very first time teaching was for a human behavior course co-taught with a doctoral student named **John Mooradian**. John always typed out his entire lectures to have "just in case." Once, bad weather took out the T3 line, and we had no TV. To keep things moving forward, I started teaching from John's notes, and when the television came back on 20 or so minutes later, we both were at exactly the same place in the lecture!

A few years later, I taught the macro practice MSW students face-to-face in Saginaw. It was a small but hearty class with three talented macro students. I remember several of them got real grants awarded from their course project. That was really exciting!

had just seen. Both the professor and the students would be on speaker phone, and we would discuss the lecture, ask questions, etc. We did not use computers at all.

The education I received from the MSU MSW Program in Traverse City was excellent. My credentials were accepted without question by all subsequent employers as I was hired for different and higher-level social work positions. I would not be overstating to say it changed the trajectory of my life. My social work career was varied and satisfying. Being a social worker helped me become a better citizen and a more involved member of the community, and I believe throughout my career I was able to make a positive contribution to my community.

Getting my MSW from MSU opened many doors for me. I have always been very grateful for the opportunity to complete my master's degree in Traverse City.

Although perhaps difficult to quantify, the program changed and, I believe, enhanced service delivery in

One benefit to me from my adjunct roles was that I got to observe a lot of different ways of teaching from the viewpoint of being the teacher, rather than the student. I watched for what worked for whom and what fit with my style, and I got to see how the curriculum fit together. That was a real advantage when I started teaching on my own. This was when I realized that I really wanted to teach, and I applied for doctoral social work programs. When I told the Gaylord students I was accepted into a program, they all clapped!

I also remember snippets of things they wrote in their papers and things they said, good things that happened to them and challenges they faced. I remember several Canadian students drove more than eight hours each way to Gaylord from Sault Ste. Marie, Canada, even in the worst of the winter!

I am grateful to the School of Social Work for the opportunity to serve in the distance education program. It had a big impact on the directions I took in my life. I learned, *à la* Dorothy, that when it comes to MSU, "There is no place like home."



*Joanne Riebschleger, PhD, LMSW, associate professor, has a joint appointment with Social Work and MSU AgBioResearch.*

Traverse City. This effect endured for a significant period, while most of us were still living and working in Traverse City. Twenty MSWs from numerous different agencies now knew each other well. A bond had been formed; trust had been established. I believe the citizens of Traverse City were better served because of MSU's MSW Program.



*Sharon Tipton Andringa is a retired social worker living in the Traverse City, MI, area.*

Kinship care is the full-time care, nurturing, and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes or clans, godparents, stepparents, or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child. This definition is designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural values and ties of affection. It allows a child to grow into adulthood in a family environment. Kinship care has existed since the beginning of families.



In 1999, plans for the Kinship Care Resource Center grew out of a series of research projects conducted by the late **Dr. Robert Little**,

an expert in kinship care issues, on the policies and programs affecting kinship families in Michigan. In 2002, the Kinship Care Resource Center was established to address the needs identified by the analysis of the research data.

Dr. Little was an instructor at the MSU School of Social Work and an expert in kinship care issues who served as director of the Children's Center facility in Washington, DC, in the 1960s and as deputy director for the Michigan Department of Social Services for Wayne County in the 1970s. Dr. Little was a passionate advocate for family preservation programs and kinship care. The Kinship Care Resource Center is dedicated to his memory.

## Supporting kinship caregivers

The Kinship Care Resource Center (KCRC), a community program in the School of Social Work, has supported kinship families across the state since 2002. One of its primary goals is to ensure that caregivers receive the services, resources, and supports they need for themselves and the children they are raising.

The most recent figures show that about 61,000 (3%) children in Michigan live in a kinship family. Some children are placed with relatives through a Children's Protective Services case, while other children may be living with a caregiver who is not their parent due to parental incarceration, military deployment, immigration proceeding, or death of a parent. About 36% of the foster care placements in Michigan are with relatives.

### Kinship navigators

Recent national attention and support for kinship caregivers has reinvigorated the program. Beginning in late 2018, Congress has provided funding to states to develop, enhance, or evaluate kinship navigator programs under the federal *Family First Prevention Services Act*. The State of Michigan awarded those funds to the Kinship Care Resource Center at MSU. The work to develop the Kinship Support Program began in 2019 with the hiring of **Alicia Guevara Warren**, MPAff, and the focus on hiring kinship care navigators—people who have provided primary care to a relative child who can help other caregivers find the resources, services, and supports they need. The School was recently awarded continuation funding for years two and three of this program.

### Engagement and collaboration

The KCRC's larger vision is to work with systems in a way that removes barriers and ensures that all children in kinship care in Michigan achieve safety, permanency, and well-being. One critical component of achieving that vision is done through community engagement and partnership. Developing a statewide kinship support program requires collaboration, partnership, and commitment to social justice for kinship families, values central to the mission of the School of Social Work.





Over 50 local support groups for kinship families exist to connect with one another and share information. Many kinship families are not accessing services because either they do not know about the social, health, legal, financial, or educational resources that they may be eligible for or they are apprehensive about seeking help. These local groups are instrumental in the Center's ability to reach and provide various trainings to caregivers and distribute resources.

**Joe Kozakiewicz**, JD, MSW, director of Chance at Childhood (CAC), another community program in the School of Social Work, has been providing legal training and information to kinship caregivers, service providers, legal professionals, and policymakers across the state. KCRC and CAC work closely to connect families to the legal information and resources they need to make informed decisions.

Associate Professor **Dr. Fei Sun** is leading a systematic evaluation of the process and outcomes of the Kinship Support Program. His team conducted focus groups in Wayne, Muskegon, and Gaylord to assess the needs of kinship caregivers as well as their expectations of a statewide kinship support program. This feedback is instrumental to the development of the program.

## Education

While the KCRC serves families across the state, it is also a place for learning and growth for future social workers. The Center provides opportunities for social work students at MSU to contribute to the School's mission of social justice and positive change by helping families who contact the KCRC find the resources and services they need. Students also contribute to other program efforts and are able to apply what they are learning in the classroom directly to make a difference for kinship families in Michigan.

Photo below: In September 2019, Kinship Care Awareness Month, several local support groups and partners worked closely with the KCRC and Michigan's Children to bring nearly 100 caregivers and supporters to the first annual Relative Care Day at the State Capitol. Pictured: Kinship caregivers and supporters standing in the gallery after being recognized in the House of Representatives by State Representative **Frank Liberati**, D-13th District, Allen Park, and State Representative **Kathy Crawford**, R-38th District, Novi.



## What are kinship navigators?

The voice of kinship caregivers is at the center of KCRC's work. Hiring kinship navigators who themselves have experience as kinship caregivers has been essential to multiple program development efforts, including identifying referral sources, networking with community partners, website development, program promotion, and helping to develop an outreach strategy. Furthermore, families seeking assistance find comfort in talking with someone who has been through a similar situation, experienced many of the same emotions, and confronted similar challenges.

Kinship navigator programs have been found to support positive outcomes in safety, permanency, and well-being of kinship families. The KCRC focus is on:

- Helping service provider networks collaborate, connect, and coordinate with one another alongside and on behalf of kinship caregivers and the children in their care
- Using newsletters, a website, toll-free phone line, and social media to share resources and provide supports for kinship families
- Connecting trained navigators to kinship caregivers through phone consultation and community outreach
- Providing a calendar of support groups offered throughout the state of Michigan, assessing where the need for new or more groups exists, and supporting group implementation
- Providing training for families and professionals who serve kinship families

# Meet the Kinship Care Team

## The KCRC director



**Alicia Guevara Warren, MPAff**, is director of the Kinship Care Resource Center at the School of Social Work. She holds a BA in Sociology and Political Science from the University of Michigan and a Master of Public Affairs degree from University of Texas–Austin and has an extensive background advocating for improved outcomes for children and families through her work in the nonprofit sector.

Prior to her arrival at MSU, she worked for the Michigan League for Public Policy as the director of the Kids Count project. Additionally, as Democratic central staff for the Michigan House of Representatives, she served as the lead analyst on issues affecting children, families, and seniors, along with immigration, women’s health, and regulatory reform.

Most recently, she was appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer to the Early Childhood Investment Corporation Board for a four-year term and was named a Children and Family Fellow of the Annie E. Casey Foundation in February 2019.

## The kinship care navigators



**Tracey DeFeyter** and her husband Jason have been licensed foster parents for five years with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. They have parented 14 kids through birth, adoption, foster care, and kinship care, and have provided respite care for

several children. DeFeyter is a direct descendant of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and spent nine years working in child welfare for the Tribe. She brings a wealth of knowledge and the hands-on experience of parenting children who have been impacted by trauma. DeFeyter is also a trainer for the Child Welfare League of America’s PRIDE model and an advanced trainer in the Nurtured Heart Approach®, having taught this transformative, relationship-focused methodology throughout Michigan.

“I have been a strong promoter of kinship care, and I’m eager and ready to increase support and advocate for families as a kinship care navigator. I understand the challenges that kinship care families face, and I’m very passionate about making a positive difference in the lives of children and families.”



**Terry Loynes** has worked in various positions in the mental health field for nearly 40 years. She and her husband Joe became legal guardians and kinship caregivers for their grandson, who came to live with them in December 2012 after both of his parents died. This led

Loynes down the path of pursuing and learning more about available resources for their grandson ranging from how to navigate the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services system to learning how to advocate for educational services via the Individualized Education Program process. She currently volunteers as a member of the Parent Advisory Committee and as a member of the Parent Coalition of Gratiot and Isabella Counties via the Great Start Collaborative of the Gratiot-Isabella Regional Education Service District. She is also a member of the Foster/Kinship Caregiver Group in Gratiot County.

“My current passion is returning to do advocacy work as a kinship care navigator through the MSU Kinship Care Resource Center in hopes of guiding other kinship caregivers along a smoother path in accessing resources and services.”

For information about the Kinship Care Resource Center, visit [kinship.msu.edu](http://kinship.msu.edu)





A special feature of the HEALS program was a two-day health care social work education and policy event, where our students gathered in Washington, DC, with scholars from the other universities to learn about and take part in the policy-making process. They heard about the important role of social work in shaping and implementing health policy through personal stories from social workers in healthcare, a former HEALS Policy Fellow, and social workers who work on Capitol Hill. They also met with **Senator Debbie Stabenow** (MSW '75) to advocate for health care policy. Pictured: The 2018 cohort of MSU HEALS scholars in Washington, DC, during their spring 2019 visit. L-R: **Jennifer Coria, Amelia Schafer, Sierra Williams, Amanda Schoeppe, Jessica Bonardelli, Sadie Shattuck, Emily Mayer, and Karlee Shave**. The 2019 cohort will travel to DC in spring 2020.

## Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholars: Initiative incorporated into ongoing coursework

The Healthcare Education and Leadership Scholars (HEALS) program is drawing to a close. MSU was one of ten universities selected to participate in this prestigious healthcare training initiative created by the National Association of Social Workers and the Council on Social Work Education to develop the next generation of healthcare social work leaders. Funding was provided by the New York Community Trust (NYCT), one of the nation's largest community foundations.

According to HEALS program coordinator **Marcia Lampen**, PhD, LMSW, RN: "As a result of the HEALS program, our School has increased its focus on healthcare in its course offerings and field opportunities. These options are required for the HEALS scholars but are also available to any interested students; so even without a program like HEALS, students now have access to an advanced social welfare policy class that focuses exclusively on health policy as well as a practice class on health care social work. Since these offerings are not

dependent on HEALS financing or support, but are now established components of the School, they will sustain the opportunities for students who wish to demonstrate social work values and leadership skills in healthcare settings. That is an effective way to impact system-level changes!"

As a condition of their participation, MSW HEALS scholars met the requirements of either the Social Work in Health Care Certificate (developed as a result of this program) or the Levande Certificate in Gerontology; BASW students took three healthcare-related electives. They also attended three special cohort meetings to help them integrate their field experience and share experiences and reflections with the other MSU HEALS scholars. HEALS field placements, approved by the coordinator and in collaboration with field staff, were all healthcare related and specifically focused on interprofessional education (IPE).

The five cohorts included a total of 9 BASW and 32 MSW students.

**Trauma** results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

**Evidence-based** interventions and tools are approaches to prevention or treatment that have moved from a strong theoretical basis to rigorous scientific evaluation, have demonstrated benefit with one or more populations, and have met acceptable standards of reliability and validity for the populations in which they are used.

MSU Center for Survivors Clinical Supervisor **Samara L. Hough**, LMSW:

"The CPT training has provided tools to assess progress of clients and test the efficacy of this form of trauma treatment. Clients were able to see the impact of their experience of trauma in weekly assignments and assessment tools. As a result, clients reported feeling a sense of power over daily decisions and minimized second-guessing themselves. They were able to identify core negative beliefs that made it difficult to cope with PTSD symptoms and began to approach living with self-compassion and security. In addition, clients gained knowledge about trauma and how it manifests in the body through psychoeducation. Therapists experienced a sense of reassurance that they were effective in helping clients heal."

# Social work through a trauma-informed lens

The MSU School of Social Work offers training in trauma treatment both to students through the MSW Evidence Based Trauma Treatment Certificate Program and to human service professionals through our Continuing Education Program. The MSW certificate requires students to become proficient in an evidence-based treatment model, and they are placed in agencies where the field instructors are experienced in implementing evidence-based practice. The Continuing Education Program provides interdisciplinary training for human service professionals related to trauma-informed practice and the opportunity to earn trauma certificates at two levels.

## MSW Trauma Treatment Certificate

The **Evidence Based Trauma Treatment Certificate Program** provides advanced MSW students at the MSU School of Social Work the opportunity to develop competence in providing evidence-based trauma-informed services to clients who have experienced trauma (and their families and caregivers) and to survivors of sexual assault. Student may choose from two evidence-based treatment models.

In addition to the specialized coursework and training in an evidence-based practice, students are matched to a specialized field placement with a field instructor who has experience implementing evidence-based practice. They also participate in quarterly clinical case consultation sessions and integrative field seminars led by faculty field liaisons trained in the same evidence-based treatment model.

Early evaluation strongly suggests that the certificate's specialized coursework and field placement and emphasis on evidence-based practice is successfully preparing students for careers in trauma treatment.

### Collaboration and capacity building

The original focus of the certificate program was treatment for children and adolescents, but through collaboration with the **MSU Center for Survivors** (formerly Sexual Assault Program), it expanded to include clinical work with survivors of sexual assault.

First, the School invested in building Center capacity for implementing evidence-based practice. MSW therapists at the Center for Survivors were trained in cognitive processing therapy (CPT) over summer 2018. This gave them another powerful tool to effectively provide treatment and allows the School to ensure that students placed there meet the certificate requirement of supervision by a field instructor trained in evidence-based treatment. Student placements began in the 2018-2019 academic year. The School continues to provide Center therapists with ongoing clinical consultation.

This is a strong beginning for expansion to additional agencies. We are proud of providing evidence-based practice training opportunities for our MSW students while at the same time investing in building field agency capacity for evidence-based practice.

For more information about the MSW Trauma Treatment Certificate, visit [socialwork.msu.edu/Programs/MSW/Certificates/Evidence-Based-Trauma-Treatment](https://socialwork.msu.edu/Programs/MSW/Certificates/Evidence-Based-Trauma-Treatment)





## Continuing Education Trauma Certificate

**E**xperiences of trauma are complex and unique to each individual, family, and community.

The MSU School of Social Work Continuing Education Program offers a multidisciplinary approach designed to introduce human service professionals to trauma-informed techniques by providing skills-building through training and education in trauma-informed care and intervention strategies.

**Trauma Certificate** courses were developed to meet the interdisciplinary needs of multiple systems and professions and also prioritize developing self-care practices in all professionals to reduce the risk of secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue. Content addresses trauma across the lifespan, emphasizes interdisciplinary and evidence-based practice, enhances knowledge of self and secondary trauma, emphasizes the impact of trauma on the brain and behavior, and encourages culturally responsive professional interaction using a trauma-informed lens.

Two levels of certification are offered: Level 1 focuses on foundations of working with trauma; Level 2 focuses on advanced practice. A total of 114 distinct continuing education courses have been offered on relevant topics through the Continuing Education Program by means of in-person workshops, live webinars, and online courses. Specific training in evidence-based treatment models is also available.

The MSU Trauma Certificate does not make someone a certified trauma counselor, but it does enhance marketability for individuals seeking this work and/or advancement in trauma-informed positions and exposes practitioners to innovative information, helping them prepare to support those who have experienced trauma, and giving them the opportunity to add this specialization to their area of work.

### Community impact

The Trauma Certificate was introduced in summer 2018. By fall 2019, 62 professionals had completed it, and many more took core required courses. Since it began, a number of organizations have contracted with the School of Social Work for customized certificate training.

As an example, last school year, the Level 1 certificate was provided in full for the Lansing (MI) School District. Eleven training sessions, including 45 hours of instruction, were provided over the course of eight months. Training was targeted at student service specialists, behavior interventionists, school nurses, social workers, and counselors. Evaluations indicated that participant knowledge about trauma increased significantly over the course of the trainings.

Photo above: Students in the *Core Concepts in Child and Adolescent Trauma* course discuss a case, examining case facts and developing hypotheses and hunches in order to identify next steps.

### Participant reflection

#### Dave Isbell:

“I used to think in terms of ‘little t’ trauma and ‘Big T’ trauma, but now I recognize that for the individuals sitting in front of me in my therapy office, the size of the ‘t’ doesn’t matter; it can all feel overwhelming and contribute to whatever issue they are trying to resolve. This is a really great way to develop a basic understanding of how trauma can be an underlying factor in sustaining both individual and systemic issues.”

For more information about the CE Trauma Certificate Program, visit [socialwork.msu.edu/CE/Certificates](https://socialwork.msu.edu/CE/Certificates)



*Sharing the Burden of War:* At the Marine Corps War Memorial. **Josh Perry** (far left, MSW '19), is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and earned the Combat Veterans Certificate; **Fernando Chavarria** (far right, MSW '18), also a veteran of OIF, shared his story for the first class.

## Social work with combat veterans

Social workers and other mental health professionals who are specifically prepared to serve veterans are in short supply nationwide. Many veterans, especially those who have served in combat, prefer to work with therapists who have also served in the military.

The MSU School of Social Work is working to address that need in two ways. The first action was to establish the Combat Veterans Certificate Program to teach social workers about complex trauma, with combat being just one layer of this.

Further, while combat exposure alone doesn't lead to suicide, it does increase risk for post-traumatic stress, depression, substance abuse, and moral injury (internal suffering that results from doing something against one's moral code), all of which do increase suicide risk.

The second approach the School is taking is a more direct response to veterans' needs. Because most veterans use the GI Bill to fund their undergraduate degree, there is great need for financial assistance if they wish to pursue a graduate program; the School has established an MSW Veterans Scholarship Fund to collect donations toward much-needed scholarship funding. The College of Social Science has chosen to highlight this fund for support in conjunction with MSU's Annual "Give Green" day.

## A new teaching approach for a critical social problem

Inspired by the experiences of her husband, Kevin Thompson (MSW '16, USMC Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran), **Tina Thompson** and her colleague **Glenn Stutzky**, created and co-instruct a series of experiential, immersive courses designed to help social workers better understand and empathize with veterans who have experienced combat.

Course aspects include first-person accounts from veterans. There are no lectures, textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, or academic papers. Instead, students learn through interacting with combat veterans, listening to interviews, viewing images from deployments, watching vetted documentary war footage, and reading material from those telling their stories from the battlefield.

The **Combat Veterans Certificate Program** launched in summer 2018; the first cohort of MSW students graduated in May 2019. These graduates represent the East Lansing, Flint, Mid-Michigan, Oakland, and Statewide Blended MSW Program options and live in various communities throughout Michigan.

Successful completion of the Combat Veterans Certificate Program requires satisfactory completion of three courses that are fully online and accessible to our MSW students across the state.

*Embracing the Stories of War* is the first course developed for this certificate. It was awarded the 2017 SAGE Publications and Council on Social Work Education *Award for Innovative Teaching in Social Work Education*. Its intent is to move the students from sympathy to empathy, by putting them in the combat veteran's boots through an immersive experiential storytelling process where they become part of the story, starting with recruitment and enlistment, through boot camp, war, and returning home. This heightens their awareness in a way that does not come through a traditional academic classroom approach.

The second class, *Sharing the Burden of War*, builds on the empathy students developed in the first course and introduces information from the macro practice perspective on the difficult and challenging realities veterans face. As part of this class, students visit





*Healing the Wounds of War*: The entire cohort is pictured at Save A Warrior™ (SAW); L-R: **Joel Evers**, **Keith Johnson** (SAW alum and on-site chef), **Amy Hoover**, **Josh Perry**, **Amanda Shearer**, **Josinda Feldstein**, **Kayla Zampese**, **Adam Carr** (executive director of Warrior Village), **Rosie Bickert**, LMSW (non-credit certificate student), **Glenn Stutzky** (faculty), **Stephanie Shaw**, **Tina Thompson** (faculty), **Kevin Thompson** (MSW '16, who shared his story for the *Embracing the Stories of War* class), and **Mellow**, the dog.

Washington, DC, for a Monuments and Memorials Study Away trip.

This is followed by *Healing the Wounds of War*, where students explore the differences between treatment and healing and are required to design their own unique programs to heal the wounds of war and complex trauma. It includes a trip to the Save A Warrior™ (SAW) program in Ohio.

Students also complete a veteran-related field placement during their advanced concentration year. These have included Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals and community-based outpatient clinics, Michigan Veterans Homes, the Michigan Veterans' Facilities Ombudsman, and the Veteran Resource Center at Ferris State University.

**Josinda Feldstein** (MSW '19), certificate student and spouse of Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran:

"Never before have I felt education seep into my heart and plant itself into my soul. The teaching methods they use and the amount of personal reflection it takes to muster through the material have really changed the higher education game."

**Kristen Chapman-McClarty** (MSW '12):

"As a social worker, this class has allowed me to understand the nuanced experiences of combat veterans and the challenges they face during and after their service. As a daughter of a Vietnam Veteran, this class profoundly changed my understanding of and my relationship with my father."

The Combat Veterans Certificate is also available as a non-credit option for human service professionals in the field. To date, 15 human service professionals have enrolled in the non-credit option for *Embracing the Stories of War*; these include VA social workers, civilian contractors in the National Guard, veteran service officers, and private practice clinicians.

For information about the Combat Veterans Certificate Program, visit [socialwork.msu.edu/Programs/MSW/Certificates/Combat-Veterans](https://socialwork.msu.edu/Programs/MSW/Certificates/Combat-Veterans)

Finland program coordinator

**Dr. Amanda Woodward:**

“Unlike many study abroad programs, we are going to Finland to learn from a country that does a much better job than we do at providing quality education, health care, and social services to its citizens.”

### Student reflections

**Julia Adams:**

“This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity allowed me to see things from a much broader perspective than I had previously looked at certain issues such as maternity and paternity leave. I look forward to using my experiences abroad to be able to apply them back in the United States and advocate for change.”

**Maija Crother:**

“Getting to know another perspective of social work opened my eyes in many different ways. Through this experience I was able to bring back what I learned to the United States. I also gained knowledge of another culture.”

Photo at right: The summer 2019 students visiting the United Nations booth at an international festival in Helsinki. #deadline2030 is the UN’s call to action around climate change. L-R: **Jenn O’Connor, Erica Kemp, Bezil Taylor, Jacquelyn Stewart, Maija Crothers,** and **Julia Adams.**

## Study abroad **with a difference**

The MSU study abroad program in Finland has been in place since 2011, with five cohorts of students to date. The focus is on comparative social welfare policy. We visit Parliament and a variety of social service agencies in Tampere and Helsinki and spend time with social work students at our partner institution, the Tampere University of Applied Science (TAMK).

Study abroad is often seen as a semester or more in a less-developed country, focusing on service and helping as well as learning. The MSW Finland program is different. Students spend only two weeks in-country at the beginning of the summer semester, with the rest of the class taking place online after we return home, making it more accessible to our students with jobs and family obligations that may limit their ability to leave for a long period of time.

This is important for the development of cutting-edge social work practitioners in a number of ways.

We discover different ways to tackle similar problems at multiple levels, including teaching social work, engaging with clients across system levels, and structuring and implementing social welfare policy. Students return home with new ideas for advocacy and practice. For example, at almost every Finnish agency we visit, public or private, the focus is person-centered: clients are people first. That happens in the United States, too, of course, but in Finland it is striking how consistent it is across every type of organization, serving all sorts of populations, in a variety of settings.

Examining why this is the case is a key part of the study abroad experience because it means looking at culture and values as well as formal structures. Finland’s Constitution, for example, included a right to health care from the very beginning. Their criminal justice system is unabashedly structured based on a premise of rehabilitation, not punishment. Higher education is free, and students even receive a stipend for living expenses. Social welfare benefits are tied to the individual rather than couples or families with children in a way that ensures equal access across the population.

Students are amazed at the benefits available to Finns. Understanding the history and values underlying the Finnish system requires us to dig deep into our own history. Traveling with a small group of students intensively for two weeks creates relationships where difficult conversations about the failings of our own country can happen in ways that are both more intellectually engaging and more personal than tends to happen at home in the classroom.





## Studying health and community care services

In a new program developed by the School of Social Work, students traveled to the Dominican Republic for nine days of education abroad in and around San Pedro de Marcoís. The 2019 spring break trip was part of the *Global Health in Social Work and the Social Sciences–Dominican Republic* course offered by the School. Eight MSW students and seven upper-level undergraduate students from the College of Social Science attended lectures from the Universidad Central del Este (UCE) Medical School and joined UCE medical students doing their assigned health service work, including hospital, clinic, and community services visits.

The program, which consists of the spring break trip and its accompanying spring online course, was developed and run by School faculty member **Karen Newman**, LMSW, and **Sung Soo Chung**, associate director of the MSU Institute for Global Health. The University has existing research and educational relationships in the Dominican Republic, including a medical study abroad program focused on surgery and tropical illnesses, and this program was developed to look at the social and emotional side of health related, in part, to that medical program.

Our students were divided into teams and paired with student teams from the medical school.

The students' in-country experience was bookended by cultural day trips for exposure to the history, food, living, and culture in Santo Domingo and San Pedro.



One team of MSU students and UCE medical students (yellow shirts) together, walking from the bus into the town to do community work.

Dominican Republic program coordinator  
**Karen Newman**, LMSW:

“This program not only emphasizes the importance of emotional and environmental health in health care, it gives students a chance to expand their awareness by working together with medical students in a community context very different from their own.”

### Participating students:

Hermance Akono  
Lakeshia Bortz  
Torrianna Bradley  
Jennifer Coria  
William Davie  
Nekiya Davis  
Torianna Gorden  
Jessica Gray

Troye Green  
Natalie McQueary  
Cassandra Morse  
Vincenza Randazzo  
Jabre Wallace  
Armoni Warlick  
Autumn Webb

Photo below: Our students gather with the UCE students before the teams headed out to do their community work. UCE faculty member **Dr. Goldny Mills**, the medical and epidemiology professor who leads work in this program, is providing instruction on the issues students were to address in the communities that day. This particular day, the topic was rabies, and the student teams were on their way to provide information about how rabies impacts human health and conditions. Students are being trained to discuss the vaccines and give shots to animals, one of the public health services provided to serve the towns.



# Innovation and technology for dynamic teaching and learning

I began my professional career as a clinical social worker. The single most memorable developmental experience I ever had happened when I was one of 13 therapists selected to conduct live clinical sessions with client families in a room with a one-way mirror. Behind that mirror sat the other 12 therapists and the developer of one of the most well-known and innovative clinical models of the time.

This was my very first experience with “live supervision.” Not only were these other clinicians watching me, but the expert supervisor had a telephone behind the mirror that he could use to “call in” to interrupt the session and redirect my efforts. My memory tells me that he rang in right after I said “hello,” but I may have been slightly more effective than that! Nonetheless, I learned more in that session than I had in hours upon hours of traditional case reviews.

From that point forward, as a clinical supervisor, consultant, and instructor, I did what I could to replicate the best parts of my live supervision experience—minus at least some of the anxiety—for generations of clinicians and students. My former students tell me that they remember the in-class simulations we did, with actors playing clients, as some of their most valued clinical learning experiences.

As clinical training advanced, so did the use of in-person and technology-generated simulations.

Building on these experiences and using current technology, our School recently unveiled the Social Work Education Learning Laboratory.

We repurposed a room in Baker Hall to install technology, including a camera, microphones, a monitor, and a green screen, that may all be controlled not only from inside the room, but from anywhere on the web! It supports competency-based education, skill development, and performance-based assessment, as well as accessibility to all learners and teachers.

Since our initial demonstration to faculty, colleagues have been generating creative ideas for not only clinical, but also research, organizational, community, and policy practice learning. We are also hopeful that this facility will advance our use of technology, simulation, and collaboration with other practice professions.



*Dr. John Mooradian is director of the MSU School of Social Work. He was honored with the 2010 College of Social Science Outstanding Teaching Award.*

## Technology tools: Catalyst for innovation

An online survey conducted by the School of Social Work in spring 2019 indicated that both students and faculty wanted more video content included in face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses; specific suggestions were included. With this in mind, the School successfully applied for a competitive internal grant from MSU’s Catalyst Innovation Program, a program to support and further MSU’s value of seeking new ideas aimed at improving the digital learning experience, stemming from the belief that incorporating digital strategies to support pedagogy can enhance students’ learning experiences and offer efficiencies in assessment and analysis.

Receiving this grant funding has allowed the School to assemble ten sets of technology tools. These “Tech Packs” can be borrowed by any faculty member

(tenure, fixed term, or per-course) for two weeks at a time to create high quality content for course use or to enable joining online meetings, classes, webinars, etc. from remote locations.

Equipment includes high quality portable lights and microphones, a tripod, and a high-resolution webcam. The School was also able to purchase two tablets and a laptop with up-to-date software for video editing, content creation, and accessibility improvement.

Follow-up evaluation will analyze usage to determine whether packs need to be also housed at off-campus sites, if more packs are needed, and to see if more or different technology tools need to be added.

Support and training are being provided to all faculty by **Erica Shifflet-Chila** and **Chris Sibley** (see page 22).



## Expanding horizons: Social Work Education Learning Laboratory

The Social Work Education Learning Laboratory contains high-tech audio and video recording equipment, including a green screen backdrop, stationary microphones, customizable lighting, and a high-resolution video camera. The high quality video and sound equipment allow more effective use of free closed-captioning services, saving a lot of faculty time otherwise used for editing transcripts.

The lab will allow instructors and students in all of our program options across the state to create, record, produce, and share content. Live action can be viewed by multiple participants in multiple locations. Beyond

simply recording videos such as lectures or tutorials, the lab will facilitate streaming of live meetings, classes, or trainings to any computer or mobile device with Internet access. This is also true for role plays, treatment simulations, etc. All of the recording equipment can be controlled remotely (by an individual on or off campus), including adjusting volume, zooming in and out on the camera, and sharing screens and documents.

Assistance, support, and training are being provided to all faculty by **Erica Shifflet-Chila** and **Chris Sibley** (see page 22).



**Andrea Martineau**, LMSW, (center) is coordinator of the FAME Program, a community program in the School of Social Work that serves as a resource center for foster youth alumni attending MSU as well as for youth who were in kinship care, have experienced homelessness, or are otherwise independent. She is sitting in the new Learning Lab in front of the green screen backdrop with **Jeanea Dunbar** (left) and **Erin Bedell**, both BASW seniors who serve as life skills coaches in the program, discussing uses for the new technology tools displayed on the table.

## Meet Instructional Technology Coordinator **Erica Shifflet-Chila**



**Erica Shifflet-Chila**, PhD, LMSW, was one of the University's "early adopters" of Desire 2 Learn (D2L), the University-sponsored learning management software, and she helped fellow faculty members in the School of Social Work transition to D2L from the previous system.

In spring 2015, she was appointed to the role of instructional technology coordinator for the School, a good fit for both her and the School, as Dr. Chila is a noted fan of technology and utilizes many forms in her teaching in face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses across program options.

"What I like best about this role is learning new ways of incorporating technology into the teaching and learning process and working one-on-one with my great colleagues to develop new and innovative approaches." She continues, "One of the important aspects of incorporating technology into teaching and learning in the School is to fulfill the land-grant mission of the University by increasing access to people from all over the state and to people who, for whatever reason, are not able to attend classes in the traditional classroom environment. We are also

teaching future social workers how to use technology to provide access to clients in an effective and ethical manner."

Dr. Chila offers one-on-one consultation with School faculty in many areas related to technology and teaching, including working with D2L, learning or incorporating different software applications into both face-to-face and online classroom environments (e.g., Kahoot!, Zoom, Slack), and creating new accessible content. Faculty are able to set up an appointment at any time and can meet in person or virtually.

"One of the most exciting aspects of this role is that it is constantly evolving as new technology becomes available and new applications are found for existing tech. I get to constantly learn new things and share them with colleagues."

Dr. Chila joined the School in 2005 and currently serves as a clinical associate professor, teaching courses on research methods, technology and social work practice, social welfare policy, and management and administration in human service organizations. Her research interests include the implications of information technology for social work practice and education and the impact of technology use on child and adolescent development. Dr. Chila is active in service to the School and the social work profession.

## Meet Information Technology Professional **Chris Sibley**



**Chris Sibley's** duties as the School's information technology (IT) professional include maintaining, monitoring, ordering, keeping inventory, and deploying all School computers, devices, and software. If someone has a computer problem, he is the one that will do the troubleshooting and take

appropriate action to solve the problem.

It is his job to learn about the many different technologies that are available and bridge between technology and social work to determine the best options to meet the School's needs and help faculty meet their technology needs. In larger units in the University, several people fulfill the numerous essential roles, but because Sibley is our only IT professional, he gets to do it all for us. He says, "This is very challenging, as technology is constantly evolving.

It keeps me sharp and constantly learning as I go. It is a joy to make sure the faculty and staff in the School have the tools and means they need to do the things they do."

Before coming to MSU, Sibley served in the U.S. Air Force, stationed at McConnell Airforce Base in Wichita, KS. Following that, he studied computer networking and information assurance. At MSU, he hired in at the Health Colleges, but within his first year, he started working at the School of Social Work. "It was a larger department with different obstacles, but it was great preparation for my role here at the School.

"I am trying to learn as much as I can about everything we do here at the School and the processes. The more I know, the more I can help find better or more up-to-date solutions to these processes. I come from a generation of somewhat both old and new. I'm hoping to incorporate that into my plans. Keep the things that need no change, and find better ways to change things that could need it."



# Preparing students for generalist social work practice in the age of technology

The mission of the BASW Program is to educate students for ethical, competent, responsive, and innovative generalist social work practice. Historically, generalist social work practice has been done in a physical or static environment. For example, we educate students in brick-and-mortar buildings to work with client systems in physical spaces.

With the advent of technology, we have been rethinking our methods and how we use technology as a teaching and learning tool.

We began by incorporating digital technologies into the teaching and learning process. The BASW Program has been offering and refining online teaching and learning opportunities over the past six years. Nearly all core BASW courses and electives have an online section or an online component. Our online sections are often the first to fill during annual enrollment. According to BASW Program Director **Monaca Eaton**, our students report enjoying learning how to build their social work skills in online settings, knowing that this will be an asset to them in future social work practice and in the job market.

Online learning helps students and faculty develop and utilize the essential digital literacy skills necessary for innovative social work practice. These skills include the ability to ethically and appropriately facilitate digital and online communication and engage in critical thinking, self-directed learning, and social engagement.

BASW Junior **Nikebia Brown-Joseph** is working on her online course in the BASW Student Resource Room, her favorite workspace for online learning.



## *BASW students and faculty reflect on digital learning*

BASW student **Holly McMasters Cusick**:

“My favorite parts of online learning are the study skills, time management skills, and prioritizing that I learned.... Not only do you learn the course material, you learn valuable life lessons that will help you juggle school, work, home life, etc. I also love going home for the summers and seeing my family, and with online learning, I have the opportunity to earn credit without staying on campus all summer. It’s the best of both worlds.”

BASW student **Ashley Person**:

“Online learning prepares students to be cutting edge social work practitioners because it fosters creativity and communication. Many of my online classes have been centered around discussion boards with fellow students and Zoom meetings, both with professors and students, live or pre-recorded. In addition, [they] push technological usage in a time with so much emphasis on technology, which better prepares social workers to understand and navigate computers, Internet, video chatting, and more.”

Senior Clinical Instructor **Rosemary Jackson**, one of the first faculty to translate a face-to-face practice class into a digital learning environment:

“As we move to more virtual environments and online interactions, online learning gives students the basis for how to work in this environment. Online learning is exacting, I like that. Everything has to be clearly laid out and in several different places; as an instructor this keeps me on my toes.”

Clinical Assistant Professor **Rebecca Wiersma** teaches online practice courses:

“[Online learning] encourages students to use new technology that helps them stay up to date with a profession that is moving more toward electronic records, online therapy, etc. It provides them with guided opportunities to work with multiple forms of technology and gain confidence in their ability to navigate different programs.”

Associate Professor **Hyunkag Cho** has taught both macro practice and research methods courses online:

“I see a pedagogical advantage.... Properly organized online courses give students a broader exposure to their classmates’ ideas; they can learn more from each other than in offline ones that tend to be limited by time. It makes me think more about students’ perspectives in teaching a course, as I have to prepare the materials and sequences of learning as if I were them.”

# Homeless Awareness Service Event

In November 2018, I partnered with community leaders and the Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GradSAC) to coordinate MSU's first Homeless Awareness Service Event. The event drew service providers and volunteers from many different divisions and groups on campus and from the community. Over 100 volunteers gave their time.

The main purposes of the event were education and awareness. Students learned about the issues facing homeless youth, which includes high school and college-age students. Volunteers assembled over 500 care packages for MSU students in need, including non-perishable food items, hygiene products, socks, and gloves. I'd like to particularly thank **Laurel Burchfield** from the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, which helped raise over \$2,700 in tax deductible donations along with a myriad of supplies.

The goal is to make this an annual event, to inform individuals and groups from the MSU and Lansing communities about the needs of disadvantaged students living on and near MSU's campus. We need to show youth in need that they are seen and cared for.

**Jessica Scott-Nehls** from the Office for International Students and Scholars and I are working with GradSAC to develop and implement the 2019–2020 Student Basic Needs Awareness Symposium. This event will focus on the current and changing needs of college students facing housing and food insecurities. We will host a resource fair for students and faculty, a panel of speakers that will include faculty and community leaders who have worked with housing and food-insecure students, and, most importantly, students who have experienced a lack of basic needs support.

Four student scholarships and one *Campus Champion* award will be presented at the symposium. Community programs will nominate students who have been advocates for issues other students are facing. Student nominations of *Campus Champions* will recognize members of the MSU community who have advocated on behalf of the needs of students.

The support we received last year was outstanding. We hope with this year's event we can have an even greater impact. We want to raise money to highlight that often the financial aid budget is not enough. There are outside circumstances not taken into account. By highlighting these issues, we can try to increase faculty/staff awareness and education and reduce stigma regarding students accessing the on-campus community programs here at MSU. We want to help ensure students are seen as people first. We understand that everyone has their "stuff," but how we support students in dealing with that stuff can define MSU as a leader in student support and success.



*Bezil Taylor will graduate this spring with an MSW in Organization and Community Leadership. He has been selected for the 2019 Outstanding Student Award by the Association of Community Organization and Social Action (ACOSA); this award recognizes the contribution of a BSW or MSW student who has been involved in community or organizational practice.*

Photo below: Volunteers and participants at the 2018 Homeless Awareness Service Event. **Bezil Taylor** pictured third from left.







## Advocating on behalf of each other

For many years, the School has held a special Recognition Ceremony during spring commencement season to gather together and honor our graduates. This year, the University changed and expanded its commencement scheduling to include ceremonies at and around the time when the School traditionally has held its own ceremony. University rules prohibit any conflicts with University commencement events. Everyone at the School was very disappointed to learn that our ceremony needed to be cancelled, but our MSW students are taking action.

MSW student **Cat Asteriou**, secretary/treasurer of Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society and a member of the Graduate Student Advisory Council (GradSAC), took this position:

“Working on and receiving a master’s degree is no easy feat in any discipline, and it is important for that achievement to be recognized! When I heard about the recognition ceremony being cancelled, I not only saw such overwhelming disappointment from my colleagues—but an immediate call to action—and I thought, ‘How fitting that we, as social workers, are trying to solve this problem!’

Working with Phi Alpha and GradSAC has given me the opportunity to act as a bridge between my colleagues and the School of Social Work, addressing their needs, suggestions, and concerns so that we may aim to offer the best student experience possible.”

**Bezil Taylor**, also a member of both student organizations, clearly summed up the students’ position:

“As students we are often tasked with advocating on behalf of our clients or communities that we work within. An even greater need that we sometimes forget about is advocating for ourselves. We understood as a group that regardless of the reason the recognition ceremony was cancelled, as social workers we are tasked with solving problems.”

With the help of **Dr. John Mooradian** and the School, students are leading the effort to find another option to reignite the celebration plans for the MSW graduating class of 2020.

All students in the School of Social Work are encouraged to participate in School activities and in student organizations and to have an advisory role with regard to School governance; they are represented at regular School meetings. Students are welcome to participate actively and have voice.

## Student reflections

**Daria Shamrova** (PhD '18):

"Research practicum courses helped to put all the pieces of the puzzle together in the way that it was challenging enough but not intimidating. I remember how empowering it was to see the result of our group work from the idea development to writing up the manuscript. It taught me to find my role in teamwork and learn from others. This course was one of the first times when someone supervised my choice of measurement tools and actually showed me what buttons to push in SPSS [statistical software] and what all those numbers actually meant. I believe it sparked multiple ideas on how to develop my research agenda in more quantitative ways."

**Kristen Prock** (PhD '19):

"I loved the hands-on practical research experience! The two-course sequence gave me the opportunity to be an integral part of the design and execution of a research project with my cohort that resulted in two national conference presentations and two published journal articles. It was also a great way to foster collaboration with fellow cohort members and faculty!"

Doctoral candidate **Carolyn Sutherby**:

"For me the benefit of the practicum course was working on a research project from the beginning to end: literature review, theorizing, implementation, analysis, presenting at CSWE's Annual Program Meeting, and publication. This was my first time being involved with independent research, and having faculty there as guides was extremely useful."



## Innovative training for doctoral research

The PhD Program in the School of Social Work aims to prepare leaders in social work academia. One way we do this is by offering an innovative two-semester *Research Practicum Sequence*. As its name suggests, the practicum is an opportunity for PhD students to practice the craft of research. Across the two semesters, we teach and strengthen student skills in the phases and components of social science research, with an emphasis on survey methodology. The skills and competencies mastered here help students prepare for their own dissertation research.

This two-course sequence experience centers on a group project that is broad enough to encompass both group and individual research questions. Each student carves out an area of interest from the larger group project that they aim to examine via survey methods. Each must use theory to guide their understanding of variables and their relationships, develop research questions, identify appropriate measures, create and implement a sampling strategy, develop an analysis plan, conduct data analysis, and produce written reports of each stage of research.

Past group projects have centered on the following areas: field education, use of technology in social work practice, cultural diversity, human rights exposure, ethics, and kinship caregivers.

Each cohort who has experienced the research practicum has disseminated its work to the larger social work community in some way. Often this occurs via professional presentation or publication. The faculty who teach the practicum sequence mentor students through the process of publication and presentation. The research practicum provides opportunities for the students to engage as part of a research team and to be mentored through a process that, as academics, will become part of their professional identity.



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## Dr. Rena Harold to retire after 34 years of service



**D**r. **Rena D. Harold** is beginning her consultancy year at MSU, retiring from her 34-year professorship in May 2020. Professor Harold has not only been a valued colleague, educator, researcher, and mentor, she served as director of the PhD Program for 17 years, MSW Program director, and associate director of the School for many years, as well

as having been the School's interim director. Many of the doctoral students she worked with have gone on to faculty and administrative positions in schools of social work (nationally and internationally) and to leadership positions in organizations.

At MSU, her committee service included the College of Social Science Dean's Advisory Board on Diversity and Inclusion and the Women's Advisory Committee to the Provost, and she received an award from the MSU Faculty and Professional Women's Association as *Outstanding Woman Faculty*. Dr. Harold has also been active with the Council on Social Work Education, sitting on the Commission on the Role and Status of Women in Social Work Education, the Commission on Membership and Professional Development, and the Council on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expression. She was also recipient of the *2017 Feminist Manuscript Award*, along with co-authors **Drs. Kristen Prock** and **Sheryl Groden**.

Over her career, Dr. Harold has authored three books and numerous articles based on her research. She has received funding from federal grant sources for her work that, broadly speaking, addresses issues of child, adolescent, and adult development in the context of school and family. This year, she will be completing a research project with colleagues that looks at how social work faculty who identify as members of diverse groups connect or separate their personal and academic identities. She has truly advanced the School's mission to promote competent, ethical, and responsive social work education, research, and practice, and we are grateful for her service and leadership. She will be missed.



Drivers along Michigan's I-75 highway near Flint had the opportunity to see the School's billboard during September and October, as we raise awareness of our programs.

## Rogers elected to represent School, College

**A**ubree Rogers was recently elected by her peers to serve on the College of Social Science Dean's Staff Advisory Committee, a wonderful recognition of her contributions and capability to represent our School and all College staff.



## Michigan Indian Day

**H**ealing Trauma in Native American Tribal Communities: MSU School of Social Work Continuing Education's annual program in honor of Michigan Indian Day focused on how cultural approaches to healing may differ significantly and vary from Tribal Nation to Tribal Nation. Participants learned about historical and current traumas occurring in Native American tribal communities, both on and off reservation land, including content on multiple traumas and the healing experience. Presenters were **Suzanne Cross**, PhD, MSW, associate professor emeritus of the School and a citizen of the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan; **Eva Menefee**, an enrolled member of the Oneida of the Thames Band and lead faculty advisor at Lansing Community College; and **Dylan AT Miner**, PhD, associate professor in the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities and director of American Indian and Indigenous Studies in MSU's College of Arts and Letters.

## School competes in Dragon Boat Race, raises funds for local center

**T**he School fielded a crew for the 8th Annual Capital City Dragon Boat Race, run by the Women's Center of Greater Lansing, held at Hawk Island (Ingham) County Park. All proceeds from the event go to fund programs, services, and advocacy for local women. This was the second year our team, the Social Warriors, competed, and we finished in second place! The School was a gold sponsor of the race.



# 2019 CSWE Annual Program Meeting

The MSU School of Social Work had a strong presence at the Council on Social Work Education 65th Annual Program Meeting—*Looking Back, Looking Forward*—held in Denver, CO, October 24-27, 2019. 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 & ALUMNI PRESENTATIONS

### **Emmanuel Chima, Pilar Horner**

*Refugee Youth Identity Formation at Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Dowa, Malawi, Africa*

### **Melanie Carlson**

*The Double Bind: Domestic Violence Advocates as Mandatory Reporters*

### **Kyunghee Lee**

*Effects of Poverty on Children's Academic and Social-Emotional Outcomes in Japan*

### **Kyunghee Lee**

*Long-Term Head Start Impact on Outcomes for Children in Foster Care*

### **Joanne Smith-Darden, Megan Hicks, Poco D. Kernsmith**

*Does Sexting Predict Sexual Behaviors Among Adolescents*

**Cheryl Williams-Hecksel, Sharon Kollar, Amy He**  
*Promoting Child Welfare Education: Promising and Effective Strategies for Innovative Partnerships*

**Rena D. Harold, Sheryl Groden, Kristen A. Prock**  
*Direct Scribing: Using Practice and Research to Give Voice to Vulnerable Populations*

**Katherine Briar-Lawson, Gary Anderson, Robin Leake, Nancy Dickinson, Cheryl Williams-Hecksel, Salome Raheim, Priscilla Day, Jill Duerr Berrick, Michael Patchner**  
*Partnerships Between Schools and Agencies in Public and Tribal Child Welfare*

### **Daniel L. Cavanaugh, Elizabeth Sharda, Carolyn Sutherby, Amanda T. Woodward**

*The Relationship Between Well-Being and Meaning-Making in Kinship Caregivers*

### **Anna Maria Santiago**

*Neighborhoods to Classrooms: Community Violence Exposure and Dropping Out of High School*

### **Josh Bishop, Cheryl Williams-Hecksel, Angela Matthews**

*ACEs, Trauma, and Protective Factors Among MSW Students: Implications for Practice Education*

### **Joanne Riebschleger, Sarah Swierenga, Daniel L. Cavanaugh, Jennifer Ismirle**

*Social Work and Tech Expert Collaboration Building User-Informed Mental Health Web Resources*

## SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

### **Dr. Anna Maria Santiago**

Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Community Practice*

### **Dr. Anna Maria Santiago**

Ex-Officio Member, Board of Directors, Association for Community Organization and Social Action

### **Dr. Daniel Vèlez Ortiz**

Councilor, Council on Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Diversity

### **Dr. Daniel Vèlez Ortiz**

Treasurer, Association of Latina and Latino Social Work Educators



CSWE is the sole accrediting agency for social work education in the United States.

**A Mission of Social Justice and Positive Change:** The MSU School of Social Work is dedicated to educating students for ethical, competent, responsive, and innovative social work practice, and to conducting and disseminating high quality research that improves the well-being of the most vulnerable in society. Our teaching, research, and outreach synergistically promote social justice, positive change, and solutions to the problems facing diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.



# Invest in initiatives **meaningful to you**

Students enter the profession of social work with a strong commitment to service, integrity, and competence. As social work educators, we believe that the good our graduates do is multiplied and extended across generations, and we are honored to help prepare them for their service.

In keeping with land-grant principles of education, research, and outreach/service, we take seriously our

responsibility to the education and training of students as well as outreach for community engagement.

If you share our values, please consider supporting these efforts with a gift to one of the scholarship and endowment funds highlighted below. A full list of giving opportunities and links to donate online can be found at [socialwork.msu.edu/Alumni-and-Giving/Endowments](https://socialwork.msu.edu/Alumni-and-Giving/Endowments).



### Robert Little Scholarship Fund

This fund provides scholarships for graduate students with a career interest in child welfare, with preference for those who want to work in kinship care.



### Dr. Mary Bremer Barron Scholarship Fund

This fund supports scholarships for students, with preference for those from the greater Flint community.



### MSW Veterans Scholarship

This fund supports veterans by providing scholarships for study in the MSW Program.



### Paul P. and Donna K. Freddolino Endowment for Distance Education

This fund supports the School of Social Work's distance educational programs, including both student support and the development of new educational technologies.



### The School of Social Work Endowed Fund

This fund provides a range of supports for the School, including student scholarships, support for faculty research, and support for School programs.



### Future Leaders Endowed Scholarship in Social Work

This fund supports graduate students through scholarships, assistantships, or fellowships.



### Gary R. Anderson Endowed Fund for Child Welfare Leadership

This fund supports workshops, lectures, and scholarships in the School related to child welfare leadership and workplace development.



### Chance at Childhood Endowment Fund

This fund supports research, education, training, and outreach concerning intervention and treatment for at-risk children and families; children's justice; coordination of professionals dealing with at-risk children and families; and methods of encouraging children and youth to develop into well-adjusted, capable, and productive adults.



### Youth Education and Support

This fund helps build, test, and disseminate research focused on real ways to increase child and youth access to accurate, non-stigmatized knowledge of mental illness and recovery.



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# MSU School of Social Work

Baker Hall, Room 254  
655 Auditorium Road  
East Lansing, MI 48824

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OUR SCIENCE TRANSFORMS THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE  
AND INSPIRES LEADERS