

PARTNERING *for* CHANGE

A PUBLICATION FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE RUTGERS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



U N D E R S T A N D I N G G E N D E R I D E N T I T Y B I A S

Educating the next generation of social workers to work with transgender populations

PARTNERING *for* CHANGE

t h o u g h t s



“Each and every one of us has the capacity to be an oppressor. I want to encourage each and every one of us to interrogate how we might be an oppressor and how we might be able to become liberators for ourselves and for everyone.”

LAVERNE COX

ACTRESS, ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK, FIRST OPENLY TRANSGENDER PERSON NOMINATED FOR AN EMMY.

PARTNERING *for* CHANGE

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ON THE COVER

The transgender symbol combines the female (Venus), male (Mars), and androgyne (Venus and Mars mixed), and was designed in the 1990s by Holly Boswell, Wendy Parker, and Nancy R. Nangeroni.



FALL 2016

PARTNERING *for* CHANGE

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the fall issue of *Partnering for Change*, the School of Social Work alumni magazine. This summer, we witnessed the senseless violence in Orlando, and the loss of more lives in needless violence between law enforcement and citizens. The many lives impacted by these tragic events serve as reminders of our role as social workers in the world and of our need to be change agents. Here at the School, we redouble our commitment to social justice in our school, our communities, our nation, and the world.

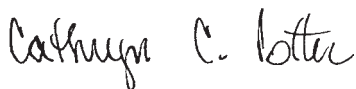
As members of a community who values social justice, difficult moments can be the foundation upon which we build both conversation and action. We are doing many things this year in the School to engage our students in social justice practice. In the following pages, you will find concrete ways to get involved with our community to address the challenges we face, both in our professional and personal lives.

In this issue, we've focused on a wide range of examples that illustrate what makes the School stand out on a national scale among our peers — passionate students, faculty dedicated to positive change, and alumni who continually strive to make the world a better place. Both longer features illustrate how we are taking the theoretical and making it applied, whether through helping a transgender student transition in a safe and supportive environment or creating spaces for students to register to vote.

I hope you will find the collective stories in this issue interesting and inspiring. If you have a story to tell, we want to hear it, and share it with our social work community. Please be in touch with ideas for stories that will appeal to alumni. I also invite you to save the date for our December 8 annual alumni winter reception, where we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Intensive Weekend program, a curriculum developed to make an MSW degree accessible to those working in human service environments.

Together, we can be active participants in this pivotal time in our country, by adding our vitality, our intellects, and our hearts to the issues that matter to us most. Many thanks from the School for all the work you do to make your communities a better place.

Sincerely,



Cathryn C. Potter, MSW, Ph.D.
DEAN AND DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR
RUTGERS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



“As members of a community who values social justice, difficult moments can be the foundation upon which we build both conversation and action.”



'16

C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S ,
G R A D U A T E S !

ON MAY 15, 2016,

the university was part of an historic moment during commencement. Not only was Rutgers celebrating its 250th anniversary, but the commencement speaker, President Barack Obama, was the first sitting president of the United States to make such a speech. In front of a crowd of 50,000 attendees, he referenced several Rutgers icons, including the football team, the grease trucks, and exit nine. When asked what made him accept the offer to speak, he said, "Because you asked." To read the full transcript of Obama's speech, visit commencement.rutgers.edu.

The Rutgers School of Social Work ceremony was held the next day, with speaker Edith Savage-Jennings, a pioneer in the Civil Rights Movement who worked on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision and helped establish the King Center. She worked as the founding fundraiser and active board member for over 25 years and successfully lobbied to make Trenton the first city to declare a MLK paid holiday and to create the nation's first MLK commission.

149

graduates received BASW degrees

644

received MSW degrees

7

earned a Ph.D

18

graduates were awarded their DSW degrees

RUTGERS UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK RANKED THIRD IN TOP TEN “BEST OF” LIST BY *USA TODAY COLLEGE*



IN THE RANKING by *USA Today College* focused on social work, the undergraduate major in social work at Rutgers School of Social Work earned the third-highest “best of” ranking, in line with majors at U.C. Berkeley and N.Y.U. Rankings were based on student outcomes, student-to-faculty ratios, high graduation rates, and low student loan default rates.

According to the story by *USA Today College*, the social work major at Rutgers received this ranking because the program has “very high standards, requiring students to maintain a 3.0 GPA.” The major was also chosen because of the core classes students must take in social welfare, alongside professional skills to make them effective communicators with individuals, families, and groups.

DuWayne Battle, director of the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BASW) program, believes this ranking reflects the dedication and commitment of the administrative team, the academic excellence of the students, the high quality of the classroom instruction, as well as the focused core goals created to fully prepare students for graduate school and professional practice in a variety of agency and community settings. “Our program is competitive, and we graduate some of the best students in the country,” says Battle. “Though we tend not to focus on rankings per se, it is gratifying to be recognized in this way.”

“Much of our success is based on the dedicated and engaged faculty; they attract excellent students,” says **Dean Cathryn Potter**. “The quality of real-world instruction is exceptional.”

To read the full announcement, visit college.usatoday.com/2016/08/05/top-social-work-colleges/.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: LUCIA DELAROCA '18, A VOICE FOR

LUCIA DELAROCA '18 entered foster care at the age of nine. Over the next several years, she was shuffled among numerous group homes, and only infrequently in contact with her mom. Her struggles to stay positive despite feeling torn from her family have drawn her to pursue a degree in social work, and so she began her BASW this fall. She is both an active and engaged student and citizen, a frequent volunteer, a political activist (having worked on the Bernie Sanders campaign), a speaker for the Institute for Families, and an advocate for those who do not have a voice.



THOSE WHO CANNOT SPEAK

WHAT DREW YOU TO THIS FIELD?

The need for justice and treatment. I was very hurt and angry for aging out of foster care. I had always thought I would go back to live with my parents and siblings, but that didn't happen. When I was taken away, my family did not have access to the support and advocacy they needed. That has changed over the last several years, and parents are now getting legal counsel and representation. In my work, I am able to bring my clients to their court case and the children are now given a law guardian, while the parent is given legal representation.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT FOR SOCIAL WORKERS TO REMEMBER WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE?

The thing nobody wants to acknowledge is that when you're in foster care, waking up without your father and your mother is really depressing. Your childhood is full of sadness, disappointments, pain, and loss. The children need to express these

emotions and work with an adult to address the pain they feel. They need a hug from caring and sweet adults. I had this. As a worker, you're kind of discouraged from giving hugs. In my training, the boundary education is so important, but at the same time, the fear is paralyzing and can remove the humanity of the situations.

The other thing to remember is that as a kid, I wanted to say to the adults around me, *Please, stop judging my mom. She's a great person who needs help right now from her family or community and she is worth it.* She died four years ago; an injured, beautiful lioness.

I couldn't speak up about what I needed, so now, I want to be the person who does that for children and encourages them to find their voices.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR WORK OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM.

I'm an adjunct member of a treatment team and a community outreach coordinator. I help youth learn or practice new skills in order to meet their treatment goals and let them know that I, as a public servant, want to hear and will listen to their input. It's pretty common for them to have low confidence, so I work to improve their self-esteem, and introduce them to different outlets, like expressing themselves in music or meeting their local legislators and elected leaders to inquire or inform about what's on their minds. This empowers them. Jane Addams, one of my heroes, was a genius for providing civic education opportunities to her clients. It is one thing to say "you are valuable" to a client, it is another thing to prove it. "One person, one vote" means we *are* all equally important.

WHAT DO YOU THINK GAVE YOU THE STRENGTH TO SURVIVE AND THRIVE?

The best group home I was in felt like a family. We knew about each other's struggles, and we knew about each other's treatment goals, so we identified with and supported one another. Also, people shared stories with me about bravery and triumph—knowing that others could make a big change helped me to see that, even though I was wounded, there was hope for healing. In my discouragement, I was met with mentors who helped keep me alive.

My first social work course blew my mind and set me on fire. I thought, *You mean to tell me that I'm not only given permission to engage politically for my clients, but that I ethically should? And I could make amazing things happen?* That so many of the social justice movements happened with the help of social workers? Education transformed me.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP?

We have to address the economic factors and injustices that keep people trapped in poverty and all that comes with it. Typically, poor people don't speak up or vote. I want to change that. A social worker has several things that she can do. Advocate. Educate. Work to heal and soothe the anger foster kids may feel. I understand why they are angry, and I don't want to punish them, I want to address what they're so angry about and make it better. ■



NEW APP ALLOWS USERS TO POST PHOTOS OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL PRACTICES IN THEIR COMMUNITY

A GAME OF BEER PONG placed beside Candy Land in the toy section of a local drug store; a machine-gun shaped bottle of liquor; a security officer standing next to a prescription drug drop box. These are a few examples of the dozens of photos taken by local community members using a new mobile app called “Be The One” that prevention specialists hope will help paint a picture of the conditions that protect a community or put it at risk for substance abuse.

“The photos assist with data collection that helps to identify trends and give researchers a more accurate understanding of where abuse exists among young users,” says Kristen Gilmore Powell, principal investigator on the project. “It’s a synergy between research and practice.” Powell and N. Andrew Peterson have been working with a team to integrate research and environmental prevention practices for more than ten years.

Developed by researchers at the School of Social Work and prevention specialists at the New Jersey Prevention Network (NJPN), the mobile app is part of a larger federal prevention effort known as Partnerships for Success. Together, they work to develop local solutions to addiction issues by using community collaboration, research and data collection, and prevention methods.

“Be The One” app incorporates many of the central goals of this initiative. On one level, the app asks users to “Be The One” to share their views, literally, by snapping photos of anything related to drug or alcohol use in their community—positive or negative. Users may search for images by county and upload photos anonymously. In turn, these pictures are analyzed by local coalition members and the Rutgers/NJPN research team. From the community images, coalitions dedicated to prevention of abuse are able to assess where their efforts are working and identify target areas where environmental strategies are needed.

In addition to photography, the app offers users other means to aid in prevention efforts:

- **Be the One to Check** provides a brief assessment quiz to help users gauge whether they or someone they care about is at risk for a drug and/or alcohol problem.
- **Be the One to Help** explains New Jersey’s Overdose Prevention Act, a lifeline legislation law that protects those who report drug or alcohol-related problems from prosecution, in hopes of encouraging users to report incidents of overdose or abuse.
- **Be the One to Ask** features several resources — including a platform to ask questions and receive answers related to substance abuse and contact information to encourage users to join (**Be the One to Join**) a local substance abuse prevention coalition.

The hope of developers is that all of the components of the app will inspire users to Be The One to make a positive difference in their communities.

The app will be promoted to the public starting this fall and is available now as a free download through the Apple Store and Google Play.

If you are interested in learning more about Be The One or connecting with the regional prevention coalition in your area, contact School of Social Work Project Coordinator Clare Neary at cneary@ssw.rutgers.edu.

—AIMEE LABRIE



MOST INTERNET GAMBLERS IN NJ ARE MEN, BUT MORE HIGH ROLLERS ARE WOMEN



ONLINE GAMBLING in New Jersey appears to be a young man's game, according to a report released this week by the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement. The study, conducted by the Center for Gambling Studies at the School of Social Work, reported on a full year of data from online gambling sites. Of more than 79,000 players who wagered online, nearly 77% were men.

"Unlike casinos, which attract older players, the average online gambler is a young man, between the ages of 25 and 34," said Professor Lia Nower, who directs the Center and led the study. "Less than one percent of gamblers were 65 or older and only 11% were 55 to 64."

The study reported that the average player also gambles occasionally on one or two sites. But 10% of the players gambled nearly every day, placing an average of 440 bets per day on multiple sites and spending big. More than half of those players

were women. "We definitely want to know more about this group," Nower said. "They gambled on an average of three different casino sites, some up to six, and spent an average of a half-million dollars in a year. We were surprised that 53% were women."

Another key finding in the report was that the responsible gambling features required by the Division appear to have a positive effect on those who choose to use them. Each site in New Jersey is required to provide gamblers with the ability to limit deposits, losses and time spent gambling, to "cool off" for a minimum of 72 hours, and to self-exclude from gaming websites. The study found that about 14% of gamblers chose to use one or more of the features.

"The good news is that players who set limits for themselves spent less than those who didn't use the features," Nower said. "Next to self-excluding, setting deposit limits was the most popular feature followed by limiting

the amount of time spent gambling."

Men tended to choose a combination of features, while women were more likely to self-exclude, she added. The average gambler who self-excluded, according to the study, bet nearly \$45,000 in one year, although one player bet over \$11.5 million.

These findings seem to suggest that limit-setting tools encourage responsible play. "The key to improving their effectiveness is to make sure the features are visible and accessible, to provide education on how to use the features, and to encourage Players to opt-in at sign-up when they can make objective choices about their play," she said.

The full Internet gaming report is available on the Division's website at nj.gov/oag/ge/2016-news/2016ResponsibleGaming-InternetGamingReport.pdf.

FACTSHEETS ON ISSUES OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE

THE CENTER ON VIOLENCE Against Women and Children, in collaboration with the NJ Domestic Violence Fatality and Near Fatality Review Board, have compiled teen dating violence factsheets for educators and community members focused on creating awareness around teen violence as it relates to physical and sexual assault.

Educators are often in the position to first notice Teen Dating Violence (TDV). Teachers, staff, and administrators may be one of the first individuals to react to a survivor, perpetrator, or friend of a survivor disclosing experiences of TDV. This initial response a survivor receives can have a tremendous impact on his or her healing and recovery. Responding in a supportive and empowering way is critical.

General guidelines:

- Listen to what the student, family member, or friend is saying without interrupting.
- Do not talk to the victim and perpetrator together.
- Be aware of your body language and respect the student's right to privacy and personal space.
- Help the student become informed of available resources.
- Maintain confidentiality while following school protocol on reporting and making sure the student is aware of this.

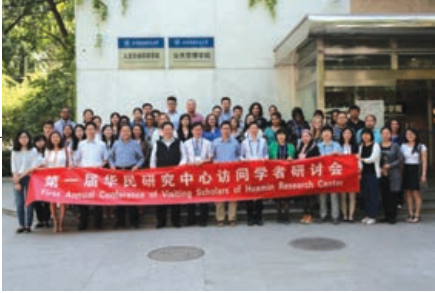
Review a full range of factsheets related to this issue on the website at socialwork.rutgers.edu/centers/center-violence-against-women-and-children/research-and-evaluation/teen-dating-violence-factsheets. ■

10*in*10

TEN THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE INTENSIVE WEEKEND PROGRAM

By: Professor Ericka Deglau

- 1 Started in 2006 under former School of Social Work Dean, Richard L. Edwards, Ph.D., and directed by Ericka Deglau, Ph.D.
- 2 Hybrid classes that meet one weekend a month make it possible for human services employees to pursue their MSW while continuing full-time employment.
- 3 Field work makes up 8 to 10 hours of curriculum each week.
- 4 Program is clinically focused and supplemented with courses that prepare experienced students for leadership roles.
- 5 Classes are led by over 50 faculty and part-time lecturers who are experienced practitioners and leaders in their respective fields.
- 6 Initially funded by New Jersey for public child welfare employees during a period of intense reform, the program shares its 10th anniversary with the NJ Department of Children and Families, which was established just weeks before the start of the program's first class.
- 7 Of the initial 152 public child welfare employees who graduated from the Public Child Welfare Intensive Weekend program, 90% remain in public child welfare service.
- 8 Opened its doors in 2010 to child welfare workers who are working in human services environments.
- 9 More than 50% of students come from behavioral health fields; 25% are employed in public child welfare.
- 10 Over 200 students are now working toward their MSW in four different locations throughout New Jersey and nearly 400 have graduated.



FIRST VISITING SCHOLAR CONFERENCE FOR HUAMIN RESEARCH CENTER

By: Joanna Zbozien '17

ON MAY 29, 2016, the Huamin Research Center of Rutgers University teamed up with the School of Public Policy and Management at Beihang University to co-host the first-ever conference of Visiting Scholars of The Huamin Research Center in Beijing, China. The purpose of this conference was to bring together alumni and scholars to talk about their new findings in their research as well as to reconnect.

Dr. Chien-Chung Huang, director of the Center, was excited to be part of this event. The conference provided a venue for the visiting scholars to exchange research ideas and to extend the research network that the Center has developed. Over the last five years, the Huamin Research Center has hosted 21 visiting scholars from top universities in China, and 16 of them participated in the conference along with many alumni. The next conference will take place in May 2017 in Beijing.

Di Sun '15, a Rutgers alumnus of the MSW program and past intern for the Center, felt that the conference was a "great opportunity to communicate with other alumni and scholars and to learn from them about nonprofit trends in both China and the U.S."

The Huamin Research Center focuses on research and exchange that promotes professional development of nonprofit organizations and strengthens individual, family, and community well-being, specifically in China. They collaborate with Chinese and American universities to bring together top scholars so that they can continue their research and share findings with one another. For more information about how to become involved with the Center, please contact Dr. Chien-Chung Huang at huangc@ssw.rutgers.edu.



CENTER FOR PREVENTION SCIENCE TO OPEN

By: Joanna Zbozien '17

in public policy and other environmental conditions that cause social and health disparities," says **Kristen Gilmore Powell**, an assistant research professor who will serve as associate director of the new center. Although much of the program's work has focused on substance abuse prevention, research in other areas of prevention will be conducted and may include community organizing, substance abuse prevention, health disparities, program evaluation, and empowerment theory and measurement.

In addition to their currently funded research projects totaling more than \$4.3 million, two new research projects have already been accepted and granted funding by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. These two projects, which will total \$750,000 over five years, are studies of New Jersey's Opioid Overdose Prevention Network: Effects of an Early Warning and Rapid Response System, and NJAssessRX: An Interagency Sharing of the State's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.

The center will work toward a better way of preventing and handling not only substance abuse, but social and community problems in general. ■

EIGHTEEN YEARS AGO, Professor **N. Andrew Peterson** came to Rutgers School of Social Work and has worked tirelessly to develop a program of research focused on empowerment-based efforts to prevent conditions that cause social and health disparities. He now has the go-ahead to develop a center devoted to these concerns.

The Center for Prevention Science will open its doors to new opportunities and growth. "Our mission is to develop and disseminate knowledge through research that builds the capacity of community-based organizations to create changes

IN THE NEWS

OUR FACULTY ARE NATIONAL EXPERTS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS. HERE ARE JUST A FEW SAMPLINGS OF THEIR ARTICLES OR QUOTES IN THE NEWS OVER THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS.

“LGBT immigrants often faced persecution in homeland: study”

Professor Edward Alessi

Philly.com, January 5, 2016

www.philly.com/philly/health/topics/HealthDay706298_20160105_LGBT_Immigrants_Often_Faced_Persecution_in_Homeland_Study.html

“Our mental health system must be fixed - even if it doesn't stop mass shootings”

Professor Beth Angell

The Guardian, May 19, 2016

www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/may/19/mental-health-system-problems-solutions-mass-shootings

“The connections between spanking and aggression”

Professor Michael MacKenzie

The New York Times, June 27, 2016

well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/06/27/the-connections-between-spanking-and-aggression/

“Rutgers tackles ‘rape culture’ — shift in mindset, early education required”

Professor Sarah McMahon

mycentralnewjersey.com, June 28, 2016

www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/local/outreach/caring-communities/2016/06/28/rutgers-tackles-rape-culture---shift-mindset-early-education-required/86479396/

“Can you be male, female, neither, or both? Pushing the boundaries of gender ID”

Professor Michael LaSala

NJ.com, July 6, 2016

www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2016/07/can_you_be_male_female_neither_or_both_pushing_the.html

“After NJ murder-suicide: A look at stopping domestic violence early on”

Professor Judy Postmus

NJ.101.5, July 7, 2016

nj1015.com/after-nj-murder-suicide-a-look-at-stopping-domestic-violence-before-the-worst-happens/?trackback=tsmclip

“Most Internet gamblers in New Jersey are men, but more high rollers are women, study finds”

Professor Lia Nower

Newswise.com, September 1, 2016

www.newswise.com/articles/most-internet-gamblers-in-nj-are-men-but-more-high-rollers-are-women-study-finds

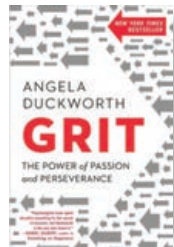
We asked our faculty and staff to send us their reading list for the winter. Here are a few of their suggestions.



Freedom in the Making of Western Culture

by Dr. Orlando Patterson
Recommended by Charles Chear, Assistant Director of Student Affairs/Instructor

Why he likes it: Written by a Jamaican-American historical sociologist and professor at Harvard University, the book explores the basic question of “what is freedom?” and how it has conceptually and politically developed from a historical-sociological perspective. It’s one of the few books in recent time to thoroughly explore the essential idea of freedom. Very relevant considering our current sociopolitical issues, tensions and conflicts: national security, religion and plurality, immigration, and globalization.



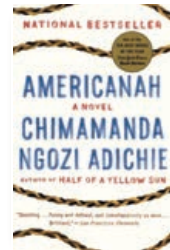
Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance

by Angela Duckworth
Recommended by Laura DiMarcantonio, Director of Admissions

Why she likes it: The book appealed to me because of the work we do in admissions. Test scores and grades are often the factors we use to evaluate potential, but I’m fascinated with anything that can predict how successful a person will be. The book has measurement tools for “grit” and discusses studies that have been done with the admissions evaluation process at West Point and with top finishers in the National Spelling Bee. It includes suggestions for how educators and parents can foster grit in young people and makes

you think about your own level of “grittiness” and how that may have developed. It’s a really interesting and positive perspective on how anyone can be successful regardless of talent or intelligence.

Americanah



by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Recommended by Emily Greenfield, Associate Professor

Why she likes it: This work of fiction is the story of two young people who meet in high school in Nigeria. One of them later immigrates to the U.S. for college, and the other immigrates to the U.K. in search of work. The book offers insightful commentary on so many social issues – race, immigration, pan-Africanism, even academia – all through deeply developed characters and their rich interpersonal relationships.



The Woman Behind the New Deal: The Life of Frances Perkins, FDR'S Secretary of Labor and His Moral Conscience

by Kristin Downey
Recommended by Emily Bosk, Assistant Professor

Why she likes it: It's a wonderful social history of the roots of social security, unemployment insurance, and the minimum wage, making it essential reading for social workers.

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SPOTLIGHT ON

Professor Sarah McMahon



PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BYRON

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his last few years have been career-changing for **Associate Professor Sarah McMahon**. In June 2016, after working at the School of Social Work since 2005, she received tenure. In 2014, she was asked to collaborate with the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault through the testing of a campus climate survey tool. That research led her and her team to the White House and to national prominence as researchers. She was also appointed by the governor of New Jersey to serve on the state's Task Force to Address Campus Sexual Violence and serves on the National Sexual Violence Resource Center Advisory Board. In addition, McMahon is chair of the NJ Domestic Violence Fatality and Near Fatality Review Board, teaches graduate classes at the SSW, and commutes to Rutgers from Cranford, where she lives with her husband Matt, 13-year-old son Nate, and 11-year-old daughter Grace. Because her areas of research and practice focus on intense issues of sexual and domestic violence, McMahon appreciates the importance of balancing the roles of being a full-time professor, researcher, writer, partner, and parent. One way she does this is by keeping reminders of the positive aspects of her life within her line of vision at work. She describes their significance in the captions below.

"Above and Beyond Award"

Collaborating with the community and using research in a way to impact practice has always been a priority to me. This award is important to me because it comes from the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance here at Rutgers, which provides critical intervention and prevention services to the community on issues of sexual violence, dating violence, stalking, bullying and other related topics. It is a privilege to partner with them on a number of projects and their recognition of my work is incredibly meaningful.

Popsicle Box

My son Nate made this Popsicle stick box for me many years ago. I have a number of my kids' arts-and-crafts projects around the office as a reminder of them and the need to try to live a balanced life that includes time outside the office with family and friends.

Bookmark

This engraved bookmark was a gift from the students in one of my policy classes. It reads "Alone we can do so little: Together we can do so much." It meant a lot to me to receive this gift because I absolutely love to teach and believe deeply in the potential of our students to go out and create change in the world. This serves as a reminder of my students and how fortunate I am to work with them.

Ceramic Heart

My colleague and friend **Dr. Judy Postmus** gave this ceramic heart to me. I love it because the tree has been the symbol we've used for the Center on Violence Against Women and Children here at the School. We have a number of "branches" covering different areas of work, we believe in planting seeds and watching what grows, and we ourselves continue to evolve. I love my job. The Center is incredibly important and meaningful to me, and I am so lucky to be able to work with such an awesome team.

White House

The issue of campus sexual violence is one that I have been studying for a long time and it has recently become more of a national priority, due largely to the efforts of President Obama's administration. I was fortunate to partner with the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault to test a campus climate survey tool, and went with my colleagues to present our results to the White House advisor on Violence Against Women, who is also an advisor for Vice President Joe Biden. In addition, it has been incredibly rewarding to see the efforts made by the University to remain a leader in the way they respond to and work to prevent sexual violence. ■



UNDERSTANDING GENDER

By: Aimee LaBrie

O

range is the New Black introduced viewers to Sophia Buset, a trans woman who is incarcerated at Litchfield Penitentiary. The reality show *My Name is Jazz* explores the complexity of a transgender teen and her family's support of her identity. Caitlyn Jenner's transformation from male Olympian to female celebrity has gained widespread international attention as has Chaz Bono's physical and social transition to his true male identity.

Though there seems to be a better understanding in popular culture about transgender lives, on issues that truly impact individuals — access to health care coverage to support their identities, income equality, and

basic human rights—much work remains to be done. On the public stage, debates continue to rage about North Carolina's law mandating that individuals must use the bathrooms corresponding to their birth certificate rather than their gender identity. Proceedings challenging that law have recently been delayed from a November trial date until next May.

At the School of Social Work, the faculty and staff remain dedicated both to supporting students who may be struggling with gender identity issues and educating future social workers to better understand transgender clients and their families.



TRANS GENDER IDENTITY BIAS

Professor Edward Alessi, LCSW, Ph.D., teaches “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Issues in Contemporary Society”, an elective course for social work students. His research focuses on understanding of stress and trauma among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations and enhancing clinical practice with LGBT and other marginalized populations. Students respond to him; Alessi has received the Outstanding Professor of the Year Award four years in a row and the Innovative and Creative Teaching Award in 2012.

Alessi explains that learning about transgender issues is critical for providing trans-affirmative social work practice: “We discuss relevant terminology, first by making it clear that meaning fluctuates, so students have to respect the language their clients use. Words evolve and some people might not like the term ‘gender-nonconforming;’ others might not identify as transgender and identify as ‘transsexual.’ We first need to examine our own biases, and also move beyond the idea that gender is binary.”

Throughout the semester, Alessi brings in speakers who discuss social policy, clinical issues, history related to LGBT populations, and their own experiences. Lawyer Jillian Weiss Ramapo speaks both about her advocacy work with the transgender community and her personal story of finding and living in congruence with her core identity.

As Alessi points out, the need to understand the transgender experience remains tantamount. “Society may be more open to the LGBT community, as a whole, and less



The transgender pride flag was created in 1999 by Monica Helms, an openly transgender American woman, and was first flown at a Phoenix, Arizona LGBT pride celebration in 2000.

comfortable with someone who wants to transition. Transphobia and discrimination even occur within the gay and lesbian community. Transgender individuals can internalize these negative messages, which contributes to overall feelings of being marginalized.”

At the same time, he does see attitudes changing. “We’re evolving on issues related to gender. Adolescents, for example, are embracing terms that don’t require them to identify as male or female. We have to remain open, and keep the conversations alive inside our classrooms and our practices.”

For one Rutgers alumna, this struggle to understand her true gender identity began at an early age and continued throughout her life. It was only after starting her MSW program at the School that she was she able to find her way.

A life-changing transition

In 2009, **Alison Beaton** enrolled in the MSW program as Alan. She had been in the field of social work as a paraprofessional for 25 years, presenting herself as one person to the outside world while feeling another way internally. “Over the course of my life, there were many times when, in theory, I wanted to address my gender, but: (a) I didn’t know how, and (b) I was afraid to upset the people around me.”

In her first semester at Rutgers, she began to see that there were other people who struggled as she did, and that the School had a supportive community willing to help her become the person she knew herself to be. “The decision was so long coming, and the sense of internal pressure eventually just started to outweigh my concerns. I had to do

this for myself. I had been down the road of trying to make my life as a male work, and it just never did.”

Alison spoke first with Professor **Michael LaSala**, a School of Social Work faculty member, researcher and clinician who specializes in work with the LGBT community and founder and faculty advisor to the student group SWAGGER (Social Workers Advocating for GLBT and Gender Non-Normative Equal Rights). Alison

With a population of students who will go on to become educators, counselors, and social workers working with transgender individuals and their loved ones, it remains key that the core values of the social work profession remain represented.

recalled: “I talked to him a little bit about the concerns I had about transitioning. He had helped other students through the process, and so he put a lot of my anxiety to rest, because I saw that I wasn’t going to be breaking new ground.” The next step was to meet with Associate Dean for Student Affairs **Arlene Hunter** to see what it would be like to go from a student who started classes as a male to begin being addressed by the feminine and accepted as a woman.

A few emails and conversations with faculty later, Alison was preparing to start the spring semester. The month after she graduated from Rutgers, Alison came out at as a woman at work. She now lives as female in her personal and professional life, though some of her family members do not know about this change.

From a very early age, Alison knew that her birth gender didn’t feel right. “I grew up in the 70s and back then, being gay was still a dirty word. No one knew anything about gender identity, and I certainly had no clue

about what that was. One of the things that helped was watching *Star Trek*. I found the character of Dr. Spock very appealing—he was cold, logical, and asexual. I tried to be the same; to alter what was going on in my head so that it matched my gender. Over time, I learned that it was not my brain that was wrong, it was my anatomy.”

“Gender identity comes from what’s between your ears and not what’s between your legs. Being transgender is something you are born with. This life is not for the faint of heart (or wallet, for that matter). We don’t come to the terms with our identity lightly,” Beaton explains. “I don’t need anyone’s approval, but I do want their respect. Don’t judge me based on what little bit of information you see with your eyes and hear with your ears.”

Looking forward

With a population of students who will go on to become educators, counselors, and social workers working with transgender individuals and their loved ones, it remains key that the core values of the social work profession remain represented.

LaSala is the acting director of the doctorate in social work program and his research interests focus on the couple and family relationships of gay men. In conjunction with SWAGGER, he was also instrumental in bringing in lecturers who can speak about the physiological aspects of transgender identity, sponsoring a conference this past April. In his clinical practice, he leads a group for parents of trans youth and thus he is cognizant of the level of denial and acceptance among others. “As a clinician, I have to make sure there’s room for all types of parents — people who are still struggling and grieving, others who are super supportive of their children and ready to buy them breast binders (for transgender males). I remind the group of these disparities and put the more experienced, well-adjusted parents in the position of mentoring,” he explains. “Parents need to be reminded that wherever they are in the journey is fine and it is understandable that they would be having a difficult reaction. They need to know that their child can still be happy and healthy and find love and success. It might be harder for them, but harder is not always a bad thing.”

He acknowledges the remaining challenges. “We have made a great deal of progress, which has created fertile ground for transgender people to be recognized and acknowledged and to assert their needs. As we start to recognize more flexibility around gender roles, that’s freed people up. However, just because it’s part

of our national conversation does not mean transphobia is over.”

Both LaSala and Alessi have a few words of guidance for educators and therapists:

Be cognizant of the challenges. As social workers, practitioners need to be able to assess and address the various stressors on this oppressed, vulnerable population as well as

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the resources available to assist them in living their preferred gender identity, whether that be fully transgender or gender queer/gender fluid, meaning some combination of male and female. We need to pay special attention to those who don’t have resources or who may be part of other oppressed groups. One of the biggest dangers, especially for young trans people, is that they may not have access to health care, and so they may resort to black market hormones or silicone which are unsafe. They are also more likely to be victims of crimes, especially if they are coming from a less affluent sphere or are persons of color. Transgender individuals overall have an elevated risk for depression, anxiety, and suicidal behavior, so carefully assess for these issues.

Use the right language. Ask the transgender person how they identify, what pronouns they use, and what their preferred name is. At the same time...

Allow for mistakes. If you mix up the pronouns, apologize and move on. That’s how you show respect, but be sure not to “over” apologize and leave the client feeling as if they have to take care of you.

Create a supportive clinical space. Make sure that the paperwork in your agency leaves room for the different ways people might identify when they’re filling out a form. Make sure your offices have magazines that celebrate trans people. It’s not just about acceptance and not discriminating, it’s also about being affirmative and celebrating the diversity of the trans community.

Do not overly focus on whether or not they’ve had reassignment surgery or who they’re sleeping with. Do you ask your other clients about their sexual organs? Probably not, so think carefully before asking your trans clients about theirs. Not all gender minority people identify as transgender and not all take hormones or pursue surgery. Remember, gender is not defined by what’s between your legs, but rather what’s in your heart and your mind. Additionally, being transgender is not connected to being gay or lesbian, so do not assume you know your transgender client’s sexual orientation. An individual can be a born male, identify as female, and be attracted to women. While clients may want to talk about these aspects of their identity, always prioritize their own concerns as you would any other client and be open to discussing practical matters such as how to manage their jobs, their families and how to recognize and battle against discrimination.

Familiarize yourself with available resources. Familiarize yourself with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health’s standards of care online (WPATH SOC’s). Sign up for continuing education training, either at the School of Social Work or at the many conferences and workshops offered in New Jersey, New York, and nationally. Consult with other clinicians who are experienced in this area. Read, pay attention to the media, and, most of all, keep an open heart and mind. ■

We are saddened to report that Alison Beaton unexpectedly passed away on October 17, 2016. She will be mourned by her family, her friends, her colleagues, and the Rutgers community. Her courage in sharing her story with us make her an inspiration. Gifts to support a memorial fund in her name can be sent to Erin Capone, School of Social Work, 536 George Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.



A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK PUTS ITS COMMITMENT TO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT INTO PRACTICE WITH ELECTION YEAR INITIATIVES AIMED AT GETTING OUT THE VOTE.

By: **Melissa Kvidahl**

A

According to data from the US Census Bureau (1), just 38 percent of Americans ages 18 to 24 showed up to the polls for the last presidential election in 2012. Further, the data shows a downward trend when it comes to civic engagement by young people – half of this age group voted in the 1964 presidential election, and numbers have been declining ever since.

An optimistic reading of this data reveals a significant opportunity for young people to increase their civic engagement, especially when compared to the much more impressive turnout posted by other age groups (about 50 percent of voters ages

25 to 44 voted in the 2012 election, as did about 70 percent of those over age 65).

At the Rutgers School of Social Work, this opportunity isn't going unnoticed. On the contrary, school leadership has taken unprecedented action during this election year, leading up to the primary and general elections, as it pertains to registering and encouraging its students to vote. "One arm of social work is focused on public policy in general and social welfare policy in specific. As a result, our faculty, students, and the profession as a whole are interested in the policy implications of elections," says **Dean Cathryn Potter**. "Additionally, good citizenship is a significant focus of our program and profession. So, our emphasis is on what every citizen has a right to do, which is to vote, and we want to encourage our students to adopt that mindset in all aspects of their lives."

Get Involved

Walking the walk is one thing. But, at the School of Social Work, it's just as important to leave behind a pathway so others can follow. The good news is, when it comes to turning out the vote, there are a lot of ways that individuals can make an impact in their communities, says **Dawn Clarke '68**, vice president of the League of Women Voters with 50 years of social work experience (and a Rutgers School of Social Work grad).

Here are her tips for becoming a more engaged voter, and how to encourage education and engagement in your own community, whether you're a social worker or a social justice ally.

Vote. It may seem obvious, but the first step in promoting voting is showing up yourself to every single election. And don't forget to keep your registration current—every time you move, even if it's across town, you need to update your voter registration.

Vote locally. This deserves a callout, Clarke says, since many people will vote in presidential elections but not local elections, where school board and city council members can win by as small a margin as a handful of votes. "We hear all the time that people think their votes don't count," she says. "But, particularly in local elections, every vote really counts."

Educate on local issues. Presidential elections and, to a lesser extent, congressional and mayoral elections, all receive a fair share of press. But what about the local ballot measures that are decided by voters? "The media is clearly falling away in its coverage of local issues, so it's falling to social media to pick up the slack," Clarke says, adding that following grassroots organizations on Twitter is a great way to stay informed. "Unless individuals get the message out themselves, it may not get done."

Empower underserved communities. "I recently ran a voter registration event at senior citizen housing in Newark," says Clarke. "And I did register voters, but what I was really doing was raising awareness among this disenfranchised group." She recommends volunteering at wellness fairs or partnering with local organizations that have an ear to the ground in underserved communities to make an impact, stressing that it "must be nonpartisan."

Start at home. Even if you're not a social worker by trade, you can live the mission of empowerment by enfranchising your own community. Bring some voter registration forms to your neighborhood's next block party, or keep a few in your car to hand out to friends — or contact an organization like the League of Women Voters, which specializes in turning out the vote, to organize a formal registration event. Take a selfie after you vote and share it on social media, to remind friends and family to do the same. "Make sure your family and friends know that you consider voting to be vital," Clarke says. "Attend debates, keep yourself informed, and make your voice count."

Reference:

1. File, Thom. 2013. "Young-Adult Voting: An Analysis of Presidential Elections, 1964–2012." *Current Population Survey Reports*, P20- 572. U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC. (<https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p20-573.pdf>)

And, this year, a number of practical measures were put in place to facilitate just that. The outcome is not only increased voter registration among students, but also a ripple effect of empowerment that reaches into students' families and communities.

Engagement on the Ground

The first step was teaming up with The Andrew Goodman Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works with America's colleges and universities to provide resources, visibility, and mentoring to students interested in engaging their peers in voting, public policy, and social justice issues.

According to **Erin Capone '05**, director of development in the School of Social Work's Office of Development and Alumni Relations, the foundation was a natural fit. "There was an undeniable parallel between their mission and the fundamental mission of social work, which has a lot to do with empowerment and engaging people to be their own best advocate," she says. "Social workers have a long history of effecting social change through policy. But the first step is making sure people are aware of the policy and are engaged citizens."

That, of course, begins with voting. So the School of Social Work, together with The Andrew Goodman Foundation, hosted a multi-front voter drive at the 2016 graduation ceremony. The Andrew Goodman Foundation also hosted a table at the event to register additional voters, and, in her remarks, the Dean reminded students to register. The result was nearly 100 voters registered, just one day ahead of New Jersey's presidential primary registration deadline. On the heels of this success, the School offered voter registration at student orientation in September.

Capone expected to register students at the graduation day voter drive. What she didn't expect was a powerful side effect: the enthusiasm displayed by students' families, who visited the foundation's table in large numbers to learn more and register themselves. For Capone, it demonstrated the undeniable ripple effect that takes place when students are informed, encouraged, and empowered to vote. "Activism is a family affair," she says. "Seeing someone you love graduate with a social work degree and learning about the importance of voter registration—that's the power of education. The families of social workers

then go out into the community and spread the message to others."

Energized by the positive outcomes of its voter drives, the school took further measures to promote increased voter turnout among its students, led in part by **Associate Professor Lenna Nepomnyaschy**, who has been instrumental in implementing a number of initiatives during this important election year. Opportunities for education and involvement included on-campus presidential debate viewing parties and phone bank events, in addition to simply having students be visible on campus on Election Day, asking their fellow students if they have visited the polls. Like many institutions dedicated to social justice issues, the School uses its influences and resources to promote voting.

In Capone's opinion, "this is truly innovative," since the School of Social Work is one of just a few institutions that uses its influence and resources to promote voting. And this is important since, according to the Campus Vote Project, a nonprofit organization focused on breaking down barriers to student voting, college students face a spectrum of unique challenges when it comes to registering and voting while enrolled in university, including, but not limited to, a lack of information regarding registration rules and deadlines, as well as confusion regarding where and how they can vote as a residential student living on campus.

And this is just the beginning. For Nepomnyaschy, the ultimate goal is to leverage the enthusiasm and momentum of this election year to produce a more politically active student body going forward, which has the power to further effect change in the various communities it calls home. "We have three campuses and a higher population of nontraditional students with jobs and families, so it's been harder historically to organize in this way," she says. "But one of our goals is to get some self-sustaining student activism going, because one of the key pieces of the social work mission and ethics is to be involved and to advocate for social change." ■

Join VAWC-CP's First Alumni Committee

This spring, the Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) will celebrate its 10th anniversary. Founded in 2007, one of VAWC's signature programs is the Certificate in Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC-CP) for MSW students. Since the program's inception, over 370 students have graduated.

As VAWC looks to grow the community for students and alumni, they are asking all VAWC-CP alumni to consider joining the VAWC-CP Alumni Committee. Your feedback in this inaugural committee will help shape how we reach out to your colleagues. As a working professional, you can share valuable insight and experiences and help improve

the program for current and prospective students. Let's build the VAWC community in New Jersey and nationwide. To get involved, email vawcmsw@ssw.rutgers.edu.

Alumna receives recognition from the Ms. Foundation



Proud of our own **Mary Ignatius BSW '12** (center), who was honored with the Woman of Vision Award in 2016 by the Ms. Foundation. She is pictured here at the 2016 Gloria Awards Gala & After Party with Clarissa Doutherd (left) and Gloria Steinem (right) at The Pierre in New York City. Ignatius works as the statewide organizer of Parent Voices, a parent-led grassroots organization fighting to make quality child care accessible and affordable for all families.

Rhonda Brown '12 Offers Advice

In foster care from the time she was 14, Rhonda Brown has moved above and beyond her challenging beginnings to become the voice for those in need. Brown has been working since she was 16 and is now an employee of the New Jersey Department of Social Services working in the capacity of family service specialist, where she has been for the last 10 years. In her current position, she works diligently, traveling across the state to find forever families for youth who are legally free and waiting to be adopted. Brown has also worked as a behavioral assistant, residential and domestic violence counselor, and preventive services case manager. She is currently studying for her license and her dream is to become a school social worker. She is an advocate, a mentor, a parent, and a mediator for those who need a voice. She offers her five professional tips for young alumni in the field of social work.

1. Take care of yourself.

After my graduation ceremony, I went with my family and friends to Houlihan's and then, still wearing my cap and gown, ran off to work as an overnight counselor at a group home in Clifton, New Jersey. In retrospect, I should have allowed myself to enjoy the moment. On that day, I missed the opportunity to be celebrated entirely. I was in such a routine with work that I didn't think about taking care of myself. We work in a field where we are care givers and the needs of others are vast. However, it's just as important to value what you need.

2. Take risks.

I'm very passionate, because as a youth, I was in the same position my clients are. Recently, I met a woman who didn't have children and was thinking about becoming a foster mom. I had three siblings in need of a home, ages 4, 6 and 7. To make a long story short, for political



reasons, the case was put on hold and so were the kids. They thought they were getting a home, and it just wasn't happening. Their behavior started to deteriorate. Although I was apprehensive about overstepping the chain of command, I spoke up to say we needed to take action because not even my supervisor, after three weeks of waiting, had said a word.

This specific example, which is just one of many I could give, led me to realize that the system doesn't always work, especially if you sit back and wait. The unfortunate part is that the youth we serve suffer tremendously. My speaking up was a risk that was necessary in order to be their

3. Maintain your optimism.

Decide how you're going to look at your life. Challenges allow you to build your character. You will absolutely make mistakes. Learn from them and keep your head up. What you experience

will prepare you for what's ahead. Every day is a gift for us to learn from and an opportunity to grow. My internship with a domestic violence shelter, Shelter Our Sisters, is where I met women who were transitioning from their residence to another place where they would secure their own apartments. Some did not see their situations as hopeless; they started their job searches, sought child care, did the laundry, and reclaimed their self-esteem.

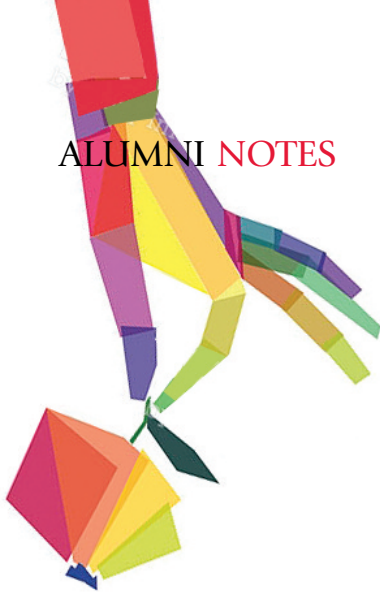
4. Become a professional mentor.

I mentored a freshman when I was a senior and she now works with the Department of Children and Families. I didn't have a mentor as a student, but I was connected to Associate Dean Hunter, Dr. McMahon, Dr. Findley, and Professor Scali. They were my informal mentors. Now, I mentor students because I want to pay it forward.

5. Stay connected with the School of Social Work.

Remember that the school is there for you beyond graduation. They can connect you with other professionals in the field, offer advice, and give support. I've found the faculty to be open to hearing my ideas. You have family and friends, but they can't necessarily relate to the difficult work we do while other faculty and alumni can.

ALUMNI NOTES



This Holiday, Take Part in the Giving Committee

Aging out of foster care is challenging for all youth, but it is particularly difficult during the holiday season as many young adults have no permanent family to rely on. Fortunately, alumni and friends can soften this harsh reality by giving either their time or their support (or both) through a program created by the Office of Youth Empowerment in the Institute for Families: **The Giving Committee**.

Last year, the School of Social Work's efforts allowed for almost 200 youth to feel cared for through a holiday gift. This year, the School of Social Work and the Office of Youth Empowerment are looking for volunteers to join the Giving Committee. Volunteers take part in a weekly conference call, and reach out to people in their communities (churches, local clubs, professional organizations, etc.) to collect in-kind donations.

No extra time to volunteer? You can send gift cards, gloves, toiletries, or other winter wear to **Maureen Braun Scalera** at 55 Commercial Avenue, Suite 303, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 or email her at mbscalera@ssw.rutgers.edu. Even a small gift can make a huge difference to someone who might otherwise receive nothing. ■

— Maureen Braun Scalera

CLASS NOTES



Susan Bash Van Vleet '75 teaches workshops to help women deal with personal blocks to moving forward in their private and professional lives. She has also just published two books, *Women Moving Forward: Over the Years* and *12 Years of the Women's Leadership Retreat Concepts*.

Katherine Heeg '96, a practicing therapist for nearly 20 years, has recently become trained and certified in EMDR, Comprehensive Resource Model. Visit her website at achieve-ourfullpotential.net/.

Susan Merkel '12 has been working to help pass bills in NJ, NY and PA that would give domestically born adoptees access to their original birth certificates. She was elected to the board of the American Adoption Congress (AAC) in August 2016 after successfully advocating for the NJ Birthright Act. AAC is a national organization that has supported members of the adoption constellation for 38 years. Members includes individuals, families, adoption professionals, and researchers, as well as organizations committed to adoption reform. ■



SEND US YOUR CLASS NOTES

We want to celebrate with you! If you have received an award or promotion, taken on a new job or interesting project, gotten married, or added a new member to the family, let us know. We would love to share your news with other alumni. Please include your class year and degree received.

**Name / Email /
Class Year and Degree / Note**

Send to Aimee LaBrie
at alabrie@ssw.rutgers.edu.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Exhibition: Rutgers through the Centuries: 250 Years of Treasures from the Archives

Thursday, November 12, 2015 through Wednesday, November 30, 2016

Alexander Library, 169 College Avenue, Gallery '50 and SC/UA Gallery

This historical exhibition features documents, photographs, and artifacts from the collections of Rutgers University Archives. Sponsored by Rutgers University Libraries. For more information, contact Matt Badessa at mbadessa@rulmail.rutgers.edu.

Note: This is one of many exhibitions running on campus throughout the winter. Visit the rutgers.alumni.edu website for more art-related events.

RUGIVINGDAY

Tuesday, November 29, 2016

Explore our proud history as a colonial college and our bright future as a comprehensive research institution. Whether you're a first time guest or a frequent visitor, we invite you to get reacquainted with our great university and have some fun along the way!

Audrie & Daisy film screening

Wednesday, November 30, 2016

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Rutgers Cinema, sponsored by VAWC
Livingston Campus, New Brunswick

Audrie & Daisy is an urgent real-life drama that examines the ripple effects on families, friends, schools and communities when two underage young women find that sexual assault crimes against them have been caught on camera. Register online at www.eventbrite.com/e/vawc-audrie-daisy-film-screening-tickets-27731759439.

Annual Winter Alumni Reception and Intensive Weekend 10 year Celebration

Thursday, December 8, 2016

6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Busch Campus, Rutgers Visitor Center
100 Sutphen Road, Piscataway, NJ

All School of Social Work alumni are invited to attend a special reception, featuring remarks by esteemed speakers. Attendees will enjoy free drinks, hors d'oeuvres, and tasty food stations while connecting with fellow graduates. RSVP by December 1 online at ssuwinteralumnireception2016.eventbrite.com or call 848-932-3900 to reserve your spot.

March is National Social Workers Month

Share your stories and photos with us by using the hash tag #RutgersSSW.

Events are subject to change. Check back to social-work.rutgers.edu/news-events/events for the most updated details and RSVP information.

2016 SUPPORTERS

Thank You

to our alumni, faculty, staff, and friends who made gifts from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. Your gift makes a difference in the lives of our students. Please note that names are listed as they were entered at the time of the gift. Questions or changes can be directed to Erin Capone at ecapone@ssw.rutgers.edu.

\$25,000 or higher

Estate of Professor Yetta H. Appel

\$10,000 to \$24,999

Dr. Richard L. Edwards
Arthur J. Falk Ph.D., RC'66, RBSG'90
Madonna F. Falk SSW'85

\$5,000 to \$9,999

Dr. Francis Harper Barchi
Dr. Robert L. Barchi
Sandra H. Lanman DC'72, SCILS'03
Steven E. Lanman RC'71
Dr. Cathryn Potter
Nellie R. Purefoy SSW'75
Catherine M. Twanmoh RBSG'80

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M. Kathleen Woodward SSW'70
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Dr. Lynne M. Healy GSNB'85
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Dr. Raymond Sanchez Mayers
Susan E. Van Vleet SSW'76
Carolyn Waldman

\$100 to \$499

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Sara Afayee LC'10
J. Gardner Ainlay SSW'80
Dr. Stephen C. Ainlay GSNB'77, GSNB'81
Beverly Pressman Albert SSW'76
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Barbara Albu Lehman DC'72, GSNB'83
Edna Ibis Alex SSW'84
Seth Antin SSW'12
John T. Ash III Ph.D., SSW'78, GSNB'94
Elliott Askew
Stacy Baird
Ronne E. Bassman-Agins SSW'72
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Lance Berg
Michelle Berg
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Dr. Rebecca T. Davis

Robert Davis
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A DAY IN THE LIFE...

By: Kyle Smiddie, SSW '11, NLAW '11



K

yle, who goes by the last name "Smiddie," was raised off a dirt road on a 40-acre farm in Southeastern Ohio. He took the bus to high school every morning, a one hour, 15 minute ride sitting in the back with lifelong friend Steve, who was his best man at his wedding 20 years later. After high school, Smiddie moved to the East Coast to go to college and later received his M.S.W. and J.D. from Rutgers University.

Today, he works as a trial attorney at the United States Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. He is in the same unit that investigated police misconduct in Ferguson, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland. His practice focuses on the constitutional treatment of prisoners in the country's jails and prisons as well as the enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act to ensure individuals with developmental disabilities can live in communities with the supports they need. Because of the sensitive nature of his work, this day reflects a representative snapshot, but is not based on an actual day.

At 6:42 a.m., my iPhone alarm goes off without fail. My dad, who spent his life as a civil rights activist, stressed the importance of breakfast before going off to work. Because of this, I make oatmeal or eggs and watch ESPN to get ready for the day.

By 7:39 a.m., I catch the Number 8 bus to the Redline Metro train. When I finally arrive at the generic, government-looking Patrick Henry Building situated evenly between the United States Congress to the left and the White House to the right at 8:30 a.m., I

water the small bamboo tree on my desk and start my day. The morning often consists of meetings and phone calls. This day, it's a call with a psychiatrist who is an expert in an investigation on adequate mental health care in a jail. She explains her evaluation of what the jail should be doing better for three detainees we met on the tour of the jail a few weeks earlier.

Around 10:30 a.m., I travel to Virginia with two colleagues of mine (a community outreach specialist and another attorney) by rental car to meet with the Arc of Virginia to talk with families about their need of crisis services for their loved ones who have developmental disabilities. The Arc of Virginia is an organization that promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental. During the meeting, self-advocates talk with us about the apartments they have recently moved into thanks, in part, to a settlement agreement between the Department of Justice and the State of Virginia.

I start to prepare internal training for an upcoming meeting on community outreach and stakeholder engagement around 1:40 p.m., but then am interrupted by an email at 2 p.m. from a lawyer in North Carolina about the lawsuit they've filed regarding solitary confinement conditions in a prison.

At 3:30 p.m., I stretch my legs by walking around the office talking with colleagues about overlaps in our cases. After I visit everyone, I add mini candy bars

(Snickers and Butterfingers) to the pottery bowl that my dad made when I was 10 years. It's glazed with blue flowers and sits on my desk like a little reminder of him. Don't judge—lawyers need some social work self-care too.

When 5:15 p.m. rolls around, I wrap up my work day by making a series of "to-do" notes. I head back to the metro, walking down Courthouse Row. When I get home to my little, colonial brick home in Silver Spring (all houses in Silver Spring are little, colonial, and brick), my one-year-old daughter Katie, is serving pretend tea with my wife, or reciting Shakespeare (depending on her mood). I smile at how lucky I am.

After Katie goes to bed at 8:30 p.m., my wife and I sit on the sofa to relax with a handful of frozen Nestle chocolate chips and watch *Damages* on Netflix...One way to recharge before the start of a new day at the office. ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BYRON



AQ Alumni Quotient

What's your score?

Your engagement with the School of Social Work can be achieved in many ways. We've created this list to help you find the ways you'd like to stay connected with the School. The more items you have checked off, the higher your AQ (alumni quotient) score.

Have you reached your full AQ (alumni quotient)?

Calculate your AQ score by taking part in the following ways (10 points for each):

- Attend the annual winter alumni reception on December 8.
- Choose a continuing education class offered by the School to earn your CEUs.
- Update your contact information and share your life updates in a magazine class note.
- Make a gift in honor of what you loved at the SSW: a professor, a class, or anything that was meaningful to you.
- Follow us on social media and join the conversation at #ChangeSSW.
- Attend our endowed lecture series on innovations in social work.
- Stop by the SSW's booth on Rutgers Day.
- Build a legacy by encouraging a family member to apply.
- Sign up to mentor a current student.
- Send a letter to the editor of *Partnering for Change*, our biannual alumni magazine.

To learn more about how to heighten your score today, contact Erin Capone at ecapone@ssw.rutgers.edu.



RUTGERS

School of Social Work

Visit us on the web:
socialwork.rutgers.edu

Email us at:
alumni@ssw.rutgers.edu

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RUTGERS

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We invite you to join us for the

Annual Winter Alumni Reception

featuring a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Intensive Weekend Program.

Thursday, December 8, 2016

6 to 8 p.m.

Rutgers Visitor Center, 100 Sutphen Road, Piscataway, NJ 08854, Busch Campus

Guest speakers will include noted graduates of the Intensive Weekend Program, Dean Cathryn Potter, and other esteemed colleagues.

RSVP by December 1 by going online to sswwinteralumnireception2016.eventbrite.com
or calling 848-932-3900.