

# PARTNERING *for* CHANGE

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



# CHANGEMAKERS

HIGHLIGHTING SOCIAL WORKERS AND ALLIED PROFESSIONALS COMMITTED  
TO BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE

MSW CERTIFICATE PROGRAM /  
PROGRAMA DE CERTIFICADO DE MSW

## LISTA

LATINA/O/X INITIATIVES  
FOR SERVICE, TRAINING  
AND ASSESSMENT

Approximately 20% of both New Jersey and New York's individual state populations are Hispanic, and as this community continues to grow, there is a lack of culturally competent social practitioners to work effectively with these populations. The LISTA Certificate Program, with funding from the New York Community Trust, was developed to fill this gap.

LISTA aims to increase the number of social workers who are culturally competent to provide services to Hispanic populations through:

- Education on evidence-based culturally responsive practices
- Internships in Hispanic serving agencies
- Experiential learning through study abroad in Hispanic countries

The LISTA Certificate Program offers multiple annual scholarships and stipends. In honor of LISTA founder Dr. Raymond Sanchez Mayers, who is retiring this year, the School of Social Work is seeking your generosity to support our scholarship fund.

For more information, contact Director of Development Erin Capone at [ecapone@ssw.rutgers.edu](mailto:ecapone@ssw.rutgers.edu).

[SOCIALWORK.RUTGERS.EDU/LISTA](http://SOCIALWORK.RUTGERS.EDU/LISTA)





*“It doesn't matter how strong your opinions are. If you don't use your power for positive change, you are, indeed, part of the problem.”*

C O R E T T A S C O T T K I N G

C O N T E N T S

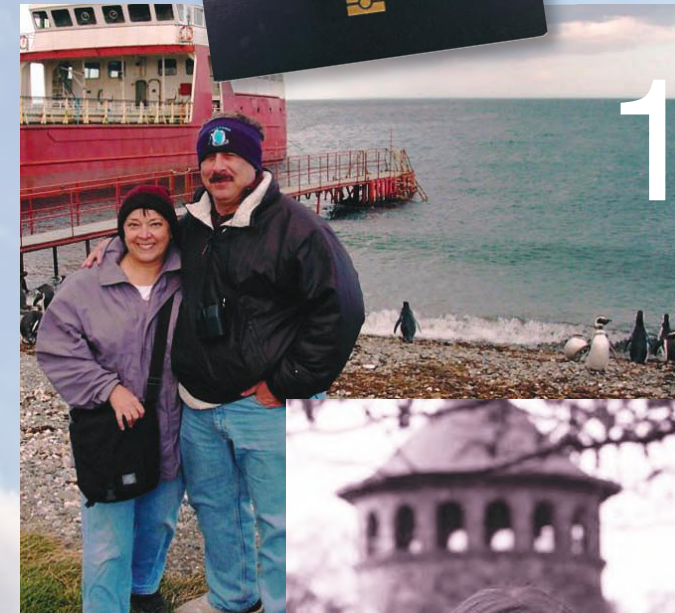
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Highlighting social workers and allied professionals who are committed to building a better future.





PARTNERING for CHANGE

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Dear Friends,

After another productive summer at the School of Social Work, we are excited to welcome fall and the many changes that come with the new season. There are so many happening right now in New Jersey – the trees are changing color, the air is cooling down, and the pace of each day quickens. We are also beginning a new academic year, and with it comes a sense of hope as a new cohort of students begins its journey to a career in social work. There is also another major change afoot – we are returning to campus.

For months, our planning team has been working tirelessly to strategize our return to Rutgers. Using guidance from federal and state public health officials, our team made the safety of our entire community its highest priority. There are many mixed emotions among us as we repopulate our spaces, but our community is resilient. We will be even stronger together than we were apart.

When I reflect on the many months that the pandemic kept us home, I am both impressed with, and sometimes appalled by, the way that social issues have come to the fore and have energized our country. The pandemic has lifted up our knowledge of health and work inequities. Race-based hatred and violence endure and call out the ways that progress toward racial justice has been stalled. How shall we respond as a people? Social workers have serious work to do as we lead for justice in multiple ways.

I was happy to hear that Juneteenth will be recognized as a national holiday. Juneteenth holds important historical and current value for all who celebrate liberation from slavery. The holiday also helps us focus on issues of justice delayed and denied, and calls us to both memory and action. Memory is important, but without the action, we cannot choose the change we know is required in our country and our communities.

Change, and particularly those who create change, is the focus of this edition of our alumni magazine. In it you'll read about the many changes that have taken place at the School since our last update and about other changes on the horizon. You'll meet alum Maury Lieberman and his wife Leslie Scallet, who have dedicated their lives to creating a better world through positive change. You'll also learn about our new podcast, which, in its first season, put a spotlight on change makers in politics.

The twin pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism have challenged our community in countless ways. Challenges provide the impetus for change. Let us choose to lead for justice. Thank you for your dedication to the School of Social Work and the entire Rutgers community.

In solidarity,

*Cathryn C. Potter*

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





# OUR RETURN TO CAMPUS

After more than a year and a half conducting classes, meetings, and other business remotely, Rutgers School of Social Work students, faculty, and staff are beginning to return to campus this fall.

“Rutgers is meant to be an in-person, face-to-face university community, with campus walkways, academic building hallways, libraries, dining halls, and student centers buzzing with live interactions. We need to get back to that model. Our plan for return recognizes this ideal while making clear that we want to be careful and to do this right,” said Rutgers President and University Professor Jonathan Holloway in a message to the Rutgers community last spring.

The School of Social Work is using guidance from federal and state public health officials to inform our planning to ensure the safety of our entire community. Our return is also guided by three principles as directed by the university:

- 1) We are returning to the classroom and the workplace in support of our mission of teaching, research, clinical care, and service;
- 2) our commitment to the health and safety of the campus community, based on science and public health guidelines, remains paramount; and
- 3) the safe repopulation of our campuses is a shared responsibility, which means we all must do our part to keep safe, to ensure equity in our return, and to be flexible in implementing the return.

President Holloway has also tasked Senior Vice President for Human Resources Vivian Fernández to chair a presidential task force on the future of work at Rutgers. The group will provide suggestions to better serve the Rutgers community, operate more efficiently, promote work-life balance, and support sustainability.

“We are focused on building a better future for the School of Social Work community,” said Dean and Distinguished Professor Cathryn C. Potter. “Although there will be challenges as we repopulate our spaces, we know our return to campus will be a positive step forward in this long journey. Looking back on all that we’ve endured since March 2020, I know that our community members are resilient.”

To learn more about Rutgers’ return to campus planning, visit [coronavirus.rutgers.edu](https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu).



## FIFTH ANNUAL CHALLENGING RACIAL DISPARITIES CONFERENCE: A CALL TO ACTION

Rutgers School of Social Work hosted its fifth annual Challenging Racial Disparities Conference, “A Call to Action,” on Wednesday, June 2, bringing together social workers and allied professionals for a powerful learning opportunity on the topic of racial disparities and white privilege. More than 300 participants attended the virtual conference, which was organized by the School of Social Work’s Office of Continuing Education.

Dean and Distinguished Professor Cathryn C. Potter, Ph.D. offered initial remarks to attendees, and the opening keynote was presented by Dr. Catherine Lee, an associate professor in the Departments of Sociology & Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Rutgers University. Dr. Lee spoke on how to confront the legacy of Asian exclusion and anti-Asian racism.

Dorothy Roberts, J.D. served as the keynote speaker and shared anti-racist lessons for social workers on Black women and reproductive justice. Roberts is a professor of law and sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, with joint appointments in the Departments of Africana Studies, Sociology, and the Law School. She is the founding director of the Penn Program on Race, Science, and Society.

An internationally recognized scholar, public intellectual, and social justice advocate, Roberts has written and lectured extensively on race, gender, and class inequities in U.S. institutions and has been a leader in transforming public thinking and policy on reproductive freedom, child welfare, and bioethics. She is the author of *Killing the*

*Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty, Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare, and Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-First Century.* In 2019, she received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Rutgers University-Newark. Her TED Talk, “The Problem with Race-Based Medicine,” has more than one million views.

Each year, the keynote lecture is offered in honor of social work professor Dr. William Neal Brown, the first Black professor at Rutgers, who passed away in 2009. Dr. Brown’s longtime partner, Suzanne Zimmer, supports the annual conference as a way to acknowledge his legacy and contributions to Rutgers, which have historically gone unnoticed.

Following the keynotes was a panel discussion moderated by Assistant Professor of Teaching Christine Morales, LCSW. Panelists included Elsa Candelario, MSSW, LCSW, Bonnie Cushing, LCSW, Catherine Lee, Ph.D., and Dorothy Roberts, JD. Morales posed challenging questions submitted by audience members, and the panel answered thoughtfully. Much of the discussion was centered on the many ways white people can stand in solidarity with Black, indigenous, and people of color and how these efforts can be sustained over the long term.

Attendees gained new skills and ideas to address issues of race in their practice with clients, organizations, communities, and within themselves. ■



## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK CELEBRATES CLASS OF 2021 WITH VIRTUAL CONVOCA TION CEREMONY

On Monday, May 17, Rutgers School of Social Work hosted a virtual convocation ceremony to recognize our BASW, MSW, DSW, and Ph.D. graduates. Families and friends gathered virtually in support of their loved ones who have spent years of hard work completing their programs and tackling countless hours of class time, research, and field work. In total, 996 students earned a degree from the School of Social Work this year, including 835 MSW students, 147 BASW students, 11 DSW students, and 3 Ph.D. students. Dean Cathryn C. Potter welcomed guests to the ceremony and recognized the many sacrifices our students have made during the pandemic. Along with the conferral of the degrees, the School presented the following awards in recognition of our students' outstanding work:

- Dean's Dissertation Award: **Yuqi Wang**
- Emerging Scholar IIDEA Research Award: **Iris Cardenas**
- Outstanding MSW Student in the Clinical Specialization: **Martha A. Pender and Dean Alexander Manning**
- Outstanding MSW Student in the MAP Specialization: **Marleina Stephanie Ubel**
- Outstanding MSW Student in the Online Program: **Sonia LaVonne Bradley**
- Outstanding MSW Student in the Intensive Weekend Program: **Simone Alexandra Jarvis**
- Outstanding MSW Student in the Blended Program: **Nicole Epps**
- Outstanding MSW Student Studying in Newark: **Rodrigo Cardenas, Jr.**
- Outstanding MSW Student Studying in Camden: **Kareemah Major**
- Outstanding MSW Student Studying in New Brunswick: **Elizabeth Helen Antonowicz**
- Outstanding Student in the Camden BASW Program: **Amos Koffa**
- Outstanding Student in the New Brunswick BASW Program: **Asia Davis**
- Brian C. Wright Social Work Award: **Skyler Noon**

In addition, faculty and staff members were presented the following awards:

- Outstanding Professor in Clinical Specialization: **Ryan DiMeglio**
- Outstanding Professor in MAP Specialization: **Cassandra Simmel**
- Outstanding Professor for Excellence in Inclusion, Intersectionality, Diversity, Equity and Advancement (IIDEA) Teaching: **DuWayne Battle**
- Outstanding Professor for Innovative and Creative Teaching: **Marla Blunt-Carter**
- Most Supportive Professor: **Anna Haley**
- Exemplary IIDEA Research Recognition Award: **Abigail Williams-Butler**
- Outstanding Part-Time-Lecturer: **Jennifer Polizotto**
- Doctoral Student Teaching in the BASW or MSW Programs: **Catie Buttner and Lorraine Howard**
- Most Supportive Staff Award: **Arlene Hunter**

Student speaker Marleina Ubel, a member of the MSW Class of 2021, addressed the audience with words of encouragement and support. Rounding out the program was a speech from Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester, the first African American and the first woman to represent Delaware in the U.S. House of Representatives. The event also included a performance from Christiana Danielle, a member of the MSW Class of 2020 who is a singer, songwriter, speaker, and Top 10 contestant on NBC's *The Voice*.

Dean Potter concluded the ceremony with words of encouragement for the Class of 2021. "Graduates, you have been prepared for a fabulous career in social work by an outstanding group of faculty and field instructors. We know each of you will find creative ways to make a difference in the lives of the people and communities you serve. You are entering a new world at a time of great crisis and need. You are the future of our profession. You are our hope for a more just future. This is not the end of our time together. You are a Rutgers social work grad now, and you will lead alongside the school for years to come. We are so very proud of you."

Congratulations, graduates, and welcome to the Rutgers School of Social Work alumni network!

## FACULTY VOICES IN THE NEWS



*"There are advantages to greater diversity in people's social networks. A crisis situation or natural disaster pushes people toward interacting with those they might not otherwise."*

**The Neighborhood Bonds That Will Outlast the Pandemic**  
Professor Emily Greenfield in *The Wall Street Journal*



*"If you're not being held accountable at any point along the way, and you continue to gain more power and attention, then there's really no motivation for you to take a real look at what you're doing. Whether it's microaggressions, whether it's harassment, whether it's using technology to manipulate, it's again about the sense of superiority and also a sense of entitlement that comes with power."*

**The Matt Gaetz Scandal Speaks to the Casual Misogyny in Many Workplaces**  
Associate Professor and Director of the Center on Violence Against Women and Children Sarah McMahon in *Teen Vogue*



*"It's really a classic example of unhelpful behavior... We want to fit in and, if other people seem to think this isn't serious, we tend to react the same way. It sends a message to the victim that people don't think they're worth helping."*

**What to Know About the Bystander Effect—And How to Fight Against It, According to Experts**  
Professor, Associate Dean for Faculty Development, and Associate Director of the Center on Violence Against Women and Children Victoria Banyard in *Health*



*"If the goal is to reduce deaths going forward, you need to have a way to prioritize clinically... If [the state's] intention [in the initial vaccine rollout] was to create socioeconomic and racial disparities [in vaccine distribution, it] could not have done a better job."*

**NJ officials, who once feared vaccine hesitancy, nowhere near meeting demand for COVID-19 immunization**  
Distinguished Research Professor Stephen Crystal in *NJ Spotlight News*



*"There's a fundamental difference between investing and gambling when it comes to stock. When people invest, they make educated guesses about which stock will increase in value in the long term. While there is some risk element, there are fairly decent metrics to predict how downturns will right themselves over time. But when people are day trading and buying risky investments for quick turnover, they are essentially gambling by betting money on something with a chance outcome on the hope of winning big."*

**COVID-19 Led to the GameStop and Robinhood Frenzy, Says Gambling Professor**  
Professor and Director of the Center for Gambling Studies & Addiction Counselor Training (ACT) Program Lia Nower in *Observer*



*While it's great to see this much-needed Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) slowly making its way out there, not all of it is making it into the hands of every renter who needs it when they need it most. There are few direct-to-tenant assistance options and some reports of landlords refusing to participate in [Emergency Rental Assistance] programs, which can effectively prevent renters from getting this critical rental assistance."*

**Legal challenges mount for federal eviction protections**  
Assistant Professor Emmy Tiderington in *National Journal*





Assistant Professor **Emily Adlin Bosk** authored "That Which is Essential has been Made Invisible: The Need to Bring a Structural Risk Perspective to Reduce Racial Disproportionality in Child Welfare" in *Race and Social Problems*.



Assistant Professor **Vivien (Wen Li) Anthony** and Professor and Director of the Center for Gambling Studies & Addiction Counselor Training (ACT) Program **Lia Nower** authored "The Relationship of Interactive Technology Use for Entertainment and School Performance and Engagement: Evidence from a Longitudinal Study in a Nationally Representative Sample of Middle School Students in China" in *Computers in Human Behavior*.



Assistant Professor **Qiana L. Brown** was appointed as associate editor to

the *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*. In this role, she will contribute to the strategic direction of the journal, help ensure the journal's standards are rigorous and that its content advances knowledge development. Dr. Brown was also elected to the board of directors for the College on Problems of Drug Dependence. On March 18, Dr. Brown was a panelist for the New Jersey Governor's Stem Scholars and New Jersey Association for Women in Science's "A Discussion with Women + Plus STEM." Additionally, she authored "Moving toward health and social equity for women who use cannabis during preconception, pregnancy and lactation" in *JAMA Network Open*.



Professor of Professional Practice **Elsa Candelario** and Associate Professor **Raymond Sanchez Mayers** presented the poster, "The Hispanic Happiness Paradox," at the Latino Mental

Health Association of New Jersey in February. They also presented the workshop, "Breaking Barriers to Services for Latinos Through Education," at the NASW-NJ annual conference in March. Additionally, Professor of Professional Practice Candelario presented the workshop "Achieving Culturally Responsive Policy through Collective Action with Latino/a/x Communities: A Case Study" with Dr. Jesselly De La Cruz at the NASW-NJ conference.



Assistant Professor **Laura Cuesta** was awarded a Russell Sage Foundation-Gates Foundation Pipeline Grant to study how regularity in child support receipt has changed over the past twenty years and the extent to which regularity affects custodial mothers' employment and economic well-being. In May, she was the keynote speaker for the Challenges and Opportunities of the Child Support

System in Colombia symposium for the Master of Family Studies Program at the Universidad Externado de Colombia. Dr. Cuesta also published "Testing the Economic Independence Hypothesis: Union Formation Among Single Mothers in Chile" in *Journal of Family Issues*.



Associate Professor of Professional Practice and Director of the Office of Global Social Work Programs **Rebecca Davis** served as a visiting lecturer at St. Joseph's University, Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences and Education in Macau, China in Spring 2021 and virtually co-taught a 3-hour credit course on social protection and social work with Rutgers alumna **Helen Liu** MSW, Ph.D.



Professor and Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

**Antoinette Y. Farmer** presented the paper "Preparing students to engage in program evaluation: An international experience" at the International Social Work Education and Development Conference in April. Dr. Farmer also authored "Risk and protective factors of youth prescription drug misuse: Variations across racial/ethnic groups" in *Child and Adolescent Work Journal*. In response to current events and the pervasive social injustices facing our society, the *Journal of Social Work Education* compiled collections of articles with a focus on race/racism, oppression, social justice, and related topics that social workers and social work educators are committed to addressing and resolving.

"Examining relationships among student empowerment, sense of community, and the implicit curriculum: A multigroup analysis of race and ethnicity," co-authored by Dr. Farmer, Professor and Associate Dean for Research **N. Andrew Peterson**, and alumna **Sheila M. McMahon**,

was open access April 1–June 30, 2021.



Assistant Professor **Adrian Gale** was invited to join the editorial board of the *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, which publishes papers based on quantitative analyses, theoretical papers, and comprehensive review articles. The journal provides a single, high-level medium of communication for psychologists, psychiatrists, biologists, criminologists, educators, and professionals in many other allied disciplines who address the subject of youth and adolescence.



**Kristen Gilmore Powell**, Assistant Research Professor, Associate Director of the Center for Prevention Science, and Director of the Northeast & Caribbean Prevention Technology Transfer Center, was invited to join the editorial advisory board for

the journal *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership and Governance*.



Associate Teaching Professor and Assistant Director of the DSW Program **Erica Goldblatt Hyatt** authored "A call to action: Addressing ambivalence and promoting advocacy for reproductive rights in social work education" in *Journal of Social Work Education*. Dr. Goldblatt Hyatt was also invited to speak at a press conference on women's health and reproductive rights with Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf on May 27.



Associate Professors **Joy (Jeunghye) Kim** and **Michael (Myungkook) Joo** received a research grant from the Division of Family Development of the NJ Department of Human Services for the analysis of narrow cost childcare in the amount of \$56,358. Additionally, Dr.

Kim authored "Return on Investment for Adult Basic Education: Existing Evidence and Future Directions" in *Adult Education Quarterly*, "Mothers' nonstandard work schedules and the use of multiple center-based childcare" in *Children and Youth Services Review* with Ph.D. student Feng-Yi Liu, and "Wage theft in the United States: Toward new research agendas" in *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* with Postdoctoral Associate Skye Allmang.



Associate Professor of Professional Practice and Executive Director of the Office of Field Education **Mark Lamar** gave a talk at the Network for Social Work Management conference in June titled "Leading with Authenticity."



Associate Professor and Director of the Center on Violence Against Women and Children **Sarah McMahon** and Ph.D. Candidate and Research Specialist at the Center on Violence Against Women and Children **Julia Cusano** published "Sexual violence prevalence and disclosure patterns among college undergraduates: exploring types of sexual violence and incident-specific characteristics" in *Journal of American College Health* and "Predictors of campus sexual violence perpetration: A systematic review of research, sampling, and study design" in *Aggression and Violent Behavior*.



Assistant Research Professor **Cory Morton** authored "Alcohol sales during COVID-19 social restrictions: Initial evidence from Alcoholic Beverage Control states" in *Substance Abuse*.



Associate Professor and Director of the Certificate in Promoting Child and Adolescent Well-Being **Cassandra Simmel**, Distinguished Research Professor **Stephen Crystal**, and Associate Professor **Ayse Akincigil** authored "A best-worst scaling experiment to identify patient-centered claims-based outcomes for evaluation of pediatric antipsychotic monitoring programs" in *Health Services Research*. Dr. Simmel and Dr. Crystal also published "Antipsychotic Treatment for Youth in Foster Care: Perspectives on Improving Youths' Experiences in Providing Informed Consent" in *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*.



Assistant Professor **Hannah Szlyk** was named a Crisis Text Line Research Fellow. The fellowship allows scholars at academic institutions to

pursue mental health service questions using the crisis line's extensive data set of conversations and texter metrics. Dr. Szlyk and her research team will be exploring the relationships between subgroups of texters who endorse suicidality and the referrals provided by the crisis counselors. She also authored "Innovating Technology-Enhanced Interventions for Youth Suicide: Insights for Measuring Implementation Outcomes" in *Frontiers in Psychology*.



Assistant Professor **Emmy Tiderington** authored "Effects of Permanent Supportive Housing on Health Care Utilization and Spending Among New Jersey Medicaid Enrollees Experiencing Homelessness" in *Medical Care* and "Medicaid Waivers and Tenancy Supports for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness: Implementation Challenges in Four States" in *The Milbank Quarterly*.



Assistant Professor **Emmy Tiderington** Assistant Professor **Emily Adlin Bosk**, and Ph.D. student **Alicia Mendez** published "Negotiating child protection mandates in Housing First for families" in *Child Abuse & Neglect*.



Ph.D. student **Peter Treitler**, Assistant Research Professor, Associate Director of the Center for Prevention Science, and Director of the Northeast & Caribbean Prevention Technology Transfer Center **Kristen Gilmore Powell**, Assistant Research Professor **Cory Morton**, and Professor and Associate Dean for Research **N. Andrew Peterson** authored "Locational and Contextual Attributes of Opioid Overdoses in New Jersey" in *Journal of Social Work Practice in the Addictions*.



# NEW FACULTY: **FIVE** OBJECTS THAT MATTER

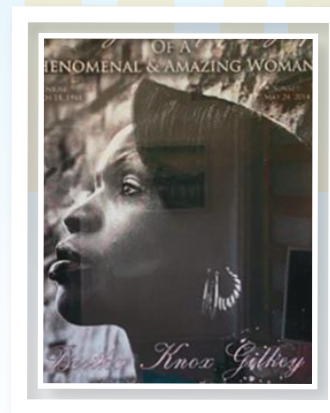
Rutgers School of Social Work is pleased to announce the hiring of three new faculty members. Assistant Professor and Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Intimate Partner Violence Prevention & Intervention Maxine Davis, Associate Professor of Professional Practice Tawanda Hubbard, and Associate Professor and Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Interpersonal Violence Research Chiara Sabina began in their roles on September 1, 2021.

Dr. Maxine Davis is a second-generation activist who is passionate about discovering how to end violence perpetration in romantic and intimate relationships. She studies people who act abusively and interventions designed to help them change. As a scholar of intimate partner violence and abuse (IPV/A), she focuses on interventions to assist Black and Latino men in ending abusive behaviors in their romantic relationships.

Dr. Tawanda Hubbard's practice interests include working with children, adolescents, adults, couples, and families struggling with adverse childhood experiences, parenting, parent-child conflict, family conflict, ADHD, mood disorders, ODD, relational challenges, personal and family crisis, unresolved trauma, and self-development. Dr. Hubbard's scholarship interests focus on in-home/in-community behavioral health, relational neglect in adolescence, opposition in adolescence, personhood, family wellness, relational interventions, structural discrimination, anti-racism and anti-oppression, incorporating social justice in clinical practice, clinical supervision, and creating and sustaining nurturing spaces for Black women in leadership.

Dr. Chiara Sabina's research centers on interpersonal victimization, especially intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and dating violence among Latinos. Dr. Sabina employs a contextual, strengths-based perspective with respect to interpersonal violence focusing on understudied groups, the influence of cultural variables, help-seeking responses, and examination of the service-delivery system.

We asked them to identify five meaningful objects in their homes and offices.



**01/ FRAMED PHOTO**

A framed photo of internationally renowned St. Louis activist Bertha Knox Gilkey is centered alongside Maya Angelou in each office space I occupy. Every action I take is a response to the questions: what would Aunt Bertha say about this? Would she expect me to stand up or stay silent—how would she advise me to speak? Studying under Aunt Bertha and my mother (Maxine Johnson), watching their seamless synergy in pursuit of justice taught me lessons that guide me every single day. As community organizers, committed to causes beyond themselves, they taught me true social work. As a guidepost in all my decisions or endeavors, I strive to make them proud and please God.

**02/ PLANTS**

I recently found a connection to nature and deeply enjoy the beauty in living plants. I love writing or working outdoors because I get to be closer to trees and large bodies of water. Plants give me calming energy and fill my heart in an indescribable manner. I'm growing my collection both outdoors and indoors, but only with "easy" perennials or low maintenance and forgiving varieties because I have a long way to go before I can claim a green thumb. Nonetheless, plants give me great joy, and I aim to cultivate a small forest in my office and home garden.



**03/ GRADUATION PHOTO**

It took 213 credit hours, three degrees in three different disciplines across two states, and seven years as a full-time student before I was instructed in a university by a Black woman. Her name was Dr. Renee Cunningham Williams, one whose accomplishments have earned the rank of full professor, but yet to be named as such by my alma mater. In this photo, I had the honor of being pictured along her side at my graduation in 2018. Less than 2% of tenured full rank college professors are Black women. My wish is for no college student to be deprived the gift of having a remarkable Black woman instruct them during the course of their formal education. I gleefully adorn a custom hand-painted stole each time I wear regalia; each color figure, quote, and placement thereof is selected with intention. Of special notation is my grandmother, Helen Underwood, who made all of my accomplishments possible by being at the center of the village that raised me.

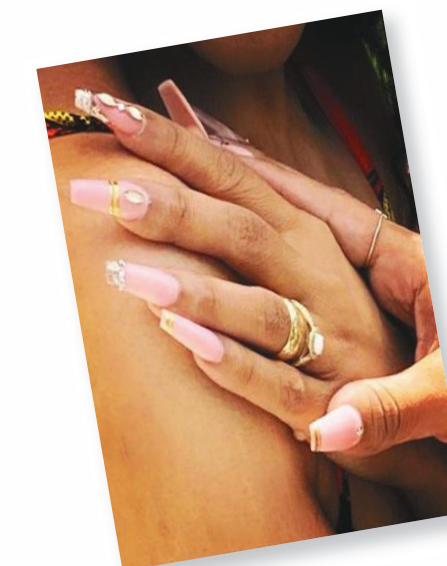


MAXINE DAVIS



**04/ GUATEMALAN PAINTING**

I bought this original painting from an artist in Antigua after visiting Guatemala in 2011. It hangs in each office I occupy. Every time I look at it, I am reminded of the obvious beauty in the mountains I climbed but also remember the piercing images of the local dump—the first place I saw abject poverty. Guatemala holds a special place in my heart and always will.



**05/ HANDS**

My nails are art and expression that serve as evidence of the freedom I have to be myself in places that were not originally built for me. Soft pink and gold are colors that make me smile. I adorn a ring gifted by Keith, a husband supporting my visions in theory and reality; a partner who is too amazing to describe in words alone. The ring is engraved with "purpose driven," a perfect description of who I am.



01/ **RELAXING ON THE PORCH**

This is one of my favorite pictures in my home. Laying back with ones' feet up, basking in the sun with peace and quiet, feeling a gentle breeze. She reminds me to take time to do nothing, to just sit in the sun, take it all in and do so guilt free. This picture has become a part of me that at the mere thought of the image I can take myself to a peaceful, calming place internally.



03/ **A SHELTERING TREE**

A dear friend of mine gave me this portrait over 20 years ago and explained to me the importance of our friendship during a painful time in my life: the loss of my youngest brother. We have been there for each other and our families over the years. She has taught me what true friendship looks and feels like. It is a blessing to have a friend who becomes your sheltering tree.



01/ **COLORFUL TREE**

As Joyce Kilmer wrote, "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree." And the splendor of trees is even more magical in the fall. This beautiful one greeted me for many years on my way to work. It served as a daily reminder to pause, breathe, and appreciate what is around me.



03/ **GRACIAS A LA VIDA**

This song composed by Violeta Parra and performed by Mercedes Sosa signals gratitude and connectedness. Some of the translated lyrics are, "Thank you to life, that has given me so much, it has given me laughter and it has given me tears, that's how I can tell joy from agony, the two materials that form my song, and your song, which is the same song, and everyone's song, which is my own song."



02/ **MY VILLAGE**

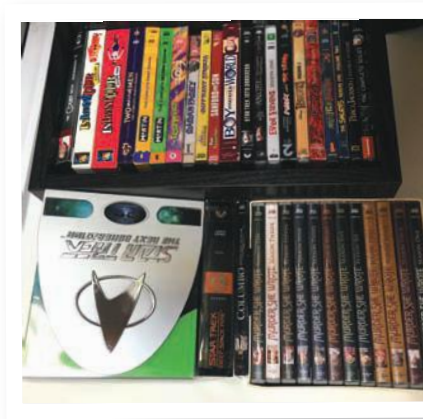
This wall unit hangs in my front room on the main level of my home. There is nowhere you can turn without seeing pictures of my family and me. It is full but not complete. There are more pictures of family and friends throughout the house. The pictures capture our love, strength, and connections. They remind me of the cloth I am cut from, shoulders I stand on, and that I am never alone.



TAWANDA HUBBARD

05/ **OLDIES BUT GOODIES**

I make it a practice to decompress at night by watching one of my favorite television shows as often as I can. It is one of my ways of slowing things down. I have watched many of these shows with family and friends. They bring comfort, familiarity, and many laughs. It is a great way to end the night and take it easy after a full day.



02/ **PASSPORT**

Sign me up! I love traveling and taking in different ways of life. Visiting is wonderful, but living abroad has changed me. I lived abroad in Granada, Spain during college and then again in 2015-2016 in Quito, Ecuador. One memorable trip was staying in my great grandfather's home in Camaguey, Cuba. Another was witnessing the marvels of Machu Picchu. Traveling is life-giving to me, and my list of places visited is not quite long enough.



CHIARA SABINA



05/ **EVENT TICKETS**

I've collected tickets for decades to remember the events and activities that inspire me. I love going to see foreign films, listening to the symphony, appreciating the visual and performing arts, dancing, taking in lessons from the wise, and wondering at the gift of life. One of the events I especially enjoyed was listening to Thich Nhat Hanh speak in Chicago. Another was hearing the live salsa of Marc Anthony.

04/ **HOT AIR BALLOON**

My ride on a hot air balloon was unforgettable and was the most wonderful celebration of another year of life. Being literally a mile high let me enjoy my local world in a whole new way and take in the buzz of life below at first, and then the stillness that envelops our daily life. It was much more peaceful than my sky diving journey, although that was exhilarating as well.



04/ **DAILY WORD**

As a social work practitioner, I hear many stories full of hurt, pain, sorrow, and struggle from those I support on their journeys of healing and recovery. I start my day with a positive and inspirational word that helps to center and ground me. When needed, I can take a moment to reflect on the words and I feel lifted, insulated, and energized. It feels like a warm blanket on a cold day.





# CHANGEMAKERS

RUTGERS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK'S PODCAST PUTS A SPOTLIGHT ON THOSE COMMITTED TO BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE



**A**

s part of our commitment to leading for justice through innovation, excellence, collaboration, and community, Rutgers School of Social Work launched a new podcast, *Toward a More Just Future*, last spring. The series explores a variety of topics pertinent to social workers and students working towards progress. Season one, "In the Spotlight," focused on change makers and was hosted by Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor of Professional Practice at Rutgers School of Social Work.

Blunt-Carter spoke with voices in politics to understand what change is, how it unfolds, and how more people can get involved. "When conceptualizing the first season of our podcast, we wanted to create a space for dialogue on change," said Blunt-Carter. "Although our main audience is comprised of social work students and practitioners, we wanted these important conversations to be approachable and accessible to everyone, no matter where they are in their education or career. Change can, and should, happen at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Our goal was to convey that creating change at any level can be difficult, but it can be done by anyone."

Season one brought three internationally known politicians and change makers into conversation with Blunt-Carter. Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester, the first African American and first woman to represent Delaware in the U.S. House of Representatives, kicked off the season. Congresswoman Blunt Rochester serves as an Assistant Whip for House Leadership and sits on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Sarah McBride, an activist and elected official who is a Delaware General Assembly member, was in conversation with Blunt-Carter in the second episode. McBride is the first transgender state senator in the country, making her the highest-ranking transgender official in United States history. Rounding out the first season was a conversation with Valerie Biden Owens, a media consultant, political strategist, and the sister of President Joe Biden. During her fifty-year career, Biden Owens ran numerous political campaigns at local, state, and national levels.

Read on for some of the first season's highlights.

**Lisa Blunt Rochester on creating change through social work:**

"I actually am the product of a social worker: our dad, a Rutgers grad. I am the sister of a social worker: my sister Marla. And I'm the mother of a social worker. My daughter, Alyssa, also graduated with a Master of Social Work from Rutgers. I watched you guys, from both a micro and a macro level, deal with social work... There are so many different ways in which you can have an impact on people's lives and improve their quality of life. As a caseworker, I still remember over 30 years ago, people who, because I was advocating for them with the Social Security Administration, got their benefits. And they were homeless. That matters. That one-on-one matters.

Social workers can run for office. Social workers can help make sure that people with the right vision, the same mission, the same goals, get elected... On more personal side, I would say as an individual, make sure you know your why. It helps to keep you going when the storms come. You can stay rooted in that why."



▲ Marla Blunt-Carter

▼ Lisa Blunt Rochester



**Sarah McBride on becoming a Delaware State Senator:**

"I was incredibly lucky. I was raised in a loving family, a supportive family, a progressive family, and I had a world of possibilities before me because of that luck and that privilege. But buried deep inside of me was a struggle with my gender identity, a struggle with who I am, and a struggle with how I fit into this world. And from a really early age I was dealing with the tension between who I was and what everyone thought I was between who I wanted to be and what seemed possible. And so, I kept my gender identity buried deep inside.

I really found an escape in reading. And in particular, in reading history. But more than an escape, I found hope in reading those history books because, as much as I was struggling with how I fit into this world, I saw in those history books that the story of every chapter was the story of advocates, activists, citizens, and a small group of courageous elected officials who would band together to deepen our sense of equality and justice for more and more people who for too often had been pushed to the margins and into the shadows. So I found hope in those history books, and I saw in reading those stories, that politics was the place where you could make the most amount of change for the most number of people in the most number of ways possible. And I thought, perhaps, if I could make a change in my community, if I could build a world where more people could live fully and freely, whether there's someone like me or someone else, that perhaps that would be a fulfilling life, even if I couldn't live an authentic life. But as I grew up, I saw that the only way to live a fulfilling life is to live at your core an authentic life."

**Valerie Biden Owens on how she gained her confidence:**

"Confidence is the number one prerequisite for success in life. And I had the great advantage of having a big brother who told me from the beginning that whatever he could do I could do better. He said I was smarter than he, I was more athletic than he. Whatever it was, he said there was nothing that he could do that any woman couldn't do, but particularly me.

Confidence is not part of one's DNA. I didn't actively take notes to learn how to be confident. I hung around with my brother. He told me I could be anything that I wanted to be. And my parents said, 'you can be anything.' They were always encouraging. It's wonderful to have a mentor, somebody who, when you're down, who says, 'come on, you can do this.' Confidence is not something that's part of your DNA. It's something really hard to get ahold of. Some people get it a little bit more easily or a lot more easily than others. And look, Marla, once you have it doesn't mean it stays. I don't know about you, but sometimes I just feel it slipped right through my fingers."

Learn more about the School of Social Work's podcast and listen to the full episodes of *Toward a More Just Future* at [socialwork.rutgers.edu/podcasts](https://socialwork.rutgers.edu/podcasts). ■



▲ Sarah McBride



▲ Valerie Biden Owens



## THE POST-RETIREMENT VOYAGE: A COUPLE'S PHILANTHROPIC JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE- LONG COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

Maury Lieberman SSW'66 and Leslie Scallet spent their formative years participating in the fight for civil rights and other progressive causes. While their commitment to social justice propelled them onto different career paths, their lives eventually converged at an organization in Washington, D.C. As their journeys entwined, Maury and Leslie developed a shared vision for spending their retirement years championing causes that have a common mission: creating a defined impact on the world.



Maury Lieberman grew up in the 1950s in Milwaukee, where his father was involved in progressive Wisconsin politics. In the mid-50s, his father took a chance on a new business and moved the entire family to Houston, at that time a small, segregated Southern city. There he witnessed far more overt

displays of prejudice, racism, and injustice than he had ever seen before. The only Jewish student in his segregated Texas high school of 2,500, Maury felt like a fish out of water. "They were traumatic teenage years," he recalls. Quiet support from some teachers and community members taught him never to generalize about any group or environment.

Meanwhile, nearly 800 miles away in Clayton, Missouri, Leslie Scallet was experiencing her own set of challenges growing up in the same decade. She excelled in school, but girls were not expected to pursue careers outside of teaching or other female-dominated jobs. "Since I had good grades, I could aspire to teach high school, but no other options were mentioned," she says with a sardonic chuckle.

Devastated by the injustices he encountered as a young man, Maury looked for opportunities to change the world. He knew his greatest chance at making an impact would be through education, so he enrolled in the sociology program at the University of Wisconsin at Madison – "the Berkeley of the Midwest," as he describes it. Maury joined in progressive causes and learned what

he needed to do to support them. Upon graduation, his extended family expected him to apply for law or medical school, but Maury had different plans. "I always wanted to go to school in the East, and Rutgers School of Social Work offered me a scholarship," he says.

Despite the distance, he moved across the country and became a social work student at Rutgers. Just one of two community organization students – the others in his cohort studied casework and group work – Maury fully immersed himself in his studies and field work, receiving a hands-on education in how to effect change.

Leslie also became intent on changing the world, taking the message in John F. Kennedy's famous presidential inauguration speech as a call to action. "There was a lot of attention to improving the world in the 1960s, and a lot of people were going to law school to do just that," she says. After studying history at Washington University in St. Louis, she decided to pursue a career in law. Encouraged only by her father, Leslie went on to earn her J.D. at the University of Pennsylvania.

Looming in the background of Maury's post-graduation life was the Vietnam War, so he chose to continue studying and received an education in urban and regional planning at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public and International Affairs. After graduating, he joined the U.S. Public Health Service, receiving a Navy lieutenant's rank, and was assigned to a civilian post at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in Washington, D.C.

Despite her academic achievements, Leslie was influenced by the social expectation that a woman with a law degree in the 1960s was unlikely to find success on the traditional career path of a lawyer. Law firms "wouldn't have me up front with clients because they would not accept a female lawyer," she explains. Believing her chances of conventional success were low, she decided instead to follow her passion for social justice. Introduced in law school to



mental health as a new area of focus in the civil rights movement, she took a job at the NIMH working as a special assistant to the director of the Institute, a psychiatrist who was one of the first to recognize the importance of patients' rights in the mental health system.

At NIMH's Center for Studies of Metropolitan Mental Health, Maury developed non-traditional mental health initiatives. With his diverse educational background, he excelled in his job collaborating with other interdisciplinary thinkers. "The center was the vanguard, and everyone thought we were off the wall," he says with a laugh. "Even our office arrangement was different – a big open space where we sat on the floor or on beanbags."

Maury and Leslie felt fortunate to have careers that provided them the freedom to think differently and deepen their understanding of mental health. And although they worked for a time in the same organization, and in the same field for nearly two decades, Maury and Leslie only knew each other informally, seeing each other infrequently. But eventually, they developed a relationship, growing close and marrying. They both went on to

*"Social workers are often pigeonholed, but I always make it very clear that part of my ability to do the work I've done throughout my life is because of my social work education."*

other jobs later in their careers and decided to retire in the late 1990s. Unlike many new retirees, Maury and Leslie were busy, serving as activists, consultants, and board members for local, national, and international organizations.

After spending years supporting several disparate causes, Maury and Leslie realized they needed to formalize their efforts and determine if their time and resources were being used to their fullest extent. They took some time to reflect on their education and work, finding that one of the greatest lessons they learned was the importance of meeting the client where they are. A foundation of social work practice, this idea would become one of the guiding principles of their philanthropic efforts. During a meeting about their support, Rutgers School of Social Work Dean Cathryn C. Potter prompted the couple to write down the purpose of their philanthropy. "It was the first time Leslie and I stepped back and reflected on our philanthropic efforts. It was not easy because we made a lot of assumptions since we share values," Maury explains.

While traveling on a ship to the Philippines to visit one of the organizations they supported, Maury and Leslie crafted a document to explain their philanthropic philosophy and goals.



They called the document "Voyage," a nod to their time at sea, but also to their constant evolution and desire to continue learning along their philanthropic journey. With limited resources and so many good causes in need, Maury and Leslie also had to choose which organizations to support. They decided to work only with groups that provide real and measured success and also employ people that truly understand their philanthropic values. "We want to be engaged in the organizations we support in some way, whether it's advisory, participatory, or facilitatory, so we can use our accumulated wisdom and skills. But we don't want to control things and come in and say things have to be done a certain way," Maury says.

Recently, the couple chose to support travel and educational experiences for Rutgers School of Social Work students specializing in management and policy. Their inspiration comes from a desire to foster student activism and heighten policy awareness. "We believe social workers need to understand policies because a lot of societal problems are the result of them," Maury says. "Social workers have a role in solving their clients' problems by changing policy rather than just by accommodating to the policy that's there. Social workers are often pigeonholed, but I always make it very clear that part of my ability to do the work I've done throughout my life is because of my social work education."

For Maury and Leslie, who have spent more than two decades on their philanthropic journey, learning from both success and failure and finding collaborators they can trust have become guiding principles. "You have to be honest about what you do and don't know and admit to the possibility that you may not even know what you don't know. And you have to find the right people to help you understand how to be effective," they say. It's this idea that has helped them fulfill their shared desire to create change in the world. ■



## CREATING CHANGE FOR THE CHANGE MAKERS

**Susan E. Van Vleet '76 has spent nearly five decades working as a management consultant using her social work background to guide companies and their staff in making changes big and small. She shares her journey to a career in social work and how her company, Susan Van Vleet Consultants, Inc., is ushering in change for the change makers.**

**Rutgers School of Social Work: Tell us about your educational and career journey.**

**Susan Van Vleet:** I attended a program in high school called Future Jewish Center Workers. It was run by social workers from the Jewish Welfare Board in New York City. We attended weekend sessions on Sundays and learned about becoming a social worker in a Jewish non-profit. There were incredible social workers who trained us each week, including Saul Alinsky, the famous civil rights community organizer, and William Schwartz, who taught us about group work.

I was hooked! I finished high school and went to college convinced I needed to take every social science class available. I majored in sociology and minored in anthropology and psychology to prepare for an MSW. I also took one undergraduate social work course from another institution because my school didn't offer them.

In 1968 I graduated and was hired by the Bureau of Children's Services, which later became the Division of Youth & Family Services (DYFS) in New Jersey. Because of my work experience and education, I was put into intake immediately, investigating child abuse and neglect in Mercer County right out of college. I took every training opportunity

DYFS offered, and because of Title 20, there were a lot.

As part of my work experience I took over the foster care function and developed a parenting pre-service training program for foster parents and adoptive parents. It was published in the Child Welfare League of America report. We got the program into every county in New Jersey, and we had 42 social workers implementing the program with the parents in their caseloads. During this time, the U.S. Foster Parent Association was being formed, and I supported that process along with the formation of a New Jersey branch. I was also part of a special program at my agency funded by Title 20 that put thirty of us through the MSW program at Rutgers. We all graduated with commitments to years of work and with enhanced titles.

After I completed my years at DYFS, I left to join Effectiveness Training Inc., a small for-profit educational corporation run by Dr. Thomas Gordon (the author of PET and a psychologist). I became his director of government relations and built that department in his company. We funded training programs in schools and public agencies all over the U.S. and in other countries. Our biggest contract involved training all the teachers and staff

in the Queens, New York City school district.

Somewhere during all of this work I got married, divorced, and then married again – and I had two children! Looking back, I don't know how I had the energy to do it all.

**RUSSW: What does your company, Susan Van Vleet Consultants, Inc., do?**

**SVV:** We are a 43-year-old management consulting company. We specialize in diversity, change management, team building, communications, and any human issue in companies. Our clients are mostly Fortune 500 companies. We work with anyone from front-line workers to VPs and CEOs. We have over 25 copyrights and three trademarks. We have worked in 19 countries with people who come from all over the world.

What we do works because we use and teach the skills and concepts from social science. We have developed longstanding relationships with people we have coached and worked with to solve personal and professional problems. When people leave a company, they take us with them to their next company. Even though the company is our client, our belief is each individual we train or work with is also our client no matter where



they work. We also have four distributors that we have trained and licensed to lead, market, and sell our programs. One of our distributors has worked with NASA and another works with CFOs.

**RUSSW: How does your social work education relate to the work you do?**

**SVV:** It relates directly to all the work we do. The concept of starting where the client is is something I learned from my first social work supervisor. I also continue to use my community organization skills and group work skills that I learned at Rutgers School of Social Work.

We have been able to solve problems with our clients that other consultants cannot because they do not have this skill base. We are not afraid of

conflict or listening to people's emotions because of our training, so we can make deeper and longer lasting change for our clients and their companies.

**RUSSW: What are some of the ways your company is creating change for those who are change makers, like social workers?**

**SVV:** We are opening up the corporate setting to the unique skill base social workers have. From assisting teams in coming together quickly and working through conflict so they can bring a lifesaving drug to market ahead of schedule to creating diversity and inclusion in places it did not exist, there are many opportunities for social workers to get involved.

For some of the VPs and CEOs with whom we work, we may be the first social worker or psychologist they have ever met. It may also be the first time they have experienced training based on social work or psychological principles. We also encourage people to participate in therapy. We make referrals out of every workshop we hold, mostly to LCSWs in our client's area.

Another area I'm passionate about is advocating for fair pay for social workers. We are at a pivotal point in the field. We are needed everywhere, so it's our time to leverage our requests for higher salaries. I always make it a point to share this idea with the groups of social workers. Most recently I discussed it with members of NASW California. I've also worked with a few social workers individually to ask for higher salaries. I think this is one of the most important things NASW should be doing. We need to examine what our

salaries should be – not what they currently are.

**RUSSW: As a change maker yourself, what are some of the challenges you face in creating change?**

**SVV:** Personally, I am constantly reminding myself to have patience and that lasting change takes time; I cannot make it happen on my timeline. I am also cognizant of the need to "on board" everyone to a project so everyone in the organization has a stake in it. Those are always my biggest challenges. Some other management consultants would say it is the conflict that is their biggest challenge. For me, having been trained as a social worker, conflict is part of the process of change.

**RUSSW: What are your hopes for the future of social work?**

**SVV:** That my profession, which I love so much, will see itself as necessary everywhere. We social workers should feel confident that our unique skill base is needed all over the world in every setting. I also hope that we demand the salaries we deserve for the life-changing work we do.

Since I've modeled what a social worker can be, there are currently more than ten children of our corporate clients who have chosen to get their social work degrees. They're doing it because they see the changes in their parents. So, now, I am paying back by helping attract the next generation to the field of social work. ■



## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND SOCIAL WORK



**Mariann Bischoff, Assistant Professor of Teaching & Management and Policy Field Specialist, and Christine Morales, Assistant Professor of Teaching, developed a course at Rutgers School of Social Work teaching environmental justice through a social work lens. They share their approach to teaching this topic, their hopes for their work, and some of the opportunities available to social workers interested in environmental justice.**

**Rutgers School of Social Work: Tell us about the work you're doing bridging the fields of environmental justice and social work.**

**Christine Morales:** A lot of what we do falls at the intersection of social work, environmental justice, and education. We sit right where all three of those pieces meet. We are trained as social workers, and our passion is environmental justice, so we're channeling this intersection into action through education by working with our students in the classroom and working with professionals by providing continuing education opportunities and professional workshops.

**RUSSW: What are your goals with this work?**

**CM:** I want to shift the social work paradigm. Mariann and I have noticed that social work tends to be very human centered, or anthropocentric. There's an invisible hierarchy that places humans at the top. To remove that hierarchy in our profession and make it less human centered forces us to see the interconnection that people have with the world. One of my goals is to galvanize more social workers into this work, however it shapes out for them. We're not prescribing certain interventions but are just suggesting that they get involved. There are so many social workers out there, and our profession can certainly make a dent and push the environmental justice movement forward.

**Mariann Bischoff:** Getting more people involved is a goal. One of the problems is that climate change and environmental degradation are such huge issues that people can feel demoralized by them. Whatever changes people are making individually, from

lowering the heat to recycling, might feel like it's not making a difference. We have to help people see how it is making a difference and also help them see the connection between Earth and its inhabitants. This work can seem like a huge uphill battle, but it can become something that can be nourishing when you are aware of your connection with other people that are working on the same issue in different ways.

**RUSSW: How can people get involved in this work?**

**CM:** We're not the first social workers to suggest that environmental justice or the environment should be included in social work, and we want to give credit where credit is due. But what I grapple with is there's no clear-cut pathway. While that can be seen as a challenge, it does give an opportunity for social workers to innovate. Because this issue is so large, the work needs to be broken down into smaller, actionable items that can be infused into the work that social workers already do. One concrete example for practitioners is to change their assessment to include questions like "How have environmental injustices impacted your life?" Just incorporating this concept into practices that we already do is one easy way to do it.

**MB:** People can get involved on a micro level, a mezzo level, and a macro level. In the course we teach on environmental justice, we have students do an intervention assignment. One student was inspired by the class to start a community garden. Another student did a lot of research on plastics, and it changed how she relates to plastics, but she's also very interested in doing advocacy work related to plastics. The personal level is important.

**RUSSW: What are some of the challenges you face doing this work?**

**CM:** Some of the challenges are personal. But of course, these personal challenges are brought on by structural forces. I'm talking specifically about imposter syndrome. It's something that I grapple with but working with Mariann is enriching. She reminds me of what I know.

Another challenge is the fact that the issue of the environment has typically been addressed by biological and environmental scientists, so carving a niche for the social work profession is both an opportunity and a challenge. Mariann and I were once at a conference mainly for scientists, and we asked the organizer how social workers could get involved. His response was to just show up, just be there. What's important is getting my voice heard, as a woman of color, but then also getting my voice heard as a representative of social work. Those are the challenges. Luckily, all of the scientists that we've been working with have been very open, and they want to hear from us. It's a matter of finding that connection and creating those networks and developing a coalition.

**MB:** I don't call it imposter syndrome, but it's the same thing. It's connected to oppressive systems, so I don't personalize it quite as much. For example, one of the challenges in teaching the work and how we approach teaching it is making sure not to teach at the students but to instead create a collaborative community environment where everyone's voice is important. It seems like a radical approach, and it's hard for me because I sometimes think "real" teachers lecture from PowerPoints. It's unhelpful and inefficient thinking, but I keep having those thoughts. Creating a place for people to believe in themselves and further their wisdom and lived experiences, to come out and mingle with other people, is a bit of a challenge from a pedagogical standpoint.

**RUSSW: What is your approach to teaching, Christine?**

**CM:** I'm in the doctoral program at the Graduate School of Education, and if I had to label my teaching pedagogies, the one that's overarching as of late is the trauma-informed teaching practices. I recognize that we're in a pandemic, and it's creating turmoil for students. I try to acknowledge that trauma while encouraging them to learn. I try to create a classroom space that's safe, where they feel like they can let go and just be a student or part of the classroom community for the time that we have together.

**RUSSW: What do you enjoy most about teaching environmental justice and social work?**

**CM:** The course is so genuine to who we are, and the assignments are so exciting to me. The first assignment we asked students to complete was a mind map, and we've asked them to do more creative things like produce videos, draw pictures, and write poems. I look at their responses, and I'm blown away. Many of the students haven't done this kind of creative work in years. That brings me joy.

**MB:** It's so profound that it can be hard to put it into words. We're seeing students reconnect with themselves and feel that their voice really matters.

**RUSSW: What do you think social work's role should be in environmental justice?**

**MB:** A lot of our work is facilitating different groups to come together. Social workers have really good people skills and community organizing skills, so we could be in a room with a group of scientists, and our role could be to move discussions forward and create spaces for them to connect.

**CM:** When I think about environmental justice, I see it as synonymous with economic, racial, and social justice. Much of the work social workers are already doing is well on its way to addressing environmental injustices, but we need to do it more intentionally. Our code of ethics provides the foundation, but we just have to shift it a bit so humans are not at the top of the invisible hierarchy.

**RUSSW: What are some of the opportunities that exist in bringing environmental justice and social work together?**

**CM:** Social workers are already placed in a lot of the areas where environmental injustices are occurring, so it's a matter of including the environmental justice work into your existing practice. People should also be more aware of what's going on environmentally and campaigning for things they believe in.

**MB:** One opportunity is within field education by placing students in organizations that work on environmental justice issues. It can create opportunities to develop relationships with organizations that work on environmental justice and keeping social work values alive in places that don't primarily focus on social work. ■





## DSW MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS MAKE SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH ACCESSIBLE TO A GLOBAL AUDIENCE

For years, the Rutgers School of Social Work Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program has transformed legions of experienced clinical social workers into leaders who promote individual, family, and community well-being. Students are trained to develop and disseminate clinical knowledge through peer-reviewed journal articles, national and international conference presentations, teaching, supervision, and innovative multimedia projects.

The multimedia project is a required component of a portfolio that students must complete in their final year of study. With guidance and support from Teaching Instructor Carol Cassidy, an educator and award-winning documentarian, students are taught to use video, audio, data visualizations, and other digital tools to advance human understanding while connecting with and serving their chosen audiences. By producing a dynamic, interactive multimedia project that synthesizes their scholarship, students make their work accessible and useful to a global audience.

"The multimedia project offers an innovative way to widely disseminate scholarly information to various audiences. Through these digital means, knowledge doesn't remain hidden in academic journals but instead becomes accessible to other clinical professionals, policy makers, and the lay public," said Michael LaSala, Professor and Director of the DSW Program.

From the onset, multimedia projects are designed for the screen and for a readership that assumes any important contemporary document is digital. DSW graduates are literate in the culture's most powerful means of communication and conversant with the challenges that digital technology poses for young and old alike.

Students who graduated from the DSW Program in May

completed the following multimedia projects, demonstrating the breadth of the cohort's work:

- "Helping Teachers Recognize Children's Trauma Symptoms and Manage Dysregulation" by Jennifer Agostino
- "Foodways, Social Identity, and Health for African Americans" by Allison Bates
- "Self-care and Elder Care: How to Help a Caregiver Care for Themselves while they Care for an Elderly Person" by Melissa Campbell
- "Thinking About Getting Your Doctor of Social Work Degree (DSW)?" by Micaela Costa
- "Best Practices in Responding to Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting in the United States" by Mariama Diallo
- "Treating Veterans Who Have Committed Sex Offenses: Approaches for General Outpatient Settings" by Alexandra Greenberg
- "The Wounded Healer" by Taji S. Karim-Reisch
- "Emerging Adults, Emerging Activists: A College Activism Retrospective and Practitioners Guide" by Kira O'Brien
- "Advocating for Gender Diverse Clients with Eating Disorders as Cisgender Providers" by Kayti Protos
- "Unlocking Homelessness in the Classroom" by Tara Ryan-DeDominicis
- "Working Autism, Visualizing Employment" by Sherri Wilson

To learn more, and for links to recent graduates' multimedia projects, visit [dsw.rutgers.edu](http://dsw.rutgers.edu). ■

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 Fredda Klein Sacharow DC'71  
 Gerald Sackin  
 Amy G. Sadeghi SSW'16  
 Devon C. Safran RC'04  
 Elizabeth C. Salerno SSW'02  
 Lourdes A. Salinas RBSNK'15  
 Jordan N. Sanders RC'05  
 Maria Santiago  
 Shuwanna V. Sapp-Greene SSW'11  
 Merna Schiff  
 Steven H. Schiff  
 Elfriede Schlesinger, Ph.D. GSNB'73  
 Ethan D. Schoolman  
 Larry R. Schwartz SSW'68  
 Elizabeth Semon  
 Sindu Shanmugas  
 Gregory Sharpe  
 Gregory Shatan

Dr. Derek G. Shendell  
 Gwendolyn T. Shrift  
 Rhoda Ann Silver SSW'73  
 Dorna Jaeger Silverman DC'67, GSED'84  
 Megan Simini  
 Richard Simon  
 Robert J. Sims, IV CCAS'18, SSW'19  
 Jason Siner  
 Karen Singer  
 Barbara G. Sirolli  
 Thomas R. Sirolli SSW'75  
 Lori Slomka  
 Linda Slonksnes  
 Gwendolyn H. Smith SSW'79  
 Sidney C. Snead, M.S.W. NCAS'64, SSW'76  
 Laurie Sneider UCNB'81, SSW'83  
 Lara Spano  
 Jonathan Spitzer  
 Adam F. Staats UCNB'04, SSW'10  
 Lisa H. Stafford SSW'91  
 Richard A. Stagliano RC'75  
 Julia T. Stahl, L.C.S.W. SSW'95  
 John B. Stanicki RC'92, SSW'94  
 Adam Starr  
 Ethan Starr  
 Hoya Starr  
 Nathaniel Starr  
 Olga Starr  
 Teresa Staten SSW'13  
 Steven M. Stern ENG'69  
 Kimberly A. Stollow SSW'15  
 Amy Strickler  
 Jessica Strong GSNB'13  
 Christine Sullivan  
 Robert J. Sullivan  
 Marcella R. Supnick, L.C.S.W. SSW'81  
 Jake M. Sussman SAS'14, SSW'18  
 Andy C. Tally  
 Theresa K. Tally CCAS'00, SSW'02  
 MaryAnne D. Tamm SSW'81  
 Dylan Tanbay  
 Reese Tanbay  
 Sloan Tanbay  
 Eileen M. Taveniere SSW'95  
 Bonnie Taylor  
 Courtney Teicher  
 Michael Teifeld  
 Naomi Fassler Theisz SSW'76  
 Andrea N. Thompson CCAS'14, SSW'16

Emmy Tiderington  
 Bessie Tomlin CCAS'01, SSW'02  
 John B. Tomlin  
 Alexander Toner  
 Diane Toner  
 Brenda M. Torres-Joyce, L.C.S.W. SSW'74  
 Harvey I. Trabb  
 Janet Lyn Golden Trabb DC'84  
 Rebecca Trump  
 Margaret M. Tuohy  
 Albert J. Turner RBSNK'02, UCN'02  
 Ruth Z. Valentine SSW'70  
 Karen E. VanOrden SSW'91  
 Nicolette A. Vasco  
 Carol A. Veome  
 Jennifer Cohen-Vigder  
 Alaina Vitta  
 Jordan Vitta  
 Gianna Volini-Jimenez  
 Jennifer Waddell  
 Derek Wallbank  
 Jinzhao Wang  
 Marlo O. Washington CCAS'15, SSW'16  
 Tomeco Washington  
 Andrew Wax  
 Judith L. Weinberg SSW'75  
 Robert M. Weinberg  
 Dr. Mark S. Weiner GSAPP'97, GSAPP'00  
 Leslie S. Weintraub GSED'05  
 Aymie L. Weiss CCAS'11, SSW'19  
 Dennis Weiss  
 James Weiss, Sr.  
 Susan Weiss  
 Sandra L. Weldon SSW'05  
 Cecily White  
 Kristin M. Will SSW'10  
 Julia C. Wnuk  
 Isabel Wolock, Ph.D. GSNB'66, GSNB'79  
 Melvin M. Wolock  
 Erin M. Wyckoff SAS'15  
 Ellen H. Yeagle GSNB'01  
 Suehae P. Yeo SAS'17  
 Kristin M. Young SSW'19  
 Holly Zanville  
 James J. Zanzuchi LC'74, SSW'90  
 Heather Zarnett  
 Richard Alan Zaugg SSW'71  
 Laurie Zazenski  
 Saul Zeichner SSW'62  
 Qingqing Zhu GSNB'20  
 Lauren R. Zippo

Lisa Zittis LC'86, SSW'89  
 Nicos A. Zittis ENG'87, RBSG'92

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**IN MEMORIAM**

We extend our deepest sympathy to the loved ones of the deceased alumni and friends listed below whose passing has been shared with the School between February through June 2021.

- Diane L. Altman SSW'86
- Edna H. Barry UCNB'81, SSW'85
- Lola Birth-Breed LC'85, SSW'88
- Bryna B. Bronstein SSW'73
- Louis W. Cherry SSW'71
- Louise P. Cohen LC'80, SSW'81
- Arlene S. Cooper UCC'82, SSW'83
- Shirley Cooperman Geismar DC'65, SSW'79
- Irene Cornish DC'75, SSW'84
- Shena Dance UCN'02, SSW'05
- Elizabeth A. Dubovsky SSW'75
- Sybil D. Hessing SSW'73
- James T. F. Hill, Jr. SSW'83
- Daniel L. Hoffman UCC'80, SSW'98
- Ruth F. Ignatoff SSW'68
- Dorothy Jones James LC'78, SSW'81
- Edith W. McIntyre SSW'70
- Joy Ogburn Phipps SSW'80
- Andrea Marie T. Petranto DC'86, SSW'92
- Georgiana M. Reynik CCAS'85, SSW'88
- Joan Rogers Taylor SSW'76
- Marthalene Spellman Howe LC'75, SSW'81
- Jerald A. Torano SSW'69
- Mary L. Vellucci CCAS'90, SSW'91
- Jack J. Wigler SB'52, SSW'63

**CLASSNOTES**

Thank you to all of our alumni who have sent us their news and updates. We encourage you to keep us posted with any good news about your job, your life, or your family. Email your news to [lzazenski@ssw.rutgers.edu](mailto:lzazenski@ssw.rutgers.edu).

**Jeanette Alexander SSW'05** is happy to share that this fall she will be walking down the aisle to the love of her life James K. Johnson. They will be married in Atlantic City, NJ at One Atlantic Events on September 16, 2021.

**Elizabeth Antonowicz, SSW'21** participated in a White House Executive Briefing to speak about the impacts of the student loan debt crisis and why immediate and long-term solutions are critical. This was pivotal for the social work profession as it was the first time such a briefing has occurred, giving social workers the chance to emphasize the importance of their presence at decision-making tables.



In the daytime, **Richard Cohen, SSW'99** works with children and adolescents in their homes throughout all of New Jersey, addressing significant concerns related to depression, anger, bullying and family conflicts. In the evening, he writes. Just released, *FOREVER SILENCED* is a psychological-based cozy mystery. In follow-up to his nonfiction work, *The Love Drug: Marching to the Beat of Ecstasy*, Cohen has, once again, put pen to paper—this time in the form of a novel written in a playful, clever, and entertaining way. Cohen has also published extensively on MDMA ("Ecstasy") and subsequently his works have been cited in dozens of journals worldwide including *Behavioral Brain Research*, *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, *Progress in Neuropsychopharmacology and Biological Psychiatry*, *Journal of Forensic Sciences*, and *European Psychiatry*.



**Kate Greene, SSW'14** (formerly Kate Thomas) married her partner Kyle and relocated to Boston, Massachusetts where she is working at the Greater Boston Food Bank in development and foundation relations.

**Frank Picone, SSW'00** is a LCSW, Advanced Trainer Nurtured Heart Approach as well as a certified school social worker. For the past 30 years, Mr. Picone has worked in a variety of settings and roles, including in community mental health centers as a crisis screener and primary therapist, in a family



be trauma-informed and reduce the need for seclusion and restraint. For the past 20 years as Founder and Director of Positive Culture Change, he has provided transformational training and consultation in the areas of leadership, workforce development, creating positive and motivating work cultures, and trauma-attuned approaches for residential treatment programs and school systems throughout the country. Currently he is the Chief Training Officer at the CTARI Institute and the Center for Great Expectations.

**Marleina Ubel, SSW'21** accepted a two-year fellowship through the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, D.C. Through the fellowship, she will be working at New Jersey Policy Perspective in Trenton as a policy analyst on issues related to criminal justice and policing. She is excited to advocate for progressive policies, work with social and racial justice groups, and lobby on behalf of vulnerable New Jerseyans.

After almost four years working in international project management in the Chinese nonprofit sector, **Jiang Wu, SSW'15** moved to the bio-pharmaceutical industry. He currently serves as the corporate communications manager at Evive Biotech, a global biologics company developing novel therapies for patients with cancer and inflammatory disorders, in Beijing, China.