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265

...students in the class of 2015 made a gift to the Students Supporting Students Campaign.

Because of them, 13 students will receive scholarships next year.



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A P U B L I C A T I O N O F R U T G E R S S C H O O L O F S O C I A L W O R K

SUMMER 2015



INCOME INEQUALITY:

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF THE CLASS DIVIDE



S U M M E R 2 0 1 5

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M E S S A G E F R O M T H E D E A N

Greetings Alumni and Friends,

AT RUTGERS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, our faculty and students study the social policies that reinforce poverty and make the economic divide unbridgeable for many of today's middle and lower income individuals and families. We, along with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), are concerned about "growing inequality, stagnant wages, and high unemployment in the U.S." Joblessness and economic insecurity contribute to the incidence of mental illness, family violence, suicide, substance abuse, crime, and diminished capacity for health, family, and community functioning. In our cover story, called, "Income Inequality: Understanding the Impact of the Class Divide," we examine the impact of the socioeconomic gap on Americans.

I hope this issue will spur discussion among students, faculty and alumni about the role of social workers in advocating for economic justice and social policy reform. The NASW recommends that social workers support the following:

- Funding and support of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).
- Funding and support of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Support of legislative and administrative strategies that address pay equity.
- Support of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.
- Advocating for legislation, policies, and regulations that affect those who may not be able to advocate for themselves.

We know that these programs and initiatives are just the beginning, for surely meaningful, living-wage work for all its citizens is what lifts a nation out of instability. If our country is to thrive, we must find a way forward toward a socially just economic environment.

In other news, it was my pleasure to visit with many alumni at several spring events, including Rutgers Day, the School of Social Work Career Fair on the Newark Campus, and the NASW-NJ conference. Rutgers School of Social Work educates more social workers than any other college or university in the state, and our graduates can be found in prestigious roles across New Jersey, the country and around the globe. We also strive to assist our graduates in finding satisfying employment or to make a career change. This year's Career Fair was attended by numerous agencies and businesses, all with active openings. I encourage recent graduates and alumni to check our website for ongoing job postings.

Many of you attended the awards ceremony to honor Bill Waldman with the 2015 NASW-NJ Lifetime Achievement Award. Bill has elevated the field of social work and enhanced the lives of New Jersey's families. He inspires our students to new heights of service and success. The entire school congratulates him on this prestigious award for a career of service to others, and I encourage those of you who know him to do the same.

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



"The causes which destroyed the ancient republics were numerous; but in Rome, one principal cause was the vast inequality of fortunes."

— Noah Webster, American editor and writer

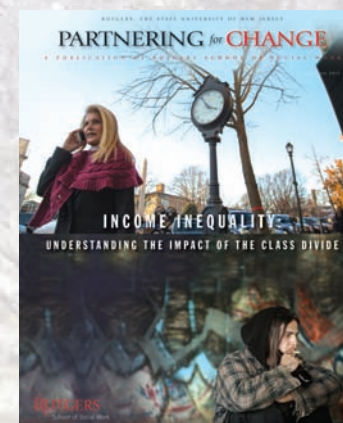
t h o u g h t s



“By some estimates, income and wealth inequality are near their highest levels in the past hundred years, much higher than the average during that time span and probably higher than for much of American history before then.”

FEDERAL RESERVE CHAIRWOMAN JANET YELLEN

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S



ON THE COVER

representing income inequality:
photography above by Ed Kashi/VII
below by iStock

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Congratulations to this year's graduates, and to convocation speaker Ashley Blazer Biden. Read more on page 25

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Students Win First Prize in National Student Philanthropy Competition "Generous U"

The Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy at Brandeis University announced that Students Supporting Students Campaign Committee within Rutgers School of Social Work has taken top prize in the national student philanthropy competition, Generous U, and will receive \$10,000.

Students Supporting Students is a student led initiative at Rutgers School of Social Work that aims to eliminate debt for future students. The campaign committee members "recognize the financial hardships associated with working towards an MSW degree, and are active in trying to fight that, and trying to lessen that burden," says Sarah Brois, an online student who serves on the committee. Kareim Oliphant, SSW' 15 and co-chair of the committee adds, "If we can do everything we can do to reduce the debt load for MSW students, that's something that everyone, nationwide, can benefit from."

The Students Supporting Students program was started in 2012 and aims to reduce student debt by cultivating a culture of philanthropy among students, alumni, and faculty. Over the last three years, the program has provided scholarships that benefited 30 MSW students and increased the number of graduating MSW students who now make a donation to support continuing students from 1% in 2011 to 58% in 2014.

You can view the winning video entry on YouTube at youtube.com/RutgersSSW.

To make a gift to support student scholarships, please visit socialwork.rutgers.edu/GIVE.



Scholarships and fellowships reflect the generosity of families and friends who stand alongside our students and help them to succeed. On May 18, 2015, we celebrated the meaningful support provided by our donors and the achievements of our student recipients at the Scholarship Recognition Reception (see photos below).



NASW-NJ Lifetime Achievement Award for Bill Waldman

The NASW-NJ 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes an individual who demonstrates the best in social work values and professional accomplishments over the social worker's entire career. This year the award was presented to William Waldman, professor of professional practice and Executive in Residence.

A Rutgers School of Social Work grad, he began his distinguished career as a case-worker with the Essex County Welfare Board. He soon was appointed the County's administrator for Food Stamp and Employment & Training programs, and became director of the Department of Human Services in Middlesex County. In 1982, he was named NASW-NJ's Social Worker of the Year.

Governor Thomas H. Kean appointed Waldman as Acting Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Human Services in 1989. Governor James J. Florio appointed him as Commissioner in 1992 and Governor Christine Todd Whitman reappointed him as Commissioner in 1994. As DHS Commissioner, Waldman transformed services in health care, child welfare, mental illness, and developmental disabilities.

He managed a \$7 billion budget and led a workforce of 19,000 in expanding services to more than one million New Jersey citizens. His skill in reaching out to others made it possible for him to successfully implement Governor Christine Todd Whitman's *WorkFirst New Jersey* welfare reform effort. This effort resulted in a drop in New Jersey's welfare caseload by more than 50 percent, as record numbers of recipients joined the workforce. In another arena, he oversaw the *New Jersey Kid Care* program, which expanded eligibility for Medicaid and provided high quality health care for thousands of children in lower and moderate-income families.

Today, he inspires social work students as a faculty member and mentor at Rutgers. His lectures draw consistent praise from students who view his vast experience and his ability to connect with others as an essential element in their educational experience.

Throughout his career, Bill Waldman has been a vigorous voice for the voiceless and has provided hope, opportunity, and a better life for the most vulnerable among us. ■

FACULTY/STAFF IN THE NEWS



Michael LaSala

Michael C. LaSala, associate professor, was funded by the Archimedes Foundation of the European Union and Tallinn University to teach solution-focused and family therapy for five weeks in Estonia, where he also taught workshops on working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) families and was a discussant at an international conference entitled: *LGBT Rights in the Baltics* at Tallinn University of Technology. During his stay in

Estonia, he provided clinical training and consultation to members of the Estonian Family Therapy Association and collaborated on research investigating the perspectives and assessment principals of child protective workers in that country. Following his stay in Estonia, LaSala gave workshops to members of the Lutheran Family Counseling Centers in Turku Finland and the Swedish Family Therapy Association in Stockholm.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BYRON



Stephen Crystal

Stephen Crystal, Board of Governors professor and associate director for Health Services Research at the Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research, is the principal investigator of an award totaling \$1,290,034 over three years. The project, titled Improving Medication Safety in Nursing Home Dementia Care, is being supported by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and will bring together nursing facility state regulators and quality improvement organizations to track the medication safety progress of each state.

Dr. Crystal's work, which has resulted in more than 250 publications, includes

many widely cited books and research articles on old-age policy and services for the elderly; on the use and outcomes of psychotropic medications and other mental health treatments; on HIV/AIDS care; and on numerous other health care and social policy topics. He has also been an important contributor to research on long-term care and mental health among the elderly. His work on mental health services has contributed significantly to understanding problems of healthcare access, quality and disparities in large usual care populations, particularly those served by Medicare and Medicaid.



Darcy Clay Siebert

Darcy Clay Siebert, associate professor, became the first Rutgers faculty member to be named a fellow of the Society for Social Work and Research. She was one of 27 inducted in 2015, joining an existing group of only 45 other researchers across North America. Dr. Siebert's substantive work focuses primarily on the occupational and behavioral health issues of helping professionals, utilizing identity theories and employing specialized research methods tailored to the collection of

sensitive data from cautious participants. She is currently analyzing data she collected from nurses, physicians, dentists, lawyers, and social workers. Her methodological work focuses on psychometrics and advanced statistical methods. She and her husband, Dr. Carl Siebert, offered multiple statistical workshops and faculty development institutes at national conferences the past few years, and they will have a nonparametrics book published in early 2016. Dr. Siebert also has specialized expertise and interest in curriculum development, and from 2010 to 2013, she created and implemented the Addiction Counselor Training (ACT) certificate program with colleague Dr. Nancy Violette from the Center of Alcohol Studies with a \$3.4 million grant from the NJ Division of Mental Health and Addictions Services. Previous accomplishments also include directing a Doctoral Program and spearheading the complete revision of its curriculum; presenting and publishing dozens of papers; and being primary investigator or co-PI on numerous research grants.



Chien-Chung Huang

Chien-Chung Huang, professor and director of the Huamin Research Center, published a study on migrant children in China. The study found that millions of migrant children and those left behind in China's poor rural provinces by parents working in factory towns face greater psychological and behavioral problems. "Family migration negatively affects children, leaving them with more social skills problems and mental health issues," says Huang.



Karen Zurlo

Karen Zurlo, assistant professor, was one of nine members of the Gerontological Society of America invited to represent the Society and to present a paper at the International Symposium on Public Policy Challenges in an Aging Society at the Institute of Public Policy and Governance, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, Shanghai, China in June 2015.

In addition to Zurlo's research on global aging issues, she has a keen interest in the broad area of retirement security, which includes factors that influence financial well-being

(such as social policies and health related factors) and the effects of financial strains (such as debt or insufficient health insurance coverage) on mental health. Zurlo also brings a unique perspective to social work because of her training as an MBA in her early career, and now as an MSW and PhD in her academic role. She is a faculty member in the Management and Policy (MAP) concentration at the SSW, and teaches Macro Practice, Social Welfare Policy, Research Methods, and International Social Work.



Sarah McMahon

Sarah McMahon, assistant professor and associate director of the Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC), participated in a roundtable discussion on March 18 at the Statehouse with retired Arizona Representative Gabrielle Giffords to discuss the intersection of domestic violence and gun violence. Giffords, who was critically wounded by a gunshot to the head, joined State Senator Loretta Weinberg and Assemblywoman Gabriela Mosquera to discuss "the need for laws that protect women and families from gun violence."

McMahon's research interests include the etiology, prevention, and measurement of violence against women and

children as well as social work education. She is currently pursuing research on the effectiveness of community-level prevention efforts, such as bystander intervention, that are aimed at changing the social norms that support relationship abuse and sexual violence.

VAWC is at the forefront of the issue of the prevention of sexual assault on campus. McMahon and her research team piloted #iSpeak, a student survey and evidence-informed method for assessing the climate regarding sexual assault on the school's New Brunswick campus. VAWC was invited by the White House to pilot the survey, the only school chosen nationally for this project.



Chancellor's Scholar for Child Wellbeing

Michael MacKenzie, Ph.D.

Michael MacKenzie, Ph.D., has joined the faculty as Chancellor's Scholar for Child Wellbeing and associate professor of Social Work. Previously an associate professor at Columbia University, MacKenzie completed his Ph.D., MSW and Master of Arts in Developmental Psychology at Michigan. He became interested in developmental pathways involving

abuse and neglect through his work with children in his family's residential group homes in his native Canada. That work sparked his passion for improving the lives of maltreated children and those growing up in out-of-home care through early relationship-based intervention strategies and alternative models of care. MacKenzie is one of a small

number of social work researchers with graduate training in molecular genetics and endocrinology, allowing him to incorporate work on the stress hormone system and gene expression into his transdisciplinary studies of early social deprivation and harsh parenting. MacKenzie is also a "Chancellor's Scholar," part of the Chancellor's Excellence Fund.

Welcome New Faculty Members

Rutgers School of Social Work presents our new faculty members. These scholars have graduated from top programs nationwide and bring to Rutgers both exciting research and varied life experience.

Emily Bosk, Ph.D.

Emily Bosk, Ph.D., has joined the faculty as an assistant professor. She received a Ph.D. in Social Work and Sociology from the University of Michigan, as well as an MSW. Her research interests include intervention with high-risk children, youth and families; child welfare; prevention of child maltreatment; intersection of social service systems; implementation science; evidence-based practice; improving professional practice; parent-child relational disturbances; trauma; and infant mental health.

Marla Blunt Carter, MSW

Marla Blunt-Carter, MSW, has joined the faculty as an assistant professor of Professional Practice on the Camden campus. Blunt-Carter is a graduate of the Rutgers' MSW program. She has worked as director of Community Planning and Policy Development for the Delaware HIV Consortium and director of Constituent Services for then U.S. Senator Joe Biden. She served as the statewide campaign director for the 2008 Obama/Biden Presidential campaign and on the Washington staff in the Executive Office of President Barack Obama as senior agency liaison.

Laura Cuesta, Ph.D.

Laura Cuesta, Ph.D., has joined the faculty as an assistant professor. She graduated with a Ph.D. in Social Welfare from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has a Specialist degree in Social Economics from the Universidad de los Andes, Colombia, and a MA in Economics from the Universidad de los Andes, Colombia. Her research interests include international approaches to child and family

policy; poverty and inequality; and parental incarceration among disadvantaged families.

Felix Muchomba, Ph.D.

Felix Muchomba, Ph.D., has joined the faculty as an assistant professor. He graduated with a Ph.D. in Social Policy and Policy Analysis concentration from the Columbia University School of Social Work. He also has a Master of Public Health Degree from Columbia. His research interests include gender inequalities within the context of social change, particularly economic development; family gender inequalities in resources, such as farmland, time; and how these gender inequalities affect health. This research is focused on East Africa and East and South Asia. Muchomba grew up in Kenya, which engendered his interest in poor families in developing countries.

Emmy Tiderington, Ph.D.

Emmy Tiderington, Ph.D., has joined the faculty as an assistant professor. She graduated with a Ph.D. in Social Work from NYU's Silver School of Social Work. She received her MSW from the University of Michigan. Her research interests include recovery-oriented practices in supportive housing programs. She brings over a decade of experience as a service provider and clinical supervisor in housing and mental health services for people with serious mental illness. ■

D

URING A FEBRUARY HEARING by the House Financial Services Committee, Federal Reserve Chairman Janet Yellen delivered a speech on economic opportunity and inequality. She offered extensive research on the evidence of increasing income and wealth inequality between the wealthiest and poorest households in America. She noted that the disparity in wealth and income in the U.S. has grown wider for several decades. Despite evidence backed by data from the government's Survey of Consumer Finances, Yellen's message was met with anger by Republicans who accused her of political bias. In challenging Yellen's discussion, Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-S.C.), told her, "You're sticking your nose in places you have no business to be."

Yellen has continued to respond with statements that indicate that she views the declining economic state of America's middle and lower classes to be very much her business.

"The extent and continuing increase in inequality in the United States greatly concern me. I think it is appropriate to ask whether this trend is compatible with values rooted in our nation's history, among them the high value Americans have traditionally placed on equality of opportunity," said Ms. Yellen at a conference on economic opportunity and inequality.

A GROWING DIVIDE

Recent research by the Pew Research Center found that the gap between America's upper and middle-income families has grown to its highest level since the Federal Reserve began collecting these data thirty years ago.

Some fast facts on the issue:

- **The U.S. is more unequal than most of its developed-world peers.** America has a higher degree of income inequality than almost any other developed country. Only three of the 34 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development rank higher: Chile, Mexico and Turkey.
- **Wealth inequality is even greater than income inequality.** Economists Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman showed that in America the wealthiest 160,000 families own as much wealth as the poorest 145 million families. The median wealth of the nation's upper-income families was seven times the median wealth of middle-income families in 2013.
- **The nation's largest cities have the most income inequality.** Across the 50 largest cities, households in the 95th percentile of income earned 11.6 times as much as households as the 20th percentile.
- **The black-white income gap in the U.S. persists.** When it comes to household income and wealth, the gaps between blacks and whites have widened. The poverty rate for blacks continues to be three times that of whites.
- **Life expectancy is lower in places with more income inequality.** New research by the Population Health Institute found that people living in a community with high income inequality were more likely to die before the age of 75 than people in more equal communities.

INCOME INEQUALITY: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF THE CLASS DIVIDE



“IN OUR STUDY, THIRTY PERCENT OF THE RESPONDENTS HAD UNSECURED DEBT. THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS DEBT WAS A SIGNIFICANT PREDICTOR OF DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AND LOWER PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING.”

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BYRON

RUTGERS SSW FACULTY EXAMINE THE ISSUE

Associate professor Lenna Nepomnyaschy has extensively studied the effect of income inequity in America. Her research interests are focused on how poverty and inequality impact child and family health and well-being. She examines the impact of social policies, particularly related to fathers and child support, on the well-being of families and children.

“The latest research shows the U.S. to have the highest inequality of income of all developed countries. The effects of inequality are increasing, especially in the areas of health care, access to education and wellbeing outcomes. Families with young children are the most likely to be poor, with 20 percent of families with children reporting food insecurity in the home,” says Nepomnyaschy.

She describes a picture of poor children falling behind from birth. Babies from lower income mothers are more likely to be born prematurely and with low birthweight. By the time they begin kindergarten, they are already behind their higher-income peers because they are more likely to live in unhealthy and unsafe neighborhoods, have much less access to high quality child care and preschools, and have poor nutrition. These gaps continue and actually increase as children progress through school because they are more likely to attend low-performing schools, their parents have fewer resources for enrichment activities, and they are more likely to have unaddressed health problems, such as asthma, obesity, and dental decay than their higher-income peers. At all points in the life cycle, high income families have the advantage.

Another area of concern is access to affordable health care. The poor are frequently one medical emergency away from financial ruin. Medical bills are the biggest cause of U.S. bankruptcies, according to a 2013 study by NerdWallet Health, which used data from the U.S. Census and Centers for Disease Control.

“We will see if the Affordable Care Act will close this huge gap in access to health care. When a medical emergency arises, the first thing the uninsured do is use up what little savings they have to pay for it,” says Nepomnyaschy.

Access to higher education also separates the rich from the poor, with low income students having much less access to college. The federal Pell Grant program, which is designed to help college students from low-income families afford college costs, now covers less than one-third of the cost of attendance at public four-year university, the lowest in its history. The cost of obtaining a college degree has increased 1,120 percent in three decades.

“Lack of access results in so much wasted talent, and it is so inefficient economically. Even when disadvantaged students have the skills and credentials to be accepted to elite colleges, they are much less likely to apply because they are not aware of these opportunities, and once accepted, they are far less likely to attend, because of the perceived cost. At the same time, evidence suggests that low-income students have the most to gain from attendance at elite universities,” says Nepomnyaschy.

Poor children with access to high quality child care do better across the board than those without. Associate Professor Myungkook Joo reports that child care assistance has a huge effect on a poor parent’s ability to earn more income. In his study of flexibility in child care subsidy program rules, including eligibility requirements, subsidy payment methods, and

co-payment rates, Joo found that variations in the availability and in the generosity of child care subsidy had a significant impact on low-income mothers’ hours of work.

“The study found that the odds of the mothers who lived in generous states working full-time were 1.65 times higher than those who lived in stringent states working full-time. Levels of subsidy encourage recipient mothers to work longer and help to close income gaps,” says Joo.

A GROWING DIVIDE

As the gap widens between the richest and poorest Americans, and the middle class declines, older adults also become more economically vulnerable. Many older adults experience psychological and financial stress, which interferes with aging comfortably. Assistant professor Karen Zurlo found in her research that unsecured debt, one form of financial stress, frequently has a detrimental effect on the mental health of older individuals. In middle-aged and older Americans, unsecured debt – which includes debt from credit cards, student loans, medical bills, and child support – was found to have negative effects on mental health because of the associated depressive symptoms and reports of decreased psychological well-being. Secured debt, like a mortgage, is backed by collateral to reduce risk, unlike unsecured debt.

“In our study, thirty percent of the respondents had unsecured debt. The magnitude of this debt was a significant predictor of depressive symptoms and lower psychological well-being. Perceived control over personal financial circumstances was a significant predictor of higher psychological well-being,” reports Zurlo. “Until the main sources of income, namely savings, pensions, and Social Security, are more secure for older adults, many older Americans will experience financial insecurity and stress in retirement. And if public policy can attenuate the effects of income inequality in this country, young and older Americans, alike, will benefit.”

Professor Chien-Chung Huang, whose previous research has focused on examining social policy, such as welfare and child support policy, reducing income inequality and poverty in single-parent families, has found that child support enforcement improves the economic well-being and reduces the poverty rate for families. Strong child support enforcement is associated with low welfare utilization, and high women labor participation and father involvement, all of which contribute to improving well-being and reducing poverty.

His recent research has examined other ways to reduce income inequality, particularly on tax policy and philanthropy. With respect to charitable giving, the government can use tax incentives to encourage affluent people to voluntarily share their wealth with others. The charitable tax deduction varies among countries as well, and the U.S. has generous charitable tax deduction, up to 50% of taxable income.

Huang describes the role that social workers must play in advocating for social policy change.

“Social workers should be advocates for social policies that help individuals and families who struggle to not fall further behind financially. By supporting family leave policies, universal child care, child support collection and charitable giving, social workers can be a voice for those who suffer most from income inequality, children from poor families.” ■

NATIONAL SERVICE:

A PROPOSAL FOR OUR NATION AND OUR PROFESSION

BY WILLIAM WALDMAN

A

s a nation, and consequently as a profession, we face a multitude of risks, threats and challenges in today's global environment. No day seems to go by without news accounts of some combination of terrorism, regional armed conflict, resurgent nationalism, refugee crises, genocides, catastrophic climate change driven weather events and others. Each one of these issues has enormous consequences for all of us. As

social workers we are often part of the first responder teams to such events as well the providers of trauma informed services afterwards and over time. Yet, the greatest challenge to our nation is not any of these — our greatest vulnerability is comprised of a confluence of domestic trends that, taken together, threaten our vision, values and unity as a nation as well as our ability to lead and respond to global issues. **These include:**

- The vast and well documented increase in income and wealth inequality in our nation which reflects that the top one percent of individuals control 25% of the nation's income and 40% of its wealth;
- The stagnation of wages which makes what is perceived as the American dream consisting of home ownership, a college education, and a decent home further out of reach for so many;
- The continued and growing intersection of race and class in our nation which results in a disproportionate number of individuals and families of color in poverty with attendant less favorable life outcomes related to morbidity, mortality, incarceration rates and others;
- The growing national response to the deaths of young men of color resulting from confrontations with local police;
- The fraying of our social safety net with growing threats to the sustainability of our social insurance and income support programs;
- The corrosive and escalating impact of money on our political processes especially given the impact of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in the matter of Citizens United versus the Federal Election Commission; and;
- The erosion of the "vital center" of American political thought coupled with polarization of elected officials and the resulting gridlock of our policy and political processes.

One might define American "exceptionalism" in terms of economic, military and technological prowess — but if there truly is



William Waldman is a lecturer and executive in residence at Rutgers School of Social Work.

such exceptionalism, it emanates more from our efforts to make our country socially and economically a land of equal opportunity; one with a vibrant middle class, a viable safety net, and one that is replete with individual freedoms, supports and protections. If we are unable to reverse or redirect the confluence of factors noted above, we may well not have the strength, unity, and perseverance to address the extraordinary challenges we face.

How is it that we mend the frayed fabric of our society, restore a sense of national inter-connectedness and purpose? How is it that we have the majority groups that make up the population of our Nation no longer regard and deal with members of the minority groups as "the other"? How do we move from gridlock to bipartisanship in our political and policy domains and from ideology to practicality and compromise in resolving our differences? There are no easy answers to any of these profound dilemmas and the feasibility and likelihood of the emergence of a comprehensive response to all is extremely limited.

Despite the above, there may be some relatively incremental but important initiatives that may be undertaken that lead us in the right direction. A specific one that comes to mind is a two-year program of required national service for all youth in our nation that might take place upon either graduation from high school or college. A choice of venue might be offered that would include military service, environmental remediation, construction and repair of the nation's infrastructure, work in social welfare programs to benefit vulnerable populations, working in health care and education in underserved areas and others. There would be no exceptions or exemptions so that youth from all backgrounds could join together for a common purpose.

There needs to be a way for each of us to take responsibility and a sense of ownership for our nation and do our part by making a contribution of our time and effort. A well-managed and adequately financed program of mandatory national service could provide an opportunity to do that.

Currently, our youth often embark on very different pathways

predicated on class, race and other factors. The pervasive use of social media reinforces the isolation of one group from the other. In some ways our nation has devolved into physical and virtual gated communities with little opportunities for meaningful interaction. Online education and technological developments might further that trend.

Certainly the creation of a mandatory national service program would require a significant investment of dollars and political capital, yet the return on investment might also be substantial. For example, we could maintain our infrastructure now or pay more later when it

needs replacement; we could reach out to our medically underserved population with prevention and early intervention services or pay more later for emergency room and hospital care; we could remediate environmental issues now or wait until the affected families and communities generate much higher costs for our health care system. There are many more such examples of possibilities, but the ultimate benefit might be the degree to which such an initiative generates understanding and respect for others; and, creates a sense of national purpose, common cause and unity.

There is no question that the profession of social work could contribute much to the planning, design and implementation of such an effort. We know how to create programs that support and develop our youth, we know how to manage such initiatives and we have the clinical skills to assist

those youth that are troubled.

As the Beatles classic song goes "you may call me a dreamer" but some dreams are worth pursuing and maintaining the status quo over time may prove to be a nightmare. Mandatory national service is not the solution, but could be a key component in a broad scale revitalization effort to reconnect our nation, through our youth, with both its roots and its promise. ■



**THERE NEEDS TO BE A WAY
FOR EACH OF US TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY
AND A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP FOR OUR
NATION AND DO OUR PART BY
MAKING A CONTRIBUTION OF OUR TIME
AND EFFORT.**



Center for Leadership and Management

The Center for Leadership and Management (CLM) is extending its reach. After receiving a grant from the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, CLM is partnering with county welfare agencies (CWAs) across New Jersey to discover, assess, and analyze programs, and to help to enhance leadership practices. These 21 agencies throughout the state provide services including general assistance, food stamps, emergency housing assistance and welfare.

"They work with some of the most vulnerable populations in New Jersey," says Bert Goldberg, ACSW, MSW, executive director, Center for Leadership and Management, and associate professor of Professional Practice. "These populations include people who are experiencing extreme poverty, new immigrant populations, people who have various disabilities, both physical and mental," Goldberg said. In addition, the Center provides training for master's level social work interns and consults with area nonprofits."



Institute for Families (IFF)

The mission of the Institute for Families (IFF) is to support and strengthen individuals, families, and communities by building the capacity of human service professionals and organizations through training, evaluation and research, and direct service.

Our **New Jersey Child Welfare Training Partnership** offers 100+ courses to support 20,000 participants to attend 1,250+ annual training days for child welfare professionals, including specialty topics on very young children and human trafficking.

Thirty-five students graduated from college through our **Transitions for Youth** program, which serves nearly 400 youth aging out of the child welfare system and pursuing a college education. Our **Youth Advisory Boards** brought together youth ages 14-22 on a bi-monthly basis in 15 NJ counties to develop leadership skills and advocate for policy and practice change.

The **Price Family Fellows Foundation Program** supported 20 Rutgers students transitioning out of the child welfare system.

Our **New Jersey Child Support Institute (NJCSI)** delivered 136

trainings serving 1,490 participants across the state, offered 16 web-based trainings completed by 2,054 participants, and facilitated 21 conference workshops.

IFF conducts applied research and offers technical support for several State and local partners. The **Sandy Children and Families Health Study (S-CAFH)** provides longitudinal field research on 1,300 people regarding their well-being in areas of New Jersey most severely impacted by Superstorm Sandy. Our **NJ Collaborative Adoption Recruitment, Education and Support (NJ CARES) program** provides intensive child focused recruitment for a random selection of 20 youth, plus training for 150 resource parents in understanding trauma, and for 50 post-adoption treatment providers. IFF is also studying the implementation of the **Protective Factors Framework** in Newark, and is leading a quality assurance and technical assistance center to improve capacity of 200+ forensic child abuse and neglect evaluators across New Jersey.

To support IFF, visit support.rutgers.edu/SocialWork.



Center for International Social Work (CISW)

Rutgers students from the CISW visited the United Nations for two events this year. The first was Social Work Day. This UN event is an opportunity for those involved in the helping professions to celebrate social service work, discuss best practices, network, inspire, and learn from each other. This event promotes good social work practice as it brings attention to global social problems in localized contexts and provides advocacy opportunities. It also promotes the importance of social workers and their value in the professional landscape. This helps to internalize social work values in policy and legislation and promote the value of the profession.

Students also enjoyed the Winter

Youth Assembly and joined students from the Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy and the GAIA Centers. The overall purpose was to facilitate discussion, foster information sharing, connect stakeholders and program facilitators, and inspire those involved in furthering the Millennium Development Goals. This assembly was the epitome of thinking globally and acting locally in that the UN collectively convenes individuals from around the world who represent interests in global issues such as: mental health, gender based violence, basic education, healthcare, environmental issues, and child maltreatment.

Visit support.rutgers.edu/SocialWork.



Huamin Research Center

■ The Huamin Research Center and Rutgers China Office co-hosted a distinguished scholar lecture by Dr. Jiangang Zhu entitled "Accountability of Civic Organizations in China" in April. Dr. Jiangang Zhu is a professor and the Executive Dean of the School of Philanthropy at Sun Yat-Sen University. Professor William Waldman provided remarks to the lecture.

■ Lisa Lawson, a 2014 China Study Abroad program participant, is developing a life skills program for mental health rehabilitation patients in Beijing, China, with help from the Huamin Research Center. The project incorporates life skill improvement through plant care and maintenance, environmental responsibility, and knowledge on health and nutrition.

■ From May 21 to June 17, the Center hosted the 5th China Study Abroad program with the Rutgers GAIA Center. The program introduced students to China's social welfare system and social work practice.

■ On May 29, the Center hosted the International Conference on Capital, Philanthropy, and Sharing at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China. At the conference, U.S. and Chinese nonprofit leaders, researchers, and philanthropists discussed the development of nonprofit sector and modern philanthropy from a global perspective. The Chairman of the Huamin Charity Foundation, Dr. Dezhi Lu, gave a keynote speech.

■ The Rutgers China Office and the Huamin Research Center co-hosted the Rutgers-China Bridge Program in Social Work and Public Policy in August. This program offers Chinese university students an opportunity to attend lectures and workshops at Rutgers' prestigious School of Social Work. To support the Huamin Research Center, please visit, support.rutgers.edu/SocialWork.



Center on Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC)

■ VAWC sponsored a screening of the documentary, "THE HUNTING GROUND" on March 10 at the Douglass Campus Center. THE HUNTING GROUND is a discussion-provoking documentary that exposes the issue of rape on U.S. college campuses, institutional responses, and the complex toll rape culture has on students and their families. In attendance were Ruth Anne Koenick, director of the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at Rutgers University, Amy Zierling, producer of the documentary, Judy Postmus, associate professor & VAWC director, and Sarah McMahon, assistant professor & VAWC associate director.

■ VAWC released findings from its report, "SCREAMING to Prevent Violence," which highlights key research points from its recently completed CDC-funded study about preventing campus sexual assault. Overall, the study demonstrated that intervention from SCREAM (Students Challenging Reality and Educating Against Myths) Theater resulted in a number of positive outcomes for students who participated, including positively impacting bystander behaviors, especially in the short term.

To support VAWC, visit support.rutgers.edu/SocialWork.

Center for Gambling Studies

The New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement released the Responsible Gaming Internet impact report for the first year of authorized Internet gaming in New Jersey. This is the first in a series of four annual reports required by N.J.S.A 5:12-95.18. This study is the first comprehensive examination of online betting patterns and responsible gaming features in the United States. Lia Nower, Ph.D., professor and director of the Center for Gambling Studies,

along with the Division, compiled the necessary data for this report, which focuses primarily on a statistical analysis of the first year of Internet gaming in New Jersey as well as the use of responsible gaming features such as deposit limits, time limits, loss limits, cooling off periods, self-exclusion and their effect on Internet gambling behavior. Subsequent reports will focus on play patterns, the use of responsible gaming controls as well as the prevalence of

problem Internet gaming in New Jersey. "New Jersey is one of the first states to regulate Internet gaming and to focus on developing a responsible gaming framework that is based on actual evidence. This gives us a unique opportunity to really understand how players bet, who sets limits on play, and what indicators are important for reduction of harm going forward," said Dr. Nower. ■

NEWS FROM OUR PROGRAMS



MSW Online

The MSW 100% Online Program continues to grow, with our sixth cohort of students starting in Summer 2015 and our first cohort entering the advanced portion of the program. Our students continue to come from diverse backgrounds and geographic regions, spanning across the country in states such as New Jersey, New York, Florida, Virginia, California and Arizona. The online program continues to offer flexibility to our online students, many of whom are working full time and managing multiple responsibilities, by allowing students to complete course work online and field work over seven semesters of the program. Our field office has been busy developing relationships with numerous agencies across the country to provide students with many different types of foundation and advanced learning opportunities working with

children, adolescents, adults, and families in settings such as hospitals, mental health, child welfare, and community-based agencies. Starting in Fall 2015, we will be offering an Advanced Standing program option for students who have their BSW or BASW from a CSWE accredited school of social work. This part-time, 100% online program will allow students who meet these requirements to complete the MSW degree in four semesters. Recently, the MSW 100% Online program was ranked #1 as the top online social work grad program by graduateprograms.com.

Please learn more by watching our video at YouTube.com/RutgersSSW.

MSW Certificate in Aging and Health

The MSW Certificate in Aging is now the MSW Certificate in Aging and Health. This change reflects a growing trend, whereby it is increasingly necessary for social workers in aging to also be prepared to address issues related to health and healthcare.

The new certificate program requires students to take advanced coursework in health policy, as well as loss across the life course. It also requires students to take at least one additional course in aging. Students in the new program will also complete their advanced field placements with organizations working at the interface of aging and health. The first group of students to graduate with the MSW Certificate in Aging and Health will be in May of 2016.

The Programs on Aging gathered input from community partners, field

instructors, faculty, current students, alumni, and other social work programs nationwide to re-develop the program in a way to optimally prepare social workers for the future of aging and health.

Reflecting this insight, Latanya Hayes, a current certificate student in Newark, remarked, "My choice to enter the program was both personal and professional. Having an older adult parent, I often hear 'you've already lived your life.' As a geriatric social work, I want to help people to continue to live to their fullest and healthiest potentials."

Visit socialwork.rutgers.edu for more information.

DSW Program

More than fifty universities offer a Ph.D. in social work. Consequently, there are many choices, programs, and opportunities for Licensed Clinical Social Workers seeking careers in academe and research. For those seeking doctoral education to develop clinical scholarship, however, the choices are quite limited.

In the past, financial and organizational forces combined to create the conditions for practitioners to hold long tenures at field agencies, and this, in turn, provided contexts for the development of field-



based scholarship and the production of knowledge in clinical social work. These leaders often used supervision as the medium for practice knowledge transfer within and between generations of practitioners.

Not only are there fewer tenured practitioners at field agencies providing supervision now, but evidence-based methods and funding require-

ments have created new contexts for practitioners seeking to provide clinical leadership.

The Doctorate in Social Work Program at Rutgers University is committed to exploring the growing and troubling distance between theory and practice, between the ways we actually practice and existing models of practice. Our program has been designed to

address the critical need for clinical leaders and advanced practitioners while providing our students with an innovative educational model that prepares them to become knowledge producers in the field of clinical social work.

Each semester of our program consists of four on-site residencies and one online residency. The four on-site residency sessions will include lectures, seminars, writing workshops, case presentations, meetings with faculty and advisors, and group research sessions. For more information, visit dsw.socialwork.rutgers.edu.



Ph.D. Program

Congratulations to these Ph.D. students who we look to become leaders in the field:

■ Ph.D. student Louis Donnelly accepted a postdoctoral research associate position at the Center for Research on Child Wellbeing (CRCW), affiliated with the Woodrow Wilson School and the Office of Population Research at Princeton University.

■ Ph.D. graduate Jamey Lister accepted a position as an assistant professor at the Wayne State University School of Social Work in Detroit. Lister was previously a research associate at the Center for Gambling Studies with faculty mentor Lia Nower. He was also the recipient of a Fulbright Research Fellowship in Canada where he conducted research on decision-making in a virtual gaming lab.

■ Ph.D. graduate Cory Morton accepted a position as an assistant professor at the University of New Hampshire, Department of Social Work. Morton was a research associate at Rutgers School of Social Work with faculty mentor Andrew Peterson.

■ Ph.D. graduate Kerrie Ocasio has accepted a position as an assistant professor of research at Rutgers School of Social Work.

■ Congratulations to Samantha Winter for receiving two fellowships with Boren and PEO Chapter AK, as she begins dissertation data collection in Africa.

■ Finally, congratulations to Anasuya Ray who is completing a post-doctoral Congressional Fellowship in the office of Senator Bernie Sanders.

The School of Social Work, in conjunction with the Graduate School-New Brunswick, offers a doctoral program that prepares students for careers in higher education, research and advanced positions in social policy and administration. Our Ph.D. program is ranked 3rd nationally in faculty productivity by Academic Analytics.

We will welcome our next cohort of Ph.D. students in fall 2015. Applications are due January 15, 2016. Information is available on the social work website socialwork.rutgers.edu/Academics/phd or by contacting program director Allison Zippay at zippay@ssw.rutgers.edu.

BASW Program

Every year, the Undergraduate Social Work organizations on the Rutgers Camden and New Brunswick campuses host the Krystal Skinner Memorial Scholarship Fund Domestic Violence Awareness Walk. This year, as a culmination and celebration of the domestic violence awareness and fundraising efforts of Rutgers School of Social Work over the past seven years, a Krystal Ball was held on the Camden campus on March 28th. Krystal Skinner, a 22-year-old student, mother, and New Jersey Division of Child Permanency & Placement intern, was killed on March 26, 2008, in a tragic domestic violence incident. In the wake of her passing,

Dr. DuWayne Battle, director of the BASW program, led the effort to establish the Krystal Skinner Memorial Scholarship Fund to financially assist eligible undergraduate students pursuing their social work degree at Rutgers. The Domestic Violence Awareness Walks and the Krystal Ball were established to further this effort. About 80 people attended the Krystal Ball, which included dinner, dancing and a silent auction. Since 2009, this effort has raised nearly \$110,000 and 11 scholarships have been awarded. To make a gift, please visit support.rutgers.edu/SocialWork

MSW Intensive Weekend



Intensive Weekend MSW students this year celebrated the passage from the foundation to the advanced/clinical curriculum with "acknowledgment" luncheons at the program's off-campus Jersey City, Bordentown, Mays Landing and, last year, Parsippany locations. The year round, sequential nature of courses in the program, designed for students who work full time in the human services, makes it particularly important to mark important milestones. The

luncheons were positive, re-energizing, and often moving. Students spoke about the power of the cohort as a personal and professional support network, the skills they had acquired and hoped to further develop and their growing sense of confidence in the workplace.

The photograph is from the most recent Acknowledgment Luncheon at Rutgers EcoComplex in Bordentown.

For more information about the program, please visit socialwork.rutgers.edu/IW.

MSW Traditional

At Rutgers School of Social Work, all students enrolled in the Masters of Social Work program are required to select an area of concentration. The choice is between Clinical Social Work, or Management and Policy, or MAP. Rather than counseling people one on one, the MAP concentration prepares students to develop programs and policies that can help greater numbers of people. The MAP concentration prepares

practitioners for leadership roles in management policy, planning and other endeavors in social work. MAP graduates have the opportunity to craft and manage policies and programs on a broad scale, and to enhance well-being and social justice for many vulnerable populations. For more information about MAP, check out our new video at YouTube/RutgersSSW.

ACT

The Addiction Counselor Training Certificate Program's (ACT) primary goal is to educate master and doctorate-level clinicians who wish to prepare for licensing in their profession as an Addictions Counselor (LCADC). Dual credentialed clinicians are in great demand in our state and across the country, particularly for leadership positions in organizations that treat both mental health and substance abuse disorders. The ACT Certificate Program provides a 6-course curriculum that covers all 5 domains and the educational hours needed for the CADC/LCADC. The program also requires a minimum of 675 experience hours gained through field placement or employment at a DMHAS-approved agency.

Students accepted into the program will also receive mentorship and preparation for the licensing exams.

The Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services has marketed our ACT program extensively to their licensed treatment organizations. A substantial percentage of these organizations do not currently have the proper proportion of licensed staff, and their organization license (and funding) is in jeopardy if they are not in compliance. For this reason, the graduates of our program will be in high demand, as they will be close, if not ready, to earn their license upon completion of the ACT program.

For questions, email ACT@ssw.rutgers.edu.

Continuing Education

The Office of Continuing Education at Rutgers School of Social Work is the largest university-based program of its kind in the country. Our administration and staff are experienced — successfully providing continuing education to social workers and human service professionals for over 35 years. Our Office offers training on a wide variety of subjects, led by the top professionals in the field. Contact Continuing Education for all your educational program needs at 848-932-8758, or ce@ssw.rutgers.edu. For more information, visit our website at socialwork.rutgers.edu/ce. ■



Grad Profile: From Homeless to a Career Helping Others

When Kareim Oliphant, then age 15, and his family emigrated from Jamaica to the United States in 2007, they hoped it would be an escape from poor economic conditions and provide

educational opportunity for Oliphant and his younger brother. After a 10-year wait for emigration approval, and a period of homelessness after the family's home was devastated by Hurricane Ivan, they moved into his grandmother's East Orange residence.

Life was not easy. The family shared the home's small basement as their living quarters. His mother, who had worked at a bank in Jamaica, could not find employment and became depressed. His father traveled frequently as a truck driver. These challenging and cramped conditions continued for four years.

"The hardest part was watching my mother struggle. She was very driven and working made her feel useful," Oliphant says. "She dreamed of coming here and providing a better life. It was difficult to watch her sadness at being unable to find employment."

Despite the family's turmoil, Oliphant excelled in high school and was accepted into Virginia Tech. But during his freshman year, tragedy struck at home. His mother was

diagnosed with a brain tumor; the crushing headaches that she had endured now made sense. As his finals neared, his mother underwent surgery. They spoke on the phone and she assured him that all would be well. A few weeks later, he was summoned home and learned upon arrival that she had died of complications after surgery.

Once again, Oliphant had to persevere through unimaginable pain and loss. Rather than turning inward, he reached out to help people in need. As regimental commander for the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, he led the corps to raise more than \$20,000 for scholarships and charitable organizations, and set a new record for corps blood drives.

After graduating from college and entering the MSW program at Rutgers School of Social Work with a Management and Policy concentration, he continued his mission of service. Oliphant improved community health by coordinating annual health fairs at his church. A mobile health van was used to offer basic health screenings to church members and residents in the surrounding community. He made a medical mission to Jamaica with nurses from his church to provide basic health screenings in rural towns.

Now an ordained minister, Oliphant leads several youth outreach and social initia-

tives, including a feed the homeless program, a youth mentorship program and a gospel band.

He started a program called ARTISE (Actively Reading Through Self Expression), which helps children enhance literacy skills through visual and performing arts.

After experiencing so much turmoil and loss in his life, why does Oliphant give so freely of his time to serve others? He says that giving back provides him with a sense of personal healing.

"I think part of the reason that I give back so much is that there were times that I wished someone had reached out to my family when we were in need. They say that if you go into social work, there must be some wound that brought you there. I know what it is like to be homeless, to lose a loved one. I know what it is like when the odds are against you," Oliphant says.

At the graduation ceremony, Oliphant wished his mother was alive to see her dream of educational advancement for her children become a reality.

"She would have had the biggest, brightest smile and the most wondrous eyes if she had been here to see me graduate," Oliphant says. "And I know what she would have said: That I had done well and she was proud, but that there was still more out there in the world for me to accomplish." ■

Congratulations Graduates!

The 249th Anniversary Rutgers Commencement was held on Sunday, May 17, and the convocation for Rutgers School of Social Work, now celebrating its 61st year, was held on May 18. The convocation speaker was Ashley Blazer Biden, executive director of the Delaware Center for Justice, Inc., and daughter of Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. The Delaware Center for Justice is a non-profit agency that provides programs and services, public education, research and advocacy for youth and adults impacted by the criminal justice system. In her convocation speech, Biden said she was truly grateful for the opportunity to speak with the graduates, and that becoming a social worker was her proudest accomplishment.

"We are a very rare and special breed of individuals. We possess a sacred sense of empathy for humanity. We believe in service, social justice and the importance of human relationships. . . Like you, the social work gene is imprinted in my DNA," said Biden.

This year there were 148 graduates receiving a BASW degree, 494 receiving a MSW degree (with an additional 61 graduating in October and 19 in January), four graduates receiving a Ph.D. degree, and 20 graduates receiving a DSW degree, which was the first ever DSW graduating class. ■



Former Foster Child Helps Families Looking to Adopt

After Maria Hernandez and her two siblings were removed from their home because of suspected child abuse, she passed through a series of foster homes. When she was finally available for adoption and a family wanted her to join their home, Hernandez's biological mother kept reappearing with the promise of changed behavior and reunion. By age 9, living in a group home, Hernandez spoke with her mother one final time. Her mother told her, "I love you. I will come back for you." That was the last time they ever saw each other, and Hernandez was eventually adopted by a new family.

"My mother was just not able to follow through on the testing and procedures she needed to do to get us back. After my adoption the records were sealed and we never spoke again," she relates. It was a difficult loss for a young child, but she did benefit greatly from a new and stable family.

Now, years later and having grown into adulthood, Hernandez graduated with an MSW in May through her participation in Rutgers School of Social Work's Intensive Weekend Program. She is the recipient of the Lynne Witkin/CPFA Scholarship, which helped her to complete her studies and pay down her student loan. Hernandez works at a nonprofit adoption agency in Fairlawn, NJ, helping to counsel and assist women who find themselves with an unplanned pregnancy and few resources as they search for adoptive families.

Through her work, she is helping to positively affect the lives of children who, like herself, will become part of a loving, nonbiological family.

"It takes a tremendous amount of sacrifice and love to place a child for adoption. With today's more open adoptions, it is great for the mother to know how their child is growing and developing and for the child to retain knowledge about his or her origins. It is an



realized that I didn't want my hurt to hurt others," says Hernandez.

In adulthood, she was able to find and connect with one of her siblings through LinkedIn, and set up their first meeting in 15 years of separation. Her brother was able to fill in some missing pieces about the past that Hernandez did not remember and the conversation resulted in "a whole new level of healing for both of us."

Hernandez credits the Intensive Weekend program with providing her with an opportunity to earn her degree while working

and completing an internship. One of her long-term goals is to create a residential program to counsel and support foster children transitioning into society.

With older foster children, who have experienced trauma and pain, Hernandez has had the joy of watching them begin to bond with a new family.

"I see the children finally letting people into their little hearts. I share that pain with them and can help them to experience healing," she said. ■

ONE OF HER LONG-TERM GOALS IS TO CREATE A RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM TO COUNSEL AND SUPPORT FOSTER CHILDREN TRANSITIONING INTO SOCIETY.

amazing thing to help these families. It is a redemptive story," says Hernandez.

Hernandez helps to create adoption plans, interview prospective families, and assists mothers with the grieving process of placing a child. She also works with older children going from foster care to adoptive homes, who are experiencing a transition to which she can keenly relate.

"When I was first adopted, I went through a honeymoon phase of excitement to have my own family. That moved to a testing period, when I did some acting out. I prayed a lot as a kid and read my Bible and had a deep sense that my story mattered, and that I was loved despite my brokenness. I experienced great healing from God and

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Donor Profile: An Endowed Fellowship Made in Memory of a Beloved Husband

When Joan Axelrod remembers her husband, Robert Jay Axelrod, she is proud to recall the way he used his larger-than-life personality to become a well-respected lawyer who championed the causes of his clients. He was a certified civil trial attorney at Levinson Axelrod, a prestigious 75-year-old law firm in New Jersey, and those he assisted received the best representation possible.

"He was always on the side of the underdog and showed such compassion for his clients. He was a wonderful lawyer and is still remembered in the legal community for his amazing skills," she says.

The couple met in Trenton while they were still teenagers and went on to have four children. Joan, who is a Rutgers School of Social Work alum with a MSW ('81) and Ph.D. ('91) recalls how nervous she was to return for her doctoral program as an older student at the age of 50. Robert fully supported her return to school, championing her efforts and even driving her at night for some of the papers she needed to print out at school. "It was truly a team effort," she recalls.

As she defended her dissertation one spring, he was diagnosed with cancer. It was a terrible contrast, the beginning of a new path in her career and the slow ending of her beloved husband's life. After his death in 2000, she tried to find some way to memorialize him, and struggled to find just the right expression of his life and accomplishments.

Serendipitously, years later, Joan was invited to a Rutgers dinner where she heard a speech by a student from Rutgers School of Social Work who was pursuing his degree in the MSW/J.D. program. The School of Social Work, in collaboration with Rutgers School of Law-Camden and School of Law-Newark, has established an accelerated dual-degree program in law and social work through which a student can obtain the JD and MSW degrees. Joan was very impressed by the student's speech and the powerful potential of graduates with both a social work and law degree.

At the event, Joan spoke to a number of SSW faculty and staff, expressing her desire to create something for her husband. Supporting this dual degree seemed like the perfect way to honor her husband's love of law with her own love of social work, which he had supported and assisted. Together with the school, she created the Joan and Robert Jay Axelrod Endowed Fellowship for the dual degree program.

"I thought this felt like the perfect way to honor his memory," she relates.



Joan has since been able to speak with Kyle Smiddie (SSW '11, NLAW'11), a graduate of the program who utilizes the skills and knowledge in his career today as an attorney at the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Seeing how Smiddie uses his dual degrees to assist the mentally disabled, those with special needs in prison, and a host of others in need, reaffirmed her choice to endow this fellowship.

"It has been an incredibly interesting and rewarding experience for me. My husband supported me through all of my professional endeavors, and it is wonderful to now provide support to Rutgers students as they achieve this dual degree."

Jacqueline Johnson, fellowship recipient, wrote this letter of thanks: "The Joan and Robert Jay Axelrod Endowed Fellowship has allowed me to concentrate more on my education and not worry as much about the financial burdens related to pursuing advance degrees. Your financial generosity has allowed me to be one step closer to my goal and has inspired me to help others by giving back to the community. I hope one day I will be able to help other students achieve their goal just as you have helped me." ■

Students interested in this dual degree can apply for admission to the Graduate School of Social Work and to either the School of Law-Camden or the School of Law-Newark. Contact The Office of Graduate and Professional Admissions at 732-932-7711, gradstudy.rutgers.edu to apply online.



SAFETY OF SOCIAL WORKERS A GROWING CONCERN



On November 17, 2014, a state child welfare worker at a Camden office building was stabbed 21 times by a client. A review of recent headlines shows the increased risk to social workers and human services professionals. In July 2014 a caseworker was killed and a psychiatrist wounded when a gunman shot them on a psychiatric unit at a Pennsylvania hospital. In 2011 a social worker on Gabrielle Gifford's staff was killed, along with others, when a man attacked the senator and her team.

The concerns in these headlines are echoed in a national study of 5,000 social workers by the NASW Center for Workforce Studies and the Center for Workforce Studies at the University at Albany. This study found that 47% of social workers had concerns about personal safety. A 2004 survey found that rates of threatening and assaultive behavior toward social workers varied based on treatment type; nearly 39% of people surveyed working in protective services had been threatened. A third of people in institutional mental health settings, a quarter of people working in community mental health and 23% of people working in public non-profit settings had been physically threatened.

Rutgers School of Social Work has been addressing the topic of safety for more than ten years. Shari Munch, PhD, associate professor, and Patricia Spencer, LCSW, clinician supervisor with



Pat Spencer

Rutgers UBHC, led a February 18th workshop called "Your Safety Matters: Staying Safe While Serving Others."

Ironically, Munch and Spencer met when Spencer was a Rutgers MSW student in Munch's 1999 class. Munch recalls Spencer asking to speak with her after class. She told Munch, "Maybe I'm not cut out for this profession. Should I quit my job? Should I quit school?" After inquiring further, Munch learned that Spencer had encountered a violent client the day before. She acknowledged that Spencer's reaction was a normal one to a traumatic event, and not a sign of her ability as a future social worker.

Over the years they transformed their professor-student relationship into a collaborative endeavor that has produced a published article on the topic of social worker safety, as well as presentations at state and national social work conferences.

"Until relatively recently the culture of social work focused solely on the client and client-centered care. Yet the reality is that we do encounter situations wherein we must protect ourselves in order to continue to be of service to our clients. And, we can lose good social workers by not offering training and support," says Spencer, who has now been in the field post-MSW for 15 years. Annually, Munch has invited Spencer to speak in her graduate courses. Spencer, who is also a field supervisor and a PTL in Rutgers School of Social Work, has incorporated violence prevention in the courses she teaches. Together they have reached hundreds of social work students. ■

SAFETY TIPS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS FROM THE SSW

- Create a culture where safety is openly discussed by all agency levels.
- Be alert and aware of surroundings.
- Know how to get help within your agency and in the community. Know the address where you are, and the correct phone number to call. Have local police department phone numbers programed into your phone.
- Have others around if meeting with possibly threatening clients.
- Wear comfortable clothing that allows freedom of movement.
- Lock all valuables in the car trunk prior to leaving for the visit.
- Trust your gut, if you feel unsafe leave the situation.
- Carry a small flashlight.
- Be aware of your social media presence. Avoid having your phone number, address or family's contact information on any social media. Avoid posting your location on social media (no "checking in").

GET INVOLVED

Attend lectures and receive FREE CEUs

Rutgers School of Social Work hosts at least four annual donor-funded lectures where complimentary CEUs are provided! To view upcoming CEU lectures, please visit socialwork.rutgers.edu/events

Become a Field Instructor or Liaison

Want to mentor a Rutgers social work student at your agency? To become a field instructor, liaison, or for your agency to have social work interns, visit socialwork.rutgers.edu/Current/Field

Work toward a certificate through our Continuing Education department

You already need CEUs, so why not earn them while working toward a certificate? Learn more about our Continuing Education Certificate Programs by visiting socialwork.rutgers.edu/ce

Submit your professional or personal updates to share good news with fellow alumni

We love to hear what our alumni are up to! Share good news with the Rutgers School of Social Work community by sending an email to alumni@ssw.rutgers.edu

Post and/or view job openings

Looking for a new job? Have an opening at your place of employment? Post and view current job openings in the tri-state area by visiting socialwork.rutgers.edu/alumni/jobs

Support our students

Our students rely on private funding to receive scholarships and support for their programs. To explore giving opportunities and make a donation please visit socialwork.rutgers.edu/give

Speak at classes or career panels

Social Work students love hearing from our alumni! We have various speaking opportunities throughout the year. Let us know you're interested by emailing alumni@ssw.rutgers.edu

Network with other alumni, faculty and staff

There are many opportunities for our alumni to come back and network with fellow alumni, faculty, staff, and students. Browse upcoming events and alumni news at socialwork.rutgers.edu/alumni

STAY CONNECTED

Make sure to update your contact information and subscribe to our eNews!

facebook.com/RutgersSSW
alumni@ssw.rutgers.edu

Linked In: School of Social Work Alumni Network

PARTNERING *for* CHANGE

IN MEMORIAM

The Rutgers School of Social Work family extends its deepest sympathy to the loved ones of deceased alumni, faculty and friends.

Dr. Douglas A. Whyte, SSW'61
November 26, 2014

Ms. Ann K. Renz, SSW'66
December 30, 2014

Mr. Louis Eugene Armour, SSW'67
March 9, 2015

Mrs. Nancy Hall Marzi, SSW'68
March 9, 2015

Mr. Roger G. Sartori, SSW'70
April 11, 2014

Mrs. Dorothy Weld Avis, SSW'71
August 22, 2013

Mr. Robert Lindgren, SSW'71
February 1, 2015

Mr. Harvey F. Guerin, Jr., ED'51, SSW'72
December 29, 2014

Ms. Mary Gregory Willow, SSW'75
March 10, 2014

Ms. Barbara S. Taylor, SSW'77
October 12, 2014

Ms. Hazel T. Butler, SSW'78
March 19, 2015

Ms. Marion Williams, UCN'78
December 27, 2014

Ms. Hermine R. Graylin, SSW'79
May 5, 2015

Ms. Ruth E. Stagg, SSW'79
January, 2015

Mr. John R. Vincent, SSW'81
January 17, 2013

Ms. Audrey M. Roberts, LC'79, SSW'81
May 5, 2015

Ms. Barbara B. Bennett, UCNB'77, SSW'84
January 24, 2015

Mr. James P. Young, SSW'87
June 26, 2013

Ms. Theresa J. Kwiatkowski, SSW'89
December 12, 2014

Ms. Dolores Genetti Ragusa, SSW'89
January 19, 2015

Ms. Harriet J. Fish, LC'93, SSW'94
May 18, 2014

Mr. Leonard S. Lomash, SSW'95
August 21, 2013

Mr. Nicholas Degennaro, LC'07, SSW'08
December 28, 2014

Ms. Deborah A. McDill, CCAS'10, SSW'11
November 17, 2014

Dr. Audrey Olsen Faulkner
May 20, 2015

Professor Estelle R. Robinson
February 6, 2015



The School of Social Work Alumni Council is pleased to honor Ms. Victoria Williams Brown as the 2015 Outstanding Alumni Award Recipient. Ms. Brown graduated from the Rutgers School of Social Work in 1976, following completion of a BA in History from Tennessee State University in Nashville. She retired this year after 38 years with Robert Wood Johnson Rahway, where she served as a Social Work Manager. She

has served for the Mental Health Association in New Jersey in many roles, including volunteer member, officer, and president, and is currently a

Board Member there. She has also been active in the New Jersey chapter of Social Work Leadership in Health Care, and has also been very involved with her sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, where she has served as charter member, vice president, and president. Ms. Brown has previously received the NAACP Freedom Fund Award, and staying true to her social work values, she is active in the community as a volunteer with the YMCA Plainfield Homeless Shelter as well as the Plainfield Shut-In Council.

Ms. Brown was nominated by one of her employees, Elizabeth Jurczak, who said, "Vickie has been the best boss I could have asked for as a brand new MSW. She hired me for my first post Rutgers MSW position and has been inspiring me to be the best social worker I can be."

Do you know an outstanding social worker? Be sure to nominate them for the 2016 award at socialwork.rutgers.edu/alumni/award.

The Rutgers School of Social Work Alumni Council

is committed to increasing alumni engagement and involvement, increasing financial support, building alumni networking opportunities, and increasing the visibility and impact of the School of Social Work. We welcome your comments, ideas, and feedback.

Contact a Council member today at alumni@ssw.rutgers.edu. ■

Dawn Apgar, SSW'93, GSBN'02
Harriet (Pat) T. Bamdad, SSW'74
Alexis R. Biedermann, SAS'10, SSW'11
Marla K. Blunt Carter, SSW'03
Frank Greenagel, Jr., RC'01, SSW'06
Lynne M. Healy, GSNB'85
Tawanda L. Hubbard, SSW'05
Daveen L. Mann, LC'95, SSW'09
Susan L. Parish, RC'88, SSW'94
Kyle Smiddie, NLAW'11, SSW'11