

PARTNERING *for* CHANGE

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

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

RUTGERS

School of Social Work

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.”

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

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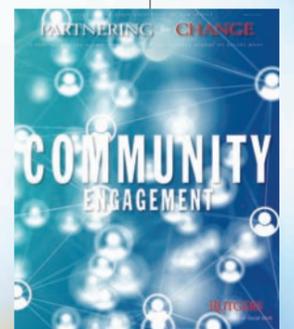
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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Dear Friends,

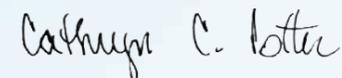
As we enter our third year of life with COVID-19, many of us are disappointed with our progress and frustrated by its continued impact on our daily lives. We could not have imagined the twists and turns the past two years have given us. Yet, despite the countless losses we've suffered, I remain hopeful for the future. Each day, as I talk to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends, I am reminded of one of the most important aspects that define us as social workers – our commitment to bettering the world. You, our social work alumni and friends, are the light that carries us through the darkness, and I am so grateful for your dedication to supporting communities to be not only safe but to thrive. This work makes me most proud to be a social worker.

Working with communities, and community engagement, is the focus of this edition of our alumni magazine. In it you will discover some of our faculty research projects that are making a direct impact on communities. From an analysis of substance misuse indicators to an assessment of maternal health in New Jersey, our faculty are leading pioneering research that will affect those in greatest need – the most vulnerable members of our communities. We're also putting a spotlight on one of our longtime partners, The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation (DJFF), which is marking its 20th anniversary this year. Founder and president Linda J. Walder, Esq. shares how The DJFF engages with communities to create paths for adults with autism to lead fulfilling and potential-driven lives.

This magazine also gives you a glimpse into the lives of some of our community members. Faculty and staff share the books they're reading, and shows and movies they're watching that have impacted their lives. A recent graduate of our MSW program also provides an inside look at a day in her life as a policy analyst at New Jersey Policy Perspective through the State Policy Fellowship at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. You'll also read about our celebration of the Classes of 2020 and 2021, other recent events, and so much more.

I hope you'll join me in finding optimism in the stories of some of the leaders in our profession. Let us remain hopeful and committed to building a better and more just future. Thank you for your dedication to the School of Social Work, the entire Rutgers community, and the communities we partner with and serve.

Sincerely,



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





RUTGERS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK CELEBRATES THE CLASSES OF 2020 AND 2021

Members of the Classes of 2020 and 2021 endured unexpected challenges as they completed their degrees during a global pandemic that transformed their lives and time at Rutgers.

Last fall, Rutgers School of Social Work welcomed these recent graduates back to campus to celebrate their successes. More than 300 alumni gathered at the tent at Woodlawn Mansion along with hundreds of family members, friends, and supporters.

Dean and Distinguished Professor Cathryn C. Potter welcomed guests to the event, noting their remarkable resilience. “We know the last nineteen months were far from what you could have imagined they would look like when you first entered your program at Rutgers,” she said. “You’ve faced countless challenges and made so many sacrifices, yet you still pushed ahead and earned your degree. We are so very proud of you and welcome you to the social work profession.” Alumni were also greeted with supportive remarks from Francine Conway, Chancellor-Provost of Rutgers University–New Brunswick.

Associate Professor of Teaching and Director of the Baccalaureate Program V. DuWayne Battle presented the faculty address, offering words of encouragement to the Classes of 2020 and 2021. Following his address was a speech from alum Nicole G. Epps SSW’21, winner of our Outstanding MSW Student in the Blended Program Award.

Members of the Classes of 2020 and 2021 were finally given the chance to proudly walk across the stage and have their name announced by the School of Social Work’s academic program directors. An enthusiastic audience cheered on the group that had waited many months to take those very important steps marking the end of their journey at Rutgers.

A social-justice themed performance by Paul Lewis, president of Rutgers Verbal Mayhem, rounded out the program.

Dean Potter closed the event with enthusiasm for the path ahead. “Members of the Classes of 2020 and 2021, you have been prepared for a wonderful career in social work by an outstanding group of faculty and field instructors. We wish you great success,” she said. “Our hope is that each of you will find creative ways to make a difference in the lives of the people and communities you serve. We are so very proud of you!” ■

SOGIE WORKSHOP ENGAGES WITH COMMUNITY TO HELP PRACTITIONERS ESTABLISH AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENTS

Last fall, the Rutgers School of Social Work Office of Field Education hosted a training session on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE) for social work professionals with HiTOPS, an organization fostering strong and healthy young people of all identities by providing inclusive and youth-informed sex education and LGBTQ+ support for young people throughout New Jersey.

The workshop introduced the three separate yet related constructs of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression to an audience of 350 participants, including agency supervisors, administrators, and staff from New Jersey and beyond who serve children and families as well as mental health and community service-focused organizations. Stacy Robustelli, PhD, Director of Education at HiTOPS, led the training. Dr. Robustelli provided an introduction of basic terminology that relates to each construct and discussed the implications for establishing affirming environments.

“Right now many people working in agencies are craving this kind of professional development in which they can open up the discussion for what it means to be affirming in any given organization,” said Dr. Robustelli. “It was clear that this audience in particular wanted to learn how to unpack all of the terms related to SOGIE and what they mean. Participants asked many follow-up questions and shared wonderful comments about the importance of the training.”

“The SOGIE training was an important milestone for the School of Social Work’s Office of Field Education and the larger community as it signaled to students, faculty, and community partner agencies throughout New Jersey and beyond that we are serious about inclusion and equity,” said Nancy Schley, Assistant

Professor of Teaching and Associate Director of Field Education in New Brunswick. “We invited partner agencies to join us in our effort to learn from each other and build positive, affirming relationships with people of all identities. The momentum created by this training provides the School of Social Work community direction and focus regarding important next steps. The knowledge gained by the training not only reverberates with attendees but also within the communities they serve.”

It is important for all practitioners to have a baseline understanding of SOGIE and pursue further educational opportunities, but it’s particularly crucial for those working with youth populations – especially given COVID-19’s toll on children and adolescents’ mental health. Studies show that if a young person has at least one affirming person in their life, it reduces their risk of suicidality by 40%. “It’s staggering and shows that this kind of training is incredibly important for people working within our communities,” said Dr. Robustelli.

One of the challenges in teaching SOGIE is the speed at which information changes. Some may feel overwhelmed by the evolving terminology or might not know how to approach topics and conversations that are deeply personal. Dr. Robustelli suggests that people extend grace to those learning about SOGIE.

“As someone who teaches a variety of audiences about SOGIE, my goal is to meet people where they are to the best of my ability and have compassion for the fact that there are generational differences. People have different motivations, values, and educational backgrounds, and we have to recognize that not everybody has had the same experiences,” said Dr. Robustelli.

Although most attendees reported having little or no familiarity with SOGIE prior to the training, a post-event survey revealed that a majority of participants learned valuable takeaways and planned to implement what they learned in both their personal and professional lives. ■

FACULTY VOICES IN THE NEWS



“During the COVID-19 pandemic, technology has been essential to facilitating remote learning. At the same time, there is a growing concern that excessive technology use, particularly for entertainment, may adversely affect children’s educational development by facilitating undesirable study habits and detracting from time spent on learning activities.”

Teens should only use recreational internet, video games 1 hr daily to avoid lower grades

Assistant Professor Vivien (Wen Li) Anthony in *Yahoo! Sports*



“Child marriage is concerning from a human rights, health and economic perspective...Girls married before age 18 are more likely to drop out of school early, become poor, acquire sexually transmitted infections, experience domestic violence, teenage childbirth and accompanying childbirth complications, including low birth weight babies or death.”

In Ethiopia, mother's wealth more protective against child marriage than father's

Assistant Professor Felix Muchomba in *Phys Org*



“You need to show not only that you are persecuted, but that you are persecuted because you are LGBTQ. It’s invasive. It becomes about private moments.”

‘A virtual death sentence’: Gay Afghans brace for uncertain future under Taliban

Associate Professor and Chancellor’s Scholar of LGBTQ Mental Health, Trauma, and Resilience Edward Alessi in *NBC News*



“Child support debt can lead to license suspension and incarceration, which undermine fathers' ability to work, pay off debts and spend time with children; can lead to more conflict in the co-parenting relationship, less reliable cash support and less involvement with children; cannot be discharged by filing for bankruptcy; and can be extremely difficult for the lowest-income parents to ever repay, thus persisting and accumulating throughout childhood.”

Mental health of teenagers affected by fathers' type of debt: Study

Associate Professor Lenna Nepomnyaschy in *Yahoo! Life*



“This is the perfect time to consider repealing policies that criminalize pregnant women for substance use and instead focus on health education, treatment and supporting research that will develop regulatory policies that protect the health of mothers and their children.”

Cannabis Legalization Can Lead to Health Disparities in Women

Assistant Professor Qiana L. Brown in *Patch*



“One of the pieces I think that is a driving factor is student activism, and in particular the activism of students who are survivors of sexual violence and other forms of violence, who have spoken out about how they felt they were mistreated by their universities.”

As They Head Back to Campus, These Students Are Trying to Reform Greek Life From Within

Associate Professor and Director of the Center for Research on Ending Violence Sarah McMahon in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*



“I was very proud that our project team, and the other advisory group members, saw them as valued project partners and collaborators. We definitely took their advice and suggestions into account.”

What Is Engaged Scholarship and How Can It Improve Your Research?

In an article about the importance of community engaged research, Cassandra Simmel, Associate Professor and Director, MSW Certificate in Promoting Child and Adolescent Well-Being, described a recent project she and other Rutgers colleagues implemented with community partners, including Youth Move National, in *Inside Higher Ed*



“People who live far from clinics or hold steady jobs are particularly burdened by daily trips to be watched getting a dose.”

How COVID pandemic changed methadone treatment for addiction

Distinguished Research Professor Stephen Crystal in *ABC News*



“The gambling court would, for the first time, provide some alternative for previously law-abiding citizens who offend due only to their gambling addiction.”

New Jersey Proposed Gambling Court Provides Option To Prison, Proponents Say

Professor and Director of the Center for Gambling Studies & Addiction Counselor Training (ACT) Program Lia Nower in *Casino.org*



Assistant Professor **Qiana L. Brown** received an NIH/NIDA subcontract to examine trends and disparities in prenatal cannabis use disorder as part of the NIDA R25 Learning for Early Careers in Addiction and Diversity (LEAD) Program. Dr. Brown also received a two-year NIH/NIDA Health Disparities Loan Repayment Program Award.



Professor, Associate Dean for Faculty Development, and Associate Director of the Center for Research on Ending Violence **Victoria Banyard** is co-PI on a \$2.95 million grant, Understanding Bystanders for Self-Directed Violence Prevention: A Prospective National Study Highlighting Marginalized Youth and Young Adults, from the NIH.

Dr. Banyard also received the Outstanding Science Contribution to Trauma Psychology Award from the American Psychological Association's Division 56, psychology's focal point for research, practice, policy development and education on trauma psychology. Additionally, Dr. Banyard authored a new book, *Strengths-Based Prevention: Reducing Violence and Other Public Health Problems*, with Sherry Hamby.



Professor of Professional Practice **Elsa Candelario** co-facilitated a roundtable for the Latino Action Network Foundation to address the individual and systemic challenges to access of services for the Latino community of NJ, and to offer recommendations to policymakers for advancing quality mental health services. In addition, she was elected to serve on the board of the Family Success Institute that works toward a vision of ensuring that every

family and community has the resources, opportunities and support they need to successfully raise their children from birth to young adulthood. She was also selected to serve on an advisory group convened by the Council of New Jersey Grantmakers and the Center for Non-Profits entitled *Doing Good Better: Deepening Philanthropic and Nonprofit Partnerships in NJ*, which seeks to change grantmaking practices and policies that hinder effectiveness and foster ways to strengthen and equalize the relationships between grantmakers and nonprofits.



Associate Professor and Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs **Laura Curran** was named a Provost Leadership Fellow for Faculty Development at Rutgers. Dr. Curran also was appointed to the Council on Social Work Education's Council for Leadership Development.



Professor of Teaching and Director of the Intensive Weekend Program **Ericka Deglau** was honored at the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies Conference with an Educational Pioneer in Workforce Development Award.



Professor and Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion **Antoinette Farmer** was selected to participate in The CUNY Leadership Institute for Urban Serving Institutions. She also presented the poster "Online Participation, Social Isolation, Biculturalism, and Empowerment: A Virtual Ethnography of Kenyan Diaspora Women Living in North America" at the 26th Annual Conference of the Society for Social Work and Research with Ruby Orwenyo, N. Andrew Peterson,

Allison Zippay, Ousseina Alidou, and George Morara Nyabuga.



Professor, Director of the MSW Program, and Special Assistant to the Dean for Interprofessional Health Initiatives **Patricia Findley**, Associate Professor and Director of the MSW Certificate in Promoting Child



and Adolescent Well-Being **Cassandra Simmel**, and Assistant Professor for Professional Practice and Coordinator for the Certificate in Promoting Child



and Adolescent Well-Being **Margaret O'Donoghue** received a \$1,919,833 grant

from the Health Resource Service Administration for the Rutgers University Behavioral Youth Collaborative, a behavioral health workforce education and training program.



Associate Professor of Professional Practice **Tawanda Hubbard** was appointed to the NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services 988 Key Stakeholders Coalition, part of the 988 Planning Grant awarded by Vibrant Emotional Health, which administers the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Dr. Hubbard was also appointed to the Advisory Reviewers Board for the *Journal of Social Policy and Social Work Studies*, an international publication of Kocaeli University's Department of Social Work in Turkey.



Assistant Professor **Woojin Jung** received a grant from Microsoft providing \$25,000 in Azure credit for her project Exploring Scalable Multimodal Approaches to Identify Vulnerable Populations in the Congo. Dr. Jung also received an \$18,000 Collaborative Multidisciplinary Award from the Rutgers Research Council for her project Developing AI-informed Vulnerability Index to Target the Food Security Pack Program in Zambia. Additionally, she received a \$10,000 Global Health Seed Grant from Rutgers Global Health Institute for her project Exploring Scalable Multimodal Approaches to Identify Vulnerable Populations in the Congo.



Associate Professor **Joy J. Kim** and Associate Professor **Michael M. Joo** received a \$77,800 grant from the



Division of Family Development, NJ Department of Human Services for their project NJ Childcare Market Price Study. They also received a \$56,800 grant for the same division for the Childcare Narrow Cost Study. Dr. Kim and Dr. Joo also received a \$107,799 grant with Dr. Curran from the Association for Social Work Boards for their project Occupational Regulations and Regulatory Practices for the Social Work Profession.



Assistant Professor **Jamey Lister** was named an editorial board member for *International Gambling Studies*.



Assistant Research Professor and Associate Director of the Center for Prevention Science **Kristen Gilmore Powell** (Principal Investigator) and Professor and



Associate Dean for Research **N. Andrew Peterson** (Co-Principal Investigator) received a \$468,000 grant, Enhancing and Coordinating Primary and Behavioral Health Care Services for Individuals with

Mental Health or Substance Use Disorders: Performance Measurement for New Jersey's Collaborative Care Initiative, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Dr. Powell (Principal Investigator) and Dr. Peterson (Investigator) also received a \$95,732 grant, Evaluation of Emergency Department Peer Recovery Support for Opioid Overdose Survivors, from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation



with Assistant Research Professor **Cory Morton** (Co-Principal Investigator). Dr. Powell was also invited to join the Editorial Advisory Board of *Human Services Organizations: Management, Leadership, & Governance*.

Assistant Professor and Chancellor's Scholar for Inclusive Excellence in Sexual and Gender Minority Health **Gabriel Robles** was awarded a \$341,000 grant from the Center for AIDS Research



Adelante Mentored Research Program. The grant funds a two-year project that seeks to examine the decision making of Latinx sexual minority men in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Dr. Robles was also funded by the Loan Repayment Program through the National Institute on Drug Abuse for work focused on stigma, mental health, and substance use among LGBT and Latinx/e populations.



Assistant Professor **Emmy Tiderington** (Co-Investigator) and Distinguished Professor of Public Policy **Joel Cantor** (Principal Investigator) received a \$3,202,220 grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities, a division of the NIH, for their project The Role of Homelessness and Supportive Housing

in Healthcare Disparities among Adults in Medicaid.



Assistant Professor **Abigail Williams-Butler** was named an Early Career Fellow at the Rutgers Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice. She was also awarded a faculty grant to lead the Policy and Intersectionality Working Group through the ISGRJ. Dr. Williams-Butler also received the School of Social Work's Exemplary Inclusion, Intersectionality, Diversity, Equity, and Advancement (IIDEA) Research Recognition Award.



Associate Professor **Karen Zurlo** is completing a nine-year term as a member of the Board of Directors of Bethesda Project, a non-profit organization that serves homeless men and women from Southern NJ and Philadelphia.

WHAT TO READ AND WATCH

RUTGERS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK FACULTY MEMBERS SHARE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADD TO YOUR LIST.



—Assistant Professor
Jacquelynn Duron

THE VANISHING HALF
BY BRIT BENNETT

Brit Bennett's second novel is a real page turner. This story follows the lives of identical twins, Desiree and Stella, who are light-skinned Black women who run away from their small hometown in Louisiana and make very different choices that forever change the course of their lives. Across different generations and from various perspectives, this book beautifully covers issues of identity, racism, privilege, secrecy, colorism, and loss. Once you start reading, you will be captivated, eager to know what happens to each of the story's characters.



—Teaching Instructor, Assistant Director of Student Affairs, and Newark Campus Coordinator Charles Chear

OUT OF PLACE: SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND MENNONITE MIGRANTS IN CANADA

BY DR. LUANN GOOD GINGRICH

From a feminist perspective, Dr. Gingrich examines traditional Mennonites excluding themselves from mainstream society and how social workers work with them in a culturally responsive manner. "Voluntary exclusion" is typically discussed as a theoretical issue, and therefore, Dr. Gingrich is innovative by adding a practice perspective. I relate to Dr. Gingrich's work as a social worker, as well as someone who grew up in a (more open) Mennonite community.



—Assistant Professor
Adrian Gale

BEST SHAPE OF MY LIFE
WITH WILL SMITH

This engaging YouTube original examines actor and musician Will Smith's journey to improve his physical and mental health. We learn about Will's upbringing, his personal and professional successes, as well as his failures. I enjoyed learning about Will's life, and it shows that even very successful people have struggles to overcome.



—Assistant Professor of Teaching and Coordinator for the VAWC Certificate Program Rupa Khetarpal

CASTE: THE ORIGINS OF OUR DISCONTENTS

BY ISABEL WILKERSON

As someone born and raised within the Indian caste system, I found this to be a thought-provoking book that expanded my understanding of the American caste system, the prevailing inequity and social injustice, and my own positionality within that structure. A must read for everyone!



—Assistant Professor
Laura Cuesta

MAID
CREATED BY MOLLY SMITH METZLER

Maid illustrates the challenges of a young single mother after she manages to escape an abusive relationship. Through what seems like a research-informed plot, this show highlights how clinical and policy approaches are both crucial to overcome poverty, intimate partner violence, and homelessness among single mothers in America.



—Associate Director of Field Education and Teaching Instructor Trinay V. Thomas

GATHER
PRODUCED BY TANYA AGER MEILLIER

This Netflix documentary focuses on chefs and elders within Native American/Indigenous communities who teach community members about the origins of their food and creating opportunities for them to become more acquainted with their foods again as part of decolonization and stimulating their economy. It was educational, profound, inspiring and uplifting. My hope is that many more seek out this fascinating documentary.



NEW FACULTY RESEARCH AIMS TO BUILD INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT OPIOID USE DISORDER

Dr. Qiana L. Brown, Assistant Professor at Rutgers School of Social Work, was awarded a \$10,000 NIH/NCATS/CTSA pilot award through the New Jersey Alliance for Clinical and Translation Science (NJ ACTS – a Rutgers-led NCATS/CTSA program hub). The pilot award, entitled *The COP Study: Communities and Officers*

Working Together to Prevent Opioid Use Disorder, aims to build an innovative, community-academic-police partnership (CAPP) to guide the development and implementation of the New Jersey State Police (NJSP)-led wastewater-based epidemiology opioid use surveillance pilot program in Camden County, New Jersey.

“This study is important because the US opioid epidemic is ubiquitous and in Camden County, New Jersey opioid overdose fatalities increased nearly 370% from 89 total fatalities in 2010 to 329 in 2018,” said Dr. Brown. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), heroin is the leading threat in New Jersey.

There is a clear need for better, more effective, multidisciplinary, population-based prevention efforts to prevent opioid overdose, both fatal and non-fatal, as well as to prevent opioid misuse and disorder (antecedents to overdose), especially given the gaps in both access to and availability of treatment. Using wastewater-based epidemiology opioid use surveillance methods

(e.g., examining municipal wastewater for opioids and their metabolites) can potentially provide timely, valid, population-based data on opioid use, which can be used to deploy prevention resources to communities in the most need. However, technical (e.g., best practices) and ethical challenges with this approach need to be addressed in collaboration with the community before implementing such surveillance programs in the community. For example, many questions remain about how to ethically collect, analyze and interpret wastewater-based epidemiology data used for substance-use surveillance—data community members are often unaware are being collected.

“Our proposed project will help address these issues through community-based participatory research (CBPR), which will provide the community with an opportunity to offer input and work collectively with academics, law enforcement and other stakeholders (e.g., clinicians, public health practitioners) to address any concerns regarding the NJSP-led wastewater-based epidemiology opioid use surveillance pilot program before the program is implemented,” said Dr. Brown.

“While research posits that many ethical concerns, including fears around police use of wastewater-based epidemiology methods, are unlikely to be realized, no

studies, to our knowledge, have directly interviewed community members in neighborhoods where wastewater-based epidemiology opioid use surveillance programs are being implemented to attain a deeper understanding of concerns and to work with communities to address trepidations. Implementing such surveillance

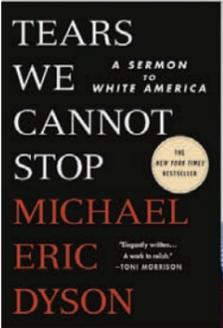
health practitioners, engineers and police officers will be invited to join the CAPP. Ultimately, the CAPP will help ensure that the NJSP-led wastewater-based epidemiology opioid use surveillance pilot program is tailored to the needs of the community and consumers of opioid prevention services.

Key personnel for this study includes

DR. QIANA L. BROWN, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR AT RUTGERS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, WAS AWARDED A \$10,000 NIH/NCATS/CTSA PILOT AWARD THROUGH THE NEW JERSEY ALLIANCE FOR CLINICAL AND TRANSLATION SCIENCE (NJ ACTS – A RUTGERS-LED NCATS/CTSA PROGRAM HUB).

programs in communities without the communities’ knowledge and input is a missed opportunity to develop community-informed prevention interventions,” said Dr. Brown. To this end, the Rutgers School of Social Work, Rutgers School of Engineering and the NJSP have partnered to implement The COP Study. From the base of this core partnership, a more extensive CAPP will be developed. Community members, community- and faith-based organizations, researchers, social workers, clinicians, public

Dr. Qiana L. Brown (principal investigator from Rutgers School of Social Work); Dr. N. Andrew Peterson (Professor and Associate Dean for Research at Rutgers School of Social Work and co-investigator); Dr. Nicole Fahrenfeld (Associate Professor at Rutgers School of Engineering and co-investigator); and Lt. Adam Polhemus (co-investigator from NJSP). ■





SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

CHALLENGING RACIAL DISPARITIES

Designed with the practitioner in mind, this live streamed webinar will provide social workers and allied professionals with a meaningful learning opportunity on the topic of racial disparities. Attendees will gain new skills and ideas to address issues of race in their practice with clients, organizations, and communities.

The keynote presentation will be delivered by Michael Eric Dyson, PhD. The conference will conclude with a moderated panel discussion with the keynote presenter and other experts. Cost: \$65 including 3.5 social/cultural continuing education hours

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2022 9AM-12:30PM VIA ZOOM

To learn more and register, visit socialwork.rutgers.edu/academics/continuing-education

Questions? Contact ce@ssw.rutgers.edu

Keynote Speaker, William Neal Brown Endowed Lecture: Michael Eric Dyson, PhD
 Professor at Georgetown University
 New York Times contributing opinion writer, a contributing editor of *The New Republic*, a prominent public intellectual, and a best-selling author.

RESEARCH WITH LOCAL IMPACT

Community-engaged research at the School of Social Work is making tangible change across the state for residents of all ages.

BY MELISSA KVIDAHL REILLY

At the School of Social Work, the impact of research extends beyond academia. In many cases, faculty members partner with leaders in the local community to yield findings that have the potential to affect how people receive services, access programming, and ultimately, live their lives. This is the power of community-engaged research. “Community-engaged research aims to build authentic partnerships between researchers and the researched,” says N. Andrew Peterson, professor and associate dean for research, “as well as strengthen communities’ awareness of their own capabilities as researchers and change agents.”

Here are just some of the most current community-engaged research projects taking place right here in Rutgers’ home state of New Jersey.



PROMOTING SUCCESSFUL AGING IN THE COMMUNITY

It's no secret that once they hit retirement, many residents leave New Jersey for another state. The age-friendly communities movement in New Jersey seeks to change this trend by working to make the state's diverse communities better places to grow up and grow old, especially for older adults with fewer resources to navigate the challenges and opportunities of aging in their own homes and communities.

As part of this movement, professor Emily Greenfield's community-engaged research on age-friendly initiatives in New Jersey helped to spur the development of Age-Friendly North Jersey, a network of age-friendly leaders, allies, and stakeholders across Bergen, Essex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, and Union counties. Her team's most recent research with the network took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. "All of a sudden, communities had a far greater volume of older adults who needed help getting their needs met," Greenfield explains. "This presented a unique and meaningful moment to understand how various initiatives responded."

Greenfield and her team conducted interviews with age-friendly community leaders during the winter of 2020-2021. They found that the leaders tended to play a variety of roles within their communities. These roles included creator (launching new programs), advocate (encouraging other community actors to be mindful of older adults when planning their own programs, services, and events), communications broker (sharing and gathering information across diverse community networks), and good community partner (helping partner organizations in limited but meaningful ways, for example, by donating to help sponsor another organization's event).

The value of this research is that it gives current leaders the language with which to describe their work, make their work visible to others, measure success, and substantiate needs. "It helps other community leaders understand the nature of this work," Greenfield says. "If they designate someone to lead an age-friendly community initiative in their municipality, this research shows what they can and should do to be effective."

Following this research project, Greenfield was able to receive grants from private philanthropy to hire a staff member at the School of Social Work to help administer Age-Friendly North Jersey. "This speaks to the translational aspect of this research," says Greenfield. "Before we were able to secure this staff position, our commitment at the School was what I could provide with my time and that of postdocs and students. Now, we have a professional to keep that superstructure going. This helps sustain it and stretches the reach of our collaborative learning and doing."

"If they designate someone to lead an age-friendly community initiative in their municipality, this research shows what they can and should do to be effective."

ANALYZING SUBSTANCE MISUSE INDICATORS

About 15 years ago, the State of New Jersey adopted a public health model to guide changes within the substance misuse prevention system, with the aim to embrace data-driven processes, bring different community sectors together, and select smart strategies for local needs. "This is different from traditional curriculum-based prevention programs in that the focus is on environmental strategies, such as policy change, to make community impacts that might discourage substance misuse and promote health and wellness," says Kristen Gilmore Powell, assistant research professor and associate director of the Center for Prevention Science.

In her work with prevention coalitions, Powell helped partners develop a mobile app called Be The One in 2017, which helps local leaders communicate through photos the positive and negative experiences of their community as they pertain to substance misuse. Now, Powell is analyzing three years' worth of photos from across the state to find out what might support healthy choices in communities versus what might endorse substance misuse.

One common theme that emerged from Powell's research is the influence of product placement. "It's very common to find drinking games merchandised right next to family board games in stores, which could promote a message around drinking to youth," she says. "Being able to point this out has allowed coalitions to approach store management and work with them to think about product placement and marketing in a more responsible manner."

Another area of improvement that the study revealed is the prevalence of litter. "It was common to see photos of a park that's frequented by families littered with things like empty alcohol bottles or cigarette and vaping litter," Powell says. "This is an important environmental consequence of substance misuse to consider."

On the positive side, coalition members have been able to utilize Be The One to showcase their prevention successes, including positive events that brought high school students together with community leaders such as doctors, pharmacists, and law enforcement.

The manuscript for this paper is under development, but Powell's hope is that her findings will help community leaders substantiate proposed policy changes. "Whether it's regarding litter or product placement, the goal is to think about policy changes that foster a healthier environment," she says. "It's about examining our current practices, making changes where needed, and raising awareness."



"Whether it's regarding litter or product placement, the goal is to think about policy changes that foster a healthier environment."



"So much of community engaged work is about listening and coming back to the table. We're excited to have those conversations and see what they want to find out next."

PREVENTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Through an ongoing partnership with the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault, professor and associate dean for faculty development Victoria Banyard has been helping to evaluate the implementation and impact of Project Dream, Own, Tell (DOT), a 15-week sexual and relationship violence prevention program for adolescents centered around healthy relationships, bystander intervention, and youth leadership development. DOT also includes a community action component, in which participants create a project designed to make change locally.

"The first evaluation we did with them was of an adult workshop they were doing," Banyard says, which took place in the fall of 2019 and early winter of 2020. "The young people participating in DOT said it was great that they're engaging in prevention, but that the adults in their lives needed similar education. So they worked with the staff at the Alliance to design a four-hour workshop for significant adults. We came in to do an evaluation that could examine the feasibility and acceptability of this adult workshop." The findings indicated a high level of acceptability; the adults really enjoyed learning from

the youth, and the youth leaders also benefited from teaching adults. Plus, the adults said the information was powerful and useful for them. "They didn't have a lot of confidence about having these complicated conversations, but they ended up gaining a lot of information from that four-hour workshop," Banyard says.

Most recently, Banyard helped the Alliance evaluate the online version of DOT, which became necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was conducted virtually via Zoom, and participants' community change project involved the use of PhotoVoice, a participatory action research method designed to give voice to underrepresented groups. "Each of the final four sessions had a theme, and participants took pictures that corresponded to that theme and brought them back to the group for discussion," Banyard explains. "After these discussions, they created a virtual presentation of the photos they took and invited adults in the community to attend."

What Banyard found this time was that the students largely benefited from the online iteration of DOT, though they did also face challenges typical to remote learning such as access to private spaces and technology. "Right now we're going back to the table with our partners at the Alliance to see if our evaluation has been useful and what else they might want to know," Banyard says. "So much of community engaged work is about listening and coming back to the table. We're excited to have those conversations and see what they want to find out next."

OPTIMIZING RUTGERS FUTURE SCHOLARS

The Rutgers Future Scholars program (RFS) identifies first-generation, low-income, academically promising middle school students from Rutgers' home communities of New Brunswick, Piscataway, Newark, Camden, and Rahway, and offers them a unique pre-college program that includes university programming, events, support, and mentoring that continues through their high school years. Students who successfully complete the five-year program and are accepted to Rutgers University receive full tuition funding. But the goals of the program extend beyond the impacts it has on individual students. Each year, RFS partners with the School of Social Work and the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy to host interns interested in studying disparities in urban communities or gaining field experience working with middle or high school youth.

"The ultimate goal is that these young people will return to the community and enrich it," says Adrian Gale, assistant professor in the child welfare and well-being research unit. "It's not just a college access program. It's a program that seeks to impact each of the larger communities where Rutgers resides by impacting its young people."

Gale is currently gathering data from current RFS participants to evaluate the different needs and outcomes that exist in each program. For example, how does being in an urban setting impact the implementation and outcomes of RFS in Newark? Which parts of the program are most impactful for scholars in Camden? Do suburban students in Rahway have the same needs as those in Piscataway? "We would like to learn, to the extent that it is possible, about which parts of the program—academic tutoring, mentoring, college socialization, or tuition scholarship—work best, and for whom it works best," he says. "My assumption is that there are groups who may only need to know about the tuition scholarship in order to be successful, and that there are other groups who need all of the services to be successful." In the future, Gale also wants to interview the parents and families of the scholars, to get their take on the program.

Gale anticipates that he'll be able to analyze the data by the fall of 2022, and ultimately present it to leadership at RFS to help them determine best practices. "We want to find the students who have the greatest needs, and make sure they have the resources to be successful," he says.



"It's not just a college access program. It's a program that seeks to impact each of the larger communities where Rutgers resides by impacting its young people."



KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

Nationwide, young children in the welfare system who have caregivers that misuse substances have between a 20 and 40 percent chance of staying in their home. What if there was a better way to approach these cases so that parents could get the help they need and children could continue to safely live at home with their families? That's the goal of a new in-home recovery program, the result of a partnership between the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, the Yale Child Study Center, Preferred Behavioral Health Group, and assistant professor Emily Bosk at the School of Social Work.

The program is currently operating in Ocean County, New Jersey (with plans to expand to Union County in April 2022), open to parents of children ages six and under, who misuse substances. Parents receive three visits per week from a care team that includes a substance use clinician, infant mental health clinician, and family support specialist. "The goal is to interrupt intergenerational transmission of trauma," says Bosk.

"Three-quarters of our clients in the program report a history of family substance misuse, so it's clear that intervention is needed from an intergenerational perspective."

Parents began participating in the program in January 2020 and, along the way, Bosk has been gathering data to examine outcomes in maternal and child mental health, child welfare, parent-child relationships, and substance use. "To date, out of the 46 families that have been receiving services, 90 percent of the children remain at home—this is incredibly significant when compared to the national average," says Bosk. "We also see very few re-reports to child welfare when families are involved in the program." Instead, children are identified for early intervention services quickly; 43 percent of kids in the program have been referred to and started early intervention. This is critical, says Bosk, as the earlier such intervention is started, the better the chances are of restoring positive developmental trajectories.

This is a totally different way of approaching the treatment of caregivers with substance misuse and, for this reason, Bosk is providing client feedback every step of the way as families move through the program. "Everything we research impacts practice on the ground and we're contributing to quality improvement in real time," she says. And though there is a risk in making changes to any system, especially where child welfare is concerned, Bosk points out that the benefits can be transformational for the state's children and families. "Really strong community engagement research involves everyone willing to take some big risks," she says.

"Really strong community engagement research involves everyone willing to take some big risks."

ASSESSING MATERNAL HEALTH

A number of factors can influence a birthing person's risk of severe maternal morbidity (SMM, a group of life-threatening labor and delivery outcomes—from heart attack to kidney failure—that result in significant short- and long-term health consequences). Could the community in which a person lives be one of them? Assistant professor Felix Muchomba says yes.

In his recent study, Muchomba and his team gathered one million New Jersey birth records dated from 2008 to 2018, and linked each of these births with maternal hospital discharge records to determine rates of SMM across the state.

Some of what Muchomba found was unsurprising, for example, that mothers with higher socioeconomic status had lower rates of SMM and those with advanced maternal age had higher rates. "But all of these factors only partly explain the variation we found across the state of New Jersey," he says, which is that rates of SMM increased the more southern in the state the mother lived, with some exceptions. And, the municipality with the highest rate of SMM (Bridgeton, New Jersey, in Cumberland County) had over three times the rate of Westfield, New Jersey in Union County, which had the lowest rate in the state.

Additionally, Muchomba examined municipal spending data in the areas where the mothers lived, specifically, how these different municipalities invested per person in the areas of public health, housing and community development, transportation, libraries, fire protection and ambulance, and policing, and how this spending measured against the likelihood of SMM.

Muchomba found that mothers living in municipalities that spend more per resident on these public services were less likely to have SMM, and an additional \$1,000 per capita spent on these services reduced the odds of SMM by between 35 and 67 percent—with one exception. "More spending on police did not have the same association with better maternal outcomes," he says. "Mothers living in places that spend more on police were actually more likely to have negative post-childbirth outcomes."

Muchomba's work, having recently been published, is currently being disseminated to media, community organizations, and municipal leaders. "This research helps us understand what kind of investments have the potential to improve the lives of birthing people in the state," he says, "and could help municipalities create spending plans that better support the health of their residents."

Support for Muchomba's research was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Policies for Action program. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. ■



"This research helps us understand what kind of investments have the potential to improve the lives of birthing people in the state."



TOWARD A MORE JUST FUTURE

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THE DANIEL JORDAN FIDDLE FOUNDATION CREATOR SEEKS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY TIES THROUGH COLLABORATION

The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation (DJFF), the first nonprofit and only all-volunteer-run organization in the U.S. focusing on adult autism, has been blazing trails since 2002. The DJFF's model programs, resources, public policy and awareness initiatives are person-centered and derive from the needs and hopes of the diverse population of adults diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and their families. As the foundation marks its 20th anniversary, founder and president Linda J. Walder, Esq. shares how The DJFF engages with communities to create paths leading to fulfilling and potential-driven lives.

How did The DJFF get started?

The DJFF was established in honor and memory of my son, Danny Fiddle, who was diagnosed with autism when he was about two and a half years old. During Danny's lifetime I realized he was going to have good schooling, and there would be many opportunities for him, especially in New Jersey and New York. But I wondered what was going to happen to him as an adult. Many children who have autism also have several comorbidities, and Danny's resulted in a seizure. He passed to heaven when he was nine years old. People said I was such an active parent and urged me to continue my efforts. I was still in a daze, but I realized that it would be worthwhile to continue on, especially because I was a person with a deep perspective on autism and the challenges that families and individuals face. I was also in a position where I no longer had the day-to-day rigor of finding the right

paths that would help my child. So, I had a unique opportunity, and I decided to take it. When our board was established 20 years ago, I suggested we focus on adults because nobody else was. It became the focal point of our trailblazing mission.

Tell us about your background and how it helped you create the foundation.

I really started from the ground up. In retrospect, my background as an attorney and prior work in public relations helped. It actually was the perfect storm, because I had the understanding of how to formulate partnerships and agreements, and I also knew how to move our mission forward, spreading awareness that autism is a lifelong journey, not just a childhood situation.

What are some of the challenges you faced when starting The DJFF?

One of the challenges was my naivete in the sense that I didn't have a nonprofit background. However, my enthusiasm really led me to reach out to others. I think when you work with likeminded organizations you are not faced with as many challenges because working together often helps create solutions. I actually started the foundation mission and brought it forward because of an article I read in *The New York Times* about a place called High Point Farm that is owned by an entity in New York City that focuses on supporting people with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. I thought the farm would be a great place for young adults who have been diagnosed with autism who are seeking to be outdoors to get their Eagle Scout badges. So we partnered with Fountain House, which runs High Point Farm. One may say it was an obstacle to reach out to an organization that doesn't even focus on autism, but after talking about it, we figured out that we could make it work.



Linda J. Walder, Founder and Executive Director, with Founding Board of Trustees member Jim Scancarella

With collaborative thinking, positivity, and the goal of helping people, we can pretty much make anything happen.

What are The DJFF's goals and values?

We always centered our mission on adults, and our core value has always been to aspire to create the most fulfilling lives possible as I had wished for my own son. Another core value in our mission is to meet people where they are, a tenet of social work. It was imperative that we listen to people, watch what they gravitate towards, and then help open the doors where they're going. Another key component of our mission is enthusiasm. We cannot underestimate passion and enthusiasm, which generate collaboration.

How does The DJFF engage with communities?

One of the strongest aspects of The DJFF is that it's known for being a highly collaborative organization. I think in our society we are very competitive by training from childhood onward, but for some reason, I'm not built that way. I feel that collaboration is much stronger than competition. I would rather listen to a variety of people and organizations to figure out a way we can take our strengths and talents and put them together to create something wonderful.

What advice would you give to someone who wants to engage with their community but might not know where to start?

Do your homework, which means listening, determining what you want, and developing your focus. I can't stress enough the importance of listening. When we started The DJFF, we created an advisory board comprised of an array of people, and the most important people we listen to have been those who have autism and their family

members. It's critical to observe and listen, not dictate to people what you think they want. I think that's been a big mistake a lot of organizations make, especially in the world of autism. A lot of advocates feel that organizations design missions based upon their own vision, but not about the people themselves who are affected by the challenges of autism.

Tell us about The DJFF's relationship with Rutgers School of Social Work.

It began when I reached out to Dean Cathryn Potter. I didn't know her, but I knew Rutgers School of Social Work had a lauded and well-respected program, so it seemed like there would be no better place to start an endowment fund. I explained to Dean Potter that we wanted to make sure adult autism would be a focus in perpetuity at great universities that had exceptional programs in the specific areas that we were interested in pursuing. We decided to focus on providing support and resources for the family members of adults with autism, an underserved community of people who are also on the lifelong journey of autism. We thought the best way to facilitate this would be to support graduate fellows working as direct care clinicians with family members of adults with autism. Obviously, you can only help a handful of people in that manner, so to throw the net out further, we tasked the fellows with creating and maintaining a resource guide to help individuals obtain information that could help their family member or just themselves. We've had an exceptional group of fellows over the years. There has been a common denominator of enthusiasm and passion amongst the fellows, and many of them have had a personal connection to autism.

As The DJFF marks its 20th anniversary, what are your hopes for the future of the foundation?

As I look back, I get emotional because I didn't have great aspirations when we started. I wanted to help one person or one family, so we will continue helping one individual and one family at a time. If we do that then we have done something really important. I hope that through our efforts we can inspire others to see that you don't have to be competitive, you can be collaborative, and your goal should be to help those you serve, not to enhance your position. Collaboration can propel us forward to do good things for people and help us realize that we all have a right to achieve our best life possible. ■
To learn more about The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation, visit djffoundation.org.



MEET ONE OF THE DJFF'S 2021-2022 FELLOWS

Kerry McGrath, Advanced Standing MSW Student

I have always known that I would have a career helping people with disabilities, but it has not been until I started studying social work that I found my niche in the profession. Through my internships, I have realized that my interests strongly align with helping to influence policy and services for adults with I/DD and autism and their families. My interest is in helping transition-aged individuals access the resources they need to lead successful adult lives, especially in the area of employment.

A DAY IN THE LIFE: MARLEINA UBEL SSW'21



Marleina Ubel SSW'21 was born in Puerto Rico and moved to the mainland when she was about five years old. She spent most of her formative years in Miami, Florida with her mother, stepfather, and four siblings. Her stepfather, who raised her as his own, was Cuban, and so her childhood was one that blended

Puerto Rican and Cuban traditions. Things were not always easy, and Marleina did not start her college education until she had a daughter of her own. She started her educational journey at Valencia College in Orlando, earning a transfer scholarship to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she received a BA in philosophy. Later, she would move to the great state of New Jersey and earn her MSW at Rutgers School of Social Work.

Today, Marleina works as a policy analyst at New Jersey Policy Perspective (NJPP) through the State Policy Fellowship at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP). While she makes contributions to work on tax and budget, her main area of focus is the criminal legal system. The nature of this work is ever evolving and often fast paced.

What follows is an example of an average day for Marleina.

7:00 AM: I get out of bed to make a cup of Bustelo before I have to wake my 10-year-old for school. I savor the 30 minutes of silence before the morning routine truly starts.

8:10 AM: I rush my daughter out the door after she has had her breakfast and put up a fight about brushing her hair. I sit down to check my calendar and inbox, which is generally in need of some attention. I respond to emails from partners at the American Civil Liberties Union, Salvation and Social Justice, and Make the Road New Jersey.

9:00 AM: Time for our weekly staff meeting. Since the start of the pandemic, we have been meeting and working remotely, with a few exceptions. The NJPP staff Zoom in to the meeting and give relevant updates. Given that I am part of the research team, I tell my colleagues

about a series of bills I am watching that are related to my area of expertise. On this day, they are S2656, a bill that requires access to law enforcement disciplinary records as government records, and S2963, a bill that will authorize local civilian review boards to review police operations and conduct.

10:30 AM: I am working on a blog that will lift up a recent report published by our friends at CBPP. The report highlights how states can use American Rescue Plan dollars to fund alternative models to policing. I use this opportunity to also lift up my recent report on police spending and alternative models in New Jersey.

12:00 PM: I make some lunch and eat with my husband, who is a graduate student. While these times are challenging, small things like being able to have extra time together give us something to be thankful for.

1:30 PM: I have a meeting with leaders in the New Jersey legislative staff offices to discuss the current status of bills that are of interest to my partners and me. We also hope to glean some insights that may help us move the legislation forward.

2:30 PM: I attend a webinar on lobbying. Attending webinars is a common way to engage in professional development, and because NJPP is a nonprofit organization, it is important to know what the guidelines are around lobbying as a representative of NJPP.

3:30 PM: There is an Abolish the Drug War (ATDW) coalition meeting. I represent NJPP in various coalitions, which consist of partner organizations, professionals, impacted individuals, and advocates across the state. ATDW meets every two weeks to brainstorm ways to create a more equitable state by ending the drug war and finding ways to remediate all the harms it has caused.

6:30 PM: I am pretty tired! I make dinner and help my daughter with her homework. I also catch up on any emails – it never ends!

9:30 PM: My husband and I read stories with our daughter as we tuck her in. After this, we get to spend about an hour of time together before I fall asleep. ■



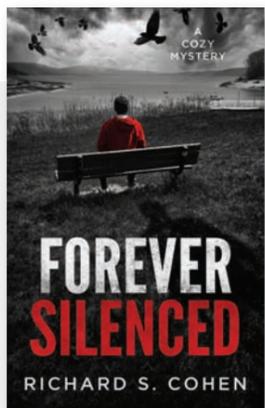
Thank you to all of our alumni who have sent us their news and updates. We encourage you to keep us posted with any updates about your job, your life, or your family. Email your news to lzazenski@ssw.rutgers.edu.

The *New York Times* article “How Shadow Foster Care is Tearing Families Apart” (December 5, 2021) looked specifically at a tragic case of illegal activity in Cherokee County, North Carolina. **Daniel Beerman SSW’72** was the plaintiff’s social work expert witness. The federal civil court jury awarded \$4.6 million to the plaintiff’s family.

Susan P. Chizeck, Ph.D. SSW’83 is semi-retired and teaches part time for the University of Texas at Dallas in interdisciplinary studies. She teaches a regular internship class for all majors and a special one for emergency medicine tech trainees. She gave up teaching her regular classes on critical thinking and writing so she could travel, but of course that all stopped when COVID-19 hit. She is married, has one child (now grown up), and continues to enjoy life. Teaching online kept her busy during lockdowns; it was a lifeline. She learned new skills and collaborated with professional staff. She never thought she’d get used to staying home to work, but now she loves it. She was previously active in professional societies and edited a journal for many years, but is glad to be done with those responsibilities.



After 50 years in the mental health field and being married that long also, **Jim Berko SSW’68** and his wife finally got to travel the world from Singapore through all of Europe and Asia. He ended his career as CEO for 30 years at Seminole Behavioral Health (now Aspire Inc.), one of the largest facilities for mental health and substance abuse in Florida.



Richard S. Cohen SSW’99 recently published *FOREVER SILENCED*, a humorous and entertaining cozy mystery. In a heartwarming story with various forms of plot twists, *FOREVER SILENCED* is a page-turner that takes readers on an enjoyable and ever-so-memorable journey.

Kim Gilroy SSW’13 is working part time at Monmouth Medical Center in their outpatient Center for Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders, aiding women and couples with issues related to pregnancy, post partum, infertility, and loss. She also started her private practice, Infinite Balance Psychotherapy, this year and is treating adults and adolescents with mood issues, anxiety, grief/loss, relationship issues, and life transitions. Kim is very grateful for the quality education she received at Rutgers School of Social Work.

Paula Hill SSW’07 became the director of the child study team and special services in Woodridge and Moonachie school districts. Her MSW has guided her career path to help children and families and she believes it makes her a comprehensive administrator. She is very proud to be an alum of the School of Social Work.

Javier Mercado SSW’77 hosts a Latin bilingual Christian music program called “Latin Impact.” Music styles include salsa, merengue, balada, reggaeton, cumbia, bachata, reggae, and worship as well as other styles of music. It airs Monday to Friday from 9:00am to 1:00pm EST at www.mixcloud.com/live/jmercador/.

While at Rutgers, Mercado and his friend José had a similar radio program with the same name on WRSU radio. When Mercado graduated and returned to Atlantic City, NJ, he also had a similar radio program with the same name on the then WUSS 1490 AM radio station.



Kara (Sellix) Kushnir SSW’15 moved into full-time private practice and manages a group of therapists in Bergen County, NJ at A Work of Heart Counseling, which just celebrated its second year in business as a group practice. She also had her first child, Evan Liam, in July 2021, which inspired her to pursue her perinatal mental health certification through Postpartum Support International.

Linda Moore SSW’93 retired as director of social services at Vineland Developmental Center in November 2014. She is enjoying her free time to do volunteer work with ladies in supervised living and at an animal sanctuary.

Karen B. Wimberly SSW’91 (formerly Karen Bakerjian) is an LCSW who completed the Post-Graduate Certificate Program in Veterinary Social Work from the University of Tennessee—Knoxville. Her keystone project focused on the link between violence towards animals and violence towards people.

Olivia Yearnis SSW’15 and **Damond Yearnis SAS’00**, who earned his MPA from Kean University in 2006, celebrated their 16th wedding anniversary this year. They have two beautiful children. Olivia also obtained her LCSW and Damond became a licensed home inspector this year.

SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE

IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED AN AWARD OR PROMOTION, TAKEN ON A NEW JOB OR INTERESTING PROJECT, GOTTEN MARRIED, OR ADDED A NEW FAMILY MEMBER, LET US KNOW. WE WOULD LOVE TO SHARE YOUR GOOD NEWS WITH OTHER ALUMNI.

SUBMIT TO [LZAZENSKI@SSW.RUTGERS.EDU](mailto:lzazenski@ssw.rutgers.edu)

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 July 2021 and December 2021.

- Ms. Katharine B. Aldridge, SSW'81
- Ms. Nancy M. Allerman, SSW'87
- Mrs. Yvette Alvarado-Colon, DC'79, SSW'87
- Mrs. Brenda D. Barton, SSW'71
- Ms. Madelyn J. Berensmann, NCAS'66, SSW'80
- Mrs. Florence M. Bernstein, SSW'63
- Mr. Richard H. Bogh, Jr., SSW'65
- Ms. Ann Therese Burke, SSW'72
- Mr. Michael W. Clissold, SSW'83
- Ms. Darlene J. Dennis, SSW'89
- Ms. Theresa Devecka-Rigoglioso, SSW'90
- Ms. Gail V. Dougherty, LC'79, SSW'80
- Ms. Kathleen M. Gilligan-Greer, SSW'79
- Ms. Patricia A. Kenny, SSW'70
- Ms. Anita A. Manno, SSW'86
- Mrs. Patricia A. Mattos, SSW'75
- Ms. Mary Frances McFadden, SSW'86
- Mr. Conrad Burt Metz, SSW'67
- Douglas B. Nessle, A.C.S.W., SSW'60
- Ms. Dorothy O'Keefe-Diana, SSW'09
- Mr. Donald A. Romeo, SSW'84
- Ms. Barbara Sage, SSW'88
- Ms. Camilla Senteneri-Bricker, SSW'14
- Sister Diane P. Szubrowski, GSED'71, SSW'88
- Mr. Alexander P. Thomson, NCAS'72, SSW'78
- Ms. Darrilyn R. Vassar-Jackson, SSW'73
- Ms. Frances Weiss Robbins, DC'39, SSW'71
- Mrs. Virginia L. Wintemute, SSW'67
- Mrs. Irene Zmitrovis, UCNB'70, SSW'95

e n d p a g e



“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

M O T H E R T E R E S A



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