The image depicts School of Social Work MSW students at the Solidarity Day march in support of organized labor in Washington, D.C., on September 19, 1981.
“Some people are old when they’re 18 and some people are young when they’re 90. You can’t define people by whatever society determines as their age. Time is a concept that human beings created.”

YOKO ONO
Dear Friends,

Welcome to the fall 2018 issue of Partnering for Change! We have begun another academic year with great energy. Our students and faculty are fantastic and represent the profession so well. You may have heard that in the latest U.S. News and World Report rankings, Rutgers School of Social Work has risen from 26th to 17th in the country! This is due to the strength of our faculty, the programs they create and deliver, the research they conduct and the impact it has on our state, nation, country and world. Please join me in offering your congratulations to them as you meet them through the year.

In these pages, you will find much that interests you, including our two feature articles. The first highlights the outstanding research efforts on bringing to light issues impacting aging populations, as well as the need to harness the resources and diversity this important demographic offers to society. This research along with the School’s Aging and Health Certificate Program for MSW students, help us truly partner for change with this dynamic sector of our population.

“The Business of Helping People” looks at three alumni who have used their business sense and foundational experience in social work to create opportunities within their communities. All three illustrate how our alumni are innovative and entrepreneurial thinkers.

Please welcome Dr. Victoria Banyard to our faculty. Dr. Banyard is truly one of the foremost researchers in the world in the area of interpersonal violence. She joins our Center on Violence Against Women and Children, already a powerhouse in this field. Dr. Banyard brings decades of experience in partnering with communities, from universities to Native American tribes, to combat various forms of interpersonal violence. She is a leading researcher in the campus sexual assault arena and adds strength to Rutgers’ existing leadership in this area.

Thank you for your commitment to the field, and for providing such inspiring stories of life-long dedication to social justice issues, as evidenced by the stories of alumna Mae Silver and the updates in the class notes section. Please join us at our before Annual Winter Alumni Reception on Thursday, November 29, when we will celebrate the next Outstanding Alumni Award recipient. See more details for this event later in this publication. A good time is always had by all at this gathering, and we hope to see you there.

Sincerely,

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

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We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please send us your feedback or ideas to
ecapone@ssw.rutgers.edu.
Even if you’re not a fan of musicals, you’ve surely heard of the hype surrounding Broadway’s Hamilton. Critically acclaimed, the show garnered a record-setting 16 Tony award nominations, 11 Tony Award wins, a Pulitzer Prize for drama, and a Grammy. It also has a multicultural cast of talented actors playing America’s founding fathers in a rap musical that is energetic, empowering, and enlightening. Tickets are expensive and hard to come by. However, students taking part in convocation on Monday, May 14 had front-row seats to one of the show’s key performers. Bryan Terrell Clark, the actor who has played George Washington in Hamilton since January 2017, was the School’s keynote convocation speaker.

A native of Baltimore and a graduate of the Yale School of Drama, Terrell Clark makes sense as the School’s convocation speaker. Not only is he one of the central figures in a hit musical that explores the nature of revolution and the important contributions of immigrants in the creation of American democracy, he is also an advocate for at-risk youth in his personal life. In 2017, he became the co-founder of the philanthropic fashion brand inDEFINEd. To date, the foundation has raised over $92,000 for various charities and philanthropic organizations, and has supported arts education for youth. Their mission is to empower youth to create change, to “redefine the world we live in,” and to become a “community of change-makers.”

Prior to his speech, Terrell Clark received the Voice for Social Justice Award. Dean Cathryn C. Potter explained the reasoning for this honor: “He does not live in the bubble that fame can bring. He has also chosen to make a difference for at-risk youth through his social enterprise, inDEFINEd, a brand that has raised funds for charities, philanthropic organizations, and arts education.”

In his remarks, Terrell Clark offered a moving portrait of what it means to be a social justice advocate. “All things work together for the good. If you live life with that mindset, you can craft the kind of life you want to lead.” He also had an important reminder for those about to embark on a professional life that is based largely on serving others. “If you want to maximize what you want to give to the world, take care of yourself first.” His remarks were met by a standing ovation from the students.

According to the most recent ranking of graduate schools from U.S. News & World Report, Rutgers School of Social Work ranks 17th among MSW programs in the nation, up from 22nd place in 2014 and 26th place in 2012. Rutgers School of Social Work now ranks ninth among public university programs, and second (tied with NYU) in the competitive New York market.

“Our high ranking is a tribute to the people who work here,” says Dean and Distinguished Professor Cathryn C. Potter. “My congratulations go out to our talented faculty and staff whose commitment to research, learning, and advancing the core principles of the field have contributed to this national acknowledgement of excellence.”

U.S. News & World Report is the global authority in rankings of graduate programs. The 2013 Master of Social Work programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education are ranked on the results of peer assessment surveys sent to deans and other key informants.
On Wednesday, June 6, Rutgers School of Social Work hosted its second annual Challenging Racial Disparities conference at the Busch Student Center, featuring keynote speaker Dr. Derald Wing Sue. With several distinguished panelists, the conference quickly sold-out and was attended by social workers and other professionals, including a large number of Rutgers alumni.

Doug Behan, director of the Rutgers SSW Office of Continuing Education, emphasized the importance of conversations related to the problem of racial inequality and its impact on all aspects of our lives. “Conversations about race can be difficult and are often avoided, however they must take place if we are going to make progress as a society. Social workers are often on the frontline in addressing racial disparities, and this conference is designed to empower them in that important work.”

Dr. Sue, who is a professor of education in the Department of Counseling and Clinical Psychology Teachers College and the School of Social Work at Columbia University, was brought in as the featured speaker as part of the Professor William Neal Brown Endowed Lecture series. His lecture focused on microaggressions and understanding the ways in which people of color can be marginalized in day-to-day interactions. He spoke about how part of the solution to racial inequality is to allow others at the table. It is like an African proverb, he said. “The true tale of the lion hunt will never be told as long as the hunter tells the story.”

Following his presentation, attendees were given the opportunity to hear from a panel of experts, which was moderated by Melissa Blumen Carter, an assistant professor of professional practice at the School of Social Work. The panel consisted of Dr. Sue, as well as Dr. Anne Gregory, and Dr. Shalonda Kelly from the Rutgers Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology. Dr. Sue spoke about the importance of a practitioner’s own awareness of her race and how that might impact the power differential in their work with clients. The panel addressed various issues related to race currently occurring in society, such as the “taking a knee” controversy. The session was highly interactive with members of the audience adding their experiences and questions.

Participants then had a lunch break to network and socialize, followed by the choice to take part in one of eight breakout sessions focused on issues related to addressing race as a professional social worker. These sessions ranged from racial disparities in child protective cases to the impact of race and trauma in the school-to-prison pipeline to mental health disparities in youth and families and the overall problem of racism, injustice, and poverty in New Jersey.

Attendee Dr. Alissa Koval-Dhaliwal first heard of the conference via an email invitation, and decided to register to enhance her understanding of the issues. As a counselor at the New Jersey City University Counseling Center whose work touches diverse populations, she found both the opening presentation and her breakout session very useful. “Conferences like this are critical to supporting and assisting my clients and our student body, who often experience disparities in education, mental health care, and health care,” she said during a break. “I am especially appreciative of this opportunity to learn from Dr. Sue, whose body of work on multicultural counseling and microaggressions has been so important and has been instrumental to my ongoing personal and professional development.” Participants in the conference were eligible to earn five continuing education hours. In addition, they were able to enhance their knowledge about key issues in the field of social work in order to return back to their jobs and apply what they learned.

For information about next year’s conference on race or about continuing education opportunities with the School more generally, please contact Doug Behan at dbehan@ssw.rutgers.edu or visit the website at socialwork.rutgers.edu/academics/continuing-education.
WHAT TO WATCH: ADD TO YOUR VIEWING LIST

WILD WILD COUNTRY:
"The six episode docuseries covers the creation and collapse of a cult leader’s utopian city in rural Oregon. The show’s complicated journey lead this binge-worthy utopian city in rural Oregon. The story’s creation and collapse of a cult leader’s "The six episode docuseries covers the creation and collapse of a cult leader’s..."

NETFLIX: "Comedian Hannah Gadsby makes people feel their empathy for a person they may not understand. With keen humor and angry yet warm voice, Gadsby实在是太可爱了. 她的演讲和现实生活中的故事都让观众感受到喜剧演员对社会的洞察力和对人性的深刻理解。"..."

GRACE & FRANKIE:
"Show starring Lily Tomlin & Jane Fonda. "Grace & Frankie:"..."

THE FOSTERS:
"The main characters are a lesbian couple and one son who was adopted by both women. Over various episodes, they..."

POSE: "It is about black gay and trans men and Ball culture in the late 80s. From a social justice perspective, it shows the intersection of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, and HIV/AIDS. Is this show worth watching? If yes, I would recommend you..."

JANE THE VIRGIN: "This premise sounds like it would be terrible and very anti-social justice and anti-homophobe, but it’s actually an amazing show that deals with gender, race, homophobia, and class, and has one character who speaks exclusively in Spanish."..."
WELCOMING NEW LEADERSHIP

We are very excited about changes in our leadership effective this fall.

Dr. Laura Carran has taken on the role of Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. In this position, Dr. Carran will oversee the academic programming of the School of Social Work and work closely with faculty and program leadership on teaching and learning initiatives. Her office also oversees the School of Social Work’s part-time lecturers.

Dr. Carran is also an associate professor at the SWW and she served as Director of the MSW program since 2014. In that role, she oversaw the curriculum and master’s level program development. Prior to that appointment, she was the inaugural director of our Online MSW Program. In that capacity, she led the design and implementation of successful online endeavors.

Carran’s scholarship focuses on social work history, low-income women’s perinatal mental health, and most recently, issues in social work education. Her work has appeared in such outlets as Social Service Review, the Journal of Women’s History, and Infant Mental Health. Carran is the Co-PI for a CSWE Policy Practice in Field Education Initiative grant.

Also this fall, Dr. Judy L. Postmus started as the Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Strategic Initiatives. Curran is the Co-PI for a CSWE Policy Practice in Field Education Initiative grant. Also this fall, Dr. Judy L. Postmus started as the Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Strategic Initiatives. In this role, Postmus is responsible for faculty development and strategic initiatives. In this role, she works closely with Dean Cathryn Potter to manage special projects related to developing and advancing strategic initiatives within the School and University, as well as locally and nationally. Since 2007, Postmus has served as the founding director of the Center on Violence Against Women and Children, the premier social work research center focused on interpersonal violence. Under her leadership, VBVC has grown to a large, vibrant, well-funded center including 16 doctoral students, and numerous post docs, staff, students, and faculty, with a current funding level of $2.5 million per year. During her time with the Center, VBVC has received funding from the National Institute of Justice, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the New Jersey Departments of Children and Families, Human Services, and Community Affairs, as well as with Verizon Wireless and Allstate Foundation. Her research is on physical, sexual, and economic victimization experiences of women with women's most recent attention given to developing a Violence Against Women Research Consortium, funded by the National Institute of Justice (2016-MU1-CL-80011). She has given many local, national, and international presentations on the impact of policies and interventions for survivors of violence. Her work is strongly influenced from her 20 years as a practitioner and administrator.

Dr. Patricia Findley has assumed the role of MSW Director. Dr. Findley came to Rutgers in 2002 at the Program for Disability Research through the School of Management and Labor Relations, working on several grants including a large cooperative agreement with the Social Security Administration and an SBIR R Award. Following a brief time as a Health Science Specialist/Researcher in the 5K at East Orange, she joined faculty at SWW in 2007. Dr. Findley was tenured as an associate professor in 2013. Her clinical and research work has focused on disability, health, and the impact of chronic conditions. She became the Special Assistant to the Dean for Interprofessional Health Initiatives in 2015, and has been the MSW Campus Coordinator for the Newark campus. She also sits on the Board of Rutgers Health—representing VBVC. Findley has been a tremendous ambassador for the school, developing relationships with faculty and administrators across multiple campuses and programs. We look forward to future successes with these leadership positions, and thank Carran, Postmus, and Findley for their commitment to the School.

Dr. Laura Carran, Ph.D.

Dr. Judy Postmus, Ph.D.

Dr. Patricia Findley, Ph.D.
Welcome New Faculty + Five Objects

UTGERS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Victoria Banyard as a full-time professor. Banyard, who was a full professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of New Hampshire, has spent her academic life focused on issues related to the prevention of and responses to interpersonal violence.

She is currently the principal investigator on two grants, one from the Department of Justice and the other with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). She is also a co-principal investigator on a second CDC grant, “Preventing sexual violence through a comprehensive peer led initiative: a process and outcome evaluation.”

Banyard brings with her decades of experience in working with these issues, having served as a research and evaluation specialist in the Office on Violence Against Women in the U.S. Department of Justice. Even as a Ph.D. student earning her degree in clinical psychology and certificate in Women’s Studies at the University of Michigan, her interest in finding ways to prevent and respond to interpersonal violence was clear.

FIVE OBJECTS THAT MATTER

Footprints: This is a gift given to me by a good friend who directed a crisis center: two embroidered footprints made by domestic violence survivors. To me it is a reminder of why I do this work — to try to reduce the burden of violence and trauma that all too many people experience. It is a reminder to me that in doing this work I always need to think about trying to understand what it is like to walk in the shoes of others. The beauty of the embroidery is also a reminder of the incredible strength and resilience of survivors who keep going, one foot in front of the other, every day.

Family pictures: Family is the most important thing in my life. This is a painting my oldest son did in his first grade art class: a New Hampshire farm, complete with barn and scarecrow. He is now 17. My office is full of photos of my family — my spouse, three children, and two dogs. My family is my support and foundation. They help me keep balance and humor in my life and keep me from spending too many hours at the office.

White House name tags: I had the chance to participate in several White House-sponsored meetings during the Obama administration when I was working with colleagues at the Office on Violence Against Women. They would give us name tags and name plates. Sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking must be public health priorities nationally and internationally. These objects help remind me that the work that my colleagues in the field do — at the Rutgers Center on Violence Against Women and Children, and back at the University of New Hampshire at Prevention Innovations — really matters; it matters at the highest level.

Books: Many of the books in my office tell stories of people and communities. Stories and voices of people’s experiences — often enduring and overcoming violence — fill my office and my work. My research draws heavily on mixed methods. Most projects involve at least some piece of qualitative research, whether through interviews, focus groups, or photovoice. The purpose of my work is to prevent violence and promote resilience among survivors. This work must be grounded in the perspectives and experiences of communities, “families” and practitioners. Their words keep our work relevant.

Magic wand: We are avid Harry Potter fans in my family. This is a replica of Professor McGonagall’s wand. To spend decades working to end a big problem like interpersonal violence — to really believe that the world can change and be more positive, and to keep fighting for social justice — you have to believe in a little magic. It is also important that this is Professor McGonagall’s wand in particular. She is a strong teacher and mentor; she has strong principles, and stands up for what is right by not only holding her students to high standards, but supporting and believing in them as they discover their own powers. It’s not always easy, but I try to aim for that ideal every day.

Welcome New Faculty + Five Objects
AGE-OLD QUESTIONS

The School of Social Work Provides Leadership for an Aging Society

By Melissa Kvidahl Reilly

According to the U.S. Census, the country is on the brink of a seismic population shift: by 2030, all Baby Boomers will be older than age 65, meaning that one in five Americans will be retirement age and, for the first time in our nation’s history, older people are projected to outnumber children.

Today, more and more researchers and innovators in the field of social work are harnessing the resources and diversity that the aging population brings to the table. At the School of Social Work, faculty members are stepping up to focus their research on policy and practice around long lives, and the school itself is doing more than ever to prepare its students to address this great demographic change.
In addition to her research on communities, Greenfield also is studying how inequalities from childhood influence people’s experiences of later life. While support from the National Institutes of Health, she is using survey data from one of the longest-running cohort studies in the U.S., which has followed the high school class of 1957 in Wisconsin for about 60 years. “As it turns out, the more privilege you have as a child, the more cognitive advantages you are likely to have, even 50-plus years later,” she explains. “This research shows the continued importance of breaking down silos between research and policy on children and research and policy on older adults.”

In this way, social workers are in a prime position to make a difference.

**Key Findings**

Associate Professor Karen Zurlo, whose research focuses on the economic security of older adults, has recently examined the link between income adequacy and mental health. “We learned through one study, which is pending publication, that adults between the ages of 65 and 64 have more challenges than their older counterparts when it comes to income adequacy and depressive symptoms,” she says. “Middle-aged adults are challenged by the costs of housing, maintaining gainful employment, financing their children’s college education, caring for their parents, and managing their own healthcare needs. In combination, these life circumstances negatively affect one’s mental health.”

Zurlo’s research shows that the older members of society—those born prior to World War II—tend to be more frugal and focused on saving and planning as compared with their younger peers. As a result, the oldest among us will have a more financially secure retirement (yielding better mental health and fewer depressive symptoms) than Baby Boomers, or those born between 1946 and 1964.

Not surprisingly, Zurlo’s research has also illuminated a need for financial education among older adults. Unlike previous generations, which benefited from employer-managed pensions, today’s retirees must be personally responsible for managing their retirement accounts and planning for retirement. “Older adults claim to be financially literate and active consumers of financial education and advice, but many are not,” she explains. Middle-aged adults often are not aware of the financial expenses they will have in retirement, or don’t know what steps to take to secure a sound retirement, Zurlo adds. Programs like Social Security and Medicare provide significant supports to their beneficiaries, but can be difficult for older adults to navigate to obtain maximum program benefits.

There is also a need to increase the infrastructure in place for this population, says Associate Professor Emily Greenfield, whose research focuses largely on those who remain living in their communities, as opposed to moving to retirement neighborhoods, assisted living communities, or other similar living arrangements. “The fact is that most people remain living in the community in later life,” she says. “So it’s a big question for advocates, policy makers, social workers, family members, and older people themselves how we can make these environments better to support people aging in place.”

Greenfield’s research on age-friendly initiatives indicates that supporting aging in place is about so much more than access to medical treatment or a senior center. “We’re starting to think about how the physical infrastructure can facilitate a good quality of life for this population,” she says. “This means assuring available transportation, housing, health and social services, opportunities for social inclusion, civic engagement, information and communications. What it all comes down to is choice. The aging population is not a homogenous group.” Greenfield says. “Take communications, for example. A senior center may think they’re meeting the communications needs of their audience by offering a weekly newsletter. That may work well for some, but there are likely volumes of other people for whom Facebook, word of mouth through a church, or other ways would work better.”

**Changemaking at SSW**

As trained professionals in issues of inequality and diversity, social workers can get involved in their communities on behalf of aging populations and other vulnerable groups. “We can become the champions of these populations. How? Act locally and think bigger than that,” says Greenfield. “What social workers experience in their work on a day-to-day basis connects with systems-wide impacts at the organizational, community, regional, statewide, national, and global levels. There are patterns here, and social workers experience these patterns and have so much to offer at all these broader levels.” She recommends that

TODAY, MORE AND MORE RESEARCHERS AND INNOVATORS IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WORK ARE HARRNESSING THE RESOURCES AND DIVERSITY THAT THE AGING POPULATION BRINGS TO THE TABLE. AT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, FACULTY MEMBERS ARE STEPPING UP TO FOCUS THEIR RESEARCH ON POLICY AND PRACTICE AROUND LONG LIVES, AND THE SCHOOL ITSELF IS DOING MORE THAN EVER TO PREPARE ITS STUDENTS TO ADDRESS THIS GREAT DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE.

**Social justice advocate David B. Scharf ’72 is the namesake of a School of Social Work lecture series named by his son, Robert. It focuses on issues facing older adults and new approaches in addressing them. Here are his top tips for working with the people later in life.**

1. **Overcomes resistance:** “It’s always the early bird that’s the loudest,” Scharf says. Older adults will often recognize the value of a service or care option, but say they don’t need it yet. While respecting the client’s right to make decisions within their capabilities, Scharf says it’s important to patiently identify and overcome resistance to needed changes. Engaging the client and their significant other in a life care planning process can be helpful, and it’s less stressful, in the end.

2. **Reduces shame or fear:** Although there are millions of older Americans who are victims of abuse (physical, emotional, and financial), the most severe, because of shame or fear, are reluctant to report it or take action, says Scharf. “These are especially true when the abuser is a friend or relative. Social workers, since they provide a combination of services and emotional support, are in a good position to connect senior victim with the help they need.”

3. **Prioritizes service:** Scharf says it’s important to recognize the significance of spirituality in the lives of the aged, and use it to help better understand them and their values. “We must consider how the love of social inclusion and how this may be accomplished when seniors can no longer access that religious institution that had been a source of much solace, comfort, and companionship in their lives,” he adds. “And we must work to find ways of connecting them to that source of help.”

4. **Capilcates on resources:** Full prevention and detection systems, GPS devices, and appliances that can be remotely monitored or controlled can increase client safety. Filling medication dispensers and remote telemonitoring can also increase healthcare compliance. Robotic vacuum cleaners, devices like the Roomba E5, and even Uber can boost a client’s independence. Engaging in FaceTime or virtual senior centers can help clients socialize, even from home. But electronic care management systems and telemonitoring can help social workers connect with other caregivers and providers to optimize care.

5. **Determines the true need:** When a senior or family member calls for help, be welcoming and responsive, but try to determine what precipitated that call, Scharf says. “Often the truth is that they fear the same mental and physical issues as younger folks, and in some ways a 66-year-old may be more interested in talking and receiving help than a 15-year-old.” Indeed, opportunities for graduates of the certificate program abound, from those in hospitals, hospice, assisted living, and skilled nursing programs to those in community programs, elder abuse services, and the government.

“I think there is a real need for this focus,” says Koller. “The popularity of the certificate program has been steadily increasing, and those who choose this path are very committed. Social work is a helping profession, and students want to have a positive and real impact on clients’ lives. Working with older adults—often, a very appreciative population—meets that need.”

**TIPS FOR INTERFACING WITH THE OLDER ADULTS**

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"There’s a misconception that people can’t change if they’re over a certain age," says Scharf. "But the truth is that they fear the same mental and physical issues as younger folks, and in some ways a 66-year-old may be more interested in talking and receiving help than a 15-year-old." Indeed, opportunities for graduates of the certificate program abound, from those in hospitals, hospice, assisted living, and skilled nursing programs to those in community programs, elder abuse services, and the government.

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THE BUSINESS OF HELPING PEOPLE:
INNOVATIVE ALUMNI WHO FIND NEW PATHWAYS IN THEIR FIELD

BY AIMEE LABRIE

HE DREAM OF SONIA SINGH, NCAS ’12, MSW ’13, was to one day open her own practice. Knowing she would face obstacles, she remained determined to build her own path to an independent private practice.

Jeff Fleischer RC ’75, MSW ’77 grew up in Newark and saw first hand the struggles of families in his neighborhood and surrounding cities. While earning his undergraduate and graduate degrees in psychology and social work, Fleischer became involved first as a Big Brother for Rutgers Community Action, and then operating an after school youth center in New Brunswick for the community.

For Christina Serrano MSW ’15, starting a business was the furthest thing from her mind as an undergraduate. Her main goal was to help others. It wasn’t until her life partner, Aaron, a long distance tractor trailer driver, started having health problems that the idea of Juice for Us began to take shape.

All three alumni have taken entrepreneurial steps to arrive where they are today. Along with their desire to help others, they share common characteristics — all exhibited the patience and determination needed to forge ahead despite various obstacles. Uniformly, they credit their experiences at Rutgers as providing direction as they moved beyond the more traditional frameworks of their fields to become leaders with a vision for success.

At first, Sonia’s direction seemed fairly straightforward. After graduation, she worked as an outpatient therapist in a large clinic. She soon found the hours, politics, and paperwork were burdensome, and felt her skills as a clinician were not being fully utilized.

At the same time, she knew that starting a private practice would be challenging. She began slowly — by searching for resources and people who could help her make the transition from a group dynamic to her own private practice.

“It took an all out approach,” she says. “I joined NASW to network, and I started looking for people who were successful in their private practices and asked them for help. I scoured the web for Facebook groups to

“...It is important for people, especially women, to listen to our inner voices. We have a sense of what we want, but often, out of fear, we choose to stay where we are. This experience has taught me that it’s okay to go for it. You have to make that leap.”

CHRISTINA SERRANO, MSW ’15
Sonia Sinha, NCA’S ‘12, MSW ‘13

“You can help a large majority of kids with the right approach. Even if you can’t assist them right away, you often get another chance in the future. I see many former youth now, and they are using lessons that they learned. You have good days and bad days, but on the whole, the balance is very positive.”

Jeff Fleischer, ’84, ’89, ’77

“If it wasn’t for the clinical skills that Rutgers gave me, I wouldn’t be the clinician I am. You can’t have mediocre skills, because you won’t get referrals or clients who return. Being a part of ACT was the best decision I ever made, because the program prepared me for what I do today.

Jeff had no idea as an undergraduate social work student that his professional life would lead him where he is today: CEO of Youth Advocates Program (YAP), an organization he has been with for 33 years. He credits the School for putting him on this path. “I had great experiences at Rutgers,” he explains. “I was part of the Youth Amb Bry student unit, led by Dr. Marcos Leidheim and Professor Abe Espada. They assigned five students to work in the Low Income Stockton Street Homes in Perth Amboy. Back then, mail wasn’t delivered, windows and elevators were not repaired, and violence and drugs were everywhere. We were engaged in the building, in community organizing, and in getting older kids in the complex to supervise the smaller children. We also organized individual counseling and gang outreach, and went to court with kids who got into trouble.”

At first, Jeff worked in New York with youth involved in gangs, and in 1991, found himself as a youth center director at La Casa de don Pedro in Newark. This work led him to hear more about YAP, and, in 1985, he was hired on to the then fairly small staff. “I was drawn to the mission to keep families together and at-risk youth out of institutions, detention centers, or psych wards.”

Under his leadership, YAP has honed its focus on providing individualized care for each person by underscoring the individual’s unique skills and interests. “For example, we had a gang member who was really good at math whom we paid to tutor younger kids. Another youth was good at fixing bikes, so he started fixing up abandoned bikes for other kids to ride,” he explains.

YAP now serves more than 19,000 families annually in 23 states, 30 major U.S. cities, and several foreign countries. In New Jersey alone, Jeff was part of a team that collaborated with colleagues and partners to create significant changes in the New Jersey Child Welfare System, such as the passage of the Bringing Our Children Home Act, legislation that reduced the state’s practice of sending youth to out-of-state institutions and encouraged family and community-based care for at-risk youth in their own neighborhoods. Today, Jeff and YAP are part of a movement to shut down the state’s youth prisons.

“Nationally, YAP is committed to reducing racial disparities in our juvenile justice systems,” he says. Though the job is difficult at times, he focuses on the benefits. “You can help a large majority of kids with the right approach. Even if you can’t assist them right away, you often get another chance in the future. I see many former youths now, and they are using lessons that they learned. You have good days and bad days, but on the whole, the balance is very positive.”

Like Sonia, Jeff recognizes that a large part of his success required having something to offer me, and I took it all in.”

After about two years where she continued to balance a part-time job to support her newly-founded practice, Sonia has built a solid outsourcing and recognizing what is actually feasible given your financial in getting those pieces in place.”

When she talked to had something to offer me, and I took it all in.”

She credits Rutgers for helping her to succeed. “If it wasn’t for Rutgers School of Social Work / Partnership for Change
Why do you think it’s important for social workers to understand the history of their communities?

It’s like understanding your own personal history. As you learn about your origins, you begin to appreciate why you are and to celebrate the connection with your ancestors. When you move into a new city, as sophisticated and vast as many big cities are, you assume you don’t have any connection, and then it doesn’t mean anything to you beyond a place to live.

For example, when I bought a home in an area in San Francisco called “Horneter’s Addition,” I became curious about the name. After doing a little research at the local library and looking at municipal records, I discovered that the place was named after John M. Hope, who, in the 1840s, became known as “California’s First Farmer” because he provided fresh produce to prospectors during the California Gold Rush. He also built a school and a meetinghouse for the community, and it turns out that he was originally from Honesontown, New Jersey. As a native of New Jersey, now living in California, like Horner, this knowledge of his history created for me an immediate connection to the place.

How should social workers get started in understanding their local history?

Be curious about your environment and the place you live. Most social workers have an innate curiosity about others; they naturally want to know more. You can treat the history of a place in the same way. Every location has a social and political history that has shaped it. Start by going to your local library archives to find out the history of the street you live on—who is it named after? When was the area around it developed? Think of the location as a person you are trying to understand, as you would a client or colleague. As you begin to uncover its history, you will likely develop a stronger connection and a better sense of understanding about the place.

Thank you to Antoinette Farmer

Associate Dean Antoinette Farmer stepped down from her role on September 1, 2018. Dr. Farmer has served in this leadership role for 15 years, across the tenure of three Deans. She has provided the calm, attentive, ethically grounded leadership that has made it possible for the School to grow and thrive across this span of time. Under her leadership, the MSW and BASW programs have grown substantially, new certificates and programs have been established, and each initiative has received the support and attention needed to be successful. In 2014, following implementation of the recommendations of the Reestablishing Change initiative, AD Farmer took on an expanded scope of supervision and leadership. She has just recently led our successful reaffirmation efforts. In her role, Farmer built the course schedules for MSW and BASW programs, and deployed 72 full-time faculty and over 150 FTAs each year to field-based classes to serve over 1,900 students. She worked closely with the directors of the Ph.D. and DSW programs with regard to course scheduling and University-requested assessment programs. She led our Assessment Committee and oversaw all assessment processes. She led our academic integrity processes. She served on a plethora of committees and led the academic management team, as well as serving as a lead faculty member. She managed a team of support staff and assessment team members while troubleshooting situations with her excellent problem-solving skills.

During her term as AD, Farmer has also maintained a strong research agenda. She was appointed as an Assistant Professor in 1996, promoted to Associate in 2002, and promoted to Full Professor in 2017. Her scholarship focuses on social work education, research with diverse groups, and greater understanding of the complexities of life, as well as the skill to involve others in what I’m doing for the community. A core social work ability—focusing on the human aspect of situations and the skill to involve others—in no way overestimate this strength.

By: Madison Molner ’17

MAE SILVER ’58 founded the first alumni association at the Rutgers School of Social Work and remains a proud advocate for the field of social work today. Born in New Brunswick, she has dedicated her life to bringing social work resources to her community. As a resident of San Francisco for nearly four decades, she founded her local neighborhood association and chaired NASW’s bay area chapter. Later, she returned to New Jersey to establish the Thomas Paine Society of Bordentown, NJ.

Presentation on “The Secret History of Fort Lauderdale,” which illustrated the city’s segregation-era history. A prolific writer, Mae has written a number of articles and pamphlets and published upwards of 20 books, most notably, Too Hot To Handle: Remarkable Women of Fort Lauderdale.

Mae’s passion for social justice continues to inspire her work and her connection to their community, regardless of whether they were homeowners or renters, they contributed to their community and the stories of the community, going on beneath the surface.

F I C A L Y  A N D  S T A F F
We appreciate our alumni and friends who made gifts between July 1, 2017, and June 30, 2018. Your contributions create opportunities for our dynamic and determined students and faculty who otherwise would not be possible. We hope you find lasting pride in Rutgers School of Social Work.

Please note that names are listed as they were entered at the time of the gift. Questions or changes can be directed to Madison Moller at mmolner@rusw.rutgers.edu.

Thank you!

* Denotes multi-year major gift pledge.
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IN MEMORIAM

We express our deepest sympathy to the local firms of the deceased alumni and friends listed below who have passed since February 1, 2017.

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Kevin J. Ziegenfuss SSW’78

Ray L. Thomas SSW’77

Dorothy J. Landis UCC’84, SSW’85

Jeannette M. Duhamel SSW’77

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Nicholas H. D’Antonio SSW’12

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MSW alums Lisa Arnold ’10 started working for PACIFYR as a consultant in April 2017. In September of last year, she became the director for the company she describes as the “Uber of mental health and wellness.” As she explains, what sets PACIFYR apart from other apps is its holistic nature in covering mental health, including emotional, and wellness aspects, as well as allowing the client to connect instantly with a counselor or wellness expert of her or his choice. She believes that telehealth will continue to grow in part because of the flexibility, privacy, and affordability of this approach. For more information about the company, visit pacifyr.com.

Dr. Rosanna Ferro RC ’99, SSW ’06, GSE ’12 joined Ithaca College in October 2017 as the vice president of Affairs and Campus Life. Ferro provides strategic leadership and vision for the division of Student Affairs and Campus Life.

Rena Beyer (formerly Brandeis), SAS’11, SSW ’13 celebrated the two-year anniversary of opening her private practice, Fostering Greatness, this October. At Fostering Greatness, Rena provides psychotherapy, psychological evaluations, and financial coaching services to clients who struggle with PTSD, depression, anxiety, grief and loss, behavioral concerns, and infertility. Her practice was featured in a newscast by CBS Philly last March for her work in the field of Ketamine-Assisted Psychotherapy.

In June 2018, after 30 years of service, Lisa Thomas ’83 retired from her position as the deputy director at Child Development Resources in Norge, Virginia. With her work at CDI, Lisa helped to evolve the organization from focusing solely on children with disabilities into a broader early childhood center. Lisa credits her MSW as the foundation that prepared her not only for her career at CDI, but also for her work in the community with a variety of human service organizations, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, the new Hope Family Village, and the Historic Triangle Safe Kids coalition. In retirement, Lisa looks to continue to serve her community in the spirit of advancing the program’s mission of social work practice that strengthens individual, family, and community well-being with an understanding of diversity in local, national, and global contexts.

Class of 2008 graduate Kimberly Bradley is currently working with the New Jersey Department of Children and Families Northern Region Child Study Team. She’s worked with DCF for almost five years and says she loves being a social worker, as it’s a rewarding and humbling experience.

Nicholas Mazza, Ph.D.’77, professor and dean emeritus at the Florida State University, College of Social Work, was elected president of the National Association for Poetry Therapy. Dr. Mazza, founding and continuing editor of the Journal of Poetry Therapy, delivered the keynote address, “A Place for Indifference: Poetry Therapy and Empowerment in Clinical, Educational, and Community Practice,” at the 38th Annual NAPT Conference in Minneapolis. Last year, Mazza received the Lifetime Achievement Award from NAPT.

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