PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

HOW SOCIAL WORKERS ARE HELPING ADVANCE THE STATUS OF WOMEN THROUGH RESEARCH AND PRACTICE
Researchers at Rutgers School of Social Work are identifying some of the most significant barriers to advancement that women face — and what needs to be done to overcome them.

“There are two powers in the world; one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women.”

MALALA YOUSAFZAI
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Dear Friends,

As we enter into a new decade, Rutgers School of Social Work is proud to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment’s ratification. Within these pages you’ll read about the students, alumni, and faculty who are committed to keeping the history of women’s suffrage alive by promoting voter registration opportunities and access for those who have historically been disenfranchised. We also talk with faculty members researching women’s issues and working to break down the barriers that continue to prevent their advancement.

Since our last publication, our faculty members have seen many accomplishments, from being awarded multi-million dollar grants, to publishing major research, and more. Lia Nower, Professor and Director of the Center for Gambling Studies & Addiction Counselor Training (ACT) Program, received a research award from the National Council on Problem Gambling while Sarah McMahon, Associate Professor and Director of the Center on Violence Against Women and Children, was named Rutgers University’s Special Advisor for Campus Climate, to name just a few.

We also hosted an array of events last fall. In October, we honored alumnus William Waldman at a gala supporting the establishment of the William Waldman Endowed Fellowship. Created upon Waldman’s retirement from his position as Professor of Professional Practice, the fellowship will assist students who, like Waldman, would otherwise have difficulty attending or remaining in school as they balance education with family and work. The following month, we hosted our Annual Winter Alumni Reception, a gathering for our alumni to celebrate and network. We now look forward to presenting the Fourth Annual Challenging Racial Disparities Conference on June 2, 2020. Robin DiAngelo, Ph.D. and author of White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism, will be the event’s keynote speaker.

Stories about our alumni are too within these pages. You’ll read about Gerald Amada, whose research — largely regarded as the first of its kind — focuses on how college administrators and professors can appropriately deal with disruptive college students; Kanako Okuda, a former dancer from Japan who immigrated to America and found her passion for social work; and Ariaceliz Ortiz, who made a gift in honor of her late father as a way to help students committed to serving others, regardless of their grades.

As always, we would like to hear from you. Please consider sending in a class note for the next issue of our magazine. We want to share your professional and personal success stories with our entire alumni community and friends.

Sincerely,

Cathryn C. Potter, M.S.W., Ph.D.
DEAN AND DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR
RUTGERS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Dr. Lia Nower, Professor and Director of the Center for Gambling Studies & Addiction Counselor Training (ACT) Program, received the Research Award from the National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) in Washington, D.C. She was also named chair of the NCPG’s Research Committee through 2021. This award is given to an international scholar whose work has made a significant global impact and has published the best original peer-reviewed research article on problem gambling and gambling disorder within the past year. The research must contribute substantially to the understanding of the disorder and include the impact, quality, and relevance to gamblers and their families.

Dr. Nower was selected based on her body of work and, specifically, a paper published last year in SUCHT, the premier addiction journal in Germany. That paper, entitled “Widening the Net: A Syndemic Approach to Responsible Gambling,” co-authored with Rutgers alumnus Dr. Kyle Caler, applies a public health framework to identifying individuals with gambling problems across multiple societal systems and triages them to a holistic, integrated resource network. The framework for the article was introduced to regulators at a summit in Berlin last year and serves as the basis for projects in the State of New Jersey.
Erica Goldblatt Hyatt, Assistant Teaching Professor and Assistant Director of the DSW Program at Rutgers School of Social Work, has joined countless others in the #YouKnowMe movement, sharing her abortion story and advocating for women’s right to choose.

Goldblatt Hyatt got an abortion after learning her son had a rare condition and would likely not make it to term. It was her first baby. Her son was diagnosed with Congenital High Airway Obstruction Syndrome because his trachea did not form. He also had Trisomy 16, a chromosomal abnormality which often leads to miscarriage. Doctors told Goldblatt Hyatt and her husband that their son would either die of heart failure in the womb or be born brain dead. Given the grave prognosis, the couple decided to end the pregnancy.

Goldblatt Hyatt chose to tell her story because she believes it’s a reflection of the values she holds so strongly as a social worker. She says, “For me, the issue centers around autonomy and choice, and trusting women to make decisions on behalf of themselves and their families. Social work as a profession values women’s voices as well as trusting them to make decisions on the creation of life and the end of it.”

Goldblatt Hyatt proposes a qualitative exploration of maternal- and fetal medicine specialists (MFMs) and later abortion patients to understand how the diagnosis of fetal anomaly after 24 weeks’ gestation, also known as the age of viability, influences whether providers are likely to recommend abortion. The implications of these findings on the field of reproductive health, rights, and social justice can inform policy and practice with women and their families.

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NEW FACULTY:

FIVE OBJECTS THAT MATTER

in continued expansion of our innovative programs, Rutgers School of Social Work is pleased to announce the appointment of three new tenure-track faculty members.

Assistant Professor Woojin Jung’s research focuses on development aid policy as a strategy to alleviate global poverty. She examines whether the poorest benefit from community development projects in fragile states, using artificial intelligence and spatial analysis. Her research addresses the problem of identifying and characterizing poverty in data-sparse contexts.

Assistant Professor Jamey Lister researches the characteristics, consequences, and treatment of addictive disorders among underserved populations. His work aims to address the ongoing epidemic of opioid-related overdose deaths, barriers to evidence-based treatment, and improve addiction treatment services.

Assistant Professor Mark Van der Maas’s research interests include refining public health approaches to addressing problem gambling during market expansion, exploring how patterns in gambling behaviors reflect the aging of the U.S. population, and critically examining responsible gambling policies across jurisdictions.

We asked each of them to identify five meaningful objects in their offices.

WOOJIN JUNG

Lemon latte cup: My day doesn’t start without having a cup of coffee. Brewing coffee, making quasi-latte art, and tasting coffee are some of the most important rituals of my day. It’s next to impossible for me to resist the aroma of coffee, particularly on a rainy day, which makes its scent deeper.

Old wallet: I used to lose wallets within a week or two of purchasing them. It didn’t matter whether it was a brand-name wallet or not. The only way to break this jinx was to have someone else buy one for me. Today, I never lose wallets if someone buys them for me. My boyfriend – now my husband – bought one for me a long time ago, and I kept it for ten years. Then my mom gave me this special gift on my birthday. I still use it and have taken it with me as I traveled to more than 30 countries around the world.

“Tokki,” or Snow Ball: This bunny is named Snow Ball. Its other name is “Tokki,” meaning bunny in Korean. It’s my daughter’s stuffed animal, but my little son carries it with him all the time. I enjoy playing with Tokki with my son and my daughter because it’s a lot of fun for them. If my kids want to skip breakfast or don’t go to bed on time, Tokki whispers to them in a sweet voice, and they magically listen. I can’t stop loving the things my kids and husband love.

Peak powdered milk: In a remote village on the other side of the globe, I was getting hands-on experience in community development. I lived in a guest house and enjoyed drinking powdered milk – white as snow and sweet as vanilla ice cream. One day, I was mixing the powder with a bottle of water, waiting for it to dissolve, and thought, “I love it, but why is there no cold milk?” Then I looked around, and there was no refrigerator. Then I realized there was no power and no running water. Drinking a cold glass of milk needed a whole system of infrastructure in place. When the government fails to provide essential public goods, each individual needs to find his or her own solution, which is inefficient and costly. People unfairly shoulder the double burden of getting by and filling the service gaps. Peak powdered milk encouraged me to think about these concepts and ushered me into the field of international development.

Papyrus journal: I like to open my travel journal on airplanes so I can daydream in the clouds. I take a pencil with an eraser so I can scribble something and feel okay making mistakes. I like the touch of a pencil sketching lines and letters in paper – crisp, smudgy, or wrinkled. Sometimes, I just end up drawing a face with big, shiny eyes. I’ve also used this journal to make a bucket list, and I’ve already checked off three items: working in an international organization, getting a doctorate, and becoming a faculty member. Now, I’d like to enrich my life with the arts so I can communicate more with the world. One day I hope to mark off my entire list and start adding new items.
The James Listers: This is me on Father’s Day in 1981 with my grandpa and dad. We share names, and were all raised in rural towns where self-reliance was valued while healthcare was nonexistent. My grandpa taught me something important — addiction is complex. He had a wonderful spirit, but his alcohol use disorder brought pain. My dad incorporated those childhood lessons as he built our family. In my life, I was fortunate to experience love from both men.

Detroit map art: This piece sits in my office and reminds me of a great chapter in my life! I met my wife, Holly, in Detroit while we both worked with an addiction clinic. The map reminds me of many cherished memories, running routes, and friends. Detroit will always be a special place for my scholarly work, too, as it’s where my mission to create knowledge that helps people with addiction from underserved communities fully developed.

Biltmore magnet: This magnet highlights the importance of family. My wife and I lived apart when she was completing her psychology internship in Connecticut as I was starting on the tenure track in Michigan. We missed each other dearly! The morning she moved we bought matching magnets to remind us of each other when apart. That trinket symbolizes the value hope can have during struggle. My mother would be proud — she sends similar keepsakes to my family members.

A gambling game passed down: This poker game has a meaning few would guess when they see it on my office shelf. I received this from one of my mentors, David Ledgerwood, upon starting my first faculty position. Dave previously received the game from his mentor, Nancy Petry. Both Dave and Nancy are gambling scholars and people that I model myself around, and I look forward to the day when I pass the game on to one of my mentees.

Headphones: Music has always been a central part of my life. I’ve played in bands, wrote my own music, and almost always have music playing while I work. When I first started writing in college, I regularly ran into writer’s block. One of the biggest things that helped me break free was music — it helped me concentrate better. Nowadays, I also use my head-phones to provide me privacy as I walk around campus, breathe, and recharge.
SOCIAL WORKERS HAVE LONG BEEN ON THE FRONT LINES OF ADVANCING DEMOCRACY THROUGH VOTING RIGHTS ADVOCACY. AS WE CELEBRATE THE 19TH AMENDMENT’S CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ALUMNI AND STUDENTS DISCUSS THE ENDURING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL WORK AND DEMOCRACY AND SHARE HOW THEY’RE WORKING TO PROMOTE EQUAL ACCESS TO VOTING.
She was not only extremely important in historian, and author, stresses the importance of fundamental figure in women’s history, her story is in gender equality. Even though Paul was a fun-loving, women were enfranchised, pushing them one step closer toward equality with men.

FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO VOTE
The fight for women’s suffrage – the right to vote on issues in political elections – began during a movement for women’s rights in the mid-19th century. It took nearly a hundred years of ambition, persistence, and heroism, but on August 26, 1920, the 19th Amendment was officially adopted. For the first time, American women were enfranchised, pushing them one step closer toward equality with men.

Paul, a Quaker born in New Jersey who believed women were enfranchised, pushing them one step closer toward equality with men.

In 1917, after many years advocating for women’s suffrage, Paul organized the Silent Sentinels, a group of women who courageously picketed in front of the White House, serving as a constant reminder of their cause. Paul and the Silent Sentinels endured regular harassment and abuse – and many were jailed – but they were steadfast in their beliefs. The following year, President Woodrow Wilson ultimately announced his support for women’s suffrage, and the amendment was later ratified.

Ensuring Equal Access
Just over a decade after women were given the right to vote, Lenna Nepomnyaschy shares tips for promoting voter registration services. “Our goal is to make sure everyone knows about this,” says Nepomnyaschy, who works within the Office of Voter Services. For a decade, she promoted voter services for the State and provided moderating and moderator training.

Today, she continues to be an active League member, registering voters and training groups to provide voter registration services. “We’ve made a lot of advancements in New Jersey, but it’s important to keep co-opting people to vote, we’re still not there,” she says.

Sharing Lessons for Future Generations
Despite the progress women have made in the last century, there is still much more work to be done. History continues to offer valuable lessons in the fight for democracy and social justice, but many fear that losing sight of the past will impact our ability to create change in the future.

“Everyone needs to understand the significance of history. If we don’t know what worked then, we’re going to have a tough time knowing how we can effect change today. Oftentimes we’ll win an issue, and then the next generation forgets how hard we fought for it. We have to continually be aware of our history,” says Clarke.

Silver echoes this sentiment, saying, “Being educated in the history of women’s rights, including stories of pioneers like Alice Paul, promotes empowerment. There are still some places where women are struggling for freedom and equality, so there’s a fight that still has to go on. We just have to keep working at it.”
be field of social work enjoys a rich tradition of female leadership, whether women are holding historical positions (Frances Perkins, first female cabinet member 1933-1945, and architect of the New Deal), winning landmark awards (Jane Addams, Nobel Peace Prize, 1931), or fighting for equality (Dorothy Height, founder, YWCA Center for Racial Justice, 1965). It’s no secret: women have been historically prominent in the field of social work, breaking glass ceilings and helping other women advance past barriers that previously held them back.

Today, a cohort of female researchers carries the torch at Rutgers School of Social Work, where they address some of the most prominent barriers to advancement that women currently face. Here are just a few.

WORKPLACE SEGREGATION

When it comes to workplace advancement, women face overt barriers like sexual harassment and pay disparity. But they also face systematic barriers, which are a bit harder to recognize since they’re not perpetuated by just one colleague or supervisor. Instead, they represent many factors, which together prevent women from reaching their full potential.

Associate Professor Jeounghee Kim says one of the more significant systematic barriers in preventing women’s advancement in the workplace is gender segregation – which refers to the fact that some occupations are primarily held by women – and the disparities that result. Overall, occupations primarily held by men tend to be well paying and highly respected, while female-dominated professions are often undervalued by society and, therefore, underpaid. “As you start to look at people without a college or graduate school education, gender segregation and associated barriers become even more evident,” Kim says. “It’s in those jobs that we see a microcosm of what’s happening in the larger economy.”

That’s why Kim’s research centers on low-wage home healthcare, a gender-segregated occupation where 90 percent of workers are women, largely without higher education. “These jobs are feminized, pink-collar jobs, so we don’t value them very much and the compensation is therefore very low,” she says. “This goes to the heart of gender segregation in occupations. Why are female workers so much poorer than their male counterparts? Because they’re in a gender-segregated sector that doesn’t pay well.”

Indeed, the pay gap is magnified in gender-segregated occupations. These workers generally face wage and hour violations, meaning they don’t get paid for overtime, aren’t afforded breaks, and often don’t make minimum wage. In fact, Kim estimates that 20 to 30 percent of direct-care workers are subject to wage theft on the part of individual family members who unknowingly hire them below minimum wage, or third-party agencies who knowingly cut labor costs to increase profit margins.
Yet another barrier to women’s advance- 
ment in the workplace surrounds their health 
and safety. Again, in the segregated, direct-care 
workforce, men and women experience very dif- 
f erent working conditions. As a result, employees in 
these sectors stay on isues like harassment and assault in 
the workplace, or health concerns like long 
hours. Or, they simply quit, says Kim.

In addition to conducting research that identifies these barriers, Kim encourages those 
working in public policy to offer solutions, for 
example, raising price caps in Medicaid and 
child-care subsidy programs, or providing incen- 
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HONORS WILLIAM WALDMAN’S LONGTIME CAREER 
AT RUTGERS AND DEDICATION TO SOCIAL WORK

n October 11, 2019 Rutgers School of Social Work hosted a celebration in honor of William Waldman’s dedication to social justice at Rutgers University and beyond. The gala, hosted at The Heldrich in downtown New Brunswick, supported the establishment of the William Waldman Endowed Fellowship, which was created upon Waldman’s recent retirement from his position as Professor of Professional Practice. The Fellowship will assist students who, like Waldman, would otherwise have difficulty attending or remaining in school.

The evening’s program included a panel presentation on the need for bipartisanship to advance social justice, a hallmark of Waldman’s legacy by educating the leaders of tomorrow.”

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Who will benefit from the gift?

“AWS student who demonstrates a commitment to serving others, regardless of their grades. What advice would you give to students currently earning their MSW degrees?

No matter what, go with your gut. You need to know what you want to do and use it as your compass because you just can’t do it all. I also learned that prioritizing family and health is more important than anything. But a lot of times it’s easier said than done. We want to pay for our student loans when we’ve finished out of school, and we want to make names for ourselves and gain all the skills we can, but we have to be realistic about how much we can handle.

Why did you choose to do a fellowship?

I began working in outpatient mental health and an involuntary short-term care facility—a involuntary psychiatric unit—at a local hospital. I also started volunteering with the Northern New Jersey Trauma Recovery Network and have continued to volunteer for them. One of my specializations is EMDR for trauma. Recently, I was working with children separated from their families at the border. When families are reunited, I provide the children with trauma care. Just recently I was asked to be a part of a film documenting the experience of one of the children I work with, who was separated from his family.

Where are you currently working?

I am the clinical supervisor for an organization providing behavioral and mental health services for individuals, couples, and families. I’m dedicated to doing community-based work because it’s needed now more than ever. What’s interesting is I did my field work in 2006 at this organization. It’s funny how things come full circle. You never know where your internship might take you.

How do you manage to care for your family, work a full-time job, and volunteer?

“I balance everything with self-care, and I’ve learned to say no to certain things. You have to know what you want to do and use it as your compass because you just can’t do it all. I also learned that prioritizing family and health is more important than anything. But a lot of times it’s easier said than done. We want to pay for our student loans when we’ve finished out of school, and we want to make names for ourselves and gain all the skills we can, but we have to be realistic about how much we can handle.

Why did you choose to make a gift in memory of your father last year?

My father passed away very unexpectedly from a massive heart attack on January 23, 2019. It was truly a shock because he was very physically fit and loved hiking and running. I made the gift as a way to honor my father as part of my healing from grief. My dad only went up to the second grade in school in Puerto Rico, but he was always big on being of service to others. Taking care of his family, friends, and neighbors was most important to him. He always said it didn’t matter what kind of degree you had, but “if you weren’t of service to others, you were wasting your time on Earth.” That’s a great quote from our Puerto Rican hero Roberto Clemente.

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Alumni News

**Turning Grief Into Action:**

**How a Dancer Became a Social Worker**

By Samuel Leibowitz-Lord ’21

To deal with life in an unfamiliar country and the heartbreak of losing her friends, Okuda turned to an interfaith ministry. She obtained her green card by studying to become a reverend and thought about ways she could combine her passion for dancing with ministry.

“By the time I got my green card, I faced many losses. I realized it was time for me to move on from dancing,” she says. “I asked myself what I wanted to do, and I decided that I wanted to help other people in a more meaningful way.”

Okuda enrolled in ESL classes and soon became drawn to social work as a career option. She decided to pursue a bachelor of social work degree and later an MSW. Her first job in the field involved working with children and families. Eventually, she found a position as a social worker in the pediatric oncology wing of Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital, where she would spend the next eight years.

While working at the hospital, Okuda taught social work classes and worked as a field instructor, which reconnected her with the academic side of social work. Soon, she was approached by Hunter College, and Okuda quickly accepted their offer for the Director of Field Education position.

With a variety of new responsibilities on her plate, Okuda realized she needed to return to the classroom once again – but this time as a student. Searching for doctoral programs, she learned about Rutgers’ program. She decided to pursue a PhD in social work and secured her desire to be a better communicator.

“Rutgers’ DSW program helped me express my passion,” she says. Now Okuda is encouraging others in the field to do the same.

“‘The website project forced me to think about how to make my research more approachable to a wide audience. My advisor made it clear that in order to be helpful to people, whatever knowledge I create has to be easily digested by my audience. I had never thought about the importance of keeping my audience in mind when writing in the past, but so many journal articles I had previously read were extremely hard to read. I always thought, ‘If I’m a doctoral student and I can’t read it, who is this for?’ So, the website project gave me the chance to think about how to best articulate my work.’”

Okuda’s website addressed the language barrier in academic social work publications by offering simple, easy-to-read guides for social workers in the field to help them deal with the daily anxieties of the job. She provided direct, actionable responses to common issues in social work pulled from high-level academic sources.

The website was an instant success. “Within three days of my website going online, 17 schools of social work and three organizations had already endorsed my project,” Okuda says. “I was very grateful that my hard work was shared so widely and was seen as meaningful.”

Okuda’s experience immigrating to America shaped her view of the world and set her on a path to become a social worker. Her first job in the field involved working with children and families. Eventually, she found a position as a social worker in the pediatric oncology wing of Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital, where she would spend the next eight years.

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ince its founding, Rutgers School of Social Work has provided fertile ground for innovative minds to bring new and revolutionary ideas to the field. Dr. Gerald Amada '62 has carved out a space for himself as a powerful voice in social work, having published 12 books and spoken at over 350 college and university conferences. Much of his research, largely regarding the field of his kind, focuses on how college administrators and professors can appropriately deal with disruptive college students. His career is a testament to the pioneering spirit of those students who have attended the School of Social Work.

Dr. Amada's journey to the field of social work began in 1960. Working at a summer camp and unsure of what to do next, he saw a poster about Rutgers. Dr. Amada found both his passion for the field as well as for his life partner, then Marcia Himmelberg. "My experiences were very much shaped and enriched by Marcia," Dr. Amada recounts. "I met her the first day at orientation. We were at the bookstore, and I had forgotten to carry enough cash to purchase my newly purchased books. Marcia loaned me the needed cash, and we almost immediately became close friends after that. She was my primary source of support, encouragement, and kindness throughout my two years at the School.

After graduating, Dr. Amada worked at a state mental health clinic in Trenton that was soon thereafter incorporated into Trenton State Hospital. Two years later, he accepted a position with the California State Mental Health Program, giving him the unique opportunity to develop a new and innovative mental health service for its students, the success of which was contingent on whether students utilized the service in significant numbers. "I didn't, at the time, have ambitions for doing this kind of work, but it turned out wonderfully well," he says.

In 1970, Dr. Amada began this new program, an on-campus mental health service with a small staff. As the program continued, he began to collaborate and consult with other college psychotherapists, exchanging strategies and principles for dealing with misconduct on their respective college campuses. After publishing an article on his work with college students in the Journal of American College Health, he received an invitation to be the keynote speaker at a national conference sponsored by Concordia University in Montreal. This conference was held in the wake of a horrendous massacre that took place at Ecole Polytechnique College in Montreal in 1989.

When he asked why he was selected to receive the distinction of being the keynote speaker, he says, "I told them that my article was the only one they could find that provided relevant and effective guidelines for dealing with misconduct on the college campus. I didn't realize, until then, that I was something of a pioneer."

As more and more institutions and administrations, including investigators of the Virginia Tech shooting, sought out Dr. Amada's practical and theoretical model, he published books on his work: Mental Health and Student Conduct Issues on the College Campus. Coping with Misconduct in the College Classroom, and Coping with the Disruptive College Student.

When asked about his thoughts on college student behavior today, Dr. Amada has observed a noticeable increase in violent incidents on college campuses. Yet, it is true, he asserts, that colleges are, for the most part, pretty safe havens for students. Dr. Amada's research on the Virginia Tech massacre did reveal, however, that there is often a lack of clarity from faculty and administrators as to how to appropriately enlist help from the colleges' mental health and disciplinary systems.

"Even if a disruptive student is mentally ill, schools have an obligation to protect all students from the misconduct of others," Dr. Amada says. "There needs to be more training on how to gauge when discipline is appropriate, and how to administer it."

Now, 57 years after graduating, Dr. Amada continues to write and review articles for psychology journals and speak at conferences. He has written books about his experiences doing individual psychotherapy, and even a few novels, including his dog's autobiography. Dr. Amada's professional career shows that Rutgers School of Social Work has been the starting point for innovators in the field who find inspiration in both their peers and their education.
I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will.

Charlotte Brontë
Students mingle outside the School of Social Work in the 1960s. The School has been housed primarily in this building since its founding in 1954 but is expanding to new locations across campus.