

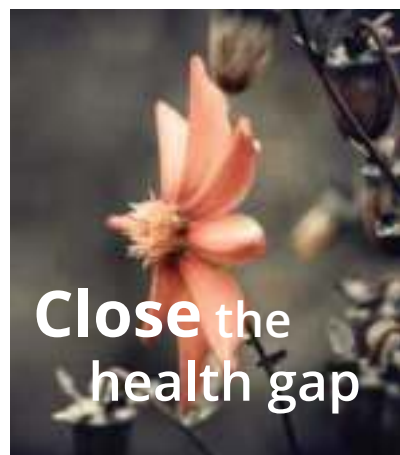
# Connections

A Magazine for Alumni & Friends of the School of Social Work

## Grand Challenges for Social Work



**Ensure**  
healthy  
development  
for all youth



**Close** the  
health gap



**Stop**  
family violence



**Advance**  
long and  
productive lives



**Eradicate**  
social  
isolation



**End**  
homelessness



**Create**  
social responses  
to a changing  
environment



**Harness**  
technology  
for  
social good



**Promote**  
smart  
decarceration



**Reduce**  
extreme  
economic  
inequality



**Build**  
financial  
capability  
for all



**Achieve**  
equal opportunity  
and justice

Achieving Measurable Progress for Society Through Social Work and Science

# Dean's Welcome

I am once again very pleased to welcome you to *Connections*. This issue captures two inter-twined themes of our work—leadership on the Grand Challenges for Social Work and heightened involvement with mechanisms for achieving social justice. As we continue to respond to improving conditions in West Baltimore and, also, to the startling results of the national election, our work continues to become deeper and more complex.

Hopefully, many of our readers have some familiarity with the Grand Challenges of Social Work—due to our social media efforts and the broader connection of NASW, CSWE, and SSWR to the initiative. This issue provides a clearer look at our leadership role in developing the Grand Challenges and just some of the activity that has grand challenge ties. Ideally, readers will see that the 12 Grand Challenges are not a comprehensive list of all that we work on in the SSW or that need addressing by our profession and others. They serve, instead, as an opportunity to focus new energy on solving problems that reach across our usual professional boundaries and will help attract others to join our causes. We see a rapid acceleration of awareness of the grand challenges and efforts to align training, education, and research to advance them. Indeed, both our Homecoming and CPE 20th Anniversary celebrations are themed around the Grand Challenges.

Another theme of this issue is our partnership with attorneys and the UM Cary School of Law to demonstrate that there is no justice without social justice. As readers will learn, the Unger decision in Maryland has given us an extraordinary window on some of the issues that will, we hope, be addressed by social workers in many other jurisdictions as they see the impact of federal pardons and other more systematic ways to reduce juvenile and adult incarceration. We are also very pleased to announce new ways that justice agencies have entrusted their success to us through generous funding of three projects supported by the US Department of Justice. We also could not be prouder about any announcement – our receipt from the US Children's Bureau of five years of funding for the *National Quality Improvement Center on Tailored Services, Placement Stability and Permanency for LGBTQ Children, Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care*. *Connections* readers will certainly be learning more about our QIC in future issues.

A less obvious theme of this issue, but one I feel intensely, is loss. As befits our age (55 years old) and stage (we are in the sandwich generation were we are still looking after students being raised into the profession as well as our older alumni) we have lost some wonderful SSW faculty and alumni. Please see our "In Memoriam" section.



Also, as I mentioned in last fall's *Connections*, we have had many delegations come through the School and to our community locations to meet with faculty and staff about what can be done to improve the quality of life in West Baltimore. Some of those visits are now turning into projects—we have new projects funded by SAMHSA, DOJ, and the US Department of Education.

All of this work now stands before the backdrop of the recent presidential elections and the concerns that the results have raised for many members of our close and extended community and our clients. This is to affirm that the UM SSW is committed to welcoming, engaging, and inspiring discussion and it is our collective responsibility to support and respect each other. We emphatically oppose acts of hate and violence and will work with all willing partners to counteract their genesis and expression. We are engaged in civil discourse and analysis to determine what paths we can take to ensure continued expansions of social and economic justice.

In addition, we affirm the position of the broader University System of Maryland to provide all of our students a safe and supportive educational environment and will continue to enforce all laws and regulations to ensure student's privacy and protection from having their educations' disrupted. The University of Maryland School of Social Work will remain engaged and committed, never neutral, as it has been for more than 50 years of civil rights progress, to protect and respect each other's rights and to advance the causes of a strong and just society.

With appreciation for all of our role models, supporters, and readers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard P. Barth".

Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW  
Dean and Professor

# Connections

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"Frequencies" mural by Chroma Dolls. Photograph by Steve Reinik.



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Sarah Butts, MSW and Dean Richard Barth, PhD of the American Academy of Social Work & Social Welfare.

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On the Cover:  
Images Courtesy of Shutterstock

# Positive Schools Center Community Schools

Looking for a positive program that is doing good things for young students in Baltimore?

Check out the Positive Schools Center/Community Schools, which is a program of the University of Maryland School of Social Work's Social Work Community Outreach Service (SWCOS). UMSSW now operates 10 Community Schools in Baltimore.





**Dr. Shanda Crowder,**  
*former director*



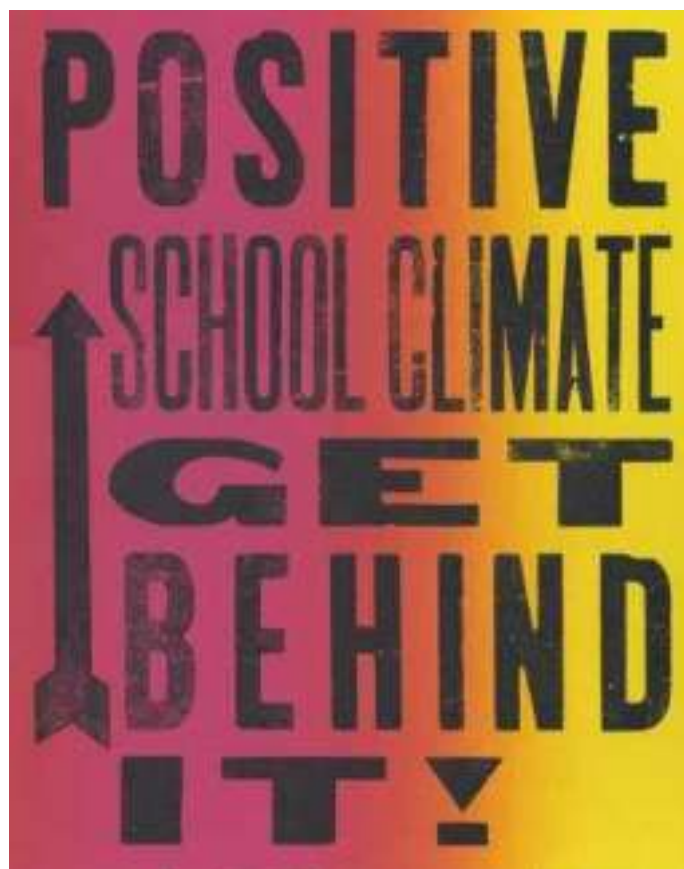
**Karen Powell,**  
*MSW '00*

**T**he goal of community schools is to provide supportive engagement to school communities to help students grow as academic scholars with the help of families, teachers, school staff, and neighborhood partners. By creating new opportunities for students before and after school and for their families, community schools seek to tap the tremendous amount of potential that exists for the children and schools in Baltimore City.

The UMSSW community schools all have a core staff of MSW-level clinical faculty who fulfill the role of “Community School Coordinator.”

Community school coordinators, and the MSW student interns assigned to each school, are active members of their respective school communities. They work with the students, families, teachers, school staff, and neighborhood partners to shape the vision and to tailor the strategies to enhance the unique assets of each school community where the benchmark is growing student scholars to reach their lifelong potential. They adhere to a two-generational approach which encourages them to engage parents in fulfilling their potential to make educational and employment progress that will buoy their sense of competence and success and lift the entire family.

Community School Coordinators are keenly aware that social injustice in terms of racial and economic disparities has adversely affected children in these communities and marginalized their families. As one implication of this understanding, SWCOS has, with the encouragement and support of



This poster was created by young people in a Wide Angle Youth Media workshop in collaboration with Globe Collection and Press at MICA. The workshop was supported by the Open Society Institute-Baltimore.

the Open Society Institute, opened the Positive Schools Center.

Positive Schools Center Assistant Director, Karen Powell, MSW '00, notes, “We know children in these disenfranchised neighborhoods have the same innate abilities as children from more affluent backgrounds. Through the Community School Model, we work to close those systemic gaps to empower families to advocate for their children so they have access to learning communities and resources where they are able to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.”

The collaborative practice link with the Positive Schools Center begins by promoting restorative practices to help school communities address trauma caused by their interpersonal experiences and exposure to traumatic events. The Positive Schools Center promotes the development of positive, supportive and mindful learning communities where students and school staff connect, develop and grow.

The Positive Schools Center helps to facilitate collaborative conversations to confront and understand the impact of school climate and its relationship with trauma, restorative practices, racial justice, social emotional learning, and student, family and community voice. Former Positive Schools Center Director Dr. Shanda Crowder notes, “All of these intentional efforts are designed for school communities to reconsider attitudes and approaches that have been detrimental to the students’ academic success. Rebuilding mutual respect and understanding will restore the collective efforts and individual responsibilities for partnerships that promote teaching and learning excellence.”

**For more information on how you can support Positive Schools Center/Community Schools, call 410-706-1882, email [positiveschools@ssw.umaryland.edu](mailto:positiveschools@ssw.umaryland.edu), or visit [www.ssw.umaryland.edu/positiveschools/](http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/positiveschools/).**

# UMB Holds Fourth Annual IPE Day

*"Just soak up from each other what it took me these many decades to appreciate," President Perman told the audience.*

**Listen to your peers. Listen to your patients or clients.** More than 400 students heard that advice delivered in innovative ways at an annual interdisciplinary event conducted by the Center for Interprofessional Education (IPE) at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB).

The event drew 406 students, including dozens enrolled at the Universities at Shady Grove in programs of the School of Social Work (SSW), the School of Nursing (SON) and School of Pharmacy (SOP). The large group gathered on campus in Baltimore for a panel discussion and a sendoff from UMB leaders.

UMB President Jay A. Perman, MD, spoke of his own path to "recognizing the power of team." A pediatric gastroenterologist, Perman gained insights early on when relying on professionals other than physicians to help care for infants who had feeding disorders.

"Just soak up from each other what it took me these many decades to appreciate," he told the audience, which included students from each of UMB's seven schools.

SON Dean Jane M. Kirschling, PhD, RN, FAAN, director of UMB's Center for IPE, outlined multi-disciplinary activities structured so that students would be able "to learn with, from, and about one another." To facilitate learning in small groups, 30 faculty members were assigned to perform as mentors on IPE Day.

SSW facilitators were clinical instructors Christopher Wirt, MSW, LCSW-C; and Barbara Nathanson, MSW, LCSW-C.

Elsie Stines, DNP '15, MS, CRNP, who together with Perman conducts the President's Clinic, a weekly pediatric clinic that provides interdisciplinary learning opportunities, gave students tips for a



**When SSW student Karen Campion took the microphone, she responded: "I definitely appreciate all the love social work is getting today!"**

successful IPE Day. The nurse practitioner's advice: "Being open and not judgmental about your team being able to work together."

A panel of eight students and alumni of various schools had words of wisdom of their own. SSW student Kimberly Cate, who studies at Shady Grove, spoke of "being flexible" during interactions in a health care setting with professionals from other disciplines.

For the hundreds of IPE Day participants, the case at hand would unfold in 10 different venues but with the same medical facts and social determinants. Actors portrayed a standardized patient, either Dolores Darling or Doug Darling, who was

seeking treatment in a primary care setting. The complaint: hypertension as flagged by nurse at a recent health fair.

But there was much more to making an assessment. A heavy smoker with a complex personal life, Darling suffered from Type II diabetes and crucial symptoms that emerged during students' collaborative interview process. The teams prepared a care plan, explained their recommendations to the patient and, with the actors momentarily stepping out of role, were given a review.

The SSW's Wirt collaborated with Perman, Stines, and Maryland Carey Law Dean Donald B. Tobin, JD, as facilitators in Group One. They listened and occasionally offered guidance. But for the most part, the students did the talking as they pored over a

case history and considered challenges, such as the patient's financial difficulties.

SSW student Josline Ali-Napo expressed concerns about whether Darling could afford diabetes medications and observed that the team should inquire what had prompted the patient to seek help at a health fair. "Any significant life changes?" she asked.

In Group Two, students sought to turn the patient's finances to their advantage in telling Darling he could save money by quitting cigarettes. How much did he smoke? Two packs a day for 25 years, he replied. "I guess you would call it a crutch," he said.

When the patient heard the team's care plan, Darling promised the group that he would ponder quitting. But he added: "I could decrease (smoking) but I don't think I could ever quit."


Later all 10 groups reunited during a wrapup session, and several praised the social workers on their teams for a knowledge of community resources pertinent to the case. When SSW student Karen Donegan took the microphone, she responded: "I definitely appreciate all the love social work is getting today!"

She went on to thank her peers in health care for taking a team approach. "They made sure I understood the basics," Campion said.


Likewise, a student in the School of Medicine (SOM) looked back appreciatively on his group's interaction. Logan Buckley, who is studying physical therapy, commented: "I knew my stuff but everyone else knew their stuff. If this were a real patient, we'd be off to a good start."

Overseeing the session were IPE co-directors Heather B. Congdon, PharmD, BCPS, CDE, assistant dean for the School of Pharmacy program at USG; and David B. Mallott, MD, associate professor and associate dean for medical education at SOM. Faculty members shared the task of fielding microphones and conducting an exuberant raffle.

The camaraderie concluded with a buffet supper at the Southern Management Corporation Campus Center, where several of the groups had met earlier. IPE Day was supported by a gift from James Earl Jr., PhD, and Sylvia Earl.



## ALISON RICHMAN PROFESSORSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT: THE ALISON RICHMAN PROFESSORSHIP FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES



President Jay Perman and Dean Richard Barth jointly announced The Alison Richman Professorship for Children, Youth and Families at this spring's annual Scholarship Brunch.


Dean Barth, in announcing the gift, noted "Our School of Social Work has been a leader in the country for decades in the area of children, youth and families. Indeed, this is one of the many magnets that attracted me to come to Maryland. Though we have generated leading research and educated many students who became leaders in the field, there is so much more to do. I am so pleased to announce that we will now have a great new resource to attract a terrific professor, through an exceptionally generous gift—the largest single gift in the School's history—that created the "The Alison Richman Professorship for Children, Youth and Families."

Many of you know Alison Richman's commitment to the field, her long practice career as a social worker with Adoption Alliances at Jewish Family Services of Central Maryland, and her loyalty to her alma mater. In fact, she holds the record for service on our Board of Advisors. Alison has led the Alumni Admissions Review Committee for years, and she and her husband Arnie funded the School's first full scholarship endowment 10 years ago.

In celebration of our School's 50th anniversary, Alison and Arnie assisted the School with the Richman Fund for Innovation, which has supported innovative and lasting projects on motivational interviewing and using new technology to assist persistently mentally ill clients.

The Alison Richman Professorship for Children, Youth and Families will allow the SSW, in perpetuity, to be able to support and retain faculty leadership in the area of children's services, and the search for the first Alison Richman Professor will commence in 2017. This gift marks the School's second endowed Professorship, joining The Daniel Thursz Professorship in Social Justice, named for the School's second Dean and currently held by Professor Michael Reisch, which was established at the School in 2006.

Dean Barth concluded "Named professorships are an important sign to the community and across academia of the importance and value a School places on particular areas. There is no trust more sacred than the one that children place in us. To fulfill that trust we must continue to build our capacity to understand children and families and how to help them meet their needs. I can think of no greater honor to the work and dedication of Alison Richman than to have a professorship to support scholarship in the area of children, youth and families at the School for generations to come."



# Taiwanese Delegation Visits SSW for Insights into Financial Social Work

Two Visiting Professors from Taiwan's Fu Jen Catholic University, including one who is a 1982 alum of the School of Social Work (SSW), visited the School in September to see and learn, first-hand, more about the School's innovative Financial Social Work Initiative.

Drs. Rosa Shioh-hwa Luo, MSW '82, Associate Professor, and Kuei-Pi Lin, Assistant Professor, have a strong interest in and commitment to financial social work and the purpose of their visit was to learn about developments in financial social work, financial capability and asset building (FCAB), and poverty alleviation in general.

While making plans to visit the United States to learn more about financial social work in the U.S., Dr. Shioh-hwa Luo found online that the School of Social Work was the first result in her online search of schools and connected with Dr. Jodi Frey, Associate Professor and Chair of the School's Financial Social Work Initiative, to arrange a visit.

During the three-day visit, the two met with many School and community officials, educators, and non-profit leaders who deal first hand with many clients with financial social work issues. While many of the challenges with financial social work are similar to the United States, i.e., families dealing with child-care, employment, transportation, housing, food and security issues, the approaches to solving these problems can be different.

Drs. Shioh-hwa Luo and Lin worked together to develop a financial social work center. "Our department decided in 2012 to make financial social work a core subject that all students in our undergraduate social work program must learn." The students also take economic classes as part of the curriculum. In 2015, those educational efforts expanded into the development of Taiwan's first Financial Social Work Center. According to Shioh-hwa Luo, "We do training courses for



Visiting Professors Drs. Rosa Shioh-hwa Luo, MSW '82, Associate Professor, and Kuei-Pi Lin visited from Fu Jen Catholic University pictured here courtesy of: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fu\\_Jen\\_Catholic\\_University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fu_Jen_Catholic_University)

social work practitioners and we offer case-based services for families with the need to improve their income status." "Their center has accomplished so much in just one year," says Frey who adds, "It is unbelievable. We have learned a lot."

Dr. Frey also learned of one unique way efforts in Taiwan might be able to be applied here. "They have secured funding from a bank foundation collaboration that gives money to families to seed businesses in the amount of \$20,000. The social workers get involved with about 50 families a year in writing business plans and helping that family be successful whether it be in a food truck business, hair styling, or other service industries. They have success rates of 30 to 40% no longer needing government funding after just a few years."

Dr. Shioh-hwa Luo agrees that the visit was a great success. "I learned a lot! I am 100% satisfied with what we have learned."

Dr. Shioh-hwa Luo came to Maryland from Taiwan in 1980 to study social work after a faculty member she had met in Taiwan recommended she come to the SSW for her degree. She returned to Taiwan in 1985 and worked in city government as a community worker in Taipei. From there she became a city government supervisor of hundreds of social workers in Taiwan. She also did Foundation work where she organized family services efforts. Continuing to expand her social work experiences, Dr. Shioh-hwa Luo worked for several years with the Red Cross Society doing United Way fundraising work that benefited the social work profession in Taiwan. Dr. Shioh-hwa Luo then went on to earn her PhD and began teaching social work at Fu Jen Catholic University.



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

## AWARDED GRANT TO IMPROVE PLACEMENT AND STABILITY FOR LGBTQ CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

The Institute for Innovation and Implementation at the University of Maryland School of Social Work has entered into a cooperative agreement to establish a National Quality Improvement Center on Tailored Services, Placement Stability and Permanency for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Children and Youth in Foster Care (LGBTQ QIC). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families' Children's Bureau has awarded \$10,000,000 to be distributed over five years.

The intent of this project is to work with 4-6 sites nationally, in partnership with state child welfare systems, to implement promising and evidence-based practices that improve placement stability, well-being, and permanency. These culturally responsive interventions will be designed to enhance staff, caregiver, and provider knowledge, skills, and competency in providing safe, affirming and supportive environments for LGBTQ youth in foster care.

Marlene Matarese, PhD, Principal Investigator, expressed gratitude to the Children's Bureau for "continuing to prioritize the needs of LGBTQ children and youth." She said, "We have seen too many youth who identify as LGBTQ in the child welfare system without a plan for permanency, connections to people who unconditionally care about them, or supports that are designed to be responsive to their unique needs. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to be part of changing this trajectory and fostering a culturally responsive workforce, and evidence based-services and supports for LGBTQ youth in foster care."

LGBTQ children and youth in foster care face a unique set of challenges such as: harassment by peers in child welfare settings, discomfort or rejection among foster parents and agency staff, and a lack of services to meet their specific needs. There is a notable cycle of system involvement and lack of permanency for youth who leave or are removed from their family home as a result of maltreatment related to their sexual orientation and gender identity.



Michelle Zabel



Marlene Matarese,  
PhD



Elizabeth Greeno,  
PhD

"This opportunity to deepen our capacity to assist sexual and gender minority youth involved with child welfare services offers enormous possibilities. I am very proud to have the leadership of Marlene Matarese and amazing partners who will realize every bit of this opportunity to help transform the way child welfare works," said UMSSW Dean, Richard Barth.

Among the SSW faculty and staff members who will contribute to the LGBTQ QIC are the SSW's principal investigator Marlene Matarese, PhD with Elizabeth Greeno, PhD, who will be the lead evaluator. Jill Farrell, PhD, Sara Betsinger, PhD, Rachel Beaudry, MSW, '15 and Whitney Burton, MSW, '09 will also be leading aspects of the LGBTQ QIC along with senior advisors Bethany Lee, PhD and Nancy Dickinson, PhD.

Also participating as core partners in the LGBTQ QIC are national experts including: Christopher Bellonci, MD (Tufts University); Johanna Bergan, and Brianne Masselli (Youth M.O.V.E. National); Terry Cross, PhD and Puneet Sahota, MD (National Indian Child Welfare Association); Kathy Lazear, MA and Sheila Pires, MPA (Human Services Collaborative); and Gerald Peterson, MA and Jessie Fullen Kamp, LMSW (Ruth Ellis Center).

"I am excited and honored for The Institute to host the Quality Improvement Center. I know the work of this Center will impact children and youth in our child welfare systems and look forward to changes in practice and policy that will happen because of this work," Michelle Zabel, MSS, Assistant Dean and Director of the Institute for Innovation and Implementation.

# PUBLIC SERVANT OF THE YEAR

## Bronwyn Mayden, MSW

If team building were an Olympic event, Bronwyn Mayden would earn the gold medal. Her 11 years as assistant dean at the School of Social Work (SSW) are unmatched for bringing divergent groups together.

Whether it's leading the School's Continuing Professional Education program, enhancing the remarkable successes of the Promise Heights initiative and B'More for Healthy Babies in West Baltimore, or facilitating interprofessional collaboration across the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), Mayden has flourished.

"Ms. Mayden possesses a powerful combination of commitment, passion, leadership, strategic thinking, organization, and intellect," says SSW colleague Michael E. Woolley, PhD, MSW, DCSW, in his nomination letter. "In short, she knows and feels strongly about what needs to be done, and knows how to bring others together to get it done."

Using skills she learned working for Mayor/Governor William Donald Schaefer before coming to SSW, Mayden in 2007 helped establish the Promise Heights program, with the goal to improve child outcomes by implementing an integrated continuum of services in the West Baltimore communities of Upton/Druid Heights. Under Mayden's leadership, Promise Heights has expanded dramatically. She has secured funding — \$2 million from more than 20 different public and private funders — for a program that includes prenatal and childhood development, community schools, extended learning time, reconnections for out-of-school youth, youth violence prevention, and family support services. SSW Dean Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW, says "Bronwyn is a beacon of joyful collaboration and engagement to a sometimes weary community."

The challenges have been many: absenteeism in schools; substandard housing; drugs and violence. In each case, Mayden worked hard to find solutions, using her candor, trustworthiness, and personal warmth to earn the respect and support of policymakers, stakeholders, community leaders, and community members. Along with frustration, she also found satisfaction and joy.

"This past June, Renaissance Academy High School graduated 82 percent of its 12th-grade class — one of the highest graduation rates in Baltimore City. That's all the thanks I need," she says proudly. "We are seeing progress. The five schools in Upton/Druid Heights enroll about 1,900 children. Our programs have touched many of the students and their families. We worked with the UMB schools to develop a pipeline of interconnected services from the beginning of life until college and career."

A program to bolster beginnings, the B'More for Healthy Babies initiative is fighting infant mortality in Baltimore — and winning.



Crib and SIDS deaths among babies in UMB's Promise Heights neighborhoods have dropped to zero, and full-term births have climbed to more than 90 percent.

Again, Mayden chose a team approach, leading B'More for Healthy Babies with Stacey Stephens, LCSW-C, in SSW and Wendy Lane, MD, MPH, in the School of Medicine. The teamwork didn't stop there, according to Lane. "Ms. Mayden has led efforts to attract community partners such as local schools and churches, and to obtain funding from multiple sources," Lane says.

Another example of team-building came in February 2016 when Mayden helped organize a forum to seek solutions to violence, citing "a public health emergency" after a Promise Heights survey showed that nearly four in 10 young people said they knew someone who had been killed before turning 20 years old.

"We have to band together to prevent the violence and all the trauma we're seeing," Mayden said in welcoming more than 120

“ In short, she knows and feels strongly about what needs to be done, and knows how to bring others together to get it done. ”

people, many of them teens and young adults, to the forum at Bethel AME Church. The event was co-sponsored by the BUILD Health Challenge, which awarded a \$75,000 grant after Mayden and Promise Heights partnered with the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center's Violence Prevention Program, Druid Heights Community Development Corp., Roberta's House (a family grief support center), Maryland Communities United, and the Baltimore City Health Department.

Mayden's collaboration isn't just with outside partners. Within UMB, she has engaged faculty and students from the schools of Dentistry, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and, of course, Social Work in her Promise Heights efforts; hundreds of students have benefited from this program.

She also joined forces with the Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Human Resources, and Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to expand SSW's Continuing Professional Education contracts. The school's CPE department has grown into the nation's second largest and Mayden is happy to say why.

“Wonderful faculty, great alumni, fabulous staff, and a great dean,” she says. “Add it all together and you get a Continuing Professional Education program that can meet the needs of social workers and other human service professionals.”

Mayden's efforts have been acknowledged with the 2014-15 University System of Maryland Board of Regents Award for Excellence in Public Service, the 2014 Reginald F. Lewis Museum Community Award, and the 2012 UMB Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Diversity Award in recognition of Promise Heights.

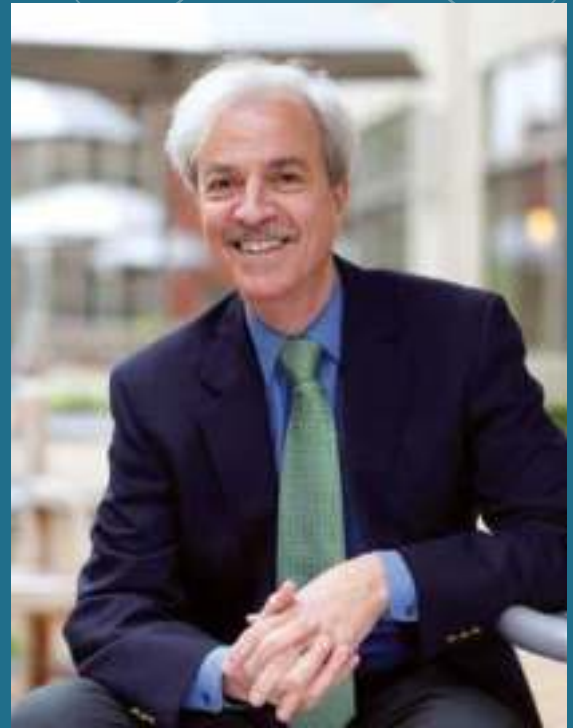
Not surprisingly, this team-builder shares the glory for her latest honor, UMB's 2016 Public Servant of Year award.

“I was very surprised and honored,” Mayden says. “We have so many talented faculty, staff, students, and administrators and to be selected for the Founders Week award is incredible. But I feel like this is our award because all of the UMB schools have supported our community work.”

Not that her work is done. “We have to expand the work from one community to several others. We have to figure out how to end generational poverty — the unyielding cycle of poverty begetting poverty.”

If anyone can do it, Bronwyn Mayden can.

## AASWSW FELLOW



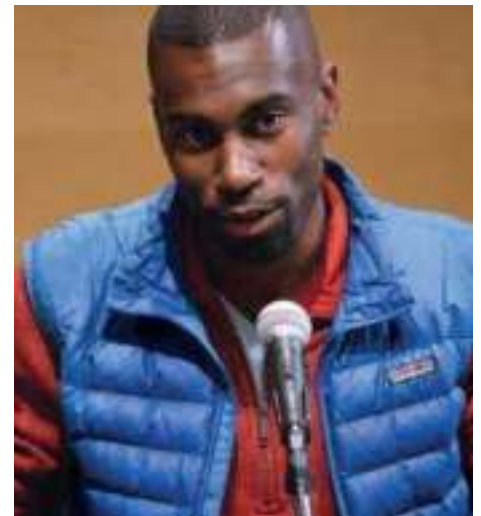
The American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare (AASWSW) has selected fellows for their distinguished accomplishments as scholars and practitioners dedicated to achieving excellence in high-impact work that advances social good. The lists includes Michael Reisch, Daniel Thursz Distinguished Professor of Social Justice at the School of Social Work. Reisch and others were inducted during public ceremonies at the Society for Social Work and Research Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

“The Fellows of the Academy are all strong leaders in integrating scientific methods and social work practice and policy and an enormous resource for the field. I am delighted that Dr. Reisch and the other new Fellows significantly strengthen the range and impact of our work to address the grand challenges facing our society.” said AASWSW President Richard Barth, Dean of the University of Maryland, School of Social Work.

The Academy aims to influence social policy by serving as a frontline source of information for the social work profession as well as Congress and other governmental and non-governmental entities. It promotes the examination of social policy and the application of research to test alternative policies, programs, and practices for their impact on society. Visit [aaswsw.org](http://aaswsw.org) for more information.

THURSZ LECTURE

# Post-Election Fight for Social Justice



**Left to Right:** E.J. Dionne Jr., *The Washington Post* columnist and frequent commentator to NPR's *All Things Considered*; DeRay Mckesson, one of the leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement; Tom Hall, host of *Midday* on WYPR 88.1 FM; Kimberly R. Moffitt, associate professor at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC)

By Mary T. Phelan

The panel and topic of the Daniel Thursz Lecture Series on Social Justice – “The 2016 Election & the Future of Social Justice in America” – was selected by the University of Maryland School of Social Work (UMSSW) long before the world woke up on the morning of Nov. 9 and learned of President-elect Donald J. Trump’s victory. There were no Donald J. Trump supporters on the panel, including the moderator.

“There’s plenty of blame to pass around, but the point of our being here today is to not talk about what happened last week but to talk about the future of social justice,” said panel moderator Tom Hall, host of *Midday* on WYPR 88.1 FM. “Because those of us who are appalled at the decision that our fellow countrymen and women made, need to figure out the proper response, need to figure out the proper posture, need to figure out where we go from here.”

Nearly 200 people attended the lecture Nov. 15 in the UMSSW auditorium on the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB)

campus as a panel consisting of a journalist, an activist, and an educator shared their thoughts about how the election turned out the way it did and how a country of many wounded people can move forward.

Panelists included E.J. Dionne Jr., *Washington Post* columnist and frequent commentator to NPR’s *All Things Considered*; DeRay Mckesson, one of the leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement; and Kimberly R. Moffitt, associate professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC).

“Tonight’s discussion goes to our school’s roots, Daniel Thursz’ impact on the School and our deeply held values.” said UMSSW Dean Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW, as he welcomed the audience. Daniel Thursz, PhD, MSW, died in 2000 after a multi-faceted career that included serving as the school’s dean from 1966 to 1976.

Since the election outcome, “The feelings and fears that have been generated amongst not just our students but also from our faculty, staff, and compatriots in the community are extremely intense,”

Barth said, adding he believes the election was a rejection of the political status quo.

Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton made several mistakes in her campaign, Dionne said. “She counted too much on the revulsion of Donald Trump and not enough on what she would do for the country. On the whole I don’t think she used the campaign to talk enough about the economic issues that moved a lot of voters in this election.”

While the country waits to see what kind of president Trump will be, Dionne said, “we need to stay organized, we need to be ready to defend some real achievements of the last few years, including Obamacare. We need to be vigilant.” Mckesson recounted how he was in New York’s Jacob Javits Center on election night, along with thousands of Clinton supporters, waiting for a victory party. “It was a very sad place to be,” he said. What matters next is how willing people will be to organize together to make sure that those who felt alienated by the Trump campaign feel included,” he said.

“When I think about what comes next ... there’s a real question of can we organize?”

“When I think about what comes next ... there’s a real question of can we organize? I think about the Black Lives Matter movement. I think about the Occupy movement. I think about all the movements and that what normally happens is people win the awareness battle and then the movement dies,” Mckesson said. “In movements that Trump provokes, now the question is can we organize on a scale we have never seen before?”

Moffitt said she is struggling with acceptance of the election outcome and on what to tell her children about it. “I am not in a space of healing quite yet, so many of my comments do not sound like a kumbaya moment,” she said.

## JUSTICE GRANTS

# Three Department of Justice Grants Come to the SSW

The University of Maryland School of Social Work recently heard positive news about three grants written this summer to the US Department of Justice.

This is an important recognition of social work’s central role in the development, and implementation, and evaluation of new models for serving persons who would otherwise become more deeply involved with the juvenile and criminal justice systems. According to Dean Richard Barth, “These awards, totaling more than \$4M, support our understanding that ‘social is fundamental’ and ‘there is no justice without social justice,’ underscore the important role we are playing, in concert with traditional justice agencies, to achieve greater social justice.”

**Improving Outcomes for Child and Youth Victims of Human Trafficking: A Jurisdiction-Wide Approach** received funding from the DOJ’s Office for Victims of Crime was accepted. The School has been awarded this grant of just under \$3M over the next three years. Research Assistant Professor Nadine Finigan-Carr is the Principal Investigator (PI) for the project. The funds awarded make possible the delivery and testing of a multi-disciplinary team response and victim-centered approach in a way that will make this response standard for trafficked youth across Maryland.

Partners include the Maryland Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention; Turnaround; Safe Center; Healthy Teen Network; MD Department of Human Resources and MD Department of Juvenile Services; MD Office of the Attorney General; MD Court of Appeals; Baltimore City, Montgomery and Prince Georges County, and many more.

**West Baltimore Youth Violence Prevention Initiative** is an Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant from the US Department of Justice. Assistant Dean and Executive Director of Promise Heights, Bronwyn Mayden is the PI. The grant will coordinate West Baltimore violence prevention efforts in Promise Heights and Sandtown Winchester with a special focus on fostering violence-free social environments; promoting positive opportunities and connections to trusted adults for all youth; intervening with youth and families at the first sign of disconnection from the community; building pathways that support youth involved with juvenile services; and protecting youth and families from violence. The award is for \$1M over three years.

Partners include the Baltimore Police Department, Baltimore City Health Department, Druid Heights Community Development Corporation, Penn North Community Association, Communities United, Catholic Charities, and the Urban Institute.

**Assessing the Impact of a Graduated Response Approach for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System** was awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Research Assistant Professor Jill Farrell is the PI. The evaluation will rigorously test a structured, evidence-informed approach to address supervision violations: a major contributor to the incarceration of young people in this country, particularly youth of color. The primary partner, the MD Department of Juvenile Services (DJS), recently implemented this graduated response system, which uses a range of sanctions and incentives to respond to youth behaviors without relying on confinement. The study will assess the implementation and effectiveness of this approach, including an examination of outcomes using data from DJS and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. The award is for \$250,000 over two years.

# SSW HELPING SURVIVORS of HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The University of Maryland, College Park and University of Maryland, Baltimore announced the opening Monday, May 9 of the University of Maryland Support, Advocacy, Freedom and Empowerment (SAFE) Center for Human Trafficking Survivors in College Park.

Located near the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), the SAFE Center will draw on the combined resources and the wide range of disciplines of both UMCP and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) to address human trafficking. Through in-house services and collaborative partnerships, the center will provide direct services to U.S. and foreign-born adult and child survivors of sex and labor trafficking, with a particular focus on survivors in Prince George's and Montgomery counties. The center is designed to fill an unmet need in the region.

"These young people have survived betrayal and violence and desperately need this safe harbor to rebuild their lives," said UMCP President Wallace D. Loh, PhD. "The services they receive through this strategic partnership will truly empower their recovery."

The SAFE Center is an interdisciplinary service, research and advocacy initiative of UMCP and UMB through its formal collaborative program for innovation, University of Maryland: MPowering the State. Researchers from both universities will come together to expand the scholarship on human trafficking, and UMCP and UMB students will become the next generation of trafficking experts and survivor advocates.

"The University of Maryland, Baltimore is honored to partner with the University of Maryland, College Park to alleviate the devastating impact human trafficking has on our community, here in Maryland and globally," said UMB President Jay A. Perman, MD. "This partnership is an excellent example of how our two universities can work together to make each institution stronger and develop real-world solutions that benefit our communities. At the SAFE Center, experts from the University of Maryland School of Social Work and the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law will conduct groundbreaking research into human trafficking and will work closely with survivors to help them realize bright futures outside of this exploitative illegal industry. We are excited to see the innovative real-world solutions that are sure to develop from this promising collaboration."

At the ceremony, officials from both universities, Prince George's and Montgomery counties, and the state of Maryland launched the center, including Susan G. Esserman, Founder and Director of the SAFE Center. Esserman, a partner at Steptoe & Johnson, is a leader of the law firm's pro bono program on behalf of trafficking victims and has represented numerous survivors in Prince George's County.

"Most people would be shocked to know the serious extent of the human trafficking problem in our Maryland communities," said Esserman. "Vulnerable and marginalized people are being forced



Susan G. Esserman, Founder and Director of the SAFE Center.

and coerced into commercial sex and forced labor less than two miles from the College Park campus. We saw a need for services for trafficking survivors in Prince George's and Montgomery counties, and we're fortunate that the University of Maryland has stepped in to help fill this enormous need through the SAFE Center."

In addition to providing survivor-centered and trauma-informed services that empower trafficking survivors to heal and reclaim their lives, the SAFE Center will also help to prevent trafficking and better serve survivors through research and policy advocacy. The center will collaborate with the Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and Maryland human trafficking taskforces—as well as local service providers, shelters, law enforcement, federal, state, and local agencies, and survivors themselves—to share best practices and make services more accessible. SAFE Center programs include:

- **Direct Services:** Through in-house services and collaboration with partners, the SAFE Center will provide intensive case management, legal services, counseling services, basic primary medical care and economic empowerment programs.
- **Research:** The center will collaborate with community organizations and human trafficking task forces to identify critical research gaps. It will work with interdisciplinary university departments to address those gaps and contribute to the body of knowledge in the human trafficking field.
- **Advocacy:** As an outgrowth of research and direct service provision, the SAFE Center will develop and support policy initiatives in collaboration with stakeholders.

Go to [www.umsafecenter.org](http://www.umsafecenter.org) for more information on the University of Maryland SAFE Center.



## In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that we share the news that Professor Emeritus Paul Ephross passed away on Thursday, January 12, 2017.

Born in Boston in 1935 to parents from Odessa, Paul was a native Yiddish speaker. He was a gifted musician who played both flute and piano, the latter with the Boston Pops as a young child. He played the piano by ear until a few weeks before he died. He was a proud alumnus of Boston Latin School, Harvard College, and Boston University before moving to get his doctorate at the University of Chicago. He then came to the University of Maryland School of Social Work, where he was a professor for almost 40 years. During that time, he served as Director of the Doctoral Program and was the founding director of the School of Social Work Community Outreach Service. He directed many research projects, and authored and edited numerous books and articles. He also served as an adjunct professor at Baltimore Hebrew University. In 2004, he was honored as a Social Work Pioneer by the National Association of Social Workers. Paul also had a private practice in psychotherapy in Rockville.



**Professor Emeritus Paul Ephross**

An active volunteer in the Jewish community, Paul became enthusiastic about Reconstructionism after hearing Mordecai Kaplan speak at Harvard. Paul later helped found the Columbia Jewish Congregation in Columbia, Maryland. His many activities over the years include serving on the Boards of Directors of The BLEWS (Baltimore's Black-Jewish Forum), the Baltimore Jewish Council, and the Associated Jewish Charities and Welfare Fund in Baltimore.

The family requests that donations be made to – (a) the Paul Ephross Scholarship Fund, University of MD School of Social Work; (b) Mazon - A Jewish Response to Hunger; or (c) JSSA Hospice, Rockville, MD.



FACULTY LAURELS



**Dean Richard Barth, PhD**, was one of five panelists for the NASW Opening Plenary in Washington DC in June. Dean Barth represented the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare. Also present were leaders of CSWE, SSWR, and ASWB. Each panelist responded to three questions about the major initiatives in their organization, the challenges and barriers ahead, and their vision of Social Work 20 years out. Barth

was also selected by the American Psychological Association (APA) to receive the Distinguished Contribution to Child Advocacy Award, Division 37, at the recent APA Annual Convention held in Denver August 4 - 7. This award has been given to a non-psychologist since 1983, but this is only the second time it has gone to a social worker.



**Michael Reisch**, Daniel Thursz Distinguished Professor of Social Justice, and Charles Garvin (emeritus professor at the University of Michigan) just published the book, *Social Work and Social Justice* (2016, New York: Oxford University Press).

**Michael Reisch, PhD**

Assistant Professor **Tanya Sharpe, PhD**, honored as the Social Work Educator of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers-Maryland Chapter. Sharpe also had an article, co-authored with Dr. C. Shawn McGuffey (Boston College, Sociology Department), entitled "Racial Appraisal: An integrated Cultural and Structural Response to African American Experiences with Violent Trauma," published in *Journal of Sociology and Social Work*.



Clinical Instructor **Gisele Ferretto, MSW**, has been named Social Worker of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers-Maryland Chapter.

**Gisele Ferretto, MSW**



Community School Coordinator **Henriette Taylor, MSW**, honored by the National Association of Social Workers-Maryland Chapter as its Field Instructor of the Year.

**Henriette Taylor, MSW**



**Bethany Lee, PhD**



**Bronwyn Mayden, MSW**



**Tanya Sharpe, PhD**



**Elizabeth Greeno, PhD**



**Terry Shaw, PhD**

Associate Dean for Research and Associate Professor **Bethany Lee, PhD**, Associate Professor **Tanya Sharpe, PhD**, and Executive Director of Promise Height **Bronwyn Mayden, MSW**, were appointed to the Baltimore Safe Streets Community Advisory Board.

A half-dozen scholars from the School have published findings related to Maryland KEEP, an empirically based training and support program for foster and kinship providers

for children between ages 4 and 12. The KEEP intervention has been shown to significantly decrease placement disruptions, increase permanency, and reduce challenging behaviors for children in care. Those who have published findings include **Elizabeth Greeno, PhD**, research associate professor, **Bethany Lee, PhD**, associate dean for research, **Dean Richard P. Barth, PhD, MSW**, **Terry Shaw, PhD**, associate professor, student **Mathew Uretsky**, and **Jessica Moore**, research assistant.





**Geoffrey Greif, PhD**



**Michael Woolley, PhD**

**Geoffrey Greif, PhD**, professor, and **Michael Woolley, PhD**, associate professor, have written a book, *Adult Sibling Relationships*,

published by Columbia University Press. More than 50 students helped with the research during the past four years.



**Amanda Lehning, PhD**

**Amanda Lehning, PhD**, assistant professor, co-authored *Creating Aging-Friendly Communities*, published by Oxford University Press.

**Amanda Lehning, PhD**, also, received the Faculty Achievement (Early Career) Award from the Association of Gerontology Education in Social Work (AGESW). The award was given at the AGESW Reception at the Gerontological

Society of America's Annual Scientific Meeting in New Orleans this past November.



**Caroline Burry, PhD**

**Caroline Long Burry, PhD, MSW**, associate professor, was awarded an inaugural Katherine A. Kendall grant. The Katherine A. Kendall Institute for International Social Work Education is an institute of the Council on Social Work Education. Burry and fellow Kendall honoree **Carolyn Tice**, professor and associate dean of the BSW program at University of Maryland, Baltimore

County, will develop a new BSW/MSW course, *Environmental Social Work Practice: A Global Perspective*, and will teach this course in partnership with the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences in Kochi, India.

MSW students **Erin Maskell** and **Tiffany Newton** named MSW Students of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers-Maryland Chapter.



**Deborah Gioia, PhD**

Associate Professor **Deborah Gioia, PhD**, LCSW-C, has been selected as the new editor of the journal, *Social Work and Mental Health* effective in January 2017. Dr. Gioia served as associate editor the past three years.

An article co-authored by **Dawn Phillip, MSW '15**, and **Michael Reisch, PhD**, Daniel Thursz Distinguished Professor of Social Justice, "Rethinking Social Work's Interpretation of 'Environmental Justice': From Local to Global," recently was named "Best Conceptual Article of 2015" by the editors of *Social Work Education: An International Journal*. Reisch also recently had his book *Social Work and Social Justice: Concepts, Challenges, and Strategies* (with Charles Garvin) published by Oxford University Press.



**Michelle Tuten, PhD**

Reinforcement-Based Treatment (RBT), co-developed by **Michelle Tuten, PhD**, assistant professor, has been listed in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP). RBT promotes the adoption of scientifically established behavioral health interventions. NREPP is an evidence-based repository and review system designed to provide the public

with reliable information on mental health and substance abuse interventions. All interventions in the registry have met NREPP's minimum requirements for review. The programs' effects on individual outcomes have been independently assessed and rated by certified NREPP reviewers.



# Grand Challenges for Social Work:





# Achieving Measurable Progress for Society Through Social Work and Science

By Wanda Haskel





*Ask social work professionals why they entered the field, and their answers will likely include, “to enable people to solve problems” or maybe, “to change the world for the better.”*

**T**hat’s why it’s a propitious time to be in social work. Now, more than ever, it’s possible to achieve even the loftiest goals.

The profession has arrived at a pivotal moment. A new era of unprecedented collaboration is opening up limitless opportunities to improve individual and family well-being, strengthen the social fabric, and help create a more just society.

Social work is embarking on a journey of innovation that has already begun to broaden the field’s capacity to provide solutions powered by science for some of society’s most pressing struggles, including poverty, inequality, homelessness, violence and substance abuse.

This rejuvenation took off with the 2009 formation of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare (AASWSW), under the leadership of founding president, University

of Maryland School of Social Work’s (UMSSW) own Dean Richard P. Barth.

Thanks to the combined efforts of the Baccalaureate Program Directors (BPD), Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education (GADE), National Association of Deans and Directors (NADD), National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR), and St. Louis Group, social work now has a national honorific society of distinguished scholars and practitioners on par with those of other professions, such as medicine and engineering.

Since the Academy’s inception, membership has grown to a select group of nearly 100 distinguished social work scholars and practitioners who have dedicated their careers to the advancement of social work science and the profession.



(l to r) Sarah Butts, University of Maryland SSW, AASWSW Chief Administrator, J. David Hawkins, University of Washington SSW, and Grand Challenges Executive Committee Member, and Larry Davis, Dean, University of Pittsburgh, SSW and AASWSW Board Member.

The Academy, which is coordinated out of the UMSSW by Sarah Butts, chief administrator, considers nominations based on rigorous criteria and inducts fellows annually. The efforts of Barth and Butts, in partnership with a committed Board of Directors, comprised of deans and scholars from across the country, have done the foundational work and heavy lifting to build infrastructure in the organization and capacity to implement national initiatives. The establishment of the Academy is a milestone for the profession, and one that UMSSW has contributed to substantially.

In January 2016, the AASWSW launched its first major undertaking, the groundbreaking 12 Grand Challenges for Social Work. The plan to tackle some of the nation's most urgent social problems was devised during a historic convening, co-hosted by the University of Southern California (USC) and the University of Washington, on the science of social work at IslandWood retreat center in Bainbridge Island, Washington, and, later, brought to the AASWSW Board for their adoption as a strategic initiative of the Academy.

The Grand Challenges provide a framework promoting innovation, collaboration, and expansion of proven, evidence-based programs to guide the profession in yielding measurable, large-scale social progress in the next decade and beyond.

### Birth of a Notion

Although the grand challenges approach is new for social work, the idea was originally forwarded in 1900 by German mathematician David Hilbert, who galvanized his field using a list of 23 unsolved “mathematical puzzles.” More than a century later, national academies, foundations, and universities employ Hilbert’s concept to inspire, align, and focus scientific and practical energy toward pioneering solutions.

When social work leaders decided to undertake a grand challenges initiative, they drew—and continue to draw—inspiration and guidance from the National Academy of Engineering’s (NAE) modern model, which has mobilized problem-solving efforts and drawn a new generation of bright minds to the profession.

Just as the NAE did for engineering, the AASWSW first assembled a volunteer Executive Committee in 2013 to lead the Grand Challenges for Social Work. The Committee includes some of the nation’s leading scientists, educators, and policy experts from throughout the field.

Originally co-chaired by Professor Rowena Fong, University of Texas at Austin, and Professor John Brekke, USC, the Committee set out to define the Challenges through a process involving wide participation from across the profession.



**Grover Gilmore, Dean, Case Western Reserve University, School of Applied Social Sciences, Ex-Officio to the Board with Richard Barth.**

Answering the Committee’s national call for input, scholars from Massachusetts to California submitted more than 80 separate concepts for Grand Challenges, which the Committee reviewed and synthesized. Next, the group sought nearly two dozen academic working papers in support of the diverse collection of ideas, which were provided by 143 authors, from 54 universities and 15 organizations.

Additionally, the Executive Committee commissioned background papers to explain the Grand Challenges concept and describe the many significant accomplishments of social work during the preceding century; meanwhile developing strategic partnerships with social work’s national organizations, interest groups and academic entities.

These partnerships, points out Fong, are essential to the Grand Challenges effort, which is grounded in an impact model targeting the pipeline of current and future students as social work professionals and emerging scientists.

“As the future stewards of our profession and science,” says Fong, “it would be imperative for them through mentoring to be influenced in their academic, professional and research career directions, to experience changing professional and scientific identities based on transdisciplinary teamwork, and to be involved in innovative technologies and transformative scientific research fostered through the Grand Challenges. These powerful impacts can be done collectively and effectively by the backing of the major social work organization.”

Stringent criteria informed the selection of the Challenges. They had to be important, compelling and backed by supporting scientific evidence indicating that measurable, meaningful progress on the Challenge could be achieved in the next decade. Working papers that showed a path forward for the social work profession, and allies, were developed. These also include ideas about how interdisciplinary or cross-sector collaboration and substantial innovation would be central to the endeavor.



**John Brekke, Professor, USC, past Co-Chair of Grand Challenges Executive Committee.**



Finally, the Executive Committee used all the collected input to craft statements articulating each of the 12 challenges. They are:

- ▶ **Ensure healthy development for all youth**
- ▶ **Close the health gap**
- ▶ **Stop family violence**
- ▶ **Advance long and productive lives**
- ▶ **Eradicate social isolation**
- ▶ **End homelessness**
- ▶ **Create social responses to a changing environment**
- ▶ **Harness technology for social good**
- ▶ **Promote smart decarceration**
- ▶ **Reduce extreme economic inequality**
- ▶ **Build financial capability for all**
- ▶ **Achieve equal opportunity and justice**

Nine UMSSW researchers are authors on Grand Challenges working papers, and many more are heavily involved in actualizing solutions. (See accompanying stories on the School’s work connected with: Ensure healthy development for all youth; Stop family violence; End homelessness; and Build financial capability for all.)

“The Grand Challenges have given our profession the chance to reflect on where we’ve come from in terms of our research and our science, and also have given us an opportunity to look at what our collective impact on society can be through our science,” says Brekke. “That’s good for the profession but it’s also really profound for society as a whole to see what social work has done and what it can do.”



The Grand Challenges for Social Work Executive Committee at the 2016 SSWR conference, in Washington, DC.

Front row (l. to r.): Edwina Uehara, Diana DiNitto, Yolanda Padilla. Back row: Marilyn Flynn, James Lubben, Michael Sherraden, Richard Barth, Ron Manderscheid, Karina Walters, J. David Hawkins, Sarah Butts, Rowena Fong. Not pictured: John Brekke, James Herbert Williams, and Claudia Coulton.

### Seizing the Day

With the goals clearly defined, many of the working paper authors have now taken the lead in implementation networks that are being developed as hubs for the activities related to each Challenge, and the Executive Committee has its work cut out for it. Currently co-chaired by Dean Marilyn Flynn, USC; George Warren Brown Distinguished University Professor Michael Sherraden, Washington University in St Louis; and Dean Edwina Uehara, University of Washington, the Committee is busy supporting the networks, pursuing resources, and exploring ways to push the initiative forward.

To their advantage is a rising awareness that the social truly is fundamental.

“People are starting to pay attention,” says Barth, citing a recent announcement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, which asserts that the largest drivers of health care costs come from outside the clinical care environment, with 40 percent “due to social and economic determinants” and 30 percent due to “health behavior.” Clinical care was responsible for a mere 20 percent.

To take full advantage of the increasing understanding of social factors’ mighty impact on human well-being, the profession must, says Barth, “add a much stronger scientific infrastructure, this will show that we can make progress, that there is maturing social work science, and that we have the capacity to create and deliver interventions that have a great return on investment and that are aligned with growing interest in evidence-based practices.”

The Grand Challenges initiative is a guiding framework that will enable the profession to achieve these aspirations, and that’s why support is growing in every corner of the field.

### Visions United

When Barth gave the keynote address officially launching the Grand Challenges at the 2016 SSWR annual conference, he was joined on stage by the heads of the three major social work organizations. Those leaders, representing the Council on Social Work Education, National Association for Social Workers, and Society for Social Work and Research, all serve on either the Grand Challenges Executive Committee or as National Advisors.

The Grand Challenges have “convened us as a profession,” says Butts.

Financial commitments also signal wide cooperation. The UMSSW has received more than \$400,000 in support for coordinating the Grand Challenge effort, principally from USC, and also from the Brown School at Washington University, the University of Washington, CSWE, NASW, SSWR and from the members of the National Association of Deans and Directors.

Proof that this social agenda powered by science is building momentum is evidenced in the multiple Grand Challenges-themed events and national conferences being organized. The Society for Social Work and Research has agreed to have Grand Challenges serve as conference themes; the Council on Social Work Education is considering consolidating some of their approximately 40 conference tracks under the 12 Grand Challenges; and the recent NASW bi-annual conference began by including Barth, representing the AASWSW and the Grand Challenges, in a plenary on the future of the profession.

Other select examples include the Network for Social Work Management Conference at USC, and events hosted by the University of Iowa, the Northwest NASW, and the Western Consortium.



**Edwina Uehara, Professor and Ballmer Endowed Dean, University of Washington, School of Social Work, Co-Chair Grand Challenges Executive Committee.**



**Michael Sherraden, Professor and Director, Center for Social Development, Washington University in St. Louis, Co-Chair Grand Challenges Executive Committee.**



**Left: Shauntia White, MSW Student, attended the September Grand Challenges Policy Conference. Right: Leigh Goodmark University of Maryland School of Law.**

Francis King Carey School of Law Professor Leigh Goodmark. Major institutional sponsors included AASWSW, Washington University in St. Louis, Brookings Institution, SSWR, Fund for Social Policy Education and Practice, and the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. Schools of social work sponsors were Washington University in St. Louis George Warren Brown School of Social Work, University of Southern California School of Social Work, University of Washington School of Social Work, University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration, University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work, University of Maryland School of Social Work, University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work, University of Michigan School of Social Work, Boston University School of Social Work, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice, and Boston College School of Social Work.

“The scale, complexity and seeming intractability of Grand Challenges demands the concerted efforts of all social workers,” says Uehara. “None alone can resolve these Challenges.”

In September, Washington University’s George Warren Brown School of Social Work’s Center for Social Development (CSD)—scholars from which edited all of the original working papers—hosted the first Grand Challenges policy conference, *Social Innovation for America’s Renewal: Ideas, Evidence, Action*. In preparation, network leads collaborated to prepare policy briefs—one for each Challenge. Participation at the conference was broad and deep with many deans of social work schools, Academy fellows, and more junior scholars engaging in shaping the initiative.

The Grand Challenges initiative is emerging at an “opportune moment,” says Sherraden, who directs the CSD and chaired the conference planning committee. Election years, he adds, “create venues for policymakers to consider new ideas and directions.”

The event focused on distilling network input, which will lead to a white paper to inform policymakers and the new administration.

This policy conference was the result of a collective effort among multiple organizations and schools of social work. Barth and Butts served on the planning committee and UMSSW participants included: Assistant Professor Jordan DeVlyder, Research Assistant Professor Christine Callahan, Assistant Dean for Field Education Samuel Little, UMSSW MSW student Shauntia White, and UM

Furthermore, a growing number of articles and editorials on the Grand Challenges are appearing in journals, newsletters, alumni magazines, annual reports, and newspapers from coast to coast, reflecting a rising awareness and interest within social work and the public at large in the interdisciplinary *Journal of Family Violence*.

To aid in communication and cooperation, the Executive Committee is using technology to offer updates and forums for sharing information, ideas and research. The website [grandchallengesforsocialwork.org](http://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org) enables users to join a mailing list and contains pages dedicated to each Challenge. A robust social media strategy, which includes a Twitter feed (@AASWSWorg), Facebook group, LinkedIn page and #Up4theChallenge hashtag, is also building the Grand Challenges community.

Twitter chats are another avenue to engage the public and social scientists in the project, as are upcoming webinars, featuring presentations by Grand Challenges network leads. The webinar series intends to foster a learning community and create opportunities for researchers from different networks to share ideas and engage both internal and external audiences.





The Grand Challenges policy conference in St Louis, Missouri, at Washington University. Richard Barth, James Herbert Williams, J. David Hawkins, Yolanda Padilla, Jim Lubben, Marilyn Flynn, Michael Sherraden, Sarah Butts, Ron Manderscheid.

## Rising to the Challenge

First up to host a webinar is the “Ensure Healthy Development for all Youth Network.” That’s because, with 30-plus years of research backing numerous tested and effective interventions, this group has the science and leadership in place to hit the ground running.

One of the foundational papers for the Challenge is “Unleashing the Power of Prevention,” with work from more than 40 authors, representing multiple schools of social work and other professions. The paper was first published by the National Academy of Medicine—indicating interest from the medical community, which is a prime example of the interdisciplinary effort required to address Grand Challenges.

With the bold ambition of reducing the incidence and prevalence of behavioral health problems in young people from birth to age 24 by 20 percent over the next decade, the coalition of scholars co-led by Professor J. David Hawkins, University of Washington, and Professor Jeffrey Jenson, University of Denver, has already made significant progress.

One prong of the network’s approach is to partner with states to educate and train front-line people on the implementation of effective prevention programs.

“Ensure Healthy Development for All Youth” already has organized a “prevention summit” for the state of Utah at which they presented on program implementation and discussed policy

implications with state leaders in education, law enforcement, human services, child welfare and economic development. The network continues to collaborate with Utah as the state pushes prevention initiatives at the regional, county, and community levels.

Another of the network’s strategies involves joining forces with the health care community and other prevention scientists to incorporate tested and effective, family-focused interventions for preventing children’s behavioral health problems into primary care.

Working through the National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives, with input from the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Board of Pediatrics, and the Coalition for the Promotion of Behavioral Health, the network held a Congressional briefing in April to educate legislators on the benefits of offering family-focused prevention programs through primary care. Hawkins was a presenter along with other nationally recognized experts on pediatric health and the prevention of behavioral health problems.

“What was really exciting was that the president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Dr. Benard Dreyer, presented about the power and potential of providing family-focused preventive interventions through primary health,” says Hawkins. “For the president of the American Academy of Pediatrics to say, ‘this is an important thing for us to do,’ really says this is a way in which policy should be moving.”

*“We have to influence the pipeline so we change the nature of the scientists and the teachers that we are producing,” says Flynn.*



## Cutting-Edge Curricula

Other notable early progress within the Grand Challenges initiative is work led by Executive Committee co-chair, Dean Marilyn Flynn at the University of Southern California, shown here.

The USC School of Social Work has rolled out a trailblazing online Doctor of Social Work program built around the Grand Challenges. Students will address a specific Challenge through coursework, residencies and, ultimately, a capstone project, culminating in the development of a proposed solution they will present to a panel of faculty, thought leaders and venture capitalists.

The school also launched an MSW training and field placement specializing in preparation for work with persons exposed to homelessness and is contracted for the first time to undertake the annual Los Angeles homelessness count.

These are huge steps toward directing the training of social work students around the implementation of evidence-based solutions, which is a critical ingredient in the Grand Challenges effort.

“We have to influence the pipeline so we change the nature of the scientists and the teachers that we are producing,” says Flynn.



**Marilyn Flynn, Dean, USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck, School of Social Work, Co-chair Grand Challenges Executive Committee.**

Moreover, Flynn chairs a university-wide steering committee, guiding the entire USC campus as it adopts the “End Homelessness Challenge,” the network co-leads of which are Assistant Professor Benjamin Henwood, USC, and Professor Deborah K. Padgett from New York University. This means that thousands of students and faculty at a global research university in disciplines ranging from engineering to education, medicine to law, are putting their heads together with government and community leaders in Los Angeles to solve a desperate problem in that sprawling city. Their progress could be a model for the rest of urban America.

In addition, individual scholars at USC are leading other networks, contributing their own research and even building campus laboratories associated with Grand Challenges.

The work within “Ensure Healthy Development for All Youth and End Homelessness” Challenges are just two examples of many that demonstrate the innovation, collaboration and expansion of proven, evidence-based programs at the heart of the Grand Challenges. Similar advances, in varying stages of development, are happening within all the networks, and are changing the face of social work.



“Frequencies” mural by Chroma Dolls. Photograph by Steve Reinik.

## Looking Ahead

The new face of the profession, for which the Grand Challenges provide a supporting structure, is one that explodes the outdated image of social workers as the people who remove children from their homes and hand out welfare checks. This initiative is revealing the visages of scientists, policy influencers and change agents lifting up society in traditional areas, including addressing family violence and supporting mental health, and in some arenas—such as the changing environment and technology—not historically linked with social work.

Success of the Grand Challenges initiative could make a tremendous contribution to modern society if it better explains the impact of social factors and engages people at all ages and in all areas of life in understanding the social interventions that are needed for broad progress.

Working together and in interdisciplinary and cross-sector contexts, the profession of social work can change the world—in grand fashion.

Richard Barth’s term as President of AASWSW ended in January 2017. Sarah Gehlert succeeds him as the incoming AASWSW President and Gail Steketee as the Incoming AASWSW Vice-President.



Sarah Gehlert, Incoming AASWSW President, E. Desmond Lee Professor of Racial and Ethnic Diversity, Washington University in St. Louis.



Gail Steketee, Incoming AASWSW Vice-President, Dean and Professor, Boston University School of Social Work.



Jordan Dyblder and Sam Little

## PREVENTION OF SCHIZOPHRENIA AND SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS

Jordan DeVlyder



The Grand Challenge to “Ensure healthy development for all youth” is one of the most developed—having authored a working paper on “Unleashing the Power of Prevention” and spawned a “Coalition for Behavioral Health” that is led by social work faculty but is multi-disciplinary and cross-sector. Fitting within this Grand Challenge and beautifully expressing the power of prevention is Jordan DeVlyder’s work on prevention of schizophrenia (the Grand Challenges working paper that he authored is at [aaswsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Prevention-of-Schizophrenia-and-Severe-Mental-Illness-3.24.15.pdf](https://aaswsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Prevention-of-Schizophrenia-and-Severe-Mental-Illness-3.24.15.pdf)).

Despite changing attitudes, mental illness remains one of the most stigmatizing conditions—even more so for those diagnosed with schizophrenia.

New research spearheaded by assistant professor Jordan DeVlyder, PhD, UMSSW points to promising results in not just treating, but preventing schizophrenia among high risk adolescents ages 12 to 20. His research challenges status quo opinions among many clinicians and researchers that schizophrenia is a chronic condition with little hope for recovery.

“We know that long term outcomes for schizophrenia can be successful by intervening as early as possible,” says DeVlyder. “Current evidence supports the notion that primary prevention of schizophrenia is possible by intervening prior to onset with individuals at clinical high risk.”

Early intervention means identifying those most at risk before they exhibit symptoms of severe mental illness such as hallucinations or psychotic episodes. “There is typically a two year gap before people seek treatment for schizophrenia,” says DeVlyder. “But it’s often difficult for this disorder to be diagnosed in a community setting.”

Getting adolescents to seek treatment is a challenge, especially because the symptoms of schizophrenia and severe mental illness are not clearly understood, even by clinicians. “This may be a group that doesn’t always seek help,” says DeVlyder. “Adolescence is already a high risk period, not just for mental health conditions. And there isn’t a general understanding of what psychosis looks like and what seeking help looks like.”

The good news is that adolescents who do get treatment often benefit. While most long-term chronic mental illness treatments tend to be pharmacology-based, research indicates that psychotherapy and general supportive therapy work well for adolescents, especially when coupled with low-risk alternative pharmacotherapies like omega-3 fatty acid tablets. “Medication alone falls short of addressing psychosocial issues such as homelessness and joblessness,” says DeVlyder. “Plus, the side effects of anti-psychotic medications are often poorly tolerated.”

“Broadening treatment horizons and using social workers as gate keepers and team leaders in identifying symptoms of psychosis in non-hospital settings are key steps to treating high risk adolescents. In that respect, social workers can function as an early warning system for detecting mental illness among high risk adolescents in settings such as schools, child welfare agencies, and even recreational programs. And they should be part of a shared decision making approach to medication,” says DeVlyder.

Addressing the Grand Challenge of integrating preventative mental health care for adolescents into community settings will not be easy, admits DeVlyder. “This will require more education on the symptoms of schizophrenia, better integration of social workers as team leaders, and more access appropriate care,” he says. “That said, when it comes to preventive health care, the gains always outweigh the costs.”

To learn more about the Grand Challenge to Ensure Healthy Development for All Youth, go to: [aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/ensure-healthy-development-for-all-youth/](https://aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/ensure-healthy-development-for-all-youth/)

# END HOMELESSNESS

Jill Yesko

During the course of a year, one in every 200 Americans will experience homelessness for at least one night. Homelessness is not just an issue of adults: between 1.1 and 1.6 million children will be homeless at some point during a given year—double the number reported in 2005.

Homelessness comes at a great cost to society both socially and financially. In fact, the cost of maintaining a person in homelessness is more expensive than solving the problem itself. Studies indicate that it costs less than \$25,000 annually to create a trajectory out of chronic homelessness. “In the past decade there has been a fundamental shift in both thinking and policymaking that homelessness can be ended, rather than managed,” notes Sarah Butts, MSW, ’08, Assistant to the President and Chief Administrator of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare at the School of Social Work.

“Every child should have a safe place to live—a safe place that they can call home” says Butts.

While the challenges for ending homelessness for adults are daunting, eradicating family homelessness and homelessness for other vulnerable populations can be even more complicated based on the number of public systems in which children and youth with intensive needs typically are involved.

Youth and young adults transitioning out of foster care are among those at greatest risk for homelessness. In a survey of Maryland young adults with foster care histories, 99% of those who responded had spent at least one night experiencing homelessness since leaving foster care, notes Deborah Harburger, MSW ’04, Clinical Instructor and Co-Director of the Maryland Center at The Institute for Innovation & Implementation at the School of Social Work. “Unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness often are referred to as the ‘invisible population’ because they are so hard to quantify. They are resilient and resourceful and often fly under the radar, staying with friends and family. They go to school and work and do what they need to in order to survive,” she says.

While Maryland does not discharge youth out of foster care into homelessness, like the rest of the country, Maryland’s current systems do not always ensure that the youth won’t end up experiencing homelessness, says Harburger. To address this mismatch, the School of Social Work has created Thrive@25, funded by the USDHHS’s Children’s Bureau, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Human Resources, the five local departments of social services on the Mid-Shore, and the National Center on Housing and Child Welfare. Thrive@25 is implementing interventions within the child welfare system on Maryland’s Mid-Shore to support individualized, strengths-based transitional planning with youth in foster care while increasing the availability of resources in the community. Thrive@25 is focused on the particular challenges that face youth as they exit from foster care in a rural community and the goal is to prevent homelessness among youth exiting from foster care.

Harburger and colleagues George “Jay” Unick, PhD, MSW, Associate Professor; Amanda Miller, MSW ’16, Program Specialist; and Elizabeth Greeno, PhD, LCSW-C, Research Associate Professor, also are spearheading Youth REACH MD, an innovative statewide count and survey of unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness across the state, funded by the Maryland General Assembly and in partnership with the Maryland Department for Housing and Community Development. “The first Youth REACH MD survey identified more than 800 youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in eight Maryland jurisdictions during the three-week count. We found that a sizeable minority of these youth and young adults reported being parents and almost half of them have custody of their children,” says Miller, who is Youth REACH MD’s Project Manager.

“Just providing affordable housing isn’t enough for some youth,” says Harburger. “Many youth and young adults have histories of trauma and need to be given the tools to obtain necessary support for mental health challenges; learn to manage money; make and sustain permanent, supportive connections; and find employment that pays a living wage to prevent homelessness.”

Increasing field placements for social work students to work with agencies combatting homelessness as well as working directly with homeless clients is critical. “We need to create a larger cohort of social workers engaged in this area,” says Samuel B. Little, PhD, MSW, LCSW-C, Assistant Dean and Director of Field Education at the School of Social Work.

Little is leading the School in its role as a regional hub for the National Homelessness Social Work Initiative and recently convened a meeting with field education faculty from UMSSW, Coppin, Howard, Catholic and Morgan as well as representatives of the homelessness services provider network in Baltimore to launch a new Homelessness Social Work Council.

“The 22-member council is a diverse body and membership continues to grow because of the importance of ending homelessness as one of the Grand Challenges for social work,” according to Little. Emphasizing the expected outcomes of the council, Little adds: “We have the opportunity to strengthen the curriculum by drawing from evidence-based practices, policy developments, interprofessional partnerships and research – all of which enhance workforce preparation of MSW students to fill eventual jobs in areas of prevention, supported housing, mental health, and other practice settings.”

To learn more about the Grand Challenge to End Homelessness, go to: [aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/end-homelessness/](https://aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/end-homelessness/)

To learn more about Youth REACH MD, go to: [www.youthreachmd.org](http://www.youthreachmd.org)

To learn more about Thrive@25, go to: [www.thrive25md.org](http://www.thrive25md.org).



Jodi Jacobson Frey and Christine Callahan

## FINANCIAL CAPABILITY AND ASSET BUILDING FOR ALL

Jill Yesko

Increasing economic empowerment through financial capability and asset building is a burgeoning area of social work that helps people build economic stability and combat the growing wealth inequality trend. Financial capability—the capacity, based on knowledge, skills, and access to manage financial resources effectively—is a prerequisite for financial inclusion in our complex economy.

“Financial capability is central to social work’s code of ethics and values with regard to empowering individuals and families to improve their financial situations and overall quality of life,” says Jodi Jacobson Frey, PhD, LCSW-C, Associate Professor and Chair of the Financial Social Work Initiative (FSWI) at the School of Social Work.

To that end, FSWI conducts research on access to asset building, achieving financial stability, and best practices to ensure access to mainstream and transparent financial services and other modes of financial empowerment. It also trains social workers to talk to people about money and its effect on a person’s overall well-being. “It’s important to look at the culture of money in families,” says Frey. “We know that money is a pervasive stressor affecting relationships, health, and the workplace.”

Ensuring financial inclusion—a key goal of FSWI and the Grand Challenges—means creating a pathway for vulnerable individuals, families, and communities to have appropriate, safe, affordable, and accessible financial resources. In addition, advocating for social and economic justice through policies and programs that help ensure greater financial stability for all through innovative strategies is another key goal of this particular Grand Challenge. Social work educators, researchers, and practitioners involved with this Grand Challenge are working on meaningful policy change both in the short- and long-term.

Like food deserts, some communities are financial deserts, lacking access to safe products or help with financial challenges. Such communities may struggle with payday lenders, pawn shops, and other “predatory” lending practices, further contributing to financial

distress. To address this, FSWI campus and community partners provide credit repair, financial counseling workshops, retirement savings planning, and other resources for West Baltimore residents through outreach with UMB, the Community Engagement Center, the Social Work Community Outreach Service (SWCOS), the Promise Heights Initiative, and partnerships with local and state programs. Recently, FSWI members expanded services to UMB students and staff as well.

Nearly everyone can benefit from social workers engaged in financial capability. “Identifying resources and helping people through a financial crisis can help families gain more stability in all areas of their lives,” says Christine Callahan, PhD, LCSW-C, Research Assistant Professor with the FSWI.

Helping people to understand how their life experiences and values shape ideas about finances is an important step to achieving financial stability. “We might ask clients: ‘What are your experiences about money?’ This may be one of the factors that inform the choices they make about finances,” says Callahan. Encouraging clients to talk about finances as part of a larger set of issues affecting their lives can be tough, especially for those for whom money is a taboo subject. “Social workers create a safe environment in which people can discuss sensitive issues such as finances, gain confidence in their financial decision-making, and maximize resources to meet their needs and goals,” says Frey.

On a systemic level, social workers are instrumental in policy and advocacy efforts to dismantle structural barriers and policies that perpetuate economic inequality. Their work influencing changes to programs, policies, and products aims to ensure that the opportunities associated with financial capability and asset building are truly accessible to all.

To learn more about the Build Financial Capability for All Grand Challenge, go to: <http://aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/build-financial-capability-for-all/>.

# SMART DECARCERATION

Jill Yesko



## From Mass Incarceration to Smart Decarceration



## Grand Challenges for Social Work

On a steamy August night, a group of men in their 60s and 70s gather in an East Baltimore church. Some play chess while others watch the evening news on a large screen TV. Platters of sandwiches and bottles of water sit untouched on a table. The scene looks like a social hour for seniors or a post-church social hour.

Indeed, the men—all of whom are African American—are members of a club of sorts: all have been convicted of serious felonies and all have been released from life sentences with parole under a 2012 ruling by the Maryland Court of Appeals.

Since then, the School of Social Work, working through and with the Law and Social Work Services Program at the Clinical Law Program at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, a program funded jointly through the Schools, has taken a proactive role in working with nearly 200 men known collectively as The Unger Class, for the court ruling. Social work services are provided to the men by Forensic Social Work Fellows, Elizabeth Smith, MSW, '13 and Angela Aloï, MSW, '15, under the supervision

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*These men suffer from what we've called the 'Rip Van Winkle Effect,'" she continues. "Many were incarcerated before the age of 21. Their family and friends may be deceased or have moved on with their lives. They have no realistic frame of reference for the cost of living, job requirements, or how to live with technology.*

”

of Rebecca Bowman-Rivas, MSW, '99, Program Manager. More than 30 UMB SSW students have worked with Unger releasees since the project began in 2013. Additionally, Joanie Shreve, MSW, '13, oversees the project at the Office of the Public Defender.

The men, many of whom entered prison as juveniles and were incarcerated for more than four decades, face unprecedented challenges for their re-entry into society in the 21st century. But there is some good news:

“One of the most important things we learned from this group,” Rebecca Bowman Rivas said, “was that many of these long-term prisoners, particularly African Americans, had maintained strong connections to their families, with regular visits from sisters and other family members. These enduring family relationships provided the most important post-release help we could give, including homes to return to.”

At the same time, these returning citizens are a harbinger of many more prison releases as federal, state, and local authorities pursue the Grand Challenge of “Smart Decarceration.”

Meeting the challenge of bringing case management and support to the men of the Unger Project and their families is just one way the School of Social Work, in partnership with the School of Law, is addressing the Grand Challenges of ensuring individual and family wellbeing and promoting a just society that fights marginalization.

While there are many re-entry programs for ex-prisoners, most concentrate on younger people and offer job training programs in construction and other labor-intensive trades. The Unger Project is unique in that its focus is on a geriatric population that may never have seen a cell phone or a laptop computer. “A lot of people say that these men don't need services but they do. Even short-term incarceration is a shock to the system. It can result in symptoms of PTSD,” says Rebecca Bowman-Rivas “These men suffer from what we've called the 'Rip Van Winkle Effect,'" she continues. “Many were

incarcerated before the age of 21. Their family and friends may be deceased or have moved on with their lives. They have no realistic frame of reference for the cost of living, job requirements, or how to live with technology.”

In addition to providing case management services, the Law and Social Work Services Program in conjunction with the - Office of the Public Defender, Law provides pre-court briefings for families to prepare them for the hearings. The schools also work with the men to help them adapt to the initial transitional period with their family members. The Law and Social Work Program, with the essential help of the social work students of the School of Social Work, also runs a Third Tuesday program, a monthly support event featuring guest speakers on topics from budgeting to job readiness. The funding for the two Fellows, as well as summer students and miscellaneous expenses such as housing and public transit passes, have been provided since 2013 by a grant from the Open Society Institute of Baltimore.

“There are so many pieces of the puzzle,” says Bowman-Rivas. “Ex-prisoners often won’t seek help until they are overwhelmed” Since many of the released men are retirement age and medically frail, their chances for post-prison employment are especially slim. “It’s like they’ve spent 30 years in the Twilight Zone,” says Bowman-Rivas. “A lot of these men thought they were going to die in prison.”

Working with the Unger Project men has been both exhilarating and frustrating, says Angela Aloï, ’15, MSW, Forensic Social Work Fellow with University of Maryland Clinical Law Office. She credits the men for their desire to integrate into non-prison lives in the face of odds stacked against ex-felons.

“I have a few clients that have associates degrees and almost all have obtained their GEDs while incarcerated,” says Aloï. “Most have taken advantage of every program offered while in prison. It’s challenging to see men who are so motivated and constantly have doors slammed in their faces.”

“Social workers can work with families when a loved one comes out of prison because it’s so difficult for the men to re-connect,” says Allison Yanky, an MSW student who has been working with the Unger men for a year. She assists handicapped clients access services and has even set up one client with on-line banking so he doesn’t need to get money orders. “I’ve realized how limited options are for these men and how a criminal history holds people back,” she says. “It’s a shame because they are making a huge effort.”

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***Most have taken advantage of every program offered while in prison.***

***It’s challenging to see men who are so motivated and constantly have***

***doors slammed in their faces.***”

Finding ways of “smart decarceration” of ex-prisoners means building support for vulnerable clients before they enter the criminal justice system. Often, that means finding affordable drug treatment or mental health programs—a difficult task because these services have traditionally been underfunded. “Jail is the mental health system of default,” says Bowman-Rivas. “It’s easier to lock problematic people away than to integrate them into society.”

The implications of imprisoning people for decades have far-reaching affects that underlie racial and social tensions. Having a parent in prison is like losing a parent through death,” says Bowman-Rivas. “Studies show that kids whose mothers go to prison have worse outcomes. It destroys families for generations.” The civil uprisings after the death of Freddie Gray underscore the importance examining the intersection of family, courts, and the penal system.

“This is the most impressive social work project I have seen in all of my years of practice,” says Michael Millemann, the Jacob A. France Professor of Public Interest Law at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law who was instrumental in the larger Unger Project.

“It’s sent a message to the public that it’s safe to release long term lifers. There have been over 150 releases and none of them have been convicted of anything more serious than a traffic violation,” says Millemann. “That’s essentially a zero recidivism rate. That’s a remarkable bit of information for policy makers.”

The Grand Challenge to “Promote Smart Decarceration” is one of the most active of the twelve.

To learn more about the Promote Smart Decarceration Grand Challenge, go to: [aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/promote-smart-decarceration/](https://aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/promote-smart-decarceration/).



# SAFE CHILDREN: Reducing Severe and Fatal Maltreatment

Jill Yesko



## Safe Children: Reducing Severe and Fatal Maltreatment



The maltreatment of children, often with fatal consequences, is one of the most pressing issues addressed by the Grand Challenges. It's estimated that one in eight children in the U.S. will have been in a confirmed case of maltreatment by the time they are 18. Maltreatment of children is both reprehensible and costly. The total cost of child maltreatment is calculated to be \$124 billion annually.

"Maltreatment of children at any age should be regarded as public health issue," says Richard Barth, PhD, Dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. "There is evidence that children who have been maltreated experience a myriad of problems."

Although social workers have been in the forefront of protecting children and reducing infant mortality, much work still needs to be done. "There are many reasons to reduce maltreatment beyond eliminating the pain and suffering of children," says Barth. "We also

need to address the harm it does to parents when they hurt their children. Parents may get a life sentence if they are convicted of child murder."

So-called "violent parenting" acts, such as shaken baby syndrome, even when not fatal, can cause brain damage and a host of other abnormalities that predispose children to a lifetime of struggle. Alarming, studies show that children subjected to less severe, but not less consequential, forms of abuse and neglect are statically likely to suffer premature deaths.

"There is new evidence that a child's social environment has a huge impact on brain development that may be difficult to reverse," says Barth. "Professionals argue that we must be more preventive yet are reluctant to use available data to offer services because they fear that services will result in adverse consequences for parents. Not using data optimally can have very adverse consequences for children."

Social workers understand that protecting children also means protecting those parents at greatest risk for harming their children. That means ensuring parents have access to secure housing, protections against domestic violence, and access to social services to reduce life stressors.

The good news is that reducing severe and fatal maltreatment of children has a positive multiplier effect that leads to reductions in incidents of mental and physical impairments, incarceration rates, and health care costs.

To accomplish this, coordination of vital records and pertinent data is necessary so early interventions for those with histories of child welfare issues can be addressed. Improving data systems such as matching birth records of newborns with parents who have previously harmed children is one way to forestall violence against children. "Birth match," which currently operates in four states, including Maryland, allows officials to check on newborns to assess whether protective intervention is needed.

"Maltreatment of children is a generational issue," says Barth. "By matching birth records we can now identify the families that are caught up in the cycle of maltreatment so that it can be interrupted." The creation of "social genomes" that integrate not only birth records, but also health, family court, corrections, and other vital data related to child welfare is another powerful tool. Other interventions include home visiting programs which have showed a significant reduction in forms of abuse and improving safe haven laws which allow parents to surrender newborn infants to responsible adults without prosecution.

We are making progress to show the impact of these approaches but some of what we do to end family violence will have to rely on our common sense and humanity.

To read more about the Grand Challenge to Stop Family Violence, go to: [aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/stop-family-violence/](https://aaswsw.org/grand-challenges-initiative/12-challenges/stop-family-violence/).

A UM SSW alum  
has dedicated his  
life to helping those  
struggling with  
substance abuse.



# A Second Chance

By Michele Wojciechowski

To see Chuck Watson, '14, today, you would never know the hell he's been through.

Chuck, 48, is professional, responsible, and kind. He's married and has a family he adores. He loves playing golf, spending time with his wife, Jesse Watson, '17, and enjoying life.

In June 2016, with two colleagues, he opened Riverside Treatment Services in Rosedale, Maryland. As the new President of the Maryland Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence, he's made it his life's work to help people escape from the throes of addiction and to heal.

That's because Chuck knows first-hand what it's like to be an addict.

## WHEN ADDICTION TAKES HOLD

Growing up in Canton, Maryland, with his parents, Sharon and Chuck, and his sister, Tracy, Chuck had a normal upbringing. In middle school, he experimented by smoking pot and drinking alcohol with friends. Looking back, he says it was recreational until he was age 16 and in high school. "To this day, I don't know why, but I became really attracted to it," says Chuck. "All the things that interested me prior—like sports and riding bikes—just didn't seem that important to me anymore."

During his junior year at Archbishop Curley High School, his substance abuse began having consequences—he failed out of school.

Chuck's parents took him to see a social worker who recommended that he spend the summer in an inpatient adolescent treatment center for kids with substance abuse problems. Chuck knew, even back then, what was happening to him. "Even at a young age, I understood my substance abuse was a problem," he recalls.



Riverside Treatment

When he returned to school, he was clean—at first. Chuck attended Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings and seemed to be finding his way in the life of recovery. But after a school dance, he went to a party, and he felt peer pressure. He began smoking pot and drinking again.

While Chuck managed to graduate from high school, the cycle of drinking and smoking pot continued. At age 19, he was arrested for multiple DWIs and got in some bad car accidents, although, miraculously, he was never hurt. When he was 23, he was hanging out in bars and clubs where cocaine use was rampant. Chuck joined in.



Chuck Watson, Crystal Pulsirisaroth and Michael Oliver

Chuck got married at age 25, and when his wife gave birth to their daughter, Dillan, he got clean on his own and stayed that way for nine months. “When Dillan was born, I wanted to do well,” he says. Chuck really wanted to be a good dad.

Eventually, though, the vicious cycle started all over again. Chuck began drinking and using. When his marriage ended, the divorce hit him hard. For the next decade, his life became a continuous spiral of alcohol, cocaine, arrests, treatment centers, and psychiatrists. In his early 30’s, Chuck tried pain medication and became addicted to that as well. When it wasn’t easily available on the streets, he moved on to using heroin which was.

“At this point, I was a total bum. Drugs were all I lived for,” Chuck admits. “I robbed from my parents and sold anything I had of value to keep this habit going.”

Throughout it all, though, Chuck’s parents stuck by him. “At the end of the day, they never gave up on me. They always thought, ‘He’s going to go to treatment and get better,’” says Chuck. “I would have given up on me a long time before they ever did.”

From ages 33-37, Chuck says that nothing good happened in his life. “I wasn’t doing well on probation. I was coming up dirty on tox screens. I was continuing to

get arrested,” says Chuck. He was assigned to a probation officer who gave him the option of either going back before a judge in violation of his probation or going to an in-patient treatment center in Florida that had been successful for other addicts. Chuck chose treatment.

“I wasn’t really going for the right reasons,” he says. “I just wanted to get off probation.”

Chuck entered treatment on September 15, 2005. Although he didn’t know it at the time, this day would become one of the most important in his life.

## THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Throughout his experience with addiction, Chuck had attended NA meetings, but he hadn’t completely bought into it. He didn’t believe he could stop using. “Total abstinence was a foreign concept to me,” Chuck says. “It was unheard of.”

But this time, while in treatment, something changed. Previously, Chuck says he lived in a world of delusion—he lied to himself all the time as he experienced negative consequences from his actions. He found ways to justify his unjustifiable choices.

For the first time in treatment, though, all the lies Chuck had been telling himself

and all the justifications were stripped away. “I no longer possessed the ability to lie to myself. I saw what I’d done to myself, to my loved ones. I had to take a good, hard, long look at myself and where drugs and alcohol had actually taken me,” recalls Chuck. “I believe that was the beginning of my journey. I embarked upon a journey of self-discovery to try to understand what I really needed to do to make profound changes in my life. I had been in multiple treatment centers. I understood what NA was. I knew I had a problem.”

Before, he wasn’t ready to accept a solution. Finally, this time, he was.

During the 10 months Chuck was in treatment, he attended NA regularly. The treatment center’s program utilized behavior modification and was faith-based. From the day he entered treatment—September 15, 2005—Chuck stopped using. And in the 11 years that have passed since, he’s stayed clean, never using drugs or alcohol again.

## INSPIRING CHANGES

When Chuck returned to Baltimore, he continued going to NA meetings, and got a home group and a sponsor. He began thinking about his future and what he really wanted to do with his life. Up until then, he had held dead-end jobs. Now that he wasn’t using, the world was open to him.

After being home for a couple of months, Chuck noticed the high number of people who were struggling with alcohol and drug addiction in Baltimore. “I felt I could make a difference since I had experienced the same pain and hardship they were experiencing, and I could share how I escaped the grip of addiction,” he says. Chuck immediately enrolled in college to study addiction counseling. After attending CCBC Dundalk, he earned a degree in social work at UMBC in 2013 and his Master’s in social work in 2014 from UMSSW with a specialization in mental health and substance abuse.

During the time he was attending college, Chuck worked at BD Health Services, Inc., and later at Eastern Avenue Health Solutions, Inc. After having worked for only a few months at BD Health Services, Chuck was groomed for management. At the time he left Eastern Avenue Health Solutions,



Chuck Watson and his son



Chuck and his wife Jesse with their two-year-old son CJ, and Chelsi Efford, 6, and Aubri Efford, 10, Jesse's daughters from a previous marriage that they are also raising.

he was working as the regional director and overseeing the operations of all four of the company's programs.

Chuck also met and married his wife, Jesse. Together, they have a two-year-old son, CJ, and are also raising Aubri Efford, 10, and Chelsi Efford, 6, Jesse's daughters from a previous marriage.

In January 2016, Chuck and two of his co-workers, Crystal Pulsirisaroth and Michael Oliver, began talking about opening their own treatment center. They envisioned running a medication-assisted and client-centered facility.

The next six months were a whirlwind. The trio created a business plan, applied for financing, found a location, and opened Riverside Treatment Services. Chuck, Crystal, and Michael planned conservatively and hoped to have 70 patients within the first six months after opening.

They had more than 70 patients after only being open for two-and-a-half weeks.

"With the epidemic going on in Baltimore City and all the surrounding counties, overdose rates are at astronomical, unheard-of levels," says Chuck. "Research studies unanimously conclude that

medication-assisted treatment for opioid-use disorder is by far the most effective treatment."

In addition to medication-assisted treatment, the center provides individual counseling and plans to offer group and intensive outpatient counseling as well. "We offer high-quality, comprehensive care to a vulnerable, disenfranchised population that is in desperate need of assistance," says Chuck.

Today, Chuck's parents are proud of him—for getting clean, having a family, and helping others. "It's by far, the greatest gift I could give them," Chuck says.

Thinking about where he's been and how far he's come in just 11 years, Chuck admits he wants to pinch himself some days. "If someone would have told me this 11 years ago, that I would be where I am today, I wouldn't have believed it," he says. "I feel like I've been given an awesome opportunity—a second chance at life—and I couldn't be more thankful. Every morning, when I wake up, life is exciting. Every day is new. I have a new passion that wasn't there before, and I feel reenergized. It's definitely been good for me. I feel like my life speaks to the power of the second chance."





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These endowments provide permanent support to the School, are invested for perpetuity, and each year a distribution is made to a selected scholar.

[www.ssw.umaryland.edu/giving](http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/giving)



class of **1971****Samuel Brown, MSW**

Attended the University of Maryland School of Social Work and Community Planning as a VISTA Fellow from October 1969 to October 1971. I am the author of five books since retiring from my social work career. My life and career are detailed in the recent publication of "A Satchel of Hope: Roots of an American Dream."

class of **1975****Alexa Smith-Osbourne, MSW**

Alexa Smith-Osborne, MSW '75, PhD '06, has recently been elected a fellow of the national Society for Social Work and Research and promoted to the rank of full professor at the University of Texas at Arlington, where she has been a faculty member and research scholar since 2006. Since 2012, she has directed the university's center for clinical

social work, a translational research hub for the development of resilience and recovery theory and intervention.

class of **1978****Mary Ellen (Jacob) Dawson, MSW**

Dawson retired June 1, 2016 after over 40 years of social work practice, initially obtaining a BSW from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1975. Social work has been a rewarding and varied career path for her. Initially a psychiatric social workers at a community mental health center, most recently her work has been the promotion of evidence-based programs for older adults in Washington state. She is relocating to Bath, OH to be close to her daughter's family.

class of **1985****Stuart Fensterheim, MSW**

Since graduating from University of Maryland, I have worked in a number of different capacities from clinical settings to administrative. I have been a counselor in managed care settings recently and have been trained with a specialization in emotionally focused therapy. I currently own a private practice in Scottsdale, Arizona. I practice Couples counseling with my dog Ollie and utilize animal-assisted therapy with the clients I serve. My practice is entirely fee-for-service at this point excepting no third party reimbursement. I am grateful to the University Maryland for giving me the foundation to be able to live my dream of owning a private practice specializing in couples relationships. With my couples counseling background and training in emotionally focused therapy I am helping couples all around the world have a closing connected relationship in their life. I also give back by offering free podcasts. The Couples Expert podcast, [www.thecouplexpertscoottsdale.com/podcasts](http://www.thecouplexpertscoottsdale.com/podcasts), is in 37 countries around the world and helps families learn how to feel close and important to their partners.

class of **1987****Heidi Brown, MSW**

Brown has been named CEO of the non-profit Jewish Family and Children's Service of the Suncoast, Inc., in Sarasota, Florida. Brown was the former CEO Of Aviva and has an extensive background in social and human services.

class of **1994****Robert Scuka, MSW (have photo)**

Robert Scuka has had three recent publications. "A clinician's guide to helping couples heal from the trauma of infidelity" appeared in 2015 in the Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy, 14, 141-168. "Relationship Enhancement and Mastering the Mysteries of Love" appeared in J. J. Ponzetti, Jr. (Ed.), Evidence-based approaches to relationship and marriage education (pp. 165-179). New York: Routledge, 2016. "Empirically supported humanistic approaches to working with couples and families" (co-authored with Catalina Woldarsky Meneses) appeared in D. J. Cain, K. Keenan, & S. Rubin (Eds.), Humanistic psychotherapies: Handbook of research and practice (2nd ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2016.

class of **1996****Jennifer FitzPatrick**

Jennifer FitzPatrick's first book, *Cruising Through Caregiving: Reducing The Stress of Caring For Your Loved One*, was published on September 27, 2016.

class of **2009****Kate Wasserman, MSW**

Baltimore resident Kate Wasserman has been selected for a prestigious 18-month ZERO TO THREE Fellowship. The Fellowship Program brings together multidisciplinary, cross-sector leaders that work across the country and around the world to positively impact the lives of infants and young children through research, practice, advocacy, and policy.

Wasserman is lead clinician at the University of Maryland, School of Medicine's Center for Infant Study and HealthySteps Site Director. She provides outpatient mental health treatment for young children, infancy through age 6, and their families with emotional and behavioral concerns due to maternal-infant attachment issues, intimate partner violence and other family traumas, and postpartum depression. With HealthySteps, she provides infant mental health services within the Family Medicine program. Wasserman is also lead trainer for the Race to the Top and Project LAUNCH workforce developmental programs, training primary care providers, mental health consultants, and home visitors on a range of infant mental health competencies, including trauma, early childhood development, attachment, parent-child interaction, and other topics within the field of early childhood mental health. She is also a National Trainer of the Fussy Baby Network.

class of **2013****Kimberly Washington, MSW**

Selected by Catholic Charities to be the Lead Clinical Social Worker for the St. Jude's Project In Washington, DC. She will be providing counseling to patients with life-limiting illness.

# In Memoriam

Daniel Timmel, MSW '81, died in September following an illness. Timmel made his home in Maryland.

Kathleen M. Hallman, MSW '88, passed away peacefully in her Annapolis, MD home on October 22 after a long illness. She was a passionate advocate for children and families during her long tenure with the State of Maryland, DSS, Child Protective Services.

Rebecca Polen "Becky" Hartman, MSW '72, passed away in August from an illness. Hartman's career spanned almost 40 years in Baltimore at Sinai Hospital's Community Care Department.

Richard Larson, MSW '74, died March 17, 2016 following complications from surgery. The School honored Larson in 2013 with its Alumni Association Emeritus Award for his 40 years of years of outstanding service to the Maryland Department of Human Resources. Larson retired in 2010 as Deputy Executive Director of the agency.

Daniel Smeragliuolo, MSW '98, passed away in January 2016. He was a former Boys' Latin School of Maryland associate dean before moving to Chautauqua, New York in 2013 to become clinical operations director for three mental health clinics at The Resource Center.

Clinical Instructor Julie Drake, MSW, JD, a long-time city prosecutor and former chief of the Family Violence Division for the State's Attorney's Office, who prosecuted many of Baltimore's most heinous child murders and stood up for the city's most vulnerable citizens, died after a battle with cancer.

Julie taught forensic social work at the SSW for nearly 20 years and served full-time, during the last 5 years, as a faculty and Program Director of the Forensic Social Work Certificate Program at the School. "We will miss Julie, terribly," said Dean Richard Barth. "we will do our best to fulfill her legacy of educating great forensic social workers."



**Gerry Aronin with Barbara Mikulski**

**Geraldine "Gerry" Aronin** - The School of Social Work is sad to report that Geraldine "Gerry" Aronin died on Tuesday, September 27. She was an early graduate of our School (Class of '65) and had an amazing career of leadership in social services and social justice movements. Just a bit of this is summarized in this excerpt from the description below of Gerry that was created for our 50th Anniversary events in 2012, as Gerry was one of the School's 50 "Heroes for Justice."

"Gerry was the first Director of Community Services in the Baltimore City Department of Social Services. There, she created the Emergency Services Program and directed a new federal demonstration program, 'The Family Living Program' which was designed to help families on welfare to achieve independence.

In 1971, Gerry was chosen as the Director of Program Planning and Evaluation in Maryland's new Department of Human Resources (DHR). By 1981, she was appointed DHR Deputy Secretary. Even in retirement, she was a leader, tireless advocate, and supporter of the School. Gerry served on the Maryland Board of Regents, the Board of the Women's Law Center, and as the legislative affairs officer for NASW-MD. She constantly looked for opportunities to find ways to assist those less fortunate."

**To give a gift to the School in memory of Geraldine Aronin, please visit [www.ssw.umaryland.edu/aronin](http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/aronin).**

Connections is a publication of the University of Maryland School of Social Work. It is produced by the School's Office of Communications. Articles and news items should be sent to the Office of Communications at the School.

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## Tell Us What's Happening in Your Life!

The School of Social Work wants you to share your news, not only with us, but with your fellow alumni. This news could include a new job or promotion, a birth or marriage announcement, new grandchildren to brag about, or almost any other news you care to share. Please fill out the form and return it to us, and it will be published in a "Class Notes" section of a future edition of Connections. We also encourage you to send pictures!\*

If you have moved, changed jobs, or changed your name, help us keep our records up to date. Please fill out the form with your new information and send it to us. You may send the form to:

University of Maryland School of Social Work  
 Office of Development & Alumni Relations  
 525 West Redwood Street  
 Baltimore, MD 21201-1777

You can also e-mail your "Class Note" to us at [alumni@ssw.umaryland.edu](mailto:alumni@ssw.umaryland.edu) or submit it online at [ssw.umaryland.edu/alumni\\_and\\_development](http://ssw.umaryland.edu/alumni_and_development).

\*Photos may be sent to the address above or if sending by E-mail, we prefer photos be saved in a tif format at 300 dpi. Images sent below that resolution may not be printed. Please include your name and mailing address on all photos sent. All photos will be returned.

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## Join Us At One of Our Spring Events!

### Homecoming

Friday, March 3rd from 9 am to 4 pm

Speaker: Rebecca Bowman-Rivas '99

### State of the School Address

Thursday, March 16th from 1 to 2 pm

with Dean Richard Barth, PhD

### Daniel Thursz Social Justice Lecture

Thursday, April 5th at 5 PM

with Dr. Julianne Malveaux, Labor Economist and Noted Author

### Continuing Professional Education's 25th Anniversary: Answering the Call of Social Challenges

Friday, April 21st from 9 am to 4:30 pm

Keynote Speaker: Yolanda Padilla, PhD

Director of the Center for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice  
at the University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work