

# GRAND CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL WORK

## 2023 DOCTORAL AWARDEES

### *Project titles and Grand Challenges addressed*



The Grand Challenges for Social Work is pleased to present our inaugural cohort of doctoral awardees. The initiative—part of GCSW efforts to **Go•Grander**—has awarded fellowships to 13 social work doctoral students to bolster their commitment to careers tackling some of our biggest societal challenges.

Each graduate student was awarded a mentoring program and a \$3,000 stipend to support research that better connects their dissertation or capstone project to the people and communities they are studying.

These awards, funded with a \$100,000 grant from [The New York Community Trust](#), are the first in a two-year effort to enable 26 doctoral students to turn their research findings into proposals for policy and practice changes addressing one or more of the identified 13 Grand Challenges. The GCSW Executive Committee and the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE) generously provided additional funding for \$500 stipends to each honorable mention (listed on page 14).



# NEHAL ELDEEB

*Centering Parent Voice: Exploring Parents' Needs and Preferences using Online Parenting Information*  
(Ensure Healthy Development for All Youth)



Nehal (she/her) is a doctoral student at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Social Welfare. She has an MSW from the University of Pennsylvania with a specialization in child welfare and child well-being and a BS in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. Nehal previously researched the nature and determinants of child maltreatment in Qatar, the development of culturally relevant parenting programs, and the identification of barriers and facilitators of implementing evidence-based parenting interventions in social service settings. Her dissertation examines traces of behavior on the internet to understand parents' information needs and preferences so they can be better centered in the design and implementation of parenting programs to improve child and youth well-being.

## ABSTRACT

Parenting is the primary mechanism for socializing children. Parenting knowledge, parenting skills, and parenting efficacy are protective factors for reducing instances of child abuse and neglect and promoting children's emotional, social, and cognitive competencies. Although evidence-based parenting programs produce desired results under well-controlled research conditions, their effectiveness in the real world is limited by low participation. Several studies have found enrollment in parenting programs by eligible or targeted participants is low, from 20 to 30 percent, and only half of participant complete the intervention. Nonetheless, parents seem motivated to receive information and support in their parenting, given the extent to which they access parenting content on the internet. This dissertation explores the needs and preferences of parents when seeking parenting information online through three lines of inquiry: What is the nature, content, and prevalence of parenting topics? What themes are present in popular parenting posts and comments? How do parents acquire, appraise, and apply online parenting information? This project aspires to inform the development and dissemination of effective online parent-centered parenting interventions by harnessing technology to prevent maltreatment and promote child and youth well-being.

# AARON KEMMERER

*Housing for Transgender and Gender Expansive People in the US South*  
(End Homelessness)



Aaron Kemmerer (he/him) is a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Social Work. He earned a BA in Philosophy & Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (2012) from VCU and an MSW (2020), also from VCU. His research interests include housing and homelessness, racial and economic justice, gender equity, and transgender and gender-expansive (TGE) people. His research relies on theories of harm reduction and queer liberation. Aaron comes from a background of community organizing around issues such as housing justice, LGBTQIA+ struggles, and prison abolition. Aaron is passionate about addressing the practical and material needs of folks experiencing housing instability. He has worked as a local community advocate since 2010 and practiced social work since 2015, and is now conducting research with an eye toward macro intervention and policy change. He seeks to increase the mainstream visibility of social issues facing TGE people in and beyond the U.S. South. The legacies of existing struggles for equity and justice in the South deeply influence his work.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation work will focus on experiences of housing instability among transgender and gender expansive (TGE) people in the U.S. South. The proposed project aims to better understand TGE Southerners' experiences with housing instability and the mutual aid networks developed to support this population. Through conducting and analyzing key-informant interviews with TGE Southerners who are involved in housing justice organizing, I will seek to understand strengths, challenges, and potential interventions. I will analyze transcribed interviews using a narrative analysis approach to weave a collective narrative about housing needs for TGE Southerners, and the ways that community members are already responding to these housing needs. I will also seek to collect and analyze cultural artifacts which are used for mutual aid work. One major goal of the research is to affect intervention towards policy change. Dissemination of the results will involve bringing together TGE community leaders and Southern policymakers in a forum to amplify the voices of TGE Southerners.

# JÉSSICA MARISOL MARROQUIN

*Exploring the Mental Health and Quality of Life of Latinx Young Adults with Autism (Close the Health Gap)*



Jéssica Marisol Marroquín (she/her/ella) is a PhD Candidate at Arizona State University's School of Social Work. She is a Licensed Master Social Worker with a Master's in Social Work (MSW) degree with a specialization in Integrated Health from California State University, Long Beach. Her undergraduate degree is from Whittier College majoring in Spanish and Social Work. Marisol's research focuses on increasing health and mental health equity among historically marginalized communities, especially for Latinx and Autism communities. She uses innovative inclusion strategies to partner and capture the voices of the Latinx and neurodiverse communities. Marisol's extensive clinical and research experience working with racially diverse and disabled communities and her positionality as a first-generation Guatemalan-American Latina provide her with unique insights and skillset to address health disparities. As a future faculty member, she is committed to continuing this line of participatory research while helping educate the next generation of social workers as health equity leaders.

## ABSTRACT

The study aims to answer the following questions: (1) What social and cultural factors impact the perceived mental health outcomes and quality of life of Latinx young adults (YA) with Autism living in the U.S? (2) How does racism and ableism impact Latinx YA with Autism's mental health and quality of life?The mixed methods study provides an in-depth exploration of the experiences of Latinx YA with Autism to identify barriers and facilitators affecting their well-being. Due to the disparities between both identities of race and disability, this research found it necessary to gather narratives directly from community members to better understand their experiences and obtain standardized scores for social determinants of health. The research can create foundational understanding on the health and well-being of this unique intersectional identity and a new understanding on how social and cultural factors impact people with different intersectionalities. This study focuses on understanding the health gap among the intersectionality of Latinx race and Autism disability by including factors like stigma and discrimination that also shape health and wellness.

# BETHANY MEDLEY

*Community Serving the Community: A photovoice project with harm reduction outreach workers*  
(Reduce Extreme Economic Inequality)



Bethany Medley (she/her) is a doctoral student at the Columbia School of Social Work (CSSW). Her research aims to support harm reduction interventions through capacity building and participatory research methods. Before entering the doctoral program, Bethany was an adjunct lecturer for CSSW courses on harm reduction policy, programming, and practice interventions. Her previous experience includes facilitating train-the-trainer overdose education and naloxone distribution, increasing community-based buprenorphine access, developing anti-stigma campaigns, and promoting best practices for treating pregnant people who use drugs. Bethany remains actively involved in drug user led advocacy efforts that inspire and inform her research. Bethany holds a Bachelor's in Social Work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County and a Master's in Social Work from Columbia University.

## ABSTRACT

Community Serving the Community: A photovoice project with harm reduction outreach workers highlights the lifesaving work of the Peer Network of New York (PNNY) at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York City. While many health and community-based organizations temporarily shut down or limited in-person access during the onset of the pandemic, PNNY never stopped delivering essential harm reduction resources to people who use drugs and their communities. Photovoice is a participatory action research method guided by Paulo Freire's theory of critical pedagogy and co-learning principles, which seek to transform oppressive powers and provide sustainable, liberation-based resources for those that are often silenced in policy and resource allocation. Through the use of photovoice, our project reveals the everyday realities of harm reduction outreach workers in an effort to advocate for improved labor conditions and rights of harm reduction workers in NYC.



# COLLEEN CUMMINGS MELTON

*Building Regenerative Futures: System-change in education settings through youth climate action & participatory methods*  
(Create Social Responses to a Changing Environment)



Colleen (she/her) received a BSW, MSW, and certificate in Global Health from East Tennessee State University. Her social work practice experience includes working as a crisis therapist and program planning and development in permanent supportive housing. Her current work and research focuses on community action towards ecosocial liberation, focusing on transformative and regenerative practices towards climate justice, environmental justice, and ecological justice. She is particularly interested in community-based and participatory methods and is working with youth climate organizers to promote systemic change towards climate action within school systems.

## ABSTRACT

We are in a climate and ecological emergency. The active crisis disproportionately impacts already marginalized groups and will impact future generations to come. For a viable future, rapid and systemic social responses are needed to mitigate and adapt to the changing environment. Today's youth are the future and leaders in climate action. Education systems are not adequately preparing youth for the future they will inherit and are an often overlooked intervention point for climate action advancement of ecological justice. To address this gap, this dissertation partners with youth climate activists to conduct a case study of the first student-initiated climate action policy within a school system. Research questions and methods were decided through youth participatory action research (YPAR) with youth climate activists who initiated and passed the policy. Data collection will include interviews of youth climate activists who were involved in creating and passing the policy, system actors within the school system (e.g., teachers, staff, school board members, etc.) and content analysis of archival documents and records. This study will provide a framework for school districts to replicate and build upon to transform education systems through youth-led climate action.

# ANDREA MORA

*An Examination of Community Violence Exposure and Sexual Harassment Among Latina/o Adolescents*  
(Build Healthy Relationships to End Violence)



Andrea Mora (she/her/ella) is a PhD candidate at the University of Michigan in the joint program in Social Work and Developmental Psychology. Andrea's research focuses on adolescents' experiences with community violence exposure and sexual harassment, with a particular focus on Latinx families and adolescents in the US and Mexico. Relying on a resilience framework and strengths-based approach, coupled with quantitative and qualitative methods, Andrea investigates factors that can protect adolescents from the negative academic and psychological effects of violence.

## ABSTRACT

Violence is a major public health concern in the United States and in Latin America. The objective of this 3-study project is to investigate protective factors for exposure to community violence and neighborhood-based sexual harassment among Latina/o adolescents in the U.S. and rural Mexico. Broadly, this project will (a) simultaneously examine community violence exposure (CVE) and neighborhood-based sexual harassment, and (b) examine parent-child relational factors that can protect adolescents from the adverse psychological effects of neighborhood violence. The first study investigates the potentially protective role of parent-adolescent cohesion in the relations between CVE, sexual harassment and depressive and PTSD symptoms one year later among 416 urban Latina/o adolescents from the midwestern United States. Study 2 qualitatively explores urban Latina/o adolescents' (N = 48) understanding of and experiences with neighborhood-based sexual harassment in their own words. The third study examines the potentially protective role of parent-adolescent communication in the relations between CVE, sexual harassment and depressive and PTSD symptoms among 200 adolescents in rural Mexico. Together, these studies identify how parent-adolescent relationships can protect adolescents from the adverse effects of neighborhood violence, and will provide direction for the design and implementation of interventions and programs that foster healthy and thriving parent-adolescent relationships.

# SARAH PACE

*African American older adults' perspectives on how communication technology impacts loneliness*

(Harness Technology for Social Good)



Sarah Pace (she/her) received her undergraduate degree in sociology from Claflin University, with minors in Spanish and gerontology. She earned a Master of Social Work degree and a graduate certificate in drug and addiction studies from the University of South Carolina. Pace is bilingual in English and Spanish. Pace has experience working with older adults living in community and institutional settings and has served as guardian ad litem for vulnerable adults taken into emergency protective custody. She has experience as an instructor for Social Work courses at the University of South Carolina and has a passion for teaching. She is a volunteer for a local refugee resettlement agency. Pace's research interests are focused on technology use among minority older adults. The purpose of her dissertation is to explore the perspectives of African American older adults' perspectives on how information and communication technology (ICT) impacts loneliness. She plans to pursue a career in teaching and research as they relate to improving the quality of life of older adults.

## ABSTRACT

Nearly one in four older adults experience loneliness. Between 2009 and 2019, the U.S. older adult population (ages 65 and above) grew by 36%, reaching 54.1 million in 2019. Among those older adults, 27% (14.7 million) lived alone, and 43% of those who lived alone reported feeling lonely. Having a more extensive social network has been found to reduce the risk of loneliness among older adults. Using technology as a tool for maintaining a social network is becoming increasingly common. Information and communication technology (ICT) reduces loneliness by allowing older adults to communicate with their family members, and friends. This research will be guided by the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology and the theory of relational loneliness. Despite the success of ICTs and the growing ubiquity of ICTs among people of varying social demographic backgrounds, few studies have reported including African American older adults. Therefore, the proposed research aims to explore the perspectives of African American older adults' perspectives on how ICT impacts loneliness through semi-structured interviews.



# JANIENE PEOPLES

*Mechanisms Linking Racial Discrimination and Substance Use in Black College Students: An Ecological Momentary Assessment Study (Eliminate Racism)*



JaNiene Peoples (she/her) is a Social Work Ph.D. student at Washington University in St. Louis and a National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) T32 Predoctoral Fellow. She studies risk and protective factors influencing mental health, substance use, and their co-occurrence among adolescents and emerging adults (ages 18-29). Her work is driven by building evidence that informs culturally appropriate mental health and substance use interventions, particularly for Black Americans. JaNiene is also trained in addressing collegiate mental health and substance use. Before starting her doctoral studies, she spent several years at Vanderbilt University as a Well-being and Alcohol, Tobacco, and other Drugs Coach. In this role, she helped students develop skills to improve their executive functioning, mental health, and well-being and served as the primary provider for Vanderbilt University's Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students (BASICS) program. JaNiene received a BS in Health and Human Performance from the University of Memphis and MS in Health Education from Texas A&M University. She is a Certified Health Education Specialist and Certified Personal and Executive Coach.

## ABSTRACT

Racial discrimination is among the most frequently hypothesized risk factors explaining health disparities in outcomes like substance use, particularly for Black Americans. However, most existing research examining the association between racial discrimination and substance use among Black college students is cross-sectional and retrospective, which introduces recall bias and is insensitive to detecting momentary fluctuations in discriminatory experiences, and their relationship to momentary substance use risk. This study will address important knowledge gaps by leveraging ecological momentary assessment to prospectively model the heterogeneity of daily racial discrimination experiences and quantify differences in substance use and use patterns (e.g., type of use, frequency of use) among Black college students who attend a Predominately White Institution in the United States (U.S.). The present study draws on Hatzenbuehler's Psychological Mediation Framework to understand mechanisms explaining the racial discrimination-substance use relationship. This study has two aims: (1) To characterize the concurrent (i.e., impact during the same prompt) and lagged (i.e., impact from previous prompts) effects of racial discrimination on substance use among Black college students; and (2) To examine the mediating role of three psychological processes (affective, social, cognitive) in the relationship between racial discrimination and substance use among Black college students. Findings from this study will inform the provision of theory-based targets that help reduce substance use health disparities related to racism in the U.S.

# TONY SALAAM

*The Challenges of Traumatic Stress in Chicago-Based Black Men Convicted of Violent Crimes*  
(Promote Smart Decarceration)



Tony Salaam (he/him) is Director of READI Greater Englewood Outreach. He has worked in the field of social service for the last 20 years with various populations. His passion is working with the underprivileged and marginalized populations; this has been his professional life work. He feels like it is his responsibility to be the voice for the less fortunate individuals who cannot speak for themselves. He feels this work is a calling on his life because of his lived experience and seeing firsthand the impact of violence on the community. He received his Master's in Social Work in 2003 from Chicago State University and a second Master's in Business Administration from National Louis University in 2007. He is a licensed, certified addiction counselor (CADC) and certified in Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy used with the criminal justice population. He is a candidate in the doctoral program in social work at Aurora University. Tony has been an adjunct professor at Northeastern Illinois University at its main campus. He has designed and create multiple programs; for example, he developed a program for Association House called "Transition to Careers," a program for individuals with criminal records. The participants work part-time and attend MRT while the case managers assist with finding full-time and permanent employment. Tony was also the founder of a non-for-profit organization to assist individuals with the successful transition back into society.

## ABSTRACT

This study reports findings of dissertation research involving phenomenological interviews with 20 African American men living in a large, urban setting who have been convicted of violent crimes and have served at least one jail sentence. The participants have experienced arrest an average of 17 times each, and all have experienced gun violence, in most cases both as victims and perpetrators; 35% have been shot at least once. Data collection included in-person, recorded, phenomenological interviews focusing on 1) the elements of participants' life experiences which created conditions for trauma and violence to occur; 2) how participants experience and understand the most recent crime for which they were jailed in retrospect; and 3) if they had experienced trauma as a result of perpetration, and, if so, how that trauma manifested and its consequences and 4) their recommendations for systemic change to reduce the incidence of trauma and violence. In addition, all participants completed the Adverse Childhood Experiences questionnaire and questions concerning Perpetration-Induced Traumatic Stress utilizing instrumentation employed by Valdez (2021). Data are being analyzed using NVIVO utilizing a Modified Van Kaam approach. Preliminary findings suggest that the participants experienced significantly elevated rates of trauma, particularly physical abuse and sometimes sexual abuse. They were forthcoming about the nature of the trauma they had experienced and its effects on them, and they did understand trauma to be a precipitating factor for risk of violence.

# BONNIE SCRANTON

*The LISTEN Project: Development and Evaluation of an Online Peer Support Program for Caregivers of Children with Variations of Sex Characteristics (Eradicate Social Isolation)*



Bonnie Scranton (she/her), LCSW, is an AASECT certified Sex Therapist and Sexual Health Educator with experience in a variety of clinical settings, including community mental health, partial and outpatient hospital programs, secondary schools, and college counseling centers. She currently works full time in private practice with individuals and couples and develops educational programming for schools and organizations around sex education and relational wellness. She received her BA in Anthropology from Oberlin College and her MSW from Smith College and is a graduate of the University of Michigan Sexual Health Certificate Program. As a Level 2 AEDP practitioner, her work incorporates principles of presence, intention, and non-judgmental observation. In her role on a multidisciplinary team at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center in Hartford, Bonnie serves the psychosocial support and educational needs of families and children with a range of variations of sex characteristics (VSC) and offers connections to nationwide peer support communities. She is the proud parent of an adult daughter who is intersex and is honored to volunteer with InterConnect, a peer support and education network whose warmth and acceptance Bonnie and her family experienced first-hand. She presents at InterConnect’s Annual Conference and sits on their Medical Advisory Board and on the Board of Directors and Medical Advisory Group of InterAct: Advocates for Intersex Youth. She is a steering group member of Psychosocial Studies Intersex International (PSI-I), a professional network promoting psychological well-being for people with VSC, and is pursuing her doctorate in clinical social work at the University of Pennsylvania.

## ABSTRACT

LISTEN Project (Let Intersex Stories Teach, Enlighten, and Nurture) aims to develop a peer-facilitated support and education program designed to support caregivers of children born with variations of sex characteristics (VSC), or intersex. The gap in awareness and understanding of differences in sex traits or reproductive anatomy contributes to social isolation and resulting stigma around bodies that do not neatly fit a binary definition of “female” or “male”. Families who receive peer support and education as they navigate the intricacies of medicine, family, and community may find they have opportunities for the deepening of relationships, increased meaning-making, and unforeseen growth, despite the unexpectedness of learning of a child’s variation. This dissertation project will employ Community Based Participation Research (CBPR) to prioritize the narratives of people with lived experience. Using an Intervention Mapping (IM) approach, it will develop a model for an online program aimed at reducing social isolation and promoting connection and growth for caregivers and people with VSC across the lifespan. Supporting the Grand Challenges vision of eliminating social injustices for members of marginalized communities, LISTEN represents an actionable opportunity to transform historically and deeply entrenched social isolation and stigma into connection, visibility, access to health, and empowerment through meaningful representation and participation in theory and praxis.

# ALEXIS TSOUKALAS

*Exploring Inequities in State Human  
Trafficking Policymaking*  
(Achieve Equal Opportunity & Justice)



Alexis Tsoukalas (she/her) is a third-year doctoral student in the Public Affairs program (Social Work track) at the University of Central Florida and holds a Master of Social Work from Case Western Reserve University. Alexis' career path began in direct service, then shifted to policy and advocacy once she witnessed the inequitable harms of misguided laws and funding. She has worked in the restaurant business and with the child welfare population, young adults experiencing homelessness, those recovering from substance use disorder, and isolated older adults. She now works as a Policy Analyst at Florida Policy Institute, focusing on state immigrant and worker justice issues. She was a State Policy Fellow with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) and is now co-chair of CBPP's state Policy Advisory Committee. Alexis served as a Legislative Chair and State Delegate with the Florida Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and is a founding member of NASW-FL's Immigration Justice Task Force. Alexis was humbly awarded 2021's Outstanding Practitioner by the Association for Community Organization and Social Action, 2020's Emerging Public Service Professional by the American Society for Public Administration, and 2017's Central Florida Social Work Student of the Year by NASW-FL.

## ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative dissertation that explores legislative speeches (i.e., floor debates, committee speeches) about state human trafficking laws with content analysis. Human trafficking within and across national borders is a pervasive and insidious global criminal enterprise that endangers human rights and impedes social justice. Sex and labor are the two main types of human trafficking, but the former is often prioritized in media coverage and state policy efforts. Since 2003, every U.S. state has passed a law criminalizing human trafficking. As such, this dissertation seeks to explore how policymakers' framing of the human trafficking issue may result in inequitable state policies. It adopts an intersectional lens to uncover what types of survivors (i.e., age, gender, race) and trafficking types legislators emphasized when publicly justifying their stances on human trafficking policies. The results of this study will ideally help put sex and labor trafficking on equal footing and ensure that marginalized groups are reflected in policymaking.

# CLIFF WHETUNG

*Weathering the Storm of Cognitive Inequities: Testing the Minority Stress and Cognition Model with Indigenous Older Adults (Advance Long & Productive Lives)*



Cliff Whetung (he/him) is a fifth-year PhD Candidate at New York University's Silver School of Social Work. He is a band member of Curve Lake First Nation, an Ojibwe reservation in Ontario, Canada. His research examines how social determinants of health impact cognitive health outcomes among racial and ethnic minorities, with a focus on Indigenous Older Adults. By using longitudinal methods, he derives insights into the cognitive profiles of Indigenous, Black, and Latinx older adults from large population-based datasets (e.g., Health and Retirement Study and the National Alzheimer's Coordinating Center cohorts). This work explores how inequitable access to resources, histories of trauma, and underdeveloped health infrastructures have on Indigenous peoples in both Canada and the United States is ongoing and a key driver of health disparities across the lifespan. Additionally, he extends this work in collaboration with Dr. Ernest Gonzales to explore the relationship between midlife work complexity and cognitive health. This work will advance our understanding of how productive aging frameworks intersect with cognitive health research, and, highlight the importance of investigating these phenomenon among diverse populations of older adults.

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation research explores the impact of midlife work complexity, volunteering activities, and discriminatory stressors on the cognitive function of Indigenous, Black, Hispanic, and White older adults. This research is innovative in several important ways. First, it centers Indigenous Older Adults (IOAs), a group historically excluded from health research. Second, it conceptualizes the interaction of race and racism with work complexity and cognitive function using rigorous longitudinal methods. Finally, it tests and integrates the Minority Stress and Cognition Model theory with existing productive aging frameworks. The relationships between work and volunteering experiences, chronic stressors, and cognitive health represent modifiable, and unexplored, pathways between social environments and cognitive impairment among racially and ethnically minoritized older adults. Moreover, our limited knowledge about the cognitive health of IOAs represents a fundamental crisis of health equity. This study aims to address these knowledge gaps by using nationally representative restricted Health and Retirement Study (HRS) data to investigate how an understudied group of Indigenous adults fared over a 14-year period (2006-2020) in the domain of cognitive health relative to Black, Hispanic, and White older adults (n = 23,381). I explore this relationship by first, modelling the mixed-effect growth curves of total cognitive function and then assessing the impact of cognitive risk and protective factors on these trajectories. Finally, the moderating effect of work complexity and volunteering is explored.



# YINGYING ZENG

*Immigrant Experiences in Asset Building:  
Implications for Policy*  
(Build Financial Capability & Assets for All)



Yingying Zeng (she/her) is a PhD candidate in social work at the Brown School of Washington University in St. Louis and a research associate at the Center for Social Development. Her research interests include wealth disparity, financial capability, immigration, and social policy. She is particularly interested in social policies and programs in promoting financial well-being and equality among marginalized populations, such as low-income families, racial/ethnic minorities, and immigrants. Yingying earned a Master's of Social Work degree from Fudan University and a Master's of Social Policy from the Brown School in 2016. She has led and participated in a variety of research projects on financial inclusion and socioeconomic outcomes as part of her Ph.D. studies. She is currently working on her dissertation about immigrants' asset building in the United States. Yingying believes that effective applied social research aims for impact and hopes to advance research that could inform social policies and programs that aim to improve financial well-being.

## ABSTRACT

While inclusive asset-building policies are increasingly being discussed, designed, tested, and implemented, few of these initiatives have focused on immigrants. Consequently, we lack evidence of immigrants' asset building in the United States, which will be required to inform asset-based programs and policies for immigrants and their families. This dissertation consists of three interrelated papers, which address the selection, adaptation, and impacts of immigration. The aim is to expand knowledge about asset-based social policy in light of immigrants' experiences by assessing how institutional-level factors affect asset building at early stages of immigration, and how holding assets affects intergenerational stability and mobility. Findings from this dissertation can inform immigrant integration policies and programs, target vulnerable immigrant families, and provide support to facilitate asset accumulation and long-term stability.

# HONORABLE MENTIONS



**ARLENE BJUGSTAD** | University of Houston: Institutional and Environmental Predictors of Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills Among Minoritized Youth: An International Perspective

**NANCY JACQUELYN PÉREZ-FLORES** | Washington University in St. Louis: Examining Mass Media, Mental Health Literacy, and Public Stigma Among the Latinx Population Residing in Nontraditional Receiving Communities

**BRITTNEY AUTRY** | University of Pennsylvania: Addressing Sexual Violence in Black Women: Towards Culturally Responsive Integration

**PETER SUN** | Washington University in St. Louis: Rural Health Disparities: The Influence of Productive Engagement in Later Life

**KATHRYN WRIGHT** | Wayne State University: Personhood, Identity and Ableism in Schools: Youth with disability confront marginalization

**KATHERINE CALHOUN** | University of Denver: Guaranteed Income as a Structural Social Work Response to Homelessness in the U.S.

**CHENGLIN HONG** | University of California Los Angeles: Technology-based interventions for IPV prevention

**LESTER KERN** | University of Chicago: Between two worlds: A case study of a psychiatric emergency department in Milwaukee

**MINJEE KEH** | University of California, Berkeley: Structural-Institutional Approach to Understanding and Addressing Work-Family Conflict: Disparities in Problem and Intervention

**MONICA DE LA CRUZ** | University of California, Berkeley: Negative narratives in the discourses of poverty

**CHERRA MATHIS** | Arizona State University: A Critical Ethnography of Arizona Immigration Courts

**TASHA CHILDS** | University of South Carolina: Working toward Eliminating Racism in Schools: A Mixed Method Study of How Teachers' Racial Bias Relates to Student-Teacher Relationships



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