

SPRING 2025 | NEWSLETTER

MSU School of Social Work

For Alumni & Friends

FOCUS: RESEARCH, ADVOCACY, AND SCHOLARSHIP





James Rawson showcasing his research project at the inaugural School of Social Work Advocacy Day.

TABLE OF

Contents

03	Letter from Director: Dr. Anne Hughes
04	Research: Dr. Hyunkag Cho
04	Alumni Spotlight: Heather Patler-Holguin
06	Research: Can we train empathy?
08	Research: Solutions for Black homicide survivors
09	Research: Transforming substance abuse treatment
10	Research: Dr. Deirdre Shires
11	Alumni Spotlight: Julie McClellan Presgrove
12	Student Spotlight: Saara Ashtiani
13	Alumni Spotlight: James Rawson
14	Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Ashlee Barnes-Lee
16	Student Spotlight: Tazkira Amin
18	Glesnes-Anderson Cancer Care Social Work Endowment
20	Kinship Care Resource Center
22	Chiquita Whittington's impact
24	Community Spotlight: Paid field placements
25	Staff Spotlight: Natasha Mwanakatwe
26	Alumni Spotlight: Jerleesha Ross
28	Alumni Spotlight: Black Girls in Social Science group
30	Advocacy Scholars showcase policy in action
32	Community Spotlight: Strengthening families
34	Celebrating our seniors at Baker Hall
36	Celebrating our graduates
39	How to give
40	Our mission

“

In this newsletter you will see some of the incredible work of our faculty, students, and alumni. The breadth and depth of this work supporting communities and vulnerable populations is amazing.

– Dr. Anne K. Hughes

LETTER FROM DIRECTOR:

Dr. Anne Hughes



Dear Friends of the School of Social Work,

Greetings from the School of Social Work! I hope you are enjoying the spring season and looking forward to what summer will offer. I am excited to bring you our Spring newsletter. In it we share stories of student success, graduation, faculty research, and the impact we are having through our teaching, research, and service. During what has been a difficult few months, the faculty, staff, and students at the School—led by our social work values—have focused their energies on making positive change, and we wanted to share this with you.

Most recently, we celebrated our graduates—students in the BASW, MSW, and PhD programs. The celebrations of their achievements were truly special, and we are so proud of what they have accomplished. It is an honor to be a part of their academic journey and to partner with them as they embark on their professional careers as social workers and academics. Inside you will see photos of our BASW, MSW, and PhD graduates from this Spring's festivities.

We are proud to support student and faculty research and innovation. The work of several of our students is shared inside, as are stories about faculty who have been making a difference through their research. The School of Social Work improves the lives of Michiganders. Two of our initiatives are highlighted in this newsletter; the Kinship Care Resource Center and the Child Welfare Fellowship are making strides to improve the lives of Michigan families impacted by the child welfare system.

I have been honored to serve as director of the School for the past five years. I will be finishing my term in August, and I am so grateful for the support you have given me. Your engagement, guidance, and passion for social work have been inspiring to me. If you'd like to share your story in our "Alumni Spotlight," please reach out to our communications manager, **Brandon Drain**, at drainbra@msu.edu.

Thank you for your support of the School of Social Work.

Go Green!

[#MSUSocialWork](#)

Anne K. Hughes, PhD, MSW, FGSA
Director Associate Professor School of Social Work
Michigan State University



RESEARCH IN ACTION:

Dr. Hyunkag Cho

SHEDDING LIGHT ON BARRIERS FACED BY MINORITY
INTIMATE PARTNERSHIP VIOLENCE SURVIVORS



Michigan State University School of Social Work researchers have shed light on the severe impact of Intimate Partnership Violence (IPV) while highlighting the systemic barriers preventing racial and ethnic minority survivors from seeking help.

IPV against women is a serious public health problem that carries life-long, detrimental effects on the physical and mental health of survivors, according to researchers. IPV polyvictimization refers to experiencing multiple types of abuse, including physical and sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression by intimate partners.

This study also found several disparities in help-seeking trends based on the severity of the IPV, along with the race/ethnicity of the survivors. “I’ve noticed that although every victim suffers from many health problems caused by IPV, certain racial and ethnic groups seek less help than other groups, resulting in even worse health,” said **Dr. Hyunkag Cho**, associate professor and director of the doctoral program at MSU’s School of Social Work.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

Heather Patler-Holguin

A mother-daughter milestone:
MSW grad shared commencement
stage with her daughter

This spring, the MSU School of Social Work celebrated not just a graduation—but a remarkable story of perseverance, growth, and intergenerational achievement.

Heather Patler-Holguin, a Master of Social Work graduate, walked across the graduation stage alongside her daughter, **Conner Holguin**, as both received diplomas from Michigan State University. Their joint celebration marked the culmination of a decade-long journey defined by resilience and determination.

About ten years ago, Heather was working in the restaurant industry when her family experienced severe financial hardship, ultimately losing their home. “I decided that I didn’t want to live that way anymore,” she said. “I needed to try to improve our situation.”

She began by enrolling at Central Michigan University to become a patient care technician—balancing a full course load, a full-time job, and long commutes. That

Why some survivors seek less help

According to Dr. Cho, racial and ethnic minority survivors are often less likely to report IPV incidents to law enforcement due to distrust of the legal system. In addition, those groups may seek less mental health services after IPV incidents such as seeking help from psychologists, medical doctors, and social workers.

Several factors contribute to this disparity, including financial burdens, culturally embedded stigmas around mental health, and reliance on faith-based coping strategies such as prayer. The underrepresentation of Black service providers and mistrust of White service providers can also further impede Black survivors of IPV from accessing much needed mental health services, according to Dr. Cho.

The role of medical and social work professionals

To better address the needs of survivors, Dr. Cho suggests, “Medical professionals need to have ongoing training regarding screening, detecting, and treating symptoms associated with abuse, working together with IPV advocates and social workers.” Early detection and prevention can be key to impeding further victimization and worse health outcomes, and service providers should pay attention to the gendered patterns of polyvictimization and their associations with health, according to Dr. Cho.

Cultural competence is also essential, Dr. Cho noted. Service providers who demonstrate cultural humility can create better experiences for survivors, which in turn increases trust and future help-seeking behavior. “When survivors find service providers who look like them, speak like them, and/or feel like them, they will be eager to visit them to share so many stories that can help service providers better understand the context of IPV incidents.” This all culminates to more individualized and focused, higher quality services.

Improving support systems for survivors

“I hope my research can foster effective collaboration among various service providers, including police departments, hospitals, and community service agencies,” said Dr. Cho. Uniting those fields can be crucial for delivering tailored services that acknowledge the unique circumstances of survivors who utilize these services, he said.

In addition, Dr. Cho hopes his research can improve cultural competence in healthcare and social services, which can continue paving the way for improved support services for survivors, “which will improve the likelihood of disclosure to IPV to healthcare workers,” he explained.

experience solidified her sense of purpose and drive. “I can do these hard things and come out stronger,” she reflected.

When her daughter Conner enrolled at MSU, Heather followed suit, this time pursuing her passion for helping others through a Master’s in Social Work. She credited the program for equipping her with the tools and confidence to serve others with empathy and purpose.

Though Heather humbly downplayed her accomplishments, her daughter Conner was quick to celebrate them:

“I won’t even say the stars aligned,” she said. “I would say that she placed the stars exactly where she wanted them.”

As Heather and Conner graduated together, they offered a powerful reminder of the strength within families—and the impact of never giving up on your goals.



RESEARCH IN ACTION:

Can we train empathy?

EXPLORING THE SCIENCE BEHIND BRIDGING SOCIAL DIVIDES

Empathy is often seen as the foundation of social connection, but understanding how it works remains a challenge.

In an era of deepening ideological division, **Kathryn Irish**, a researcher who received her PhD on May 2, 2025, at Michigan State University's School of Social Work, is exploring the neural basis of empathy and its role in bridging political and social differences.

Empathy is central to all helping professions, especially social work, and ideas about empathy are reflected in powerful social and civic institutions, according to researchers. Yet even though empathy is amongst the most highly researched subjects in all human history, there are few examples of findings being translated in ways that address real problems or improve quality of life, Irish explained.

"The biggest misconception is that [empathy] can't do anything, that it's powerless," said Irish. Since its inception, empathy has been inexorably linked to morality, ethics, and virtue, she continued.

"The presence, or absence, of empathy in one's personality or behavior has become a misnomer for one's individual morality—an inference of one's social value," said Irish.

Ideas about empathy can also grant power, often granting moral or material authority to figures like politicians or religious leaders. It can also strip power, often used to justify carceral systems by falsely claiming people who commit crimes "lack empathy," which is inaccurate, according to Irish.



The study anticipates that improved executive functioning will strengthen both cognitive and emotional connection with the simulated character, ultimately increasing a person's willingness to help a stranger.

– Kathryn Irish



At the heart of Irish's research is a technique called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). TMS is a non-invasive way to stimulate specific areas of the brain that aid in understanding how different regions contribute to our thoughts, behaviors, and emotions. Irish and her team focus on a region called the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC)—a key part of the brain involved in decision-making, emotion regulation, and social reasoning, according to researchers.

According to Irish, depressive symptoms are associated with decreased activity in the left DLPFC (hypoactive left DLPFC) and over-activity of the right DLPFC (hyperactive right DLPFC). Applying low-frequency TMS to the right DLPFC can temporarily inhibit its activity, restoring balance to the entire DLPFC network.

Further, "Improved cognitive functions facilitated by low-frequency TMS to right side DLPFC include improved [Theory of Mind](#) (ToM)/cognitive empathy—specifically, the ability to infer the mental status of another," Irish explained. This infers that subjects who have their right DLPFC suppressed can enhance their executive functioning and improve cognitive empathy.

The study anticipates that improved executive functioning will strengthen both cognitive and emotional connection with the simulated character, ultimately increasing a person's willingness to help a stranger, according to Irish.

Although still in the early stages, Irish's research could contribute to interventions that foster empathy, reduce polarization, and improve diplomacy. If successful, this research could inform new approaches to conflict resolution, education, and even clinical interventions for individuals struggling with empathy disorders.

At a time when ideological polarization is at an all-time high, these insights could be a crucial step toward bridging societal gaps.



RESEARCH IN ACTION:

Grassroots solutions for Black homicide survivors

LEVERAGING SUPPORT TO RAISE AWARENESS



One of the biggest crises that often goes unnoticed in the United States is the trauma and systemic inequities faced by survivors of homicide victims in predominantly Black communities, according to experts.

The Washington Post reports that, of the 54,868 homicides in 55 U.S. cities over the past 10 years, 50 percent did not result in an arrest and remain unsolved, with almost three-quarters of the victims in those cases being Black. This high rate of unsolved homicides in Black communities, combined with the racial disparity in solved vs. unsolved cases, has led to unrest and furthered the divide between the Black community and police.

Dr. Kendall Morris, an assistant professor at Michigan State University's School of Social Work, along with **Dr. Linda Sprague Martinez** with the University of Connecticut, takes a deep dive into how grassroots organizations can help leverage support from key stakeholders to raise awareness about the issues faced by Black survivors of homicide.

In their meta-analysis, they highlight the Women Survivors of Homicide Movement (WSOHM), a grassroots organization in Boston, MA, and how its efforts can serve as a model for social workers striving to create change on major social issues.

"Grassroots orgs can influence systemic changes because they are most often run by individuals who are very connected to the community," Morris explained.

The WSOHM was founded in 2014 by a local community leader, **Ms. Mary Franklin**, whose passion for solving homicides is fueled by the tragic murder of her husband, **Melvin Bernard Franklin**, on October 15, 1996, in Dorchester, MA.

Since its inception, the organization has become a vital force in Boston, actively working to reshape how homicide cases are handled, improve community trust in law enforcement, and secure funding for essential survivor services.

WSOHM has also hosted multiple public vigils, marches, and forums aimed at raising awareness about unsolved murders and the systemic neglect of homicide survivors. The organization even successfully advocated for the creation of an official day dedicated to honoring and raising awareness of unsolved homicides in the area. The mayor of Boston declared October 15 as Homicide Awareness Day.

Morris and Martinez envision a world where social workers collaborate to build out similar infrastructure as the WSOHM.

“Social workers can partner with these organizations by connecting them to resources and forms of support, or providing it themselves if they are able,” said Morris. “They can also conduct community-based, empowered research to ensure more of the research and practitioner community is aware of the unique needs.”

One of the biggest points of emphasis Morris stresses is the importance of culturally competent clinical support in addressing the needs of survivors.

“For Black survivors, it is critically important that clinicians are aware of the historical, racial, and systemic backdrop in which Black survivors exist and are able to support them with that context in mind,” she said.

Morris is currently conducting a study examining the impact of homicide support grassroots organizations in Detroit, MI. Her vision is to improve the relationship between social work institutions and the criminal justice system to create a better, more cohesive partnership with the community and its stakeholders.

“I hope that stakeholders will become more aware of the issues that Black survivors face and the support that they need after having a loved one killed,” Morris said.



RESEARCH IN ACTION:

How social work is transforming substance abuse treatment



In this PODCAST episode, **Dr. Pilar Horner**, Associate Professor, joins us to discuss the crucial role of social workers in addressing substance use disorders. Dr. Horner highlights the unmet treatment needs and the stigma that individuals with addiction often face and explores how programs like MI CARES are making a difference in healthcare by providing training on evidence-based addiction care. We dive into the importance of social work education in preparing future professionals to tackle these complex issues, reduce stigma, and offer compassionate, effective support to those in recovery. Tune in to hear more about the intersection of social work, substance use education, and the path forward for creating a more supportive system for individuals battling addiction.

RESEARCH IN ACTION:

Dr. Deirdre Shires

EXPOSING DISPARITIES IN ACCESS
TO GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE



While visibility and advocacy for transgender and gender diverse (TGD) individuals have grown, significant healthcare disparities remain—especially in access to gender-affirming hormone therapy (HT).

[A recent study](#) led by researchers at Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Michigan found that nearly one in three TGD adults in Michigan who expressed interest in hormone therapy had not yet been able to obtain it. Possible reasons for these delays include inadequate provider knowledge, inconsistent insurance coverage, and financial limitations.

“While trans and nonbinary communities face a number of barriers to accessing hormone therapy, the biggest threat right now is a lack of legal protections for gender-affirming care,” said **Dr. Deirdre Shires**, associate professor and researcher at MSU’s School of Social Work. “This is combined with the surge of anti-trans legislation and other politically motivated roadblocks,” she continued.

Shires also noted that currently, 27 states do not protect access to gender-affirming care through insurance coverage, and 37% of trans youth ages 13-17 live in states that have laws banning best practice gender-affirming care.

“While current Michigan law prohibits discrimination based on gender identity and expression—which should include protecting healthcare access—continued politicization of trans identities takes a serious toll on the health and safety of trans and nonbinary individuals,” said Shires.

The study also found that disparities in access to gender-affirming HT exist even within TGD communities, particularly for racialized individuals, those with less formal education, and nonbinary people. Healthcare providers who provide HT should “avoid assumptions about which patients may be interested in gender-affirming care, and increased transgender health content is needed at all levels of medical education to improve access more broadly,” the team recommended.

HT has been shown to improve mental health, body satisfaction, and overall quality of life in TGD adults, while also reducing risk of suicidal ideation, according to the research team. “Universal access to HT is imperative,” the team concluded. “In the meantime, resources to demystify coverage for gender-affirming care are sorely needed.”

“Now more than ever, there is a critical need for social workers, healthcare providers, and community organizations to advocate for laws protecting access to hormone therapy and other gender-affirming care for trans and nonbinary communities,” said Shires.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

Julia McClellan Presgrove

OCL PROGRAM GRADUATE SPRING 2023

OCL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER



When I applied for the School of Social Work master's in organizational and community leadership (OCL) program, I did so with a motivation for change and an overwhelming sense of not knowing where to start.

The regular, East Lansing, full-time program is intentionally designed in a way that allowed me to quickly build a foundation of understanding with minimal prior exposure to the profession or field of study. This program introduced me to varying spaces where social workers are engaged in macro work, influencing how and where I searched for jobs post-graduation.

Additionally, I built confidence in my capabilities as a social worker by learning, then refining skills, and identifying how I can effectively contribute to the work that is being done. During the program, I deepened my understanding of evaluation and research methods and was able to identify my research areas of interest.

This is a vital step in my career which led me to apply to the University of Michigan's School of Social Work where I currently serve as a research coordinator in the Level Up Employment Skills Simulation Lab. These experiences are impactful to my career trajectory as I begin to apply to PhD programs this cycle to further my career goal of being a social work researcher.

In the OCL program, I was also able to expand my social networks and make connections with folks. Maintaining these connections has been valuable in leading to several leadership opportunities such as serving on the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Michigan Chapter's board of directors and on the OCL Alumni Advisory Board. I decided to explore the NASW-MI board seat based on my experience as a student intern and the great connections I had made with the staff. In both roles I am able to stay informed about the work that is being done locally, engage in macro work, and build upon these established connections.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

Saara Ashtiani

Social workers play a vital role in strengthening and advocating for marginalized communities, a mission that begins even during their undergraduate years. For BASW junior **Saara Ashtiani**, this comes in the form of empowering students with disabilities to get jobs, while subsequently laying out a pathway for future success through the [Michigan State University Building Opportunities for Spartan Success \(BOSS\) Program](#).

The BOSS Program is a two-part, work-based learning opportunity that matches MSU students with disabilities to campus jobs that align with employment goals. Ashtiani serves as both a job coach for the program and a student research assistant at the [MSU Stride Center](#). The center oversees the BOSS Program, which helps students with disabilities build career pathways.

The program includes 10 weeks of employment and 15 weeks of classes. Each week, Ashtiani works hands-on with two students teaching them skills like how to build a resume, write cover letters, develop social skills and even being a person of support for them at their jobs. In addition, she also facilitates the weekly classes. “As a job coach, it is my specialty to figure out what additional goals they could have for themselves, helping them recognize what they might be and figuring out ways to achieve those goals throughout the semester,” said Ashtiani.

Being in this position has been a rewarding experience for the junior. “One of the most exciting things has been watching one of the students have a dream for what their job was going to be throughout the semester, and watching that finally come into place,” she explained. “Watching them achieve their goals that they’ve had and then being able to land a position with the job placement for next semester and just continuing that work has been really awesome to see.”

Ashtiani “fell in love” with the MSU School of Social Work after switching majors, she said. “I realized that the School of Social Work was the hidden gem of Michigan State,” she explained. “There is just so much support and kindness and friendship and mentorship that you can find within the School of Social Work from literally everyone involved that I don’t think there’s another place like that.”



There is just so much support and kindness and friendship and mentorship that you can find within the School of Social Work from literally everyone involved that **I don’t think there’s another place like that.**

– Saara Ashtiani



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

James Rawson

MY SOCIAL WORK ADVENTURE



It's been a year since graduating from the 2024 OCL program, and I feel my social work adventure has been a whirlwind. The experiences that I have accumulated to this point have been impactful. From being the PACE field organizer for NASW-MI to starting a nonprofit, this future I sought for has been beyond my imagination. Though I credit my beginning with MSU's School of Social Work.

Program's Impact on Career

When I got my acceptance letter, I wanted to make the most of my time. By viewing each day as a learning opportunity, my educational philosophy has impacted my career. Taking the time to be curious about subjects has led me to the latest social work research methods. Now, I implement the lessons learned daily but always keep my mind open.

The OCL professors have molded my thinking habits, and I solve problems that go beyond the literature. For instance, the nonprofit I started took a lot of thought, and sometimes I used non-typical methods. Solving issues is not cookie-cutter, but I think multi-dimensional. At this moment I have been successful, but when I am wrong, the decisions made are not highly impactful.

Maintaining Connections

Keeping connections is essential to my achievements. Everyone has some type of influence, hopefully for the positive. I connect to hear about other's successes or negative encounters. By reflecting on their stories, I learn to give praise about their overcoming obstacles and how to overcome personal barriers. Though being affiliated with MSU is a plus, I connect because of similar interests. You don't know what happens down life's path; do your best to stay positive, and they will remember it.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Ashlee Barnes-Lee

OUTSTANDING FACULTY AWARD WINNER



On January 23, 2025, Michigan State University's College of Social Science honored **Dr. Ashlee Barnes-Lee**, an assistant professor at MSU's School of Social Work, as its recipient of the **2025 Outstanding Faculty Award**.

This award is presented annually and recognizes a current faculty member in the College who takes pride in, and is committed to quality teaching, while demonstrating substantial involvement in undergraduate education. Barnes-Lee also spoke at the Spring 2025 College of Social Science Commencement on Saturday May 3, 2025.

Barnes-Lee is touted for her exceptional ability to mentor students, both in and out of the classroom, bringing enthusiasm, clarity, and passion, noted **Dr. Anne Hughes**, director of the MSU School of Social Work.

"She maintains rigor in the classroom while ensuring real-life connections to the materials for students," Hughes continued. "She is organized and an excellent communicator, actively engages our learners, models professionalism and interdisciplinarity, and is a powerful and aspirational presence for our students of color."

As a Black female scholar, Barnes-Lee is intimately aware of the challenges faced by minoritized students and strives to create a space of inclusion for her students to feel welcomed, heard, and seen. "One of the reasons I wanted to teach was so that underrepresented students could learn from someone who may have similar experiences," said Barnes-Lee. "My primary goal is to create a learning community where students, regardless of their respective identities and backgrounds, can feel invited to engage in the learning process," she said.

Barnes-Lee is a triple Spartan who loves MSU and values her ability to give back to the institution in her role as a professor, mentor, and role model.

"In my teaching, I aim to emphasize student mastery and performance, highlight real-world applications, and foster an active and welcoming learning environment," said Barnes-Lee.



She teaches a variety of courses, including both Bachelor of Social Work (BASW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) programs, respectively. In addition, she has created and taught an interdisciplinary undergraduate elective called Contemporary Issues in Juvenile Justice—a course that examines key issues facing the modern American juvenile justice system including racial/ethnic, gender, and class disparities.

Barnes-Lee demonstrated superior classroom performance based on student feedback collected from the University via the Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS): a survey system that serves to provide student input toward assessing and improving course design and teaching performance. Her course evaluation averages range from 4.43 to 4.78 out of 5, which are well above the average in the School of Social Work, according to the data.

Students also praised Barnes-Lee's impact on their learning.

When asked to reflect about what aspects of the course made the greatest, positive contribution to their learning experience, one student said: “Dr. Barnes-Lee was extremely supportive. She motivated me with her kindness and compassion to be a better student and to grow.”

Another student noted, “She brought some much-needed humanity to a program that can feel kind of mechanical and faceless during normal times—and this semester was anything but.”

Barnes-Lee's philosophy of teaching is backed by the belief that “educating the whole student includes caring about what they learn and who they are,” she explained. “What makes an effective and impactful social work educator is being able to bring the social work core values in the classroom with you. Every time I step foot in a classroom, I choose to intentionally model competence, social justice, the importance of human relationships, integrity, service, and especially dignity and worth of person.”

Barnes-Lee is a Detroit native and interdisciplinary scholar. She earned a BA in both criminal justice and psychology, alongside a master's and PhD in Ecological-Community Psychology from MSU. She is also a former Dean's Research Associate Program member—an initiative aimed at promoting an inclusive scholarly environment in which outstanding scholars in the social sciences support the advancement of Institutional Access in the academy. Barnes-Lee has a decade of practical experience working with youth in diversion programs, juvenile probation, detention centers, and in facilities serving youth diagnosed with mental health challenges.



One of the reasons I wanted to teach was so that underrepresented students could learn from someone who may have similar experiences.

– Dr. Ashlee Barnes-Lee

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT:

Tazkira Amin

The Michigan State University School of Social Work honors **Tazkira Amin** as its **2025 Outstanding Senior Award** recipient.

This award recognizes a graduating senior who has demonstrated exemplary academic and extracurricular successes and a strong sense of leadership, commitment, and dedication to MSU.

"I am grateful to have even been considered for this award, let alone to have received it," said Amin. "The close relationships that I have developed with faculty and my peers in the School of Social Work have been solely due to my love for connection, so I am honored that this community has deemed me worthy of this."

Amin's career at MSU has been positively influenced by her time spent in the Social Science Scholars Program (SSSP)—an initiative that offers research and leadership opportunities, mentorship, and a chance to get to know faculty members.

Of those faculty members, **Dr. John Waller**, the director of the Social Science Scholars Program, made the largest, most positive impact on Amin.

"It is not an understatement when I state that he has changed my life," said Amin. "He has helped me become a better writer, friend, and person." Waller's influence, led by his kind and compassionate nature, is the lens by which Amin lives her life and pursues her future, she said.

"Taz is a model student because she is so much more than academically excellent," said Waller, "She is also unfailingly generous, kind, wise, mature, and ethical." In all his decade-long time spent as director of the program, Waller states, "I have not had the pleasure of teaching or getting to know a more admirable student." Taz approaches life with a rare selflessness, which is rewarded by close friendships and the respect and admiration of everyone around her, said Waller.



“

I learned that it is okay, and even important to rely on others when there is a collective objective. By utilizing everyone's strengths and being collaborative, reaching the goal is even more enjoyable and rewarding.

– Tazkira Amin



For a large part of her time at MSU, Amin worked with a nonprofit called Humanity for Prisoners (HFP): an organization that works one-on-one with people in prison to provide personalized services that empower them to receive support and assistance.

It was during her time spent working there that she realized she could make an actual difference in the world.

Amin was a part of a team that connected clients to loved ones with whom they had lost contact. After her first year on the team, she was contacted by the former volunteer manager, informing her that an interaction she had facilitated led a mother to find her son after presuming he was dead.

“I think about that a lot,” said Amin. “If I make no other impact in my life, that experience has shown me that I have and can continue to make a difference.”

It was during her freshman year that Amin would come to realize exactly how she could make a difference in the world.

In a SSSP class, Amin read a book called *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* by Thomas Sugrue. This book touched on the numerous barriers placed on African Americans in the Detroit area, including racial covenants and blockbusting efforts that kept them confined to certain parts of the city.

“It was this very book that allowed me to recognize the importance of combining urban planning and social work to create change,” she said.

After graduation, Amin will pursue both a Master of Social Work and a Master of Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. This interdisciplinary approach highlights “the importance of considering urban systems such as transportation and housing when helping individuals get access to the resources they need,” said Amin.

Amin graduated on May 3, 2025. She credits her time at MSU with shaping both her career path and her personal growth.

“I learned that it is okay, and even important, to rely on others when there is a collective objective,” she said. “By utilizing everyone’s strengths and being collaborative, reaching the goal is even more enjoyable and rewarding.”

Tazkira Amin is from Warren, MI, and embodies Spartan pride through her academic achievements and community service. Tazkira graduated with a degree in social work with minors in Cities: Environment, Design, and Society. She has contributed significantly to organizations like the Center for Community Engaged Learning, Humanity for Prisoners, and Women’s Council—and was also a part of the 2024 MSU Homecoming Court.



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

Glesnes-Anderson Cancer Care Social Work Endowment

Honoring his late wife, **Valerie Glesnes-Anderson**, **Dr. Gary Anderson** has established the **Glesnes-Anderson Cancer Care Social Work Endowment**: a scholarship to support MSU social work students pursuing healthcare and hospice work. This gift reflects his lifelong commitment to strengthening the social work workforce, developing innovative programs, and uplifting those most in need.

In 2001, Valerie Glesnes-Anderson was diagnosed with breast cancer and was able to treat and overcome it at times until her passing in 2021. Her extensive knowledge of the healthcare systems as a former hospital vice president helped her navigate some of the challenges of finding good care. However, social workers made a positive difference throughout the process, and the family could see how hugely significant social workers could be to people.

“We had experience with two social workers during Valerie’s many hospitalizations and treatments,” said Dr. Anderson. “Both were MSU Master of Social Work (MSW) students. Their knowledge of community resources, ability to connect us to those resources, and helpfulness were needed, timely, and valuable.”

As a social worker, Dr. Anderson believed having therapeutic, concrete assistance that social workers could provide in medical settings “should be integral to addressing the management of this illness.” The endowment ensures that future generations of social workers are equipped to provide compassionate care and advocacy for individuals and families navigating the challenges of cancer and the complexity of a medical bureaucracy. Each MSW student must demonstrate a commitment to the field of healthcare or cancer care through prior experiences, internships, or professional goals.

With the encouragement of his two daughters, Lauren and Elizabeth, Dr. Anderson chose to honor his late wife’s memory and contribute to a positive legacy for her by creating an endowment to support social work students. “When considering how to honor my wife, I was certain that supporting students was the right direction,” said Dr. Anderson. “Providing a scholarship reflected our devotion to students and was consistent with the priorities and values that I tried to highlight during my time as the School’s director.”

Gary Anderson served at Michigan State University’s School of Social Work for 25 years—15 years as its director and another 10 years as a faculty member. Dr. Anderson developed and supported many innovative programs and projects, like the **Community Programs**, which continue today and allow the School to fulfill its service mission across the State of Michigan.

“

We had experience with two social workers during Valerie’s many hospitalizations and treatments. Both were MSU Master of Social Work (MSW) students. Their knowledge of community resources, ability to connect us to those resources, and helpfulness were needed, timely and valuable

– Dr. Gary Anderson



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

Kinship Care Resource Center

EXPANDS SUPPORT FOR MICHIGAN FAMILIES WITH NEW FUNDING

Michigan State University's [Kinship Care Resource Center \(KCRC\)](#) remains dedicated to helping children in Michigan stay with their families through kinship care.

This commitment has been reinforced by **Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer**, who recently announced her [FY2026 budget](#), which includes nearly \$90 million in new investments to strengthen kinship care services and ensure children remain safe.

“Michigan has been a national leader in kinship care and believes children who need placements outside their homes should be placed with relatives or other close family friends whenever possible,” said **Elizabeth Hertel**, director of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). “This allows children to maintain connections with relatives, friends, and communities they know and aligns with our priority to keep families together when it is safe to do so.”

Kinship care is the full-time care, nurturing, and protection of children by family members or other important adults in the child's life. This could include grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings, or family friends.

Kinship care can occur when a child is placed through the MDHHS foster care system or through an arrangement made outside the child welfare system between the parent and the kinship caregiver.

Currently, Michigan has 10,000 children in the foster care system, with nearly half of those children currently placed with relatives, according to MDHHS. Research shows that placing children with relatives minimizes the trauma and loss associated with foster care while also reducing the time spent in the system.

To support kinship families, MDHHS partners with MSU's KCRC, which provides essential resources, training, and outreach to caregivers across the state.

“The Michigan State University Kinship Care Resource Center is proud to support all kinship caregivers raising relative children, ensuring they have the information,



Michigan has been a national leader in kinship care and believes children who need placements outside their homes should be placed with relatives or other close family friends whenever possible.

– Elizabeth Hertel, Director
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services



referrals, and resources needed to provide safety and stability for their families,” said **Michele Brock**, director of Community Programs at MSU’s School of Social Work.

KCRC offers the **only statewide toll-free support service** specifically designed for kinship families, available at **800-535-1218**. Through partnerships with community organizations such as the Upper Peninsula Commission for Area Progress (UPCAP), D.A. Blodgett-St. John’s, Hands Across the Water, Spaulding for Children, and Child and Family Charities, KCRC is expanding its reach to ensure caregivers receive the assistance they need.

With the increase in state funding and ongoing support from MDHHS, MSU’s KCRC continues to play a critical role in advocating for kinship caregivers and the children they support.

“Thanks to MDHHS’s commitment to prioritizing kinship caregivers who have stepped up for family, KCRC can step up for them,” said Brock.

The Kinship Care Resource Center is one of several Community Programs in the School of Social Work at Michigan State University. The KCRC serves kinship care families across the state by providing information and referrals to resources and services for caregivers and the children they are raising. KCRC also offers support to professionals serving kinship families.

The Kinship Care Resource Center is generously funded through grants provided by the [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#).

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

Chiquita Whittington's impact

CREATING SPACE, DRIVING CHANGE

For **Chiquita Whittington**, social work isn't just a career—it's a calling, shaped by her lived experiences and commitment to advocacy.

This passion is exemplified in both of her roles at Michigan State University: As the director of the MSU **FAME Program**, as well as the co-director of the MSU **Women of Color Community** (WOCC).

The MSU Women of Color Community was founded in Fall 2018 by members of the Institutional Diversity: Excellence in Action (IDEA) Coordinators. It was created as a social, networking, and professional resource for all women of color administrators, faculty, academic specialists, support staff, and allies.

"Finding this community has been invaluable. It meant not feeling alone or out of place but instead finding a space where I was welcomed and understood," said Whittington.

As a collective, WOCC brings women of color together to discuss issues related to recruitment, retention, advancement, and overall wellness at MSU. Its meetings are designed to foster shared learning, collective support, and the exchange of knowledge and experiences. WOCC also collaborates with other women's organizations across campus to create professional development opportunities, and its members engage in University-wide DEI initiatives to develop cultural and celebratory programs.

"Our hope is that both women of color and our allies come to understand the unique stories, successes, hardships, and ongoing needs of women of color in higher education—particularly here at MSU," Whittington expressed. "We want to create strong connections, support one another through challenges, and establish safe spaces where we can laugh, bond, and truly be seen."



Finding this community has been invaluable. It meant not feeling alone or out of place but instead finding a space where I was welcomed and understood.

– Chiquita Whittington

Since stepping into this role, she's witnessed growth in both interest and memberships in the group, noting, "One the most powerful aspects of this community is how it has helped so many of us navigate career transitions."

Whittington's commitment to advocacy extends beyond WOCC.

In addition to supporting women of color in higher education, she works directly with marginalized students through the FAME Program—ensuring they also have access to the guidance and resources they need to thrive.

FAME is a resource center for foster youth alumni attending MSU as well as for youth who were in kinship care, have experienced homelessness, or are otherwise independent. FAME exists to provide support and resources to these students during their time at MSU to help them be successful during their collegiate experience on MSU's campus and during their transition to becoming MSU alumni.

Being the director of the FAME Program has granted her the opportunity to be a voice for underserved students, she explained. "It's not just about guiding and supporting them; I learn just as much from them as they do from me," she continued.

Many FAME students are people of color, and Whittington emphasizes the importance of them knowing they belong at the table. "Too often, people of color have had to fight for a seat, and I want my students to know that they don't just deserve to be there—they belong there."

Each of her roles has broadened her understanding of the ongoing needs related to equity and inclusion on MSU's campus.

"In both roles, I've observed that policies and procedures are often established by individuals who may not directly experience their impact," she said. "It is essential that the voices of those with lived experiences are heard, considered, and supported in decision-making processes."



FAME exists to provide support and resources to these students during their time at MSU to help them be successful during their collegiate experience on MSU's campus and during their transition to becoming MSU alumni.

– Chiquita Whittington



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

Paid field placements in the MSU Social Work Program

The Field Education Office at the MSU School of Social Work has long supported paid field placements for BASW and MSW students. Historically, social work field placements have been unpaid, making it challenging for students to balance work, school, and professional training. Paid placements can help alleviate financial barriers, allowing students to focus more on developing their skills and making meaningful contributions to the communities they serve.

Some of the benefits of paid field placements are:

- **Equity and access** – Paid opportunities ensure that students from all financial backgrounds can participate fully in their field placements.
- **Enhanced learning experience** – With less financial stress, students are better able to immerse themselves in real-world practice and gain meaningful experience.
- **Career readiness** – These experiences strengthen professional skills and prepare students for success in the workforce.

How students can be paid for field placements:

There are several pathways through which students may receive compensation for their fieldwork:

- **Stipend** – Agencies can pay students a fixed sum of money for the internship. Stipends range from \$500–\$2,500 per semester and can be disbursed once at the end of the semester or at varying intervals throughout the semester.
- **Hourly pay** – Agencies can hire students and pay them as hourly employees for the work they do for the agency.
- **Employment-based placement** – If the student already works for the agency or gains employment during the internship, we can often count some or all their paid work hours toward their required field hours.
- **AmeriCorps partnership** – Agencies that partner with AmeriCorps to hire temporary AmeriCorps members can use these positions for interns. Often, AmeriCorps positions meet BASW and some MSW field curriculum requirements, allowing students to count their work hours toward their internship requirements.
- **Work study** – Through partnership with MSU's Work Study Office, agencies can be reimbursed for 70% of what they pay students who qualify for this need-based program.

Paid placements can help alleviate financial barriers, allowing students to focus more on developing their skills and making meaningful contributions to the communities they serve.

How the Field Office supports paid placements:

The Field Education Office plays a central role in expanding and maintaining paid field placement opportunities through a variety of strategic efforts:

- **Outreach and education** – The Field Office makes it a point to promote the importance of paid placements when meeting with community agencies and encourages participation from new and existing partners.
- **Data collection** – The Field Office is starting to track paid placements to be able to analyze student outcomes and develop best practices.
- **Technical support** – Paying social work interns is very new to most agencies, so the Field Team actively offers logistical support to agencies and students, including guidance on funding mechanisms, internal policy, and contract development, etc.
- **Continual internal review and adjustment** – The Field Office, with input and support from community stakeholders on the Field Advisory Committee, continually reviews internal policies and procedures and makes adjustments to allow for flexibility for paid field placements. For example, in recent years the employment-based placement policy was expanded from one prescriptive option to various options depending on an array of student and agency factors.

Student input and partnership:

In Spring 2025, a group of MSU social work students started MSU Payment 4 Placement (P4P). P4P is a student-led campaign working to decrease economic injustice in field education by increasing the number of students who receive payment for placement. In April, the P4P group met with the Field Office and the director of the School to collaborate on finding solutions. The Field Team supports P4P's mission and is committed to alleviating financial burden for students in field placements.

P4P is currently aiming to form a registered student organization and develop a discretionary fund for students in financial distress utilizing grants and donations. Please contact p4patmsu@gmail.com for more information.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT:

Natasha Mwanakatwe

My name is **Natasha Mwanakatwe**, and I'm excited to have joined the School of Social Work as the Field Office Coordinator. I first came to MSU as an international student from Zambia, and now, in a full-circle moment, I'm happy to be back on campus, supporting the community in a different way. I'm thrilled to be a part of the Field Education team and look forward to contributing to the continued success of our students, the program, and the School!

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

Jerleesha Ross

IMPACT OF MDHHS FELLOWSHIP IN PUBLIC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Program Fellowship is transforming lives by supporting MSW students dedicated to public behavioral health. This [fellowship provides each recipient with \\$30,000 in funding](#), enabling future social workers to focus on their education and fieldwork while preparing to address critical mental health needs in underserved communities.

Here is how the fellowship has impacted MSW student **Jerleesha Ross** on her journey:

What inspired you to pursue a career in public behavioral health?

My biggest inspiration for pursuing a career in public behavioral health has been personal experiences growing up as a person of color in an economically disadvantaged community. I have seen the effects lack of resources and under-representation can have on a community that was once flourishing such as Flint. As an adolescent, I lived through the Flint Water Crisis and witnessed firsthand how it weakened an entire community. As a young adult, I bore witness to the further detrimental impact of the global pandemic COVID-19 on the world and these already-struggling communities. At times, I felt hopeless in the fight for change and justice within my own community. I've come to realize this is a familiar story for far too many individuals. Pursuing a career in public behavioral health has allowed me the ability to play a role in the changes I would like to see and encourage a reflection of the diverse communities we serve within the social work profession.

Receiving this fellowship has had such a positive impact on my academic journey. It has given me the ability to not only continue to pursue my master's degree but do so whilst remaining debt free. Most children want to be a doctor or firefighter, but as my mother tells it, I was different. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I knew I wanted to receive a collegiate education; this is truly a dream come true for me. I always envisioned university as my pathway to success, and I'm incredibly grateful for how it has transformed my life. I have faced many challenges throughout my academic career, and I at times questioned if I could finish, largely due to financial stresses of obtaining a degree. This fellowship has been a huge weight off my shoulders and revamped my hope for a bright future in the field of social work.

Could you share insights or memorable experiences from your field placement that have shaped your perspective on behavioral health?

One of the best experiences of my field placement has been the connections I have been able to make within the community of Burton. I've had the privilege of experiencing a full circle moment by working under an individual who played a significant role as coach and social worker in my own adolescence to now fulfilling that role myself. I've had the ability to become an important figure for students, and it has opened doors for other opportunities such as coaching middle and high school volleyball. These experiences overall have reinforced the importance that a role in public behavioral health can have on an individual. As an emerging professional, field placement overall has allowed me to strengthen my skills, continuously learn, and broaden my knowledge. I have gained a better understanding of the perspectives of the community. As they always say, it's best to get information straight from the horse's mouth!

My short-term goal is to accomplish my first big step toward full certification by gaining my master's degree. This will allow me to achieve my long-term goal of improving access to mental health services and influence policy changes in public behavioral health. I envision using my skills to continue to go into the public, network, and be an advocate for individuals and families. Continuing to work within the community can help me enhance diversity and play a role in promoting social justice, especially for marginalized communities. I overall hope in my career to be a bridge between the communities in Michigan and the resources they need.

What guidance would you offer to students considering a path in public behavioral health?

If I could offer any guidance to students interested in pursuing a pathway in public behavioral health, I'd say do it, but remain resilient! It may not be an easy pathway, but it is one that is very rewarding. Be open minded; it is a broad pathway that can take you many different directions. That can be an overwhelming feeling but one of the most exciting parts of this career pathway. Be open to making connections and utilize your resources! They can be everything in public behavioral health. I always say the youth are our future and have been one of my biggest draws to working with adolescents as a target population. I'm excited to see what the future holds; their potential is limitless!

“

Pursuing a career in public behavioral health has allowed me the ability to play a role in the changes I would like to see and encourage a reflection of the diverse communities we serve within the social work profession.

– Jerleesha Ross



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

MSU student founds Black Girls in Social Science group

Aaliyah Wilson is a senior majoring in social work who founded the group Black Girls in Social Science (BGSS): a community that uplifts, empowers, and connects Black women pursuing careers in social work, psychology, sociology, and beyond.

BGSS serves as a hub where students share resources, build professional networks, and engage in meaningful conversations about navigating academia and the career field as a Black woman.

“For Black women, it is really hard for us to set the tone for ourselves when it’s predetermined how we should act and be seen,” said Wilson. Despite Black women accounting for the largest percentage of Black college students across the nation, according to experts, “We’re not seen that much, and we’re just kind of underestimated,” Wilson continued. “BGSS is used for us to motivate ourselves more, and also empower us more, to show there is a space for us, and there is a future for us.”

As a social work student, Wilson has an innate passion for representation and advocacy, which fueled her to form this group. During her sophomore year, Wilson noticed that there weren’t many organizations for Black women across the College of Social Science. “I wanted to make a space for everyone in social science because we’re really spread throughout this whole college,” she explained.

Wilson soon put together an E-board consisting of 11 Black women across the college, including social work senior **Kayla McMichael**.

McMichael serves as the fundraising chair for BGSS and is also a part of the Students for Social Work Student Advisory Board (SFSW) at the MSU School of Social Work.

As a transfer student, McMichael initially felt lost at MSU. “It took me five major changes before I finally found my passion in social work, and that’s when my personal journey truly began,” she explained. But along the way, she realized how much she needed a sense of community, as she often felt like she didn’t see many people who looked like her on campus. That changed when she met Wilson.



“Seeing events created specifically for women who look like me and share similar struggles was inspiring,” said McMichael. “I knew right then that I wanted to be more than just a member—I wanted to take on a leadership role and help sustain this space for others.”

Through mentorship, advocacy, and peer support, BGSS is not only fostering belonging but also laying the groundwork for future leaders in social justice and community work. Wilson’s passion for representation and empowerment fuels her vision for a more inclusive and supportive academic environment at MSU—one that ensures Black women in social science feel seen, heard, and valued.

The 2024-25 Black Girls in
Social Science E-Board



MSU Advocacy Scholars showcase policy in action



This spring, our MSW and BASW Advocacy Scholars gathered to present their yearlong projects focused on advancing social justice and policy reform. Through dynamic poster presentations and thoughtful dialogue, students highlighted the impact of advocacy in areas such as healthcare access, housing equity, and youth justice. The event brought together faculty, peers, and community leaders to celebrate the power of student-led change—and the future of social work advocacy.





COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT:

Strengthening families using an equity lens



On March 21, 2025, the School of Social Work at Michigan State University had the privilege of hosting renowned author and advocate **Dr. Jessica Pryce** for an insightful presentation on “Strengthening Families Using an Equity Lens.” Pryce’s talk centered on the critical need for social workers and community leaders to embrace and incorporate equity into their practices to foster stronger, more resilient families, with a particular focus on child welfare.

Dr. Pryce, a leading voice in the fields of family dynamics and social work, is known for her extensive research on family empowerment, child welfare, and her dedication to promoting social justice. The conversation explored how social workers and professionals can strengthen families, especially those involved in child welfare systems, by incorporating equity-based policies and practices that reflect the lived experiences of marginalized populations. Pryce highlighted the importance of viewing family support systems through an equity lens, ensuring all families—regardless of background—have access to the resources and opportunities necessary to thrive.





Dr. Pryce had the opportunity to connect with the Michigan Title IV-E Child Welfare fellows at MSU the evening before her presentation. The group shared a meaningful dinner, where they engaged in rich discussions on child welfare practices and how an equity lens can shape their work moving forward. This intimate setting allowed the fellows to connect with Pryce on a deeper level, gaining further insight into her work and the implications for child welfare practice.

“We were honored to have Jessica Pryce join us at MSU to share her valuable insights on strengthening families through an equity-driven approach,” said **Elizabeth Montemayor**, Child Welfare Program coordinator at the MSU School of Social Work. “Her work aligns with our mission to train social workers who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and passion to challenge inequities and create lasting change in our communities, especially in the area of child welfare.”

This event was open to students in the School of Social Work and faculty. It also included other Michigan Child Welfare Title IV-E institutions and students.

For more information about Dr. Jessica Pryce's work, visit www.jessicaprycephd.com.





Celebrating our seniors at Baker Hall

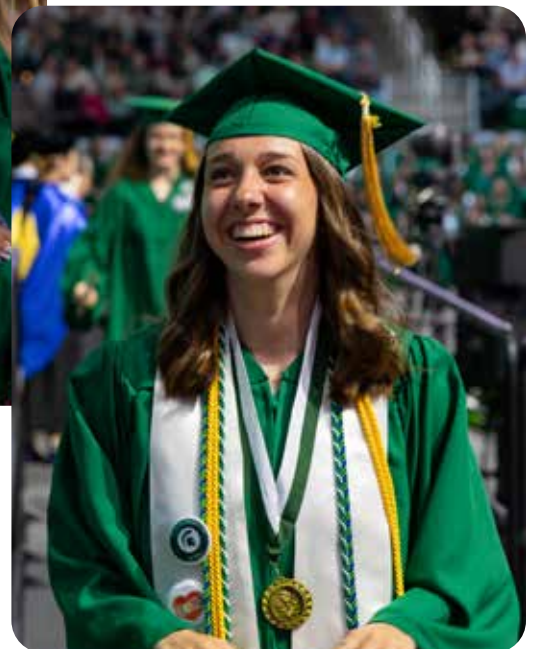
We closed out the semester with joy, laughter, and Spartan pride at our inaugural Senior Night in Baker Hall! Graduating BASW students gathered with faculty, staff, and peers to reflect, celebrate, and look ahead to their next chapters in social work. The highlight? A surprise visit from Sparty, who brought the energy (and photo ops!) as we honored the incredible Class of 2025. Congratulations, seniors—you make MSU Social Work proud!







Celebrating our graduates





Celebrating our graduates



Invest in initiatives meaningful to you

Students enter the profession of social work with a strong commitment to service, integrity, and competence. As social work educators, we believe that the good our graduates do is multiplied and extended across generations, and we are honored to help prepare them for their service. In keeping with land-grant principles of education, research, and outreach/service, we take seriously our responsibility to the education and training of students as well as outreach for community engagement.

If you share our values, please consider supporting these efforts with a gift to one of the scholarship and endowment funds highlighted below. A full list of giving opportunities and links to donate online can be found at <https://socialwork.msu.edu/alumni/endowments.html>.



Robert Little Scholarship Fund

This fund provides scholarships for graduate students with a career interest in child welfare, with preference for those who want to work in kinship care.



Dr. Mary Bremer Barron Scholarship Fund

This fund supports scholarships for students, with preference for those from the greater Flint community.



MSW Veterans Scholarship

This fund supports veterans by providing scholarships for study in the MSW program.



Paul P. and Donna K. Freddolino Endowment for Distance Education

This fund supports the School of Social Work's distance educational programs, including both student support and the development of new educational technologies.



The School of Social Work Endowed Fund

This fund provides a range of supports for the School, including student scholarships, support for faculty research, and support for School programs.



Future Leaders Endowed Scholarship in Social Work

This fund supports graduate students through scholarships, assistantships, or fellowships.



Gary R. Anderson Endowed Fund for Child Welfare Leadership

This fund supports workshops, lectures, and scholarships in the School related to child welfare leadership and workplace development.



Chance at Childhood Endowment Fund

This fund supports research, education, training, and outreach concerning intervention and treatment for at-risk children and families; children's justice; and coordination of professionals dealing with at-risk children and families.



Youth Education and Support

This fund helps build, test, and disseminate research focused on real ways to increase child and youth access to accurate, non-stigmatized knowledge of mental illness and recovery.



David and Nancy Hanafin Neal Scholarship Fund

This fund supports student scholarships that enable BSW or MSW students to continue their education and complete their degrees.



Newsletter • Spring 2025

Contributing writers: Anne Hughes, Brandon Drain
Photography: Brandon Drain, Jacqueline Hawthorne, Juan Holguin and University Communications
Graphic design: Rose Homa Design

MSU School of Social Work

Baker Hall, Room 254, 655 Auditorium Road, East Lansing, MI 48824

A mission of social justice and positive change

The MSU School of Social Work is dedicated to educating students for ethical, competent, responsive, and innovative social work practice, and to conducting and disseminating high quality research that improves the well-being of the most vulnerable in society. Our teaching, research, and outreach synergistically promote social justice, positive change, and solutions to the problems facing diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.



socialwork.msu.edu

[Learn about our Organization and Community Leadership \(OCL\) Alumni Board](#)

[Attend our Continuing Education sessions](#)

[Prepare for the Social Work Licensure Examination](#)

[Qualify for State of Michigan School Social Work certification](#)

[Become a Continuing Education presenter](#)

[Become a Field Instructor or Field Faculty Liaison](#)

[Donate to support the School's scholarships, research, and programs](#)

Michigan State University is an equal opportunity educational employer.



College of Social Science
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY



OUR SCIENCE **TRANSFORMS THE HUMAN EXPERIENCE**
AND INSPIRES LEADERS