DSW launched!
Dear Friends:

As you can see from our cover photo, we are thrilled to have successfully launched Cohort 1 of our Doctorate in Social Work: *Education as Practice*. We announced the program in May and were overwhelmed by the response. Despite the abbreviated admissions timeframe, we started in August with a full complement of 20 highly qualified students, all of whom have teaching and practice experience.

Earlier this semester, I had the honor of teaching the second course in the DSW program and it was a terrific (and humbling) experience. What an amazing group of engaged learners and teachers! The cohort and faculty are pushing each other to great levels of achievement and reflection. It is clear that our faculty is learning as much through the experience as our students. In addition to being energized and challenged by this group of professionals, we’ve seen tangible benefits throughout our school from the pedagogical conversations and technological training that went into preparing for this online program. We are excited about admitting our second cohort in early 2015 and having two cohorts on campus in July 2015. You’ll read more about our DSW launch on the following page.

As highlighted in our spring 2014 newsletter, 2014-2015 marks a year of milestones for the School of Social Work: our BSW program celebrates 40 years of accreditation, our MSW program celebrates its 25th anniversary, and our DSW program celebrates its successful launch. In honor of these milestones, we will be hosting a “Milestones Celebration” on October 2, 2015, and hope that all of you will be a part of it. Look for an email about ways to participate in planning this event. In the spirit of collaboration, we hope to involve students, alumni, faculty, staff and community members in this momentous celebration!

Barbara W. Shank
Dean and Professor

This issue of *Perspectives* highlights our news and events through the lens of two themes. The first is interprofessional education and collaboration, which will be introduced by our guest editor, Lisa Richardson, director of MSW field education (page 4). The second is the School of Social Work’s overarching theme for the year, *Justice for Children, Youth and Families*. This theme will tie together our annual signature events as well as many of the programs hosted by our student organizations. You will see this theme played out in our spring 2015 newsletter as well.
DSW Launched!

We have launched the first online DSW program in the United States to focus on Teaching as Practice. At the time of this article, students in Cohort 1 are completing their third course in a 45 credit, three-year program. About two-thirds of our class members are already full-time faculty and the remaining students have experience in adjunct faculty positions. This level of engagement with teaching has influenced our teaching and the students’ learning. A philosophy of teaching articulated with our DSW competencies characterizes our focus on co-creating; we all teach and we all learn.

Since the day of their arrival on campus in August, our 20 students have been engaged in specifying their goals for teaching, scholarship, service and leadership. Beginning with a three-day orientation, students had opportunities to articulate specific steps in moving their dreams into reality. They created charts, practiced online demonstrations, and planned for ways to maintain relationships in the virtual holding environment.

Key to this DSW program is a residency requirement – a two-week, on-campus summer course in St. Paul each of the three years. In the first summer, the personal interactions in the campus-based course help cement the relationships formed during the orientation. This time also provides an opportunity to become familiar with campus resources and comfortable with the classroom technology. Subsequently, in the online classroom, students and faculty have noted the ease with which students have engaged in the synchronous sessions, while dispersed across the United States from South Carolina to Alaska, from California to Indiana.

As our program unfolds, the pioneering spirit of our inaugural class continues to inspire and delight. The term that keeps coming to mind is synergy – a program intended to address a gap in the number of doctoral-prepared educators; educators in need of doctoral credentials and professional development as teachers; and a format that allows for staying at home while going to school – all come together to create something bigger than its parts.

If you have similar aspirations and a sense of adventure and commitment, join us at an online information session to discern whether this DSW program might be for you.

www.stthomas.edu/socialwork/DSW

All photos taken at orientation, Oak Ridge Conference Center
Spotlight on Interprofessional Education and Collaboration
Letter from the Guest Editor

Social workers are no strangers to interprofessional practice and collaboration, the focus of this issue of Perspectives. Our roles frequently require active participation on multidisciplinary teams. We help individuals, families and communities build and enhance informal and formal support networks, including accessing resources provided by professionals from a wide range of disciplines.

The ability to work collaboratively, to understand our own and other professionals’ scopes of practice, and to communicate across disciplines, is essential for influencing change effectively.

Across the country, interprofessional education has taken on strategic importance in higher education. Employers have noted that well-functioning teams produce better outcomes across industries. The Affordable Care Act has increased expectations for team-based and integrated care, and launched a national Coordinating Center for Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice. These changes in our practice context reinforce the importance of social workers clearly articulating their roles on interprofessional teams, and maximizing skills in collaboration and communication.

Within the School of Social Work, interprofessional practice is articulated in our program competencies and courses. Both BSW and MSW students actively engage across disciplines in their field placements. DSW students will have the opportunity to practice in an interprofessional setting through a course on interprofessional education. Opportunities for students to learn with and from other disciplines are long standing. The Interprofessional Center for Counseling and Legal Services (IPC), launched in 2003, is a unique center that brings together social work, psychology and legal services (see page 6). BSW and MSW students participate each year in the Carondelet Village project, working with students from a variety of other disciplines (see page 10).

Several articles in this issue will bring to life the rich learning and practice that comes through interprofessional education and collaboration. We hope these stories represent the themes you see in your own practice, and help to reinforce the value we bring to our work with individuals and communities, through active engagement, teamwork, communication, and collaboration.

Montessori Partners Serving all Children (MPSAC) Grant: An Interprofessional Partnership
By Kendra Garrett, Associate Professor

Faculty from the School of Social Work and the St. Catherine University occupational therapy, education, public health, and physician assistant programs are collaborating with the Montessori Center of Minnesota on a three-year grant sponsored by the Better Way Foundation. This grant is funding an interprofessional partnership that seeks to build sustainable relationships among participants to promote optimum growth and development of children in several Montessori schools in the Twin Cities. Three schools (Brightwater in north Minneapolis, Centro/Siembra in south Minneapolis, and Cornerstone in St. Paul) participated during the 2013-14 school year. During the first year of the partnership, the participants developed communication guidelines, conducted preschool screenings, interviewed parents about their needs, conducted a parent-education forum, and consulted on student needs. Now the group is beginning year two, and two new St. Paul schools, American Indian Montessori and Hmong Montessori School, are joining. The partnership also has been able to add a new junior-level social work field placement from the School of Social Work with the collaborative.
Interprofessional Collaboration: a Theme at the Annual Summit on Emerging Issues in Social Work Practice
By Katie Johnson, MSW student and Field Practice Institute research assistant

Beginning in 2012, the School of Social Work’s Field Practice Institute invited students, field instructors, faculty, and practitioners to an annual summit on emerging issues in social work practice. Topics have included clinical social work in medical settings, voices of alumni, and mental health in educational settings. While each session has drawn distinct audiences, each group has identified a common thread: the importance of working effectively on interprofessional teams.

“It’s striking to note how interprofessional collaboration has surfaced as a theme at each of our three annual summits,” commented Lisa Richardson, director of MSW field education and co-director of the Field Practice Institute. “While social workers are accustomed to working in ‘host’ settings, the prevalence of the topic at the summits reinforces how essential it is to work collaboratively for change.”

“Social workers are skilled at thinking systemically,” Lisa Richardson noted. “As our summit presenters noted over and over, interprofessional work offers an opportunity to embody systems work and systems change.”

Across varied settings, social workers collaborate with a variety of professions to coordinate care and support for clients. Physicians, nurses, teachers, administrators, law enforcement officials, and other service providers become professional partners. Relationship dynamics in teams can be complex, with each member bringing a different perspective to the conversation and team member roles sometimes being unclear.

During our first summit, Tanya Rand and Cindy St. George from HealthEast emphasized the importance of such systems work in the medical setting. Social workers in hospitals and clinics have the responsibility of not only helping patients and families navigate health care systems and interpret complex terminology, but also educating various other medical professionals about the psychosocial issues of their patients. Social workers Leslie Sater and Diane Jorgensen added that social workers in the medical field had the additional challenge of working in a system that is outcome based, in contrast to a profession that values processes. The prevalence of cross-disciplinary supervision also requires that professionals from different disciplines understand each other’s professional identities and roles.

Our second summit featured the voices of alumni across diverse practice settings. Hospice social service manager and social worker Jim Heymans spoke about being an effective and competent interprofessional team member. He noted that while we need to continually advocate for our profession, we also have the responsibility of understanding terminology used in our team members’ professions and respecting the authority of these other disciplines. Carey Winkler, director of BSW field education and co-director of the Field Practice Institute, reinforced this perspective. “Social workers on interdisciplinary teams need to be knowledgeable about and work in environments with varying ethical codes and standards.”

This past year’s summit focused on social work in educational settings. Kathy Lombardi, Heather Alden, Mary Larscheid, and Christy McCoy (pictured below) identified the many professionals with whom school social workers collaborate, including school administrators, teachers, counselors, psychologists, and school nurses. Social workers in the educational setting have mezzo responsibilities of promoting effective school policies and administrative procedures, involving themselves in policy-making teams in order to advocate for social emotional learning initiatives, and promote interdisciplinary systems collaboration. In addition, school social workers provide professional development sessions for school staff on topics such as signs and symptoms of mental health conditions, best practices for responding to challenging behaviors, and information on how exposure to trauma affects the brain and learning. This type of professional development can change how educators view students’ behavior, expanding their perspectives to include the individual and institutional biases that create barriers to students’ learning.

While each of the summits presented unique ideas and challenges for social workers on interdisciplinary teams, all speakers emphasized the importance of communicating to team members the role and strengths that social work brings to each setting. Brenda Verbrick with Allina Health encouraged social workers to demonstrate to other professionals our core competencies, including our systems perspective, strengths perspective, expert knowledge of mental health and chemical health issues, and knowledge of community resources. Indeed, social workers’ empowerment paradigm and emphasis on “starting where the client is” are well-aligned with the family- and patient-centered practices that are emerging with industry reforms. The unique contributions of social work to interprofessional practice and collaboration surely will continue as a theme for many summits to come.
The Interprofessional Center for Counseling and Legal Services: a Model of Interprofessional Collaboration
By Rebecca Mariscal, Class of ’15


The Interprofessional Center (IPC) on St. Thomas’ Minneapolis campus brings together the School of Social Work, School of Law and the School of Professional Psychology. The center was created eleven years ago and moved to its new location in Opus Hall in 2012. At the IPC, students from each discipline work together to help clients and further their own learning. Co-director of the IPC George Baboila of the School of Social Work, said the center has a dual purpose: “meeting the needs of the community and meeting the needs of students.”

“If we have a client, one of the important things about working interprofessionally is, it’s not my client or your client, it’s our client.”

Whitney Wessels, MSW ’14, and Skye Coughlin, BSW ’14, worked with the IPC during the 2014 spring semester. St. Thomas and St. Kate’s students have the rare opportunity to participate in interprofessional work at the center. “There are few places like this in the nation where students get to do work interprofessionally,” Coughlin said. “We have so many resources at our disposal here.”

The two social work students had different roles within the IPC. Wessels worked in clinical counseling while Coughlin worked as a generalist doing case management, but both interacted frequently with their interprofessional co-workers from the School of Law and the School of Professional Psychology. “We share the clients,” Wessels said. “A lot of my clients are receiving some overlap of our services.”

Baboila said the IPC teaches students the skills necessary to work with different disciplines.

“It helps everybody have a clear understanding of other professions, how interprofessional collaboration works, what its purpose is, what its goals are,” Baboila said. “If we have a client, one of the important things about working interprofessionally is, it’s not my client or your client, it’s our client.”

In order for the three professions to work as one, all disciplines must be viewed as important, Baboila said.

“We all depend on each other and we all have tremendous respect for each other’s professions,” Coughlin said.

Still, each of the disciplines brings something unique to the table. Wessels said each profession will have different priorities for the clients. “I might have a very different relationship with a client than the same client would have with their case manager or their lawyer.”

These different relationships allow students to gain a better, more complete understanding of the clients, their needs and the challenges they may face. “Working in an interdisciplinary setting is a great opportunity to get a comprehensive picture of the clients that you’re working with and to really understand what they’re going through,” Wessels said.

Wessels said that the IPC also provides an opportunity to teach others more about social work, a task that can be daunting. “It requires strong understanding and confidence in what you do,” Wessels said. But bringing more recognition to the field is important. “Being a social worker, when a lot of people don’t understand what the role of social work is – especially in an interdisciplinary setting – is an opportunity for us to advocate for ourselves,” Wessels explained.

The ability to work with other professionals in the School of Law and School of Professional Psychology is the reason both these students chose the IPC. Wessels had worked in an interdisciplinary setting in a hospital, and enjoyed the shared understanding in that experience, leading her to select the IPC. “Working with lawyers and case managers and psychologists seemed like a really good opportunity to continue that interprofessional, interdisciplinary work that I had in mind,” she said.

Coughlin, who chose the IPC to learn more about the law side of things and work with others in the legal discipline, hopes to return to the center again after she completes law school, this time working as an attorney. “Once you’re part of the IPC you’ll always be part of the IPC,” Coughlin said.

Learn more about the IPC at www.stthomas.edu/IPC
Jim Stolz is now a clinical supervisor with Assistance in Recovery (AiR), a national provider of services for those struggling with alcohol, drugs, eating disorders and mental health issues. It is no coincidence that the clinical social work team at AiR is largely comprised of graduates of the St. Kate’s – St. Thomas MSW program and that four of the seven did their clinical field placements at the IPC.

“The IPC is designed as an optimal training ground for social workers. In addition to the exceptional clinical experience, the collaborative piece is key. Students gain experience working with different disciplines and learn how each discipline operates and what they bring to the table. IPC students graduate without fear of other professions and are well-versed in the laws around social work that they will have to navigate,” Stoltz said.

When Stoltz joined AiR there were no clinical social workers on the team. Now their clinical case management program, which is built on the family systems model, is predominantly clinical social workers. “Social workers are uniquely qualified to do this type of work. They have the ability to pull all of the disciplines together and they don’t become too attached to a specific approach or way of doing things. So much of our work is done collaboratively, it’s vitally important to be able to look at all of the layers and not align with only a single discipline. The IPC is an especially effective environment in which to hone these skills,” Stoltz said.
Minnesota Commissioner of Human Services Lucinda Jesson joined the NAMI Minnesota State Conference November 15. She referenced the “Determinants of health” chart, above, in stating that only 10-15 percent of “health” is determined by traditional clinical care. She called for health reform that looks at the “other 85-90 percent,” which includes physical environment factors such as housing and safe communities, and myriad other social and economic factors and health behaviors, including access to mental health resources.

Looking at this chart, it’s clear to see why social workers need to be actively engaged in both the practices and policies aimed at improving health.

The first annual Policy in Practice (PiP) Forum was held October 10 at the University of St. Thomas. The purpose of these forums is to create a space where social work students, professionals, and alumni can come together to learn more about the interactions of “on-the-ground” professional social work practice and public policy. Thus, social workers will be better able to advocate for their clients and for their profession as they become better informed on these interactions.

The first forum, “The Affordable Care Act (ACA): Impacts on Clinical Social Work Practice,” featured a distinguished panel of four experts in the field. The speakers were drawn from a number of different fields—social work, psychiatry, public health, advocacy, and management—emphasizing the broad reaches of the legislation, and the interprofessional nature of the response.

All of the speakers specifically mentioned the ACA’s emphasis on interprofessional responses to mental health, due to its call for community-based and holistic responses to health needs.

The next speaker, Sue Abderholden, serves as the executive director of the National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) - Minnesota Chapter. In this role she acts as a policy expert and advocate for people with mental illness. Abderholden offered her views of the ACA’s impact on people living with mental illness, saying that she was, in sum, optimistic about the law’s long-term impacts on access to high-quality care for people with mental illness.

The next two speakers on the panel are both working in the field of mental health services, and so were well-positioned to speak to the ACA’s impact on their work environments. The first, Dr. L. Read Sulik, serves as the chief integration officer and child and adolescent psychiatrist at PrairieCare. Dr. Sulik spoke about his efforts at PrairieCare to achieve the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s “Triple Aim” through integration of primary and behavioral health care. (The “Triple Aim” is the goal
of simultaneously improving the patient experience of care [quality and satisfaction], improving the health of populations, and reducing the per capita cost of health care.)

He particularly focused on emerging roles for social workers as the ACA rolls out – for example, as patient care specialists, care coordinators, or wellness coaches. Regardless of the title of the role, Dr. Sulik believes that the ACA has created opportunities for integrated health care, including behavioral or mental health care, and that clinical social workers are particularly well-suited to provide this type of care.

The final speaker, Chris Hickman, LICSW, is system director of Fairview Counseling Centers and Clinical Integration. Mr. Hickman also emphasized the opportunities for rethinking behavioral health care services that the ACA has created. For example, he pointed to Fairview’s integrated behavioral health model as an example of the type of cross-systems work that the ACA calls for. He identified new roles for clinical social workers as well, including an integration of mental health and physical health care, seeing clinical social work as part of a health care team, and providing “whole person care,” a concept that was repeatedly mentioned by all of the panelists.

After the panelists spoke, Dr. Toft facilitated a lively discussion with audience members. The conversation ranged from questions about how the ACA and its new roles for clinical social workers would impact social workers in private practice, to how different service providers were responding to the laws’ mandates, to its impacts on clients who are economically at-risk and have mental health needs.

The forum served to highlight that the ACA policy does, indeed, have significant impact on clinical social work practice. Furthermore, as the models for service are developed both within formal health care systems and for independent clinicians, it will be important for social workers to be involved.

Slide presentations from the event can be accessed on the event page: www.stthomas.edu/socialwork/PIPACA

Engaging at the Micro, Mezzo, and Macro Levels

Emily Ross, ’12 MSW, NAMI-MN board member

While completing my MSW at St. Kate’s – St. Thomas, I used NAMI-MN’s Family-to-Family Program participants for my clinical research sample. One of my committee members nominated me to serve on NAMI’s board of directors the spring after I graduated.

I now work full time providing direct care to adults with mental illnesses and chemical dependency issues in an intensive residential treatment setting. My work is very much centered in micro-level practice.

Serving on NAMI’s board of directors is not only an honor, but it also has given me an opportunity to practice social work at mezzo and macro levels. I collaborate with other members of the board to oversee the management of NAMI-MN and ensure the organization’s mission is fulfilled. I am able to offer a clinical lens to strategy, administration, and other pertinent issues, as well as aid in the formulation of key policies and strategic goals.

I’m grateful for the opportunity to expand the scope of my social work practice through NAMI. At this point in my career, I know my heart sits with micro-level clinical practice, but I am delighted for this opportunity for continued growth and challenge.
The IPE program allows students from many health professions to learn from one another and work together. “All together we’re smarter than one of us alone,” Rottenberg explained. “The students gained a better understanding about what each profession did and how they worked, an opportunity many students do not get.”

The social work students also had the opportunity to showcase their own disciplines.

“Social workers bring what we call the strengths perspective. Not what’s wrong with this person, but what’s right? What are their strengths, what do they have going for them?” Rottenberg explained. “Students gained an appreciation for what they brought to the collaboration, which led to more self-respect as well as respect for others.”

The interprofessional skills that social work students learn while working at Carondelet will prepare them for their future professions in the health sector. “The direction of medical care is more collaborative and this partnership provides valuable experience that they can apply in the real world,” Rottenberg said.
BSW Student Studies Impact of LINK’s Services on Youth Crime

BSW student Emily Scharpen has been selected by the Grants and Research Office to represent UST in the Minnesota Private College Scholars Showcase. Scharpen collaborated with professor Katharine Hill on her community-based research grant project, “The Impact of the Link’s Juvenile Supervision Center on Crime Rates in Minneapolis.” The objective of this showcase is to include research projects that have some link to policy or society, which in turn can help legislators and other audiences appreciate the institutions undergrads’ research. Great work Emily and Katharine!

Research Study on Foster Youth Transitions Brings Classroom Learning to Life for Three Social Work Students

Following is an excerpt from Undergraduate Research at UST | Inquiry by Kristin Walters

Claire Smart, Alison Paz, and Lauren Olson are three UST seniors who’ve had the opportunity to collaborate while getting their feet wet in research. Together, the three are working under the guidance of social work professor Ande Nesmith on an ongoing study about foster youth transitions.

“The Transitions program was originally created to help businesses transition through changes,” Smart said. In its original form, the Transitions program prepared employees who were going through corporate change by telling them what to expect at each stage. “We’re analyzing how well the program works for kids that are transitioning out of foster care,” Smart said.

Data for this three-year study was collected from Family Alternatives – a Minneapolis-based foster care and adoption agency – via qualitative and quantitative surveys, with other UST graduate and undergraduate students taking part in the research along the way.

Smart, Paz and Olson all joined the study as research assistants in 2014. They’ve worked as a team to pull together and analyze the study’s different data sets, sharing responsibilities as they go. “There is value in other perspectives, especially in research, and having that has been really interesting,” Olson said.

Working together now also helps to prepare them for the way it will be in the future, according to Smart. “In social work, you’re often working on a team,” she said. “It helps to be able to bounce ideas off each other.”

For Paz, the hands-on experience helped bring her classroom learning to life. “I didn’t know a lot about the foster care system before this project, so this made it very real,” Paz said. “I also think the experience has been rewarding in learning how I work and by developing my work ethic.”

All three women recommend getting involved in research as a way to get hands-on experience in the field before graduation.

“It wasn’t until this past year that I really understood that being a research assistant was an opportunity available to me,” Olson said. “There is really important research being done in social work, so this kind of opportunity is valuable for students – and everyone else.”

Visit www.stthomas.edu/gro for more info about undergraduate research grant programs.
The words stick out in stark contrast, bold black letters on white paper. Labels duct-taped to shirts. “Bad Kid.” “Troubled.” “Can’t Trust.” The words many use to refer to foster children, especially the ones about to age out of the system.

The duct-taped labels were a part of a PSA video created by Connections to Independence or C2i for short, the focus of the School of Social Work’s annual Room at the Table event. C2i works with youth in foster care who will age out of the system to ensure that they receive adequate resources and a chance to live independently and reach their maximum potential.

The event featured introductions from Executive Director Jessica Rogers and Program Director Michelle May, as well as a panel of youth who shared their experiences with the foster care system and the C2i organization.

C2i works with youth aged 15 to 24 to develop five core life competencies: education, employment, housing, financial literacy and personal wellness. Rogers highlighted the importance of personal wellness, something many programs forget. “That’s focusing on their well-being. You can teach kids how to go on to postsecondary, how to get an apartment, how to get a job, but they’re not going to be able to sustain those things if they’re not healthy in mind, body, and soul,” Rogers explained.

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C2i Panelists, back row: Lucy Kayee, Jessica Rogers, Michelle May. Front row: Thomas Stone, LeShae Carter, Javon Turner

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24. Each group focuses on different skills, from staying on-track in school to independent living skills to stabilizing home and career.

All three of these groups highlight the youth perspective. "Anything and everything we do, we have a youth voice. Programming ideas come directly from the youth," May said.

Room at the Table participants heard from a panel of C2i participants, which included Leshae Carter, Lucy Kayee, Thomas Stone and Javon Turner. The four shared how they originally entered the foster care system, the number of foster homes they have been a part of, their experience with C2i and how it differed from other foster programs. C2i’s small caseloads of 12 youth per counselor (compared to common caseloads of 40+ at the county level), coupled with year-round programming, a mental health focus and a focus on the social aspects of youth connections are all key to participants’ success.

In addition to hearing from the panelists, event participants had the opportunity to role-play a situation between a foster care youth and her support system, including foster parents, teachers and a social worker. This exercise highlighted the importance of a systemic approach and the strengths perspective, but also raised awareness of how easy it is, as professionals, to talk at youth instead of talking with them.

When asked what they would like to share with social workers in the system, the panelists emphasized that it is important for social workers to remember the reason they are there: for the youth. "Close your mouth and open your ears. The more you speak and assume you know this young person, the more we’ll close off," Kayee said.

Learn more at: www.c2iyouth.org

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**Did You Know…?**

- Over 60% of Minnesota’s homeless youth population have experienced foster care at some point in their life
- 46% of youth in foster care graduate from high school.
- Only 15% go on to post-secondary education
- 49% of youth who have aged out of foster care are unemployed.

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**C2i impact on youth in foster care**

- 100% high school graduation/GED
- Over 85% have housing
- Over 75% employment rate

C2i works with youth in foster care who will age out of the system to ensure that they receive adequate resources and a chance to live independently and reach their maximum potential.

Sources:
- C2i PSA video on YouTube
- Connections to Independence Annual Report 2012
During its first meeting in September, members of the newly formed Student Justice Initiative (SJI) voted to join forces with Take Action MN, a Twin Cities-based nonprofit organization which, according to its mission statement, works to “realize racial and economic equality across Minnesota.” Specifically, SJI will participate in Take Action MN’s Justice 4 All campaign, which seeks to restore justice to Minnesota’s discriminatory criminal justice system by eliminating the barriers that prevent persons with a criminal record from finding employment and by re-enfranchising previously incarcerated people who have been denied the right to vote.

One of the most challenging barriers that formerly incarcerated people face in reintegrating into society is finding employment due to hiring practices that immediately deny anyone with a criminal record. This practice contributes to Minnesota having the nation’s worst racial disparity in hiring: the African-American unemployment rate is 27 percent, which is five times higher than the rate for white Americans. Additionally, Minnesota currently

A Raised Consciousness. You might think that as a program devoted to clinical social work education, our MSW students might not be interested in advocacy and promoting social justice. You might assume that our students’ orientation toward systems and structural change is, “some macro-oriented social worker will do that.” However, as a professor of social work history and social policy in a clinical social work program, I am forever surprised and energized by our students’ level of interest in these issues and their desire to want to address social injustice. However, as of last spring, we had not managed to transform this excitement into a sustained group effort.

The Blueprint for Advocacy. Last spring, several social work faculty (Stacy Husebo, Lisa Kiesel and Jessica Toft) decided to provide such an opportunity as part of the school’s strategic plan. The idea was to set up the conditions and provide the faculty consultation and facilitation necessary for students to gain the experience of leading an issue advocacy effort. The blueprint developed is to ask 2-4 advocacy groups to pitch their advocacy agenda to students.

Students ask questions, deliberate, and then vote to determine the Student Justice Initiative (SJI) for the year.

Each year we envision student leaders organizing meaningful advocacy opportunities for students in cooperation with the selected advocacy group, such as talking with legislators, developing fact sheets, writing letters to the editor, educating the public, going to “Day on the Hill” events and more. We see this as a great opportunity for students and the people they can help by bringing many voices to an issue. We have well over 500 BSW and MSW students in the program and more than 30 faculty. Imagine the potential! We want students to learn and model an integrated profession of social work that provides excellent service and works for social justice.

Transforming Structures. We began the initiative this year with the outstanding assistance of the MSW Student Association and its leaders (Andrea Grey and Nicole Dahl and faculty liaison, Jane Hurley Johncox) who held the first meeting to select the advocacy issue. We’re excited to see how the first chapter of this initiative unfolds and we hope for great success and the momentum for many years of student-led advocacy.

“‘There must exist a paradigm, a practical model for social change that includes an understanding of ways to transform consciousness that are linked to efforts to transform structures.’”

– Bell Hooks
denies individuals convicted of a felony the democratic right to vote until they have served their full prison sentence terms, which includes probation and parole. This means that over 70,000 people living in the community, working, and paying taxes are legally denied a political voice in Minnesota. This policy contributes to racial injustice that plays out on a local and national scale: in Minnesota, 8 percent of African-Americans are denied the right to vote, while nationally, 1 in 13 African-Americans are disenfranchised.  

By advocating to change corporate hiring policies and Minnesota’s voting laws, the Justice 4 All campaign seeks to restore full citizenship rights – and human rights – to persons with a criminal record. The group already has supported Minnesota’s “Ban the Box” legislation, making it illegal to ask if an applicant has a criminal record on the job application. If Minnesota’s discriminatory criminal justice policies stir your passion to fight for social justice, as it did for us, please join our Student Justice Initiative!

For more information about how you can get involved, contact Cady Nielsen at cady.nielsen@stthomas.edu. For more information about this year’s campaign issue, go to restorethevotemn.org.

1. www.takeactionminnesota.org/work/criminal-justice-reform/
2. www.sentencingproject.org/template/page.cfm?id=133
Calley Roers, MSW ’10
Calley currently is working as the in-patient unit therapist at PrairieCare, a child and adolescent psychiatric hospital in Maple Grove, Minnesota. She provides family, group, and individual therapy for children admitted to the unit. After obtaining her LICSW in February 2013, she recently met requirements to become a licensing supervisor to LGSWs.

Sarah Breyette, MSW ’14
Sarah currently is working as a foster care social worker at Volunteers of America in Edina, Minnesota. She provides services for children who have emotional and behavioral problems and/or special needs, and who cannot live with their birth parents.

Erica Gerrity, MSW ’05
Erica Gerrity, MSW ’05 and program director of the Isis Rising prison doula program, was featured in the Dec. 3 Minnesota Women’s Press for her work as a “changemaker.” Erica was a leader in the coalition to pass legislation to support pregnant women and new mothers in Minnesota prisons and jails that went into effect July 1. Congratulations!

Rachel Murr, MSW ’13
Rachel is a therapist at the Working Well Mental Health Clinic in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her MSW clinical research paper formed the basis of her new book, Unnatural: Spiritual Resiliency in Queer Christian Women, released this fall.

Christine Rintoul, BSW ’14
As an intern for the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, every day I am granted the privilege to attend meetings at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. I sit as a representative of the Holy See mission, and I write a report for the mission on every meeting that I attend. I have been following the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) since I started October 7, 2014, and the topics discussed in this committee range from the Israel-Palestine conflict to international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space. Sometimes the mission sends me to side meetings with more specific topics, such as women in custody in conflict situations or organ trafficking. These side meetings tend to have more social work-related discussions than the general debate statements from member states in Fourth Committee.

Overall, I feel as though my social work lens gives me a deeper understanding of the issues being discussed in all of the meetings. My social work training has provided me with a holistic understanding of both policy and its implications on the lived human experience, which I think gives me a unique view of the statements made at the U.N. I am definitely getting some practice in cultural competency. I’m constantly interacting with people from all over the world and re-evaluating how my own social position affects my personal understanding of an issue. This further proves to me how important it is for people who actually work with the people to actively influence the policies being made.

Margaret Kelly, MSW ’09, ordained Lutheran pastor
Margaret was featured in “St. Paul Pastor’s Pulpit? A food truck” in the St. Paul Pioneer Press, Aug. 18, 2014. Her vision of “radical hospitality” has come to life as a “church on wheels that drives to where people are, offering free food and prayer to the poor, homeless and near-homeless.”

Cheryl Flugaur-Leavitt named 2014 Minnesota School Social Worker
Congratulations to SOWK field instructor, Cheryl Flugaur-Leavitt for being named 2014 Minnesota School Social Worker of the Year! Flugaur-Leavitt has been a school social worker in the Minneapolis Public Schools for 14 years. Her award was presented at the MSSWA conference November 3 in St. Paul.
New roles and new faces in the School of Social Work

Hiyana Xiong
After three years supporting the MSW program, Hiyana Xiong has moved into the role of DSW academic online program manager. Congratulations Hiyana!

Melissa Anderson
Melissa Anderson joined the School of Social Work in October as the MSW administrative assistant. She comes to us with eight years' experience working in higher education and a BBA in finance from the University of Iowa. Welcome Melissa!

Rachel Miller
Rachel Miller joined the School of Social Work in the spring as the field information coordinator, working with our field education leaders and students. Prior to joining the SSW, she worked in the public school system and has a degree in English ed from the University of Minnesota. Welcome Rachel!

Laurel Bidwell
Laurel Bidwell Ph.D., MSW, LICSW, joined the School of Social Work faculty this fall as an assistant professor on a one-year contract. Laurel has her MSW from City University of New York and her MPhil and Ph.D from Columbia University. Welcome Laurel!

Student participation in American Cancer Society Grant at Mayo Clinic
By Kathleen Caron, MSW, LICSW, coordinator of MSW Weekend Cohort Field, instructor

For the third time, a clinical student in the School of Social Work has been selected by Mayo Clinic Rochester to complete their practicum as a part of a master's level training grant for clinical oncology social work.

This national grant, funded by the American Cancer Society, offers the opportunity for a clinical student to receive specialized training in clinical oncology social work. This year is the fourth year the Department of Social Services at Mayo Clinic Rochester has been awarded this grant, and we are thrilled that for three of those years, our students have been selected to receive this prestigious and competitive practicum opportunity.

Carrie Christensen was the first student from our program to be a part of this grant, and was selected in the first year of the grant. Christensen was in the regular standing two-year track in the MSW program and graduated in 2012.

Clare Dudzinski was the second student from our program to be selected, and completed the practicum as a full-time summer block in summer 2013. Dudzinski was in the advanced standing one-year track and graduated in 2013.

Kristen Weeker was selected most recently, and will be completing her practicum this upcoming summer, 2015, as a full-time summer block practicum. Weeker is in her clinical year of the Regular Standing two-year track.

The MSW Field Education Program is happy to formally support Mayo’s application for this grant, as we continue to be impressed with the level of training and supervision our students receive. This practicum offers students, who have an expressed and demonstrated interest in pediatric oncology social work, to develop their knowledge base and skill set in working with patients and families living with a cancer diagnosis.

Social Work Students presented at the Oral History Association Annual Meeting
Social Work students Luci Russell ’13 and Helen Garcia ’15, along with Louise Edwards-Simpson, St. Catherine University assistant professor, presented “Meta Perspectives on the Intersection between Homelessness and Higher Education: A Faculty-Student Collaborative Oral History Project.” Edwards-Simpson is project director, SCU Voices of Homelessness Oral History Project. They presented in September at St. Kate’s and in October at the Oral History Association Annual Meeting in Madison, Wisconsin.

Carl White’s story, “Learning a New Way to Live, With Pain,” featured on Sharing Mayo Clinic site
Carl White is completing his master’s of social work and has a job as a health unit coordinator at Mayo Clinic Hospital, Saint Mary’s Campus. Read about his journey since 2009, when he was consumed by chronic pain from two accidents, and how far he’s come since being referred to Mayo’s Pain Rehabilitation Center.

Full article: http://sharing.mayoclinic.org/discussion/ learning-a-new-way-to-live-with-pain
BSW Student Organizations at Work

This semester the leadership team from Beta Epsilon has been working with St. Catherine University - University of St. Thomas international students to respond to the concern that international students do not always feel recognized and integrated into the larger community. A partnership was formed to be more inclusive and welcoming while serving the common good. On November 29, 2014, 18 Beta members and international students packaged 8,634 pounds of food for Second Harvest Heartland food bank along with other volunteers. It was a truly community-building event.

BSW Social Work Club

By Natalie Thoresen, Class of 2017

The BSW Social Work Club is in the process of a “revival year.” With four new enthusiastic officers taking over and the support of new members and faculty, we have transformed and expanded the club. Throughout the semester we held bi-monthly meetings with a variety of guest speakers who shared their experiences in the social work field and in working for justice in an unjust world. We also have been lucky to organize, and participate in, a few volunteer and service projects for those in the surrounding community. This first semester has been a wonderful experience and we hope to grow in semesters to come. Thank you to all who have given our club support and we welcome new members as we continue this journey. If you would like to get involved, or hear more information, like us on Facebook at “UST/SCU BSW Social Work Club” or contact the faculty club adviser, Miriam Itzkowitz, at miriam.itzkowitz@stthomas.edu.

The 2014 MSWSA Open Baskets Service Project was a success!

Open Baskets gives hope, love and gifts to our neighbors living with a mental illness. The goal of 1,800 baskets for the 2014 holiday season was met. Congratulations to Colleen (Open Baskets executive director), her family and all the volunteers!
Area of Emphasis Scholars
The fall semester got underway with meetings of our three AE Scholars programs: Area of Emphasis in Aging (AEA), Area of Emphasis in Military Practice (AEMP), and our newest program, Area of Emphasis in Practice with Immigrants and Refugees (AEIR), which launched this fall.

On September 4, the AEMP Scholars hosted the Vet Center Mobile Unit, which provides helpful information for veterans and information about the UST military/veteran community.

Each area of emphasis brings together MSW students, faculty and community members in a program of coursework, practicum, research and community partnership in these emerging and critical areas of social work practice.

To learn more about the AE Scholars programs, visit www.stthomas.edu/socialwork/graduate/current/aescholars.


Congratulations to Social Work faculty members Carey Winkler, Jessica Toft, Sarah Ferguson and Mary Ann Brenden, who wrote the grant proposal for this project. The intention is to screen the video at the SSW “Milestones Celebration” on October 2, 2015. Below is a brief description of the project:

As a historically male-orientated institution, the impact of women in leadership at the University of St. Thomas is noteworthy. Traditionally, the profession of social work has had far more women than men in its ranks. However, leadership in social work has been male dominated, with few women serving as agency administrators, professors and deans of schools of social work. The School of Social Work at the University of St. Thomas did not follow this trend. Since its inception in the late 1960s, the Social Work program at the University of St. Thomas and St. Catherine University has been led by women throughout its development from a small undergraduate major to the comprehensive, successful and influential School of Social Work that now offers degrees at the baccalaureate, master’s and doctorate levels.

The proposed project will document the long-held leadership roles that women have played in the School of Social Work at the University of St. Thomas through the creation of a video and a companion article focused on the oral histories of three prominent women leaders: Dr. Barbara Shank, Dr. Angeline Barretta-Herman, and Dr. Janice Andrews-Schenk.
Serving the Latino Community in Practice and Research
By Rebecca Mariscal, Class of 2015

In the southwest corner of Minnesota, in a town of about 12,000 people, doctors, nurses, social workers and other health professionals from throughout the region come together to serve the uninsured public and the Latino population.

School of Social Work professor Catherine Marrs Fuchsel is one of these people. She got involved with the Our Lady of Guadalupe Free Clinic in Worthington, Minnesota, three years ago when she met one of the founders, Father Jim Callahan. The clinic was in the early stages of its development and Marrs Fuchsel worked with Callahan to get involved as a mental health practitioner.

Since then, Marrs Fuchsel has worked more than seven clinics and treated more than 50 patients. The clinic operates for an entire weekend every six weeks or so. Marrs Fuchsel has even recruited some of her students to get involved as well. Graduates Sierra Asamoa-Tutu and Patrick Foley both participated in the clinics during their time at the School of Social Work. They had the opportunity to consult with clients while supervised by Marrs Fuchsel. The consultations are with many different people who have a wide variety of concerns. Although the clinic serves the entire community, they receive mostly uninsured members of the Latino community.

Marrs Fuchsel said this gives students an opportunity to work with an underrepresented population and gain experience with grassroots mental health.

“If you’ve had a calling or an interest in working with immigrants, and persons who are uninsured who are Latinos, it’s a great way to be able to work with this type of population,” Marrs Fuchsel said. “We need to give them a voice.”

If you’d like to learn more about the clinic or opportunities to volunteer, please contact Marrs Fuchsel at: clmarrsfuchsel@stkate.edu.

Marrs Fuchsel is in her fourth year of a research project examining a culturally relevant program using a specific curricula known as Sí, Yo Puedo for mental health professionals who work with immigrant Latina women and their families. The program is designed to promote self-esteem and provide education on healthy relationships, dating and domestic violence within a cultural framework. Social workers who work with this population can use the curriculum to facilitate psycho-educational groups in practice settings. The program is 11 weeks long and clients meet two hours per week. She continues to collaborate with Centro, the largest Latino community-based agency in the Twin Cities serving Latino families, on collecting data and facilitating groups for immigrant Latina women. Recently Marrs Fuchsel presented the curriculum at two national conferences in Chicago, Illinois and Lansing, Michigan.

CSWE-APM 2014
The School of Social Work was well represented at the 2014 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)-APM in Tampa, Florida.

Participants included:

Barbara W. Shank, dean and professor, who presided over many sessions and receptions in her roles as the CSWE Board Chair (2013 – 2016) and President of the International Consortium on Social Development (ICSD).

Lisa Richardson, MSS, LICSW, director of MSW Field Education, organized and led numerous sessions in her roles as the North American Network of Field Educators and Directors (NANFED) - president and treasurer, and member of the CSWE Council on Field Education (COFE).

Laurel Bidwell, MSW, Ph.D, LICSW, assistant professor. Paper presentation*

Michael Chovanec, MSW, Ph.D, LICSW, associate professor. Poster presentation*

Kari Fletcher, MSW, Ph.D, LICSW, assistant professor. Military Social Work Track, member

Catherine Marrs Fuchsel, MSW, Ph.D, LICSW, assistant professor

Lance Peterson, Ph.D, LICSW, assistant professor. Electronic poster presentation*

Felicia Sy, MSW, Ph.D, LICSW, assistant professor. Honored as a Social Work Education Mentor. Paper presentation*

Jessica Toft, MSW, Ph.D, LISW, associate professor. Paper presentation*

*See professional notes for presentation details
Professional Notes

Pa Der Vang


Angie Barretta-Herman

http://isw.sagepub.com/content/early/2014/10/06/0020872814547437

Karen Carlson


Catherine Marrs Fuchsel


Lance Peterson

Jessica Toft

Felicia Sy

Laurel Bidwell

Karen Carlson

Mike Chovanec
Milestones Celebration

40 years BSW – 25 years MSW – DSW Launch

Save the Date: October 2, 2015

7-10 p.m., University of St. Thomas, Woulfe Alumni Hall

Look for an email about ways to participate in the planning and the celebration. Not getting our emails? Make sure you stay in-the-loop! “Update Contact Information” at:

www.stthomas.edu/socialwork/alumni
School of Social Work Upcoming Events

February
February 27 – Group Work Institute: Aging and Social Group Work.
McNeely Hall 100, UST. (CEHs)

The Three Things You Need to Know About Work with Military Connected Populations

March
March is Social Work Month!
Events will include
BSW field education poster sessions:
March 10 – at St. Kate’s and
March 11 – at St. Thomas

March 14 – Advanced Clinical Practice Institute: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: Applications for Anxiety, featuring Ann Layne, Ph.D.
McNeely Hall 100, UST. (CEHs)

March 25 – Justice Lecture
This year’s theme is Justice for Children, Youth and Families.
Coeur de Catherine Ballroom, St. Kate’s

May
May 9 – Dash-it-for-Baskets 5k, supported by the MSWSA

May 18 – Clinical Research Paper Presentation Day. McNeely Hall 100, UST. All are invited to join our MSW students as they present their Clinical Research Papers throughout the day

May 30 – Advanced Clinical Practice Institute: A Relational Psychoanalytic Approach to Couples Therapy, featuring Phil Ringstrom, Ph.D.
McNeely Hall 100, UST. (CEHs)

August
Coeur de Catherine Ballroom, St. Kate’s. (CEHs)

October
October 2 – Save the Date! School of Social Work “Milestones” Celebration

* Events for specific audiences will be found on our website event page or information will be sent via email

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Tell us about your career advancements, papers, honors and achievements and we will include this information in our notes section. Simply visit www.stthomas.edu/socialwork/alumni, update your information, and provide the information you’d like to highlight in the comments section.

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Join us at LinkedIn
SCU-UST School of Social Work Student/Alumni group

Check out our new School of Social Work website:
www.stthomas.edu/socialwork

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