

IN HIS SERVICE

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

CAUSEWAY CHALLENGE

Students work to empower community engagement through voter education

Carolita Claus, Bess Helton, and Teanna Taka are three students from the Master's of Social Work program who believe that voting can be an important indicator of community health, well-being, and empowerment. After submitting a project proposal to the Causeway Challenge in the spring, the team was announced as winners in August!

Their project recognizes that social workers play a distinctive role in empowering people who may feel unheard to get involved through civic engagement and voting. Carolita, Bess, and Teanna will collaborate with faculty to supplement the Social Work program's curriculum in order to empower social workers to

encourage voting in the communities where they work. Following training, students will be able to access a downloadable toolkit to subsequently educate their internship agencies on voter engagement.

The goal of the pilot program is to produce a resource toolkit for use by other universities, agencies, and programs.

—Stephanie Guster,
assistant professor



Pictured above: Dean Kristie Wilder, Teanna Taka, Bess Helton, and Carolita Claus

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORKER

It is not possible or even desirable to separate our religious beliefs from our social practice. However, the way we approach religion and especially the concept of sin may prevent or support our work as social workers. A quick survey of the Bible reveals that sin, in essence, is the breaking of God's law (1 John 3:4), which was given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

When Christ was among us, the rabbi and the wise men of that time were deeply engaged in applying the law to all possible life circumstances. The purpose of this tremendously detailed work was to protect people from sinning.

It is utterly surprising that Christ rebuked the work of the Jewish leaders as missing the intention of God's law, which is love. They were obsessed with perfect obedience, but that did not make them more loving people. The apostle John explained, "Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love" (1 John 4:8, NIV). Obedience of God's law in a way that does not make people more loving is "missing the target," which is actually one of the definitions of sin.

Some today believe that the Bible gives them the right to oppress certain groups

(Continued on page 6)



MESSAGE FROM DEAN KRISTIE WILDER

The past few months have been busy, to say the least, and fully exhilarating. We hope you enjoy reading this edition of *In His Service* and hearing about the ways our school stays engaged and committed to impacting change.

On the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, for example, students and faculty worked alongside the Chattanooga community to paint, garden, tutor children in reading and math, assist the homeless in having a dignified shopping experience at the Salvation Army Free Store, and so much more. The day of service not only helped those being served, but it gave our faculty, staff, and students an opportunity to more deeply understand and reflect on social work's core values of service and civic engagement.

The month of March, which is National Social Work Month, was a time to raise awareness about the impact of the nation's more than 600,000 social workers. In support of this, the faculty and students organized and attended several events with a focus on this year's theme, "Social

Workers Stand Up!"

In April, students participated in the annual campus-wide Research Day. BSW and MSW students presented their policy research from Social Welfare Issues and Policies class in a poster format, while BSW students in Human Behavior and Social Environment gave oral presentations. It is inspiring to see students begin to appreciate how important research is to achieve what they want to do the most—help people.

The School of Social Work recently acquired a \$15,000 grant that will enable our faculty, social workers from the community, and law enforcement to co-train 200 local police officers in best practices for policing. This grant continues the spirit of collaboration that our school and the Chattanooga Police Department established in 2015, under the Enhancing Law Enforcement's Responses to Victims of Crime grant.

Finally, we are pleased to share that at its June 2017 meeting, the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) accreditation commission reviewed the undergraduate

and graduate-level social work programs. The accreditation for both programs was affirmed for eight additional years, without conditions or progress reports, the maximum period available from CSWE. Many individual and collective contributions were made toward the reaccreditation process. We look forward to eight more productive years delivering quality social work education.

I'm certain that more good news will be coming in the next few months as we continue to play a meaningful role in the lives of our students, alumni, and community members. We are glad you are part of our community and invite you to stay connected with us, share your story, and join in our excitement about the mission of our school.



He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8, NASB

FIELD DIRECTOR TRANSITION

Smiling. Energetic. Mediator. Loving. Happy. Helpful. Engaging. These are just a few of the many adjectives that colleagues use to describe the department's outgoing field director, Professor Evie Nogales-Baker. Professor Baker has served as the director of Field Education here at Southern since 2009 and has taught in the School of Social Work for 12 years. During this time, she has assisted hundreds of students in securing their internship placements. Professor Baker has carried this often monumental task with a grace, a joy, and a beautiful spirit that has helped Southern's Field Education program grow into one that is branded for its excellence. As director, she has collaborated with countless community agencies to match students to this central cornerstone tenet of social work education. Her expertise will support the incoming field director, Professor Stephanie Guster, during the transition. Professors Baker and Guster are both committed to helping students find their passions supporting the field education model.



Professor Evie Nogales-Baker
former director of Field Education



Professor Stephanie Guster
new director of Field Education

-Stephanie Guster, assistant professor

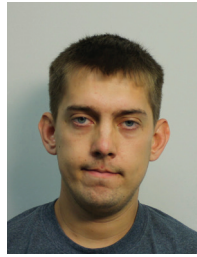
MAY 2017 GRADUATES



Carolita Claus
BSW



Takamar Comete
BSW



Jeremy Forberg
BSW



Stephanie
Hairston-Sanders
BSW



Samuel Hamby
BSW



Elizabeth Helton
BSW



Aleece Holliman
MSW-Trauma



Rita Lee
BSW



Candace McFarlane
BSW



Ashley Stevenson
Pelham
MSW-Trauma



Stephanie Supriyadi
BSW



Teanna Taka
BSW

JULY 2017 GRADUATES



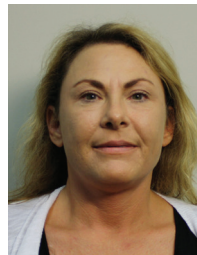
Marina Acosta
MSW-Trauma



Sierra Blevins
MSW-Child & Family



Adrian Boyd
MSW-Trauma



Anne Gonzalez
MSW-Child & Family



Melissa Hand
MSW-Child & Family



Natalie Herrera
MSW-Trauma



Jaron Hobdy
MSW-Trauma



Amanda Kindred
MSW-Trauma



Jaily King
MSW-Mental Health



Phylcia McCastle
MSW-Trauma



MacKenzi Nomura
MSW-Trauma



Antanet Roberts
MSW-Child & Family



Treva Sands
MSW-Trauma



Kristen Schwindt
MSW-Trauma



Shanae Stock
MSW-Trauma



Bob Stover
MSW-Mental Health

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK UPDATES

BSW Updates

With a new school year well under way, we pause to share some of the highlights from last school year. We continue to be grateful to God for His leading in our activities. The BSW program has been busy with service outreach, various recruitment opportunities, campus events, research, and even a trip to Washington, DC.

In January 2017, our campus family and student body were able to provide the Street Store experience on Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Service Day. A total of 2,000 items were donated and 96 individuals who were homeless were blessed through clothing, food, music, and conversation. This same month, we also hosted a department convocation in which Chris Atkins spoke to our students about his social work experience in Baghdad.

In February, our social work students (in collaboration with UTC's social work club) watched the documentary "13th" and enjoyed a discussion on equality and institutional racism. These out-of-the-classroom experiences provide a wonderful venue to put our learning to life! The end of the month meant midterm muffins for each of our students as they completed their midterm projects and exams.

March is Social Work Month, and every year we seek ways to celebrate our profession. This year's NASW social work theme was "Social Workers Stand Up," and our events included a university-wide convocation by Larry Davis, PhD, on Thursday, March 16, where the topic of his talk was "Rising Inequality: The Problem of the 21st Century." During the week of March 20-24, our School of Social Work hosted awareness booths in the student center, each with a differing theme, and a photo booth where students selected topics they "stand up for." Themes included racial equality, refugees and immigrants, and the end of human trafficking. Guests learned factual information about each issue and posted their #socialworkersstandup photo to social media. Additionally, faculty and students were invited to attend the local NASW banquet, where our own Bess Helton, BSW senior, received the local NASW-TN SE region BSW Social Work Student of the Year award. Congratulations, Bess!

Social Work Month would not have been complete without opportunities for advocacy! Our students participated in Social Work Day on the Hill, and our BSW seniors attended their Social Welfare Issues and Policies (SWIP) class trip to Washington, DC, at the end of March.

During our campus-wide research day on April 18, juniors from Professor Rusu's Human Behavior & the Social Environment II class provided research presentations on their chosen topic of interest. Seniors in Dean Wilder's SWIP class conducted a poster presentation displaying the poster topics they had presented in DC during their SWIP trip in March. April also provided an opportunity to acknowledge award recipients at the senior recognition banquet, university-wide awards convocation, and our department convocation. Award recipients for the 2016-2017 year are listed below. Congratulations to all of our majors and a big congratulations to the award recipients for this year. Keep up the great work! It is noticed.

Our final department convocation took place at the end of April. During this convocation students elected Social Work Club officers for the next school year, and faculty acknowledged the student award recipients for their achievements. In early May, we celebrated the success of our graduates through our first School of Social Work pinning ceremony on Friday, May 5. Though we have had BSW pinning ceremonies for many years, this was the first year it included both MSW and BSW graduates. We are proud of our graduates and wish them God's greatest blessings as they seek ways to change their world!

BSW Award Recipients for 2016-2017

Senior Awards

Academic Excellence: Sam Hamby
René Drumm Research: Carolita Claus
Social Work Major of the Year: Bess Helton
Leadership: Bess Helton
Excellence in Field: Teanna Taka

Non-Senior Awards

Ed Lamb Community Service (\$1,011): Dylan Gibbons
Top Achievers (\$500 each): Angelica Acevedo, Darcee Christensen, Karissa Goodman, and Samir Khalil

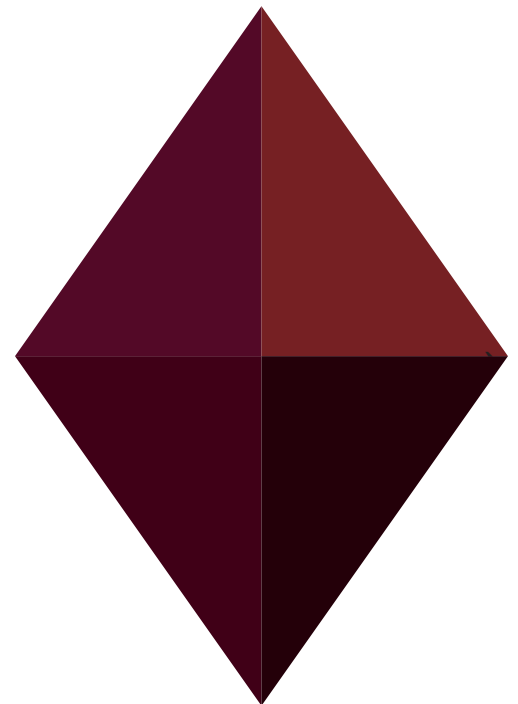
Social Work Club - May 2017

The Social Work Club had a blast this past semester. From serving our community to raising money and just having fun together, we can officially say it was a great year. In January our club joined the Salvation Army to host the Street Store in Chattanooga. Students donated and sorted various clothing items and set up a store for our homeless population in Chattanooga.

The club also visited the Chambliss Home and had an opportunity to interact and play with the kids. For fundraising, the club hosted a bake sale on campus, which was a success. The school year came to a close with a beautiful agape vespers with speaker Teri Ruff and a pizza party where members sat around playing board games and enjoying each other's company.

Thank you to the officers who made this past year possible: Karissa Goodman, Dylan Gibbons, Jocelyn Shear, Emily Bartlett, Cassondra Harris, and Darcee Christensen. New officers were elected for the 2017-2018 team, and they are excited for this upcoming school year. We would like to wish good luck to our new officer team: Karissa Goodman, Dru Thompson, Dylan Gibbons, Jocelyn Shear, Paola Mendez, Kaitlyn Goffin, Kassidy Stephens, and Tiffany Yi.

-Karissa Goodman, SWC president



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK UPDATES

MSW Updates

“Social Workers Stand Up”

Foundation students joined with other social workers in advocacy at the annual Day on the Hill in Nashville on March 22. “Social Workers Stand Up” was the 2017 theme for an annual legislative and policy event organized by the Tennessee Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-TN) in coordination with university social work programs across the state. This event is one of the most exciting and empowering programs offered to Tennessee social workers and social work students. Over 400 students and practitioners from across the state attended the event.

MSW Coalition

To support the local community, the MSW Coalition used The Howard School to print

T-shirts. Profits from sales are used to support the school.

MSW Award Recipients for 2016-2017

René Drumm Research: Rebecca Woods

Student of the Year: Treva Sands

Academic Excellence: Ashley Pelham and Julie Phillips

Excellence in Field: April Rentsch and Robert Wade

Ed Lamb Community Service: Janet Poles

MSW Graduation

The 2016-2017 year ended with two MSW students graduating in May and 16 graduating in July. Students in the program came from throughout the Southeast, including North Lauderdale (750 miles), Huntsville (120 miles), Atlanta (110 miles), Knoxville (100) and Nashville (150 miles).

State Licensure Exam Preparation

For the past two years, Southern has offered licensure preparation classes for our graduating students and community social workers to help them know how to study for the state exam. The next class is being offered on December 10, 2017, from 1-5 p.m. in Daniells Hall. Contact Professor Lorri Merchant at lmerchant@southern.edu for details.

Social Work Certification Course

Individuals interested in becoming certified in school social work may take the required course during the first week in June. We have offered this for the past two years and will offer it again on June 4-6, 2018. Contact Professor Stephanie Guster at sguster@southern.edu for details.

BSW HAPPENINGS



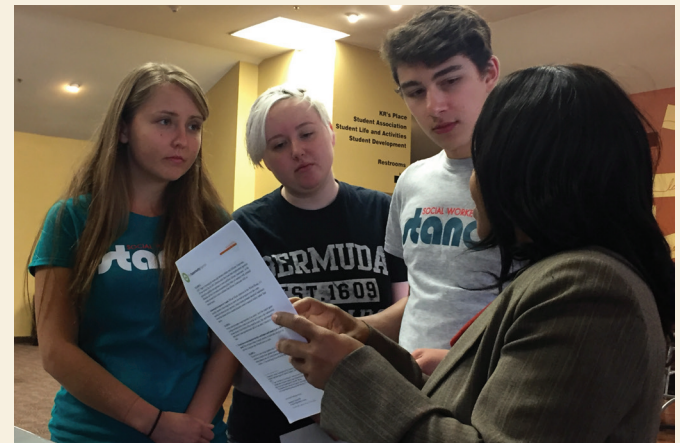
Chattanooga City Council representative Carol Berz (front, center) poses with Phi Alpha inductees and Southern Adventist University faculty.



Katie Wilson, MSW '14, addresses graduates during the 2017 Social Work Pinning.



Rita Lee, Takamar Comete, Candace McFarlane, and Ciara Saranto present a poster during Campus Research Day.



Darcee Christensen, Emily Bartlett, and Samir Khalil talk with Professor Stephanie Guster at the Social Work Month booth.

FIELD AGENCY FOCUS: BABY UNIVERSITY

Baby University (Baby U) is a one-of-a-kind program that offers intensive case management services, mentoring, and support to expectant mothers and families in the Chattanooga, Tennessee, area. Its mission is “To effectively prepare children for lifelong success, from healthy pregnancies through early childhood development.”

The executive director of Baby U, Elizabeth Cotellese, LCSW, shared that they believe “the truest measure of a successful community can be seen in the way it values its youngest and most vulnerable populations. Decades of data show that 80-90 percent of brain development occurs by age 3, beginning during pregnancy. Baby U provides parents with concrete supports, resource linkage, and coaching to encourage healthy pregnancies and early brain development,

allowing children to be best prepared for school and life. Supporting parents and children through the earliest years offers a prime opportunity to make the most lasting impact, even into future generations. When our youngest thrive, we all succeed.”

Southern has had the privilege of partnering with Baby U since the start of the program in 2015. This program has been a favorite field placement for both our BSW and MSW students. MSW candidate April Rentsch completed her foundation practicum at Baby U. When asked what she valued most from their practicum experience at Baby U, she replied: “I have enjoyed learning about the clients served and local resources that can benefit them as

well as improve their self-sufficiency. I have learned more about working with a team of colleagues that are diverse in education and cultural background. Overall, it has been a wonderful experience. I learned so much but felt welcomed and valued at the same time.”

Baby University is a program dedicated to building strong families in the Chattanooga community. For more information regarding Baby University, go to babyuchattanooga.org

–Evie Nogales-Baker, associate professor



Pictured above: Elizabeth Cotellese and April Rentsch

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORKER (CONTINUED)

(continued from page 1)

of people and take away the rights of those who do not believe the same or do not live according to their understanding of morality. However, Christ warned all of us that if our beliefs are not based on love and do not lead us to loving others, then they are sinful: “If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:2, NIV).

In this context, racism, oppression, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, homophobia, ageism, and misogyny are not loving acts—no matter how we may try to justify them with the Bible. Legislation that leaves people without medical insurance, policies that help the rich get richer at the expense

of the hard-working people, budgets that cut support for the most vulnerable groups of our society, superfluous spending on weapons, the rejection of refugees, and the treatment of immigrants as criminals are not based on love and are in direct conflict with God’s law. In Mathew 25, Christ is laying down the criteria upon which he will select His true followers: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Mathew 25:35-36, NIV).

As Christian social workers in one of the richest countries in the world, we are called by God to stand firm against the sins

of injustice, oppression, discrimination, and any other action that may lead to hate and violence. If we want to be accepted by Christ, we should commit ourselves to loving others—even those who are not like us. Anything short of this kind of love is a sin, no matter how committed we may be to perfect obedience to the law.

–Corneliu Rusu, associate professor

MSW HAPPENINGS

Below is a representation of MSW students who defended their portfolios prior to the July 2017 commencement. Our buttons are popping with pride for each student who successfully defended a portfolio. We know our graduates will be change agents in their communities.



Professor Corneliu Rusu, Professor Evie Nogales-Baker, Anne Gonzalez, and Field Instructor Marissa Holcombe



Dean Kristie Wilder, Jaron Hobby, and Professor Nina Nelson



Carmen Quezada Hutson, Treva Sands, Katie Wilson, and April Wilson



Dean Kristie Wilder, Jaily King, and Professor Lorri Merchant



Professor Corneliu Rusu, Shanae Stock, and Professor Lorri Merchant



Professor Laura Racovita-Szilagyi, Task Supervisor Stephanie Alfaro, Amanda Kindred, and Professor Evie Nogales-Baker



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Tricia Foster
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Annette Heck
Lorri Merchant
Nina Nelson
Laura Racovita-Szilagyi
Corneliu Rusu
Kristie Wilder

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