

# MOSAICS



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# News of the SCHOOL

## COMINGS & GOINGS

**Kathy Dmochowski**, registrar, left after 17 years of dedicated service to UB and students. She joined the New York State Insurance Fund as a legal secretary.

**Michael Lynch, MSW '10**, joined field education as a clinical assistant professor in October.

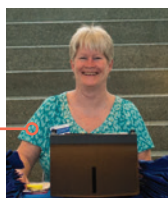
**Gokul Mandayam, PhD**, joined UB in the fall and is a clinical associate professor.

**Katie McClain-Meeder, MSW '12**, joined field education as a clinical assistant professor in July.

**Melanie Sage, PhD**, joined UB in the fall and is an assistant professor.

**Todd Sage, MSW**, joined UB in the fall and is a clinical assistant professor.

**Ezra Staley, JB/MBA '09**, accepted the position of executive director of social innovation initiatives, a jointly-funded role with the schools of Social Work and Management.



## PROMOTIONS

**Margie Quartley, MSW '89**, field education coordinator, was promoted to assistant director of field education.

**Clinical Assistant Professor Luanne Bakk** is now the Rochester, N.Y. field education coordinator. Additionally, she has taken over as a co-host for our inSocialWork® Podcast.



## GLOBAL & CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS

UBSSW was a co-sponsor of World Refugee Day in Buffalo, N.Y. in July. View a photo collage of the event on the back cover.



In the spring, we hosted a delegation from Haiti, which included representatives from SUNY Global, the Kellogg Foundation, the Haiti Development Institute, and Haitian NGOs.



Additionally, we hosted a delegation from Ukraine, which included social workers and psychologists who work with communities affected by traumatic experiences of war. This delegation was hosted by Rochester Global Connections, and the Open World Leadership Center.

Five members of our faculty visited India to participate in the International Conference on Nurturing Global Mental Health at Amrita University in Coimbatore, India. Read more about this on page 14.

In an ongoing effort to fight for social justice and human rights, our students, faculty and staff continue to raise their voices by attending rallies and protests on local, state and national issues throughout the year, even taking their opinions to the news. For example, current MSW students are helping to create a new Gender Equality Ordinance in Buffalo. Additionally, Josal Diebold, MSW/PhD student, wrote a recent op-ed in *The Public* on controversial decisions and appearances made by the Erie County sheriff. Social justice activism is woven into who we are and what we do.



## STUDENT NEWS

MSW students Casey Springer, Adrienne Garr and Karra Barrett, accompanied by Pat Shelly, director of community engagement and expansion (not pictured), were in Washington, D.C. for Social Work Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill.

Recently MSW students Shannon Linehan, Loriann DeVito, Kat Solecki, Casey Springer, Adrienne Garr, Jordan Kember and Sara Alpert, along with Director of Community Engagement and Expansion Pat Shelly, traveled to Albany, N.Y. for Legislative Education and Advocacy Day, sponsored by NASW-NYS, NYS Association of Deans of Schools of Social Work, and the NYS Social Work Education Association.

Social work students voted PhD candidate Brad Linn as the Adjunct Faculty Member of the Year. Additionally, he received the University at Buffalo Graduate Student Excellence in Teaching Award.

MSW students Megan Carroll and Adriana Ragland received the American Association of University Women-Buffalo Branch Catalyst for Change Scholarship 2017. This scholarship is awarded to students who have demonstrated success in a grassroots effort that has effected positive change for women or girls.

Recent grad Kaneisha Wheelock, was awarded a highly competitive fellowship through the Veteran's Administration. She will be part of the Interprofessional Fellowship in Substance Addiction Treatment at the Seattle Division of the Addictions Treatment Center within the VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

MSW student Casey Springer attended the Congressional Research Institute for Social Work and Policy Political Boot Camp.

## FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

Associate Professor **Lisa Butler** was named a Fellow of the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation.

Assistant Professors **Patricia Logan-Greene** and **Noelle St. Vil** were named Partnership for the Public Good Policy Fellows.

Associate Professor **Robert Keefe** was named an Overseas Fellow for The Royal Society of Medicine in the United Kingdom.

Our inSocialWork Podcast was presented with the SUNY Council for University Advancement Awards, Best of Category in Electronic Communications and Interactive Media – Audio Category.

**Alberto Godenzi, PhD**, visited UB and spoke on the "Future of Social Work Education," to faculty, staff and PhD students. A social work professor at Boston College and former dean, Godenzi is also the special advisor to the college's president for global engagement.

## SCHOOL SEEKS TO ADD DOCTORATE IN SOCIAL WELFARE

In response to interest expressed by MSW graduates, the School of Social Work has developed a Doctorate in Social Welfare (DSW) program. The pending DSW is a part-time, fully online 39-credit program that builds on the strengths of the trauma-informed and human rights perspective of the school. The DSW program will produce advanced clinical practitioners deeply grounded in implementation science and empirical support for interventions. The three-year program is intended

for working professionals with two-years relevant experience, and, as such, coursework will be offered in both asynchronous and synchronous online formats. The University at Buffalo will join a relatively small number of schools – 12 across the nation – who offer the DSW. The program is currently awaiting final approval from the New York State Education Department.

## FROM DEAN NANCY J. SMYTH

An extraordinary event occurred this summer at UB – graduate students from the schools of Social Work and Management came together to develop innovative solutions to social issues through projects at eight Western New York organizations. The Social Impact Fellows program was an inspired meeting of the minds between two seemingly disparate disciplines, to collaborate to develop innovative and sustainable responses to social challenges.

The inspiration for the partnership between management and social work came three years ago when I saw that a number of area nonprofits were struggling, including several regional nonprofit closures within a year. In talking with the executive directors at the time, I found that they had difficulty negotiating an environment where dedicated government funding was drying up. Consequently, there was uncertainty as to how to survive in this context. It appeared to me that entrepreneurial thinking might be a useful strategy in this new environment.

As a result, then-School of Management (MGT) Dean Arjang Assad and Tom Ulbrich, assistant dean and executive director of the UB Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, Lesa Fichte (in our Continuing Education Office) and I started planning a conference together on the theme, “Transformational Leadership and Entrepreneurial Thinking for Nonprofits.” We thought that maybe 50 people would attend. We had to change the venue when we received nearly triple that amount of responses. So, we thought, maybe we’re onto something here.

To further the collaboration after that first flush of interest, we started convening a group of faculty, staff, community members, alumni, and students to consider how best to work together, across our two disciplines, toward social innovation. We explored what this work might look like and identified some ideas for collaboration. Finally, in June 2016, this process culminated in a creative innovation retreat to envision specific projects for collaboration, including the Social Impact Fellows. Other projects that had their inspiration at the June retreat were cross-disciplinary student workshops on creative problem-solving to address social issues; a co-taught management-social work course, “Innovation in the Social Sector”; and another conference (organized through the MGT Center for Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness), “Leading Innovation in the Social Sector,” that brought together the nonprofit and business communities. And, once again, the conference resulted in a huge response, this time from the private and nonprofit sectors.

The Social Impact Fellows Program came to be when Hadar Borden, program director of the UB Blackstone LaunchPad, a one-stop shop for entrepreneurial projects, became involved at our June retreat. Current School of Management Dean Paul Tesluk and I had already been thinking about a Fellows program, and together, with the LaunchPad’s help, after the retreat, we crafted the program proposal (and received funding notification in December of last year).



The Social Impact Fellows turned out to be a unique approach to social innovation. Across the country, many schools of social work and business work on social innovation, but none have come together in this manner. The collaborative environment cultivated across the UB campus is conducive to such joining of forces.

Social work colleagues around the country were waiting to hear how this pilot program played out. As you’ll see in the story in this issue, it was a promising success. So much so, that we’re already beginning to recruit students and partnering organizations for next summer’s program.

And, just as important, we are finding that the key to social innovation is in promoting collaboration and learning across disciplines – which comes down to building relationships, and working together toward our common goals.

NANCY J. SMYTH, PHD, LCSW

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The University at Buffalo is a premier research-intensive public university, the largest and most comprehensive campus in the State University of New York. UB’s more than 29,000 students pursue their academic interests through more than 390 undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs. Founded in 1846, the University at Buffalo is a member of the Association of American Universities.

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# MOSAICS



Left to right: Kathryn Leonard, Promise Bruce, Elizabeth Bowen



# BUFFALO'S BLACK

*SSW students organize a community intervention to determine who benefits*

By Jana Eisenberg

Last spring, Promise Bruce, MSW '17, and Kathryn Leonard, MSW '17, took their social work education to the next level when they expanded upon a coursework-assigned community assessment to organize and present a community intervention.

It was after completing Assistant Professor Betsy Bowen's Community Social Work course that the two were motivated to pursue this research-driven action. (See sidebar for a profile of Bowen.) And, on April 27, over the course of two hours, they were all gratified to see a diverse group of about 40 people in attendance.

The decision to hold the intervention, which they titled "Black Business Boom: A Community Conversation," arose from information gathered during interviews conducted with residents in Buffalo's Hamlin Park neighborhood.

Their conclusion, based on those anecdotes and opinions, was that many who live in the community feel that the current Buffalo "boom" is not benefitting all people and neighborhoods equitably, especially the east side, and that new businesses don't always reflect the needs, wants, and character of their communities.

## **Building the event**

Their goal for the event was to bring people together to discuss what is needed to create a business and cultural district for Buffalo's black community, with the hope that after two hours, there would emerge "an action plan to resist gentrification and support black businesses on Jefferson Avenue and throughout our city."

Bruce and Leonard organized, promoted, hosted and co-facilitated the event: they sourced an appropriate community-welcoming space, on Buffalo's east side. They invited a few local community organizers to attend, and one to facilitate. They were pleased with the neighborhood and business-owner turnout.

"People were interested – obviously, there is a huge need; we were expecting 15 people and 40 showed up," said Bruce after the event. Not a Buffalo native, she has purchased a home on the city's east side, and plans to stay and work here. "The things that I'd like to see, and the things that community members said that they want seem to be similar – like more education on local politics, to know where our taxes go, how to access mental health services and how to begin healing."

Leonard said that she came to social work through her interest in community organizing. "I'm not exactly sure what I'll do with my social work degree – I do know that the best community organizers are social workers," she said. "In social work, we can be more broad in scope as well, and look at society; see how we can fix it."

## **Engaging conversation**

The event, officially moderated by Alexander Wright, founder of the African Heritage Food Co-op, first had "rules of engagement" set forth; they included, in Wright's words, "step up and step back; give constructive feedback; focus on what we have in common, and what we can do now; and, let's have thick skin."

Then the real conversation began. Wright opened up with a general question: "Do you feel there are obstacles to the creation and promotion of black-owned businesses?"

A list of responses was recorded on a poster-sized sticky note. In true community fashion, Wright surveyed the participants on which of those topics they were interested in exploring further in the next phase of the event, which was smaller group breakouts.

Leonard said her social work and community organizing training were tested. "In a conversation about black business, I need to make sure that I'm not putting my voice above anyone else, or directing the conversation the way I think it should go, if that's not what the community wants," she said.



# STUDENTS PRACTICING WHAT BOWEN TEACHES

Assistant Professor Elizabeth Bowen demonstrates her teaching philosophy in her classrooms, embracing her belief in respecting students as diverse adult learners. She also, as she writes, “aims to maximize the value of their social work education through strategies including...use of multiple learning modalities, and making explicit connections between coursework and research, practice, and policy.” Bowen joined the faculty in 2014.

Her positive results were demonstrated in April, when two of her graduate students, Promise Bruce, MSW '17, and Katie Leonard, MSW '17, expanded upon research begun in Bowen’s Community Social Work course.

In that class, the assignment was to assess a Buffalo neighborhood; they selected Hamlin Park. The next semester, based on that assessment, Bruce and Leonard undertook an independent study – with Bowen as their advisor – in which they conducted a community intervention. (See accompanying main story for more about the students and event.)

“In Community Social Work, after the students’ assessments, they identify an asset map,” said Bowen, whose interests in addition to community social work include the nature and treatment of alcohol and other drug problems, and social welfare history and policy.

“They’re not just reading a textbook, they’re learning about the community,” she added. “The whole idea is, rather than the research or the student identifying the assets, finding out what the stakeholders think are the strengths and needs.

“It was exciting to see these students fulfill one of my dreams as a teacher: they implemented their own good idea in an independent study,” she continued. “They took what they learned and put it into action. They were inspired by the older people in the community to have that conversation as a starting point – it’s not like they just decided ‘This is the issue that the community needs.’”

Bowen, a Fulbright Fellowship winner and recipient of the 2016 Protege in the American Psychological Association’s Cyber Mentors Program, is the school’s liaison to the National Homelessness Social Work Initiative.

“Versus clinical or one-on-one social work, community social work is ‘macro,’” Bowen stated. “While Community Social Work is not a required course, an important part of social work and its history has always been looking at multiple levels – community, city, local, regional, national; to attend both to individual struggles, and to look at ways to improve systems.

“The biggest takeaway and most gratifying thing for me during their independent study was sitting back and watching them organize and then run the community event,” said Bowen.

- Jana Eisenberg

# BUSINESS BOOM

Bowen supports this concept. “Learning what a community needs by hearing a diversity of opinions and voices is a little complicated,” she said. “That’s what I try to teach. And Promise and Katie’s project is a great example of it.”

## Encouraging response

At the conclusion, again, all were heartened by the response. “People said that they wished there was more time, and that they’d like to meet again. That’s a good sign,” said Bruce.

“My biggest hope was that people would make connections, find out who’s doing what work,” said Leonard. “In the group I was in, there were some ideas but not a strong action plan. Everyone said they wanted to meet again, and I said that I would find a space for them. I want to make sure I follow through on that.”

Bowen believes the event was a success. “I told them, you’ve brought people together who wouldn’t normally be in a room together,” she said. “Of course you’re not going to solve the issues in two hours. But the seed is planted. You may not know immediately how it grows. Maybe two people connected and converged with ideas, or an aspiring entrepreneur met someone who can help. Social workers believe that change happens through relationships.”

As an example of how her students are demonstrating their commitment to their work, Bowen proudly gave this example: “Promise and Katie received a small amount of funding for the event from the School of Social Work Graduate Student Association,” she said. “With that \$100, they purchased refreshments from three local, black- and women-owned businesses. It’s a small thing, but it shows their efforts; that they’re practicing what they preach by supporting and introducing others to local businesses.”



# SEEKING sustainable solutions to social issues

MSW and MBA students work together as Social Impact Fellows

By Jim Bisco



The Social Impact Fellows outside Kapoor Hall, the setting for the competitive conclusion to the program.

Top row left to right: Asta Padervinskaite, Juwan Thompson, Caitlin Lachaal, Joe Ricciardi, Nicole Jones, Jonathan Puma, Emily Cavallari, Mark Wilson, Cheyenne Ketter-Franklin, Colleen Kristich, Maur DeLaney, Jamie Core

Bottom row left to right: Cody Barber, Kristen Kozlowski, Brendan Donahue, Thomas Bracken Coyne

**E**ight School of Social Work MSW students and eight School of Management MBA students were paired in teams helping eight Western New York organizations to find solutions to systemic social issues in an eight-week summer internship.

The Social Impact Fellows program is part of an ongoing collaboration between the two schools. SSW Vice Dean and Chief of Staff Maureen Hammett calls it “the most robust offering that has sprung from this partnership between the schools built around social innovation and social entrepreneurship.”

Hosted in partnership with the Blackstone LaunchPad at UB, a campus-based entrepreneurship center, the pilot program was funded by a gift from the UB President’s Circle to the School of Social Work.

Each team spent four days weekly exploring and implementing an innovative initiative to help their partner organization.

“From our perspective, Social Impact Fellows is another way to impact our community, to allow our students an opportunity to leverage the Western New York community as their learning laboratory,” observes Blackstone LaunchPad Program Director Hadar Borden. “I think many of our students who are part of this program and students in general are very interested in social good and having some kind of a community outcome.”

**Finding solutions to social issues is one aspect—making them sustainable is quite another.**

Finding solutions to social issues is one aspect – making them sustainable is quite another.

“From what I’ve seen, a lot of people who are in the social sector are working in that arena from the heart – they’re passionate about it and sometimes the heart doesn’t always connect to the mind in the sense of what is strategic,” continues Borden. “I think that’s what we’re bringing together – the heart and the mind.”

And thus, the meeting of the hearts and minds of social work and management for social good.

## COMPETITIVE PROCESS

The partner organizations responded to requests for proposals. Twenty-nine were reviewed and ultimately eight were selected. “We were looking for a project that the students could really take on and propose a solution in eight weeks – the time they have in their internship,” says Borden.

“In terms of the scope of the project, they range from organizations that have already put some thought to it and the fellows are now implementing that idea, and there are others that just have an idea that the fellows can take all the way through implementation.”

Seven not-for-profit entities and one for-profit were selected for the program. “I would call it a competitive process for the student applicants as well,” says Hammett. “The applications included a statement of their interest in the program. There were 22 applicants for 16 spots.”

Borden notes that with School of Social Work students, the internship was above and beyond their required curriculum for graduation. “This additional piece that they added on to their degree experience is really making themselves stand out, and I think the same is true for the School of Management students.”

Hammett concurs. “That’s one of the ways we chose to market the program because we felt that the experience would help students to distinguish themselves and be significant for their career path.”

The diverse sensibilities of the two sets of graduate students were taken into consideration. “We were thoughtful as to how to pair them, interviewing them for their personalities, their experience, their interests professionally,” explains Borden. “The students were told at the outset that this was going to be different from anything you’ve experienced in college or in your graduate program, so don’t challenge it but embrace it.”

Embrace it they did.

## COLLABORATING DISCIPLINES

The fellows spent the first four days each week exploring and implementing an innovative proposal to help their partner organizations. Fridays were spent on campus as students learned how to identify and define social challenges and generate sustainable solutions with School of Social Work faculty Kelly Patterson and Elizabeth Bowen; in addition, they reviewed

entrepreneurial principles with Tom Ulbrich, assistant dean and executive director of the School of Management's Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership. Students also attended forums with guest speakers on local economic development and social justice issues, and visited socially minded organizations in the region.

The organizations' needs ranged from a biking program to help refugees with accessibility to employment opportunities to advancing entrepreneurship for women.

MSW student Caitlin Lachaal and MBA student Emily Cavallari were teamed on developing a program at a local veterans center that can impact veterans who are in transition and recovery. "I have no background in business so I wasn't sure exactly how this was going to play out, especially in the context of creating social change," admits Lachaal. "But over the course of eight weeks, it became apparent that both disciplines were not entirely disconnected; there is value in both, and when coupled, they can produce some really impactful results."

Cavallari concurs. "These two disciplines rely on each other much more than I expected. Our project allowed for the creation of a program guide that included both management and social work concepts. Caitlin's skills proved advantageous with the evidence-based research and literary reviews, using her developed social work language, while the management tasks, including market strategies, organizational hierarchy structures, etc., were where I felt comfortable putting my focus."

The team appreciated the relationship with the partnering organization. Lachaal says the agency was "incredibly warm and welcoming and interested in using our skills and expertise." Both students agree that future collaborations would be welcome.

"This program really highlighted the need for collaboration between the two," Lachaal explains. "There are so many social problems that need to be addressed, but there needs to be a plan that will allow solutions to be sustainable."

The social impact of the experience had an influence on the MBA student. "After completing this program, my eyes are definitely open to the possibility of working for a nonprofit organization in the future," Cavallari relates. "The social work aspect of this program has taught me to be more aware of all of the factors causing an issue, including cost-cutting procedures and profit maximization, as well as making sure all needs are addressed with the specific population and the impact that it has on the entire community. Caitlin and I were able to think creatively and intricately when working together to solve any issue. Future collaborations would allow for increased innovations and more efficient organizations."

## PITCH FOR A CAUSE

As a finale to the eight-week fellowship at the end of July, both members of each student team delivered their five-minute "pitches" on the projects they developed and their long-term economic viability before an audience of peers, supervisors and three community judges who would decide on prizes to be awarded. The eight presentations each showed innovation and creativity.

The 1st place prize of \$2,000 went to MBA student Cheyenne Ketter-Franklin and MSW student Jonathan Puma for Belmont Housing Resources for WNY. The 2nd place prize of \$1,000 went to MBA student Juwan Thompson and MSW student Colleen Kristich for Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY. In a surprise twist, Michael Weiner, CEO of the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County (who was one of the three judges for the pitch competition), announced a \$1,000 donation from the United Way to increase the 2nd place prize to \$2,000 as well.

SSW Dean Nancy Smyth deemed the Social Impact Fellows a novel approach to innovation. "Many schools of social work and business are interested in social innovation. Nobody is doing it by bringing disciplines together collaboratively with different ways of thinking and learning from each other, because there are a lot of obstacles in doing that. But I think we have been able to make it work partly because we've gotten to know and respect each other."

"Our social innovation partnership with the School of Social Work is unique because it is a truly interdisciplinary effort," says Paul Tesluk, dean of the School of Management. "Each stakeholder brings critical resources and experiences to the table, and it's at this intersection where we can provide the most social benefit to such critical issues as global poverty, health and wellness, climate change and food scarcity."

The successful result of this pilot program in terms of involvement, innovation and collaboration on social issues has spurred a second installment of the fellowship next summer with funding from the Charles D. and Mary A. Bauer Family Foundation already in place and recruitment beginning this fall.

Social impact indeed.



The 1st-place team with members of their partner organization and the deans from the schools of Management and Social Work.



The 2nd-place team with members of their partner organization and the deans.



# UBSSW COMMENCEMENT 2017

## 2016-2017 STUDENT AWARDS RECIPIENTS



- ANDREW J. LAUGHLIN AWARD **SAMANTHA PAIGE**
- ARCHIE W. SWANSON HONORARY AWARD **GENEVIEVE GIBSON**
- BERTHA S. LAURY THORN & ROSE AWARD **MAUR J DELANEY**
- DEBORAH ZIMMERMAN '89 MEMORIAL AWARD **CHRISTINE HOJCZYK**
- DENA P. GOLD MEMORIAL AWARD **CAMILLE ARTH**
- DOROTHY LYNN HONORARY AWARD **ALEENA VANDEN BOGERT**
- DREAM AWARD **RACHEL DAWS | ROBYN TAYLOR**
- HASELTINE T. CLEMENTS MEMORIAL AWARD **GABRIELLE JOYCE**
- JULIAN SODJA MEMORIAL FUND **LATIKA HERRING**
- KRISTOPHER L. BRASELTON MEMORIAL AWARD **LISA BURGESS**
- MARY O'DONNELL MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD **PATRICIA SMITH**
- NASW AWARD **ROBYN TAYLOR**
- OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD **CANDRA SKRZYPEK**
- SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARD **MATTHEW SCHWARTZ**
- TERESE EUSANIO MEMORIAL AWARD **KATHERINE BLAKELY**
- ROSE WEINSTEIN AWARD **SHANNON NOWAK**





Our Online Student Cohort



# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RHO KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY 2017 INDUCTEES

Camille Arth  
Erin Barry  
Alyssa Bergsten  
Gabrielle Citriniti  
Thomas Coyne  
Maur J DeLaney

Josal Diebold  
Tarsis Gotay  
Latika Katri Herring  
Haley Huey  
Alexandra Kirchmeyer  
Colleen Kristich

Raquel Lowery  
Natasha Mehta  
Ângela Richeson  
Allyson Roach  
Candra Skrzypek

Alyssa Syms  
Robyn Taylor  
Caitlin Torkel  
Aleena Vanden Bogert

Honorary Inductees  
Braden Linn, MSW '12  
Kristen Luppino-Gholston, MSW '05

# HONORIN

SSW alumni, field and research awards were presented in two ceremonies held in spring honoring the accomplishments of alumni, faculty, field educators, students and community partners. Following are profiles on the award recipients.

Please note: complete versions of the profiles are available online at <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/awards>



From left: Clinical Professor and Associate Dean for Community Engagement and Alumni Relations Denise Krause, Dean Nancy J. Smyth, Ellen Fink-Samnack, and PhD student Josal Diebold.

"I met with (then-SSW dean) Elizabeth Harvey who was impeccably dressed, and her hair equally impeccably done. She sat down, kicked off her shoes, pulled up a leg underneath her in a very relaxed way and said, 'So, why do you want to be a social worker?'. It was definitely a wow moment! I remember thinking, to be that comfortable in your own skin, if this is what social work involves, I'm in."

For Fink-Samnack's field experience, Director of Field Instruction Bertha Laury provided a challenge for her to demonstrate her value and what she could uniquely bring. The student rose to the occasion and proved herself to her mentor as a lifelong relationship developed.

During her subsequent tenure at various hospitals, Fink-Samnack found herself purposefully examining the need to develop competent, well-trained helping professionals. She carefully planned to start her own business – EFS Supervision Strategies, LLC – in order to educate, advocate for, mentor, and empower the trans-disciplinary case management workforce.

## Distinguished Alumni Award: **Ellen Fink-Samnack**

For more than 30 years, Ellen Fink-Samnack, MSW '83, has made significant contributions to social work as evidenced by her roles as professional trainer, industry consultant, educator, social media moderator, continuing education developer, accreditation specialist, social work supervisor and professional mentor for the case management community.

The lessons she learned along the way to a successful career in the profession are rooted in her experience at UB. She recalls her introduction to social work as a junior in sociology who was enticed to join an innovative program being created between the two departments.

With a reputation as the ethical compass of professional case management, Fink-Samnack has published more than 90 articles, book chapters, and texts. She moderates a forum on LinkedIn, Ellen's Ethical Lens, discussing ethical challenges faced by professionals in the health and behavioral health domains. She also has a Twitter feed on which she posts relevant articles daily – most days the first post goes to the SSW – to help people empower their knowledge base.

Fink-Samnack remains connected to the SSW by sharing valuable resources through social media as well as guiding new MSW students in the mentor program.



## Juanita Hunter

**Juanita Hunter**, EdD '83, MS '74, BS '71, RN, FAAN, received the UBAA Community Leadership Award for outstanding accomplishments. She earned her BS in Social Welfare at UB in 1971 before embarking on a nursing career. Hunter worked as a public health nurse coordinator, joining the School of Nursing faculty in 1978 in community health. Her work centered on human rights and care for the homeless.

Photo Left to Right: Former president of the UB Alumni Association Mary Garlick Roll, MS '88, BS '84, Juanita Hunter, EdD '83, MS '74, BS '71, RN, FAAN, President Satish Tripathi.

# NG EXCELLENCE



PhD Candidate Travis Hales, right, receives award from Research Professor Thomas Nochajski, with Smyth.

## Buffalo Center for Social Research Excellence in Research Award, Student Level: Travis Hales

Because of the lack of research on implementing trauma-informed care – the SSW’s curriculum focus – as an organizational change process, Travis Hales, PhD candidate, MSW, 14, under the guidance of mentor Thomas Nochajski, research professor, set out to study the original five values or principles of researchers Harris and Fallot. They included creating a safe culture where transparency and honesty are valued, where people are given choices and autonomy, within a spirit of collaboration and empowerment.

“What we ultimately found was that the five values were somewhat unique but they all shared an underlying dimension and were all extremely correlated with one another,” Hales explains.

“Why our research was unique is that for the first time we really looked at trauma-informed theory using data to see how those relationships played out,” observes Hales. “What the data is ultimately saying is that intervention in any one of Harris and Fallot’s five areas is likely going to produce positive impacts on all the others because they share an underlying dimension.”



Assistant Professor Nadine Shaanta Murshid honored with Associate Professor Gretchen Ely and Smyth.

## Buffalo Center for Social Research Excellence in Research Award, Faculty Level: Nadine Shaanta Murshid

Assistant Professor Nadine Shaanta Murshid has an innovative research agenda that includes the exploration of an understudied and controversial topic. Her research on mobile banking in Bangladesh in partnership with bKash, Bangladesh’s largest mobile banking provider, breaks new ground, focusing on how mobile banking – the use of cell phones to provide electronic banking services – impacts migrant worker families. This research studies how technological innovations influence family roles and control their resources.

Murshid engaged in a series of interviews to discover how this is being used among such a low-income population.

She concluded that the mobile banking convenience resulted in both positive and negative impacts on families. “People are also sending money back to the villages where their families reside, including their immediate family members. Migrant workers in cities are the largest subset of people who use mobile money to send money home. One of the interesting things I saw was that people were sending money home to their families but they themselves were not going home as much anymore. In some instances, they were also forming additional family units in the city.”



Jenni Kotting (center) receives award on behalf of National Network of Abortion Funds from Ely and Smyth.

## Buffalo Center for Social Research Excellence in Research Award, Community Level: National Network of Abortion Funds

Jenni Kotting, communication director and chief technology officer for the National Network of Abortion Funds, acknowledges the dearth of solid research around how abortion barriers affect vulnerable communities, especially in the area of abortion funding.

Kotting notes that the research conducted with associate professor Gretchen Ely was a true partnership in the sense that it was mutually beneficial and that the research itself would be beneficial to the work, not just to the academic.

“The research here is really new and tells us a lot about what are the life circumstances of someone who is seeking abortion funding,” Kotting explains.

She says that the results currently are national in scale, based on about 4,000 cases over a period of five years. “They really told us about the need that exists among people of color, young people, and people living in poverty.”



Field Educator Ron Schoelerman is flanked by Senior Field Education Coordinator Zoe Koston, left, and Assistant Director of Field Education Margie Quartley.

## Ron Schoelerman: Field Educator of the Year

Coming full circle in his career, Ron Schoelerman, MSW, '07, is director of the program in which he originally interned as an SSW student. The director of Intensive Adult/Forensic Mental Health Services for Erie County has been helping to groom a number of students since 2008. “To me, that’s everything – you get a chance to learn on the job, to gain that mentor skill. I wanted to make sure I gave students the same opportunity that I had,” Schoelerman notes.

In his role as director, Schoelerman guides the department in providing services within the county’s correctional facility, including the delivery of one-on-one intervention for incoming inmates. This is where the students come in, working with individuals in custody who might need some support while they go through the legal process, mental health care if they have such ongoing needs.

Schoelerman describes it as a challenging environment but a perfect one for social work. “It fits that whole social work experience of working with micro and macro levels and to be able to process with the students after.”

– Jim Bisco

# SYMPOSIUM EXPLORES INJUSTICES TO *Indigenous Women*

By Jana Eisenberg



The School of Social Work's second daylong symposium, "Indigenous Women: Human Rights Protections and Activism" took place on March 30. In collaboration with Native, academic, and community partners, the largest annual off-campus event hosted by the school's Global Interest Group explored numerous issues and topics featuring a panel of speakers.

A diverse group of about 70 attendees, including high school and secondary students, faculty and professionals, indigenous and non-indigenous people, shared with and learned from each other about these deeply relevant, resonant issues.

In her opening remarks, Dean Nancy Smyth said, "We understand that a society's structures have a large effect on people's risk of trauma. The United States is an example of a system that doesn't consider how it is experienced by multiple populations. The way indigenous people have been treated is – and continues to be – shameful."

Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Hilary Weaver, one of the event organizers and host for the proceedings, continued with welcoming comments, including acknowledging "the people whose territory we stand on today." The symposium took place at the main library in downtown Buffalo, land where Seneca people once lived. Weaver, herself a Native woman (she's Lakota by birth and, through culture, since moving to the Buffalo region in 1993, Haudenosaunee) said, "My culture is very important to me; I'm grounded in my indigenous ways."

## **Crucial circumstances**

Weaver said she is thankful to be part of a profession that appreciates diversity and challenges injustice. "Today's event is the realization of a long-held dream, and we gather in a thankful way that acknowledges the gifts of creation," she expanded. "One of our goals is to raise awareness about crucial and often overlooked circumstances."

The circumstances to which Weaver referred included the thousands of murdered and missing indigenous women in the Americas; the complex laws surrounding prosecuting crimes committed on tribal land, inadequate law enforcement investigations, lack of media coverage, and the simple fact that indigenous women and girls

are sexually abused, abducted and/or murdered at a hugely disproportionate rate, and with far less reaction from the greater society. (The previous day, the related documentary, "Highway of Tears," was screened at the SSW.)

Weaver noted that this is both a historic and contemporary issue. She also posited that she chooses to look at the issue not only from a "deficit perspective."

"We wanted to say, 'People are doing something about this'; talk about activism and how we're moving toward more safety for indigenous people," she noted after the event. "We reached out to people who are doing creative work using technology for activism."

## **'Our American heritage'**

Due to several deaths in her community, planned keynote speaker Beverley Jacobs did not appear in person. Jacobs, Mohawk, Six Nations of the Grand River, an activist, attorney, and former head of the Native Women's Association of Canada, was the primary researcher for the 2004 Amnesty International report, "Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada."

As a result of Jacobs' absence, and with the flexibility necessary when holding large events, the program morphed to add multimedia presentations as well as more time spent on question-and-answer and interchange between attendees and panelists.

Other panelists included Jaynie Parrish, Navajo Nation, instructor in American Indian studies, and a social media consultant, and Melanie Sage, now UBSSW assistant professor, who has published on the ethical use of social media for social workers. Parrish teaches at the University of North Dakota.

In a brief video, artist, educator and activist Whisper Kish discussed the history of colonization and genocide, and the heritage of violence against indigenous women in North America. "Sexual terrorism' is...alive," she said. "It's not 'if' but 'when' will your body be violated." She quoted the statistic that one in three Native women will be raped in her life, calling it "our American heritage."





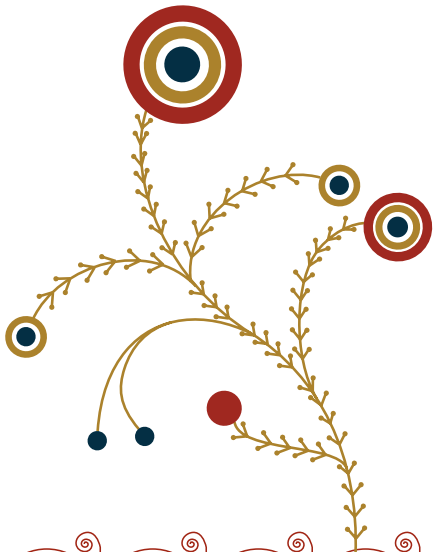
### Resonating discussion

The ensuing comments and conversation felt immediate. Referring to the room as being filled with “allies,” Weaver iterated how important it is to talk and educate about the issue. She screened Beverley Jacobs’ TED Talk, “How do we Stop Aboriginal Women from Disappearing” which, even though it was given several years ago, remains on point.

The day expanded to include songs, anecdotes and brainstorming about actions to take. Inspiration came from the participation of Quinna Hamby and Sienna Hoover, Niagara Wheatfield High School students and activists who live on the Tuscarora reservation.

Towards the end of the day, attendee Jocelyn Jones, Wolf Clan, summed up part of the prevailing attitude: “We can’t undo [hundreds of] years of intergenerational trauma overnight. But we need to help native populations find ways to heal, so the next generations can start to have a chance to live without some of this pain we’ve been carrying around.”

The day ended with a simple yet powerful “women warrior” dance, accompanied by Darelyn Spruce, Hawk Clan singer and drummer. She needed no amplification to make her song heard. All joined hands.



Hilary Weaver pictured with daughter, Iris Hill



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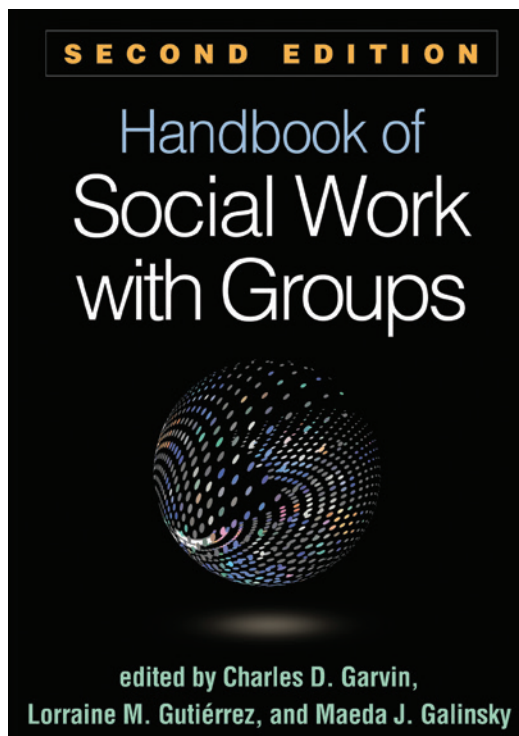
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IT'S A VIRTUOUS COMBINATION.



### “Group Work in Child Welfare”

chapter written by Barbara Rittner, SSW associate professor, in

### Handbook of Social Work With Groups, Second Edition

edited by Charles D. Garvin, Lorraine M. Gutiérrez, and Maeda J. Galinsky [The Guilford Press, 2017]

Rittner is among the leading authorities adding group work perspective in this revised and expanded edition of a definitive text that has introduced students and practitioners to the theory and practice of social work with groups.



# Global Mental Health

is focus of SSW's delegation to  
international conference

A delegation of five SSW faculty members participated in the International Conference on Nurturing Global Mental Health in March at Amrita University in Coimbatore, India, in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. UB and Amrita have had a partnership since 2006.

The conference focused on the results of a National Mental Health Survey which found that mental and substance use disorders are a significant source of morbidity in India, with over 10 percent of residents meeting criteria for some type of mental disorder, and an estimated 150 million Indians with one or more mental or neurological disorder. It is estimated that only one in ten persons in India with a mental disorder is receiving evidence-based treatments.

"We embraced the idea of coming together around a topic that's important certainly in both countries," said Assistant Dean for Global Partnerships and Director of Field Education Laura Lewis, who led the SSW delegation. "Our School of Social Work has a trauma-informed, human rights perspective, so we thought that would be a contribution that we could make."

Lewis presented on stigma and mental health. Assistant professors Annahita Ball spoke about mental health and children, and Annette Semanchin Jones' topic was disability and mental health; she also spoke about foster care and mental health. Elizabeth Bowen presented on substance abuse and mental health, and Mickey Sperlich rounded out our contributors with LGBTQ and mental health issues.

According to Amrita Department of Social Work Chairperson Dr. Suja. M.K., who is applying for funding to complete a fellowship next year at the SSW, "Most people don't take treatment for mental illness due to the fear of stigma, isolation or rejection."

Lewis felt that the SSW delegation played a significant role in helping to disseminate information by highlighting best-practice approaches that can help to remedy the issues associated with mental health. "One of the things about mental health is that there is differential access. Where there is poverty in the U.S. and in India, people are less likely to have good care," she stated. "I think the conference helped bring to light issues that we have in common around providing treatment for mental health and also potential approaches that could be applied in either setting. The problem of mental health is one that is more easily combated when we work collaboratively and understand across cultures and borders what's working and what's not."

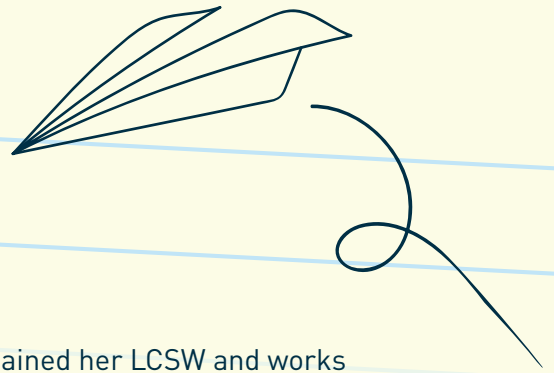


Left to right: Annahita Ball, Laura Lewis, Annette Semanchin Jones, Elizabeth Bowen, Suja. M.K., and Mickey Sperlich



Photos courtesy of Mickey Sperlich

# Classnotes



## '90s

**Sonja McAllister, MSW '95**, is the program manager of Wrap Program and Health Homes at Child & Family Services. She resides in Buffalo, N.Y.

**Ann-Marie Orlowski Dirschberger, MSW '97**, joined Cradle Beach as CEO. Cradle Beach is a nonprofit serving economically disadvantaged children and those with special needs. She lives in Lancaster, N.Y.

**Peter Robbins, MSW '97**, is enjoying retirement while still working for social justice in the world. He resides in Arcade, N.Y.

## '00s

**Beverly Gostomski, MSW '02**, retired from CMH Counseling in Buffalo, N.Y. and is now enjoying life in Fort Myers, Fla.

**Kristen Weese, BA/MSW '02**, received the Secretary's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Service for Homeless Veterans, and was honored with the Distinguished Government Service Award by the Buffalo Federal Executive Board. She serves as the Health Care for Homeless Veterans program manager at VA Western New York Healthcare System. She lives in Lockport, N.Y.

**Kathleen A. Callan, MSW '03**, joined the Office of the District Attorney of Erie County as chief of administration. Callan resides in Kenmore, N.Y.

**Jodi McKay, MSW '03**, is the home and community based services supervisor with the Niagara County Department of Mental Health. She is a recipient of the Mental Health Recovery Award from the 2017 Compassion in Action Awards. She resides in Lockport, N.Y.

**Susan Seewood, MSW '03**, is the preventive services coordinator with the Family & Community Services Department at Catholic Charities of Buffalo. She oversees foster care and adoption, therapeutic supervised visitation, parent training and preventive services programs. Seewood lives in Lancaster, N.Y.

**Se'Vaughn Silver, MSW '07**, was name executive director of Teaching & Restoring Youth, Inc. in Buffalo, N.Y. Silver lives in Williamsville, N.Y.

**Jenna Witkowski, MSW '09**, received her LCSW and works for Buffalo Psychiatric Center's Assertive Community Treatment Program team.

## '10s

**Maria Gordon, MSW '10**, accepted a position at Binghamton University as associate director of field education.

**Meghan Gansemer-Socko, MSW '11**, a social work care manager with Greenville Health System, works with the Memory Health Program, providing case management services to family members caring for a loved one with dementia. She is involved in the program's ongoing research opportunities. She lives in Simpsonville, S.C.

**Melissa Pietrkiewicz, MSW '12**, a school social worker, recently founded a nonprofit Partners in Kind, which is a collective of those dedicated to addressing the unmet human needs of Chautauqua County by participating in monthly service projects. Additionally she was the keynote speaker at the 2017 NYS Incarcerated Education Programs Conference in Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Pietrkiewicz resides in Fredonia, N.Y.

**Catlin Denis, MSW '13**, recently obtained her LCSW and works at Fidelis Care specializing in addiction and mental health. She also opened a private practice with Gravity Counseling Services providing in-home therapy. She lives in Buffalo, N.Y.

**Kania Ponto, MSW '13**, is the communications associate for the National Association for Social Workers – New York State Chapter. Ponto lives in Schenectady, N.Y.

**Kathleen Brady-Stepien, MSW '14**, is associate executive director for Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies, and was named one of the Albany 40 Under 40 Rising Stars of 2017 by *City and State Magazine*. She resides in Albany, N.Y.

**Emma Fabian, MSW '14**, director of substance user health policy at Evergreen Health was named a *Buffalo Business First* 30 Under 30. She lives in Buffalo, N.Y.

**Elizabeth Hole, MSW '14**, was promoted to program director at Horizon Health Services, where in addition to her administrative duties, she provides therapy to clients with complex trauma. She resides in Kenmore, N.Y.

**Alyssa Pepe, MSW '14**, is a crisis counselor II at BestSelf Behavioral Health. She resides in Kenmore, N.Y.

**Emma Beilke, MSW '15**, is a psychiatric social worker at the Erie County Medical Center. Beilke resides in Buffalo, N.Y.

**Timothy Shaughnessy, MSW '15**, was promoted to transitional care manager at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center Health Home. He lives in Niagara Falls, N.Y.

**Brandy Loveland, MSW '16**, is the director of community engagement at the Erie County Restorative Justice Coalition and she resides in Amherst, N.Y.

**Lisa Noelle Sears-Ricotta, MSW '16**, is an addictions counselor at Stutzman Addiction Treatment Center and she lives in Orchard Park, N.Y.

**Dawn St. John, MSW '16**, is a foster care recruiter and licensing counselor with the Children's Network of Southwest Florida.

**Rachel Wilson, MSW '16**, joined Albany County as the prevention educator with the Crime Victim and Sexual Assault Center. Wilson lives in Albany, N.Y.

**Tina Zapetis, MSW '16**, is a therapist in outpatient mental health and the Addictions Recovery Program for Clifton Springs Hospital & Clinic. She resides in Palmyra, N.Y.

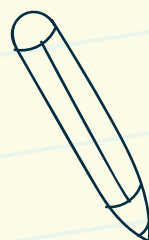
**Sara Andrew, MSW '17**, joined Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center as a behavioral health emergency department care coordinator. She lives in Gasport, N.Y.

**Joseph Magliocco, MSW '17**, is a therapist at Liberty Resources Behavioral Health Clinic in Rochester, N.Y. He resides in Henrietta, N.Y.

**Natasha Mehta, MSW '17**, was hired by Say Yes to Education in Buffalo and is a family support specialist in the Buffalo Public Schools. She lives in Buffalo, N.Y.

**Victoria Rader, MSW '17**, is a social worker at Absolut Care in East Aurora, N.Y. She resides in Buffalo, N.Y.

**Mark Ramos, MSW '17**, is a social worker/outreach coordinator at the Center of Excellence for Alzheimer's Disease at the University at Buffalo. Ramos lives in Buffalo, N.Y.

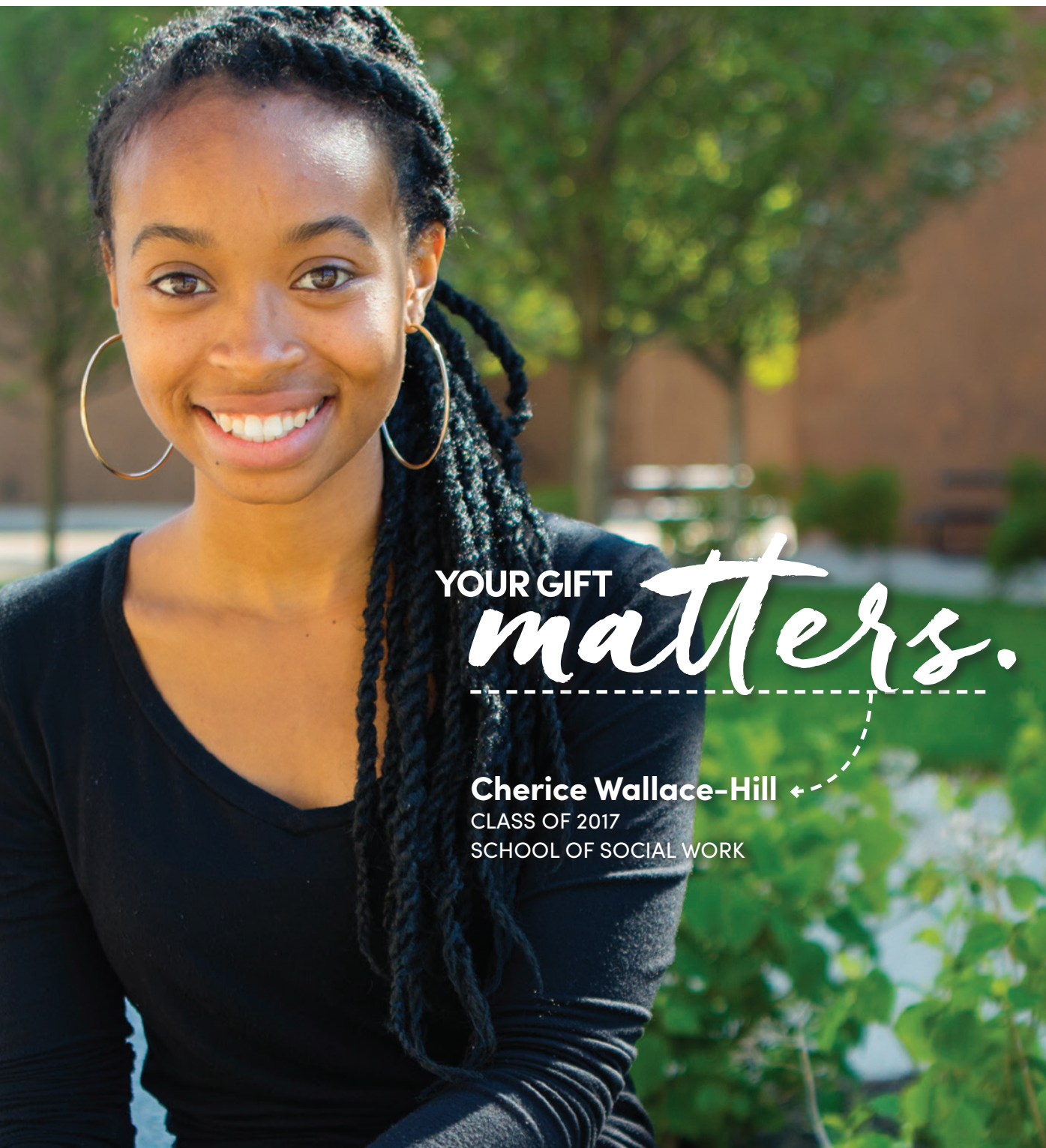


# UB Out-N-About



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**Cherice Wallace-Hill** ←  
CLASS OF 2017  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Cherice Wallace-Hill was a nursing student when she transitioned to studying social work. "Many patients came in seeking medical care because of the poor living conditions, lack of education, and social and financial isolation that resulted in their falling ill. It made more sense for me as a helping professional to serve individuals at the root of the issue," says Cherice, who received UB Fund support to study abroad and intern at the German Red Cross for a semester, an experience she says made her "a more confident, stronger and open-minded social worker." The first person in her single-parent home to study at the graduate level, Cherice is grateful to UB donors whose support "makes a huge difference, providing students so much more than a typical education in a classroom."

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