

IN HIS SERVICE

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

A two-time graduate from Southern, Sharon Smith-Hensley (BSW'07, MS CMHC'11) has been advocating for clients since 2008 at the Samaritan Center, where she currently serves as social services director. On October 30, 2016, Sharon received the Advocate of the Year Award by the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare's Southeast region. In her professional role, Sharon helps clients get viable resources by partnering with other agencies and churches as needed to meet client needs. "I see it as a puzzle," she said. "If we don't have it here at the Samaritan Center, I ask, 'where can I find the pieces to make a whole?'"

In addition to advocating for clients, Sharon also helps clients help themselves.



WINTER 2016

Pictured above: Sharon Smith-Hensley (right), Samaritan Center social services director and Southern School of Social Work alumna, accepts an award honoring her as the Tennessee Conference of Social Welfare's Southeast Region Professional Advocate of the Year. She accepts the award from Terri Lawson, executive director of the Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare.

She partners with local resources that assist clients who are making lifestyle and career-changes. Whether it is connecting a client with a life coach, partnering with Southern's nursing program, or finding funds for a client to attend a Reversing Diabetes Seminar, Sharon is engaged in helping clients have a better life. "It's thinking outside the box," she said.

When asked to give advice to students in our Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Master of Social Work (MSW) programs, Sharon shared: "Treat your internship like a career; be invested. Internships lead to jobs." Sharon learned this through her own academic experience. Internships in both her undergraduate and graduate programs led to job offers. On the topic of self-care, Sharon advises: "Schedule time

to take care of yourself. Make it a priority." Sharon's personal methods of self-care include scheduled regular devotional times and exercise (at the time of the writing of this article, she was preparing for a half marathon). Sharon also makes it a practice to attend social work conferences and to keep her skills sharp through attending classes and programs in the community. She concluded: "Keep learning and using best practices. Just because you're finished with school doesn't mean you're finished learning. Learning benefits your clients as well as yourself."

— Cheryl Craven
Office Manager
School of Social Work



DEAN'S MESSAGE

The best social workers have chosen their profession because they are motivated by a deep sense of calling to serve others. As we continue through another semester, I'm reminded that the School of Social Work's faculty and staff honor and help our students explore their sense of calling. We work tirelessly to equip students to step into that call in their lives through the professional practice of social work. Our rigorous curriculum prepares our students for the demands of professional practice wherever their calling will take them. We believe their passion to serve others deserves nothing less.

In this Issue of *In His Service*, you'll hear from faculty members about new

courses being added to our Master of Social Work (MSW) curriculum, faculty research projects, as well as the experiences of students and field instructors in their varied fields. It is our hope that as you read these updates, you will get a glimpse of how our students are preparing to serve directly as well as leading others to care for the most vulnerable.

As always, thank you for your continued interest in the School of Social Work at Southern Adventist University. Please be sure to update your current email address at swfsalumni@southern.edu so that the school's event announcements, job posts, and e-newsletters continue to reach you. You can also

"Like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sauschoolofsocialwork to stay updated on current program happenings or to share your own professional updates.

Until we meet again - whether on social media, email, or face-to-face - happy reading!

In His Service,



For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45 NIV).

FROM STUDENT TO FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Penfield Christian Homes is a drug and alcohol treatment center that was established almost 35 years ago. The agency has four campuses across the state of Georgia, including a women's residential facility, two men's residential facilities, and a men's transitional facility. The men's transitional facility is located in LaFayette, Georgia, where alumnus Matt McUmbert, (MSW '13) serves as an addictions counselor. Matt has worked at Penfield for nearly seven years, the last two of those as a clinical social worker, upon his completion of the MSW program at Southern.

Matt has served as a field instructor for Southern's MSW students interning at Penfield's north campus as well as at other agencies. He finds it rewarding to watch the students he supervises grow both personally and professionally. While there are diverse opportunities available for students, past interns have obtained clinical experience by facilitating individual and group sessions and by teaching classes on various topics

relevant for the men in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction.

As an alumnus who continues to contribute to the MSW program by serving as a field instructor, Matt has this to say: "The MSW program at Southern is awesome. I am currently going into my third year of postgraduate practice and couldn't be happier about the decision I made to attend Southern." Matt appreciates the richness of the clinical experience offered by the MSW program at Southern and feels that students are provided with everything they need to know to practice social work.

The School of Social Work would like to thank Matt for the work he does with our students, ranging from guest speaking at Southern to providing opportunities at Penfield for its interns. Students in the MSW program who are interested in interning at Penfield may contact Professor Evie Nogales-Baker, the director of field education, for further information.

— Kyley Barton, MSW '15



Matt McUmbert
Penfield Christian Homes

DECEMBER 2015 GRADUATES



Karen Allen
MSW-Child & Family



Trudy Baker Duncan
MSW-Child & Family



Kyley Barton
MSW-Trauma



Luvhina Bien-Aime
MSW-Spiritual Care



Brittni Bryan
MSW-Entrepreneurship



Marvelle Davis
MSW-Child & Family



Alex Fletcher
MSW-Trauma



Heather Ann Flowers
MSW-Trauma



Samantha Graham
MSW-Entrepreneurship



Rebecca Hernandez
MSW-Child & Family



Adrienne Hines-Bond
MSW-Child & Family



Chelsea Kirkpatrick Jones
MSW-Child & Family



Vicky Landau
MSW-Child & Family



Debby Lazarine
MSW-Child & Family



Samantha Paul
MSW-Child & Family



Katherine Rodriguez
MSW-Child & Family



Candiss Steinke
MSW-Child & Family



Brandon Strachan
BSW



Lisa Twigg
MSW-Child & Family



Tonya Venable
MSW-Child & Family



Lisa Warren
MSW-Child & Family



Nicole Yoshida
MSW-Child & Family

Dean Kristie Wilder and the faculty and staff of the School of Social Work would like to extend their congratulations and warmest wishes for a bright future to our December 2015 graduates. May you partner with God in changing the world!

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Even until the day of His crucifixion, the apostles could not accept that Christ's kingdom was not from this world. They were constantly elbowing each other to secure the most powerful positions in the "new government." Under Christ's victorious leadership, they were ready to make Judah a great country again. It was unthinkable that Jesus would allow himself to be arrested and killed. Christ crucified was a tragedy that would throw the apostles into absolute confusion.

With Christ gone to heaven, His followers continued to pursue the idea of the "earthly kingdom" with a success that went beyond the apostles' wildest dreams. During the medieval times, when there was no separation between church and state, the European continent brought legislative powers into obedience under "God's will" and became "God's Kingdom." Millions were killed in the process through wars, executions at the stake, and in the torture chambers of the Inquisition. This was the price to pay for keeping the kingdom together, purged of "heretics," witches, and all kind of other "deviants."

Today, many Christians in the United States believe that we are again right at the gates of "God's kingdom on Earth." They believe with enough political support and the right God-fearing leaders in power, this country can be turned around and fully submitted to God's will. If given the power, these Christians promise to clean this land of sin, to base public policy on the Bible (not unlike the ideas of Sharia law), and to restrict the rights of groups or organizations that are violating God's will.

Christian social workers, who are struggling to live a faithful life in a deeply divided and troubled world, may be easily seduced by the promises of an earthly kingdom of God. They might believe that nothing could be better than a country whose citizens are brought into obedience of God's Law. To these Christians and Christian social workers, Christ is saying today, as he told the apostles numerous times, "My kingdom is not from this world." The transformation that God requires is not done through legislation, but through love and personal sacrifice; not through political power, but by the power of the Holy Spirit; not by arrogant imposition of our beliefs on others and by restricting their civil rights, but by humble service.

Since the United States is not the "earthly kingdom of God," the citizens of this country should have the choice not to follow our beliefs or the Bible. Self-determination, freedom, and equality are fundamental principles that should guide our practice.

As Christian social workers, we should stand by the principle of separation between church and the state and resist any attempt to impose Christian morality on the diverse population living in this country.

—Corneliu Rusu, associate professor

SOCIAL WORK HAPPENINGS



1: MSW student Martin Pita enjoys the Dean's Luncheon. 2: Office Manager Cheryl Craven passes out "midterm muffins" to BSW students. 3: BSW alumni and current MSW students Jessica Hill and Lindsey Crerar facilitate a booth at TCSW's Southeast Tennessee Fall Conference in Chattanooga. 4: BSW students enjoy hot cocoa, fellowship, and songs of praise at a Social Work Club vespers program. 5: MSW students celebrate successful portfolio defenses with field instructors, professors, and attending faculty. 6: BSW and MSW alumni (from left) Brittini Bryan, Samantha Graham, Kyley Barton, Khaneisha Harewood, Jessica Hill, and Lindsey Crerar, gather with Professor Evie Baker for an alumni roundtable discussion in Daniells Hall.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK UPDATES

BSW Updates

LTCA Emphasis

The School of Social Work is pleased to offer the option of a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree with an emphasis in Long Term Care Administration. Students selecting this emphasis will prepare for social work practice as well as administrative opportunities within the context of a long term care facility.

Social Work Club

This school year the Social Work Club has participated in and hosted many fun events. The club hosted a vespers for its members, participated in the AMEN Clinic, and volunteered at the Chambliss Center, helping in their classroom. The club also raked leaves for fundraising and hosted a Christmas party. During the fall semester, the club collected clothing donations in preparation for The Street Store project that was a part of Community Service Day on January 18, 2016. The event provided the homeless community of Chattanooga with a dignified shopping experience.

This semester, the club will continue to help the Chambliss Center and plans to organize another vespers for members, as well as a bake sale for further funding.

Phi Alpha Honor Society

Phi Alpha has worked diligently to advance its mission of academic excellence and service within the student body. The organization strives to meet student needs and foster community by planning events such as an induction banquet and a graduate school workshop. By encouraging students in this manner, Phi Alpha hopes to help students achieve their professional goals.

New York Study Tour

Six social work majors took part in the weeklong New York Study Tour over Thanksgiving break. Junior social work major Carolita Claus recalls a pivotal point during the trip. "We went to the Henry Street settlement. It's amazing to see how social work started in New York City and to understand the roots of what we are doing on a day-to-day basis."

MSW Updates

Changing Faces

We say a fond farewell to faculty member Dr. Mioara Diaconu. During the three years "Dr. D" was with us, she tirelessly mentored students, developed international study tours for Master of Social Work (MSW) students, and implemented best practices to take the MSW program to new heights; she will not soon be forgotten.

Professor Diaconu leaves us to join the School of Social Work at Western Michigan University as an associate professor. We wish her the best in this new endeavor.

Professor Lorri Merchant became the new MSW program director, beginning with the 2105-2016 school year. Professor Merchant comes with the prior administrative experience of directing a hospice program as well as serving as program, director of Social Work at Union College in Nebraska.

New aspects of the MSW program include an emphasis in military social work and veteran's services; a school social work course, which meets qualifications for certification; and a dual degree of MSW/MBA to be offered in the 2016-2017 school year.

MSW Coalition

The MSW Coalition participated in three opportunities to help families in the community during their time of need. The first was providing three families with a great Thanksgiving dinner and a Wal-Mart gift card to assist them with any other needed items. The second opportunity was donating toys to Chattanooga Cares during the holidays to support the families of people living with HIV. The final opportunity was taking children on a shopping spree for Christmas, which was done on December 22, 2015. The Coalition helped brighten the smiles of three children on that day, making their holidays a total success.

Professor Research

Professor Heck

In May of 2015, Annette Heck was awarded a Doctor of Social Work degree in Clinical Practice and Leadership from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The title of her capstone paper was "Understanding the Stressors and Coping Strategies Experienced by Seventh-day Adventist Clergy."

Professor Merchant

Professor Lorri Merchant is writing her dissertation at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on the intersection between religious coping and mental health. Her research focuses specifically on how forgiveness, making meaning, and relationship with God impact well-being and psychological distress.

Professor Racovita-Szilagyi

In September of 2015, Laura Racovita-Szilagyi received her PhD from Capella University. Racovita-Szilagyi was awarded her degree in the area of Human Services with a specialization in management of nonprofit agencies. The title of her dissertation is "Perceptions of Promoting and Modeling Ethical Values in Nonprofit and Public Agencies."

Professor Rusu

Professor Corneliu Rusu is writing his dissertation on life in intentional communities. He is completing his PhD through Pacifica Graduate Institute in California.

New Additions!



Daniel Adam joined the Heck family on September 11, 2015.



Anderson Jude joined the Wilder family on August 9, 2015.



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Cheryl Craven
Tricia Foster
Annette Heck
Lorri Merchant
Laura Racovita-Szilagy
Corneliu Rusu
Kristie Wilder



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