

SPRING 2024 ISSUE

The Change Agent

The Newsletter for Millersville University's School of Social Work



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A Letter From the Chair

A Letter from the Chair

Dr. Karen Rice, Department Chair

As we wrap up another academic semester and year, I wish to congratulate all our graduates! Within this issue of *The Change Agent*, you will notice the varied activities our students, faculty, and staff engaged throughout the semester. These activities included policy advocacy, professional development, and research, which are indicative of the varied experiences offered to our social work community as we invest in both personal and professional growth.

As we enter summer break, things slow down slightly within the school. I wish all members of our community time for rest and relaxation. We look forward to the upcoming academic year and hope you will join us in one or more of the activities we have planned. Take care, be well, and Together, We Can Be The Change!

Karen Rice



Spring 2024 Graduates

Congratulations to the BASW, MSW and DSW Spring 2024 graduates from the School of Social Work.

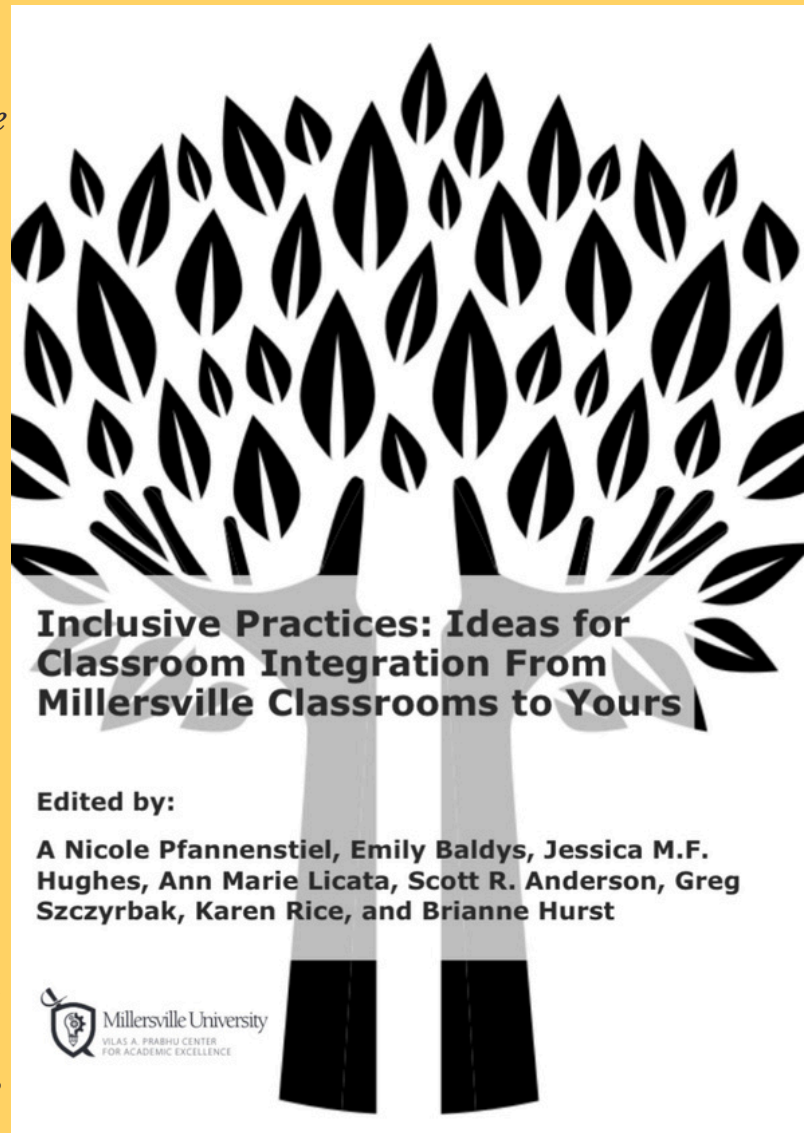
Roberto Lopez-Adrian gave graduate student moment of reflection at Millersville's graduation ceremony on May 4th, 2024.

Roberto Lopez-Adrian, MSW '24

Faculty Highlights

Inclusive Pedagogy Book and Chapter

This spring, **Dr. Karen Rice** co-edited the open access book titled *Inclusive Practices: Ideas for Classroom Integration From Millersville Classrooms to Yours* alongside colleagues across Millersville campus. Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work, **Dr. Bertha DeJesus**, authored Chapter 9, Inclusive teaching : Macro practice course design to support a real-world project. The book came together thanks to Open Education Resource Mentors, Drs. Nicole Pfannenstiel, Emily Baldys, Jessica M.F. Hughes, Ann Marie Licata, and Karen Rice and the support and guidance of faculty-librarians, Professors Greg Szczyrbak and Scott R. Anderson as well as **MSW student, Brianne Hurst**. The book builds on existing faculty professional development work integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion into faculty pedagogical approaches across learning spaces. “The book extends the work in its aims to broadly share repeatable, remittable teaching and learning approaches that foster inclusive student-centered learning” (Introduction, p. 12)



National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Legislative Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD) 2024

LEAD is an annual event hosted by NASW Pennsylvania chapter attended by nearly 1,000 social work students, professionals and supporters gathered at the Pennsylvania State Capital to advocate for legislation that is relevant to the social work profession. This year was the first time LEAD has been held in person since the start of COVID-19. The theme for the event was “Empowering Social Workers,” which emphasized the importance of the Social Work profession. Students and professionals visit legislators throughout the day to engage in legislative advocacy. The 2024 Bills of Focus included: HB 1841 - Social Work Licensure Compact Model Legislation HB 1500 -Increasing the Minimum Wage. See below for student reflections and experiences. Students met with Representative Smith Wade El and Senator Scott Martin’s staff to discuss the bills.

Faculty Highlights

NASW-PA LEAD Event Student Reflections

Students Kelly Dietrich, Elise Zimmerman, Lily Crowell, and Emily Moyer shared their experience of NASW-PA LEAD in a paper for Dr. Laura Granruth's SOWK 303 class in April, 2024.

Overall, we found LEAD Day to be an incredibly empowering and moving day where social workers were able to feel seen, heard, and valued. Getting to participate in the march and listening to cars honk in support, followed by hearing people in positions of power with the ability to change policy and pass legislation offer their support and thanks toward social workers was inspiring. Rep. Smith Wade El offered lots of insight toward our concerns and Senator Martins staff spoke to us in a completely different manner that gave us some perspective into what it's like to work in legislation. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and look forward to LEAD Day next year!



*Social Work Students and Professionals
Marching to the NASW-PA LEAD
Rally*



*Millersville BASW and MSW students at NASW-PA LEAD Day with Dr. Granruth and
Rep. Ismail Smith-Wade*

Faculty Highlights

Dr. Kat Walsh Deploys with the American Red Cross

During the winter session, Dr. Kat Walsh was deployed with the American Red Cross for 3 weeks to the Nashville, Hendersonville, and Clarksville areas of Tennessee to assist with the recovery efforts from the devastating tornadoes that occurred in the beginning of December. Throughout the Christmas and New Year's Holiday season, Dr. Walsh served as a Disaster Mental Health supervisor and service provider to help community members impacted by the tornadoes as well as volunteers and staff members also assisting those significantly impacted. Dr. Walsh was also a member of the Red Cross Integrated Care and Condolence Team (along with other disaster health and spiritual care volunteers), to provide additional support to families who lost a loved one as a result of the disaster. This experience will enhance Dr. Walsh's knowledge as a disaster (mental health) responder, inform her work as a Social Work and Disaster Mental Health professor, and embody Millersville and Social Work's professional values including service, compassion, professionalism, and civic engagement.



Dr. Kat Walsh (left) with mental health colleague Judith Schagrin (right)



Faculty Highlights

Local and International Conferences and Trainings

Drs. Bertha DeJesus and Wanja Ogongi attended the 2nd Biannual International Social Work and Multidisciplinary Conference at Maasai Mara University in Narok, Kenya from May 29-31, 2024. Traveling with them are students who will present their research.



Dr. Bertha DeJesus



Dr. Wanja Ogongi

11th Annual Global Well-being and Social Change Conference: Matters of Marginalization

In collaboration with various Departments and Offices at Millersville University, *The Learning Institute* hosted its annual conference to examine social, economic, and environmental injustices and human rights violations to foster positive change. The conference provided a platform for experts to share their knowledge and offer training for agents of change. The conference brought together faculty, students,



Attendees of the Global Well-being and Social Change Conference, Millersville University, Stayer Hall

staff and community professionals from around the region and across disciplines, to learn to advance social justice and human rights. The 11th Annual Global Well-Being Conference took place on March 15, 2024 and focused on social justice advocacy theoretical approach to enhance our global connectedness as we navigate an evolving world. The keynote speaker was Vanessa Philbert, CEO CAP Lancaster and the theme was *Matters of Marginalization*.

Faculty Highlights

The 2024 Pennsylvania Council of Children Youth and Family Services (PCCYFS) Conference

Students from Millersville University School of Social Work across all three programs (BASW, MSW, DSW) participated in the two-day PA Council of Children, Youth, and Family Services (PCCYFS) annual conference. The conference included keynote speaker Gerardo Lopez, former MS-13 gang member. A Panel discussion was led by the PA Department of Human Services (DHS) Deputy Secretaries Jennifer Smith and Laval Miller-Wilson who discussed providers who partner with children youth and families, Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations. Sessions included topics such as leadership, therapeutic practices, online safety, relationship building, educational success and more. Thank you to **Dr. Abigail Wilson** for organizing the event for our students to support their professional development.



Social Work Students at the PCCYFA Conference Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

PCCYFS Conference Student Reflection

by: Evelyn Morales, BASW

I was able to network with a wide variety of providers and learn about career opportunities. I learned about trauma informed practice by attending sessions on Human Trafficking: From Prostitute to President and Current Adolescent Drug Trends and Culture as well as hearing from speaker Gerardo Lopez. The session on Human Trafficking was particularly powerful because the speaker shared a very graphic story about his person life experience as a victim and how he uses that experience to help children and youth today. Gerardo Lopez's experience of escaping gang life with MS-13, was helpful to understand the trauma that can lead someone to join a gang and the trauma of trying to escape. The sessions on Creative Strategies to Addressing Former Foster Youth Housing Insecurity and Educational Stability: Helping Youth Remain on the Path of Academic Success, were particularly of interest in the type of work I hope to do. The sessions focused on agency programs, inter-professional collaboration, and advocacy for clients and systems that that need to change to help clients reach their fullest potential. There were even representatives from the state to answer questions regarding funding and policies to support innovative programs.

Faculty Highlights

Tri-State Campaign School for Social Workers

Social Work students attended the Tri-State Campaign School for Social Workers in March, 2024 at Rutgers's University. The annual Campaign school was led by experts in the field, Kate Coyne-McCoy, MSW and Tanya Rhodes Smith, MSW. Other presenters included professionals from the University of Connecticut, Rutgers University, and West Chester University, as well as the NASW-PA chapter president Sierra McNeil, MSW and the NASW CEO Dr. Anthony Street. Campaign School presenters discussed topics including political campaign basics, raising money, messaging, campaign and volunteer research, ethics and policies, representation and power and networking opportunities.



Attendees and Presenters at Campaign School at Rutgers's University

Campaign School Student Reflection

by: **Victoria Ziegler, MSW, LSW**

We had the opportunity to workshop our future campaign strategies and meet with current elected officials who shared their experiences and motivations for pursuing office. The event also encouraged reflection on personal and professional values and beliefs to clarify our motivations for involvement in government and social work careers. The conference provided ample networking opportunities for social work students and professionals. Everyone at the conference's vulnerability, excellence, and expertise inspired and empowered many colleagues, including myself. Overall, the event was an excellent opportunity to advocate for and empower ourselves, each other, and our clients, leaving us renewed motivation and purpose in our social work careers. I would highly recommend attending this conference!



Social Work Student Attendees at Campaign School at Rutgers's University

Faculty Highlights

School of Social Work Job Fair



Attendees at the Job Fair at the Ware Center

The School of Social Work Practicum Staff, **Jostalynn Parry** and **Heather Strohman** organized a job fair held on April 12, 2024 at the Ware Center. Thirty two agencies offering positions to BASW, MSW, and Psychology graduates attended. Agencies also shared information about available internship opportunities. See below for a list of agencies who attended.

- Adelphoi
- Backpack
- Bethany Children's Home
- Chester County
- COBYS Family Services
- Community Progress Council
- Community Services Group
- Lancaster County
- Manos House, D.A.R.S. Inc.
- Dauphin County
- Visiting Angels
- Excentia Human Services
- Focus Behavioral Health
- Hamilton Health Center
- Invision Human Services
- Keystone Human Services
- Behavioral Health & Development Services
- Laurel Life
- Lancaster Behavioral Health Hospital
- The Lincoln Center
- PA Counseling
- Wellspan Health

Faculty Highlights

School of Social Work Job Fair



Attendees at the Job Fair at the Ware Center

Agency List Continued:

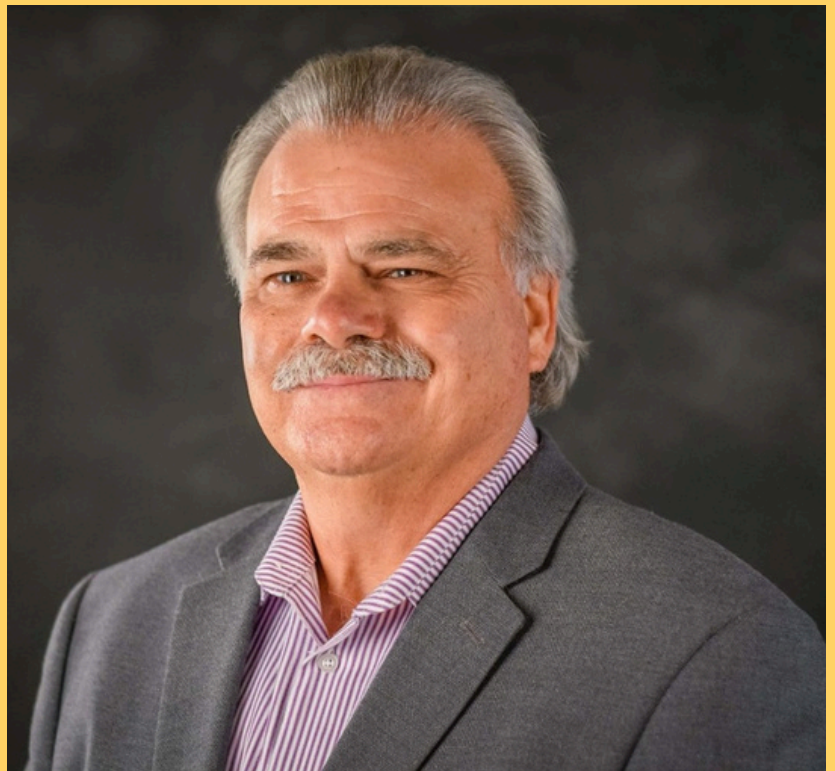
- York County
- Youth Advocate Programs Inc.
- Seond Grace
- Team Care Behavioral Health LLC.
- PA Comprehensive Behavioral Health
- Ponessa
- Sober Living and Recovery Houses
- Recvery Insight
- Sterling Life Solutions
- Tenfold
- Valley Youth House



Faculty Highlights

Dr. Felizzi Becomes New DSW Coordinator

Dr. Marc Felizzi earned his MSW from Delaware State University in 1995, and his PhD in Social Work from Widener University in 2011. He has spent the last 30 years working with and researching issues regarding mental health issues with children, adolescents and their families, as well as the effects of trauma and the impact of traumatic reactions, in addition to the effects of addictive behavior of adolescents and their families. Dr. Felizzi is a trained provider of the Screening,



Dr. Marc Felizzi, DSW Coordinator

Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) substance abuse assessment model. He has examined the effects of family violence, juvenile violence, the consequences of family instability on youth. Dr. Felizzi has written extensively on these topics, and his findings and opinions have appeared in local and national publications, and he has been interviewed on a number of national radio and television regarding juvenile violence. Dr. Felizzi joined the Millersville University School of Social Work in 2013, where he teaches a number of courses in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. He has also taught classes in conjunction with the Master of Science in Emergency Management program in Emergency Mental Health and Trauma. Dr. Felizzi is also the Coordinator for MSW/MEd in Sport Management Dual degree program and was recently named the Coordinator of the DSW program. Dr. Felizzi is also a Mental Health provider for the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee. Dr. Felizzi often brings his clinical experiences to life in class and shares his experiences as a therapist with students. In addition, he has a thriving clinical practice in Wilmington, Delaware where he works with clients of all ages.

Faculty Highlights

Dr. Frank Becomes New BASW Coordinator

Dr. Jennifer Frank is an associate professor in the Millersville University School of Social Work. Jennifer holds a Phd in Social Work from the Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. A licensed social worker in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, her research, teaching, and practice interests are in poverty and homelessness. In 2022, Dr. Jennifer Frank was named Social Work Educator of the Year by NASW of Pennsylvania. Further, in the Fall of 2023 she received an EPPIIC Award for her commitment to public mission, as demonstrated by her community work. Her current research foci include human connection, poverty perceptions, basic needs, and



Dr. Jennifer Frank, BASW Coordinator

social action. She recently presented her work on social isolation with Dr. Granruth on our local NPR program, Smart Talk. In 2022, they received a PASSHE grant to implement a letter writing project between MSW students and individuals from local agencies that address poverty. The project, Stepping Stones, demonstrated a decrease in loneliness among letter writers and produced a recent publication, "Please Mr. Postman:" Exploring the Use of Letter Writing to Address Loneliness in the Journal of Evidenced-Based Social Work. Dr. Frank is a research fellow with the Millersville University Center for Public Scholarship and Social Change. Most recently with the Center, Dr. Frank and her team published a community research report about unsheltered homelessness called People & Places: Community Need and the Use of Public Spaces in Binns Park. This report was based on 18 months of local community-based data collection and analysis. She is a member of the Hunger Free Campus Task Force, which attends to student food insecurity and the Family Friendly Campus Task Force, which helps support students who are parents. Dr. Frank is active in the community as a founding member and board vice president of the Loft Community Partnership. Dr. Frank is a former board member of the HUB, which operates the Campus Cupboard and Campus Closet offering food and clothing for college students in need.

Student Highlights

Graduate Student of the Year

Rasheed Osman began Master of Social Work program at Millersville University at Bell Socialization in York and pursued a specialization internship with the American Red Cross. He is currently volunteering with the Keystone Crisis Intervention Team. Rasheed was the GA for the School of Social Work. He facilitated the documentary and dialogue and policy webinar series and engaged in book talks through the Learning Institute as he oversaw their programs for the College of Graduate Studies in 2023. Rasheed served as a peer mentor in the Ubuntu Leaders Fellows Program. In this role Rasheed guided students through designing projects that address community challenges aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and helped them present their projects. Rasheed participated in LEAD day and advocated for two legislations and helped mobilize community members to vote. He is also an active member of his local NAACP chapter, committed to fighting racism, advocating for civil rights, and promoting social justice. Rasheed facilitated the constructive dialogue groups, a platform that presents opportunities for students to talk, and share concerns, and values conflicts, challenges regarding racism, values, and beliefs from the ADEI lens using Ibram X Kendi Antiracist Deck. Rasheed also presented at three international conferences: the GASI conference in Spain, in Las Vegas, and at the Global Well Being Conference at the Ware Center. Rasheed participated in the 2022 Millersville University College Core Class with Leadership Lancaster, a year-long leadership program, which has been instrumental in using the community as a classroom. Rasheed was selected to serve on the Leadership Lancaster Achieve Committee team.



Rasheed Osman at the 2024 Student Leadership Awards



Rasheed Osman receiving award from Skully and NJ Brown, Asst. director of Fraternity & Sorority Life and Student Engagement

Student Highlights

Phi Alpha Induction

The Theta Alpha chapter of the Phi Alpha Honor Society inducted several honorees on May 3rd. Please welcome the following Phi Alpha inductees for Spring 2024:

- Ainsley Bair, MSW student
- Jomo Beatty, MSW student
- Abigail Beiler, MSW student
- Miranda Blackburn, DSW student
- Keihana Carelock-Thomas, MSW Student
- Patti Colucci, DSW student
- Julie Cremins, BASW student
- Anna Fiordimondo, BASW student
- Bethany Franklin, DSW student
- Mikayla Hicklin, BASW student
- Rachel Preibisch, MSW student
- Shelby Robb, MSW student

We, the School of Social Work, look forward to all new Phi Alpha members' future endeavors!



Dr. Granruth, Dr. Rice, Dr. Proctor and Students Who Were Inducted into Phi Alpha Honor Society, Spring 2024

Student Highlights

The Alliance for Social Change Food Drive

The Alliance for Social Change (ASC) held a "food drive" for the Hub's Campus Cupboard. John Herr's Market (Millersville) agreed to be the sponsor of the drive. ASC officers created a list of non-perishable items that students could use, and approached Herr's shoppers: "Might you buy one or more items of this list while you are shopping to contribute to a food bank for MU students?" Simultaneously, other ASC officers staffed a table at the exit to receive donations. This "grassroots-style" social work project apparently worked...The ASC received 470 pounds of food! The HUB was overwhelmed - in good way! - for their Cupboard.

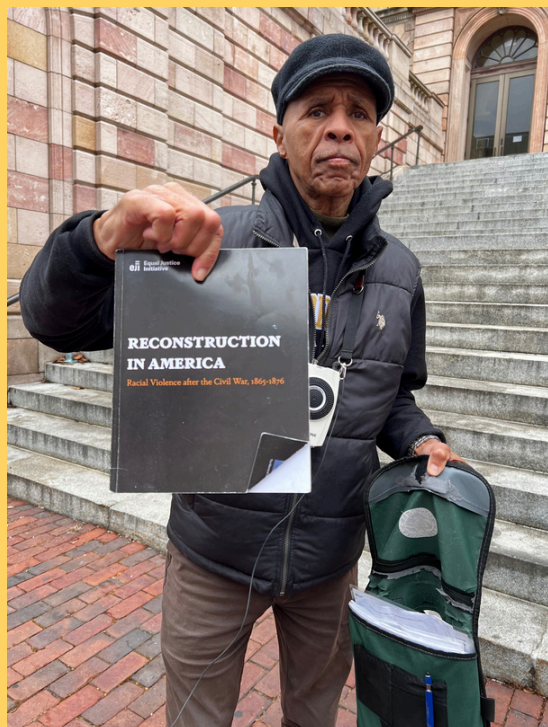


Members of ASC Food Drive at John Herr's Village Market

Black History Walking Tour

In honor of Black History Month, students, faculty, and staff participated in a walking tour through Lancaster City. It was an educational experience for the social work community as they learned about Black leaders in our local city

who fought for justice and inclusion, key values of the social work profession. Thank you, Nelson Polite, Jr., President of African American Historical Society of South Central PA and Lancaster History board member, for leading students, faculty, staff of our social work community as we learned about Black leaders in our city who fought for justice and inclusion.



Students, faculty, and staff with Nelson Polite Jr. in Lancaster City

Student Highlights

Student Research

Social Work students shared their research at the annual Made in Millersville celebration. This year's Made in Millersville event marked the 10th anniversary and was held on April 9th, 2024 in the Student Memorial Center. **Evelyn Morales**, a senior at Millersville in the School of Social Work published her research titled *Addressing the Child Welfare Workforce Crisis in Pennsylvania* following her presentation. Evelyn hopes that researching this issue and its impacts will serve as a steppingstone toward finding solutions and reducing the shortage of child welfare workers in Pennsylvania.



Evelyn Morales, BASW '24

Practicum Instructor of the Year

Christopher Thomas holds a Master of Social Work degree from Millersville University of Pennsylvania. He practices macro social work as a data analyst for the Lancaster County Homelessness Coalition, with the goal of addressing the needs of those at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. He has interests in policy, research, and advocacy. When he isn't working, Christopher enjoys spending time outside gardening, foraging, and kayaking. He lives in Lancaster with his fiancé and their two cats. Congratulations, and Thank You for supporting our students and the School of Social Work.



Christopher Thomas, MSW

World Social Work Day Event

On March 28th, social work students gathered in celebration of World Social Work Day to create a collective art peiece. The creation of the art piece highlighted innovative, community-led social work and connecting through nature. Thank you to **Dr. Heather Girvin** and **Dr. Joyous Bethel** for organizing this celebratory creative activity.



World Social Work Day

March 19

This year's theme is 'Buen Vivir: Shared Future for Transformative Change', which emphasizes the need for social workers to adopt innovative, community-led approaches that are grounded in indigenous wisdom and harmonious coexistence with nature. Today, our students are attending Legislative Education and Advocacy Day to promote the profession and advocate for various services that enhance the lives with whom and communities with which we work.

BUEN VIVIR

*shared future for
transformative
change*

**WORLD SOCIAL WORK DAY
19TH MARCH 2024
#WSWD2024**



Congratulations to our Spring 2024 Graduates



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MU SSW ALUMNI

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