

the utopian

FITNESS FOR ALL
as a social justice cause

HARM REDUCTION
and the opioid epidemic

RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE
goes Texas-wide

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN | STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

FALL 2017



Harm reduction and the opioid epidemic p. 8

FROM THE DEAN

"WHAT MAY LOOK LIKE A SMALL WORDING CHANGE IN THE MASTHEAD REPRESENTS A TRUE WATERSHED IN OUR HISTORY."

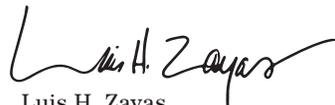
You may have noticed something different on the magazine's cover — if you haven't, I suggest that you turn the page back and look again. What may look like a small wording change in the masthead represents a true watershed in our history. We are now the Steve Hicks School of Social Work, thanks to a transformative gift from R. Steven Hicks, vice chairman of the Board of Regents of The University of Texas System.

This gift, which will grow through a matching program, will allow our school to increase the financial support offered to master's students. Thanks to Mr. Hicks, more individuals, regardless of socioeconomic background, will be able to respond to their social work calling with less concern about student debt and more freedom after graduating to pursue their passion for helping others and changing the world for the better.

Furthermore, this gift will enhance our foothold in the field of addictions through the development of curricula, fieldwork experiences, and endowed professorships. Mr. Hicks's generosity will also help us create new programs to equip students with skills in fundraising and philanthropy that are essential for the nonprofit and managerial world.

The announcement of this gift happened literally as this magazine was going to print. We will share more details about the many ways in which this gift will benefit our social work community later in the fall, through a special issue of *The Utopian*. In the meantime, to learn more about Mr. Hicks and his commitment to make a positive difference in the lives of others, I invite you to visit our website: <https://socialwork.utexas.edu/featured-a-watershed-in-our-history>.

For decades now, the school has been the beneficiary of your generosity. I am grateful for every one of you, for the difference you have made in the lives of our students, and I am excited about what we will accomplish together in the future.



Luis H. Zayas
Dean and Robert Lee Sutherland Chair
in Mental Health and Social Policy



FROM YOU

"Just received the latest copy of *The Utopian* and was very impressed. I am pleased to note that social work has not changed since my days though its application and creativity have. Social work seems to continue to uncover needs and their potential solutions regardless of politics or trends or fads. Behind these efforts lie a conviction and philosophy that each individual social worker will continue to follow the rest of their days. It feels good to be part of that calling."

Dieter Gaupp (MSSW '52)



"I received the hard copy of *The Utopian* yesterday and it looks amazing! I love the piece on People's, the archival photos, and the piece on Doug Smith. Great job!"

Laurie Cook Heffron (PhD '15)

"*Two Smiths, One Quest* is a well written article about two excellent alumni doing great policy work! Thank you for sharing this story!"

Alison Mohr Boleware (MSSW '15)

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 The University of Texas at Austin
Steve Hicks School of Social Work

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the utopian

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FITNESS FOR ALL

Carolyn Haney wants social workers to take up the cause of fitness access

WRITER: ANDREA CAMPETELLA

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About 35 sweaty individuals jumped, twisted, and shimmied to the music following the cues of an energetic instructor at the front. It was mostly women, mostly middle-aged, and mostly Latina-looking — although I could not take my eyes off an older white woman in khaki pants who seemed to be having the time of her life. Every time the chorus line came up, everybody moved their hands with gusto, as if shaking something off them.



This was a WeViva Zumba class, the brainchild of Carolyn Haney (MSSW '03).

"I've always wanted fitness to be a social work issue. Social workers are starting to care about nutrition, but haven't got to fitness yet. But if you think about it, being fit is all about access to resources: you need money to take a class or buy the right pair of shoes; you need time, if you are a parent you need a support system in place, and so on," Haney told me one morning over coffee. Her hair was up in a ponytail, and she had black athletic wear on. She likes to run early in the morning, before her two daughters wake up.

Haney came to social work with a life of being active in her native California, a stint as a ski instructor in Utah, and another stint as a counselor in a residential treatment center with an intense wilderness-oriented program. While doing her master's in social work at UT Austin, she sought an internship with Marathon Kids, for which she promoted running among school-age children in low-income Austin zip codes. She continued on this path after graduating, joining another Austin nonprofit that targeted obesity via programs to get children in middle schools active and healthy.

"And then I had my first daughter in 2010," she said and paused her rapid-fire talk for a moment. "I was in a place where I wanted to get my body back. I had the resources to do it, but this made me think of the many women who didn't. I realized that while we were all targeting kids with fitness and get-healthy programs, there was this huge population of low-income mothers in Austin, mostly Hispanic, that nobody was paying attention to, nobody was serving!"

Statistics from the Texas Department of State Health Services back Haney's realization: Women are less likely to engage in leisure physical activity than men, and Hispanic women are more likely to be overweight and have diabetes than white women.

Haney said her idea was simple: to create a comfortable, culturally appropriate space for low-income moms wherever they lived, where they could drop off their kids, exercise, and learn about healthy eating — all this for free.

"Target the mom," she elaborated, "and the family will be healthy. If the mother has the knowledge and the resources, she can be a role model and create healthy habits for the whole family."

In the spring of 2011 Haney approached Foundation Communities and offered to develop a six-week fitness and nutrition program for residents of one of the organization's

It was Wednesday evening and a Pitbull hit was blasting in the community center of the Homestead Oaks Apartments in South East Austin: *Echa pa'lla, todo lo malo, echa pa'lla* ("throw it away, all that is bad, throw it away").

I want WeViva to be a resource for these moms so that they can be the epicenter of health and wellness for the whole family.



apartment complexes. As the social worker she is, she started by surveying her target population to find out its needs.

"I distributed flyers, and I literally knocked on the door of every single apartment. I went with a friend who spoke Spanish so that we could share the idea with the women and find out what they wanted. We offered three options: aerobics, which we called *ejercicios de mujeres*, yoga, and Zumba. And it was 100 percent Zumba, Zumba all the way!" she said laughing.

Out of that successful test-run, Haney developed WeViva, now a fully fledged 501c organization that offers between 30 and 40 free fitness and nutrition classes a week to adults all over Austin — in apartment complexes, clinics, schools, and community organizations. The majority of adults served are low-income Hispanic women, and thus most classes are bilingual in Spanish and English. The nonprofit's very name is a hybrid of English and Spanish: "We" (community, friends, co-workers) and "Viva" (Spanish for live or alive).

"The goal is to remove every possible barrier. Our instructors speak Spanish, look like our participants, understand that these moms may have never taken a fitness class before, that it can be intimidating for them. We also offer free childcare when needed. We want to make it easy, fun, and enjoyable, because we want them to keep coming back," Haney said.

Fun certainly abounded at Homestead Oaks that Wednesday evening. The Zumba class ended with rounds of high-fives, hugs, and group photos. About 15 women stayed for a nutrition class taught by a spunky instructor named Maria. The topic was sugar in drinks and packaged foods, and Maria had lined up products going from soda to ranch-dressing on a desk. She switched effortlessly between Spanish and English as she read the nutrition labels, advised to double check the serving size, and explained the math to convert pesky grams of sugar into more visual spoonfuls — "just divide the total by four!"

A chorus of "oohhs," "aaahhs," and "*Dios míos*" rose as Maria theatrically poured 12 tablespoons of sugar into a plastic cup to show the sugar content in a bottle of Fanta strawberry.

"I think it's because it's red soda. Isn't clear soda better?" someone asked.

"*Es lo mismo!* It's the same!" Maria answered and read the nutrition label on a bottle of 7Up. "Next time your kid has a tummy ache, think twice before giving them 7Up!" She held the plastic cup with sugar high for everyone to see: "This is what you are giving your kids when you take them to the *piñata*. And then you wonder why they won't stay put!"

Questions kept popping up as Maria went down the line of products. When she reached the end, a woman in a grey WeViva t-shirt said, "So, pretty much you are telling us that we shouldn't cook with anything that comes from a box or a jar. That's all I know how to do! Does WeViva offer cooking classes?"

This is the kind of response that makes Haney happy: "I want WeViva to be a resource for these moms so that they can be the epicenter of health and wellness for the whole family."

Haney looks back with satisfaction to WeViva's seven-year run. Always a mover, however, at the time of this interview she was in the process of stepping down as the nonprofit's executive director to let new people in with new ideas that could bring the organization to its next phase. When asked what was next for her, she thought for a moment.

"I don't know yet, but I do think about teaching about fitness and social work," she answered. "We social workers need to talk more about the benefits of fitness; we should be talking about fitness deserts as we talk about food deserts. That's an idea to explore!" ■

ABOVE: A WeViva nutrition instructor pours spoonfuls of sugar into a cup to show the sugar content in soft drinks and packaged foods.

THE BUSINESS OF SOCIAL WORK



SAM WOOLLARD still remembers the refurbished apartment building with the filled-in swimming pool where the School of Social Work was housed in 1988, when she got her bachelor's degree. Woollard now owns two consulting businesses that respectively support philanthropy planning and social impact initiatives. She thinks there is much opportunity for social workers to bring their training and skills into consulting.

SHE STARTED on a typical social work career path, which led her to managing a program for addiction recovery education in Austin. "It was the mid 1990s, and it was the first job where we actually got an email address, although we were not sure what to do with it. We also were excited when we could do group faxing to remind people about a meeting!"

SHE JOINED A NETWORK — CAN/Community Action Network — to learn more about other organizations in the Austin area. "This was before the internet; it was hard to find information. CAN was our first attempt as health and human service providers to form a group, learn about each other, and find some common outcomes and outputs." She eventually became CAN's associate director, a position she held for eight years.

SHE SAW THE POWER OF NETWORKS AND COALITIONS to improve communities. For instance, CAN worked with the Internal Revenue Service to enhance its tax support program. This effort eventually became Foundation Communities' Tax Preparation Program, which in 2016 alone filled more than 20,000 tax returns for Austin low-income families.

SHE DECIDED TO STEP INTO THE CONSULTING WORLD in 2007. "I stepped back and asked myself, what am I passionate about and what am I good at?" She figured she was good at connecting people, forging a path from the bigger picture to the practical details, and helping groups move forward with their goals.

SHE STASHED THREE-MONTHS WORTH OF MONEY IN THE BANK and bought a convertible. "I needed time to think, and I wanted to make sure I would be able to live and have good credit when I was ready to start something new!" During this

time, she 1) met someone for coffee everyday: "one of the best pieces of advice I ever got;" 2) created a website and developed a business plan: "very helpful, because you have to be very concise and clear about what you do, who are your clients, how much money you need to make to pay the bills;" 3) talked with every consultant she could find: "I asked them questions like how do you determine how much you charge, how do you identify your clients, how do you create ongoing business."

WHEN SHE WAS ABOUT TO DESPAIR about her career change she got her first client, who has been with her ever since. In 2013 she gained a new business partner and now their consulting business employs two people and has three associates. "Every piece of business we receive comes from a referral. The relationships that I have formed over almost 30 years in human and health services have been critical to our success."

THEIR CONSULTING STYLE IS ROOTED IN SOCIAL WORK. "We don't come in as the experts. We have expertise and are happy to share it, but we really believe that the folks we work with have the answers. Our job is to facilitate their process to get to them."

WHEN SHE LOOKS BACK AT HER UNDERGRADUATE DAYS, she realizes that she never had the opportunity to think about social work as a business. "This is even true for the folks who want to go into private practice, they also need to learn how to make a business out of that. I think there is huge opportunity here, and I'm happy to share what I have learned so far with whoever is interested."

You can contact Sam at sam@woollardnichols.com

"V" is for Volunte



Sarah Jovinelly, MSSW '16

The Bridge Collective, Austin

"I started volunteering with the Bridge Collective after the Texas Omnibus Abortion Bill (HB 2) passed in 2013. The bill left only five health care clinics that provide abortion services open in Central

Texas, meaning that many people had to travel great distances for both the mandatory ultrasound and actual abortion procedure. At the Bridge Collective, we offer practical support to remove barriers from this daunting process. Our volunteers provide safe transportation and unbiased, nonjudgmental emotional support. Within the next year, we also hope to have abortion doulas on duty in clinics to provide patients with emotional support during the actual procedure."



Stephanie Glass, MSSW '16

Women's Storybook Project, Austin

"I visit women who are in prison and record them reading books to their children. In my last visit, I went to the Gatesville Women's Prison Unit, and recorded a young woman reading *Love*

You Forever, by Robert Munsch, to her toddler-age daughters. The book focuses on the parent-child relationship throughout the child's life, and concludes with the child as an adult caring for the parent, who is in the final stages of their life. The story is quite beautiful and although it can be an emotional read, it is a favorite among the women who participate in this project. I love that as a social worker my job is to create positive change, but I cannot cover all the areas I would like to. Volunteering provides me an outlet for this, allows me to learn new things and contribute to the community I live in."



Allie Townshend, MSSW '13

CASA of Travis County

"I advocate for the best interest of children who have experienced abuse or neglect and are in the child welfare system. For each case, I maintain ongoing contact with the children, their

families, legal counsel, school staff, therapists, etc.; and I provide written and verbal testimony to family court. I have been a CASA volunteer since 2009 and although I am currently taking a break from managing a case, it has helped me stay grounded in the clinical aspect of social work — even though I'm a CAL graduate."



Bonnie Herrman, MSSW '13

Tree House Humane Society, Chicago

"Tree House is a cat rescue organization. I take adoptable cats to a nearby assisted-living facility or nursing home for socialization with the residents. Many of the residents have memory and/or physical

impairment, and these visits help engage those who may be withdrawn, nonverbal, or have difficulty communicating. I found my passion for working with seniors during my final field placement, and I've been working with them ever since! The visits are an amazing reminder to me that even the smallest moments and connections can bring joy and meaning to the lives of others."



Nicole Gollis Golden, MSSW '04

Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, Austin

"I started volunteering shortly after the Sandy Hook shooting, which shook me to the core. I realized that I had to do something — anything — to keep my own

family and other families safe from gun violence. I now lead the Austin group of this fast growing national grassroots network. I organize events, recruit volunteers, lobby legislators, speak to media, and support gun-violence survivors. I hope some day the work we do will be remembered as having changed the course of history for the better."

ering.

Service is one of the core values in the NASW Code of Ethics. Nine alumni share where and why they volunteer.



Cara Fox, BSW '98

Little Helping Hands, Austin

“Through Little Helping Hands we do family volunteer projects with our three kids with a variety of organizations across the city — from food pantries to animal shelters to assisted-living facilities and

more. I love it because we get to learn about new organizations and causes, and it gets us outside the bubble of our usual neighborhood and out doing things we might never have done otherwise. Plus it generates so many teachable moments and conversations. My mother modeled voluntarism when I was a young child. The number one thing volunteering brings to my life is gratitude: I always tell my kids is that if you're grateful for what you have, then what you have is always enough.”



Nora Druepple, MSSW '86

American Red Cross, Central Texas

“I am a volunteer and instructor in disaster mental health. During the Onion Creek flood in October 2015, for instance, I worked at a shelter for displaced residents, providing them

support, information, resource referrals, and psychological first aid. I also went to a small community near Taylor to assist in a needs assessment at a shelter that was also responding to a flood. I went with my husband, who is a nurse/paramedic, and also volunteers for the Red Cross. I love the collaboration among different disciplines and the teamwork approach at the Red Cross — and it's very cool that as a social worker I get to work with my favorite nurse!”



Laura Snyder Wagenknecht, MSSW '09

Buncombe County Commission, Asheville

“I visit assisted-living facilities throughout the county to advocate for and help residents, and to make sure facilities comply with code regulations. I chose to volunteer with this committee because we all become older, and we all have

less mobility over time. I like knowing that there are many of us who want to ensure that people who are older or have disabilities have a voice and can have decent living conditions where they spend most, if not all, of their time. I want to make sure that these people have the dignity, quality of life, and respect that they deserve.”



Deborah Sharp, MSSW '98

Measure Austin

“Measure Austin is a partnership among data geeks with an activist edge and a passion for social justice. The ultimate goal is to help achieve a new community-policing model in Austin. The immediate

goal is determining what community factors and law-enforcement performance measures we need to pay attention to in order to improve the interactions between communities and police. There is a developer element too, as Measure Austin will be monitoring these factors in real time on their website. I'm on the advisory board, and I have been working with an interdisciplinary team to create a white paper on trauma-informed policing; I interviewed community members and police officers to discover their lived experience of trauma and how it might inform their interactions with each other. It's very exciting to be working with the Austin Police Department and to meet other people in the city with the same passion for social justice.”



Minimizing Harm

Is the opioid epidemic bringing harm reduction into the mainstream?

BY ANDREA CAMPETELLA
PHOTOS BY SHELBY KNOWLES



Top: AHRC staff member and social work student James Walker prepares the van before departing for a mobile outreach. Left: A nurse volunteering with the AHRC helps set up the van.

“Are those Danskos?” she asked pointing to my red sandals. I nodded and we briefly discussed the benefits of comfy-yet-cute shoes for women like us, who suffer from bunions. I had plopped myself on the driver’s seat of the Austin Harm Reduction Coalition van, still unsure of what to do with myself, so I appreciated the chance at conversation. The woman — blonde, in her fifties, wearing shorts and stylish sunglasses — stood next to the van’s door waiting for her turn to get in. It was a Friday evening, and we were in a parking lot on East César Chavez, in Austin.

She smiled at me as she passed by to get to the van’s service area. Two volunteers sat behind a custom-made wooden front desk divided up into square compartments: a big one for used needles, and smaller ones for supplies that ranged from cookers (metal bottle caps with twister handles) to single-use plastic vials of water and saline solution to alcohol wipes and tourniquets. She chatted casually with the volunteers while she dropped used needles, picked and chose supplies that she put into a brown paper bag, and asked for clean needles size 28. As she was leaving, a man — also blonde, also in his fifties, also wearing sunglasses that he lifted for me to see his “baby-blue eyes” — came in. He got supplies and asked if someone could check his wrist, which looked somewhat swollen. He was sent to the back of the van — an area with two sets of worn gray car seats facing each other — where an affable volunteer paramedic checked the wrist, and recommended that he stay out of it. “If you need to use, try here or here,” she said pointing to areas in the man’s upper arm. Later on, one of the volunteers talked with a young man in a leather jacket about how to use naloxone to prevent an opioid overdose. The man left with a green plastic sachet containing three vials of injectable naloxone, clean needles, and printed instructions.

The Austin Harm Reduction Coalition (AHRC) has been providing services like these to the drug-using community since 1995. Harm reduction is a public health model that seeks to reduce or eliminate drug-related harm, such as the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C or death from overdose, without requiring abstinence from drug use or necessarily promoting it as the only solution. In addition to clean supplies, harm reduction programs offer support and access to health education and services.

“It definitely challenges your views of traditional service providing,” James Walker told me. He is a UT Austin social work master’s student and the AHRC staff member who drove the van the day I joined the mobile outreach.

“The client is the expert on their own needs, and if a clean needle is what they need to stay healthy, it’s not your job tell them otherwise, your job is to give the clean needle to them,” he elaborated. “We all know this deep down in our heart as social workers, but in many agencies there are lots of restrictions that come between ourselves and the clients. That was not the case at AHRC, and I really liked that when I started. I fell in love with the harm-reduction framework.”



Harm reduction has been the basis of addiction services in Western European countries since the 1920s. But in the United States, where drug policy has been mostly based on prohibition in a criminal justice framework, most services have operated on abstinence-only models and through 12-step programs based on Alcoholic Anonymous’ Big Book, first published in 1939. Harm reduction groups only emerged in the 1980s in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its association with injection drug use. In this context, practices such as needle exchanges helped contain the spread of the HIV/AIDS virus by reaching individuals who were not necessarily seeking abstinence, and therefore were not accessing services through traditional 12-step programs.

Although many see harm reduction and abstinence models as polar opposites, UT Austin social work professor Lori Holleran Steiker believes that we are better off thinking about them as part of a continuum of services. This is not, however, what she thought back in 2000, when she came to the Forty Acres as an expert in addiction and prevention services.

“I grew up with a mother in recovery and the mantra ‘a drug is a drug is a drug,’” Holleran Steiker told me one morning in her homey School of Social Work office, during a break between meetings with students. “My mother was an addiction counselor and she believed, and there was not much evidence to the contrary back then, that whether it’s alcohol or oxydocone the solution was the same for everyone: stop and stay stopped if you didn’t want to die.”

Research by Sam MacMaster, a friend and colleague at the University of Tennessee who was studying women who injected drugs, made Holleran Steiker question her assumptions.

“He was the first one who said to me, ‘Lori, you are wrong. These women’s experience of craving is different, their brain chemistry is different, their ability to stay stopped is different. If they don’t have access to treatment and only come to 12-step meetings many of them are going to end up dying because the risk of an opioid overdose is very high during relapse.’”

New scientific evidence on the neurobiology of alcohol and other drugs corroborated MacMaster’s assertion. Holleran Steiker now teaches a popular signature course, *Young People and Drugs*, where she covers the science that made her put her childhood mantra “a drug is a drug is a drug” to rest.

“Different substances pose a different risk of developing a compulsive chemical dependence in which you can’t stop using without help. For example, the risk for alcohol is 15 percent, but for heroin is 23 percent,” she explained, citing



Clockwise: Social work professor Lori Holleran Steiker. The AHRC van’s custom-made desk contains supplies such as saline solution, tourniquets, and alcohol wipes. The AHRC has been providing safe injection education and HIV prevention in Austin for more than 20 years.



“The client is the expert on their own needs, and if a clean needle is what they need to stay healthy, it’s not your job tell them otherwise, your job is to give the clean needle to them.”

the work of pharmacy professor Carlton Erickson, who is a regular invited speaker in her signature course. “In addition, because compulsive substance use is a brain disease that does not develop overnight, sometimes lifetime treatment and monitoring are necessary for recovery.”

Holleran Steiker thinks that given this evidence, it makes sense to embrace a range of treatment options, including abstinence but going beyond it, to help individuals seeking recovery find what works best for them: “Particularly with opioids, over the years we’ve recognized that sometimes it’s necessary to have medication-assisted therapies, which we know are effective.”

But this view, she says, is not widely shared in the recovery community.

“Here in Central Texas the recovery community is incredibly strong, and almost all built around abstinence. There is resistance against medication-assisted therapies and other harm-reduction initiatives. The thinking is, how are you considering yourself a person in recovery, if you are still using a substance to fix yourself? So the social stigma attached to drug use is also present in the recovery community.”

Although personally she more easily embraces abstinence models, Holleran Steiker says that she has learned that her experience is not everybody’s.

“Having witnessed kids going through this, I understand the need for medication-assisted therapies, and I’m so grateful that harm reduction exists. My goal, being involved with both 12-step programs and harm reduction groups, is to bring those two groups closer together and break down those silos.”

In 2015, in fact, she invited MacMaster to Austin for a recovery conference she helped organize. To her memory, it was the first time that abstinence and harm-reduction groups were in the same room to purposefully talk about this schism: “It was a hard conversation, but one we need to have. And the time is now.”



Since it emerged in the 1990s, harm reduction has not only remained on the margins of addiction services but also on the margins of the law. Despite some reforms under the Obama administration, U.S. national drug policy is still dominated by the war on drugs, which criminalizes substance use, endorses



Top: Through the mobile outreach, the AHRC meets drug users where they are, addressing conditions of use along with the use itself.
Right: University of Texas System police officers in a training organized by Operation Naloxone (OperationNaloxone.org)



abstinence-only programs, and portrays harm reduction as contrary to the goal of a drug-free America.

The AHRC, for instance, operates in a legal gray zone. The volunteer manual I was given to read states that distribution of syringes is considered a misdemeanor in Texas — possession of drug paraphernalia with the intention to distribute — that providing clean syringes to anyone under 18 is a felony, and that when volunteers spot new participants they must inform them that needle exchange is illegal and therefore discretion is important.

Before we left for the outreach, Walker assured me that in his three years with the AHRC he had never had an incident with the police. But during a quiet moment in one of the stops, as we were chatting in the back of the van, he stiffened in slight alarm to the sound of a siren. He only relaxed when the paramedic came to tell us that she had seen an ambulance go by one of the cross streets.

One element of the AHCR outreach, however, has been recently made legal in the state of Texas: the distribution of naloxone, a highly effective antidote to an opioid overdose.

Often known by the brand name Narcan, naloxone is classified as a prescription drug and as such must be prescribed by a licensed health care provider after an individualized evaluation of the patient. But in September 2015 Texas joined the majority of other states by passing a law (Senate Bill 1492) that allows qualified Texas pharmacists to dispense naloxone to patients and/or third parties, and makes it easier for community organizations like the AHRC to acquire, store, and distribute naloxone.

I asked Lucas Hill, a professor at the UT Austin College of Pharmacy, why making naloxone accessible was acceptable now when harm-reduction groups have been trying to expand access since the 1990s.



Lucas Hill

“The most cynical reason is that white people started to die,” he answered.

Hill was referring to death by opioid overdose. Once the bane of poor and African-American communities, in the last decade addiction to opioids — in the form of both controlled substances like heroin and prescription pills like OxyContin — and death from overdose have moved into

predominantly white suburban and rural areas. As the face of opioid addiction has changed, many argue, using naloxone to save lives from overdose has become more acceptable.

But Hill also pointed out that in terms of sheer numbers, the current opioid epidemic involves more users and more deaths than ever before. According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2015 opioid overdoses killed 33,091 Americans — nearly as many as those killed by guns and car crashes, and almost three times the number who died of an opioid overdose in 2002.

“From 2000 to 2010 opioid overdose was the fastest growing cause of death in the United States. Nothing is changing in a bad direction as quickly as drug overdoses,” Hill said. “It takes an average of seven to ten years for facts about epidemiology to find their way into practice and policy. That’s where we are now, and that’s another reason why states are passing naloxone laws.”

The current opioid epidemic may have shifted attitudes about drug laws and allowed for less punitive approaches. But the stigma attached to drug use is still strong and creates hurdles for people to get the help they need.

In Texas for instance, Senate Bill 1492 created the legislative environment for the prescription of naloxone via a “standing order,” a sort of open order that a physician signs and a pharmacist can use to dispense naloxone to someone the physician has not personally examined.

But, Hill says, “It was left to individual physicians and pharmacists to find each other, create an agreement, a template for the order ... there was not much incentive for anybody to do that.”

It took months of tireless work of advocates making the necessary connections until finally, in June 2016, the Texas Pharmacy Association issued a standing order.

“It is interesting, because the law is so much about pharmacy but the process has not been driven by pharmacists. It has been driven by advocates and social workers and harm-reduction groups,” Hill reflected.

After the standing order was issued, in theory any pharmacist could get it from the TPA website, complete a one-hour online training, and start dispensing naloxone to anyone requesting it. In practice, Hill said, this is not yet the case.

“Many pharmacists don’t know about the standing order or have misconceptions about naloxone and may decide they don’t want to dispense it. They may fear that naloxone will enable patients to use higher doses of opioids, or will discourage them from seeking treatment. All the available scientific evidence says the opposite, but they may not be aware of that.”

Hill is trying to address this knowledge gap through Operation Naloxone (OperationNaloxone.org), a collaboration among the UT Austin’s College of Pharmacy and Steve Hicks School of Social Work and a community organization (the Texas Overdose Naloxone Initiative) that provides free opioid overdose prevention and naloxone trainings on the Forty Acres and throughout the community. Holleran Steiker is part of the executive team, and Walker is a student member.

“We have trained the UT Austin Police Department and given them naloxone; we have trained resident advisors and now dorms are stocking naloxone. We are one of the few pioneering universities around the country that are being really proactive in this matter,” Hill said. “My dream now is to train pharmacy and social work students so they pair up, visit pharmacies and give naloxone information — like drug reps but for a good cause and not for money!”

In the meantime, even with naloxone laws on the books, many people with an addiction to opioids still depend on harm reduction organizations like the AHRC to stay alive.



The second outreach stop, in South East Austin, was busier than the first. I sat on the back of the AHRC van, rolling donated tourniquets tightly and holding them with tiny, brightly colored rubber bands. People came in and out, and many left with naloxone kits: a young professional-looking couple driving a silver SUV, a middle-aged Hispanic man who said he had kicked heroin but his children were addicted and he feared for their lives, an older woman with platinum hair lovingly carrying a yappy little dog, a young man with many questions — where should he inject the naloxone? How long should he wait to give a second dose? Did it have to be kept in the fridge?

Walker and the AHRC volunteers listened with attention to everyone who came to the van for services, answered questions, joked back, and made small talk. It was Good Friday, and a few people wished us a happy Easter before leaving.

Later on, as we were driving back to the AHRC office in the Austin dusk, I thought about something that both Hill and Holleran Steiker had suggested: If there is a silver lining to the current opioid epidemic, it may be that it brings more compassion for all drug users and a greater acceptance of solutions other than laws that criminalize addiction and approaches that require abstinence to obtain services.

“From a social work perspective,” Holleran Steiker had also said, “if we get this right and everybody can access the whole spectrum of approaches, then we can help people find what best helps them.” ■



RESEARCH THAT CHANGES LIVES



The cost of human trafficking

There are more than 300,000 victims of human trafficking in Texas, including almost 79,000 minors and youth victims of sex trafficking and nearly 234,000 adult victims of labor trafficking, according to a groundbreaking study by the Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (IDVSA). The study also established that traffickers exploit approximately \$600 million per year from victims of labor trafficking in Texas in the most at-risk industries and economic sectors, including migrant farm work, construction, kitchen workers in restaurants, and landscaping services. An estimated \$6.5 billion is spent on the lifetime costs of providing care to victims and survivors of minor and youth sex trafficking in Texas, including costs related to law enforcement, prosecution and social services.

Learn more at <http://sites.utexas.edu/idvsa/>

Busch-Armendariz, N.B., Nale, N.L., Kammer-Kerwick, M., Kellison, B., Torres, M.I.M., Cook-Heffron, L., Nehme, J. (2016). Human Trafficking by the Numbers: Initial Benchmarks of Prevalence & Economic Impact in Texas. Austin, Texas: Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, The University of Texas at Austin.

Credible fear

The Karnes Detention Center houses many women from Central America who are seeking asylum in the United States. As part of the legal process, they have an interview to explain why they think there is credible fear of danger for their lives should they be returned to their countries. Through the Social Work Detention Response Team, led by professors Monica Faulkner and Laurie Cook Heffron (PhD '15), students from UT Austin and St. Edward's are helping women detained at Karnes prepare to recount their stories, which in most cases involve violence and trauma.



Be PrEPared to prevent HIV

Social work professor Michele Rountree believes in bringing culturally tailored services to people right where they are to reduce health disparities. That's why she is a founding member of the Center for Health Empowerment (CHE), a nonprofit that has recently opened in East Austin to improve the sexual health of underserved populations. CHE provides access to an anti-HIV medication — PrEP, or Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis — that is highly effective to prevent infection when taken once daily.

Clinician's Corner

Clinician's Corner offers short-form articles on topics relevant to social work practice with children and families, and opportunities for researchers and practitioners to come together through Facebook Live sessions to discuss the articles, share resources, and learn from one another. Social work participants will also have opportunities to earn CEU credits. Visit: bit.ly/2qJmTKP

Bringing the latest to addiction treatment

Alcohol and drug addiction disorders are complex and difficult to treat, requiring development and testing of treatments through rigorous scientific research. Once treatments have proved to be effective and acceptable to consumers, moving them into clinical practice is a slow process that can take more than a decade. Social work researchers are helping to speed up this process through a \$3.9 million federal grant. Funds will be used to bring the latest therapies and technological enhancements — including web-based support and interactive voice response — to addiction treatment programs in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana, and Arkansas.



Bullying, ethnicity, and depression

Doctoral student Hannah Szlyk and colleagues examined the relation between depression and general versus ethnic-biased bullying among 534 Latino students in a large North Carolina school district. They found that ethnic-biased and verbal or relational bullying had a direct effect on depression while general and physical bullying did not. Results are published in the *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*.

Cultural competency

Social work senior Gwen Leonares joined the UT Austin Arabic Flagship Program because she knew she wanted to work with refugee populations. During her internship at Refugee Services of Central Texas, she had plenty of opportunities to practice Arabic with individuals and families from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria. Speaking the language of your clients, Leonares says, “is a key part of being a culturally competent social worker.”



Zeroing on homelessness

As director of the National Homelessness Social Work Initiative, professor Heather Larkin Holloway has partnered with CSWE and social work schools across the country to increase homelessness-related curricular content and internships. “Our aim is to strengthen the ability of schools of social work to prepare students to be leaders in this field while supporting current service program directors and policymakers to deliver effective, data-driven homeless services,” Larkin says.



Ties that bind

Professor Elisa Borah argues that we should broaden our understanding of military social work by including not only active duty personnel and veterans but also their immediate and extended family members. As Borah writes in the *Journal of Family Social Work*, they all “frequently share in the challenges and sacrifice associated with active and reserve duty as well as in the veterans’ reintegration and subsequent adjustment to civilian life.”

School-based mental health

Students’ growing mental health needs have resulted in more teachers delivering school-based psychosocial interventions. But we know little about how effective these interventions are to improve students behavioral, emotional, or social functioning. Professor Cynthia Franklin, doctoral student Anao Zhang and colleagues conducted a systematic review of existing studies on the subject. They found that school-based interventions showed statistically significant reductions in students’ internalizing outcomes such as depression and anxiety but no significant effect on externalizing outcomes such as disruptive conduct and substance use. Results are published in *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*.



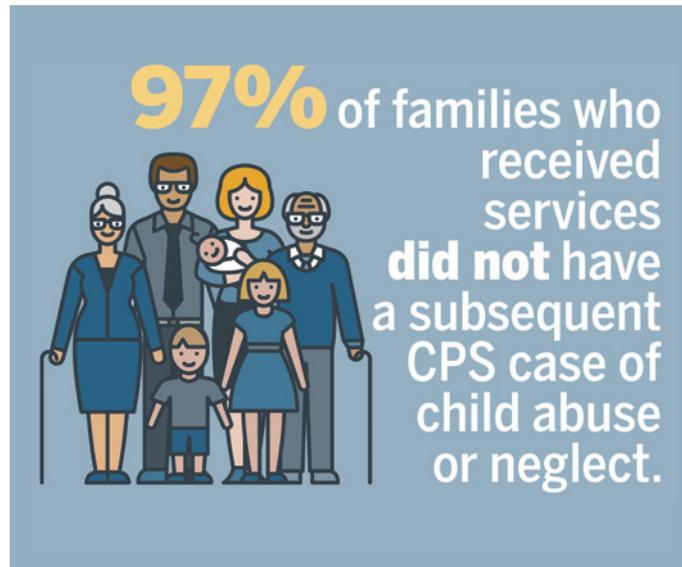
Student of the year

Master’s student Lynn Panepinto was selected 2017 Student of the Year by NASW/ TX Capital Area Branch. Panepinto is doing a dual degree with Latin American Studies, and is passionate about helping improve the lives of Latinos in the United States.



Child abuse prevention works

Texas families who receive child maltreatment prevention services do not have a subsequent child protective services case, according to a new report from the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing. It is the first report to show that receiving services prevents child abuse cases, and that these programs are effective in the long run. Read the report: bit.ly/2qAVayz



Harassment in field placements

While sexual harassment is a common experience for college students, we know little about incidences in social work field placements and how prepared students and field instructors are to deal with this issue. In an exploratory survey of 535 students, professor Leila Wood found that only 51 percent of them had received training about sexual harassment; those who did felt more prepared to address safety concerns in their internships. The study results are published in the *Journal of Social Work Education*.



“Advocating serves as more than just a means to the end.”

Embracing feminism

Former Texas state senator Wendy Davis made the case for embracing feminism and engaging in civic action during the 2017 School of Social Work’s Otis Lecture. Davis recalled that the first time she attended a city council meeting as an advocate she was struck by the scant number of women in the room: “Advocating serves as more than just a means to the end of passing or blocking a piece of legislation. Advocating is about learning where the room is, how to speak up, how to stand up in it; it’s about understanding that it belongs to you and that the people there work for you and are answerable to you and your vote. And yes, hopefully it’s about seeing yourself there, speaking on that dais.”



Social work without borders

This past spring, clinical professors Robin Smith and Sarah Sloan shared U.S. perspectives on teaching social work practice with colleagues at the Pontificia Universidad Católica in Santiago, Chile, through Skype sessions. In the summer, they made a week-long trip to Santiago where they met daily with their Chilean colleagues to discuss skill-building lessons in family therapy, ways to incorporate diversity training into the curriculum, and ideas for enhancing field supervision.



Voices from East Austin

Undergraduates Cassandra Najera and Sarah Hudson went on an Alternative Spring Break last March with the Longhorn Center for Community Engagement. They spent the break in East Austin, where they interviewed residents and made short videos documenting their views on the area’s rapid gentrification. Watch the videos: bit.ly/2pP5rGt



What do engineering and social work have in common?

Projects with Underserved Communities (PUC) is a UT Austin program that pairs engineering and social work students in service-learning collaborations around the world. This past summer, a team went to Thailand to install a filtered water transmission and distribution system for the village of Don Kang, and another team went to Guatemala to design and build solar panels that will provide electrical power for a children’s malnutrition clinic in the town of San Agustín Acasaguastlán. Through PUC, students meet community needs while gaining skills in project management, leadership, and cultural competency.



Looking for CEUs?

OCTOBER 27

Fairbanks lecture with Elizabeth Kita

NOVEMBER 2-3

Inaugural Texas Clinical Supervision Conference

FEBRUARY 21-23

27th Annual Texas School Social Workers Conference

ONLINE 24/7

Self-paced seminars available anytime

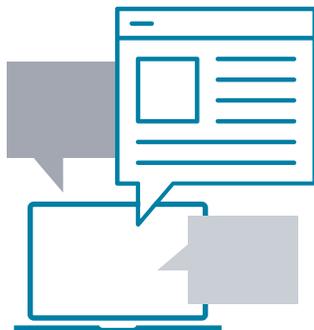
More events and info at socialwork.utexas.edu/ceu or call 512-471-2886

What makes adoptions successful?

Monica Faulkner, Tina Adkins, and Rowena Fong reviewed years of research to summarize the risk factors that lead to discontinuity in adoption and guardianship. The goal is to guide current and future interventions for adoptive and guardianship families. Read the report: bit.ly/2q8edjY

Blog it

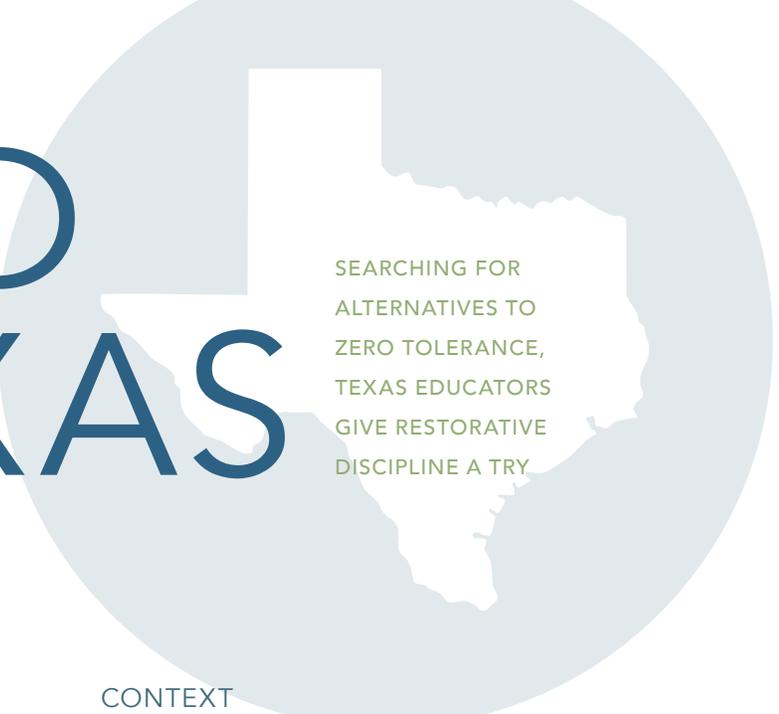
Professor Cossy Hough has partnered with alumni Will Francis (MSSW '10) and Anna Stelter (MSSW '16) to launch *70%* (socialworkershealthpolicy.com), a blog about health policy, the social determinants of health, and social workers’ commitment



to advance good health in their places of practice. Why *70%*? That’s the estimated influence of environment and lifestyle on overall health — medical care and genetics take the remaining 30 percent. The blog is actively recruiting contributions from social workers. Get in touch with Cossy if you want to learn more or contribute: cossyhough@austin.utexas.edu

TESTED IN TEXAS

BY ANDREA CAMPETELLA



SEARCHING FOR
ALTERNATIVES TO
ZERO TOLERANCE,
TEXAS EDUCATORS
GIVE RESTORATIVE
DISCIPLINE A TRY

Zero tolerance was once seen as the only way to address student misconduct, particularly in high-poverty schools. But years of harsh, no-excuses discipline have resulted in high rates of suspensions and expulsions that affect minorities in disproportionate ways and predict a cascade of poor outcomes, from dropping out to jail time.

“Educators are hungry for alternatives to office referrals when it comes to student misbehavior,” says social work professor Marilyn Armour. She and her team at the Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue are working with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to introduce restorative discipline to educators across the state.

A preventive approach that emphasizes talking it out and resolving disputes while keeping students in school, restorative discipline has already created positive change in Texas and gained fans like Mandy Matthews, assistant principal at Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders in Austin.

CONTEXT

In 2011, a scathing report from the Council of State Governments’ Justice Center summarized the results of years of zero-tolerance discipline in Texas schools: 60 percent of middle and high school students had been expelled or suspended at least once, African-American and Latino students were disciplined at higher rates than their white classmates, and students suspended or expelled were more likely to repeat a grade, drop out, or end up in the criminal justice system, feeding what some call the school-to-prison pipeline.

OPPORTUNITY

The report found that 97 percent of disciplinary actions were made at the discretion of school officials for violations of conduct rules — anything from playing with a toy gun to wearing pants too low at the hips.

What if teachers were given tools other than office referrals to deal with these behaviors? Oddly enough, teachers learn little about this while getting their certification. “You learn about your content area, how to write a lesson plan and so on, but not much about building relationships with students, about the social work aspect of working with young people,” Matthews says.

In addition, Armour points out, most teachers are white and female, and they get their first jobs in schools where students are mostly minorities: “The cultural diversity gap between teachers and students means that the potential for misunderstandings and assumptions about each other is very high.”

THE PILOT

In 2012, San Antonio’s Ed White Middle School was issued an “Improvement Required” from TEA. Principal Philip Carney knew that at the core, the problem was discipline: the school had one of the highest suspension rates in its district and teachers spent so much time dealing with disciplinary issues that they sacrificed teaching actual content. That year, Armour’s team began training school staff and by 2014, after two years of gradually replacing zero-tolerance with restorative discipline, suspensions were down 75 percent, and the school received four stars of distinction for its standardized test scores.

Restorative discipline changed the school climate so much that students devised a form to request a restorative discipline circle to deal with difficult situations *before* conflict broke out. A new expression entered the school's vocabulary:

As a fifth grader told another, "I could fight you, but I'm gonna circle it."

UPSIDES AND DOWNSIDES

A common misconception about restorative discipline is that rule breakers are simply asked to share their feelings in a circle without being held accountable for their actions. But for students, Matthews says, it is much harder to have a face-to-face conversation with somebody they hurt than "staying at home suspended watching Netflix and not ever having to talk about what happened." Armour adds that restorative discipline brings "meaningful accountability:" instead of a one-size-fits-all consequence such as school suspensions, circle participants come up with a consequence that fits the specific situation and needs of everyone affected.

Another argument is that restorative discipline is too time consuming. But as the example of Ed White Middle School shows, Armour says, educators are already spending much time dealing with disciplinary issues: "They can spend that time on the front end with prevention, or they will spend it anyway on the back end, with reactivity. Restorative discipline emphasizes prevention, and it ultimately saves time."

Yet another argument is that it's too involved. Matthews says yes: "Many teachers were uncomfortable with facilitating hard conversations. They would say, 'I'm not a counselor, why do I have to do this?' And that's where you see the difference between people who like to teach content, and people who like to teach kids and are truly invested in the lives of young

"CIRCLE IT" How it works

Picture this: Students and their teacher come together in a circle with a talking piece — any object, and only the person who holds it can talk — to discuss how things are going for 15 minutes at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the week. These check-in, check-up, and check-out circles, Matthews says, give teachers "a framework to build relationships with students so that office referrals are not the default option when a rule is broken." Weekly circles also teach students how to deal with emotions and disagreement in non-violent ways.

When there is a conflict — a fight, cyberbullying, a student talking back to a teacher — everyone involved is called into the already familiar framework of a circle with a facilitator to have a conversation structured around three questions: What happened? Who has been affected? What are we going to do to make things right? The solution and consequences agreed upon are written in a binding document that all circle participants sign and promise to uphold.

Restorative discipline "is not a short-term program or a silver-bullet solution," Armour says outright. "It's a whole school approach, a set of principles and practices to create a different school climate, which pays dividends when times get tough."

"Nobody else is doing what we are doing here. Cities like San Francisco, Denver, and Boston have had school-board resolutions to implement restorative discipline, but here we are scaling it statewide. We have a phenomenal opportunity to influence a major social institution that is key for the public health of our country."

MARILYN ARMOUR

THE INSTITUTE for RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
and RESTORATIVE DIALOGUE



people." Armour adds that restorative discipline is a whole school approach focused on relationship building: "Teachers for whom this is not a good fit may move to other schools."

GOING TEXAS-WIDE

After the success at Ed White Middle School, Armour and her team were flooded with training requests; when they presented at conferences, educators waited in line. In 2016 they started to bring restorative discipline trainings to TEA regional service centers, which funnel continuing education for teachers and administrators across the state. The trainings are practical and hands-on. There is a two-day training for school administrators, where they can understand the nitty-gritty of restorative discipline by experiencing circles with peers, and can evaluate whether or not it is a good fit for their schools. For those who think it is, there is a five-day training for coordinators — the educators or community-based staff members who will guide implementation and help tailor restorative discipline in each school. So far, approximately 1,160 administrators and 450 coordinators have gone through the trainings.

"Nobody else is doing what we are doing here," Armour says. "Cities like San Francisco, Denver, and Boston have had school-board resolutions to implement restorative discipline, but here we are scaling it statewide. In the process, we are learning a lot about what happens with implementation, and we are bringing this knowledge back into the trainings"

Armour thinks that the failure of zero tolerance policies has opened opportunities for new approaches, and is excited about showing what restorative discipline can do in Texas, which has 10 percent of the nation's student population: "We have a phenomenal opportunity to influence a major social institution that is key for the public health of our country." ■

What's new? Share your personal or professional news with us: utopian@utlists.utexas.edu

'86 Nora Druipple, MSSW '86, BSW '82, recently celebrated 30 years as a clinical social worker specializing in crisis, trauma and grief. She worked in community mental health before joining the Austin Police Department Victim Services and the Emergency Room at Brackenridge Hospital. As a critical incident responder and crisis counselor, she has assisted in numerous disasters, including, the Columbia Shuttle disaster, the events of September 11, 2001, Oklahoma City bombing and various hurricanes crises. From her private practice she provides clinical supervision, training, consulting, and crisis response to workplace traumas. She was recently appointed to the NASW Texas Ethics Committee. She also works with families of fallen law enforcement through Concerns of Police Survivors.

'90 Barri Rosenbluth, MSSW '90, was featured on the August 2017 issue of the *Austin Woman* magazine as the senior director of Expect Respect at the Safe Alliance. Expect Respect is a comprehensive program for kids aimed at preventing dating abuse and violence. The program offers support for anyone who experienced violence from a dating partner, provides school-based counseling and support groups, educates teachers, nurses, coaches, parents and clergy on the warning signs of abuse, and teaches kids how to create healthy relationships.

'92 Rebecca McIntyre, MSSW '92, lives in London and is the missing children's coordinator for both Westminster and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Children's Services.

'98 Karen Confer, MSSW '98, has served as the coordinator of the Teen Parent Program in the Round Rock Independent School District since 2001. She also runs her own private practice providing therapy for

children and adolescents in foster care and enjoys her role as a field instructor for the UT Austin School of Social Work.

'00 Jennifer Carter Dochler, BSW '00, is the public policy director at the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. She was named the 2013 Outstanding Faculty Member at the University of Missouri's School of Social Work. She is married and lives on 20 acres with pets and a fishing pond.

'03 Becky Morales, MSSW '03, has started a new job as manager of collaborative care at the UT Austin Dell Medical School. In her role, she is responsible for building and implementing the collaborative care model of mental health services into the integrated practice units in order to support the global wellness of patients.

Michelle Zadrozny, MSSW '03, recently returned to clinical practice after several years in nonprofit program development. Zadrozny is the founder of Creating Transformational Workplaces, which specializes in facilitating clinical processing groups for field staff employed by social services agencies to improve employee retention, self care, and organizational effectiveness. She is also the founder of Plumeria Counseling, which provides individual counseling and coaching on launching effective career transitions and aligning work and life goals.

'05 Jillian Yasmin Bissar, MSSW '05, BSW '03, has been a social work supervisor at UT Health Houston Pediatric AIDS program since 2011. She lives in East downtown Houston and has rescued a dog mom of two fur babies.

'07 Katie Milosovich Bryant, MSSW '07, has just celebrated her 10-year anniversary as a social worker at Westlake High School in Eanes, Texas. She loves that the school supports the social and emotional well-being of students and has allowed her to try many different things during her time there. Katie is a member of several coalitions throughout the community and has worked with University High School in Austin.

This summer Katie celebrated eight years of marriage with her husband Jason. Their life is busy with three amazing children: Elliot (6), Dylan (4), and MJ (19 months).

Cara Edmond, MSSW '07, is the director of institutional effectiveness and community relationships, a student services associate, and an adjunct faculty member at AOMA Graduate School of Integrative Medicine in Austin.

Krissy Richard, BSW '07, is a human resources coordinator at Samsung Austin, and a passionate volunteer for CASA of Travis County.

Ari Rosen, MSSW '07, is the donor stewardship manager at Zeno, a nonprofit in Seattle that makes math more accessible to and engaging for children. Rosen and their partner welcomed a new child last February.

Heather Van Diest, MSSW '07, is a social worker in the Child Abuse Resource and Education (CARE) program at Dell Children's Medical Center. She is finishing her MPH degree at the UT Austin School of Public Health, with the goal of moving out of clinical practice to focus on macro and prevention work and research. She feels fortunate to be currently involved in research with the Steve Hicks School of Social Work's Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing, where she is working in two projects related to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). In her spare time, she enjoys weight training and spending time with her 5-year-old daughter at the local water parks.

'08 Leah Davies, MSSW '08, received the 2017 Social Worker of the Year award by the NASW-TX Capital Area Branch. Davies is the associate director of the Texas Office for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities, where she facilitates state-wide collaboration, develops and implements programs, provides education, and engages stakeholders to address the causes and reduce the impact of developmental disabilities. Davies has 10 years of experience working in the nonprofit sector in Austin and is an active volunteer with The Trail of Lights Foundation and CASA of Travis County.

Meagan Dorsch, MSSW '08, recently celebrated five years with Veterans Affairs in Salisbury, North Carolina. She enjoys volunteering with her local Texas Exes chapter as the community service chair.

Elizabeth Wilson Eaton, MSSW '08, relocated to College Station, Texas, with her husband and twin toddlers last fall. She is providing counseling services to students in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University.

Kristina Perez, MSSW '08, is the director of operations at Action Point Consulting, an analytics agency in Austin.

Megan Pollack (McAlister), MSSW '08, BSW '06, gave birth to Niels Kenneth Pollack on May 16, 2017.

'09 Natalie Beck, MSSW '09, received her doctorate in social work (DSW) last May from the University of Tennessee. She is excited about teaching the introductory course for the new Public Safety Certificate program at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work, starting next spring semester. When she wrote, she was about to have her first baby.

Annie Terry Carroll, MSSW '09, recently received her clinical license. She gave birth to a daughter this past January.

Melissa Kong, BSW '09, recently earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California. She is now a doctoral candidate in leadership studies at Dallas Baptist University.

Olubunmi Oyewuwo-Gassikia, MSSW '09, BSW '07 recently earned a PhD from the Jane Addams School of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and will join the faculty in the Social Work Department at Binghamton University as an assistant professor this fall.

Lisa Pokorny, MSSW '09, recently relocated to Georgia and accepted a new position as the employee assistance coordinator for Fort Stewart.

'10 Stephanie Gonzales, MSSW '10, is a victim services counselor with the Austin Police Department. She has worked for the department for

five years, and spent the last two in the child abuse unit. Gonzales recently purchased her first home and is a proud “mom” to her sweet dog Juniper.

Valeria Hernandez, MSSW '10, is the manager of phone services for the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Pamela A. Malone, PhD '10, recently received her Fellow in Thanatology (FT). Her book *Counseling Adolescents Through Loss, Grief, and Trauma* was published by Routledge in 2016. Malone maintains a clinical social work practice in Austin and provides supervision to LMSWs seeking to become LCSWs.

Kamini Verma, MSSW '10, is a licensed clinical social worker. She has become a certified educator in Trust Based Relational Intervention to help abused and neglected children and their families cope with the aftermath of trauma. She is also pursuing becoming a Registered Play Therapist.

'11 Jessica Boston, MSSW '11, worked with State Rep. Elliott Naishtat for three legislative sessions. She is now a policy analyst at the Texas Medical Association, where she focuses on behavioral health, population health, child and adolescent health, and cancer. She also serves as a field instructor for the Steve Hicks School of Social Work, is an executive member of the Children's Protective Services Board for Travis County, and the chair of the Ad Hoc Committee at Austin Child Guidance Center.

Brigid Counts, MSSW '11, is a school-based mental health provider with Jervey & Associates. She is mother to a 2-year-old daughter, and received her clinical license in 2015.

Cheryl Jones, MSSW '11, was recently promoted to the position of corporate and foundation relations manager at the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) in Dallas. She also works at Medical City Dallas Hospital on weekends to continue to be connected to medical social work, which she loves.

'12 Sarah Lonsdale Bledsoe, MSSW '12, transitioned from medical case

management to providing therapy full time at the Montrose Center in Houston, where she works with the LGBTQIA community and individuals diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. She married in September 2016 and is excited to be close to celebrate their first anniversary.

Jodi Berger Cardoso, PhD '12, received the 2017 Distinguished Service to Women Award in the Pre-Tenure Faculty category from the University of Houston, where she is an assistant professor. The award recognizes research and mentorship that promotes success in women.

Patrick Lloyd, MSSW '12, is the community resources coordinator at the Georgetown Public Library. He is proud to be part of a small but growing group of library social workers.

Viana Vallejo, MSSW '12, recently celebrated five years as a program manager for Communities in Schools. Vallejo received her clinical license in 2015 and joined Austin DBT Associates as a psychotherapist last September.

April Young, MSSW '12, has accepted a position at the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, working on behalf of state aging and disability programs. When she wrote, she was looking forward to moving to Washington, D.C., during the summer.

'13 Becca Kosho, MSSW '13, got a unique opportunity to work on memory care after graduating. She also bought a house and started a family. She loves memory care, but she has now returned to work with Hospice Austin.

Kendal Tolle, MSSW '13, is the assistant director of evaluation at the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. She is engaged to be married this October.

'14 Emily Osan, BSW '14, headed to Guatemala shortly after graduating to teach English in a school that was part of a local women's cooperative. She later returned to Texas and worked in a college access program. Last year she moved to Telluride, Colorado, where she works as a prevention

educator for a domestic violence and sexual assault crisis center.

Grecia Ramos, MSSW '14, is a PhD student in social work at the University of Southern California's Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. She is interested in researching the incarceration experiences and mental health of Mexican-American male adolescents.

Jillian York, MSSW '14, celebrated three years as a therapist with Hope Alliance in Round Rock, Texas. She recently married, earned her clinical license, and bought her first house.

'15 Paige Johnson, MSSW '15, is a family advocate at the Center for Child Protection.

Kathryn Lewin and Travis Singley, MSSW '15, are engaged to be married in April 2018.

Cindy Eschliman Mood, MSSW '15, is the social services director at Walnut Hills Nursing and Rehab center in Austin. She enjoys working with residents and families and looks forward to hosting her second UT Austin social work student intern this fall. A year ago, she created a group for social workers in the nursing, hospital, home health, and hospice world called Facility-Involved Social Workers. They meet once a month for happy hour or lunch to provide fellowship and networking to one another.

Emily Shryock, MSSW '13, shared that her service dog Morey (also a proud UT Austin graduate) passed away on May 13, 2017, after a short battle with cancer. She knows that Morey was loved by many of his social work classmates and professors and will be missed by all.

'16 Stacy Saucedo, BSW '16, currently works as a resettlement case manager at Refugee Services of Texas in Austin.

Terry Selvera, MSSW '16, joined Bluebonnet Trails Community Services in April of this year as a supported employment and education specialist for the ClearPath team. The team offers coordinated specialty care for the early treatment of psychosis.

SHANE WHALLEY

2017 Charles I. Wright Distinguished Alum



Current position:

Lecturer in the Steve Hicks School of Social Work, and I've started *Daring Dialogues Consulting*, which provides trainings on LGBTQ, cultural humility and responsiveness, and social justice frameworks.

Three things you can't live without:

Students, because they keep me vital and current. Community, broadly defined. And nature. If I can't get outside, I feel weary.

A memory from field:

I did my field placement at Out Youth. I went to Out Youth's prom — so many queer kids can't go to their high school prom with their date — in a tux and a bow tie, and I also brought a sequined gown and hose and a curly long wig, and sang "I Feel Pretty" for the students. It was great to do serious work but also be playful and serve as a role model for them of what it could be like to grow up and thrive.

Most used practice skill:

Professional use of self. I'm a storyteller. When I teach I try to bring my full humanity into the room, which is risky and important.

An experience at UT Austin:

I always tell students, "If there's something you feel is missing, build it." When I got here, there was not a LGBTQ student group, and so I started one. I enjoyed being active in many different communities. One of my favorite memories is when, during my second year, my cohort got together for happy hour and afterwards four of us auditioned for *The Vagina Monologues*. Kathy Armenta, myself and one other member of my cohort were cast in the production.

BY ALLAN HUGH COLE JR.

Norton Armour

A Teaching Life

November 12, 1929 – September 5, 2017

On Tuesday, April 4, 2017, in his fifteenth year as an adjunct instructor, Norton Armour taught in his Loss and Grief course for the last time. With his beloved Marilyn by his side, he lay at home in a hospice bed, his head propped up by pillows. His voice was slightly weaker than usual, but he spoke with deft strength and elegance to his students. I became one of them.

A couple of days earlier, Norton and I had discussed a plan for me to serve as the course instructor for the rest of the semester. We spoke at length about his approach to the course and what he hoped the students would gain. At one point in our conversation he paused. Then he said: “I wish I could tell them goodbye.” Norton cherished his teaching responsibilities and his students even more. It became clear that he wanted to speak directly to them about his own grief and invite them to consider theirs. I suggested that we Skype him in to class the following Tuesday afternoon, so that he could say goodbye and his students could say goodbye to him. He welcomed this idea and said he looked forward to their final class together.

That Tuesday afternoon, the students and I gathered for class, discussed the plan for the day, and then had a few minutes to wait for the Skype session with Norton to begin. The room became silent. The students were nervous and sad. Being in their late teens and early twenties, most had never come face-to-face with any person in hospice care, let alone with a teacher in that situation. Yet as our session started and Norton began to speak to them, his reassuring tone and winsome spirit took hold. They relaxed and listened intently. Many had tears spilling over their young cheekbones.

And he taught them.

He spoke about his sadness over not being able to complete the semester. He reflected on how important

Teaching is the highest form of understanding.

ARISTOTLE

teaching in the School of Social Work had been to him. He also noted the irony of his course being on loss and grief, adding as he chuckled that he was still trying to figure out who to be mad at. And then he used his own experience of knowing that the end of his life was drawing closer to make multiple connections with what he and the students had read, discussed, and wrote about during the previous

seven or eight weeks. A consummate educator, he was teaching to the very end.

We then had the opportunity to speak to Norton, each in our own way. We expressed gratitude, for him and for his teaching. We voiced appreciation for the time we had with him, and I acknowledged Norton’s many contributions to the life and mission of our school and to the social work profession.

It was a good day.

A sad day, yes, and one none of us wanted, but also a good day because it was filled with gratitude and even joy tied to the privilege of teaching, learning, and helping others thrive.

I admit that I, too, have wanted to be mad at someone; mad about not being able to learn from this gifted teacher and good man for a longer period of time. But that anger quickly fades as my deep gratitude emerges. We experienced a moment in class that day when death was looming while life kept pushing it away. We were connected by technology but firmly bound by something much greater: the quest for knowledge and understanding, our common humanity and search for deeper meanings — all life-giving things because they help us become more human and more humane.

ALLAN HUGH COLE JR. is senior associate dean for academic affairs and director of undergraduate programs at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work.



WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS



Sandra Olarte-Hayes

MSSW '15, 2013–2015

St. David's Foundation Bilingual
Social Work Scholar

The last day of her internship at LifeWorks, Sandra Olarte-Hayes was offered a permanent position. Since then, she has mostly worked as a bilingual counselor with Spanish-speaking individuals.

"When I started the program I thought I was going to work with women who had experienced sexual and domestic violence. I didn't imagine that my career was going to be mostly working with individuals involved with the justice system and that I would come to realize that the dichotomy between victim and perpetrator does not really exist. It is not what I expected, but it's definitely working!"

When not at LifeWorks, Olarte-Hayes is active in the Austin community: she has

facilitated restorative circles with incarcerated adults, and with teenagers through an East Side high school and through Youth Rise Texas, which congregates teenage community organizers with a parent or caregiver who has been incarcerated or deported.

"The St. David's Foundation scholarship allowed me to graduate without debt, which is completely transformative if you think about how much social workers make," Olarte-Hayes says. "None of the community work and volunteering that I did right out of school would have been possible if I had debt. The St. David's Foundation scholarship really changed my career path and opened so many opportunities for me."



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Diana Anzaldúa, Ireneusz Banaczyk, Olivia Branscomb-Burgess, Kay Coleman, Elizabeth Cook, Alex Elder, Meredith Englehart, Kristian Fleming, Melissa Forrow, Yesenia Lares-Martinez, Ellen Line, Ana Lopez, Katie Martin, Charlotte McDermott, Ryan McEwen, Margaret Neaves, Marisa Ortega, Victoria Ortiz, Rachel Poppers, Nataly Saucedo, Betty Jo Schafer, Catarina Silva, Abby Smartt, Samantha Synett, Hope Underwood, Anneke Valk, Nicollette Violante, Jessie White-Ledet, Maya Williams

Why I Give

Dieter Gaupp (MSSW '52) and his brother Peter applied for the master's program in 1950, the year the School of Social Work opened its doors.

"Peter kept getting mail and I didn't get anything. So one day we went to the social work office in Austin and I inquired about my file. And the answer was 'Oh, there are two of you?!' We were a small group of students in that first class, all pioneers. We had to face some adversity, being housed in Old B Hall, which was creaky and falling apart and what not."

Gaupp did his first field placement with Family Services and Travelers Aid Agency, in Amarillo: "In those days we still had Route 66, and many people going west got stuck in Amarillo, for whatever reason, so we helped them. I went up there with another student, Bob Willis. We didn't have much money, so we moved into a trailer that was barely big enough to turn around, but we somehow made it."

"I give because I was a student with no money, so I want to make sure students have funds! I also give because I am grateful. Going to the School of Social Work was a great experience for me, and a lot of what I learned is part of my DNA now."



Silence=Death

Alan Silverman and Steve Cadwell Fellowship in LGBTQ Social Work Studies

Alan Silverman (MSSW '80) passed away April 15, 2017, after a long battle with brain cancer. His classmate, friend, and fellow LGBTQ activist Steve Cadwell (MSSW '80) shared his thoughts on what motivated the two of them to establish this endowed fellowship.

“Alan and I represent the generation of gay men who spanned the eras from ‘the love that dare not speak its name’ to gay liberation and out and proud. We also survived the AIDS epidemic, which catapulted us even further into our work — just by chance, we didn’t die. We learned the full meaning of the AIDS activism motto: *Silence=Death*. Alan lived that motto of activism and took it all over the world.

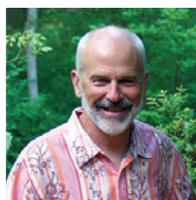
We’ve made enormous gains in civil rights for LGBTQ in our lifetimes but the work is not done. It’s never done in this imperfect world and as social workers we’re committed to change for the better. With this endowment we wanted to support frontline work by students who are committed to that cause, no matter what their orientation is.

We lived through the late 1970s, with all the social chaos and change. When we joined the School of Social Work, we were fortunate to be part of a class that was full of activists with really diverse experiences and backgrounds — so much of the learning is from peers in the program!

In that era, most of us received financial help in some way. By ensuring funding for students who are committed to LGBTQ issues, Alan and I want to ensure that others benefit from the diversity and classroom conversations that we benefited from in our time.”



ABOVE: Alan Silverman
RIGHT: Steve Cadwell



Children are our future

Ruth G. McRoy Scholarship in Services for Children and Families

Ruth McRoy’s early social work career as a marriage counselor and later in an agency serving children and families impacted by adoption posed the main question that she has sought to answer throughout her long, fruitful career as a researcher and scholar: how can we best serve and improve outcomes for children and families?



“Children are our future and we need to do everything we can to enable them to be successful,” says McRoy, who in addition to producing research on child welfare and adoption has worked nationally and internationally on policies to improve service delivery for children and families. She was a member of the School of Social Work faculty for 25 years, and is the Ruby Lee Piester Centennial Professor Emerita.

McRoy launched this scholarship with the goal of providing financial support to students who plan to pursue a career in services for children and families. She is thankful to all who have contributed to this fund and those who will do so in the future.

“My years at UT Austin as a doctoral student first and as a faculty member later were the best years of my life. I want to give others the opportunity to have that experience.”

To contribute to any of these initiatives or learn more about endowments, contact Laura Turner, lauraturner@austin.utexas.edu, or 512-750-1015.

What is an Endowment?

A sound investment: An endowed gift is invested, never spent. Each year a distribution — like dividends on a mutual fund account — is made to your chosen program or area. Investment earnings above the dividend rate help the endowment value grow over time, to keep pace with inflation and maintain your endowment’s spending power.

A choice you make: Your gift can take almost any form. From professorships to scholarships and more, choosing what your endowed gift will support is simply a matter of talking with us about your interests and finding (or creating) a program that matches them

An ever-growing legacy: You may take up to five years to fund an endowment to the minimum required level. Once it is officially established, you or anyone else may continue to add to its principal at any time.

A lasting imprint: By selecting the title of your endowment, you forever link your name — or that of a family member, friend, or organization — to scholarly excellence at The University of Texas at Austin.

IN MEMORIAM

ALUMNI

Debra Rene Wiley

BSW '83
March 27, 2017

Alan Silverman

MSSW '80
April 15, 2017

FACULTY

George K. Herbert

professor emeritus
March 18, 2017

Memorial contributions can be made to the George K. Herbert Endowed Scholarship

Norton Armour

lecturer
September 5, 2017

THE UTOPIA SOCIETY

Recognizing Gifts Made in Fiscal Year 2017

The Utopia society is comprised of alumni and friends who provided monetary contributions to the Steve Hicks School of Social Work to assist in providing excellent educational programs for our students. Listed herein are those who made personal contributions of \$100 or more between September 1, 2016 and August 31, 2017. Many others contributed their valuable time and talents to enhance the educational experiences of our students. We deeply appreciate the generosity of all of our supporters!

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2017. A WATERSHED IN OUR HISTORY. Steve Hicks (center) celebrates the announcement of the Steve Hicks School of Social Work with students, faculty, and staff.

