

the utopian

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

ALWAYS ON DUTY

Military spouses tell their stories

HOPE AFTER TRAUMA

In Katrina's and Harvey's wake

ON CAMERA

Prosecuting domestic violence

SPRING 2018



Military spouses tell
their stories p.2

FROM THE DEAN

"AS WE THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE, WE MUST THINK BIG, BOLDLY AND AMBITIOUSLY. I AM CERTAIN THAT OUR FACULTY, STUDENTS AND ALUMNI CAN MAKE THESE IMAGININGS COME TRUE."

We social workers dream of a better world in which no one is left on the margins or falling through the gaps. Our aspirations have to be big and bold — as William Butler Yeats wrote, "In dreams begin responsibility." As we move the Steve Hicks School into the future, we have to imagine what that future may look like to advancing a more just society.

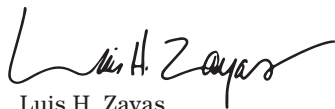
Let's imagine a day when a family with a child with autism or a developmental disability never has to take care of their child alone, or when parents are not led to divorce from the stresses of taking care of this child, and that siblings don't feel neglected because their disabled brother or sister consumes so much of the parents' time, emotions and resources. Just imagine a day when, in a place like Texas, a well-trained cadre of social workers, nurses, physicians, pharmacists, and occupational, physical and speech therapists surround the family with services within their neighborhoods and communities.

We should envision, too, a time when our elders age productively at home and in their communities with the services provided by multidisciplinary teams. And when social workers, engineers and architects work together to create safe environments that monitor the health of older adults, and when tele-therapy can help depressed elders in the comfort of their own home.

Let's imagine also a time when members of the military and their families are supported on- and off-base and provided the services they need to keep the family together.

As we think about the future, we must think big, boldly and ambitiously. I am certain that the Steve Hicks School of Social Work faculty, students and alumni can make these imaginings come true.

In this issue's stories, we can peek at that future by reading what our faculty, students and alumni are doing to fulfill the dreams they feel responsible for. Enjoy!



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



FROM YOU

"This is fantastic work!"

Elizabeth Endres (MSSW '12), via Facebook, on the article "Fitness for All."

@CrismonUTCOP

"UTCOP's Drs. Erickson & Hill quoted in this moving article! - Operation Naloxone saves lives!"

"Thank you for the article "Tested in Texas," which reminds all of us of the importance of changing school culture. A restorative justice initiative, supported by an entire school, gives students positive, pro-social expectations on how to manage conflict. I will be sharing the article with the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Juvenile Justice."

Mark Booher, Ph.D.



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ALWAYS ON DUTY

BY ANDREA CAMPETELLA. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY ANNE JACKSON AND IRENE JANES



MILITARY SPOUSES TELL THEIR STORIES

Things started to fall apart for Anne Jackson in 2008, when her husband MJ was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

It seemed like ages since they had met at the Midnight Rodeo, a honky-tonk in Lubbock, Texas. Jackson was then finishing her law degree at Baylor and MJ was a pilot in training at Reese Air Force base who surprised her with his two-stepping skills. Five years later, he surprised her again when he proposed over the PA system at the football game during Jackson's 10-year high-school reunion in her hometown of Gruver.

The newlyweds moved to Fort Hood, and then to Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, where Jackson first experienced the hardship of separation. Only a few weeks after their second son was born in January 2002, MJ was deployed to Iraq. Although it was an arduous four months

apart, Jackson was not working outside of the home at the time and was able to move in temporarily with her parents for support.

Things were very different in 2008. Jackson, who had re-started her law career after their third child was born, was then assistant county attorney for Bell County. With MJ away, she had to juggle a demanding job, the full responsibility of raising three young children, and the constant worry about her husband being in harm's way. The relentless pressure, Jackson says, turned her into a very angry person.

"You are always scared, but you have to take care of business, and you have to

act tough. So when things don't go well, when the kids get into trouble at school or the water heater breaks or the dog dies, you become angry to take care of business. If you can yell, and get the job done, then you can move on," she said.

The separation from MJ was also difficult on their children. One day their middle son came home from school and asked Jackson whether "the guys in the hallway pictures were still alive." Jackson, who had recently given a portrait of MJ to the school, felt her heart sink as she realized that in her son's experience, formal portraits always depict deceased people and that he had spent the day wondering if his dad was dead and nobody had told him.

"People would tell you, kids should not have to deal with adult problems. But when their father is putting on a helmet and a bulletproof vest and going to Afghanistan, saying that he is going to fight bad guys is not enough. You have to be somewhat honest and tell them, this is what war is," Jackson said.

Upon MJ's return from this second deployment, things only got worse. He was detached and easily angered, which put the whole family on edge. Jackson, who had been waiting for MJ's return to get some respite and resume family life, felt deeply frustrated. One day, as they were standing in the kitchen, MJ hesitantly shared that he was not sure what was wrong but that he felt overwhelmed.

"And I was like, you feel overwhelmed? You were by yourself doing your job for six months while I was home doing my job, working full time, with three kids. I have been waiting for you to come home and be a dad, I don't care if you are overwhelmed," Jackson told MJ. In retrospect, she knows that this was probably not the best thing to say to a returning warrior, but that was reality for her at the time. It was a breaking point, and she realized that they needed help.

Jackson knew marriage counseling was not an option for MJ — he was a major trying to be promoted to Lt. Colonel.

"There is this perception that if you are breaking mentally in some way, that does not speak well of your ability to be a commander. You are supposed to be a warrior, to be impenetrable, a man of steel. My own impression is that if you can talk about it and get better, you will be an even stronger leader because your men are going to experience that at some point. I think the military is coming around to this idea," she explained.

Jackson had seen advertisements for Military OneSource — a 24/7, one-stop shop for services — and one day she decided to call. "I think I need help, but I don't want the military to know about

it," she told the person who answered the phone. They put her in contact with a counselor, whom she started seeing during her lunch hour, without anyone in her family knowing.

"I went there, and I started crying. And I still see her, almost eight years later. She understood my problems, she helped me get the autism diagnosis for my older son. In 2012 when MJ was so depressed that he was shaking and could not function, I snuck him through the back door of her office, at Christmas. She started seeing him informally, and when he got closer to retirement in 2014, he realized he could let go and talk about what was going on."

Below: Family photos of Anne Jackson, MJ and their three sons.



"I went there, and I started crying. And I still see her, almost eight years later. She understood my problems."

-Anne Jackson

I first learned about Jacksons' struggles with military family life on a Saturday morning last summer, during a meeting of the Veteran Spouse Network. The brainchild of Elisa Borah, a research associate professor at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work, the network creates connections among spouses of veterans across Texas, and between spouses and researchers like Borah, who seek to help military families.

Borah knows too well the toll that fifteen years of continuous war has taken on soldiers. She spent four years managing clinical trials for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among active duty military personnel at Fort Hood, in one of the busiest Department of Defense's research sites in the country.

But, in true social work manner, she also knows that soldiers' challenges are their families' challenges, whether it's learning to live with a severe injury, coping with mental health issues, adjusting to civilian life, or facing unemployment. In 2015, Borah joined UT Austin with the goal of better understanding and serving the needs of veteran families, especially spouses.

"It is often spouses who encourage the veteran to seek treatment in order to save their marriage or improve family relations. They are vital to veterans' successful transition into civilian

life. They also become the family's breadwinner when veterans are unable to work," Borah explained.

Borah believes that the entire family serves when military personnel serve. Recent research suggests that deployments, in fact, not only take a toll on soldiers' mental health but on spouses' mental health as well. A 2017 *New England Journal of Medicine* study, which analyzed medical records of more than 250,000 spouses of active duty soldiers between 2003 and 2006, found that multiple and prolonged deployments typical in Iraq and Afghanistan were associated with more mental health diagnoses for depressive, anxiety, sleep, acute stress reaction and adjustment disorders. The article lists many of the challenges that brought Jackson to the breaking point: maintaining a household, coping as a single parent and experiencing marital



strain due to deployment-induced separation and difficult reintegration.

Despite spouses' vital role and risks to their mental health, there is not enough support for them. Borah wants to change that.

"I was doing focus groups with Texas veterans, and the spouses came because they had volunteered to help. And they told me, 'This is great, we want to support our veterans, but there is nothing for us.' I've heard this message so strongly across the state that I created the Veteran Spouse Network to help fill that gap," Borah said.

Through five local chapters and an active online presence, the network serves as a clearinghouse of information for veteran spouses seeking support, services and connecting to others who are going through similar struggles. It also allows researchers like Borah to obtain direct input from the population they want to help.

On the Saturday morning that I joined the network's meeting, a small number of spouses — all women, with Jackson among them — and researchers were kick-starting the development of a peer-support-group curriculum. Men are welcome to the group but Borah said they have been more difficult to recruit.

In one of the opening activities, the group's facilitator that day asked the women to write traits of military spouses on post-it notes. Once the colorful notes were posted randomly on a wall, words like "frustrated," "on edge" and "tired" but also "resourceful," "willing" and "strong" expressed the simultaneous strain and resilience present in every spouse. Both qualities, as well as a deep commitment to help others, also showed in the stories that the women shared that day.

There was for example Melissa, a Winsboro veteran county service officer and cattle rancher with a deliberate manner, who is also the wife of a disabled Vietnam veteran who struggled with PTSD for many years before he was diagnosed.

"When he was diagnosed with PTSD I was relieved. I instantly went back 20 years, and many things made sense. We had come out with our own words to describe what happened. His nightmares, we called them jungle



dreams. And I learned very quickly not to wake him up from them: you get out of the bed, go to the end, wiggle a toe, and say, hey, you are having a bad dream, wake up. That's what I learned to do to survive," she shared.

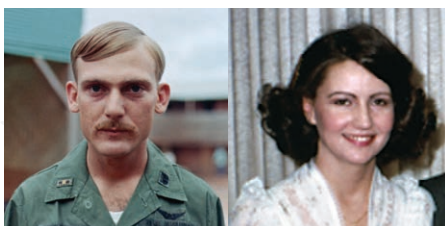
Melissa now uses her own experience with her husband's PTSD symptoms with the veterans and spouses that visit her Winsboro office to find help in accessing services.

There was Nelida, an outspoken medical consultant, active grassroots organizer and the main caregiver of her veteran husband. He struggles with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, physical injuries, and a few years ago, at age 35, went into heart failure. Nelida also serves at the Veteran Spouse Network's representative in El Paso.

"I found that networking and being connected with nonprofit organizations across the country has helped my family thrive, pay the bills, get to Houston when it's been an emergency ... I go to every VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] meeting, town hall meeting, anything, and let them know that we the caregivers and the spouses and the families matter. It's because of me that my family is thriving, if it was up to my husband he would never ask," she said as other members nodded in agreement.

Above: Elisa Borah (center) in a Veteran Spouse Network meeting with team members Hannah O'Brien (left) and Molly Platz (right). Borah and O'Brien are also part of the recently launched Military & Veteran Family Program, a joint effort of the Steve Hicks School of Social Work and the Dell Medical School Department of Psychiatry to address the unique needs faced by military and veteran families. Visit sites.utexas.edu/mvfp for more information.

THE VETERAN  SPOUSE NETWORK
veteranspousenetwork.org
Facebook: [VeteranSpouseNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/VeteranSpouseNetwork)



There was also Irene, a retired computer trainer who met her husband Bill after his Vietnam service while both were volunteering at the Addison Community Theater – now Water Tower Theatre. Bill has Agent Orange lung cancer from Vietnam. Irene said that she is always on the alert for triggers that can put her husband on edge.

“After the Vietnam War they called it an emotional death. Warriors get withdrawn, cut off from the world, and then heal and come back out until something triggers it again. It’s a roller coaster for the spouses, and I can’t imagine having to deal with that and also having kids or a full-time job,” Irene shared with empathy for the other spouses in the room.

During a phone conversation, Irene said that she has encouraged her husband to write and publish Vietnam-related poetry as a way of processing his trauma. They are also the creators of “the 191,” a website dedicated to members of the 191st Assault Helicopter Company in Vietnam, in which Bill served as a pilot.

“You know, the men of the 191 all had good jobs, good families, you see them and say, they are perfectly healthy. But you get the women together and talking, and we all experience these episodes, and we all are trying to put them back together every time they sink down or get depressed or get aggravated. Being involved with the 191 was really a learning experience for me,” she said.

And there was Jackson, who told the group about how she started to see parallels between the tension in her home after MJ’s return and the family violence cases she was prosecuting in Bell County.

“I started seeing these dynamics after 9/11 where there was family violence right after soldiers got back from a deployment. What looked like typical family violence was actually untreated combat reunion and reintegration issues. I started reading books to figure out what was going on, and worked to get services to soldiers with undiagnosed and untreated mental health challenges, instead of just criminalizing their behavior,” she explained.

In 2015, Bell County formed its own Veterans Treatment Court, which serves veterans charged with a misdemeanor offense whose military or combat-related experiences contributed to the commission of the offense. The court relies on certified veteran peer mentors who assist participants through the court process, and provide support, encouragement and help in navigating services.

“I was able to get my husband to volunteer for it, so now he is a certified peer mentor for the veterans court. He has gone from thinking that mental health and talking about your problems was a joke to doing it every day with veterans,” Jackson said to the rest of the group’s cheers.

After a few more meetings during the fall, the 12-session curriculum

was finished and ready to be piloted in spring 2018. The next goal, Borah said, is to train members of the Veteran Spouse Network to serve as peer co-facilitators of support groups throughout the network’s regional chapters. Borah also plans to evaluate the curriculum with pre- and post-assessments to learn how to further improve it.

Close to the holidays, I visited Jackson in Bell County to learn more about her advocacy for military families and her experience with the Veteran Spouse Network.

“I’ve always wanted the rest of the country to understand how hard this is,” she told me. “We have been deploying for 16 years. We military families don’t just need your support when our guys are gone. We need it when they are back too. And it’s not all parades and rainbows and YouTube clips where everybody is crying because they are so happy. It’s a lot of hard work.”

Jackson paused for a moment and then she added, “In the middle of all this, being able to talk to people who also lived this life and went through what I went through ... that provides a lot of healing. It reminds you that you are not crazy, that you are not alone.”



Left: Bill in Vietnam. **Right:** A recent photo of Irene and Bill. Bill’s polo shirt bears the patch of the 191st Assault Helicopter Company in which he served in Vietnam.

THE ART OF CLINICAL SUPERVISION



TAMMY LINSEISEN, MSSW '89, was one of the main forces behind the inaugural Texas Clinical Supervision Conference, which in Fall 2017 gave a multidisciplinary group of practitioners — from social workers to counselors and family therapists — the opportunity to enhance supervision skills and knowledge. Linseisen, who has been teaching at the school since 1998, regularly conducts the training “The Art of Clinical Supervision,” a 40-hour series that meets Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners’ requirements to supervise candidates for clinical licensure.

WHAT IS CLINICAL SUPERVISION?

Clinical supervision is the art of supporting and challenging beginning therapists in order to teach and mentor them to become skilled, theoretically grounded and empathic clinical social workers.

More pragmatically, clinical supervision is one of the independent services that qualified licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs) are authorized to provide.

HOW DOES ONE BECOME A CLINICAL SUPERVISOR IN TEXAS?

Well, obviously you must have your LCSW, which means that you went through the process of supervision yourself — one of the requirements to become an LCSW is at least 24 months of clinical supervision by a board-approved supervisor. You also must have held your license for two years. And you have to take 40 hours of board-approved training.

Interestingly, the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners was among the first in the country to require such a high number of training hours. This happened in the early 2000s, and in 2001 Bonnie Bain and Alicia Garcés created the first 40-hour training from our school.

More recently, the board has required that approved clinical supervisors obtain an additional three hours of continuing education each biennium to maintain their status.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INTERESTED IN THIS LINE OF WORK?

In 1991 I was hired by the Settlement Home, a center for treatment and substitute care services for girls here in Austin. While working there I supervised the staff that worked with the eight adolescent females on our cottage. I also supervised my first social work students from both St. Edward’s and UT Austin. It was my first experience supervising, and I learned that influencing how these staff members

and students understood and empathized with the girls was something I truly enjoyed.

WHAT ARE TWO CHALLENGES OF SUPERVISING?

The responsibility and liability involved in the oversight of supervisees’ clients; the delicate balance of offering feedback in ways that promote learning and don’t bring up defensiveness.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT SUPERVISEES BRING UP?

I will give you an example. A supervisee sent me a 911 message and during the supervision call she stated that a child she had seen in therapy for the first time that day had shared that her father told her to say that her mother was “crazy” — the parents were in the middle of a volatile divorce — and “joked” that one day he was going to hurt her mommy at the house.

During the call, I helped the supervisee process her own feelings, and we discussed possible courses of action. We also discussed how difficult it is to hear these stories from our clients, which is important in supervision in order to prevent vicarious trauma — residue left over when we clinicians hear traumatic stories over and over and work without support and self-care.

WHY HAVE YOU DONE THIS FOR MORE THAN 25 YEARS?

Because of the relationships I create with new supervisees and the mentorship that continues throughout their careers, because I love to watch the growth of new professionals into confident social workers, and because it is a mutual learning process — I stretch myself and grow with every single supervisee!

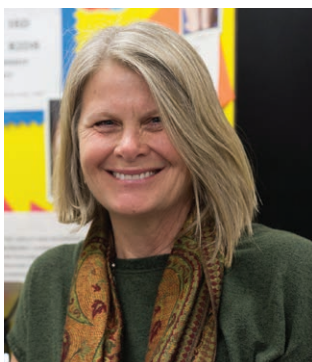
For next offerings of “The Art of Clinical Supervision” go to socialwork.utexas.edu/ceu.



FILLING A GAP

CAPCITYKIDS INTERNS SERVE LOCAL CAMPUSES WITH SOCIAL SERVICES

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY LYNDA GONZALEZ



KATE AMERSON

Kate Amerson (MSSW '94) lets out a hearty laugh when asked if she always knew that she wanted to be a social worker.

She began her undergraduate degree at San Antonio College in the 80s, convinced she would major in theatre and drama. Everything changed when she took a social work elective class her final year before transferring to The University of Texas at Austin.

"I remember sitting in the class thinking, 'Oh my gosh, you mean to tell me I can get paid for advocating?'" she said.

Since then, Amerson has had a career in social work for approximately 30 years with a specialized focus on advocating for students in public education. She loves her current role supervising CapCityKids interns and is proud of the work they have done on their placement campuses.

"In a way, I am a student when they are with me," she said. "They keep me on my toes, and I love watching the next generation taking over the reins."

Amerson said the program also creates a space for collaboration among agencies. She regularly brings in presenters from local organizations and invites interns from other schools in the district to attend these sessions.

The CapCityKids internship program approaches its 10-year anniversary next year, and everybody is looking forward to a big celebration. Amerson would also love to see the program replicated in other school districts in the state.

"I'm really proud that we target campuses that just don't have the extra onsite support they need," Amerson said. "To have our social work students come in and provide that support means a lot to me."



HEATHER THIEL

At her CapCityKids internship, Heather Thiel co-leads a support group for elementary-school children with current or recently incarcerated family members. Many students in the group don't fully understand what's happened to their family member because it's not talked about at home. The support group provides them with a safe place to understand the situation. Thiel and her co-leader explain to the group that their family members are now in a facility, what it looks like, and how an average day there might unfold.

"The main goal is to teach the kids that they have choices and that just because their loved one has been sent to prison doesn't mean that they're fated to the same outcome," Thiel explained.

The group has also helped build a sense of belonging through crafts and activities that emphasize community. For example, students once wrote their worries down on balloons and took turns tossing them into the air.

They helped one another keep the balloons from falling to the ground to demonstrate that it's okay to rely on others for help.

In her second semester as an intern, Thiel hopes to start a therapeutic improvisational theatre group.

"Improv is a really great, safe environment for kids to get their feelings expressed," Thiel said. She added that improv can help students foster active listening skills and learn sympathy because partner work is required to execute a scene well.

Thiel is thankful for the amount of support and training she's received through her internship.

"We have optional training that are coordinated by CapCityKids," she said. "I took a grief-and-loss training that was truly life-changing."



Since 2009, CapCityKids has funded internships for social work students in Austin public schools that need extra counseling and social services support. Intern supervisor Kate Amerson and three of the current CapCityKids interns share their views on the program's impact on the communities they serve.



MADI LOW

Making a house out of leaves for cockroaches isn't the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of therapy. But for Madi Low this memory stood out from her experience co-leading an eco-therapy group for elementary students during her CapCityKids internship.

Each week, Low leads a small group of male students around their campus, where they hold outdoor picnics, feel the sun on their skin and appreciate the greenery around them.

"Think of five things you can see right now, four that you can smell, three that you can touch," she says to them as she teaches them mindfulness techniques.

Most of the boys in the group were selected because they were struggling with behavioral issues, while others were selected because administrators thought they would make good role models. Low said the weekly meetings have given participants a deeper

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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VISIT **CAPCITYKIDS.ORG**

understanding of what nature can do for them, as most of them hadn't had much exposure to nature prior to joining the group.

"Research says that being outside makes you feel better," Low said. "I've always had a love of nature, and I was really excited to share that with the group."

At a different elementary campus in Austin, Low handles a caseload of individual students and leads a support group. Because of the variety of her responsibilities, she has learned different counseling styles, ways to plan, and ways to respond to situations when they don't go as planned.

"I can speak so highly of CapCityKids," Low said. "It recognizes the need for interns to learn and grow so they can be set up to have a successful career in social work."



AMBER BORCYK

At her CapCityKids internship, Amber Borcyk facilitates a variety of groups for first, second and third graders. Some of the students have refugee status, others are homeless, and some have incarcerated family members. Two of the groups she leads focus on processing difficult family transitions, and the other group is for children who needed extra emotional support and attention. All of them, Borcyk said, crave normalcy in their lives.

In all her groups, Borcyk incorporates play-therapy techniques she's learned through CapCityKids training. For example, to break the ice with students, she uses a beach ball with questions written on it. When students catch the ball, they can choose between the two questions their thumbs landed on. She explained that this creates "psychological safety" for children because they're given a sense of autonomy.

Last fall Borcyk also helped register female students for "We Are Girls," an annual

conference put on by the Girls Empowerment Network of Austin (GENAustin) and designed to build confidence in young female students. She saw one shy attendee blossom during the day, especially after attending one of the morning workshops that encouraged participants to let out an actual roar.

In her second semester with CapCityKids, Borcyk wants to branch out and work with high-school and middle-school students. She knows she'll get the support she needs.

"What really motivates me is my relationship with my field instructor, Kate," she said. "She works really hard to give us weekly supervision and mentors us in a growth-mindset kind of way."



Hope

AFTER TRAUMA

BY ANDREA CAMPETELLA

**Tara Powell's journey to
help communities heal after
Katrina, Harvey and beyond**

New Orleans, 2007

Two years after hurricane Katrina wreaked havoc on New Orleans, Tara Powell was still seeing its lingering effects. It was the fall of 2007 and Powell, who had just received her Master of Social Work from Tulane University, was working for the international organization Save the Children. She was called to assist a middle school where a massive fight had taken place, with scores of students beating each other, their teachers and even the security guards.

"It was pretty bad. The crisis counselor called and said that they were going to expel 20 kids unless somebody did something. So my supervisor sent a colleague and myself to run a trauma-focused curriculum with the students ... or figure out what else to do!" Powell recalled.

In the immediate aftermath of Katrina, Powell explained, many agencies went to New Orleans to provide mental health programming for schools in order to help students, teachers and parents cope with the collective trauma the storm had left on its wake.

"The teachers were stressed out, many of the children were separated from their families, with their parents being in Houston or Atlanta and not able to come back. Children were living in overcrowded conditions and many of them were acting as heads of households despite being only 13 or 14 years old," Powell said.

But two years after Katrina, because of budget cuts and the outside perspective that hurricane recovery was complete, most programs were no longer available. The public school system, meanwhile, was still in crisis. Katrina had left only 16 of 128 buildings relatively unscathed and the student population greatly diminished. According to The New York Times, as late as 2013 the student population was still under 45,000, compared with 65,000 students before

the storm. One way the school system coped with the crisis was by clustering students from different neighborhoods in one single school. This, Powell said, was a recipe for disaster.

"New Orleans neighborhoods are very particular: being from the Lower Ninth Ward is very different from being from the Tremé or New Orleans East. But kids from all these different neighborhoods were put in the same schools. They formed gangs ..." Powell said and paused. She chuckled as she added, "They were not really gangs because we are talking about middle schoolers. But they called themselves that."

Powell and her colleague started by meeting with the students, individually and in groups, to get a grasp of what was going on and listen to students' perspectives. Based on these discussions and input, they reshaped the existing curriculum with new topics and activities.

"We were doing community participatory research before we even had a word for it! The kids got really excited about being part of the process and experiencing the final product," Powell said.

This curriculum eventually became the Journey of Hope, a school-based psychosocial intervention for children and early adolescents who have experienced collective trauma. The intervention focuses on normalizing emotions and building coping skills.

During her time at the Ph.D. program at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work, Powell conducted research that provided evidence for Journey of Hope's effectiveness. To date, the intervention has been implemented far and wide: after a 6.3 earthquake in New Zealand, tornadoes in Alabama and Oklahoma, flooding in the United Kingdom and Canada, and hurricane Sandy in New York and New Jersey.



TARA POWELL | PH.D. 2014

Left: A Journey of Hope session with New Zealand school children. The program was delivered after the 6.3 magnitude Christchurch earthquake of 2011.

Right: School-based mental health providers role-play a calming activity from the Journey of Hope curriculum, during a training that Powell conducted in Houston in November 2017.



Houston, 2017

This past fall, Powell, now an assistant professor at the University of Illinois, was in Houston conducting an all-day Journey of Hope training as part of post-Harvey recovery efforts.

Hurricane Harvey, which fell on Houston in August 2017, left in its wake nearly \$200 billion worth of damage in the city. The flooding damaged more than 100,000 homes, and at the time of the training thousands of residents were still living in hotels and rental housing, unable to return to their homes.

“I was canoeing down my street. My house was fine, but one block away there was five feet of water. I helped a neighbor evacuate on his wheelchair,” a training participant named Sasha told me during lunch break. He lives in Meyerland, a neighborhood on Houston’s southwest side, which was heavily flooded.

With the other participants that day — most of them school-based mental health providers —

Sasha’s goal was to help with recovery efforts by delivering the Journey of Hope in Houston schools.

The training was hands-on, with approximately 40 participants taking turns to play the role of facilitators and students. The intervention, which consists of eight sessions for groups of 8-10 students, covers topics such as safety, fear, anxiety, anger, grief and self-esteem. The sessions include components such as cooperative games, literacy activities, art-based activities and mindfulness exercises.

A colorful nylon parachute serves as both a physical anchor — participants sit or stand around it — and multi-use element for each session. During the training, participants learned how to use the parachute as a safety net in a trust-building activity, a shifting piece of ground in a cooperative game, and a soft floating roof in a calming exercise.

After the group covered each session, Powell answered questions and shared practical tips acquired from her many years of experience with the intervention.



The Journey Goes On

The Journey of Hope is keeping Powell busy these days, as Save the Children is rolling the intervention out not only in Houston but also in Florida and Puerto Rico.

“I never thought that I was going to be a social worker, and that 10 years after getting my master’s I would still be working on disaster recovery!” said Powell, who discovered her fascination with helping individuals recover from traumatic events during her time in the Peace Corps in West Africa.

Powell is currently expanding her work to help adult populations. She is starting with a project in Jordan, to find feasible ways of integrating mental health awareness into primary care settings for Jordanian and Syrian adults who have experienced severe trauma during the recent wars in the region.

“There is deep stigma around mental health in Jordan. This is something that I also saw during my time in New Orleans; children were not getting the help they needed because of the stigma around mental health,” Powell reflected.

When asked how she feels about her globe-trotting career, Powell responds that everywhere she has gone she has seen the common plight of human beings trying to overcome trauma.

“My passion is really about how to reach the wider group of people affected by traumatic events and help them meet their emotional health needs. Human beings are resilient. Given the right kind of supports, almost anyone can overcome a catastrophe,” Powell said.

Below: More scenes from the Journey of Hope training that Powell conducted in November 2017 in Houston. The training was sponsored by Baylor School of Medicine, Mental Health America and Save the Children, with funding from UNICEF. Approximately 40 school-based mental health providers attended.

“Do the students know why they are coming to the group? Should we mention the hurricane directly?” a participant asked during one of the discussion breaks.

“Well, I would wait to see whether they bring it up. Despite our pre-conceptions, Harvey may not be the most important thing kids have in their minds. Perhaps for them what is important is that they are living in a place they don’t like, or that they had to change schools or move away from their friends. Let it come out from them,” Powell answered.

“What do we do if a session is particularly moving for the kids?” another participant asked.

“Let’s remember that this is a psychoeducational intervention, it is not therapy,” Powell said. “We are not going very deep, the goal is to help them identify and process their feelings, and give them basic coping strategies that are useful for any traumatic situation. If you see that a particular kid needs more help, then you should follow up and refer the kid to a counselor.”





RESEARCH THAT CHANGES LIVES

Family connections

About 112,000 children and youth in the U.S. foster care system are currently waiting for adoptive families. AdoptUSKids is a national project of the Children's Bureau that supports child welfare systems and helps connect children in foster care with families through initiatives like a photo-listing website of eligible children and public information campaigns to recruit foster and adoptive parents.

Since 2002, professor Ruth McRoy and her team at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work have been working with AdoptUSKids. They provide evaluation data and analyses to assist with programming decisions and quality improvement of all services that AdoptUSKids offer.



Marijuana use and pregnancy

Although marijuana is known to have potential therapeutic benefits, it has also been found to have an impact on birth outcomes, including preterm delivery and fetal growth restrictions. In a recent study published in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, doctoral student Sehun Oh, professor Diana DiNitto and colleagues found that from 2005 to 2014, marijuana use prevalence among unmarried pregnant women increased from 5.4 to 10 percent while it remained stable among married women (mostly under 1.5 percent). The trend among unmarried women was associated with lower disapproval of marijuana use, and past-year anxiety and depression.



Achievement award

Yolanda Padilla is the recipient of the Distinguished Scholar Achievement Award from the Association of Latina and Latino Social Work Educators. She received her award at the 2017 CSWE annual meeting in Dallas.



Harvey relief

In the wake of Hurricane Harvey last fall, social work faculty and students provided debriefing and brief counseling to United Way of Central Texas 2-1-1 staff. The Austin office was working 24/7 to handle emergency calls normally handled by operators in the hurricane-affected areas.

On DACA

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is an immigration policy from 2012 that has protected many young undocumented immigrants from deportation and allowed them to work legally. The current administration has taken steps to end this policy.

"We are talking about the ruptures that could happen in countless families if DACA is not extended," Dean Luis H. Zayas told the Council of Contemporary Families. "We are talking about kids who are Americans, for all intents and purposes, and who will be subject to deportation. That's simply going to be a very painful thing for many people. And it will cut across generations because some young adults with DACA status are the parents of U.S. citizen-children."

Read the full interview: <http://bit.ly/2CYWukX>



Culturally competent health care

The Steve Hicks School of Social Work has received federal funding for a cross-college program to prepare social work, psychology and psychiatry students to deliver culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health care. This four-year award will allow the school to fund 12 master's level social work students each year. The program is in collaboration with the university's Dell Medical School, College of Education and School of Nursing.



LIVESTRONG Cancer Institutes

Barbara Jones has been appointed associate director for social sciences and community-based research at the Dell Medical School's LIVESTRONG Cancer Institutes. She will lead research in areas such as psychosocial oncology and work with the community to determine best models of care that meet the needs of cancer patients and their caregivers.

On migrant children

Doctoral student Amy Thompson and colleagues drew from 32 in-depth interviews with Mexican and Central American children held in Mexican immigration detention centers to understand how they express their agency as they try to navigate their way to the U.S.-Mexico border. The authors challenge popular narratives that cast migrant children as either victims or criminals, and argue instead for an approach that embraces children's rights and vulnerabilities while acknowledging their resiliencies, competencies, goals and strengths. Results were published in the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*.



GRACE program

The St. David's Foundation has generously continued the funding of the GRACE program, which prepares master's level students to work with older adults. The funds will be used to provide fellowships to 24 students in the GRACE program, fund a trip to the annual meeting of the American Society on Aging, and support outreach and professional development for GRACE graduates.



Bringing social justice in

Doctoral students Kasia Olcon and Jelena Todic were recognized by GADE (Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work) for their work on integrating social justice into the doctoral curriculum and making it an explicit priority in our school community.



What to do after a breast cancer diagnosis?

"You have cancer." One small phrase can change the life of someone who has been waiting anxiously since finding the first lump. The moments after a diagnosis are some of the hardest for breast cancer patients and their loved ones. And the health care system is not structured to make this time easier. Barbara Jones and other experts at UT Austin explain what happens after a breast cancer diagnosis and share insights on how to best support newly diagnosed individuals: links.utexas.edu/djttms



To good health

In a recent article in the *American Journal of Public Health*, Michele Rountree and colleagues provide recommendations for improving the education of social workers in six key health-related areas: aging, behavioral health, community health, global health, health reform and health policy.



Older adults and suicide

Professors Namkee Choi and Diana DiNitto analyzed 10 years (2005-2014) of data on all older adults who died by suicide in 16 states, and found that physical health problems and untreated depression are often significant drivers of suicide among older Americans.

"Rather than a reason for making suicide acceptable, this is a call to take measures to relieve the pain and suffering that precede suicide," DiNitto said.

Choi and DiNitto offer concrete ways to help prevent suicide among older adults in your life: links.utexas.edu/fnqoyu

A student-run homeless clinic

The C.D. Doyle Clinic in downtown Austin provides free services to the homeless population and a place for students of medicine, nursing, pharmacy and social work to sharpen their professional skills and connect with the homeless community.

"We see clients at the end of their visit to the clinic, and help them with any resources they may need," said social work student Kara Robbins. She added that some clients mostly come to connect.

"One Sunday, a gentleman was telling me about how people ignore him. We had a great conversation about what he is reading, what's good in his life, and how he actually gives money away to people who are struggling more than he is," Robbins said. "That's where social work comes in: We can be that person who is there for him, in that moment."





Socks for the Sole

While volunteering at the student-run C.D. Doyle clinic, social work junior Lu Tran noticed that socks were frequently listed on donation requests. He decided to create Socks for the Sole, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that raises funds to purchase socks and donates them to organizations that serve Austin's homeless community.

"None of the nonprofits have a steady sock supply, and I felt like that was a need we could fulfill as students," Tran said.

In fall 2017, the nonprofit raised money to reach their goal of purchasing 500 pair of socks. And then a donation from local company Sock Club doubled their inventory. Tran hopes Socks for the Sole inspires other students to think about how they can make an impact now.

"We have all of these resources at UT, and we should do something. If 10 people can raise money for 1,000 pair of socks in one semester, then imagine if 5,000 students got together," he said.



Partnering for alcohol-free pregnancies

Mary Velasquez and the team at the Health Behavior Research and Training Institute (HBRT) are collaborating with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the development of free, online educational resources about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. The goal is to help busy health care

practitioners — doctors, nurses, social workers, medical assistants — learn more about prevention, diagnosis and FASD-informed care.

Access the free training here: nccd.cdc.gov/FASD



Support for Puerto Rico

Last fall, students, faculty and staff contributed time, toiletries and money to create hurricane relief kits. In mid October, JetBlue flew donations to Puerto Rico for free, and they included 50 hurricane relief kits from our school completed with handwritten notes of encouragement.



Field Instructor of the Year

Erin Spalding, MSSW '07, received the 2017 Field Instructor of the Year Award for her fantastic work supervising our students during their internships at The Christi Center. Thank you Erin!

Looking for CEUs?

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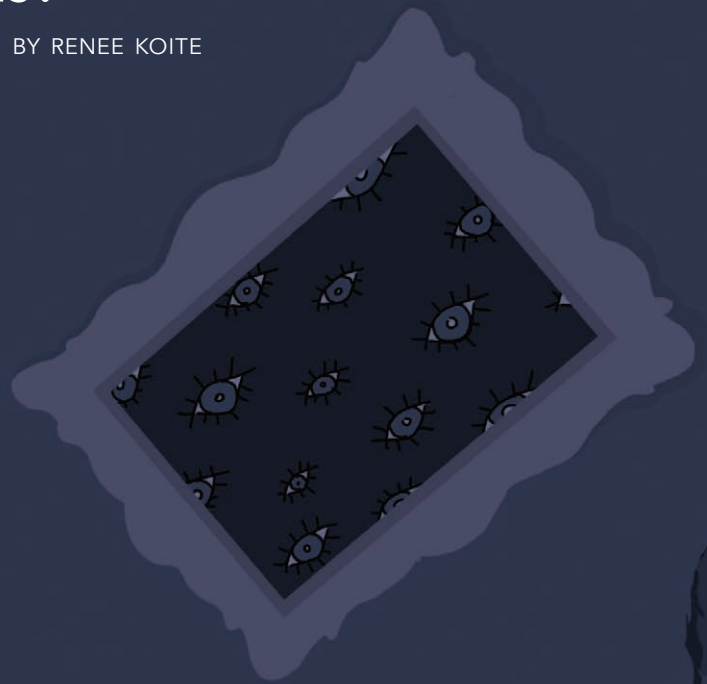
DO VIDEO STATEMENTS HELP PROSECUTE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CASES?

WRITTEN BY ANDREA CAMPETELLA. ILLUSTRATION BY RENEE KOITE

Leila Wood still remembers with detail one of the first video statements she saw of a victim of domestic abuse.

“I could hear a child crying in the background and seen things thrown around throughout the house. A woman was describing the assault and the camera closed up on her face, where you could see a black eye, and then she moved her hair apart and you could see an injury,” Wood said and paused for a moment.

“And then, as the woman said, ‘and he threw me against the wall,’ the camera panned to show a body print on the wall, made from the impact. And that’s hard to forget,” she added.



Wood, a research assistant professor at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work, is leading an evaluation of the use of video statements in domestic violence cases in three Texas jurisdictions. The goals are to learn whether video statements affect case readiness for prosecutors, law enforcement officers' experience, offenders' accountability and victims' experience with the criminal justice system.

THE ROAD TO VIDEO STATEMENTS

Prior to the women's movement of the 1970s, the criminal justice system treated disputes between spouses as a private matter. If police responded to a call, the typical response was to separate the parties involved and to advise the aggressor to calm down and perhaps spend the night somewhere else.

Due to grassroots efforts and several landmark civil lawsuits against police departments that failed to protect victims of domestic violence, the justice system started to develop policies such as protective orders and mandatory arrests. By 1986 nearly half of all police departments in the United States had implemented mandatory pro-arrest policies.

Arrests, however, would be meaningless without prosecution. And domestic violence can be hard to prosecute.

"After an initial call to 911, many victims are unable or choose not to testify in court, and if they do, they may recant their statements and testify on behalf of their alleged abusers, for whatever reason," Wood explained.

By their very nature, in fact, abusive relationships erode resources — such as social support and economic independence — that are essential for a victim to participate in the criminal justice process.

To jump this hurdle, in the 1990s prosecutors moved towards evidence-based and no-drop prosecution, which relies on evidence (anything from 911 calls to police reports and medical records) and does not require the victim's cooperation. By 1996, 66 percent of prosecutors' offices across the country had adopted this approach.

In the past few years, smaller and cheaper cameras have made it possible to add video statements to the evidence law enforcement officers collect. Video statements have the advantage of vividly capturing victims' emotional and

physical condition moments after the assault as well as any signs the assault may have left in its wake — furniture tipped over, broken items, blood.

The main utility of these statements is during the preparation of the case. Due to inability to cross-examine a video, they generally cannot be used in court.

VIDEO STATEMENTS IN TEXAS: THE JURY IS STILL OUT

In 2011, El Paso police department pioneered the use of hand-held video cameras to take statements from victims of domestic violence. In 2016, the model expanded to 16 Texas jurisdictions. In that year, Wood and her team at the Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault began conducting interviews and focus groups with police officers and prosecutors in three of the 16 jurisdictions.

Preliminary analysis show that, overall, law enforcement personnel had positive experiences. Officers said video statements allowed them to convey complex information and increased their credibility by providing documentation of their actions. Prosecutors could make a quick initial assessment of a case by viewing the video and could get a deeper understanding of the victim's experience and threats to safety. Videos also provided leverage when negotiating with the defense team.

After analyzing outcomes from 6,491 closed family violence cases from one jurisdiction, Wood and her team found that cases with videos were less likely to be dismissed and more likely to result in a plea agreement.

In the next phase of the evaluation, the team will add new sites to better understand the impact of video statements on case outcomes, and to better understand victims' perspectives and how video statements impact their agency and safety.

Evidence-based prosecution, Wood explained, was meant to reduce victims' burden — by removing the decision of prosecution from the victim to the state, abusers could not coerce or threaten their partners to drop charges. But this type of prosecution can also reduce victims' agency.

"If they don't want the case to move forward for whatever reason, they don't get to make that decision," Wood said. "Moreover, the defense attorney gets to see the video. And the only time videos can be used in court is to impeach the victim if they recant. So, a very important part of our research is to understand the victim's experience with the process."



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

'64 Truett Briggs, MSSW '64, had a fruitful social work career at the Department of Human Services' Income Maintenance Administration in Washington, D.C., where he started as supervisory social work specialist in 1968 and retired as assistant deputy administrator in 2005. After retiring he joined Whitetail Ski Resort in Pennsylvania as a ski instructor, where he worked until 2015. Truett enjoyed the reunion with 1964 classmates in 2014.

'72 Camille Miller, MSSW '72, has retired as president and CEO of the Texas Health Institute, a position she held since 1996.

'76 Jane Derrick, MSSW '76, retired in 1999 after working 22 years as a contract manager for the Texas Department of Human Services. In 2012 she was diagnosed with Triple Negative breast cancer. Now five years out from treatment, she has published a book about her journey: *Jane Beat Cancer: A Guide for the Newly Diagnosed*. Her book covers not only her diagnosis and treatment but also all she's done to adapt to her new normal, including changing her diet and lifestyle. For more details visit www.seejanebeatcancer.com.

'77 Janie Otto Garrett, MSSW '77, has been in private practice since 1988 at Coppell Counseling Center in Coppell, Texas.

Stephanie (Pousson) Ackert, MSSW '77, has retired after 28 years with the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts Human Services Department. She worked in Planning and Development and as director of the Cambridge Multi-Service Center, serving homeless and near-homeless individuals and families. Ackert worked in state and local government in Austin before moving to Massachusetts. She and husband Kevin are enjoying small-town New Hampshire life and daily encounters with nature.

'78 Jean J. Lyons, MSSW '78, opened a private practice in Dallas after retiring from AETNA Insurance.

Steve McKee, MSSW '78, is principal at Social Impact Consulting, LLC, specializing in social sector leadership and organizational development. He holds an adjunct faculty appointment at the LBJ School of Public Affairs where, in consultation with the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service, he currently teaches a course on governance of nonprofit organizations. In September 2017 he accepted a part-time position as director of the Texas Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility (texaspsr.org). He capped 2017 with a winter-break trip with family and friends to Ecuador, where they visited the cloud forest, the Amazon and the Galapagos.

'93 Emma Orta, MSSW '93, is enjoying a new twist in her social work career after many years of direct practice. For the past five years, she has served as the MSW Academic Advisor at New Mexico State University. She loves supporting and guiding new social work students through their graduate school journey and giving back to the profession in a new way. She is proud to have recently received the NMSU Provost's Excellence in Advising Award as well as the Dean's Award of Excellence in the College of Health & Social Services.

'95 Eric Metcalf, MSSW '95, was presented with the 2018 Counseling Super Hero award by the Austin ISD Counseling Department for his ongoing collaboration, advocacy for school counseling, dedication, integrity and support. Eric is the chief of program strategy for Communities in Schools of Central Texas.

Paul Mott, BSW '95, is working to overcome various health issues and sharing his life journey through a public Facebook blog. Additionally, as he works on his faith and accepting himself as an empath, he is planning to write a book about being a Christian empath. He is passionate about and an advocate for mental-health care not only for survivors of trauma but also for first responders. He writes, "I confess that I do not miss Texas heat, but have found that UT and friends still

in Austin remain in my heart. I am a Life Member of the Texas Exes, and proud to be a graduate of the School of Social Work."

'96 Jonathan Bentley Singer, Ph.D. '96, continues to have a great experience with the faculty and students at Loyola University Chicago. In 2017 he was elected secretary of the American Association of Suicidology. After two years of living in Evanston, Ill., Jonathan and his wife bought a house. This planted a rather large root for their new life in the midwest. He is still tweeting at @socworkpodcast.

'01 Christa Soileau (née Powers), BSW '01, obtained an MSSW from UT Arlington and is a licensed clinical social worker. She worked for years in the Dallas-Fort Worth area in psychiatric settings including ABC Behavioral Health and Presbyterian Hospital. While starting a family, Christa worked as a care manager at Lifesynch (managed care) in Fort Worth. Missing clinical work, Christa returned to Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas as a therapist. In December 2014, Christa opened her private practice, Selah Counseling & Wellness Centre.

Chad Wysong, MSSW '01, and his wife Cris moved back to Austin from Bethesda, Maryland in August 2017. In Bethesda, Chad worked for 16 years at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in multiple positions, including budget, administration, management analysis and change management. He also served on two assignments at the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C., one in IT change management and one in budget formulation. As a MSSW student in 2001, Chad successfully applied for the federal government's Presidential Management Fellows Program (PMF), which led to his position at NIH after graduation. Now back in Austin, Chad continues to work for NIH in an analyst role. He is excited to be back in Texas and involved with the Steve Hicks School of Social Work.

'03 Linda Glatt Anderson, MSSW '03, works at South Middlesex Opportunity Council (SMOC) in Framingham, Massachusetts.

'04 Kristin Schumacher, MSSW '04, earned a Ph.D. in public affairs in 2011 from the University of Colorado at Denver. She is a senior policy analyst at the California Budget & Policy Center, where she conducts research and analysis on anti-poverty programs such as SNAP, TANF and subsidized early care and education.

'05 Nancy (Shaffer) Klein, MSSW '05, relocated back to her hometown on the Space Coast of Florida in 2017 along with her husband and 3-year-old daughter Elizabeth. She was a field instructor for many years while she oversaw the Employee Assistance Program at Goodwill Central Texas in Austin. She is currently providing in-home psychotherapy to clients receiving Medicare and/or Medicaid.

'06 Adam McCormick, MSSW '06, is an assistant professor of social work at St. Edward's University. Adam recently authored the book, *LGBTQ youth in foster care: Empowering approaches for an inclusive system of care* (Routledge, 2018).

Kate Quirin Spooner, MSSW '06, lives in Denver, where she works part-time with children, families and adults in a small private practice. She spends the rest of her time running around, cooking and exploring with her husband and 18-month-old daughter.

'09 Tiffany Anschutz, MSSW '09, has been working on launching a new inpatient residential drug and alcohol treatment center in East Austin. Sage Recovery Villa will be a trauma-informed treatment center specializing in trauma, addiction and holistic healing through yoga, acupuncture and more. It will be staffed with only master's level clinicians qualified to treat individuals with more complex issues in addition to their substance use. Anschutz opened an outpatient counseling center, Sage Recovery & Wellness Center, in 2014.

Annie Carroll (Terry), MSSW '09, and her husband welcomed their daughter, Laken, in January of 2017. They moved to the United Kingdom in November of 2017 and she is now working for Department of Defense as a community outreach specialist.

Quan Cosby, BSW '09, is currently working on risk management at Marsh & McLennan.

Kayle Evans, MSSW '09, lives in Austin with her husband, two dogs and a cat. She recently opened a private practice specializing in sustaining sobriety, eating and body image issues, mood disorders and shame-related issues. Outside of private practice, she also enjoys teaching yoga for a community-based program.

Jennifer June Strayer, MSSW '09, received a promotion at the Muskogee VA in Oklahoma and has graduated to a very competitive GS-12 position in geriatrics, the population she specialized in. Jennifer moved from her home state of Arkansas to Oklahoma at the end of 2017. Jennifer received her LCSW in Arkansas in October 2013, and was awarded her LCSW in Oklahoma in January 2018.

'10 Andrea (Lahm) Albrecht, MSSW '10, has been working for the past seven years as an emergency room social worker at St. David's South in Austin.

Alda Santana, MSSW '10, has been working in sexual and reproductive health in Texas for the past 10 years. She recently helped launch a county-wide adolescent health collaborative with more than 20 agencies across Travis County. She also works at Women's Health and Family Planning Association of Texas, a nonprofit that administers Title X funds for the state and supports local clinics, hospitals and health departments in expanding access to quality sexual and reproductive health services.

'11 Kelly Bagnall, BSW '11, joined Teach for America after graduating and moved to Las Vegas, where she spent six years teaching in low-income communities in Las Vegas Valley to help close the achievement gap. This past summer she transitioned out of the classroom and accepted a recruitment position with Democracy Prep Public Schools, an organization with the mission of educating responsible citizen-scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship.

Reno Gomez, MSSW '11 married Chase Roe on April 29, 2017.

'12 Loren Fouch, MSSW '12, has transitioned into the role of chief operating officer at Millwood Hospital in Arlington, Texas. She is excited to be in a role that connects her clinical and macro skills.

'13 Paula Gerstenblatt (Ph.D. '13) is an assistant professor at the University of Southern Maine in Portland. She recently received a President's Award for Community Engagement for a course she co-taught with artist in residence Mushana Ali to create a mosaic mural with community members and USM students in Portland's East Bayside community.

Shay Noriega (née Mooney), MSSW '13, BSW '10, has worked with the United Way of Greater Austin 2-1-1 Center for more than four years. In 2017 she received the Information and Referral Resource Specialist Award from the Texas Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (TAIRS). She was recognized at the annual TAIRS conference, where her husband and parents surprised her during the awards ceremony.

Emily Roth Van Laan, MSSW '13, is part of a support team working with students with various neurological differences at the Monarch School in Houston.

Brad Watson, MSSW '13, is a medical social worker with Encompass Hospice in Austin. He is participating in LCSW supervision with Doran Oatman, LCSW.

'14 Shanté Lowery (née Johnson), MSSW '14, started her social work career at Big Brothers Big Sisters Lonestar, where she worked for three years as a partnership specialist for their mentor 2.0 program at Kimball High School in Dallas. She got married to her husband Keith in April 2015, and in May 2017 they had their first child, Isaac. Shanté passed her LMSW exam in February 2017. She is now Faith Family Academy's first school social worker, and is helping them redesign their student support services department. She is working towards obtaining her LCSW and would like to open her own practice in the future.

Donald "Keith" Montgomery, MSSW '14, is seeing clients three days per week at Therapy Austin. He is focusing on individual adults

with mental health and substance use disorders. He will also open a solo practice one day per week beginning March 21, 2018, in northwest Austin. Keith received his LCSW in 2017, his LCDC in 2010, and his MAC in 2016.

Ciera Ray, MSSW '14, worked in juvenile justice for the past three and a half years, and has recently ended her time doing individual, group and family therapy with adolescent boys. She now works part-time as a medical social worker in three different agencies. She is thankful that her social work degree prepared her to work with different populations and levels of society. Ciera received her clinical license in June 2017 and is looking forward to continuing direct practice on a contract basis with local foster care agencies. As she put it, "the sky is the limit!"

'15 Juliana Lindsey (née Ssemenda), MSSW '15, has recently accepted a position with UT Austin as an associate academic advisor with the Liberal Arts department. She is thrilled to work more closely with students and to be a Longhorn again! In her new position, Juliana will utilize her interpersonal, problem-solving and strategic-planning skills, along with her global perspective, to advise students through their academic tenure at UT Austin. Prior to this position, Juliana worked for two and a half years at an international education provider company, Academic Programs International. During her time there she learned a lot about program development, cultural engagement and how universities create academic curriculums abroad.

Rachelle Olivares, MSSW '15, has obtained her LMSW. She works as a planner for Travis County Health and Human Services Research and Planning Division.

'16 Brenda Cazares, MSSW '16, BSW '13, has been working in Austin as a licensed bilingual social worker in the field of telepsychiatry and integrated behavioral health. She graduated from the master's program as an Integrated Behavioral Health Scholar.

Meghan Graham, MSSW '16, BSW '14, joined the Counseling and Mental Health Center at The University of Texas in Austin in

January of this year. She is enjoying her time there as a brief assessment and referral counselor.



Sarina Jones, MSSW '16, and her husband Chris Cerny (also a UT Austin graduate) welcomed their first child and future Longhorn into the world on September 12, 2017. Caroline Grace Cerny (photo above) is a happy baby and has brought them much joy.

'17 Samantha Guz, MSSW '17, moved to Chicago, Illinois, where she is working at a grassroots social service agency. She develops programs and provides direct services to youth on Chicago's Southside.

Candy Taylor-Ceballos, MSSW '17, is in California working as a medical social worker at Stanford Children's Health-Lucile Packard Children's Hospital in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Taaj Sheikh, MSSW '17, BSW '15, is a policy analyst with the Texas Sunset Commission.

Catarina Silva, MSSW '17, BSW '16, works as a caseworker at Bertha Sadler Means Young Women's Leadership Academy, where she completed her final field internship. She enjoys doing individual counseling, group counseling and much more!

Maya Williams, MSSW '17, is in her first year in the doctoral program in social work at Washington University in St. Louis. Her article "Foundation field internship and identity formation" was published in *Reflections: Narratives of professional helping* 22:4.

Empty Pedestals

Last August the statues of Confederate leaders Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnson and John Reagan were removed from The University of Texas at Austin's South Mall, on the orders of President Gregor L. Fenves.

BY DIANE MCDANIEL RHODES

There was a total eclipse of the sun the first day it was possible to walk around the South Mall without encountering a civil war monument. I'm not much one for coincidence. As Sherlock said, "the universe is rarely so lazy."

There has been debate about monuments honoring Confederate leaders of the U.S. Civil War. Discerning the meaning of these monuments has been divisive and more recently has become downright disputed. UT Austin has a complicated history around the marginalization of African Americans. As long as I can recall, the Civil War monuments standing on the South Mall as "heroes" were an issue of conflict. People asked what difference it makes. I didn't know what difference it would make until they were gone.

My experience being Black on this campus has always been complicated. Being a third generation Ph.D., daughter of state leaders, and having relative wealth doesn't mean I earned inclusion. My dad taught here for over 40 years. He had a speech about the statues, "At the beginning of every school year I walk around the campus. And I walk down the South Mall. I don't pay any attention to those statues there. They are just pieces of stone that some stupid people worship. Never once has one of those statues stopped me from going to the library. If they did, I would be pissed. I would be really angry. But they don't. You cannot let something like those pieces of stone stop you from being who you want to be." When he spoke about the statues there was humor in his tone, mock lecture laced with crisp bitterness.

I first stepped on campus as the 12-year-old daughter of a new assistant professor. I went to summer camp, competed in

theater contests, and got my bachelor's degree here. My kids went to camp here. I got my Ph.D. here. I teach here. I can't estimate how many times I walked up and down, past or around the South Mall. I walked past the Civil War monuments, the grass, the shady oak trees, and students and visitors sprawled on the lawn in the sun.

Monday, August 21st, I woke to national fanfare anticipating the total eclipse of the sun and news that the remaining Civil War monuments on the South Mall had been removed. I walked to the South Mall to see the space without the statues. And I realized the mall is lovely and inviting, a thought I'd never registered before. Despite all the time spent on those sidewalks, I never sat on the mall to read, talk with friends, or once in 40 years used the space for enjoyment. I was stunned. I took a seat on a bench to take in fresh awareness. I couldn't recall ever thinking "I can't sit here in front of those statues." There was no concise decision to not sit, not in my conscious mind. But finding a comfortable place on campus to enjoy never included the grassy South Mall shade. And suddenly it did. Does.

So, Dad, I agree; those pieces of stone never stopped me from going to class or the library. They didn't stop me from getting my education; however, they held a space reserved for my exclusion by cherishing conquest and capture. Without them there is suddenly a new space I can choose belonging. Othering matters. I saw the eclipse of the sun and the South Mall.

Ask me again what difference it makes. Now I know.



The best and brightest

Tom and Sally Dunning Endowed Forty Acres Scholarship

"We began our journey with social workers over 40 years ago, when we were adopting our daughter. Social workers were wonderful and caring in assisting us from the first day. As a board member of the Texas Department of Human Services, I saw firsthand the positive impact they made on the lives of children and adults in Texas. Later, when I was the Homeless Czar of the City of Dallas, I worked closely with a wonderful social worker. More recently, I have seen the positive results of having social workers meet with the most disruptive students in both middle and high school.

"We truly believe that social workers are the glue that holds our society together, and hope that our scholarship will encourage the best and brightest high-school graduates to come to the Steve Hicks School of Social Work."

– Tom Dunning



Education for all

Cynthia and Christina Franklin Endowed Fellowship in Solution Focused Brief Therapy

"As a first generation college student and someone whose dad could not read or write, I learned very early in life the importance of having an education. I have been in the faculty of the Steve Hicks School of Social Work for more than 25 years. I have witnessed the growth of the school and it just keeps getting better!

"My students and colleagues have given so much to me professionally and personally. It has been a blessing in my life and it has made me think how to give back. Steve Hicks's matching challenge and the chance to stretch my dollars definitely prompted me to give sooner. I hope my gift will help students prepare themselves to practice and do research on Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. I have seen this therapy make positive change in the lives of so many at-risk students during my career that I want to contribute to pass this social work practice to the next generation."

– Cynthia Franklin



One of our first graduates

Joe Jenkins Family Endowed Excellence Fund in Social Work

Joe Jenkins graduated with his Master of Social Work from UT Austin in 1952, only two years after the school had opened its doors. He has loved watching the school grow and thrive, and proudly displays in his home the award he received in 2000 as alumnus of the year. Joe returned to his hometown of Waxahachie after four decades of social work practice in the Chicago area. He joined the city council, ran for mayor, and was elected five times. He continues to do social work in every way he can.

"Social work was my life career. I am so proud to be one of the first class members. It was an exciting time in the profession, and I am proud I helped develop the standards of home care across the country.

I give because I love the School of Social Work! I hope to help improve students' careers and enhance their education."

– Joe Jenkins



A son's tribute

*Luis A. and Mercedes Zayas Family
Endowed Fellowship in Social Work*

"The school now named after Mr. Steve Hicks represents opportunity. Opportunity for young people who would not have been able to afford their education and who now can obtain their Master of Social Work and pursue a life of helping others.

"With this endowment, I hope that young people who are the first generation in their families to attend college can also aspire to earn a Master of Social Work. I think I was a social worker from the earliest days that I can remember. I was always concerned with the vulnerable, those less fortunate than me, and those who are in some way victims of discrimination and marginalization. My parents always supported me and my interests, and I wanted to honor their memory by naming the endowment after them. My father, especially, always reminded me of how important a college education was. It is a tribute to him that I accomplished as much as I have."

– Luis H. Zayas



In memory of a son

*Andrew Pickett Mobley Memorial
Endowed Presidential
Fellowship in Social Work*

"Becoming a social worker has changed my life for the better in more ways than I can count. I am so proud to be a member of this profession, and I want to encourage others to choose this field.

"My husband John Scoffield and I wanted to endow a presidential fellowship in memory of my son, Andrew, as we know that he'd be very proud to be a part of supporting social workers in their desire to make the world a better place. Steve Hicks's extremely generous matching gift will allow Andrew's fellowship to double its impact on changing the lives of new social workers. We are so very grateful to him."

– Holly Scoffield



A family legacy

Kerr Family Pay it Forward Endowed Scholarship in Social Work

"Social work and social workers have touched my life at critical times too personal to detail. But suffice to say that my life was changed in an incredibly positive way by the interaction with a person who helped me through trying times.

"Forty years in financial services as CEO and working with clients have taught me that relationship skills are the most important attribute for a business leader. The Steve Hicks School of Social Work is the finest place on the planet to learn relationship skills.

"Our hope is to help students in financial need and also bring social work values and skills into other career paths. Skills that social workers take for granted can make the difference between an average and an exceptional career as a business leader or a scientist. We also hope to expand the perspective of incoming students and help them look beyond traditional social work career paths."

– Bruce Kerr



A couple's commitment

*Patrick Hefferan Memorial
Endowed Fellowship in Social Work*

"I've used the course work and the values-based perspective from my graduate education in social work in each of the positions I held during forty years of employment — I've worked with Medicaid programs in Texas, Minnesota and North Carolina. My interest in public health care programs began in fact with my field assignment at the Austin Health Department.

"This endowment was a way to honor Patrick, and it continues his commitment to donate to educational programs and human service organizations. I hope that the recipients will be able to attend graduate school without incurring much debt. I wanted to replace some of the federal and state scholarships that were available to my friends and me when we were in school, but that are no longer funded."

– Anne Shotton



Training world-class social workers

Pamela A. Ackert Endowed Scholarship in Social Work

“The Steve Hicks School of Social Work is designed to train the very best professionals to help those who need it the most. Upon graduation, these young men and women will join schools and governmental organizations to help others. And, these same young men and women will grow to be the leaders of these organizations over time. With this scholarship, we hope to help a promising young student turn into a world-class social worker by reducing the cost of their tuition, which will relieve the financial burden on them when they graduate.”

– Pamela Ackert

“Not only does this scholarship help needy and deserving social work students, it also honors Steve [Hicks] and his family for their contribution.”

– George Ackert

Why your support matters

K.C. Lawrence

MSSW '12, 2010 Sylvia Shapiro Scholarship recipient

K.C. Lawrence traded a budding business career for a social work degree and has never looked back.

“My dream was to combine my previous business experience with geriatric social work training and a nonprofit certificate to then obtain a position in a small nonprofit as a program director,” Lawrence said. “A few years ago, this dream came true when I started working at AGE of Central Texas.”

Lawrence is the program director of the nonprofit’s Memory Connections program. This is an early-memory-loss support program focused on enhancing the mental and physical health and overall quality of life of people affected by early-stage dementia.

“We do brain boosters, physical exercise, creative activities... they try new things and can talk to other people who are going through similar experiences,” Lawrence said. “Being with them at this moment of their journey with memory loss is a huge honor for me.”



Steve Hicks Matching Gift Challenge

Steve Hicks likes to say that the real secret of being a philanthropist is that you receive much more than what you give. Because he wants others to share in the joy of giving to social work, he has issued a \$5 million matching challenge to create endowed scholarships. The rules are as follows:

- Give or pledge \$50,000 or more (to be completed within 5 years).
- Steve Hicks will match the amount.
- Your name — or that of a family member, friend or organization — will be linked forever to scholarly excellence at The University of Texas at Austin.

To participate in the challenge, visit sites.utexas.edu/steve-hicks-challenge or call 512-475-6840.

IN MEMORIAM

Edgar H. Busby
MSSW '53

Jay Erwin Grotzky
MSSW '90

Martin Holloway
MSSW '98



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