



## Cancer Care for the Whole Person

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Building New Models of  
Oncology Care at UT Austin

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## the utopian

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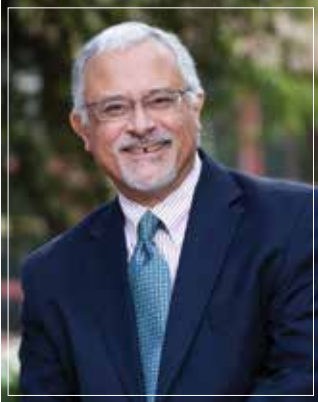


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The University of Texas at Austin  
School of Social Work

## From Dean Luis H. Zayas



This past July, years of advocacy work took me to Capitol Hill, to testify before one of the most powerful bodies of the United States government. I was in good company with **Olivia Lopez**, an alumna of our School and a seasoned clinical social worker, and with **Barbara Hines**, a UT Austin emeritus clinical law professor.

The three of us testified on the conditions inside family detention facilities in South Texas, before a forum sponsored by the House Judiciary Democrats and Congressional Progressive Caucus.

Our goal was to make the case for changing how the Department of Homeland Security and Immigration and Customs Enforcement treat asylum seekers who are fleeing gang and domestic violence in Central America. To do this, Olivia shared her first-hand experience as the social worker in one of the detention centers. She revealed the abuses and deception that private prison companies perpetrate not just on the detained mothers and children but also on the very government agencies that pay their contracts. Two immigrant mothers, who had been released on bond after spending nearly a year in detention with their children, backed Olivia's testimony. Barbara showed how the detention centers violated more than one human rights convention, law, or federal agreement. My testimony told the psychological trauma heaped upon already traumatized children and mothers by private prison contractors and by our government's approach to handling refugees from three of the most violent and corrupt countries in the Americas. Our testimony was timely too, because a federal judge in California had ruled that the Obama administration was in violation of a settlement stating that children could not be held in unlicensed facilities. That day, on Capitol Hill, we made the case before the congresswomen and congressmen so that they would urge the government to change its policies and practices with refugees.

This is only one example of the advocacy work coming from our School. This issue of the Utopian opens a window onto other instances—from advocating for cancer patients and their families to testifying in court on behalf of victims of interpersonal violence and human trafficking to drafting bills that address social justice issues. Through this advocacy work, our faculty, students, and staff are, to rephrase The University of Texas at Austin's tagline, starting here what changes the world.

The stories may suggest that it was a short, quick arrival at the point of being called to testify in courts, be at the table when it comes to designing new models of cancer care, or be seated before state or national legislators. But in reality, it is a long road that can take years and decades to walk. For most of us, the road starts in our social work practice, with a client or a case that pushes us to seek better solutions for all.

My road to that day on Capitol Hill started in late 2005, when immigration attorneys in St. Louis, MO, first approached me to assist with a case in which an undocumented immigrant father with three U.S.-born citizen-children was being ordered deported. The father was challenging the removal order on the basis of the "extreme and exceptionally unusual hardship" that would befall his children if left without a father or forced to leave their homeland to a country they didn't know. This father had always comported himself in an honorable manner, living the American dream as a small and successful business owner. We won that case. And there were many others like this first one in the following ten years. From advocating for children who could become exiles to another country or orphans in their own U.S. home, I moved on to advocating for the rights of asylum seekers who were neither security threats nor flight risks.

Like the faculty and staff featured in this issue of the Utopian, and like many others at our School, I have walked a long and not always easy road in my advocacy work. I hope you enjoy reading about the passion, persistence, and single-mindedness that it takes to become advocates for those who need a voice—a cornerstone of the social work profession. I also hope you feel proud of being our friend and supporter. Your generosity allows us to keep engaging in meaningful ways with the most pressing social problems of our day. We are deeply grateful to all of you who care about and support the School.

Sincerely,

Luis H. Zayas, Ph.D.  
*Dean and Robert Lee Sutherland Chair  
in Mental Health and Social Policy*

# Roads to Recovery

by Lori Holleran Steiker



Newspapers and magazines are full of stories of adolescent and young adults struggling with addiction. Stories of youth overdoses flood the media, the death rates for overdose in Americans aged 15 to 24 more than doubled from the early to mid-21st century nationwide. This trend serves as an ominous backdrop to the findings of the Texas School Survey of Substance Use, which shows that Texas high school students were more likely to report lifetime use of alcohol, cocaine, Ecstasy, and methamphetamines compared to their peers nationally.

Less attention, however, has focused on the dynamic changes in new modes of intervention that provide hope to young people seeking recovery. Awareness and support of these options is essential to move forward in this arena.

**“Most people regard ‘rehab’ or ‘treatment’ as the primary or even exclusive option for teens spiraling out of control with drugs and alcohol, but new research reveals increasing options with promise.”**

Most people regard “rehab” or “treatment” as the primary or even exclusive option for teens spiraling out of control with drugs and alcohol, but new research reveals increasing options with promise. Medical management of early recovery is one viable direction,

with pharmacological interventions such as Suboxone or Naltrexone that can help assist individuals in the transition from illicit opiate use to a drug-free life. Also, treatment settings now aim at community-based exposure to “life in recovery” and longer periods of intervention and support across a continuum of care. This model is replacing the tradition of removing and isolating individuals in 28 days of inpatient care to then return them to their previous worlds, full of relapse risk and triggers.

When teens receive treatment, it is often counterproductive for them to return to the very same environment where they were unable to succeed in the first place. Discouraging success rates have been documented for kids who return to their previous high schools after residential treatment.

One emerging alternative to address this problem is the creation of new institutional structures such as recovery high schools. Growing from the awareness that school campuses may be “sobriety hostile,” recovery high schools are specifically designed for students recovering from a substance use disorder. Young people who attend these schools get a chance to connect with other youth and staff supportive of recovery, to be in an environment free of substance use triggers, and to become a part of new peer group settings where they make friends, experience clinical support, recreation, and social activities after school and on weekends. There are presently 35 recovery high schools in the National Association of Recovery Schools, five of which are in Texas. I have had the privilege of being part of the creation of the first recovery

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# Focus: Promoting recovery among people affected by drug and alcohol abuse

high school in Austin, University High School, which opened its doors in fall 2014.

Another form of support that is growing but not fully realized are collegiate recovery programs on university campuses. For reasons similar to the ones described above, it is important that university students have levels of support beyond local twelve-step meetings. Texas is leading the way with this model, as shown by the success of The University of Texas at Austin's Center for Students in Recovery (CSR). CSR has recently garnered support from the Regents, who have allowed for dissemination of this model to all nine UT Campuses.

Peer recovery coaching and mentorship are also emerging as key for youth in recovery. One of the main innovation at University High School in Austin is that the young adults in the CSR are mentoring and modeling sober living on a campus for the recovery high school students.

The depth of the problem and the limited effectiveness of treatment in itself call for imaginative and energetic responses. Not all solutions will work for everyone, but we have to develop more resources and awareness so students can find their individual paths to recovery with support along the way. ✧



**Lori Holleran Steiker** is a University Distinguished Professor at the School of Social Work



According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's most recent National Survey on Drug Use and Health, an estimated 22.7 million Americans needed treatment for problems related to drug or alcohol abuse in 2013. Suzanne Bartholomew, MSSW '11, is the manager for the women's program at The Arbor Treatment Center in Austin. We talked with her about her approach to promoting wellness and recovery among people affected by drug and alcohol abuse.

## How did you become interested in recovery work?

As a recent graduate, I did not have a particular field that I was determined to go into. I remember, rather, the simple desire of wanting to help people suffering from emotional pain. My first job opportunity was working in an adolescent rehab center as a counselor. I loved working with teenagers and I considered myself lucky to have a clinical role, but had no idea that substance abuse would become a specialty of mine. What quickly occurred to me, however, was that working in recovery was a gateway for working with depression, anxiety, grief, loss, trauma, mood disorders, family issues etc. Now, as the program manager of an adult residential program, I am able to see how the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous worked in my life. By continuing to follow up on opportunities as they presented themselves, I found myself exactly where I am supposed to be.

## How would you describe your approach to recovery?

I begin with unconditional positive regard. So many of my clients enter rehab crippled by guilt and shame. One of the most powerful things I have found that I can do is listen to their stories and provide an experience of compassion and empathy. My approach also focuses on trauma and the use of Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing therapy, or EMDR. I have found that facilitating a healing experience from trauma can be one of the most profound ways in which I can help an individual in their recovery.

## How has your training in social work prepared you for what you do at The Arbor?

Social work directs me to look at a client's strengths when they are coming from a place of having lost everything to their addiction. This is a natural fit with The Arbor's philosophy of approaching clients from a place of love and not fear. The Arbor also takes a systems perspective, which aligns with my foundation in social work. My social work training has prepared me to participate in The Arbor's mission to help the individual and the family in recovery, as I understand that addiction is not an individual issue and the family must be directly involved in solving the problem.

Photo: "Heal the world" by flickr user sana via Creative Commons, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/>



Photo: "Leila after shaving her head," by flickr user Jess Sloss via Creative Commons (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>). "BC Children's Hospital Foundation" removed from green and red balloons.

# Cancer Care for the Whole Person

*Building new models of oncology care at UT Austin*

*by Andrea Campetella*

We have come a long way since the 1970s, when then the word cancer was not spoken, and patients were not told their diagnosis because it was thought they would give up hope. There is now a firm trend in oncology towards putting the needs of patients and their families at the center and making them an active part of the healthcare team.

"We have recognized that we have to care for the whole person, which means we must attend to the medical as well as the psychosocial needs of the patient and the family through treatment and beyond," said Barbara Jones, assistant dean for health affairs at the School of Social Work and an expert in psychosocial oncology. "We know that the mind and the body are linked, and that curing the disease in itself does

not always give patients the quality of life they deserve. Even if the cancer is gone, if people remain traumatized and emotionally scarred, they are not fully healed."

Locally, the trend towards holistic and patient-centered cancer care has been loud and clear in last fall's announcement that The University of Texas at Austin and the LIVESTRONG Foundation will be launching the LIVESTRONG Cancer Institutes of the Dell Medical School. These institutes will create replicable and scalable models of care that are centered on the needs and lives of patients, and treat the whole person—emotionally, physically and practically.

“These are exciting times at UT Austin,” said Jones, who is helping to design the Dell Medical School’s interprofessional curriculum and has collaborated with LIVESTRONG for many years. “We have this unique opportunity to build a medical school from the ground up and to create innovative, patient-centered models of oncology care.”

“Collaboration is key to our success,” said Clay Johnston, dean of the Dell Medical School. “One of the key benefits of building a medical school from scratch on the foundation of a leading university like UT Austin is being able to tap into a wide range of superb resources, including experts in social work who are a critical component of improving health. Our team is very excited about the work we’re already doing with the UT School of Social Work and will continue to take advantage of creative opportunities for collaboration.”

Creative collaboration—with other health professionals, with patients and their families, with students and community organizations—has been at the heart of Jones’ two decades of experience in psychosocial oncology, all the way from direct practice to education to research and implementation.

### A Holistic Approach to Cancer Care: From Direct Practice to Educating Other Health Professionals

Psychosocial oncology began formally in the mid-1970s, when new treatments for cancer were discovered, fear of the disease lessened, and the stigma attached to the word “cancer” diminished.

“I started in pediatrics, as the social worker in the interdisciplinary oncology team, so for me it was quite obvious that we had to care not only for the child but also for the family, and that there were huge unmet psychosocial needs,” Jones recalled. “As social workers, this holistic approach comes quite naturally to us because of social work’s person-in-environment perspective. We understand an individual and his or her behavior in light of the environmental contexts—family, neighborhood, systems—in which that person lives and acts.”

Psychosocial oncology became better known to the wider public after the 2008 Institute of Medicine report, *Cancer Care for the Whole Patient: Meeting Psychosocial Health Needs*.

“The Institute of Medicine report basically said that we could and should support patients and families better when they go through cancer treatment, and that there were many areas in need of improvement,

such as distress screening, psychosocial care, family conferencing, institutional support for psychosocial services and empowering psychosocial providers to be leaders in their institutions,” Jones explained.

Partly in response to this call for action, in 2009 Jones developed the country’s first interprofessional graduate course in psychosocial oncology. The course prepared students in social work, nursing, psychology, public health, and other health-related disciplines to provide clinical services and conduct research in psychosocial oncology.

“The course is about learning the theories behind psychosocial oncology, but more importantly, applying them to the real world,” said Farya Phillips, a postdoctoral fellow in psychosocial oncology at the School of Social Work who has been a teaching assistant for the course. “It gives students an overview of the resources available in the community for people affected by cancer, makes them think about the existing gaps, and challenges them to come up with meaningful projects and solutions to fill those gaps.”



“With the creation of the LIVESTRONG Cancer Institutes at the Dell Medical School we have a unique opportunity to build patient-centered oncology care from the ground up, with patients helping us decide what is critical to the delivery of their care.”

— Barbara Jones

More recently, Jones has taken her passion for educating oncology social workers to a national level, through the Excellence in Cancer Education and Leadership (ExCEL) program. ExCEL represents the first time that the National Cancer Institute has funded a social work team to develop national leadership in the field of psychosocial oncology. Since 2010, the program has trained over four hundred social workers from across the United States plus five other countries.

As one of the co-investigators of the ExCEL project team, Jones has been responsible for developing, directing, and delivering the ExCEL trainings, which focus on issues such as family conferencing and communication, distress screening and assessment, interdisciplinary teamwork, evidence-based interventions, and culturally sensitive practice.

“We went through great examples of how social workers in the treatment team work with the whole family. Discussing interdisciplin-

ary teamwork, that is, how to work with nurses and doctors, was also very helpful,” said alumna **Caren Heilman**, a pediatric oncology social worker at Dell Children’s Medical Center in Austin, and a participant in the first ExCEL training in May 2011.

In 2014, the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS) recognized Jones and the other co-investigators of the ExCEL project by awarding them the 2014 APOS Outstanding Training and Education Award.

### **Building the Evidence to Support the Practice**

In recent years, psychosocial oncology has become a recognized field, and research has demonstrated the impact of communication and clinical interventions on improving care and quality of life for patients and their families.

“We are at a point where everybody in the health care team, including patients, wants to know what is the evidence that says that a given psychosocial intervention will work, and what results can be expected,” Phillips said.

Jones has been researching the needs of adolescents and young adult survivors of cancer for many years. Currently, Jones and Phillips are studying a mindfulness meditation intervention for adolescents and young adults with cancer. They are also researching interventions to help empower young cancer survivors by giving them the skills to face common psychosocial issues, such as fear of relapse and fertility challenges.

“The focus on adolescents and young adults as a separate group is a recent development in psychosocial oncology. In part, it comes from the fact that survival rates have not improved for this population and they face unique developmental issues that impact their quality of life during treatment and into survivorship,” Jones said.

In psychosocial oncology, Jones explained, practice informs research and research informs practice in an integral and ongoing process that keeps patients and families at the center. For instance, Jones was recently conducting psychosocial research in Montana at Camp Make-a-Dream, a nonprofit that every summer welcomes children, teens, young adults, women and families affected by cancer.

“I was conducting a feasibility study of a mindfulness intervention that I had adapted on the basis of my clinical expertise and the existing research. I did the intervention with the adolescents and young adults at the camp, and they provided invaluable feedback to help us further refine the intervention. So our research is very practice-based and very patient-centered,” Jones said.

### **Giving Back to the Community**

Because of her social work clinical background, Jones maintains a community-oriented approach to psychosocial oncology research, education, and practice. Throughout her career, she has volunteered and held leadership positions in numerous organizations that provide care and support to people affected by cancer and their families, in Austin and across the nation.

“As a long term collaborator with Barbara, we feel very fortunate to have a national renowned leader in the cancer community and the field of social work to provide her insight and expertise to help us improve the lives of people affected by cancer—and we’re all able to do that right here in Austin,” said **Emily Eargle**, an alumna of the School of Social Work and the director of navigation services at the LIVESTRONG Foundation.

Jones has been engaged with the foundation for more than ten years. She has been an advisor on key projects such as the LIVESTRONG Survivorship Center of Excellence Network, a unique partnership of seven National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer centers to improve outcomes for post-treatment cancer survivors, and the LIVESTRONG Young Alliance, a partnership of key stakeholders focused on an often overlooked population of those diagnosed between 15 and 39 years of age. Jones has also conducted assessments of the LIVESTRONG navigation program, to help them understand national priorities and key gap areas to support people throughout the cancer continuum. Most recently, Jones has moderated a panel of patients and survivors at the LIVESTRONG symposium on patient-centered cancer care.

“We’re pleased to have recently announced our partnership with Dell Medical School at UT Austin to launch the LIVESTRONG Cancer Institutes,” said **Ruth Rechis**, LIVESTRONG vice president for programs & strategy. “We will use the knowledge we have built over the last eighteen years in partnership with the community and key individuals like Barbara to change the ecosystem of cancer care and create patient-centered models that will start in Austin and spread throughout the world.”

“With the creation of the LIVESTRONG Cancer Institutes at the Dell Medical School we have a unique opportunity to build patient-centered oncology care from the ground up, with patients helping us decide what is critical to the delivery of their care,” Jones concluded. “I am inspired by the chance we have to improve the lives of cancer patients and families and to truly transform oncology care.” ♦



# Ask the Expert:

## Beth Pomeroy

### on the DSM-5

Countless workshops and presentations on the Fifth Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) have garnered professors **Beth Pomeroy** and **Cynthia Franklin** a nickname: the DSM-5 Ninjas. We asked Pomeroy what social workers should know about the new manual, and this is what she shared:



**1. There are four new chapters:** Trauma and Stress Related Disorders, Obsessive Compulsive Disorders, Depressive Disorders, and Disruptive Impulse Control Disorders.

**2. The diagnoses within the categories** for mental disorders are listed according to lifespan development. For instance, disorders usually found in childhood are listed first, followed by adult disorders.

**3. The coding for DSM 5 diagnoses** has changed from ICD-9-CM codes to ICD-10 codes. While the DSM IV-TR was closely linked to the International Classification for Diseases-9th Edition, the DSM 5 has updated the codes to conform to the ICD-10 codes. In fact, the DSM 5 has provided both the ICD-9-CM codes as well as the ICD-10

codes. For example, Schizophrenia is coded 295.90 (F20.9) Schizophrenia with the code in parentheses being the ICD-10 code.

**4. The five axes have been removed.** Only the clinical diagnosis is documented followed by V or Z codes. Axis I, II and III were collapsed into a single Primary Diagnosis. If there is a medical disorder accompanying a mental disorder, the medical disorder is listed first. V codes (as listed in the DSM IV-TR) or Z codes (aligned with the ICD-10 codes) are listed after the primary diagnoses, and describe the psychosocial and cultural factors that might be impacting the client and the client's situation.

**5. The DSM-5 now includes** a section for each diagnosis on risk for suicidal behaviors. Prior editions of the DSM did not describe

the prevalence rates of suicide for each of the mental disorders. With the addition of suicidal risk factors, the clinician can be aware of and assess the client for suicidal thoughts or behaviors. This important information can be a useful tool for clinicians to use in evaluation and treatment considerations of clients.

**6. Goals of the DSM-5 Task Force** included reducing the stigma of mental illness and symptom overlap among classifications of mental disorders. Changes will take time to incorporate into agency software programs, insurance claims and licensing exams for social work and other professions. Timeline for these changes will vary from agency to agency and state to state. ♦

Learn more about the DSM-5 in Beth Pomeroy's and Cynthia Franklin's online seminars, offered by the Office of Professional Development: [www.utaustinsocialworkceu.org](http://www.utaustinsocialworkceu.org)

What do you want to ask our experts? Send us your suggestions to [utopian@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:utopian@utlists.utexas.edu)!

# On Being Witness

*How social workers can advocate as expert witnesses and why they should do it* by Andrea Campetella

A man with the words “Pimpin’ Ken” tattooed on his forehead was the first thing that **Laurie Cook Heffron** noticed when she entered the Bexar County courtroom last October. The man was the defendant in the human trafficking case for which Cook Heffron was about to testify as an expert witness. He was accused of pimping out a group of women in San Antonio.

“As I entered the court room, I heard his defense attorney say that the man’s biggest problem was that he was a lover of women, that he didn’t do anything wrong except love women. And I thought, this is going to be really interesting,” Cook Heffron recalled.

The defendant was ultimately charged with continuous human trafficking, a first-degree felony that subjects those charged to additional sentencing.

With her testimony for this case, Cook Heffron, then a doctoral student at the School of Social Work, joined a sizable group of faculty and researchers who regularly serve as expert witnesses in civil, criminal, immigration and other types of courts.

Since 2004, in fact, the School’s Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (IDVSA), led by associate dean for research **Noël Busch-Armendariz**, has been offering trainings in domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking to attorneys and potential expert witnesses such as social workers, counselors, and advocates. Busch-Armendariz has served as an expert in over 50 cases, and teaches the training alongside other expert witnesses and attorneys. This academic year, IDVSA will add an expert witness training for immigration cases.

We talked with three IDVSA researchers—Cook Heffron, **Caitlin Sulley**, and **Margaret Bassett**—to gather their insights about how social workers can serve as expert witnesses and why they should do it.

## Ways of Testifying

Social workers can testify as general or case experts. In the Bexar County case, for instance, Cook Heffron testified as a general expert in human trafficking and interpersonal violence. Her role was to educate the judge and the jury about human trafficking, about patterns of violence and abuse, and to dismantle common misconceptions about how victims and survivors of violence may respond.

“The prosecutor wanted me to help the jury and the judge understand why this group of women didn’t leave the man who was exploiting them. The women were adults, U.S. citizens, he didn’t have them shackled... why didn’t they leave? So I shared what the research says about strategies that traffickers use to coerce their victims, how victims of violence can bond with the abuser, and what might be common behaviors. For example, in this case, the trafficker also sold drugs, and that’s how he recruited women. He capitalized on the woman’s drug addiction, and had coercive ways of giving and withholding drugs. He also used sexual violence to control them,” Cook Heffron explained.

In another instance, Cook Heffron testified as a case expert. This was in immigration court, on behalf of a Guatemalan woman who had fled severe domestic violence at home and was facing deportation. For this case, Cook Heffron was able to combine her clinical skills with her research expertise.

"I interviewed the woman, I conducted a lethality assessment that showed her risk of being killed if she was sent back home was sky high, and I submitted a written testimony. I was testifying as a social worker with clinical skills but also as a researcher who could put this particular case in a larger context, and talk about how what this woman experienced fit within what we know about domestic violence. So I was not just another person saying that the victim was believable, but I added this larger context based on what the science says," Cook Heffron said.

## How to Prepare for the Witness Stand

As a general rule, before the oral testimony, the judge and the attorneys ask questions to ensure that the witness has the needed expertise to testify. Sulley shared her experience of being qualified as an expert witness in martial court for a case of military sexual assault:

"They asked me about my master's degree, and about specific courses that were related to the case, so I talked about learning about trauma, neurobiology, and so on. They also wanted to know about my research background, how many victims I had worked with, and my experience interviewing sexual assault victims," Sulley said.

"Working with good attorneys helps a lot, because even when the defense tried to discredit me, the prosecution came back to clarify. You have to trust the attorneys you work with," Sulley added.

Being on the witness stand can be nerve wracking, particularly during cross-examination. Bassett recalled being cross-examined during a domestic violence case:

"The defense attorney was really aggressive, the judge was not allowing much testimony, and they were arguing whether the science and research about domestic violence was a hard science or a soft science. And the defense attorney was really attacking me, trying to make it seem that I offered nothing of value," Bassett recalled.

Bassett now leads the IDVSA Expert Witness Program.

"In our trainings, participants not only learn up-to-date content but also practice testifying with an attorney and get feedback from faculty. Testifying is like public speaking, with the added difficulty that you are trying to educate the judge and the jury, that you tell your story by responding to questions, and that you are exposed to somebody that will try to undermine what you say. You have to build up the skill and ability to manage that in a professional way, and to showcase your expertise effectively," Bassett said.

## Why Testify?

Testifying as an expert witness is a unique way to advocate for the causes you are passionate about and to give voice to others.

"I have been in the field of domestic violence for about 30 years. I feel that I have an obligation towards people who have allowed me to hold their stories and work with them in their journeys," Bassett said.

"People who are abused in relationships often don't have a voice. When they share their stories with me, they give this powerful voice that is a compilation of all those stories."

For researchers, testifying as an expert witness also helps to keep research endeavors grounded in the world beyond academia.

"My doctoral research is on immigrant survivors of domestic violence. Sometimes doing research can seem very distant from the causes that we care about," Cook Heffron

reflected. "Serving as an expert witness helps me feel that I am contributing something to this cause, and to understand better how my research is relevant."

And finally, testifying as an expert witness is rewarding—as much as it is challenging.

"It's challenging because you take the essence of your work and articulate it in a high stress environment. You have to be very present, and the stakes are very high," Sulley said. "But with good training and good support, you can rise to the occasion, you are firing on all cylinders, your adrenaline is going, and it's what you are passionate about. It's really rewarding to use your expertise to give a voice to survivors who otherwise may not be heard." ♦



2015 IDVSA Expert Witness Training





# From Classroom to Capitol

*Social work students draft and advocate for bills during the 84th Texas Legislature*

*by Paepin Goff*

As social work students prepare for advocacy-based careers, faculty members from the School of Social Work develop course assignments to help train their students for real life experiences in the field.

Last fall, one professor challenged her students to create legislation that could be filed during the 84th session of the Texas Legislature, which convened on January 13 and ended on June 1.

Research associate professor **Monica Faulkner** organized her course, *Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy*, to familiarize master's level students with how legislative policies impact clients. Students in her course drafted a solution to a social justice issue in the form of an official bill, a social media strategy, and an op-ed.

"I've tried to push my students into critical levels of thinking," Faulkner said. "Students sometimes look at it as advocacy on behalf of clients, and miss the broader piece. It's good for them to analyze what has been done and why it didn't work and how to go forward."

The demands of the project required students to research past legislation — both in Texas and in other states — to formulate a realistic plan of action. After developing their projects, some of Faulkner's students had the opportunity to work with advocates and legislative offices to get their legislation filed.

Students **Erica Sheley**, **Amanda Herrera**, and **Jenny Ugalde** worked on a bill to require the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services to track and report the number of pregnant teens in foster care.

"We know that the percentage of pregnant teens in foster care is higher than in the general population, but in Texas we don't have solid numbers or evidence on that," Sheley explained.

In Faulkner's class, as they learned about the foster care system, Sheley realized how complicated it was when foster youth had children.

"Everything becomes really fuzzy. Is that child in foster care too? Should that child be taken away from its teen mother or father?"



These questions need to be answered because there isn't a consensus, standard protocol, or policy in place," Sheley said. "The bill we drafted was really a first step. We need to know the extent of the problem before trying to fix it."

Through collaboration with the advocacy group Texans Care for Children, the students' bill was presented to the legislature. Although the original bill died in the Senate, it was later included in Sunset Bill 206, which passed and was officially signed by the Governor in June of 2015.

"We all come into social work because we're passionate about something. In my case, I'm really interested in child welfare, that's why I came into social work," Sheley said. "To see this bill pass while I was in grad school was an awesome experience."

Student **Adrian Gaspar** said his personal experience as an adolescent in foster care motivated him to draft a bill that would make improvements to the foster care system by focusing on the developmental needs of foster youth.

"The bill I worked on is meant to nudge foster caregivers to make a reasonable, documented effort toward providing leveling opportunities for kids in their care," Gaspar said.

Those leveling experiences include the chance to attend after-school tutoring, athletics, other extracurricular activities and employment opportunities that go beyond standard school attendance.

After researching state requirements for foster parents, Gaspar drafted SB 1407, which requires foster families to make a reasonable effort to provide those opportunities for children in their care. SB 1407 was officially passed and signed by the governor in May of 2015.

Other students sought to solve issues that they encountered while working with clients in their jobs or their field placements.

**Bonnie McIntyre** developed her project on the basis of her experience at Family Eldercare, an Austin non-profit that provides services for older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. McIntyre noticed that many of her clients who had hearing disabilities did not have access to basic telecommunication technologies, and she set out to draft a bill that would help solve the problem.

As McIntyre researched the issue, she learned of existing funds the state could tap into to subsidize a videophone service for people with hearing disabilities, but she faced a barrier during the legislative session.

"The Universal Service Fund is a national fund that every person who has a phone contributes to each month, but it was originally meant for landlines in rural communities," McIntyre explained. "Because it wasn't meant for Internet data, providers were hesitant to endorse it."

In the end, McIntyre's bill didn't pass. But she said she learned a valuable lesson from the experience.

"I think the overall belief is that things are too hard to change so it's discouraging and frustrating," McIntyre reflected. "Even though I didn't succeed, I feel that it was a really important experience overall. There's a growing disparity in access to make change and there's a growing need for someone to assist with that."

**"I've tried to push my students into critical levels of thinking. Students sometimes look at it as advocacy on behalf of clients, and miss the broader piece. It's good for them to analyze what has been done and why it didn't work and how to go forward." —Monica Faulkner**

In fact, the School of Social Work trains its students to do exactly that: recognize social issues and work to resolve them, a reflection of the core values of the social work profession.

"Without advocacy, you're never going to put out a fire," McIntyre concluded. "It's a necessary part of the work we do. It's such a natural part of the concept of social work."

Faulkner said her experience in the Texas Legislature as chief of staff for a state representative led to her passion for teaching students how to tackle social justice issues from the ground up.

"I'm really proud of the students and the work they did, that they pushed themselves to do," Faulkner said. "I'm proud of the fact that we were able to take an academic assignment and put it into real life to help people. That is exciting." ♦

## UT HEALS

The School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin is one among ten institutions across the country to receive a five-year grant from the Council in Social Work Education, the National Association of Social Workers, and the New York Community Trust to train social work students to be healthcare leaders.

Social Work HEALS (Social Work Health Care Education and Leadership Scholars) aims to develop the next generation of healthcare social work leaders who will spearhead efforts to address system-level changes, heighten awareness of prevention and wellness, and address the issues of structural racism that are embedded in social institutions.

“We are very proud to be one among the ten programs selected nationally for this award,” said **Barbara Jones**, assistant dean for health affairs at the School of Social Work and principal investigator in the grant.

The grant will fund the School of Social Work’s UT HEALS program. This program, directed by clinical assistant professor **Dede Sparks**, will support two students in the bachelor’s program and two students in the master’s program for the next five years. Each student will commit to focused healthcare social work education, a healthcare field placement, and travel to a 1.5 day healthcare social work education and policy event in Washington, DC. In addition, the program will support UT HEALS field instructors to attend the national conference of the Society for Social Work Leadership in Healthcare, which is held annually.



Social work and nursing students training together at UT Austin

“The UT HEALS program allows us to deepen our already strong commitment to social work healthcare education, and comes just at the right time as UT Austin embarks in the creation of the new Dell Medical School,” Jones said.

The School of Social Work offers a joint social work/public health degree as well as extensive opportunities in healthcare education and field placements. Since 2007, under Jones’s leadership, the school has been at the forefront of cross campus collaborations to integrate interprofessional education for social work, medicine, nursing, and pharmacy students. The school has also received grants from CSWE and the Health Resources and Services Administration to train master’s students in integrated behavioral health.

## Helping Spread the Word About Student Loan Repayment for Texas LCSW’s



**Will Francis, MSSW '10** and director of government relations at NASW-Texas has shared this good news about Texas Senate Bill 239 (effective September 2015), which relates to student loan repayment assistance for mental health professionals:

*The law sets two repayment tiers for licensed clinical social workers (LCSW’s):*

- *\$80,000 for an LCSW that has received a doctoral degree related to social work*

- *\$40,000 for an LCSW who has not received a doctoral degree*

*Repayments will be spread over five years. To qualify, LCSWs need to apply to the board, have completed one, two, three, four, or five consecutive years of practice in a mental health professional shortage area, and serve Medicaid or Medicare clients, or persons in the Texas Department of Juvenile Justice or the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.*

More information coming out soon!

## Building Community Capacity to Care for Military Men, Women, and Their Families

Multiple and long deployments to war zones have placed great strains on our military personnel and their families, as shown in the unprecedented prevalence of traumatic brain injury, posttraumatic stress disorder, and suicide among other problems.

Clinical social workers provide a great proportion of the mental health care to service members and their families in U.S. military installations worldwide, and in Veterans Affairs hospitals and community-based clinics across the nation.

To help strengthen military social work knowledge and skills among community providers who offer much needed care to service members and their families, the School of Social Work is holding the Third Annual Military Social Work Conference, *Strengthening Military Families Through Effective Community Practices*, September 16-18.



With this conference, the School of Social Work brings the latest research and most effective evidence-based practices to community-based social workers to better prepare them to care for military men, women, and their families. The conference also facilitates a dialogue between social workers embedded in military settings and those helping service members outside of the military health care system.

## New CSWE Center for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice



**Professor Yolanda Padilla** is the leader of the new CSWE Center for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice. This center will provide social work education with the opportunity and the means to support greater

diversity and social and economic justice in education, teaching, research, curriculum, institutional arrangements, and leadership development.

“It was a real honor for me to appoint Dr. Padilla as the inaugural director of this very important center for our field. She brings passion for the issue of diversity and social and economic justice, and will be in the enviable position of setting the course and the priorities as well as the functioning of this center,” said School of Social Work dean **Luis H. Zayas**.

Padilla brings extensive background in the areas of racial and ethnic disparities in health and broader life chances, including critical analyses of social and economic justice and diversity issues in social work education. She has served as principal investigator in research funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, and the Social Science Research Council. Her teaching has focused on organizational, policy, and community practice as well as undergraduate interdisciplinary education on social and economic justice for non-social work undergraduate students.



## Faculty News



Terrence Allen received funding from Southwest Key and the Annie E. Casey Foundation to conduct an evaluation of the Community Connections Program, which provides services to youth involved in the juvenile justice system. He was also selected as a reviewer for the National Institute of Justice.



Marilyn Armour has received one of the collaborative teaching grants under the UT Austin Curriculum Innovation Grants program. Her proposal, in collaboration with Barbara Pazy from the College of Education, focuses on Restorative Discipline in schools.



Noel Busch-Armendariz received a \$1.7 million dollar grant from The University of Texas System to evaluate student experiences with intimate interpersonal violence, and the impact of programming and policy on students who have experienced violence and those who have not.



Yessenia Castro received continued funding from the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute to examine the efficacy of a culturally-adapted brief motivational intervention in a community hospital setting where heavy-drinking Mexican-origin men who are unlikely to have sought formal treatment for alcohol problems present for medical treatment of an alcohol-related injury.



Namkee Choi has been awarded an R01 grant from the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) for her study "Telehealth treatments for depression with low-income homebound

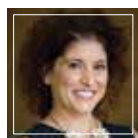
older adults." It's a randomized clinical trial to compare clinical and cost-effectiveness of two aging service-integrated, tele-delivered depression treatments for undeserved seniors. She also received a Big XII Faculty Fellowship from the UT Austin Office of the Senior Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies to visit the Division of Health Services Research, Department of Internal Medicine, University of Kansas.



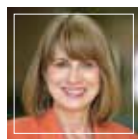
Allan Cole has been appointed to CSWE's Council on Leadership Development for a three-year term. This council helps develop strategies that ensure an adequate number of leaders for the profession who represent the racial, ethnic, and programmatic diversity of social work education.



Catherine Cubbin is a new Op-Ed Project fellow. This year-long fellowship for underrepresented women and diverse thought leaders aims to increase the range of voices and quality of ideas we hear in the world. Through this program, 20 university faculty members will be trained on how to become thought leaders through radio, television and print media publications and appearances.



Susan De Luca was selected by the Population Research Center for their summer grant boot camp. She has also been selected as a SAMHSA grant reviewer for their State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention Grants, and as reviewer for the Journal of Social Work Education for the next three years.

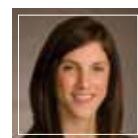


Cynthia Franklin visited Mainland China and Taiwan during July to present workshops on Solution Focused

Brief Therapy for school counselors, teachers, psychologists, and parents.



Rowena Fong gave the keynote address at the 2015 GADE conference, University of Kansas. Her keynote was titled "Social Work Grand Challenges Initiative: Implications for doctoral education."



Teresa Granillo was selected a 2015 Women of Distinction by the Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce.



Faculty emerita Roberta Green was awarded the NASW Knew/Whitman Outstanding Achievement Award. This award recognizes significant impact on national health public policy, professional standards, or exemplary program models. Greene received this award for her outstanding achievement in the field of gerontology.



Lauren Gulbas was awarded a LLILAS Argentine Studies Program Grant for her project, "Sociocultural processes, family dynamics, and psychopathology among adolescent with suicidal ideation and/or behaviors in Córdoba, Argentina."



Lori Holleran Steiker received the 2015 Cale McDowell Award for Innovation in Undergraduate Studies for her leadership in the Signature Courses program at UT Austin. She also received the 2015 Ulysses "Mac" McLester Spirit of Recovery Award, the CSWE Distinguished Recent Contributions to Social Work Education Award, and was selected as one of the 2015 Texas 10 by the



Texas Exes. Nominated by UT alumni, the Texas 10 are among the best and most inspiring professors on campus.



Yuri Jang received an R01 grant from the National Institute on Aging for her project "Limited English proficiency, health, and healthcare among older immigrants." She also received funding from the City of Austin for her project "Asian American quality of life." Jang was the recipient of the 2015 RAISE Faculty Award, given by the Asian/Asian-American Faculty Staff Association at The University of Texas at Austin.



Barbara Jones is the principal investigator in a Social Work HEALS grant awarded to our school to train BSW and MSSW students to be healthcare leaders. She also received funding from the UT Austin Office of the VP for Research for her project, "Mindpower for AYAs: A mindfulness-based intervention for adolescents and young adults with cancer."



Jane Maxwell has been elected to the board of the International Council on Alcohol, Drug, and Traffic Safety.

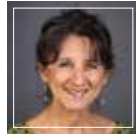


Angela Nonaka received a teaching award from The University of Texas at Austin School of Undergraduate Studies for a research/blog assignment she developed for her Language and Humor Signature Course.

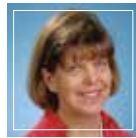


Vicki Packheiser received the 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award from the NASW Capital Area Branch. This award recognizes the best social work values and accomplishments demonstrated in the social

worker's lifetime. She was also selected the 2015 Professor of the Year by the Senate of College Councils at UT Austin.



Yolanda Padilla is the leader of the new CSWE Center for Diversity and Social and Economic Justice, created in partnership between CSWE and UT Austin. This center will provide social work education with the opportunity and the means to support greater diversity and social and economic justice in education, teaching, research, curriculum, institutional arrangements, and leadership development.



Beth Pomeroy received a Special Research Grant from the Office of the Vice President for Research at UT Austin for her project, "Development of an instructor's manual for the clinical assessment workbook."



Clay Shorkey will be honored as a 50-year member of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) at the upcoming NASW/Texas 39th Annual State Conference in Galveston this November. He will receive a special 50-year pin, will be acknowledged at the opening plenary, and is receiving complimentary registration for the conference.



Richard Spence has received funding from SAMHSA to continue the Addiction Technology Transfer Center for Region 6, which includes Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Louisiana. The goal of the center is to enhance competencies of substance-use-disorder counselors for the delivery of evidence-based, culturally relevant addiction treatment services, and thereby to promote recovery and improve the lives of individuals and families affected by alcohol and drug abuse.



Stacey Stevens Manser from the Texas Institute for Excellence in Mental Health is the co-principal investigator of "Impacting acute trauma: Does a Brief Intervention affect PTSD outcomes." This project received funding from Seton Healthcare Family in a new partnership with the LBJ School of Public Affairs and the Center for Health and Social Policy.



Kirk Von Sternberg was on an invited panel to discuss Screening and Brief Interventions in medical settings, and he also presented "Preventing substance-exposed pregnancy: The CHOICES family of studies" at the 13th International Conference on the Treatment of Addictive Behaviors, Odense, Denmark.



Tanya Voss has been appointed as a member of the CSWE Council on External Relations for a 3-year term. This council works in concert with the Commission on Global Social Work Education, with specific interface with other global organizations such as the International Association of Social Work and the International Federation of Social Workers.



Dean Luis Zayas's new book, *Forgotten citizens: Deportation, children, and the making of American exiles and orphans*, has been published by Oxford University Press. In July, Dean Zayas testified in Washington, D.C., before a forum sponsored by the House Judiciary Democrats and Congressional Progressive Caucus on the effects that prolonged detention has had on the refugee children and mothers held at two South Texas immigration detention centers.

# Class Notes

What's new? If you have personal or professional news to share with other alumni and the SSW community, please send us an email to [utopian@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:utopian@utlists.utexas.edu)

## '80s

Char Doland Parsley, MSSW '80, has retired from her position as the executive director of Nexus Inland NW, a service center for the deaf and hard of hearing in Spokane, WA. During grad school, Char had to drive 160 miles every day from Lampasas to attend classes at UT Austin while caring for her four children at home. After receiving her MSSW degree, she worked in Austin and the DC metro area, to eventually move to Spokane, where she remained for the next 15 years and became the first female president of the Washington State Association of the Deaf.

Annie Louise Livingston-Garrett, MSSW '82, has been active with the National Alliance on Mental Illness in Colorado, doing In Our Own Voice presentations and co-facilitating a Connections peer-support program. She has also been taking creative writing and poetry classes, and has had poems published in the Colorado Mountain College's literary magazine, *Rocky Mountain Reflections*. In her free time, Annie reads, snow shoes, bikes, hikes, and occasionally watches UT football games with the Rocky Mountain Texas Exes.

Robin Rosell, MSSW '82 serves as the director of social services at People's Community Clinic (PCC), where she coordinates and implements specialized adolescent health programs. She was recently awarded the Phyllis Richards Austin Icon for Children Award for her outstanding work at PCC.

Nancy Crowther, BSW '83, has accepted a position as the acting executive director at H.A.N.D. of Central Texas, a non-profit providing exceptional, innovative care and support for those who need assistance with daily living. Ms. Crowther is a dedicated volunteer who has diligently advocated for people with disabilities locally and nationally for over 30 years.

Rich Kenney, MSSW '84, is an assistant professor and the social work program director at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska. He is pleased to announce that the Council on Social Work Education Commission on Accreditation recently voted to reaffirm the Chadron State College Baccalaureate Social Work Program to its full accreditation status for the next eight-year cycle.

## '90s

Stuti Trehan Patel, BSW '93, has been appointed associate district court judge in Fort Bend County, Texas. Her swearing-in took place on July 27, 2015.

Rachel Fusco, MSSW '95, serves as an associate professor and chair of the direct practice concentration at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work. Dr. Fusco's research focuses on the mental health of children in the child welfare system, and she is particularly interested in early childhood and the long-term impact of maltreatment and other risks during this developmental stage.

Herschel Knapp, MSSW '95, has just finalized his contract with Sage Publications for his fifth textbook *Practical Statistics for Nursing Using SPSS* (forthcoming, early 2016). Herschel also serves as a part-time instructor for the University of Southern California social work program and as project manager for a telehealth program at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Los Angeles.

## '00s

Susan L. Schoppelrey, PhD '01, has been at Radford University since 2007 and was promoted to associate professor in 2009. Dr. Schoppelrey's research focuses on organizational climate and culture. She recently completed work on a three-year grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to investigate the relationship between organizational culture, ethnic diversity among clients and staff, and client outcomes at rural community mental health agencies in the Midwest.

Orlando F. De Leon, MSSW '03, is proud to join the integrated behavioral health sciences team at The People's Clinic in Austin, TX. Mr. De Leon continues to operate his own private practice, where he provides in-home individual, family and immigration-related biopsychosocial assessments.

Nancy Francisco Stewart, PhD '03, has been promoted to the rank of professor at Jacksonville State University in Alabama. She is also enjoying the role of grandmother of two little girls with a third one to be born later in the summer.

Shane Whalley, MSSW '03, recently began working as the peer support unit manager for Via Hope, an agency working to transform the Texas mental health system into one that fosters

resilience, promotes recovery, and is person, youth and family-driven. Mz. Whalley has also served as the education coordinator for the Gender and Sexuality Center at UT Austin for the past seven years and has delivered over 100 workshops a year to students, faculty, and staff on LGBT issues, social justice, and sexism.

Bree Borgsteadt, MSW '04, BSW '03, currently serves as a counselor at the Local Mental Health Authority and Austin Travis County Integral Care and runs a part-time private psychotherapy practice in Northwest Austin specializing in individual, couples and family therapy. In addition, Ms. Borgsteadt recently founded the Austin Women's Service Club, a service organization that supports non-profit organizations in Austin.

Marisol Daugherty, MSSW '04, recently accepted a position as a case manager for Catholic Charities of Central Texas. Working with the Best Single Source Plus (BSS+) program, Ms. Daugherty empowers clients to become stably housed and self-sufficient through comprehensive case management and advocacy services.

April Ferrino, MSSW '05, builds on over ten years of experience as a policy analyst in her new position at the Texas Network of Youth Services in Austin, where she writes evaluation reports for grant funded projects, collects and analyzes state-level child welfare data, conducts policy research and analysis, and provides public policy support and subject matter expertise for child welfare issues and initiatives.

Amanda Ryan, MSSW '07, began working as a social worker at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Longview in February of this year. Ms. Ryan comes to the position with seven years of experience at Baylor Scott & White.

Kim Bender, PhD '08, is an associate professor at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work. Dr. Bender recently received the 2015 University of Denver Distinguished Scholar Award, which recognizes unusually significant and meritorious achievement in professional scholarship.

Meagan Dorsch, MSSW '08, is a polytrauma social worker at the Department of Veterans Affairs in Salisbury, NC, where she provides mental health and case management services to veterans and families of veterans who have suffered a traumatic brain injury.

Kristina S. Perez, MSSW '08, has accepted a position as the early childhood intervention team supervisor at Easter Seals Central Texas. Ms. Perez comes to the position with several years of experience as the director of the infant development center at the Annunciation Maternity Home in Georgetown, TX.

Amy Chanmugam, PhD '09, MSSW '96, recently received The University of Texas at San Antonio President's Distinguished Achievement Award for Teaching Excellence. Dr. Chanmugam is an assistant professor at UTSA College of Public Policy.

Lisa Osborn, MSSW '09, began working as the advocate supervisor at Child Advocates San Antonio (CASA) in March of this year. Prior to joining CASA in San Antonio, Ms. Osborn worked as the senior program coordinator at CASA of Jefferson Parish, LA, where she supervised 27 court-appointed advocates serving area children.

#### '10s

Stephanie Pulliam Brown, MSSW '10, has recently accepted a position as program director at Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Middlesex County, NJ. She comes to the position with nearly four years of experience as a senior child advocacy specialist at CASA of Travis County, TX.

Robert McFerren, MSSW '10, BSW '09, serves as the clinical program manager at Meridell Achievement Center, a residential treatment center providing psychiatric and neuropsychiatric treatment to children and adolescents.

John Perry, MSSW '10, has opened a private psychotherapy practice. He specializes in working with individuals, adolescents, and families struggling with substance abuse, sexual identity, depression, anxiety, and histories of physical and emotional abuse. He continues to counsel residents at the Phoenix House in Austin.

Maggie Sizer, MSSW '11, has recently begun working as a research assistant for ByteCubed, a business management consultant in Washington, DC. Ms. Sizer comes to the position with years of administrative support experience at IPT Associates, where she worked in consultation with the US Department of Defense's Office of Small Business Programs.

Miriam Camero, MSSW '12, BSW '11, recently received her JD from the University of Houston Law Center and has accepted an internship with US Customs and Border Patrol in Houston. During her time at UH, Ms. Camero served as president of UHLC's Hispanic Law Students Association and served as a student attorney for UHLC's Civil Practice Clinic.

Elizabeth J. Harvey, MSSW '12, opened her own private psychotherapy practice in October of last year. She continues to serve as a social worker at St. David's and Seton Hospitals in Austin.

Rachel Holden, MSSW '12, currently serves as a manager and counselor in the co-occurring disorders program at Crosspoint, Inc., a San Antonio residential facility providing a structured environment for individuals referred by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the U.S. Probation Office or U.S. Pretrial Services.

Jorge Antonio Renaud, MSSW '12, is the newest field organizer working to end mass incarceration at the Center for Community Change. A talented public speaker and activist, Mr. Renaud comes to the position with over three years of experience as a policy analyst at the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition.

Jabez Si Yeon Kim, BSW '13, has accepted a position in the strategic planning department at Korea Food for the Hungry International. He is happily engaged networking with donors, writing grants, and traveling as part of their international networking team.

Jenna Luzzo, MSSW '14, BSW '13, began working as a counselor and peer support coordinator at NMD United, a non-profit connecting adults with neuromuscular disabilities.

## Save these Dates!

### Fall 2015



#### September 26

##### Sixth Annual Social Work Tailgate

Come have fun with us and watch the Longhorns play the Oklahoma State Cowboys



#### October 2

##### Fairbanks Lecture:

"When a Parent Dies: A Psychoanalytic Perspective of the Process of Bereavement," by

Colin Pereira-Webber



#### November 9

##### Child Welfare

##### Conference:

"Listening, Learning,

and Uniting for Permanency," keynote by Dr. Alfred Perez

To receive further information and invitations to these events, make sure we have your updated email address. Send us your updated email to [utopian@utlists.utexas.edu](mailto:utopian@utlists.utexas.edu)



## Terri Spahr Nelson Selected 2015 Distinguished Alumna



Noël Busch-Armendariz, Terri Spahr Nelson, and Jennifer Luna-Idunate at the 2015 Alumni Reception

Terri Spahr Nelson, MSSW '88, BSW '87, is the recipient of the 2015 Charles I. Wright Distinguished Alumni Award presented by the School of Social Work and its alumni organization, the Social Work Alumni Network (SWAN).

Spahr Nelson is psychotherapist, consultant, educator, and author with more than 30 years of experience working in mental health and behavioral sciences, and specializing in victims of violence and trauma. She is a military veteran, twice awarded the Army Commendation Medal. She is Director of the Bachelor's of Social Work Program in the Department of Family Studies & Social Work at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

## A Dinner to Celebrate Friends and Supporters

The 2015 Celebration Dinner welcomed nearly 200 attendees, including scholarship recipients, faculty, staff, volunteers and the School of Social Work's most loyal donors. Each year, this event recognizes the significant and long-term contributions of our alumni and friends. In addition to showcasing the expertise of our faculty, the research of our outstanding doctoral students and learning about the experience of a current student in the master's program, the event is also a unique opportunity for the dean to share school and university news with our valued partners. Our growing relationship with the Dell Medical School and the future of our building were some of the highlighted items the dean discussed this year.



Miriam von Born, Ruth Rubio, and Belinda Goertz



Jeanne and Terry Startzel with doctoral student Laurie Cook Heffron



BSW student Marta Morataya and Jean Avera



## John and Jennifer Gates Endowed Scholarship in Social Work



John and Jennifer Gates

John and Jennifer Gates have been committed to their communities for a long time but according to John, MBA '89, "you can always do more." When their youngest daughter, Jordan, chose social work as her career path, they were thrilled. "UT has meant a lot to us as a family and the School of Social Work has been a big part of that," John said. When asked why they created this endowment, which will support undergraduate social work students, he continued, "There are billions of people in the world that need help...that's a lot of work and we might as well get started." John and Jennifer understand how critical social workers are to filling gaps that philanthropy and systems sometimes can't. "With this scholarship, I'd like to think there is one more social worker every four years than there might otherwise have been. We can never have enough of them. I love the tagline 'What Starts Here Changes the World,' and we want to be a part of that."

John and Jennifer Gates have been committed to their communities for a long time but according to John, MBA '89, "you can always do more." When their youngest daughter, Jordan, chose social work as her career path, they were thrilled. "UT has meant a lot to us as a family and the School of Social

## Dean Zayas's Summer Texas Tour

When it comes to seeing the state of Texas, Dean Luis H. Zayas has covered a lot of ground. From McAllen to El Paso to Amarillo, he has visited most of the state's major metropolitan areas. But what he felt he was missing was all of the famous "wide open spaces" in between. Thus, the Zayas Texas Tour was born—three different trips covering different areas of the state...some more wide open than others. While the scenery and small town charm lived up to the former New Yorker's expectations, it was seeing the shared sense of pride in being a UT Austin alumni that truly shined... no matter the town population size.

To see more pictures and to let us know if you want to be on the 2016 Tour: [#zayastextour](#)



Dean Zayas with Anita Hunter MSSW '80, at the Scurry County Museum in Snyder, TX

### WHY I GIVE



As a kid, whether volunteering at church or giving time at school functions, it was always ingrained in me that it was important to give back. A responsibility.

In my job, I hear prospective graduate students talk about the daunting amount of debt they have accrued and yet still are willing to take on more knowing that a graduate degree will give them more opportunities. I feel pretty fortunate that people invested in me, and while I don't give thousands of dollars, every little bit goes a long way to ensuring the success of someone else.

One of the things I enjoy participating in is the Honor a Social Worker campaign. You get to tell someone "You're doing a great job as a social worker" and at the same time you are still helping students. A win-win.

— **Ramón Gómez, MSSW '01,**  
*Director of Student and Community Affairs, School of Social Work, UT Austin*

# Leaping Towards a Legacy *by Laura Turner Wells*

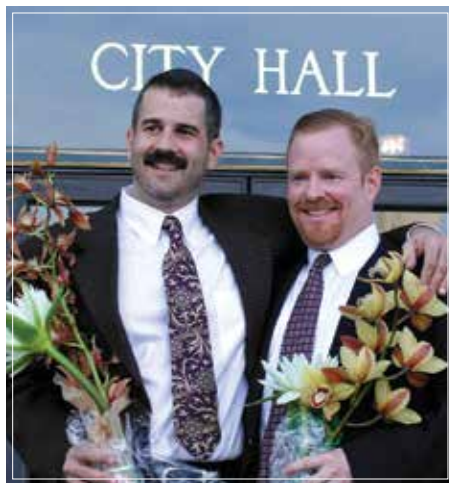
As director of development at the School of Social Work, I have often noticed uneasiness when I discuss planned giving with our donors. And it makes sense. First of all, the entire concept revolves around planning for one's end of life. And then on top of the discomfort of thinking of your own death, you have all of the jargon and overlapping terms—planned giving, estate planning, estate giving, wills, bequests, charitable annuities and so on. It's no wonder 64 percent of Americans don't have a will.

During my past seven years at the School of Social Work, however, I have seen several donors take the leap and use planned giving as an opportunity to leave a legacy. It can be quite simple and in most cases, can be changed over the years depending on the evolving needs of one's family. Many, through a planned gift, were able to commit a much larger and impactful gift than they could afford in their lifetime. An endowed scholarship, which starts at \$25,000, might seem out of reach today but many of us can put something in our will that could reach a higher level and create a connection to the school forever.

Take **Bob Teague, MSSW '93** and former graduate coordinator, as an example. He has recently created a planned gift with his husband, **Dan Ashbrook**. Bob and Dan chose to dedicate a percentage of their estate through their living trust to establish the Ashbrook-Teague Trust Graduate Fellowship in Social Work, which will support students working with older adults, a passion of theirs. I talked to Bob so he could share his insights on planned gifts.

## **Why did you decide to make a planned gift?**

We wanted to leave some kind of philanthropic legacy, and through estate planning we could amp up what we could accomplish. We put a lot of thought into how we give charitably and the UT Austin School of Social Work has always been at the top of my list. Quite frankly, it was easy to do.



Dan Ashbrook and Bob Teague (right)

## **At the time, did you know that planned gifts are revocable, changeable and not legally binding?**

When I got the template language from university, it answered a lot of those questions, especially what happens if there isn't enough at the end to create the endowment. It was comforting to know that money would turn into a current fund that would still be a gift to be made as intended, for student support. So the overall intent would still be honored.

## **What was the process like?**

I thought it was a breeze. All UT Austin wanted was for us to fill out the basic form. And working with the development staff was delightful. Most of the questions came up while getting consensus with Dan since it was his money, too. Not that he needed to be convinced! The execution part was actually very straightforward and really simple.

## **Would you encourage others to consider making a planned gift?**

Definitely. It is a good way to express your philanthropic wishes. And for people who are in a situation like we are, where we will not be parents, it is an additional way to leave something behind. And of course, I want to support the School of Social Work.

## **Any final words of wisdom?**

The first thing we did was go to our attorney and learn what "flavor" of estate planning documents we needed. The change of the marriage laws in the state of California did affect us as taxpayers. It required some extra vigilance and we had to pay a lot of attention to the estate-planning piece. Learning the definitions of those terms and what they really mean as opposed to their scary titles was super helpful. The language is intimidating but the reality, once explained in less daunting language, is more comfortable.

I would say, seek the advice of a trusted professional like an attorney that can walk you through it! They helped us understand how to craft the language so that no matter what happens a gift will be made—no matter how great or small. That is what we wanted. ✧

To receive a packet about planned giving options or to ask questions, contact Laura Turner Wells at (512) 232-8376 or [lwells@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:lwells@austin.utexas.edu)

# The UTOPIA Society

# Recognizing Gifts Made in FY 2015

The UTOPIA society is comprised of alumni and friends who provided monetary contributions to the 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, 2014- August 31, 2015. 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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