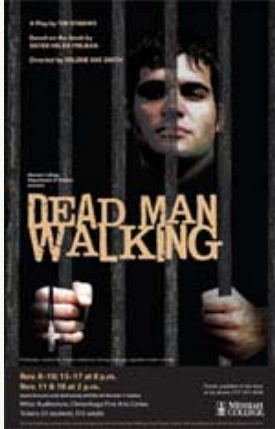


## Dead Man Walking: Capital Punishment from a Social Work Perspective



Sister Helen Prejean's personal encounter with a man on death row was told in *Dead Man Walking*, featured by Messiah's Theatre Department on November 8<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. The show revealed the humanity of those on death row, as Sister Helen asserted that each person is "worth more than their worst mistake."

Why should we care about the issue of capital punishment as social workers? Our Code of

Ethics tells us that each human has worth and potential for growth. Furthermore, the oppression of racism and classism is evident in capital punishment sentences. Those on death row are disproportionately minorities who are poor, which gives them the inability to adequately fight the justice system as the more privileged. As advocates, it is our role to support those who do not have access to necessary resources, and speak on their behalf to have equal treatment.

While the play was not condoning the murders of those on death row, it revealed the different perspectives involved in murder cases. The issue of forgiveness on all sides was crucial. Currently there is a petition for a Moratorium on Capital Punishment. The Supreme Court recently told state and lower federal courts

that they ought to delay executions in their jurisdictions until an official moratorium is in effect.

I believe the play was a representation of something Jane Addams, one of the founders of social work, would have supported. Jane Addams was invested in peacemaking as she was one of the founders of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). She was also a Women's Peace Party Delegate to the first International Congress of Women.

By E. Speakman



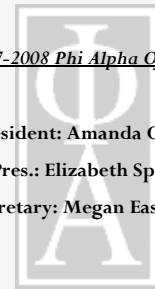
Jane Addams

## A Social Work Potluck: Phi Alpha Style

On Sunday, November 10th, Phi Alpha hosted a potluck dinner in the Eisenhower conference room. The Phi Alpha members were present, as well as several other students from the major. We enjoyed scrumptious, homemade dishes such as lasagna, cranberry walnut salad, cornflake potatoes, corn chowder, and mini cheesecakes. It was a great way of getting to know one another outside of the classroom setting and just relax. Keep your eyes open for future Phi Alpha events! We'd love to have you!



Pictured From Left to Right: Hazel Shively, Rebecca Coover, Megan Eastman and Elizabeth Speakman



### 2007-2008 Phi Alpha Officers

President: Amanda Glenn  
 Vice Pres.: Elizabeth Speakman  
 Secretary: Megan Eastman

**Who:** Bethesda Mission for Men Soup Kitchen

**What:** Bethesda has a soup kitchen to provide food for men living in the mission and on the streets. Volunteers help serve food as well as clean up after meals. They also talk with the men and share their love and faith in Jesus Christ.

**Where:** Bethesda Mission on 611 Reilly Street in Harrisburg

**When:** The fourth Wednesday of every month from 3:15-6pm

**Contact:** Courtney Zimmerman  
 @ [CZ1156@messiah.edu](mailto:CZ1156@messiah.edu)

**Who:** Bethesda Mission for Women Soup Kitchen

**What:** Cook and serve lunch for women on Saturdays or dinner on Sundays.

**Where:** Bethesda Mission on 611 Reilly Street in Harrisburg

**When:** Lunch on Saturdays and dinner on Sundays

**Contact:** Courtney Zimmerman  
 @ [CZ1156@messiah.edu](mailto:CZ1156@messiah.edu)

**Who:** Bethesda Youth Center

**What:** The center provides afternoon and evening activities for local elementary school students to give them a Christian alternative to the streets. The focus is on building friendships with the kids and acting as positive role models. Volunteers help with tutoring, spiritual development, and open-gym time.

**Where:** Bethesda Mission on 611 Reilly Street in Harrisburg

**When:** afternoons and evenings  
**Contact:** Courtney Zimmerman

## Sexual Orientation and Religion According to the *Code of Ethics*

According to the National Association of Social Work's (NASW) *Code of Ethics*, sexual orientation and religion receive equal attention in regards to tolerance, with each being mentioned four times (Pollack, 2007). Neither sexual orientation nor religious preference is "first among equals". This article examined how employers or supervisors address their employees about sexual orientation and religion according to the standards laid out in the *Code of Ethics*. Even though the United States government holds religious freedom higher than sexual preference in the Constitution, as social workers we are

to treat everyone with an equal amount of respect and dignity. A telephone survey was conducted from 1,515 with 55% of the respondents "believed engaging in homosexual behavior is a sin". According to the same study, social workers and social work students have a more accepting view on homosexuality than the general public. Some employers may see an increase in dialogue about sexual orientation and religion a solution to increase tolerance. Social workers should recognize that there does not necessarily need to be a final conclusion, but we can continue forming ideas as we continue learning.

**Reference:**

Pollack, D. (2007). Sexual orientation and religion from the perspective of the code of ethics. *Social Work*. 52(2).



**From the NASW Code of Ethics**

*"Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability."*

<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

"If I had any doubts before arriving here in August, about whether social work was the right career to pursue, my experiences have definitely erased all doubts."

-Sarah Hazlett

## Feature Spotlight: Phi Alpha in Philadelphia

### Junior Elyse De Jong

While in Philadelphia for the semester I am volunteering at Duckrey Elementary school around three mornings a week. Although my role in the school is more like a teachers aid I am learning valuable knowledge related to social work. By being directly in an urban public school environment I am able to observe and experience daily where these children spend a majority of their day. Experiencing the inequalities of the public school system first hand, including lack of supplies, old buildings, and overburdened teachers. I have been able to build relationships with some children and gain a better understanding of the difficulties that plague their life. Although it is chaotic and heartbreaking at times, I have also witnessed joy, hope and peaceful students overcoming their burdens and learning together.

### Junior Sarah Hazlett

My experience at the Philadelphia Campus so far has changed my outlook on social work. If I had any doubts before arriving here in August, about whether social work was the right career to pursue, my experiences have definitely erased all doubts. Being literally surrounded by poverty, crime, and injustice does not discourage me from urban social work, but instead it encourages me, so hopefully I can become apart of the change. The experience I have had so far in the city has been amazing. I have grown academically, socially, and spiritually while in Philadelphia.

### Junior Rachel Ward

Philadelphia has been quite the experience! One of the most beneficial aspects of going to school in Philadelphia is exposure to diversity that you would never experience at Messiah. I have numerous classes where I am the minority rather than the majority. Another great experience has been my internship. I am working in the guidance office of a Philadelphia high school. It is eye opening everyday and I will never forget the experience.

Pictured From L to R: Rachel Ward, Sarah Hazlett and Elyse De Jong

