

Spring Newsletter

MESSIAH UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

2023





A MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT



"Welcome Spring.

With a new year comes redefined goals, resolutions, and reimagined dreams.

As the Department Chair and Program Director, I welcome 2023 with eager anticipation of renewed hope in humanity. I hold fast to aspirations, and dreams for the Department as a whole and for each student. I would like to encourage each of you to take some time to set realistic personal and professional goals.

Spring is a season that brings with it newness and rebirth. The dull and cold days of winter quickly fade away, and one sees the emergence of life. God's creations beings to bud flourish and bear fruit for this season and the season ahead.

Let us look to this new season and semester with renewed hope. Let us never forget our hope lies in Christ. As the semester rolls around and the challenges of assignments, soul searching decision bombard our thoughts, and adulting becomes a scary word; In this new season remember, Isaiah 40:31 "But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint."

- Charlene Lane, PhD., LCSW-R, Social Work Department Chair

"Messiah University Social Work students make significant impacts on the local and global community for Christ. Students have engaged the world with the love of Jesus using interventions integrated with professional, ethical and competent social work approaches. Approximately 7500 hours of service learning and field experiences will be conducted by the end of the 2023 spring semester. Student's have been placed in settings including urban and rural schools, community outreach, women's shelters, retirement communities,

foster care and adoption agencies, drug and alcohol treatment programs, faith based community social service, hospice, residential schools and district attorney offices. A student is in an international placement in Ecuador and students are also participating in a new partnership with the Baltimore Urban Studies Program. An essential component of preparing to be a professional social worker at Messiah University is the focus on service learning and field engagement included in the majority of social work courses. Through these field experiences, students live out the values of the social work profession while advancing the gospel serving as the hands and feet of Christ to a broken and hurting world. I have the privilege of witnessing students coming to the realization that they have used classroom learning applied in a field setting to make a difference in the life of someone in need. This is transformational in a student's life. Messiah University Social Work students are being transformed and changing the world in the process."

- Michelle George MSW, LCSW, BCD, Social Work Field Coordinator



Dr. Lane

Professor George

Debbie Chopka

WELCOMING NEW AND RETURNING STUDENTS

In September, the Social Work Department kicked off the semester with the annual welcome back party. Professors and students had a great time getting to know each other over food, dessert, and games!

Students learned about Tevera, a new field placement database, which organizes all timesheets, learning contracts, and evaluations that was successfully implemented in the department this year.



SOCIAL WORK CLUB

The department's social work clubs operate to support students, provide professional development opportunities, and grow students faith.

The peer mentor program is a great way for underclassmen students to connect with upperclassmen for support. The Cultural Liaisons provided a number of opportunities to develop cultural competence. The bi-weekly bible study is an opportunity to gather together as social workers and grow in our faith.



PHI ALPHA National Honor Society

Phi-Alpha had the opportunity to volunteer at Paxton Street Mission in November. All volunteers were given a tour of the building and were told about the various roles of the case workers at this agency. While some social work members were serving cupcakes and snacks to the residents, other members were calling bingo or helping residents mark off numbers. It was a really great experience. Phi-Alpha will be volunteering with Love the Hill in Harrisburg for their spring service project.



SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS PRACTICE INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION



This year, our social work students participated in two different interdisciplinary collaboration exercises. Our seniors joined with sophomore Physical Therapy students from Messiah University's Graduate Program at Winding Hill to engage in creating mock treatment plans. Then some students joined sophomore nursing students to engage in a simulation involving end of life care.

In April, Professor George, along with Dr. Karen Burket and Jordan Zercher, will present at the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors Conference in Birmingham, Alabama on the topic of interdisciplinary collaboration.



STUDY ABROAD

This semester, senior students are completing field placements beyond the Messiah University local area. Brooke Wimberly and Judith Kyei-Poku are attending the Baltimore Urban Studies program and Kiley Arick is traveling to Ecuador. In previous years, students have studied abroad in Uganda and Chicago.

Judith



Kiley



Brooke



SOPHOMORE FIELD PLACEMENT

“One thing I love about my sophomore field placement is the diversity of experiences I get to encounter through my agency. From creating Lifebooks and making phone calls to attending adoption hearings and home visits, I get to practice in the many areas of foster care and adoption. All the opportunities that I have through my placement have helped me to grow into a more professional and competent social worker through opening my eyes to the many roles that are necessary to help meet the needs of children in foster care.”

-Olivia Winton, BSW 2025



Students completing their sophomore placements will participate in 50 hours of practice in both their fall and spring semester at the same organization, resulting in 100 hours of experience in social work practice under the supervision of an experience social worker.



"My sophomore field placement is at Masonic Villages Hospice in Elizabethtown. I spend most of my time at MVH making visits to hospice patients. Some patients are very conversational and with other patients I simply offer supportive presence. I have also had the opportunity to attend trainings, observe bereavement groups, and perform documentation tasks. I have had several opportunities to observe interdisciplinary team meetings of social workers, medical staff, and chaplains. My field placement often takes me outside my comfort zone. However, this is where growth and learning happen."

-Darren Miller, BSW 2024

SENIOR FIELD PLACEMENT

Elaine Brandenburg (Social Work Alumna Class of 2022), completed her senior placement at the Dauphin County District Attorney's Office and is currently working as a social worker in Nepal. Hear about how her senior placement provided her tangible skills and experiences that prepared her for her first job as a social worker!



Students completing their senior placements will participate in 450 hours of practice in both their spring semester of their senior year under the supervision of an experienced social worker.

"My senior placement at the Dauphin County District Attorney's Office was incredible. Not only did I get first hand experience working with clients but I also learned the importance of a multidisciplinary team which included attorneys, detectives, doctors, police officers, and other professionals. My senior placement was emotionally intense which taught me firsthand the importance of self-care. No longer was self-care a catch phrase or something I heard about in university, but something I needed to put into practice. Overall, I'd say my placement prepared me in a lot of ways to be a social worker, especially how to adapt to new environments, including my work now as a social worker and researcher in Nepal!

I've been living in Nepal for nearly 6 months now and I have grown so much personally and professionally. Currently I work with women from all over Nepal with severe psychosocial disabilities, mostly schizophrenia. The women often are from villages where mental health services are practically nonexistent and religious stigma surrounding mental illness exists. Working with all Nepalis, living with Nepalis, and going to Church with Nepalis has helped me to immerse myself in the culture and the language. Although I still have much to learn, my daily work includes me speaking and understanding Nepali. In addition to growing my language skills, I've had the opportunity to see how the mental health system (or the lack thereof) works here in Nepal, including barriers women face."

ALUMNI TESTIMONY

"Messiah's Social Work Department understands the necessity of engaging students into hands-on practice from the very beginning of our social work career. From the first year as a Social Work student, our learning in the classroom was paired directly with our implementation of that knowledge in our internships and practicum. The professors also understand the importance of diversity and cultural humility in the field of social work and worked hard to integrate these topics into every class. I have come to find that Messiah [University] is a name that is well-known within the world of higher education within the field of Social Work, and that is for the caliber of students that they produce and the level of discipline and excellence that is carefully nurtured in us. Messiah prepares future social workers to perform at a high level of excellency. I learned early on in social work that competence is not something we achieve, but constantly are working towards. Messiah provided me with the skills to constantly expand my knowledge base, and provided me with the experience and liberty to seek out areas of interest that I had in social work. Due to Messiah's connections in the community, I was able to seek out placements that prepared me fully for the next step of my career after graduation. Without my Messiah education, I can truthfully say I do not believe I would be able to walk into each new experience that I encounter with the same level of confidence that I currently have, because I know I am well-prepared."



Kholiwe Wyatt
BSW 2016

Scan this QR code to read
more Alumni Testimonies!



ANNOUNCING RUBY COFFEE + CO.



Our students are beyond amazing! Soon to be graduates from Messiah University, Rachel Beatty and Rachel Ferrence, are opening Ruby Coffee & Co., a coffee shop in Camp Hill, with the mission of training, employing, and helping survivors of human trafficking. Watch this FOX43 news clip using the QR code and follow their business on social media.



www.rubycoffeeandco.com/ @rubycoffeeandco

Congratulations Class of 2023!

We're so proud of our seniors who are already demonstrating what it means to be professional, ethical, and competent social workers.



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK 22-23



For more information on our program, go to our website!



Department of Social Work

One University Avenue

Suite 3057

Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

www.messiah.edu/SocialWork

