

SPRING 2024

Action

The Magazine of the Mandel School



A growing understanding

Considering social workers' roles as legislation limits access to gender-affirming care for transgender youth



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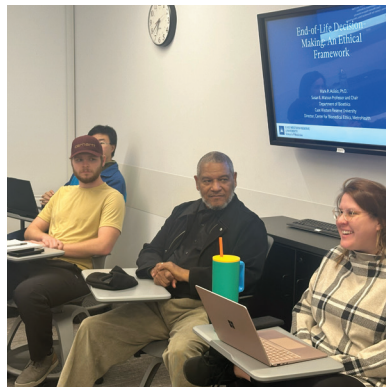
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From the Dean



Dear Mandel School alumni and friends,

I am delighted to share with you the latest edition of *Action*, which highlights our ongoing impact and accomplishments and provides an insider's look into what's happening with our Mandel School community.

First, I'm thrilled to announce that the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation has awarded the school a transformative \$5 million grant to support student scholarships over the next five years, beginning in the fall. We are deeply grateful for this generous commitment, which will make our world-class education more affordable to a wider number of gifted students and help advance leadership in social work education and nonprofit service (more on p. 4).

There is much more exciting news to be shared. Stories in this issue will give you a feel for how we continue to champion **equity, innovation and transformation** in all we do at the Mandel School, including how we are delving into gender-affirming care and transgender rights in Ohio and beyond (p. 12). We also showcase the tremendous growth in international student applications and enrollment, which highlights an impressive global reach (p. 16). Plus, we provide an update on the newly launched Classroom Without Walls, an educational program that addresses academic equity by allowing experienced community learners with bachelor's degrees to take up to three master's-level courses, free of charge (p. 18).

As dean, I am very proud of the many accomplishments the Mandel School has made in recent years. We continue to stand out as one of the nation's leading social work schools, attracting applicants from around the world. This is largely due to the support of our alumni and friends who have paved the way. Thank you. As our valued partners, we invite you to journey with us inside the pages of this edition of *Action*.

With gratitude,

Dexter Voisin, PhD, LCSW

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Dean in Applied Social Sciences
Case Western Reserve University

Breaking down barriers

Reducing the financial burden for aspiring social workers

Social workers choose their profession because they want to help others and improve society. And, with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) predicting a shortage of 74,000 social workers each year for the next decade, society needs them—now more than ever.

But the financial burden for these professionals is often too much to bear. Their advanced degrees come with a promise to repay student loans on average salaries of about \$50,000 per year, according to the BLS.

Fortunately, that burden has become noticeably lighter for some students at Case Western Reserve University's Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. With a five-year, \$5 million grant, the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation has established a scholarship fund for promising Master of Social Work (MSW) students who will be known as "Mandel Scholars."

"The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation has long supported the Mandel School's efforts to advance leadership in social work education and nonprofit service to build a more just world," said Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation President and CEO Jehuda Reinharz. "As the need for well-prepared, mission-driven leaders continues to grow, reducing their financial burden represents an important investment for the future."

In total, Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel and their foundations have provided more than \$68 million in philanthropic support to Case Western Reserve University. This most recent



gift to the Mandel School will allow its recipients to focus more on their academic and practical work, and less on making ends meet.

This is the overwhelming sentiment from students who posted thank you notes to the foundation on the school's Kudoboard, a website on which students, staff, faculty and alumni post their notes of gratitude for the gift.

"My education is possible because of the foundation's generous support," wrote **Moses Ngong**, first-year student at the Mandel School. "Thank you so much for investing in social work."

Valeria Stutz, a third-year MSW student, agreed: "[Without this funding], I would not have been able to pursue a degree at Mandel and access its wealth of resources and supportive community. Thanks to your foundation, I have significantly less student loan

debt, which gives me greater freedom to make choices about my career!"

Dean **Dexter Voisin, PhD**, gratified by the significant investment, saw the gift not only as a benefit to the students themselves, but to society as a whole.

"We deeply appreciate the Mandel Foundation's generous commitment," he said, "which will allow more of these exceptional students to pursue a Mandel School education and in turn, benefit those they go on to serve."

View the Kudoboard:



Nurturing nonprofits through education

New certificate program tackles fundraising challenges head-on

It's an unfortunate reality that Northeast Ohio nonprofit organizations—many of which operate in service to the most disinvested communities—are seriously under-resourced. Often, they lack the means to effectively seek charitable contributions to address their missions.

Enter: the new Professional Certificate in Nonprofit Fundraising from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences.

Students of the program will learn to improve fundraising skills essential to the success of the organizations they serve. The first course of the certificate program was offered in April, with subsequent offerings planned for every few months. Professionals can take individual courses or pursue the full certificate.

Read on to learn more about the program from **Rob Fischer, PhD**, chair of the Master of Nonprofit Organizations program.

1. What inspired the development of this Certificate in Professional Fundraising?

Fundraising has always been central to the training of nonprofit leaders. Back in 2019, the Mandel School began working with the Association for Nonprofit Fundraisers on the needs of fundraising professionals in the region. With support from the Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation, we surveyed 200 working professionals and conducted interviews with some



"Many professionals working in nonprofit fundraising roles have received little specific training in fundraising.... Our goal is to offer a regional access point for these working professionals."

—Rob Fischer, PhD

30 individuals. In response to what we learned from this study, we decided to launch a Professional Certificate in Nonprofit Fundraising.

2. What are the highlights of the program?

The certificate is designed as a four-course sequence that includes two required courses and two electives selected by the student based on their needs. Each course is approximately eight hours of in-person workshops coupled with readings, group learning and individual practice work. Students will also have access to professional mentors and networking opportunities with other fundraisers. As a professional certificate, the courses are not for academic credits, which allows a lower price point (\$1,500 per course). We are also offering substantial

scholarships that have been generously supported by donors.

3. What problems do you hope this program will solve, specifically for Cleveland and our region?

Many professionals working in nonprofit fundraising roles have received little specific training in fundraising and, more often, have learned on the job. In addition, many fundraisers often feel isolated in their organizations and receive little in the way of ongoing educational support—especially fundraisers working in smaller and more grassroots organizations. These issues lead to higher job dissatisfaction and turnover. Our goal is to offer a regional access point for these working professionals.

—Alaina Bartel

Honors and awards

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences' faculty, staff and students go above and beyond in service to their profession and communities—and their contributions don't go unnoticed. Here are some of the ways they were recently recognized for their accomplishments.



Sharon Milligan, PhD, the Grace Longwell Coyle Associate Professor in Social Work, was reappointed for a three-

year term on the The International Association of Schools of Social Work, a nongovernmental organization that consults with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1947.



Dan Flannery, PhD, the Semi J. and Ruth Begun Professor, Distinguished University Professor and director of the Begun Center

for Violence Prevention Research and Education, was elected as a fellow of the American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare, a distinguished honorific society of scholars, researchers and practitioners.



Laura Voith, PhD, associate professor, was awarded the Group of Advancement for Doctoral Education's 2024 Donna

Harrington Faculty Award for Excellence in Mentoring of Doctoral Students.



Megan Holmes, PhD, professor and co-director of the Center on Trauma and Adversity, was elected as a fellow of the Society for

Social Work and Research.

2023 National Association of Social Workers regional award recipients

Each year, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) honors a select group of students and practitioners for their exceptional contributions to the field. This year, award winners included faculty, students and alumni of the Mandel School.

Ohio



Kathleen J. Farkas, PhD (WRC '73; GRS '84, social welfare), Lifetime Achievement, Region 3



Jonathon Henry (SAS '18), Social Worker of the Year, Region 3



Pranit Lanjewar, third-year Master of Social Work student Student of the Year,

NASW-OH, Region 3, Cleveland



Renee Leber (SAS '09), Social Worker of the Year, Region 2



Martha Lucas (SAS '75), Outstanding Service to NASW, Region 2



Joanne Lunceford, PhD (SAS '11), Social Worker of the Year, Region 5



Timothy McCarragher, PhD (GRS '02, social welfare) Lifetime Achievement, Region 2



Amy Restorick Roberts, PhD (SAS '00; GRS '13, social welfare), Social Worker of the Year, Region 6

Illinois



Chelsea Laliberte Barnes (SAS '18), Social Worker of the Year, Statewide

Tapped for their expertise

Faculty members from the Mandel School—renowned for their research in social work, nonprofit administration and mental health—are frequently approached by media outlets to provide commentary on current events. Here are some recent examples.



“When we say religion and religiosity, we’re really talking about a proxy for social connections. We’re talking about supportive institutions that have historical and contemporary relevance to many positive outcomes in the Black communities.”

—**Dexter Voisin, PhD**, dean, to *The St. Louis American* about his new research that found a link between religiosity and favorable behavioral outcomes



Certain childhood experiences can put people at risk of committing domestic violence in the future. Social isolation and unhealthy social networks can be dangerous for victims of violence ... because they can worsen mental health conditions.”



—**Laura Voith, PhD**, associate professor, to *The Bismarck Tribune* about the relationship between domestic violence and mental health



Even though they’re here and the threat is not a physical one per se, it is experienced by the body as though it is. We’re all kind of extra vigilant, scanning for danger or holding our people close ... in this sort of prolonged fear state, which is really hard on the body.”



—**Jenny King, PhD**, assistant professor and co-director, Center on Trauma and Adversity, to *ideastream*, Cleveland’s local NPR affiliate, about the traumatic effects of the Israel-Hamas war on local populations



There is always context; there is the issue of the training and protocol within the [police] division. Violent behavior [attributed to active shooters] is unfortunately one of the most difficult things to predict.”



—**Dan Flannery, PhD**, the Semi J. and Ruth W. Begun Professor and director of the Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education, to *CBS News* about an investigation into Maine’s most deadly mass shooting

Media MVPs

For the first time, Case Western Reserve University’s media relations team honored 25 faculty across campus with “Media Relations MVP Awards” for sharing their expertise with a broader audience.

Take a look at the Mandel School award winners:

Rob Fischer, PhD, the Grace Longwell Coyle Associate Professor in Civil Society and co-director of the Center on Poverty and Community Development

Dan Flannery, PhD, the Semi J. and Ruth W. Begun Professor and director of the Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education

Jenny King, PhD, assistant professor and co-director of the Center on Trauma and Adversity

David Miller, PhD, associate professor and associate dean for academic affairs

One question

Students at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Sciences pursue degrees in social work for a variety of reasons. Take a look at how some students answered this question.



“Why did you choose to pursue a degree in social work?”



“I want to be the voice people need, to advocate for those who are forgotten and ignored.”

—**Kyrach Hopper**, MSW with concentration in children, youth and families



“I was significantly impacted by my mom’s battle with cancer. My family received support through social workers and therapists, and I want to provide the same services that helped me through everything.”

—**Jessica Rubideaux**, MSW with emphasis on children, youth and families



“I chose social work to become a change agent, influence social change and contribute to improving the lives of individuals, families and communities.”

—**John Kisseih Tetteh**, MSW with concentration in substance use disorders and recovery



“I want to be the change and make a positive impact on society by advocating for marginalized and vulnerable populations and promoting social justice.”

—**Shanel Hoek**, MSW with concentration in adult mental health



“I chose social work because [when I volunteered during the pandemic] I found thousands of people need help with so many things. Of course, I alone cannot do everything, but at least I can contribute myself in this field to maintain respect, dignity, love and care for people in society.”

—**Pranit S. Lanjewar**, MSW with speciality in healthcare, adult mental health and trauma-informed care



“I want to make a change in people’s lives. Coming from a minority community, I believe it’s crucial for us to normalize mental health for future generations.”

—**Haneen Abdel-Nabi (CWR '23)**, MSW with focus on child and adolescent mental health and specialization in trauma



“I chose social work because it gives such a unique and holistic perspective regarding so many of the issues that plague individuals in our society. ... But mostly, I chose social work because I love people and believe everyone deserves to be well and live a life of wholeness, health and abundant opportunity. I want to make a difference to help change that.”

—**Carlie Freeman**, MSW focusing on adult mental health



“I care very deeply about other people, and I have a very empathetic, humanistic worldview. I love systems theory and systems-based thinking, and I tend to think of problems and personal situations from a variety of perspectives.”

—**Harley Rubin**, MSW individualized path in community, health and policy with the transgender and gender-diverse population

Equity. Innovation. Transformation.

These are the guiding principles of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. Here are just a few of the ways faculty, staff and alumni are putting those principles into practice.

EQUITY

STUDYING DISPARITIES

Older Black Americans are twice as likely as older white Americans to suffer from Alzheimer’s and dementia. **Anne Nguyen, PhD**, associate professor at the Mandel School, is trying to understand why—and how to prevent it.

“It’s not just that Black Americans are more likely to suffer from cognitive decline, but they’re also less likely to get diagnosed,” she said.

Nguyen said she’s interested in studying “upstream” factors—preventive measures—in cognitive decline, rather than the “downstream” medical issues they develop after diagnosis.

“Understanding and addressing modifiable risk factors are essential for eliminating the racial disparities in cognitive health outcomes,” she said. “Social factors are specifically modifiable, meaning that we can change them.”

Read Nguyen’s latest research:



“If Black Americans do get a diagnosis—for Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, for example—it’s often at a much later stage, when the care is more intensive and expensive. Most Alzheimer’s medications are only for people in the early stages of the disease. So, if people are diagnosed at later stages of the disease, they don’t qualify for these medications.”

—Anne Nguyen, PhD, associate professor

“We are excited to partner with the Mandel School to offer graduate-level educational opportunities to Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities staff. We are committed to continuous learning, and we know that having highly trained staff only improves our ability to deliver on our mission and provide the best services and support to the people we serve.”

—Amber C. Gibbs, superintendent and CEO of the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities



Amber C. Gibbs

INNOVATION

NEW NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIPS

The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts there will be a shortage of 74,000 social workers per year for the next decade. Educational institutions—including the Mandel School—are trying to do their part to address this dire predicted outcome.

To do this, said Dean **Dexter Voisin, PhD**, the Mandel School is setting its sights close to home. “I believe it is part of our community responsibility to elevate and foster talent from inside the same neighborhoods where social workers serve,” Voisin explained.

To that end, the Mandel School recently signed four new agreements with Cleveland-area service providers—FrontLine Service, Bellefaire JCB, Murtis Taylor Human Services and the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities—to recruit and train diverse students for its Master of Social Work program. The goal is to enroll about 10 employees from each of the four organizations; each will be eligible for 50% scholarships.

“This is part of an effort to build strategic relationships,” Voisin said, “to address an overall need of trained social workers in our community.”

TRANSFORMATION

BEING THE CHANGE

Before **Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, PhD (SAS '71)**, was a student at the Mandel School, she worked at the Cuyahoga County Division of Child Welfare in Cleveland.

It was challenging work, and the disengaged demeanor of the infants in the foster care group homes left her feeling haunted. She wanted to understand the cause, so she set out to learn more by enrolling at the Mandel School.

“There are complicated clinical dynamics involved in child protection intervention with the goal of keeping them safe,” she explained. “The child may be physically safe, but emotional needs may not be met.”

Peebles-Wilkins went on to lead a pioneering career in social work, blazing a path for aspiring professionals like herself. But in 2022, Cuyahoga County—where Peebles-Wilkins lives—had just 30% of the staff they needed to support the children and foster care services.



That’s why, last year, she created the Wilma Peebles-Wilkins Endowed Scholarship for Infant and Young Child Well-Being. Intended to provide support for a student in Cuyahoga County, the scholarship will go to a student interested in foster care social work.

“I would like to interest prospective students in providing better services to children in foster care.”

—Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, PhD

Listen to Peebles-Wilkins on the Mandel School’s *Change Leaders* podcast:





A growing understanding

As legislation to restrict transgender individuals' access to care passes around the country, Mandel School faculty, students and alumni consider the impact—and take action

By Emily Mayock

When Sara Roberts' 15-year-old child told her they are transgender, Roberts felt confident she could navigate the complicated journey on which they were about to embark. After all, Roberts (SAS '10) was a trained social worker specializing in child and family welfare, a mental health professional and a longtime ally of the LGBTQ+ community.

As the two began maneuvering the doctor's appointments, hormone therapies, name-change processes and, most of all, social and emotional effects related to her child's transition, Roberts quickly learned she'd been mistaken.

"Even using my social work skills that I was trained in, I still managed to mess up—and I had to watch as my kid shut down and went through tremendous amounts of

depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideations as they tried to figure out their own identity," Roberts remembered. "I joined support groups, they went to a therapist that was part of the LGBTQ+ community, but even with those networks, there weren't really resources for parents of trans teens on how to support their kids."

Roberts ended up finding strong connections through Facebook groups, where she started noticing patterns in the lines of conversation: struggles with name changes, lack of understanding by the parents themselves or their larger communities and heartbreak watching their children be torn down. Worse still, Roberts said, was the regularity with which parents had to band together to grieve the pain—or, sometimes, death—of these children. But Roberts also

noticed the strength and joy in these groups, especially celebrating their children's successes.

Seven years later, Roberts' son, who uses a range of pronouns, is a thriving college student—and Roberts is back at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, teaching courses on policy and advocacy while working toward her PhD.

Her research focus is driven by her own experience: developing resources for parents and families of trans children, from initial understanding and affirmation to advocacy and education.

"Despite knowing the challenges that we are facing," Roberts said, "I am ready for this continued fight to ensure that our children are allowed to be their true selves without the systemic oppression they are facing today."

A look at the landscape

Roberts' work—alongside more from Mandel School faculty, students and alumni—is becoming increasingly critical and complex, as state legislatures across the country pass laws to limit access to medical care for transgender children.

Ohio's House Bill 68, for example, would outlaw gender-affirming care for minors (except for those already receiving care), bans transgender girls and women from participating in girls' and women's sports, and introduces a number of bioethical requirements and adjustments to healthcare practice. Republican Gov. Mike DeWine vetoed the bill in December, specifically noting parents' rights in health decision-making and calling the focus on gender-confirmation surgery a "fallacy," as no children's hospitals in the state perform such surgeries. State legislators overrode his veto in January, but a judge placed the law on a short pause just two weeks before it was to go into effect.

Guidelines for Ohio social workers

Read the most up-to-date guidance on Ohio HB68 from NASW at naswoh.org/page/hb68guidance.



"I am ready for this continued fight to ensure that our children are allowed to be their true selves without the systemic oppression they are facing today."

—Sara Roberts

Simultaneously, the number of youth who identify as transgender is on the rise nationally—doubling since 2017, according to a 2022 study from University of California, Los Angeles. In Ohio, 1.15% of youth ages 13–17 identify as transgender, compared to .51% of all adults over the age of 18.

Phyllis "Seven" Harris (MNO '05), executive director of the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, said she's seen this firsthand. The center has expanded its programming to meet their needs and also launched the Advocacy in Action initiative to conduct advocacy work and policy

education for the community—including social workers, such as Roberts, who are seeking guidance in an ever-changing climate.

"As social workers, we are called to fight social injustice, period," Roberts said. "Our call to action is to advocate for marginalized populations and meet people where they are. So now it's about understanding how we do that under the new legislation."

Policy in practice

The Ohio chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) held a training and released a 30-page guidebook in late February on navigating the "unprecedented change to social work" brought about by HB68. Their guidance (see sidebar) outlines everything from ethical concerns to documentation requirements to a decision chart for responding to subpoenas.

Harley Rubin, a second-year Master of Social Work student focusing on community practice, policy advocacy and health practice with the transgender and gender-diverse population, is the Mandel School's MSW student representative on the board of NASW of Ohio. In this role, and as vice president of equity and inclusion on the university's Graduate Student Council, he's worked on advocacy campaigns for a variety of causes, including in support of transgender rights.

Rubin, who is also doing a field practicum at University Hospitals focused on gender-affirming care and has presented at conferences on the topic, said he fears social workers will be discouraged from working with trans youth at all, or that they won't be open to having critical conversations surrounding gender exploration.

Dana Prince, PhD, an associate professor who specializes in the impacts and outcomes of sexual- and gender-minority youths in foster care, cited similar concerns of a “chill effect” in which practitioners are scared, confused or unaware of how to provide care to transgender, nonbinary and gender-nonconforming youth.

“What you're doing with these laws is putting in more barriers to mental healthcare, and you're targeting trans youth, which has a certain structural violence beneath it,” Prince said, citing the recent death of a nonbinary teen, Nex Benedict, in Oklahoma, days after they were beaten in a school bathroom. “But it's also putting in barriers for mental health practitioners who are just trying to do their jobs. Can you imagine the burden we are placing on already-overworked social workers by putting [the regulations of HB68] in place?”

But while Prince's and Rubin's concerns for social workers' responsibilities are vast, more than anything, they fear what legislation like HB68 would do for trans youth. Prince said she is confident trans youth are already internalizing the legislation, feeling their gender identity is “unsafe” to talk about.

In December, Rubin provided written testimony (a skill honed through his “Legislative and Political Processes” course at the Mandel School) to the Ohio Senate Government Oversight Committee. Rubin detailed his experiences transitioning as a teenager, including a suicide attempt at age 15 before he had access to gender-affirming care.

He is not alone. Nearly one in five transgender and nonbinary youth reported attempting suicide, and more than half considered it, according to the 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Mental Health by The Trevor Project. And, data from Prince's research team shows the rates are even higher among trans and nonbinary youth in foster care, who often end up in the system because of non-affirming home situations.

In addition, the vast majority of transgender youth experienced symptoms of anxiety and/or depression, the Trevor Project report stated. Among their worries: 93% of transgender and nonbinary youth said they are concerned about transgender people being denied access to gender-affirming medical care due to state or local laws.

In his testimony, Rubin cited a 2023 randomized clinical trial of 64 transgender and gender-diverse adults that found a significant decrease in depression and suicidality among those who were able to receive gender-affirming care immediately. “For youth who understand their identities early on,” Rubin wrote in his testimony, “delays in care, like those HB68 would cause, could be life-threatening.”



“For youth who understand their identities early on, delays in care, like those HB68 would cause, could be life-threatening.”

—Harley Rubin, in written testimony opposing Ohio House Bill 68

Ohio's bill in particular requires parental consent to receive mental health support for a “gender-related disorder,” which the NASW says does not have sound clinical criteria.

“We are already pathologizing trans youth by forcing them to have a mental health diagnosis in order to receive gender-affirming care. They're being forced to see themselves from a deficit perspective,” said PhD candidate **Braveheart Gillani**, whose research and advocacy focus on sexual and gender minorities and healthy masculinity development, along with issues of racial equity and social justice. “But what we need to see is the joy and resilience that exist in this community. As [author and

In the U.S. Trans Survey from 2022...

94%

of respondents who lived in a gender other than that assigned at birth reported being more satisfied with their quality of life

98%

of respondents receiving hormone therapy reported this treatment made them more satisfied with their life

47%

of respondents had considered moving to another state because of anti-trans legislation—with Ohio among the 10 states from which people had moved because of such laws

theorist] bell hooks noted, innovation and resilience happen in the margins—because those are the people who are oppressed. That's what's happening here.”

Expanding support

Gillani sees this in practice through his work on the board of the LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, where he works with Harris and Managing Director **Gulnar Feerasta (MNO '16, SAS '16)** on a variety of initiatives—including improving the research done at the center, advocating for appropriate and respectful compensation of queer research participants, and ensuring research results get disseminated openly back to the community.

For her part, Feerasta has been integral in increasing the programmatic efforts of the center for trans people. It's all about ensuring they're meeting the needs of their community and centering their experiences, she explained.

“Someone once said to me, ‘This is the LGBT Center, but I don't see anything for the ‘T;’ Feerasta recalled. “That was eye-opening for me because this person saw it through their lived experience, which I didn't have.”

In addition to resources, the center now offers Trans+, a three-hour, semiweekly meeting space for trans and

nonbinary individuals, as well as a variety of support groups for families and resources such as assistance navigating healthcare.

“As a community center, we feel it's very important to continue to hold and create that space for the community,” Feerasta said. “The center's role right now really is being a place of respite—a place where you can put your shoulders down, grab a cup of coffee, breathe and be you ... before you have to go back out into the world that wants to erase you.”

The center also focuses on helping parents and patients alike navigate the healthcare landscape as trans people and their families seek healthcare options.

Seeing trans youth become “their whole selves” at the center has been nothing short of enriching for Harris and Feerasta—and for the children's parents and family members, who may have struggled to gain support and resources, like Roberts once did.

“These parents are stepping up to say, ‘My kid is a whole other kid now that we've allowed them to acknowledge who they are,’” Harris said. “It doesn't mean every day is bells and whistles, but knowing what we can offer and how we can help these families means the world.”



An expanding global presence

International students are turning to the Mandel School to translate their passion for social work into action

By Daniel Robison

For Nigeria native **Ayowole Ajiboye**, volunteering with the United Nations to advance sustainable development goals in his home country sparked an interest in social work.

“I saw inequality firsthand—and the toll it could take on mental health,” he said. “It ignited a fire within me to be a catalyst for societal change and uplift those in need.”

As Ajiboye explored his educational options in social work, trusted friends passed along a recommendation: the Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University. Leaving his role as a market development officer for an agricultural company in Africa, he enrolled in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program.

Now a second-year student, he’s volunteered for food banks in Cleveland and is serving his field placement with Lead Safe Cleveland Coalition—providing lead-safe workforce training and education to property owners.



Ayowole Ajiboye

“It’s beautiful being able to really integrate what I’m learning in my classes and apply it to help people,” said Ajiboye. “My time here has helped me develop skills and empathy as a change agent.”

Global magnet

Ajiboye’s experience mirrors a prevailing trend at the Mandel School. In recent years, it has seen a 400% increase in international applications.

The number of countries from which applicants originate has nearly tripled—with a notable increase in

applications from regions such as East Africa (Kenya, Uganda), West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria), India and China.

To attract more interest from international students, the Mandel School has been using an array of targeted marketing tactics—such as culturally tailored communication on social media and other channels to a broad spectrum of countries. These efforts are paying off.

“We have become more intentional in terms of saying international students add to our overall learning experience,” said **Kimberly McFarlin (MNO ’05, SAS ’05)**, assistant dean of student services and career planning at the Mandel School. “We live in a global society, and having international perspectives creates a richer educational environment and community for everyone.”

A transformative path

Dexter Voisin, PhD, knows first-hand the opportunities and challenges that come with being an international student. Born and raised in Trinidad and Tobago, his journey pursuing a post-secondary path in the United

States has shaped his approach to welcoming students from abroad.

“The American dream looms large in the imagination of people all over the world, regardless of where they live,” said Voisin, the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Dean in Applied Social Sciences. “I was no exception to that, and I see that in our students.”

In recent years, Voisin spearheaded an effort to increase scholarships offered to international students, which “has been instrumental in increasing their numbers,” said Voisin. “It’s reduced the barrier to many of them attending.”

This surge in applications has consequently heightened competitiveness, positioning the school to achieve its highest selectivity rate to date.

“So we’re really bringing in the best of the best,” he said, “the *creme de la creme*.”

From admission to graduation

While the Mandel School has a legacy of welcoming students from abroad, its leadership recently sharpened its focus on enhancing support services for international students—including specialized orientation, visa assistance, and seminars focused on cultural adjustment, such as dressing for local weather conditions and learning English idioms to navigate language nuances.

“We provide students with comfortable spaces to ask any question as they’re learning and growing,” said McFarlin. “Then they carry that learning back to the classroom and into the field.”

The approach helped China native and second-year MSW student **Peijian Wang** overcome initial concerns about confronting cultural differences in the U.S.

“In many ways, the school encourages us to build meaningful connections with fellow students,” said Wang. “From the beginning, I felt safe, included, and that nobody judged me negatively for what I think or say—I can always be myself.”



Peijian Wang

Wang’s initial weeks at the Mandel School reaffirmed his decision to attend. Attracted to its small class sizes and history of high rankings, he saw it was an ideal place to become a therapist.

“I’m learning how to guide people to find their own power and strengths,” he said. “It provides a sense of fulfillment for me.”

Diverse destinations

While most international students at the Mandel School choose to pursue an MSW degree, there has been a notable increase in enrollment in the Master of Nonprofit Organizations (MNO) program in recent years.

Each degree is highly versatile and offers an array of career opportunities—including counseling, community work, research, policy development and advocacy, said **David B. Miller, PhD**, director of international education program and chair of the Master of Social Work program at the Mandel School.

“We prepare students, no matter where they’re from, to address a range of social issues relevant in many cultural contexts,” Miller said. “Social needs that we have here are present around the world, and international students come here to learn how to intervene effectively.”

Gamaliel Muhani—originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo and raised in Kenya—is seeking an MNO degree to prepare him for a career in social innovation to address “social needs in new ways.”

He credits the Mandel School’s emphasis on interactivity in classes and with professors “who are always available for us,” he said. It’s given him a new confidence to pursue entrepreneurial ventures post-graduation.

“I always tell my friends that I’ve already had an amazing return on my time here—and I haven’t even graduated yet,” he said. “I know I’ll carry this experience with me always.”

International applicants to the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences have soared in recent years

2021: 35 applicants from 8 countries

2022: 66 applications from 16 countries

2023: 236 applications from 26 countries

2024: 714 international applications from 37 countries*

*as of April 18, 2024



Connecting classroom and community

Classroom Without Walls welcomes social work professionals and offers pathway to continued education

By Lauren Marchaza

Like many school social workers, **Cassandra Klein** has an office stocked with snacks, clothing, socks, coats, gloves and other essentials students might reach for throughout the day. She even has weekend bags of food and produce to send home with students in need.

As a family support specialist at Cleveland’s Memorial School, Klein’s job is to provide wraparound services to students and their families so they have everything they need to succeed at school.

“I try to make sure families have resources so that education becomes their top priority,” Klein said.

Despite her ability to provide families with so many of the basics that help ensure their success, there was one thing she never felt comfortable offering.

“If I’m grieving, I feel like I have a pretty healthy way of dealing with it. But when other people grieve—especially like little kids—I’m just like, ‘Are you OK?’” Klein explained. “I’m just not that great at comforting others.”

So when she saw an email last winter from a colleague about the “Social Work with Death, Grief and Loss” course offered through a new program at Case Western Reserve University’s Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, she saw an opportunity to learn.

“I’d like to learn about grief and loss,” she recalled thinking. “Maybe this will help give me a little more insight.”

The experience also gave her the chance to entertain another idea she had: earning her master’s degree.

As it turned out, this new program—Classroom Without Walls—was designed to spur social workers like Klein to pursue both.

The Mandel School launched the program for two purposes: to create transformative learning experiences for both students and community learners—social work professionals with bachelor’s degrees who have worked in human services—and to encourage social work professionals to further their careers by enrolling in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program. Community learners, who hail from various Cleveland organizations, learn alongside traditional MSW graduate students, bringing real-life experiences to the class.

To remove barriers to class participation, some of the community learners receive a \$1,000 stipend and can enroll tuition-free for up to three classes—providing them increased access to advanced education and a pathway toward a Mandel School degree.

“Access to quality education remains one of the most powerful forces that promote equity in America,” said Dean **Dexter Voisin, PhD**, who has pioneered the program. “Classroom Without Walls promotes educational equity, inclusive excellence and collaborative learning.”



“Classroom Without Walls is a great opportunity for shared learning, to show individuals in the community that the citadel of Case Western Reserve—when you peek behind the curtain—has so much to offer. And that you should not be afraid of taking the opportunity to come inside and learn.”

—David B. Miller, PhD

Start of something good

When **David B. Miller, PhD**, director of international education program and chair of the Master of Social Work program, heard the idea for Classroom Without Walls last year, he knew it would be a perfect fit for the Mandel School.

“Dean Voisin really wanted to open up the classroom to the community,” he said. “The Mandel School has a long history of being community-oriented. Classroom Without Walls helps us build on that.”

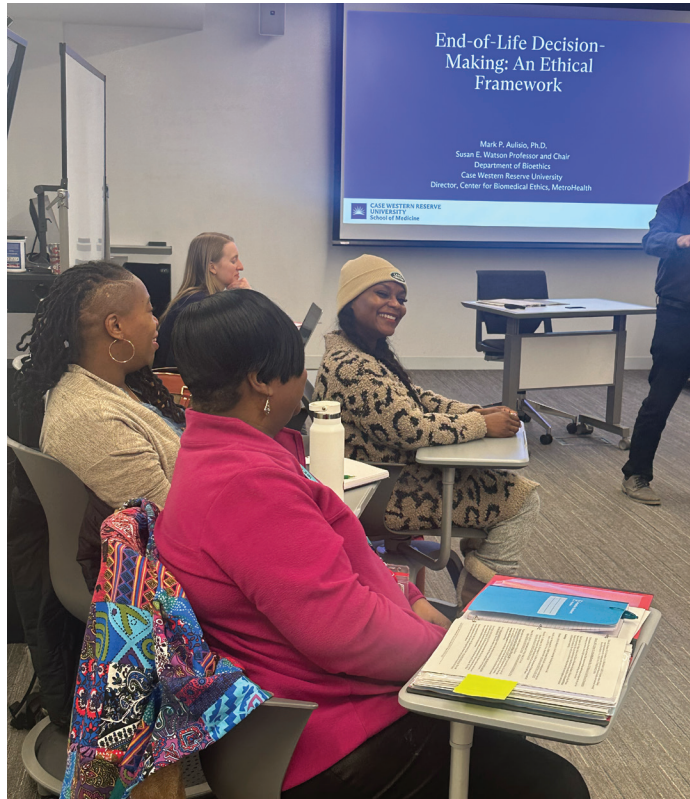
First, Miller and Voisin needed to decide on a class to pilot for the program. They knew they had to find a relatable topic that would resonate with students and community learners alike.

They settled on death, grief and loss.

“It’s [a topic] that many people could understand and work with,” said Miller, who

has taught a course on the subject for many years and now teaches the Classroom Without Walls pilot course. “I can guarantee you there’s nothing like writing your own obituary or drawing a picture of what you think death looks like. We are dealing with a subject that is very universal to everyone.”

The Mandel School began recruiting community learners to enroll in the course and, before long, about 30 had applied. Ultimately, the class ended up with seven traditional MSW students and 10 community learners. That includes Yvonne Pointer, a Cleveland-based anti-violence activist, author, motivational speaker, philanthropist and member of the Ohio Women’s Hall of Fame. With her vast experience in community work and grief support, Miller invited her to be a “community connector” in the class.



From foreground to background: Arlene James, Krista Lumpkins-Howard, Kevinee Gilmore, all community learners, and Erin Grohe, MSW student, listen in on a discussion about grief and loss. (Photo courtesy of David B. Miller)

It's this unique combination of students, Miller said, that creates a special dynamic unlike any other found on campus.

"They bring a richness to the class," he said. "Our [traditional] students get to see, understand and hear from professionals in the field who are dealing with adolescents, adults and older adults."

Conversely, he explained, the community learners get a sense of what it's like to pursue graduate degrees and apply their newfound knowledge—in real time—in their professional and personal lives.

"The program has impacted my life both personally and professionally," said community learner **Arlene James**, who works with emancipated foster youth at Cuyahoga Community College. "The in-class exercises, reflection papers, research on various topics, presenters and student presentations have been instrumental in my learning experience," she continued, and noted that the content of the course has been so intriguing, the group often finds themselves talking long after class has ended.

"There's a lot of give and take about what's going on, and those 'aha' moments that really enrich everyone's

learning," said Miller. "There's just this energy, and they take it with them."

Mutual learning

Although the original plan was to pilot only one course, Voisin saw an opportunity to incorporate another, brand-new course that he believed—because of both its content and format—would have broad appeal.

"Operationalizing Antiracism for Everyday Impact" is a course that aims to empower participants with tools, techniques and practices to effectively counter racism. Instead of being grounded in theory alone, this course helps students take action against racism in practical ways.

"What we want to see is greater intentionality around antiracist practice leading to the disruption of racism in its many, many forms," said **Mark Joseph, PhD**, the Leona Bevis/Marguerite Haynam Professor in Community Development, "whether that be internalized inside of us, interpersonal, institutional or systemic."

Although there are lots of conversations about racism and white supremacy today, there are far fewer discussions about the everyday tools and strategies needed to fight it, explained Assistant Professor **Jenny King**, who co-teaches the course alongside Joseph and PhD candidate **Braveheart Gillani**.



Mark Joseph



Jenny King



Braveheart Gillani

The unique hybrid, high-flex format of the course—which allows students to attend classes virtually or in person—was likely a draw for its 24 students, five of whom are community learners.

"The idea was to make it as accessible for as many different types of students as possible," said King. "There's a lot happening that makes it really nice to have a team of the three of us to manage the physical classroom, the online classroom, the technology...all of those different pieces."

Much like the subject of death, grief and loss, countering everyday racism is one that speaks to many and is applicable to all. That's been evident to King, who feels energized by the synergy of the classroom discussions.

"[The students] come from all different areas of life and work and practice," said King. "We see the ripple effect of what the students are taking from the course, integrating into their own lives and then taking into their spheres of influence so into their work and their practices in their communities."

Gwendolyn Garth, a community learner, activist and artist, has found value beyond the content of the course. "It was also a place of healing," she said. "This class was a kind of medicine for me! The environment created was safe and I felt free to explore my own biases—and to be real in sharing them."

The class participants learn from each other, but they're not the only ones learning in the classroom. Gillani has found lessons in his role as one of the course's instructors. "To be able to teach with two experienced, seasoned, grounded faculty members in such an intimate way—this is



Bryan Jung, a MSW student (left), and Yvonne Pointer, a community consultant (right), participate in discussion during one of the Classroom Without Walls pilot courses. (Photo courtesy of David B. Miller)

the highlight of my PhD education," he said. "This is the deepest learning experience I've had so far."

King agreed. "There's a lot of learning from one another that's happening in the course," she said, "and that has been a really beautiful thing to see."

Planning for the future

As the spring semester wraps up, Miller, Voisin and other faculty are planning next steps for Classroom Without Walls—possibly for as soon as the summer. They're considering courses that are part of the generalist foundation for all MSW students, such as social welfare policy and human development. Some classes may even be offered online to better

accommodate working professionals.

"I hope the Classroom Without Walls model will inspire other schools of social work to do the same," said Voisin. "The core of this program taps into our shared mission of prompting a more equitable society."

As more students enroll in the program, Voisin hopes community learners will consider themselves part of the Mandel School and, ultimately, choose to pursue graduate degrees.

Miller hopes they'll become ambassadors for the Mandel School as well.

"Classroom Without Walls is a great opportunity for shared learning," Miller said, "to show individuals in the community that the citadel of Case Western Reserve—when you peek behind the curtain—has so much to offer. And that you should not be afraid of taking the opportunity to come inside and learn."

Alumni corner

A message from the president of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences Alumni Association

Dear Mandel School alumni and friends,

Every ending ushers in a new and exciting beginning, overflowing with possibilities.

As we close another semester—one that has been full of hustle and bustle for all who are associated with the Mandel School—I write to you with anticipation of possibilities on the horizon. Commencement approaches and, with it, congratulatory laughter and hugs, the start of new careers or promotions, smiles of success and contentment about program development, milestones met, and the emergence of new relationships birthed from selfless contributions of time, talent and financial resources.

This spring brings the end of my second term as board president of the Mandel School's alumni association. It feels like these past four years have flown by. Under my leadership, the board:

- worked to ensure the growth and sustainability of our alumni network as a reliable resource to both alumni and students;
- partnered with Dean Dexter Voisin to identify and focus on three goals aligning with his priorities of equity, innovation and transformation;
- developed our own diversity statement and recognized alumni who hadn't been honored before;
- improved our programming by offering virtual and hybrid events for alumni and students all over the nation to connect; and
- helped enroll top prospective students who are delivering positive changes to society.

I encourage you to get more involved with the Mandel School to take advantage of the alumni benefits available to you. If you haven't been getting recent school emails, please register a personal email address via the QR code on p. 24 to receive *Inside the Action*, a monthly e-newsletter chock-full of news, information about in-person and virtual events, career opportunities and support, such as how to join the Alumni Career Network.

As I close out my tenure, I am so thankful to the executive committee of the board and the staff at the school. The hard work of both groups made my job "doable" on every level. I am also grateful to have served with so many amazingly dedicated board members who bolster the Mandel School community in so many ways. I hope that alumni will consider serving on the board at some point, or at least always support our efforts to find new and exciting ways to be of service to you all.

Thank you for the honor and opportunity to serve you.



Adrienne Y. Hatten, PhD (MNO '96)

Mandel School Alumni Association Board President

Adrienne Y. Hatten

2023-2024 Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences Alumni Association Board

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 Siyue "Linda" Xu (SAS '20)

A new face



Aimee Bell

Aimee Bell joined the Mandel School as the associate dean of development and external relations last winter. With more than 15 years of experience in alumni and constituent relations, communications and fundraising—particularly in higher education—Bell is ready to begin building relationships with alumni and donors who help make the work of the Mandel School possible.

Words of wisdom

Alumna returns to campus to offer advice for the Class of 2024

Hannah Griswold (MNO '93) learned to give back from a young age.

The daughter of a bishop in the Episcopal Church, she watched her parents lead lives of service, working "in the trenches" to help people from their hometown of Philadelphia to communities around the world.

When it came time to decide what she would do after college, Griswold didn't think twice before pursuing a career that would allow her to do the same thing: nonprofit management.

"That care and passion for helping was instilled in me from childhood," she said, "so it felt like a natural next step."

While earning her bachelor's degree at Kenyon College, Griswold's roommate told her about a new nonprofit management program at Case Western Reserve University.

"It seemed like the perfect fit—the exact next step to get out in the world," she said, "and make a difference." Griswold enrolled at Case Western Reserve in the fall of 1991 and, this spring, will return to her alma mater to speak at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences' diploma ceremony.



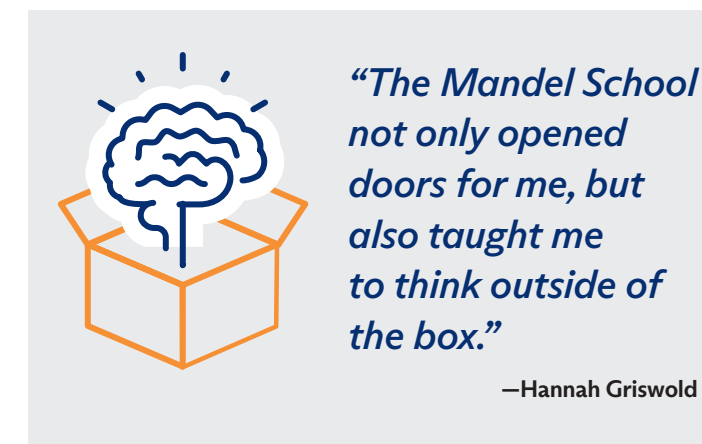
Hannah Griswold

"The Mandel School not only opened doors for me," said Griswold, "but also taught me to think outside of the box. I was able to dream up innovative programs to attract new audiences—and I wasn't afraid to just pick up the phone and call donors."

Today, Griswold lives in West Palm Beach, Florida, where she is the special projects coordinator for a new cultural arts center in the area, The Innovate. When she returns to Cleveland in May for the commencement speech, she will expand upon two pieces of advice that continue to serve her in her career.

"First, put aside your ego and step out of your fear and discomfort. You'll never know what someone might be able to offer if you don't ask," she said. "Second, put yourself in someone else's shoes. You get to give others the opportunity to make a difference. That is such a gift."

—Carey Skinner Moss



At the Mandel School, Griswold felt empowered by her professors and discovered a knack for fundraising. After graduating, she helped establish a civic engagement nonprofit, Imagine Chicago, before moving to New York City to work for major cultural organizations, including the New York Public Library, Carnegie Hall and the American School of Ballet.

Class notes

Reported to the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences between Sept. 9, 2023, and Feb. 21, 2024.



Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, PhD (SAS '71), created the Wilma Peebles-Wilkins Endowed Scholarship for Infant and Young Child Well-Being

at the Mandel School (see p. 11).

Peebles-Wilkins has been a stalwart philanthropic partner at the Mandel School for over 40 years, providing critical annual support, helping to enhance the Student Emergency Fund and scholarships.



Danny R. Williams (MNO '04) was sworn in as the Cleveland Heights city administrator.

Jennifer Johnson (SAS '07) is the executive director of Cleveland's Canopy Child Advocacy Center, which provides evaluation and court resources to ensure speedy investigations for maltreated children in Cuyahoga County.



Alesha Washington (MNO '07), president and CEO of the Seattle Foundation since 2022, presented "Next Gen Philanthropy" to

alumni and friends at the Mandel School in November during Nonprofit Awareness Month.

Jenny Komos Hartmann (SAS '12) is earning a PhD in social work from Columbia University in New York City.



Jamie Cage, PhD (GRS '17, social welfare), was promoted to associate professor with tenure at Virginia Commonwealth

University School of Social Work.



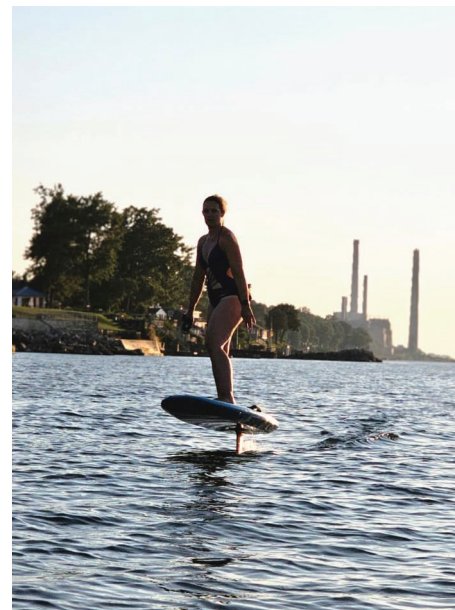
Chelsea Laliberte Barnes (SAS '18), in response to her brother's unintentional overdose death, worked with her parents to found

Live4Lali, which provides harm reduction and peer support for those struggling with substance use disorder. She is also chief operating officer of Wolf Pack, a behavioral health organization.



Dena Cipriano (MNO '19) was recently featured in *Foiling*, a Portugal-based magazine, for her role in advancing the sport of efoiling, which

is hydrofoil surfboarding powered by electricity (see photo below). She owns and operates the only woman-owned efoil affiliate in the world. Cipriano is the manager of communications, brand and reputation at Materion, a metal supplier in Mayfield Heights, Ohio, where she also co-leads ELEVATE, an employee resource group dedicated to advancing women at the company.



Share your updates and email address:



In memoriam

Death notices reported to the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences between Sept. 9, 2023, and Feb. 21, 2024.

Del Nord (SAS '45) of Brookline, Massachusetts, died March 11, 2023. Nord maintained a private practice as a psychotherapist with adolescents and adults from 1953 until 2020. She also completed some doctoral work in Egyptology at University of Chicago during the 1960s, focusing her research on the status of women in Old Kingdom Egypt.

Thomas O. "Tim" Mazanetz (SAS '61) of Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, died Sept. 16. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Social Work from University of Wisconsin in 1959. He then came to the Mandel School and worked at Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin after graduating.

Shirley Lusher Finck (CLC '66, SAS '67) of Atlanta died Aug. 26. She enjoyed a long career as a social worker in Atlanta.

Mary M. Boenke (SAS '69) of Roanoke, Virginia, died March 29, 2023. A longtime civil rights activist, Boenke wrote "Our Trans Children," which, with more than 65,000 copies in print, became one of the most published gender education pamphlets on the topic. In 1999, she edited *Trans Forming Families: Real Stories About Transgendered Love Ones* with an introduction by trans activist Jessica Xavier.

Darleen Joan Lindstrom (GRS '77, anthropology; GRS '86, social welfare) of Santa Fe, New Mexico, died Dec. 29. She dedicated most of her career to serving those with early life trauma and researching the efficacy of spiritual experiences relative to trauma recovery.

Deborah Squires Goeble (SAS '79) of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, died Jan. 9. Throughout her career as a social worker, Goeble worked in emergency crisis intervention, marriage and family therapy, and independent social work and was a consultant for the Anti-Defamation League.

Judith M. Sogg (SAS '81) of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, died Nov. 27. Following graduation, Sogg worked as a bereavement counselor at Jewish Family Service Association of Cleveland.

Linda Marie Wilson (SAS '86) of Twinsburg, Ohio, died April 2, 2023. She worked as a licensed clinical social worker for many years at Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare System in Northfield and as a hypnotherapist in her own private practice.

Julie Ann Rittenhouse (SAS '87) of South Bend, Indiana, died Oct. 11. She participated in the formation of the Cleveland Housing Network and was board chair of Cleveland Mental Health Services, which became FrontLine Service. Rittenhouse was also board chair of the Senior Transportation Connection, a Cleveland nonprofit that helps transport seniors and people with disabilities. As the social concerns chair of the Notre Dame Club of Cleveland, Rittenhouse contributed decades of service, which was memorialized in

2001 when the club voted to honor her as the first woman to receive "The Man of the Year" award.

Donald Payne (SAS '88) of Strongsville, Ohio, died July 1. Before becoming a social worker, Payne earned bachelor's and master's degrees from The Juilliard School as well as a Doctor of Musical Arts from the Eastman School of Music. He came to Case Western Reserve University in 1961 to serve as a professor of music, concert pianist and chamber musician until 1987. The following year, he graduated with his Master of Science in Social Administration and became a licensed social worker. He volunteered for more than six decades in the fields of literacy, mental health and child welfare.

Helen Menke, a 20-year Mandel School employee, died Dec. 4. Menke worked as a department assistant to the Master of Science in Social Administration program's admissions office. In 2005, she was honored with the B. Lenora Benson Award of Excellence and, the following year, she became the department assistant for the PhD in Social Welfare program, where she stayed until retiring in 2016.

Empowering families through support

Family Success Network could transform Ohio's child welfare system

Calling child protective services (CPS) is often considered to be a last resort. But in reality, more than 37% of children in the U.S. experience a CPS investigation as a result of alleged or suspected maltreatment.

Sometimes, these investigations lead to placement in the foster care system, which can lead to trauma for children and families alike. In Ohio alone, more than 16,000 children reside in foster care—making the state fifth in the nation.

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences faculty members **Nancy Rolock, PhD**, Henry L. Zucker Professor in Social Work Practice, and Associate Professor **David Crampton, PhD**, are part of a multi-county effort aiming to change that.

In 2019—with the support of the Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau and the Community Collaborations to Strengthen and Preserve Families grant—the Ohio Children's Trust Fund collaborated with community partners to launch the Family Success Network (FSN) in three counties in northeast Ohio: Trumbull, Mahoning and Columbiana.

The FSN is designed to strengthen and support families based on their unique needs, with the goal being to prevent child maltreatment—and subsequent referrals into foster care—by providing families with services such as parenting education and support, financial literacy, and basic life skills.

"Removing a child from their home and putting them in foster care is itself traumatic," said Crampton. "Sometimes it's required to make sure the child is



Nancy Rolock



David Crampton

safe, but our hope is that [the program] helps them avoid a crisis that might lead to a foster care placement."

The evaluation of FSN is a collaborative effort among Crampton and Rolock as well as Michelle Johnson-Motoyama, PhD, at Ohio State University College of Social Work and Deborah Moon, PhD, at University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. As evaluators, they meet regularly with staff, review data to determine the program's effectiveness and scalability, and refine the program, making adjustments for different

communities as the program expands into other counties.

One key to the success of the program, they said, is the inclusion of trained family coaches—many of whom have personal experiences that inform their work—who deliver services to families and their children through sessions intended to improve behaviors.

"They meet their clients where they are," said Rolock. "It really helps families see that these are people who are genuinely interested in helping them."

Another key to the program's success: It's completely voluntary—a notable difference from the mandated participation of families involved with CPS.

"So we are not saying to families, 'This is what we think is best for you,'" Rolock explained. "Families are choosing what they think is best, and I think that's really the way we should be moving as a society to help families in need."

This project was funded by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under grant #90CA1867. The contents of this article are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children's Bureau.

Refer someone to the Family Success Network for assistance:



Mark your calendars for Nov. 14–17

Case Western Reserve University's 2024 Homecoming and Reunion Weekend

Join the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences on Nov. 15, for our signature Alumni Celebration, including inspirational remarks from alumni award recipients and an update from Dean Dexter Voisin.

On Nov. 16, earn continuing education credits, among other engaging activities.

Keep an eye on case.edu/socialwork/homecoming for event details and registration.

Interested in volunteering?

The Mandel School needs reunion class advocates for graduation years ending in four and nine.

Email mandelschoolevents@case.edu to learn more.



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