

WINTER 2025

Action

The Magazine of the Mandel School

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Targeting trauma

The Center on Trauma and Adversity takes a new approach
to nurture healing and resilience



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Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel
School of Applied Social Sciences

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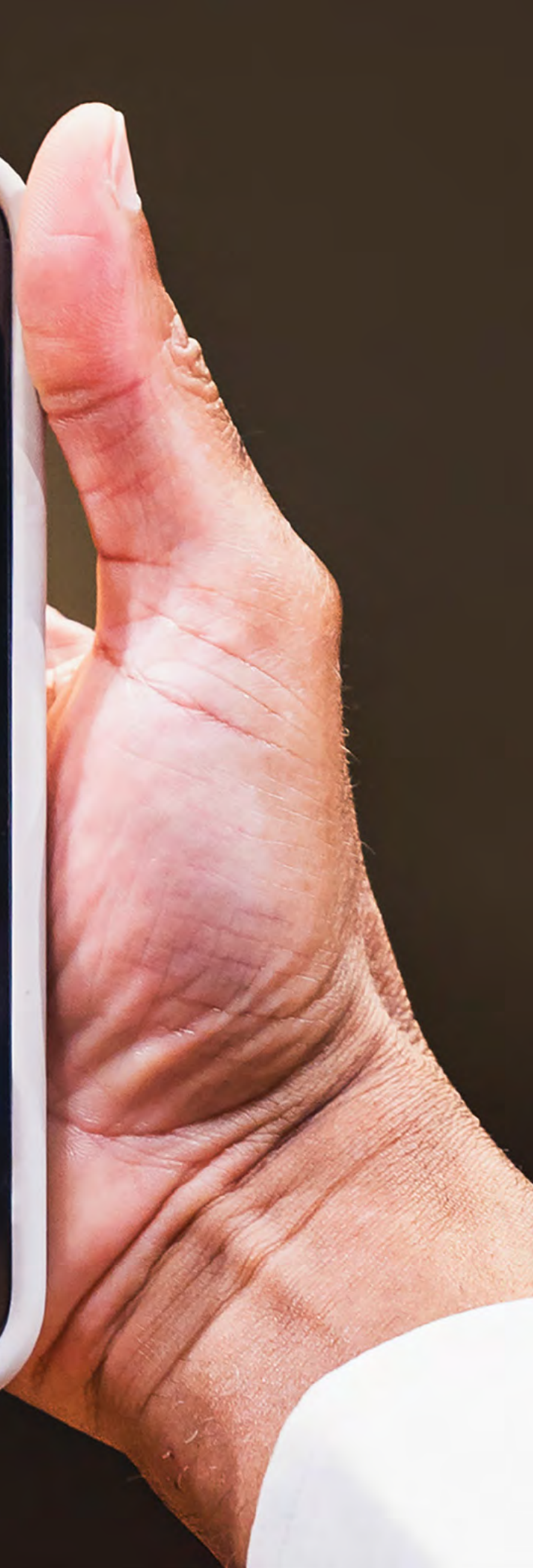
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From the Dean

Dear Mandel School alumni and friends,

Driven by our commitment to **equity, innovation and transformation**, I am excited to share with you the latest edition of *Action*, showcasing recent updates, research achievements and community impact from the Mandel School.

In this issue's cover story, you can read how Professor **Megan Holmes, PhD**, Associate Professor **Laura Voith, PhD**, and others in our Center on Trauma and Adversity are advancing trauma-informed education by preparing future social workers to address the complex needs of those affected by trauma—an essential part of our mission to foster equity and care in every setting (p. 12).

The opioid epidemic continues to negatively affect millions of American individuals, families and communities. Distinguished University Professor **Dan Flannery, PhD**, has conducted an important study on opioid overdoses among those using drugs when they're alone. The results provide critical insights for work addressing the ongoing epidemic (p. 9).

This issue also takes a deep dive into the Louis Stokes Fellowship in Community Development program, which honors the late Louis Stokes, a trailblazer who was the first Black congressman from Ohio. He served in Congress for 15 terms and later became a Distinguished Community Professor at the Mandel School. The program fosters emerging leaders interested in trailblazing their own paths in urban policy, housing, economic equity and social justice to transform communities (p. 18).

I am also delighted to welcome the new chair of our Visiting Committee, **Susan LaPine**, who will lead our outstanding committee members to help elevate our school's visibility, increase philanthropy and drive student enrollment. (Read about the Visiting Committee on p. 30.)

I invite you to explore this edition of *Action*, learn more and become engaged with our vibrant community throughout the year.

In service,

Dexter R. Voisin

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel
Dean in Applied Social Sciences

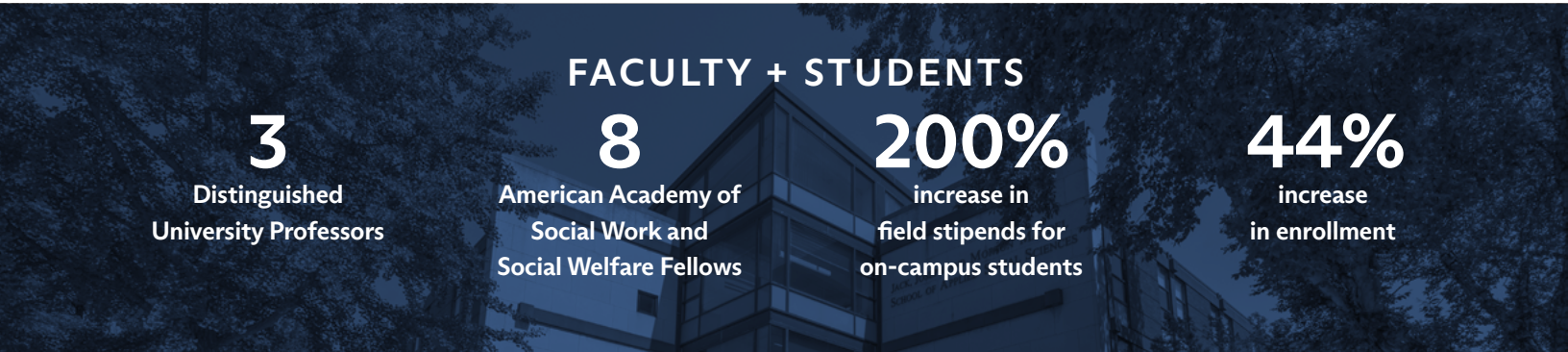
President, National Association of Deans and Directors



Mandel School on the rise

The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences has celebrated one success after another, whether it's in the area of program development, students and faculty, fundraising or new partnerships.

Take a look at a few of our many accomplishments over the past three years.



FACULTY + STUDENTS

3

Distinguished University Professors

8

American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare Fellows

200%

increase in field stipends for on-campus students

44%

increase in enrollment

PARTNERS + PROGRAMS

6

new partnerships with area service providers

- Catholic Charities
- Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- FrontLine Service
- Murtis Taylor Human Services
- Ohio GuideStone
- Wingspan Care Group

2

new academic programs

- Classroom Without Walls initiative
- Professional Certificate in Nonprofit Fundraising

FUNDRAISING

11x more

raised for Day of Giving 2024 (from \$6,000 to \$68,000)

Nearly 3x

higher donor participation

\$5 million

from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation to support student scholarships

\$10 million+

raised for First Year Cleveland since it joined the Mandel School

91%

increase in research grant awards

600%

increase in donor pledges since 2022

Experts in the spotlight

Mandel School faculty and researchers—widely recognized for their expertise in social work, nonprofit leadership and mental health—are often sought by media outlets for their thoughts on current issues. Here are some of their recent insights.



“The problem is, we become conditioned early on to stop listening to our bodies. A cascade of changes happen in the body when the stress response is activated in a sustained way. When the dose is too big, and there’s not a clear beginning or end, that causes wear and tear on the body.”

—**Jennifer King, DSW**, assistant professor of social work, to *TIME* about how stress physically impacts the body



A lot of the training over the last couple decades was really focused on foreign terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al-Qaeda. Jan. 6 really changed the landscape across the country in terms of this topic.”



—**Ryan McMaster**, research data manager at the Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education, to local NPR affiliate *ideastream* on Ohio groups working to prevent extremist violence



“Find these children early in public schools and help them then and there. [...] [K]ids who grow up in poverty—or who are referred to child protective services—are significantly more likely to become victims of violence when they become teenagers.”

—**Laura Voith, PhD**, associate professor, writing in *Juvenile Justice* about her study on the effectiveness of school interventions on reducing youth violence



[The announcement] brings attention to the issue, and if it gets people talking about [gun violence] again, and how we can come to some common ground—and take steps that don’t violate an individual’s right to have access to firearms—we should be pressing hard to do this at every turn.”



—**Daniel Flannery, PhD**, the Semi J. and Ruth W. Begun Professor, to *Spectrum News 1* about U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy’s declaration of gun violence as a public health crisis



These families deserve our compassion, dedication and support. By investing in diaper banks and supporting expanded Medicaid coverage, we can all help ensure babies receive this most basic need.”



—**Angela Newman-White**, executive director of First Year Cleveland, writing as a guest columnist for *cleveland.com* about how donations support parents with low incomes in Cleveland

Equity. Innovation. Transformation.

These three core values drive the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. Read on to learn how faculty, students and alumni from the Mandel School are demonstrating these ideals through their impactful work.

EQUITY

Shaping the lives of the chronically homeless

Doctoral candidate **Meagan Ray-Novak** set out to conduct a study that would help elucidate intersections of race and gender in chronic homelessness. But her work eventually revealed an unexpected theme: the profound impact of caretaking for loved ones.



Led by Ray-Novak, who is also a research associate at the Mandel School's Center on Poverty and Community Development, the study involved 40 in-depth interviews with people experiencing chronic homelessness and captured their firsthand experiences, including caregiving responsibilities and personal losses.

Researchers used different methods to analyze these firsthand accounts, looking for patterns that could point to larger issues in society. Many participants prioritized relationships with loved ones, even when those relationships led to personal instability, such as job-loss or eviction. Emotional connectedness was often more important than securing stable housing.

"We found that this story is really about love and caretaking," Ray-Novak said. "Many individuals in our study made sacrifices—losing homes, jobs and financial security—to take care of loved ones during moments of crisis."

The research, she said, offers a foundation for future interventions that account for the relational and identity-based needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, potentially reshaping how services address housing insecurity.

INNOVATION

A "space for discovery"

For the educators behind Cleveland's Math Corps program, math is much more than just a school subject. It's a new way to see the world, said **Francisca García-Cobián Richter, PhD**, the Math Corps Cleveland program director.



"Math is just a medium," said García-Cobián Richter, who is also an associate professor of social work, draws on her background in analyzing social interventions and academic outcomes for students. "It's just a way by which young people come together to support each other and see and realize their own greatness."

Math Corps, which was started in Detroit in 1992, is a combination of an extracurricular math club, a



mentoring program and tutoring. Open to Greater Cleveland students in grades 7 to 12, it pairs college students and instructors to work with and mentor high school students, while high school students help out younger students. That structure builds camaraderie and gives older students leadership experience, García-Cobián Richter said. Students meet at Case Western Reserve University every Saturday morning, starting out with breakfast and games, then break into groups for tutoring.

“It’s not just for children who have a very positive or a very negative relationship with math,” García-Cobián Richter said. “We’re not expecting every child to love STEM. It is more than that. It’s providing that space for discovery of themselves.”

Math Corps aims to teach math differently than it’s taught in schools, García-Cobián Richter said. Instructors let students dictate the pace of their learning, hoping to inspire curiosity about concepts they may not get to in school.

“It is a family,” García-Cobián Richter said. “It’s really a community.”



TRANSFORMATION

Listening for change

Alarmed by a rise in gun violence in their community, three mothers of Euclid, a city just outside of Cleveland, decided to take action by forming the Hope Task Force. They recently hosted three listening sessions—led by two representatives from the Mandel School.



Mark Chupp, PhD (GRS '03, social welfare), associate professor and founding director of the Community Innovation Network (CIN), co-led the three November sessions with **Gloria Craig (SAS '21)**, a facilitator for CIN.

Their work is part of the Mandel School’s goal to assist the local community in developing policy proposals and action plans based on the community’s own ideas. Nearly 140 people attended three sessions at the Euclid Public Library, where they shared their concerns and experiences with guns and gun violence—some especially tragic.

But they also identified existing assets and qualities in the community that promote safety. “Through our structured dialogue process, facilitated by our MSW students in small groups, every person was able to share personally how gun violence has impacted them,” Chupp said. “This cultivated deep listening and mutual understanding among people with very divergent experiences.”

Chupp noted he was pleased with the range of participants as well as the outcomes: In written evaluations, more than 90% reported they were more motivated or energized to address community safety. For example, Kandace Jones, who has lived in Euclid for more than 40 years, emphasized the need for community-building efforts, especially with youth.

Chupp, Craig and the CIN team are analyzing the input from the listening sessions to identify topics that will be explored in the next phase of the process. CIN will take the first three months of 2025 to share findings, educate the community on best practices and introduce local resources for promoting safety. This will lead to a visioning and strategy session in May, Chupp said, that will be the basis of an action plan for the community to improve safety in Euclid.

Racking up the recognitions

Take a look at some of the honors, awards and promotions granted to our faculty and students over the last several months.



Ayowole Samuel Ajiboye

Sylvia Hernandez (SAS '24) and third-year Master of Social Work student **Ayowole Samuel Ajiboye** received the Unity Banquet Scholarship Award from Case Western

Reserve University, which celebrates the academic achievements of underrepresented and diverse students. Additionally, Ajiboye was honored with the Outstanding Community Service Award at CWRU's Dr. Dorothy Pijan Student Leadership Awards.

Reserve University that works on engineering, growing and commercializing “live” replacement joints to treat this osteoarthritis.



Dean **Dexter Voisin, PhD**, was named a Social Work Pioneer by the National Association of Social Workers Foundation. The award is among

the highest honors in the social work profession, granted to a select few who have made significant and innovative contributions to human services.



Laura Voith, PhD, associate professor, was nominated as a member of the Diversity Scholars Network, a scholarly community at

University of Michigan's National Center for Institutional Diversity that aims to improve understanding of historical and contemporary social issues related to identity, difference, culture, representation, power, oppression and inequality as they occur and affect individuals, groups, communities and institutions.



Jazmin Long (MNO '15, SAS '15), adjunct instructor and president and CEO of Birthing Beautiful Communities, will receive the YWCA

Women of Achievement Award, which is given to Northeast Ohio women who have achieved extraordinary accomplishments through career success, community service, leadership, mentoring and dedication to YWCA's mission of eliminating racism and empowering women.

Robert Fischer, PhD, was promoted from associate to full professor and became the Grace Longwell Coyle Professor in Civil Society. **Sharon Milligan, PhD**, became the Grace Longwell Coyle Associate Professor in Social Work.



David B. Miller, PhD, associate professor, was named equity officer for OMEGA: Orchestrating Multifaceted

Engineering for Growing Artificial



From left: Sharon Milligan, Dexter Voisin and Rob Fischer pose for a photo during Homecoming and Reunion Weekend in November.

Preventing tragedy

Researchers reveal new risks for opioid users

In Cuyahoga County, the stark reality of the opioid crisis is that most drug overdose victims die alone, with no one nearby to help.

A recent study, led by researchers at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences and done in partnership with Cuyahoga County, highlights the critical need for “targeted harm-reduction strategies,” which include the distribution of Naloxone (an opioid antagonist that can reverse the effects of an overdose) and increasing the availability of medication-assisted treatment options and fentanyl test strips.

Focusing on Northeast Ohio, where the opioid epidemic continues to claim lives at nearly twice the national average (see sidebar), researchers used data from the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner’s Office to examine overdose deaths between 2016 and 2020, and looked specifically at people who overdosed while using drugs alone.

Putting overdose deaths in perspective*

Unintentional overdose deaths per 100,000 residents

Cuyahoga County:	U.S.:
54	28

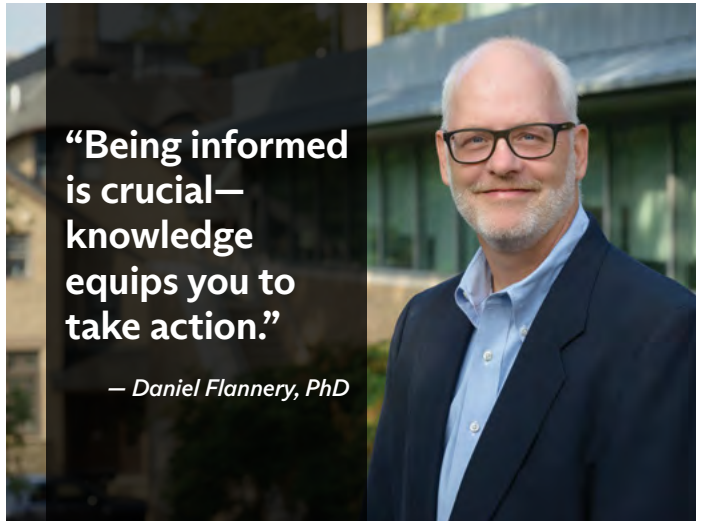
Cuyahoga County overdose deaths were:

94.9%	72.2%	71.3%	35 to 64
non-Hispanic	white	male	years old

More than **60%** of victims were pronounced dead at the scene

Naloxone administered in just **28.6%** of the cases

*2016–2020



“Being informed is crucial—knowledge equips you to take action.”

— Daniel Flannery, PhD

Their findings, which were published by the National Institutes of Health’s National Library of Medicine, revealed that a staggering 75% of overdose victims were using drugs alone—a behavior strongly associated with increased mortality. Key findings indicate that individuals using drugs alone were more likely to be at home and less likely to receive life-saving interventions such as naloxone, said **Daniel Flannery, PhD**, the Dr. Semi J. and Ruth Begun Professor and director of the Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education at the Mandel School.

“Being informed is crucial—knowledge equips you to take action,” Flannery said. “It’s about reviving someone in need and, if that’s not possible, contacting emergency services immediately. The chances of a fatal outcome significantly increase when there’s no one around to help.”

New policies and community efforts must prioritize reaching individuals at risk of using alone to curb the devastating impact of the opioid crisis, said **Vaishali Deo, MD**, research associate at the Begun Center and co-principal investigator in the research.

“Our findings underscore the urgent need for innovative harm-reduction strategies aimed at those most vulnerable: those using drugs alone,” Deo said. “Interventions must focus on reducing isolation and improving access to emergency medical care to prevent further loss of life.”

—Colin McEwen

One question

Action asked students at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Sciences what their favorite course has been so far. Here's what they had to say.



Nonprofit Revenue Planning and Development:

“It provided applicable content for establishing and sustaining funding for the nonprofit sector. I appreciated that the class offered an in-depth collaborative case study of Cleveland Public Theatre to ground our learning experience.”

—*Erin Grohe, MSW/MNO with a concentration in health*

“What has been your favorite course so far?”

”



Community Theory and Practice:

“I enjoy seeing the different levels of social workers engage with a population, and this course expanded my understanding of macro and mezzo work. I now want to do more at the community level, work more with legislation that impacts my community and work in grassroots organizations.”

—*Deja Wilson, MSW with a concentration in children, youth and families*



Theory/Practice Approaches in Direct Practice Social Work:

“Having not studied psychology as an undergraduate student, the course felt very overwhelming at first. But Amy Korsch-Williams facilitated excellent discussion topics and ideas that enabled me to think outside the box about direct practice. Each class with her brought its own exciting energy.”

—*Kenny Wallace, MSW with a focus in adult mental health*



Introduction to Neuroscience in Social Work Practice:

“It has been fun, incredibly informative and has exposed me to neuroscience in a way that has inspired me. I am deeply fascinated by the role the brain plays in our field. Learning more about its functions and relationship with trauma has been an excellent building block for other classes.”

—*Carlie Freeman, MSW with a concentration in adult mental health*



Trauma Informed Social Work Practice with Adults:

“I loved our reading materials on trauma and expressive therapies. I also enjoyed our assignments, like recording a podcast episode with one of my classmates on working with undocumented immigrants who have experienced sexual violence.”

—*Valeria Stutz, MSW with a concentration in mental health with children and adolescents and a certificate in trauma-informed practice*



Collaborative Practice:

“It helps to collaborate with students from [nursing, dental and medical] backgrounds and helps to get ideas from other broader perspectives. Bringing together people who have specialized expertise in other areas to collaborate with social workers helps ensure that [our] clients get the best possible care and support they need.”

—*Katie Afele, MSW with a focus on children, youth and families*



Individual and Family Theory and Practice:

“We learned about traditional and non-traditional families, and how to engage and interact with them through therapeutic role plays.”

—*Ariana Johnson, MSSA with a concentration in children, youth and families*





Targeting trauma

How the Center on Trauma and Adversity is pioneering new approaches that nurture healing and resilience—in classrooms, on campus and in communities across the country

By Daniel Robison

Ruth Bieber-Stanley understands the power of a steady, supportive presence.

Growing up in New Mexico, and during summers in college, she worked with kids in camps and after-school programs—experiences that deepened her commitment to youth and helped her see the impact that empathetic mentors can have on young lives.

Now, as a second-year Master of Social Work (MSW) student at Case Western Reserve University's Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, she's training to become that guiding figure for others: a therapist dedicated to helping youth and teens overcome trauma.

Trauma, a severe form of adversity, is often deeply distressing, sometimes life-threatening, and can leave lasting impacts on mental and emotional well-being. It can be an intense, disruptive experience that shapes a person's inner world in ways that can linger long after the event itself.

For Bieber-Stanley, this path is personal. As a teenager, she faced her own difficult period, a time when the encouragement of a mental health professional helped her find strength and understanding.



“When research is purely extractive—focused only on data collection or publications—it’s less meaningful for the people it can benefit the most.”

— Tyrone Hamler, PhD (GRS '23, social welfare)

“A therapist really helped me through a rough time,” she said. “That experience inspired me to enter the field; it made me want to be that support for someone else.”

Her drive to make a difference comes at a crucial time: Nearly 50% of all mental health conditions emerge by age 14, and around 75% by age 24, according to recent figures from the National Institute of Mental Health.

“Our teenage years are such an important period,” said Bieber-Stanley. “It’s a time when you can really intervene, honor someone’s agency and help them develop skills that can lead to a happy, healthy adulthood.”

Seeking a trauma-informed approach to her work, she chose the Mandel School, where a recently introduced certificate in trauma-informed care aligned perfectly with her goals.

Bieber-Stanley’s view mirrors a growing shift in mental health: an understanding of trauma not as an isolated experience but as a pervasive force affecting behavior, relationships, and personal development. Trauma-informed care—an approach grounded in empathy, safety and

strategies to prevent re-traumatization—has become a guiding principle for the Mandel School’s work on trauma and adversity.

Since its founding in 2018, the trauma center has become a hub for specialized courses, fellowships, and training certificates to equip future social workers with skills to support trauma-affected clients and communities.

“Our students see that we not only have a responsibility as social workers to acknowledge the presence of trauma,” said **Megan Holmes, PhD**, professor of social work at the Mandel School, “we also have a responsibility to discover new knowledge and practices that promote healing and connect people to help.”



Megan Holmes

In research, faculty have also woven these principles into a range of studies and community initiatives.

“When we work together,” said Holmes, co-founding director of the trauma center, “we can make collective progress rather than isolated efforts.”

Pioneering trauma solutions

In the trauma center’s first six years, several of its initiatives have attracted national attention, helping shape best practices and advancing the field.

For instance, in a project that’s the first of its kind in the country, Mandel School faculty trained nearly 300 Cleveland recreation center staff—from desk workers to custodians—to recognize and address trauma. Rotating teams of social workers and counselors also provide direct support to patrons of all ages. Research from the project’s first phase shows that this approach has increased positive interactions at the centers, particularly among youth and those impacted by violence.

Targeting trauma “on three fronts”—education, community outreach and research—is what sets the trauma center apart among academic institutions, said **Amy Korsch-Williams (SAS ’04)**, senior instructor at the Mandel School and trauma center faculty affiliate.



Amy Korsch-Williams

“This work has never been more critical,” she said, pointing to the staggering global reach of trauma. Research shows that 61% of adults report at least one adverse childhood experience (ACE), such as abuse, neglect or household dysfunction. Often, trauma registers deeply in both brain and body and is linked to long-term health risks—including heart disease, substance abuse and mental health struggles.

With six or more ACEs, a person’s lifespan may be shortened by up to 20 years, and with four or more, the risk of suicide increases fourteenfold.

At the Mandel School, social work students are taught to see trauma as “a normal human response to abnormal events—experiences that can be terrifying, overwhelming and deeply violating,” Korsch-Williams explained.

Though the effects of trauma can be severe, she emphasizes the potential of trauma-informed strategies to restore a sense of safety, empowerment and self-worth.

“Trauma is one of the most treatable conditions there

is—and everyone deserves opportunities to heal,” Korsch-Williams said. “It affects everyone, and we’re working to make spaces safer and supportive for all.”

Centering empathy

A core principle of trauma-informed care is a commitment to inclusion. This applies even in unexpected places, and to individuals who may seem far removed from the concept of vulnerability—for example, men on probation for assaulting women.

Laura Voith, PhD, led a research team at the Mandel School in conducting a study on participants in Cuyahoga County’s largest court-mandated batterer intervention program. Their study examined how trauma shaped these men’s lives and how a trauma-informed approach might improve their outcomes.

“We learned firsthand the extent of trauma many of these men endured,” said Voith, an associate professor at the Mandel School. “They’re often isolated, deeply stigmatized and pushed to society’s edges. Conducting this research required us to handle their stories with care and respect.”

Traditional research methods often overlook the trauma and marginalization participants face, a limitation Voith’s team recognized. They understood that standard approaches—such as rigid surveys or detached interviews—could risk re-traumatizing participants or fail to capture their full experiences.

“Ethically, we wanted to acknowledge the complexity of working with this population,” Voith said.

This sensitivity to trauma transformed the researchers’ methodology. Rather than simply collecting data, they focused on building trust, a process they found essential to gaining honest and comprehensive responses. As they built relationships with the men in the program, they also recognized the need for a deeper shift in how academic research engages communities that are often underserved.

“There’s frequently a disconnect between the research process and the communities we work with,” said **Tyrone Hamler, PhD (GRS ’23, social welfare)**, who helped conduct the research as a graduate student and now serves as an assistant professor at the University of Denver. “When



Tyrone Hamler

research is purely extractive—focused only on data collection or publications—it’s less meaningful for the people it can benefit the most.”

To address this challenge, Voith’s team designed a trauma-informed framework that shaped every part of the study. Rather than relying on traditional methods, they prioritized collaboration, viewing participants as active partners. This approach required more thoughtful research practices, such as giving participants advance notice before discussing sensitive topics.

“For some men, questions about not working felt like a blow to their identity as providers,” Voith said. “Small adjustments, like alerting them ahead of time, helped build trust.”

The study—published in *Social Work Research* in 2020—has attracted widespread attention for its methodology. It’s led to training requests on the trauma-informed framework from organizations such as the Urban Institute and has been cited in studies in diverse fields, including in healthcare and computer science.

What’s more, the Mandel School research team also found the methods improved the quality of their data.

“Trust leads to truth,” Hamler said. “Without it, participants may hold back or give superficial answers—but when they feel safe and respected, they’re more likely to share.”

Classrooms of care

At the Mandel School, faculty often start classes not with a lecture, but with a simple question: “How are you doing today?”

This small yet intentional gesture invites students to pause, reflect and feel grounded. It’s a hallmark of a trauma-informed classroom, where empathy and connection are prioritized to create an atmosphere where students feel safe, understood and ready to learn.

New findings underscore the need for this tack: A 2022 peer-reviewed study of over 1,500 undergraduates found that 85% had experienced at least one traumatic event, with 21% encountering trauma within their first two months of college. Trauma can significantly affect learning; during states of alert or fear, functional IQs effectively drop.



Jennifer King

“The more stressed we are, the more regressed we are,”

Jennifer King, DSW, co-director of the trauma center and assistant professor at the Mandel School, said during a recent trauma-informed training for educators.

Simple steps such as using mindfulness exercises can help students stay engaged. Quick, sensory-rich activities like doodling or crocheting can calm stress responses and restore balance within minutes. Instructors encourage students to meet their basic needs—trusting them to take breaks, move around or snack.

“It’s like surgeons wearing gloves—a universal precaution,” King said. “It’s important to provide ongoing support for everyone. Even if these practices don’t apply to you, they might help the person next to you.”

Trauma-informed teaching isn’t just a classroom approach or subject of study—it’s also a guiding practice. At the Mandel School, professors intentionally model these behaviors in everyday interactions.

“Each student is a future social worker,” said Korsch-Williams, “so we aim to prepare them to apply these principles professionally.”

Alina Dumbauld, a second-year MSW student, applies her trauma-informed training directly in her fieldwork. As a counseling intern at The Village Network—a behavioral health organization for youth and families in Cleveland—she uses sensory aids and flexible participation techniques to support children dealing with trauma.

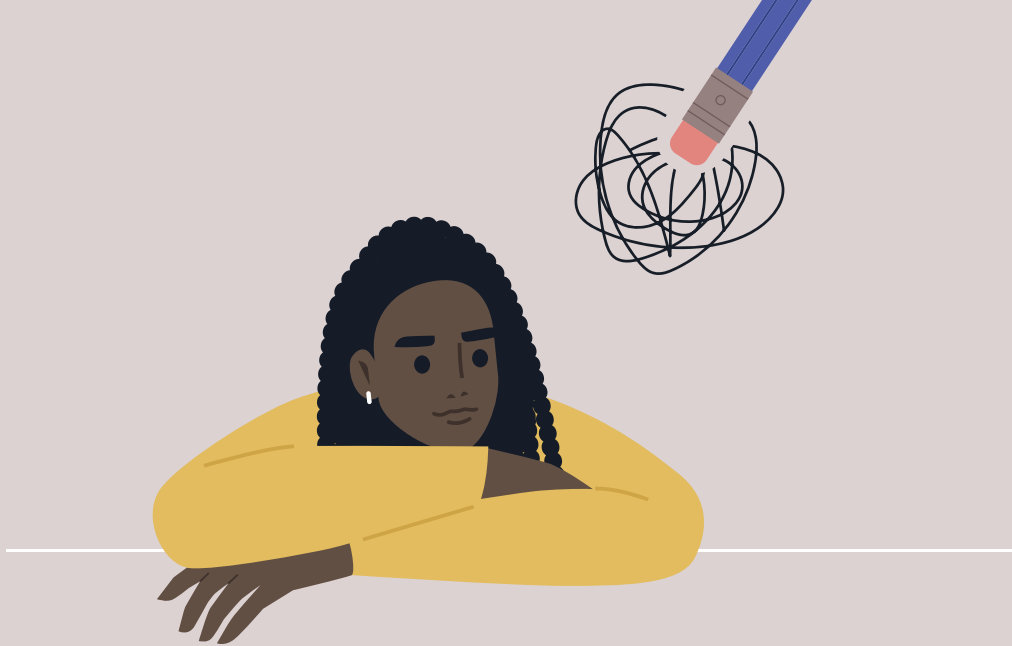
At the Mandel School, Dumbauld is also a Trauma-Informed Practice NMT Fellow—receiving specialized training in the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics(NMT), which blends neurodevelopment and trauma theory to guide her work with children and families.

“I’m already using these methods to build strong, supportive relationships with clients,” she said. “That’s experience I can build on as I start my career.”

Empowering educators

Trauma-informed educational practices are also gaining traction across Case Western Reserve University—evolving from a specialized approach to a cross-disciplinary movement.

For years, Mandel School faculty refined these methods in their classrooms, while also aspiring to expand their use. That vision moved closer to reality last spring when the trauma center launched a teaching certification program, drawing faculty from medicine, business and the social sciences.



“Education changes lives, and trauma-informed methods make that transformation accessible to all students. It’s not an add-on—it’s central to how we should teach going forward.”

— Tracey Messer, PhD

Nathan Howell, PhD, an assistant professor of biochemistry in the School of Medicine, has found trauma-informed approaches helpful when his students are facing personal challenges.

“I teach a lot of cancer-related courses, and some students are undergoing chemotherapy or have loved ones facing a diagnosis,” he said. “It’s important to recognize that class material isn’t the only thing happening in their lives.”

Trauma-informed practices have positive potential across educational levels, according to **Tracey Messer, PhD**, an assistant professor of organizational behavior at Weatherhead School of Management.

“Education changes lives, and trauma-informed methods make that transformation accessible to all students,” she said. “It’s not an add-on—it’s central to how we should teach going forward.”

For Messer, the approach also bridges emotional intelligence—her expertise—with classroom management, a critical need in post-pandemic settings, where reported traumas have risen.

“Emotions are contagious, especially negative ones,” she noted. “As educators, we’re not just teaching content; our behavior can impact student outcomes for the better.”

Scaling change

While trauma-informed teaching is taking root in classrooms across the university, the trauma center’s leadership has ambitions of extending these practices beyond campus.

With support from the university’s Veale Institute for Entrepreneurship, the certification workshop is being rolled out nationally. Hundreds of administrators, staff and faculty completed the training last fall at the Coalition of Urban and Metropolitan Universities conference in Minneapolis.

The workshop’s launch marks another achievement in the trauma center’s short history. Increasingly, its leaders see their work having potential to reach a much broader audience and spread trauma-informed approaches to more sectors of society.

“Trauma will always exist,” Holmes said, “but how we respond to it makes all the difference.”



A fellowship and legacy of change leaders

Aspiring social workers follow in the footsteps of civil rights leader and former professor

By Jared Scott Tesler

After arriving on the campus of Case Western Reserve University in 2023, **Nicholas “Moses” Ngong** felt compelled to start making connections within his new community.

That’s when Ngong, a second-year student working toward dual master’s degrees in social work and nonprofit organizations, dreamed up Neighbor Nights, a community-building initiative that brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds to share ideas for making positive, sustainable changes in their neighborhoods.

“Neighbor Nights bring people together to solve issues with community wisdom from the bottom up,” Ngong explained, “rather than creating dependency on institutions that don’t always represent everyday residents’ perspectives.”

Ngong is just one of several students who have been selected for the Louis Stokes Fellowship in Community Development at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. The fellowship,



Nicholas “Moses” Ngong

named for the late **Louis Stokes (ADL ’49, HON ’91)**—a U.S. Congressman, civil rights champion and former distinguished visiting professor at the Mandel School—is awarded to highly motivated students who exemplify leadership potential in serving historically vulnerable and marginalized communities.

“[My father] viewed working at the Mandel School as an opportunity to help aspiring social workers understand the importance of advocacy as well as the alignment between social work, legislation and political realities,” said **Lori Stokes**, a former journalist and news anchor, who is following in her father’s footsteps as a Distinguished Visiting Community Scholar at the Mandel School.

“He encouraged his children and those who came after him to be kind, never forget where they came from, take nothing for granted, give back and ‘be somebody,’” she said. “I have to believe that every Louis Stokes Fellow carries that philosophy with them—and they, too, are creating future leaders.”

The support Ngong has received from the Mandel School, especially through this fellowship, has helped make Neighbor Nights possible.

Legendary leader



Long before he took on the role of distinguished visiting professor at the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences at Case Western Reserve University, **Louis Stokes (ADL '49, HON '91)** was widely known for his work as an attorney, civil rights pioneer and politician.

Over the course of his illustrious career, Stokes argued the “stop-and-frisk” case of *Terry v. Ohio* before the United States Supreme Court, served 15 consecutive terms in the United States House of Representatives as the first Black congressman from Ohio, and chaired the United States House Select Committee on Assassinations, which was tasked with investigating the murders of President John F. Kennedy and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

Today, Stokes’ life and legacy live on at Case Western Reserve through the Louis Stokes Fellowship in Community Development, which aims to inspire students to improve the lives of others.

“The mentorship and practicum experience have really benefited my work, which means a lot to me,” said Ngong, who spent two years leading Slavic Village Development’s Community Stewards Program before applying to graduate school. “I’m so grateful for the support I get from faculty, who help me brainstorm ways to take my work to the next level. And practical and theoretical models presented in class have helped me consider new ways of advancing the causes I care about.”

Emily Reed, another Louis Stokes Fellow and a first-year Master of Social Work student, was called to the profession, she explained, because of its “values of social justice, service, and dignity and worth of all people.” With a particular interest in racial and health disparities and social



Emily Reed

determinants of health, Reed wants to help create a more equitable society, especially for women of color, veterans and individuals with disabilities.

“Health, well-being and safety significantly impact us and our experiences, and we need to advance the quantity and quality of life for all,” Reed said. “The Louis Stokes Fellowship will push me to become the kind of social worker I hope to be. Its learning opportunities, like the capstone project, will enable me to explore my interests, challenge myself and acquire new skills. The fellowship further bridges the classroom and field by connecting students to current leaders in Cleveland and providing support to pursue professional development opportunities.”

Both Reed and Ngong agree the mentorship aspect of the fellowship—in which students are matched with experienced community leaders who provide individual consultation, networking and support—is especially valuable, personally and professionally.

“I’m so appreciative of my mentorship from [nonprofit consultant, executive coach and Mandel School Visiting Committee member] **Richard Jones, PhD (SAS '75; GRS '81, social work)**,” Ngong said. “Our conversations always push me to get the most out of myself and think about where I want my career to take me.”

Experts in the field

Distinguished Alumna Award recipient and Mandel School Hall of Achievement inductee **India Pierce Lee (SAS '05)** and accomplished real estate developer and community leader **Oliver Gross (SAS '06)** are shining examples of how the Louis Stokes Fellowship shapes leaders in community development and policy.



India Pierce Lee

When she was a Louis Stokes Fellow, Lee completed a group project aimed at leveraging the resources of Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals Cleveland Medical Center and Case Western Reserve University to help provide long-term support to families in the areas of education, health, housing and workforce development.



Oliver Gross

The fellowship helped her learn Cleveland's history of community development.

"It created a forum for transparency and collaboration, enabling us to find solutions that will impact people's lives for generations," Lee explained. "The Ability-Based Learning Environment [a set of standards for social work education] and its competencies have been embedded and applied in my work to be reflective, advocate for justice, uphold values and ethics, think critically and value diversity."

Throughout the years, Lee has enjoyed a long and impactful career in community and economic development, advocating for economic and social equality, education, housing and wealth-building while collaborating with numerous organizations to revitalize local communities. Today, she is the executive vice president and chief strategy officer of Cuyahoga Community College, where her mission is to "create opportunities that enhance the lives of students and community members, guiding them toward careers that provide family-sustaining wages."

Lee also serves as steering committee chair of First Year Cleveland, a nonprofit dedicated to reducing infant mortality—particularly among Black families—working to ensure first birthdays for all babies, and healthy moms for every family in Cuyahoga County.

Gross, who has spent the past 20 years as president and chief executive officer of New Urban Development—the real estate development affiliate of the Urban League of Greater



"I came to the Mandel School seeing myself as a businessman—but I left as a social worker doing business."

—Oliver Gross

Miami—said the fellowship informed how he approaches and views the individuals, communities and organizations with which he works, enabling him to "meet them where they are, identify their inherent assets and build on that."

While he was a student at the Mandel School, Gross effectively harnessed the practical concepts he learned in the classroom and lasting personal and professional relationships he formed both on and off campus. This ultimately aided him in creating a neighborhood revitalization plan for the only historic Black community in Naples, Florida.

"The community organizing, asset mapping, and communication skills and techniques I acquired at the Mandel School mitigated the erosion of this community up until today," shared Gross, who, these days, is responsible for the acquisition, development, construction oversight, financing and property management of his company's commercial and residential real estate portfolio. "I came to the Mandel School seeing myself as a businessman—but I left as a social worker doing business."

No matter where they are in their careers, from future leaders to seasoned professionals, one thing is clear: Each and every fellow—past and present—feels fully supported and inspired by the Louis Stokes Fellowship in Community Development and the man for whom it is named.

"Louis Stokes is the epitome of a pioneer and an admirable leader. We feel his legacy and experience the results of his work in civil rights and community development every day," Reed said. "As a woman of color, he inspires me to continue to work toward and advocate for 'what can be,' following in his footsteps of civic participation, personal engagement and investment in people. He truly embodies the power of community."



"Louis Stokes is the epitome of a pioneer and an admirable leader. We feel his legacy and experience the results of his work in civil rights and community development every day."

—Emily Reed

Alumni corner

Welcome additions

Two new professionals join the Mandel School’s development and alumni relations team



Lia Hones

Mandel School alumni and friends may have noticed two new faces at recent events: **Lia Hones**, director of special giving, and **Thecla Harris**, senior director of development, joined the Mandel School’s alumni and development team over the summer.

With a strong background in relationship building and strategic planning, Hones collaborates with alumni and friends to support initiatives that enhance the impact of the Mandel School.



Thecla Harris

Harris, who brings more than 20 years of expertise in nonprofit leadership and community engagement, oversees leadership giving strategies, strengthens connections with alumni and supporters, and fosters

meaningful partnerships to advance the Mandel School’s mission. She serves as a central resource for alumni and works collaboratively with colleagues across the school and university.

.....

To make a gift or get involved, contact Hones at lia.hones@case.edu and Harris at thecla.harris@case.edu.

Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences Alumni Association Board 2024-2025

The Mandel School is grateful to the members of its Alumni Association Board for their ongoing efforts to support alumni, students, faculty and staff.

Executive Committee

Adriennie Y. Hatten, PhD (MNO '96), president
 Dean Fazekas (SAS '91), vice president
 Sharyse Jones (SAS '08), secretary

Board Members

Ellen Abraham (SAS '80)
 Ramses Clements (SAS '13)
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 Jane Abrahams Daroff (SAS '85)
 Maureen Dee (SAS '78)
 Virginia “Jamie” Dineen (SAS '19)
 Maureen “Rini” Gauntner (SAS '67)
 April Hickman (MNO '17)
 Emery Ivery (SAS '83)
 Margaret Kennedy (SAS '78)
 Anna Madorsky (MNO '20)
 Carole Marciano (SAS '93)
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 Michael Mayse (MNO '05)
 Carlier Myers (MNO '03, SAS '13)
 Teresa Schleicher (MNO '07)
 Susan Sternad-Basel (SAS '81)
 Ronald Stewart, PhD (MNO '96)
 Demitrius Styles (SAS '17)
 Aleksandra Tyler (SAS '20, MNO '20)
 Joy Willmott (SAS '61)
 Sarah Wolf (SAS '21)
 Siyue Xu (SAS '20)

What kinds of alumni events do you want to see? Tell us by completing this survey:



Lifelong connections

Alumni and friends reunite for a weekend of memories

Bundled in blue Case Western Reserve University scarves, students, alumni, faculty and staff gathered on campus last November to celebrate Homecoming and Reunion Weekend. The festivities kicked off Thursday evening with Blue Bash at Thwing Center, and continued on Friday at Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences' Noble Commons, where Dean **Dexter Voisin, PhD**, gave the state of the school update and presented the Mandel School Alumni Awards (see p. 31). Later that weekend, Professors **Sharon Milligan, PhD**, and **Robert Fischer, PhD**, delivered the Grace Longwell Coyle Lecture and were honored with the namesake professorships (see p. 8).

Here are just a few highlights from the weekend.

SAVE THE DATE:
Homecoming and
Reunion Weekend
Oct. 9–12, 2025



Cross-country connections

From the east coast to the west, Dean Dexter Voisin, PhD, has been bringing the Mandel School to alumni. Take a look at where he's been and who he's connected with over the last several months.



Lynne Healy presenting to students during lunch before delivering the Herman D. Stein Lecture in International Social Welfare at the Mandel School in September



From left: Dean Dexter Voisin, Lynne Healy and Terry Hokenstad at the Stein Lecture in International Social Welfare at the Mandel School in September



From left: Dean Dexter Voisin and Howard and Jackie Guttman during a visit to Mount Arlington, New Jersey



From left: Dean Dexter Voisin, Fran Danis, Kimberly Strom and Alice Lieberman at the National Association of Social Workers 2024 Social Work Pioneer® Program and Luncheon in Washington, D.C.



Dean Dexter Voisin and Marion Woodward in Oakland, California



Dean Dexter Voisin and Dorothy Faller in Cleveland



From left: Dean Emeritus Grover "Cleve" Gilmore, Lori Stokes, Dean Dexter Voisin, India Pierce Lee, Emily Reed, Oliver Gross, Sharon Milligan in Cleveland



Taking the stage

Class of 2024 begin their alumni journeys

Excited soon-to-be-graduates lined up on a drizzly day in May to accept their diplomas from the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences.

The newest class of alumni received their Master of Social Work and Master of Nonprofit Organizations after listening to a keynote speech by **Hannah Griswold (MNO '93)**, a strategic development consultant with over 20 years of experience in fundraising and brand creation. Later, everyone gathered for a reception in Noble Commons at the Mandel School.

Here are just a few of the scenes from that celebratory day.



Sandra Turner accepting the 2024 Distinguished Service Award



Stephen H. Hoffman accepting the 2024 Advocate for Social Justice and Leadership Development Award



Patrick Clifford accepting the John A. Yankey Outstanding Part-time Teacher Award



Emotionally intelligent leadership

Alumnus credits social work education for his success in business

As principal of his Guttman Development Strategies, **Howard Guttman (LYS '76, SAS '77)** provides his clients—such as Mars Inc., GlaxoSmithKline and Walmart—guidance on team alignment, coaching, and development for leaders.

Guttman emphasizes a horizontal, high-performance organizational model which requires teams to work together—and relies on lessons Guttman learned as a student at Case Western Reserve University.

Action magazine interviewed Guttman to learn how studying social work prepared him for the corporate consulting space. Read on to hear what he had to share.

“EQ is the dividing line. [For the most successful people] in any organization, technical skills get them in the door, but EQ enables them to go up the ladder.”

—Howard Guttman

What led you to CWRU?

I was in the nonprofit world. I [wanted] to get a master's in library science because libraries serve as a base for community development. After a couple of library science courses, I [realized it wasn't a great fit], but still wanted to work with communities.

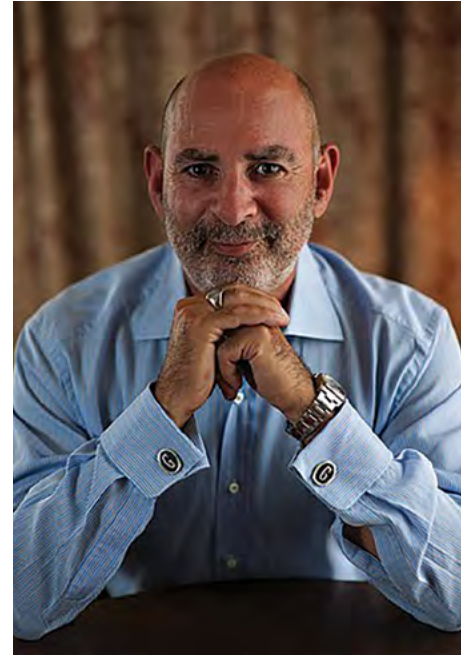
I proposed a dual degree with the School of [Information and] Library Science and the School of Applied Social Sciences. In the end, I never did anything with libraries, but being able to assess needs, understand data collection and contract with clients has served me my entire career.

How does a social work degree prepare someone for the business world?

A greater sense of process and [assessing] individuals. Most who come out of business schools [and] into consulting are one-dimensional. Process [and] facilitation skills, understanding of dynamics, and a systems approach [are] huge differentiators.

How do social work graduates bring emotional intelligence to a business?

Trying to create high-performance, horizontal organizations, it's an [emotional quotient (EQ)] game. It presumes people have technical competence—finance people understand numbers, human resources people understand talent acquisition—but that's not the game. It's having emotional intelligence to understand how you impact people. Most people who [don't] make it don't [fail] because they're not good technically, [but] because they're not able to build and sustain organizational support for themselves. EQ is the dividing line. [For the most successful people] in any organization, technical skills get them in the door, but EQ enables them to go up the ladder.



Howard Guttman

What's one challenge you overcame for which your social work background equipped you?

A CEO [felt] discomfort regarding [a particular] business situation. His concern started to reflect feelings of self-doubt he's had for a long time versus [the] presenting issue. I thought back to when I worked at [Louis Stokes Cleveland Veterans Affairs Medical Center] or practicums with women in need. It's the same skills, except he happens to be a CEO of a multibillion-dollar company versus a mother struggling to pay for her kids. You're still trying to tap into core emotional issues. In the corporate world, many times there is a facade people have because they don't want to demonstrate that vulnerability.

—Lauren Dangel

Class notes

Reported to the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences between Feb. 22 and Oct. 8, 2024.



Associate Professor Emerita **Kathleen J. Farkas, PhD (WRC '73; GRS '84, social welfare)**, received the Herman D. Stein Distinguished Social Work Educator

Award at the Mandel School's diploma ceremony in May. Farkas was selected for the award—which is named after the former dean and provost—for her contribution to social work education and the profession, as evidenced by her scholarly pursuits, leadership and academic excellence.



Nichole Cobb (CWR '93; SAS '95; GRS '24, social welfare) received the Case Western Reserve University School of Graduate Studies 2024 Ruth Barber

Moon Award—which is awarded to graduate students who demonstrate academic promise, leadership ability and financial need—for her leadership in curriculum development.

Barbara Anthony (SAS '04), co-founder and executive director for Play Gap, a Cleveland nonprofit that works to expand awareness, accessibility and support for women's sports opportunities, received a 2024 NCAA Legends and Legacy Community Award. She was selected because of her commitment of time, resources and influence to improve and invest in her community of Cleveland, a host city for the 2024 NCAA Men and Women's Final Four Basketball tournament.

Rebecca Nelis (SAS '04) was named a 2024 Remarkable Woman of the Mahoning Valley by *WKBN 27 First News* in Poland, Ohio, for her work in the community and for opening her private practice, Pathways of Ohio Counseling Services.

Sandra M. Turner, PhD (GRS '04, social welfare), received the Mandel School's Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes an individual's outstanding contributions to the social work profession, the community and the school.

Kelly Flamos (SAS '06) acquired Cleveland's historic Variety Theater, aiming to revive it as a live music venue and community hub. She and her husband, Colin McEwen (LAW '23), sold their previous venture, Mahall's, a music venue and bowling alley, in 2022.

Jenita McGowan (MNO '08) became the deputy chief of staff for climate and sustainability for Cuyahoga County in Ohio.

The Black Professionals Association Charitable Foundation of Cleveland recognized **Indigo Bishop (CWR '08, SAS '12)**, **Ivan Conard (SAS '21)** and **HerMaya Onunwor (SAS '16)** as members of the 40 Under 40 Emerging Legends Class of 2024.



Mackenzie Scott's Yield Giving, which supports people and places experiencing the greatest need in the United States, gave \$2 million—its largest

award to date—to Birthing Beautiful Communities. The Cleveland nonprofit, led by CEO **Jazmin Long (SAS '15, MNO**

'15), works to address and improve systemic and community structures that contribute to poor birth outcomes through culture, education, advocacy, support and engagement.

Sean M. Inderbitzen (SAS '18) published *Autism in Polyvagal Terms: New Possibilities and Interventions*, which offers insights into the application of polyvagal theory in understanding and addressing autism and improving the lives of individuals with autism.

Kelly Gross (SAS '20) became the executive director of Child and Family Services for The Marsh Foundation in Van Wert, Ohio.



Amy Vaughters (SAS '20, MNO '20), an active-duty social worker (pictured here with her father), was promoted from first lieutenant to captain in the U.S. Army 1.

Tyrone Hamler, PhD (GRS '23, social welfare), assistant professor at the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work, received a two-year Leadership and Education Advancement Program for Diverse Scholars Fellowship. Sponsored by the American Psychological Association, this prestigious and nationally competitive fellowship is a mentoring and leadership program for early-career behavioral scientists from underrepresented racial and ethnic populations whose research agenda is related to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive Kidney Diseases.

Social work superstars

Each year, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) inducts “Pioneers”—social workers who have made exceptional contributions to the profession through service, teaching, writing, research, program development or legislation.

In 2024, two Mandel School alumni—and the school’s dean—were among them. Honored during the annual luncheon in October, they joined 48 other Mandel School alumni and faculty who have been inducted in previous years.

Dexter Voisin, PhD, Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Dean in Applied Social Sciences

Dorothy Faller (SAS ’75)

Kimberly Strom, PhD (GRS ’93, social welfare)

The NASW Ohio Chapter also honored eight Mandel School alumni and students for their exceptional contributions to the social work field.

Social Worker of the Year Award:

Renee Leber (SAS ’09) Region 2 (Akron)

Jonathon Henry (SAS ’18) Region 3 (Cleveland)

Joanne Lunceford (SAS ’11) Region 5 (Columbus)

Amy Restorick Roberts, PhD (SAS ’00; GRS ’13, social welfare) Region 6 (Cincinnati)

Student of the Year Award:

Pranit Lanjewar, Region 3 (Cleveland)

Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients:

Timothy McCarragher, PhD (GRS ’02, social welfare) Region 2 (Akron)

Kathleen Farkas, PhD (WRC ’73; GRS ’84, social welfare) Region 3 (Cleveland)

Outstanding Service to NASW:

Martha Lucas (SAS ’75) Region 2 (Akron)



From left: Caroline Spikner, Joanne Lunceford, Andriel Ugbomeh, Felicia Hayes, Kathleen Farkas, Ebony Speakes-Hall, Krystal Martin, Dean Dexter Voisin, Katharine “Kate” Guditz, Pranit Lanjewar, Emma Steele and J. Richard Romaniuk at the NASW Ohio Social Work Celebration Gala in Columbus, Ohio, in March.

In memoriam

Death notices reported to the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences between Feb. 22 and Oct. 8, 2024.

Joyce Edward (SAS '46) of South Setauket, New York, died Feb. 4, 2024. In addition to a Master in Social Work from Case Western Reserve University, Edward earned degrees from Antioch College and Northwestern University. She later became a psychotherapist and psychoanalyst, publishing articles on psychoanalytic theory and its applications to studying human nature. She taught at Smith College, Hunter College, Adelphi University and various psychoanalytic institutes.

Doris Epstein (SAS '46) of Woods Hole, Massachusetts, died June 8. Epstein worked in state mental hospitals and correctional facilities before opening her own counseling practice. She retired in 1989, but remained involved with many organizations well into her 90s, including the Falmouth Art Center, Falmouth Human Services Committee and the League of Women Voters of Falmouth.

Juanita M. Todd (SAS '57) of Greenville, Ohio, died June 20. She began her career with the Red Cross in Germany in the 1950s, but spent the following 45 years in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, working as an licensed clinical social worker at University of North Carolina Medical Center.

Carolyn Sugiuchi (SAS '62) of South Euclid, Ohio, died Aug. 25.

Constance "Connie" (Wiencek) Kobalka (SAS '73) of Worthington, Ohio, died Oct. 1. Kobalka was an activist for social equality and justice. She managed programs for seniors at the Salvation Army in Cleveland, one of which helped them age in place at home.

Craig R. Boitel (SAS '77; GRS '02, philosophy) of Lakewood, Ohio, died Sept. 11. Boitel managed his private practice for decades while also preparing social work students for their own careers.

David J. Lundeen (SAS '78) of Cleveland died March 13. His 48-year career began at Parmadale Children's Village and was followed by a directorship at Jones Home of Children's Services in Cleveland. He later served as director of Lakewood Youth Services as well as executive director and CEO of the Cleveland Christian Home and Community Care Network. Lundeen also spent 30 years as an ordained deacon, church business manager and youth group spiritual director for the Catholic Church.

Joseph Doran Jr. (SAS '79) of Charlotte, North Carolina, died April 12. After receiving his degree from the Mandel School, he went on to a career as an adult therapist with Catholic Social Services of Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

Janet A. Graddick (SAS '84) of Chicago died April 24. She served as the social service supervisor for the Human Services Department of Knox County, where she oversaw a team of dedicated professionals and managed programs that provided crucial support to vulnerable populations, including older adults and those experiencing homelessness.

Marguerite "Bonnie" Humphrey (MNO '92, MGT '00) of Gates Mills, Ohio, died May 29. A civic advocate, Humphrey dedicated her time to supporting and protecting Cleveland institutions for future generations. She was passionate about access to healthcare and the arts, and served as a trustee for University Hospitals Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital and The Cleveland Orchestra.

Edmund Kwame Botchway (SAS '19), of Ghana, Africa, died Aug. 17. A former Mandel Leadership Fellow, Botchway dedicated his journey in social work to building greater equity in the local economy. This was evident in his involvement with numerous organizations, including RE:Source Cleveland, the Cleveland Foundation, NAACP Cleveland, Contractors on the Rise and the Equitable Development Initiative. He recently was a speaker at Davos at the World Economic Forum, and had just founded the Pan-African Center for Transformation intended to serve the African Diaspora.

Guiding growth

How the Mandel School Visiting Committee transforms student opportunities

For more than three decades, the Mandel School's Visiting Committee has been instrumental in supporting the school's mission to advance leadership in social work and nonprofit education. Made up of more than 30 influential alumni, community leaders and professionals from diverse fields, the committee isn't just a body of advisors—it's a dynamic force that has driven tangible change.

"We have a real partnership with the dean and the school, so the committee's key priorities fall directly in line with Dean **Dexter Voisin's**," said Chair **Susan LaPine (MNO '97)**. "We plan to maximize our experience and expertise to benefit the school via three pillars this year: increased school visibility, higher enrollment (recruitment and retention) and philanthropy."

Through their leadership, committee members have helped raise millions of dollars, easing the financial burden for students: The committee's Think Scholarships campaign raised over \$2 million, and their efforts during CWRU's Day of Giving helped lead to a significant boost, growing from \$6,000 in 2021 to \$68,000 in 2024.

But financial support is just one part of the equation. Several members contribute to the school's mentoring program which, established in 2020 as a grassroots effort, is now a collaboration between the school's Student Services Office and the Alumni Relations Office.

"That initiative has grown and now serves every student who signs up for



Susan LaPine

mentorship," LaPine explained, "which was the original goal."

The committee's commitment to visibility is another key factor in the school's growth. Members actively engage with students at networking dinners and recruitment events, helping to raise the Mandel School's profile. Their efforts have played a crucial role in increasing donor support, which in turn provides more opportunities for students to flourish.

"We know the Mandel School is a great point of pride in northeast Ohio and is the top-ranked professional school at Case Western Reserve," LaPine said. "The Visiting Committee hopes to help make the Mandel School a 'household name' everywhere."

—Alaina Bartel

Mandel School Visiting Committee

Goldie Alvis (SAS '73)
 Georgia Anetzberger, PhD (GRS '71, anthropology; SAS '80; GRS '86, social work)
 Paula Atwood (SAS '73)
 Eugenia Cash (SAS '92)
 Jane Daroff (SAS '85)
 Beth Embrescia (SAS '94)
 Bonnie Frankel (SAS '79)
 Denise Gibson, PhD (SAS '78)
 Lilli Harris
 Stephen Hoffman
 Dianne Hunt (SAS '67)
 Richard Jones, PhD (SAS '75; GRS '81, social work)
 Susan LaPine (MNO '97), *chair*
 Marcia Levine (SAS '66)
 Bruce Loessin
 Holley Martens (SAS '07)
 Jane A. Robertson (SAS '95)
 Gail Schlang (GRS '63, communication sciences)
 Susan Sternad-Basel (SAS '81)
 Melody Stewart, PhD (GRS '08, social welfare)
 Lori Stokes
 Ella Thomas (SAS '71)
 Tony Thomas (SAS '84)
 Sandra Turner, PhD (GRS '04, social welfare) *Immediate Past Chair*
 Sharon Higley Watts
 Cynthia Webb (SAS '95)
 Lisa Weitzman (SAS '14)
 David Wittkowsky (WRC '85)
 Theodora Wolf (SAS '84)
 John Yankey, PhD
 Pamela Young

Congratulations

to the 2024 Alumni Award Winners

The Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences recognized the following alumni during Homecoming and Reunion Weekend in November.



Distinguished Alumna Award

Jill L. Dickie, PhD (SAS '74)

Professional Achievement Award

Lisa McDuffie (SAS '93)

Nonprofit Leadership Award

Sherri Brandon
(SAS '00, MNO '18)

Louis Stokes Community Service Leadership Award

Sharyse N. Jones (SAS '08)

Early Career Success Award

Malcolm D. Burton (SAS '17)

Special thanks to our Alumni Awards Committee Members:

Linda Crowell, PhD
(SAS '90; GRS '95, social
welfare), *co-chair*

Teresa Schleicher
(MNO '07), *co-chair*

Maureen Dee (SAS '78)

Dean Fazekas (SAS '91)

Emery Ivery (SAS '83)

Michael Mayse (MNO '05)

Aleksandra Tyler
(SAS '20, MNO '20)



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