



# Department of Social Work

Spring, 2021 (Volume 7, Issue 1) Alumni Special Edition

## Message from the Interim Department Chair

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Please visit our Social Work Department website to for contact information, and get learn more about our Social Work program, the profession of Social Work, and some great professional resources at:

<http://www.tsu.edu/academics/colleges-and-schools/colabs/social-work/index.html>

The month of March is Social Work Month, and we are celebrating with this special edition of our TSU Social Work Department Newsletter! Despite the state-wide and national challenges we have faced during the last year, our social work students and alumni continue to practice and serve in the community, which is featured in this issue, in honor of Social Work Month! They discuss the great work they're doing in the profession, as well as how the TSU Social Work program prepared them for success! On behalf of the TSU faculty and staff, we couldn't be more proud of you all! *Go Tigers!*

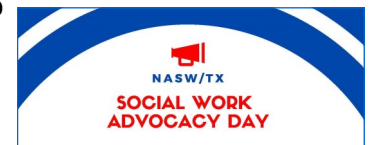


### **NASW/Texas "Social Work Advocacy Day" Experience**

by Jeremy Dellavecchia (*Class of 2021*)



NASW/Texas' annual event during Social Work Month, Social Work Advocacy Day (SWAD), offered a whole week of virtual activities, and was the most inspirational, confirming, and motivating pep-rally I have ever been to. The event left an unforgettable imprint on me of what it means to collaborate for action! I logged into the Zoom (which I already was dissuaded about, since I get inspired most when in face-to-face events), I noticed there were well over 200 attendees, with people engaging in the chat, speakers taking turns welcoming and inspiring others, and really setting the standard. Once the event formally started, the topic for the day, *Medicaid Expansion for All*, was presented, and we began with a morning rally which left me so pumped up I was ready to march to the Governor's office! The guest speakers, local representatives, and provider networks provided exceptional educational information and advocacy updates. This motivated social workers and social work students so much that it was easy to see the impact we could make! After the events, we moved into actually placing phone calls to Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, and Speaker Dade Phelan to advocate for Medicaid expansion. What a learning experience it was to join hundreds of social workers advocating for an issue not just in policy, theory, and rallying...but also in *ACTION!* By attending SWAD, I was able to get a clear picture of what true, passionate, social work looks like! I saw Social Work Advocacy Day for what it truly is... passion in practice, love in action, and a voice in unity!



### **It's THAT Time of Year... Social Work BLOCK Admissions!**

It's the time of year when junior-level students begin the process of applying for senior-level BLOCK. This year, the application submission and interview will be held completely **online!** All of the information about the BLOCK application process can be found in the "Admission to BLOCK" tab, located in the Social Work Majors blackboard. Interviews with Ms. Ifueko will be held in April. We are looking forward to preparing our juniors for a smooth transition to the senior year!

## Celebrating our Social Work Alumni!

**Jessavia Sampson, LMSW, BA (Class of 2015)**  
**Primary Therapist, The Eating Recovery Center/Pathlight Mood & Anxiety Center**



My name is Jessavia Sampson, and I am Licensed Masters Social Worker with over 8 years of experience in crisis intervention and mental health treatment. I received my master's degree from the Graduate College of Social Work at the University of Houston. I have worked in various aspects of the field including non-profit, medical social work, and clinical social work. I am currently focusing my practice in working directly with individuals and families impacted by mental health disorders. I hold the position of Primary Therapist at The Eating Recovery Center/Pathlight Mood & Anxiety Center, in the Woodlands, Texas. I create treatment plans and provide weekly therapy sessions to both adolescents and adults impacted by eating disorders, mood, and anxiety disorders.

The TSU Department of Social Work played a vital role in who I am today. I learned so much about what type of Social Worker I wanted to be. I was honored with having professors who were invested and who strategically molded me and my peers for success. At the time I did not know how valuable the knowledge I absorbed would be and how powerful it was in building the foundation of my career in Social Work. I always reflect on how intimidated I was about Senior BLOCK and how I questioned my ability to commit to the workload and requirements. During my journey the most important lesson I learned was to trust my peers and my professors, and most importantly, myself. I learned how to network, apply my knowledge, build my confidence, and to be patient. This helped better prepare me for graduate school and created the foundation for me to become the competent Social Work Professional I am today. *Go Tigers!*



**Romy Nuñez, LMSW, BA (Class of 2019)**  
**Bilingual School Social Worker, Jane Long Academy**



I am currently working for Houston ISD at Jane Long Academy as a Social Worker. To enhance student well-being and their academic success, I provide both direct and indirect services to support students who are struggling with any emotional, behavioral, social, or other mental health issues. Some of my job duties include conducting psychosocial assessments, suicide risk assessments, assessing for substance use and other social/developmental histories. I provide therapeutic services and counseling to students through individual, group, or family sessions. I also assist in developing behavioral interventions/contracts to better serve students in their class settings. I help with conflict resolution amongst peers or students and their teachers. I help students build their social skillset and help manage their anger. I also provide crisis intervention and stress management while assessing student safety. Additionally, I collaborate directly with school staff, parents/guardians, families, and community partners to promote student academic, emotional, and social potential. I also try to listen to the parental requests for their child, and I try to accommodate them the best that I can. Some indirect services I provide include developing training, psychoeducational programs, workshop opportunities for school staff, and advocating for improved school or district-wide accommodations to better assist students. Lastly, I help identify community resources and form partnerships with local community organizations to support my clients' needs.

The TSU Social Work program helped me prepare for practice by teaching me the generalist aspects of social work. This program helped build my critical thinking skills, communication skills, and overall professionalism; the Baylor University MSW program helped me to hone my clinical skills. My social work education has helped me become the social work practitioner and clinician I am today!

## Celebrating our Social Work Alumni!

**Roy Cooper, LMSW, BA** (Class of 2016)  
**Senior Social Worker, Michael E. DeBakey Veteran Affairs Medical Center**

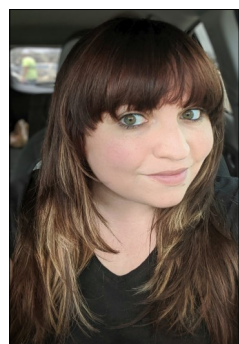


I currently work in the Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Department, which is housed under the Housing and Urban Development - Veteran Supportive and Assistive Housing (HUD-VASH) division of the VA. I enjoy serving as the HUDVASH Interdisciplinary Team Leader. In addition to this leadership position, my duties include development of treatment plans with clients and interdisciplinary treatment teams, completing psychosocial and suicide risk assessments, coordinating community-based services, identifying high-risk patients, and providing crises intervention and clinical case management services. Outside of the agency, I have also served on the NASW/TX Conference Planning Committee for several years, and have returned to TSU as an Adjunct Instructor and guest speaker. Service is such an important Core value of the Social Work profession. Being an active alumni serving at TSU is important, too!

Texas Southern University's Department of Social Work armed me with the fundamental tools needed to be highly success in both graduate school at Baylor University and in my career. This all began with what I learned in the classroom and the opportunities I had to sharpen my skills outside the classroom. While at TSU, I began developing my leadership skills and serving the community in the Social Work Student Organization. The faculty and staff's tireless dedication to excellence, innovation, the student-centered approach, leadership and responsibility, are the reason so many of the students are successful. It is at TSU where I learned the guiding principals and ethics of my profession, and continue to apply the skills I've learned in service in- and out- of my current job. When I receive an inquiry regarding this outstanding Social Work program my response is always the same, "*The program is challenging. The professors demand your very best efforts. There will be times when you question everything, but if you put forth the effort, it will change your life!*"



**Aurora Coffey, LMSW, BA** (Class of 2017)  
**Student Support Manager, Communities in Schools- Houston**



After graduating from Texas Southern University I went to University of Texas at Arlington and received my Masters in Social Work. I am currently a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) and will be starting my clinical hours for my LCSW in the fall. I currently work for Communities In Schools Houston as Student Support Manager and I am placed at an Elementary School in Fort Bend ISD. My job duties include connecting parents and students to resources within their community, facilitating student groups, providing one on one student guidance and counseling, and providing additional services that help students stay in school and thrive.

The TSU Social Work Department prepared me immensely for not only my Masters program, but for life as a Social Worker. The rigor of the TSU program prepared me for my current job as well as previous jobs, to not only meet my deadlines but ensure that I produce quality work. Many doors have opened up to me because of the great reputation that comes from the TSU Social Work program, and it allowed me to build a strong and diverse network of Social Workers. I am truly fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from the Social Work programs professors and will always remember everything they did to prepare me for the professional world.

## Celebrating our Social Work Alumni!

**Deshara Goss, MSW, BA** (*Class of 2012*)

**Community Initiatives Manager, Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation**



I serve as the Community Initiatives Manager for Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation. Part of my job includes collaborating with local residents, businesses, and non-profits to address gaps in service and identify action projects that residents/businesses can implement to improve the overall quality of life for families in the 5th Ward. In my free time, I enjoy working on local, city, and national campaigns. I was recently named as a 2020 DNC Presidential Fellow, in which I worked with other local strategists and communication teams to plan and coordinate events surrounding the 2020 Presidential election. As a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., I served as the Public Policy Co-chair for the National Pan-Hellenic Council of Houston, and as a former Connection Chair for my Graduate Chapter in Pearland, helping to plan campaign and voter registration awareness drives in Houston and the surrounding areas. I am a proud alumna of Texas Southern University and the Graduate College of Social Work at the University of Houston!

I tell everyone that I am "great" because of the GREAT education and support that I received while at Texas Southern. The TSU Social Work Dept. taught me how to believe in myself, believe in my skills, be a go-getter, and live/work with passion and conviction. My love and commitment to the Black community (and to the Houston community as a whole) was shaped by field practicums, was supported through mentorships and career building internships and fellowships, and has continued to blossom and grow through peers, other TSU alumni, and a continuous relationship with the TSU Social Work Department. I THANK the TSU Social Work Department for not just teaching me the fundamental techniques of the Social Work practice, but for teaching me that with anything in life, you must learn your history, build a support network, take pride in where you came from, and lay a foundation for others to follow! I am FOREVER A TIGER!



**Lucia Salas, MSW, BA** (*Class of 2019*)

**Bilingual Therapist, Harris County Juvenile Probation Department**



My name is Lucia Salas, I am proud to be a first generation college student! I'm currently a bilingual therapist with the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department. Currently, I'm studying for my LMSW exam and starting my non-profit organization.

TSU's Social Work prepared me to advance in my MSW program at Baylor University, and I was able to finish my master's degrees in one year. TSU's Social Work program opened so many opportunities for me, including serving as the MSW Representative on the National Association of Social Workers/ Texas Board of Directors, attending the National Social Work Advocacy Day (SWAD) at the Capital, and speaking at the Capital about intersections of mental health and mass incarceration. I also recently served as a Panelist for TSU COLABS Conversations, during National Women's Month, featuring successful TSU alumnae. I have so many amazing experiences with TSU's Social Work program, where I built generalist practice and leadership skills through courses, internship, and serving in the Social Work Student Organization! I recommended this program to anyone interested in social work and who wants to make a difference in the world.

## Celebrating our Social Work Alumni!

**Abigail Bartlett, MSW, BA** (*Class of 2017*)

**Director of Community Organizing, Healthy Homes Coalition of West Michigan**



From my first social work class, SOCW 145, I never felt lost in a sea of students at Texas Southern University, but was able to cultivate personal interests, build skills (thank you Dr. Willis) and develop meaningful relationships with professors. Having attended a large university for my masters (400 cohort members) the attention, encouragement, and guidance I received at Texas Southern University by faculty and support of classmates set me up to find connection with others and develop advocacy skills that would support my future endeavors in both graduate school and career.

The time I spent in the social work department helped develop my ability to critically analyze my disposition in the world- the influences that shaped my beliefs, the motives behind my behaviors, the biases I hold, and the strengths that I have. That foundation of personal awareness seeps into every part of my work now, and all those writing assignments and reflection papers that I wasn't sure would help me in the mezzo/macro level work are used on a daily basis. These skills have abetted in so many ways, from navigating bureaucratic structures and relationships with elected officials, building relationships with community members, agency partners and colleagues and to think about diversity broadly. This includes age, family, work history, race, education background, family history, interests, and abilities to understand the way we all show up in the same space in different ways.

From the start, I have always wanted to do mezzo/macro level social work and was encouraged to see social work faculty who had worked in non-clinical settings (I'm thinking of you Dr. Queen!). I currently work in Grand Rapids, Michigan (I guess I made it back to the great lakes state, Dr. Milton) at an organization focused on environmental justice where I lead our grassroots organizing efforts with local community advocates to get proactive environmental health policies passed. Our current efforts are to enact a proactive lead rental inspection ordinance that would require rental homes to have a lead clearance prior to families moving in (see [healthyhomescoalition.org/raisethestandards](http://healthyhomescoalition.org/raisethestandards)).

As a staunch opponent of incorporating theory and practice in undergrad (many thanks for your persistence, Dr. Loudd), it is now the foundation of critical analysis I revert back to when starting new initiatives or attempting to understand group dynamics, interests, and capacity. In our organizing work we use a stair step model of organizing: educate, involve, and advocate. We engage our community through education-making others aware of the health hazards that exist in our communities and homes. We involve parents, grandparents, and community members to become a part of the work we are doing whether through volunteering at one of our COVID-19 safe drive through events, attending our monthly advocacy meetings, joining a leadership development class, or building a relationship with another parent advocate. And finally, we advocate together. We know that long-term change happens when proactive policies are enacted and resources are readily available. We work with city commissioners to develop implementation plans, attend and speak at city council meetings, and join local advocacy boards. Parent voices are vitally important when policy decisions are made and we work to make that a reality.

Oh, and that friendly reminder from Ms. Ifueko about greeting all those you interact with before getting down to business has never left me. To this day, I am reminded to speak with the person first and the issue second, knowing that rapport building is critical to engage in long-term change work. I am forever grateful for my time in the Social Work Department at TSU, having forever shaped my personal and professional journey for the better!



## Celebrating our Social Work Alumni!

**Stanley Hayes, BA** (Class of 2019)

**Program Support Assistant, Michael E. DeBakey Veteran Affairs Medical Center**



After graduating from TSU, I worked briefly with the Cenikor Foundation as a Lead Behavioral Health Technician. Currently, I work at VA Hospital located in the Houston Medical Center, in the Mental Health/Substance Abuse Clinic. In my current position, I provide support to veterans, assist with all their basic, physical, and psychological needs, address depression, homelessness, and financial literacy. I also help with appointment setting, claim filing, and connecting veterans to AA/NA meetings. Other services I provide include family counseling and anger management.

I have fond memories of the experiences I had as a Social Work major at TSU. In SOCW 360, I was awarded the “World’s Greatest Social Scientist Award” for an SPSS lab assignment, and will always cherish the mentoring Dr. Queen provided to me. My experience with the TSU Social Work Department has been life-changing. The staff constantly reminded me to expand my horizons; not just limit my experience to the population with whom I normally work with. I so appreciate Ms. Omorogbe, Director of Field Education, for assigning me to the TSU Student Accessibility Services Office (SASO) for my field internship during the senior year. It was a great learning experience! My educational plans are to one day pursue my MSW once this pandemic is over. Hopefully, TSU will have started their Master’s program. Based on my experience in the TSU Social Work program, and my practice experience providing services to veterans, I have some advice for the new cohorts of social work students: Enjoy each day there. I truly miss the day-to-day feeling I had in classes...that feeling that I belonged to something bigger than me. *Go Tigers* and future Social Workers!



## What’s NEW in the Department???

- ⇒ Dr. Queen (Dean/ Professor of Social Work) is co-editing a book with Dr. Susan Mapp (Professor of Social Work at Elizabethtown College) entitled, “*Successful Baccalaureate Social Work Programs: A Handbook for Current and Emerging Leaders*”, which should be published in Spring, 2022.
- ⇒ Our TSU Social Work Department has developed 7 new agency partnerships, which serve as internship sites for our senior social work majors. Some of these new agency partners include: Precinct 2Gether Community Services, Windsor Houston, Mission Care Center, Anchor Community Services, and the TSU Tiger Market.
- ⇒ The Social Work Department has transitioned the Social Work Application process, academic advisement, the BLOCK Application process, and other helpful student resources ONLINE, in the Social Work Majors blackboard. Social work majors not on this blackboard should email a request to be added to Ms. Ronda Lewis at: [Ronda.Lewis@tsu.edu](mailto:Ronda.Lewis@tsu.edu)
- ⇒ In February, Dr. Loudd served as Moderator for the National Coalition of 100 Black Women Houston Metropolitan Chapter’s event, “*National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day: Know Your Status*”. The topic for this panel discussion included HIV/AIDS among Black women and girls in the United States.

## Celebrating Social Work Month!



This year, the theme for Social Work Month is “**Social Workers are Essential**”, and Social Work legislators and leaders are bringing

national attention to our work! Senator Stabenow and Representative Lee, both Social Workers, drafted a resolution recognizing the work and values of the profession. In addition, The National Association of Social Workers has a wide variety of online tools to help us celebrate our special month, and educate others about how we are essential! These include: Logos for use on social media, a social media toolkit, a sample press release, promotional gear, short public service announcements (PSAs) about the profession, expert advice about how to promote the profession, and recordings by Mit Joyner (President of NASW) and Angelo McClain (CEO of NASW) from their national radio tour!

NASW President  
Mildred C. Joyner, DPS, MSW, LCSW



NASW Chief Executive Officer  
Angelo McClain, PhD, LICSW



Find the text of S.Res. 115 here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-resolution/115/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22social+work+month%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=4>

Find the NASW resources and tools at: <https://www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Month>

Because Social Workers are essential, it is especially important that we focus on SELF-CARE! Taking care of ourselves, and *addressing our own wellness is also essential!* Self-care is something we should practice regularly– not just on birthdays, or after we catch a cold. We encourage our future social workers in our program to begin making self-care part of your weekly routine! Don't know where or how to start a self-care or wellness plan? Check-out these great online resources to help guide you:

“**Creating a Healthier Life: A Step-By-Step Guide to Wellness**”: <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma16-4958.pdf>

**Tulane University Self-Care Resources:** <https://selfcaretips.tulane.edu/>

### Featured Community Resources

- ◆ The **TSU Career Services Center** is a great resource for our students to get help with writing professional resumés, job searches, mock interviewing, networking and... *free* professional headshots to current students and alumni! Please visit their website for more information at: <http://www.tsu.edu/students-services/departments/career-services/index.html>
- ◆ The **Baker-Ripley Neighborhood Tax Centers** offer *free* tax preparation for individuals and families earning up to \$58,000. Find more information, and schedule your appointment online here: <https://www.bakerripley.org/services/baker-ripley-tax-center>
- ◆ The **Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD** offers a *free* helpline for those experiencing depression and/or anxiety. Contact **1-(833)-986-1919** to speak with a helpline staff person.