CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY
Bridges is the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work magazine. We selected the name Bridges largely because of its symbolism. The term provides an important metaphor for both our profession and our school. Social work is a profession that has, as part of its mission, the goal of building and sustaining bridges among individuals, families, groups, neighborhoods, and communities, and we felt that the title Bridges captured this part of our professional mission. At the same time, the city of Pittsburgh has more than 450 bridges, and Allegheny County has almost 2,000, suggesting an uncompromising desire of the city’s inhabitants to remain connected with one another. In keeping with this heritage, it is the school’s goal to sustain and build bridges among those needing social work services; our students, alumni, faculty, and staff; the community; and corporate and governmental partners. We believe that the information in this magazine is an important way to achieve this goal.

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NOTE: We sincerely apologize for the inadvertent omission of Bobby Simmons, director of career services, from the faculty listing in the school’s 100th anniversary section in the summer 2018 issue of Bridges.

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Bridges magazine is published biannually and is sent to alumni and friends of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work.
Dear alumni and friends,

It’s hard to believe that I am already finishing my first term as dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work. Over the past few months, I have had the privilege of meeting many of you at one of our school- or center-sponsored lectures or events, at our Distinguished Alumni event, at a social work conference, over lunch or coffee, or as I have been visiting local community agencies. It’s been truly wonderful getting to know everyone here—the students, faculty, and staff within the school as well as our rich network of alumni, partners, and collaborators within Pitt, Pittsburgh, and the broader world. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to interact with folks within the Cathedral of Learning and have especially enjoyed the opportunities to begin getting a sense of our connections and opportunities in the broader community. It has been fabulous to see all that is happening around us and how connected the school is to so much of it! This issue of Bridges highlights some of the wonderful work that is going on.

One of the factors that drew me to Pitt was its strong investment and involvement in the community. This term showed us the strength of Pittsburgh and the wonderful connections between the city and the University. In mid-October, we celebrated the grand opening of Pitt’s first Community Engagement Center in Homewood. The opening itself was an example of all that is wonderful about being intertwined with the community around us—a highly diverse group of people coming together to celebrate new possibilities, to enjoy learning from each other, and to just have fun (it’s hard not to have fun when you’re wearing virtual reality goggles to learn about cat anatomy, dancing together to drums, admiring paintings by local artists, or watching children giggle as they squeeze “rubber” frogs cast from seaweed). For those of you who live or work in the Pittsburgh area, the center is open to all, so please feel free to stop by.

On the research side, we recently launched the school’s latest center, the Center for Interventions to Enhance Community Health (CiTECH), an ambitious interdisciplinary effort between the School of Social Work and the Department of Psychiatry led by James and Noel Browne Endowed Chair Shaun Eack. CiTECH addresses a core challenge for social work in the 21st century: translating research- and evidence-based interventions into real-world practice to improve treatments and interventions with those who need them most.

I am not the only new addition to the school this year. We also welcomed new Assistant Professor Brianna Lombardi, whose work examines the impact of childhood victimization and adversity on children’s mental health outcomes. The MSW program at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown also welcomed a new program coordinator, James Andrews, who brings more than 30 years of experience as a clinical/forensic social worker, therapist, administrator, risk manager, consultant, and educator.

As most of you are quite aware, we also experienced tragedy this fall with the anti-Semitic attack at the Tree of Life synagogue in Squirrel Hill. As we came together to support each other, our students, and the broader community, I was awed by the passion, devotion, expertise, generosity, and genuine goodness of our school. I am particularly grateful for our faculty, staff, and students who took the lead in providing counseling services, organizing rallies, reaching out in every direction, and working unfailingly together. In the face of the hate, division, and violence that seem much too common in our society, I am so glad to be part of a school and community grounded in social justice, human dignity, social connections, and the importance of doing all we can to make the world a better place. Thanks to all of you for being part of this extended community and bearers of this set of values and beliefs.

As we come to the end of 2018, I wish you all a new year filled with passion, hope, purpose, and joy.

Please stay in touch: Follow us on social media, visit our Web site, or join us for an event on campus. And you can always reach us at socialwork.pitt.edu. We welcome your input and support!

Elizabeth M.Z. (Betsy) Farmer
Dean, University of Pittsburgh
School of Social Work
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

BASW PROGRAM

Undergraduate Summer Research Program Continues to Attract Scholars
Through the generous support of the Office of the Provost, six undergraduate social work students were selected to work alongside research-engaged faculty members and were supported with a $1,000 fellowship this past summer. BASW students Rowan Connelly, Teresa DePace, Julia Lee, Emily Patrick, Ari Peck, and Elizabeth Steiner were selected to participate in the summer research fellowship program.

To learn more about undergraduate research opportunities, visit socialwork.pitt.edu/researchtraining/undergraduate-research.

Student Receives Honors College Fellowship
BASW student Sarah Krause has been awarded one of 10 Chancellor’s Undergraduate Teaching Fellowships through the University Honors College. She will be collaborating with Associate Professor Rafael Engel to expand on the topic of 19th-century European immigration to the United States in the Foundations of the Welfare State course. She will focus on the history of intergenerational assimilation of European immigrants in the United States and how immigration policies have evolved over time. She hopes that this will help students to place current immigration patterns, policies, and ideologies in historical context.

Student’s Workshop Selected for Conference
BASW student Brandon Thomas was selected to present his workshop, Quick to Judge: Removing the Stigma, at the 2018 National Association of Social Workers Pennsylvania Chapter Conference. Thomas, who also works as a patient care technician in the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, developed the workshop to help attendees identify stigmas health care providers have toward patients with either mental health or addiction issues, primarily those presenting to an emergency room.

MSW PROGRAM

The Master of Social Work (MSW) program celebrated 126 new MSW graduates during the April 28, 2018, commencement ceremony at Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum. Of those students, 25 completed all the requirements for the Community, Organization, and Social Action (COSA) specialization and 101 completed the requirements for the Direct Practice with Individuals, Families, and Small Groups specialization. Each of these graduates is now prepared with the specialized competencies to engage in advanced social work practice. We wish these newly minted MSW graduates the best of luck as they begin their professional social work careers.

The 2018–19 Academic Year class consists of 177 registered students. Of those students, 140 have decided to pursue the Direct Practice specialization and 29 the COSA specialization. Eight students remain undecided. Although the majority of the 2018–19 students are from Pennsylvania, this year’s class has a higher-than-average number of out-of-state students as well as five international students who hail from: China, France, Ghana, India, and Nigeria. This likely speaks, at least in part, to the School of Social Work’s stellar reputation within the state of Pennsylvania, nationally, and even internationally.
This past year, we’ve witnessed a number of changes within the MSW program. Last spring, Assistant Professor Darren Whitfield accepted an appointment as the new Direct Practice chair. We congratulate him on this appointment and also give a warm welcome to both Brianna Lombardi, assistant professor, and Adjunct Professor James Andrews, MSW program coordinator at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. These individuals bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their respective new positions. We are excited to have all three of them assume their new roles within the school.

This academic year, the School of Social Work is celebrating the 60th anniversary of its community organization program—the first and longest-standing community organization program in any school of social work. The school hosted a kickoff lecture, “Reflection on 60 Years of Community Organizing,” on November 5. Please stay tuned for other upcoming events.

PHD PROGRAM

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program has had a really busy year. Our students continue to publish, present at national conferences, and receive external funding, and we are looking forward to another successful year.

Eight students in total defended their dissertations between summer 2017 and summer 2018, including four since our last update: Heath Johnson, Andrea Joseph, Daniel Lee, and Thomas Ylioja. Joseph and Lee started tenure-track jobs this fall, Ylioja is the associate clinical director of health initiative programs at National Jewish Health, and Johnson is the supervisor of the crime analytics division of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police. Three of our third-year students have completed and are defending their comprehensive exams, and we have a number of students who are planning to defend their dissertations this year.

In addition, five new students began our PhD program this fall: Dashawna Fussell-Ware, Jacob Gordon, Soobin Kim, Ke Li, and Laurenia Mangum.

WILBUR I. NEWSTETTER AWARDS

On June 12, 2018, the School of Social Work hosted the Wilbur I. Newstetter Awards ceremony to give special recognition to three individuals who have exemplified personal and professional excellence in their service to the school: Morton Coleman, Mary Page, and Edward Sites.

Coleman is the founding director of the Institute of Politics at the University of Pittsburgh and is a professor emeritus at Pitt Social Work. He served as dean of the School of Social Work at the University of Connecticut, acting dean of the Pitt School of Social Work, personal advisor to Henry Ford II on urban issues, secretary to the mayor of the City of Pittsburgh, and senior social planner for the Community Renewal Program in the Pittsburgh Department of City Planning. He is a renowned community organizer and beloved Pitt faculty member.

Page is associate professor emerita at Pitt Social Work, where she served as the MSW program coordinator, and led the school’s family therapy program. She was previously cited by the YWCA Greater Pittsburgh as Woman of the Year in Education. She is a specialist in interpersonal skills and social group work and developed and implemented the Extended Master of Social Work program, which received high praise from many sectors of the community.

Sites has been a faculty member at the school since 1966 and was awarded emeritus status in 2006. He served as director of admissions and financial aid, chair of the children and youth concentration, coordinator of the joint Master of Social Work/Master of Divinity degree program with the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, coordinator of the Home and School Visitor/School Social Worker Certificate program, member of the doctoral faculty, and founding principal investigator of the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Education and Research Programs. He also is Pitt Social Work’s unofficial historian, and his attention to detail and research skills have helped to archive the work and the 100-year history of the school for future generations.

The awards are named for Newstetter, the founding dean of the School of Social Work, who served from 1938 until 1962. Only two other people have previously received the award: Ruth Smalley and Manuel Conrad Elmer.
The Child Welfare Education and Research Programs (CWERP) are an integrated continuum of degree education and professional development programs designed to strengthen the public child welfare workforce in Pennsylvania. The continuum includes two degree education programs, Child Welfare Education for Baccalaureates (CWEB) and Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL), which operate in collaboration with 17 schools of social work across the state. Training, technical assistance, transfer of learning, organizational development, and support for best practices is provided to the staff and administrators of the 67 county child and youth jurisdictions in Pennsylvania through the University of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center. This integrated array of programs is administered by Pitt’s School of Social Work in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services’ Office of Children, Youth and Families and Pennsylvania Children and Youth Administrators.

Pennsylvania’s professional development programs provide a network of workforce strategies aimed at making meaningful, sustained change in the public child welfare system by increasing the capacity of the direct service and administrative staff who provide services to children, youths, and families. The following program accomplishments highlight the remarkable success of the CWERP continuum:

- Since 2018, 1,162 CWEB graduates have entered the Pennsylvania public child welfare workforce.
- Since 2018, 1,382 child welfare professionals have earned Master of Social Work degrees.
- More than one out of every four public child welfare positions in Pennsylvania is held by a CWEB or CWEL graduate or a current CWEL student.
- More than 1.2 million licensed professionals have received training in the mandated and permissive reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect through an online education program developed and maintained by the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center.
- More than 1,000 current or former foster youths ages 16–21 have attended a weeklong retreat at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, where they focus on goal setting, planning, advocacy, and leadership while building relationships and experiencing college life.
- More than 1,400 training sessions were provided to the child welfare workforce in one calendar year.
- A five-year federally funded child welfare demonstration project focusing on enhanced assessment, family engagement, and the implementation of evidence-based practices is near completion.
- Support of the Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board has included working with more than 300 youths in the foster care system in statewide and regional forums to advocate for improved practices, inclusion of youth perspectives, and better-informed young persons.
- New teaching modalities, such as simulation and team-based learning, have been incorporated into training to better prepare caseworkers and supervisors for child welfare practice.
- Forty-four online course options were provided to more than 6,000 participants in one calendar year.
- Advocacy for child welfare policy and practice improvement has included oversight of citizen review panels across the state, support for the implementation of legislation such as the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P.L. 113-183), and assistance with federal Child & Family Services Reviews.
- Testimony on professional education and training was provided to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Children & Youth Committee and at a congressional briefing held in Washington, D.C.
- An Academic Excellence Award was given to the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center in 2012 by the American Public Human Services Association. In 2014, the center received the Youth Thrive Award from the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

More than 100 University of Pittsburgh faculty and staff members work to improve the caliber of the public child welfare workforce and the service outcomes experienced by children, youths, and families through CWERP. Seventeen schools of social work and the staff and administrators of 67 public child welfare agencies across the state have contributed to and benefited from the success of this remarkable endeavor. The investment in child welfare studies that was made by the University more than 100 years ago has clearly exceeded expectations.
NEW COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH CENTER CREATED

Investigators at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and the Department of Psychiatry in the Pitt School of Medicine have established the Center for Interventions to Enhance Community Health (CiTECH) to study, understand, and improve community behavioral health services.

CiTECH is the first collaborative research center of its kind between a school of social work and a psychiatry department. CiTECH will serve as a bridge to the community in order to conduct translational research on population behavioral health.

The first official pilot study funding was awarded in spring 2018 to Jessica Levenson, assistant professor of psychiatry, and Sara Goodkind, associate professor of social work. This study will focus on improving educational outcomes for underserved youths by adapting evidence-based sleep interventions for use in the community.

The project supports the mission of the center to improve the uptake of evidence-based practices and enhance community mental health services. Says CiTECH director and founder Shaun Eack,

“We believe that when we combine the significant and respective expertise of both social work and psychiatry, we will have the scientific, clinical, and community grounding needed to reduce the multi-decade lag between the development of an effective practice and its use in the community. By bringing these worlds together, we will make research advances more relevant and hope to hasten the translation of evidence to community practice.”

Projects in CiTECH are supported by a number of entities, including the Community Care Behavioral Health Organization, National Institute of Mental Health, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

School News continued on page 18
Elizabeth M.Z. (Betsy) Farmer, the new dean of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, has an impressive academic track record. Before taking over at Pitt, Farmer served as professor and associate dean for research at Virginia Commonwealth University and served on the faculty at Case Western Reserve University, Pennsylvania State University, and Duke University.

But her approach to social work is deeply informed by her experiences as a group home parent, a respite care provider, and a treatment foster parent, all of which inspired her highly influential research into the challenges and complexities of out-of-home placements. This work in the social work field showed her the tremendous opportunities and challenges in a complex treatment system and the potential for interventions to change the lives of young people.

Farmer recently sat down to discuss the strengths and opportunities she sees ahead for the School of Social Work as it enters its second century.

What drew you to Pitt’s School of Social Work?

“From attending conferences and general familiarity with the field, I was very aware of the work that School of Social Work faculty members were doing. I thought they were incredibly productive and innovative. And part of what impressed me was the school’s commitment to community engagement.”

As the School of Social Work enters its second century, what elements of the school’s work and curriculum do you find it important to maintain?

“First, Dean [Larry E.] Davis did a wonderful job of positioning the school nationally for receiving the attention it deserves. Colleagues from campus, Pittsburgh, and the nation recognize the school’s productivity and excellence.

“Therefore, I am in the very wonderful position of being able to build upon a strong foundation. We will strive to maintain the core substantive foci the school has on race and social problems, child welfare, and mental health. Those are all central to social work and are all areas of great strength for the school. The aim is to maintain our strong research and education in these areas and to build from this base to grow and expand them.”

What new initiatives are ahead for the school?

“Having just celebrated the 100th anniversary and commemorated all of the school’s achievements, it’s a wonderful legacy. The question now is, “How do you build on that? What does that second century look like?” And I think the answer is by focusing on how we integrate all that we do to impact the world around us. There is so much going on at the school. How do we bring that together to develop synergy to expand our capacity and ability to create change?

“Community engagement is an area where the school is already quite strong, but we can look to continue and strategically build upon that. Where are the places in the community that we can be more useful? What does that look like? How do we learn from and work with the world around us?

“On campus, the things that could be expanded, I would say, are interdisciplinary collaborations. Areas like integrated health, underserved populations, aging, mental health, and systems change are areas where faculty are already doing strong work, but there is a potential for collaboration that we can more fully embrace and support.

“Another area to expand and focus on is bridging the Direct Practice and COSA [Community, Organization, and Social Action] specializations within the MSW program. We’re well known for that dual focus, but we need to figure out how a student can get an integrated experience of both tracks. Our alumni talk about how both micro and macro issues and skills play out in their own careers. Really, I would say we’re figuring out how we can make our education as relevant as possible for the challenges of the 21st century.”
What are you most looking forward to in leading the School of Social Work?

“This is a time when social work is desperately needed. Social work is critical for moving the country forward and bringing us together.

“It’s also a time of rapid change, driven to a great extent by changes in technology. There are the traditional social work occupations that lots of people do, but there are also other avenues where alumni are exploring and creating new opportunities. Our students and alumni are helping us to think about the wide range of positions and fields where social work leaders, practitioners, organizers, and scholars can help to shape the future. The values and skills learned in social work have such broad-based relevance and applicability.

“I feel incredibly fortunate to be here at this time and in this place. It feels like the pieces are all in place and coming together in ways that will allow us to build on what has been here and explore the possibilities for the future. I see tremendous potential.”

—Elizabeth M.Z. (Betsy) Farmer
Dean of the University of Pittsburgh
School of Social Work
Connecting with the Community

The School of Social Work continues its rich history of community engagement.

By Adam Reger

As the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work celebrates its first 100 years, the fall of 2018 marks another important anniversary. Sixty years ago, in the fall of 1958, the school launched its curriculum in community organization, setting in place a legacy of community engagement that today is stronger than ever.

The community organization curriculum—the first program of its kind in the country—emphasized direct interaction with individuals and communities, advancing the small but growing body of scholarship in the field of community practice within social work.

The first graduates of the program—now the Community, Organization, and Social Action (COSA) curriculum—went on to make significant contributions to the War on Poverty and engaged meaningfully in communities in Pittsburgh and beyond. Students and faculty helped to drive the neighborhood alliance movement of the 1970s; fed the rise of community development corporations in the 1980s; made crucial contributions to the community policing initiatives of the 1990s; and established the Pitt Community Outreach Partnership Center, which engages community partners in neighborhoods that include Oakland, Oak Hill, and Hazelwood.

“Community engagement is inherent in the nature of social work,” says Tracy Soska, clinical associate professor and chair of the COSA program. “Engagement is part of the explicit curriculum. But we’re also learning through engagement, by being out there and applying the methodology that comes from the classroom.”

Theory and research, in turn, affect social workers’ direct practice and dictate how faculty and students interact with community partners. The notion of research and practice informing one another comes up often in discussions among the numerous faculty members and students who are engaged in partnerships with community members.

Although some of the issues of the day may have changed since 1958, School of Social Work researchers remain as committed to addressing vital societal problems today as they have ever been, tackling local and national issues ranging from racial and gender disparities to income inequality and intergenerational poverty.
Using Education as a Lever: Pitt-Assisted Communities & Schools

Led by faculty members John Wallace and James Huguley and program director Esohe Osai, the Pitt-Assisted Communities & Schools (PACS) initiative was founded in 2015. Its mission is to enrich the lives of children in Pittsburgh’s disadvantaged Homewood neighborhood, leveraging University of Pittsburgh resources to support students in neighborhood schools, specifically Lincoln PreK–5, Pittsburgh Faison K–5, and Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy 6–12. The work is funded by the Richard King Mellon and the Pittsburgh foundations.

By establishing a regular and consistent University of Pittsburgh presence in Homewood, the aim is to create a college-going and career-oriented culture not only among neighborhood students but also in the broader community.

PACS grew out of a decade of University engagement in Homewood led by Wallace, a native of the neighborhood who also is senior pastor at Homewood’s Bible Center Church. He was inspired by the Harlem Children’s Zone, a large-scale nonprofit organization aimed at breaking cycles of intergenerational poverty for families and children, and attended a three-day practitioners institute to learn more about the organization.

“We [the institute attendees] were blown away by what they were doing on behalf of children in central Harlem,” says Wallace. “They had all the problems our Homewood kids had, but multiply it by 10. We all agreed that we wanted to pursue a model like that in Homewood.”

PACS, like the resulting Homewood Children’s Village, seek to use education as a lever to improve the outcomes of the neighborhood’s children.

“Our aspiration is to do for poor children what middle- and upper-class parents do naturally: give them access to quality education,” Wallace says. “As a Head Start graduate myself, I fully appreciate the importance of education.”

PACS partner schools have seen significant improvements in outcomes, including lowered rates of expulsion. Students have benefited from significant exposure to Pitt resources, including meetings with representatives from the School of Nursing, College of Business Administration, and Swanson School of Engineering.

As in the Homewood Children’s Village, Wallace and his colleagues use a two-generation framework that considers child, parent, and community rather than viewing children in isolation. That means supporting children’s growth and success by building parent and community stability.

In support of that goal, PACS includes the Parent Education and Employment Initiative, which supports community members with parenting resources through the Pittsburgh Parenting Project and workforce development opportunities via Talent Pathways Through Community Engagement, a pilot program aimed at serving economically disadvantaged populations in neighborhoods proximate to the Forbes/Fifth corridor. And the Manufacturing Assistance Center (MAC), a Swanson School-supported program, offers advanced manufacturing machinist training certification programs that result in living wage jobs for its graduates.

The neighborhood has seen promising changes, Wallace says, from the relocation of MAC to Homewood to the opening of the Everyday Café, a much-needed social gathering space where community members can meet.

“All of this is built with the needs and aspirations of the community at the center,” Wallace says. “The goal is to normalize a neighborhood many have forgotten and hopefully catalyze social and economic development.”

PACS also mobilizes student engagement through service learning and volunteer opportunities. Several School of Social Work students have conducted their field placements at the Homewood Children’s Village, while Pitt Center on Race and Social Problems fellows have worked in the neighborhood. The recent opening of the first Pitt Community Engagement Center (CEC) on North Homewood Avenue has opened the door to a significant uptick in the number of student volunteers.

Just as important, the Homewood CEC creates a permanent University presence in Homewood, undergirding the creation of a college-going culture in the neighborhood by shifting the idea of the University of Pittsburgh from a distant cluster of academic buildings to a center just down the street, operated and staffed by faculty members and students whom residents encounter regularly.

“This is not an overnight project to transform communities that have been neglected,” Wallace says. “But we are heading in the right direction and making progress.”
Diverting the Pipeline: Just Discipline

Huguley, the coprincipal investigator on PACS, also is helping to steer pioneering research on racial disparities into how in-school discipline is applied.

The report issued by Huguley and his team, *Just Discipline and the School-to-Prison Pipeline in Greater Pittsburgh*, collected data from area school districts, comparing district suspension rates to the state average and tabulating racial disproportionalities. The report and other work of the project was funded by The Heinz Endowments.

“We were startled to find that Black students in Allegheny County were more than seven times as likely as their White peers to be suspended,” says Huguley. That figure is substantially higher than the 5.5 to 1 rate at which Black students across Pennsylvania face exclusionary disciplinary practices compared to White peers.

Exclusionary disciplinary practices, which remove students from the classroom, have been found to have serious negative consequences for students, including lower academic performance and an increase in school dropouts.

The project grew in part from Huguley’s academic interest in looking at the way that school climate affects student achievement, particularly among Black students.

“We were very interested in how students of color were experiencing school discipline,” Huguley says. “Suspensions have been a major issue, particularly in connection with the school-to-prison pipeline, where school discipline can contribute to student engagement with the criminal justice system.”

The school-to-prison pipeline is perhaps the gravest effect of the excessive use of exclusionary discipline. The term school-to-prison pipeline refers to the process whereby in-school discipline increases students’ likelihood of encountering the juvenile justice system, which in turn is associated with significantly higher negative personal, educational, and economic consequences for youth.

Digging deeper into the project, the researchers identified a quandary with regard to Black students. In urban schools, the overall rate of suspensions was higher than in suburban schools, meaning the average Black student was more likely to be suspended. But in suburban schools, where there are typically fewer Black students enrolled, the overall rate of suspensions was lower, but the likelihood of Black students being suspended relative to White classmates rose significantly.

The report offers as a solution the Just Discipline and Climate Model, an integrative approach to school discipline that builds on a foundation of school community buy-in, getting everyone from teachers and staff to students and families on the same page regarding effective discipline reform.
COVER STORY

Homewood community member Jaden McDougald (left) chatted with Marcus Poindexter (SOCWK ’18G), teaching assistant in the School of Social Work, outside the CEC before the ribbon cutting at the Homewood Community Engagement Center Grand Opening.

The proposed solution builds on this foundation with approaches such as creating a strong relational climate; adding full-time staff; and paying explicit attention to poverty, social context, and race by having staff take bias tests, hiring a teaching staff with strong racial representation, and investing in culturally responsive classroom management.

Huguley and his team have partnered with the Woodland Hills Intermediate School to create a pilot project, currently in its second year, that implements the team’s proposed solutions, also taking into account consultations with leading practitioners across the country. So far, Huguley says, the results are promising, with the number of suspensions and fights both down. And surveys of student and teacher perceptions have shown an improved school climate.

Although ultimately the aim is to make the program available widely as a model for schools, Huguley emphasizes the importance of paying close attention to what the team’s findings have shown, allowing research to drive practice by using observations from the field to make adjustments and improvements to the pilot project.

Huguley also pointed to the importance of advocacy in addressing issues like exclusionary disciplinary practices and the school-to-prison pipeline.

“As social workers, we have the very best evidence of things that need to happen,” he says, “and we need to use our platform and knowledge base to move policy in the right direction.”

Focusing on People: The Pittsburgh Wage Study

As debate around raising the minimum wage, including the national Fight for $15 campaign, picks up steam, a team of School of Social Work researchers is exploring the real-life effects of wage increases and considering the broader policy implications of such decisions.

The Pittsburgh Wage Study has its origins in the public testimony of Associate Professor Jeffrey Shook before Pittsburgh’s City Council, which led to a partnership with local representatives of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). While data existed on the effects of smaller wage increases, only a few localities, Seattle, Wash., among them, had raised the hourly minimum wage all the way to $15.

“Although the wage issue has gotten a lot of attention, not as much has been paid to what effect this will have on people,” says Shook.

Both SEIU and the research team had a strong interest in exploring that question. By attending meetings of workers, the research team connected with union members employed by a hospital that had recently granted a wage increase to $15 per hour.

The team conducted in-depth interviews with workers aimed at discovering what changes the wage increase had brought, constructing a diverse sample with regard to age, race, and whether respondents had children or not.
Interviewers had the employees fill out household budgets to identify areas of financial hardship. Researchers complemented that qualitative data with a large-scale quantitative survey of workers.

“One thing we’re learning is that raising wages is not the only consideration,” says Shook.

Unintended consequences of the wage hike include resentment among employees who may have seniority over colleagues now receiving the same pay and a lessened incentive for employees to join a union. And a rise in wages can create what Associate Professor Sara Goodkind calls a “benefits cliff,” with workers’ increased wages making them ineligible for public benefits meaning that some workers may actually be worse off after a wage increase.

The Pittsburgh Wage Study is driven in part by a common interest among team members in studying the pervasive effects of poverty.

“Poverty underlies so much of what we study in social work practice and research,” says Goodkind.

Associate Professor Rafael Engel agrees: “Whatever topic someone is addressing in social work, poverty may not be the cause, but it’s almost certain to exacerbate the problem.”

“It’s really important that we engage with these broader structural issues,” says Shook. “Social workers can bring a much different perspective to the conversation compared to economists. There’s been so much focus on what the macroeconomic effects are going to be, but how does this affect people?”

In September, the Pittsburgh Wage Study team held a two-day symposium to share its findings with a broad range of stakeholders. Day one of the symposium featured scholars sharing their findings based on the wage increases in other cities, while on day two, policymakers were invited to respond to these findings and members of the public were given a chance to voice their opinions.

The Pittsburgh Wage Study represents a “ground-up approach” to the topic, says Sandra Wexler, former director of the school’s master’s program and a consultant on the project. Every phase of the project has been carried out in collaboration with SEIU partners. That approach is in contrast to experimental studies that attempt a specific intervention and then measure the results.

“There’s a relationship between what we do in the classroom and in the field,” says Wexler. “Sometimes we go top down, but at other times, we begin with relationships in the field. That’s consistent with social work’s philosophy of working in partnership with communities and integrating theory into that work.”

The notion of translating research into practice has strongly informed the Pittsburgh Wage Study.

“There is a limit to what quantitative research can provide,” says Engel. “Each half of our research informs the other. We may find out we’re not always asking the right questions and then make changes. That interplay is one more reason community engagement is important—it drives and informs research. The two aren’t siloed.”

Going forward, the team plans to continue sharing its results, creating an ongoing conversation and eventually making specific recommendations for policymakers and employers.

One opportunity Engel hopes for is to present workers' perspectives directly to employers.

“Many employers don’t realize exactly what their workers’ experiences are,” he says. To back up employees' accounts with data could provide a compelling case, one many employers may not have fully appreciated. “The aim is that they [employers] will end up understanding in multiple ways what this means for people’s lives.”

Redefining Resilience: Gwen’s Girls

In addition to contributing to the Pittsburgh Wage Study, Goodkind is one of three partners in a research project aimed at enhancing programming for high school-age participants in Gwen’s Girls, a local nonprofit that offers holistic programs for at-risk girls.

Founded in 2002 by Gwendolyn J. Elliott, one of Pittsburgh’s first Black female police officers, Gwen’s Girls provides needed services and support to girls and young women. It has helped more than 2,500 young Black women to avoid the most common pitfalls facing them, and a recent survey found 100 percent of participants advancing to the next grade level, avoiding pregnancy, and staying out of the juvenile justice system.
“This is a time when social work is desperately needed. Social work is critical for moving the country forward and bringing us together.”

— Elizabeth M.Z. (Betsy) Farmer
Dean, University of Pittsburgh
School of Social Work
The project, titled Redefining Resilience and Reframing Resistance: Evaluation of a Violence Prevention and Health Promotion Empowerment Program for Black Girls, is a collaboration among Goodkind, Gwen’s Girls Executive Director (and daughter of its namesake) Kathi R. Elliott, and Britney Brinkman of Point Park University. Its goal is to supplement existing offerings with programming that addresses the specific needs of high school girls.

“We realized that we needed to engage differently with high school girls,” Goodkind says. “That fit really well with our work on creating systemic change to reduce barriers to Black girls’ equity.”

The team’s approach is to involve girls in advocacy efforts and in leading community and political change. “A lot of programs focus on fixing girls, but our premise is that we’re going to involve girls in fixing society,” says Goodkind. “These challenges exist not because something is wrong with them but because of social inequities that exist around them.”

The program enlists girls in fixing society by training them as researchers who are in effect investigating the conditions of their own lives by performing community-based participatory research. Girls review and critically assess statistics about Black girls in the region as well as reflect on and analyze their own experiences. They may interview each other, policymakers, or other decision makers they come in contact with, asking questions that they want to know more about.

“We really want to base the research component off conversations with the girls and have them decide what questions they want to explore,” says Goodkind. “What do we need to know to make Pittsburgh a better place for Black girls?”

The project developed from Kathi Elliott’s invitation to Goodkind to join the Gwendolyn J. Elliott Institute, which advised Gwen’s Girls on programming targeted at Black girls. The collaboration grew naturally out of that work, Goodkind says, and when the researchers became aware of a funding opportunity from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Interdisciplinary Research Leaders program, it was a natural fit, because the program provides funding not just for academic researchers but also for community partners.

“Part of the theory behind this project is thinking critically about what empowerment means,” says Goodkind. “I think we’ll see more individual changes in these girls by connecting with broader change efforts so that they start to hear a very different message from ‘Something is wrong with you,’ which so often is what they hear. When they’re given the support to try to change the world instead, it completely transforms the story.”

The project demonstrates social work’s ability to focus on both individuals and broader societal factors, Goodkind says, by thinking about how both individuals and communities can contribute to social change.

Edoukou Aka-Ezoua (left), a Pitt MSW student intern, has fun doing arts and crafts with neighborhood children.
The staff and associates of the Center on Race and Social Problems (CRSP) continue to work hard to provide a forum for addressing America’s defining social problem: race. The activities in which we engage seem to be needed now even more than they were when CRSP was launched in 2002. Ironically, only a short time ago, many believed that our country had moved into a post-racial era. Unfortunately, their beliefs were premature. But we remain undaunted in our efforts to bring about a more perfect America, and we could not continue our efforts without the support of so many at the University of Pittsburgh and in the larger Pittsburgh community. So we want to give thanks to all of you who have helped to build and sustain the center.

Fall Speaker Series
Our speaker series continues to attract very large, diverse audiences. Thanks to the generosity of the law firms Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC and Reed Smith LLP, we are able to offer outstanding rosters of scholars and practitioners who share the most up-to-date data, research findings, and thinking on race and social problems. It also is because of the generous support of these two law firms that the center is able to provide complimentary lunches to speaker series attendees. Since the start of the 2016–17 speaker series, we have invited all lecture attendees to bring nonperishable food items with them, and we then pass those items on to a local food bank.

Journal Readership
Our journal, Race and Social Problems, has become a highly successful publication in the social sciences. It is a multidisciplinary and multiracial journal. It has just this year received an impact score from Thomas Reuters via Journal Citation Reports, which indicates that it is well read by scholars. The June 2018 issue included articles examining connections among political affiliation, racial resentment, and intimate relationships. Access to the journal can be found via the center’s Web site, crsp.pitt.edu.

Thursday, September 20
“The Causes and Consequences of 21st-century Segregation”
Douglas S. Massey, Henry G. Bryant Professor of Sociology and Public Affairs, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University

Wednesday, October 24
“Education Is Not Enough to Close the Racial Wealth Gap”
Danyelle Solomon, Senior Director, Race and Ethnicity Policy, Center for American Progress

Wednesday, November 14
“Measuring and Projecting Race and Ethnicity”
Howard Hogan, Chief Demographer, U.S. Census Bureau

Wednesday, December 12
“Punishment, Race, and Social Bonds: A History of Law Enforcement in America”
Ekow N. Yankah, Professor of Law, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University
**Summer Institutes**

This summer, we held three successful Summer Institutes. On June 6, the annual Race and Child Welfare institute focused on the opioid crisis. Opioid overdose is now one of the leading causes of death for young adults, whose children often end up in the child welfare system. On July 11, Pittsburgh Black elected officials provided an in-depth analysis of unemployment and poverty in the region. On July 25, the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police and the Department of Public Safety presented the third in a series of institutes that examined the intersection of race and police work. These institutes are part of an ongoing effort to build awareness of racial bias in everyday encounters.

![Pictured from left to right are Ed Gainey, Larry E. Davis, Jake Wheatley, and DeWitt Walton.](image)

**National Grant Awarded**

Over the years, CRSP has funded projects in disciplines such as law, criminal justice, medicine, nursing, education, developmental psychology, psychiatry, sociology, economics, public and international affairs, and business. Our analysis of the 10-year period from 2004 to 2014 found a return on investment of more than $6 for every dollar awarded. We hope to continue this outstanding track record. Most recently, School of Social Work Assistant Professor Jaime Booth leveraged her CRSP Pilot Study funding into a national grant. She was awarded an $836,699 grant by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to study impoverished Black youths. The center continues to seek proposals from qualified researchers for funding for 2018–19. Visit our Web site for details.

![Audience members at the July 25, 2018 Summer Institute](image)

In summary, CRSP has had another successful year. We encourage you to visit our Web site and attend our events whenever possible. Again, we truly appreciate your ongoing support. ■
Honoring University of Pittsburgh at Bradford and Titusville President Livingston Alexander

(Below are the remarks given by Stephanie Eckstrom, coordinator of the MSW Program at Pitt–Bradford, at President Alexander’s retirement celebration)

The Pitt–Bradford MSW Program started here in 2002, and I can tell you that Pitt main expected the program to last one, maybe two cohorts, and we are now recruiting for our ninth. And while it has been a collective effort, I truly believe that your ongoing support of the program has been a steadfast pillar of its longevity. Without your consistent interest, this program would have been easily dismissed by the larger bureaucratic offices. It doesn’t engage in glamorous research, and it certainly doesn’t make Pitt a ton of money. But what the Pitt–Bradford MSW program does do is educate local, clinical professionals who are invested in the wellbeing of our communities. I think this is where you connect with the program, recognizing and believing in the power of education to solve difficult, social problems.

On behalf of Dean Larry Davis, it is my honor to present you with the Pitt School of Social Work Award of Recognition. I am proud to reveal that the words on the plaque are my creation, as this is how I truly feel:

“[we want to recognize] your unwavering support of social work education, facilitating opportunities for students to learn and strengthen our communities. You have embodied the values of social work: enacting empathy and respect; upholding human dignity; and advocating for social justice.”

To me, you think like a social worker, and there really is no greater compliment that I can give. Thank you for everything.

(Here is the letter from Dean Davis that accompanied the award.)

Dear Livingston,

With my retirement on the horizon, I’ve been giving a lot of thought to all that we’ve accomplished in my 17 years as Dean of Pitt Social Work. I’m sure you, too, have reflected on the tremendous advancements and achievements at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford during your long tenure as President.

As you plan for retirement, I wanted to let you know how much I appreciate your leadership and friendship over the years. You have been a constant champion and advocate for our social work program and our students on the Bradford campus. You have shown great care and concern for others in your time as President and you have always engaged in the difficult but needed conversations around race, poverty, addiction, and mental health. As a social work scholar, I am pleased and proud of your great work.

It is my distinct honor and privilege, then, to honor you with the enclosed Pitt School of Social Work Award of Recognition for your unwavering support of social work education, facilitating opportunities for students to learn and strengthen our communities. You have embodied the values of social work: enacting empathy and respect; upholding human dignity; and advocating for social justice.

I regret that I cannot be there in person to bestow this award upon you as the Pitt Bradford community celebrates your life and legacy at the regional campus. I have asked our Program Coordinator at Pitt Bradford Stephanie Eckstrom to share this honor with you on my behalf. Please know that Stephanie carries with her the admiration and appreciation that we all have for you and your impact on Pitt Social Work and the greater Bradford community.

On behalf of the school and our students, thank you for playing an important role in the success and impact of our social work program at Pitt–Bradford. We appreciate you.

With gratitude,

Larry E. Davis
Dean and Donald M. Henderson Professor, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, and Director, Center on Race and Social Problems
Alumnus Jeffrey Bolton Reflects on the Impact of His Education on His Career

In fall 2017, the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business launched a joint Master of Social Work (MSW)/Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program. The joint degree program is designed to provide students with a unique combination of social work knowledge and skills and exceptional strength in management decision making and leadership. Although this is a new program, in the past, some Pitt MSW students did go on to pursue an MBA. One of those graduates is Jeffrey W. Bolton. Bolton earned his MSW at Pitt Social Work in 1979 and returned to Pitt to earn his MBA in 1987. After serving in various roles at Carnegie Mellon University, including chief financial officer, he joined the Mayo Clinic, where he currently serves as chief administrative officer and vice president. Bolton reflects on his time at Pitt and the impact of his education on his work today.

How has the social work education you received at Pitt helped you in your career?

“There are significant benefits to a social work education. I recognized, from a career standpoint, that I was interested in opportunities in a mission-oriented organization. It also helped me to develop interpersonal skills and taught me group dynamics, which have been extremely helpful throughout my career.”

Why did you decide to get your MBA?

“My second job out of graduate school was with the City of Pittsburgh as a grants administrator working on a program that provided job skills to the unemployed. It was a good program. However, many good programs in the private and nonprofit sectors were eliminated under [then President Ronald] Reagan. I realized how vulnerable important social programs are because they depend on external funding from the state, county, and federal governments; it is unreliable support. I wanted to learn another set of skills because although these programs and organizations may have a critical societal mission, they are vulnerable without a sustainable business model. I wanted to create business models to support social services.”

What do you feel are the benefits of having both degrees?

“Both degrees gave me a combination of skills; they are complementary degrees. Social work skills make you a more effective and successful leader, and they are so important in the day-to-day work. Being able to understand people and practicing active listening are key skills.”

What do you envision the next generation of MSW/MBA graduates doing?

“I’m excited about the next generation. Millennials are incredibly bright, energetic, and looking for a purpose in their work. An MSW/MBA matches that purpose-driven philosophy with business skills. Today, social entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the social service realm. Leaders in program entrepreneurship will be an important part of training.”

If the dual degree program existed back when you got your MSW, would you have gotten both degrees simultaneously?

“Yes, and I probably would have focused more on administration and research. It certainly would have been more efficient [than getting both degrees separately].”
DEVELOPMENT AND ALUMNI NEWS

2018 Alumni Awards

Distinguished Alumnus—Social Work Education

David Miller (PhD ‘93)
Associate Professor, Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University

David Miller’s research focuses on the health status of African American males. Specifically, he is investigating how African American males participate in the informed decision-making process regarding cancer screening. Miller’s interests also include health behaviors of minority men, development and validation of the Urban Hassles Index, retirement preparation and the role of social workers for those falling short of post-employment income streams, and the influence of social networks on the sexual behaviors of elderly adults. Miller chairs the health path of study and is the lead instructor for the school’s research sequence. He also is director of the International Education Program at the Mandel School.

Outstanding Alumni Awards

Samantha Balbier (MSW ‘98)
Executive Director, Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership

Samantha Balbier has led the Greater Pittsburgh Nonprofit Partnership for the past four years, coordinating and guiding the collective voice of the nonprofit community to advocate and lobby for critical issues affecting the sector. At a time when policy practice has resurfaced as vital to effective social work practice, Balbier has stood out in the region for her leadership and passion. She has given back to the school in many ways, including offering the keynote address at Pitt Social Work’s student-organized policy practice forum on proposed federal budget cuts. Her knowledge and understanding of the budget climate and how it impacts human services both locally and nationally are remarkable.

Rosa Davis (BASW ‘81, MSW ‘86)
Executive Director, POWER

Rosa Davis has led the Pennsylvania Organization for Women in Early Recovery (POWER) for 26 years, growing the organization from one program to a multifaceted continuum of treatment and support services designed to reflect women’s lives and experiences. Davis’ leadership and impact have been critical to addressing issues related to addiction and trauma in the region. Her reputation is enhanced by her involvement with several professional and community organizations. Davis is committed to supporting women in recovery, and she is beloved for both her expertise and her compassion.

Distinguished Alumnus—Social Work Practice

Don Goughler (MSW ’76)
Executive in Residence, The Forbes Funds

Don Goughler is a nationally recognized leader and executive coach in nonprofit executive management. He served as CEO of Family Services of Western Pennsylvania (now Wesley Family Services) for 15 years, managing a $27 million budget and leading a staff of more than 500 people. Prior to that role, Goughler was CEO of Southwestern Pennsylvania Human Services, Inc., for 22 years. In his current role as executive in residence at The Forbes Funds, he has provided direct coaching to more than 220 executive directors and board leaders, sharing his expertise and wisdom with the next generation of nonprofit leaders in the region. Goughler is a highly visible and impactful alumnus of the School of Social Work, where he has been an adjunct instructor for more than 20 years.


**Outstanding Field Instructor**

**Robyn Markowitz Lawler (MSW ’10)**
Assistant Director, Hillel Jewish University Center of Pittsburgh

Robyn Markowitz Lawler has been a go-to field instructor for Pitt Social Work since shortly after her graduation. She is lauded by the field staff for her interpersonal skills, planning and organization, and leadership. She has hired several of her interns upon completion of their placement, confirming the strong partnership Markowitz Lawler has forged between Hillel and Pitt Social Work.

**Rising Star**

**Monica Ruiz (BASW ’15, MSW ’17)**
Executive Director, Casa San José

Monica Ruiz is the executive director of Casa San José, a nonprofit serving the needs of the Latino community in Western Pennsylvania. She has been a powerful advocate for Latinos on legal, housing, development, and educational issues. Ruiz fights for those facing deportation proceedings and launches projects to assist women, youths, and high school students. She received the 2018 New Person of the Year Award from the Thomas Merton Center for her work.

From left to right, John Wilds, Dean Betsy Farmer, and other guests show their Pitt pride at the Distinguished Alumni Awards Program on October 3, 2018.

Pictured from left to right are Monica Ruiz, Robyn Markowitz Lawler, Samantha Balbier, Donald Goughler, David Miller, Dean Betsy Farmer, and Molly Allwein.

Pictured from left to right Keith Caldwell, Mary Ohmer, Monica Ruiz, and Tracy Soska at the Thomas Merton Center.
Journal Articles


Reports


Books


Book Chapters


Presentations


Goodkind, “Navigating Cultural Diversity and Bias,” presentation for juvenile court judges and personnel sponsored by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, Pittsburgh, Pa., September 2017.


Whitfield, “Supporting Gender and Title IX in Our GSPIA Community,” University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, Pittsburgh, Pa., March 2018.


Grants

Sara Goodkind is a coprincipal investigator on Redefining Resilience and Reframing Resistance: Evaluation of a Violence Prevention and Health Promotion Empowerment Program for Black Girls, which has been funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Goodkind is a coinvestigator on the Pittsburgh Wage Study, which has been funded by the Heinz Endowments and the University of Pittsburgh Social Science Research Initiative. Jeffrey J. Shook and Rafael Engel are coprincipal investigators on the study.

James P. Huguley is principal investigator on the 2018 Parent College Access and Engagement Study, which has been funded by the Pittsburgh College Access Alliance.

Huguley is coprincipal investigator on the Westinghouse Feeder Pattern University-assisted Community Schools Project for 2018–20. The project has been funded by the Richard King Mellon Foundation.
Huguley is coprincipal investigator on the 2018–20 Justice Scholars Institute, which has been funded by the Pittsburgh Foundation.

**Leah A. Jacobs** has received an Innovation in Education Award from the University of Pittsburgh Provost’s Advisory Council on Instructional Excellence for Building a Classroom Without Walls: Teaching Neighborhood Assessment with Google Earth.

Jacobs is principal investigator for Substance Abuse, Treatment, Neighborhoods, and Housing: How Services and Social Circumstances Affect Criminal Recidivism, which has been funded by the University of Pittsburgh Central Research Development Fund.

**Christina E. Newhill** is coprincipal investigator on Families as Partners in Reducing Violence, which has been funded by the National Institute of Mental Health. This project proposes to develop a novel psychoeducational intervention to reduce violence in individuals with mental illness by employing families and clinicians as partners.

**Darren Whitfield** is principal investigator for the 2018–19 National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Self-regulation Processes and Risk Perception in Reduction Methods among Black MSM in HPTN 073 Study in the HIV Prevention Trials Network Scholars Program.

Whitfield is principal investigator for the 2017–18 Black Adherence Stigma Project, which received funding from the University of Pittsburgh Central Research Development Fund. The current application proposes to examine the effects of microaggressions (i.e., racial, gay-related, and provider microaggressions) on HIV PrEP adherence among Black gay and bisexual men.

### Awards

**Sara Goodkind** received a 2018 Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award from the University of Pittsburgh.

Goodkind received the 2017 Iris Marion Young Faculty Award for Political Engagement from the University of Pittsburgh.

Pictured from left to right are Chancellor Patrick Gallagher, Cecelia Epperson, Emma Lucas-Darby, Shannon Murphy, Dean Farmer, Rosie Rinella, Larry Davis, Valire Copeland, Megan Soltesz, and Tony Gacek.
“Community engagement is inherent in the nature of social work ...”

—Tracy Soska, clinical associate professor and chair of the COSA program

see feature story, Connecting with the Community, on page 8