

# PEARLS OF OUR LEGACY

## RESILIENCE STRENGTH GROWTH



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### Dr. Laura Ainsworth, PhD, LCSW

Laura Ainsworth is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at LSU. She is the director of the Human Development and Family Science program and associate director of the Healthy Aging Research Center. Her primary areas of research are school social work, school mental health, school mental health policy, evaluation research, and community development. Dr. Ainsworth has published her research in peer-reviewed journals, such as *Children and Schools* and *School Social Work Journal*.

### Kimberly Allen, LPC-S, LMFT

Kimberly Allen is a Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with a private practice specializing in relationships. Mrs. Allen obtained her bachelor's degree in psychology from Louisiana Tech University and her master's degree in marriage and family therapy from the University of Louisiana at Monroe. She was a School Counselor in Livingston Parish for 14 years and is currently a Research Associate for the Social Research and Evaluation Center at Louisiana State University where she manages the Louisiana School Social Work Expansion Project.

### Dr. Michelle Alvarez, EdD, MSW

Dr. Michelle Alvarez is a Past-President of SSWAA who was a member of the team that launched the first national school social work model and national certification for school social workers. She has published articles and books in the field in an effort to advance the field of school social work and continues to research and write. She was a school social worker in Pinellas County Florida and project director for a grant that employed school social workers in Evansville, IN.

### Chris Beamon, M.A., LPC, NCC

Chris Beamon currently works for Boulder County Community Services as the Racial Equity Manager. Formerly the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Coordinator for Communities in Schools GulfSouth, Chris has shifted her work to focus more on making a difference on the macro level protocols as opposed to the micro level as a Behavioral Health Counselor. Chris specializes in education and intervention regarding marginalized populations and the structural systems of discrimination and inequity that affect the public and students being serviced by the public school system and civil services. Chris also worked previously as a private practice clinician through *Aspire to Empower* as a specialist with the LGBTQ+ community of the Greater New Orleans area and the state of Louisiana at large using Child Centered Play Therapy and Expressive Arts Therapy. Chris has participated in many conferences as a lead presenter regarding the equity of marginalized populations and informing clinicians on important subjects and research to help better inform their advocacy and ethical considerations when moving through civic, educational, and agency settings.

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### **Susie Bohun, MSW, LCSW**

Susie Bohun (she/her) is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who has spent her career developing and directing programs in a variety of settings including state government consent decrees and homeless service providers. She is a fierce advocate for equitable and forward-thinking program development. She is also a self-proclaimed "anti-burn out champion" dedicated to supporting the next generation of social workers through advocacy for thriving wages, supervision, and fair working conditions.

### **Kenneth Bourne, MSW, LSW**

A licensed social worker in Philadelphia, Bourne is the author of *Anger Management for Black Male Teens: A practical guide on how to help your teen manage their emotions*. He is the first in his family to go college, the first of his high school to obtain a graduate degree, and the founder of Bourne Anew, a platform of workshops and trainings to serve Black boys/men. Bourne has presented his evidence-based, culturally relevant, antiracist, and healing-centered framework for Black males at colleges and universities across the country. He holds a B.A. in Anthropology/Sociology from Denison and a Master of Social Work with a certificate in Violence Against Women and Children and Network For Social Work Management from Rutgers University.

### **Dr. Philip Breitenbucher, EdD, MSW**

Philip Breitenbucher serves as an Assistant Professor of Social Work and a Research Associate at California Baptist University. He provides consulting services to numerous organizations and government agencies throughout the nation. His research interests include leadership, organizational change, social work instructional design, and the intersection of child welfare and substance abuse.

### **Avery Brewton, LCSW**

Avery Brewton is a social worker, culture changer, restorative justice leader, and wellness educator in New Orleans, Louisiana. She has spent years working in the area of trauma and creating trauma-informed and trauma-sensitive educational environments throughout the Greater New Orleans Region. Avery was part of the ground-breaking, SafeSchools Nola initiative and has worked with the New Orleans Public Schools System, Louisiana Department of Health, and Tulane University to initiate the Train-the-Trainers Trauma-Informed Schools project. She now is part of the Coalition for Compassionate Schools, housed in New Orleans, LA.

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### **Tara Brown, M.Ed.**



Known as 'The Connection Coach', Tara Brown is president of Learner's Edge Consulting and an Award-winning educator, author and international speaker. She holds a M.Ed. in Administration and Supervision. Tara's 35-year professional journey as a teacher/coach has taken her from rural Florida to gang territory in California and to one of the largest high schools in Tennessee. Since leaving the classroom, Tara's passion and humor continues to drive her work with adults around the globe. Through her keynotes and trainings, Tara's goal is to motivate and better equip adults with a deeper understanding of the power of human connections to increase motivation, engagement and unleash potential.

### **Dr. James Canfield, PhD, MSW, BSW, LMSW**



Dr. James P. Canfield is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at Louisiana State University. He is an expert on child and family homelessness and has done extensive work developing measures for use in school social work practice. He is the author of School-based Practice with Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness, in the SSWAA series. Dr. Canfield has published many studies on responses to homelessness, presented internationally, and appeared on radio and film as an expert.

### **Dr. Stephanie Carnes, PhD, LLM, LCSW**



Stephanie Carnes is a trauma-focused LCSW and former school social worker from New York's Hudson Valley. After a clinical career engaged in strengths-based work with Central American immigrant youth, she now works primarily as a consultant, supporting school districts and community organizations that seek to better understand their immigrant populations. She holds a Ph.D in social welfare, an MSW, and an LLM Master of Human Rights Law degree. She is fluent in Spanish.

### **Dr. Erin Cole, DSW, LCSW**



Dr. Erin is full-time faculty at Nazareth in the MSW program. Before joining Naz, she had over 17 years of direct social work practice in school settings, medical settings, and working with teen mothers experiencing homelessness. Dr. Erin holds a certificate in trauma counseling and trauma informed care as well as being a certified school social worker and a licensed clinical social worker. Her capstone research was on game-based biofeedback as an intervention to teach self management skills.

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### Marjorie Colindres, MSW, LCSW, PhD Student



My name is Marjorie Colindres. I worked in school settings as a school social worker starting in 2012 with K-12 grade students in the Chicagoland area. Additionally, I work in a private practice setting with children, adolescents, adults, couples, and seniors at Life Balance Counseling as a bilingual licensed clinical social worker. I have also worked as an adjunct instructor at Loyola University Chicago (LUC). Lastly, I am a Ph.D. student at Loyola University Chicago in the social work program.

### Chassity Coston, MSA



Chassity K. Coston, MSA currently serves as principal of Bigelow Middle School in Newton Public Schools. She has previously led schools across North Carolina, Mongolia and Kuwait. Ms. Coston received a Masters in School Administration from UNC Chapel Hill, and has taken her experience to start TBP, LLC and [www.TheBossyPrincipal.com](http://www.TheBossyPrincipal.com), where she mentors educators transitioning to school leadership.

### Dr. Matthew Cuellar, PhD, MSW



Dr. Matthew J. Cuellar is a tripartite faculty member in the School of Social Work at University of Alaska, Anchorage. Currently in his seventh year as a professor of social work, Dr. Cuellar earned his PhD in Social Work from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville with a Minor in Statistics from the Haslam School of Business. He earned his Master of Social Work from The University of Alabama. Dr. Cuellar has extensive experience working in various child serving systems and has served as principal investigator and lead evaluator on several externally funded projects sponsored by local, state, and federal agencies. Dr. Cuellar's current research focuses on school social work leadership and the role social workers play in keeping schools safe. Dr. Cuellar's interdisciplinary scholarship has been published in several notable journals and textbooks. Most recently, Dr. Cuellar's work has appeared in *Social Worker's Desk Reference (4thEd.)*, *Social Work Research*, *Journal of School Violence*, *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, and *Psychology in the Schools*.

### Dr. Shadonna Davis, PhD, LCSW



Shadonna Davis is an Assistant Professor at Clark Atlanta University. She is a licensed clinical social worker with over 15 years of experience in school social work, child welfare, and juvenile diversion. Her research focuses on YPAR projects and youth development interventions conducted in school and community settings. Dr. Davis received a Ph.D. in Educational Policy Studies, a Master of Social Work, and a Bachelor of Business Administration from Georgia State University.

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### Dr. Robin DeLuca-Aconci, PhD, LCSW



Robin DeLuca-Aconci's background of practice is in school social work, focusing on anxiety in children and adolescents and issues of educational access and equity for populations that have been historically under-resourced and marginalized. Her research focuses on the impact of social emotional competencies, human rights education as well as corporate social responsibility.

### Dr. April Duncan, DSW, LCSW, RPT-S



April Duncan (DSW, LCSW, RPT-S) obtained her Bachelor's in Arts & Science from the University of Missouri-Columbia (2006), Masters of Social Work from Saint Louis University (2012) and Doctorate of Social Work from the University of Southern California (2021). She is the founder of BMH Connect, an organization focused on Black youth empowerment through the use of play therapy. Dr. April is a racial trauma expert and leader in her field in advocating for the mental health needs of Black children.

### Jennifer Fields, MSW, LSW



Jennifer Fields works as a School Social Worker/Home & School Visitor for the Elizabethtown Area School District, located in Pennsylvania. During her fifteen years in this role, she has established policies and practices for addressing a variety of barriers to student education. Mrs. Fields has worked with school and community stakeholders to develop programs that directly respond to current needs, which is her passion. Two programs she is most proud of are Bear Bags, which provides supplemental food to district families, and an innovative GED Diversionary Program, a collaboration between the school, local Magisterial District Judge, and Literacy Council, that provides GED services to students under the age of 18. Mrs. Fields is currently working to finish her PhD in Social Work from Walden University. In her free time, she enjoys being active outdoors with her husband - fishing, crabbing, boating, and spending time with her wonderful family and friends.

### Quinn Flowers, LICSW, LCSW-C, LCSW



Growing up in Syracuse, NY, Quinn Flowers always had a desire to help young people. She has a Bachelors degree in Child and Family Development and a Masters in Social Work from Howard University's School of Social Work. As a Social Worker, she served in a variety of settings, including foster care, psychiatric inpatient treatment facilities, non-profit organizations, community outreach centers, telehealth facilities, and most recently the school setting.

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### Christopher Gackenheimer, MSW



Christopher Gackenheimer is the clinical supervisor at Hope Academy in Orange, CT. He has worked as a program coordinator of after school programs and summer camps in Chicago, for Chicago Public Schools, and with children and adolescents in private practice. He earned his MSW at the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois Chicago and is a doctoral candidate in the DSW program at Southern Connecticut State University.

### Dr. Ana Gamez, PhD, MBA



Ana M. Gamez, Ph.D., MBA, is a Professor of Psychology and Practicum Coordinator in the Forensic Psychology Program at the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences at California Baptist University. She has 18 years of graduate-level teaching experience and 21 years of law enforcement experience.

### Erin Glaccum, BS



Ms. Glaccum joined Love146 in June 2017. During her tenure at Love146, Ms. Glaccum has created new systems to support the provision of technical assistance to facilitators and trainers certified in Not a Number, streamlined the re-certification process, and facilitated finance and billing procedures. Ms. Glaccum focuses on building relationships with large state and non-profit partners across the country and providing guidance on how to bring prevention education to their communities.

### Cheryl Green, M.Ed



Cheryl Greene (she/her) leads the Welcoming Schools team that trains and equips educators to create safe and affirming spaces for all kids and families across the country. Welcoming Schools has over 60 facilitators nationwide and the program has impacted over 10.5 million students. Cheryl was a classroom teacher, school leader and basketball coach for over two decades before joining Welcoming Schools. During that time, it became clear to her that until students feel safe, respected and valued.

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### Christina Harper, MA, LSW, LPCC-S, LPSC



Chris Harper MA, LSW, LPCC-S, LPSC is currently the Assistant Director of Student Services and Well-Being at Perrysburg Schools in Perrysburg, Ohio where she oversees all social work related programs. She was the first school social worker hired in the District in 2022. In addition to designing the School Social Work program she developed the Northwest Ohio Collaborative to establish a network of support for the school social workers in the area.

### Lakisha Hoffman, MSW



LaKisha Hoffman has 20 years of experience in mental health and public education, including as a teacher, assistant principal, mental health director, and school social worker. Through her work, she honors the resiliency of the communities she serves while providing them with the resources for healing and transformation. LaKisha serves as the Senior Director of Social Emotional Learning for Sown To Grow, and the Senior Director of School and Community Programs for the Child Mind Institute.

### Rebekah Hrcka, MSW, LISW



Rebekah Hrcka, MSW, LISW, is currently the District Social Worker for Anthony Wayne Local Schools in Whitehouse, Ohio. She has served in this role since August, 2023 and is piloting the school social work program for her district. Prior to this role, she was a school social worker for Spotsylvania County Public Schools in Fredericksburg, VA for nine years. She is working with colleagues to develop and continue to build a collaborative of school social workers in Northwest Ohio.

### Peter Hutcheon, MSW, LCSW



Peter Hutcheon received his B.A. from The Univ. of Iowa in English Literature, Cinema Studies & Secondary English Education. I taught high school English for 3 years in Chicago Public Schools and then returned to The Univ. of Illinois-Chicago to earn my MSW degree. In July of 2019, upon completing supervision and passing the exam, I earned my Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) license. I also have my endorsement in High School Special Education (LBS 1) and my English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement.

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### Dr. Ashley Johnson, EdD, LSSW



Dr. Ashley Johnson has over 15 years of mental health experience. Dr. Ashley Johnson currently works with the Memphis-Shelby County Schools as a Licensed School Social Worker, as well as is the CEO/Director of Wheat & Johnson, LLC Education Consulting Agency. She serves as an adjunct professor for Western Kentucky University within the Social Work Department. Dr. Johnson enjoys working on her research interests centered on social policy and justice along with a great cup of coffee!

### Sheri Koller, LCSW, LCSW-C, NCSSW, PPSC



Sheri Koller, LCSW, LCSW-C, NCSSW, PPSC is the 3rd individual to receive the NCSSW. With over 20 years of experience as a school social worker, Sheri is an expert in the field of student mental health and suicide prevention. As the owner of Brave Journeys LLC, she supports schools nationwide through her consulting business and develops programs to address the complex mental health issues facing our schools, including a fundamentally different approach to suicide prevention and intervention.

### Dr. Jordana L'Esperance, PsyD



Dr. Jordana L'Esperance, PsyD has served Newton Public Schools since 2001, as a licensed school and clinical psychologist and health service provider. "Dr. J" brings experience from outpatient, residential, and hospital settings. She earned her Masters and Doctorate from Antioch New England Graduate School, and also holds certificates in school leadership and special education administration.

### Ted Lewis, M.Ed



Ted Lewis (they/them) joined the team at HRC in 2022 and serves as the director of Youth Well-Being in HRC's Foundation. The Youth Well-Being program is dedicated to improving the lived experience of LGBTQ+ youth in everyday institutions of daily life. Ted leads on Project THRIVE, Time to THRIVE, and HRC's Youth Ambassador program. Ted brought nearly two decades of experience to their role at HRC. Prior to this role, Ted served as the executive director of Side by Side, a Richmond-based LGBTQ+



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### Dr. Brenda Lindsey, Ed.D



Dr. Brenda Lindsey is a Teaching Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign School of Social Work. Her scholarship and teaching interests are focused on how school social workers can integrate evidence-informed approaches that strengthen social-emotional learning competencies for students. She is the Managing Editor of the International Journal of School Social Work.

### Carelyn Loeffler, MSW Student



My name is Carolyn Loeffler, and I am in the advanced generalist program for my Master of Social Work at UAA. After graduation in 2021, I went on to work in behavioral health with children affected by trauma. In my time in this field, I had the opportunity to work in schools with students and families; through this work, I noticed a gap in behavioral health knowledge and a general lack of services in schools, which was a big reason for pursuing SSWEND and continuing to learn and improve schools, I look forward to the coming year and growing my skills in the school setting and making connections with those in the community.

### Dr. Robert Lucio, PhD, LCSW



Dr. Lucio has over 18 years of experience working directly with youth "at-risk" of adverse behavioral, academic, and mental health outcomes. Dr. Lucio has also consulted with local school districts to enhance social workers use of evidence informed interventions, advocacy, and has been actively involved school behavioral health. He is experienced at developing models of risk and protective factors in youth, provided trainings on advocacy, data informed decision making, and cultural diversity.

### Anthony Marino, EdD (Anticipated 2024)



Anthony Marino has worked in education in New Orleans since 2014. He started his career as a teacher in roles including music, intervention, and special education. His school leadership experience includes service as a Special Education Coordinator and a Coordinator of Individualized Learning, Documentation, and Accountability. Anthony received his undergraduate degree in Music Education from the University of Rhode Island, and a Master's in Educational Studies from Johns Hopkins University. He is currently pursuing an Ed.D in Diversity and equity in Educational Policy, Organization, and Leadership from the University of Illinois with a dissertation focus on the school-to-prison pipeline. He is currently the Dissemination Coordinator for the Coalition for Compassionate Schools.



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### Dr. Susan Mason, PhD, MSSW, LCSW-R



Dr. Susan Mason, Professor of Social Work and Sociology at the Wurzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University. Is author of over 40 peer reviewed articles, book chapters and four books. Her School-linked Services book with Laura Bronstein describe and promotes social/health services in public schools. School-based bullying is viewed as a public health social concern. Dr. Mason, a graduate of Teachers College, Columbia, taught in the New York City and Chicago public schools.

### Chantelle McCormick, MSW, LCSW



Chantelle McCormick, MSW, LCSW is the clinical director of the Clementine program through Monte Nido & Affiliates. Their Clementine programs are residential facilities that offer comprehensive treatment to adolescents with eating disorders. In addition to eating disorders, Chantelle has a long history of working with populations that suffer from chronic & complex trauma. Chantelle is currently working toward her Doctorate in Clinical Social Work (DSW) through the University of Pennsylvania.

### Brandon Mitchell, MSW



Brandon Mitchell is a doctoral candidate at the University of Louisville. His research is guided by one overarching question: how can we bolster healing-centered frameworks in schools amid ongoing mechanisms of oppression, racism, and hegemonic domination? In consideration of this overarching research question, two pathways of research examine: (a) the impact of policies and media discourse, and (b) role and practice of school social workers toward justice-oriented action.

### Sarah Mouser, MS



Ms. Mouser, Prevention Program Manager, focuses on building state and local partnerships and community collaboration in order to ensure that Love146 is maximizing its efforts to impact youth. As part of her core job functions, she coordinates the ongoing development and redesign of the Not a Number curriculum. Additionally, she led the recent, rigorous Not a Number program evaluation at Houston ISD. Previously, Ms. Mouser served as the Program Manager for Special Populations at YES Prep Schools.

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### **Dr. Tiffany Nelson, DSW, LCSW, PEL:SSW**



Dr. Tiffany Nelson is an Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois Chicago and is the Immediate Past-President of the Illinois Association of School Social Workers. Her research interest advances the skill development of social workers to support the social-emotional development and mental health needs of students. Her attention is also turned to historically marginalized groups and furthering policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **Anna O'Dell, LMSW, PhD Candidate**



Anna O'Dell (LMSW) is a PhD candidate in the College of Social Work at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Through previous clinical experience as a school-based therapist, Anna further developed a desire to support public school teachers utilizing an asset-based, wellbeing framework. In her dissertation, she focuses on the impact of teacher wellbeing on their intention to leave the profession and how economic factors impact teacher wellbeing and retention.

### **Lou Paschall, LAPSW, NCSSW**



Lou Paschall has practiced School Social Work for 20 years. In 2022, she became the first Tennessean to earn the Nationally Certified School Social Worker (NCSSW) designation. She attended the Manchester City Schools as a child and is honored to provide School Social Work services there. Her research interests are the ethical use of technology, School Social Work supervision, Social Work history, play therapy, bibliotherapy, and animal-assisted interventions.

### **Allie Perez, MSW, LICSW, RPT**



Allie Perez, LICSW, RPT has been a school social worker at AppleTree Early Learning Public Charter School in Washington, DC for over seven years after working as an early childhood teacher. She received her MSW from The Catholic University of America in DC. Prior to working at AppleTree, she provided individual, family, and group therapy for several years at an outpatient counseling center for adoptive and pre-adoptive families and a general outpatient counseling center for families.

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### Dr. Jim Raines, PhD, LCSW



Jim Raines calls himself an accidental academic with the heart of a practitioner. He earned his MSSW at Columbia University in New York City and his Ph.D. from Loyola University of Chicago. Jim has been President of the Illinois Association of School Social Workers, Midwest Council, and the School Social Work Association of America. He has written five books published by Oxford University Press on evidence-based practice, school social work, ethical decision-making, and treating DSM-5 disorders.

### Dr. Amber Ramirez, EdD, MSW, LCSW



Dr. Ramirez earned her BSW and MSW degrees from University of Nevada Reno and her Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership from University of Massachusetts (UMass) Global. She holds an LCSW in CA with experience in providing services at all levels: micro, mezzo and macro. She has been teaching as a full-time faculty member in Master of Social Work programs since 2013 and is currently an Associate Professor with UMass Global.

### Diana Rarich, MSW, LCSW



Diana Rarich is a school social worker of twenty years. Diana is the Social Emotional Learning Coordinator for Cherry Creek Schools. Diana has served across the K-12 and transition continuum, as well as having child protection and residential treatment experience. Diana holds an MSW from the University of Denver and a clinical license. She is a Certified Daring Way™ facilitator and volunteers regularly for the American Red Cross in disaster mental health.

### Ken Rautiola, MSW, LCSW, NCSSW, M.Ed



Ken Rautiola earned his MSW, M.Ed., and Educational Specialist (Educational Leadership) degrees from the University of Maine. A current Ed.D. student at Liberty University and rater for the NCSSW process, he works at a regional K-12 day treatment school in Central Maine. He serves on his district suicide prevention and mental health advisory committees, the NASW Maine School Social Work committee, and has served on his local school board. Nationally, he serves both on NASW and SSWAA committees.

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### Dr. Samantha Reaves, PhD



Dr. Reaves works to integrate her research and clinical experiences to improve outcomes for children. Her research interests lie at the intersection of mental health and education and she often investigates how school or family factors influence student outcomes in underserved communities. As a clinical-community psychologist, she believes great prevention work can be done and realizes the importance of strengthening the systems children are nested in to promote wellbeing, so she is committed to supporting schools, at multiple levels, to improve policies and procedures around student socioemotional functioning. In her work at the NCSMH she primarily supports the Partnering for Student Wellness project, the SOR parenting program evaluation, and the National Quality Initiative.

### Lauren Reed, LCSW, LSSW, MPA



Lauren Reed is a graduate of the University of Memphis where she earned her Masters in Social Work. Lauren has been a School Social Worker since 2016 and thrives in the middle school setting serving students and their families. Trained in EMDR, Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, Mandatory Pre-Screening Agent, and with nearly a decade of experience in crisis response, Lauren brings a wealth of knowledge and perspective.

### Chris Rich, LCSW, ACSW



Chris Rich, LCSW, ACSW Chris Rich is the Senior Manager of Student Health Services at Milton Hershey School (MHS). He has 26 years of experience in social work practice. Specialty areas of practice include ethics, homesickness prevention, student mentoring, bullying prevention, positive behavioral support, student safety, and health/wellness. Chris Rich is active in professional associations. He served as president of NASW-PA (2009-2011) and is currently chair of their Ethics Committee. He is involved in professional review, training, writing newsletter articles, consultation, advocacy, and education on topics of ethics and social work practice.

### Dr. Consuela Robinson, EdD, LCSW-C



Dr. Consuela Robinson is a licensed clinical social worker with over 20 years of experience in outpatient mental health, medical and school settings. Currently, she serves in an administrative capacity co-leading the Social Work and School-Based Mental Health Program in The Howard County Public School System in Ellicott City, MD. Dr. Robinson earned her Master's in Social Work from the University of California, Berkeley, and her Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Bowie State University.



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### Dr. Sara Rodrigues, DSW, MSW



Sara (she/ela) is the Executive Director of Balanced Learning Center. She has over 20 years of experience working with children and families in schools, clinics, private schools, community mental health, home-based programs & residential facilities. The principles of wraparound are a major component of her work as she believes that families are the experts on their own experiences, strengths & needs. She earned her MSW from Rhode Island College in 2006 & DSW from Simmons University in 2023.

### Dr. Kelli Sammis, Ed.D



Kelli Sammis, Ed.D. is a retired school leader who served Texas schools for nearly 3 decades. Her classroom experience ranged from teaching kindergarten to I.B. English, but more than half of her tenure was spent serving as a school and community leader. She brought her passion for mindfulness, social-emotional learning, and educator well-being to the Breathe For Change team in 2021 and has the privilege every day to work on initiatives that bring these tools to as many schools, districts, and communities across the nation as possible because she believes that the most important resource that schools have is its staff.

### Savannah Santis, LMSW



Savannah Santis has almost twenty years of experience as a social worker. In her fifteen plus years in Education, she has recognized several trends. One being that while expulsions rates continue to increase, SEL education was decreasing. Seeing firsthand the negative effects one expulsion can have on a student, family, school, and community, she jumped at the chance to help create the Restorative Practice programs in Berkeley County. In just a few years, there has been significant change.

### Dr. Cynthia Schulemeyer, PhD, NCSP



Dr. Cynthia Schulemeyer, NCSP, serves as the Coordinator of Psychological Services for The Howard County Public School System in Ellicott City, MD. In her current role, Dr. Schulemeyer supervises school psychologists and interns and oversees the school system's crisis intervention and threat management teams. Dr. Schulemeyer is a former recipient of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association's School Psychologist of the Year Award and has over 30 years of experience as a psychologist.

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### Dr. Tasha Seneca-Keyes, PhD



Tasha Seneca Keyes is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work at California State University San Marcos. She obtained a PhD from the University of Chicago and a MSW from the University of Utah. Her research focuses on improving educational outcomes for underrepresented students, with a particular focus on Native American students. She is a former school social worker, and her practice experience informs her research.

### Tamara Sheppard, LCSW, M.S.Ed



Tamara Sheppard has been employed as a school social worker in the Rochester City School District for over twelve years. She also worked as a per diem emergency department social worker for fourteen years at the University of Rochester Medical Center (Strong). In these roles, Tamara has provided crisis intervention and supports, individual and group counseling, facilitated restorative circles, completed mental health assessments and facilitated various workshops to students, families, and staff.

### Dr. Maria Sinkule, DSW, MSW, LCSW



My name is Maria Robles Sinkule. I am on my 16th year as a school social worker in the northwest suburbs of Illinois. Additionally, I have worked in early intervention as a bilingual social worker. I have worked as an adjunct instructor at Aurora University and University of Illinois in Chicago. I am the Past President of the Illinois Association of School Social Workers. I received my Doctorate in Social Work from Aurora University in May 2020.

### Sharana Sloss, LMSW



Sharana Sloss is a Licensed Master Social Worker at Berkeley County School District with over 10 years of experience helping children and families that are exhibiting vulnerable/at-risk behaviors. Sharana has a heart for adolescents and specializes in how thoughts and feelings fuel actions and behaviors. Sharana's current work has been around utilizing mindfulness practices to aide in building youth resilience, structuring positive self-image and establishing tangible outcomes.



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### **Alicia Smith, MSW, LMSW**



Alicia Smith, is a Licensed Master Social Worker that practices in the state of Missouri and Kansas. After obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in Child and Family Development from Missouri State University, she went on to obtain her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Missouri Kansas City. Being actively involved in various non-profit organizations, in 2020 she established her own non-profit, Advantageous Afford, which meets the needs of scholars in our local community.

### **Kennesha Smith, MSW, LMSW, PhD Student**



Kennesha Smith is a doctoral student at Louisiana State University. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in both Psychology and Sociology, in addition to a Master of Social Work from Georgia State University. Throughout her career, she has served different populations in a variety of roles, but her passion resounds with school social work practice. She served as a School Social Worker for five years in Metropolitan Atlanta working with homeless youth.

### **Emilie Souhadra, MSW, LISW**



Emilie Souhrada, MSW, LISW, is a licensed independent social worker for Central Rivers Area Education Agency in Waterloo, Iowa. Emilie is a Past President of the Iowa School Social Workers' Association (ISSWA) and Past Vice President of the Midwest School Social Work Council. Emilie currently serves as the ISSWA Advocacy Legislative Committee Chair and the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) Advocacy and Legislative Action Committee Co-Chair.

### **Stephanie Steward-Bridges, MSW**



Stephanie Bridges has 20 plus years of experience working in higher education, community health and now K-12 Education. Her expertise includes a wide range of experiences; however, she is most passionate about integrating mental health and education. Her most current work includes changing school climate by meeting student mental health needs and coordinating a district-wide Multi-Tiered System of Support process. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Higher Education Leadership at Indiana State.





# PEARLS OF OUR LEGACY

## RESILIENCE STRENGTH GROWTH



School Social Work  
Association of America

### Dr. Elaine Swain, DSW, LMSW



Elaine Chavez Swain is a Filipina-American, born and raised in New York City. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in 1995 and a Masters Degree in Social Work in 1999 from the University of South Carolina. After 26 years of professional experience in the social work field, Elaine achieved a Doctorate in Social Work in 2023. The majority of her experience has been in school social work. Removing barriers to success and negotiating systems is something she loves to do every day.

### Katie Szarzynski, MSW, LCSW



Katie Szarzynski is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and holds her PEL in School Social Work in the state of Illinois. She practices as a School Social Worker by day at Prairie Hill School District and provides outside counseling services with a private practice part time. Katie is a TBRI Practitioner and experienced in Eating Disorder treatment. In her down time, Katie enjoys dabbling in hobbies of hiking, kayaking, gardening, and reading as well as spending time with her family.

### Dr. Leticia Villarreal Sosa, PhD, LCSW



Dr. Leticia Villarreal Sosa is Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development and Professor in the School of Social Work at UTRGV. She earned her A.M. and Ph.D. at The University of Chicago. She is an experienced school social worker and Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Her research focuses on Latinx and immigrant youth, school social work, international social work, and school equity. She is the Editor-in-Chief of the International Journal of School Social Work.

### Dr. Christine Vyshedsky, PhD, LCSW



Christine Vyshedsky, PhD, LCSW is an Assistant Professor in the Wurzweiler School of Social Work at Yeshiva University. She serves on the board of the New York State Social Work Education Association, has worked with children and adolescents for almost 10 years in an out of school settings, and as a therapist has worked both virtually and in person with children and families. Her research focus includes social work leadership and research methods for practitioners.

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## RESILIENCE STRENGTH GROWTH



School Social Work  
Association of America

### Kami Wagner, MA, NCC



Mrs. Kami Wagner, MA, NCC, is the Coordinator of Student Support Programs in The Howard County Public School System in Ellicott City, Maryland. She began her career as a School Counselor and has over 15 years of experience in school settings. In her current role, Mrs. Wagner co-leads the School-Based Mental Health and Social Work Program and leads the school district's work in developing substance abuse prevention programs, trauma-informed schools & efforts to support LGBTQIA+ youth.

### Melissa Webster, MSW, LCSW



Melissa Webster, MSW, LCSW is the Clinical Director of Monte Nido & Affiliates.

### Dr. Shenita Williams, PhD, LCSW



Dr. Williams serves as the Director of Field Education for the School of Social Work at Virginia Commonwealth University, where she plays a crucial role in preparing future social work professionals. During her previous position as a school social worker spanning over 25 years, Dr. Williams worked in close collaboration with fellow school social workers, school psychologists, and school counselors to spearhead significant transformations in the provision of school-based mental health services.

### Makayla Wilson, MSW Student



My name is Makayla Wilson and I am a SWEEND scholar in the full-time Master of Social Work program at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. My practicum placement is at Providence as a school-based clinician at Lake Otis Elementary. Through the program, I will be getting my Type-C certification in Alaska and my graduate certificate in Children's Mental Health. Following my time in this program I plan on working as a school-based clinician. Through my practicum, I have been able to gain an impactful experience of working within the school system and engaging with students.

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