

The Change Agent

The Newsletter for Millersville University's School of Social Work



A LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dr. Karen Rice, Department Chair

Dear School of Social Work Community,

It is with deep gratitude and pride that I share this newsletter introduction with you, my last in the role of Department Chair as I assume a new professional role. Serving in this capacity has been an honor, and I am incredibly proud of the work, relationships, and shared commitment that define the School of Social Work at Millersville University.

In this issue, I am honored to share the incredible highlights of the work in which our faculty, staff, students, and alumni are engaged. Throughout these pages, you will read about transformative efforts taking place on personal, organizational, and community levels. This work reflects the exceptional experiences our faculty and staff provide for members of our social work community, experiences that challenge intellectual curiosity, foster rigorous research endeavors, and enhance cultural sensitivity and humility.

When we create spaces within and outside of our classrooms that foster belonging and value diversity in thought, we make it possible for each of us to become the best versions of ourselves, to shine, achieve our goals, and fulfill our purpose. This commitment to belonging, equity, learning, and service continues to be at the heart of who we are as a School of Social Work.

To our graduating students, I challenge you to use your education as the transformative tool that it is. Continue to seek opportunities to build community, embrace humility, and advocate for just societies, institutions, and organizations by creating more just and fair solutions and being there for others when they feel lost. The world needs leaders like you. I am confident that Millersville University has provided you with the skills, knowledge, and foundation to do this meaningful work. But do not stop learning. Continue to lead with compassion, courage, and purpose.

Congratulations to our graduates and to all of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni for another successful academic year. Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as Department Chair and for being part of a community committed to change, justice, and care.

Take care, be well, and Together, We Can Be The Change!

Karen Rice

EXPLORATION/COMPETENCE

Drs. Rice and Granruth Leave Behind a Legacy of Growth and Innovation

Dr. Rice served the School of Social Work (SSW) as Department Chair for the past 14 years. During my tenure, the department grew in size, becoming the first School at Millersville University. The growth in student enrollment was due to the innovative programs launched under Dr. Rice's leadership, including the DSW Program; online options within the BASW and MSW programs; social justice minor; post-baccalaureate and post-master's certification and certificate programs in Home and School Visitor, School Social Work, Trauma-Informed Behavioral Health, and Advanced Children, Youth, and Families; and two, first of their kind, dual degree programs within the MSW Program: MSW/MS Emergency Management and MSW/MEd Sport Management. Additionally, Dr. Rice co-led the development of the Accelerated BASW to MSW program, which reduces the time and cost to complete the MSW program. The SSW increased the number of innovative practicum opportunities to respond to working students' needs and increased the number of paid practicum opportunities. Three international internship opportunities for students in all our programs were launched, and the SSW hosted a number of interdisciplinary short-term service-learning programs. Finally, in Fall 2026, the School of Social Work will pilot the Human Services Pathway Program with juniors attending McCaskey High School to increase the pipeline of behavioral healthcare professionals.



Dr. Rice's impact was also felt from professionals around the world as a result of her desire to support the needs of our licensed professionals by launching a continuing education program, The Learning Institute, that brings together colleagues from across disciplines and around the world to better understand global issues that affect us all and how to take action to respond justly.

Dr. Rice is most proud of the implementation of resources to address the barriers to undergraduate students' degree completion. These resources include the Lending Library where students can access required textbooks, Student Support Fund to address non-academic barriers to degree completion, and the Clothing Closet to provide students with professional clothing needed for internships and job interviews. Her proven success within the SSW, led to Dr. Rice's appointment by MU President, Dr. Daniel Wubah as the university's Graduation Rates Coordinator. In this role, Dr. Rice will work directly with key university stakeholders to increase MU's undergraduate graduation rates.

Dr. Rice remains a faculty member within the SSW and will continue to teach across all three programs. You will notice one more change; Dr. Rice had a name change to Dr. Halfhide.

EXPLORATION/COMPETENCE

Dr. Laura Granruth, MSW accepted the role of MSW program coordinator in May of 2020 after serving for two years as the DSW Program Coordinator. Little did she know but she jumped straight into the fire of working on the reaccreditation of the MSW program. This is a lengthy and deep dive into what assessing content taught in our classrooms and activities and opportunities the MSW program offers outside of the classroom. She dove into this important responsibility with professionalism and gusto. In 2022, the MSW program was reaccredited until 2030. Concurrently, Dr. Granruth began the process to develop the online MSW program. This program began in fall of 2022. It is a highly successful program that complements our in-person program. After serving two 3-year terms, Dr. Granruth has opted to step down as MSW coordinator and return to her teaching role within the School of Social Work. She also will remain as the coordinator of the university's Civic Engagement Center. We asked Dr. Granruth for her reflections on her time as MSW program coordinator.



Dr. Granruth shared that she thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of the MSW students and working with them on the successful completion of their degree program. She feels that she was often most helpful to students when obstacles arose that could complicate their degree completion by finding ways to keep students moving. Dr. Granruth stated, “I met with many applicants and students on Zoom or in person. There was nothing more joyful than listening to what they hoped for in their career and a life and to show them the opportunities in the MSW program. Often a student would tell me that they were so grateful for personal contact because they didn't realize how they could use our required and elective courses to meet their professional needs to build a career that is meaningful to them. I will miss these interactions dearly.” Dr. Granruth also loved hooding the MSW graduates each May, noting, “I will definitely miss that celebration of their achievements.” Dr. Granruth also wants to take the opportunity to thank her coworkers in particular, she would like to recognize Christine Kolenda and Jostalynn Parry for being great supports and great people. “It takes a team to process hundreds of applications and manage hundreds of students. I would have been lost without their support and kindness.”

Students will still see Dr. Granruth around in our bachelors, master's, and doctoral programs. She usually teaches the policy courses, but you may also find her in a research course or perhaps an elective. She hopes that current MSW students and alumni of the program stay in touch. And she wishes everybody the best in their student career and their professional career.

EXPLORATION/COMPETENCE

DSW Program Turns 10

The DSW Program at MU launched in the Fall of 2015 with an inaugural cohort of 12 students. The impetus for the DSW was the clear need for social work leadership of local and national social service organizations. Historically, the DSW was a “practice degree” that signified advanced clinical training. While advanced practice skills were and are valuable, they do not necessarily prepare DSW-level practitioners for positions of leadership in agencies, organizations, and institutions of higher education. As a result, many social service agencies have been led by professionals not grounded in social work values and experience. The too-frequent result was mission creep, service gaps, and the reification of the “lower status” of social work professionals. Initially, the MU SSW DSW curriculum was designed to train practitioner-scholars who were prepared for leadership positions in organizations and institutions of higher education.

The world has changed significantly since the inception of our DSW program. Over the past few years, faculty in our School of Social Work—like most social work professionals-- have been deeply concerned about the state of our world. We began considering strategies for doing even more to sharpen our curriculum and prepare social work leaders to face the complex challenges of the 2020s. Faculty conversations led to a disheartening consensus: training students to lead organizations that were part of the status quo; preparing students to teach in institutions that no longer embrace critical thinking; and preparing scholars to conduct research during a time when agendas are censored seemed inadequate responses to the circumstances of our world. It became clear that our doctoral program could no longer train students to succeed in the systems as they are, but rather, our program had to prepare our students to change the systems. The social work faculty made the decision to revise the DSW curriculum so that it now centers on transformative leadership. The courses are designed to train practitioner-scholars who can innovate and drive systemic change. Our faculty prepares its graduates to transform organizations, agencies, and higher education environments. We graduate ethical, forward-thinking change-makers who are prepared to address complex challenges associated with global conflict, environmental devastation, and human rights violations.

– Dr. Heather Girvin, MSS

*DSW 2026 Graduates: Drs.
Karen Lehman, Jeccisa Hippely,
Yanina Marti-Ramirez de
Arellano, Mercy Berkoh, Carita
Mitchell, and Natalie Montero*



Reflections From 2026 DSW Graduates

"During my first DSW residency, a third-year student encouraged us, as first-year students, to start seeking adjunct faculty opportunities while we were still in the program. At the time, the idea seemed impossible given the demands of the DSW program along with my personal and professional responsibilities. To be honest, I also doubted whether I was ready. Looking back, I realize it was not only possible but entirely achievable.

The DSW program has been instrumental in my professional growth. It gave me the confidence to pursue a university teaching position, a goal I had held for years. More importantly, it helped me develop a student-centered approach to teaching by providing tools that support learners while honoring their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and realities.

Beyond preparing me to teach, the program reinforced my commitment to lifelong learning, leadership, and the advancement of the social work profession. It has equipped me to help prepare the next generation of social workers with empathy, critical thinking, cultural humility, and a deep appreciation for the unique strengths and challenges each student brings to the classroom." Dr. Yanina M. Marti-Ramírez de Arellano, DSW, LCSW, RPT-S, CCPT-II

"When I began the Doctor of Social Work (DSW) program at Millersville University, my motivation was deeply personal for reasons that included the trauma of the pandemic and the death of my mother, a life-long learner and firm believer in the power of education. After earning my MSW in 2004, I revisited the idea of a doctoral degree for many years before committing in 2023. My career in school social work has centered on policy and advocacy for underrepresented students in K-12 education. The DSW program strengthened my macro practice perspective and created the opportunity to serve as an adjunct professor at Millersville, supporting students in their practicum and field experiences.

Over the past 20 years, I have led programs serving adolescent parents, students experiencing homelessness, youth in foster care, and migrant and refugee students. Following completion of my DSW, with a dissertation focused on social and emotional learning, I now serve as Director of Safe and Supportive Environments, overseeing school safety, SEL programming, and bullying prevention efforts.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunities provided by Millersville University's School of Social Work and for the program's role in strengthening my leadership and impact. Throughout the program, I received high-quality instruction from professors who were knowledgeable, supportive, and genuinely invested in student success. I also benefited from a cohort of peers who offered encouragement, collaboration, and shared learning, along with a program culture that values student voice, professional experience, and individualized growth. In addition, the challenging coursework and dissertation process helped me deepen my research, writing, and critical thinking skills. The preparation for both scholarship and teaching was not something I initially anticipated when exploring programs, but it became exactly what I needed." –Dr. Karen Lehman, DSW

PROFESSIONALISM/DIGNITY & WORTH OF INDIVIDUALS

SCHOLARSHIP

2026 Lancaster Learns Conference

Lancaster Learns is a conference for educators from different universities in Pennsylvania that supports professional development and provides a space to share ideas, strategies, and experiences to improve teaching and learning. The event itself brought together 120 participants at Saint Joseph's University and included a keynote speaker along with 21 sessions highlighting a variety of topics in teaching and learning. There was also strong representation from Millersville University, with faculty and students both attending and leading several sessions. We are pleased to highlight MU graduate students, alumni, and faculty.

Millersville University social work MSW student Esther Smith, who also serves as Graduate Assistant to Dr. Foels in the SSW Certificate and HSV Certificate programs, was there helping with tech during the session and volunteering in various aspects throughout the day.

Drs. Dianna Montgomery and Leonora Foels presented on *"Active Learning Strategies for Creating an Inclusive and Collaborative Learning Environment"*. Dr. Montgomery, a Millersville University doctoral graduate, who is now a professor at Eastern University, and Dr. Foels led an engaging session focused on moving beyond traditional lectures to create more inclusive, collaborative classrooms. The session included hands-on activities, like puzzle boxes, to connect participants to the topic and sparked conversation and idea-sharing among attendees.



Pictured above are Dianna Montgomery and Dr. Leonora Foels presenting in their session called *"Active Learning Strategies for Creating an Inclusive and Collaborative Learning Environment"*.

Yanina Marti-Ramírez de Arellano and Bertha Saldaña-DeJesús from Millersville University led a round table on *"Incorporating Self-Care while Teaching in Higher Education"*. The session focused on educator well-being. Attendees shared practical strategies for maintaining boundaries and self-care, such as using the car ride home to decompress, disconnecting from email in the evenings, and other ways to stay grounded after difficult moments with students. The session concluded with a short mindfulness activity led by Yanina.



Yanina Marti-Ramírez de Arellano and Dr. Bertha Saldaña-DeJesús presented on *"Incorporating Self-Care while Teaching in Higher Education"*.

Drs. A. Nicole Pfannenstiel and Leonora Foels, and Marie Firestone from Millersville University presented *"The Feedback Is Worth Getting"*, which was an engaging workshop focused on improving how faculty gather student feedback. Drawing from their own experiences, they shared different approaches to collecting meaningful mid-semester and end of semester feedback and helped attendees think through what kinds of questions actually lead to useful responses. A key part of the session was giving participants time to brainstorm what their own mid-semester surveys would look like for their specific classes. The workshop offered clear, hands-on strategies that faculty can easily bring back to their own teaching.

Drs. Leonora Foels, Marie Firestone, and A. Nicole Pfannenstiel presented on *"The Feedback is Worth Getting"*.



Lancaster Learns Conference Experience and A Moment of Reflection

At this year's Lancaster Learns conference, I had the opportunity to hear Dr. Johanna Inman speak about moving from "*pedagogical solitude*" to "*pedagogical solidarity*." She talked about how easy it is for educators to feel isolated with all the demands they face and emphasized the importance of building supportive, collaborative communities instead of working in silos. I especially liked the ideas she shared to break down these silos that included informal coffee meetups, book clubs, and co-teaching as ways to connect, and learn from each other. It was a good reminder that teaching and learning are not things we are meant to do alone.

As I graduate and look back over my past two years here, I can really see how much this experience has shaped me. Yes, the classes and experiences provided me with the knowledge I needed for success, but the learning went far beyond the classroom. I also gained valuable experience working as a graduate assistant for both Drs. Pfannenstiel and Foels and through the variety of conferences I was able to attend. I even had the opportunity to speak on a panel at the 2025 PASSHE conference, which was an especially meaningful experience in my professional growth.

Some of the most meaningful parts of this program came from working with others. There were times when everything felt overwhelming and isolating, especially trying to balance schoolwork, internship, and my home life. What helped me most was the people I connected with along the way, both professors and peers. Being able to talk through assignments, share experiences from our placements, and support each other when things got tough were moments that reminded me that I was not alone. Moving forward after graduation, I want to carry that with me and be more intentional about building community, because we are stronger when we support each other.

-Esther Smith, MSW student



PUBLIC MISSION/SERVICE

School of Social Work Hosts Representative Ismail Smith-Wade-El

As part of National Social Work Month, the Millersville University School of Social Work hosted Ismail Smith-Wade-El, Pennsylvania State Representative for the 49th Legislative District, for a community Town Hall on March 5, 2026, in Stayer Hall. The event focused on critical issues facing Pennsylvania residents, including senior care, affordable housing, and homelessness. More than 100 individuals participated, with approximately half attending virtually, creating an accessible forum for students, faculty, and community members to engage directly with an elected official.

Moderated by Dr. Laura Granruth, Associate Professor of Social Work the event was intentionally designed to connect classroom learning with public policy and civic engagement. Representative Smith-Wade-El discussed the legislative process and the challenges facing Pennsylvania communities. He emphasized the similarities between legislative constituent services and social work practice, noting that both professions address individual needs, collaborate with community organizations, and pursue systemic policy change to improve lives.

A lively question-and-answer session allowed both in-person and virtual participants to share concerns and perspectives on community issues. The Town Hall served as an important civic engagement opportunity, fostering dialogue among students, faculty, community members, and elected officials while reinforcing the profession's commitment to advocacy, social justice, and public service. It also highlighted Millersville University's role in preparing the next generation of social workers to lead with compassion, engage in policy advocacy, and contribute to positive social change.



PUBLIC MISSION/SERVICE

Social Work Students' Policy Advocacy in Action

Approximately 30 Millersville University social work students participated in the National Association of Social Workers-Pennsylvania (NASW-PA) Legislative Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD) in Harrisburg. LEAD is an annual advocacy event that brings together nearly 1,000 social work students and professionals from across Pennsylvania to learn about the legislative process, engage in policy advocacy, and meet directly with elected officials about issues affecting the social work profession and the communities they serve. Attendees gather at City Island before marching to the Pennsylvania State Capitol, where they participate in a rally and legislative visits throughout the day.

Millersville University's delegation was led by Dr. Laura Granruth, who serves as the University's lead faculty member for LEAD and has long championed civic engagement and policy advocacy opportunities for social work students. During the event, Dr. Granruth played a visible leadership role, particularly during the march from City Island to the Capitol, helping students connect the values of the social work profession with real-world legislative advocacy.

The day provided students with first-hand experience in macro social work practice and public policy advocacy. Millersville students met with staff members from Senator Scott Martin's office to discuss issues important to social workers and the populations they serve. Students also enjoyed an unexpected hallway conversation with Representative Ismail Smith-Wade-El, which provided an additional opportunity to engage directly with a state policymaker. A highlight of the day was an extended and highly productive lobbying visit with Representative Thomas ("Tom") Mehaffie of Pennsylvania's 106th Legislative District. During the meeting, students shared their perspectives on social work practice, community needs, and legislative priorities affecting Pennsylvania residents.

Participation in LEAD allowed students to experience the policymaking process beyond the classroom, demonstrating how social workers advocate not only for individual clients but also for broader systemic change. Through meetings with legislators, participation in the Capitol rally, and interactions with elected officials, Millersville students strengthened their understanding of civic engagement, advocacy, and the profession's commitment to advancing social and economic justice. The experience reinforced the important role social workers play in shaping public policy and prepared future professionals to serve as effective advocates for their communities.

We look forward to seeing all students in March for LEAD 2027!



Participating in LEAD--Student Reflection

Participating in the NASW-PA LEAD Day with Millersville University was inspiring, especially as I was advocating beside my professional family. It was powerful to hear from two representatives, a social worker and a nurse, who share the same personal and professional values, and who understand the complexities of navigating systemic supports for the most vulnerable. While I listened to their speeches, I found myself dreaming of being in that role. They were passionate leaders and shared their expertise fighting for changes that can and will positively impact the entire state. I could feel the pride that their team had in achieving the accomplishments of being highlighted on LEAD Day and I was honored to be there supporting their goals. I'd love to learn more about how they turn their idea into an approved bill that shapes lives, and to get a sneak peek of their professional, daily life. Inside the State Capital, I had my first educational, hands-on, experience participating in discussions about policies and law. The atmosphere inside the State Capital on LEAD Day was chaotic, fast-paced, crowded, and loud, similar to the New York Stock Exchange. Business professionals were in a grandiose building, quickly pitching ideas, negotiating terms, and closing as many sales as possible before the day's end. I found this general sales environment to be familiar; however, this time, personal experiences and observations were encouraged over scripts. In the past, I've written postcards, sent emails, and made calls where leaders encouraged the use of scripts to streamline the process and make the biggest impact. So, it caught me off guard that my personal experience was welcomed, and even preferred, in this setting. I also appreciated learning that I don't need to be an expert on the House Bill for my voice and experiences to be important to those within our government. This was my first experience speaking one-on-one with a political leader and I felt like my voice did help 'move the needle' if only by a little. Lastly, I was surprised to learn that when representing an organization and their advocacy, it is socially acceptable to advocate for other policies after I've prioritized their policy goals. When Izzy Smith-Wade-El joined us in the hallway to get a summary of our political adventures at the Capital, I was grateful that he requested details of other House Bills that were important to us. Usually, the constituent is the one bringing the concern to the government official, via school board meetings and local township meetings. However, for the first time in my presence, a government official sought out our opinion as they were actively listening to our questions and comments. It was a moment that shifted the traditional hierarchical dynamic, providing me with comfort and appreciation for genuine connection. Overall, LEAD Day with Millersville University and the NASW-PA was an inspirational, educational, and powerful experience that taught me valuable, advocacy-focused, lessons.

—Gina Krouse, MSW Student



INCLUSION/SOCIAL JUSTICE

Students Share How They Create an Inclusive and Sustainable Tomorrow

World Social Work Day is celebrated every year on March 17th. This year's theme, "Co-Building Hope and Harmony: A Harambee Call to Unite a Divided Society," highlights the vital role of social work in bringing people together across communities, cultures, and systems to shape a more inclusive and sustainable tomorrow.



INTEGRITY

SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS TAKE THE PHI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY OATH

The concept of a national social work honor society came from a group of undergraduate social work students at Michigan State University in 1960. Investigation revealed that local chapters existed at three schools. Those three schools along with a few other schools formed a National Honor society Committee in November 1960.

For more than a year this committee worked on the constitution and other administrative matters. The name Phi Alpha and the key were adopted from the local chapter which existed at Florida State University. The constitution and formal organization were completed in 1962, and six chapters qualified to become "charter chapters." They were Florida State University, Michigan State University, Ohio Northern University, Central State College, University of Dayton, and the University of Tennessee. Over 400 chapters are now in existence, and the addition of new chapters is continuing with the national office held at the University of Tennessee.

The purpose of Phi Alpha Honor Society is to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work. Phi Alpha's slogan that embraces their purpose is "Through Knowledge-the Challenge to Serve." Phi Alpha offers membership to social work students, faculty and practitioners. Each chapter is free to develop a program to meet local needs. The National Council of Phi Alpha, the organization's policy making body, meets once a year at the Council of Social Work Education's (CSWE's) annual program meeting conference, and each chapter has one voting representative on The National Council.

The Theta Alpha chapter of Millersville University's Phi Alpha Honor Society was formed in 1998 and, therefore, is 28 years-old this year! We welcome the following new chapter members for 2026:

- John R. Bair, III, MSW Student
- Stephanie S. Bartley, MSW Student
- Mercy A. Berkoh, DSW Student
- Christina N. Geib, BASW Student
- Kelly L. Goff, DSW Student
- Evan A. Gomez, BASW Student
- Aaron A. Guhl, MSW Student
- Eliz B. Hawbecker, BASW Student
- Madison E. Lazzelle, MSW Student
- Jasmine Ramos, BASW Student
- Trista P. Senez, BASW Student
- Carley M. Smith, MSW Student



COMPASSION/IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

School of Social Work Alumni Lead with Compassion

Bri Stairiker earned her BASW from Millersville University in 2009. She went on to complete her MSW at the University of Maryland, with a concentration in clinical social work, specializing in mental health. Bri obtained her graduate social work license in Maryland and later successfully passed the licensure exam, becoming a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW).

Given her interest in serving those who experienced trauma, Bri became a Trauma-Informed certified therapist through Drexel and a National Certified Trauma-Focused CBT therapist.

While employed at University of Maryland's Medical Center's Department of Psychiatry and CHOP's Department of Psychiatry, Bri engaged in various research projects resulting in a number of publications.

Most recently, Bri opened her private practice, *Unwind the Mind Counseling*, in 2018. In 2021, she became a foster parent and in 2025, Bri, along with her husband, adopted a child from foster care. Bri proudly states, "It all started at Millersville!"



Bri Stairiker,
BASW '09



Leah Ferguson, BASW '20, MSW '21

After graduating from the MSW program in 2021, Leah moved back home to Harrisburg, and became an admissions counselor for Millersville from October 2021 to May 2022. Leah shares how this role was an excellent opportunity to network with other higher education professionals while utilizing her social work skills. This experience led to Leah securing a job with West Chester University in June 2022. Four years and three job titles later, Leah is now advising first-year social work students.

Leah has always had a desire to help college-aged students, especially historically marginalized students and now she is positioned to do just that. Her current role as Student Success Team Lead allows her to support students to ensure their academic success and program completion. She also enjoys serving as a mentor to social work students in her role as practicum supervisor. As Leah shared, "During undergrad, I fell into a deep passion for higher education and college students. I wrote 75% of all my papers on marginalized students in higher education, and now I am summoned to be on committees and work to close some gaps. Full circle in such a short time!"

COMPASSION/IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

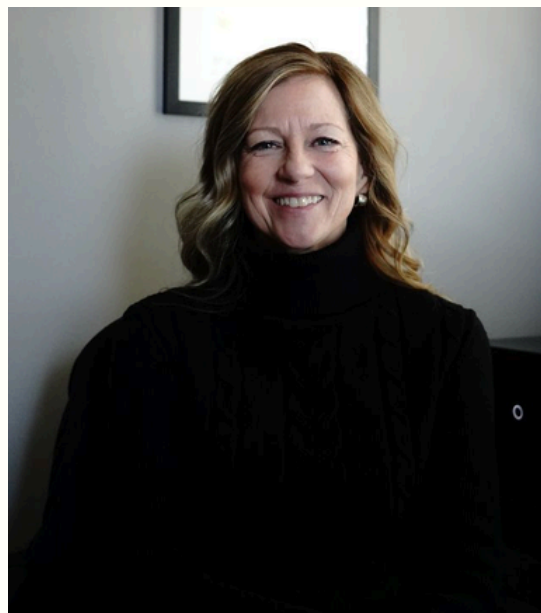
School of Social Work Alumni Lead with Compassion Con't

Since graduating from MU, Laura Hank's career has unfolded in ways that continually bring her back to the heart of why she chose social work. Laura had the privilege of beginning her work in community mental health as an Intensive Case Manager, where she learned quickly how essential it is to meet people with steadiness and respect during some of the most overwhelming moments of their lives. From there, she moved into school-based counseling, which deepened her appreciation for the resilience of young people and the importance of showing up with consistency and care. Those experiences — along with later work in outpatient therapy and clinical supervision — helped clarify the kind of clinician Laura wanted to be: someone grounded, curious, and deeply present. That clarity eventually led her to open *Supportive Pathways Counseling*, Laura's solo practice here in Pennsylvania. Creating a space that reflects her values — calm, relational, and rooted in genuine connection — Laura shares this has been one of the most meaningful steps in her professional life.

What prepared her most at MU was the combination of mentorship and hands-on internship experiences. Laura shares that her professors didn't just teach clinical frameworks; they modeled how to think, reflect, and grow as a clinician. Her internships gave her the space to apply those lessons in real settings, to learn through doing, and to begin developing her own clinical voice. Together, those experiences taught Laura how to sit with discomfort, how to trust the therapeutic process, and how to stay anchored in her ethics even when the work felt heavy. Laura still carries those lessons with her — the reminders to slow down, to stay curious, and to let the relationship be the foundation of the work.

To current students, Laura shares, “give yourself permission to grow slowly. Some of the most essential clinical skills — attunement, presence, confidence — develop over time and through real human connection. You don't have to have all the answers to make a meaningful difference. Trust your training, trust the process, and trust that you will find your place in this field. Your compassion and your perspective matter more than you know.”

**Laura Hank,
MSW '09**



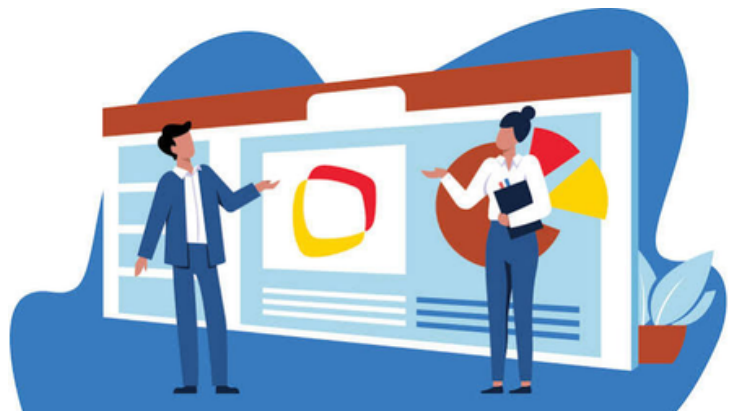
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOLARSHIP ACTIVITIES

APPOINTMENTS

- **Redcay, A.** Became a certified Warrior Advocate Leader (WAL) for the Wounded Warrior Program after participating in training in Nashville, TN, December, 2025.
- **Rice, K.** Appointed to Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Board of Accreditation (BOA) Policy Subcommittee, June, 2026.

PUBLICATIONS

- Aykanianl, A., **Frank, J. M.**, & Eyrich-Garg, K. M. (2026). Intention to leave among frontline homeless services workers in the U.S.: A mixed methods analysis. *International Journal of Homelessness*, 6(2), 123-145.
<https://ojs.lib.uwo.ca/index.php/ijoh/article/view/23279/18716>
- Groza, V., McCreery Bunkers, K., **Proctor, C. D.**, & Ryan, S. D. (2025). Advancing our understanding of LGBTQ+ adopted people, *Child Welfare*, 103(3), 29-54.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48850402>





Millersville University
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
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Mindfulness Calendar

Sponsorship Opportunities

Presenting Sponsor \$1,500 • Name/logo and back cover* • First choice of any month • Recognition in emails and social media • <i>And more!</i>	Featured Sponsor \$500 • Choice of sponsored month • Collaborative content input (work with calendar team to provide an activity or reflection prompt for your month) • <i>And more!</i>
Monthly Sponsor \$300 • Logo on one calendar month (content curated by the SSW team)* • Recognition in online campaign and social media • <i>And more!</i>	Supporter Sponsor \$150 • Name listed on back cover of the calendar • Option to include brief message of support (25 words or less) • <i>And more!</i>

*Some restrictions apply. Please see full list of benefits for details.

Visit [Millersville.edu/sswstudentsupport](https://www.millersville.edu/sswstudentsupport) for list of full benefits and to sponsor!

Learn More About the Mindfulness Calendar
and Sponsorship Levels

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SPRING 2026 GRADUATES!



Spring 2026
BASW Graduates

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MU SSW ALUMNI

Stay connected! We love to hear from our alumni and feature the great work you are doing! [Email Us!](#)