



# Viewing Social Work

An occasional newsletter from the Viterbo University  
Undergraduate Social Work Program

<http://www.viterbo.edu/social-work>

FALL 2019

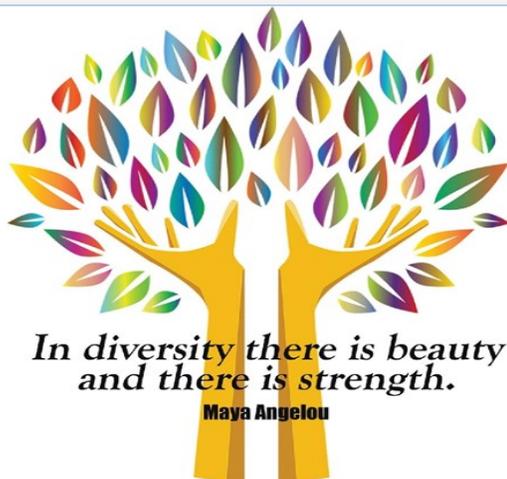
ISSUE # 17



## A message from the Director: Jennifer Anderson-Meger, Cultural Humility in Social Work

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This fall our Field Instructor Training focused on the concept of cultural humility. Cultural humility stresses a framework for practice that puts the social worker in a position of learner rather than knower. It encourages the social worker to critically self-examine his or her own privilege, prejudices, and power in order to interact in

a more culturally sensitive manner. Those who practice cultural humility understand that clients have capacities and gifts based on their experience that the social worker may not have experienced. The social worker cannot understand all the diverse experiences out there, but she or he can learn about cultures and strengths in their clients. It is ok not to know everything as long as one practices life long learning and listening to others.

The social work program at Viterbo has made a commitment to increase programmatic efforts both in and out of the classroom to develop an awareness of intersectionality, diversity, inclusivity through the practice of cultural humility. Our society depends on social workers who can practice humility to create bridges and trust in an ever polarized environment. We are excited about ideas to foster this development for social work students and the university committee.



## Social Work Club

The 2019-2020 Social Work Club consists of six officers:

President: Samantha Boland,  
Vice President: Samantha Whitlock

Secretary: Susan Yang

Treasurer: Morgan Pederson

Public Relations: Kaity Fischer

As of early October the club coordinated and participated in several events, including a food and clothing drive for local families in the Hamilton school district who experienced a house fire. The club also promoted the Social Work program at the Welcome Back Bash, Franny Fest, and Fresh Check Day (suicide awareness and prevention).



In late October, Social Work Club partnered with the Viterbo Student Nurses Association at Halloween for a diaper drive and women's health awareness. A taco/chili sale is planned in November to raise money to adopt a family at Christmas. The club also plans to sponsor a day at Sacred Grounds coffee and conversation for homeless on Wednesday mornings.

The club has a new Facebook (FB) page this year! "Viterbo University SOWK Club 2019-2020." Please add this page on your FB for updates on the club. Anyone is welcome to join Social Work Club, regardless of major! It takes many hands to put on the events. If you have any questions regarding the SOWK Club please email Samantha Boland at [bolan65896@viterbo.edu](mailto:bolan65896@viterbo.edu).

### SOCIAL WORK FACULTY UPDATES



Janet Holter was awarded tenure this fall! She is active in numerous university level committees and serves as interim department chair for Social Work, Sociology, and Criminal Justice. Janet presented work at the National Council on Social Work Education's annual meeting in late October.

Deb Daehn Zellmer is on sabbatical fall semester studying interprofessional education. She will be bringing recommendations for programming to strengthen our ties with nursing, nutrition dietetics, world languages, and substance abuse counseling. Social workers work in interdisciplinary teams so the skills and knowledge are critical.



# Congratulations to Outstanding Student Leaders in the Social Work



Rachel Hall

Emma Pieper and Rachel Hall were honored spring 2019 at the Student Leadership Awards for their outstanding contributions to student life, volunteer efforts, and leadership on the Viterbo campus and La Crosse Community. Their efforts have touched many lives and supported numerous individuals and families. Emma is the past president of Social Work Club. Both students are moving into their field education placements and plan on May 2020 graduation.



Emma Pieper

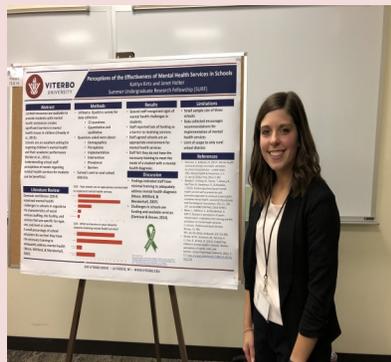
## Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship

The Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program at Viterbo University offers students the opportunity to engage in faculty-supervised research over the summer. The program runs six weeks, and students are awarded a stipend to cover their work. Last summer, three social work students, supervised by Janet Holter, participated in SURF:

**Alexa Baker's** study *Evaluation of the Implementation of Trauma Informed Approaches in K-12 schools* involved interviewing school teaches, and school social workers to examine and evaluate their perception of Trauma Informed Care in schools.

**Kaitlyn Kirtz's** research *Perceptions of Effectiveness of Mental Health Services in Schools*. Kaitlyn gathered data school mental health services, with focus on how school staff perceive the effectiveness of these services.

**Harley Large's** conducted a qualitative study on the effects of homelessness on children and their education by reviewing literature and speaking with expert interviewees. Students presented their research at Seven Rivers Research Symposium on November 15, 2019 at Viterbo University.



## Bureau of Labor Forecast for Social Work Jobs

*The following article is from the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2019).*

Overall employment of social workers is projected to grow 11 percent from 2018 to 2028, much faster than the average for all occupations. Employment growth will be driven by increased demand for healthcare and social services, but will vary by specialization.

Overall, job prospects should be very good, particularly for clinical social workers. The continuing growth of healthcare spending and treatment increases the opportunities for clinical social workers as compared to social workers who do not offer treatment services.

The median annual wage for social workers was \$49,470 per year in 2018. Median annual wages for social workers in the top industries in which they worked in May 2018 were as follows:

Hospitals (state, local, and private) . . . . .	\$60,100
Local government, excluding education and hospitals . . . . .	\$54,430
Ambulatory health care services . . . . .	\$49,840
State government, excluding education and hospitals . . . . .	\$48,590
Individual and family services . . . . .	\$41,810

*Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor*



## Scenic Rivers Area Health Center Involvement

**The Scenic Rivers Area Health Center offers educational and training opportunities for students, promoting healthy communities, a diverse and sustainable workforce, and cooperative solutions to local health needs”** (Scenic Rivers AHEC, 2019).

Social work senior **Makenzie Vesbach** was involved in the Wisconsin AHEC Community Health Internship Program (CHIP) program in summer of 2019. Makenzie was placed at Scenic Bluffs Community Health Center in Cashton, WI. During this internship, Makenzie participated in numerous projects and activities including the creation of a community health curriculum addressing public health, and facilitation of a senior exercise class. Makenzie got to know many people at the community health clinic, was able to work with the CEO, and created many professional connections for her future career as a social worker.

Social work junior **Samantha Boland**, participated in a weeklong event known as the Wisconsin AHEC Express Program, staying with five other students from various locations in La Crosse, WI. The focus of this program was on services offered to residents of rural communities. The students toured many organizations, including an in-home birthing center, a Ho-Chunk clinic, an Amish community, the Tomah Veterans Affairs and the youth development center here in La

## Field Instructor Spotlight—Angel Lee

Angel Lee graduated from Viterbo University in May of 2004 with her Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work. Angel has worked with Gundersen Health System (GHS) since graduation. Angel has over 15 years of providing direct services for patients. She spent 10 of those years working as a medical social worker serving medically and socially at-risk women and children. Angel has served on multi-disciplinary teams working with various providers within the hospital and clinic for the following departments, OBGYN, Pediatric, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and the Learning and Developmental Diagnostic Center (LDDC). Angel holds a Master Degree in Social Work from the University of New England in Maine.



Angel joined the Center for Violence and Intervention Prevention Center in 2015 and currently serves as a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Advocate. She has been a part of the program for 5 years providing services and support to victims, their families and facilitating continuity of care for those impacted by domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Angel is devoted to providing outreach services and providing education on topics such as domestic abuse and sexual assault. She is dedicated to teaching about Hmong culture and has delivered many educational presentations to various medical departments as well as for the community on key aspects of Hmong culture related to domestic violence, spiritual care, cultural sensitivity, Hmong women labor and delivery including post-partum practices. Angel remains active in her community Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault coordinated community response team, WI Hmong Sexual Assault Advocates Circle, member of the Leadership Circle Group through End Domestic Abuse identifying society issues that support oppression, provides and create innovative ideas to restore all effected by domestic violence. Angel also serves as a committee member for the Access Committee which is a part of the Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse dedicating her time to addressing linguistic and cultural barriers faced by the increasing numbers of limited English proficiency patients.

Angel first started learning, teaching and taking interns back in 2012. She enjoyed the field experience so much that she has continued to have interns placed with her from both Viterbo and Winona State University. Angel resides in the La Crosse County area with her 4 children, her poochon puppy, Marco and married to her high school sweet heart, Sheng. Angel is a foodie and travels for food. She enjoys long walks, running, cooking, and being outdoors.



### Thank You from an Alum

I cannot thank the program at Viterbo enough! With the experience I was able to see the master's program from a totally different perspective than my other cohort members, and I believe it was the beginning of showing other future counselors how valuable and needed both social workers and counselors are in the world today. I was able to educate my cohort members about some of the history of social work and the amazing things they have accomplished throughout the short history! Eve Viner

## Alumni Profiles

### Shoua Yang Class of 2018

**Please tell us about your career path since leaving Viterbo.**

"After leaving Viterbo University, I accepted a job at La Crosse County Human Services and have been here since June 2018 working as an initial assessment CPS social worker. After leaving Viterbo, I also started a home baking business where I specialize in fruit covered cakes. My husband and I reside in Holmen, we plan to buy our first home within the next year and hope to start a family soon. " Within the next 5 years I plan to return to grad school, and complete my Masters degree, focusing on child welfare. One day I would love to work as a community social worker or school social worker.



**What are your greatest challenges with your job? What are the greatest rewards?**

"One of the biggest challenge with working in child protection is being able to separate work and personal life. There are many days when you just do not seem to have enough time. However, you must remember to remind yourself the work will be there tomorrow. One of the biggest rewards, in this profession, is seeing the success stories of having parent and child reunified because the parent has worked hard at being the best they can be and protect the child. "

**What was most meaningful to you about your Viterbo education?**

"I really enjoyed learning from professors who made me feel like I was important and I mattered. In addition, I loved having professors who had real world experiences and was able to pull from those experiences and teach us how to be great social workers. "Take every opportunity and use it to it's potential. Viterbo and our community has a lot of offer students. Reach out to different community members and take the time to learn about people so that you may have a better understanding of their circumstances. Find ways to understand and empathize with other rather than sit back and sympathize. "

### Emily Meyer Class of 2015

**Please tell us about your career path since leaving Viterbo University.**

"After graduation, I started working as a service coordinator for Birth-To-Three (B-3) here in La Crosse County. This is a home visiting program for babies ages 0-3 and monitors development. I started my MSW education in the fall of 2015. After a year in B-3, I took a job as a school counselor at St. Patrick's elementary school in Onalaska. After grad school, I accepted a position at Mayo am now working as the Ob/Peds/L&D SW. Soon after graduation, I married my husband, Tony and a year later we had our first son, Wyatt who is now 2! This past April we had our second son, Mason. We are a small, but very busy family.



**What was most meaningful to you about your Viterbo education?**

"All the 'hands on' opportunities Viterbo provided, with job shadows and internships. I would not be in the position I am in if it was not for the senior internship provided by Viterbo. I also appreciated the honesty of our professors. They were able to tell us about what real life social work is about as they have lived it!"

**What surprised you the most about social work?**

"One thing that has surprised me the most about social work is the wealth of opportunities the role of social work provides across populations. There is always a need for social work in almost every area of our workforce. "

**What thoughts would you like to share with current Viterbo social work students?**

"Take every opportunity you can while you are in school to network, job shadow, build your resume. It will be to your benefit once you graduate and have a good professional network already in place. also, develop a strong self-care routine. It will be very beneficial to have this in place as you enter the workforce. "

## ALUMNI UPDATES

### 2001

**Shelley Gabrielson** is a quality assurance analyst with Inclusa in La Crosse, WI.

### 2007

**Claire Sleaper (Murphy)** is a community resource specialist with Unity Point Health – Meriter Health in Madison, WI.

### 2011

**Samantha Brye (Young)** accepted a position of Mental Health Social Worker with Vernon County Social Services.

**Whitley Vogel** is working as an adult protective services social worker for Vilas County, WI.

**Breanna Jajairam (Schell)** is an associate director for an agency that provides homeless services in Los Angeles, CA.

**LeeAnn Jordinson Keeler** is operations manager at Anchor Recovery and Community Center in Providence, RI.

### 2012

**Choua Vue-Brabant** is working as a clinical social worker at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN.

### 2013

**Tatiana Bueno (Wolf)** is a school social worker at Central High School in La Crosse, WI.

**Alyssa Zube (Umberger), LCSW** is an Intensive in-home therapist. She and her husband have two boys, Barrett (2 years) and Boden (3 months).

### 2014

**Ashley Olsen (Brown)** is a Birth to Three and CLTS Lead Service Coordinator for Juneau County Department of Human Services in Mauston, WI.

### Stay in touch!

Please email **Jennifer Anderson-Meger** at [jimeger@viterbo.edu](mailto:jimeger@viterbo.edu) with any news to share in our next newsletter

### 2015

**Kayla Thomas** left her social work position in Juneau County to finish her final year in the part time MSW program in Madison. She works at Trailways Counseling in Sun Prairie, WI and is completing her field placement at Menodota MH Services.

### 2016

**Eve Viner** is completing her thesis for her master's degree in Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling at Columbia College in Chicago. She is interested in pursuing a second master's degree in social work. She said her social work background gives her a unique and important perspective in her cohort. She plans to get married in October 2020.

**Jenna Speltz and Tyler Blaskowski** were married in September 2019.

**Olivia Leavitt** is a social worker/program manager at Trempealeau County Health Care.

### 2018

**Austann Abbott** is a social worker with Vernon County Social Services.

**Tenilla Amerine** is working at the Salvation Army in La Crosse, WI.

**Josephine Gall** is a legal advocate with Sojourner Project in Minnetonka, MN

**Trudy Johnson (Eide)** is the General Surgery Resident Program Coordinator at Gundersen Healthcare in La Crosse, WI.

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