FROM THE INTERIM DEAN

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Our latest issue of In-Ovations brings news of the many challenges and opportunities before the School of Social Welfare. As you all may know, our former Dean, Mary Ellen Kondrat, retired last year. I will serve as interim dean until a new dean arrives on campus. We currently have an active search for an established leader in the field to fill this position, and I am confident that we will have news for you on that matter sometime in the first half of next year.

I have to confess that this job has enabled me to see the School in a different way. As a faculty member and associate dean for research, I was more narrowly focused on my own work and our external funding. As the dean, I have had the opportunity to view our school from a much broader perspective both within the larger university and nationally. The provost office and the other deans on campus have been highly supportive of me and it is clear that they hold our school in high regard. At the national conference of deans and directors of schools of social work recently in Tampa many other deans took the opportunity to ask about the well-being of our former dean and offer their support. There has been strong interest in our search for a new dean and for our faculty search this year.

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While strong leadership and stability under only two different deans in the past 27 years has been a major contributor to our school’s reputation, it is the contributions of our faculty and staff that form the core strength of our school. From the dean’s chair I see clearly all the contributions that our faculty and staff make. And what I see makes me prouder than ever to be a part of this enterprise. Through all the change over the years, one thing has remained constant: all of our faculty and staff bring skill, energy, and passion to solving the problems of the state, the nation, and the world’s most vulnerable, and their achievements, especially this past year, have been remarkable. Some of these major contributions are highlighted in this issue of In-Ovations.

I think you will agree that their great work on behalf of our traditional client populations is something that every Jayhawk can be proud of.

I would be remiss if I did not note that our School suffered tremendous losses this year as well, with the deaths of our former Dean Ann Weick, and Professor Emeritus Dennis Saleebey. Their groundbreaking work in the strengths perspective, as well as Ann’s leadership of the School over nearly two decades, was crucial to the School’s attainment of national recognition as a highly ranked School. Their work gave the School an identity that we maintain, years after their departure. We miss them, and we honor them through our continuous use of our collective strengths to make the School, the University, and our world a better place.

I hope you enjoy this issue of In-Ovations, and that you too are proud of your connection to the School.

Rock Chalk,

Tom

Visit socwel.ku.edu for the latest University of Kansas School of Social Welfare academic and research developments.

Tom McDonald, Ph.D.,
Interim Dean
INVESTING WITH KIDS: EMPOWERING ECONOMIC CITIZENRY AND EDUCATIONAL MOBILITY

Investing with Kids is a randomized experiment of Children’s Savings Accounts (CSAs) and financial education that is being planned, designed and implemented by AEDI with an interdisciplinary team of researchers in KU’s School of Education, Department of Sociology and Department of Linguistics and in cooperation with a local school district and credit union. Beginning in the fall of 2014, children—predominantly from lower-income and minority groups—in kindergarten classrooms were randomly assigned to various treatment and control groups to test the causal relationships between CSAs and children’s economic and educational well-being. Investing with Kids uses a design that engages children directly in the saving process and gives them combined knowledge and experience by teaching financial education in the classroom. The three-year experiment has the potential to reach upwards of 1,500 children and will allow for longitudinal testing of causal relationships to determine the effects on well-being over time and to provide insight into the most efficient design of CSAs. With the support of funding from the National Endowment for Financial Education, the interdisciplinary team of researchers is also exploring the mechanisms that drive the effects of the experiment through qualitative interviews with children and their parents. Thus, this experiment hopes to explain both whether and how CSAs improve children’s well-being. Moreover, the interdisciplinary team of researchers will explore related and previously untested effects on well-being in areas of child development such as cognition, language, and health.

A SAVINGS ACCOUNT AS A GATEWAY TO BETTER CREDIT MARKETS, A PROTECTORY FROM UNSECURED DEBT

Young adults’ average debt is approximately $60,000, including debt from mortgages, vehicles, credit cards, and student loans. Mounting debt can be considered a double-edged sword—in some cases it can be productive for achieving economic mobility like taking out a home mortgage that generates equity, whereas in other cases it can be unproductive like paying down high interest on credit through long repayment plans. Thus, finding strategies that provide access to healthy credit markets while protecting them from unsecured and costly debt may help steer young adults toward more financially stable balance sheets and improve their chances for economic mobility. One such strategy may be ownership or acquisition of a savings account. Using panel data from the Census Bureau’s 1996 Survey of Income and Program Participation, this study investigates the acquisition of a savings account as a precursor to a balance sheet comprised of productive debt.
That is, this study asks whether the acquisition and ownership of a savings account pave the way for young adults to invest in low-interest, secured debt from mortgages, and protect them against accumulating high-interest, unsecured debt from credit cards and payday lenders.

**SOLUTION FOCUSED FINANCIAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

The financial education curriculum was designed for teachers in the third grade and has seven lessons on financial education that can be delivered in 20 to 30 minutes each. The curriculum is experiential and uses math concepts that are integrated with children's literature, classroom activities, and homework assignments to help students comprehend real-world perspectives on saving, money, goal setting, and positive problem solving. The curriculum takes the typical problem-solving scenario a step further, guiding students toward solution building, a process that starts with goal setting and actionable steps toward a desired future. Students, through the facilitation of their teachers, and in partnership with parents and other adults, start with a goal and identify the steps that it takes to reach that goal. They learn about their assets including current CSAs and the importance of building on those assets.

The choice$ and chance$ solution-focused financial curriculum follows the National Standards for Financial Literacy, 2013 New York ©Council for Economic Education on savings. Saving is the part of income that people choose to set aside for future uses. People save for different reasons during the course of their lives.

People make different choices about how they save and how much they save. Time, interest rates, and inflation affect the value of savings. The choice$ and chance$ curriculum offers excellent connection to the classroom making it ideal for teachers to integrate with already existing curricula. Classroom connections include:

- Easy to follow mini lessons
- Lesson materials included
- M.S.W. degree
- Alignment with curricular standards
- Methods for teaching goal setting
- Methods for teaching a unique approach to problem solving
- Specific ways to engage parents and significant others as partners in the financial learning
PROSPERITY KIDS

Matched comparison analyses will focus on students in Grades 4 to 6 (~ages 9 to 11) who received CSAs. Current CSA enrollment patterns suggest that approximately 32 percent of students receiving CSAs are between the ages of 9 and 11. Assuming a total sample of 500 students that receive CSAs via Prosperity for Kids in 2014, AEDI anticipates including 160 students that receive a CSA between the ages of 9 and 11 and 160 matched counterparts within the same district and grade level (total matched comparison sample of 340 students in Grades 4 to 6).

The qualitative piece will consist of five phases:

- Conduct youth and parent interviews at the beginning of the project
- Conduct youth and parent interviews at the end of the first year
- Conduct focus groups using concept mapping at the end of the first year (data generation)
- Conduct youth and parent interviews at the end of our second year (at this time will ask participants to sort and rate the data gathered earlier, this will be followed by data analysis)
- Conduct focus groups at the end of the second year to see if any additional information comes in
Americans favor individualistic explanations for economic outcomes, yet racial inequality and intergenerational transmission are strong in the U.S. compared to other countries. Once children reach adulthood, parental financial standing should hold limited influence over adult economic outcomes. The transition to adulthood has become increasingly insecure, however, and inequality has increased in recent decades, suggesting that financial transfers from parents to adult children may represent an important mechanism for reproducing racial inequality between generations. Using newly available data from the 2013 Panel Study of Income Dynamics Rosters and Transfers Module, this study investigates the relationship between parent-adult child financial transfers and racial socioeconomic inequality.

Specifically, AEDI provides descriptive information about the prevalence and amount of parental transfers since age 18 by race. Next, AEDI uses seemingly unrelated estimation and Sobel-Goodman mediation analyses to estimate whether parent-adult child transfers mediate intergenerational socioeconomic similarity differently by race.

In other words, do parental transfers play a larger role in the transmission of financial standing of whites than blacks? Do transfers represent one mechanism by which whites reproduce their economic advantage over blacks?

Descriptive results show that white families are more likely to give their adult children money, and when they do give more money, they give it particularly for school. Specifically, young black men are 25 percent more likely than white men to receive no money from their parents (21 percent for women). Among those who receive any money from parents, young white men receive nearly four times as much money as their black counterparts and young white women receive over five times as much money from parents as young black women.

Contact WILLIAM ELLIOTT III at welliott@ku.edu to discuss AEDI further.
KANSAS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Kansas Behavioral Health Scholars Program will help recruit and fund students for master’s-level education focused on behavioral health practice with adolescents and transitional-age youth. The program is open to advanced level master’s students on all four campuses: Lawrence Campus, Edwards Campus, Fort Hays State University Campus and Garden City Community College Campus.

The three-year, $1.2 million grant, from the Health Resources and Services Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will fund the final year of master’s work for up to 85 students over the life of the program. The initiative will support experiential training, enhanced interprofessional preparation, the development of field placements in integrated care, and the exchange of knowledge about workforce development in behavioral health with children, adolescents and transitional-age youth. The funding was available as part of the Affordable Care Act.

Many of our students struggle with getting loans or taking an extra job to be able to pay for school. These funds will help address those concerns for a good number of students,” said Michelle Levy, research associate in the School of Social Welfare. “With our special focus on the Western part of the state, the program will also help to increase the number of social workers in a part of the state that has been traditionally challenged by workforce shortages.”

The program will emphasize the preparation of clinical students to work interprofessionally with transition-age youth, a term that refers to young people age 16 to 25, a traditionally under-served population. The School of Social Welfare will collaborate with the KU Medical Center’s Center for Interprofessional Education and Simulation to offer training with other health professionals involved in the provision of patient-centered, integrated care.

“Taking an interdisciplinary approach will allow us to add more specialized knowledge to these students’ skill set,” said Alice Lieberman, professor of social welfare. “Sometimes transition age youth can get lost in the system because of shortages in behavioral health care.”

Previous research has shown there are only about 115 professionals with a master’s of social work degrees working in the western half of Kansas, or roughly one for every 349 square miles. Partnering with agencies in western Kansas to prepare more professionals will benefit children, families, schools, communities and the state, Levy said.
The Kansas Behavioral Health Scholars Program is the latest in KU’s ongoing efforts to service western Kansas. In 2013, the School of Social Welfare began offering its master’s of social work program through a partnership with Fort Hays State University and Garden City Community College. The program allows social workers in western Kansas to further their education and stay close to home.

**ANTI - BULLYING SUMMIT**

More than 200 research scholars, social workers and community members attended the Anti-bullying Summit, which took place on September 18 and 19 in Lawrence, Kansas. The summit, part of the Kansans Against Bullying Project, brought together some of the world’s leading scholars on the topic and educators in area schools to discuss the latest research, prevention and intervention strategies as well as how schools can put them to work. The summit was organized by Anne Williford, assistant professor of social welfare, and Paula Fite, associate professor of psychology at KU

Williford and Fite recently led efforts to help schools across Kansas develop anti-bullying policies as part of the Kansans Against Bullying Project. The project was supported by the Kansas State Department of Education.

“What we heard consistently around the state was that the policy piece was helpful,” Williford said. “But we also frequently heard ‘OK, we have a policy in place, but how do we enact it?’”

The recurring question on how to put anti-bullying policies to work led to ongoing conversations amongst several researchers. Williford and Patricia Hawley, professor of educational psychology at Texas Tech University and a former KU faculty member, began work on a special anti-bullying issue of the Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, exploring anti-bullying programs and policies as well as how they can be effectively enacted. Research shows that, while some anti-bullying interventions have had large effects in other countries, programs have been only modestly successful in North America. The special issue invites leading scholars to advance their perspectives.
on how to improve the precision and effects of anti-bullying interventions in North America. The summit was thus an extension of this special issue and presented an important opportunity for researchers and educators to address the topic together.

“Essentially what the summit was intended to do was tackle the modest effects we commonly see for anti-bullying interventions and stimulated dialogue among leading scholars in the field and with area educators and community professionals on how we can collectively improve our efforts,” Williford said. “While even a modest reduction in bullying is clearly a good start, we as a field think we can do better.”

The summit’s morning session featured several leading anti-bullying researchers from the United States and Canada — including Hawley, Shelley Hymel of the University of British Columbia; Jamie Ostrov of the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York; and Karin Frey of the University of Washington — presenting on topics such as improving anti-bullying interventions through applying cutting-edge evidence and psychological theory, exploring the role of peer group dynamics and the importance of friends in prevention efforts, and looking specifically at early intervention strategies for young children.

The sold-out afternoon session was free and open to educators, administrators, community professionals and parents who wanted to put anti-bullying practices to work. Dorothy Espelage, the Edward William Gutgsell & Jane Marr Gutgsell Endowed Professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, kicked off the afternoon session with a keynote address on practical strategies to prevent and effectively intervene with bullying. Eric Vernberg, professor of clinical child psychology and director of the Child and Family Services Clinic at KU; Sheri Bauman, professor at the University of Arizona; and Williford lead sessions about preventing cyberbullying, developing and enacting evidence-based interventions in schools and communities, and effectively training adults to deliver bullying interventions and support students in these behaviors.

Visit kansansagainstbullying.ku.edu to learn more about the Kansans Against Bullying Project and view videos from the summit.

PROJECT HELPS STATES MINE DATA TO IMPROVE SERVICE FOR KIDS

When children are placed in foster care, the ultimate goal is to give them the best possible services to achieve permanency, either by returning them home or finding a stable, supportive home environment. A project directed by the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare has developed a Web-based reporting system that helps child welfare agencies know how well they are achieving timely permanency as well as many other performance metrics. The project is currently working with 12 states across the country.

For years, child welfare agencies have kept volumes of data on the youth they served and their outcomes. However, reams of paper reports made it difficult to organize the data into usable formats. About eight years ago KU launched the Results Oriented Management (ROM) Project to help agencies use already existing data in a flexible reporting tool that allowed agencies to see and use their data in new ways.

“We saw one of the major roadblocks to using data was simply getting access to it,” said Terry Moore, project director in the Center for Children and Families in the social welfare school. “In today’s world we’re used to being able to quickly access information we need, but it hasn’t always been that way in social services. What we do in this project is help agencies organize their data longitudinally, develop meaningful metrics and provide Web-based reports that enable further analysis.”

The simple goal is to help child welfare service providers improve their operations. The goal is not new, but through use of the ROM Reports system, it can be done in a much more efficient and intuitive manner. Moore shared the example of a state wanting to find out how
children were doing 12 months after entering the foster care system. The ROM Project allows users to find out how many have been reunited with families and how many are still in foster care. The user can also check by various time periods — such as quarters or fiscal years — by staff unit from region to individual workers, and drill down to child records behind the aggregate numbers.

“Everyone in an agency has access to the same data. Based on that information, it can help you diagnose what’s going on,” Moore said. “This gives them the tools to understand what might be driving a particular outcome for a particular group of kids, and whether they are meeting service standards. We see it as a tool for continuous quality improvements for better serving kids and families.”

That improvement can range from one worker to state legislators and policy makers. Case workers can find data on their clients. Organizations can use the data to improve their operations and make reports to policy makers who make decisions regarding funding and laws pertaining to child services. Colorado has taken the project a step further, becoming the first state to enact a version of the ROM Reports that is available to the public. Individuals can visit cdhsdatamatters.org to find data on children being served, child safety, permanency outcomes and more.

States using the system are already able to quickly access data on roughly 70 different measures and use filters to pull together specific types of information from the data to create customizable reports. ROM Project staff helps states generate new reports or add features to the system when they find they are looking for certain data or reports that are not currently available. There has been growing concern in child welfare that minorities are being disproportionately placed in foster care. New reports in the system allow states to analyze their own data to determine whether there is over-representation of specific race groups at various decision points.

“We also help them understand what the data means and how they can use it to improve their services,” Moore said.

The Center for Children and Families has also made the system available for use in analyzing data for child and adult mental health services as well as psychiatric residential treatment facilities in Kansas. Similar to the child welfare version, states and service providers can view data and produce reports, including data on measures such as school outcomes, clinical data, services provided in homes versus facilities and many others. Likewise, the reporting system is now being developed for juvenile justice programs.

The states using the ROM Project or in initial preparations to use it: Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, and Vermont.
$2.9M GRANT TO SERVE STATE’S MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN AFFECTED BY SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The number of children in foster care in Kansas has hit a new record, and one in five of those children are there because of issues related to caregiver substance abuse. Researchers in the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare have secured a five-year, $2.9 million grant to help agencies across the state serve the youngest, most vulnerable children and strengthen families affected by substance abuse.

The grant, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, will allow KU to partner with state agencies and Kansas’ two foster care agencies and service providers throughout the state to focus on improving safety, well-being and permanency for children up to age 3. Kansas Serves Substance Affected Families is a research project funded through the third round of Regional Partnership Grants from the Children’s Bureau at DHHS, which seek to promote interagency collaboration to enhance services for substance-affected families. In the first two rounds of this funding, KU researchers Tom McDonald, Jody Brook and Becci Akin focused on enhancing services for children ages 3-12 who were affected by caregiver substance abuse in Kansas, Oklahoma and Iowa. This new project, led by McDonald, Susana Mariscal, and doctoral candidate Kaela Byers, expands on this earlier work and shifts the focus to young children who are especially vulnerable.

“Kids, especially young children, are present in homes affected by substance abuse. These children are at a greater risk of experiencing the negative impact of complex trauma on their development, and thus it is essential to provide an early intervention,” said Mariscal, research associate in the social welfare school and KSSAF co-principal investigator and lead evaluator. “We seek to improve family functioning in order to enhance the children’s well-being, safety and permanency.”

Children up to age 3 are in a crucially important phase of neurological and psychological development. Suffering neglect, abuse and other negative experiences as a result of parents’ or family members’ substance abuse can have long-lasting psychological, emotional and health consequences, the researchers said. To prevent these consequences, researchers will begin an evidence-based intervention, the Strengthening Families Program, targeting children in the target age range.
The goal of the program is to strengthen families to increase children’s safety and well-being in the home, thus increasing the likelihood of reunification and permanency. The program works with parents and children, teaching parenting skills, helping them set goals and meet children’s needs.

“It’s about improving parenting skills, coping abilities and functioning better together as a family,” said Byers, project coordinator in the social welfare school. “Strong relationships between parents and children promote healthy child development and serve as a protective factor against future maltreatment and substance use.”

Kansas Serves Substance Affected Families will collaborate with the Kansas Adoption Permanency Project, an effort led by the social welfare school to put in place trauma screening and functional assessment for all children who enter foster care in Kansas. The project will also train providers across the state so they are able to continue enacting the Strengthening Families Program beyond the life of the grant.

Work on the project began in November, and the timing is vital, researchers said. Parental substance abuse is the No. 1 reason children enter foster care in Kansas, including 29 percent of children up to age 3 who are in out-of-home care. Children in this age range are 60 percent more likely than their older peers to be removed from their home because of parental substance abuse. Additionally, 7 percent of all foster care cases were related to methamphetamine use in 2014, nearly double the 3.9 percent in 2010. For infants to 3-year-olds, 11 percent of the cases were associated with caregiver methamphetamine use in 2014.

The Kansas Serves Substance Affected Families program is a partnership between the social welfare school, the Kansas Department for Children and Families, Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services, and the state’s two foster care agencies: KVC Behavioral Health Inc. and Saint Francis Community Services Inc.

Contact AMY MENDENHALL at amendenhall@ku.edu to discuss CCF further.
The Center for Mental Health Research and Innovation has partnered with the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) on a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) titled “Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment.” The grant is intended to increase employment outcomes for individuals with serious mental illness in Kansas, including those with a co-occurring substance use disorder. The five-year, 3.9 million dollar grant will benefit from the Center’s long history of supporting Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs) in Kansas to implement the Individual Placement and Support Model of Supported Employment (IPS-SE), a national evidence-based practice in adult mental health. Currently 13 CMHCs in Kansas are implementing IPS-SE with support from the Center. Competitive employment rates for IPS-SE teams in Kansas are currently 48 percent, the highest in the past seven years. This grant will allow for expanded access to IPS-SE services in Kansas, specifically for those who are uninsured.

The Center for Mental Health Research and Innovation continues to partner with Dr. Patricia Deegan in an ongoing effort to establish CommonGround, a shared decision-making software application, in Community Mental Health Centers throughout Kansas and the United States. Since 2006, the Center has worked with Dr. Deegan to develop, implement and test the software, which promotes self-sufficiency and medication-related informed decision-making for people with a serious mental illness. The software provides key pharmacological and non-pharmacological information, while focusing on individual strengths. To date, 70 sites have implemented CommonGround software nationwide.
NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Center for Mental Health Research and Innovation has launched a new partnership with the Center for Children and Families to pilot Strengths Model case management for children ages 12 to 16. While Strengths Model case management has been well-established in the area of adult mental health, this partnership marks the first attempt to use the model in the area of children's mental health. Johnson County Mental Health Center has been selected as the initial pilot site and implementation efforts are underway.

The Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment project will help increase employment outcomes for individuals with serious mental illnesses in Kansas.

Contact RICK GOSCHA at rgoscha@ku.edu to discuss CMHRI further.
Center for Research on Aging and Disability Options (CRADO)

The Center was created to improve social service practice and policy for older adults. The Center also helps to develop faculty and students knowledge and skills in working with older adults and people with disabilities. Faculty and staff work with the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) and other state agencies, as well as a variety of other public and private service organizations to provide research, training and technical support.

AARP RECENTLY WELCOMED ROSEMARY CHAPIN TO ITS NATIONAL POLICY COUNCIL

Dr. Rosemary Chapin has been chosen to be a member of the AARP National Policy Council (NPC), which is a 26-member policy analysis and advisory body to AARP’s Board of Directors. She has been charged with ensuring that public policies reflect members’ concerns and interests. Dr. Chapin will help develop and make policy recommendations to AARP’s Board of Directors. As a National Policy Council member, Dr. Chapin will examine polling research and policy trends and analyses, and meet with policy experts and other NPC members in Washington D.C. to craft policy recommendations.

MEDICAID FUNCTIONAL ELIGIBILITY INSTRUMENT

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) has contracted with CRADO to develop a Medicaid Functional Eligibility Instrument (MFEI). The MFEI will be used to determine eligibility and support needs for Medicaid Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) for customers who have physical disabilities, traumatic brain injury, or who are frail elders. The nursing home population will also be included. CRADO is partnering with the Research and Training Center on Independent Living (RTC/IL) and staff from KUMC to complete this project.

A universal, standardize assessment tool is a critical tool for streamlining access to care for people seeking services. A well-designed assessment instrument can be used to not only determine eligibility for public programs, but may also provide other functions such as care planning, data collection, rate setting and quality assurance. A universal assessment can also promote choice for customers when the assessment determines eligibility for multiple programs; promote equity by using the same assessment criteria for all individuals in need of services; and capture standardized data that will help policymakers analyze program effectiveness.
THE GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Carrie Wendel-Hummell, Rosemary Chapin, and Alicia Sellon were presenters at The Gerontological Society of America Conference, in Washington D.C. in November 2014. They presented findings from their study, Medicaid Cost Comparisons across the Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), Home and Community Based Services/Frail Elderly, and Nursing facilities. PACE is an innovative program that provides all health and long-term care for older adults under a single capitulated payment and holds promise for containing Medicaid costs while improving quality of care. In this project, they compared Medicaid cost expenditures and selected health outcomes for customers in PACE to matched customers in Home and Community Based Services/Frail Elderly, and Nursing Facilities. Their findings can inform decisions on managing and expanding the PACE program. This report is available at crado.ku.edu/projects/all.

Visit crado.ku.edu to stay up to date on the latest research and projects associated with the Center for Research on Aging and Disability Options.

Contact ROSEMARY CHAPIN at rchapin@ku.edu to discuss CRADO further.
Alumni

Our alumni make significant contributions toward improving the lives of vulnerable people. Frequently social workers are the catalysts for change. Their work takes place behind the scenes. We honor their success, remembering that there are many, many others whose valuable works goes unrecognized.

MOLLY TYE

Molly Tye graduated from the KU bachelor’s of social work program in 2006. Following what some may call an unusual career path for a social worker, Molly was recently named academic coordinator for the Penn State football program. She began her career as a volunteer academic support assistant for the men’s basketball program at Howard University during her master’s studies there. After two years with the Virginia Tech Student-Athlete Support Services, she returned to Howard’s Athletics Department as the senior academic advisor for two years. Molly served for three years as the assistant athletic director for student-athlete support at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Florida, where she worked specifically with high risk student-athletes. The program won national accolades for academic achievement during her time there. Molly enjoys being able to join her lifelong love for athletics with her passion for social work and feels inspired by how competitive sports provide talented students with educational opportunities they may not otherwise have access to.

Molly’s interest in social work began with a desire to mentor youth in the inner city. She was able to sharpen her skills during her practicum at an inner city school district. Molly believes that her education in the social work program at KU taught her to collaborate with people from opposing viewpoints to achieve a common goal, an experience which still impacts the way she makes decisions today. Her experiences in the BSW program at KU also taught her to think critically and look for the strengths in every person and situation. In many ways her undergraduate studies prepared her for the experience of being in the minority at a historically Black College for graduate school, by teaching her the value of diversity as well as how to relate and connect with people from a completely different background than herself. Molly credits her upbringing in a church community for teaching her the important values of hard work and compassion for others which led her to the social work profession. Molly’s faith has remained at the center of her career and has been her inspiration through the many challenging cases she has encountered in her profession.

Molly also followed a family tradition and became a foster parent, fulfilling what she feels is her calling to nurture and care for the orphaned. She has proudly mothered five foster children over the course of two years and looks forward to mothering many more. As a foster parent, she encourages social workers to never underestimate the value of foster parents in ensuring the welfare of children and their place in the social work profession.
KELLIE HENDERSON

When Kellie Henderson worked with Washington policymakers in the summer of 2014 to improve the nation’s foster care system, she brought a perspective that extended beyond her master’s degree in social work from the University of Kansas.

Kellie, a Wichita native, offered her own experiences as a foster youth.

“The biggest obstacle I faced in college was the absence of parents to talk about challenges such as peer pressure, career choices, life in general and, essentially, about my fears and anxiety once I leave the academic realm,” she said.

Kellie was one of 12 current and former foster youth from across the nation who spent the summer on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., as a part of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institutes’s Foster Youth Internship program. The summer long assignment provided individuals who had spent time in the foster care system with an opportunity to intern in a congressional office and share their experiences, opinions and unique perspectives with policymakers in Congress. Kellie was an intern for U.S. Sen. Orrin Hatch.

As part of their assignment, the Foster Youth Internship Program participants researched issues affecting children in foster care, then compiled their findings and recommendations into a policy report. This document was presented at a congressional briefing and shared with child welfare advocates across the country. In past years, these reports have generated both local and national attention to the critical issues facing more than 400,000 children currently in the foster care system.

Kellie’s proposal included that each state should be obligated to develop an informative curriculum to better prepare youth for the foster care system. That curriculum would provide information to youth on their specific rights in addition to detailing the role of professionals they may come into contact with.

Since 1999, more than 230,000 young people have transitioned from foster care without permanent family connections. Only 58 percent will graduate high school by age 19, compared with 87 percent of all 19-year-olds. While 70 percent of all foster care youth have the desire to attend college, less than 20 percent actually pursue higher education, and less than 3 percent will earn a college degree by age 25.

“Foster youths often consider post-secondary education unattainable or undesirable due to circumstances they faced in their childhood or foster homes,” Kellie said. “In my opinion, the child welfare system does not do enough to prepare foster youths for the possibility of a college education, and neither does the high school they attend. There is a need for a sincere, concerted effort across all systems to support foster youths to make an informed decision about their educational future.”

Kellie was one of twenty students who began KU master’s classes the summer of 2013 with the launch of KU’s new Western Kansas M.S.W. Program and graduated in May 2014.
VENIDA CHENAULT

In January 2014, Venida Chenault, B.S.W., M.S.W. and Ph.D. alum, was appointed the new president of Haskell Indian Nations University (Haskell).

Venida has held several positions at Haskell during almost 21 years of her association with the university. She started in 1991 as social work faculty and as an advisor where she taught and developed pre-professional courses and curriculum in social work, American Indian studies and addiction until August 2004. During that time, she also served as interim director of American Indian studies (June 1996 to July 1999); as acting associate dean for the Division of Instruction (December 1997 to June 1998); as acting director of the Institute for Distance Education (April to August 2003); and as co-director of a Ford Foundation grant that Haskell held in conjunction with the University of Kansas, exploring the Native American experience.

From October 2008 to October 2009, Venida served as a Visiting Scholar in Social Welfare at the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare, where she worked to advance research and scholarship on the topic of violence and abuse against Indigenous women. She also authored a book on the same topic during this period.

In December 2004, Venida was named Haskell’s vice president of academic affairs, which gave her administrative oversight of a 3 to 4 million dollar budget and supervisory responsibility for all academic programs, budgets, faculty and staff within the Division of Academic Affairs. In her position she also served as acting vice president for university services from October 2009 to January 2010; acting Haskell president from January to May 2010; and at Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) headquarters in Washington, D.C., from September 2012 to April 2013. While with the Bureau, she helped lead key priority post-secondary education projects, including developing partnership agreements with tribal colleges and universities (TCUs) and working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ Office of Justice Services and the National Park Service to design professional development curriculum. From 2006 to 2007, she also held consultations and workshops on tribal sovereignty and self-determination as well as academic assessment and research for TCUs.

Venida attended Haskell as a student in the fall of 1975 and the spring of 1984. She later attended the University of Kansas where she earned a bachelor’s degree in social work in 1986, a master’s in social work in 1990, and a Ph.D. in social work in 2004. She has given numerous presentations on the subject of violence and substance abuse activity and prevention within the American Indian community, and developed and taught courses on human behavior, community health social work practice, chemical dependency and social work as they relate to Native people. In addition, she has published numerous articles and reports on a variety of topics related to the study of American Indian societies and cultures.

She has received several awards, including Haskell Outstanding Alumni of the Year (Spring 2009) and the Crystal Eagle Indigenous Leadership Award, Center for Indigenous Studies, University of Kansas (Spring 2005). She was named both a Kellogg Minority Serving Institutions Leadership Program Fellow and an American Indian Higher Education Consortium Fellow in 2003, and an American Indian College Fund Mellon Award Fellow in 2004. From 1998 to the present, she served at various times on Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Education, Social Services and Constitution committees, and the Nation’s Social Service Advisory Board.

Venida leads a BIE-operated university which has been educating American Indians and Alaska Natives from the nation’s federally recognized tribes for almost 130 years. Opened on September 1, 1884, as the United States Industrial Training School with a focus on agricultural education in grades one through five, the school was known as Haskell Institute throughout Indian Country until 1970 when it was known as Haskell Institute throughout Indian Country until 1970 when it was transformed into a two-year higher education institution and
renamed Haskell Indian Junior College. In 1993, the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs approved changing the school's name to its current form.

Haskell has grown from its original 22 students to an average enrollment today of over 1,000 each semester from tribes across the United States. It offers associate and baccalaureate programs accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and integrates American Indian and Alaska Native cultures into its curricula. Students may transfer to another baccalaureate degree-granting institution or go directly into the workforce. For more information, visit haskell.edu.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs oversees the Bureau of Indian Education, which operates the federal school system for American Indian and Alaska Native children from the federally recognized tribes. The BIE director is directly responsible for implementing federal education programs and laws, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, in 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools on 64 reservations in 23 states serving over 40,000 students. The BIE also funds or operates off-reservation boarding schools and peripheral dormitories near reservations for students attending public schools. In addition, the BIE provides post secondary education opportunities to American Indians and Alaska Natives by offering higher education scholarships, providing operational support funding to 26 tribal colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges, and by directly operating two institutions of higher learning: Haskell and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, N.M.

Information provided by news released by Haskell.

AMANDA BLACKHORSE

Amanda Blackhorse, a 2006 graduate of our B.S.W. program and a recipient of a Native American Scholars stipend through our CB/School-administered project, has made quite a bit of news lately. Amanda is the named plaintiff in Blackhorse, et.al. v. Pro-Football, Inc. case. Briefly, plaintiff Blackhorse successfully sued to direct the US Patent and Trademark Office to cancel the trademarks of the Washington R*dsk*ns. Blackhorse and many others believe the term, and the mascot, are offensive stereotypes. Now the team’s owner, Dan Snyder, is suing Blackhorse and her fellow plaintiffs in a so-called “SLAPP suit: briefly, SLAPP stands for ‘strategic lawsuits against public participation. Such suits are meant to deter citizen challengers to wealthy corporations. However, Blackhorse says she will not be intimidated, and intends to see this case through to its final-and hopefully satisfying- conclusion.

The case has been wending its way through the courts for ten years. And Amanda, now a social worker on her reservation, is finally seeing a culmination of work that began back when she was a BSW student at KU, and going to Arrowhead to protest the use of the Kansas City Chiefs’ mascot. We salute Amanda, and are proud of her for continuing her fight for dignity and respect for all First Nations peoples.
SOCIAL WORK DAY 2014

Columnist, Leonard Pitts Jr., and clinical psychologist and author, Harriet Lerner, offered keynote speeches at the KU School of Social Welfare’s annual alumni event, Social Work Day, on April 11, 2014 at the Kansas Union in Lawrence. A sold out crowd of more than 500 social workers and University of Kansas alumni gathered to hear and learn about the latest developments and therapies in social work today. Social Work Day was a one-day conference featuring keynote speakers, Leonard Pitts Jr. and Harriet Lerner, and eight workshops provided by University of Kansas faculty.

In a career spanning more than 35 years, Leonard Pitts, Jr. is the author of one of the most popular newspaper columns in the country and of a series of critically-acclaimed books, including his latest, a novel called “Freeman.” And his lifelong devotion to the art and craft of words has yielded stellar results, chief among them the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for commentary.

But that is only the capstone of a career filled with prizes for literary excellence. In 1997, Pitts took first place for commentary in division four (newspapers with a circulation of over 300,000) in the American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors’ Ninth Annual Writing Awards competition. He is a three-time recipient of the National Association of Black Journalists’ Award of Excellence, and was chosen NABJ’s 2008 Journalist of the Year. Pitts is a five-time recipient of the Atlantic City Press Club’s National Headliners Award and a seven-time recipient of the Society of Professional Journalists’ Green Eyeshade Award.

Harriet Lerner, Ph.D., is one of our nation’s most respected voices on the psychology of women and the process of change in couples and families. For over three decades, she was a staff psychologist at The Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas, and a faculty member and supervisor in the Karl Menninger School of Psychiatry. Currently in private practice in Lawrence, Kansas, she is the author of numerous scholarly articles and eleven books, including The New York Times bestseller, “The Dance of Anger,” “Women in Therapy,” and, most recently, “Marriage Rules: A Manual for the Married and the Coupled Up.” She is also, with her sister, an award-winning children’s book author, and she hosts a blog for Psychology Today.

Registration for Social Work Day 2015 will be available at socwel.ku.edu/swday in early January 2015. The 2015 keynote speaker will be Scott Miller, Ph.D.

Contact VALERIE HAWLEY at vhawley@ku.edu to discuss further.
PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION (PCE)

Our School of Social Welfare’s Professional and Community Education (PCE) program provides high quality, cutting edge, skill-building online and onsite continuing education for mental health providers and community members. Program schedules are offered two times per year within a fall-winter schedule (September to February) and a spring-summer schedule (March to August) schedule. PCE is widely known for providing exceptional continuing education classes, workshops and trainings by master instructors who intentionally engage participants in a manner that advances their practice skills.

The program has recently added several high-trending mental health topics such as mindfulness/contemplative practices for providers and clients, trauma-sensitive interventions, integration of somatic/body considerations in treatment, and neuropsychology. In addition, there is a new “Growing Healthier Sprouts” series of classes targeted towards enhancing parenting and developing healthier children through classes and workshops such as Mindful Parenting, Create Your Village: Healing Families Through Fun and Play, and Starting Small: Integrating Mindfulness Practices with Children.

PCE also offers a comprehensive speaker’s bureau service that allows agencies and other organizations to customize their continuing education classes by coordinating a master PCE instructor and class offering for CEU’s through PCE. These classes can be held onsite at your own organization or at the University of Kansas. For more information please contact Sydney Spears, Ph.D., LSCSW, director of KU Edwards Campus social welfare programs at sspears@ku.edu.

Contact SYDNEY SPEARS at sspears@ku.edu to discuss further.
What an exciting time it has been since the School of Social Welfare kicked off the campaign in 2012! The school has so many alumni and friends who have contributed at many different levels to help propel the School toward its goal of $5 million, but the School is not there yet. The donation is little over $4 million with the campaign coming to a close in 2016, so the School needs your help.

If you are an alumnus of the school, you may want to give back as a way of showing your gratitude for your education. There is a sense of appreciation, loyalty, and responsibility to help in preparing the next generation of social workers. As a friend of the school, you may choose to give because you want to support the education of social workers. Their role in society may resonate with your values and the hope for a more positive future. There is no doubt that social work is the change profession.

You can contribute online at socwel.ku.edu or if you would like information on establishing an endowment to provide a lasting legacy through a pledge or your estate, please contact Debbie McCord at the University of Kansas Endowment at 785-832-7372 or dmccord@kuendowment.org. All gifts are greatly appreciated.

Contact **DEBBIE MCCORD** at dmccord@kuendowment.org to discuss further
MARGARET LLOYD

Not only was Margaret Lloyd’s, doctoral student, application to the 2014 Capitol Graduate Research Summit accepted (a highly competitive process), she competed against eight other KU Lawrence campus graduate students in Topeka and won the award. She received a $500 scholarship prize for her work in The Disparate Impact of Alcohol, Methamphetamine and Other Drugs on Family Reunification after Foster Care in Kansas.

Eight graduate students from KU are selected to present work to state legislators and other members of state government. Using a Building Communities framework, Margaret presented on The Disparate Impact of Alcohol, Methamphetamine and Other Drugs on Family Reunification after Foster Care in Kansas. Lloyd’s research focuses on how various drugs of abuse differentially impact family reunification after foster care. Her findings indicate that methamphetamine use is a significant barrier to reunification, and that parental drug addiction is associated with substantially longer stays in foster care. These findings suggest that a more robust intervention approach could positively impact reunification.

It is a very competitive process at each step and an impressive win for both Margaret and the School of Social Welfare. Congratulations also to her mentors, especially her advisor Jody Brook.

KAELA BYERS AND AISLINN CONRAD-HEIBNER

Two years in a row the School of Social Welfare has had the honor of two of its Ph.D. students receiving the Doris Duke Fellowships for the Promotion of Child Well-being. Kaela Byers received the fellowship in the third cohort (2013-2015) and Aislinn Conrad-Hiebner in the fourth cohort (2014-2016). Each cohort, 15 fellows are chosen from a highly competitive applicant pool by a panel of experts convened by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. These fellowships are designed to identify and develop a new generation of leaders interested in and capable of creating practice and policy initiatives that will enhance child development and improve the nation’s ability to prevent all forms of child maltreatment. The fellowships are generously funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.
“The best strategies for preventing abuse and neglect will come from an innovative and well-prepared workforce—one that is not bound by the limits of any single traditional academic discipline,” said Chapin Hall Senior Research Fellow Deborah Daro, who oversees the initiative. “By providing opportunities for this diverse group of scholars to learn from each other, the fellowship creates a rich context for nurturing new knowledge on the dynamics of abuse and neglect and how best to promote child well-being.”

Each Fellow has identified two mentors—an academic mentor to supervise the content and rigor of their research, and a policy mentor to maximize the impact of their research on policy and practice. Kaela’s academic mentor is Tom McDonald, Ph.D., professor and interim dean, University of Kansas School of Social Welfare. Her policy mentor is David Lindeman, Ph.D., director of the Lifespan Institute at Parsons, senior scientist at the Bureau of Child Research and courtesy associate professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas. Aislinn’s academic mentor is Margaret Severson, Ph.D., professor, University of Kansas School of Social Welfare. Her policy mentor is Jacqueline Counts, Ph.D., M.S.W., director, Achievement & Assessment Institute, Center for Public Partnerships & Research at the University of Kansas.

Chapin Hall has established a peer learning network that brings together the Fellows from all four cohorts, their mentors, scholars, practitioners, and policymakers across a number of disciplines, including social work, psychology, medicine, law, child development, education, public policy, and public health. Kaela’s research focuses on buffering toxic stress in early childhood to prevent childhood social-emotional disruption and promote child well-being. Kaela is a research assistant at the Center for Children and Families where she works on projects related to the implementation of evidenced-based practices in community mental health and early childhood settings. Aislinn’s dissertation research will examine the relationship between constructs of economic conditions (current economic state and material hardship) and risk for child physical abuse, as mediated by parental stress.

Information provided by chapinhall.org/fellowships/doris-duke-fellowships

NIK SCHUETZ

It wasn’t the Peace Corps that got Nik Schuetz thinking about a Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) degree. It was a job before and after his two-year assignment in Kenya that gave him a taste of what the field had to offer. Or, more accurately, how it would best enable Nik to help the most people in need.

After earning a psychology degree from Beloit College in 2008, the Kansas City native and Rockhurst High School graduate landed a job at Gillis, a revered south Kansas City nonprofit that serves at-risk children and families.

“I never considered social work before,” Nik says. “At Gillis, I got a sense of the full scope of it, everything that goes into helping people on a large scale, yet one individual or family at a time. I realized I wouldn’t be able to make the biggest impact without an advanced degree.”
Fall 2014, Nik left his fourth position at Gillis to begin his final year in the M.S.W. program at the Edwards Campus in Overland Park, which includes a practicum at Midwest Cancer Alliance.

**Degree Is Key**
The need for passionate, trained and experienced leaders is just as great in the social service world as in business or technology, if not more so. Nik strives to be one of them. He says the reputation and academic rigor of KU’s M.S.W. program made his an easy choice.

“This seemed like a more professional program with a stronger curriculum,” he says. “I was definitely attracted by the practicum and international study, but also the amazing research opportunities.”

Last year Nik earned a $2,000 research scholarship and the opportunity to assist professor Terri Friedline in a study of the impact of Child Savings Accounts on families in poverty. This year he was awarded a full graduate research assistant position working alongside professor Jody Brook. It covers his tuition in full, plus a stipend, but he values the experience even more.

“I got my foot in the door last year, and the more research I do, the more I get excited about it,” he says. “It’s definitely a path I’d like to follow.”

**What Next?**
Schuetz, who won the MARGO award for outstanding achievement in M.S.W. foundation level practicum last year, says he wouldn’t mind being a student forever. He’s strongly considering pursuing a doctoral degree in social work, but his ambitions lie beyond the classroom.

“I can see myself working at a think tank, doing some research, getting published, and informing policy makers on what really works, how we can make people’s lives better,” he says. “Seems like a great way to enact change without having to be a politician myself.”

While politics may not be in his future, Nik Schuetz is on a personal campaign to do the most good for the most people. And, thanks to his education, he’s learning the possibilities are limitless.

“This field is applicable to every part of life. If you think life can be better for anybody – children, the homeless, veterans, the elderly – then an M.S.W. is the right degree for you. KU has a great program that can cater to anyone who wants to make a difference.”

Information provided by KU Edwards Campus Marketing and Public Relations office.