

Issue 3/3

California Baptist University
Social Work Newsletter
September 2020



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Fireside Chat – Luke Womack

October 15, 2020

NASW-CA Virtual Conference

October 16-17, 2020

NACSW-CA Virtual Conference

November 5-8, 2020

Social Work Month

The Entire Month of March

Lobby Days

April 2021| Sacramento



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Message from our Program Director

During a recent conversation, a friend said to me, “I wish we could just skip 2020 and go straight to 2021.” His sentiments were that 2020 has been a tough year, from pandemics, police brutality, to protests, and his wish was that we could skip over it, to get on with the good stuff of life. My reply to him was, “Would you be prepared for 2021, if you didn’t learn from 2020?” While 2020 has presented numerous challenges for all of us, it doesn’t have to be a “bad” year. In fact, as social workers, we often help our clients to “reframe” challenging seasons in life from “bad events” to “character developing events.” Sociologist C.S. Lewis once stated, “Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny.” While we all face challenges in this season, I believe God is uniquely using this season as “preparation” for those who dare to pursue the extraordinary. We have the choice of being discouraged, or being open to seeing life and pursuing our goals “differently.” The Department of Social Work at CBU is excited for a new academic year, and while we may provide education “differently” than planned, we are still moving forward with the fire, determination, and passion that we worked with under former conditions. Our Department encourages everyone to embrace the “differences” of this season. Coronavirus has forced us to learn and utilize technologies and platforms that have always been present, but were largely unused, but now we see that things can be done “differently.” Imagine how we will be able to eradicate accessibility issues for clients who were previously unable to take advantage of classes and resources due to physical distance. Look at the conversations around race, privilege, systemic oppression, police reform, inequality, and unity that we are having across this nation as the world is begging for something different. We even see governments seeking to help those on the verge of being evicted, communities rallying to house the homeless, and jails releasing non-violent offenders, as we engage with one another differently. This is a season of thinking, engaging, and living “differently,” and we believe the world will be a better place because of it.

The Department of Social Work is doing some “different” things. We accepted 134 new students into our MSW program, making this our largest incoming class since the program’s inception. We have launched our Distance-Learning (DL) MSW courses, allowing 29 working and remote students to engage in asynchronous social work courses, with an in-person residency at the end of each semester. Additionally, the Department of Social Work has launched our Doctor of Social Work (DSW) program with 39 doctoral students, representing a wide array of professional and academic backgrounds. The Department has sponsored some dynamic conversations on race throughout the summer and will be providing more virtual presentations throughout the semester for students and the larger community. We are embracing the opportunity to do things “differently,” and we are excited for the new things God has in store, and the new ways in which we will be able to serve those around us.

We pray that you find success, peace, and growth in this season of difference. Encourage others to hold their heads up, and re-imagine how we can do things greater than we’ve done them before. As we live with this kind of faith and optimism, we may discover that “roses can grow through concrete.”



Charles Lee-Johnson, D. Min.
Chair, Department of Social Work



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Faculty Spotlight

Please join us in welcoming Professor Arellano, Professor Bermejo and Professor Middleton to the Social Work Department. These three new Lecturers are an exciting addition and will be an added value to the program as we continue to grow.



Liza Arellano, LCSW obtained her BA in Behavioral Science from CBU and her MSW from California State University, San Bernardino. She has over 15 years of experience in child welfare, predominantly with the County of San Bernardino, where she served in various capacities, including conducting child abuse and neglect investigations, training and development of staff, supervision of blended and specialized units, and managing multiple child welfare placement programs. Professor Arellano is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who managed the provision of mental health services for foster youth in San Bernardino County through collaborative efforts with the Department of Behavioral Health. Professor Arellano and her husband are longtime residents of Riverside County and are involved in the children's ministry at their local church. She has a passion for children involved with the child welfare system, having adopted her two sons from foster care. Professor Arellano's research interests include better outcomes for youth in congregate care, preventative child welfare services, and the effectiveness of on-the-job training for child welfare social workers.



Faculty Spotlight Continued



Jerri Middleton is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in California and in the state of Alabama. She received her MSW at the University of Alabama and her BA in Social Work at Texas Tech University. Professor Middleton has been working in the field of social work for over 10 years in various settings, including a psychiatric and substance use hospital setting, child welfare, short-term treatment residential centers for children and teens, community social work for West Alabama, family services with Head Start/Early Head Start, and clinical social work. Professor Middleton spent the last five years working for the University of Alabama in the college counseling department providing individual therapy, group services, crisis intervention, consultation, and outreach services for the community and university systems. Her specializations include trauma-informed care, clinical social work with teens and young adults, and child-welfare. Professor Middleton is a wife, mother of two, and avid lover of the outdoors. She frequently spends her time camping with her family and playing basketball when possible.



Russ Bermejo has 12 years of experience in public child welfare practice, including nearly 10 years as a Senior Social Worker with Orange County Children and Family Services. His casework primarily focused on family reunification, family maintenance, or permanency planning. Professor Bermejo served as an Aftercare Fellow for International Justice Mission, where he worked on a project aimed in preparing sex trafficking survivors for vocational training and employment in Cebu City, Philippines. As an IJM Fellow, Professor Bermejo researched and drafted best practices for reintegration of trafficking survivors, conducted think tank discussions and training in the aftercare community, and developed an economic self-sufficiency program now known as 10 Thousand Windows, which offers economic empowerment services for survivors of violence and exploitation in Cebu. While in Cebu, Professor Bermejo, also served as a clinical director for My Refuge House, which is a safe house shelter ministry for newly rescued victims of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. Professor Bermejo's passions include UCLA sports, St. Louis Cardinals baseball, making birthday cakes, and spending time with his wife, Megumi and their four children, Grace, Honor, Courage, and Hope.



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Join the CBU Alumni Association Today!*

Visit our membership registration [here](#).

Take advantage of all the benefits we have to offer including:

- Privileges at the [Annie Gabriel Library](#)**
 - Complimentary access to the [CBU Aquatic Center](#)**
 - 10% discount at the [CBU Campus Store](#)
 - Discounted tickets to all regular season home athletic events**
 - [AUTO ADMIT](#) to any of the 14 Online & Professional Studies division master's degree programs.
 - [Career Center](#) services, including job fairs, interview skills workshops and the online job board
 - [Alumni Access](#): provides discounts to a collection of both local and national hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, car dealers, theme parks and much more!
- Join with access code: **LANCERACCESS2018**

Check out our other benefits for alumni by visiting our website a ua.calbaptist.edu/benefits.

Curious as to what your former classmates have been up to? Visit our [Class Notes](#) and [Alumni Spotlight](#) and find out!

**Due to COVID-19 precautions, some benefits such as athletic and other events and access to CBU facilities may be unavailable at this time.

Questions can be directed to alumni@calbaptist.edu or 951.343.4439.

Field Placement Spotlight

Hope through Housing is dedicated to breaking the cycle of generational poverty by implementing programs that empower individuals and change communities. We deliver services and support to low-income residents within National CORE apartment communities aimed at Building Bright Futures, creating Pathways to Economic Empowerment, and building Connections to Care for seniors. Based in Rancho Cucamonga, Hope serves residents on 70+ sites throughout SoCal, Texas, Florida, and Arkansas.

Through a combination of direct programs, individualized resident guidance, and community partnerships, Hope delivers an array of programs and services in onsite community centers located within National CORE affordable apartment communities. Our goal is not only to provide safe, stable, quality housing, but to use that housing as a platform to elevate the health, well-being, and self-sufficiency of low-income families and seniors.

This year, Hope Through Housing is hosting eight MSW interns at sites located throughout the Inland Empire.



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Carry 117

It is that time of year again! All newly enrolled MSW students received a Carry 117 computer bag from the Social Work Department. Each bag is hand-made and crafted by local women in Korah, Ethiopia.

Carry 117 is steadfast in their mission of empowering sustainable development by hiring at-risk women and training them to sew. They are then able to provide for themselves and their families.

CBU Social Work is honored to work with Carry 117 again this year.

Summer 2020

Over the summer, Social Work faculty were busy engaging in presentations, conducting research, and participating in community service. Look below to read find out more about these activities:

Dr. Carla Thornton and Dr. Kendra Flores-Carter were planning to go to Belize in the summer of 2020 to work with the Belize Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented them from traveling to Belize as planned. The Ministry of Education had to make a rapid pivot to create virtual continuing professional development opportunities for teachers across the country that were planning to attend the summer training. Even though Dr. Thornton and Dr. Flores-Carter weren't able to provide the training in person, they ended up having a larger impact by virtually training over 3,000 teachers in five weeks during the summer. Dr. Thornton and Dr. Flores-Carter collaborated with colleagues from Belize to develop a comprehensive curriculum on Mental Health, Financial Wellness, and Digital Learning to help teachers cope with the pandemic, as well as become familiar with distance learning modules. The Ministry of Education is looking forward to continued partnership for additional professional development courses led by Dr. Thornton and Dr. Flores-Carter in the future.

During the summer, Social Work faculty designed and participated in a social justice webinar series to address the absence of equity and inclusion in social policy, explore biblical themes related to just policy, and provide research-informed tools for creating equitable and inclusive policy and meaningful social change. **Dr. Krystal Hays, Dr. Jennifer Costello, Dr. Antonio Mejico, Dr. Kendra Flores-Carter, Dr. Stephen Brown and Professor Phil Breitenbucher** each held a webinar addressing these themes; and we are excited to continue the discussion.

Inland Empire Employment Opportunities

This employment listing offers a variety of positions in the field of social work ranging from entry level to executive level, provided by a wide range of local and national employers. Click on the blue hyperlink to access the website for the job description or conduct an internet search.

1. Pacific Grove Hospital, [Social Work I](#), Riverside
2. Pathway Family Services, [Social Worker](#), Hemet
3. Bristol Hospice LLC, [Hospice Social Worker](#), Riverside
4. United Health Group, [Social Worker](#), Hemet
5. Foster Children Safe Haven, [Social Worker/Case Manager](#), Rancho Cucamonga

Note This is a free resource for job seekers. The college is unable to verify the status of jobs and is not responsible for any content or subsequent transactions between employers and candidates.



Social Work

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Our Mission Statement

The mission of California Baptist University's MSW program is to develop competent advanced social work practitioners, leaders, and world changers who live their purpose through the integration and application of social work values, knowledge, and skills to help individuals, families, and communities in need.

The MSW program strives to develop graduates who are dedicated to enhancing human well-being and whose integrity, ethics, and leadership distinguish them in the workplace and the world.

The MSW program is committed to faith integration, teaching excellence, scholarship and mentorship, and empowering students to live their purpose and glorify God through professional social work practice with diverse populations.

The MSW 4 Pillars

Justice | Trauma | Truth & Reconciliation | Social Enterprise



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