Commencement 2022
Celebrating Graduates of the Classes of 2020, 2021, and 2022!

The CUNY Graduate Center will hold the 56th Commencement ceremony on June 9th at 3:30 p.m. at the Barclays Center. The ceremony will feature Stephen Brier as the Commencement speaker, and Raj Korpan as the student speaker.

We are proud to honor the following PhD in Social Welfare graduates!

Graduates of 2022
Sarah Bussey
Bertha Fountain
Hedi Levine
Austin Oswald
Danielle Strauss

Graduates of 2021
Sandra Castro
Rachel Chernick
Jonathan Edwards
Anthony Freeman

Graduates of 2020
Meredith Doherty
Agnes Halarewicz
Carolyn Hanesworth
Joshua Livingston
Adam Reynolds
Inga Saitadze
Margaret Salisu
Maurice Vann
Ovita Williams

Call for Student Funding
We are pleased to announce a call for funding for all registered students. The funding can help support your presentation at an academic conference taking place this Summer or Fall 2022, or can be used to support you in your completion of data collection and/or data analysis (e.g., transcription costs; services of an editor). If you are interested in applying for funding, please complete the application form at: Call for Funding. Deadline is June 17, 2022.
Student Achievements: April & May

Sabretta Alford's book review of "Making their days happen: Paid personal assistance services supporting people with disability living in their homes and communities", by Lisa I. Iezzoni, was accepted for publication in the Journal of Social Work.

Ian Williams was accepted into the The Network for Social Work Management’s 2022 Doctoral Scholars Institute, taking place this June, 2022.

Tiffany Younger was the invited as the commencement speaker for the classes of 2020 and 2021 at Columbia’s School of Social Work Commencement.

Yasmine Awais contributed to the GC Wellness Center's Mental Wellbeing Video Series through her video, "Keeping Well in Difficult Times."

Yasmine has also accepted a position as Associate Professor at Notre Dame of Maryland University to start in the Fall of 2022.

Evelyn Bautista-Miller, through her non-profit, Tender Steps of New York, participated in two community activities: 1. National Student ID Clinic, which provided support in assisting families to complete the home kit; and 2. "Where are We Now with COVID", which provided an opportunity to have a Q&A session about the mental health impact of COVID-19?

Tiffany Younger
Liberation Health Science Fellow at the Insight Center

Tiffany Younger obtained a dissertation fellowship at the Insight Center which is sponsored by Pivotal Venture. The Insight Center is a national economic justice organization that works to build inclusion and equity for people of color, women, immigrants, and low-income families. Through research and advocacy, narrative change, and thought leadership, Insight aims to ensure that all people become, and remain, economically secure. Insight Center intentionally centers race, gender, and place in the pursuit of progressive economic change.

As a Liberation Health Science Fellow at the Insight Center, Tiffany is working with the team to fill research gaps that center Black women. In addition, she is building out her project Liberation for Us, an interactive lab where experts, thought partners and allies work together to develop measurement tools, frameworks and methodologies that center race and gender.

Interested in the Insight Center? See: https://insightcced.org/
Congratulations on the Successful Defense & Deposit of Your Dissertation!

"'Queering' Age-Friendly New York City"
- Austin Oswald
Austin will be joining the research team as a Postdoc Fellow at the Goldsen Institute at the University of Washington

"The ARV Treatment Adherence Model: A Qualitative Study on Antiretroviral (ARV) Treatment Adherence for People Living with HIV"
- Danielle Strauss

"Navigating College While Homeless: A Phenomenological Inquiry of the Young Adult Experience"
- Bertha Fountain

Alumni Feature: Dr. Barbara Milton (Class of 2008)

Dr. Barbara Milton, PhD in Social Welfare Graduate from 2008, with Deborah Lawrence, published "Inherited wisdom: Drawing on the lessons of formerly enslaved ancestors to lift up Black youth". The book, "underscores how practitioners and lay people alike can highlight the strength, fortitude, resilience, and community found in the narratives of enslaved forebears to help young people recover hope for the future. Readers learn how the resilient and resourceful actions of enslaved Africans many years ago can serve as a blueprint for the healing and survival of their progeny in contemporary society" (Cognella Publishers, 2022).
You can find the book at: Cognella Publishers
Student Spotlight: Becca Cadoff
Let's Have a Conversation with Becca!

Why did you apply to the PhD in Social Welfare? - I was working at a job I loved (doing quantitative research at a criminal legal system reform organization), but I have always hated NYC so I knew I’d want to leave at some point. In my role, I was given a ton of autonomy. But when I was looking at job postings, the autonomy I was looking for seemed to require a PhD, so I figured I should get one for when I was ready to leave NYC (which happened earlier than expected because of COVID, but as has been said “plans are useless but planning is everything”). I loved the CUNY/SSW program because it offered so much flexibility. I have a bachelor’s in social policy and a master’s in public administration, so I know I look at the world through a policy lens. But what is missing is the social work perspective, that human-centered approach that is so important for reform (especially within the CLS). I have loved that the SSW program has allowed me to focus on criminal systems reform, and also holds space for people.

What has been your favorite course so far as a student? Why? - I loved Qualitative Methods with Dr Vicki Lens. I came into the program as a quantitative researcher, and the course (and Vicki) really opened my eyes to the types of research questions that can be answered best through qualitative methods. Following that class, I also took Critical Methods with Michelle Fine and Critical Statistics with Brett Stoudt, both in the Critical Psych program. The combination of those three courses really changed my outlook--on both the program and the world. Next, I read a lot of GREAT books in “Urban Poverty” with Van Tran (sociology). Last, I met my committee chair through a Data Management course in the Crim program at John Jay. I guess this is a long way of saying: a) explore courses offered through various programs, and b) be open to options that aren’t necessarily within your wheelhouse.

What do you want to do after you graduate? - I’m going on the academic job market this fall, so I hope to get a job as an assistant professor. I love teaching and mentoring, so I want to apply to programs that are not research-heavy because I want my focus to be on the students and giving them opportunities to be part of my research. I’m also a registered yoga instructor and Level 1 Reiki Certified. I hope to work toward a few other personal training certifications and eventually open a holistic health center that provides services to people with criminal records and/or who have been negatively impacted by legal system involvement. I think my happy place will be a balance of teaching and coaching, with maybe a little research and legislative advocacy thrown in.

What leadership and/or employment positions do you hold within CUNY? - I’m a member of the Social Welfare Committee on Anti-Black Racism and Liberatory Transformation. I’m also a student representative on the Social Welfare sub-Committee on Advising & Mentoring.

What’s something that people would be surprised to know about you? - I have picked up rowing (crew) as a side hobby during COVID, and I’m actually now coaching adult learn-to-row programs at my local club. I love it, and this experience reinforces that I want a career in teaching/coaching/mentoring/etc. I love helping people step up to a new challenge, and supporting them as they find their footing on a new level.

What is the focus of your research? - Overall, I’m interested in the intersection of social welfare and criminal legal system (CLS) policies on people who are living in communities following incarceration/contact with the CLS. For my dissertation, I’m using a large, quantitative, longitudinal dataset (the Panel Study of Income Dynamics) and will investigate the impact of CLS contact on housing, total income packages (earnings, benefits, financial support from friends and family), and the way each of these areas (housing, earnings, benefits) implicate each other. Following graduation, I hope to conduct a community-based/participatory (hopefully action!) research project that delves into all these factors (welfare and criminal policies; housing and income), from the perspective of people who are living within these realities.

What are you currently reading, watching, or listening to? - I’ve been doing a lot of soul-searching (haven’t we all?), and I’m currently on a Brene Brown kick. I’m listening to The Power of Vulnerability (for the second time), and reading “I Thought It Was Just Me (But It Isn’t)”. Both are really challenging some underlying assumptions I’ve been making about myself for my whole life, and have provided some incredibly powerful journaling prompts/ideas that I hope will lead me on a path to finding my own voice. “On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous” by Ocean Vuong is one of the most beautiful books I’ve ever read. I’m also a huge Taylor Swift fan (sometimes polarizing opinion: I’m obsessed with the album Reputation). Last, I’ve watched Lovecraft Country (HBO) multiple times, and think about it often; it is incredibly complex and quite thoughtful - plus just some damn good acting and fun to watch. Okay, sorry not sorry, one more.... if you haven’t seen The Wire (HBO), it’s brilliant. I named my car Omar after Michael K. Williams' character.

What’s something we should ask you? What’s your answer? - This isn’t necessarily “something we should ask me,” but I am a incredibly private and self-conscious person. (Many of you who have met me will not believe this; I’m often able to play extravert pretty well.) But I struggle deeply with anxiety and depression. I’m able to hide it well (apparently, because when I share this most people are surprised), but I think mental health conditions are important to share and normalize - especially among fellow graduate students. I’ve finally found a good mix of medication that works for me, and feel incredibly lucky to have found a therapist who I love (after literally trying over 15 therapists in the last 10 years). I also feel better when I can exercise, meditate, and be outside every day. Of course, what has worked for me might not work for you, but as I said, I think it’s so important for us to talk about this more so I’m sharing my story.
Welcome to the PhD in Social Welfare
Incoming Cohort of 2022

Shermira R. Busby is a transformational catalyst, educator, policymaker, and workforce professional hailed from the United States Virgin Islands to Brooklyn, NY. She received her Bachelor of Science in Human Services from CUNY, New York City College of Technology (City Tech), and Master of Social Work from Fordham University. As the Director of Business and Industry Workforce Training at City Tech, she administers industry-specific training programs that motivate students to cultivate knowledge and skills, explore their future passions, and become economically self-sufficient. Shermira is also an adjunct lecturer in the Human Services Department at City Tech. As a first-generation American, Shermira is committed to developing approaches that will enhance the quality of life for individuals in low socioeconomic groups. Her research interests include disparities in economic recovery along racial and gender lines—particularly women of color, labor diaspora, and policy implementation.

Mickey Correa, LCSW, has an MSW from Fordham University Graduate School of Social Service and an M.Div. from New York Theological Seminary. Mickey is Afro-Puerto Rican and a native New Yorker, raised in the Red Hook projects. He serves as a Methodist pastor to a bilingual parish in Washington Heights and is the Chief Program Officer of the Blanton-Peale Institute & Counseling Center. Mickey’s work in the field has included working with the homeless, preventive child welfare, mental health treatment, and EAP. Mickey is also an adjunct lecturer at the City College of New York. Mickey’s interests include disparities research, resilience factors in the lives of minoritized men who have experienced traumatic phenomena in urban settings, the training of BIPOC therapists, and the intersections of sexuality, spirituality, and mental health.

Julie Glickman is a clinically licensed social worker and a certified school social worker. She received her Master’s degree in social work from Hunter College School of Social Work in 2009 and is certified in Trauma-focused CBT. She has worked with children, adolescents, and families in various settings including schools, foster care, and anti-violence programs. She serves on multiple diversity, equity and inclusion committees and partners with the Anti-Defamation League to provide programming in schools. Julie is a trained Theatre of the Oppressed facilitator and loves using a variety of modalities to help clients improve self-esteem and self-advocacy. She also uses these tools to support clients and communities as they heal from trauma. Her primary areas of interest include suicide prevention, anti-oppression, traumasensitive schools, and trauma-focused practice.
Welcome to the PhD in Social Welfare
Incoming Cohort of 2022

Victoria Murray earned her MSS from Bryn Mawr College with a focus on clinical social work and child and family well-being. Victoria has worked extensively as a direct practice social worker in the field of mentoring with young people impacted by foster care. She is a facilitator, trainer, and mentoring consultant specializing in trauma-informed, harm-reduction, and youth centered practices. She currently works as a Technical Assistance Provider through the Silver Lining Mentoring Institute to provide no-cost consultation opportunities for non-profits who seek to initiate, strengthen, and grow mentoring programs specifically related to youth impacted by foster care. Through doctoral studies, Victoria seeks to deepen how we understand what it means "to belong" across the lifespan. Her research interests include re-envisioning foster care and aging out, youth-centered mentoring, trauma, non-profit organizational change and equity practices, and social work education.

Samantha Norris believes in the power of collective spaces to dismantle oppressive structures. She is currently pursuing a graduate certificate at the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies. A Chicago native, she received her MA in Social Service Administration from the University of Chicago. Samantha landed in NYC in 2013 after spending two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Dominican Republic, where she worked with adolescent girls and families and attempted to dance bachata. She is currently the Supervising Social Worker at Safe Passage Project, a legal services organization that represents immigrant youth in deportation proceedings. Through her doctoral studies, Samantha would like to explore the impact of neoliberalism on social service provision in nonprofit spaces and the transformative potential of emancipatory/critical social work practice and theory for workers and communities.

Julio Rafael Mora received his Associates degree in Liberal Arts from BMCC and Bachelors in Anthropology from Hunter College. He was inspired to pursue a Masters in Social Work from his experience in supporting constituents in Community Board 2 and other personal and professional support that provided safe spaces to explore his purpose and his investments in valuing his voice. He graduated with an MSW from Fordham University and was the recipient of The Mayor's Graduate Scholarship Program. Based on his personal and professional experiences, he has focused his career on providing support and services to older adults such as individual therapy, learning about home care services as a supervisor, and more recently, as a care manager where he had the opportunity to develop and facilitate a support group for older adult men at a NORC/senior center in Astoria. As a result, his research interests is focused on how the cultural perception of aging, history of immigration and trauma, social spatial experience, racial and class identity are associated with older adult Latino men's motivation in accessing mental health and health care services. In addition, he would like to focus on learning quantitative research and exploring how AI and machine learning could be utilized to improve services for seniors. He is currently studying to obtain LCSW.
Welcome to the PhD in Social Welfare
Incoming Cohort of 2022

Patrick Schelle is a seasoned social worker, working over 10 years in the Tri-State area - primarily New York. Determined to address racial disparities and utilize a trauma responsive approach, Patrick’s goal is to work alongside young people, to transform the youth systems; most specifically the youth justice system. In addition to advocacy work in the US and in Haiti, his primary job functions include adaptive leadership and program development in the non-profit sector. Patrick is an active member to many committees and coalitions including; Alternatives to Incarceration Coalition, AntiRacist Alliance, Westchester Coalition for Police Reform, and the White Plains Police Reform Task Force (2021). Patrick has future goals as a PhD student with CUNY (The Graduate Center) Social Welfare program to utilize action research methodology in effort to transform youth systems (with their voices at the helm).

Simone Schultz is a licensed mental health counselor with comprehensive training and credentials in forensic psychology, clinical mental health counseling, social work, trauma, and addiction treatment. She earned her BA and MA in Forensic Psychology from John Jay College of Criminal Justice and her MSW from Columbia University. She also holds an advanced certificate in clinical mental health counseling from Long Island University and a Master CASAC credential. She is the Associate Vice President of Behavioral Health at the Fortune Society and she is also an owner/psychotherapist in her private practice. Simone’s research interests include alternative to incarceration behavioral health treatment programs, desistance from crime, first responders’ mental health, and clinical intervention research specifically tailored for the justice-involved population.

Haein Son earned his Master’s in Social Work from the State University of New York at Albany. Haein currently works as the Director of External Review at the New York City Children’s Center. Over the past twenty years, he has been a strong advocate for addressing mental health issues in the Asian American community. He is the co-founder and past president of Korean American Behavioral Health Association, Inc. His research interest is culturally competent crisis care for Asian Americans. He hopes to learn how Asian Americans define mental health crises and what drives them to reach out to mental health crisis services or emergency service providers. He also wants to expand his research interest to developing a better and more effective crisis care system and evaluating crisis interventions, including the new 988 system.