



SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

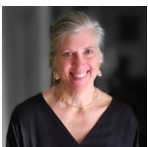
Spring 2026



A LETTER FROM LESLIE GREGORY

What a gift to watch our beautiful campus burst into spring bloom, where longer days and warmer temperatures constantly remind us of the hope and promise of renewal. The growth unfolding on our campus has mirrored the growth within our department this year. We have seen significant expansion in our MSW program, alongside the creation of new systems and staff positions designed to better support our students. Our BSW program has remained steady and there is a strategic initiative to develop a fully online BSW program in the coming years.

In addition to these important developments, our students also deepened their understanding of social work knowledge, values, and skills during the academic year. We are confident our students will conclude the semester strong, grounded in faith and their social work calling. We believe our graduates are equipped to carry the light of hope into a world that deeply longs for it. Ultimately our strength is rooted in the promise of Lamentations 3:22-23: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."



Leslie Gregory
Social Work Department Chair



CELEBRATING SOCIAL WORK MONTH: ALUMNA DR. DARLA COFFEY INSPIRES EASTERN COMMUNITY

In honor of Social Work Month, Eastern University was proud to welcome back one of its own distinguished leaders, Dr. Darla Coffey, BSW '83, on March 25th. Her presentation, titled "Social Work Pride: The Perfect Skillset for Today's World," served as both a celebration of the profession and a powerful call to action for the next generation of change-makers.

During her talk, Dr. Coffey addressed the challenges of navigating a modern landscape often described as VUCA—volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. While such a world can seem daunting, she reminded the audience that Eastern students and professionals are uniquely prepared for these times. By combining a steadfast foundation of faith with the practical, rigorous skillset of social work preparation, individuals are equipped to meet uncertainty and complexity head-on.

The heart of her message was an invitation to "think bigger." She challenged attendees to look beyond the immediate tasks at hand and recognize the broader impact of their training, urging them to lead with confidence and purpose in an ever-changing society.

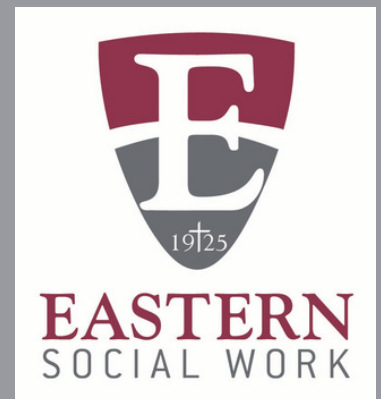
Dr. Coffey's return to campus underscores her enduring bond with Eastern University. A 1983 graduate and the 2014 Alumna of the Year, she has remained an important part of the EU community. Since 2023, she has helped direct the university's future as a member of the Council of Trustees. Beyond Eastern, she is a Senior Leadership Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania and previously led the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as President from 2012–2022.

Dr. Coffey brings a wealth of national expertise to her alma mater. Her visit was a poignant reminder of the enduring value of an Eastern education and the vital role social workers play in bringing hope and stability to a complex world.



Dr. Dianna Montgomery
Champions Inclusive Classrooms
at Lancaster Learns

On February 27, 2026, Dr. Dianna Montgomery participated in Lancaster Learns to present her workshop, "Active Learning Strategies for Creating an Inclusive and Collaborative Learning Environment." This engaging, in-person session provided educators with a hands-on look at practical pedagogical tools and active learning techniques. Dr. Montgomery's presentation focused on how to foster respectful, deep discussions within diversity-focused courses, giving participants the strategies needed to build classrooms where every voice is heard and valued. It was a timely look at how collaborative learning can bridge differences and enhance the educational experience for all.





SSWA Hosts Successful "Lemon-Aid" Fundraiser for Valley Youth House

On April 10th, the SSWA (Student Social Work Association) successfully hosted its second annual "Lemon-Aid" fundraiser. The group sold lemonade, shirley temples, and fancy cups, raising over \$400 for a great cause. The proceeds will be used to purchase specialized curly hair products for foster youth in the Supervised In-House Living (SIL) program at Valley Youth House in West Chester, PA. This important equity issue was brought to the SSWA's attention by Social Work Senior Kay Burak, who is completing her internship at the facility. Kay highlighted that the home currently provides basic hair products for straight hair, meaning youth with different hair textures must spend their personal stipends to buy products that work for them. Thanks to the generosity of the Eastern community, the SSWA was able to purchase products the youth themselves picked out, sending a powerful message that they are seen and cared for.

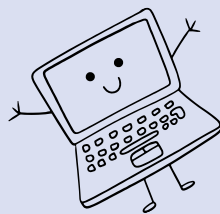


DO NOTHING FROM SELFISH AMBITION OR CONCEIT, BUT IN HUMILITY COUNT OTHERS MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN YOURSELVES. LET EACH OF YOU LOOK NOT ONLY TO HIS OWN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO TO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS.

-PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4
(ESV)



Are you ready to take the next step in your social work career?



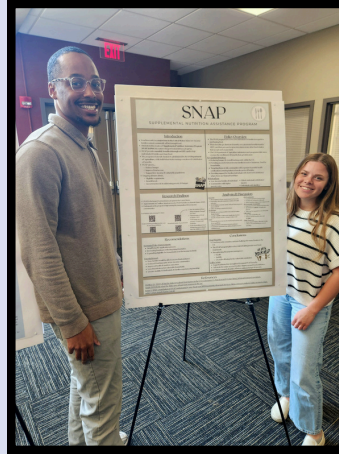
Join us for our next Master of Social Work (MSW) Virtual Information Session on Wednesday, April 29th, from 7:00 to 8:00 PM ET. While we schedule these sessions frequently to accommodate busy professionals, this upcoming date is the perfect opportunity to learn about our flexible online program, explore our curriculum, and discover how Eastern University can help you lead with faith and justice. Don't miss this chance to have your questions answered by our faculty and admissions team. You can reserve your spot today by registering at eastern.edu/events/master-social-work-msw-online-info-session.

Annual CHS Research Symposium Highlights

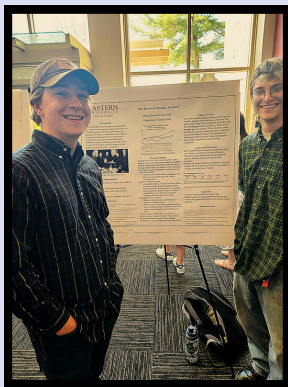
The College of Health and Sciences (CHS) hosted its annual Research Symposium for CHS students, alumni, and faculty on Friday, April 10, 2026. Attendees learned more about the amazing research and endeavors happening within CHS. We congratulate our students on their participation and the awards that were earned.



Social Justice Award went to seniors, Kay Burak and Valentina Aquino for "The Opioid Crisis & Community Intervention"



The Qualitative Excellence Award was awarded to junior Jaden Ricketts for "Pushed Out? Alternative Education and the Pathways into the School-to-Prison Pipeline"



BSW Students' poster presentations in McInnis Hall



MSW Student, Mary Cassel developed a program proposal at her internship site, Mercy Connections in Vermont. She presented her research at the symposium and did a program proposal presentation for agency staff and the community.



Alumni Spotlight: Mika Muschamp, MSW '25



After graduating from Eastern in 2025, Mika Muschamp has transitioned back into full-time work at Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital, where she collaborates with a multidisciplinary clinical team. Originally a nursing major before pivoting to psychology, Mika found her true calling in social work through the recommendation of a colleague and was drawn to Eastern for its faith-based mission. Currently, she is focusing on licensure and is excited to give back to the university as a Faculty Teaching Assistant.

Mika credits Eastern's faculty and spiritual focus for her professional growth, specifically noting how her final internship at the Coatesville VA helped her find her voice as an advocate. Balancing a career and graduate school was no small feat, but she found stability through the mentorship of Professor Bowman Lim and a disciplined self-care routine. Her advice to current students is to engage fully with their cohort: "Build a community and take advantage of class discussions to truly connect."

