



SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025

A MESSAGE FROM LESLIE GREGORY

As we head into a new season it is hard to imagine that spring is on its way given the cold wintry weather here in Pennsylvania. The gray days and frigid temperatures have reminded me of the importance of warmth, not just from sunnier days, but more importantly from our relationships in the social work community at Eastern.

As spring approaches, we can be confident in God's faithfulness and renewal. In Isaiah 43:19, the Lord declares, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Just as the seasons change, bringing new life to the earth, we, too, are given fresh opportunities including those that our upcoming graduates will be embarking on, whether that might be further education, a new job, licensure, or ministry.

Whether you are deep in your studies, teaching and mentoring, or out in the world serving others through your social work practice, know that your work is meaningful and that you are making a difference. May this spring be a time of renewal for you—renewed energy, renewed passion for justice and compassion, and renewed faith in the One who calls us to this work.



*Leslie Gregory,
Social Work Department Chair*

MARCH IS SOCIAL WORK MONTH



Tech for Good:
How Data and Innovation Can
Create a World Where Every Child is
Rooted in Family

THEA RAMIREZ
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19TH
6:30-8:00 PM
EAGLE GREAT ROOM
OR VIA ZOOM

We hope you can join us for this in-person and virtual event for students, alumni, and social work professionals.

1.5 CEUs are offered.

PLEASE RSVP TO SOCIALWK@EASTERN.EDU

SOCIAL WORK MONTH SEMIINAR SERIES:

The social work department is offering free seminars for personal and professional development. One CEU is offered for each session. Please email social.wk@eastern.edu if you plan to attend and need the CEU.

Seminars are virtual and can be accessed using this link:

[Social Work Seminar Zoom Link](#)

March 4th 7:00-8:00 pm (ET) Couples Counseling

This seminar on couples counseling will explore the foundational principles and therapeutic techniques used to support couples in navigating relationship challenges.

March 11th 7:00-8:00 pm (ET) Addictions

This seminar on addictions counseling will provide a comprehensive overview of the theories and practices used to support individuals struggling with substance use and addictive behaviors, including sex addiction.

March 18th 7:00-8:00 pm (ET) Christianity and Social Work

This seminar explores the intersection of social work and Christianity, focusing on how faith-based principles can inform and enhance social work practice.

MSW INFO SESSION

Join Us for an Information Session on the Master's of Social Work Program! Interested in advancing your career in social work? Don't miss our upcoming Master's of Social Work (MSW) Information Session on **Wednesday, March 27th from 7-8 PM Eastern Time.**

Learn more about the program's curriculum, admissions process, and how our MSW can help you build a rewarding career dedicated to making a positive impact on communities. Register today and get all the information you need to take the next step in your social work journey!

[For more information and registration](#)

LOOK WHAT OUR GRADS ARE DOING



Thea Ramirez, BSW, '06 was named alumna of the year. She will be speaking at our annual colloquium on March 19th. See above.

Thea Ramirez '06, is the Founder and CEO of Adoption-Share, a nonprofit technology organization, designed to mitigate connectional barriers that keep children languishing in foster care. Family-Match, a program of Adoption-Share, is the first application designed to leverage data and predictive models to better match children in foster care with foster and adoptive families. Thea holds a master's degree in clinical social work and is known for envisioning and implementing big ideas that create collaboration among people and organizations.

In addition to being named a "Young Influencer" by Catalyst (catalystspace.com), she has been featured and published on platforms such as CNN, Christianity Today, Parents.com, The Washington Times, USA Today, and the Wall Street Journal. Her advocacy and innovation in child welfare has brought her to speak at the White House, the European Parliament in Brussels, and the American Enterprise Institute and has resulted in meaningful policy reform. She is a 2018 Congressional Angels in Adoption Award recipient and had the honor of ringing the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange in recognition of her work in adoption and child welfare. She is married to Lucas Ramirez (Eastern Alumn 2005) and together they have three children who reside in Brunswick, Georgia.



Toby Gregory, BSW, '24

As a graduate social work student at the University of Kentucky, Toby Gregory has had the opportunity to contribute to a research-driven initiative exploring the intersection of social work and sports. This project is led by Survivors 4 Change, a nonprofit organization based in Chicago that focuses on revolutionizing sports safety education and promoting healthy relationships to create safer, more supportive environments for youth athletes. In collaboration with the University of Kentucky and funded by the National Hockey League Foundation, the initiative aims to foster positive youth development within the youth hockey community in the greater Chicago area.

Our work encompasses curriculum development, training programs, and research analysis, all designed to strengthen relationships between coaches, parents, and athletes while prioritizing safety and well-being. My role involved research support, program evaluation, and contributing to educational materials that enhance communication and collaboration within youth sports.

This initiative underscores the growing potential for social workers to play an integral role in athletic spaces, addressing critical issues such as athlete safety, mental health, and community development. By integrating social work principles with the structure of youth sports, we are helping to shape a more inclusive and supportive environment for young athletes.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW SOCIAL WORK BLOG

We're excited to announce the launch of our new [Social Work Blog](#)—a space where we'll be sharing valuable insights, resources, and updates in social work. Whether you're a student, professional, or simply passionate about making a positive impact, our blog is designed to keep you informed and inspired.

We invite you to visit the blog for thought-provoking articles, and the latest trends in social work practice. It's a fantastic way to stay connected with the department and engage with a community dedicated to creating meaningful change.



CONGRATULATIONS DR. MONTGOMERY

We are thrilled to celebrate an outstanding achievement by one of our own! Please join us in congratulating Dr. Dianna Montgomery for earning her Doctorate in Social Work, an incredible milestone that reflects her dedication, hard work, and passion for making a meaningful impact in the field. This achievement is a testament to her exceptional skills, resilience, and hard work. We couldn't be prouder of her accomplishments and commitment to Eastern's community. Please extend your heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Montgomery as she embarks on this exciting new chapter of her career!

Doctor of Social Work

Public Oral Dissertation Defense

Presented by: Dianna L. Montgomery, LSW



DISSERTATION TITLE:

UNDERSTANDING AND ASSESSING CRITICAL THINKING USING ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES IN UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK COURSES THROUGH BLOOM'S MASTERY LEARNING

Date: Thursday, Feb. 27, 2025

Time: 11am

In-person location: Stayer Hall Room, 106

Virtually Zoom link <https://millersville.zoom.us/j/92437919373>

Dissertation Committee Members:

- Dr. Leonora E. Foels, Chair
- Dr. A. Nicole Pfannenstiel
- Dr. Melissa A. Mullen Davis



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CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



A TIME TO RISE CAMPAIGN

Eastern University is kicking off its Centennial celebration on March 19, 2025, marking 100 years of God's faithfulness

The university's Christian focus in education is evident in its mission to provide quality and affordable Christian higher education. This commitment is reflected in the development of innovative programs and strategic plans aimed at making a difference in the world.

In recent years, Eastern University has experienced significant growth thanks to the addition of new innovative programs and a strong commitment to providing an education grounded in faith, reason, and justice.

As part of the Centennial celebrations, Eastern is hosting various events, including a Kick-Off Worship service on March 15 and Founders Day Chapel on March 19. These events highlight the university's dedication to its Christian mission and the vibrant community it has nurtured over the past century

As we commemorate our Centennial Year, we invite you to join us in supporting our mission. Your generous gift will help ensure that the next 100 years of Eastern University are filled with continued academic excellence, spiritual development, and growth in service to God and others.

Please consider making a donation to support Eastern University's ongoing commitment to faith-based education and excellence. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey!

CONSIDER SUPPORTING OUR BSW PRACTICUM STUDENTS

Every year, social work students face the challenge of covering travel costs to practicum agencies where they gain the valuable experience and skills they'll need in their careers. For many, this essential step in their education can be financially overwhelming. Our Travel Assistance Fund directly supports students by offsetting the cost of travel to their practicum placements. With your donation, we can ensure that more students have the opportunity to gain valuable social work experience, regardless of their financial situation.

No matter the amount, your donation will go directly toward supporting students who are working to make a difference in the lives of others. Simply include the name of the fund you'd like your gift to go to in the comment section

[A Time to Rise Campaign](#)

