

BYU

School of Social Work Newsletter



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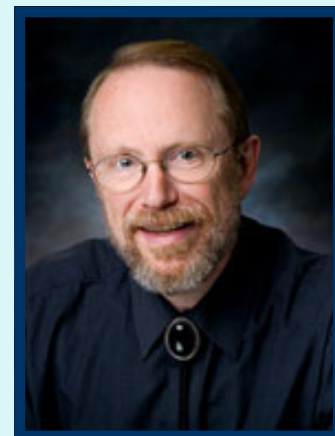
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Annual Social Work Conference

The School of Social Work was pleased to have Dr. William Miller, co-founder of Motivational Interviewing, at this historic conference held on November 1, 2019. It was an honor to hear him speak about the origin, successes with, and basics of Motivational Interviewing.

Dr. Miller received his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Oregon. He retired as a professor from the University of New Mexico in 2006. The main focus of his work has been the psychology of change through studying addiction treatment. After retiring, Dr. Miller only speaks a few times a year. Dr. Wood, one of the MSW professors, invited him to speak at BYU and spent many hours planning for this paramount conference. Due to Dr. Miller's influence and the known success of Motivational Interviewing, registration for the conference was full in less than four hours, with more than 200 people on the waiting list.

Motivational Interviewing is a way of speaking with clients to bring out their own motivation to change. This person-centered method has been found to be more effective than only educating clients and has been proven to help people change across a broad array of issues through thousands of successful case studies. At the founding of Motivational Interviewing, Dr. Miller and his co-founder Dr. Rollnick sought to teach therapists *how* to do it





but discovered that it was better to teach people the spirit behind MI instead. The four key elements to the spirit behind MI are partnership, acceptance, compassion, and evocation. Clinicians guide clients through ambivalence to help them to

choose to and motivate themselves to change. This happens by engaging with the client to create a connection, focusing on a mutual goal between client and clinician, evoking the client's motivation to change, and planning how the client is going to make the change. Rather than telling the client what to do, the clinician asks open questions, affirms the client, reflects and summarizes what he or she has said, and, with permission, advises the client.

Many students, faculty members, BYU alumni, and local clinicians attended the conference. Speaking of this experience, MSW student Ailaina Rice said, "I am amazed at how important empathy is in the therapeutic relationship. Sometimes we forget that the reason we got into this profession was to help others, and empathy can help us realize the worth of others." Another student, Rachel Andelin, said, "I was so happy at the chance to meet Bill Miller personally and thank him for the incredible amount of good he is doing. I really felt like Motivational Interviewing is simply charity. It's how God works with us. This conference

will be an enduring happy memory." A conference attendee commented, "This conference was wonderful and extremely relevant to my work in private practice. I can't wait to implement the concepts that I...learned and practiced." Dr. Wood, when asked about his part in the conference, discussed how historic it was to have Dr. Miller visit BYU with MI being the foundation of the MSW program. It also aligns perfectly with the mission of the university and church teachings.

Dr. Miller talked about the importance of true clinician empathy in helping clients to decide to change and keep to their decision. Clients are more likely to change when the clinician is empathic, rather than directive. He talked about accurate empathy, or deeply understanding the clients experience, and how it can be learned and improved. Counselors with the highest level of empathy had the fewest number of clients' relapse. This can be done, in part, by using reflections. By guessing the client's meaning through a statement, instead of asking questions, we are able to get more information from the client and understand him or her better. The more we reflect the client's statements about change, the more likely he or she will be to make the decision to change. Dr. Miller talked about how we can recognize "change talk" by listening for clients' discussion of desire, ability, reasons, and need for change. Dr. Miller shared how Motivational Interviewing can be used to help clients from a variety of backgrounds, languages, education, and life circumstances. It was truly an honor to hear Dr. Miller teach such invaluable skills to all who were present.



Letter from the Director

Dr. Gordon Limb



I was recently reading an article that asked about completing “Bucket Lists.” I thought about what bucket lists we might have as a student at BYU and in the School of Social Work. Thus, as we end another year and begin a new year (and decade), here are some bucket list items I came up with for BYU Social Work Students and Alumni:

1. Visit the BYU Museum of Art, Museum of Paleontology, Museum of Peoples and Cultures, Monte L. Bean Life Science Museum, and Education in Zion exhibit
2. Attend the Provo Temple or the Provo City Center Temple
3. Hike the “Y” -ideally to watch a sunrise or sunset
4. Eat at the Creamery (specifically ice cream, chocolate milk, and mint brownies)
5. Eat at the Cougareat food court
6. Eat at the BYU Store’s milk and cookie bar
7. Walk along the south campus stream/trail and visit the botany pond
8. Attend a BYU sporting event (while football and basketball get the most publicity, BYU’s Olympic sports are among the best in the nation) and a cultural arts event (musical, choir, play, etc.)
9. Do service at the Food and Care Coalition
10. Do a service project at “Y” Serve in the Wild
11. Visit Bridal Veil Falls
12. Do something at Sundance- (ski, hike, bike, eat)
13. Visit the Provo City Library (the former Brigham Young Academy building)
14. Do something on Utah Lake or the Provo River
15. Attend the Farmer’s Market at Lavell Edward’s Stadium
16. Do something at Seven Peaks (water park or ice arena)
17. Attend a BYU Devotional (preferably every week)
18. Bonus: Hike to the top of Mt. Timpanogas

BYU Social Work specific items:

1. Receive and wear a BYU social work t-shirt
2. Attend the social work annual conference
3. Visit Topaz Japanese Internment Camp and Legislative Day at the Utah Capital
4. Attend a Comprehensive Clinic brown bag event
5. Give a Fulton Conference poster presentation and/or another presentation at a local or national conference
6. Attend an MSWSA event (e.g., opening social, turkey bowl, graduation dinner)
7. Incorporate intentional self-care into your lifestyle (thanks Wendy Sheffield)
8. Attend a Winter semester lecture (Thursdays at 11am)
9. Take (and pass!) the social work licensing exam
10. Get to know one or more of the new social work faculty

I feel very blessed to work at BYU and interact with amazing faculty, staff and students. I cannot think of a better place to work and get an education. Thanks to all for your contribution to making the BYU School of Social Work what it is.

Gordon Limb

School of Social Work Mission Statement

The mission of the School of Social Work at Brigham Young University is to support the overall mission of BYU and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by generating new knowledge and by educating and training students to use the appropriate knowledge, values, and skills of the social work profession to serve individuals and families within their environment and the context of their specific cultures.



Letter from the Alumni President

Dean F. Anderson

Hello to all my fellow BYU School of Social Work alumni and Cougar fans. As I am new to this position, may I just say how proud I am of each of you and the amazing work you do. When my class graduated in 1987, one of the members of our class made T-shirts and gave each of us one. Vertically down the front left side (as you face the person wearing the T-shirt) were the letters, "M" "S" "W." Adjacent to each of these letters were words that said the **following**.

**Made to
Save the
World**

As she gave us our T-shirts just before graduation, we all had a good laugh. We were trained, charged, excited, and ready to take on the world. Some of us cried as we said goodbye to our class of 21 colleagues, friends, and to the mentors and professors that we had worked so closely with for two years. Some of our class stayed close to Provo and some went abroad. Our common goal was to make a difference in the world.

Thirty-two years later, I now think about the thousands of world saving individuals who have passed through the classrooms of the BYU School of Social Work and wonder about the tens of thousands of individuals and families we have all touched. Although the world is not yet saved, each of you who have graduated have made the world a better place. It is a little scary to think where the world would be had Dr. Gibbons and others not started the School of Social Work. They trained, mentored, and sent all of us to the four corners of the world. I extend my admiration, respect, and appreciation to each of you for the difference you make in our world.

On November 1, 2019 the BYU School of Social Work put on its annual conference. Dr. Bill Miller presented on Motivational Interviewing. I had to agree with Dr. Limb when he welcomed the large crowd to the conference. He said that this was not only our annual Social Work Conference but it is also like an annual Social Work Reunion. It is so fun to get to see old friends and make new friends. As Dr. Miller taught about his work in Motivational Interviewing, I was impressed at the caliber of presenters that the BYU School of Social Work attracts. In thinking back, I was impressed by the merit of professors and staff that the School had more than 30 years ago. Now, in 2019, the School continues to attract quality professors and instructors who can attract the caliber of professionals like Dr. Miller to come speak at a one day conference. It is impressive to me to see that our BYU School of Social Work, after all these years, continues to be of the highest standard, drawing attention, respect, and admiration from around the world. As an alumni of this great program, I am proud to be linking elbows with each of you as we are all "Made to Save the World." I hope we will each reflect back fondly on our roots with the BYU School of Social Work and continue to endeavor to work to make our world a better place. Good luck to you in your journey where ever you are in this vast world.

Dean F. Anderson

Your donation helps provide an excellent educational experience for students.

If each of our 4,000+ social work alumni gave just \$10 per year, that would fund a scholarship for a current social work student!

Yes, your donation matters!

For donations to the School of Social Work contact:

Jim Crawley
jim_crawley@byu.edu
(801) 422-8028

Help give more students an "exceptional educational experience."

Welcome to BYU Dr. Hooley!

New Faculty Member

Dr. Cole Hooley's journey in deciding to become a social worker is based on the examples of many influential people in his life—several of whom happened to be social workers. Some of these people included his mission president's wife in the Texas McCallan mission and the founders of a number of inspiring community programs. As an undergraduate student at BYU, Dr. Hooley originally majored in theatre, then switched to secondary education with hopes of teaching drama and social studies. As part of the social studies curriculum, he took several social science courses one of which was Introduction to Social Work. In that class he found a career that applied the incredible things he had been learning in his other social science classes. This desire to act, help others, and emulate great people in his life led Dr. Hooley to get his bachelor's degree in Social Work from BYU. While in the program, he received a confirmation of his decision, and knew his place was to help people who society had pushed aside and considered broken.

Dr. Hooley continued on to receive his MSW from Smith College. His internship was in New York City. After he graduated, he stayed in the city and worked in several positions (case planner, therapist, supervisor, etc.) including as Director of Social Work and Counseling for a charter school network in Harlem. While in New York, Dr. Hooley met and married his wife, who had gone to law school and was also working in the city. They started their family in New York where Dr. Hooley worked for several years before returning for his PhD.

After their time in New York, Dr. Hooley and his family moved to St. Louis where he received his Ph.D. in Social Work from Washington University. After finishing his degree, Dr. Hooley accepted a job as a BYU MSW faculty member. He currently resides in Lindon with his wife, and 4 girls.

Dr. Hooley has felt very welcomed at BYU and is grateful for the amazing faculty and students. His research program focuses on how we can expand the reach of mental health care. He works with systems of care to help get quality mental health service "benefits to more people over a wider geographical area, more quickly, more equitably and more lastingly" (CGIAR, 2000). He has already influenced so many lives for the better, and will continue to do so here at BYU.



Faculty Updates



Gordon Limb
Program Director

This year, Gordon Limb has used his social work education to conduct research on stepfamilies and spirituality. He recently started teaching the policy class and is enjoying the opportunity to spend time with the students. He has also enjoyed working with the staff and faculty this year. He is currently researching American Indian stepfamilies, fragile families, and spiritual assessments.

Charlene Clark

Charlene Clark had a busy, but successful year helping with the school's Unit Review and the annual Social Work Conference hosting Dr. Bill Miller. She is currently working on CSWE reaffirmation, class scheduling, awarding scholarships, and AmeriCorps.



Nanci Shumpert

Nanci Shumpert has been working for BYU's Social Work program for almost eight years. She is working hard to prepare the second-year cohort for its last semester and upcoming graduation. She really enjoyed meeting one of the BYU MSW founders, Dr. Gene Shumway, in his home for the Social Justice Paper Awards event.



Wendy Sheffield

Wendy Sheffield is celebrating 25 years in the Field Education department at BYU. She has used her social work education this year to speak at numerous emotional wellness and mental health trainings. She had the privilege of seeing her two oldest children receive their white coats in their respective medical school programs this year—both within in the same week! She is currently assisting with the CSWE reaffirmation, focusing on the explicit curriculum section.

Stacey Shaw

Stacey Shaw has used her social work degree this year to assist students in their projects and research to help the community. She has enjoyed working with colleagues in Malaysia and seeing refugee colleagues discuss her research with other professionals. Dr. Shaw is currently working on several research projects in Malaysia and the United States with an emphasis on mental health and case work services for refugees.



David Wood

Dave Wood has used his social work education to serve the military and veteran population this year with his position in the National Guard. He also worked on several community coalitions to prevent suicide, including working with Hope4Utah and the Alpine School District Suicide Prevention Coalition. He enjoyed hosting Dr. Bill Miller at the annual Social Work Conference this year. Dr. Wood is currently working on research evaluating suicide prevention programs. He is also conducting research to benefit veterans.





Sherinah Saasa

This year, Sherinah Saasa has used her social work degree to help several orphans and vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa continue attending school and not drop out. She has also conducted and disseminated research findings aimed to support practitioners working with African immigrants in ways to mitigate negative effects of social exclusion. Dr. Saasa was invited to speak at an event on campus for the Africana Studies Program and Black Student Union on promoting social justice for America's marginalized black population and bridging the division between African Americans and black immigrants. Dr. Saasa enjoyed summer with family—her first break since starting her Ph.D. program in 2015. She is currently collecting data for a project on African immigrant utilization of services, mental health outcomes, and barriers to successful integration.

Cory Dennis

Cory Dennis has now worked at BYU for four years. He has used his social work degree to supervise CSWs and see clients in his private practice. He enjoys trail running. Dr. Dennis is currently studying substance use treatment processes and is exploring the impact of substance use on families. His research is also exploring how to address substance abuse in families and the reasons people have for pursuing recovery.



Steven Hoffman

Steven Hoffman used his social work degree to give six presentations in five different conferences throughout the year. He has now been at BYU for one year and loves his job just as much as he hoped he would! He is currently working with colleagues at UT-Knoxville to look at health literacy and mental health literacy among college athletes. He is also investigating how family dynamics influence dating behavior among teens with researchers at the University of Michigan and UT-San Antonio.

MSW Student Association Officers



Front Row (from left to right):

Andrea Call (2nd year) Secretary

Lynette Randall (1st year) MSW Student Representative

Atu Falevai (1st year) Graduate Student Society Representative

Sara Pulsipher (1st year) Advisory Council Representative

Back Row (from left to right):

Jenna Hillman (2nd year) Graduate Student Society Representative

Emma Black (2nd year) Mentor Liaison

Eric Hales (2nd year) Activities

Ashley Olsen (2nd year) MSW Student Representative

Abigail Hardy (2nd year) President

Mallory Funk (2nd year) Mentor Liaison

Brynn Celestino (2nd year)

McKenna Beckstead (1st year) Activities

Not Pictured:

Mckenzie Robertson (2nd year) Activities

Holly Brassfield (2nd year) Advisory Council Representative

Chelsey Wood (2nd year) Mentor Liaison

Teancum Faumui (2nd year) NASW Representative

Advisory Council

Members

Dean Anderson, LCSW
Wasatch Mental Health
BYU MSW Alumni President

Layne Daybell, LCSW
Development Counseling Services

Gene Gibbons, DSW
Co-Founder, BYU School of Social Work

Margaret Nell, LCSW
Family Services, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Allen Proctor, LCSW
Retired BYU Field Liaison

Kevin Raff, LCSW
VA Medical Center

Barbara Robinson, LCSW
Primary Children's Hospital

Cindy Simon, LCSW
Utah Co. Dept of Drug & Alcohol
Prevention & Treatment (UCaDDAPT)

Doran Williams, LCSW
Wasatch Mental Health

Gordon Limb, PhD, ACSW
Director, BYU School of Social Work

Nanci Shumpert
Program Manager, BYU School of Social Work

MSW Student Representatives:
Holly Brassfield
Sara Pulsipher



The role of the BYU MSW Advisory Council is to give advice and ideas to the program from their community and agency perspective.



New Student Orientation

Class of 2021

Members of the new MSW cohort were excited and nervous to meet their “cohort family” for the next two years and begin their journey in BYU’s MSW program. New Student Orientation was held up Provo Canyon just before the semester started. First year students had the opportunity to learn more about each other, their faculty members, and the expectations of the program. Many of the students were extremely impressed by their future professors and classmates as they got to know each other.

Trista Pickett, a first-year student, said of New Student Orientation, “It was so great to meet a majority of my cohort and to start building relationships before school. It helped so much with my qualms about starting school again. It was also great to get to know my professors and learn about what would be expected of me throughout the program.”



MSW 1st year students and School of Social Work faculty & staff

Another student, Rebecca Kiser, said, “I just loved the unity that was emphasized among our cohort. I keep telling myself, “We’re all in this together!”

Beth O’Brien, a new student, said, “I was amazed by the caliber of people drawn to the social work profession.”

Members of the faculty also enjoyed the event. New faculty member, Cole Hooley, said, “It seemed so fitting to start off social work training with relationship building. I loved connecting with the incoming students. Their desire to make this world a better place is so infectious.”

The students and faculty had the privilege to hear from Dr. Kauwe, the new Dean of BYU Graduate Studies. He talked about the importance of persistence, passion, and creating lifelong relationships with faculty and cohort members through his personal experiences. He also shared his efforts in the fight to end Alzheimer’s and applied it to the social work values.

The new students were grateful to have had the opportunity to feel the Spirit, rekindle their passion for social work, and meet their new School of Social Work family.

Topaz Visit

Japanese Internment Camp

As an essential part of social work, we strive to bring social justice to all. We seek to understand past injustices, advocate for our clients, and promote just policies both now and in the future. To better help students understand how social workers can apply social justice work within their communities, the School of Social Work visits Topaz--the Japanese Internment Camp in Delta, Utah--every year. Stacey Shaw, the faculty member who oversees this visit shared the purposes of this event:

- To have an experiential learning about historical injustices
- To learn about gaps in our WW II education and look at what occurred in our own state/area
- To have collective cohort and department participation: bonding and physical immersion
- To support community partners who educate and preserve this history

This visit not only helps us to better understand the important social work value of social justice, but also fulfills BYU's aim of lifelong learning and service. As we strive to understand the past, we can also seek for a better present and future. Carrie Judd, a first-year student in the MSW program, said of this experience, "It was shocking to me how similar the racism, fear, and war hysteria that led to internment camps is to present day rhetoric and media." This experience helped the students analyze the world around them and start to find ways to bring social justice to those who are unable to advocate for themselves.

BYU's MSW program strives to emulate the six social work values, including social justice. Upon review of the MSW curriculum, the faculty recently added a course with the specific purpose of discussing social justice. This class discusses topics such as racism, sexism, privilege, identity, classism, and oppression. Students' biases, current events, and relevant literature are analyzed in efforts to assist students in becoming the best advocates of social justice possible for their clients.

The visit to the Topaz Internment Camp will influence BYU students experience in their quest for social justice for the rest of their social work careers.

"In 1942, the US government forcibly removed 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry from their homes on the West Coast into ten camps around the country. Not because of anything they did, but because of their race. How did this happen in a democracy?"

~Topaz Museum



"I felt it was a great opportunity to be together as our entire current MSW program (two cohorts, faculty, and staff) to explore historical injustices and seek ways to reflect on our role as citizens, friends, and social workers in being informed, speaking out, and seeking to address injustices. Our discussions about additional ways to apply our learning and advocacy to current issues are ongoing..."

~Stacey Shaw



Opening Social

MSWSA

The Opening Social for the MSW Student Association was a huge success! Members of both cohorts were able to get to know each other and increase the comradery with their classmates. Students were able to connect with those they don't usually get to interact with in classes and develop greater friendships. Some students said:

"It was so good to connect with cohort friends outside of classes! And it was great to meet new MSW friends as well!" -Olivia Nash

"It's always fun to get together with classmates, friends, and family outside of the lab or outside of classes. It was a great opportunity to catch up on each other's lives and eat good food." -Mallory Funk

"The opening social was simple but felt like a gathering with family. I really appreciated meeting some of the first years and talking with people I do not usually interact with in class. Our program is awesome!" - McKenzie Robertson

The second-year students were eager to meet and give advice to their first-year peers, which was greatly appreciated by the new students. Before the event, the second-year cohort volunteered to be assigned as mentors to first-year students providing personal advice, answer questions, and guide the new students in the program. Savannah Anderson, a second year, said, "I loved the opportunity to get to interact with not only my cohort, but the first years as well. Though I didn't intermingle as much as I would have liked, I did get to meet the first year that I mentor and build a relationship with her. It was a fun event and I was grateful for the people who organized it." A first-year student, Alissa Brown, shared her excitement, saying, "It was great to be able to connect with my 2nd year mentor."

The Opening Social was a great opportunity for mentors and mentees to meet and connect, and for the first and second years to get to know each other. Many friendships were developed, and it was a great night enjoyed by all. Eric Hales, a member of the MSWSA leadership who planned the event, said, "Our opening social was a lot of fun! We had a soup bar and just enjoyed visiting together. We were especially

excited to welcome the first years to our program; we're so proud to be in BYU's MSW program and we were eager to share our excitement with the awesome new cohort. We enjoyed getting to know them and their families better."

The MSWSA is a great way for students to feel valued and welcome, and to develop friendships throughout their time in the program.



President Nelson's Visit to BYU

His Message to Young Adults Around the World



President Russell M. Nelson gave his first BYU devotional as Prophet in September of 2019. Many of our MSW students had the privilege of hearing him speak at the Marriott Center. President Nelson's message was based off of these five points:

1. You are sons and daughters of God
2. Truth is truth
3. God loves every one of us with perfect love
4. The Lord Jesus Christ, whose Church this is, appoints prophets and apostles to communicate His love and teach His laws
5. You may know for yourself what is true and what is not

His message helped to provide answers to certain church policies and testified of the love Heavenly Father has for His children as well as the truth of His divine laws. President Nelson's message had answered prayers for many of our MSW students. They have said:

"It was such a wonderful experience to be able to listen to the Prophet and hear what he had to say to students. It was amazing to hear the teachings he gave us on seeking truth and re-emphasizing the policies that the church has put into place and why. I think it helps to have clarification from President Nelson, and also provided me with additional understanding and testimony that he truly does speak the will of Heavenly Father." -Trista Pickett

"It was rewarding to simply feel the spirit in the room as he entered. I feel like it's a privilege to be at BYU where we can hear frequently from apostles and prophets." -Mallory Funk

"I really enjoyed the opportunity to get to hear from our prophet at BYU. I thought his message was very powerful and was given at a great time, it was needed." -Savannah Anderson

"I was in awe of the opportunity we had to hear from our prophet! It made me feel that we, as young adults, are very important to God. I appreciated how straightforward President Nelson was in laying down truth and widening my own eternal perspective. How blessed we are to be attending this school!" -Rachel Andelin

President Nelson's message not only uplifted students, but also testified of the social work values. The prophet spoke of loving all of God's children, no matter how different from us they might be. He said, "Because we feel the depth of God's love for His children, we care deeply about every child of God, regardless of age, personal circumstances, gender, sexual orientation, or other unique challenges." We can apply this in our interactions with clients each day and remember to love them as God does. No matter how many mistakes His children make, Heavenly Father will always love them, and we should too. President Nelson shared this truth by quoting Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor

life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to *separate* us from the *love* of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Heavenly Father never gives up on His children, and we shouldn't either. We are to help clients to understand their unchangeable worth as individuals.



Shumway Luncheon

Social Justice Writing Contest



Paula Dudley, Katelyn Sun, Naomi Christiansen with Dr. Gene

Every year, second-year students are given the opportunity to write a paper on how they have been able to improve social justice through their internships or life experience. The winners of the writing contest were Naomi Christiansen in first place, Katelyn Sun in second, and Paula Dudley in third.

Naomi's paper was on her experience interning in the prison over the summer. Just a few weeks before her internship was supposed to end, she realized no one would be meeting with her clients until the next intern came and wanted to find a

way to help them continue to progress. One of her clients, who she was particularly concerned about, had a background in theater, and together they decided to start an improv group with the other inmates. This group became very successful and is still going on today. Of this experience Naomi said, "Social justice is overwhelming, but I can see the needs of one and there is a trickle-down effect."

The winners were given the opportunity to have dinner with Dr. Shumway, one of the founders of the BYU MSW program, and his wife. Nanci Shumpert, the MSW Program Manager who coordinates the event, said, "It was a lovely event this year with an open house on October 10th at the Shumway's historic home (the Fred R. and Mary J. Taylor House)." Naomi shared that Dr. and Mrs. Shumway reaffirmed her desire to be a social worker and that it was a spiritual experience. They embody the Christ-like kindness, excitement, love, and warmth that is so central to social work. Of the event, Dr. Stacey Shaw said, "Each student shared about their paper, especially Naomi, and the Shumways both shared a few thoughts; it was a really great event. Quite a few of their family members were there as well as many in our department."

This is a wonderful reminder that we can all influence social justice. And even if we just help one person, we are successful. We are grateful to Dr. Shumway and everything he has done for the School of Social Work at BYU.

Visiting Scholar

Dr. Goutham M. Menon

The School of Social Work was honored to have Dr. Goutham Menon, Dean of the School of Social Work at Loyola University Chicago, visit BYU campus. During his visit to BYU Campus, Dr. Menon spoke in the first-year cohort's Social Justice class. His moving lecture was on poverty in the United States, "Inequality in one of the richest countries in the world is inexcusable." He spoke of the responsibility each of us have to do what we can to help others. Our education is truly a privilege that we can use to bless the lives of others. He said, "It's not that we can't do it, it's that we hesitate." We can't expect other people to do something that we can do ourselves. Although this responsibility and career can be overwhelming, he said, "The only thing you really need in this profession is to be humble and kind." His lecture inspired the new students to make a difference and continue working hard in the program.

Two of the students had the opportunity to take Dr. Menon to Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Welfare Square and the LDS Humanitarian Center. Of this experience, Linda Fifita said, "I think the most valuable thing I learned from Professor Menon was to be willing to take chances. His philosophy was to look for what needs to change to benefit others, then find a way to help. He has such a proactive approach to life. He is a man who could easily be prideful, but he is very humble." It was a pleasure to have Dr. Menon visit BYU campus and share his passion and knowledge with us.



Linda Fifita, Dr. Goutham Menon, Rachel Andelin

Meet the Class of 2021



Kayla Wendelboe

Draper, UT
Sociology from BYU

I was so excited and grateful when I found out I'd been accepted into the BYU MSW program. This was my first pick for the school I wanted to go to, but I knew how difficult it is to get into this program and so I tried to not get my hopes up. I was shocked and so excited when I found out I had gotten in. I still can't believe it sometimes. I really look forward to starting my internships and using the skills I have learned so far in this program. I love to cook, exercise, hike, snowboard, bake, and travel.

Becky Willard

Syracuse, UT

I am overwhelmed with gratitude to be attending BYU and am amazed at the goodness of God, His love, and His tender mercies. I look forward to learning new skills and developing new talents that will bless God's children. I want to work with adolescents and young adults after graduation. I feel that there is a great need to help this population develop life skills and overcome anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation. I have been married to my best friend for 26 years and we have 2 awesome sons and 1 daughter-in-law. We love the outdoors, traveling, and spending time together!



Ailaina Rice

Page, AZ
Psychology from BYU

When I got into BYU, all I really felt was relief. I had dedicated two years to learning about social work and felt it aligned with my life goals. When I got in, it continued to let me know that this is a path I was supposed to take. I look forward to learning how to incorporate the gospel into my profession. I feel like social work needs the Spirit of the Lord involved to keep our sanity and help others. I am interested in working with college age students within a clinical setting. I know that making the transition from high school to college can be stressful. I would love to help students with any mental health issues they face when leaving home. I love horror movies and scary stories. I also play volleyball, soccer, tennis, and do Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. I love relaxing at home and watching fail videos with my husband, Britton.



Jennie Houtz

Salem, UT

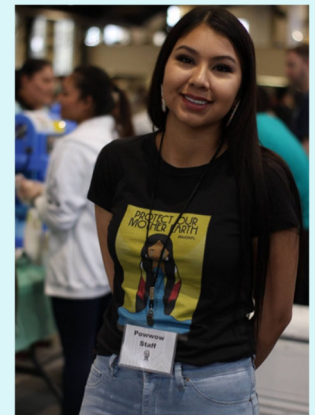
Public Health from BYU

When I got into BYU, it was hard for me to believe I actually got in. I was shocked but so grateful and excited. I look forward to pushing myself and getting to know the cohort. I cannot wait to be able to work in the field. The area of social work I want to work in is the million-dollar question... I feel like there is so much I don't know it makes it hard to say just yet! Outside of the program I enjoy sports, hiking, riding motorcycles and four-wheelers, visiting national parks, Netflix, eating, watching the Utah Jazz, traveling, and being with friends and family.

Tyra Hardin

Vancouver, WA

I felt very blessed, lucky, and thankful when I first learned of my acceptance into the program. As a first-generation college graduate, there have been many barriers that I have had to overcome to obtain my undergraduate degree. My acceptance into the program feels like I won the lottery and that all my hard work and perseverance was worth it. I look forward to learning and developing more skills to help people. I am especially excited for our practicums; I hope to be a part of the future changes and healing. My career goal includes wanting to work with the Department of Children Services upon graduation. I want to provide children with advocacy in various settings and be assisting them in receiving services that they need. As a social worker I will be an advocate for treatment at a legal level. I love to dance! My husband and I both met because of our passion for dancing. He is a Native American Hoop Dancer and I am a Jingle Dress Dancer. We often spend our extra time practicing and performing. On the weekends and some weekdays we perform for schools and events. I also enjoy reading, running, watching movies, and cooking!



Atu Falevai

Tonga

BYU Hawaii

When I got accepted to BYU, I felt very blessed. I look forward to learning how to become a successful clinical therapist and hope to work in a school or hospital setting. My wife is from Utah. I have been married for three years. Outside of the program I enjoy hiking and listening to music.



Morgan Evans

American Fork, UT
Psychology from BYU

When I got accepted to BYU, I was over the moon! After finishing the program, I want to become an LCSW. I am the oldest of six children, the adoptive brown sheep of the family. Outside of the program, I enjoy movies, traveling, and eating.

Samara Brown

San Antonio, TX

When I got accepted to BYU, I felt... Yay!!! During the program, I look forward to developing useful skills. After graduation, I want to work in schools. I have a younger brother and sister who are great and very musically talented. My mother is a seminary teacher and my father is in the military so we moved around a lot. Outside of the program, I enjoy reading and spending time with friends.



Kristina Vaughan

Bartlesville, OK
Psychology from BYU

When I was accepted into the program, I felt pure excitement and gratitude. I love BYU and feel very blessed to be a part of the MSW program. I look forward to learning the skills needed to connect with people at a deeper level and help them find healing. After graduation, I want to practice therapy with adults, families, or the elderly. I am the youngest of seven children and have been married for two years. Outside of the program, I enjoy running, traveling, and spending time with family.



Justin Jacobson

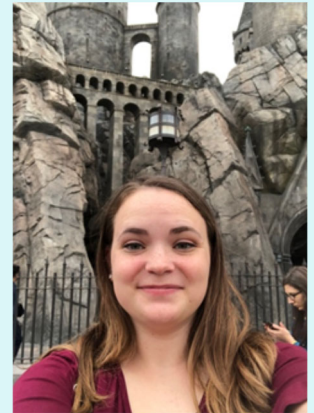
Syracuse, UT
Psychology from BYU

When I got into BYU, it was very exciting. I was trying to figure out which direction to go after my undergraduate degree and this gave me some direction. I look forward to learning to better understand and work with others. After graduation, I hope to do military work, substance abuse, and technology development. I have been married for about a year with no kids. I have three brothers and one sister. Outside of the program, I like to be outside. My wife and I have been rock climbing a lot and we like hiking and camping.

Angela Baker

Orem, UT

When I got into BYU, I was so excited and felt incredibly blessed. I look forward to increasing my therapeutic skills. After graduation, I want to work in equine therapy. I have lots of nieces and nephews and I love playing with them. Outside of the program, I enjoy reading, training horses, and photography.



Peter Bown

St. George, UT
Public Health from BYU

I was very excited when I got into BYU and I am confident that this program will help me achieve my career goals. I look forward to learning how to be a very effective social worker and therapist. After graduation, I plan to work in private practice therapy to help individuals who have addictions and mental health struggles. I have five sisters and I am married to my beautiful wife. Outside of the program, my wife and I enjoy spending time together, being with family, being active outside, and travelling.



Yerenia Flores

Iowa

Psychology from BYU

I am very grateful for being able to be part of this program and to learn such valuable skills. I am so passionate about helping others! Although it is very scary to think about, I am very excited to have my client next semester and be able to practice the skills that I am learning. After graduation, I would really like to work with multicultural clients. My family and I are from another state but have made Utah our home and have loved every minute of it! I am the oldest and love being with my family!

Linda Fifita

Salem, UT



When I got into the program, my first thought was one of complete humility and gratitude. I consider it a high honor to be studying at the Lord's university on how to help people. I believe it is a true privilege to be learning how to serve others at a university whose emphasis is to "enter to learn and go forth to serve." I look forward to learning from the experiences of our professors and implementing their knowledge in my career. After graduation, I hope to work in school social work, family services, adoption, and hospice. I am a mother of thirteen children (four biological nine adopted). My husband is from Tonga (I'm white) and our children are from many diverse ethnic groups. Outside of the program, I enjoy family, camping, cheering at football games, crocheting, and serving.



Allison Giambattista

Rochester, NY

Psychology & Spanish Studies from BYU

When I got into BYU, I was so excited to be able to keep learning and growing and understand more about how to help others. I look forward to getting to know all the professors and learning from the clients that I see in the internships. I'm not yet sure what population I want to work with after graduation. I've been married for two and a half years, and I love baking, reading, hanging out with my husband, and trying new things.



Leticia Soares Tomaz

Canada

Social Work from BYU Hawaii

When I got into BYU, I was ecstatic. I look forward to learning therapeutic skills. I want to work in a hospital after graduation. Outside of the program, I enjoy hanging out with friends.

Aria Crawford

Pleasanton, CA



I put all my eggs in one basket by only applying to the BYU MSW program. I wasn't planning on just applying here; but, after a lot of thought, I didn't want to go anywhere else. Therefore, I was absolutely stoked and relieved when I got accepted. I knew without a doubt, I was supposed to be at BYU, in this program, at this time in my life. After graduation, I want to work with young adults. My parents and my brother are my best friends. I love and admire them all. I love playing sports and traveling.



Alissa Brown

South Weber, UT

Social Work from Utah State University

When I got into BYU, I was ecstatic. I knew this was the best program in the state and where I would get the best education. Everyone asked me why I did not do a one-year program (I could have). BYU's program inspired me so much that I chose the two year over a one year. I look forward to learning from our amazing professors and the hands-on experience we get. After graduation, I want to work with teens and do crisis work with them. The end goal is a private practice. I love game nights and have them often with friends. In the summer you will always find me at the lake.



Lynette Randall

Utah

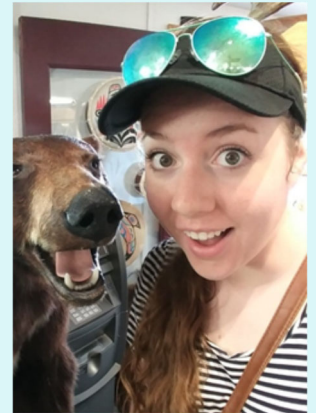
Social Work & Pediatric Clinical Research from University of Utah

When I got into BYU, I was thrilled! What an accomplishment and blessing to have been accepted into this program. I look forward to gaining so many skills and increasing my knowledge base. I have a brother who is 16 months younger than I am. My mother passed away when I was 17 and I have a stepmother and father, both of whom I love very much. Outside of the program, I enjoy being outside and working as an adaptive river rafting guide.

SaraLynn Gillepsie

Cincinnati, Ohio

When I got into BYU I felt...!!!WOW!!! I look forward to practicing! I would love to work with women in mental health. I met my husband, David, on our mission to Raleigh, NC and we have been married for four years. I love pretty much anything artsy: music, painting, singing, drawing, writing, etc.



Ann Cherie Carter

Salt Lake City, Utah

Psychology from BYU

I was so shocked when I read my acceptance letter that I think I dropped my phone and then sat in silence while I tried to process. If you were there you probably thought that I had been rejected! There was such a build-up in preparing, hoping, and working on the application that it was surreal to finally read the words that told me I was accepted. I was so relieved and grateful for all of the help and support I had received along the way. I know that this is where I am supposed to be. I am looking forward to soaking in as much experience and knowledge as I can as I continue to learn in the classroom and in internships. There is no life outside of the program... All joking aside, I love trying new things like creating stained glass windows, casting sculptures in bronze, and rock climbing. This last summer, my husband and I disguised ourselves as an elderly couple and signed up with aliases for the tennis class that his little brother teaches and he didn't recognize us! I love keeping life interesting.



Rachel Andelin

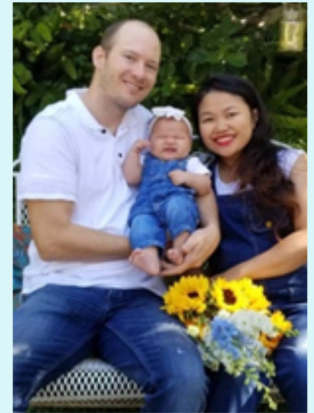
Stanwood, Washington
Psychology from BYU

When I got into BYU, I was so humbled and grateful. It felt so right and so comforting, especially because I didn't apply anywhere else. I felt a huge trust and responsibility to learn all that I can within this wonderful gospel context, and to then go out and make a difference! I look forward to the internships. I want to work in mental health counseling. I am one of 12 siblings! We all grew up on a farm and we love to sing, talk and give each other massages. Outside of the program, I enjoy singing, playing the piano, writing music, dancing, running long distance, tennis and being outdoors!

Yee Yee Mon

Myanmar

When I got into BYU, I felt accomplished and overwhelmed. I look forward to gaining knowledge, becoming competent and have required skills for the field. I want to work with the women and youth population. I have two younger sisters both living in Myanmar with my mother. I am married and have one daughter. Outside of the program, I enjoy reading and sewing.



Shelby Moss

Riverton, Utah
Social Work from Utah Valley University

I was so thrilled to have the opportunity to study at BYU and learn how to be a social worker! I am looking forward to making lifelong relationships and being able to learn as much as I can about social work. Once I graduate I am hoping to be a therapist for adolescents with anxiety or depression. I have my two loving parents, a sister who is five years older than me and my two triplet brothers! When I'm not doing school work, I love to read and golf.



Carrie Judd

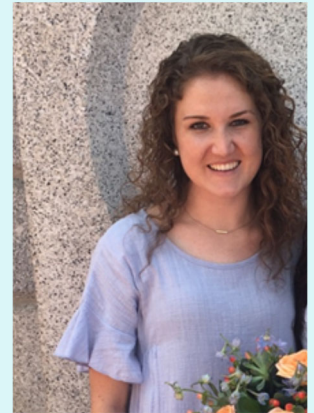
Orem, Utah

Human Development from BYU

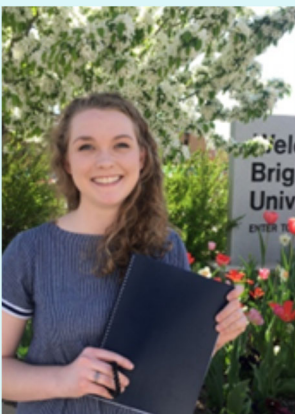
I was excited to start this new chapter of my life and eager to prove to everyone (including myself) that I can do this! I look forward to learning more about myself and becoming a better person. After graduation, I'm not sure what I want to do yet, but I'm interested in working in schools, hospice and respite care, or suicide prevention and bereavement. I am the second of five daughters. My parents are currently serving as both the assistant director and the ombudsperson at the BYU Jerusalem Center. I enjoy spending time outdoors and improving.

Morgan Oliphant

Salt Lake City, Utah



When I got into BYU, I was filled with shock and gratitude. I am excited to learn and to grow as a person and as a social worker. I also really look forward to creating life-long friends. I want to work in mental health and am excited to learn what else I am passionate about. My family is the greatest and I consider them my best friends. I love playing sports, playing and listening to music, being outside, and spending time with family and friends.



Mara Dayley

Caldwell, Idaho

Sociocultural Anthropology from BYU

I am thrilled to be part of the next wave of the MSW army to be unleashed on the world. I am so excited for internships and learning everything I don't yet know about social work! I hope to work in both schools locally and other agencies internationally. I am anxiously engaged to my best friend, Ace, and will marry him this December. I am the oldest of three siblings and three cats. I love reading books about North Korea, petting cats, and eating Thai food and chocolate.



Donika Byng

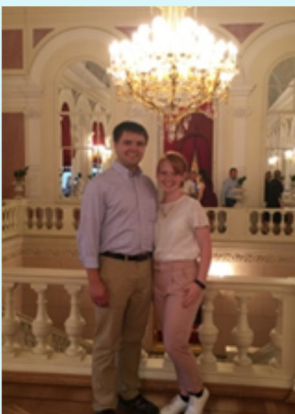
Trinidad & Tobago
Psychology from BYU Hawaii

I honestly didn't think I was going to get in. I really felt so blessed that I was given the opportunity to come here and study. I look forward to the lectures! Each professor has so much knowledge to share, I'm always focused on taking it all in. After graduation, I want to work in juvenile corrections and probations. I really want to work with misguided youth. My family is awesome. I love them very much. I like to spend time at the beach. But since there aren't any in Utah, spending time with my daughter.

Beth O'Brien

Springville, Utah

When I got into BYU, I felt relief, excitement, and gratitude. I have so much to learn. This is an amazing opportunity to associate with professionals in my field--professors and students. I will be better equipped to move forward professionally and help others. After graduation, I want to work in maternal mental health. I am a single mom to five children, three of whom still live with me. Outside of the program, I enjoy spending time with my kids, cooking, reading, and visiting the Oregon coast.



Sara Pulsipher

Nephi, Utah
Russian from BYU

I was humbled that I was accepted even though my background and experiences vary drastically from most students in the program, but I just felt it is where I need to be. I look forward to becoming more like Christ. I want to work as a clinician, but I am leaning towards receiving a Ph.D. in Social Policy to help improve both domestic and international social welfare programs to protect families. I have two sisters, the best parents in the world, amazing in-laws, and am married to my best friend, adventure buddy, and Prince Charming. I love learning languages, exercising, going on adventures, and spending time with family.



Trista Pickett

North Logan, Utah
Social Work from BYU

It was all so overwhelming, but in a good way. I feel so blessed to be here and grateful that I was even considered to be part of this program. I was ecstatic to start learning again, and to know that I was going to receive a high-quality education. I look forward to discovering how to best help others, and also getting to apply what I learn in my internships. I'm hoping to work in either a hospital or school setting. I'm open to new experiences too. My family consists of my mom, dad, and six kids! My two sisters and I are married, and I have three brothers, the youngest of which is adopted. I love to draw, sketch, and occasionally paint. I also love to read, go outdoors, and play lacrosse when I get a chance.

Mikelle Thorpe

Lehi, Utah

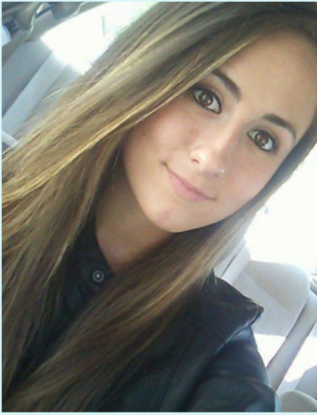
I feel so blessed to learn from the incredible professors and students at BYU. Getting my MSW from BYU has been a dream come true for me. I felt so honored and blessed to be accepted to the program here. I look forward to helping others in a variety of settings—whether that be a school, hospital, adoption agency, or private practice. I have been married to my high school sweetheart for two and a half years and we are excitedly expecting a baby boy in March. I love spending time outside, hanging out with family, and travelling.



Rebecca Kiser

Rexburg, Idaho
Exercise Science from BYU

When I got into BYU my first reaction was gratitude. I feel so blessed to be at a university that values combining quality secular learning with spiritual growth. I'm looking forward to being part of a family and am excited to continue making connections with each other as we learn how to become competent social workers. I'm also excited to incorporate learning how to become my best self as a social worker with growing into my best self as a daughter of God. I currently have too many specific hopes to name them all, so, to name a few, I would love to work in mental health and eventually focus on issues related to self-worth and perfectionism. Specifically, I would eventually love to work as an advocate and educate about mental health, as well as address the stigma attached to all realms of life (addiction, disability, missionaries, mental health, etc.). I'm the second oldest of four with a wonderful single mother. I also love to dance and have recently been getting into rock climbing.



Jessica Furner

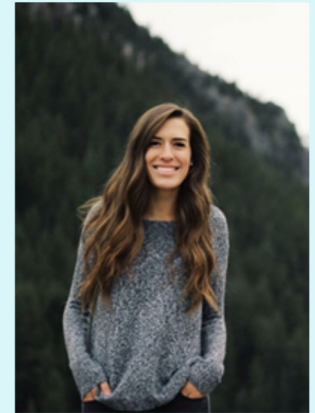
Castle Dale, Utah
Social Work from Utah State University

I was very relieved and excited to get into BYU. I look forward to the internships the most. After graduation, I want to go into trauma therapy. Outside of the program, I enjoy reading and watching movies.

Ali Woolstenhulme

Salt Lake City, Utah

When I found out I got into BYU I was so happy! Attending BYU's social work program was my number one goal coming out of my undergrad, so I felt so blessed and excited to be accepted. I most look forward to learning how to help others through their pain in the program. After graduation, I would like to work with the homeless population. Outside of the program, I like to ski and spend time with my family.



Faheem Ohri

Pakistan
LUMHS, Jamshoro, Pakistan

Just by getting accepted and coming here to BYU was a big achievement for me because it's really hard to get accepted and come here. In the program I most look forward to getting myself ready and accepted in a Ph.D. program. After graduation, I want to work in child protective services or medical social work. Outside of the program, I like making YouTube videos.

Second Year Cohort Updates

What has been your favorite part of the program so far?

How much I have been learning about therapy! -
Ashley Olsen

My classmates! They are very understanding and caring. I have had so many great experiences because of them. - Tania Barr

Learning from the wonderful professors and peers that are a part of the program! - Brynn Celestino

My favorite part of the program has been my internships. I love being able to get real-life experience and apply what I have learned.
- Nicole Greenwood

A combination of the compassionate and competent professors, or the opportunity to practice therapy at the comprehensive clinic.
- Teancum Faumui

Clinical experience and focus, as well as support from faculty in this regard. - Stefan Chase

Field seminar and internships - Hannah Moxon

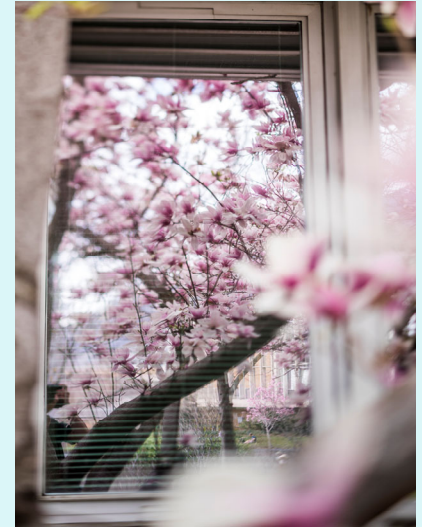
The people. - Charleene Tiatia

I have really loved getting to know the awesome people in my cohort. - Kathy Spencer

The great support provided for me to excel in my internships. - Kimberly Ibarra

I love the passion, knowledge, and experience that our professors have. We are so lucky to have such competent and caring guidance in this program. - Kathleen Seay

All of my cohort friends, class time with professors, and my internships. - Eric Hales



Summer internship. - Alanna Conlee

Developing relationships with students in my cohort. They are so helpful and supportive. - Jenna Hillman

Being in a room full of people who have the same core values as I do, and yet still have such vibrant diversity in how to apply their passion for social work!
- Miranda Wilcock

I have loved getting to know all the wonderful members of the cohort! They are so strong, and each bring unique talents, interests, questions, and ideas to our group. We really do grow from one another. I have also enjoyed learning more about myself both in classes and through my internship. I've pushed myself and am learning what I am capable of. - Sarah Evans

The hands-on learning. - Naomi Christiansen

Learning the different techniques and, most important, getting to know and love my cohort. - Lindsay Gledhill

Classmates, professors, learning applicable skills & becoming more informed about current events/hot topics. - Abigail Hardy

My favorite part of the program so far is the amazing people involved in the program. Our professors are incredible, and I truly enjoy learning from them. I also love our cohort and am grateful for the friendships that we have formed. - Mallory Funk

THE COHORT. I love the people I get to be on this journey with and have learned sooo much from not only my professors (who are equally as great), but from the other students. - Savannah Anderson

My favorite part of the program is field seminar class. We can come together as students and learn from each other's experiences and learn ethics and how to better our future practice as social workers. I really enjoy the freedom to learn at our own pace in that class. - Paula Dudley

I have absolutely loved becoming close with my cohort members. They are dear friends of mine. The socialization is something I look forward to every day I come to school. - Bria Carlsen

Integrated learning with internships. - Katelyn Sun

Our amazing professors and the friends I have made in the cohort. - McKenzie Robertson

Our cohort—I love our cohort. And my Fall/Winter internship. It's been so amazing. -Andrea Call

I love the support I've received and the active learning in my classes. -Andrea Wilson

Honestly, I have enjoyed all of it! -Erica McMahon

The push to become more aware of myself and others! - Denise Hansen

Making new friends. -Erin Christensen

The cohort members. -Holly Brassfield

I have really loved so much about the program -- the great classes, the opportunity to try things out at internships -- but my favorite part of the program so far has been being part of this cohort and getting to know others better. Everyone is so kind, and I have felt constantly lifted by them. -Samantha Escamilla

My favorite part of the program has been the internships I have had. I have loved being able to apply the things I have learned in class to help individuals and families. -Sarah Bartholomew

Everything!!! In all seriousness, this program has been an incredible experience. I LOVE-- beyond love--my clinical classes. The clinical focus of BYU is a big part of why I came here. But I also love the social justice, policy, and advocacy aspects of social work. And I love research, so I lucked out that I've enjoyed every class. -Rebecca Carlson

It has been excellent learning with excellent people! I have learned so much about myself and others in this program. -Olivia Nash



2nd year MSW Students

What has been your take away from the program so far?



We are all human, whether we are a student, a teacher, a prisoner, a soldier, a mother, daughter, brother, father, or anything in between. - Miranda Wilcock

That it is okay to try new things and not succeed at first. I won't grow as a therapist unless I'm willing to go out of my own comfort zone. - Sarah Evans

When all else fails, be present and curious.
- Naomi Christiansen

Everyone is unique and has their own story and have things to offer and you can learn from everyone-- weaknesses or strengths. - Lindsay Gledhill

Find your client's pain and hold space for it.
-Andrea Call

I think the biggest thing I've learned is the importance of sitting with someone in their pain and validating them. -Andrea Wilson

Connections to others, and knowledge on how to be a social worker. -Holly Brassfield

Learning is a continuous process. You have to open yourself up to feedback and be vulnerable to be able to improve. -Samantha Escamilla

My takeaway so far from the program is the importance of taking care of myself so that I am able to help those I serve and come in contact with. -Sarah Bartholomew

Trust the process. -Rebecca Carlson

It's all in God's hands. -Olivia Nash

My takeaway is the privilege we have to sit with people in their emotions, whether they be happy or sad, and to see the inherent dignity and worth in each individual. Regardless of the modality we use, treating people as people and building rapport can make all the difference. - Mallory Funk

People are resilient and can do hard things, but it never hurts to have a little help along the way. And that's where we come in! Also, you get out of the program what you put in to it! - Savannah Anderson

Life is hard, but you can do hard things.
- Paula Dudley

There are so many ways to be an effective social worker. I don't need to try to be like anyone else to succeed. - Bria Carlsen

I need to find the agency/area in life where I can best serve others given my talents, etc. - Katelyn Sun

Stay in the here-and-now and find the pain.
- McKenzie Robertson

The best thing you can do for your client is to have a good therapeutic relationship. - Ashley Olsen

To be an effective social worker you need to know how to listen with empathy. - Tania Barr

Everyone has experienced pain and sorrow, and connection is what helps heal people.
- Brynn Celestino

My take away from the program is to make self-care a priority. - Nicole Greenwood

Remember the basics, learn to love people the way the Savior does, learn to sit with people in their pain to help them move on from it.
- Teancum Faumui

Know what my role as a therapist is now.
- Stefan Chase

Clinical experience. - Hannah Moxon

Just how amazing the work we do is. The great opportunity we have to work with diverse populations, and to be advocates for them. But most of all, the chance to see these people as sons and daughters of Heavenly Father. I feel that social work and the work of the Lord go hand in hand. - Charleene Tiatia

A good clinician never stops learning and never "arrives." - Kimberly Ibarra

This is a period of learning and we should take advantage of everything we can that can enhance our knowledge. - Kathleen Seay

Everyone has a story. It's a really cool opportunity to be able to learn people's stories and witness them change their journeys. -Erica McMahon

I love this program! It has provided me with new skills and confidence to be myself and to accept others where they are. Denise Hansen

Remembering the Savior is the ultimate healer (for me as a therapist and for clients). -Erin Christensen



Help people recognize what they know by sitting with them in their pain and helping them sort through everything they're processing.
- Eric Hales

Best of times, worst of times. I still feel so fortunate to be a student here. - Abigail Hardy

There is a difference between being qualified and having experience. Just because we don't have much experience, doesn't make us unqualified to help people. We are providing a service that many people wouldn't get otherwise. It's okay to not know everything! - Jenna Hillman

Connections to others, and knowledge on how to be a social worker. -Holly Brassfield

Learning is a continuous process. You have to open yourself up to feedback and be vulnerable to be able to improve. -Samantha Escamilla

My takeaway so far from the program is the importance of taking care of myself so that I am able to help those I serve and come in contact with. -Sarah Bartholomew

Trust the process. -Rebecca Carlson

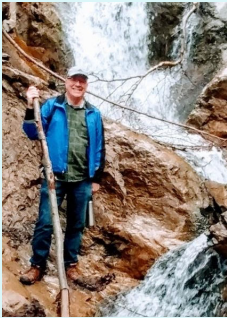
It's all in God's hands. -Olivia Nash

Alumni Updates

How have our alumni used their Social Work degree to make a difference in



Class of 1984



Greg Robinson

Saratoga Springs, UT ~ Master's ~ Wasatch Mental Health

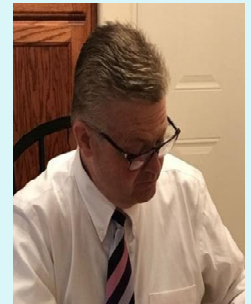
I have spent my career working with children and adolescents who have suffered through severe trauma to work through that trauma. My hope is that most, if not all, of them have returned on an appropriate life trajectory. But I know the sad reality is that many of them have not.

Class of 1985

Tracy Ward

Orem, UT ~ Bachelor's

It has helped me interact effectively as President and Chair of the board of a nationwide finance company.



Class of 1986



Marcela (Taylor) Sanchez

Denver, CO ~ Bachelor's ~ College for Financial Planning

It has helped me to take actions that led to the removal of inappropriate public advertisements in our community and to eliminate a "Designated Smoking" area for students at our high school.

Class of 1989



Richard Whiting

Rexburg, ID ~ Master's ~ BYU

I have been able to work with so many different groups and individuals both professionally and otherwise and have seen remarkable change. The principles learned in the social work program have enhanced my understanding of the gospel, made me a better parent, neighbor, and friend. My family has been truly blessed.

Lynne Wright

Mechanicsburg, PA ~ Bachelor's

My macro skills help me build community and alliances and my micro skills help me connect with vulnerable patients who are struggling.



Class of 1990



Sherry Gunn

Pittsburgh, PA ~ Bachelor's ~ Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh

I have served extensively in the church utilizing SW skills in every calling. Let's be honest, being a Relief Society president is really just being a volunteer social worker. I have also volunteered extensively in my community through schools, food banks and other non-profit

Ken Stewart

Saratoga Springs, UT ~ Bachelor's ~ Family Services

I have been able to provide social work services in diverse and unique settings, including forensic mental health, inpatient psychiatric units in correctional settings, outpatient mental health services on a Native American reservation, adoption and birth parent services, and clinical counseling and management. These opportunities would not have been possible without the foundation that BYU provided me.



Class of 1993



Rebecca Johnson

Apex, NC ~ Bachelor's

Our family suffered a loss to suicide which brought me back to the field of social work. My journey of healing began with becoming trained as a crisis counselor at our local hotline which I have been doing now for five years. I also became trained as a support group facilitator and facilitate a support group for those who have lost loved ones to suicide. It is one of the few that meets weekly in the U.S. I have been able to do some advocacy with our local government officials that has been very rewarding. They have been receptive to our stories and are making strides in changing policy relating to mental health. I never imagined my return to social work after raising a family would look like this, but it is truly where I am meant to be.

Class of 1994

Clara Louise Brown Crookston

Hauula, HI ~ Master's ~ Missionary

My social work degree has helped me in my church callings, in my relationships in the community and in my missionary work. Daily I help students with their applications, with their losses and their concerns. I often help new missionaries adjust. My degree has given me skills to help many adoptive families and adults who were adopted. I am very grateful for the MSW program and my LCSW skills.



Class of 1996

Maria Coppersmith-Buschman

Denver, CO ~ Bachelor's ~ Halcyon Hospice

I am currently an MSW Student.

Nathan Gibbons

Cedar Hills, UT ~ Bachelor & Master's ~ Provo MTC Family Services

I've had a tremendous experience working with these social work degrees. I've had the opportunity to be deployed on a few occasions for some crisis response work with the Church.

One of the highlights of my career has been working within LDS Family Services' adoption program. I've felt much reward having worked several years with missionaries as they begin their training at the MTC. They are the most motivated people on the planet. I've just felt so grateful for all these opportunities to grow. I hope I've helped others. I know I've been





Matthew Watson

Mesa, AZ ~ Master's ~ Missionary Mental Health Advisor

I have been employed by Youth and Family Centered Services, Primary Children's Center for Safe and Healthy Families, Family Services, and the Missionary Department for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have had opportunities to support volunteer services such as Families Supporting Adoption, the Addiction Recovery Program for LDSFS, served as a state leader for Healthy Families America, as a representative of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on civic task forces, such as the Arizona Attorney General's Opioid Abuse Clergy Coalition, Arizona Adoption and Foster Care Clergy Coalition. I also served as a team leader for Child Trauma Treatment Network - Intermountain West.

Tendra Andrews

Nampa, ID ~ Bachelor's

The skills I learned in social work benefit me constantly, as I raise my family, serve in the Church, volunteer in schools, and try to make a difference in the community.

Class of 1997



Mike Rowley

Greenville, SC ~ Master's ~ Spring Brook Behavioral Health

I use the principles of social work every day in my administrative responsibilities. I draw on skills I learned at both the bachelor's and Master of Social Work programs to help manage multiple systems, conflict resolution, resolving issues with the principles of solution focused therapy, crisis management, improved communications, etc. Although I never planned to be a hospital administrator, the BYU School of Social Work prepared me for it in ways I would have not thought possible.

Ryan Heck

Blanding, UT ~ Master's ~ San Juan Counseling

I have provided outpatient counseling services in the four corners area for 22 years. My work has included after-hours crisis response in mental health-related emergencies. We have worked to expand school-based mental health services and employment opportunities for adults with chronic mental illness. Recently it has been my pleasure to supervise MSW interns and newly graduated MSW clinicians.



Ricardo Merchan

Burbank, CA ~ Bachelor's ~ LA County DCFS

I got my Master's and help now in ensuring child safety.

Class of 1998

Holly (Grow) Waite

Nampa, ID ~ Master's ~ BYU Idaho

I have worked in community mental health, in schools, and in medical settings. It has also helped me raise three children who were in the foster care system.



Matthew Froelich

Utah ~ Master's ~ DCFS & BYU

I am working at DCFS as a clinical social worker and I also teach a substance abuse and other addictions class at BYU in the Public Health Department. The longer I am in the field the more I see the value of a social work degree. At DCFS, we utilize teaming as a key part of the work we do. We work with the whole family and invite others in their lives to come to the table to help solve problems. It is great to see when families are able to make changes and break negative cycles in their lives.

Kristina Holley

Alpine, UT ~ Master's ~ Clinical Director for Aspen Counseling Services

It's been a HUGE asset in my life. It's let me be a mom and have a career at the same time. I've been in this field for over 20 years and I still LOVE it!!

Class of 1999



Matt Erickson

Hyde Park, UT ~ Master's ~ Logan River Academy

Sarah Moore Oliphant

Denton, TX ~ Bachelor's ~ University of North Texas



Class of 2000



Kim Rippon

Kaysville, UT ~ Master's ~ Private Practice

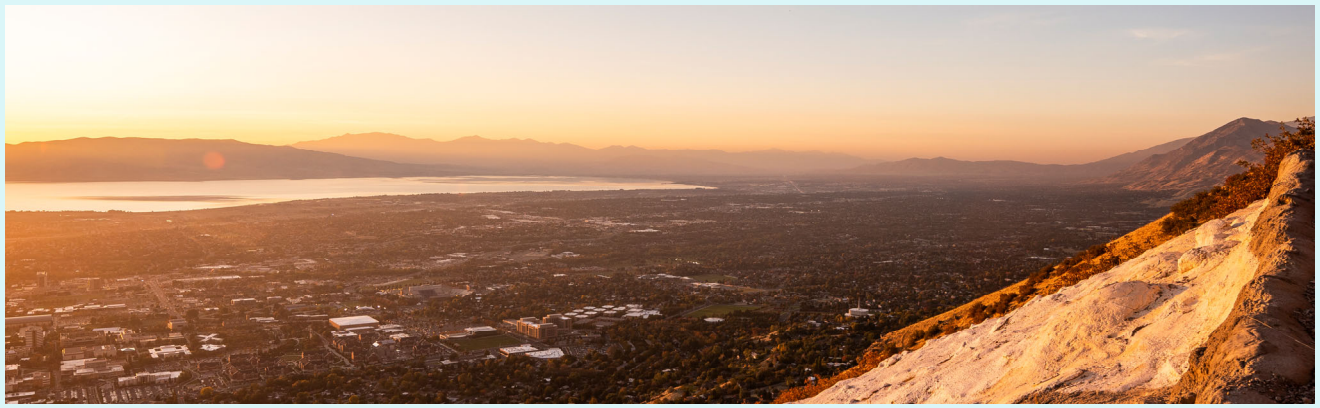
I have trained Bishops & stake presidents regarding sexual abuse & how to help that population.

Tracy Burnham

Centerville, UT ~ Master's ~ Family Services

I have had the privilege of counseling with hundreds of clients over the past 20 years. While I do believe I have helped many people to find relief from personal suffering, I have felt the greatest benefit personally due to the lessons I have learned from my clients. I feel deeply grateful to my clients for allowing me to be a small part of their healing journey.





Jim R. Jacobs

Lochbuie, CO ~ Master's ~ Family Services

My two years at BYU were the second best two years for my life! Second to my mission, my experience at the School of Social Work helped me to realize better ways to help and serve others. Recently, I was certified as a Daring Way Facilitator for the work of Brene Brown. This has allowed me to make a huge difference in the community and area here! I am so blessed to do the work I do!

Lance Peterson

Apple Valley, MN ~ Master's ~ University of St. Thomas

In addition to educating students, Jessica and I have a mental health practice. We have been able to provide services for several members of the church as well as the community at large.

Class of 2001

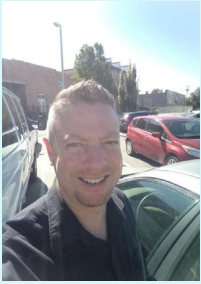


Olivia Porter

Phoenix, AZ ~ Master's ~ Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to complete both a BSW and MSW at BYU. Six years of intense study of mental health, child development, and effective communication and clinical skills has been priceless. I'm a better mother, community member, and attorney because of these degrees. Every single day I work with children who have been severely traumatized, and I advocate for their best interests inside a system that views them as adults. My degree helps me constantly analyze what is in each child's best interests by providing me a solid framework from which to work.

Class of 2002



Jared Powell

South Jordan, UT ~ Master's ~ First Step House & Comprehensive Psychological Services

There is nothing so empowering and pleasing to me as facilitating and witnessing the healing of another person. Whether I'm working with the toothless, homeless addict who rolled out of the gutter last night, or a high-functioning business executive, it is a curious thing to observe how similar the healing process is, even though it facially looks quite different in terms of the time it takes, the resources that need to be brought in, and severity levels. My degree from BYU has positioned me to experience in living color those things that were talked about in my program, and has been my platform for learning much more about the human condition.

Robert Broce

Boone, NC ~ Master's ~ Appalachian State University

My social work degrees have given me the perspective and vision to see and address social problems at multiple system levels. I have had opportunities to work directly with clients and patients, facilitate agency and structural change, and influence policy in local and global communities.



Melinda Preisler

Hooper, UT ~ Bachelor's

I feel I use my knowledge from my degree every day. I am a wife, mother, daughter, friend, neighbor, church member. My interactions are influenced daily by the principles I learned. I can't imagine my life without it!

Class of 2003



Kendra Ratnapradipa

Elkhorn, NEB ~ Master's ~ University of Nebraska Medical Center

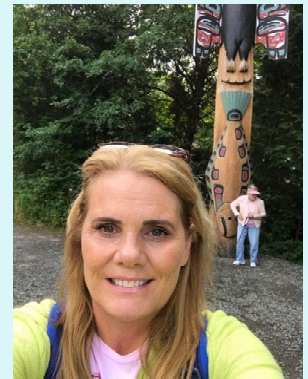
I am not currently practicing SW, but my degree informs my interest in social determinants of health, and I am building collaborative relationships with social workers to conduct research.

Class of 2004

Drucilla P. Christiansen

Orem, UT ~ Master's ~ Private Practice

Being able to work with those who are struggling in many different and diverse areas.



Nicole Brown

With my background in social work I have felt compelled to do something more within my community. I have been fortunate enough to find like-minded community members. We have helped newly arriving refugee families settle into apartments. I have co-started a Houston Texas Cottage of Big Ocean Women and as a cottage we have aligned with other organizations. We have collaborated to bring speakers to our local community on prevalent topics, partnered for donations drives and are currently working as a Sister Cottage with a BOW Cottage in Jos, Nigeria to fund self-sufficiency enterprises for women in Jos.

Dianna Odell

Provo, Ut ~ Bachelor's ~ Utah County Public Defender's Office



Class of 2005

Jana Roberts

Las Vegas, NV ~ Bachelor's ~ Clark County School District

Since the 2015-16 school year, I have been part of an initiative to get more mental health professionals in schools to help combat bullying and improve school climate. We have introduced restorative practices, worked with our counselors on programs already in place and assisted in reducing absences.

Allison Walsh-Day

Afton, WY ~ Master's ~ Stay-at-Home-Mother

I worked in community and/or military until two and a half years ago.

Class of 2006



Sam Plummer

Salt Lake City, UT ~ Bachelor's ~ SoFi

The social work program was the gateway to understanding empathy and support in my community. I was a front-line leader at a call center when I was working on my degree. I quickly realized that coaching with a desire to understand where the individual was coming from allowed me to make connections to their professional development. I found purpose in knowing that supporting people in their work life improved outcomes in their personal life as well.



Class of 2008



Rachel Freestone

Kalamazoo, MI ~ Bachelor's

I have enjoyed taking an active role in my community participating in local service projects, serving on the housing board for my cooperative housing community during graduate school, and especially as I have served in my callings as Primary and Relief Society presidents.

Laurie Forbes

Jefferson, OR ~ Master's ~ Laurie Forbes Counseling

Because of my degree and specialty of treating PTSD, I have been able to serve in my community to help individuals heal, I have worked with a lot of veterans, and have served in my community to help come up with solutions to the teen drug/alcohol problems.



Alyona Noble

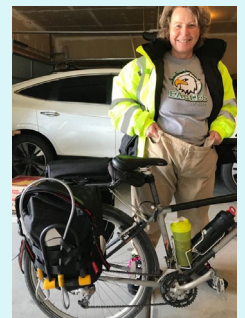
American Fork, UT ~ Bachelor's ~ DaVita Lone Peak Dialysis

I have been working with terminally ill patients since 2012. It's been a blessing to be able to work on making their lives better.

Laura Whitney

Lehi, Ut ~ Bachelor's ~ Alpine School District Transportation

I look at people and situations holistically. I understand confidentiality. My word choices are more careful. I am more self-aware. I talk less and observe more. Last year, while I was driving middle school "regular-ed" students and looking in the rear-view mirror, I was prompted to leave a paper on each seat with resources for rape crisis. After the teenagers got off the bus, I counted the papers left or thrown in the trash I discovered that 6 of those papers were discreetly pocketed. While I do not work as a licensed social worker anymore, I am grateful for the experience and the education!



Class of 2009



Marc Gilchrist

High Level, Alberta ~ Master's ~ Alberta Health Services

I use my degree every day in everything.

Erin Shepard

Ogden, UT ~ Master's ~ Maternal & Mental Health Clinic Owner

Owner/clinician of practice specializing in maternal mental health. Regularly speaking at engagements focused on educating public regarding mental health and emotional wellness. Actively working with the State of Utah on sub-committees creating regulation and standard of care of women's' health. Staying close to my roots by supervision CSW's working towards licensure. My education has prepared me to fulfill every calling I have had within my ward and stake. It has helped me see needs in my children's schools and know how to best advocate for those needs in a way that creates action.



Jessica Alvarado-Guadron

Utah ~ Master's ~ Deseret Industries & BYU

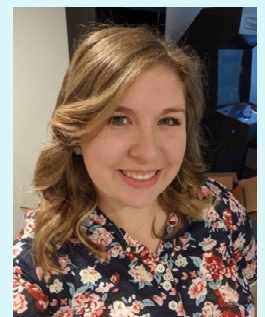
I love getting to work in this field! It is challenging and rewarding all at the same time. I could not be more grateful for the chance to serve those in my community.

Class of 2010

Katrina Hubbard

West Jordan, UT ~ Bachelor's ~ BYU

Although I don't work directly in the field, I have used my education in all my jobs in various ways.





Steven Hyer

Crestview, FL ~ Master's ~ Eglin Air Force Base Family Medicine

The teaching that I do in my current position enables family medicine physicians to effectively assess and treat a variety of behavioral health conditions in primary care for military service members and their families. I also provide primary care based behavioral health services.

LaDawn Park

Gilbert, AZ ~ Master's ~ Lost Search Media

The skills I learned in the social work program have extended to all facets of my life. While I don't actively practice as a therapist, I still regularly work with individuals who are striving to overcome difficult circumstances or crisis situations. I volunteer with a variety of humanitarian aid and relief groups. I am able to be understanding and compassionate of my clients and to communicate effectively with them. When I was a seminary teacher, I was able to be aware of my students' needs and help and bless their lives. It helps me in my callings and in my relationships in my personal life. I will always be grateful for the time I spent at BYU studying social work with some of the most amazing people I know.



Class of 2011

Craig Boyle

Kennewick, WA ~ Bachelor's ~ Sageview Youth Psychological

Helping overcome their mental health struggles through therapy.

Richard Alboroto

Las Vegas, NV ~ Master's ~ University of Nevada Las Vegas

My social work degree prepared to be more passionate about child welfare. It honed me to be an expert in research, especially in the field of child abuse and neglect.



Class of 2012



Jonathan Padilla

Winters, CA ~ Master's ~ North Bay Regional Center

It has enabled me to better assess situations, support clients, and coordinate services for them. The leadership training has also been greatly helpful in team building and supporting my staff.

Kerri Abney

Provo, UT ~ Master's ~ Intermountain Health Care

Helped me noticed others that may need help or be suffering.

Class of 2013



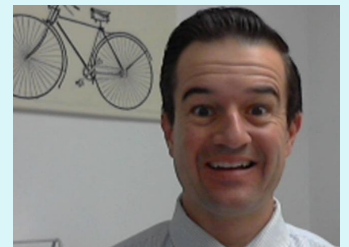
Julie Lutz Potter

Kansas City, MO ~ Master's

Paul Shelton

Orem, UT ~ Master's ~ DI Development Counseling Services

I work to help people address their employment barriers to be more self-reliant.



Stephen Walker

Green River, WY ~ Master's ~ Rock Springs Community Health

My degree has enabled me to help others find freedom from addiction and realize that they have a purpose and value. It has helped me better understand who I am and in turn helped me to help my brothers and sisters around me. I will be forever blessed because of my education at BYU and my service afterward.



Kristee Barker

Chesapeake, VA ~ Master's ~ Highland County Medical Center

I work at a rural medical center in the middle of absolutely nowhere, Virginia. I've worked here for three and a half years. The community where I work is underserved and remote. Many people have to drive well over an hour, perhaps two hours, over mountain ranges to get to a hospital (or even to do a decent grocery shopping). I'm all they have in the way of counseling. I work general outpatient, so I see people struggling with depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, marriage issues, school problems, and everything in between. I LOVE being a therapist! I see it as a sacred calling. Christ was called "wonderful, counselor." This is my way of helping people find the healing and peace that ultimately only comes from the Savior. I have seen people in the deepest darkest spaces of despair, rise and find healing. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be a part of their sacred journeys. I am incredibly grateful to be a tool in God's hands to contribute to them finding peace and wholeness.

Class of 2014

Valerie Payne

Los Angeles, CA ~ Master's ~ Private Practice & KIPP SoCal

My social work degree has allowed me to work with individuals and families who have experienced trauma and mental health needs. BYU gave me a safe place to discuss faith and ethical questions. I feel that BYU gave me the clinical skills that have allowed me to help others. I love being an LCSW!



Kristin Byers

Raleigh, NC ~ Master's ~ Community Mental Health Center

I continue to specialize with PTSD and working with police officers and veterans.

Class of 2015



Jessica Helms

Portland, OR ~ Master's ~ Unity Behavioral Health

Kelsey Haymond

Bellevue, WA ~ Master's ~ Betterhelp

I am able to help the one.



Carron Ellsworth

Orem, UT ~ Master's

I constantly use my social work education in all of my relationships, with family and community! It has helped me understand different people around me and know how to work with them in order to make positive change.



David Parks

Tokyo, Japan ~ Master's ~ United States Air Force

My BYU social work degree has helped me frame everyday clinical decisions in a framework that suits both my inclinations and the greater code of ethics. As I have stuck to this code, I have been able to work through and overcome many challenges. This, in turn, allows me to give the best care to those I serve.





Alex Johnson

Orem, UT ~ Master's ~ Scenic View Academy

I have been able to help families connect with a valuable resource for adults with Autism.



Ryan Turner

Theisbergstegen, Germany ~ Master's ~ Air Force

Social skills are a major force for resolving conflict, communicating a vision, and achieving goals in social settings.



Trevor Nelson

Rexburg, ID ~ Master's ~ Centerpoint Counseling

It is an under-served population and it has allowed more services to be provided.

Brittany Crooks

Bitburg, Germany ~ Master's ~ Air Force Family Advocacy Program

I have been able to see a real difference made in the lives of those around me, as I have been able to support them in gaining access to resources that they need, information that is invaluable, and services that they didn't know existed. It is truly an honor for me to help people become their best selves.



Paul Epperson

Orem, UT ~ Master's ~ Utah Department of Corrections

I have enjoyed working with my clients and seeing the changes that they are making in their own lives with the hope of strengthening family relationships and successfully maintaining their recovery.

Class of 2017

Sarah Higbee

Philadelphia, PA ~ Master's ~ PA Institute for Community Living

I am able to help empower those who are in need.



Alex Lamoreaux

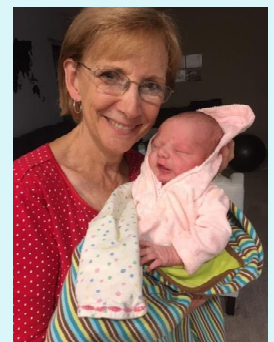
Eagle Mountain, UT ~ Master's ~ Utah Valley Hospital &

I spent two years working with recovering addicts and alcoholics! It was a challenging but rewarding field! Now I assist physicians in the ER with psych patients and crisis intervention.

Linda Wilson

Provo, UT ~ Master's ~ Provo Family Services

My social work skills don't just stay in my office but are also needed in very unexpected places. I used them with the teen that totaled our parked car in front of our house and disclosed her plan for suicide, with a troubled ward member whose gay son was planning his wedding, with the man donating blood beside me whose child was exhibiting distressing bipolar symptoms. The invaluable skills and insights I gained through my MSW program continue to enrich my life as well as enable me to lighten the distress and burden of others.



Carmen Gordichuk

Edmonton, AB ~ Master's

I have provided a lot of informal counseling to other mom's and at church

Lauren Barnett

Orem, UT ~ Master's ~ Utah State Hospital— Girls Unit

I am able to help suicidal teen girls learn skills that can help them live a life that they feel is actually worth living.



Class of 2019



Jessica Meyers

West Hartford, CT ~ Master's ~ VIPKid

I have not been working within the social work field but have been able to share my skills and knowledge within my ward and calling. I am forever grateful for my social work education!

Ben Schilaty

Provo, UT ~ Master's ~ BYU Honor Code Office

Every day I meet with students who are experiencing one of the most stressful times of their university career. My social work training has helped to quickly build a rapport with students, empathize with them, put them at ease, and help them make plans for the future. I also give multiple presentations a month on the LGBTQ Latter-day Saint experience and my time working as a therapist at Family Services has made me a more persuasive and well-rounded speaker. I use the skills I learned every day.





Stephanie Nixon

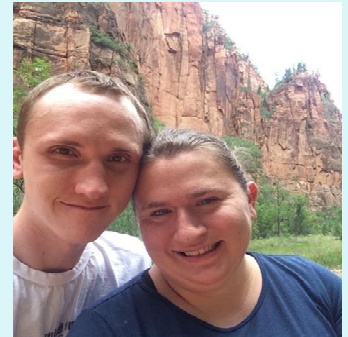
American Fork, UT ~ Master's ~ Family Services

One thing I love about working at Family Services is that I really feel like I am working in my community. I am able to help people of all walks and talks of life with challenges from depression and anxiety to pornography addiction to challenges in their marriage. I have found a lot of satisfaction in helping people gain insight and understanding, learn new coping skills, and make changes to improve their mental health and relationships.

Zachary Larkin

Provo, UT ~ Master's ~ Utah County ADDAPT

It has been fun to help inmates in the county jail feel worthwhile and not return to jail.



Jade Hurst

Utah ~ Master's ~ Renaissance Ranch

I'm currently working with Senator Hollins on a bill that would create a sub-committee for trauma informed medical care for victims of domestic violence and sex trafficking. Working with women in these populations, it's clear that there is a clear gap in knowledge when it comes to medical providers being able to treat these women.

Lilly Vazquez

Lewisville, TX ~ Master's ~ Dallas County Supervision & Corrections

My social work degree has helped me make a difference in the community through helping my clients learn how to be free from their addictions. This helps them reintegrate in the community, maintain sobriety, and avoid recidivism.



Thank you for all you do & for your support of the