

# The Future *of* Social Change

2014 SP2 REVIEW

THE ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL POLICY & PRACTICE

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE

# Masthead

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INTRODUCTION

# Celebrating the Future of Social Change

**THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE IS REFLECTED IN SP2'S VISION: "THE PASSIONATE PURSUIT OF SOCIAL INNOVATION, IMPACT AND JUSTICE." TODAY, THE SCHOOL IS AT THE NATIONAL FOREFRONT IN COMBINING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND PRACTICE FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OTHERS. THROUGH EXCELLENT EDUCATION WITH HANDS-ON APPLICATION, SP2 CONTINUES TO PRODUCE SOCIAL CHANGE LEADERS WHO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE PUBLIC/SOCIAL POLICIES THAT ADDRESS MULTIPLE SOCIAL CHALLENGES. THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE WILL BE BRIGHTER AS SP2 WORKS TOWARD FULFILLING ITS VISION, WHILE COMPLEMENTING PENN'S LARGER VISION OF INCLUSION, INNOVATION AND IMPACT.**

# The Future *of* Social Change

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# A Message from the Dean

**EVEN AS WE FOCUS OUR COLLECTIVE VISION ON THE SCHOOL'S PROMISING FUTURE, THIS IS ALSO A PARTICULARLY AUSPICIOUS MOMENT TO TAKE A SECOND AND LOOK BACK AT OUR MOST IMMEDIATE PAST.**

After twelve years as Dean, Richard James Gelles returned to the standing faculty and to his ongoing social science research, but he has left behind quite a legacy. Under his leadership, SP2 expanded its central social work mission by creating new degree programs that mesh wonderfully with the field's macro traditions and rigorous clinical training. Gelles also helped to make sure that the School increased its endowment and its enrollments, providing a stable foundation for the future we have yet to build, a future that includes:

- expanding SP2's global footprint by attracting top faculty from all around the world while mounting research projects and training labs in Asia, India, Latin America, and Africa;
- increasing the volume and clarity of our voices in national debates about how to most effectively and holistically address issues of homelessness, violence, mass incarceration, mental health, economic inequality, discrimination and more;
- embracing the fact that SP2's global and national mandates run squarely and inescapably through its responsibility to grapple with pressing local issues in and around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the entire region.

- collaborating with other Penn Schools and with outside institutions on intractable social problems. The brightness of SP2's future should have a marked and measurable influence on all of the institutional spaces and individual lives that our research, fieldwork, and activism touch.

We will write SP2's future together, every single one of us, and the social changes wrought will be a testament to the inextricable links that we embody between theory and practice, scholarship and service, academics and social relevance.

I hope that you are as excited and determined as I am to march into that future with the passion, purpose, and political will to imagine a world that does not yet exist.

**JOHN L. JACKSON JR., PHD**  
*Dean, Richard Perry University Professor*



# Welcome from the Associate Dean & Editorial Director

**"WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED CHANGING,  
YOU'RE FINISHED."  
- BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

Penn's ever practical founder Benjamin Franklin said it best. Change is inevitable, and even necessary for continued growth and development. For over a century, Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice has led the way in educating future social change leaders. This has been a dynamic effort with many twists and turns to accommodate our ever-changing world.

Today SP2 is at a banner moment in time. The School recently completed an unprecedented fundraising campaign. Admissions are at an all-time high. Faculty continue to conduct cutting-edge research that is globally disseminated. Alumni are in critical decision-making roles that tangibly make a difference in social work and social policy. In this book you will read exciting examples of how these successes are not only affecting the School's future, but also the very *future of social change*.

Changes within and outside of SP2 are far from finished. As we begin a new era under the leadership of Dean John Jackson, the entire SP2 community is excited about continuing its positive trajectory.

Five years ago we embarked on an ambitious journey. Using the SP2 Review, our goal was to illuminate SP2's diverse social change spectrum from "business" to "impact" to "bridges" to "culture". Each book told a story of our progressive success; painting dynamic pictures from multiple perspectives.

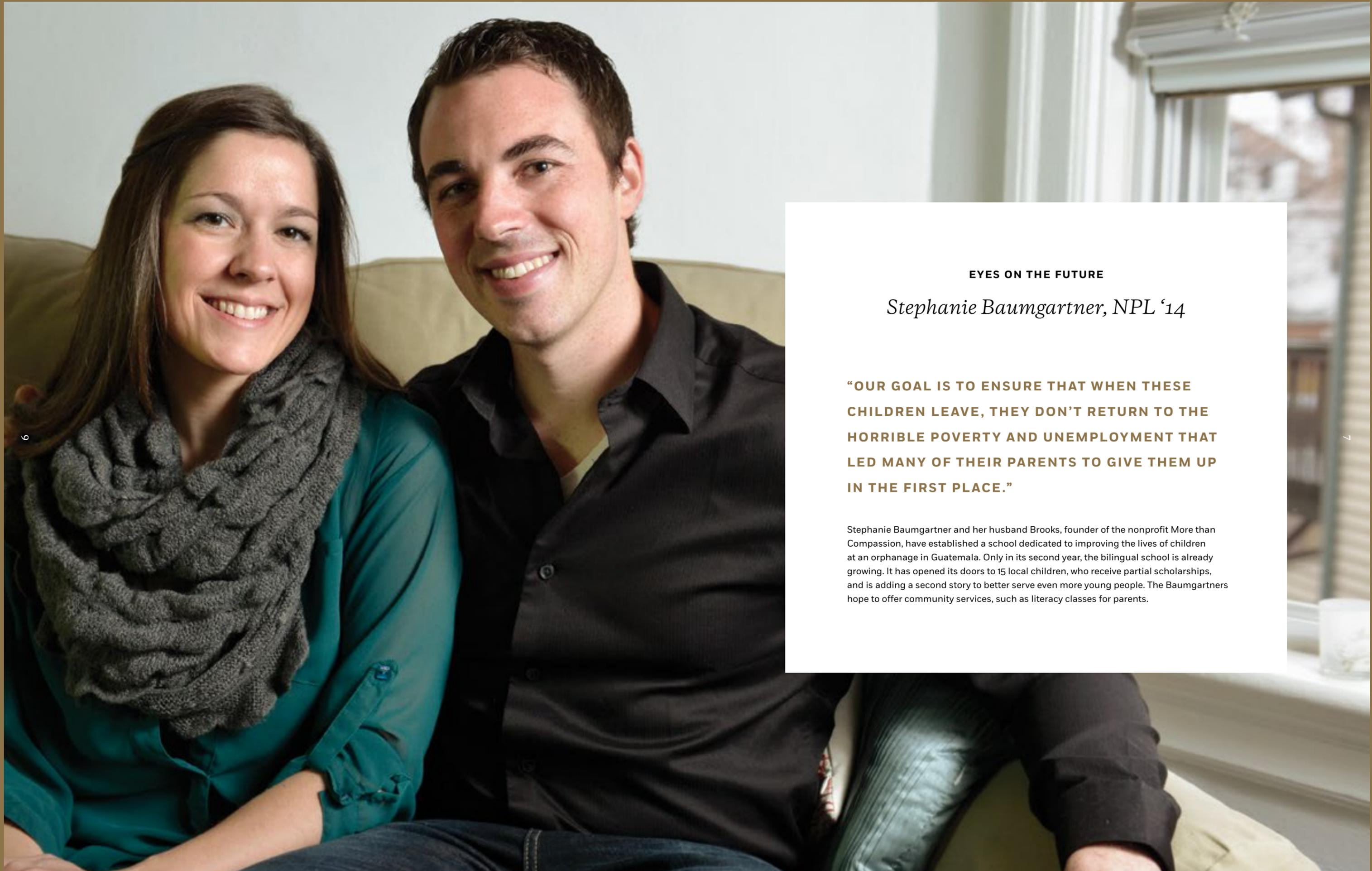
Now we are presenting the last book in the five-part series: "The *Future of Social Change*." In order to introduce Dean Jackson to the SP2 community, we are also conducting a complementary *Future of Social Change Tour*. The tour will visit six east coast cities in the fall, with its kick-off in Philadelphia, and will head westward in the spring (for more information visit [www.FutureofSocialChange.com](http://www.FutureofSocialChange.com)). Please join us in a city near you! You will be part of a diverse audience, including prospective/accepted students, SP2 Overseers, alumni, and more.

Over the next year while we conduct the tour, we will take a brief respite from the SP2 Review. The book will return newly imagined in 2016. Until then, thank you for your readership over the past few years. We hope that you have enjoyed the series, and also will enjoy the first chapter of our new beginning in "The Future of Social Change."

With gratitude,

**NADINA R. DEIGH**  
*Associate Dean, Development & Alumni Relations,  
SP2 Review Editorial Director*





**EYES ON THE FUTURE**

*Stephanie Baumgartner, NPL '14*

**“OUR GOAL IS TO ENSURE THAT WHEN THESE CHILDREN LEAVE, THEY DON’T RETURN TO THE HORRIBLE POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT THAT LED MANY OF THEIR PARENTS TO GIVE THEM UP IN THE FIRST PLACE.”**

Stephanie Baumgartner and her husband Brooks, founder of the nonprofit More than Compassion, have established a school dedicated to improving the lives of children at an orphanage in Guatemala. Only in its second year, the bilingual school is already growing. It has opened its doors to 15 local children, who receive partial scholarships, and is adding a second story to better serve even more young people. The Baumgartners hope to offer community services, such as literacy classes for parents.



## SOCIAL PRACTICE

# Transforming Disasters Into Catalysts for *Positive Change*

**WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU LOST YOUR HOME IN A FIRE?  
IN MOST CITIES, UNINSURED FAMILIES DISPLACED BY  
CATASTROPHIC EVENTS END UP IN THE SHELTER SYSTEM.**

In Philadelphia however, the Red Cross House (RCH)—a one-of-a-kind jewel in the city, the region, and the country—has adopted a cutting-edge approach to helping families recover from disaster in a holistic manner.

At RCH families stay for up to 21 days in hotel-style suites with a private bathroom, kitchenette, and laundry. The facility provides three meals a day, play areas for children, and computers with internet access. Mental health and spiritual counseling is available to help residents heal from the trauma of their experience. Personal caseworkers help families create and implement a unique recovery plan. RCH goes well beyond meeting the immediate and practical needs related to a family's displacement.

“We look at disaster recovery through a social work lens,” explained SP2 alumnus and RCH Director, Chad Dion Lassiter, MSW '01. “For many families, fire is a metaphor for the myriad other challenges that affect their day-to-day lives such as unemployment, underemployment, incarceration, and behavioral health issues. Our focus is empowerment and resilience and we have found that fire can serve as a catalyst that enables families to emerge stronger than they were before their displacement.”

To help families overcome obstacles, RCH has developed innovative collaborations with local businesses, universities, and community organizations. Through a partnership with Temple University, law students and professors help

“Our focus is empowerment and resilience and we have found that fire can serve as a catalyst that enables families to emerge stronger than they were before their displacement.”



families assess and tackle legal obstacles that may arise during their recovery. Local banks and insurance agencies have also teamed up with RCH to provide classes on money management, budgeting, homeownership, fire safety, and first aid and also offer workshops about homeowners and renters insurance.

Perhaps most importantly, RCH aims to create a sense of normalcy for families whose lives have been upended. For example, the agency works with schools to reroute busses so children can continue to go to school. A variety of therapeutic events, such as movie nights and outings to sporting events

or museums, help residents relieve stress. Art, music, and play therapy options provide outlets that allow children to speak back to their trauma.

“At SP2 I gained a theoretical framework and practical skill set that has enabled me to apply non-traditional approaches aimed at empowering those who are marginalized by social and economic inequality, racism, and discrimination,” recalled Lassiter. “That expertise has shaped my work at RCH. Ultimately we use human agency to help families recover. We understand their misfortune and attempt to close their wounds, but at the same time we see their full humanity.”

“Ultimately we use *human agency* to help families recover. We understand their misfortune and attempt to close their wounds, but at the same time we see their full humanity.”

CHAD DION LASSITER, MSW '01

#### RESEARCH CENTERS

## The Center for High Impact Philanthropy

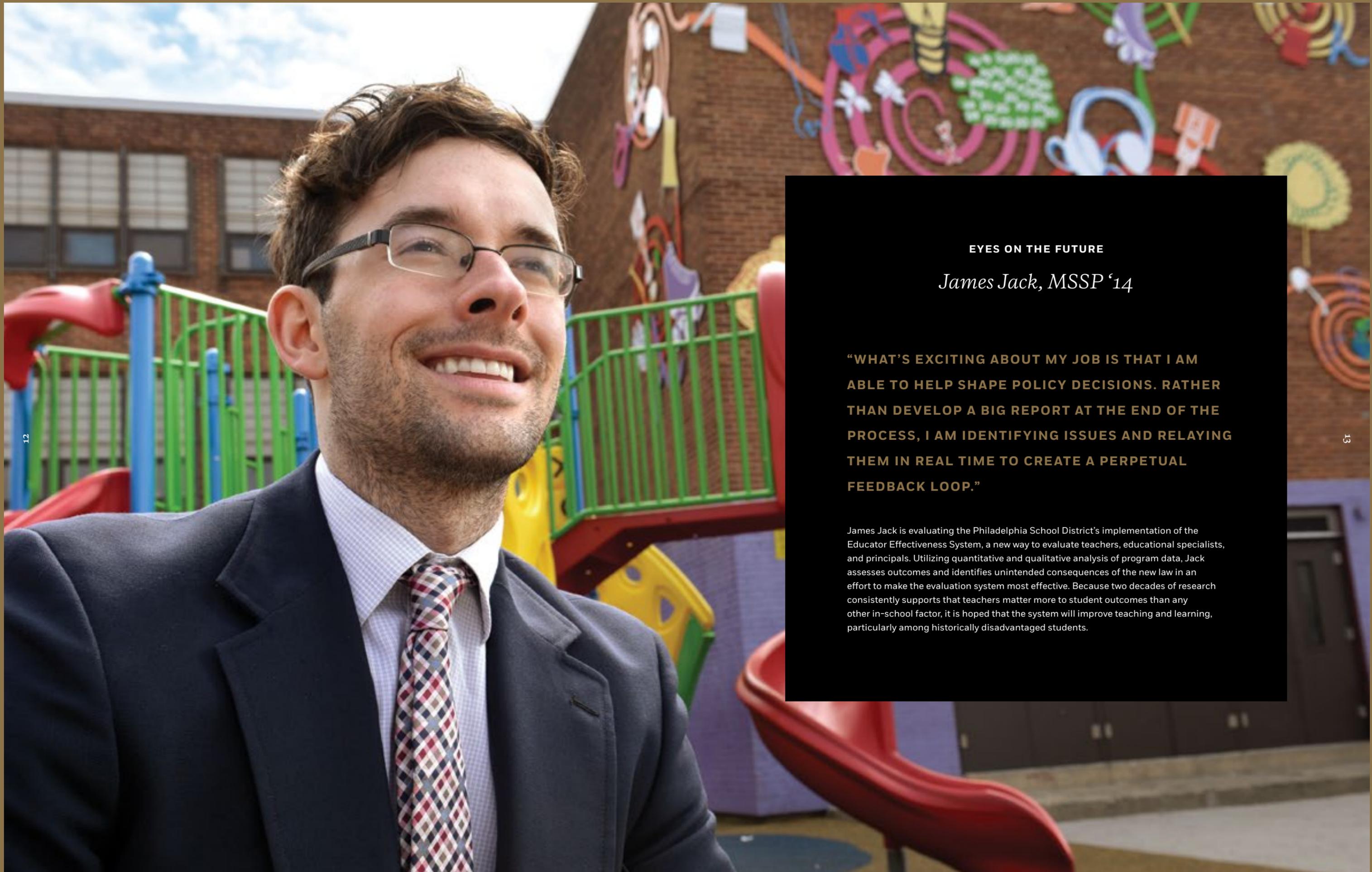
**FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Katherina M. Rosqueta, MBA

**WEBSITE**  
[www.impact.upenn.edu](http://www.impact.upenn.edu)

The Center for High Impact Philanthropy is a trusted, global authority for donors interested in doing good with available resources. A greater interest in impact-focused philanthropy, an increase of organizations supporting effective funding, and a recognition of Millennials as a cohort that will shape philanthropic practice in the future, presents opportunities to move money to the most impactful giving opportunities.

The Center's unique model combines multi-disciplinary resources and the analytic rigor of a university-based center with real-world decision making. Smart answers are not enough; solutions must be practical to implement. CHIP has developed social and multi-media platforms and a partnership network not usually found at a nonprofit. This approach has attracted inquiries from peer universities hoping to launch similar centers around the world.

The Center's upcoming "Philanthropy for Social Impact" initiative will provide resources for donors to practice high impact philanthropy in their area of interest. The Center will also embrace its educational role by teaching undergraduate, graduate, and executive level courses. CHIP plans to strengthen its capacity for partnerships across Penn, locally, and globally.



EYES ON THE FUTURE

*James Jack, MSSP '14*

**“WHAT’S EXCITING ABOUT MY JOB IS THAT I AM ABLE TO HELP SHAPE POLICY DECISIONS. RATHER THAN DEVELOP A BIG REPORT AT THE END OF THE PROCESS, I AM IDENTIFYING ISSUES AND RELAYING THEM IN REAL TIME TO CREATE A PERPETUAL FEEDBACK LOOP.”**

James Jack is evaluating the Philadelphia School District’s implementation of the Educator Effectiveness System, a new way to evaluate teachers, educational specialists, and principals. Utilizing quantitative and qualitative analysis of program data, Jack assesses outcomes and identifies unintended consequences of the new law in an effort to make the evaluation system most effective. Because two decades of research consistently supports that teachers matter more to student outcomes than any other in-school factor, it is hoped that the system will improve teaching and learning, particularly among historically disadvantaged students.

TECHNOLOGY

# Navigating Medical Decisions In the Age of Genetic Mapping

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**IN THE PAST DECADE, SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGHS IN GENOMICS HAVE RADICALLY TRANSFORMED THE MEDICAL LANDSCAPE.**

These advances allow women to test for inherited mutations in genes called BRCA1 and BRCA2, which significantly increase the risk of developing breast or ovarian cancer. But as SP2 Assistant Professor Allison Werner-Lin PhD, MA, EdM has documented, for many women this newly available information can also lead to greater uncertainty.

Unlike other genetic markers, which predict diseases such as Huntington's with 100% certainty, mutations in the BRCA1 or BRCA2 are not definitive indicators of cancer. Up to 70% of women with a BRCA mutation will develop breast cancer, as opposed to 12% of the general population.

"That kind of uncertainty can be very uncomfortable," she explained. Inspired by her own family history with cancer, Werner-Lin has been examining the

psychological impact of having a genetic mutation, as well as how women understand the ambiguity of risk and how that ambiguity affects their life choices.

Today, women have more options for managing their risk than ever before—ranging from regular screenings for early detection to more extreme measures such as prophylactic surgery to remove the breasts and ovaries.

"Navigating these choices can be treacherous," said Werner-Lin. "Particularly because medical guidelines often compete with what women want from their lives." For example, she noted that standard of care guidelines recommend women with BRCA mutations have their ovaries removed by the age of 35. For a 33 year old woman who is still hoping to have children, the consequences of that approach may be unacceptable.

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“Navigating these choices can be *treacherous*. Particularly because medical guidelines often compete with what women want from their lives.”

ALLISON WERNER-LIN PHD, MA, EDM



Werner-Lin's research found that women with BRCA mutations tend to understand risk, and to make decisions about managing that risk, in the context of their family histories.

“If a woman's mother died of breast cancer at 35 she often has a strongly held belief that her fate will be the same, even though clinical evidence to support that assumption isn't certain,” she said. This belief, that her life is truncated, can have far reaching implications that affect not only her medical decisions, but also her selection of a partner and whether or not she has children.

Recent changes to health policy also impact the choices of some women in troubling ways.

“I've spoken to women who are opting to have mastectomies as young as 23—when their risk is minimal—simply because provisions in the Affordable Care Act mean they can still be covered by their parent's insurance,” she says.

In light of what she has learned, Werner-Linn is now focused on testing the capacity for developing and distributing interventions that can help women cope with their diagnosis and make decisions that are right for them.

“The advocacy community has done an exceptional job of raising awareness and providing support, but women need access to support and information that is monitored by health and mental health professionals,” she said.

#### RESEARCH CENTERS

## The Center for Mental Health & Aging

**DIRECTOR**  
Zvi Gellis, PhD

**WEBSITE**  
[www.sp2.upenn.edu/cmha](http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/cmha)

The Center for Mental Health & Aging (CMHA) is a national leader in the aging field. CMHA shapes solutions to promote effective integrated service delivery models in partnership with health and social service agencies. The Center conducts research, demonstration projects, and clinical training across the nation to address the health and mental health needs of older adults, family caregivers, and communities.

CMHA solves problems by understanding the mechanisms of effective health care delivery for older persons. Behind every research study are the life stories of real older adults that help develop and tailor evidence-based services for an aging society.

By 2020, 60,000 to 70,000 geriatric social workers will be needed, but less than 10% of that projected number is now available. A special internship program is designed to help students bridge the gap between academic learning and professional training in the field of gerontology. CMHA offers national trainings in depression and anxiety assessment and treatment, Problem Solving Therapy, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, and dementia.



**EYES ON THE FUTURE**

*Nikka Landau, NPL '14*

**“PHILASOUP IS A GREAT WAY TO MEET OTHER PEOPLE INTERESTED IN EDUCATION, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, AND SOCIAL CHANGE WHILE RAISING FUNDS FOR SOME AMAZING SCHOOL PROJECTS HAPPENING IN PHILADELPHIA’S CLASSROOMS.”**

Nikka Landau co-founded PhilaSoup, a non-profit that supports fundraising and networking in Philadelphia’s education community. The organization hosts regular dinners for teachers and diverse sectors of the education community who pool contributions to establish a micro-grant. During the dinner, educators pitch their ideas and participants vote on the project they would like to fund. Projects have ranged from memory boxes for children experiencing loss to nutrition lessons using pizza as a tool to teach healthy eating. Landau currently works as a consultant in Detroit and serves on the board of Write a House, a non-profit that buys and renovates houses in Detroit and gives them away to writers.



SOCIAL PRACTICE

# Illuminating A Path *to* Mental Health

**PUBLIC ART IS GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH COMMUNITY  
BEAUTIFICATION, BUT CAN ART AFFECT THE HEALTH OF  
INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES?**

Sara Ansell, MSW/MSSP '09, Director of the Porch Light Initiative, believes it can. The Porch Light Initiative, a collaboration between the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program and the Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services, is a groundbreaking public art initiative aimed to improve individual and community health through human connection and art.

The program pairs artists with individuals receiving treatment for behavioral health challenges, providers, and community residents, to work within social service agencies and create art that addresses trauma and the associated issues of drug addiction, mental illness, and other behavioral health concerns.

Work begins with a series of organic conversations among all constituencies about their strengths and challenges, their perceptions of recovery and healing, and the kinds of murals they would like to

see. The design that emerges is a visual representation of that dialogue. Transforming that design into a full-scale mural involves intensive work with service recipients, as well as inclusive community meetings and paint days. According to Ansell, the entire process from conception to completion is not only beneficial to people's health, but helps to reduce the stigma associated with behavioral health services.

"The stigma surrounding addiction and mental illness can prevent people from seeking treatment," she explained. "But creating community art together in a behavioral health setting helps to change perspectives. By focusing on the art we can bring people together in ways that can't be achieved by merely talking to them about the issue. That is the magic behind this project."

In addition to its innovative program model, Porch Light is also the focus of a pioneering study by the Yale School of Medicine, assessing the project's impact on individual and community-level outcome measures.

The rigorous evaluation design is new to the field of public art. It includes tracking program activities, comparison sites, community surveys, systematic observations of mural sites, case studies, and pre, post, and follow-up interviews.

For Ansell, Porch Light is a logical extension of research she conducted at SP2 with Dr. Amy Hillier, which examined the impact of the built environment on the health of individuals.

“SP2 not only taught me about the research process, but made me think deeply about how we are affected by our physical surroundings. Those questions propelled me to the work I do now,” Ansell recalled. Working with Hillier also shaped Ansell’s understanding of community-based research.

“Amy’s research always included the voice and perspective of individuals who lived in the spaces we were studying,” she said. “I really appreciate that the Porch Light evaluation is grounded in that community-based model. It’s a respectful and healthy way to ask the big questions.”

“The entire process from conception to completion is not only beneficial to people’s health, but helps to reduce the stigma associated with behavioral health services.”



“SP2 not only taught me about the research process but made me *think deeply* about how we are affected by our physical surroundings.”

SARA ANSELL, MSW/MSSP '09

#### RESEARCH CENTERS

## The Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice & Research

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Debra Schilling Wolfe, MEd

#### WEBSITE

[www.fieldcenteratpenn.org](http://www.fieldcenteratpenn.org)

The Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice & Research is a collaboration of the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and Penn’s Schools of Social Policy & Practice, Law, Medicine and Nursing. The Field Center promotes the latest research, promising practice, and seeks system-level reform to improve the lives of victims of child abuse and neglect and children in the foster care system.

Field Center faculty, staff and students collaborate with key partners on both local and national levels to identify where change is needed, conduct research, and recommend solutions. In response to a recent Pennsylvania House resolution, the Center released a statewide plan using data analysis and GIS mapping technology so that, for the first time, a database of child-friendly multidisciplinary centers for the investigation of sexual abuse is accessible to all of Pennsylvania’s victims.

The Field Center continues to work for improvements to the child welfare system, whether it’s helping former foster youth navigate challenges of higher education, developing new strategies for victims to access child welfare services, or increasing capacity for qualified medical professionals to treat abused children from rural communities.



EYES ON THE FUTURE

*Katy McGinley Kaplan, PhD '13*

**“AS A NATION, WE ARE WAY BEHIND IN TERMS OF ADDRESSING ISSUES RELATED TO MENTAL HEALTH. THERE IS SO MUCH MORE WE CAN DO TO STEP IN AND SUPPORT FAMILIES FACING THESE CHALLENGES.”**

For her dissertation, Katy McGinley Kaplan developed and tested a cutting-edge web-based parenting intervention for parents with mental health challenges. The intervention, which addresses issues related to parenting children from birth to 18 years old, is unique in that it has a cross-disability focus and is user friendly for individuals with diverse learning styles. It provides access to peer support with other parents facing mental health challenges. Kaplan, who continues to work on the project funded by the National Institute on Disability Rehabilitation Research, serves as Director of Human Services & Special Initiatives for Philadelphia City Council Member Dennis O'Brien. In this capacity, she heads up an autism task force at the state level and recently co-chaired the Fourth International Conference on Families with Mental Health Challenges.



## SOCIAL POLICY

# Bringing Bail Payment *to the* Digital Age

**A SMALL TWEAK WITH A BIG IMPACT IS HOW TEAM BETTERBAIL DESCRIBES THEIR PUBLIC POLICY PROPOSAL, WHICH COULD END UP SAVING PHILADELPHIA TAXPAYERS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS A YEAR.**

Comprised of Laura Buckley, MSW '14, Cherlyn Lim, MSW '14, Yosha Gunasekera, a JD candidate, and Sabrina Maynard, an MPA candidate, BetterBAIL won the Fels Public Policy Challenge, a Penn-based policy competition, and placed among the top four teams in a national competition.

Currently, a staggering 52% of all inmates in the Philadelphia Prison System are pretrial detainees, who cost taxpayers approximately \$140 million per year. Many of these individuals could avoid pretrial detention if their friends or family could simply post their bail. However, Philadelphia requires all bail payments be made in person. This antiquated system not only creates an undue burden on family members who may not live in the area, but contributes to Philadelphia's overcrowded and costly jail system. BetterBAIL will help reduce the population in Philadelphia jails and return bail-eligible, pretrial

individuals to their families and communities by allowing for electronic bail payments.

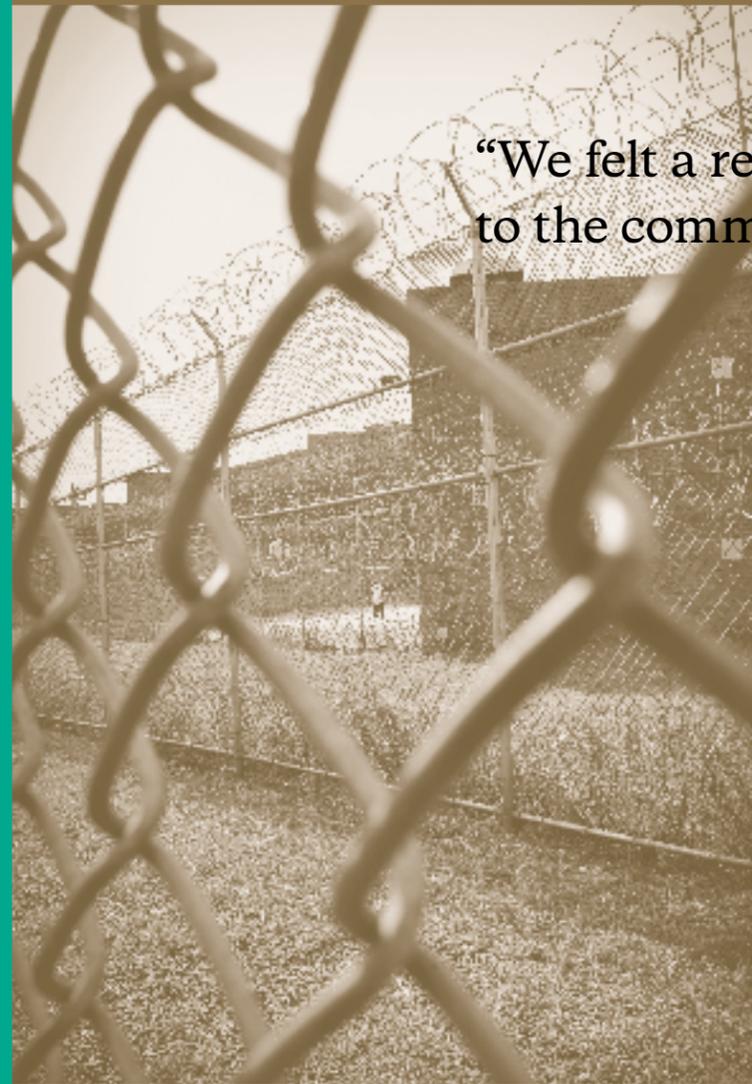
For SP2 alumnae Buckley and Lim, the inspiration for BetterBAIL grew out of their work in criminal justice. Lim was a juvenile justice intern who previously served as a probation officer in her native Singapore. Buckley interned at Philadelphia FIGHT's Institute for Community Justice, where she manages a diverse caseload of incarcerated and recently released individuals.

"I see firsthand how individuals and families are negatively impacted by the Philadelphia bail system," she explained.

Both students credit their success in the competitions to the interdisciplinary nature of the team and their efforts to solicit public input.

“For me it really emphasized the importance of seeking perspectives from *multiple disciplines* when trying to enact change.”

CHERLYN LIM, MSW '14



“We felt a responsibility to give voice to the community,” Buckley said.

In crafting the policy, they conducted numerous interviews and focus groups with inmates, family members, and stakeholders in the justice system.

“We felt a responsibility to give voice to the community,” Buckley said.

In one such interview with the PA Administration of Courts the team learned that several other Pennsylvania Counties have already begun transitioning to an electronic system and that there is money in the State budget to bring Philadelphia online.

“That’s when we knew our vision could become a reality,” recalled Buckley.

To make it happen the team has applied for support from the Mayor’s Fund for an outreach campaign and targeted training. They are also making plans to evaluate the system and monitor its usage.

Lim, who calls the challenge the highlight of her education, said the experience will inform her work back in Singapore.

“For me it really emphasized the importance of seeking perspectives from multiple disciplines when trying to enact change,” she said.

#### RESEARCH CENTERS

### The Evelyn Jacobs Ortner Center on Family Violence

**DIRECTOR**  
Susan B. Sorenson, PhD

**WEBSITE**  
[www.sp2.upenn.edu/ortner](http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ortner)

Technology has changed many aspects of life, including how abused women can interact with service agencies. Individuals under 30 are at highest risk of intimate partner violence and sexual assault and almost all use the internet. The Evelyn Jacobs Ortner Center on Family Violence recently found that one third of domestic violence and sexual assault agencies in the U.S. do not have a website, citing limited resources as a major barrier.

Abusers can monitor their victims’ Internet usage, an act known as electronic stalking. Two thirds of agency websites don’t have a quick escape button or information about how to “erase” electronic footprints. It is important for women experiencing abuse to have access to information and help. How to provide assistance without increasing the risk of abuse remains an important task.

The Ortner Center is planning research on additional technologies including mobile phones and social media. Faculty and students in Annenberg, Computer Science, and Wharton will collaborate on the research.

The Center strives for women to have full and safe access to technologies, allowing increased connections with people and information.

**EYES ON THE FUTURE**

*Jennifer Boyle, DSW '14*

**“BECAUSE NO SINGLE TEST ASSESSES REPEATED EXPOSURE TO TRAUMA, CLINICIANS GENERALLY UTILIZE A VARIETY OF TOOLS, WHICH CAN BE EXPENSIVE, TIME CONSUMING, AND REQUIRE A HIGH LEVEL OF EXPERTISE. IT CAN ALSO BE DIFFICULT FOR CHILDREN TO COMPLETE THESE TESTS BECAUSE ONGOING TRAUMA OFTEN AFFECTS EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING, INCLUDING LANGUAGE SKILLS AND THE ABILITY TO READ OR PAY ATTENTION.”**

Jennifer Boyle and her illustrator husband, Adam King, worked to create a tool that uses cartoon- like images, instead of traditional questions, to identify and assess the effects of complex trauma on children. For her dissertation, she recruited Master-level therapists to test the tool in a variety of clinical settings. After graduation, she hopes to further refine the tool and develop training for its use.



## SOCIAL POLICY

# The Next Step In Ending Homelessness

**AFTER MORE THAN A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AT THE FOREFRONT OF HOMELESSNESS RESEARCH AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT, DENNIS CULHANE, PHD, DANA AND ANDREW STONE CHAIR IN SOCIAL POLICY, CAN POINT TO SEVERAL POSITIVE TRENDS, BUT KNOWS BOLD SOLUTIONS ARE NEEDED TO SOLVE THE MOST CHALLENGING ISSUES.**

“The good news is that after some grave missteps, we have identified interventions that are highly successful,” said Culhane. Chronic homelessness in the United States has declined by 25% over the last six years, due in large part to the effectiveness of the Permanent Supportive Housing Model.

This model helps people experiencing repeated long-term homelessness, many of whom suffer from severe mental illness or substance abuse, to obtain permanent homes. Culhane’s research indicates that 85% of those who receive this intervention remained housed two years later and experience improvement in their quality of life as evidenced by decreases in emergency room use, shelter access, and incarceration.

Significant strides have been made in curbing short-term, crisis-related homelessness, which generally affects families and youth, through a strategy called Rapid Re-housing.

“The goal of this model is to move people out of homelessness as quickly as possible so they don’t become disconnected from the mainstream economy,” explained Culhane.

Rapid Re-housing provides cash supports for security deposits and short-term rental assistance. It also includes assistance connecting to employment, social services, and education. According to Culhane, 85% of those who receive this intervention do not return to homelessness within 12 months.

“The goal of this model is to move people out of homelessness as quickly as possible so they don’t become disconnected from the mainstream economy.”

“We’ve done enough demonstration projects to know these strategies work,” said Culhane. “The challenge moving forward is to find innovative ways to bring them to a population-wide scale.”

Culhane and his colleagues are exploring how Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act expand access to Permanent Supportive Housing, particularly for those 50 and older who represent the largest segment of the chronically homeless population. Currently they are working with a few states to pilot an intervention involving Social Security outreach.

“Many of these individuals have age-related functional disabilities that qualify them for both cash assistance and medical support,” he explained.

“But there is still a gap between what they get and the cost of rent. Because we know that there are significant savings to Medicaid when people are housed, we are trying to identify ways to leverage Medicaid dollars to finance that gap.”

Another important focus is stemming the growth in homelessness among 18-34 year olds, many of whom became disconnected from the labor market during the recent recession.

“In order to prevent another generation of long-term homelessness, we need to invest in programs that re-connect these young people to employment and the community so they don’t become alienated from the social fabric,” Culhane said.

“Because we know that there are *significant savings* to Medicaid when people are housed, we are trying to identify ways to leverage Medicaid dollars to finance that gap.”

DENNIS CULHANE, PHD, DANA AND ANDREW STONE CHAIR IN SOCIAL POLICY

#### RESEARCH CENTERS

## Out-of-School Time Resource Center

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Nancy Peter, EdD

#### WEBSITE

[www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc](http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc)

The Out-of-School Time Resource Center (OSTRC) conducts research and promotes resources for out-of-school time staff, programs, and participants. By providing resources like an online training calendar and monthly Peer Networking Meetings, OSTRC cultivates partnerships between individuals and organizations. Effective OST professional development is directly connected to youth outcomes such as increased academic achievement, decreased participation in risk behaviors, and greater access to college and careers.

The fields of out-of-school time, positive youth development, afterschool, and school-age care are embracing an increased focus on measurable outcomes on individual, program, and systemic levels.

OSTRC hopes to share its experience coordinating resources, convening Peer Networking Meetings, and evaluating professional development with additional local, statewide, and national colleagues. The center plans to continue expanding into the areas of sports-based youth development (SBYD) and informal science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programming. Finally, the Center will dig deeper into evaluating professional development, and link quality training to positive staff, program, and youth impact.

**EYES ON THE FUTURE**

*Stacey Barrenger, PhD '13*

**“THE INTERDISCIPLINARY NATURE OF THE PHD PROGRAM REALLY BROADENED MY PERSPECTIVE. I WAS ABLE TO TAKE CLASSES IN POLITICAL SCIENCE, PUBLIC HEALTH, AND ANTHROPOLOGY THAT SHAPED THE WAY I THINK ABOUT CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND HELPED ME UNDERSTAND RE- INCARCERATION AS A HEALTH RISK.”**

Stacey Barrenger studies barriers to successful community integration experienced by men with mental illness leaving prison. She noted that conventional supports that focus strictly on linkage to mental health services do not sufficiently address this population's most pressing challenges, which include finding employment, reconnecting with family, and paying court fees. Barrenger examines more comprehensive solutions, such as utilizing peer counselors to support individuals in navigating a more successful return to society. She is adopting a harm reduction approach to help them avoid situations that could increase the risk of re-incarceration.





EYES ON THE FUTURE

*Tasha Hannah, MSW '14*

**“MY UNDERGRADUATE WORK WAS IN LEGAL STUDIES, WHICH TAKES A PUNITIVE APPROACH TO SOCIETAL CHALLENGES. I’M MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN FIGURING OUT HOW I CAN HELP PEOPLE. I VIEW MY ROLE AS A SOCIAL WORKER THROUGH A LENS OF EMPOWERMENT AND STRENGTHENING.”**

Tasha Hannah has been a full-time employee at the Department of Human Services (DHS) for 17 years. While earning her MSW, she continued to work for DHS as a life coach in a character enhancement program. In this role, she strives to help at-risk teenage girls embrace their unique characteristics, pursue the highest possible level of education, and become positive and productive members of society. The experience has been life affirming.

“As I educate these young ladies, I find myself learning so much from them,” she said. Ultimately, Hannah hopes to work in a therapeutic setting where she can help child trauma victims avoid entering the system.



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# A Recipe for Social Change

**OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS, INTEREST IN LOCAL, FRESH FOOD HAS GROWN DRAMATICALLY, SO IT MIGHT SEEM COUNTER-INTUITIVE THAT IN MANY LOW-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS, RESIDENTS HAVE NOWHERE TO PURCHASE HEALTHY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. AS DIRECTOR OF THE FOOD TRUST, Yael LEHMANN, MSW '06, IS ON A MISSION TO ENSURE THAT ALL PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, NUTRITIOUS FOOD AND THE INFORMATION TO MAKE HEALTHY DECISIONS.**

Research demonstrates that people who live in underserved neighborhoods are at greater risk for diet-related diseases like obesity. To counter these effects, The Food Trust employs a multi-pronged strategy combining boots-on-the-ground service with research, public policy, and advocacy. The organization works with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers, and policymakers in Philadelphia and across the country to change how we think about healthy food and to increase its availability.

“Our approach is to increase both access and demand,” explained Lehmann. To that end, The Food Trust runs more than 25 farmers’ markets in low and mixed-income neighborhoods throughout Philadelphia. The markets not only bring food into underserved neighborhoods, but also accept SNAP benefits and other incentives to make it affordable for all residents.

Access alone does not always change behavior. The organization also helps people better understand how to incorporate healthy food into their diets through nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, and school-wide education programs. Its efforts have proven to be quite effective. A 2008 study found that less than half the number of children who participated in The Food Trust’s nutrition education program in a North Philadelphia school became overweight compared to students in a control school.

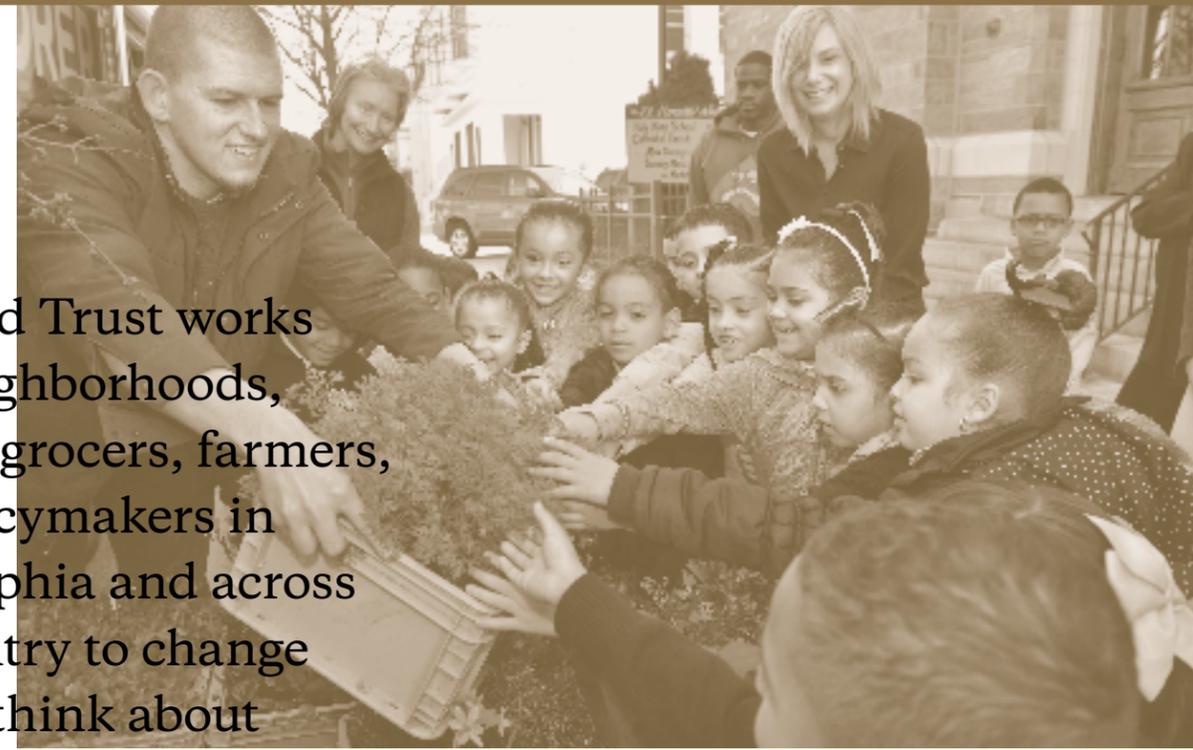
The organization also promotes healthy eating through its Night Markets. These wildly popular city-wide celebrations of food, hosted in diverse neighborhoods throughout the city, feature an eclectic variety of affordable food and entertainment, and have drawn as many as 37,000 people.

The Food Trust works with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers, and policymakers in Philadelphia and across the country to change how we think about healthy food and to increase its availability.

On the policy front, The Food Trust recently collaborated with the Reinvestment Fund and Policy Link in a highly successful advocacy effort that resulted in the federally funded Healthy Food Financing Initiative. This nationwide effort provides grants and loans to organizations that want to offer healthy food in underserved neighborhoods.

Lehmann credits SP2 with providing the foundation that is the framework for her work at The Food Trust.

“We are known as a public health organization, but at the heart of most public health issues is social inequity. Decades-long practices such as redlining and refusing loans to people of color have created public health epidemics in many neighborhoods,” Lehmann explained. “At The Food Trust we apply social justice practices to try to right some of the wrongs of the past.”



RESEARCH CENTERS

## Program for Religion and Social Policy Research

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Ram Cnaan, PhD

WEBSITE

[www.sp2.upenn.edu/prspr](http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/prspr)

The Program for Religion and Social Policy Research (PRSPR) is working on a study of 100 congregations and assessing their financial value to their local economies. The Program also started a new project regarding members of the Church of Jesus Christ and the Latter-Day Saints where PRSPR studies the new phenomenon of elderly volunteers/missionaries. In addition to highly publicized youth missionaries, more and more retirees are volunteering for full-time missions. PRSPR aims to understand this phenomenon and link it to the literature regarding productive aging.

The program also studies collaborative projects between city government and its local faith community. As no local government can meet the full needs of its residents, new models of public-faith collaborations will emerge. PRSPR plans to be in the forefront of documenting and assessing this trend.

The role of clergy in the 21st century is challenging, complex, and ever evolving. Along with a few scholars in the field, PRSPR will venture into understanding clergy challenges and helping make their work more meaningful and rewarding.

“We are known as a public health organization, but *at the heart* of most public health issues is social inequity.”

Yael Lehmann, MSW '06

EYES ON THE FUTURE

*Sandeep Shah, MSW '14*

**“WHEN SOMEONE IS STRUGGLING, IT ISN'T USUALLY THE RESULT OF ONE THING. IT'S IMPORTANT TO APPRECIATE THE BROAD RANGE OF UNDERLYING ISSUES AND SYSTEMS THAT AFFECT ONE'S LIFE.”**

Sandeep Shah's journey to empower others has led to a multi-faceted education. As a banker in California with a strong interest in economic development, Shah was inspired to pursue an MSW when he began working with Bhutanese refugees around financial literacy. At SP2, he continued working with the Bhutanese community providing case management, translation, and advocacy at a local nonprofit. He also created a website designed to help other agencies serving Bhutanese clients. But the banker in him needed to better understand the funder's perspective of the non-profit sector, so he went on to work with the Philadelphia Foundation's Philanthropy Services Team. Shah plans to pursue a Masters in Public Health. "Health is at the core of almost every social issue," he explained.





## EYES ON THE FUTURE

*Jill Harrington-LaMorie, DSW '11*

**“OUR SOCIETY WANTS GRIEF TO BE NEAT, BUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES ASSOCIATED WITH MILITARY DEATH COMPLICATE BEREAVEMENT. WHEN SOMEONE DIES YOUNG AND SUDDENLY, THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS ARE FACED NOT ONLY WITH THE IMMEDIATE LOSS, BUT ALSO THE LOSS OF EVERYTHING THEY ANTICIPATED FOR THAT INDIVIDUAL’S FUTURE.”**

Jill Harrington-LaMorie is the Senior Field Researcher on a congressionally directed medical research project exploring bereavement in military families. As part of this study, Harrington-LaMorie and her team are recruiting 3,000 survivors to complete the first-ever national survivor questionnaire examining the myriad ways military death impacts surviving families. They will also conduct a longitudinal study following 500 survivors for two years and facilitate 40 focus groups. Harrington-LaMorie notes the DSW program was ideal preparation for the project, which bridges clinical practice and research and requires an understanding of trauma-informed care as well as strong quantitative and qualitative research skills.



CURRICULUM

# Proactively Addressing *Shifts* In Child Welfare Health

**WITH FOUNDATIONS INVESTING HEAVILY IN OUTCOMES RESEARCH AND CHAMPIONING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE, CHILD WELFARE AGENCIES IN PHILADELPHIA AND ACROSS THE NATION ARE TRANSFORMING THEIR SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR THE CHILDREN THEY SERVE.**

Such far-reaching changes have resulted in an urgent need for highly trained social work practitioners with child welfare expertise to both implement and evaluate new models.

To help meet this need, SP2 has established the Child Well-Being and Child Welfare Specialization (CW2). Developed and taught by Johanna Greeson, PhD, Antonio Garcia, PhD and Andrew Fussner, MSW, the specialization provides students with the skill set and knowledge to gather, critique, and implement trauma-informed, evidence-based practice.

“On average, positions in the child welfare workforce turn over every two years,” Greeson explained. “Individual factors such as educational background are one reason. By better preparing students interested in entering this field, CW2 can make a real impact.”

Specialized courses will focus on either clinical or macro social work practice. Students will also complete an integrated capstone seminar, taught by nationally recognized scholars from diverse backgrounds including psychology, sociology,

law, and medicine. Each scholar will provide a unique approach to child welfare and mental health practice. Students will also participate in field placements offering opportunities for cutting-edge practice in their specialization with entities such as the Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research, Philadelphia Department of Human Services, child advocacy centers, child protection teams, schools, and mental health settings.

"On a clinical level, the CW2 will provide practical instruction and first-hand experience to help students address the types of problems they will encounter in the real world, such as what to do when a child is suicidal or has had an overdose," said Fussner.

On a macro level, the concentration serves as a natural laboratory for students to examine emerging practices and identify what is most effective. It also offers invaluable opportunities to participate in cutting-edge research with program faculty. For example, Garcia is conducting research on components of Philadelphia's new community-based service delivery model called Improving Outcomes for Children, and Greeson is piloting a novel intervention that utilizes natural mentoring for older youth aging out of foster care.

"Our goal is to provide a seamless student experience that encompasses academic content, field work, and the benefit of our research," Garcia explained. "Ultimately we will assess this approach by tracking where students land, whether they rely on that content, and what impact it has on outcomes for children."

50 "On a clinical level, the CW2 will provide practical instruction and first-hand experience to help students address the types of problems they will encounter in the real world, such as what to do when a child is suicidal or has had an overdose," said Fussner.



51 "Our goal is to provide a *seamless student experience* that encompasses academic content, field work, and the benefit of our research," Garcia explained.

ANTONIO GARCIA, PHD

**EYES ON THE FUTURE***Max Marchitello, MSSP '11*

**“THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF RESISTANCE TO THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS. THE TENDENCY IS TO RESPECT THE NEEDS OF THE SYSTEM MORE THAN THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN, BUT IT’S CRITICAL TO RAISE EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS AND HOLD STATES ACCOUNTABLE FOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE, OTHERWISE DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS WILL FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS.”**

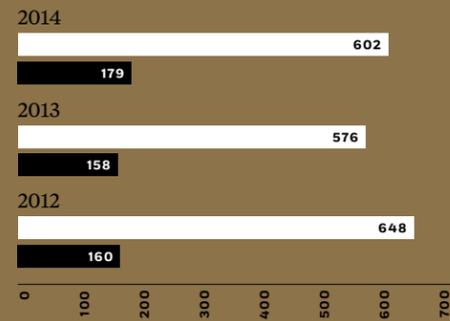
As an education policy analyst at the Center for American Progress, Max Marchitello is working to ensure the Common Core and the aligned assessments are implemented successfully and fairly. A former classroom teacher, Marchitello is studying how higher standards impact student achievement and is working to develop programmatic responses that protect and improve education for all students. His goal is to increase support and advocacy efforts around education equity that ultimately motivate legislators to make better decisions on behalf of underserved students.

2014/2015

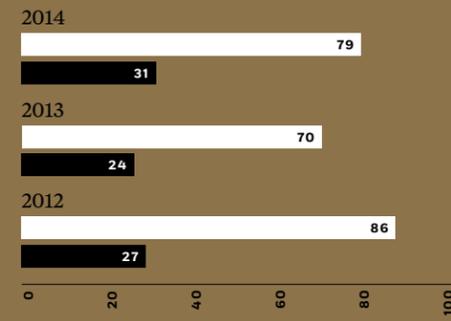
# Student Data

■ STUDENTS APPLIED  
■ STUDENTS ENTERING

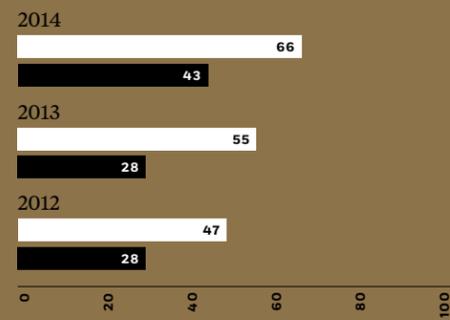
## MSW ADMISSION TRENDS



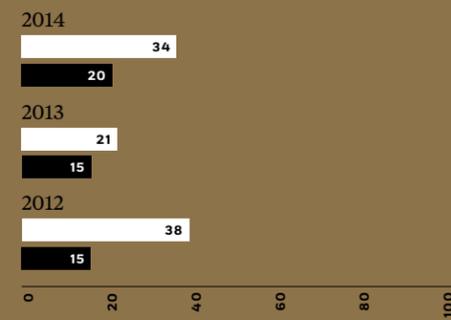
## MSSP ADMISSION TRENDS



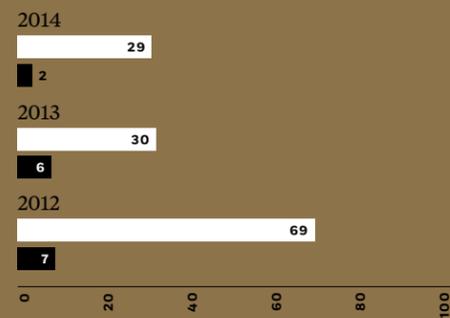
## NPL ADMISSION TRENDS



## DSW ADMISSION TRENDS



## PHD ADMISSION TRENDS



“As a clinician committed to social justice, I was challenged by expert faculty and staff. The Penn experience is one that I continue to *utilize and expand* on a daily basis.”

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Chaplain

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Child & Family Therapist

CARING COUNSELORS, LLC

Coordinator of HIV Prevention

CAMDEN AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER

Crisis Clinician for Children & Adolescents

DELAWARE GUIDANCE SERVICES

Dean

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

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STATE OF VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Director of Recovery and Red Cross House

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

Domestic Violence Coordinator

JEWISH FAMILY & CHILDREN SERVICES

Executive Director

JEWISH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTIN

Forensic Social Worker

OFFICE OF FORENSIC SERVICES STATE OF MARYLAND

Guidance Counselor

OAKLAND MILITARY INSTITUTE

Homeless Health Initiative Social Work Trainer

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA

Marketing Director

THE OAKS

Mitigation Specialist

DEFENDER ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA

Policy Analyst

YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION ORANGE COUNTY

Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Fellow

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Public Affairs Specialist

NATIONAL NETWORK TO END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Research Analyst Supervisor

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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