

School to Move to State-of-the-Art Facility, Thanks to \$40M Gift

Hunter's School of Social Work celebrates its 50th anniversary with exciting news. Thanks to the largest single gift ever made to CUNY, \$40 million from the Community Trust, the School of Social Work is moving into a brand-new, environmentally friendly, tech-enhanced building in East Harlem.

The new building is scheduled to open in September 2011.

The school will be renamed the Lois V. and Samuel J. Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College after the project's benefactors, who also built and own the HCSSW current building at 79th Street. The new \$135 million building will be located between 118th St. and 119th St. on Third Avenue. The N.Y. State Legislature provided an additional \$80 million for construction.

Under the deal, the Silberman Fund is also establishing a \$20 million social work grant program.

The state-of-the-art building will feature twice the current number of classrooms as well as research space. The new CUNY School of Public Health and the library at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (CENTRO) will also relocate to the building.



The architectural firm Cooper, Robertson & Partners' design for the future Silberman School of Social Work

School of Social Work Dean Jacqueline Mondros called the move "perfect for the school," whose national prominence has risen along with its reputation for training top-flight social workers. The community will benefit from the presence of the school, Mondros said, while the school will benefit from Harlem.

"It's a chance to live our mission," Mondros added. "Social work is all about enhancing communities and the people in them. To have a community in which to work, that needs us and wants us, and which we need and want — it's a synergistic moment. We're very excited about it."

Some 97 percent of the school's students come from New York City, and most work in

the city after graduation, Mondros said.

"We're not ivory tower. We're interested in being good neighbors and good partners."

The new building will use natural light to enhance energy efficiency. Its facilities will surround an inner courtyard and include patios and gathering spaces. The ground floor will be designed to engage the community with sidewalk

access, an art gallery, and an Internet café.

The new facility will allow the school to increase its current enrollment of 850 master's students and 100 doctoral candidates.

"We are grateful to CUNY Chancellor Matthew Goldstein whose leadership and support made this building possible. Moving to East Harlem will provide the school with a unique opportunity to expand our mission," said Hunter President Jennifer J. Raab. "We are more than up for the challenge. As 'the social work school for New York,' we continue to provide city agencies and departments with outstanding practitioners, community leaders, and researchers."

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Message from the President

It is my pleasure to inform you about what is probably the most significant news in the 50 years of the Hunter College School of Social Work. Thanks to the largest single gift in CUNY history — \$40 million from the Community Trust — construction will soon begin on our new home, a state-of-the-art building in East Harlem. The New York State legislature provided an additional \$80 million, the largest infusion of public funding for Hunter since the addition of the East and West Buildings at the 68th Street campus

in the mid-1980s.

Occupying the block between 118th St. and 119th St. on Third Avenue will allow us to expand our mission and be a force for change in the living laboratory of East Harlem, where we will establish partnerships with community-based social service providers to have a direct and immediate impact on the lives of the neighborhood's residents. It will also enable us to address New York City's health crises through an interdisciplinary alliance with CUNY's new School of Public Health at Hunter, which will also be located in the building.

It is because of the legacy of our graduates that this project is possible. We want to thank all of you for continuing to care for the future of New York.

Jennifer J. Raab

Message from the Dean

This newsletter reflects Hunter's exceptional legacy in social work education. Our past is represented by the retirement of Florence Vigilante, one of the school's most admired teachers and clinical practitioners. The present is told in the stories of our new faculty members, and in the important contributions being made by our graduates Jared Bernstein at the White House and Marianne Schretzman in city government, and by the community organizing class of 1999, who continue to selflessly raise scholarship support in memory of Amy Watkins.

The promise of our future is expressed in our new state-of-the art building in East Harlem, a result of the historical and ongoing generosity of the Silberman family and the New York Community Trust and the commitment of Hunter and CUNY to strengthen HCSSW as the premier school of social work.

As alumni, I know you join me in my admiration for our illustrious past, pride in the vibrancy of present faculty and students, and enthusiasm for living our future with agencies, organizations, and residents as we prepare to move to East Harlem.

Jacqueline B. Mondros



Biden Appoints Hunter Grad to Top Advisory Post in the White House

Vice President Joseph Biden has named Jared Bernstein (MSW '86) as his chief economic advisor.

"Jared Bernstein is an acclaimed economist and a proven, passionate advocate for raising the incomes of middle-class families," Biden said when making the announcement. "His expertise and background in a wide range of domestic and international economic policies will be an invaluable asset to the Obama-Biden Administration."

"It's an honor to have him on my team," Biden added.

Bernstein, formerly of the Economic Policy Institute, is an expert in income disparity, low-wage labor markets, and poverty issues. During the Clinton Administration, from 1995 to 1996, he was deputy chief economist for the Department of Labor.

Bernstein says he has great memories of Hunter: "Some of my most meaningful and lasting experiences came from the casework and group work I did," Bernstein wrote in an email. "I vividly remember my first cases, and while I fear I didn't help [the clients] much, I can absolutely assert that they helped me learn, firsthand, about the

social and economic injustices they faced.

"Today, I'm amazingly fortunate to be able to address those injustices at the highest level of government. I wouldn't be here had I not started on this path at the Hunter School of Social Work."

Bernstein said he fondly recalled Professor Emeritus George Getzel and the late Professor Roselle Kurland. "The values they imparted are with me today," Bernstein said.

"Hunter School of Social Work was where I first started making connections between micro and macro, between the challenges less advantaged people face in their everyday lives and the larger policy environment in which they live," Bernstein wrote. "My professors were consistently interested in both. The models we learned about were never person-centric, but they never got too abstract, leaving the person behind."

A CNBC commentator, Bernstein has written many books, including *Crunch: Why Do I Feel So Squeezed? (And Other Unsolved Economic Mysteries)* and *All Together Now: Common Sense for a Fair Economy*.

Bernstein holds a PhD in social welfare from Columbia.



Jared Bernstein (2nd from left) meets in the Oval Office with Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs, National Economic Council Director Lawrence Summers, Council of Economic Advisors Chair Christina Romer, Office of Management and Budget Director Peter Orszag, and President Obama.

Hunter Alumna Named NYC Family Services Coordinator

In these trying economic times, New York City's needy children, families, and adults can look to the leadership of Marianne Schretzman (MSW '86), a Hunter School of Social Work alumna and professor named by Mayor Michael Bloomberg as family services coordinator for the City of New York.

In her new position, Schretzman will manage cross-agency collaborations to enhance social services provided by the city.

"Marianne Schretzman has a long-standing commitment and an accomplished career working with our city's most vulnerable residents," Bloomberg said. "Now more than ever, we need to ensure that New York's families are getting the services they need. Marianne will help make sure that our safety net remains strong."

Schretzman said her challenge is to prioritize city services amid a \$4 billion city budget deficit to "meet the needs of people in distress."

She said she continues to benefit from her relationship with Hunter, and plans to keep teaching the administration course she has taught since the late 1990s.

"The students help me more than I help them," she said. "They give me ideas and the truth about what's going on at the street level. It's a great class."

Hunter's "most meaningful impact," she said, is to teach the value of social work. "The work of a social worker is not a frivolous matter. It requires a juxtaposition of knowing and caring for oneself while developing those mysterious bonds of understanding with others that allow for healing."

And Hunter plays an important role in helping the city, she stressed.

"Hunter embraces the values that go hand in hand with making New York City such a responsive place for people with needs, for people suffering from mental

illness, and for those suffering from social and economic injustice," she said.

"It's a time for social workers, who always give so much," she continued. "Just as you think you've given everything you have, you have to be more than you think you can be, and do more than you think you can do."

Schretzman previously served as deputy commissioner for the Division of Policy and Planning at the Department of Homeless Services and as deputy assistant commissioner at the Administration for Children's Services. She earned her doctorate in social welfare from the CUNY Graduate Center.



Meet Our New Faculty



Young children, mothers, and pregnant women often don't get the mental-health care they need, and that's the primary focus of study for **Mary Cavaleri**, new assistant professor of social work.

Cavaleri is working on developing community-based interventions to increase access to treatment and services.

"For young children, typically the caretaker is the gatekeeper for the receipt of services," Cavaleri said, adding, "When the caretaker has his or her own mental-health issues, it compounds the problem."

Cavaleri earned an MSW and PhD at New York University. In addition to studying depression in new and expectant mothers, she has done clinical work with young children with behavior disorders.

It is estimated that 26 percent of children need mental-health services, including 40 percent of the children in low-income communities, Cavaleri said. She added that half of these youngsters never get treatment, and three-quarters drop out of treatment too early.

Stigmas, perceptions, and bad experiences in the realm of mental-health treatment are all problems, Cavaleri said.



Assistant Professor **Nancy Giunta** brings an expertise in aging to Hunter. The job of long-term senior care often falls on family members, and

there's a need to focus on those caretakers who will need support, Giunta said.

With the maturing of baby boomers, the number of U.S. seniors will probably more than double, from 30 million in 2000 to an estimated 75 million by 2030.

"Preparing home- and community-based services for older adults is needed. Right now policies are focused on consolidating and cutting services instead of preparing for the increased demand and need for such services," Giunta said.

Giunta teaches research methods, community organizing, and social planning and policy. She is the recent recipient of a prestigious research fellowship from the Hartford Foundation Geriatric Social Work Initiative. The grant will fund Giunta's work with the East Side Management Consortium of East Harlem and the Upper East Side to determine the benefits of collaboration between agencies. She is a faculty fellow at the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging and Longevity. She earned an MSW and PhD from the University of California-Berkeley.

"I feel so lucky to be at Hunter," Giunta said. "What I love about the school is the rich diversity, experience, and talents brought by the students."



Professor **Michael A. Lewis** is an advocate for the poor and co-founder of the U.S. Basic Income Guarantee Network (USBIG), a

cooperative of academics and activists that seeks to establish a minimum salary in order to ameliorate poverty.

"The current welfare system is more concerned with enforcing work than helping the poor, and I think that's bad," Lewis said.

Lewis teaches social policy and has written about income-support policy, civic engagement, and social networks. He also works as a statistician for researchers.

Lewis was formerly a community organizer in East New York, Brooklyn. He earned an MSSW at Columbia and a PhD at the CUNY Graduate Center.



Deborah L. Tolman is paving new ground in the study of gender and sexuality, bringing an exciting expertise to the doctoral faculty at the

School of Social Work.

The founding director of San Francisco's Center for Research on Gender and Sexuality and former professor of sexuality studies at San Francisco State, Tolman will also teach courses on research methodology.

Tolman calls sexuality the "elephant in the room" in relation to social work. "There isn't a lot of elaborated work on sexuality in social work, but sexuality is an element of what every social worker comes in contact with," Tolman said.

Mixing qualitative and quantitative research methods and devising effective ways to win grants are other areas of expertise Tolman brings to Hunter. "When doing research, methods are your tool. My goal is to expand the students' tool box," she said. "You're only as good a researcher as the questions you can ask and answer."

Tolman holds a doctorate in human development and psychology from Harvard. Her book *Dilemmas of Desire: Teenage Girls Talk about Sexuality* (Harvard University Press, 2002) was awarded the 2003 Distinguished Book Award from the Association for Women in Psychology.

“I feel so lucky to be at Hunter. What I love about the school is the rich diversity, experience, and talents brought by the students.”

— Nancy Giunta

School of Social Work Goes Global

With projects and partnerships in Nigeria, Vietnam, and Puerto Rico — and development of a vital international protocol for use in national disasters and wars — the School of Social Work is taking its expertise overseas.

To address the critical needs of distressed children in Nigeria, Professor Darrell Wheeler, along with professors Willie Tolliver and Antonio Young, is using a \$250,000 grant from the American International Health Alliance to train Nigerian social workers in case management, leadership, and other skills needed for the care of orphans and vulnerable children.

The program hopes to expand the capacity of the Federal University of Social Work, Enugu, and the University of Nigeria to help children with HIV.

Hunter is partnering on the project with the Nigerian Social Work Association of the United States, Howard University's School of Social Work, and alumnus Boniface Eze of the Nigerian Social Work Association.

"The goal isn't for the Americans to come in and say, 'This is how you should do it,'" Wheeler said. "Our hope is that the partnership will build strength on both sides."

Also involved in international projects is Professor Martha Bragin, who was one of 28 people worldwide chosen by the U.N. Inter-Agency Standing Committee to develop guidelines on how humanitarian assistance should be administered during conflicts and natural disasters.

Bragin said she is proud to represent Hunter on the high-profile international

committee. The guidelines have been delivered to a large number of governmental and nongovernmental agencies, from UNICEF to local police organizations, that respond to emergencies. At a conference to be held in Beijing in May, Bragin will present the guidelines and discuss how they should be taught to social workers.

These guidelines are "a standard of practice for the protection of small children," Bragin said, adding, "It's essential to keep children from getting separated from the family at all costs, even when people are getting chased with knives."

For instance, she said, police can be directed to tag babies when families are fleeing an emergency.

Bragin has long been involved in international efforts. Since 1995, she has worked to help Vietnam develop a social-work profession after the switch from communism to a market economy.

This impetus for her work, she said, came from Vietnamese officials who wanted to protect children during the economic transition.

Efforts are also underway at Hunter to develop a partnership with the University of Puerto Rico to collaborate on issues of disability and autism-spectrum disorder.

"We will look for opportunities to engage in research and training between the two institutions, and hope for an exchange of scholars," Professor Wheeler said.

Wheeler emphasized that the international initiatives are a logical step for Hunter.

"I think it's a reflection of the scholarly



Dr. Martha Bragin (r) has traveled the world to help establish best practices in dealing with victims of armed conflict and other emergencies.

interests of our faculty. Our students are remarkably diverse. Our clients are diverse. It only makes sense for the city's premier social work school to be involved in international scholarship."



Dr. Darrell Wheeler (l) enjoys visiting with Nigerian officials on a project to help the plight of orphans.

EAP Founder Florence Vigilante Retires

for me," said Vigilante, a casework professor. "I greatly enjoyed working and continually learning in an academic environment. And I made wonderful friends."

Vigilante came to the school in 1967 as an admissions interviewer and soon became Director of Admissions. In 1983, she created the school's Employee Assistance Program to provide free counseling for Hunter employees, their families and significant others. She also was the chairperson of the casework sequence, a post she held for 18 years.

And Vigilante is the longtime senior editor

of the *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*.

In retirement, Vigilante said she's looking forward to having time to write about Hunter's EAP program, and she'd like to teach part-time.

She belongs to a group at Mt. Sinai Hospital that is exploring the service needs of people who live past 70, a phenomenon more common today.

"A group of us is living longer. As this occurs, we need to explore the kinds of services needed, and, importantly, to recognize that those needs change over time."



Dean Mondros (l) thanks Dr. Florence Vigilante for four decades of service.

Hunter bid a heart-felt farewell to Dr. Florence Vigilante, who retired at age 81 after 42 years at the School of Social Work.

"Hunter has been a glorious experience

Legacy of SSW Student Lives On

On the tenth anniversary of the murder of much-loved Hunter graduate student Amy Watkins, the School of Social Work is celebrating the tremendous effort by Hunter students, faculty, and administration to keep her dream alive.

Watkins, a Kansas native, was studying to get her MSW and working as a community organizer with domestic violence victims in the Bronx. On March 8, 1999, as she was returning to her apartment in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn, she was fatally stabbed in the back during an attempted robbery. The tragedy stunned the school and made national headlines. Days later, 300 marchers held a candlelight vigil on her street.

Watkins' Hunter classmates were not about to let her drift into obscurity. A group of eight fellow community-organizing students formed a scholarship committee

2009: The Year of the Community Organizer

When Americans learned Barack Obama was once a community organizer in Chicago, many (including Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin) were confused. What's a community organizer?

This is a gnawing question for social workers. But Obama changed all that, said SSW Dean Jacqueline Mondros.

"People didn't get it. They do now, folks!" Mondros said at the Amy Watkins Scholarship Committee event.

Applications to Hunter's community organizing program are up 75 percent, from 103 applications last year to 180 this year — for 40 places. Hunter has the largest community-organizing program in the country, Mondros said.

Indeed, community organizers are that hard-to-define mix of social workers and activists, folks who believe that organization and action are needed to address society's ills.

"I'm a community organizer," Mondros said. "When people used to ask my dad what I did, he'd say, 'She makes trouble.'"



Founders, winners, and supporters of the Amy Watkins Scholarship Fund gathered at Hunter to celebrate Watkins' life and the work of the committee. From left: alumnae Deb Bernardino, Mindy Fernandez-Sheinbaum, Katie Magee, Chana Widawski; Prof. Steve Burghardt; this year's recipient, Jessica Hall; alumnae Angelica Otero and Sarah Morrison; and Dean Jacqueline Mondros

under the tutelage of their professor, Dr. Stephen Burghardt.

"We expected to see her in class and instead heard she was knifed to death. We were in total shock," said Chana Widawski, a founding member of the committee. "But we're social workers. We turn shock and anger into action, and that's what we did."

Burghardt said he told the group to start slowly. "They said, 'No way,' and raised \$25,000 that first year." The group has raised more than \$90,000 for an annual community-organizing scholarship to Hunter, including two gifts totaling \$20,000 from Yoko Ono. On March 24, the committee held a tenth-anniversary commemorative fundraising event at Hunter.

Burghardt said the diverse people who've come out to support the committee represent "a belief about what our America can be."

"It's a belief that, yes, our America can be about a multiracial, multicultural world," Burghardt added. "This is what Amy created, the possibility of what our world can be."

Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes, whose office prosecuted the two young men who committed the crime, called the murder "tragic." But, he added, "I'm sure Amy is looking down and very proud of what's happened in her memory."

Watkins, 26, dedicated her life to social justice and was passionate in her work to combat poverty, violence, and discrimination. She continues to inspire. Students from Acorn High School for Social Justice in Brooklyn attended the anniversary event. They had formed an anti-violence group after watching a segment about Watkins on NY1.

Larry Watkins, Amy's father, said he could see his daughter represented in the room.

"She was never condescending. She looked up to everyone, even children," he said.

This year's scholarship winner is Jessica Hall, a first-year community-organizing student. Hall is a social work intern at Project for Return of Opportunity in Veteran's Education (PROVE). She works with homeless people in her Lower East Side neighborhood and volunteers to help youth caught in the justice system.

"It's really about keeping her legacy alive," Widawski said. "We wanted to remember Amy's life, and not her death. We want the focus to be on her incredible vision."

The committee now hopes to raise enough money to provide full scholarships, instead of partial ones.

"There's a dearth of scholarships for social work," Widawski said. "This profession we've chosen, there's not a lot of money in it."

The Hunter College
School of Social Work
129 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10075

Tel: 212.452.7085
Fax: 212.452.7197
www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork

City University of New York
Matthew Goldstein, Chancellor
Hunter College
Jennifer J. Raab, President

Hunter College School of Social Work
Jacqueline B. Mondros, Dean

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SSW Alums Pursue Careers in Government

Marc Cherna (MSW '78) is a recipient of the University of Pittsburgh's Institute of Politics Coleman Award for Excellence in Community Service. The Coleman Award recognizes outstanding community leaders for their contributions to the Western Pennsylvania region. Cherna has been the director of the Allegheny County Department of Human Services for 10 years.



Bethany Jankunis (MSW '99) has been named to *City Hall Newspaper's* "Top 40 Under 40: The Next

Generation of Political Leaders in New York" for 2008. Jankunis is the chief of staff for Assemblymember Deborah Glick. Jankunis received her law degree from Fordham University, where she was the Stein Public Interest Scholar.

Gary Parker (MSW '00) is director of government and community affairs for New York University. He advocates on the city and state levels for student aid and money for research and development projects.

Michael Meade (MSW '05) is deputy chief of staff for State Senator Eric Schneiderman. Meade says he was always interested in social justice and community organizing, so working in politics is a "great fit."

Jessica Silver (MSW '05) is deputy director of community affairs and constituent services for Manhattan Borough President

Scott Stringer. She works with community organizers to engage Manhattanites on such issues as housing, schools, and transit.



Jenny Sobelman (MSW '06) is the new director of state legislative affairs for the NYC Department of Education.

Sobelman represents 1,452 public schools, a \$17 billion annual budget, and 140,000 employees. "I have MSW on my business cards. I'm very proud to be a social worker in politics," Sobelman said.



Jesse R. Bodine (MSW '07) is the director of constituent services and policy for New York City Councilwoman Gale Brewer. Bodine helped with the effort to battle the bedbug epidemic in NYC. He is now helping Brewer work on rat control issues. Previously, Bodine interned for State Senator Liz Krueger.

Jihoon Kim (MSW '08) works for State Senator Eric Schneiderman as a community liaison to the Upper West Side. Kim works on education, transportation, and disability issues.

Yuvelqui Rivera (MSW '08) serves as constituent services coordinator in State Senator Eric Schneiderman's office, where

she handles a large volume of case work.

Katrina Butler (MSW '09) is a sentencing advocate for the Brooklyn Defender Services, a not-for-profit that provides indigent defense. She helps clients obtain services after they are arrested.



Michael Meade (MSW '05), Yuvelqui Rivera (MSW '08), and Jihoon Kim (MSW '08) work for State Senator Eric Schneiderman, a Democrat representing the Upper West Side, West Harlem, Washington Heights, Inwood, Marble Hill, and Riverdale.

IN MEMORIAM

Frances Keyes Porter ('37) died on November 11, 2008, at age 93. She worked for many years as a social worker and teacher after graduating from Hunter. In the late 1940s, Porter ran an orphanage in Alaska.

HCSSW Introduces Center for Advanced Clinical Education

The School of Social Work is launching the Center for Advanced Clinical Education (CACE) to meet the educational needs of professional social workers. CACE offers continuing N.Y. State certificate programs in individual therapy, family therapy, and social work administration, as well as special classes and events. The first course offerings are Co-occurring Disorders: Integrated Practice Across Professional Lines and Trauma-Informed Practice: Applying Trauma Knowledge in Multi-cultural and Multi-problem Treatment. For enrollment information, contact director Judith B. Rosenberger at judith.rosenberger@gmail.com or 212.452.7044.

Hunter's School of Social Work Top-Ranked Nationally

The Hunter School of Social Work was ranked in the Top 10 nationally in the Winter '09 issue of the *Journal of Social Work Education*.

The rankings came soon after Hunter College was named No. 8 in the nation among "Best Value" public colleges for 2009, according to *The Princeton Review* and *USA Today*.

Hunter's doctoral program in social work, offered in conjunction with the CUNY Graduate Center, was ranked fourth in the nation, while the MSW program was ranked seventh. The article graded graduate

schools by selectivity — how many students apply, how many are selected, and how many of the selected students choose to attend that school. It also provided rankings based on publication rates and reputation.

"This is really good news," said Dean Jacqueline Mondros. "It shows you how strong we are compared with other schools."

For years, national rankings for schools of social work were based on opinions from deans and on other subjective markers. "It was a popularity contest without any basis of data," Mondros said.

In the selectivity ranking, NYU's MSW

program came in 72nd; its PhD program, 31st. Columbia's MSW program was ranked 89th; its PhD program, 19th.

The new benchmarks are part of an effort by the National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work to create a more rigorous national assessment system.

Hunter's PhD program admitted 30 percent of its applicants, and 87 percent of those accepted chose to attend Hunter. Along with the University of Iowa, this was the highest enrollment rate of any school. For MSWs, Hunter accepted 35 percent, with 67 percent of those students attending.

NATIONAL RANKINGS BY SELECTIVITY*

MSW programs

1. San Francisco State
2. University of California at Berkeley
3. Brigham Young

4. Southern Connecticut State
5. UNC, Chapel Hill
6. University of Utah
7. **Hunter College**

8. Rhode Island College
9. Portland State
10. UCLA

PhD programs

1. University of Michigan
2. University of Chicago
3. Washington University

4. **Hunter College**
5. University of California at Berkeley
6. UCLA
7. University of Pennsylvania

8. University of Washington
9. UNC, Chapel Hill
10. Case Western Reserve

* "Picky, Picky, Picky: Ranking Graduate Schools of Social Work by Student Selectivity," *Journal of Social Work Education*, Winter 2009