



In

ALL
THINGS,
GIVE
THANKS
TO
GOD



BAYLOR UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK



Diana R. Garland

Dean, Baylor School of Social Work

Dear friends,

When I was a young girl, my church told me to count my blessings, one by one. It is an attitude of gratitude deeply ingrained in me, and one I embrace when I think of you - friends and supporters of the Baylor School of Social Work. When I came to Baylor in 1997, I had only an inkling of the School I hoped to help guide into existence. Now, through the work of many talented faculty and staff, our alumni, and God's grace, this "little school that could" has earned national recognition for its distinctive integration of faith and practice.

You have helped make that happen. You believed in us when we were just beginning to believe in ourselves. You supported us when others sat back and waited to see how we'd turn out. You prayed for us, sent us words of encouragement and recommended us to others.

You had the vision and faith to help us send graduates into the world to address social injustice and systemic wrongs. Yes, social workers take care of the hurting individual, but you had the wisdom to know they also tackle problems at the core level. They address the systems and not just the symptoms. A friend of ours in business says this is called "cause-based resolution." We simply call it justice.

In this booklet, you will find profiles of social work alumni, all of whom received scholarships as students. Your gifts, made in faith, equipped them to carry out their callings to help the least of these. That truly is faith in action.

*In all these things,
we give thanks*

In

THE LIVES OF

DEBBIE SIMCOX

VIVIANA URDANETA

SUMMER TWYMAN

SUZANNE DWIGHT

MATTHEW SCHOBERT

CASONDRA BROWN

JACOB MAINS

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
MADE THE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR
EDUCATION AND THEIR CAREERS

In

HOSPICE CARE

DEBBIE SIMCOX

Debbie has worked in hospice care a total of 10 years, first in the 1990s after she earned her BA in Social Work at Baylor, and now again the past three years at Providence Hospice. Just talking about her work and the privilege she believes it brings tears to her eyes. They are not tears of sadness, as one might imagine, but tears of gratitude.

“It is the most incredibly rewarding work. I am still amazed that people allow me to walk into their lives at such a vulnerable time and are willing to share their stories and their families with me,” she said. “It’s a great honor, and I do feel it is a calling, and that God gives you a special grace to be able to do this.”

She believes God has provided many special graces for her. She returned to Baylor for her graduate degree when she was 40 years old and had two school-age children. “On paper, it was financially impossible for me to go back,” she said. She worked full time while she pursued her degree part time. “All I can tell you is that each time a payment was due, the money was there. The scholarship I received made a huge difference.”

Deborah encourages people to give to student scholarships even if it’s a small gift. “Sometimes people may think if they can’t give a huge gift, they shouldn’t bother. Every dollar matters. They add up and God multiplies it.”



DEBORAH, BASW, MSW, LMSW,
RECEIVED A SCHOLARSHIP FUNDED
BY THE BOARD OF ADVOCATES

In

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CENTERS

VIVIANA URDANETA

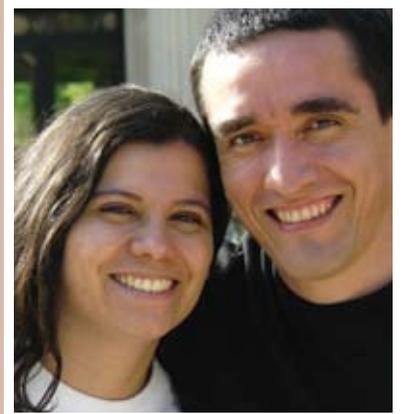
As a youth minister in her home country of Colombia, Viviana longed to be able to do more than just listen when people came to her with their troubles. “I remember my deep desire to help both children and parents but I wondered how I could be better prepared to help them,” she said.

That question brought her to Baylor, where she received master’s degrees in divinity and social work. Now she works as a Spanish-speaking counselor at Genesis Women’s Shelter in the Dallas Outreach office for women and children affected by domestic violence.

“I’ve always wanted to help people in that moment of crisis,” said Viviana, whose husband, Julian Gonzalez, is working on a doctorate at Southern Methodist University. “Once we both complete our PhDs, we want to return to Colombia. I think part of my calling is to help people from my country and to use my social work skills to counsel people there.”

Attending Baylor would not have been possible for her without the scholarship assistance she received. “I didn’t have the money,” she said, “but the people who gave to this made it possible for me to go to school.”

Now, she helps women realize they have options in life, too. “So many think they can do nothing, that they are helpless, but I help them to see the strength they have. I love that moment when I see a woman realize ‘I can decide otherwise for myself and my family.’”



VIVIANA, MSW/MDIV, RECEIVED THE LOUISE BRANDON SCHOLARSHIP



In

CONGREGATIONS

SUZANNE DWIGHT

This past year, Suzanne watched proudly as five of her scholarship kids walked the stage to receive their college diplomas. These were at-risk, inner-city children from Dallas whom she had mentored and encouraged through high school.

Suzanne has been director of children and youth for The Stewpot of First Presbyterian Church in Dallas since 2004. "It was really special to have been a part of their lives this entire time," she said. "They didn't have any other support system. We have 11 who will complete within the next year. Some of them have been with us since elementary school."

The Stewpot offers a safe haven for homeless and at-risk individuals. Suzanne coordinates five enrichment programs for youth in first grade through college. The program serves almost 250 students, most of whom are Hispanic.

Suzanne earned her undergraduate degree in social work from the University of Texas at Austin, but she wanted to attend Baylor for her master's degree. The scholarship aid she received helped equalize the tuition difference between a public and private university.

"As a Christian, I really needed to be around educators who have a strong faith and could teach me how my faith could be important to my practice and also how to work through ethical issues that come up. Baylor was my first choice."



SUZANNE, MSW, LMSW, RECEIVED THE LOUISE BRANDON SCHOLARSHIP

In

GLOBAL COMMUNITIES

SUMMER TWYMAN

Halfway around the world in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Summer is working with survivors of female sex trafficking. She is clinical director for Transitions Global's aftercare facility for girls ages 14 to 18. The 20-bed center provides basic care, medical, dental, education, job training and counseling services.

Summer first encountered human sex trafficking when she worked for the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families right after graduation from Baylor. "We had two cases in the office where children were trafficked either from the suburbs into the city or from Boston to another major city in the United States," she said. "That's when I saw how the two passions in my life could come together – serving God in an international setting and serving God as a social worker."

The tuition assistance Summer received as an undergraduate helped her pursue her calling to be a missionary through social work. Now she helps these terrorized young girls learn to dream again and to see where their dreams will take them.

"A lot of our girls, after they experience the restoration and the love and the care of our Cambodian staff, decide to pursue a career path as a helping professional so that they can reach out to girls who have been in their situation."



SUMMER, BSW, RECEIVED A STATE OF TEXAS TUITION GRANT

In

VA HEALTH SYSTEMS

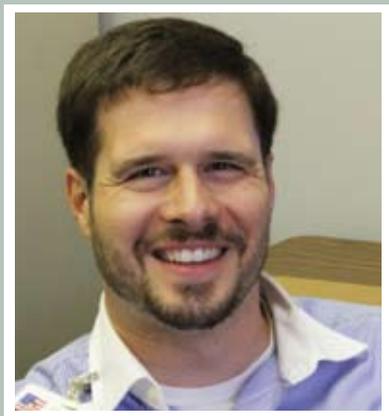
MATTHEW SCHOBERT

Matthew talks about the big picture and finding what doesn't work and fixing it. For him, a win-win isn't good enough; he's looking for the win-win-win. As Administrative Officer to the Chief of Social Work Service at the Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, he has the opportunity every day to find ways to better resource the 135-plus social workers in the system so they can maximize services to veterans.

"I've always wanted to know how to get involved and make a difference on a bigger scale," he said. "I see health care as a social justice issue, an issue of basic human rights."

He especially likes the challenge of finding ways to make change happen in a system as complicated as that of the VA, he said, but always with one goal in mind. "I want to find ways to help the Social Work Service be one of the best clinical services in the health care system. It's important for me to take care of and support the social workers who are taking care of their clients."

Matthew held two jobs and attended classes part time during his MSW education, but the scholarship assistance he received enabled him to complete his degree and begin his career without crippling debt. "That's what I would wish for every social worker," he said.



MATT, MDIV, MSW, LCSW, RECEIVED THE LOUISE BRANDON SCHOLARSHIP

In

CHILDREN'S HOMES

CASONDRA BROWN

When Casondra was leading a life skills class, she met a young girl who was very "hard-core." She came from a broken home and had a negative attitude about life and school. Recently, she gave Casondra a poem she had written. "It said that after meeting with me, she was able to trust, to hope, and to believe she could determine her future," Casondra said. "She is now a totally different child."

In her job at Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services in Houston, Casondra works with families in crisis. Her goal is to help them stay together and to provide a path for them to move beyond the crisis.

Family is important to Casondra, who watched her mother sacrifice and work hard as a single parent. "I know firsthand how it feels to struggle and not have anyone to help you. I witnessed my mother experience it."

Casondra said her education at Baylor would not have been possible without the scholarship she received. "It helped to relieve the financial burden of paying for graduate school, and it paved the way for me to walk in the calling and purpose God has on my life."

Eventually her family was able to break out of the cycle of poverty. "Because of that," she said, "I have hope for the families I work with."



CASONDRA, MSW/MDIV, LMSW,
RECEIVED A SCHOLARSHIP FUNDED
BY THE BOARD OF ADVOCATES

In HOSPITALS

JACOB MAINS

At the Oregon State Hospital, Jacob works with patients whose lives “have been devastated by mental illness, and they don’t have the resources to get the help they need anywhere else,” he said. “They have lost jobs, relationships, housing and hope.”

Jacob, a psychiatric social worker at the hospital, helps them with medication management; individual, group and family therapy; and job training. He said it’s amazing to watch the transformation that occurs. “Individuals who were lost in their illness go from feeling hopeless to believing they matter and can do something valuable with their lives.”

Jacob was the first person in his family to go to college. His family had few resources to help him pursue a degree, but after working with inner-city youth near Oakland, CA, he knew he needed more education and training. Having heard of its world-class faculty and intentional integration of faith and practice, he knew Baylor’s School of Social Work was the only place he wanted to be.

“If it was not for the financial support I received, I would not be able to do the work I do every day with some of the most vulnerable people in our society. I feel incredibly blessed and humbled. Because of these donors, my life and the lives of the people I work with, have been forever changed.”



JACOB, MSW, RECEIVED THE JOE & MARGUERITE LONG SCHOLARSHIP

In Lives

PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS
ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE
EVERY DAY IN COMMUNITIES
HERE AND AROUND THE WORLD
BECAUSE FIRST YOU GAVE

In Faith

More than 90 percent of current students in the School of Social Work receive financial assistance, but more than *half* of those still must procure loans – there is not enough scholarship aid to meet the need.

Still, they come.

They feel called to step up when others step back. They believe each person has dignity and value as one created in God's image. They choose to live out Baylor's mission call to servant leadership and the Gospel's call to "love your neighbor." They believe the best way to do that is as professional social workers



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW
YOUR GIFT CAN HELP A
SOCIAL WORK STUDENT, CALL:

KRISTEN A. BOX
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254-710-6284

DIANA GARLAND
DEAN, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
254-710-6223

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