

# THE SALUKI SOCIAL WORKER

*Together we can change the world.*

Social Work  
School of Human Sciences  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

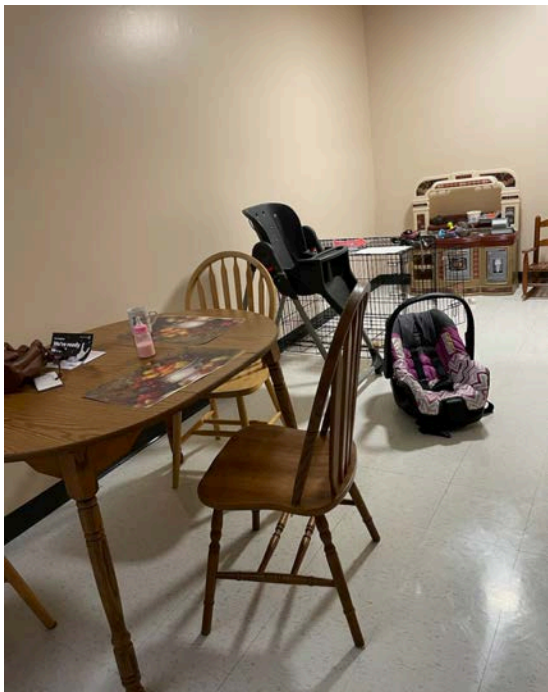
Vol. 1, Issue 6  
Spring 2024

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## HAPPY SOCIAL WORK MONTH

March is Social Work Month!  
Let's take some time to  
celebrate our social workers  
and their contributions.  
Thank you for all you do.



## BREAKING NEWS

### NEW PROJECT TO TRAIN INVESTIGATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

*Article by: Ashleigh Spence*

Sarah Buila, an associate professor and programs director in social work at SIU is doing work to prepare new hires for the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

The simulation lab helps Child Protection workers gain real-life experience and practice in a safe environment. Located in Evergreen Terrace, Buila has created a fake set up of a home, including actors and life-like baby dolls to help people gain practical experience in the field. She makes it as life-like as possible; "I really like making the fake stuff, food coloring to make wine, clay to make fake dog poop..."

She also believes that the simulation lab helps those working in social work to confront their biases and prejudices in a real way. She says that going through training this way really impresses on you and how you act. It can reveal things about yourself that you were unaware of before. The protection workers are filmed and

recorded as they work through the lab, so they can see how they react after the fact. One of her main goals is for people to learn how to build rapport with the families they may be working with in the future.

Buila wants the bad reputation of CPS and DCFS workers to change. She explained how the main goal of DCFS is to reunite children with their families, but unfortunately this is not always the best or safest option. This real life practice past the classroom is a big step in readying these workers. She found that trainees want more practical work than classroom work, so they also have created a mock courtroom and a fake clinic. These experiences help create a well-rounded individual who understands each part of the system a child may be going through. A grant was received in 2020 from Gov. J. B. Pritzker to create the simulation lab. Due to covid, the process slowed down, but it seems to be picking back

## NEW PROJECT TO TRAIN INVESTIGATORS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

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up now. Labs similar to the one here at SIU also exist at other schools such as Northern Illinois University. DCFS is hiring a lot of people right now which makes the lab more important than ever. Buila hopes to someday be able to have students learn using the lab as well.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION PROJECT

Article by: *Rebecca Frye*

Dr. Soliman believes that you can't always learn everything in a classroom. Sometimes you need to be able to learn key elements of social work through hands-on experiences. One of the only ways to have hands-on experiences is during small trainings or programs. To create the best experience for SIU students Dr. Soliman has created the Interdisciplinary program. The interdisciplinary program focuses on merging traditional classroom teaching concepts with new educational concepts. The interdisciplinary program is dedicated to giving students first-hand experience with professional teamwork, collaboration, communication, compromising, and assessment. But rather than learning these concepts in a classroom, Dr. Soliman wants peers from different backgrounds to interact

*Cont. on page 5*

## SIU Day of Giving 2024

The 8th Annual SIU Day of Giving provides an opportunity for every member of the Saluki community to move the university forward. As we enter a new, promising year, we encourage you to consider all the incredible things happening all around us and the bright future ahead.

*When is SIU Day of Giving?*

It will be from 12 a.m. through 11:59 p.m. CST Wednesday, February 28.

*How can I make my gift?*

Just visit [siuday.siu.edu](http://siuday.siu.edu) on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, and find the area and priority you wish to support.

*What if I don't see Social Work in the list of participating groups?*

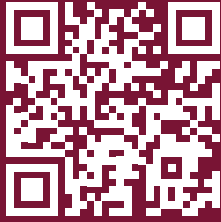
If you do not see this on the platform, please select "Other" and include the program/fund name you wish to support in the comments section. We will make sure your gift is designated to the area of your choice.

**TO MAKE A GIFT TO SOCIAL WORK:**

- 1. Select College of Health and Human Sciences**
- 2. Select the drop-down box**
- 3. Select the Social Work account**

*Support the social workers activity fund*





Connect with our Social Work world through our **Facebook group.**

We welcome current and previous students, faculty, community partners, and friends of Social Work at SIU. "Social Work at SIU"

## SOCIAL WORK DAY FIELD INSTRUCTOR WORKSHOP

Free workshop for our Field Instructors, in thanks for their service to our students:

March 22, 2024 9:00am-12:00 Noon  
Student Services Building, Room 150  
Southern Illinois University  
1263 Lincoln Drive

Free CEUs:  
Lynne Chambers-Culturally Courageous  
Marvinetta Woodley-Penn-Global Girls

Please send your RSVP to [pmartens@siu.edu](mailto:pmartens@siu.edu) and include:

- Your name
- Agency name
- License # for the CEU
- Email address to send the CEU after the event
- Results of your Pretest
  
- Prerequisite (s): Project Implicit - Choose the Race Test <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

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## Online DSW Program

An Online Doctorate of Social Work Program is being proposed for the future. A survey distributed by the department showed a good amount of interest. The program will focus on advanced social work practice skills.

## STUDENT NEWS

### Jessica Cates

*Article by: Joseph Harper*

Jessica Cates is an undergraduate student in her senior year who is making a difference in the lives of individuals impacted by substance use disorders. Jessica who is from the Anna/Jonesboro area is doing her field placement at Fellowship House in Anna, IL which is operated by Centerstone, Inc. Jessica has an empowering story of personal recovery that she desires to share to address the stigma associated with individuals with substance use disorders. In fact, prior to enrolling in college, Jessica's substance use disorder resulted in her three children being placed into foster care in 2016. That event led to Jessica seeking recovery assistance and her family was reunited within three months. The DCFS worker involved with her case is now the supervisor of the agency where she is currently placed. Jessica has been in recovery for eight years along with her husband. Jessica reports that she has really enjoyed her social work program. She stated that all her instructors have been very caring and supportive. Jessica also indicated that the members of her cohort have been very close and have supported each other in their educational journey. She has enjoyed working with individuals in both the detoxification and rehabilitation program at Fellowship House where she has learned several skills necessary in working in treatment programs.

Congratulations to Jessica on her upcoming degree completion and being in recovery for eight years. She is looking forward to working in the recovery field.



### Jenna Ortiz

*Article by: Joseph Harper*

Jenna Ortiz is in her final semester of her MSW program. Jenna is from Chicago but has lived in Carbondale the past several years. Jenna reported that she found her way to social work after first exploring nursing as a career. She reports a strong desire to help others and is particularly interested in working with youth. Jenna completed her BSW at Southern Illinois University and has almost finished her MSW. Jenna's field placement is at Parrish Elementary School in Carbondale. She works with students in pre-kindergarten through first grade. Jenna's placement supervisor is Juanita Drue who was featured in last year's newsletter. Jenna reported gaining valuable experience in practice interventions and enjoys the relationship she builds with her students. She had many positive things to say about her

supervisor stating that she is very supportive and a very organized individual. Jenna indicated that Ms. Drue is like a "work mother" to all her student interns. Mrs. Drue stated she loves giving our students the "hands-on" experience that they don't get in the classroom. She values supporting students in developing their work ethic through having





*Jenna Ortiz, MSW Student*

Jenna plans to continue to work with children and is exploring various opportunities in her chosen field. We congratulate her on her hard work and services to children in the community. The social work program values the contributions of Mrs. Drue, other faculty, and administration of Parrish School with giving our students, both graduate and undergraduate, an amazing learning experience.

the students follow a caseload and schedules much like regular employees. Students practice individual counseling, group work and crisis intervention skills under her supervision. Mrs. Drue described Jenna as one of her top MSW students with significant natural abilities and stated Jenna was “born to be a social worker.”

Jenna also serves as a graduate assistant in Project 12-Ways which is an SIU program that enables families to remain intact and to reduce the likelihood that children will be harmed. She assists with several services provided by that program.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION PROJECT**

*- Continued from Page 2.*

simultaneously over one patient case. The interdisciplinary project’s overall goal is to bring all different medical majors together, for one day, to interact how they would in a medical-like setting. Patients see all types of specialists and doctors so these doctors and specialists must be all on the same page about the patient. To drive a professional collaborative mindset in students, the interdisciplinary program presents students from all different backgrounds with a young adult patient case. The group is thoroughly informed of the patient’s background and current state. Each specialized team is then asked to do their work for their designated profession. So for example those in nutrition are asked to come up with a nutrition plan and those in psychology

do a psychological evaluation. These individualized teams are then brought together as a board of practitioners to address the patient’s case as to what they would recommend. The groups are then asked to collaborate and give feedback and recommendations that would help each team excel for the patient’s benefit. This drives a collaborative and problem-solving environment. As the day goes on teams begin to develop their professional setting team working skills to be able to, productively, create a perfect patient assessment plan. Once teams have created their assessment plan they are then asked to present their final plan to the whole board. The patient’s goals should be clear and concise. Once everyone is done presenting, everyone is then brought together to reflect on their experiences and their highs and lows of working together and where they can progress still. An interdisciplinary project is one of the best ways to get hands-on teamwork experience from a medical mindset. Some students feel that college classes dont always prepare them for the collaborative environment that is the professional world. However, the interdisciplinary program is the missing piece that students need to try to prepare themselves for the next step into professional life.



## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

My name is Olusoji Ibukun, and I come from Nigeria. In August 2022, I started on a transformative journey to the United States after receiving a scholarship to pursue my Master's degree in Social Work at Southern Illinois University (SIU). This opportunity has not only shaped my career aspirations but has also enriched my life in ways I never imagined. Studying in the USA is often perceived as financially burdensome for international students like myself. However, SIU stands out for its unwavering commitment to providing opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds, including funding through scholarships. This support has allowed me to focus wholeheartedly on my studies and pursue my passion for social work without worrying about financial constraints. What sets SIU apart is its inclusive

and welcoming environment. From the moment I stepped onto campus, I felt a sense of belonging and safety. There's no room for bullying here; instead, everyone, from fellow students to professors, embraces diversity and supports each others' growth. The accessibility of professors who are always willing to help has been instrumental in my academic journey. My passion for social work extends far beyond the classroom. I envision a future where I can continue to advocate for vulnerable communities and make a tangible difference in people's lives. The lessons I've learned at SIU have not only shaped me into a better professional but also into a more compassionate individual and dedicated parent. Reflecting on my experiences, I am filled with gratitude towards SIU for providing funding opportunities for international

students like myself. This support has allowed me to pursue my dreams without the burden of financial worries hanging over me. I am deeply appreciative of the opportunities and support I've received during my time here. To aspiring international students considering studying in the USA, I wholeheartedly encourage you to consider SIU. It's more than just a university; it's a place where you'll find a second home and a supportive community that will empower you to thrive. SIU has not only equipped me with the knowledge and skills needed for my career but has also instilled in me a sense of belonging and purpose. I am proud to call SIU my academic home, and I am committed to paying forward the support and opportunities I've received here.

*Written by Stellah Nakiranda*



*"It's more than just a university; it's a place where you'll find a second home and a supportive community that will empower you to thrive."*

## FACULTY NEWS

### FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

#### Michelle Coriasco

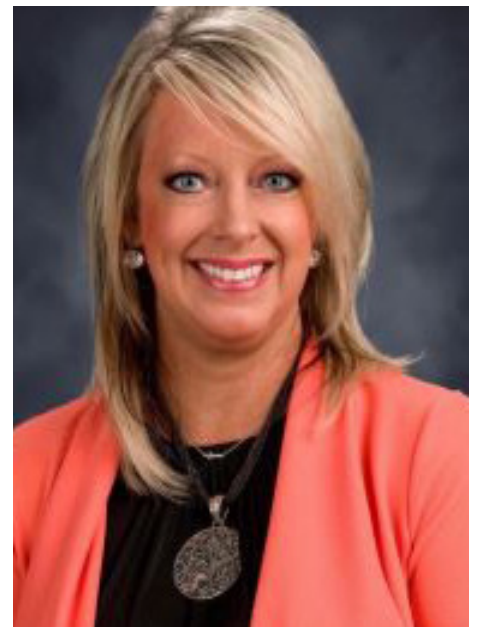
*Article by: Nathan Culli*

Michelle Coriasco is a seasoned school social worker with extensive experience spanning over 26 years, currently employed at Herrin Elementary School. In this role, she has undertaken various responsibilities including serving as the PBIS team leader, Peer mediation sponsor, Red Ribbon Week Coordinator, and more. Her duties include crisis intervention, small group counseling, individual counseling, and character education for students in grades 2-5.

Additionally, she coordinates PBIS monthly celebrations and develops tiered services for students. Coriasco serves as a virtual coach for the Illinois Education Association, where she mentors new clinicians in their first three years of practice. This involves discussing professional responsibilities, social-emotional learning, behavioral interventions, and coordinating services for children and families. As an adjunct instructor at SIU Carbondale for six years, Coriasco teaches two required graduate courses for school social work students, which focus on providing a foundation for practice in a school setting and preparing students for their career goals. She aims to support students even after graduation, ensuring they

are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. At Herrin Elementary School, Coriasco leads the SEL/REACH Team, focusing on promoting social-emotional learning and student well-being. She implements initiatives such as the REACH program, which addresses trauma and mental health needs, and organizes activities to support faculty and staff well-being. Addressing diverse needs of students and families in the community, Coriasco utilizes universal screening tools to identify individual needs and develops personalized plans, which may include counseling, tutoring, or outside agency referrals. She emphasizes the importance of community outreach and collaboration to connect families with resources, noting that “the challenge in southern Illinois is the lack of resources, as we have many families who are on waiting lists for at least three months or longer.” Regarding pressing social issues impacting schools today, Coriasco highlights the prevalence of anxiety and depression among students, which are exacerbated by factors such as technology use and academic pressure. She continues to stress the importance of the role that social workers play in providing support and interventions to create a healthy learning environment. Reflecting on her experiences, Coriasco notes the growth of social work roles in their district and emphasizes the importance of providing support to students and families. She is

passionate about their work and strongly desires to serve as a supportive figure for others, emphasizing the collaborative nature of social work.



## NEW FACULTY

### **Nina Koen, MSW, LCSW**

#### *School of Social Work*

Nina Koen is a social worker and therapist who has been able to impact so many peoples lives with over 15 years of experience. She started off as an education major but it didn't feel right, so she took an intro to social work class and fell in love with it. Due to the impact of realizing how much trauma can be passed on and how often something from their childhood impacts peoples adult life, she now specializes in substance abuse and mental health, along with the polyvagal theory and the criminal justice system with how our body responds to trauma causing certain people to make certain decisions. She is currently going to school at SIU for her doctorate, and is working on writing about the polyvagal theory and trauma informed care with how our nervous systems are affected. She wants to inform trauma principles and merge them with this theory to give people safety and help them heal and deal with their triggers and trauma. She has also written a book chapter on substance abuse through a cultural diversity lens and how cultural components impact dynamics within groups. Koen also has a private practice called Koen Counseling and Wellness Center. A whim with her friend flourished into amazing access to help people "Survive to Thrive". With access virtually and in person at one of three locations at Herrin, Edwardsville and Jerseyville.

They have contracts with drug courts, redeployment and school districts, as well as innovative practices like yoga, spiritual healing, hypnotherapy, brain spotting, EMDR, and meditation. Along with school and running a business she is also a teacher. There's not just one thing she doesn't love about her job but she absolutely loves teaching. She loves watching her students learn and grow and become people who make an impact and potentially come and work with her. She taught at SIU from 2015 till 2020 where she worked at SEMO, and now she is back at SIU. Nina says, "They ask me when are you gonna stop teaching? I say, hopefully never". She has said that she has learned so much throughout the years and she agrees when people say that social work is a calling. She has been through her own personal experiences that affected how she saw the world. She came into this job saying she would never work with people who have been convicted of a sex crime, but when she did, she realized that they are just people who have made some bad decisions. With her work with the criminal justice system she believes that people shouldn't be defined by their mistakes. Nina says that if someone five years ago told her where she is today she would have laughed and said they are crazy. She has experienced imposter syndrome thinking about if she really is capable of helping someone through their heavy experience, but she has been able to impact

so many people and proved herself wrong. She is thankful for her husband for being by her side through it all, and the people she has met, helped and worked alongside with.

*Article by Alexis Moore*





## FACULTY NEWS CONT.

### **Julie Partridge, Ph.D** *School of Human Sciences*

#### *Article by Ashleigh Spence*

Dr. Julie Partridge became the interim director of the School of Human Sciences this past January. She describes the job as a “bit of a whirlwind.” This coming summer, she will have been working for SIU for twenty years! A sports and exercise psychology professor, Partridge isn’t shy about jumping into new roles. She has also worked as the graduate program coordinator, faculty athletics

representative, and director of the Social Psychology of Sport Laboratory. She says the job as interim director has been a big jump, and she has learned a lot in the process.

A few of the things Dr. Partridge has been excited to learn about include the SimLab run by Sarah Buila, the accreditation process, and the new online master’s of social work program. The online MSW program is a completely online program for those wishing to get their MSW. The availability of a program like this provides opportunities for students unable to take classes in-person. It offers the same opportunities

for remote students as it does for students on campus in Carbondale.

Dr. Partridge says she has had an interesting opportunity to learn in this new role. She emphasizes how she wants students to learn practical skills. The programs she oversees now as director may be out of her wheelhouse, but she will continue to create opportunities for students to grow.

### **Juliane P. Wallace, Ph.D, FACSM**

#### *Article by Carly Gist*

Dr. Juliane P. Wallace has worked at Southern Illinois University for almost twenty years now and has held positions in the School of Human Sciences and the Graduate School. She is currently the Associate Provost for Academic Administration (APAA) at Southern Illinois University. Her daily tasks include consulting with the units on hiring plans and processes, managing the Provost level promotion and tenure process, and working closely with the faculty and graduate assistance unions to ensure the people of SIU are supported. She described the transition from Director of the School of Human Sciences as “seamless.”

“My previous administrative experiences have provided a strong understanding of what is needed at the unit level which helps guide my decisions at the APAA level. I feel like I can be a strong advocate and support to the units,” she said. “There are



## FACULTY NEWS CONT.

JULIANE P. WALLACE

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definitely things that are new in this role which provides me with learning and growth opportunities. I consider myself a lifelong learner, so I need those areas of challenge and development in any role that I take on. Working directly with the faculty and graduate student unions is a wonderful experience to add to my portfolio. I like to make a difference."

The Social Work program is currently in the process of developing a Doctorate of Social Work. Because she is the primary point of contact for the unions, she said it will be her responsibility "to work with the unit on the process to approve the new degree and notify the union."

She said the department provides "excellent educational opportunities for social work students" and prioritizes "relevant practice opportunities for students" so that students can be as prepared as possible when entering the workforce. The program currently offers a Trauma Based Fellowship and provides simulation training for child welfare works through partnerships with the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services.

She wants to leave social work students with this advice: "Embrace and own your educational journey. Take advantage of the opportunities that SIU provides to set yourself apart from other graduates with the same degree."

## FACULTY RETIREMENTS

### Elisabeth Reichert, Ph.D.

*Retired Fall 2023*

Professor. Reichert began her social work studies in Germany, where she received a master's degree. Before studying social work, Prof. Reichert spent two years in Malaysia as a program coordinator for the German equivalent of the US Peace Corp. After receiving her social work degree in Germany, Prof. Reichert studied at the University of Tennessee (UT) on a Fulbright Scholarship. At UT, Prof. Reichert received a MSSW and a PHD in Health Education. After completing her academic studies at UT, Prof. Reichert worked in rural Appalachia for a sexual abuse treatment program.

In 1994, Prof. Reichert came to SIUC as an assistant professor and retired as a professor. At SIUC Professor Reichert has published internationally recognized books and articles in the area of human rights. Professor. Reichert has also conducted and taught a study abroad course in Germany for over 25 years, which attracted students throughout the United States.



### Saliwe Kawewe Ph.D.

*Retired Spring 2024*

Dr. Kawewe is a former Director of the School of Social Work. Prior to this, she has had experience as Graduate Program Director. She has been a faculty member at SIU since 1996. Dr. Kawewe obtained her Ph.D. from Saint Louis University in 1985; an M.S.W. from Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in Saint Louis in 1979; and a B.S.W. from the University of Zambia in 1974. Dr. Kawewe's background experience is diverse and entailed working in university administration in Zambia, social work practice as a Social Services Worker and Probation Officer in Zimbabwe; and in Child Welfare/ Protective Family Services in foster Care in the U.S.A.

In addition to publishing over 50 publications including refereed articles, chapters, and proceedings, Dr. Kawewe has held membership in various professional associations. She has made presentations and chaired sessions at various professional meetings and organizations within her field



# In Memorium

## Connie J. Baker

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Connie Jean Baker. She died at her home on February 4, 2024 after several years of living life to the fullest with cancer. Her family held a celebration of life earlier this month. Connie had a strong faith in God knowing the end

of this earthly life led to the beginning of her eternal spiritual life with her Lord. Connie received both her BSW and MSW at SIUC. After working at area agencies, Connie returned to SIUC to teach for more than 20 years. Many students and faculty members fondly

recall her willingness to help anyone with a need. We offer our sincerest condolences to her family and friends. Connie's life legacy continues on in the lives of her students, faculty and other professionals with whom she worked.

*Article by Sarah Basler and  
Christine Mize*



# SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ALLIANCE

## Mandy Thompson

*BSSW Student*

### *Article by Mea Roedell*

Mandy Thompson, a 21-year-old senior at Southern Illinois University, is on the brink of completing her undergraduate studies in social work. Thompson's passion for social work started during her high school years while volunteering at a local domestic violence shelter. "I did their direct service domestic violence/sexual assault volunteer training and from then, I knew I wanted to do something similar for my career," she explained. This early exposure led her to pursue a degree in social work at SIU. Throughout her academic journey, SIU has provided Thompson with invaluable support and opportunities for growth. "Through professors, mentors, and great friends, SIU has helped empower me to be confident in my skills and challenged me to accomplish goals I wouldn't have thought I would've been able to do!" she remarked. At the heart of Thompson's campus engagement is her role as president of the Social Work Student Alliance (SWSA), a student-led organization dedicated to enhancing the college experience for social work students. "We work together to create events, service projects, grow professional skills, and get the word out about social work," she explained. Thompson's enthusiasm for her major and campus involvement is noticeable. "My cohort of fellow social

work students always brighten my day," she expressed. "I love how social work is a career dedicated to helping individuals and the society they live in." Her dedication to community service shines through her involvement with SWSA. "My favorite thing about SWSA is our dedication to helping the Carbondale community. My favorite event has been feeding the homeless during Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week!" she shared. Reflecting on her time at SIU, Thompson talked about the vibrant culture and renowned social work program as key factors in her decision to enroll. "I enjoy

being outdoors, going to SIU football games, being a part of Greek life while also being able to study social work! Many members of my family also went to SIU!" she exclaimed. Looking ahead, Thompson mentioned how she has her sights set on graduate school to obtain a Master's in social work, with a specialization in medical social work and interests in violence and injury prevention. As Mandy Thompson prepares to embark on the next chapter of her journey, her commitment to social work and community engagement serves as an inspiring example for her peers and future generations of SIU students.



# COMMUNITY PARTNER REPORT

## Egyptian Public and Mental Health Department

*Article by: Brittany Watson*

On a curve in the South of Eldorado, Illinois rests the central office for the Egyptian Public and Mental Health Department. Opening its doors to serve within the public health sector in 1952, Egyptian was and remains a driving force of health and safety in the communities of Saline, Gallatin, and White. By adding the complement of mental health services in 1972, the agency was able to promote a complete picture of wellness by offering a wide array of resources. The agency also features services in Wayne County, as well as offices in Harrisburg, Carmi, and Shawneetown, with two locations located in Eldorado.

EHD for short, offers adult and adolescent outpatient mental health services, substance use and drug overdose services, as well as recovery programs, and 24/7 crisis stabilization services. In the realm of public health,

they provide environmental services, such as the food safety program and water/sewage analytics. Public health also encapsulates educational programming, Covid-19 information, vaccines, programs for women and children, supportive breastfeeding counseling, and so much more.

CEO Angie Hampton states "This agency is so much more than a job for me. Our goals are to improve the lives of everyone, and in doing that, we will occasionally see a gap in resources. Recently housing was a big conversation for us, for example. Our organization is always willing to work hard to find and/or create resources that provide citizens with basic human rights and needs. Even though our mission statement exists, we are ultimately committed to making life better for individuals."

The Egyptian Health Department mission statement states: "Egyptian Health Department is dedicated to providing human services that support and enhance the lives of individuals, families, and groups in southern Illinois."

I, myself, have been employed with Egyptian for the past 2 and a half years as an engagement specialist for the mobile crisis response team. One day I went looking for a job, I found a career, and became part of a family. As a social work student, I'm thankful. Not only our mission statement, but also the spirit and vigor of my colleagues and supervisors make the department a lovely, encouraging, and safe place to work.

*"One day I went looking for a job, I found a career, and became part of a family."*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Please contact us with more news about alumni, community partners, faculty, staff, or students:

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## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"One person can make a difference,  
and everyone should try."*

*-John Fitzgerald Kennedy*