2014 NASW-MD Chapter Awards

BY JENNI WILLIAMS

The 2014 Annual Conference Awards Luncheon was inspirational and moving to all who attended. It was a day to honor the best in the field of social work. Each award winner was supported by family and friends, as well as the conference attendees, and we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of our award winners for 2014!

2014 Lifetime Achievement Swaran Seth Dhawan

Swaran is a woman who has devoted her life and career to working with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures who struggle with mental illness. When she was a child living in India’s northern mountains, Swaran and her father often visited patients at a local hospital, many of whom were veterans of conflict suffering from PTSD. Swaran’s father taught her to treat these people with dignity and respect, and this has been a guiding force in her life’s work of breaking down bound-


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aries and challenging the negative stereotypes associated with those who suffer with mental illness.

Swanson immigrated to the US in the 1960s, and earned her Master's Degree in Social Work from Smith College. She has educated social work students from Smith College as well as the University of Maryland. She has been a field instructor, supervisor, and consultant. She led the creation of the Maryland Association of Resources for Families and Youth (MARFY) in 1970; helped the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) develop its family to family program; and has served on the board of directors of the Pro Bono Project, where she remains a counselor today. In 1997 she co-founded Counseling Helping South Asians/Indians, Inc., better known as CHAI. The objective of CHAI is to help bridge the stigma, cultural, gender, and generational gaps within this underserved community. This spirit of teaching across social, class, and racial boundaries has characterized her entire career as a social worker.

Swanson has been quietly pioneering for the diverse groups of mentally ill people to be given the opportunity to recover by employing their internal and external assets. She was culturally competent before the concept was articulated. She is a valued member of the Maryland Chapter of NASW and serves as a member of the CHAI Board of Directors. She imparts her knowledge, experience, and skills with a conscious fairness, and we are honored to present her with this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award!

2014 Social Worker of the Year

Stephen Howe

Stephen has worked in the field of child welfare since his field placement in 1980, when he worked in Child Protective Services at Baltimore City DSS. He was one of the original staff of the Foster Care Review Board for 8 years, and then was the program manager at DHR/SSA for 5 years. For the past 30 years, he has been in the private sector working with local, regional, and national organizations and currently is the VP of Services to Children Families, and Communities and the Children's Guild in Baltimore. He is a past president of MARFY and the Maryland Conference of Social Concern. He is the president-elect of the Foster Family-Based Treatment Association (FFTA) and a member of the Open Minds Advisory Board. He is currently the president of the Alumni Association Board of Directors of the UMBC School of Social Work. He has a wealth of experience in working with the children of Maryland, and for his dedication and service, we are happy to name him this year's Social Worker of the Year.

2014 Social Work Educator of the Year

Dr. Errol Sebastian Bolden

As the Chair of the Social Work Department at Coppin State University, Errol Bolden is a teacher, mentor, and advisor to students both locally and globally. He is an advisor to master's and doctorate level students in departments of social work in Barbados, Ethiopia, and Miami. He is a strong advocate for inter and interdisciplinary collaboration and is chair of the Black Male Taskforce Initiative; the African American History Program; Manager of the Coppin Barbados MOU; and is chief investigator of both the Campus Wellness Program and Center for Entrepreneurship, Policy, and Leadership. He has served on search committees for faculty, staff, and administrators, and is facilitator of the faculty advancement to tenure and promotion. For his leadership in forging a path for others to follow, we are honored to present him with this year's Educator of the Year Award!

2014 Field Instructor of the Year

Jennifer Cox

Jennifer is the Associate Director of the University of Maryland School Mental Health Program (UM-SMHP), and is responsible for managing the 18 clinicians at 27 school sites in southwest Baltimore in addition to being on-site at two Baltimore City Schools covering Pre-K to 8th grade. Jennifer has been with the UM-SMHP since 2006 and previous to her employment served there as an intern herself. Jennifer is a proud graduate of the University of Maryland, School of Social Work and Mount St. Mary's College. She is committed to delivering a high level of care including evidence-based programs and places a special emphasis on parent involvement and the training of future practitioners.

Jennifer's leadership skills of encouragement, listening, and providing useful feedback to her students has made her a favorite among those who instructs. She is team oriented and willingly shares ideas with other students in a helpful, encouraging way which helps build much needed confidence in new social workers. She is dedicated to her community and maintains a positive attitude with her interns, therefore earning their respect. For all of these qualities which embody the field of social work, she is pleased to honor Jennifer with the 2014 Field Instructor of the Year Award!

2014 MSW Student of the Year

Jourdan Munster

Jourdan is earning her MSW at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and is slated for graduation in May, 2014. She heard her calling to social work while working with adolescents at the Rosneath Youth and Community Center in California and promptly entered the School of Social Work in UMBC. She has worked with teachers, parents, and children at Woodbine Elementary/Middle School in Baltimore City, and is currently working with adults at the City of Baltimore Workforce Program.

In addition to her coursework and placement, Jourdan is the SCA President of the School of Social Work, which has provided her with leadership skills and administrative level experience. All of the experiences she has gained thus far has been invaluable to her development as a social worker and she has decided that her ideal social work career would be one that involves working with adolescents (preferably those within a school-based juvenile justice system). She looks forward to working as a social worker and is happy to present her with this year's MSW Student of the Year Award!

2014 BSW Student of the Year

Brian DeKeel-Findley

Brian is a BSW student at Salisbury University and has gained the respect of her peers and the faculty as a result of her leadership skills both on and off campus. She is president of the student organization WINK (Women Inspiring Never-Ending Knowledge), created to empower and educate women on the campus of Salisbury University. She is also a peer educator in the Campus Against Violence Program where she educates students about domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault. She serves on several campus committees and is an executive board member and special events coordinator for the Social Work Student Association. She helped organize the Hurricane Sandy Relief Drive which collected clothing and toiletry items for those affected by flooding in Cinfield, MD. She was interviewed and featured in a CNN news report where she advocated for the importance of federal aid to college students speaking about how forced budget cuts would impact students’ ability to attend college. Brian also works in her community as a volunteer for the Jovene Christmas Shopping tour which provides toys for children. She has volunteered at the Life Crisis Center in Salisbury, the May Literacy Center, Holly Center, and works one-on-one with an elementary school student. She is intelligent and articulate in the classroom and is a honor student. She is truly impressive, and we can't wait to see where her career will take her! Congratulations to our 2014 BSW Student of the Year!