

# SOCIAL WORK TIMES

*Think. Work. Serve*

*Mid-Tennessee Collaborative MSW Program-Tennessee State University*

## Greetings

Professor Vicki Gardine Williams, MSW, ACSW

I would like to congratulate you on the successful completion of the inaugural academic year of the MTC-MSW. As I said to you when I welcomed you in the fall 2009, you are the “pioneers”, the first cohort, and hopefully, one of the first graduates of the MTC-MSW program.

I am elated about your progress and so proud of all of you! It was a challenging academic year with uncertainties and new experiences for all of us. We had goals and expectations and we had to confront the fact that new ideas and actions are experimental and occur by “trial and error”. We needed to be flexible, empathic, understanding and supportive of each other as we attempt to achieve the goals and outcomes we established for ourselves and the program.

*~Continued on page 4*

## Twelve Ebony Females

Dr. Rebecca M. Moore

The first student cohort of the MTC MSW Program arrived on Avon Williams campus in late August 2009 for the Fall Orientation Session. I sensed the cautious nature of a few, heard the excitement in others, and witnessed the willingness of all to become “pioneers” of a new program. To begin any graduate program requires a commitment not only from the student, but from the student’s family or support system. I came to know each student’s unique story and how destiny placed her in that room at that particular time of their lives.



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To be a pioneer implies one will be walking through uncharted territory. Our program was organizationally developed by a handful of visionaries with extensive experience in teaching, service, and research. However, implementing our program has required that the student be that willing pioneer / participant. We have experienced a few glitches between a program on paper and a program that is student-centered. In some situations, a student has identified an issue that needed to be addressed and changed. Over the past academic year, the various department chairpersons and program director has worked out specific curriculum details, refined operations, or contributed to strengthening existing components in this collaborative process. The work to produce an exemplary MSW program will continue until we are officially granted accreditation.

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## DCS Employees Title IV-E

DCS employees who are a part of the Title IV-E program should complete and submit the following paperwork to Brian Roberts at TCCW by the beginning of the semester:

- ✚ Regional Administrator Approval to Pursue a MSW degree form
- ✚ Student Grades from previous semester
- ✚ Student Class Schedule for upcoming semester
- ✚ Tennessee State Employee Fee Waiver (send to the school Bursar's Office)

If you are currently in the program and have questions, contact:

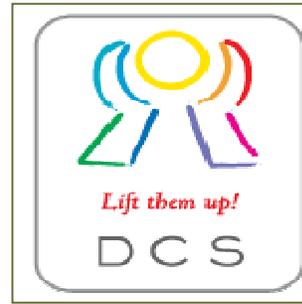
**Brian Roberts**, Program Specialist

## Student Reflections

Laurissa Garlington

I enrolled in the MTC MSW program at Tennessee State University May 2009 after being out of school for 22 years. This was an exciting time as well as a terrifying time for me. There were occasions when I thought I had possibly made a mistake and started doubting whether or not I should continue; however, staff from the program were extremely supportive. They understand the challenges a nontraditional student faces and are always readily available to assist in any way.

I chose to enroll part-time because I am married with two boys and I'm employed full time. The part time program class schedule has been



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If you would like to know more about the program, contact: **William Haynes**, DCS  
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manageable and I have truly enjoyed my experience thus far. I can tell the classes on the syllabus have been thoroughly researched and will prepare me for my future as a master level social worker.

My first semester instructor stressed the importance of "finding a balance". I have yet to do that, but I remain optimistic that it can happen. I look forward to completing the MTC MSW program in three years.

*"Staff from the program were extremely supportive."*



*MSW students enjoying a break from discussions of Macro SW.*



## Service Learning

Alisha Fayne & Jacqueline Moore

As part of our curriculum in Social Work Practice I, the class was asked by our professor, Dr. Moore, to take part in Service Learning/Civic Engagement activities in our community. I decided to do my activities through Hands on Nashville (HON), which is an organization that matches volunteers with service organizations in the community.

Through HON, I volunteered at Nashville Cares, which is a community-based AIDS service organization which serves individuals infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in the Middle Tennessee area. During my experience, I was able to learn more about HIV/AIDS in the middle TN area, meet other volunteers from other universities, and work first-hand with individuals infected/affected by HIV/AIDS. I must say it was a very enjoyable experience!

During my first semester in the MSW program I completed a 15-hour service learning assignment at a safe house for women who were recovering alcoholics and drug addicts. The director of the program is an LCSW and provided opportunities for



*Service Learning Awards:  
Oakes, Smith & Arnold*

me to learn how the program operated, and with the permission of the women, I was allowed to attend group counseling sessions. The first core value in the Social Work Code of Ethics is service. Social workers are expected to volunteer time in service to others. Having a service learning experience during the first semester of this program let me know just how important the value of service is to our profession.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- + [www.hon.org](http://www.hon.org)
- + [www.networkforgood.org/volunteer](http://www.networkforgood.org/volunteer)
- + [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org)

## Ethical Dilemmas

Shonreh Doss-Ogbana

During the fall semester of my first year in the MTC-program at Tennessee State University, my Social Work Practice I class was given the assignment of reporting on Ethical Dilemmas that social workers face while working in the field. I was a little confused about what exactly an ethical dilemma was at first. One thing that I learned in practice was to face each issue that I might encounter by using the NASW Code of Ethics. The principles of Service, Social Justice, Dignity and Worth of the Person, Importance of Human Relationships, Integrity, and Competence are at the core of the mission of social work as a profession.

I thought hard about what I would write about and decided I would write about the dilemma that arises when a person in the social work field has a disability. After writing the ethical dilemma paper for this class, I realized

that each day I am faced with ethical dilemmas and the NASW Code of Ethics is always a good way to gauge what to do inside the world of work and in one's personal life.

- + **To see the NASW Code of Ethics in its entirety go to:** <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>
- + **For more information and how to join the National Association of Social Workers go to:** <http://socialworkers.org/>
- + **National Association of Black Social Workers:** [www.nabsw.org](http://www.nabsw.org)



### *~Twelve Ebony Females continued*

At TSU, we began the year with seven (7) full-time and six (6) part-time pioneers; all Ebony females. After week three, one (1) student withdrew from the program. By mid-semester, three (3) individuals had changed from full-time to part-time status. Twelve (12) students completed the fall and spring academic semesters. Summer session began with four full-time students completing their respective field practicum. There are many variables in a student's life and sometimes a student's personal circumstances change. Adjustments must be made to ensure each student achieves balance in her life in order to accomplish educational goals.

Over the past two semesters, I've been part of expanding a universe with students that are truly exceptional. All of our students are life-long learners and many have returned to academia after a lengthy absence. Each student has risen to the academic challenges in part due to her intelligence, determination, and support system. And, every one of these students has demonstrated a commitment to this program. They have attended events and activities because they wanted to, not just because it was/was not required. They have shared their individual life events with their classmates and have become that "collective" identity with the program.

*"To be a pioneer implies one will be walking through uncharted territory."*

Even today as I write this article, I am amazed at how far each student has come over the last ten months. Everyone has gained confidence, as well as competency, in her social work knowledge, skills, and abilities. Foremost, I have been blessed to be a part of the progress made among our students and with the unfolding of this new program.



*Dr. Rebecca Moore, MSW Faculty & Field Coordinator*

### *~Greetings continued*

Thank you for your flexibility, empathy, understanding and support in completing the first academic year of the MTC-MSW program. We are grateful for your determination, tenacity and goodwill. I hope you are looking forward to the coming academic year when you will confront your challenges with the appropriate attitudes, and professional values and principles.



*Professor Vicki Williams, Director of SW*



### TSU MSW Pioneers



**M. Abdallah** Believe! This is the signature, along with my name, that I've been using since 2009. I state it to remind myself and others that no matter what is occurring in your life, if you believe then it will come to fruition. As I begin this new journey towards achieving my masters, I believe that I will be able to use everything that I learn to benefit someone else.

**T. Arnold** I've had a few significant events in my life that contributed to my decisions to work with children and families as well as to apply to the MTC MSW Program at TSU. Writing is not my strength, but I am passionate and dedicated, so I have faith that I will succeed in completing this program.



**C. Crawley** First, I am committed to assuring the educational success of my sons. Second, I see it invaluable to "serve". Through Tennessee's Department of Children's Services, I am a public servant. Returning to graduate school has been a major "lifestyle" adjustment but it's exciting and fulfilling. I am passionate about the field of social work and being exemplary for my sons.

**S. Doss-Ogbonna** Change has been a recurring theme in my life and I have learned to accept it and embrace it. I came from a military family, a life of rules, and different locations with varying cultures and colloquialisms. Since settling in the southeast states, I've completed a Bachelors degree in Psychology and a Master's in Sociology.



**A. Fayne** I have always had the innate need to help others. Since I began my MSW program and gained more insight into the field, I would like to open my own center for low-income individuals seeking help for emotional, mental, physical, sexual and substance abuse.

**D. Groves** Many experiences contributed to my heart's desire to continue my education. So, here I am as a mother, student, and employee trying to balance my life and still be a voice for the victims that cannot speak for themselves.





**L. Kinslow Garlington** My family, church, and community service are my support systems. As an older student, I am more focused and realize the importance of continuing my education. I should have more options as an MSW in order to help others and I continue to face the challenges this program brings me.

**J. Moore** I discovered at an early age that I loved working with children and youth. Currently, I serve as the Director of Professional Development for the Division of Juvenile Justice with DCS. And, I did find the love of my life late in life. He is my main supporter along with my sister and step-mother.



**L. Oakes** I'm most intrigued by my elders ... I grew up with my great grandparents and my grandparents who taught me the importance of being humble and to help others. My parents are very supportive and open-minded in part because I was a military child. I had the opportunity to grow up with many different ethnic groups.

**G. Smith** My father, from Accra-Ghana, named me "Gloria" because he believed that names influence others. After studying in Ghana, I traveled throughout Europe and England, eventually bringing me to America. I consider myself a catalyst of social change and aim to use my MSW to enhance the quality of life for people.



**S. Thomas-Houston** I am the first child in my family to attend and graduate from college. I have one daughter who inspires me to be a better person. Presently, I work for DCS in Child Protection Services and do so because I'm helping to protect children from abuse and/or neglect.

**M. Wright** After the encouragement of my pastor, friends and a former undergraduate instructor, Dr. Hortense Kilpatrick, I made the difficult decision to embark upon graduate school. I came to the realization, that I am supposed to work hard, because everything that I have accomplished (by the grace of God), has brought me so much joy. I now embrace graduate school with fear and anticipation.





## Mayor Karl Dean Lecture

Gloria Smith

Under the auspices of the College of Public Service and Urban Affairs, the Annual Distinguished Lecture Series, Mayor Karl Dean (Nashville and Davidson County) presented a lecture entitled "Urban Education". This event was held at Tennessee State University, Avon William Campus, on February 26, 2010. The address highlighted the needs for public services in the community with the inclusion of various professions in the community such as, educators, public workers and social workers and students. All of these stakeholders are major role players in helping shape the Nashville community.

Mayor Dean addressed how new programs are being sought after with the long term effect of benefiting the Nashville communities; an example of which was attracting new teachers and encouraging more volunteer work. The Mayor also saluted certain people in the community for

outstanding contributions that must be emulated by all. As a political leader, Mayor Dean models the behavior and thinking of the larger community in support of the betterment of the city of Nashville.



*MSW Student Gloria Smith with Mayor Karl Dean*

## The "Mama Teresa" of Tanzania

Deanna Groves

Dr. Theresa J. Kaijage was a special guest at Tennessee State University as part of the MTC-MSW program. This meeting was meant to bring students together from the three universities: TSU, APSU and MTSU. Dr. Kaijage spoke of the AIDS epidemic in Tanzania, along with the first AIDS service organization in that country, and one of the first in Africa. These organizations offer specific services and supports for families with HIV/AIDS.

It was evident that Dr. Kaijage was an international social worker. Evidenced by listening to "Mama Teresa" as she is fondly

called, she truly cares about the individuals that she works with and her willingness to give back. Dr. Kaijage was able to share with the class the difference in social work in Tanzania as opposed to social work in the US. Is it truly any different? After listening to her, I have to say, "No." Social Work is, regardless what part of the world you practice, still the art of helping others.

**For more information on WAMATA, social service agency in Tanzania, go to:**

<http://www.websites.designpandorab ox.eu/wamata/index.html>

*Dr. Theresa Kaijage*



## *Top 10 Reasons to Become a Social Worker*

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10. You no longer have to watch Judge Judy, Divorce Court, and Judge Joe Brown for a laugh.
9. You become a hot topic at parties and social events.
8. You don't have to worry about family members asking to borrow money.
7. Your life starts to look great compared to your client's lives.
6. You will be able to tell "you wouldn't believe what happened" stories for years.
5. You will have job security due to endless societal issues.
4. You get to self diagnose yourself and family members.
3. You get to utilize the APA Manual on a daily basis.
2. You get to put titles behind your name such as MSW, LCSW, MSSW, LMSW, etc.
1. You will be branded as being selfless, empathetic and caring; when in fact you are just nosy.

## Editor's Note

The first edition of the "Social Work Times" was an absolute great experience for me as editor. Initially I was hesitant because I did not think that we (TSU MSW Students) would have enough to share about our first year in the MTC-MSW program. But I was very wrong and soon found out that we had a wealth of experiences and opportunities to share. The idea of the newsletter came from our instructor, Dr. Moore, the title of the newsletter was crafted by MSW Student, Alisha Fayne, and the experiences were submitted by the TSU MSW Students; combine the above and we now have our first edition of the "Social Work Times." We as a group wanted to produce a newsletter that would be helpful to students and encourage them in their journey at TSU. I hope that you find this newsletter to be both informative and enjoyable.

Believe!

*Maryam Abdallah, MSW Student*