



Celebrating 90 Years of Excellence

This year marks the 90th anniversary of Social Work classes and coursework at Howard University. Additionally, marking the 80th anniversary of the HU School of Social Work's (HUSSW) installation and founding, the school has grown rich in the legacy of leadership in social work, social justice, advocacy, and community empowerment. Since the School's founding in 1945, HUSSW has been at the forefront of social work education, preparing skilled professionals dedicated to transforming lives and promoting equity. Throughout the years, HUSSW has produced influential leaders who have shaped the field of social work and made lasting impacts locally, nationally, and globally. As we celebrate this milestone, we honor the faculty, staff, alumni, and students who have contributed to the school's success and enduring mission. Several recognition events and activities are planned this year. Looking ahead, HUSSW remains committed to advancing social change and improving the well-being of individuals and communities, continuing its legacy of excellence.

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Dean Sheara Jennings steps up as 15th Dean of the School of Social Work

Dr. Sheara Jennings joined Howard University after spending 20 years at the University of Houston, where she held various roles, including Associate Dean of Doctoral Education in the Graduate College of Social Work, the Humana Endowed Chair in Social Determinants of Health, and Special Assistant to the Provost.

Before the University of Houston, Jennings served as Executive Director of the Durham Scholars Program at the University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill's Kenan Institute for Private Enterprise and the director of field education for the Department of Social Work at North Carolina Central University. Also, she served as a diversity trainer and consultant for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. **Read more**



Sheara Jennings, Ph.D.,MSW,
Dean of HUSSW

A Message from our Dean –

Dear HUSSW Alumni, Friends, and Colleagues:

This issue of The Howard Way affords me the opportunity to reflect on my first year serving as Dean of the Howard University School of Social Work. Rooted in humility and inspiration, this academic year has been a time of listening, learning, and witnessing firsthand the strength, compassion, and commitment that define the HUSSW.

These pages offer a meaningful snapshot of a dynamic community in motion—one rooted in scholarship, service, and social justice. You will read about career milestones, faculty and staff promotions, the arrival of new colleagues, and exceptional programming. We celebrate our most recent graduates and their journeys ahead, share the powerful impact of our ISL Trip to Cape Town, South Africa, and uplift the remarkable accomplishments of our alumni whose work continues to change lives and communities. We also pause in remembrance of alumni and colleagues who passed away during this academic year—honoring their contributions and legacies.

While we have so much to celebrate, we must also acknowledge the growing challenges facing higher education, many of which pose serious threats to the values that anchor our profession. Social Work is—and must remain—a voice for the marginalized, a defender of human rights, and a champion for opportunity. Now, more than ever, our mission is not only relevant but also essential.

In the face of injustice and division, our field is well-equipped to lead with needed integrity and care. This moment calls for our recommitment to the foundational principles of our profession and to prepare the next generation of leaders with the knowledge, skills, and moral clarity to meet the demands of an increasingly complex world.

To serve as Dean during such a pivotal time has been characterized by some challenges, yet it has also been a most profound privilege. I am grateful for the warm welcome I have received as well as the trust and collaboration that surrounds me daily. As we look to the future, I am energized by the strengths of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni who continue to rise to the challenge with purpose, and determination; and am excited about the possibilities that lie before us.

Thank you for being part of this extraordinary community committed to excellence, equity, and impact.

In Truth and Service,

Sheara Jennings, Ph.D., MSW, ACSW

Dean, Howard University School of Social Work

Honoring the Remarkable Careers of Leaders in Social Work

Dean Emerita Sandra Edmonds Crewe, PHD, ACSW

Dean Emerita Sandra Crewe concluded her tenure on June 30, 2024, after over 11 years as Dean and 10 years as Associate Dean at HUSSW. Her remarkable leadership and contributions were honored at a celebration held at the end of the Spring 2024 academic year.

Currently, on a year-long sabbatical, Dr. Crewe serves as the Sojourner Truth Race and Social Justice visiting professor at Rutgers University. She will return to HUSSW in her role as professor in Fall 2025, where she will continue to inspire and educate the next generation of social workers.



Associate Dean Dr. Tracy Whitaker, DSW, ACSW

The Howard University School of Social Work (HUSSW) extends heartfelt thanks to Dr. Tracy Whitaker as she steps down from her role as Associate Dean for Academic and Student Advancement. For over twelve years, Dr. Whitaker has been a dedicated leader, guiding efforts in CSWE accreditation, launching the HUSSW Online program, evaluating dissertations and grants, and advancing student support and academic innovation.

Dr. Whitaker will continue to serve as a tenured Associate Professor, focusing on teaching, research, mentoring, and expanding the District of Columbia Peer Case Management Institute (PCMI). Her impact has been profound, and the HUSSW community looks forward to her continued contributions.



Faculty Milestones

Dr. Altaf Husain appointed new Associate Dean for Academic and Student Advancement and CSWE Diversity Center Scholar

The Howard University School of Social Work proudly congratulates Dr. Altaf Husain on two recent achievements. Dr. Husain was appointed the new HUSSW Associate Dean for Academic and Student Advancement. He follows in the footsteps of Dr. Tracy Whitaker. In addition, Dr. Husain was appointed as the CSWE Diversity Center Scholar for the 2024–2025 academic year by the CSWE Center for Diversity and Social & Economic Justice. CSWE indicated that Dr. Husain's prestigious recognition as Diversity Center Scholar reflects Dr. Husain's exceptional contributions to the field of social work through his dedication to education, groundbreaking research, and unwavering advocacy for social and economic justice. **Read more**

Dr. Meirong Liu – Appointed Director of Ph.D. Program

Dr. Meirong Liu has been named Director of the Ph.D. Program at Howard University's School of Social Work. A full Professor and Chair of the Research Sequence, her research focuses on public assistance for vulnerable children, health disparities among racial/ethnic minorities, and multicultural social work. She has secured over \$7 million in grants and leads a study on improving asthma care for children in public housing. A prolific scholar, she has published widely in social work and public health journals. She recently co-authored *Addressing Anti-Asian Racism with Social Work Advocacy and Action* (Oxford University Press, 2024). A new interest of hers is researching biases in generative AI for minority health. Committed to equity and inclusion, Dr. Liu chairs the CSWE Asian American and Pacific Islander Social Work Committee and serves on CSWE's Global Council. As Ph.D. Program Director, she aims to strengthen student and faculty support while expanding the program's research and impact on social work education. **Read More**



Happy 100th Birthday to HUSSW Alumna Reverend Rhoda C. Nixon

The Reverend Rhoda C. Nixon, MSW, M.Div., celebrates 100 years of service, leadership, and faith leaving an indelible mark on social work, education, and ministry. A proud 1950 Howard University School of Social Work alumna, she credits Howard for instilling in her the values of flexibility, listening, discipline, and purpose. Her groundbreaking career took her from community outreach at Howard to becoming the first woman in a supervisory role with the NYC Board of Education, mentoring countless professionals along the way. A Life Member of Zeta Phi Beta Soror, she co-founded the Delta Beta Zeta Chapter and dedicated herself to youth empowerment through ministry, leading impactful programs like “Youth Connection.” Her advice to future social workers: “Social work is heart work—complicated yet rewarding. Be resilient, flexible, intuitive, and always lead with compassion.” We proudly honor Rev. Nixon’s extraordinary legacy— Happy 100th.



Welcoming New Staff

Sharon Fletcher, Ph.D. Program Coordinator Ms. Sharon Fletcher has assumed a new role as the Ph.D. Program Coordinator at the School of Social Work. In this role, Ms. Fletcher will assist the Ph.D. Program Director to oversee and enhance the program, creating a supportive atmosphere of excellence for our doctoral students and faculty.

Kristin Conley, Budget Administrative Officer

Ms. Kristin Conley joins HUSSW after serving at Vanderbilt University. She brings expertise in financial budget management, reporting, and analysis. She holds a B.B.A. in Marketing and Entrepreneurship from The University of Toledo and an M.A. in Organizational Leadership from Western Kentucky University.

Vera Fields, Community Outreach Coordinator – Multidisciplinary Gerontology Center

We're pleased to welcome Vera Fields as the new Community Outreach Coordinator for the MGC. With over 30 years of experience in education, events management, and technical writing, Ms. Fields specializes in group-based community programming and intergenerational initiatives, having worked in the private sector with LCLM, LLC, and with her own business. She specializes in events, conference, and logistics management, and as a technical editor and writer in the for-profit and non-profit communities. She previously taught in Prince George's County, Montgomery County, and Arlington County Public Schools. She has a deep commitment to community engagement.

Armani Hayes, Facilities Assistant

We're excited to welcome Armani Hayes as one of two new Facilities Assistants at HUSSW. A designer, with IT and marketing expertise, Mr. Hayes possesses a background in graphic design, branding, and digital content creation. He has worked with Holder Construction Company and the American Public Health Association. Mr. Hayes supports HUSSW facilities under the Office of the Assistant Dean of Administration.

Sabrina Williams, Facilities Assistant

Sabrina Williams joins HUSSW as a Facilities Assistant. As a military veteran, she brings expertise in executive support and facilities management. She has supported high-level executives and has a strong knowledge of office systems, databases, and technology management. Ms. Williams supports HUSSW facilities under the office of the Assistant Dean of Administration.

Deonte Lee, Assistant Registrar

Mr. Lee is our new HUSSW Assistant Registrar, following Ms. Sharon Fletcher. A proud graduate of Coppin State University with a degree in Art, Deonte is a multifaceted individual focused on seeking and building professional growth. We are excited to have him on board and look forward to the impact he will have on our team!

Celebrating the Class of 2025: HUSSW Awards and Recognition Ceremony

On Friday, May 9, 2025, the Howard University School of Social Work (HUSSW) community gathered to honor the achievements of our graduating M.S.W. and Ph.D. students. Each year the HUSSW Awards and Recognition Ceremony showcases and recognizes the many accomplishments of its on-campus (Flagship) and online (Starship) MSW students, as well as the dual degree, MSW-MPH, MSW-MBA and MSW-MDiv students. In addition, to the many graduating Masters students the ceremony recognized two PhD students, Dr. Ebony McCovery and Dr. Dwayne James. The ceremony was a heartfelt celebration of academic excellence, resilience, and commitment to social justice.

The ceremony featured inspiring remarks from distinguished faculty members, who commended the over 130 graduates for their dedication to the field of social work. The HU Cramton Auditorium was filled with family, significant others, and friends, with over 1,200 attendees. The program began with an inspiring prayer by HU Dean of the Chapel Rev. Dr. Bernard Richardson, followed by an acapella version of the Black National Anthem, Lift Every Voice, sung by HUSSW students Ms. Jalyn Andrus and Ms. Carmen Ross. Remarks were offered by HU President Ben Vinson, III, HU Provost Anthony Wutoh, and HUSSW Dean Sheara Jennings. Master of Ceremonies duties were presented by HUSSW Associate Dean Altaf Husain and this year's keynote speaker Ms. Rebecca Jones Gaston. Ms. Jones Gaston served as the highest-ranking Social Worker in the Federal Biden-Harris Administration, where she headed the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF is recognized for promoting the well-being of children and families through leadership, funding, and support of a variety of social service programs.



In addition to the 130-plus MSW and two PhD candidates who walked across the Cramton Auditorium stage, awards were presented to students who demonstrated outstanding leadership, scholarship, and service.

This year, HUSSW graduates navigated unprecedented challenges with grace and determination. They are the first post-COVID-19 class and the largest combined on-campus and online graduating class at HUSSW.

Ms. Rebecca Jones Gaston recognized their achievements but also provided wisdom for each social worker on their road ahead. She said they would be needed as social workers during these interesting and challenging times. Their preparation and accomplishments reflected not only personal perseverance but also a deep-seated commitment to affecting positive changes in communities in the region, nationally, and worldwide.

As these new social work professionals embark on their careers, they carry forward the values and mission of the social work profession and Howard University. As Howard-prepared social workers, their contributions will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on the individuals and communities they serve. Among the special recognition awardee names were Dr. Inabel Burns Lindsay Social Work Education Leadership Award winner, Dr. Sandra Edmonds Crewe; Founders Fellow winner, Ms. Carmen Ross; Eva M. Stewart Agency-Based Education Exemplar Award winners, Amonie Antone, Joya Cleveland, Zibora Gilder, and Rebecca Sachs; Student Leadership Award & Service Award winner, Zibora Gilder; and Dean's Distinguished Graduate Award winner, Yao Odamtten.

The final portion of the program included the moments candidates, families, significant others, and friends waited for... hearing the names of their graduates and seeing them traverse — walking, skipping, in wheelchairs, and even a student in regalia performing a cartwheel across the stage! They then each took a photo with Dean Jennings.

Final degree awards for all HU graduates and honorees were conferred by HU President Ben Vinson III on Saturday, May 10, 2025, on “the Yard” (the HU quadrangle in the middle of the HU main campus) after the Commencement address by Honorary Doctorate Degree and Commencement Orator, Levar Burton.

Levar Burton (Levardis Robert Martyn Burton Jr.) is an American actor, director, author, and television host. From his breakout acting role as Kunta Kinte in the 1977 ABC miniseries **Roots**. He went on to achieve global acclaim for his role as Geordi La Forge in **Star Trek: The Next Generation**. However, Burton is perhaps best known for hosting and executive producing the PBS children's program **Reading Rainbow** for 23 years. He started to sing the Reading Rainbow theme song during his commencement address and the many undergraduates and graduates in cap and gown began singing with him. Such was his impact on children from Reading Rainbow!

For names of the graduates, the special recognition students, and Phi Alpha Honor Society inductees — and a look at the entire May 9, 2025, program — please **Read More**. Congratulations to the Class of 2025!



HUSSW Hosts Amazing GADE 2025 Annual Conference

The Howard University School of Social Work proudly hosted the 2025 Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work (GADE) Annual Conference from April 2–4, 2025, in Washington, DC. With the theme "Shaping the Future: Doctoral Education for the Next Generation of Social Work Scholars and Leaders," this gathering brought together over 100 doctoral program directors from across the nation to engage in critical discussions on the evolving landscape of social work education. HUSSW was especially proud to be the first Historically Black College/University (HBCU) to host the GADE conference.

The conference featured an inspiring keynote address by Stacey Abrams, the inaugural Ronald W. Walters Endowed Chair at Howard University. Ms. Abrams' powerful speech, *Empowering Voices, Inspiring Change*, underscored the importance of leadership, advocacy, and innovation — all of which she stated are central to the work of social workers and faculty involved in social work education. Drawing from her personal experiences growing up in a modest household with parents who were clergy, Ms. Abrams shared how her parents instilled the value of education and encouraged their children to make a difference. She emphasized that her parents inspired her to aim higher. In her remarks, she urged attendees to embrace the change around them and to become agents of good. Her message was met with a standing ovation.

GADE attendees also participated in panel discussions, interactive breakout sessions, and networking opportunities — all designed to foster collaboration, share best practices, and explore strategies for supporting doctoral students in an ever-changing political and academic landscape.

We extend a heartfelt thank-you to the Howard University School of Social Work Alumni Association (HUSWAA) for their fundraising efforts and sponsorship of our welcome dinner ceremony at the National Press Club. We'd also like to thank all our university partners: Charm Photography, Kornerstone Productions, Sodexo, and Howard's The Dig, who made this historic gathering possible.

As we celebrated 45 years of doctoral education at the Howard University School of Social Work, this conference reaffirmed our commitment to preparing the next generation of social work scholars and leaders.



**2025 GADE
ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Shaping the Future: Doctoral Education
for the Next Generation of Social Work
Scholars and Leaders

APRIL 2-4, 2025

Howard University
Washington, District of Columbia

KEYNOTE SPEAKER
MS. STACEY ABRAMS

GADE
EST 1977
GROUP FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
DOCTORAL EDUCATION IN SOCIAL WORK



The Social Impact of Jimmy Carter

Somuch has happened in 2025, including the recognition of the passing of Jimmy Carter, the 39th U.S. President, who died on December 29, 2024. He and his wife, First Lady Rosalynn Carter, served from 1977 to 1981. He is celebrated for his enduring contributions to social justice, human rights, and humanitarian work — with a legacy that transcended his presidency. He is remembered for steering the country through turbulent times, including the oil crisis of 1979, the Iran hostage crisis, and the decision to boycott the 1980 Summer Olympics. Throughout his leadership, Carter created both critics and admirers. A fierce advocate for human rights, he integrated these values into U.S. foreign policy — standing against oppressive regimes and supporting global dissidents in the name of peace. Through hands-on efforts with Habitat for Humanity, Carter championed housing as a fundamental right for all, inspiring millions — including social workers — to take action. Alongside Rosalynn Carter, he also advanced causes in mental health, rural development, and healthcare access for underserved populations, as well as global peace efforts. These contributions — in healthcare, mental health, affordable housing, and support for the unhoused — are deeply aligned with the core values of social work. Yet, many fail to recognize how President Carter, and later Mr. Carter, played a major role in these efforts. His humility was also evident in his rural upbringing in a farming community. He authored numerous books and taught Sunday School for much of his adult life at his hometown Baptist church in Plains, Georgia — a town of fewer than 600 residents.

During his administration, Carter emphasized diversity and equity, appointing two Howard University alumni to groundbreaking roles. Patricia Roberts Harris became the first Black woman to serve in the Cabinet in 1977 as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and later in 1979 as Secretary of Health and Human Services. Carter also appointed Andrew Young as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, where Young brought a sharp focus on diplomacy and global justice. These appointments underscored Carter's deep commitment to inclusion and representation. His lifetime achievements — including being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 — reflect his humility, compassion, and unwavering dedication to creating a more just and equitable world.

HUSSW Achievements



Howard University School of Social Work Ranks #12 in US News and World Report

The Howard University School of Social Work achieved an impressive milestone, ranking #12 in the 2024 U.S. News & World Report's list of top social work programs. This distinction places the school among the top 5% of social work programs nationwide, reaffirming its reputation for academic excellence, innovative research, and commitment to social justice. Notably, this ranking also makes it the highest-ranked school within Howard University, further solidifying its impact and leadership in the field.

Howard's School of Social Work has long been recognized for its dedication to preparing the next generation of social workers through a rigorous curriculum that integrates social welfare policy, human behavior, ethics, and real-world clinical experience. Students benefit from hands-on learning opportunities, engaging directly with communities to address pressing social issues such as economic inequality, mental health, and systemic injustice. The program's emphasis on culturally competent practice and advocacy ensures that graduates are well-equipped to drive meaningful change in diverse settings, from nonprofit organizations to government agencies and healthcare institutions.

As the demand for skilled social workers continues to rise, Howard University's strong ranking reflects its ongoing efforts to provide students with the tools, knowledge, and practical experience necessary to excel in the field. With a legacy rooted in service and empowerment, the School of Social Work remains a leader in shaping the future of social work education and practice.

HUSSW Student Update News

Gaining Passion for Research - Adachi Selas

I recently had the opportunity to present the research I've been conducting in collaboration with Dr. Janice Edwards at the HU Spring Research Symposium. Just as the poster I created pieced together the knowledge we've gained so far, presenting the material served as the perfect culmination of the work that had gone into the project up to that point. Participating in the symposium also exposed me to the work of other brilliant Howard students, opened avenues for future interdisciplinary collaboration, and reinforced the importance of research in the field of social work. As a first-time presenter, this event allowed me to practice defending my unique ideas with the support of the scholars who came before me — including my advisor, Dr. Edwards.

Before beginning this project about a year ago, I had not yet developed a passion for research. I viewed it more as a means to an end rather than the valuable contribution to one's field that it truly is. One of the greatest benefits of working as a graduate assistant has been building a meaningful relationship with a faculty member outside the classroom and learning from their expertise. Dr. Edwards's passion for research and her embodiment of the Black Perspective in her work have shaped my view of what is possible in social work.

The inspiration for our current paper, entitled “**Unveiling Disparities: Exploring Overmedication of Black Foster Care Youth and How Implicit Bias Contributes**”, came from a conversation Dr. Edwards and I had about our areas of interest and expertise — hers in psychopharmacology and mine in child welfare. Through conducting a systematic review of the literature, we discovered gaps in prior research on the overmedication of Black foster care youth. My passion for social justice, combined with her knowledge of cultural psychopharmacology, drove the effort to fill these gaps and highlight areas for improvement within social work practice.

One year later, I'm proud to say that we completed the article, and it is now my first publication in a journal. I'm grateful for all that I've learned about the research process, and I know that staying engaged with what's happening in the field will make me a stronger social worker.



Ed- The resulting article by Dr. Janice Edwards and Ms. Adachi Selas accepted by the Urban Social Work Journal and published in the January 2025 issue. Edwards, J.B, Selas, A (2025). Unveiling Disparities: Exploring Overmedication of Black Foster Care Youth and How Implicit bias contributes. Urban Social Work, 8(3), 222-236. Authors Dr. Janice Edwards and Ms. Adachi Selas are now hard at work on a book on Psychopharmacology.



1919-2025

BEATRICE “Bea” LIEBENBERG

On Saturday, January 4, 2025, Beatrice Liebenberg of Washington, DC, passed away at the age of 106. She was the beloved wife of the late Maurice Liebenberg and the loving mother of Jean Liebenberg and Dr. Robert (Bobbi) Liebenberg, cherished grandmother of Julie Pearl, Katie Liebenberg, and David Liebenberg, and a proud great-grandmother to Hannah Pearl, Jackson, Lila Falkenstein, and Sasha Bea Liebenberg. Bea, as she liked to be called, was born in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on July 2, 1919, to the late Joseph and Bertha Laikin Zipperstein. What made Ms. Liebenberg so interesting to the HUSSW is that she was a Howard University School of Social Work alumna having completed her MSW at HUSSW. She was a proud Howard-prepared social worker who studied under inaugural Dean Inabel Burns Lindsay! A dedicated social worker who specialized in group work, Bea taught at several institutions, including Smith College. She was recognized nationally for her expertise and spent much of her career in Washington, DC. Funeral services were held on Sunday, January 12, 2025, at Mt. Lebanon Cemetery in Adelphi, Maryland. Memorial contributions may be made to the Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health of the American Group Psychotherapy Association or to a charity of your choice.

Our Transformative Trip to Cape Town: An Immersive Experience in Global Social Work

In April 2025, a contingent of faculty, staff, and students shared some of their experiences from the recent International Service Learning (ISL) trip to Cape Town. Their first-person account follows: Our trip to Cape Town, South Africa, in March 2025, provided us with an eye-opening opportunity to engage with communities, reflect on global social work practices, and embrace cultural exchange. The journey allowed Howard University School of Social Work students, faculty, and staff to gain invaluable insights into the realities of social work in South Africa, engaging deeply with the challenges and triumphs of the communities we visited.

One of the most profound experiences came during our visit to the Langa Township, where the enduring legacy of apartheid still influences daily life. Established in 1923 as the first township to segregate Black South Africans, Langa remains a stark representation of socio-economic inequality. Despite this, the strength and resilience of its people are ever-present. “My time in South Africa was an eye-opening experience that deepened my understanding of global social work,” shared **Chelsea Hood, a HUSSW Ph.D. student**. “Engaging with students and professionals there reinforced the importance of culturally responsive approaches to addressing domestic violence and community healing.”

Our visit to Project Playground, a local organization serving children and families in Langa, underscored the power of community-driven initiatives. The organization’s motto, “Play Saves Lives,” exemplifies the importance of social work in fostering safe environments for children to learn and grow. In Langa, we also explored the township’s history through visits to the Langa Heritage Museum, where we learned about the painful history of the Dompas (passbook) system. Under apartheid, all Black and Colored individuals—regardless of birthplace—were required, under penalty of fine or incarceration, to carry a domestic visa or passbook daily. This system allowed the apartheid regime to control the movement of Black South Africans during White rule (1947–1994). The experience was a stark reminder of the systemic barriers that continue to impact Black and Colored communities throughout the country and perhaps worldwide...

At Likhwezi Primary School, which educates children from infancy to age five, we saw how education provides hope and opportunity. Bilingual instruction in English and Xhosa helps bridge gaps in early childhood development and prepares the next generation for a brighter future. One of the most impactful moments was when our delegation volunteered to paint the home of a grandmother raising her grandchildren.

“The opportunity to witness the impact of service work in real time—how something as simple as a coat of paint can restore dignity and pride—was deeply moving,” shared **Ms. Kathelon Toliver**. The home, once dull and in need of care, was transformed into a vibrant, welcoming space. The joy on the grandmother’s face was indescribable. As we sang “Lean on Me” together, it was a powerful reminder of the 2025 Social Work Month theme—Compassion + Action—and how small acts of kindness can have profound, lasting effects on individuals and communities. Our experience was also enriched by the opportunity to interact with local social workers and educators. **Matthew Harris** reflected on the visit to Pinocchio Crèche, a center providing early childhood education to children in the community: “I was surprised to hear how cyber threats impact smaller communities, and it impressed upon me the double-edged sword that technology often brings.”

The home, once dull and in need of care, was transformed into a vibrant, welcoming space. The joy on the grandmother's face was indescribable. As we sang "Lean on Me" together, it was a powerful reminder of the 2025 Social Work Month theme—Compassion + Action—and how small acts of kindness can have profound, lasting effects on individuals and communities. Our experience was also enriched by the opportunity to interact with local social workers and educators. **Matthew Harris** reflected on the visit to Pinocchio Crèche, a center providing early childhood education to children in the community: "I was surprised to hear how cyber threats impact smaller communities, and it impressed upon me the double-edged sword that technology often brings."

Despite challenges such as cyberattacks, the staff's resilience and preparedness highlighted the ongoing struggle for community empowerment. It was an inspiring example of how social work is evolving to meet modern challenges. **Dr. Cudore Snell**, a native South African who survived apartheid, gained his BSW at the University of the Western Cape (SA) before coming to the U.S. to gain his MSW and PhD in Social Work. Dr. Snell, Professor, Former Dean and Assistant Provost for International Programs at Howard, has helped lead an HUSW International Service-Learning delegation for 12 years. The trip was a chance to unite his Howard family with his South African counterparts. "Our faculty, staff, and students are stellar ambassadors not just for social work, but for America, portraying positive images all around," he said. "I am fortunate and grateful to have been part of the delegation." The warmth of the South African community, the resilience in the face of historical and contemporary struggles, and the collaborative efforts of everyone involved made this experience one to remember.

Rebecca Sachs emphasized the significance of connecting with local social workers: "It was inspiring to witness social work in action—seeing the shared language and approach in helping at-risk children and families."

Her reflections underscored the importance of cultural humility and how social work can adapt to local contexts while upholding its core values. As our trip came to a close, we reflected on the lasting impact of our time in Cape Town. The journey wasn't just about visiting new places or learning from new people—it was about living the core values of social work and recognizing the universal need for justice, equity, and compassion. This trip left an indelible mark on each of us, reminding us of our shared humanity and the continued need to advocate for dignity and opportunity, both at home and abroad.

Acknowledgment of Leadership: We extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Sandra Jeter for stepping in as the leader of this year's Cape Town trip. Your guidance, commitment, and enthusiasm are deeply appreciated, and we're grateful for your leadership in making this experience so meaningful and memorable for all involved.

We also offer our deepest gratitude to Dr. Cudore Snell—We thank him for his incredible leadership over the past 12 years. His vision, dedication, and unwavering commitment have helped shape this international program into what it is today. His legacy continues to inspire all who participate.

Below, Pictures include top left HUSSW delegation painting house of Cape Town grandmother; top right HUSSW delegation for faculty, staff and students; mid-left, HUSSW delegation with students and faculty at University of the Western Cape in a drum circle; mid right -HUSSW delegation at Human Services Offices; and bottom left, HUSSW delegation at Pinocchio Creche, and right include picture of HUSSW delegation gathered at Robben (seal) Island (12 kilometers off the coast of Cape Town), famous for housing incarcerated political prisoners during apartheid).





From Campus to Community

Dean Jennings Alumni Tour

Dean Sheara Jennings of the Howard University School of Social Work is planning to visit agencies across the DMV area where **HUSSW alumni are making an impact.**

This year-long tour is part of an effort to connect with alumni and learn about the communities and organizations they serve.



If you are interested in having Dean Jennings visit your agency, please complete this short form!

<https://forms.office.com/r/3Hayvd3y4T>



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Howard University School of Social Work



90 Years of History and Howard Prepared Social Workers

Any comments, additions, deletions or corrections should be directed to Dr. Robert Cosby, editor at robert.cosby@howard.edu. Special thanks to the many HUSSW Faculty and Staff contributors to this edition of the Howard Way Newsletter. Special Thanks are extended to Mr. Armani Hayes for layout and reporting. News ideas, content, photos and video are welcome and can be sent to robert.cosby@howard.edu. Any mistakes or misrepresentations are the sole responsibility of the editor.
