

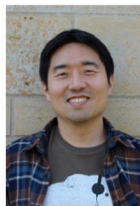
AEA/AEGSW Newsletter

School of Social Work

2018-2019

BSW- Area of Emphasis in Gero-Social Work Scholars

MSW- Area of Emphasis in Aging Scholars



Sunghwan Cho
MSW



Kassara Kneeland
MSW



Stephanie Larson
MSW



Jessica Miller
MSW



Kari Nystul
MSW



Rachel Potter
MSW



Emma Schedler
MSW



Ashley Shoonover
MSW



Sammi Witmer
BSW



Tanya Rand, MSW LICSW
Coordinator of
Aging Services

ST. CATHERINE
UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF
St.Thomas

YEAR IN REVIEW

2018 - 19

This year, scholars decided to focus most of their energy on continuing to educate and bring awareness to the growing need for more professionals to work with older adults through a Careers in Aging Open House Event (see page 4) and by presenting about this need to different classes. Scholars also stayed actively involved as professionals in the community through attending various conferences (see page 2), as well as raising money and walking for Walk to End Alzheimer's (see page 3). Scholars also partnered with another MSW student-led initiative, Mapping Social Justice, to get others involved in advocating for the aging population (see page 3). Cheers to another successful year!



Save the dates:

**Walk to End
Alzheimer's**

**Saturday,
September 28**

Join us during the
walk or have lunch
with us afterwards.

*More details to
follow.*

*Watch for emails
about additional
news & events!*

Contact
Tanya Rand,
Coordinator of
Aging Services for
more AEA
information or
about events.
She can be reached
either by phone at
651-962-5817 or by
email at
tjrand@stthomas.edu

Conferences

MGS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Five scholars along with AEA Coordinator, Tanya Rand, attended the Minnesota Gerontological Society Conference in April.

AEA Scholar, Emma Schedler got the opportunity to present on a panel discussion this year with **AEA Coordinator, Tanya Rand**. The panel discussion focused on the rising need of workers to serve the increasing older adult population. Emma, Tanya and the other panelists shared their experiences and expertise about the aging population and educated attendees on the many unique jobs available for working with older individuals.

In another breakout session, **AEA Scholar, Rachel Potter**, along with her colleagues at Jewish Family Service of St. Paul presented on "Challenges and Solutions to Mental Health Services for Older Adults," a panel discussion that included a brief overview of JFS, mental health concerns and trauma in older adults, psychotherapy, the JFS PEARLS program, the expansion of tele-



Tanya Rand and Emma Schedler presenting on the growing need for people to work with older adults.

counseling to rural Minnesota, and the JFS In Home Art Therapy program. Rachel specifically spoke about the new tele-counseling initiative to reach homebound older adults in rural Minnesota. Rachel and her colleagues will be presenting on this topic this summer at the Minnesota Age and Disabilities Odyssey Conference in Duluth, MN.

AEA Scholar, Stephanie Larson was honored to have received one of two Elva Walker Spillane Scholarships. In Stephanie's application for the scholarship she reflected on the way older adults have helped shaped her personally and professionally. Her grandparents, an internship at a rural, critical access (continued on page 3)

MCDES CONFERENCE BY JESSICA MILLER, LSW

I took interest in attending a conference put on by the Minnesota Coalition for Death Education and Support (MCDES). I attended the MCDES spring conference on May 3rd and I was honored to accept a scholarship to attend. This year's spring speaker was Melinda Moore, PhD and the subject was grief after suicide. One of the most impactful moments of the day was when Melinda asked the audience to raise their hands if they have been impacted by a death by suicide - nearly everyone raised their hands. This was so eye opening to the fact that suicide is a such a growing issue. Also, to the fact that there is such a gap between the people who are in need of support and professional support services. If there was anything that will stick, it will be the proper language that should be used when talking about suicide. According to Melinda, it is negative to use terms such as "committed suicide" or "successful suicide" because they are suggesting things that are not accurate. Committing suicide sounds like a person is committing a crime and successful suicide is not something that is "successful". Therefore, the appropriate term to use is by stating what happened such as if a person died by suicide.



Stephanie Larson receiving the Elva Walker Spillane award from Rosalie Kane.

hospital, her work as a hospice volunteer coordinator, and time as a AEA scholar helped explain why she is pursuing a career in gero-social work. Stephanie on her receiving the Elva Walker Spillane scholarship:

“I extend my gratitude for the support, both financially and in spirit, in receiving the Elva Walker Spillane scholarship”.

Congratulations, Stephanie!! For more pictures from the conference [click here](#).

PARTNERING WITH MAPPING SOCIAL JUSTICE

BY ASHLEY SCHOONOVER

Scholars partnered with Mapping Social Justice (MSJ), an MSW student-led initiative that researches and sends out advocacy action alerts to the School of Social Work in attempt to get students engaged in advocacy and social justice. Scholars were educated how to create action alerts to send out to students in the School of Social Work this past winter. **AEA Scholar, Ashley Shoonover** and **AEGSW Scholar, Sammi Witmer**, completed action alerts to advocate for policy change and awareness for older adults which were both sent out to the student body in May. These action alerts were focused on isolation in older adults and accessibility of rural mental health for older adults. MSJ was also invited to participate in our April 25th event by educating attendees on advocating for policy change and how to contact community representatives. In partnering with MSJ, scholars learned more about how policy change can affect the older adult population and were able to get others involved in advocating for this population.

WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S BY SUNGHWAN CHO

One of my favorite Fall events is Walk to End Alzheimer's. The reason I like this event is that I can be a voice for older adults with Alzheimer's disease and their families. Although Alzheimer's is a potential issue that everyone could face, few people have an understanding of how many older adults with Alzheimer's are misunderstood and underserved. When many people or voices get together, it has the ability to make a big impact. Whether participants are older or not, have Alzheimer's or not, the solidarity shown at the Walk to End Alzheimer's event tied us together as one big voice. I am happy to be a part of one of the walks which advocates for this the older adult population.



Careers in Aging

CAREERS IN AGING OPEN HOUSE EVENT



Rachel Potter greeted visitors at the Careers in Aging event.

This year scholars decided to continue their focus on educating and bringing about awareness for the growing need of professionals to work with older adults. On April 25th, scholars put on a Careers in Aging Open House event, which focused on three main areas: Awareness, Education, and

Career Exploration. The event was held on the second floor of the Summit Classroom Building at the University of St. Thomas.

To bring about awareness, scholars created posters that focused on topics such as ageism and diversity in aging. There was also a Myths of Aging Spin-the-Wheel game where attendees were able to win prizes. Mapping Social Justice brought information about current legislation affecting seniors and postcards for attendees to send their

state or U.S. legislators. For education, scholars focused on educating attendees on different aspects of spirituality, dementia, and the social determinants of well-being and aging. Attendees were able to try dementia simulation or talk with a retired Geriatrician or social worker to ask them questions about different aspects of aging. AEA alum, Rachel Henkel also presented a poster presentation in this room.

This event also focused on career exploration by inviting agencies that serve older adults from all over the Twin Cities to set up booths. These agencies were able to speak with students or other visitors about what their agencies and work look like on a day-to-day basis. For the career fair we had the following alum: Carol Ashwood, Anne McDonald, Jane Crompton, Rebekah Elling, Lori Halbur, and Florence Wright. Scholars had a fun night connecting with alum, different agencies, and other visitors. For more pictures click [here](#).



Steph Larson, Jessi Miller, and Kassara Kneeland at the Careers in Aging event.

CAREERS IN AGING PRESENTATIONS BY SAMMI WITMER

As part of the AEA and AEGSW 2019 events, scholars had the opportunity to present what careers in aging looked like, and the growing need for professionals to work with older adults to a variety of classes. This spring, **AEA Scholars Rachel Potter** and **Jessica Miller** had the opportunity to present to a high school Career Investigations class at Park High School. **AEA Scholars Emma Schedler** and **Kari Nystul** with **AEGSW Scholar Sammi Witmer** spoke with a BSW policy class about what a social work career in aging may entail. Scholars discussed the history and policies that impact older adults in the United States, and what future numbers of older adults were projected to be. Along with some prompting of true or false questions, myths, and critical questions that students were encouraged to contemplate, social work jobs on all eco levels were covered, allowing students to see the range of jobs that have a significant impact on the aging population, today and in the future. **AEA Scholar, Stephanie Larson**, and **AEA alum, Alison Waid** teamed up to present to a class of respiratory therapy students about the role of social workers on interdisciplinary teams. To view pictures of these presentations [click here](#).

Graduating Scholars

THEIR CLINICAL PLACEMENTS, HIGHLIGHTS FROM BEING A SCHOLAR AND FUTURE PLANS



Sunghwan Cho, MSW '19 I served older adults with serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI) at Birchwood Care Home this year. I really enjoyed preparing a poster for the Careers in Aging event. Every time I have meetings with scholars, I got encouraged and learned how to contour my poster section, harmonizing with the event. Sunghwan will be attending Virginia Commonwealth's School of Social Work Ph.D program in the fall and plans to focus his research on practice with older adults.

Kassara Kneeland, MSW '19 I did my clinical internship at the St. Cloud Hospital where I had experience in the adolescent, adult and geriatric mental health units. Being apart of the AEA scholar program has given me the opportunity to network with students and alum who all have one thing in common, working together toward providing care for older adults. As for the future, I hope to continue to grow in my passion for working with older adults and find a career that will sustain my passion.

Kari Nystul, MSW '19 This year I completed my internship with Catholic Charities in their Aging and Disabilities Program working with older adults through care coordination in addition to some work with their Homeless Elders Program. My favorite part of being an AEA Scholar was getting to be a part of a community of peers who were just as passionate and excited about working with older adults as I am. Going forward, I plan to look for a job serving seniors and work towards getting my LICSW.

Rachel Potter, MSW '19 I completed my clinical internship with Jewish Family Service of St. Paul working with older adults in their homes providing brief in-home counseling for those struggling with depression. AEA reiterated my passion for working with older adults while looking through the eyes of all the other scholars and offered us a platform to discuss trials and tribulations when working with older adults. After graduation, I will continue working at Jewish Family Service as a counselor and start working toward my LICSW.

Emma Schedler, MSW '19 This year, I worked individually with older adults in a long-term care living facility as a part of a two-year grant program. I loved being an AEA scholar; it gave me such amazing opportunities to advocate, work alongside other people who are just as passionate about this population, and grow my knowledge and skills. After graduation I plan to continue my work in hospice care, mostly serving older adults in nursing home settings, and hope to provide more supervision to undergraduate students who are interested in working in this area.

Ashley Schoonover, MSW '19 I am a CSWEP scholarship recipient, which allowed me to be placed in an agency that does not have a social worker. I was able to advocate for the underserved population and provide therapy to the older adult population. Being an AEA scholar was truly a blessing throughout my time at St. Thomas, it gave me a voice to reach the older adult population and make a difference. Moving forward, I have been hired by my field placement and look to continue my work in the older adults population as a therapist.

Sammi Witmer, BSW '19 This year I interned at the Minnesota Veterans Home - Minneapolis, where I spent my time working with Veterans and their families. One of my favorite moments from being an AEGSW scholar was presenting on information about a future with older adults. As an ally and someone who takes pleasure in teaching, being able to go out and educate is something I enjoy very much. Now that I have graduated, I do not know what my future will hold. My goal is to return to my home state Oregon and get my RBSW (LSW) and find a job in any kind of older adult agency.