

THE SALUKI SOCIAL WORKER

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Spring 2026

Vol. 1, Issue 9

Social Work
School of Human Sciences
Southern Illinois University Carbondale



QUOTE OF THE DAY

"YOU ARE BRAVER
THAN YOU BELIEVE,
STRONGER THAN YOU
SEEM, AND SMARTER
THAN YOU THINK." –
WINNIE THE POOH

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New Adjunct Faculty: Dr. Lenorris “Lee” Hughes

By: Joe Harper

Dr. Lenorris “Lee” Hughes earned his Bachelor’s degree in Recreation and Leisure Service Management in 2009 and his Master of Social Work in 2020 from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He recently completed his Ph.D. in Population Health here at SIU.

Dr. Hughes is a U.S. Army veteran, having served 12 years as a Sergeant. His professional experience spans social services, counseling, community outreach, and mentoring youth and veterans. These experiences have shaped his commitment to supporting individuals and communities through both practice and research.

His research focuses on trauma, resilience, veteran mental health, and the long-term impact of childhood experiences on adult health outcomes. He is particularly interested in translating research into practical, real-world interventions that improve the well-being of vulnerable populations.

In the classroom, Dr. Hughes strives to bridge the gap between research, practice, and lived experience. His goal is to help students understand the real-world impact of social work while equipping them with the critical thinking skills, compassion, and cultural awareness needed to serve diverse communities effectively.

Southern Illinois University Carbondale has played a significant role in Dr. Hughes’s personal and professional journey. Returning to teach at the university holds deep meaning for him, as he maintains a strong connection to its mission and values. Originally from Chicago, Illinois, Dr. Hughes now resides in Southern Illinois with his wife, an educator. Between him and his wife, they have eight children, and only one is still living with them in the home.

In addition to his academic work, he owns and operates a barbershop in Murphysboro, Illinois, which serves not only as a place for grooming but also as a hub for mentorship, meaningful conversation, and community engagement. In his free time, he enjoys reading, studying scripture, engaging with his community, and spending time with his family.



FACULTY NEWS CONTINUED

New Adjunct Faculty: Carrie Vine

By: Joe Harper

Carrie Vine holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music with a focus in bassoon, as well as both a bachelor's and master's degree in social work. She became a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) in 2022.

Carrie currently serves as a Clinical Coordinator at Centerstone, where she oversees clinicians and counselors at the methadone clinic in Marion. In addition to her full-time role, she maintains a small caseload through a private practice based in the Chicago area.

Her professional experience spans a wide range of communities and focus areas, including individuals living with HIV, LGBTQIA+ community advocacy, harm reduction initiatives, substance misuse treatment, opioid overdose prevention, and reproductive justice. Carrie is also actively engaged in statewide collaboration with organizations such as AIDS Foundation Chicago, Equality Illinois, and Planned Parenthood of Illinois, working to advance policies that support and protect vulnerable populations.

Carrie is passionate about Southern Illinois University and believes she has meaningful contributions to offer its student community.

Her greatest accomplishment in life is raising intelligent, compassionate children who embrace and respect all people. She lives in Carbondale with Curt, an accomplished musician; Skylar, a young comedian; and a lively menagerie of animals.



Faculty Interview: Dr. Elaine Jurkowski

By: Anna Rodgers

Dr. Jurkowski was born and raised in Winnipeg, Canada. She fell into social work as a career choice following a serious life-threatening illness on the part of a family member. This forced her to ask herself how she can help others. Her first professional job following the completion of her undergraduate studies included vocational rehabilitation, disability, mental health, and immigrant/refugee work. She has also been able to travel to a variety of countries to either teach about social work practice or train people.

She has taught courses across the curriculum. She has discovered that her favorite courses to teach are policy-oriented courses, research & program evaluation, social work practice (especially macro practice) and advanced

Faculty Interview: Dr. Elaine Jurkowski Continued

health/mental health practice. Dr. Jurkowski's areas of practice interest include aging, workforce development/interprofessional collaboration, disability practice, grant writing and agency development.

She became familiar with southern Illinois as a Graduate student, working at the Illinois Public Health Leadership Institute in Chicago. When visiting SIUC with a friend, she learned about the school of social work. When she found out about an open position, she decided to apply. She planned to work at SIUC for two years, to learn about rural communities and social work practice, but ended up staying for 28 years.

At this point in her career, she is eager to publish her articles that are in progress. She is in the midst of writing a book that addresses advanced practice skills while working with groups and therapeutic interventions. In addition, she hopes to put her MBA to use and write a workbook to help social workers and those working in the non-profit world use business acumen to help their agencies survive and thrive.

Dr. Jurkowski has recently announced that she will be retiring from SIU. Congratulations, Dr. Jurkowski! Thank you for your years of service helping students on their educational journey!



ALUMNI NEWS

Alumni Spotlight: Cody Roberts, LCSW

By: Sophia Slupski

Cody Roberts graduated from Southern Illinois University with his bachelor's degree in social work in 2021. After completing his bachelor's degree, he chose to pursue his master's degree at SIU, graduating in 2022. Cody chose to do that route because it felt like the right choice - academically and practically - with not having the hassle of transferring credits. Cody describes the MSW program as a solid and great program. As of 2026, Cody is working in school social work at Brehm Preparatory School. He recently achieved another big milestone by earning his LCSW. Cody's favorite part of social work is simple, but powerful, which is working with people. He values connecting and supporting the population he is passionate about.



One piece of advice he has for future social workers is, "Self-Care is not just something you should do - it is something you NEED to do."

2026 SIU System Distinguished Student Service Award: Tatiana Castillo

Tatiana Castillo an MSW Student of Pasto, Narino, Colombia was presented this award from the Southern Illinois University System Board of Trustees and the SACSS. During her time at SIUC she has founded the Multicultural Empowered Women Student Association. She has also been involved in the International Student Council, completed an internship at the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute, and at the Carbondale Public Library.

Tatiana Castillo has skills in social work research, advocacy, and outreach. She is an asset to SIUC and the Social Work Department. Congratulations Tatiana!



News, Social Media & Screens: A prescription for Emotional Balance

By: Tatiana Castillo, MSW Student

If your phone had side effects listed like medication, **many of us would stop taking it immediately.** Side effects of social media and screen time include: sudden sadness. Identity confusion. Irritation. Doom scrolling. Emotional fatigue. The strange belief that everyone else is happier, richer, fitter, prettier, more productive, and somehow making sourdough bread at 6 a.m.

Social media is no longer just a tool. It is part of our social environment. It shapes how we see others and how we see ourselves (Valkenburg et al., 2022). We carry it in our pockets, open it in bed, check it while eating, and sometimes consult it more than our own inner voice.

We think we are choosing content. But often, content is choosing us. Algorithms are designed **to keep attention, not protect peace** (Zuboff, 2019). If something triggers envy, outrage, insecurity, or curiosity, it is more likely to stay in front of us.

As a social worker, journalist, and observer of human behavior, I see something deeper than screen time. I see **emotional consequences.** Adults feeling behind in life. Parents pressured to do everything perfectly. Young people questioning their worth through filters and followers. Many are not failing. Many are simply overexposed. Research links heavy social media use with anxiety, depression, and psychological distress, especially among youth (Twenge et al., 2018). This is not weakness. This is a wellness issue. So, what is the treatment plan?

Prescription for Emotional Balance		
Rx: Boundaries, Twice Daily	Supportive Interventions	Prognosis
<p>Boundaries are not punishment. They are protection. They are how we decide what enters our mind and what does not.</p> <p>Ask before consuming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why am i opening this app right now? • How do I feel after using it? • Is this feeding me or draining me? 	<p>Air: Conscious Breathing helps regulate stress and improves well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2003).</p> <p>Water: Drink a Glass of water without multitasking. Revolutionary, I know.</p> <p>Matter: Touch real life. Hug, hold a hand or sit on grass. Humans need contact more than notifications.</p> <p>Laugh: Laugh with someone in person. Not “lol”. Real laughter.</p> <p>News Diet: Stay Informed but not flooded. Repeated exposure to distressing news can increase stress (Holoman et al., 2014). Information should empower you, not exhaust you.</p>	<p>Excellent, if used consistently.</p> <p>We are not broken. We are overstimulated. Your nervous system still knows the way back to balance.</p> <p>One final instruction: Put your phone down for five minutes after reading this. If you laughed at the irony of reciving a prescription through a screen, healing may have already begun.</p>

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Salukis Take On NASW-IL Advocacy Day 2026

By: Olivia Edmonds & Anna Rodgers

18 SIUC students attended the NASW-IL Advocacy Day in Springfield, IL on April 15, 2026. The purpose of Advocacy Day is to raise awareness and advocate regarding legislation that legislators are reviewing. The issues that we were advocating for were bills HJR 0053, HB 4982, SB 2771. Each bill had different advocacy needs.

HB 4982 requires pharmacies to post the 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline that is visible and legible for customers. The purpose of this is to post the mental health crisis number in a trusted facility. Individuals who are on antidepressants usually go to the pharmacy to pick up their prescription. Having the crisis number posted helps these individuals know that there is a resource if they need additional help. Printing posters is one of the least costly things that you can do to spread awareness. This bill has passed the House and is now in the Senate.

SB 277 requires the placement of contact information for the 988 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline across public institutions. These institutions include but aren't limited to public schools (elementary, primary, and universities), hospitals, and public libraries. This bill has passed the Senate and is moving through the House.

HJR 0053 protects professional degree status for social work, nursing, counseling, and allied health graduate programs. Social Work, like many other professions, requires a master's degree to obtain the LCSW credentials. To get this degree, you have to be able to pay for a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. Some individuals in rural areas like Carbondale aren't able to obtain these degrees without loans, scholarships, or grants. This bill is expected to be heard on the House floor soon.



Salukis Take On NASW-IL Advocacy Day 2026 Continued

During Advocacy Day, students are led by Lobby leaders. These individuals are from all over Illinois. Lobby leaders are required to go to Springfield the day before the event to go through training to make Advocacy Day a success. This training will focus on the bills. They learn why they are important and what we are advocating for as social workers. The training includes doing different exercises to role-play talking to a legislator. After the training, the lobby leaders explore the capitol and figure out where everything is so that they can guide their group effectively the next day. On Advocacy Day, the Lobby leaders are assigned a group from a certain district of Southern Illinois. They have assigned meetings with senators and representatives from their areas to advocate for the different bills.

Advocacy Day is a great experience for social work students. They are able to meet legislators and social work students from other Illinois schools. Improvements can always be made, and Advocacy Day gives a chance for social work students to advocate for improvements to the world of mental health. We hope Salukis will continue to attend for years to come.



SWSA REPORT

Social Work Student Alliance: Advocate, Communicate, & Spread Awareness

By: Anna Rodgers

At the start of the semester SWSA had meetings to make a game plan for the semester. The SWSA President & Vice President created a bulletin board with different ways to practice self-care. For example: being creative, making lists, getting adequate sleep, and drinking water. They thought that this was important for students to be reminded of when finishing the semester.

In February SWSA volunteered at Gum Drops and at the 2026 Coldest Night of the Year Event. Gum Drops is an organization in Carterville, IL. SWSA was only there for a couple of hours, but we were able to make an impact on local students' lives. Volunteers at Gum Drops pack food bags with cereal, oatmeal, granola bars, and other snacks for children at the local schools. At the 2026 Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser for the Carbondale Warming Center, SWSA members served food, helped hang decorations, and were on the route encouraging the walkers. This was a great opportunity to come together as a community and support individuals in need during times of uncertainty.

This semester SWSA partnered with Kappa Delta Chi Inc., a Latina-founded, but not Latina-exclusive, service-based sorority that upholds values such as unity, honesty, integrity, and leadership, during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Together, they made blue ribbons that are placed all over campus. SWSA made handouts to share information about how to report abuse and different signs of abuse. Kappa Delta Chi Inc. provided supplies for the ribbon making and helped spread awareness through social media. SWSA enjoyed getting to know the members of Kappa Delta Chi Inc. and hope to work together again in the future.

SWSA was able to provide transportation and cover registration fees for students to attend NASW-IL Advocacy Day in Springfield, IL. Students were able to make connections, explore the capitol, and advocate for improvements in the social worker field.



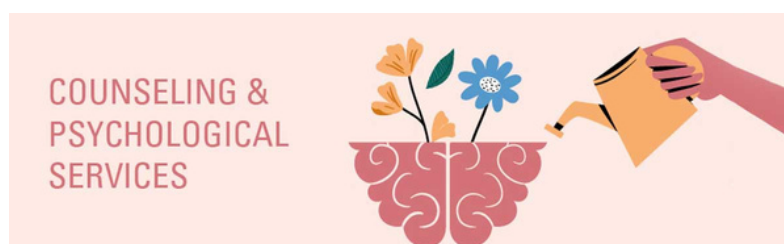
CAMPUS RESOURCES

Student Health Services

Consider **Student Health Services** your medical home away from home! We provide quality medical care for all SIU students enrolled in on-campus courses. This includes preventative and general healthcare, as well as management of chronic health problems. Comprehensive services include radiology for x-rays, laboratory for testing, and a pharmacy for your prescription, over-the-counter, and immunization needs. We also offer the specialized services of a registered dietitian/nutritionist and psychiatrist. You do not need insurance to access care at the Student Health Center. These services are provided for an affordable \$10 per visit door fee.

Counseling and Psychological Services include individual, couples, and group counseling. In-person or telehealth appointments may be ongoing, walk-in, same-day support, and for risk assessment. Services are offered over extended hours at multiple locations on campus. These services are provided at no additional cost.

Wellness and Health Promotion Services Coordinators on campus, providing health promotion and prevention education to students. Their services also include **Confidential Advising support** for survivors of dating or domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment, misconduct, or assault; Peer HEROES student-to-student mentoring and education; and the HEROES program support for Salukis in Need. We also welcome you to visit our student stress management location, the Dawg Lounge. This area offers massage chairs, relaxation and calming features, along with support dogs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A second multicultural Zen Den, the **HEROES Hideaway, is located in the Student Center.**



COMMUNITY PARTNER REPORT

Frances Jayne Memorial Community Library

By: Alaina Crowder

As aspiring social workers, our commitment lies in the foundation of advocacy and providing enriching services for the communities in which we plan to serve. This dedication to service has led me to share an up-and-coming volunteer opportunity with fellow social work students and faculty within the Carbondale area. As a resident and community assistant at Evergreen Terrace (ET), I have had the opportunity to promote and advocate for resources for the betterment of the community at ET. With this in mind, the Frances Jayne Memorial Community Library was established last Fall in honor of my late Granny Frances. Growing up, I spent a lot of time with my grandmother. She taught me the importance of meeting others where they are by actively listening, advocating for better circumstances, and implementing solutions. In fact, her lessons on advocacy led me to pursue a degree in social work in the first place.

With the help of the Area Coordinator, Brandon Secrist, who is an SIU alumnus with an MSW degree from Edwardsville, I have been able to keep her memory alive. The Frances Jayne Memorial Community Library operates on a simple principle, which is “you take a book, you give a book”. While establishing the community library, I have also had the opportunity to establish “collection hours” which allow the community to come together to drop off books for the community library and be informed about upcoming events in the community. This volunteer opportunity can be expanded to include reading events as well. I hope this volunteer opportunity brings as much joy to the community as I have in establishing it! If interested in volunteering, do not hesitate to reach out to Brandon Secrist at brandon.secrist@siu.edu or me at alaina.crowder@siu.edu.



SIUC Internship Site: Brehm Preparatory School

By: Sophia Slupski (BSW Intern)

This spring semester, I had the opportunity to do my Internship at Brehm Preparatory School. Brehm Preparatory School is an educational setting to support students with learning disabilities and neurodiverse needs.

Throughout my internship, I gained hands-on experience working with students in structured and everyday environments. Some of my roles included taking students to the dorms to complete their hygiene and chores, assisting in SEL lessons, sitting in on counseling sessions, sitting in on campus forums, and much more. The important role is building trust and rapport with the students. The interactions have allowed me to apply patience and interpersonal skills.

A most valuable aspect of my internship was sitting in and observing counseling sessions. This experience has given me a look into how social workers assess student needs, develop intervention plans, and provide support. It has also allowed me to strengthen my skills in documentation, including SOAP notes, assessment, and critical thinking.

Furthermore, I have supported and led students in community-based activities, such as outings and recreational clubs. All of these experiences showed the importance of social-emotional learning and real-world skill development. At Brehm, I worked with a diverse population of students. Working with diverse populations has taught me that it is important to recognize individuals' differences, respect their backgrounds, and adapt different approaches to best support each student.

Overall, my experience at Brehm Preparatory School has been challenging, but rewarding. I have grown as a person, personally, but also professionally. Gaining the different skills that help me prepare for my future in the social work field. Brehm has reinforced my passion for supporting youth, along with advocating for individuals with social-emotional needs



CASA for Kids

By: Olivia Edmonds

CASA for Kids stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. CASA does multiple things to help children. The growing success of this program has led to similar organizations around the nation.

CASA started in 1977 when a judge in Seattle decided he needed to know more about the children whose lives were in his hands. He started using community volunteers – regular citizens – as a “voice in court” for youth who have experienced abuse and neglect.

Illinois CASA was founded in 1993 and is the organizing body for 29 local CASA programs. 82 of the 102 counties in Illinois recruit, train, and manage 3,400+ volunteer advocates. These volunteers advocate for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse and neglect and are now in the child welfare system.

Volunteers fill out the advocate forms including demographic and background information. Your address determines the office you volunteer with. If chosen, it could take a month for you to be assigned a case. There are training courses that you have to complete, and you must get fingerprinted to be a volunteer. CASA is a great organization I am proud to be a part of for the last year.



NEW FEATURE: ADVERTISEMENTS FOR SOCIAL WORK INTERNSHIPS & POSITIONS

The Saluki Social Worker is published twice per year—once each semester—as a project of the Social Work Student Alliance (SWSA). We are accepting a limited number of advertisements from agencies seeking social worker interns, students, and graduates.

Print-ready ads will be accepted for single publication in exchange for a donation to SWSA:

- 3" x 4" advertisement – \$200 donation
- Half-page advertisement – \$350 donation

Agencies interested in advertising in the newsletter may contact:

Joe Harper, Editor

✉ Joseph.Harper@siu.edu



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

Vol. 7, Issue 9

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