



# ImPrints

Celebrating 100 Years of Child & Family Development in Detroit

2023  
SPRING



Dr. Resko (left) presents a digital poster with former MPSI post-doc student Guixin Lee at the Society for Social Work & Research Conference in Phoenix. The team researched emotional exhaustion in peer coaches who provide support and recovery in substance use disorder.

## MPSI Researcher Cracking the Opioid Crisis

by Ryan Cunningham, MPSI Project Assistant

One of Dr. Stella Resko's first jobs as an undergraduate in social work at the Ohio State University was working with women completing their felony convictions at a halfway house, next door to a fraternity. In this small facility of maybe 15 beds, Dr. Resko saw a magnified version of the challenges facing women and families all over the country, issues such as substance use and trauma victimization. "That was probably one of my early experiences that led me to focus on substance

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## Women of Ferry Street: Then & Now



In honor of Women's History Month, the Freer House co-hosted "Women of Ferry Street" with the WSU Division of Government and Community Affairs in May. A historical video and awards ceremony honored the achievements of Sue Mosey, executive director of Midtown Detroit Inc.; Jacqueline Wilson, first lady of WSU; Nancy Tellem, co-founder of BasBlue; Ann Nicholson, long-standing board



From left: Dir. of Community Affairs Stacie Clayton, honorees Walker-Miller, Tellem, Nicholson and Wilson, Pres. M. Roy Wilson, honoree Williams, BOG Member Danielle Atkinson, honoree Mosey, VP of Government and Community Affairs Patrick Lindsey, and Freer House Dir. Colburn.

member of Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute and the Freer House; Carla Walker-Miller, founder and CEO of Walker-Miller Energy Services;

and Geneva Williams, Ph.D., vice chair of the Michigan Women's Commission. About 75 people attended.



**MPSI's Infant Mental Health team** (Ms. Weathington and Drs. Dayton and Barron) showed their support for their graduating Dual-Title students. These graduates combined their Master's in Social Work with extensive IMH training. Dual-Title graduate LaTricia Mitchell (left) was the commencement speaker.



#### OPIOID FROM P. 1

use and interpersonal violence," she said.

Dr. Resko is a WSU professor and coordinator of the Graduate Certificate in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Studies in the School of Social Work jointly appointed to MPSI. Her focus has shifted to confronting the crisis that is the opioid epidemic, specifically the evaluation of treatment services and drug overdose prevention efforts. Counties and municipalities in Michigan are being awarded more than \$1B in settlements from opioid distributors like Walmart, Walgreens and Johnson & Johnson. They are working to spend the funds wisely.

"We need to think about how this money can best help communities and families harmed by opioids," Dr. Resko said. "There are many worthwhile ideas to consider, including the expansion of treat-

ment and harm reduction services, such as Naloxone to reverse an opioid overdose, and fentanyl testing strips." To use the settlement money productively, these communities have tapped Dr. Resko and her collaborator Dr. Elizabeth Agius, also of the School of Social Work, for their expertise and technical assistance. Dr. Resko and her team currently provide guidance through regular webinars on topics such as community-based needs assessment and providing medications for opioid use disorder in jails.

Dr. Resko's other projects deal with issues that can exacerbate the drug overdose crisis, such as stigma, lack of information and misinformation. She has teamed with former MPSI fellows Emily Pasman and Sydney Wallace to partner with groups like Families Against Narcotics to survey families on how opioid stigma impacts

how they communicate, find support, and seek help. The surveys have shown that many families don't have access to Naloxone and hold negative views toward medications for opioid use disorder. "Many families view medications as a last resort. There's this misconception that you can't take treatment medications long term. But when people stop them, that's when you do see an increased risk of overdose and death," said Dr. Resko. Her research seeks to reverse these misconceptions.

Although the language of intervention research is sometimes expressed in terms of statistics, or dollars and cents, Dr. Resko never loses sight of the human connection. "These are real people's lives," she said. "The number of overdose deaths keeps increasing. There are people and families behind all these numbers and data. That's always been a good reminder for me."





(L-R) Dr. Dayton; Erin Frisch, director of Michigan's Office of Child Support; Boman Gray (former program coordinator for Detroit's Fathers Forward); Commissioner Gray, and Zenell Brown formerly of the 3rd Circuit Court.

### HHS Commissioner Visits MPSI

Dr. Carolyn Dayton hosted a discussion with Tanguler Gray, commissioner of the Office of Child Support Enforcement at the Administration for Children and Families in the US Department of Health and Human Services. Commissioner Gray is a leader in defining justice who has advocated for outreach versus incarceration to keep fathers connected to their children when they are unable to pay child support. The event was co-sponsored by the 3rd



Circuit Court, and the Metro Detroit Fatherhood Policy Initiative Group.



## Extraordinary Teachers

Carolyn Dayton, PhD, LP, LMSW, IMH-E®(IV) holds joint appointments at the School of Social



Work as an associate professor and at MPSI as the associate director of the Infant Mental Health Dual Title Program. She is also an extraordinary teacher, so it was no surprise when she received WSU's President's Award for Excellence in Teaching. The announcement, from WSU President M. Roy Wilson, cited Dr. Dayton's significant contributions to the university's teaching mission and her contributions to academic excellence. She also received the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network's Fatherhood Advocate Award. Dr. Dayton is principal investigator on a project that is implementing a co-located Infant Mental Health and Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder (PMAD) clinic at Wayne Pediatrics in Detroit to serve young children and their parents struggling with mental health issues.

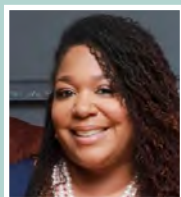
Hannah Schacter, PhD, received the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Teaching award this year. Dr. Schacter



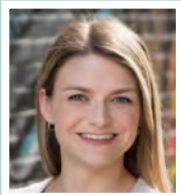
is affiliate faculty of MPSI and the faculty advisor for its Giant Step teen conference. This is Dr. Schacter's second teaching award in two years.

**From Birth to Old Age** – The Lifespan Alliance promotes collaboration between MPSI and the Institute of Gerontology on research that spans the life course. Each year the Alliance hosts a research day where students compete for prizes by presenting posters about their research and giving talks explaining their projects.

This year's competition was particularly strong, and judges spent additional time deliberating. MPSI Training Director Julie Wargo Aikins cited students' extra preparation of their submissions. "The judges praised the high quality of all entries and said it was difficult to choose just two winners per category," she said.



MPSI trainee **Ajene Gailliard** won 1st place for her poster on "*Predicting Fathers' Beliefs about a Father's Role in Providing Nurturing Care during Early Childhood.*"

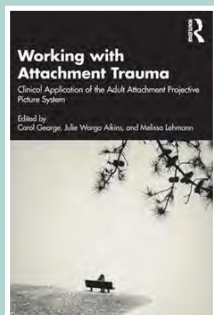


**Emily Pasman** won 2nd place for "*College Students at Risk for Harm Related to Substance Use May Be Unaware of Available Services.*"



**Alexandra Ehrhardt** took 1st place for her paper presentation, "*Adolescent Perceptions of Peer Competence Increase Following the High School Transition.*"

**How to Work with Attachment Trauma** – Dr. Julie Wargo Aikins co-edited a 2023 book that explains the use of a prominent assessment tool called the Adult Attachment Projective Picture System (AAP). The tool can be used with adults and adolescents to determine attachment trauma, plan treatment and guide therapy. Reviewer Hale Martin, PhD, said, "This book is a milestone in demonstrating the broad applicability and critical



value of the AAP. The creativity and clinical acumen of the authors will benefit a host of future clients." *Working with Attachment Trauma* is available through the Rutledge website.



### **AI and Weight Loss** –

Affiliate faculty Elizabeth Towner, PhD, is part of the team that won a recent \$404,000 grant from the National Institute of Nursing Research of the NIH. Their

project will focus on artificial intelligence technologies to aid weight loss counseling. They will use AI to provide motivational interviewing. If successful, the approach could bypass the problems of counselor shortages and clients sometimes feeling judged during human-to-human interactions. The AI is named NAOMI for Neural Agent for Obesity Motivational Interviewing.

### **Science Fair with a Twist** –

The usual high school science fair format got turned upside down this April when 35 high schoolers from the Detroit Public Schools Community District got to judge scientific research presentations by WSU students and faculty. Organizer Hilary Marusak, PhD, welcomed the students to start judging. "The power is in your hands," she said. "Take advantage of us and our knowledge, this is an opportunity for all of us to learn and have fun!" Dr. Marusak is MPSI affiliated faculty and founder of and advisor to the Science Policy Network-Detroit (SciPol-Detroit). SciPol-Detroit advocates for science career development opportunities, encourages community efficacy, and bridges the gap between scientists, lawmakers, and the lay public. Dr. Marusak received the prestigious 2023 Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Award for creating and advancing SciPol-Detroit.





# IMH Movie Night Fans Flame of Advocacy

by Ryan Cunningham  
MPSI Project Assistant

Imagine your jubilation as an expectant mother. Imagine your hopes and dreams for your child. Imagine your absolute trust in your healthcare providers. Now imagine you die in childbirth, your family's grief compounded by the preventability of your death. Nurses and doctors disregarded your symptoms because – you are a person of color. These and similar stories comprise the documentary, *Aftershock*.

In February the metro-Detroit chapter of the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health (MD-AIMH) hosted a screening of *Aftershock* for about 60 people at the Freer House, home of MPSI. MD-AIMH represents professionals from Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties who work with and for infants, young children, families and caregivers. They also offer trainings and continuing education scholarships for members and support to agencies and programs.

Assistant Research Professor Dr. Carla Barron helped to organize the event. She co-chairs the training committee for MD-AIMH and is clinical coordinator for MPSI's Infant Mental Health Dual-Title Training Program.



most powerful moments was when the partner of a departed mother said, “It was safer for our parents to have kids than it is for us today.”

“That quote made me question our growth as a country and society,” Dr. Barron said. “With our state-of-the-art technology and medical procedures, this should not be.”

Karol Wilson, LMSW, training co-chair for MD-AIMH, led an audience discussion following the film. Ms. Wilson has spent more than 30 years as an IMH consultant, trainer, supervisor and

mentor. She helped the audience process their responses in ways that promoted connectivity and action. Participants discussed that childbirth for women of color is greatly impacted by systemic and institutional racism.

The movie, though deeply troubling, inspired positive discussion. Dr. Barron believes strongly that



Viewing the film was a chance for MD-AIMH members to reconnect after years of COVID-19 precautions, Dr. Barron said, and to contemplate the tragedy of maternal death caused by racism and oppression. She saw “tears, anger, frustration and sadness” in the audience. For her, one of the film’s

training to examine cognitive bias and honor each woman’s experience is integral to promoting advocacy and change. “I believe that being in-person and connected made this a powerful experience and fanned the flames of advocacy,” she said.





Our **Early Childhood Center** resumed full enrollment and activities this year. Guest readers returned to adoring listeners. Families came back to participate in classroom events. Special guest MPSI Board member Nancy Swords brought Madagascar hissing cockroaches to race across the classroom. And the spring field trip to the Real Life Camp & Farm in Canton brought about 50 awe-struck students and parents into close contact with cows, goats, bunnies, pigs and horses. A year to remember . . .







*The historic 1892 Freer House has proudly served as home to Merrill-Palmer faculty, administrative office and meeting rooms since 1921.*

## What's New at the Freer House?

*By Ryan Cunningham*



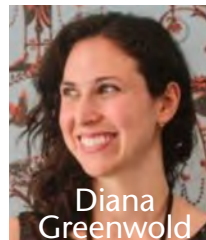
### Smithsonian Centennial

It began with the 1906 gift from Charles Lang Freer of his entire art collection and became the Smithsonian's first art museum in May 1923 on the National Mall in Washington, DC. The National Museum of Asian Art, formerly the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur Sackler Gallery, celebrated its centennial this year. Freer House Director William Colburn was invited to the DC festivities and attended with VP of WSU Government and Community Affairs Patrick Lindsey. The duo met VIPs

from around the world, many of whom were surprised to learn the details of Freer's life and home in Detroit. Several of them expressed serious interest in visiting Detroit to tour the Freer House, something Director Colburn is happy to accommodate.

### The Peacock Room in Detroit 1904 -1919

Dr. Diana Greenwold, Lunder Curator of American Art, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian's National



Museum of Asian Art, presented a riveting lecture in December on the Peacock Room's period in the Freer House. There was a tremendous response to the event, with around 150 viewers and a lively Q&A session monitored by guest host, Dr. Kenneth Myers, curator of American Art at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

### Charles Lang Freer, Chinese Art, and the Making of Global Detroit

The Freer House and the Friends of Asian Arts & Cultures presented a unique lecture by Ian Shin, PhD, U-M assistant professor of History

and American Culture in February.

Dr. Shin discussed how Freer's genuine desire to learn about and care for Chinese art and antiquities placed Michigan in the vanguard of "America's Pacific Century." Over 300 people from across the US and overseas registered for the program and Dr. Shin received overwhelming praise for his scholarship.



### Garden Fund Grows on WSU Giving Day

The Freer House tripled its Garden Fund goal during WSU's April Giving Day, raising close to \$8,000 from 52 donors! This will cover the annual costs of maintaining the Freer House garden for 2023 and assure the garden's continued health and growth.



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## October 24, 2023 Giant Step Teen Conference



Michigan's longest running teen conference returns to Wayne State's Student Center on October 24. Teens will join from schools and home schools across metro Detroit, meeting and talking with teens who may seem different to them until

they discover all that they have in common. Since 1983, teens have entered as strangers and exited as friends. "Inclusion, Harmony, Acceptance" is the Giant Step motto. And don't we all need more of that?

Like to support the cause?  
Click the QR code  
for our donation page.



## Coming Soon! Explorations in Development

*Continuing Education Conference for Professionals*

Watch for details in late spring about MPSI's next Explorations in Development conference in early fall. This long-running collaboration between MPSI's Healthier Urban Families and Infant Mental Health programs will be virtual and focus on fatherhood. Explorations in Development has an outstanding reputation as a provider of timely, high quality, CE certified information to help social workers and other clinicians hone their services.



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