



2019/2020

MPSI REPORT **AWARDS**

Weatherston Scholarship

in Infant Mental Health Selects First Awardees by Cheryl Deep Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute awarded

graduate students, Leina Filipczak and Emily

Brown, the 2020 Weatherston Scholarship for their exceptional work in the Infant Mental Health

Dual-Title Degree Program. The specialized

their master's in social work and interested in

degree is open to WSU students working toward

working with infants, very young children and their families. The Weatherston scholarship was created under the leadership of IMH Director Ann Stacks, PhD, to honor the important work of Deborah Weatherston, PhD, in infant mental health (IMH) in Michigan, the country, and across the world. The scholarship has been funded through generous donations from dozens of faculty members and community professionals in social work, psychology and early childhood. It is designed to support diversity in the infant mental health field and provide financial support to deserving gradu-

ate students to cover some of the extra costs incurred in choosing the Dual-Title Degree option. "It was a tremendous honor to be recognized for the work I did with infants and families long ago, my years at the Merrill-Palmer Institute as the co-founder and director of the Graduate

Certificate Program in IMH, and the collaborative work I was privileged to carry out with the Michigan Association for Infant Mental Health and the nationally recognized Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health," Dr. Weatherston said. "I wish to give a special thank you to every donor who has made this fund possible."



Leina knows Dr. Weatherston (Debbie) by reputation, though Covid-19 restrictions have kept them from meeting in person. Weatherston's seminal article defining an IMH specialist is Leina's checklist to keep her on track. She will graduate in May 2021 and would like to get experience working directly with moms and babies before eventually starting a non-profit for women with substance disorders or have experienced significant trauma. "My other passion is knitting which can be very therapeutic in a group setting," Leina said. "When I had my son, knitting

was my lifeline. He would sit on my lap and play with the yarn while I interacted. I like the idea of a family-friendly therapeutic healing through art

program that includes knitting."

me," she said. "I've totally absorbed myself in it. I

read the IMH books for fun. I just love it."

Leina's son is now 8 and her second child is due in January. Working, parenting (including home schooling during the pandemic), field placement and attending graduate school has been stressful. She deeply appreciates the help provided by this scholarship and others she has received. "I would have had to put school on hold if not for this scholarship help," she said. makes all the difference."

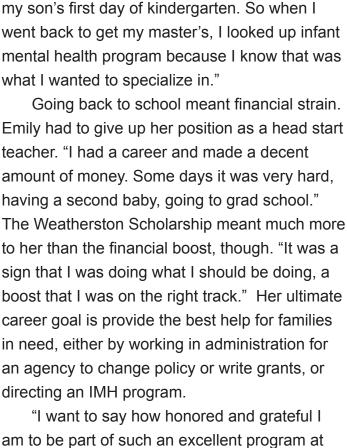
Emily Brown

Emily, 27, will graduate with her MSW in

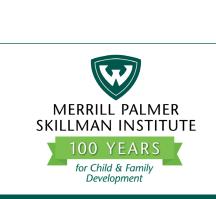
2022. She works part-time and is the mother of two: an 11-year-old and 1-year-old. She first learned of infant mental health as a high school student, pregnant with her first child and fortunate to have an astute guidance counselor who put her in touch with an infant mental health therapist through The Guidance Center. "She was wonderful," Emily said. "She was with us through

has been a powerful and wonderful experience. The IMH community is kind, understanding and receptive. I am grateful to be a part of it." "I am thrilled that the scholarship is so meaningful to Leina and Emily," Dr. Weatherston said, "as I hope it will be to others in years to come." To learn more about the Deborah Weatherston

Wayne State. My professors are so knowledgeable and supportive. And they are in it, in the field, part of the research and interventions, part of what makes IMH what it is," she said. "This



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