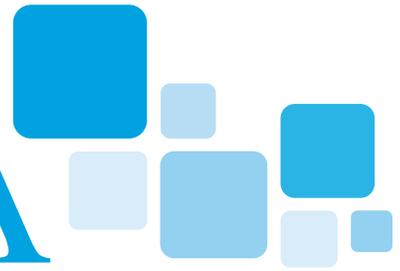


MSSWA



MINNESOTA SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION

FALL 2020

Newsletter

President's Message

Greetings Minnesota School Social Workers!

What a year this has been! Throughout the summer I hope you were able to find some time to take advantage of all the good things around you. Parks, lakes, walks, runs, fishing, boating, trails, hikes, short trips to your favorite part of Minnesota with your family! Our favorite spot as a family is Lutsen, Minnesota however, this year our kids requested to switch it up. We headed to Lanesboro, Minnesota for some kayaking, trails, golf, campfires and games every night. If you need a good spot for your family, I highly recommend Cedar Valley Resort. Very family friendly and so many things to do! It certainly was refreshing and a much-needed trip before the kickoff to the Fall, 2020 school year.

This year will be like nothing we have experienced in education. I write this as our districts are all trying to make the best decisions about how we will be supporting our kids and families academically, their mental health, basic needs as well as their social, emotional learning. Our districts across Minnesota are committed to do the best they can to keep their staff safe and healthy. There are so many unknowns and the numbers continue to ebb and flow. I am hopeful that the vaccine will be conclusive in being effective to slow the spread.

Since the order of Shelter in Place by Governor Walz we have met as a full board and executive board on a very consistent basis. Region Representatives met every Tuesday for the first 6 weeks of the order. We voluntarily connected, shared resources and supported each other during this difficult time with our colleagues, families and the youth that we work with day to day. The Executive Board has been meeting weekly for an hour to discuss how to support our Regions, discuss legislative meetings and review MDE meetings that several of us attend on a weekly basis. The silver lining is that there have been so many connections at the state and local level with Minnesota School Social Workers present at these meetings sharing what we do throughout the state.

They recognize the very impactful work that you are all doing and the commitment that you have for the safety and security of our youth and families. We have all had to pivot and get outside of the toolboxes that we typically use now more than ever. We are good at that by nature however, the current crisis has pushed our skill sets to new levels and will continue to do so.

It has been an honor to sit on the state and local level meetings during this time of unrest not only due to COVID but also the discussions regarding racial inequities and the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmed Arbery to name a few. School Social Workers along with their student support team members will continue to support the next steps of healing and advocate for those who do not have a voice.

The SSWAA Delegate Assembly facilitated by Christy McCoy was on July 15th and 16th, 2020. Sherry Murphy and I had the pleasure of attending. The connection with fellow School Social Workers across all states is always amazing learning work. School Social Workers that attended talked about some of the top concerns of their states and how we can address the concerns across our states. We also discussed the National Certification model that will be rolled out this year as a pilot project at a variety of districts throughout the states. There will be more information coming about this change in licensure.

If you ever have the opportunity, I would strongly suggest attending the SSWAA delegate assembly. There are so many great School Social Workers across the US that you can learn from and embed their practices in your state and local districts. It is truly a collaborative conversation throughout the meeting days.

Finally, I want you to think about your own self-care. Who are the people that you can talk to? Who supports you? We really need to identify those people that you can problem solve or just talk to as we move into this next school year. How do you balance

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SAVE THE DATE - MSSWA

MSSWA 2020 Fall Conference **Virtual** October 26-28, 2020

MSSWA 2021 Spring Conference April 5, 2021

MSSWA 2021 Summer Conference June 14-16, 2021

(Continued from page 1)

your home and work life? Most of our districts have EAPs that can be accessed. Take time to reach out when you need them. Encourage your fellow colleagues who may not be connected to this group to use the resources around them too. We have to put our own oxygen masks on first to support our students and families that we are working with in the coming school year.

Thank you for your time, commitment and passion to this very important career as School Social Workers. You are needed, appreciated and critical for the work that is ahead. I look forward to working with all of you this school year!

Sincerely,

Molly Fox, LICSW
MSSWA President
mnorri1@isd77.k12.mn.us
507-420-5237



SAVE THE DATE!

MSSWA 2020 Fall Conference

October 26-28, 2020

VIRTUAL On-Line Conference

MSSWA 2021 Spring Conference

April 5, 2021

Shoreview Community Center (Shoreview Room)

4580 Victoria Street N, Shoreview, MN 55126

MSSWA 2021 Summer Institute

June 14-16, 2021

Chase on the Lake Resort

502 Cleveland Boulevard W, Walker, MN 56484

MINNESOTA SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER OF THE YEAR 2020- TABITHA WHEELER



The Minnesota School Social Workers Association proudly announces the selection of Tabitha Wheeler as the Minnesota School Social Worker of the Year for 2020. Tabitha has been a school social worker for the High School for Recording Arts in St. Paul for 17 years. She earned her LSW from Winona State University in 2001. Nominator, Joey Cienian, director of Educational Programming, wrote, “She has done exemplary and heroic work sustaining and being a foundational rock in support of our schools mission which is to find and nurture the genius and creativity of every student despite any life changes or setbacks. We believe strongly that Tabitha’s dedication to our mission has changed the lives of hundreds of students and families over her many years of service.”

Tabitha’s co-worker, Stephanie Miska, Assistant Director of Special Education, shared that “Tabitha is truly a student advocate extraordinaire. She ensures that she educates her students on their rights as individuals, provides them guidance in how to navigate through a system that may continue to oppress and contribute to barriers that frustrate and devalue human dignity and worth of our students. She maintains the highest level of integrity, with her actions, intentions and advocacy skills. She will go up against an army if she feels her students are in any way shamed, marginalized or their rights are being violated.”

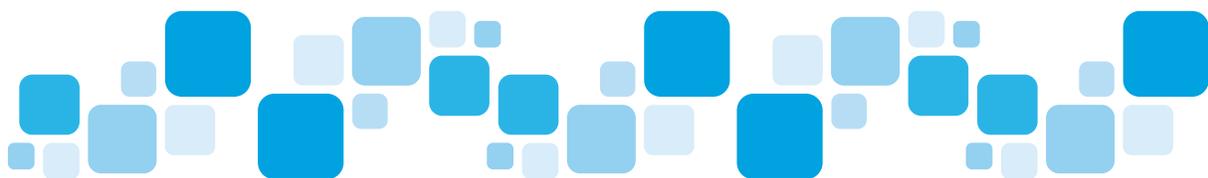
Tabitha makes strong connections with her staff as well continuing to educate them on how to meet students' needs. Dan Frey, Director of Student Engagement, writes, “From the moment we met, she changed the way I thought about how education and social work services relate to one another in a school setting. She instilled in me the idea that our young people must have their social, emotional and physical needs met at a high level by a caring community before we can begin to build trust and engage in education.”

Community member and former co worker, Paris Yarbrough, Esq., shares “Tabitha recognizes that many of the youth enrolled at High School for Recording Arts are dealing with communal violence, ostracization due to their sexual orientation or LGBTQI identity, suffering from PTSD and other issues. However, Tabitha consistently challenges herself to evolve in understanding issues that plague the communities she works with.”

Working in a district where they have anywhere from 100-150 of the students struggling with homelessness and high mobility, Renee Swanson, Assistant Director of Educational Programming, adds “Tabitha is deeply connected to community resources for our students and Tabitha has been an advocate of getting resources for our students on-site at HSRA so that our students can access them at school, eliminating the need for students to seek assistance outside of school. Tabitha has also done extensive grant work and collaboration efforts in order to acquire on site, nurses, housing advocates and a full time therapist for our students.”

MSSWA is so excited to acknowledge Tabitha Wheeler and her dedication to the profession. Her knowledge, her support for her colleagues, her commitment to students and advocacy to the families she serves makes her our Minnesota School Social Worker of the year for 2020! Dan Frey’s words sum it up best. “She has undertaken this professional selflessness without expectation of recognition, but with the sole goal of making our young peoples’ lives better, every moment of every day.” Congratulations Tabitha!

Please enjoy Tabitha’s acceptance speech: <https://youtu.be/v7VPhNhAtvM>





SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER OF THE YEAR NOMINEES

Aimee Love

Aimee Love has been employed as the school social worker at Northern Lights Community School in Grand Rapids for the past 7 years. Aimee was nominated by the director of NLCS, Mike D. Hamernick, who stated she is the “best social worker ever”. In addition, he stated: “In my time working with Aimee Love, I have learned so much more about service, care and compassion for others more than I could ever return in a lifetime.” Aimee’s co-workers describe her as a terrific advocate for students and families and a person with a lot of empathy and patience for all people. She is willing to go up and beyond day after day to ensure the safety of all and to ensure everyone’s voice be heard. She is said to be one of the most valuable assets within the school and community. She has many roles to fill within her position and although the tasks are many, she is reported to always have a smile on her face and consistent with her effort. Aimee is also a breast cancer survivor. In 2017 she gave a speech to her community prior to going on leave to combat her rare form of breast cancer. Her co-workers stated the speech empowered others to look to the future and “to be vigilant about giving compassion to our fellow humans...” Aimee earned her BSW through College of St. Scholastica in Duluth. She has also worked as a medical social worker, an outreach and education coordinator for the SNAP program, and as a medical health practitioner.

Julie Leistico

Julie Leistico has been employed by the Foley Intermediate School for 20 plus years. She was nominated by her Principal, Eric Bjurman who stated “Julie is an outstanding educator and is student centered.” He continued that she is “willing to go the extra mile and is a true advocate for the students she works with. Julie is intentional about building positive relationships with students and families. She then uses that relationship building to help equip students with the skills to be successful in the school setting.” Julie has taken the lead on the student intervention team and has developed interventions from opinion- based interventions and support to data informed practices. She also developed a building wide Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Handbook used by students, staff and parents. Her principal added that she is “a tireless worker and is always there for students”. She also is supportive to the special education staff. Julie attended college at St. Benedicts and has a MSW and is a LICSW.

Stephanie Ochocki

Stephanie Ochocki is the Anoka Hennepin District PreK-12 School Social Worker. Julie Beaufaux writes, “Prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, our school was struggling with a different epidemic; youth suicide. We lost more than 10 students to suicide this year before entering distance learning. Each and every time our Crisis Team was enacted, Stephanie was our lead. She will give credit to lots of other people, but it was her steadfast vigilance to best practices, compassion for students, and crisis responder support, that created the best possible environment for students to receive support after these tragedies.” She has chaired committees for professional organizations, written and received grants, provided training the trainer education, and co-lead the School Social Work Department in Distance Learning. Her entire resume reflects a strong professional passion for school social work in all areas- legislative, direct practice, Department support, student support and academia.

Jennifer Sandbeck

Jennifer Sandbeck is a Social Worker for Waseca Public Schools. Her career has been and continues to be a lifetime commitment to serving children and families in need. She has arranged services for children and families experiencing homelessness. Jennifer provided case management to adults with disabilities. Serving as a liaison between home, school and the community, she has presented in outreach, conducted skills groups and home visits. She created a backpack food program, food drives and multiple programs that serve and meet the needs of students and families. Jennifer is an advocate, she has outstanding leadership and follow through skills along with a kind and compassionate heart that is in alignment with her work and passion. Her service and contributions are worthy of support and recognition of Social Worker of the Year.

CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT 2020

Kathy Lombardi-Kimani

We are pleased to announce the 2020 Career Achievement award recipient, Kathy Lombardi-Kimani. Kathy has been the lead School Social Worker for the St. Paul Public Schools since 2002. Kathy has a long list of achievements including being a presenter at numerous professional conferences. She has provided clinical supervision and mentoring, as well as educating and advocating for the role of school social worker. Kathy collaborates with community resources and is a vital member of school teams as well as community teams focusing on children's mental health. She was instrumental in obtaining funding for school mental health support and education. Kathy continues to be a strong advocate for children and the profession of School Social Work. We are proud to have her representing the best of School Social Work in Minnesota! Congratulations Kathy!

We had the opportunity to celebrate Kathy on April 6th with a car parade, check out the video! <https://youtu.be/eQApU-AIthc>





A CALL TO ACTION

By Christy McCoy MSSWA Legislative Chair; SSWAA President Elect

As we embark on a new school year, the current climate of our nation has significantly impacted us both personally and professionally. As a nation and individuals, we are in the midst of navigating individual, vicarious and collective trauma resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many others. These crises have shed light on longstanding social inequities and injustices toward African Americans as well as other marginalized groups. As a profession, social work “has traditionally been looked to for leadership and support in altering conditions that impede human potential and dignity” (White, 1982, p. ix). Not only have School Social Workers been called to adjust our practice in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic but we are also confronting the critical question “*in what ways am I disrupting racism and systemic oppression in my practice, school and community?*”

Our united voices are critical in fighting for inclusion, respect for diversity and equitable access for all individuals from birth to death and social justice. The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others demand immediate action not only from our policy leaders but from our communities as a whole. Our expertise and unique position as school social workers provides us the opportunity to facilitate courageous conversations, spearhead initiatives to promote inclusion and safety as well as support the healing process.

Advocacy is one of the cornerstones of our work and is guided by our professional values of **service, social justice, dignity and worth of a person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence**. Although the roles and responsibilities of school social workers can vary from school to school, district to district and state to state; every school social worker engages in advocacy. Our advocacy efforts have been crucial in unpacking and addressing the current and long-standing inequities caused by COVID 19 and the trauma caused by racial injustices and history of police brutality towards communities of color. To increase our impact and disrupt systems, policies and practices that create inequities, school social workers must engage and extend our advocacy efforts beyond our school buildings. Without our advocacy, the status quo remains and inequities persist.

As school social workers, we have increasingly recognized that the question is not “should we embark in advocacy initiatives” but rather “how can we get involved to be true agents of change to help our students, families, schools, and communities.” Advocating for change and dismantling social injustices takes place at all levels but we either often struggle to know where to start or feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of the charge. A great way to begin is to remember that you are not alone! One of the benefits of being a member of MSSWA and SSWAA is that the more members we have, the stronger our voices. At the same time, MSSWA and SSWAA work diligently to ensure our school social work perspective is always at the table and that our decision-makers understand the value of school social work interventions in decreasing barriers, promoting safe school climates, holistically meeting the needs of the whole child and promoting academic achievement. For example, one of the highlights of the summer was that members of the MSSWA Board and Legislative Committee met with Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan to discuss our roles in meeting the needs of students and families during COVID 19 as well as our work to dismantle systemic oppression. Finally, MSSWA and SSWAA have created a variety of tools and resources to support and enhance your practice such as position statements, PowerPoint presentations, Webinars, etc. Collectively we have the ability to transform systems and communities.

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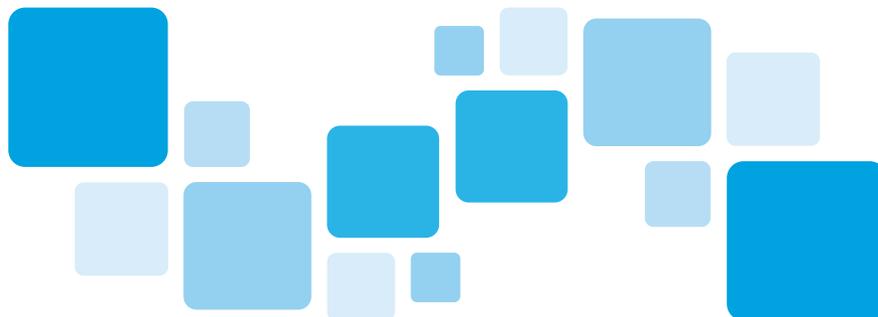


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What steps can you take this year to strengthen your advocacy efforts? Think about what is manageable as well as the assets you bring to your practice. How can you utilize these same assets to be a true agent of change? Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Join MSSWA/SSWAA
- Respond to Action Alerts – MSSWA and SSWAA make it easy by providing a template where you can simply add your name, share an example from your practice then cut and paste to an email to your state and U.S. Senators and Representatives
- Present to your local school board
- Attend MSSWA Day on the Hill March 2021.
- Become a member of building or school district leadership committees such as school safety.
- Get involved, volunteer for a MSSWA or SSWAA committee where your assets can be shared.
- Stay informed about issues impacting children, families, mental health, education and the profession of social work by following your legislators on social media.
- Attend town hall meetings hosted by your legislators.
- Invite a school board member, legislator to your school.
- Write an article about “A Day in the Life of a School Social Worker” or about initiatives you implement to ensure all students feel safe, valued and respected for a local newspaper, MN School Board Association Quarterly Journal, Education MN Magazine.
- Present on the Role of School Social Work in Crisis Prevention/Trauma Informed Schools, etc. at conferences like MN School Mental Health, MN Secondary Principals Association, MN Elementary School Principals Association, MACMH, etc.
- Create a School Social Work Bulletin Board.
- Provide professional development to your staff showcasing your mental health expertise on topics like suicide prevention, trauma informed schools, etc.

As always let us know about the results of your advocacy efforts as it helps inform our work as a state and national association. To learn more about MSSWA and SSWAA Legislative Priorities for 2019 please visit www.msswa.org and www.sswaa.org advocacy pages. Stay tuned for Legislative Updates from MSSWA/SSWAA Legislative Committees. Thank you for all you do on behalf of students, families, staff, communities and the profession! Have a great school year!



REGION 1 *update*

We are seeking representatives for Region 1. If interested or have questions about the role, please contact Molly Fox at: mnorri1@isd77.org



REGION 2A *update*

Region 2A will have a Fall meeting in October. Location to be determined. One suggestion was a book club. If you have any recommendations for a book we could all read, please respond to Melissa.Ahlschlager@jccschools.net. At this meeting we will be talking about distance learning and SEL curriculums/ideas, ways to stay in contact with students and families and resources we have used during this time of distance, in-person and hybrid learning.

Area resources:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OycLQfDxmpvphOAARtYbVwXqn2CL7oBVacq-t8DAAmg/edit?usp=sharing>



REGION 2B *update*

We hope that you have been able to relax this summer with family and friends and find time to enjoy yourself. As we prepare for the 2020-2021 school year, whether that be in person, hybrid, or distance learning, there will be a continued need for local mental health, food, housing, and financial support for our students and families. Please check out the following resources below to help you support your students and families. Additionally, please visit mssw.org for a wealth of resources and encourage your colleagues to join MSSWA!

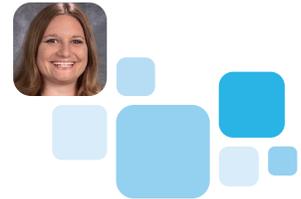
- 24 hour response
TEXT to TALK:741741
Crisis Text Line | Text HOME To 741741 free, 24/7 Crisis Counseling
- MVAC ://www.mnvac.org/
- Echo Food Shelf- 507-345-7508
- CADA House- 507-625-7233
- Partners for Affordable Housing 507-387-2115
- SS Boutique- ssboutiquemn@gmail.com
- Salvation Army- 507-345-7840
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** 800-273-TALK (8255).
- Police: 911

We are in the process of scheduling our fall region 2B meeting. The meeting will be virtual. Please watch your emails for an invite!

Michelle Halverson, MSW, LICSW & Kris Madsen, MSW, LICSW- Region 2B Co-Reps

michelle.halverson@sibleyeast.org

kmadsen@isd2135.org



REGION 3 *update*

Greetings, Region 3 and welcome back to what is sure to be an unforgettable school year! We hope this newsletter finds you rested and rejuvenated to continue to make an impact in your school and community. Please take the time to renew your MSSWA membership and encourage your colleagues to join our amazing organization.

Covid-19 has taken much of the time and focus of our country, but as school social workers, we will continue to provide support and guidance to students and their families, schools, and communities. Our mental health expertise will be an asset to all, especially during this unprecedented time.

Please see below for resources:

Central MN Crisis Response Team

Children’s mental health crisis response phone numbers (by county)

Crisis Text Line

MSSWA: Responding to Covid-19

Supporting Children during COVID-19

Talking to Kids About the Coronavirus

United Community Action Partnerships

Thank you for all you do and have a wonderful year!
~Tara Prom & Carmen Tschida





REGION 4A *update*

Welcome back to a fall like no other!

As social workers, we are flexible and ready to take on whatever may come our way!

At the same time, we will need to put in even more effort in the area of self-care and boundaries.

Look for Region 4A meeting to be held in October. More details to come as we get the start of the year up and going!

Below is a list of resources retrieved from a website created by Anoka-Hennepin School Social Worker and Region 4A member Megan Lagasse, MSW, LICSW.

For more information on the available resources, or other membership needs, please reach out. This is our time to connect and grow stronger together. Sending you all positive thoughts and social work energy as you begin your time with your students again.

Julia Messenger, MSW, LICSW Region 4A Representative
763-506-5531
Julia.Messenger@ahschools.us

Resources

Back to School

School Supply and Food Distribution

Anoka County-

August 27th, 3:00-7:00pm

Multiple Locations:

- Northtown Mall
University & 85th Avenue
Blaine, MN
- George Enloe Park
631 Lund Blvd.
Anoka, MN
- Huset Park West
3965 Jefferson Street NE
Columbia Heights, MN

Hennepin County-

Community Emergency Assistance Programs (CEAP)

School Supply Distribution

- 7051 Brooklyn Blvd
Brooklyn Park, MN
Call 763-566-9600 to schedule a pick up

Food Resources

Hennepin County

CEAP (Community Emergency Assistance Program) 763-566-9600

6840 78th Ave N, Brooklyn Park

Open to ages 12-24 on Wednesdays from 3-6pm, open to everyone M-F

CROSS Services 763-425-1050

12915 Weinand Circle, Rogers

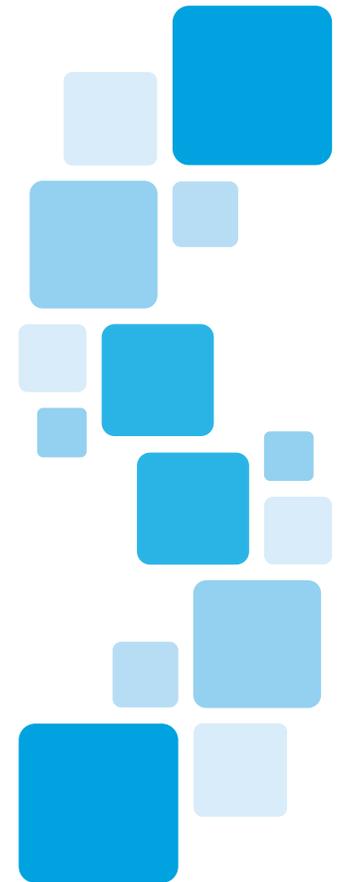
Fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable foods

Serves West Champlin, Dayton, Maple Grove, Corcoran, Osseo, Rogers

Salvation Army

Multiple locations

Lunches, Dinners, Food Shelves, and Food Distributions



(Continued from page 10)

Anoka County

Community Food Calendar serving Anoka County (updated monthly!)

Family Table Meals, food distributions, Manna Markets, and food shelves

Hope4Youth Drop-In Center Food Shelf 763-323-2066 Email: info@hope4youthmn.org

2665 4th Ave N, Suite 40, Anoka

Serves youth ages 16-23, Mon-Fri 2pm-7pm

Hope for the Community 763-757-4266 Email: mail@hopeforthecommunity.com

1264 109th Ave NE, Blaine

Open Thursday 2:30-5:00pm

Salvation Army

Multiple locations

Lunches, Dinners, Food Shelves, and Food Distributions

Shelter

Family in Anoka County:

- Get on Family Promise 763-568-7365 wait list and keep them updated (not an emergency shelter)
- Mary's Place (M-Th, 10:00 am or 1:00 pm with whole family, 2+ minor children)
- If domestic violence situation, try Alexandra House 763-780-2330 or call Day One crisis line: 1-866-223-1111
- If family is able to split Up (Adults to Stepping Stone, Kids to family/friends, Safe Families or Together for Good or youth shelter)
- If staying in the car, problem-solve a safe place to park, place to access restroom and outlets. Provide blankets, pillows, gas card, etc. if needed.
- Do Coordinated Entry assessment if applicable: Salvation Army 763-324-1215

Family in Hennepin County:

- Call **Shelter Team** (families in Hennepin County have a right to shelter) 612-348-9410
- Try **Mary's Place** (M-Th, 10:00 am or 1:00 pm with whole family, 2+ minor children)
- If domestic violence situation, call **Day One** crisis line: 1-866-223-1111
- If family is able to split Up (Kids to family/friends, **Safe Families** or **Together for Good** or **Crisis Nursery** or youth shelter)
- If staying in car, problem-solve a safe place to park, place to access restroom and outlets. Provide blankets, pillows, gas card, etc. if needed.

Financial

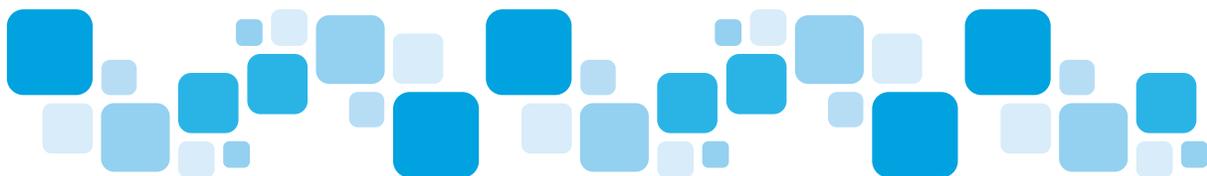
Families/individuals may qualify for some, none, or all of these programs depending on income, family size, age, circumstances, and disability.

Bridge to Benefits is a website screening tool that can help you identify what programs you might be eligible for.

Hennepin County Resource Line: 612-348-3000 (8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 7 days a week)

Help available in different languages

If you're impacted by COVID-19, you can call this number for help with clothing, financial assistance, grocery and household supplies, medical care and equipment, or medication.



REGION 4B *update*

Hello Region 4B! Please welcome our new Region Co-Representative, Rachel Rydberg.

Rachel Rydberg is a social worker at Jordan Middle School. She's been a school social worker for seven years and has worked with students in grades K-12. She's excited to serve as a MSSWA co-representative with Nancy to connect with other school social workers in her region and to support the work of school social workers in MN.

Please reach out to either Rachel or me at any time during the school year.



Area Resources:

Families Moving Forward (emergency shelter) (Scott & Carver counties): [Emergency Shelter](#)
 CAP of Scott, Carver, & Dakota Counties: [CAP | Community Action Partnership of Scott, Carver, Dakota Counties](#)
 HEART Ministry at Hosanna Church (Shakopee): [HEART Ministry](#)
 FISH Partner Network: [FISH Partner Network - Meet the Needs of our Community](#)
 Scott County Human Services: [Economic Assistance](#)
 Scott County Mobile Crisis Unit: [Scott County Mobile Crisis Services](#)
 Jordan Area Food Shelf: (952) 292-8759
 Reaching our Communities Kids: [ROCK](#)
[MSSWA Covid-19 Resources](#)

Region 4B Fall Meeting: To be announced! We will send out information to our region shortly!

Nancy VanHorne, MSW, LICSW
nanvan37@gmail.com
 Rachel Rydberg, MSW, LICSW
rrydberg@isd717.org



REGION 5 *update*

Hello, Region 5! Summer is waning and many of us have already returned to "school mode." While the year doesn't quite look the way many of us had hoped to return to learning this fall, we stand ready to support the needs of our students and families during these challenging times amidst the global pandemic, continued racial injustices, and social unrest. We begin this school year in many ways similarly to years past while also unlike any other. Although we do not know yet what our full year will look like, we do know that we will continue to show up for our students, families, and staff, and continue to make safe and equitable learning environments for our students our priority.

As your region rep, I am right there with you and here for you. The goals of MSSWA are to support members and the communities we serve through advocacy, lobbying, continued professional education, and by continuing to grow our member voice. Please connect with your colleagues and share with them the power we have as a group, that membership helps amplify our collective voice, as well as funds lobbyists to represent us, our profession, and ultimately our students.

I would love to hear from you with any ideas you have for how MSSWA can support you in your work. Feel free to e-mail or share any thoughts and best of luck to you with your start to the year!

Laura Lyman, LICSW, Minneapolis Public Schools

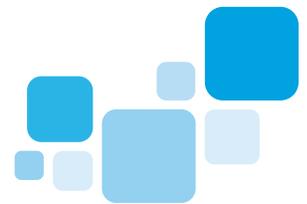
REGION 7 *update*

Hello Region 7! I hope you have been able to enjoy the beautiful summer weather and take some time to relax and renew. As we prepare for the uncertainty of the 2020-2021 school year, there is a wealth of resources available through [MSSWA](#), [SSWAA](#), and [SSWN](#). Please refer to the SSWAA article by Stephanie Ochocki for recent positions papers on returning to school during COVID-19 and solidarity position with Black Lives Matter.

Don't forget to renew your MSSWA membership and please encourage your colleagues to join! If you are considering membership, check out the 'Benefits to MSSWA Membership' article in this newsletter and other resources on the [website](#). Please also feel free to contact me with questions about MSSWA's mission and activities and the benefits for members.

Self-care and mutual support will be important as we start what promises to be an unpredictable and challenging school year. In September, I will reach out to see if we can put a virtual regional meeting together this fall.

Take care and be well,
Heather Rappana, MSW, LICSW
Region 7 Representative
heather.rappana@duluthedison.com



REGION 8 *update*

Hello Region 8! We are so excited to begin another year with all of you in NW Minnesota.

Sherry and I are looking forward to being able to meet with you again virtually this fall. It was great to "see" so many of you in the spring. Watch your email for updates on a meeting date this fall. We are also asking that you share any CO-VID resources that you have found particularly helpful in your area with our group. If you email them to Sherry or Jeri we will combine them and have a list to share with all of you. We know it takes the village and this challenging time in our lives is no different. MSSWA has been working hard to have shared resources as well. Please be sure to check them out.

Here is a little info about us and a call to action for one of our members. :)

I have been a school social worker for 12 years. I currently work as an elementary school social worker at New Heights Elementary District 595 in East Grand Forks, MN. I have served on the MSSWA board as a Region 8 Rep for 6 years and in Region 3 prior. I previously served as Recognition Chair for 3 years and just completed a term as the MSSWA Board Secretary. I am currently the State President Elect to the MSSWA Board.

Co- Representative Sherry Murphy, MSW, LICSW smurphy@egf.k12.mn.us

I have been a school social worker for 26 years. I work out of a special education cooperative (NWRIC) and currently serve in 2 districts, Viking Elementary and Tri-County Elementary Schools. I have been involved with the MSSWA board for over 24 years as a Region 8 Rep, Recognition Chair, Promotions Chair and as State President. I was also honored to be the MSSWA School Social Worker of the Year in 2010.

Co-Representative Jeri Nomeland, LSW jnomeland@nwrlic.com

So you may have noticed that our Region 8 Co-Representative, Sherry Murphy was elected to serve as MSSWA's President elect this year! This creates an opening for a new Region 8 Co-Rep. We are excited to offer this opportunity for a member to be involved at the State level!

Please reach out to Sherry or Jeri if you have any questions or are interested in becoming a co-representative. Being a part of the State board is a great opportunity to increase your network of SSW colleagues and to also be a greater part of the advocacy efforts for SSW services across the state.



REGION 9 *update*

Hello and welcome to a new year! We will see what this new year has in store - flexibility and willingness to adapt to whatever comes our way will be so important! Below is a list of mental health, food, housing and other services available in our area:

Mental Health Resources

- Local crisis hotline - 218-850-HELP (4357) or 877-380-3621
- Becker County Human Services 218-847-5628 (emergency assistance, community health, WIC, childrens' and adult mental health and child protection)
- Lakes Crisis and Resource Center - 218-847-7446
- Rural MN Cep -218-846-7400 or rmcep.com (questions on unemployment applications)
- Prairie St Johns - 701-476-7200 (mental health assessment and emergency services)
- Lakeland Mental Health Center- 218-847-1676 (Becker County's community mental health clinic)

Other:

- Becker County Food Pantry - 218- 846-0142
- MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership (housing, fuel assistance and Head Start services) 218-847-1385

Lake Park Audubon School District Mental Health Personnel

- Lisa McLeod -LPA School Social Worker - 218-325-0754 ext 3157 or lmcleod@lpa.k12.mn.us
- Jamie Nelson- LPA School Counselor - 218-325-0754 ext. 1081 or jjnelson@lpa.k12.mn.us
- Shanna Garcia, Stellher Human Services Mental Health Professional - 701-404-7210 or shanna@stellher.com or sgarcia@lpa.k12.mn.us
- Zach Priddy, Stellher Human Services Mental Health Professional - zpriddy@lpa.k12.mn.us

We are still working on the 3 models for the LPA District for the fall and will have our plan listed on our district website: lakeparkaudubon.com.

Most schools in our region are in a similar planning place.

As new region reps, we were not able to schedule any regional meeting before the shutdown, so it will be our goal this year to schedule a meeting this fall. Good luck in your new year!

Lisa McLeod and Sheila Stadstad

REGION 10 *update*

Dear Region 10 Members:

2020 has brought unique challenges and innovations to our practice as school social workers. Whether you are preparing for in-classroom learning, hybrid, or distance instruction, it is crucial that we consider fresh ways to prepare our school communities to be a welcoming, helpful, nonjudgmental, and caring environment. As always, this starts with our own self-care practice. Here are some great resources for you to check out:

- [Self-Care for Educators](#)
- [Self-Care for Educators During COVID](#)
- [Responsive Circles for COVID-19](#)
- [Reunite, Renew, and Thrive](#)
- [RISE Index](#)

We hope to have information regarding our Fall Region 10 Meeting out to you soon! Watch your email for an invite!

-Warmly,
Dan Porter, MSW, LICSW & Cara McGlynn, MSW, LICSW- Region 10 Co-Reps
dporter@916schools.org
cmcglynn@916schools.org



REGION 11 *update*

Greetings School Social Workers from Region 11! As I write this note, I have mixed emotions about everything that has happened in our world over the past six months. At times I was overwhelmed with the constant influx of media stories about COVID and other times it was all the political nonsense. At times I was saddened by the hate and division. At times I was angry at the injustices I witnessed. At times I was frustrated because I wasn't able to connect with some of the students with whom I work. But always, and most importantly, I was thankful to be a School Social Worker and to still have a job that allows me to journey alongside students and families as they navigate this sometimes-uncertain world.

I have been a region representative for over 20 years, and I have loved every minute of it, but my time has come to step down and allow someone else the opportunity to experience the inner workings of our organization, MSSWA. I have learned so much about our profession and organization through the networking opportunities and by serving on the MSSWA Board. I would like to ask each of you to thoughtfully consider stepping into this role for our region. The rewards are great and the friendships you make will last a lifetime. Please let me know if you have any questions about this position on the board. Region 11 has another representative, Melissa Sutlief, so you would not be doing this position alone, but as a team.

Stay tuned for information this fall regarding our Region 11 MSSWA meeting. Take care and have a wonderful school year.

Tammie Knick, MSW, LICSW
Region 11 Co-Representative

Melissa Sutlief, MSW, LGSW
Region 11 Co-Representative
msutlief@browerville.k12.mn.us



REGION 12 *update*

What comes to our minds right away is, WOW! This has been an interesting 6 months for sure in the world of education and has put our social work skills to the test. As charter schools, we are required to follow all the guidance put forth by the MN Department of Education. However, since we are considered our own entity, we are able to make decisions for what is best for our students and families. Since we provide support for school social workers across the entire state, we want to provide you with statewide resources:

- <https://www.mncharterschools.org>
- <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/chart/scres>
- <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/guides/guides?issue=charter>
- <https://centerforschoolchange.org/minnesota-charter-school-resources>

If you are new to working in a charter school and/or would like to be added to our network, please contact Courtney. We hope you are all healthy and happy as we venture into the 2020-2021 school year. Please reach out to us anytime for support!

Courtney Stenseth, LICSW
School Social Worker @ MTS Secondary, Minneapolis
Secretary for MSSWA
cstenseth@emailmtcs.org

Carolyn Disch, LICSW
School Social Worker @ Blue Sky Online Charter School
carolyn.disch@blueskyschool.org



INTRODUCING PRESIDENT-ELECT, SHERRY MURPHY!

Sherry Murphy, MSW, LICSW, began her social work career by earning her BSW at Mankato State University in 1994, with the intention to earn employment as a School Social Worker. After completing a second internship in a medical setting, Sherry was offered a position and worked in hospital, home care, hospice, long-term care settings and also in vocational rehabilitation until 2009 when she was hired to work as a School Social Worker for Hutchinson Public Schools. In 2014, Sherry moved to East Grand Forks, Minnesota and began a brief employment as a School-Linked Mental Health Professional with East Grand Forks Public Schools and In-Home Therapist through Northwestern Mental Health Center prior to becoming the School Social Worker for the EGF district in 2015. In 2006, Sherry received her MSW through The University of St. Thomas/College of St. Catherine MSW program. During her master's program, Sherry completed her internship in an inpatient mental health hospital. Sherry joined MSSWA as a Region 3 Co-Representative in 2012 and then as Region 8 Co-Representative upon her move to Northwest Minnesota. Shortly after joining, she became co-chair and then chair of the Recognition Committee; and in 2018 Sherry became MSSWA Secretary. Sherry has previously served as Treasurer on the Minnesota Nursing Home Social Workers Association Board and is currently Vice-Chair on the Polk County DAC Board of Directors. Sherry believes MSSWA offers a voice to School Social Workers from across the State and hopes to continue to grow that voice promoting the many ways school social workers are essential in schools, through our support and advocacy of children and families and reducing barriers to learning.



INTRODUCING MSSWA SECRETARY, COURTNEY STENSETH!

Courtney Stenseth, MSW, LICSW began her social work journey at MN State University, Mankato where she earned her BSW in 2004 with a focus on child protection. She was encouraged by her mentor and professor, Dr. Chris Black-Hughes to pursue grad school and consider school social work. Courtney went directly to grad school where she did her clinical placement at St. Louis Park High School where she fell in love with school social work. Dr. Black-Hughes also encouraged Courtney to work in a field that she would not have considered to gain well rounded clinical experience. Courtney worked in adult mental health for the two years she was attending grad school and gained valuable mental health knowledge. She graduated with her MSW in 2006. Courtney's first school social work job was at Oh Day Aki Charter School in Minneapolis where she proudly served primary Native American Students. This opportunity was followed by another school social work position at Emily Grey Charter School for another couple years. An opportunity presented itself to Courtney to be the first School Social Worker at MN Transitions Charter School (MTCS), which she pursued. Courtney has been at MTCS for almost 10 years and she considers MTCS her forever home. At MTCS she is also a Restorative Coach, Licensing Supervisor for other social workers in the district, Field Supervisor for interns and the District Homeless Liaison.

Courtney began her involvement with the MSSWA Board in 2012 as a Region 12 Representative for all Charter School and ALC Social Workers throughout all of MN. She also serves on the Network and Outreach Committee for MSSWA. When Courtney began her career, macro practice was on the back burner. However, the knowledge she has gained by being on the MSSWA board has positively impacted her practice and she continues to be amazed with the advocacy work MSSWA does for all school social workers from MN. Courtney is happy to explore this additional role as Secretary.

SNAP IN SCHOOLS OUTREACH TOOLKIT

Submitted by Stephanie Ochocki

The Minnesota School Social Workers Association promotes and supports our students, families and school communities and our profession through involvement and advocacy with a variety of stakeholders. One such group that the MSSWA legislative committee began working alongside during the 19/20 school year is the Breakfast After the Bell (BAB) coalition. Led by Second Harvest Heartland, this coalition seeks to improve health outcomes for Minnesota's children by increasing the availability of free school breakfast for Minnesota's learners. In response to inquiries from school partners about resources that could be utilized to support students and families struggling due to the economic devastations caused by COVID-19, Second Harvest Heartland created the SNAP in Schools Outreach Toolkit to educate about the benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and to provide tools and resources that help schools reduce barriers to support family access and receipt of SNAP program benefits. Second Harvest Heartland can take SNAP referrals, so the tools are designed to help schools make referrals to SNAP Navigators and help streamline the experience for families. Understanding the important role that school social workers play in maximizing access to community-based resources, leadership from Breakfast After the Bell and Second Harvest Heartland reached out to share their Snap in Schools Outreach Toolkit with MSSWA in hopes it would support our work serving students and families.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Brad Lundell, MSSWA Legislative Lobbyist

The 2019-2020 school year has clearly been unprecedented in terms of disruption and that disruption will likely continue into the 2020-2021 school year. School social workers have been on the frontlines in helping staff and students deal with the changes brought about by the pandemic.

One of the biggest issues facing the education system during the pandemic has been the vulnerability that many students experience when the support provided by school support staff is not readily available. Getting needed educational assistance to students and families in need has been at the top of Governor Walz' education agenda and has been expressed clearly in a number of his Executive Orders that provided the outline for how educational services were delivered during the distance learning period that began in March and ran through the remainder of the school year. In addition, the Walz administration made student support services one of the funding priorities for the revenue that will be coming from the Federal government as part of the various stimulus bills that have been passed in Washington, D.C.

The Legislature has also recognized the importance of school social workers and MSSWA was involved in a number of hearings and meetings discussing how services were being provided during the distance learning period.

Given the truncated nature of the 2020 Legislative Session, there is not much to report on what happened. A very slim education policy bill passed during the first special session in June that contained several helpful measures for school districts, but little of it will have an effect—one way for the other—for school social workers. There was an effort mounted early in the session where MSSWA and the Coalition of Licensed Social Workers were advocating to amend OHI Criteria related to ADHD to include a community based LICSW to the list of qualified diagnosticians and update the language to include criteria for ADHD as outlined within the DSM V, but there was not enough time to build the support necessary to see the bill introduced and heard.

The 2021 Legislative Session is bound to be interesting. The economic damage caused by the pandemic has yet to be accurately tallied, but it is relatively certain that the Legislature will be looking at a significant budget deficit when it convenes next January. That likely means little in terms of new funding or new programs coming out of next year's work, but it is important to note that the budget deficit that occurred as a result of the collapse of the housing market in 2008 was larger and that the state still managed to make investments in public education. It will certainly be interesting to note.

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MSSWA is working on a law change that would bring more revenue to school districts that has a reasonable shot of happening in 2021. Social workers by and large do not receive third party reimbursement for services provided to special education students as part of their IEP. Services provided by school social workers in the evaluation stage are reimbursed, but the school social work community knows that it continues to provide an array of services to special education students after they qualify for special education services. There has been a long-running disagreement between the education and human services community as to whether post-evaluation services provided by school social workers should qualify for third party reimbursement. Current law—or rather interpretation of current law by the Department of Human Services—does not allow reimbursement, but legislation is being drafted and the groundwork is being laid to give this issue a thorough discussion in 2021. MSSWA is working closely with the Minnesota Administrators for Special Education (MASE) and other education groups in hopes of forging a strong coalition that will see current law changed. This change would not cost the state anything in terms of revenue as it is Federal revenue that is in play.

I also want to mention that legislation to include a community clinical social worker to the list of qualified diagnosticians outlined in education law for the disability of Other Health Impairment specifically for ADHD will likely be discussed again, although there remains opposition to that proposal in some quarters.

In closing, I want to again say how proud I am to represent MSSWA at the Legislature. School social workers are dedicated to making the world better for students by providing the type of assistance to students and families that other support personnel really cannot. The year ahead will certainly be a challenge and I welcome all of you to contact me with any questions or comments you may have as we move ahead.



School Social Work Association of America



Pictured above: School social work leaders from across the United States participate in the annual Delegate Assembly. This year's annual July event was conducted virtually.

As the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly changed the educational landscape in March 2020, the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA) was immediately responding with **resources and support** for school social workers.

- **SSWAA Position Paper: Response to COVID-19 Health Crisis and the Role of School Social Workers**
 - **SSWAA COVID-19 FAQ Qualifiers**
 - **SSWAA COVID-19 FAQ**
- **SSWAA Resolution Statement: The Impact of School Social Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

When protests and riots broke out across the country due to the death of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis, SSWAA again stood ready with a response to guide and support school social workers and state organizations, while continuing to collect relevant **resources for school social workers to promote racial equity and social justice**.

- **SSWAA Position Paper: Solidarity Statement with Black Lives Matter**

And as both the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and unaddressed racial inequalities will impact reopening school in Fall 2020, SSWAA again leads with guidance and support for school social workers.

- **SSWAA Position Paper: School Reopening Priorities and Guidance during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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SSWAA is the only national association solely dedicated to the specialty practice of school social work with the mission to have a school social worker in every school and the investment in legislative advocacy at the federal level that can help make that happen. As a result of the 2019 SSWAA Delegate Assembly, the SSWAA Board made changes to the membership fees and benefits structure. Please consider joining SSWAA to help strengthen our collective voice and gain access to resources and support helpful to your practice. Here are just some of the great benefits for members:

- Professional Liability Insurance (Malpractice Insurance) included for free with your membership!
- Bi-weekly 'E-Bell' electronic news briefs located with resources and information pertinent to school social work.
- Full access to SSWAA's website including practice tools, evidence-based practices, research findings, position papers, SSW promotional products, etc.
- Technical assistance on key issues affecting SSWs.
- Publication discounts on the SSWAA Workshop Series & SSW Journal.
- Conference discounts
- Membership discounts: MSSWA is affiliated with SSWAA, so if you are a member of MSSWA you can also receive a \$25 discount good toward SSWAA products.

Check out the full details on membership at <https://www.sswaa.org/join-sswaa>. Membership rates are as low as \$40/year for the basic membership. However, the full and premiere membership status provides the highest access to relevant tools and resources that will support your school social work practice, including the School Social Work Resource Library (SSWRL), a database of resources that are vetted for their evidence by a team of academics and practitioners.



We welcome the ideas and input of our members to further support and promote the profession. Please reach out with your needs and ideas! You can find me at: stephanie.ochocki@gmail.com

Join SSWAA to strengthen your practice!

Stephanie Ochocki, DSW, LICSW
Midwestern Rep. SSWAA

FIND MSSWA ON ALL THINGS SOCIAL MEDIA!

