

## NACSW Convention in Grand Rapids!

The Convention 2015 Planning Committee is pleased to announce several exciting keynote speakers and preconvention institutes sure to inspire and stretch you at our annual convention from November 12-15, 2015 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Our nationally known keynote speakers this year include Dr. Michelle Loyd-Paige, Dr. Gary Anderson, and Lisa Sharon Harper.

At the opening session on Thursday evening on November 12<sup>th</sup>, **Dr. Michelle Loyd-Paige** will challenge participants to begin their pursuit of shalom with the end in mind. Her presentation is entitled *“Pursuing Shalom: Moving Forward While Thinking Backwards.”* Dr. Loyd-Paige is the Executive Associate to the President for Diversity and Inclusion and the Dean of Multicultural Affairs at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**Dr. Gary Anderson** will be this year’s Alan Keith-Lucas lecturer on Friday morning, November 13<sup>th</sup>. He will be presenting on *“Building Resilient Professionals and Organizations: Christina Principles and Workforce Development,”* which will synthesize



Gary Anderson



Lisa Sharon Harper



Michelle Loyd-Paige

research on resiliency and on leadership and apply this knowledge to both social workers and human service organizations. Dr. Anderson is a Professor of Social Work and former Program Director at Michigan State University’s School of Social Work.

At the evening banquet on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, **Lisa Sharon Harper** will explore the biblical concept of shalom and its implications for the social worker and the Christian as we engage the world with justice and compassion. Her presentation is entitled, *“Pursuing Shalom: Serving Our Neighbors Locally and Globally.”* Lisa Sharon Harper is the Director of



Mobilizing for Sojourners.

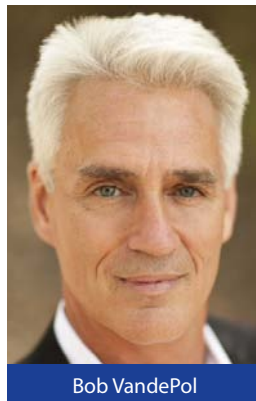
There are also four outstanding preconvention institutes planned for November 12<sup>th</sup>: *“Trauma Focused Care – One Christian Agency’s Work to*

*continued on page 2*

## NACSW’s April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Audio Conference Webinar

NACSW is pleased to announce that it will be offering its next audio conference webinar entitled *“Leadership in Times of Crisis: Christ’s Call to Competent Compassion”* on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 pm – 2:15 pm Eastern Standard Time. This audio conference workshop will be presented by Bob VandePol, Director of Pine Rest’s Employee Assistance and Church Assistance Programs in Grand Rapids, MI.

Dr. VandePol maintains that there is no greater honor....and no greater responsibility than to be there for people at the most traumatic time of their lives. This presentation will present evidence-informed best practices in the delivery of critical incident response services to people and organizations impacted by tragedy, and do so with special focus upon the role of faith-in the provision of these services.



Bob VandePol

Dr. VandePol is the director of Pine Rest’s Employee Assistance and Church Assistance Programs. Former president of Crisis Care Network, the world’s largest provider of critical incident response services to the workplace, Bob is a nationally known keynoter, author, and editorial subject matter expert. He managed CCN’s NYC Command Center after 9/11 and led subsequent response campaigns following several other US tragedies.

Audio conference webinars have been designed so that any person or group can participate simply by calling a telephone number provided by NACSW from any telephone in the US or Canada. In addition, interested participants may simultaneously log on to these sessions from their computers or mobile devices to follow the presenter’s PowerPoint

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## NACSW Board Appointment and Election Results

NACSW is pleased to announce that Dr. Kimberly Hardy from the University of St. Joseph in Hartford, CT has been appointed by NACSW's Board of Directors to fulfill the last two years of an unexpired three year term on NACSW's Board effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. In addition, the two candidates who were elected by the membership to serve on NACSW's Board with terms running from 2015 - 2017 are:

- Karen Helder, Grand Rapids, MI
  - Amy-Lynne Hilderbrand, San Luis Obispo, CA
- Board officers for 2015 are as follows:
- President: Denis Costello, Toronto, ON
  - Vice President: Kesslyn Brade Stennis, Baltimore, MD
  - Secretary: Allison Tan, Forest Park, IL
  - Treasurer: Terry Wolfer, Columbia, SC
- Please keep these Board members and officers in your prayers for wisdom and guidance in the year ahead.

### CATALYST

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Editor: Rick Chamiec-Case,  
Executive Director

Address: P.O. Box 121, Botsford, CT 06404  
Tollfree Phone: 1.888.426.4712  
Website: [www.nacsw.org](http://www.nacsw.org)

*Catalyst* is published four times a year for members of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work. The purpose of *Catalyst* is to communicate with the NACSW membership about association news, events, activities and developments. It includes statements of opinion by a variety of members and friends, which do not necessarily represent the views of NACSW.

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## Convention

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*bring Shalom to Refugees*" presented by a team from **Bethany Christian Service**, "*Respect, Opportunity and Beauty: The Three Currencies of Shalom Communities*" featuring staff from **Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF)**, "*Congregational Social Work in 2015*" facilitated by Drs. Diana Garland and Terry Wolfer, and "*Grappling with Faith: Teaching with Decision Cases*," led by **Drs. Terry Wolfer and Mackenzie Huyser**.

NACSW also offers a variety of opportunities for faith-based organizations to make connections with convention participants and get the word out about their programs and ministries at NACSW's Convention 2015. Several of these opportunities include:

1. *Exhibiting*: Reserve exhibit space in our convention exhibit hall for just \$368 if you are a non-profit, or \$420 if a for-profit — and 50% off these rates if you are a current organizational member of NACSW!

2. *Advertising*: For just \$110, we will "stuff" your brochure or some other promotional item in the convention bag that all participants will receive at the registration desk.

3. *Event Sponsorship*: Your organization can make a major contribution and/or sponsor a specific convention event — in exchange for enhanced visibility with our 350+convention participants.

You will find additional detailed information forms for all three of these promotional options by visiting our website at [www.nacsw.org](http://www.nacsw.org).

And, while you are in the Grand Rapids area attending the NACSW conference,



there is a great deal to do in the second largest city in Michigan. The convention will be held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, in downtown Grand Rapids. There are lots of places to visit in the area, including the Grand Rapids Art Museum, DeVos Performance Hall, Grand Rapids Children's Museum, Gerald R. Ford Museum, Van Andel Arena and the John Ball Zoo. Check out [www.experiencegr.com](http://www.experiencegr.com) and [www.grcity.us/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.grcity.us/Pages/default.aspx) for additional information about the city.

Most of all, plan to join us for Convention 2015 in Grand Rapids, MI from November 12<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>!

As you can see, NACSW's Convention 2015 promises to have something for just about everyone. We invite you to join other Christians in social work and social services from all over the US and Canada for an exciting three and a half days together in Grand Rapids in November — you don't want to miss it!

## Audio Conference

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presentation on-line, and engage in interactive chat during the session.

For additional information (including session learning objectives), and/or to register on-line, go to NACSW's website at <http://www.nacsw.org>, or you can contact the NACSW office tollfree at 888-426-4712 to register on the phone.

Current NACSW members and staff working for NACSW organizational members may participate in this audio conference and earn CEUs at no cost. Friends of NACSW may participate

in this session for just \$26 (or \$16 for fulltime students), or in groups for \$79. Participants are eligible to earn 1.25 continuing education contact hours approved by the Association of Social Work Boards by receiving a score of 80% or better on a short twelve-question quiz based on the material covered in the conference.

We hope you are able to join us on April 27th for this important audio conference workshop — we encourage you to register today!

# Why So Much Focus These Days on NACSW's Emerging Leaders?

I have been working for NACSW for almost 20 years now, and before that I was on NACSW's Board of Directors starting back in the late 1980s. In fact, though it might be hard to imagine looking at me now, when I first became involved in NACSW, I was a young, emerging social work leader, having recently graduated with my MSW, just beginning my career as a social worker, and just starting my family.



Rick Chamiec-Case

I remember vividly how vital NACSW was to me in those younger years as I was trying to figure out who I was as a social worker – and particularly, who I was and was becoming as a Christian in social work. I remember sitting at a Board table with Alan Keith-Lucas, David Sherwood, and others, and how encouraging it was to listen to and learn from others who were so passionate about both their faith and their social work, and who deeply believed that

the two had so much to offer each other. The impact of those connections on me was immeasurable, perhaps more significant than any other during my early formative years as social worker.

Once during the early 1990s when my friend Terry Wolfer was rotating off NACSW's Board of Directors, he said he felt good about the future of the Board because – and I guess this was somewhat uncommon in those days – there were a number of younger NACSW members who had recently joined the Board, which ensured that there would be a younger perspective playing a role in the leadership of the association. I have thought more about what Terry meant by this in recent years, and I think he was really on to something. NACSW – and not just NACSW, but all organizations, whether they be churches or agencies or membership associations – need diversity of all kinds to be strong, healthy, resilient and sustainable. The kinds of diversity they need include gender diversity, ethnic diversity, diversity in members' expertise and experience – and, of course, age diversity. I think this is part of what Paul was getting at when he wrote in the letter to the Corinthians about Christ's body being made up of many different members which

all have their distinctive and crucial roles to play in the overall health of the Church:

*12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. . . . If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body (1 Corinthians 12: 12; 17-19).*

In a similar way, NACSW needs the perspective and energetic participation of younger, emerging leaders to be whole, to strengthen NACSW so that we can better serve and nurture Christians in social work young and old alike. I am grateful for the way NACSW supported me when I was just starting my career 30 years ago. My hope and prayer is that NACSW grows exponentially in its ability to support and nurture social work leaders of the future.

So I look forward to seeing where NACSW's newly established young, emerging leaders initiative leads us in the months and years ahead. I believe it has great promise to make NACSW stronger both now and in the years to come!

## Partnering on the Spring Issue of SWC:

### Becoming a More Vital Christian Presence in Social Work

NACSW invites you to take a moment to pause and celebrate what the Spring, 2015 special issue of *Social Work and Christianity (SWC)* – “Religion and Spirituality in Competency-Based Social Work Practice” - represents to NACSW and to our profession. This special issue is a tangible example of NACSW being a vital Christian presence in social work. It also signals two professional social work associations working together to help equip social workers to understand the role of religion and spirituality in competency-based practice with clients and communities.

Developed and co-edited by Michael Sherr and Altaf Hussain, this special issue

was supported by a unique partnership between NACSW and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The editorial team of *Social Work & Christianity* provided logistical and editorial support to the co-editors, and CSWE provided administrative staff time to assist with this collaboration as well. Importantly, NACSW has agreed to share an electronic version of this special issue so that CSWE can post it on their website so that their members can also access this valuable material.

The collaboration on this special issue represents the second time NACSW and CSWE have partnered together in recent years. In February of 2012, several

members of NACSW joined a diverse group of social work scholars to form the CSWE Religion and Spirituality Workgroup and Clearinghouse. This workshop, which Michael Sherr co-chairs with Ed Canda, exists to enable CSWE to provide resources for social work educators to help faculty and students address religion and spirituality issues more sensitively in competency-based practice. Of equal importance, the workgroup formed under CSWE serves as an example of what is possible when social work educators work together to support the engagement of diversity in practice, while appreciating and respecting

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# Lifelong Learning

January 17<sup>th</sup> of last year was freezing cold in Minneapolis, Minnesota. That evening I pulled into a parking lot on the campus of Augsburg College and sat in my car for what seemed like forever. People who know me well might guess that my hesitance to exit the vehicle was due to my strong aversion toward sub-zero temperatures. Although that may have had something to do with it, the thought of walking into my first graduate school class was the true culprit for this angst I was feeling. It was a mixture of emotions including fear, inadequacy, and vulnerability - as well as excitement. I had put off graduate school for a number of years while I was wrapped up tightly in my career, and now sitting in the parking lot, I knew there was no turning back. Could I handle balancing full-time work, full-time class, *and* a part-time internship? Was I willing to sacrifice my personal life for the next 18 months? Would a Masters in Social Work degree really even benefit my professional future? It was time to find out.



Mallory Birch

and graduate school has allowed me to reconnect with my responsibilities to the social work profession by being immersed in literature and research, and engaging in discussions about social justice and advocating for macro level change with other professionals.

Going through this experience, I began to reflect on how this same dynamic might apply to my spiritual life. In most cases I think about my faith as it relates to my own personal relationship with Christ. There is nothing wrong with that, but as I get caught up in my day-to-day life, I forget about my responsibilities as a Christian to the larger faith community. If I am not immersed in His word and surrounding myself with people who can challenge me and help me to grow, then I can lose sight of the greater purpose of my faith. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says that, “all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (NIV). The Bible is our guide to remind us of the fundamentals and build up our competence as servants of Christ, and other Christians form the community that provides the support, encouragement, and wider perspective that

enriches and grounds me in my faith.

Fast-forwarding to today, my perspective has changed immensely as I am only a few short months away from graduation. The program has stretched me and challenged me in ways I never thought possible. Rather than draining me and tiring me out, I became rejuvenated and excited about the possibilities in my future. I am so grateful that I chose to step out of my car that January evening and participate in something that would better me both as a professional and as an individual.

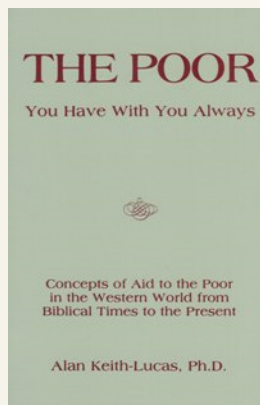
My prayer today is that we do not forget the importance of a lifelong commitment to learning. In our work as social workers and in our walk with God, we should be absorbing the literature that teaches us best practices and challenges us to be better. I pray that we do not simply go through the motions of our day, but are able to take a step back and think about how our actions are impacting the community around us. I pray that we take the time to inform ourselves of the social problems that exist in our communities and surround ourselves with professionals and servants who will join us in the fight against oppression.

Mallory Birch, LSW

## PUBLICATION AVAILABLE FROM NACSW

### ***THE POOR YOU HAVE WITH YOU ALWAYS: CONCEPTS OF AID TO THE POOR IN THE WESTERN WORLD FROM BIBLICAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT***

Alan Keith-Lucas. (1989). Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work. \$20.75 U.S. (or \$16.50 for NACSW members or for orders of 10 or more copies).



*The Poor You Have with You Always* traces the thinking, both Christian and secular, that has lain behind society's treatment of the poor throughout the centuries in the Western world from the Old Testament's concern with justice to American welfare policies in the 1980s; from the writings of the early church Fathers to contemporary articles in professional journals. This book is designed to help students acquire a conceptual background for practice with the disadvantaged together with a sense of the history not only of the social work profession but of human compassion as a whole. It has been tested with undergraduate and graduate classes in Christian and state-supported colleges and universities.

Want to meet local NACSW members? Area representative contact information is on page 11. E-mail pictures of your local NACSW event to [info@nacsw.org](mailto:info@nacsw.org).

# Newest Trainings Added to NACSW's Online Continuing Education Program

NACSW is pleased to announce that since the last issue of *Catalyst*, we have added several new trainings to our online continuing education program at [www.nacsw.org/CEU](http://www.nacsw.org/CEU).

Don't forget NACSW's "Buy One Training & Get One Free" promotion during March!



Julie Griffin

New trainings recently added to our program (which now has 85+ trainings) include the following:

## **Forgiveness: A Pathway to Emotional Healing**

*Robert Enright, Ph.D.*; video-based training; 4.0 CEUs

Based on Dr. Robert Enright's 25-years of peer-reviewed, empirical scientific research, this workshop will develop participants' confidence in their own forgiveness skills so they can help their clients bring forgiveness to themselves and to their lives. Session participants will: 1) learn what forgiveness is and what it is not; and 2) discover and learn a pathway to forgiveness. In addition, participants will learn how we can all bring forgiveness to our families, schools, work places and communities for better emotional health.

## **Navigating End-of-Life Issues with Clients**

*Julie Griffin, MSW*; video-based training; 1.25 CEUs

End-of-life issues are a part of life we will all encounter whether prepared or not. The social work profession is in a unique position to promote positive and factual understanding while demystifying societal fears surrounding matters of life and death. Social workers who are informed about end-of-life issues empower their clients and the general public to move beyond preconceived ideas toward sustainable action that will meet long term goals helping reduce their fears of the future.



## **Virtues and Character in Social Work Practice**

*Terry Wolfer, Ph.D. and Cheryl Brandsen, Ph.D.*; text-based training; 6.0 CEUs

Social work practitioners are social change agents that spend much of their time examining social structures and advocating for policies and programs that advance justice and increase opportunity. Social justice is central to the mission, professional development, and ethical

decision making process in social work practice. However, the development of



Holly Oxhandler

character traits and virtues within Christian social workers is equally important in furthering social justice and working with diverse populations.

This training brings to light questions about professional

identity, relationships, and the ability to thrive and sustain social change through the understanding and development of a virtue framework. This framework combines philosophy, theology, and pedagogical practices to offer a holistic approach to professional development and explores the traits of charity, faith, generosity, gratefulness, and justice in social work practice.

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## NACSW'S "BUY ONE TRAINING & GET ONE FREE" OFFER FOR SOCIAL WORK MONTH

To help you celebrate social work month in March, NACSW is pleased to announce a special "Buy One Training & Get One Free" promotion for NACSW's online CEU program. This special arrangement makes it possible to access double the number of our online trainings for your dollar throughout the month of March!

To participate in this special "Buy One Training & Get One Free" promotion, any time between March 1st and 31st:

1. Register and pay for any online training offered through NACSW's online CEU training program at: <https://nacsw.org/CEU/>
2. Send us an email with the title of a second training (of equal or lesser CEU value) that you would also like to take, and we will register you for this second training at no cost. Please make sure to include your license number in this email.
3. NACSW will send you a confirmation email with your log-in information for this free training within 24 hours (it will take a little longer on weekends).

All 85+ online CEU trainings are "fair game" in this special promotion. Feel free to "Buy One Training & Get One Free" as many times as you wish throughout the month of March.

Don't hesitate to contact us at [info@nacsw.org](mailto:info@nacsw.org) with any questions you might have. Take advantage of this special offer to stock up on CEU trainings (approved by the Association of Social Work Boards) sensitive to the thoughtful integration of Christian faith and social work practice!

## MEET THE BOARD

### Allison Tan

I am excited and humbled to be a member of NACSW's Board of Directors. As I think back, it brings a smile to my face to consider how a naïve Taylor University student attending the 1999 Annual Conference in St. Louis has been transformed and strengthened into a seasoned social work practitioner and academic – largely through my constant connection with NACSW. The tagline for NACSW reads: “NACSW: A Vital Christian Presence in Social Work.” NACSW has also been a vital presence in my life, personally and professionally for 15 years now.



Allison Tan

I have attended nearly every annual conference since that first one in 1999 where I served as a BSW student volunteer. After two more conferences as a BSW student and one more as an MSW student (from Case Western Reserve University), I transitioned my membership to that of a social work practitioner. From 2003 until 2008, I worked as the Program Supervisor of HIV & Substance Abuse services at Lawndale Christian Health Center on Chicago's west side. In that capacity, NACSW became particularly “vital” to my sense of self and my professional identity as a Christian social worker as I came face-to-face with the daily challenges of

balancing Christian faith and social work practice within a tension-filled field like that of HIV and AIDS.

During that time in my life, I took every opportunity to present workshops at NACSW conferences on the issues I found challenging and thought-provoking in my practice: understanding HIV and AIDS, considering best practices for working with LGBT clients, ethical referral, etc. Folks came to my workshops to hear from an “expert” on these issues; little did they know that for every bit of expertise I shared, I also gleaned wisdom from each person who attended.

Over the years, the relationships I have formed with NACSW members and its leadership have been paramount to my personal and professional development. Informal fellowship, formal networking, and everything in between have been (for me, and many others with similar journeys within NACSW) the greatest reward and the single greatest reason for my commitment to renew my membership and return to the conference every year. Somewhere along the journey, I also began also to have opportunities to write and be published in NACSW publications – both the journal and NACSW's main textbook, *Christianity and Social Work*. Writing on best practices and ethical challenges associated with work with LGBT clients within the context of our Christian faith traditions has become a strong passion for me and an area of constant excitement.

In 2008, I left full-time social work practice and returned to academia to pursue my PhD in social work at Loyola University in Chicago. After defending my

dissertation in October, 2011, I took about seven months off from the world of social work to welcome my son into the world – the greatest adventure thus far in my life! Then, in August of 2012, I accepted my current position as an Assistant Professor of Social Work in the BSW program at the University of St. Francis (USF) in Joliet, Illinois. I teach a variety of courses primarily in the areas of Human Behavior in the Social Environment, macro practice, research, and health care. In the Fall of 2014, I am also beginning a new venture at USF aimed at improving student writing and APA citation through our Writing Across the Curriculum efforts.

Working in academia affords me the great opportunities to merge my personal scholarship (a continued research agenda focused on the intersection of LGBT issues and Christian faith) and my commitment to service to the profession. It is in this capacity to that I am so pleased to serve on the NACSW Board of Directors; it is truly my way to plant my roots even deeper into an organization and a gathering of people who have been a “vital presence” in my life for more than 15 years. I am most excited about the ways I will be able to focus my efforts as a Board Member on engaging with our youngest NACSW members – students and young professionals. It is my sincere hope to be able to give back to them a portion of what was invested in me by those with whom I connected back in 1999. Believing wholeheartedly in the mission, vision, and presence of NACSW, this new leadership venture is one I cannot wait to begin.

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## Continuing Education

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### Integration of Clients' Spirituality among Christians in Social Work

Holly Oxhandler, Ph.D.; video-based training; 1.0 CEU

This workshop introduces the Religious/Spiritually Integrated Practice Assessment Scale and describes the views and integration of clients' religion/spirituality into practice among a national sample of social workers who self-identified as Christians. Based on these findings, implications and suggestions for social work practice are discussed.

Online continuing education through NACSW offers easy, “on-demand” access to a wide array of high quality training options sensitive to the thoughtful integration of faith and practice accessible via computer or mobile device. All trainings included in this program provide CEUs accredited by the Association of Social Work Boards.

NACSW's online continuing education program offers high-quality trainings in several different formats including video-based trainings, audio-based trainings,

text-based trainings and virtual study groups, a more interactive approach to small group, online continuing education.

On-line trainings cost between \$15-\$20 per CEU hour. Members of NACSW with receive a 20% discount on all courses, and additional discounts are available for alumni of program partners (<http://www.nacsw.org/CEUPartners.htm>) as well.

For a full catalog listing, go to: [www.nacsw.org/CEU](http://www.nacsw.org/CEU).

## TECHNOLOGY COLUMN

### New Social Work Job

This fall I took my first official social work job. I've worked in the nonprofit world and used

a lot of my social work skills, but I never had a job where I was called a social worker! I am a School Social Worker at a high need elementary school in beautiful Minneapolis.



Nick Cross

The story of arriving at this point in my career is a great one, but not super relevant. But I do want to share some technology thoughts from my experience thus far.

#### Understanding the required tools.

What are the basic tools that you are required to use in your position? It is important to seek out training and to find people who can help you understand how to use the technology tools you need for your position. I've found it is really helpful to do both. Training can give you the "official" way to use technology while you are also learning some of the "shortcuts" that long-time users know. You'll be able to figure out what works best for you.

**Using technology to network.** Because I have just joined a new speciality with the social work profession, I have a lot to learn! I've been able to use Twitter to connect with other school social workers, other school professionals, and professional organizations like NACSW. I have also found social work, counselor, and teacher blogs to be extremely helpful with my transition to this new role. Using Twitter and reading blogs have helped me discover useful resources, and reading

others' stories has been extremely helpful.

**Working Smarter.** How can technology help you work smarter? It might not be super obvious when you first start your new job, but hopefully over time you can figure out ways to make technology do some of the work for you! Can you type your meeting notes instead of handwriting them? Can you use mail merge to simplify tasks? Can you do work from a mobile platform like Google Docs? One example I found is a school counselor who wanted to meet and survey every student at her school. Instead of writing out each survey response, she created a Google Form that she was able to use on her iPad to organize the data in a simple spreadsheet collected while sitting across from the student!

**Using Google.** Google can find almost anything: obscure references, old professional papers, etc. Don't be afraid to go to Google and hit search. I have found some great resources that other school districts and other school social workers have put together and posted to the Internet. I'm a Google guy, but I'm sure Bing can get some useful results as well! Google can often answer questions we are afraid to ask.

**Being "Old School."** Sometimes we need to use some "old school" technology like the telephone or walking across the hallway to talk to a colleague. I have found that sometimes only searching on Google to answer a question has left me empty handed or with outdated information. Instead I could have called my lead or another social worker to quickly get the correct information. Yes, sometimes human interaction IRL (in real life) is better than digital connections!

I hope these thoughts are helpful even if you aren't in the midst of a job transition. It is always good to take a step back and reflect on our work practices to see if there are ways to improve them.

## Special Issue

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differences.

To read NACSW's special issue on "Religion and Spirituality in Competency-Based Social Work Practice," go to:

[http://www.nacsw.org/Publications/SWC/SWC42\\_1.pdf](http://www.nacsw.org/Publications/SWC/SWC42_1.pdf)

To find out more about the CSWE Religion and Spirituality Clearinghouse, go to:

<http://www.cswe.org/CentersInitiatives/CurriculumResources/50777.aspx>

## UPCOMING AUDIO CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS AND PODCASTS

### AUDIO CONFERENCES

April 2015  
Audio Conference/Webinar  
"Leadership in Times of Crisis:  
Christ's Call to Competent Compassion"  
Bob VandePol  
April 27, 2015  
1 pm – 2:15 pm (Eastern)

September 2015  
Audio Conference/Webinar  
"Interventions to Prevent  
Human Trafficking with Youth"  
Elizabeth Wilson  
September 28, 2015  
1 pm – 2:15 pm (Eastern)

### PODCASTS

April 2015's Featured Podcast  
"Spirituality, Child Trauma  
and Expressive Arts"  
Donald Phelps  
Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2012  
in St. Louis, MO  
on October 27th, 2012

May 2015's Featured Podcast  
"Theological Perspective on  
Immigration Reform Counseling"  
Stephanie Spandl  
Recording of  
NACSW's Audio Conference Webinar  
on September 30th, 2013

June 2015's Featured Podcast  
"Switch to the Fearless Mode"  
Judith Gonzales  
Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2012  
in St. Louis, MO  
on October 28th, 2012

July 2015's Featured Podcast  
"Resiliency or Recovery: Helping  
Individuals Develop Resiliency Skills"  
Angela Gaddis  
Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2013  
in Atlanta, GA  
on October 26th, 2013

For more information about any NACSW audio conference and monthly podcasts, please contact the NACSW office at [info@nacsw.org](mailto:info@nacsw.org), 888-426-4712 (toll-free), or visit our website at [www.nacsw.org](http://www.nacsw.org).

FREE FOR NACSW  
MEMBERS!

# On Telling Stories

**I** tell stories for a living. If I were assigned to tell your story, I would be asking all kinds of personal questions, some of which you would be more comfortable answering than others. Your education and your job history—easy enough. Your family history—a little tougher. Your health history, including mental health and substance abuse—harder still. And perhaps hardest of all—those questions having to do with religion or a faith community.



David Fritz

Then there's the task of explaining it all to defense attorneys and prosecutors and judges. Some stories are easier to tell than others. Some are easier to document than others. The over-arching question is why any of it matters.

The tables were turned on me recently,

giving me the opportunity to tell parts of my own story. I was in attendance at a mandatory training session on diversity and cultural competence. While introducing ourselves, we were to mention to the class the pronoun by which most prefer to be addressed. That was easier to do for some than for others. Surely I am not the only one to wonder why that mattered.

Then the class was divided into groups of four. Each of us was to share our answers to a series of questions, including two titles by which we like to be referred. That was easy enough—"Social Worker" and "Professor" were my choices. We were to share one value from our family of origin which is important to us. That was my opportunity to talk about my grandfather, his career as a minister for the United Methodist Church in Wisconsin, and about the involvement of his churches in aiding the poor. That was easy enough. Then we were to talk about one stereotype with which we have had to struggle during our lives. That was not so easy for me, a white male of privilege. That was my opportunity, however, to talk about how

the integration of faith and social work practice can be viewed in a positive light.

I enjoy telling stories, either my own story or the story of someone else. Although I tell them for a living, I also tell them for fun. In March of each year, I recognize the overlap of Social Work Month with Women's History Month by posting daily reflections on the stories and lives of influential social workers, particularly our "founding mothers," as the University of Chicago might call them. In doing so, I look especially for those influences which have faith-based elements in them. In previous years, I have focused on Jane Addams, Mary Richmond, Dorothea Dix, Frances Perkins, and Dorothy Height. This year, I focused on the life and work of Edith Abbott. All of them have amazing and inspiring stories to tell, as my home library is showing more and more.

Hmmm . . . maybe there is an idea for a series of (short) convention workshops, with titles sounding something like: "Who Cares about Edith Abbott?—A Reflection on the Development of the Social Work Profession (and Why it Matters)."

## Free Online Journal

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The journal is sponsored by Baylor's School of Social Work and the George W. Truett Theological Seminary.

# Announcing NACSW's Poverty Alleviation Member Interest Group

NACSW is pleased to announce that it recently launched a new member interest group focused on poverty alleviation. The purpose of this group is to learn about and explore ways of addressing poverty and related issues locally, domestically, and around the world. NACSW's poverty alleviation member interest group will be focusing on a variety of activities such as:

- Sharing together and being inspired by ways that Christians in social work are effectively addressing poverty through their work, within their communities, and in partnership with (their) congregations
- Identifying and creating volunteer and service opportunities and projects for ourselves and others to become more actively involved in addressing poverty utilizing a full range of social work knowledge and skills at micro, mezzo, and macro levels
- Identifying and affiliating with effective faith-based (or faith-friendly) organizations doing important work addressing poverty locally, domestically, and globally

This member interest has identified the following area of focus for its first initiative:

Equipping Christians in social work to be better able to educate and support churches, congregations and denominations regarding a robust range of anti-poverty strategies so that the faith community can play a more active, vital

role in joining broader community and societal efforts to combat poverty locally, domestically, and around the world.

The group also affirmed several important principles to help shape its on-going work:

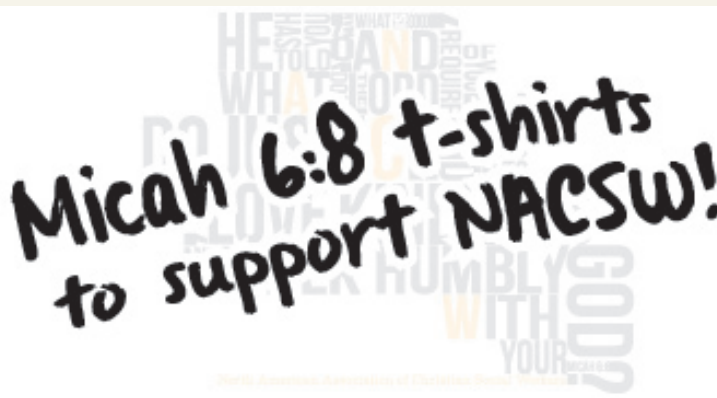
- The strategies that we should pay the most attention to are those that have shown themselves to be effective and cost-efficient ("evidenced-based" practices)
- We should be disciplined to ensure that any initiatives or projects we commit to should have both a concrete, hands-on practice/praxis component, as well as scholarly/academic component (so as to invite participation by both practitioners as well as educators/researchers within our membership)
- We should be disciplined to ensure that any initiatives or projects we commit to address issues of poverty at multiple levels, including micro (for example, working for individual and group behavioral change), mezzo (for example, strengthening organizations involved in poverty work) to macro (for example, advocating for economic equality/social justice)
- Anything we work on should keep faith at the front and center of those efforts as we see faith as a motivating force in our lives and work, as source of unique insight and perspective, and a useful connection to communities of faith as potential partners and resources.

NACSW is committed to supporting the development of this member interest group by supporting strategies like:

- Recruiting at least 5-10 workshops at each convention on poverty and related issues and providing space for member interest group meetings at NACSW conventions
- Organizing conference calls every two months to facilitate ongoing member sharing, bringing in invited speakers, brainstorming about how to grow the service opportunities we could offer to NACSW members, etc.
- Creating opportunities for communicating what we learn and what we are doing with the rest of NACSW via blogging, listserv exchanges, Catalyst and SWC articles, social media exchanges, developing a member interest group webpage, etc.

Of course, these ideas represent only the tip of the iceberg regarding possible ideas and directions in which the poverty member interest group could grow. To learn more about NACSW's new poverty alleviation member interest group, go to: [www.nacsw.org/MemberInterestGroups/Poverty/PovertyAlleviation.htm](http://www.nacsw.org/MemberInterestGroups/Poverty/PovertyAlleviation.htm). If you are interested in becoming a part of this group, send an email to [rick@nacsw.org](mailto:rick@nacsw.org).

We look forward to seeing where NACSW's newest member interest group grows in the months and years ahead!



We invite you to proudly support NACSW with a Micah 6:8-based t-shirt! An NACSW t-shirt would be a terrific gift for your favorite social worker. A portion of your purchase will support NACSW. You can view these new t-shirts by clicking by going to: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/theWolfandtheBee>.

You can choose from a variety of colors in styles fit for men or women. In addition, women can choose either crew or v-neck t-shirts. All shirts are made of incredibly soft ringspun cotton and cost just \$15 plus shipping. Order your NACSW t-shirt today!

# Speaking Out...

## NACSW MEMBERS AND FRIENDS SHARE THEIR VIEWS

... At the 2014 NACSW conference I participated in some of the best workshops I have ever experienced in forty years in the field! So I know NACSW is contributing in the field and I am proud of that.

Jane  
Harrisonburg, VA

Looking through <NACSW's Online> trainings earlier I realized there are so many great courses! I am very excited to be a member and have the opportunity to take some of the trainings.

Caitlyn  
Pittsburgh, PA

NACSW welcomes letters to the editor for the "Speaking Out" section of *Catalyst*. Please submit your comments, ideas, and feedback to [rick@nacsww.org](mailto:rick@nacsww.org).

## Call for Nominations

Current members of NACSW are invited to propose candidates to run for NACSW's Board of Directors for terms starting 2016. Board members are primarily responsible for setting NACSW's future goals and direction, developing policies to guide the organization's efforts to meet those goals, and ensuring that the organization has and uses effectively the resources required to accomplish its mission. Nominees will be evaluated and prioritized in accordance with current Board needs for expertise and diversity.

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## GENEROUS DONORS TO NACSW

NACSW wants to say "thank-you" to the many generous donors who through their financial contributions have helped further NACSW's mission "to equip its members to integrate Christian faith and professional social work practice:"

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## CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Area	Contact	E-mail
Alabama (Univ. of AL)	Nancy Payne	ngpayne@sw.ua.edu
California (All)	Amy-Lynne Hilderbrand	histendergrip@gmail.com
California (Central)	Eleanor Speakes	espeakes41@gmail.com
California – Northern	Osmond Kwan	osmond81@gmail.com
Canada (Ontario)	Timothy Myland	mylandti@gmail.com
Connecticut	Bob Nield	bobnield@hotmail.com
Florida (Central)	Marleen Milner	mmilner@seu.edu
Florida (Northwest)	Dianne Presley	dianne.presley@gmail.com
Georgia (Atlanta)	Shaina Blair	sdr_rodody@yahoo.com
Hawaii	Andy Dahlburg	adahlborg@hotmail.com
Indiana	Jeff Bryant	jbryant@uindy.edu
Kentucky (Louisville)	Tim Moseley	tim@waysidechristianmission.org
Maryland (Western)	Brent Thornton	snowmanbrent@atlanticbb.net
Massachusetts (Boston)	Stacey Barker	stacey.barker@enc.edu
Michigan (Western)	Gary Deckert	gdeckert@yahoo.com
Minnesota - Minneapolis-St. Paul	Nick Zeimet	zeimet.nick@gmail.com
Mississippi	Jana Donahoe	jdonahoe@deltastate.edu
Missouri (Southwest)	Lacey Nunnally	nunnally@evangel.edu
Missouri/Kansas (Kansas City)	Terri Bennett	nealandterri@yahoo.com
New York City Area	David Fritz	dmfritz3@gmail.com
New York (Western)	Dave Skiff	skiffd@roberts.edu
North Carolina (Central)	Ken Smith	ktaasmith@gmail.com
North Carolina (Raleigh-Durham)	Amelia Roberts-Lewis	amrobert@email.unc.edu
North Dakota/South Dakota	Gayla Sherman	gayla.sherman@charleshallyouthservices.com
Oklahoma (Tulsa)	Robert Kiel	rkiel@oru.edu
Tennessee (Eastern)	Reba Terry	reba_terry@bellsouth.net
Tennessee (Western)	Stevie Ray	stevieray38128@yahoo.com
Texas (Dallas)	Linda Openshaw	linda.openshaw@tamuc.edu
Texas (Fort Worth)	Melissa Stanford Oden	mstanfordoden@yahoo.com
Texas (Houston)	Kim Parker	parkerly@msn.com
Texas (San Antonio)	Kelly Moeller	kelly.moeller@yahoo.com
Washington, DC/VA/MD	Willi Dalaba	willidalaba@aol.com

## OVERSEAS CONTACT INFORMATION

Australia	Ian Bedford	ianjudybedford@iinet.net.au
Korea	Sang Hak Ro	rosang-h@chikushi-u.ac.jp

For email addresses and additional chapter information, please see NACSW's chapter webpage at: <http://www.nacsww.org/chaplist.html> or contact the NACSW office.

## PARTNERING IN NACSW'S MISSION AND MINISTRY

There are a number of ways to provide a financial contribution to NACSW to partner with us in our mission and ministry.

- To make a secure, one-time or monthly donation, go to [https://www.nacsww.org/2008/2008\\_support.htm](https://www.nacsww.org/2008/2008_support.htm) or contact us at the office at [info@nacsww.org](mailto:info@nacsww.org), or call tollfree at: 888-426-4712.

- Please also consider NACSW as a beneficiary when you write or update your will. To discuss a planned giving option, please contact Rick Chamiec-Case, executive director, at [rick@nacsww.org](mailto:rick@nacsww.org), or 888.426.4712.

## NACSW JOBNET:

The Christian Career Connection



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Online continuing education through the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW) aims to offer easy, "on-demand" access to a wide array of high quality training options sensitive to the ethical integration of faith and practice from the comfort of your computer or mobile device. All trainings included in this program provide CEUs accredited by the Association of Social Work Boards.

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www.nacsw.org/CEU



## Nominations

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Board candidates must be NACSW members who are committed to the mission of NACSW. They must be willing and able to attend the six semi-annual meetings of the Board that occur in various locations over the three year term. Board members are responsible for their own travel, lodging, and meal expenses.

You can download a nomination form at <http://www.nacsw.org/BoardNom3.htm>, or contact the NACSW office for a copy.

NACSW

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