

CEHDconnect

THE MAGAZINE OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPING promise

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WINTER 2023

from the
DEAN

HOMECOMING is no longer just a parade and a football game. Don't get me wrong, this year's Homecoming was a great series of events. Hundreds of students, faculty, staff, and alumni turned out for the CEHD Homecoming tailgate party. It was an honor to lead the CEHD parade participants with Alumni Society Board President La Tasha Shevlin, in a convertible driven by alumnus Doobie Kurus.

Turns out, "homecoming" represents so much more.

In July, we welcomed home alumna Dr. Joan Blakey as the new director of the School of Social Work. Although she returned at a challenging time, as we are still working through local and global challenges, she is leading the school to pursue new opportunities.

In August, we also welcomed the Institute of Child Development (ICD) to its new home in Carmen D. and James R. Campbell Hall. Many alumni, staff, and friends contributed to this effort, following the generous lead of the Campbells. Now, Campbell Hall is home to new offices, labs, classrooms, student spaces, and places to gather and collaborate.

And, in CEHD style, college researchers continue to improve lives, for example, by connecting students to schools and communities, and connecting immigrants and refugees to hopeful futures by understanding the realities of their homelands (see the stories on Check & Connect and work in Liberia).

This issue of *Connect* is full of homecomings, of sorts. Join us as we continue our work—your partnership makes so much more possible. Enjoy reading about some of the possibilities ahead. *Adelante.*



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
+ HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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PHOTOGRAPH BY

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RSP Architects

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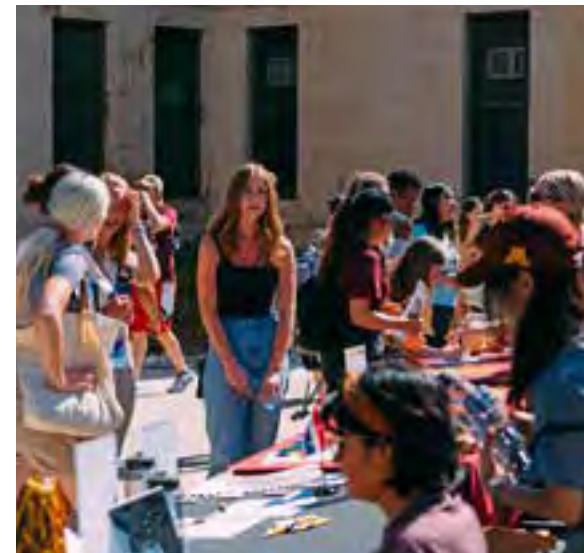
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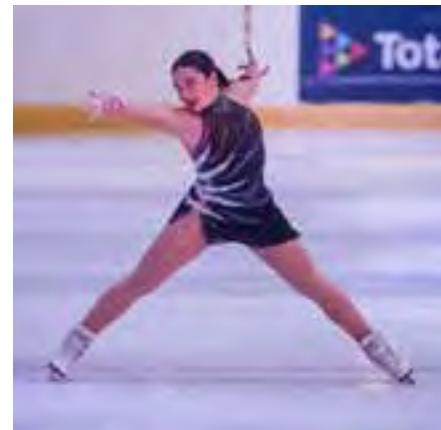
CEHD Block Party 2022 welcomes in new school year

MORE THAN 500 STUDENTS, faculty, and staff came to the Burton Hall courtyard in September to celebrate the 2022 CEHD Block Party. The event is a celebration of the new school year and the return to campus. Attendees enjoyed food, music, lawn games, and swag while learning about CEHD's many programs.

More photos: news.cehd.umn.edu/cehd-block-party-2022-welcomes-in-new-school-year



COURTESY OF EUGENIA GARZA



Champion figure skater and undergrad researcher

A PASSION FOR FIGURE SKATING drew Eugenia Garza from Mexico to Minnesota at age 12. "I started skating when I was 3 years old, so that's 16 years now," says Garza. "A coach from Minnesota would give seminars in Mexico and told my mom, 'She could really make it. Move to Minnesota and train with me.'" By the time she turned 15, Garza was representing Mexico on the international figure skating stage. As the current Mexican national champion, she went to the Olympic qualifiers in September 2021, and last January, competed at the 2022 Four Continents Figure Skating Championship.

Proximity to her family and figure skating coaches made the University of Minnesota a perfect fit. "I wanted to stay close enough so I could be near my family and keep training and skating but I also wanted to live on campus. It was close enough where I could still have my life and everything," she explains.

Throughout her years as a figure skater, Garza has worked with many physical therapists and gained admiration and respect for the field of physical therapy. It was that same admiration that brought her to the School of Kinesiology at CEHD.

"So originally—the reason this whole thing started—was because I was always going to physical therapy and I loved my physical therapists. They're amazing," she says. "I'd been involved in sports for so long and I wanted to stay involved even after I was done skating and competing, so I figured it would be a good career path."

Looking ahead, Garza plans to continue competitive figure skating and hopes to expand her involvement in research. She's also considering graduate school. "Getting into grad school, that's definitely a goal. But I'm just taking it as it comes."

—JASON HANKA



NEW GIFTS AND COMMITMENTS

\$100,000 TO \$249,999

Google Inc. supported the Analysis of State Policy Infrastructures Designed to Support Equity Focused Computer Science Education project.

Roshini Rajkumar and **Roshan Rajkumar** established the Concy Rajkumar Child Whisperer Fund to support the Child Development Laboratory School.

\$25,000 TO \$99,000

The 3M Foundation Inc. renewed its support of Prepare2Nspire.

M. Janice Hogan-Schiltgen added to the Janice Hogan Fellowship Endowment.

Dolores Merrill established the Dolores M. Merrill Scholarship.

Valdemar J. Olson renewed his support of the Marilyn Nordstrom Olson and Valdemar Olson Scholarship.

The Mendon F. Schutt Family Fund at the Minneapolis Foundation gave to the CAREI and Minneapolis Public School Partnership Fund.

Karen M. Sternal gave to the Minnesota I Have a Dream Scholarship and the Upward Bound Director Fund.

HERITAGE SOCIETY COMMITMENTS

The estate of **David and Merece Johnson** added to the David A. and Merece H. Johnson Endowment in EHD.

The estate of **Jill Mithun** added to the Jacqueline R. Mithun Fellowship.

Includes gifts made between June 7 and October 19, 2022

New conference honors Ed Psych's Stan Deno

IN SEPTEMBER, the Department of Educational Psychology hosted the Inaugural Stan Deno Lecture & Panel Discussion. The conference honored the work of the late Stan Deno, a pioneer in the field of special education and the founder of Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) and co-founder (with Phyllis Mirkin) of Decision-Based Individualization (DBI). Deno was an emeritus faculty member in the department until his passing in 2016.

Lynn Fuchs and Doug Fuchs (pictured), both professors of special education at Vanderbilt University and institute fellows at American Institutes of

Research, delivered the keynote, “What We Know and Still Need to Learn about Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) and Data-Based Individualization (DBI).” CBM is a fast, easy way for teachers to measure student achievement as often as once a week and adjust teaching to help students progress. Data-based

individualization (DBI) is the systematic use of assessment data to monitor student progress and provide intensified interventions. The researchers described CBM and DBI as two closely connected processes and—throughout their talk—demonstrated how the biggest improvements in student achievement occur when teachers engage both.

Later, a panel of researchers discussed the applications of data-based decision-making to current research, policy, and practice to meet the needs of diverse learners. While the Fuchs’ talk focused on students with disabilities, the panel extended the discussion around DBI into multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and general education as well.

Panelists included Kim Gibbons, director of the Center for Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI); Kristi Baker Patterson, director of curriculum and instruction for ALLMemphis; and David Parker, vice president of research and assessment at ServeMinnesota.

The conference was sponsored by the National Center for Leadership in Intensive Intervention (NCLii), Renaissance Learning, and the University of Minnesota’s Stan Deno Fund.

Watch the lecture: z.umn.edu/89lc

Support the Stan Deno Fund: z.umn.edu/86wx

—SARAH JERGENSON



Introducing new CEHD international student group

THE CEHD INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMMUNITY, or CISC, is a new student group that represents international students attending CEHD. The group hopes to enhance mutual learning, increase their presence, and advocate for the needs of international students. CISC was formed by members committed to creating a caring community of international students.

In November, CISC hosted a Fall International Student Luncheon, a networking and welcoming event for CEHD international students. Over a casual lunch, international students interacted and made meaningful connections. The event was an opportunity to build a sense of community and learn more about the college’s efforts to support international students. The event, sponsored by CEHD International Initiatives, was attended by over 40 students from 25 countries representing the diversity of CEHD’s global community.

For more information, contact CISC at cisc@umn.edu.

Learn more: sites.google.com/umn.edu/cisc/home

COURTESY OF CEHD INTERNATIONAL STUDENT COMMUNITY

Honors

▼ **Gail Ferguson**, Institute of Child Development, received the 2022 George A. Miller Award for an Outstanding Article by the American Psychological Association Division 1. The article, “The Whiteness Pandemic Behind the Racism Pandemic: Familial Whiteness



Socialization in Minneapolis Following #GeorgeFloyd’s Murder,” was published in *American Psychologist* and was written with graduate fellows Lauren Eales, Sarah Gillespie, and Keira Leneman.

Nicole LaVoi, Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, was inducted into the Gustavus Adolphus Hall of Fame. LaVoi played tennis at Gustavus.

Mitch McSweeney, School of Kinesiology, was awarded the *Journal of Sport for*

making decisions about book products emanating from AERA activities, journals, projects, or programs.

Donald Dengel, School of Kinesiology, was appointed to the Academics and

Development’s 2022 JSFD Early Career Scholar Award for his significant contributions to the field.

Karen Seashore, Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, was honored by the *Journal of Educational Administration* with a special issue entirely dedicated to honor her legacy.

Appointments

▼ **Vichet Chhuon**, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, has been appointed chair designate of the AERA Books Editorial Board. The board has responsibility for implementing AERA’s Handbook Series,



as well as for reviewing and

making decisions about book products emanating from AERA activities, journals, projects, or programs.

Cassie Scharber, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, has been named Assistant Dean for Professional and Online Education at CEHD. She will lead distributed education efforts and initiatives within the college specific to professional and online learning.

Eligibility Committee for the Big Ten Conference. He also serves as the Faculty Athletics Representative for the University of Minnesota to the Big Ten Conference and the NCAA.

▼ **Zan Gao**, School of Kinesiology, was appointed as an associate editor of the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. Gao has served as an editorial board member of this journal since 2015.



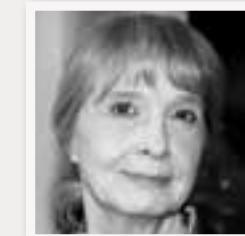
Li Li Ji, School of Kinesiology, has been selected as a fellow with the Society for Redox Biology and Medicine for his outstanding contributions to the field.

Cassie Scharber, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, has been named Assistant Dean for Professional and Online Education at CEHD. She will lead distributed education efforts and initiatives within the college specific to professional and online learning.

In memoriam

VERA LOIS ERICKSON was a professor emeritus and an alumni of the Department of Educational Psychology until her passing on September 25, 2022. She earned her BS degree, cum laude from the University of Minnesota–Duluth and completed her PhD in educational psychology at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities. In 1976, she accepted a position as a professor of educational psychology at the U of M. She had a long, illustrious career in which she won a National Research Award (1976) and published many important scholarly articles. She was much loved by her many students. She traveled the world by giving speeches at conferences and universities and was a Visiting Scholar at Harvard University’s Graduate School of Education in 1980–81. Erickson’s studies focused on longitudinal data about young women’s moral and

ego growth. She was able to contribute toward making changes to the way women were valued and appreciated in this world. She was a feminist at heart. She valued fairness, honesty, and justice. They were the pillars of her moral being. Erickson joined other female colleagues at the U of M in a class-action lawsuit for equal pay and promotion. She helped change the culture, and mentored other women who were struggling to find equality. She retired from her position as associate professor in 2005. In her memory, the family suggests making a donation to the Alzheimer’s Association: act.alz.org/donate.





▲ Second grader Audrianna Stone works on an activity with mentor Nikki Kern.

menting the program before the county adopted it on a larger scale. “These mentors are really web weavers who engage students, faculty, and staff.”

A desktop app version of the model enables faster recordkeeping for such a large group of students and allows administrators to track progress and quickly troubleshoot areas of need. At the end of the 2021-22 school year, the county reported a 75 percent drop in school absences and a 62 percent decrease in suspensions from year-ago levels, says Jana Ferguson, ICI’s project coordinator overseeing implementation in the county.

After struggling last year, Destyni Clingerman, a junior at Duluth East High School, is getting better grades and planning for life after high school.

“Her grades didn’t reflect how good of a student she could be,” says her mentor, Shaq Coleman. “She’s doing a whole lot better now.”

At this, Clingerman smiles.

“He gets on my nerves, honestly,” she says, poking fun at her mentor’s high expectations. Asked what made this year a positive experience and what she would advise other students, she pointed inward.

“Be willing to try, and to think about the future,” she says. “Everyone says to just live in the present, but I want to graduate and move on. You have to try for yourself, versus doing it for others.”

Raleon “RJ” Moore’s love of football motivated him to turn around what could have been a poor start to high school.

“I want to go all the way to the NFL, to live my dream, and take care of my family,” said Moore, a freshman at Duluth East who joined Check & Connect last year as an eighth grader. After Moore fell behind in several classes, mentor Becky Davidson showed him a system for checking off tasks, with each success building to the next. As

DAVID J. TURNER

Scaling student engagement

A popular dropout prevention plan pivots

TROUBLING DECLINES in national test scores and high school graduation rates laid bare the pandemic’s devastating effects on students. Absenteeism and learning loss could hurt classroom performance for years to come, scholars fear. Enter Check & Connect, an evidence-based intervention created at CEHD’s Institute on Community Integration (ICI) decades ago that is leveraging a digital app to track students on a wider scale. It’s also adapting its model to boost attendance, performance, and graduation rates at more schools.

About 900 students are enrolled in Check & Connect across almost every K-12

school in St. Louis County in northern Minnesota this fall. County officials last year tapped American Rescue Plan Act funds to hire dedicated program mentors, matching them with at-risk students. Today, nearly 50 mentors are developing supportive relationships with students, in addition to electronically charting attendance, behavior, and grades.

“People said we’d never staff all these positions, but we were actually able to be selective, getting the right people for the positions,” says Sarah Laulunen, the Check & Connect coordinator for Duluth School District, which had begun imple-



Moore entered high school this fall, mentor Bitsy Zwak worked with Davidson on the transition plan, and Moore is maintaining improved grades and attendance, along with his football eligibility.

“Teachers have been trying to support their students as best they can for many years, but today the issues are more serious,” says Zwak, a longtime paraprofessional at the school. “When kids see success and know they’ve driven it, their world explodes in this positive reaction.”

Moore says Davidson was enthusiastic and caring, but more importantly showed him a workable plan for getting back on track.

“She gave me hope in a system,” he says. “I know I have a lot to work on, but I don’t care about anything other than getting to where I need to be.”

Schools implement the program at all grade levels in hopes of heading off risks long before they become serious.

“Kids drop out not because something happens when they’re 17. It’s a cycle that begins very early,” says Lisa Perkovich, regional Check & Connect coordinator.

Once teachers identify students who would benefit from the program, most

parents have been grateful, says mentor Nikki Kern.

“Last year, just getting her to want to come to school was a real battle,” says Ethan Stone, whose daughter Audrianna is a second grader at Parkview Elementary in Virginia, Minnesota. “Now she wakes up and is excited to go.”

Meanwhile, a study at Central Lakes College to adapt the intervention for the postsecondary level shows students enrolled in Raider Connect earned higher average credit hours than a control group.

And Communities in Schools of Central Texas is one of several nonprofit organizations around the country that is deploying grant funding and other resources to implement the program.

Early results have been positive, particularly among students engaged with the program for 16 or more hours, says Karen Gonzalez, innovation officer.

Check & Connect soon will be or has been implemented internationally, in after-school settings for students with disabilities transitioning from high school, with juvenile offenders, and embedded in refugee programs in the United States, in addition to traditional school settings in all

“These mentors are really web weavers who engage students, faculty, and staff.”

▲ At left: Junior Destyni Clingerman shares a laugh with her mentor, Shaq Coleman. Right: Freshman Raleon “RJ” Moore meets with mentor Bitsy Zwak (right) and Jana Ferguson, the lead ICI person for Check & Connect in St. Louis County.

50 states. In the last five years, more than 500 trainers and coaches have learned how to teach coordinators and mentors how to implement the program, creating a pipeline to reach thousands of additional students, says Eileen Klemm, ICI’s national training director for Check & Connect.

Under a recent grant, ICI is releasing free online resources to help school personnel implement the program. The challenge for many schools now is finding financial support to keep mentors on the job, but the recent successes are promising.

“Many schools lost touch with families as the pandemic wore on, but those who had Check & Connect already in place had a mechanism for reaching out,” says Klemm. “Others started saying, ‘We need to re-engage students and this is a proven method, so let’s try it.’ When a leadership team understands the program and recruits the right champions, that’s when the magic happens.”

—JANET STEWART

Learn more: z.umn.edu/89lj

FSOS grad student leads international initiative in Liberia

Results offer insights into how best to support immigrant and refugee communities



COURTESY OF ZAMZAM DINI

ZAMZAM DINI, a Family Social Science (FSOS) doctoral student specializing in Couple and Family Therapy, flexed her clinical practitioner skills in Liberia last summer by leading workshops for parents and young women on healthy relationships. The experience gave her great insights that have been invaluable in her work as a trauma therapist at the Minnesota Trauma Recovery Institute (MNTRI), where she often is in contact with the immigrant community.

Dini traveled to Liberia representing the Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE) in a partnership to facilitate capacity-building training and healthy relationships education to community service providers in Liberia.

The Liberian initiative was a collaboration between WISE and the Liberian-based non-governmental organization (NGO) Organization for Women Empowerment (OWE) and funded by a U.S. State Department community-building grant.

Dini created and managed four Parent Encouragement Program workshops that help parents navigate the K-12 school system to boost their engagement. Some of the topics covered in the parent workshop included adverse childhood experiences (ACES) & trauma, social and emotional learning in children, attachment, and child development.

"I think something that will stick with me as a future educator is to always remember the wealth and knowledge that is in the room with you," she says. "I was blown away by the discussions that we were having during the parent workshops and honored to be among them. The ideas that were being shared were some of the most fruitful I've witnessed in a classroom."

► Zamzam Dini (third from right) with members of the Organization for Women Empowerment NGO.

In addition, Dini led seven healthy relationships workshops with 19 girls from three different groups and four NGOs to help them identify healthy/unhealthy traits in a relationship and how to intervene to ensure they feel safe in the relationships they create with family, friends, and partners. Topics included women's empowerment, girl's empowerment, and healthy relationships.

Dini said the experience directly related to her research on understanding refugee trauma across generations.

"I value outreach and connecting to immigrant and refugee families directly, which is what led me to work with WISE and our parents," she says.

Dini, whose family emigrated to the U.S. as refugees of Somalia's civil war when she was two years old, grew up in Seattle in a vibrant community of immigrants and refugees. She understands deeply the challenges facing these communities.

"I grew up seeing trauma and pain, as well as resilience and strength in the communities around me, and I knew I

wanted to become a clinician from a young age," she says. In college, she majored in psychology as an undergraduate and discovered marriage/couple and family therapy (M/CFT) while researching graduate programs.

"I felt it was the better match for me and my worldview," she says. "M/CFT has a systemic worldview and considers relational/contextual factors in understanding people that psychology simply does not do systematically."

As a trauma therapist at MNTRI, she meets with individuals, couples, and families in treating chronic PTSD and trauma, as well as everyday life stressors. While some of her clients are immigrants, she hopes to work more extensively in those communi-

ties after finishing her doctorate degree in family social science. As a student, she has received the David and Karen Olson Fellowship and the Janice Hogan Fellowship.

Her goal in her doctoral program is to help bridge the gap between academic research and immigrant and refugee communities. Some of her main areas of research interest include working with

"I value outreach and connecting to immigrant and refugee families directly."



immigrant and refugee populations in relation to trauma and studying the mental health of immigrant and refugee populations who have experienced war, migration, and familial separation.

"Taking what we are learning in the classroom in our graduate programs and disseminating it to the community at large is a responsibility that we all have as researchers," she says. "I want to be involved in opportunities where I can disseminate research that is about or might benefit immigrant and refugee communities to these communities directly."

She says whether that's partnering with nonprofits, conducting workshops, or speaking at events geared toward these communities, she wants to focus on research that addresses issues that are directly related to immigrant/refugee communities. These communities are often ignored or underrepresented by researchers, and her goal is to bring awareness to the experiences of these communities in her own research.

Her next project for WISE will be to develop a new curriculum and facilitate parent workshops for new Afghan refugee arrivals in the next couple of months. She plans to incorporate the internship requirement in the program for this new project as well.

—JULIE MICHENER



INTRODUCING

Campbell Hall

*The Institute of Child Development's
new home is an investment in the future*

BY LORA HORGAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY COREY GAFFER, GAFFER PHOTOGRAPHY

BUILDING DESIGN BY RSP ARCHITECTS



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HIGH AMONGST the trees, light streams through floor-to-ceiling glass walls, illuminating cozy

seating areas where students scout out a spot to study. Students bound up and down the wide, open staircase as they go from classrooms to research labs. Gone is the space that Governor Tim Walz once described as, “like your grandparents’ high school.”

This is the new Carmen D. and James R. Campbell Hall—the home of the Institute of Child Development (ICD)—and the culmination of an investment that has been decades in the making.

“Magic will happen in this building,” said Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan (BA ‘02), who is an alumni of ICD and spoke at the grand opening of Campbell Hall. “We will help children develop their brains to their full potential.”

The \$43.8 million renovation and con-

struction of Campbell Hall began as a vision for ICD, but was catapulted into reality by a lead gift from the Campbells. Additional support came from a long list of donors, investment from the University, and \$29.2 million from the state through the 2020 capital investment and bonding bill. In a whirlwind effort, the completed building now ushers in a new era for ICD’s hallmark programs—research and teaching on the science of human development and early childhood education.



◀ Opposite page: Large and small groups can gather throughout the common spaces that were designed for collaboration.

Above: The new addition faces East River Parkway with a view of sculptures by artist Dee Briggs. Right: The second and third floors are home to research suites linked by an open staircase that overlooks the oak trees.





▲ Opposite page: The graduate student lounge is home to the ICD PhD alumni wall. The walls around the lounge feature the names of all PhD recipients since 1928. In 2022, ICD conferred its 500th PhD and looks forward to adding many more names in the future.

One of the most exciting new features is a graduate student lounge with offices and communal space. Winding around the glass walls in the space is a display of the names of the 500+ ICD PhD alumni.

"This space makes it easier for collaboration and cross-talk between students," Reilly says. "I think the physical space now matches more of the department values and culture."

Reilly says the new building is a signal to her that the University and the broader community are paying attention to and investing in the work that is happening at ICD.

"It just shows they value the students and the work we're doing, in a way that I didn't feel in the old building," she says.

Charisse Pickron, assistant professor at ICD, has been eagerly anticipating starting research in the new building since she joined the faculty in fall 2021. As a post-doctoral fellow at ICD from 2018 to 2021, she considered several offers when she went on the job market, but "knowing that ICD was getting a brand new building and lab space was a pretty strong factor for my decision-making process," she says.

Pickron studies how infants and young children perceive their social world by using behavioral and neurophysiological techniques such as eye-tracking and EEG. She is in the process of setting up her lab with new state-of-the-art equipment.

"In the new building, I have more flexibility over how I want to do my work," she says.

ICD has always been known as a place that is rich with "people resources" so having the new building allows us to bring our physical resources up to par, Pickron says.

A HOME UNDER ONE ROOF

"The sky is the limit now," says Megan Gunnar, Regents Professor and former director of ICD. Decades ago, Gunnar says she and her colleagues began discussing the need for ICD's home to be transformed from the historic 1903-era East Bank building with a 1969 addition to modern facilities befitting its cutting-edge research.

"For nearly 20 years, all of my research space was over in the medical school and my staff and students had to spend hours traveling back and forth," Gunnar says. "It is so much more efficient and we can get so much more work done now that research space and office space are under one roof."

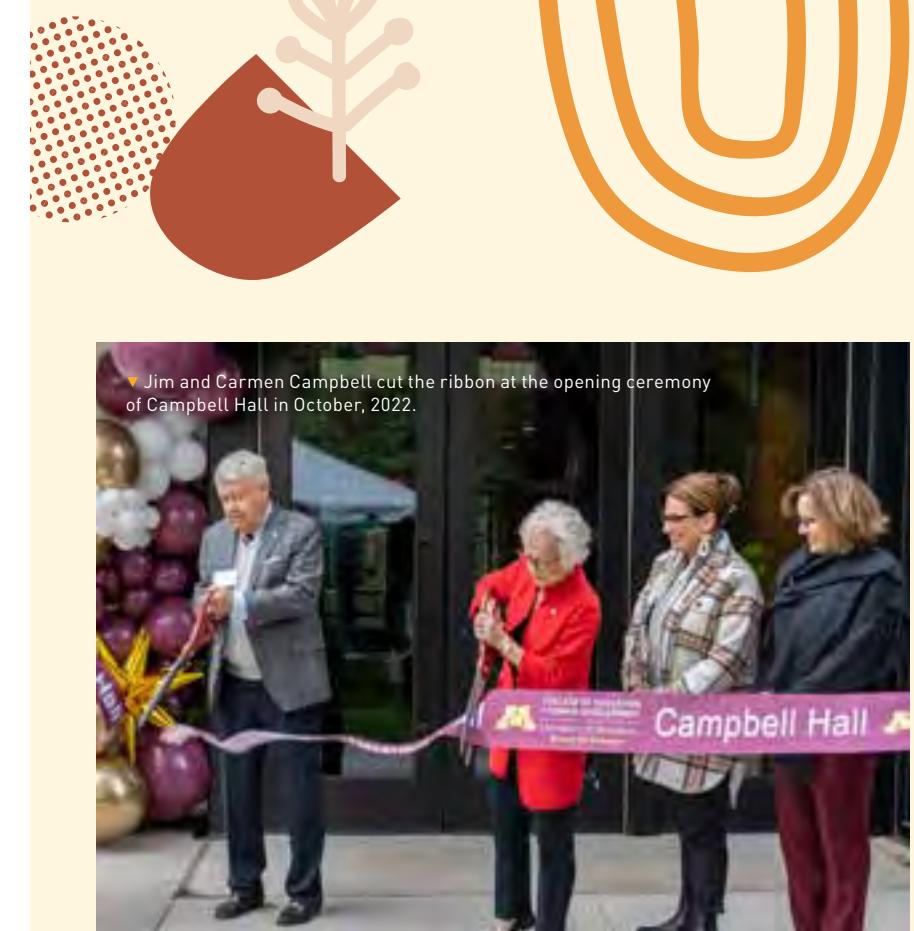
A key goal of replacing the 1969 addition with a more functional new space and renovating the historic building

was to bring the majority of students and faculty in ICD back under one roof. Undergraduate classes had not been held in ICD's building for several decades because of the lack of classroom space. The new spaces were intentionally designed by RSP Architects to generate organic collaboration among students, faculty, and staff.

"Magic will happen in this building."

INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION

Emmy Reilly, a fifth-year doctoral candidate, says one of the things that drew her to ICD's PhD program in developmental psychology was the collaborative and supportive community and culture. However, the physical space that she worked in during her first few years in the program wasn't the best environment for fostering those relationships between students.



▼ Jim and Carmen Campbell cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony of Campbell Hall in October, 2022.

THIS IS WHY WE GIVE

AT THE OCTOBER 7 GRAND OPENING of Campbell Hall, Carmen and Jim Campbell shared their memories of the old Institute of Child Development (ICD) building—from Carmen's time student teaching in the lab school to more recent visits during Gov. Tim Walz's tour for the 2020 capital investment bonding bill. The ribbon cutting and official opening of Carmen D. and James R. Campbell Hall was the formal celebration for the Campbells and the numerous donors whose support made the project possible.

Carmen shared how she got her start in the education field by finding early inspiration at ICD. She said the building was antiquated even then, but the instructors were the "best thing about it." After graduating in 1964, she taught kindergarten for 11 years in Minneapolis.

"The teachers [at the lab school] and what they did in the classroom was so exciting and I thought, 'I can do this,'" Carmen Campbell said at the grand opening.

The Campbells decided they wanted to support the College of Education and Human Development—in part to honor the legacy of teachers in their families. Their commitment to supporting early childhood and future educators came full circle when they made the lead naming gift in 2017 for the new home of ICD.

"This is the world-class organization in the development of young children," Jim Campbell said. "And now they've got a first-class facility to operate in."

THE UNDERGRAD EXPERIENCE

The return of undergraduate students to ICD's building has brought a notable surge of energy to the department as more of these students find ways to get involved. Jenna Rusch is a junior developmental psychology major who also serves as the co-president of the Developmental Psychology Student Organization (DPSO) and is a student employee at ICD.

"I spend most of my days at Campbell, so it's feeling more like a home now," she says.

Student groups like DPSO have dedicated office space in Campbell Hall and access to larger classrooms to hold their meetings. Rusch says the student services offices, which are now located on the first floor, have been a key place for students to get information about how to get involved with departmental opportunities.

Pickron says having most of ICD's programs under one roof is already making it easier for students to spend time in her lab, as well as attend enrichment opportunities like the weekly ICD bag lunch speaker series.

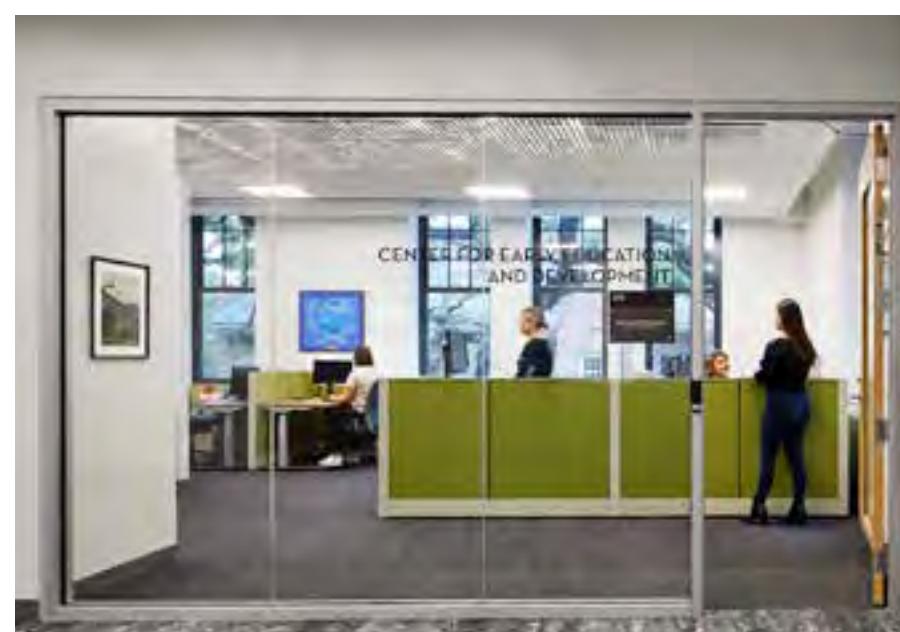
"It allows for a more fluid culture of having research and teaching all happening together," Pickron says.

WELCOMING COMMUNITY

Kathleen Thomas (PhD '97), William Harris Professor and ICD's current director, says having the improved space will allow ICD to open its doors to more community members.

"We have always had a legacy of sharing our science and collaborating with community partners to advance understanding of development across the lifespan," Thomas says. "We are excited to welcome our current and future partners to this new space."

One notable difference on the grounds is the move of the former Shirley G. Moore Lab School out of ICD's building. The



◀ Opposite page, top: Bright, cheerful play rooms greet children and families when they arrive to participate in research. Center: The Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) now has a home in Campbell Hall. Bottom: Displays throughout the building highlight ICD's rich history of research and teaching.

Child Development Laboratory School (CDLS) was established in 2021 to unite the former Shirley G. Moore Lab School and the University of Minnesota Child Development Center into one learning community near Dinkytown.

"Having two modern facilities for training, research, and community involve-

ment is going to be a benefit for our state, region, and beyond," Thomas says. She noted that the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED), ICD's applied research center that works with early childhood professionals, is now located in Campbell Hall, furthering opportunities for collaboration.

Pickron says features like lactation rooms, bright waiting/play rooms, and bathrooms with child-size fixtures will improve the experience for families and research participants.

"One of my priorities is to make sure families have a positive outlook on par-

ticipating in developmental research and coming here," Pickron says. "Now that feels more attainable to achieve."

As the Institute of Child Development approaches its 100th anniversary in 2025, the opening of Campbell Hall is a reflection of the scholarship and instruction that has been achieved and an investment for the next generation of leaders in the fields of early childhood education and developmental science. ☀



Watch more at z.umn.edu/CampbellHallOpening



THANK YOU, DONORS

We would like to thank all our donors who made the Institute of Child Development's new home a reality with a contribution of \$25K and above.

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COMING HOME TO LEAD AND INSPIRE

NEW SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK DIRECTOR RETURNS TO HER ALMA MATER

BY KEVIN MOE

Joan Blakey left the University of Minnesota and the School of Social Work (SSW) with a BS and MSW in hand. She now returns to SSW as an associate professor and its new director, ready to inspire students, staff, and faculty alike to strive to make a difference. ¶

"It is my responsibility to create an environment in which we provide the best education possible for students and that we provide the best work environment possible for faculty and staff to thrive and bring their best selves to their work, which should be reflected in

the education that students receive," she says.

Blakey is returning to CEHD and SSW after serving as the associate dean of academic affairs and associate professor at the School of Social Work at Tulane University in New Orleans. Prior to that, she was a

JARIUS DAVIS





department chair and associate professor at the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

When announcing her new role at SSW, Dean Michael C. Rodriguez said Blakey will make the CEHD community brighter and stronger. "She brings great scholarship, leadership, and lived experience, as well as new energy and commitment to goals that are closely aligned with those of the SSW and CEHD," he said.

Besides her BS and MSW from the U, Blakey holds a PhD in social work from the University of Chicago. "What drives my passion is my education," she says. "I think about the education that I received and how much it has changed my life, how much it has opened

new worlds for me, how much it has shaped the person that I have become."

When Blakey graduated from college, she was inspired to change the world. "While I think perhaps I was a little naïve at the time in terms of how much I could change the world, especially without the help of others, I've never lost my desire to leave a legacy and to affect change," she says.

Blakey hopes to instill this attitude among every student that walks through the school's doors. "I want students to leave inspired to change whatever piece of the world they feel passionate about that they feel they can contribute to making it better," she says. "It's not about maintaining the status quo. It's about embodying

JARUS DAVIS



▲ Faculty and staff joined friends and family in officially welcoming Joan Blakey as head of the School of Social Work at an October 12 reception at the St. Paul Event Center.

and living our social work mission. That drives me as a college administrator."

BEING THE BEST IT CAN BE

So as a college administrator, what does her job entail? "My responsibilities are to the faculty and staff to create an environment in which they can thrive, that every single person who is employed through



THIS IS WHY WE GIVE

IT WAS A "GIVEN" that Andy (PhD '91) and Gary (PhD '93) Whitford Holey would donate to the University of Minnesota. "We had that shared connection, and both of us received financial aid as students," they say.

Andy grew up in the suburbs of Minneapolis, and thought of the University as a "wonderful, mysterious place." When applying for graduate programs in computer sciences, the U felt the most welcoming and had the strongest community. Faculty like Ravi Janardan and the late Marvin Stein were strong mentors and showed personal interest in Andy's progress.

Gary joined Andy at the U to pursue a doctorate in social work. He admits he didn't have a background in the field when he applied, though he had experience as a 4H Extension agent. A high school career aptitude test showed a strong

fit for "social work" but he (nor his family) didn't understand how that would translate to a job. He encourages today's students to take time to explore the many career paths in social work through different internships, and get to know fellow students, especially those who aren't like you. He has fond memories of Clarke Chambers, Esther Wattenberg, and former CEHD Dean Jean Quam.

The Whitford Holeys first gave to the U in response to annual appeals around the time they finished their degrees. Andy's parents always supported his father's

alma mater, and both families put a strong value on education. Their careers as professors—Andy at Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict and Gary at St. Cloud State University—also kept them connected to college students and their needs.

In 2019, they decided to increase their commitment with a major gift and estate pledge to establish the Whitford Holey Fellowship for graduate students in social work. They also support Andy's home department in the College of Science and Engineering, and the College of Veterinary Medicine on behalf of their dogs (who were enthusiastic participants in this interview).

It was a simple decision to start giving back. "We know it's not easy for everybody to go to college, and not everyone comes from privileged families. Our University education was a gift that we equally benefited from."

—ANN DINGMAN



▲ Gary Whitford Holey and J. Andrew (Andy) Whitford Holey

the School of Social Work feels valued, appreciated, and that their contributions matter,” she says. “I believe that every single person contributes to the mission of the school, what the school is, and what it will become.”

Blakey says the responsibility of the school is to inspire. “We should be pushing students to think critically about the world, about how they can really make a difference,” she says. “If students leave our program the same as they came in, we have not done our job.”

Being the best it can be for students, then, is a primary goal for Blakey. “We want to provide students with more options and choices around electives of what their education will look like,” she says. “We want to create an online MSW program and make our program more accessible to people in rural areas and to people who need flexible, part-time options to complete their degree. I also want to look at our curriculum and really begin to work on what using an anti-racist, anti-oppressive lens would look like in our current social work practice.”

Refining the curriculum and online program has

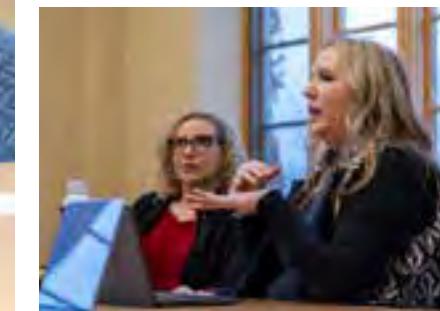
“I believe that every single person contributes to the mission of the school, what the school is, and what it will become.”

both short- and long-term aspects. “We’re working on the curriculum and making changes now. Part of that involves thinking about where the field will be in the next 50 years,” she says. “What do we believe social workers will need to know and how do we best prepare them for practice?”

Baking anti-racism into the curriculum is an urgent need, Blakey believes. “I want to center multiple perspectives and decenter white-bodied-ness and white normative views,” she says. “I want to begin to look at the ways in which we teach students about how to work with diverse populations. Oftentimes we focus on white families and white individuals as the norm and then we jump from there to ‘this is how you work with African Americans.’ ‘This is how you work with Latino people.’ ‘This is how you work with Indigenous people.’ We need to

rethink our entire curriculum around what it means to educate the social workers of today.”

Blakey says students have the right to have and see themselves reflected in the curriculum, in the faculty, and in the student body. “Students have a right to be in a program that celebrates all of who they are and seeks



MARJAN SAMADI

JONATHAN PAVLICA



to be inclusive, welcoming, and providing a sense of belonging,” she says. “I believe students also have the right to receive a rigorous education that pushes them to think critically, that pushes them to at least try on different perspectives, and to really see problems from different viewpoints so that they can respond to and speak to why they believe something should be a certain way beyond their personal feelings. Their beliefs and opinions should be rooted in research, knowledge, practice wisdom, and social work values and ethics.”

To make this happen, Blakey plans to tap into the key strength of the school—its people. “We have a world-class faculty that is doing amazing things from work in domestic violence to work with refugees to work with aging populations. Our faculty interests really run the gamut of social work practice,” she says. “We have some of the best staff at this University who really care about students, who really care about social work’s mission, and who are really dedicated to making this school the best place it can be. And I think we have some of the most dedicated students.”

Blakey says she wants to build upon the solid foundation that has already been built by Joe Merighi, John Bricout, Jim Reinardy, and Jean Quam. “I know that every single faculty member has ideas about what they think the school should be and what the school should look like,” she says. “And so I think that’s going to take

time to really figure out what we are going to become, what we are going to highlight, and what we want to be known for as a school of social work. Those are conversations that are going to happen over the next couple of years and we will be continuously tweaking and improving as we go along.”

HAPPY TO BE HOME

Blakey is excited about the future and also, happy to be home. “The school has a special place in my heart because it is my alma mater, because I got my bachelor’s and master’s here,” she says. “I grew up in St Paul. I am a fourth-generation Minnesotan. My family has a very long legacy in St. Paul.” Her great-grandfather, Cassville Bullard, helped to build monuments in St. Paul and Minneapolis and also worked on the governor’s mansion, the state capitol, and the Foshay Tower, once the tallest building in Minneapolis. Her cousin Art Blakey was the first African American sheriff at the State Fair and was the first Black king of the St. Paul Winter Carnival.

“My family has a long history of caring about Minnesota public service and contributing to the betterment of the Twin Cities area,” she says. “And I am the next person in line to continue that tradition. I am really excited to be here to serve in this role. It is not lost on me that I am the first Black woman to serve in this role and I really am honored to be leading the school at this time in history.”

◀ Opposite page: Blakey in an executive leadership meeting in Peters Hall with Suzanne Shatila and Beth Bayley.
Above: Traci LaLiberte, Jean Quam, Kirsten Anderson, Sue Abderholden and Joan Blakey at the December 12 Esther Wattenberg Policy Breakfast held in St. Paul;
Above right: Blakey speaking at the ceremony.



Watch more at
z.umn.edu/JoanBlakeyWelcome



Wakpa Tanka and Misi-Ziipi: Today's Mississippi River

OLPD PhD student reflects on sacred river, human rights, and her own ancestral story

“THE DAKOTA PEOPLE called the Mississippi River ‘Haha Wakpa,’ which means ‘river of the falls’ and also ‘Wakpa Tanka,’ or Great River.”¹

WHAT IS THIS PLACE? WHAT IS MY RELATIONSHIP TO IT?

I grew up knowing that the Mississippi River was both “great” and with falls. From my earliest memories, I remember

trying to spell M-I-S-S-I-S-S-I-P-P-I orally the fastest. Yet, I never knew the Dakota language for this precious, life-giving source. As an adult, I had to look up the Dakota language term and now have a commitment to use the Dakota language for this beautiful ‘Wakpa.’

I am the first generation in my family to be born on Dakota homelands near the Wakpa Tanka and raised in and around

Minneapolis. I never thought of reenvisioning my own settler story through the water. This idea connects to my ancestral roots and encourages me to look at “my settler colonial” story differently. I reflect on being the first generation in my family born near the northern part of this “river of the falls” and close to its source.

Wakpa Tanka is the second-longest river in the United States, surpassed by only 100 miles by the Missouri River, and the fourth largest in the world. Wakpa Tanka is the second-largest drainage system on the North American continent behind Hudson Bay and flows generally south for 2,340 miles to the Mississippi

1 Retrieved from Mississippi River | Bdote Memory Map on May 1, 2022.

JAIROS DAVIS
KRISTI RUDELIEUS-PALMER

River Delta in the Gulf of Mexico. It has tributaries from two Canadian provinces and 32 U.S. states.

The significance of Wakpa Tanka for Indigenous Peoples spans thousands of years. In the 16th century the first European explorers and then settlers used this powerful source, initially as a barrier. It created borders of “New Spain,” “New France,” and early “United States” and then as a crucial means for transportation and communication. At the height of the “manifest destiny” era in the 19th century, the Wakpa Tanka served as a vehicle for western expansion and the “land grab” migration.

The headwaters of Wakpa Tanka is glacial Lake Itasca. The Anishinabe name for “Lake Itasca” is *Omashkoozo-zaaga’igan* (Elk Lake) and for Wakpa Tanka is *Misi-zibī* (also Great River). I have traveled with hundreds of international visitors and family to the headwaters of *Misi-zibī*. This source provides energy for the more magnificent water flow that separates the east and west banks of the Mníšota Wóúnjpe Waŋkántuya² (University of Minnesota) campus. Further down the river, it joins the Mníšota Wakpa, also known as the spiritual “Bdote” for the Dakota.³

WHAT DO I HOLD AS SACRED ABOUT THIS PLACE? WHAT DO I DREAM FOR IT?

This powerful Wakpa is sacred, holding stories and earth beings to whom the Great River has provided life and wisdom. I also have memories of boating, canoeing, sailing, and just watching its movements along its shores and witnessing eagles swoop into its waters.

As a settler student, I want for those of us who come to this place to learn how

2 Translation from the Dakota Dictionary Online site at the Department of American Indian Studies at the University of Minnesota.

3 Retrieved from Bdote in Mni Sota—Sacred Land on August 29, 2022.

to be good caretakers of Wakpa Tanka. It provides healing energy as we reflect on its life-rendering power and connections among Indigenous Peoples and newer visitors and settlers. Through storytelling and dialogue, I hope that we can learn how to honor the water with our songs and care as it teaches us how to remember all our relations.

My hope is that this sacred river will continue to provide an environment where people can gather to: (1) *connect*, enabling individuals and communities to share their truths; (2) *dialogue and confront* atrocities and *restore* peace and humanity; (3) *mediate disputes and foster trust* among groups in conflict; and (4) *integrate* memorial and learning spaces to reflect on our “interwovenstory,” openly and honestly and with humility.

THE WAKPA TANKA AND HUMAN RIGHTS

As a human rights educator, I believe that local and global water rights struggles are informed by and related to the human rights struggles of our past and future in a number of ways:

- *Honoring water, land, and air to protect future generations.*
- *Providing a cultural bridge between ancestral legacies and human rights movements.*
- *Grounding human rights learning in lived experiences of knowing, being, and acting—linking water rights to shared community values.*

I hope to work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members to create human rights learning spaces, honoring our ancestors, their stories, the land, air, and water and to foster cross-cultural



understanding for the next generations.

On November 11, 2021, I attended the Veterans for Peace celebration of Armistice Day at the Sheridan Veterans Memorial Park located on the Wakpa Tanka in North Minneapolis. I listened to a Dakota elder pay tribute to Armistice Day of Peace. A large sphere of shields in the center of the circle honors veterans and reflects vibrantly at night. I had a vision while circling the different war markers, beginning with the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War. Was the place for the human rights learning museum revealed to me?

Only time will tell whether a collective dream of a human rights museum will continue to have a ripple effect along Wakpa Tanka and *Misi-zibī*—this Great River. What I do know is that this powerful body of water is sacred and collectively we need to love, respect, honor, and protect it. Wakpa Tanka holds a mosaic of stories within each drop of moving water.

—KRISTI RUDELIEUS-PALMER

Kristi Rudelius-Palmer is a PhD candidate in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development and a 2021-22 Leadership in Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity Fellow. She wrote this article as a reflection activity in Professor Elizabeth Sumida Huaman’s course, DSSC 8310: Comparative Indigenous Research and Learning: Methodologies, Social Movements, and Local and Global Interconnections.

Cross-continental collaboration

CEHD hosts 14 Kazakhstan scholars for a six-month research and leadership program

ZHANAT MOMYNKULOV says he had always dreamed about visiting and studying in the United States because of its strong academic and research traditions. From June to November 2022, he got his chance as part of the first CEHD Bolashaq Visiting Scholar Program.

For six months, 14 scholars from the Central Asian country of Kazakhstan visited CEHD to participate in a customized program to build knowledge and capacity in research methods, innovative teaching approaches, and academic leadership.

Momynkulov, a senior research fellow at the Academy of Public Administration of Kazakhstan, says he was thrilled at the opportunity to study at CEHD. “I wanted to learn the core basics of the American system of research in higher education. CEHD is one of the leading schools in education across the nation,” he says. “I am interested in politics and international re-

lations, but I preferred education because it is easier to achieve social transformation in my country with the help of education and human development rather than by administrative reforms.”

The Bolashaq Scholar Program is hosted by CEHD International Initiatives and is funded by the Bolashaq International Scholarship, a highly prestigious fellowship supported by the government of Kazakhstan. The program supervisor herself is a Bolashaq Scholarship recipient. Zhuldyz Amankulova, a current doctoral candidate in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development (OLPD), had been interested in expanding the collaborations between Kazakhstani institutions and the University for some time. “As of 2019-2020, the University of Minnesota had fewer than 10 students from Kazakhstan,” she says.

Amankulova saw an ideal opportunity when her government announced a new program aimed at sending 500 scholars annually for internships to leading universities and research centers around the world. In collaboration with International Initiatives Director Marina Aleixo, Amankulova helped design the CEHD Bolashaq Visiting Scholar Program.

The six-month cohort program includes one-on-one collaboration with host faculty, an intensive schedule of academic seminars and workshops, on and off campus activities, and individualized time for research planning.

“We enjoyed the beautiful and colorful landscape of Minnesota,” Momynkulov says. Scholars participated in several organized cultural activities, including a visit to Duluth and the State Fair. “As for the program, we learned a lot not only about American higher education, but also qualitative research methods in social sciences,” he says.

▼ Below left: The Bolashaq Scholars pay a visit to St. Olaf College in Northfield. Below right: On their visit to Duluth, the scholars traveled up the North Shore to see the famous Split Rock Lighthouse. Next page: Upon meeting in Minnesota, the scholars display the flag of their homeland, Kazakhstan.

COURTESY OF CEHD INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES



and the inspiring social, economic, and cultural developments taking place across the country,” he says. “Although the U.S. and Kazakhstan are miles apart and very different in many ways, it was intriguing to find many similarities in the aspirational goals we have for our respective communities and higher education systems.”

The program also created an opportunity for interdisciplinary and intercollegiate collaboration. In addition to CEHD faculty, the program involved faculty from other colleges and programs. “It has been amazing to see the positive response from so many faculty and staff, in and outside CEHD, to our requests to engage in the program,” says Aleixo. “They have given their time leading workshops, opened their classrooms for observations, and joined cultural events.”

Additionally, the 14 visiting scholars from Kazakhstan also come from different institutions and disciplinary backgrounds. The program has allowed them to learn from each other and develop meaningful relationships that will hopefully grow into academic partnerships once they return home.

These mutual benefits Amankulova believes gives the Bolashaq Visiting Scholar Program its strength and will allow it to grow. “I hope this program is the start for further collaboration and exchange between CEHD partners, scholars, and their home institutions,” she says. “I hope the collaboration sparks further interest from both sides to continue learning and exchanging ideas and skills.”

As the current program wraps up this fall, CEHD is already busy preparing for the 2023 cohort.

—KEVIN MOE

the program,” she explains. “The program helped me become stronger in my will to implement things like a student advising unit for undergraduate programs, first-year experience courses for freshmen, and so on.”

Helping bring shape to Mankhanova’s thoughts was her CEHD host faculty, OLPD Professor Bhaskar Upadhyay. “We work on whatever resource or ideas they want to talk about,” he says, such as how to support undergraduate students from rural areas, making STEM instruction more appropriate in local contexts, and helping the scholars get their research recognized, which Upadhyay finds particularly important.

Mankhanova is the head of the educational and methodical department at Kazakh-British Technical University. The main responsibility of the department is to ensure that the educational process in the university follows the requirements of the ministry of education.

“Kazakhstan has more centralized control over higher education than the United States,” Mankhanova says. “Standards set by the ministry are followed by all universities of the country.”

Because her position requires managerial decisions, she liked the fact that the scholar program was partly focused on management in education and science.

“There were some ideas I had been thinking about even before taking part in

Learn more:
cehd.umn.edu/global/bolashaq-program

from the
PRESIDENT



LA TASHA SHEVLIN
BS '08, Human Resource Development and MEd '13, Family Education Executive Director, UpTurnships

DEAR FELLOW ALUMNI

At the end of September, the U of M campus celebrated Homecoming (see next page). Hundreds of CEHD alumni, faculty, staff, students, and family members came together at the college's events, including a large group who walked in the parade. It was energizing and inspiring to once again see the sense of belonging and commitment in our community.

At 70,000 strong, we have one of the largest alumni populations on campus. In that group, I know there are hundreds (thousands?) of incredibly talented individuals making a difference in their careers and through service. But too often, they don't get the recognition they deserve. Does this description remind you of anyone?

If you know an outstanding CEHD graduate, please consider nominating them for an award. We have alumni recognitions for early-, middle-, and late-career stages as well as international graduates. In addition, the college collects names to put forward for University-level awards. You can learn more about how to honor someone's achievements by visiting cehd.umn.edu/alumni/awards. It's just one way you can help our community come together and appreciate our contributions to improving lives.

Be sure to join us for an upcoming event as well! Check out cehd.umn.edu/alumni/events for opportunities both on campus and online, and please reach out with your ideas, memories, and feedback anytime at cehdas@umn.edu. Thanks for your loyalty and support.

La Tasha Shevlin

Two ICD alums receive U's highest honor



The top-ranked Institute of Child Development has a long list of esteemed graduates. This fall, ICD honored two exceptionally distinguished alumni with the U's highest honor, the Outstanding Achievement Award (OAA).

Sarah Mangelsdorf earned her PhD in child psychology, and was the first graduate advisee of Professor Megan Gunnar. Today, she is a highly esteemed academic leader recognized for her work on issues of academic quality, educational access, and diversity and inclusion at some of the nation's leading public and private institutions. She has frequently broken the glass ceiling in higher education, including becoming the first female Liberal Arts and Sciences dean at the University of Illinois. In 2019, Mangelsdorf left her position as provost of the University of Wisconsin to join an elite group as the first woman president of the University of Rochester. In addition, her continued research on social and emotional development in infancy and early childhood is internationally known in her field, and she has been honored several times for her teaching.



the Center for Early Education and Development (CEED) in response to growing interest in the welfare of children and their families, and a need to organize efforts across the University in multiple disciplines. He initiated a variety of outreach programs to "give away" research-proven education and development practices and policies. Today, CEED is a leader in the state for helping the early childhood workforce achieve strong outcomes for our youngest citizens. Weinberg's commitment to child development and translating research to practice has greatly benefited individual children and the larger community, improving lives through collaborative partnerships, and influencing policy.

Mangelsdorf was recognized with the OAA on October 6, and Weinberg on November 17.

JAIRUS DAVIS; MARJAN SAMADI

ICD Professor Emeritus Richard Weinberg spent his career researching best practices in developmental science and ensuring practitioners could access and implement them in early childhood education settings, making a lasting impact on families and educators. Weinberg founded

CEHD 2022 Homecoming

About 400 CEHD students, alumni, faculty, staff, and their families enjoyed fellowship and fun at the homecoming pre-parade party in the Burton Hall Courtyard on Friday, September 30. The event was followed by the traditional U of M Homecoming Parade. The only blemish to an otherwise perfect celebration was the Gophers' 20-10 loss to Purdue on Saturday.

See more: news.cehd.umn.edu/cehd-2022-homecoming



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 CEHD Alumni & Student Networking Group

 @UMN_CEHD

Call for nominations

Take a moment to encourage and honor someone you know by nominating them for an award! The CEHD Alumni Society recognizes early- and mid-career CEHD graduates through the Rising Alumni Award and Alumni Award of Excellence.

Visit cehd.umn.edu/alumni/awards and check the Happenings alumni newsletter for more information.

The transformative power of education

PhD alum's international experiences help shape her educational mindset

EDUCATION CAN TRANSFORM a life and the world. That statement drives Jenna Mitchler. She experienced it firsthand as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Malawi several years ago and more recently in Tajikistan through the Fulbright Specialist Program.

"I look for opportunities to learn about people who are different than myself—there's so much value in diversity and difference," she says.



COURTESY OF JENNA MITCHLER

Mitchler joined the Peace Corps after earning her undergraduate degree—a major in English education and a minor in coaching—and taught English and HIV/AIDS education in Malawi in southeastern Africa. She also served as the president of northern Malawi's Gender and Development organization, which provides scholarships to girls so they could pay for secondary school fees.

After her two years in the Peace Corps were up, Mitchler returned to the U.S. and began teaching high school English. However, some familiar strains kept playing in her ear. "While reflecting on my time in Malawi, I realized that culture and education intersect in ways that profoundly impact students," she says. "I knew I had to learn more."

She applied to the Culture and Teaching program at CEHD and graduated with a PhD in curriculum and instruction in 2015. She is now the assistant superintendent for Bloomington Public Schools.

In June of this year, Mitchler was accepted in the Fulbright Specialist Program, designed for academics and professionals to develop partnerships with organizations by way of an international exchange. "As a part of my exchange, I partnered with TajRupt, a nongovernmental organization that aims to empower the youth of Tajikistan to solve some of the biggest challenges facing the country through critical thinking," she says.

Spending six weeks in the central Asian country, Mitchler helped facilitate a review of TajRupt's curriculum and assessments and shared strategies for helping educators grow as practitioners. Her team identified areas of strength and how the organization can draw upon research-based processes for curriculum review and development. Mitchler also used the time to get to know her new surroundings.

"This Fulbright experience was an incredible opportunity to live with people who have a culture different from my own, which nudges me to be a curious observer, recognizing my assumptions—something I'm always hoping to do more and better," she says.

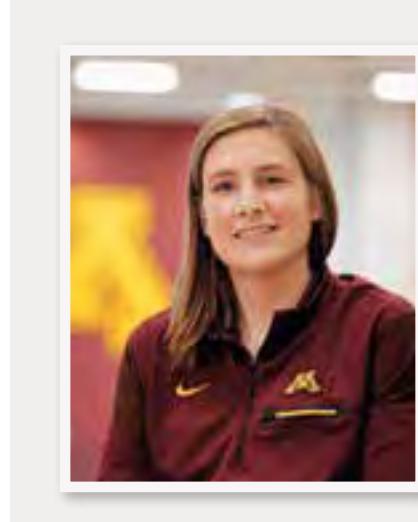


◀ Jenna Mitchler (front, center) with students and staff who attend and work at TajRupt in Khujand, Tajikistan. TajRupt aims to empower the youth of the country.

Mitchler has also kept up her relationship with CEHD, currently serving as vice president of the alumni society board. "My experience at the U of M shaped me as a person and as a leader," she says. "It's always my aim to find ways to give back to the people and organizations that have given so much to me. As vice president of the board, I get opportunities to connect with aspiring educators and educational leaders, while advocating for the University."

And why does she do all this? Because education can transform a life and the world. "It's the responsibility of those in the field of education to understand our histories and our current context while ensuring each of our learners are afforded humanity, inclusion, and access to opportunities," she says. "This is what drives me as a leader."

—KEVIN MOE



ERIC MILLER

Lindsay Whalen (BS '06) inducted into Basketball Hall of Fame

Congratulations to Lindsay Whalen (BS '06) for being inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame. According to an article in the *Star Tribune*, "A Hutchinson native, Whalen broke the all-time Minnesota high school scoring record and helped turn around the Gophers program. She helped lead Minnesota to the NCAA Sweet 16 in 2003 and then took Minnesota on a magical ride to the Women's Final Four in 2004. She went on to lead the Lynx to four WNBA titles and won two gold medals with the U.S. national team. She is now entering her fourth season as the Gophers head coach."

Whalen is a graduate of the School of Kinesiology with a BS in sport science (now sport management).

Listen to her acceptance speech: z.umn.edu/86vs

Breathing room

BY KEVIN MOE | PHOTOGRAPH BY JAIRUS DAVIS

SARAH ETHERIDGE'S undergraduate career was anything but smooth. After bouncing from DePaul University to Iowa State, they weren't feeling confident about their major or future prospects.

"My grades reflected this too," Etheridge says. "I went from a top honors student in high school to academic probation by the end of my journey."

They left college to move to Minnesota in 2018 with the goal of improving their mental health and building up mental resilience. When COVID put a pause to everything in 2020, it gave them time to pause and reflect. "I was working five jobs at that time and struggling," they say. "During the stay-at-home orders, I thought a lot about how the life I was living wasn't sustainable, and that I had a deep desire to go back to school."

Etheridge ended up finishing their associate's degree and then enrolled as a youth studies major in the School of Social Work. They graduated this fall with plans to attend law school. "I will still keep social work, specifically as it impacts young people, at my core as I work toward a career in law focusing on juvenile justice mixed with policy and system change," they say.

A big help in Etheridge's journey was receiving the Marie Mellgren-Beth Turner Scholarship. The scholarship, which is given to deserving students in the School of Social Work, was established by Mellgren's family in her remembrance. Mellgren was herself a social work scholarship winner, receiving one in 1954. Turner was a social worker colleague.

Etheridge says the scholarship helped them take a moment to breathe under the financial strain of trying to complete their degree. "In all of my career journey, I have had a tumultuous experience with financial aid," they say. "I wasn't taught important financial strategy as a child, in many ways because there is no future planning when you grow up in poverty. Financial gifts, such as this one, are life and death for students like me. It sounds dramatic, but it's a reality. For so many of us who are doing our best to 'make it out' so to speak, scholarships can either push us toward the completion of our degree, or the lack of them can lead to falling back into the cycle that feels inescapable."

Etheridge says investing in those who need financial help is social justice work. "When you donate money toward a student who has experienced marginalization of any kind, whether it be through racism, sexism, classism, transphobia, etc.—you're really pushing those students to feel like they've regained a sense of power," they say. "Never underestimate what goodwill can do for the future of our workforce."

Support CEHD student scholarships at cehd.umn.edu/giving.
Contact us at 612-625-1310.



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+ HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



"There is no future planning when you grow up in poverty."

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Welcome to 2023! We wish you a happy and successful year and look forward to seeing you at our many upcoming events and activities.

