

## Alumni

### Celebrating Alumni Over the Last Four Decades

**Cindi Wright MSW'97, BSW'78**, received her Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree in 1978 and her Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree in 1997 from the University of South Florida. She is currently a School Social Worker with Hillsborough County Schools.



#### How did the USF School of Social Work prepare you to enter the field of social work?

The curriculum for the BSW program at USF prepared me with the knowledge and skill base to enter the field of social work as a generalist practitioner. I learned a variety of intervention methods and skills and how to apply these methods and skills to different populations and all ages, from the very young to older adults. I developed an understanding of human behavior and development and also the macro view of social welfare systems and institutions. The program provided an eclectic approach to social work practice that served me very well in the many different types of positions that I held during the first few years after my graduation.

**Cheryl Tippett Harrell, BSW'80**, received her Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree in 1980 from the University of South Florida. Cheryl is currently an Employee Assistance Counselor at JPMorgan Chase & Co.



#### If you were able to give advice to yourself as a student looking back, what would it be and why?

1. You will make mistakes and you will fix them and this will build you in strength and wisdom so don't be so hard on yourself. ....Practice what you advise. .... apply what you learn to your own life right away
2. Trust the blend of your gut, your heart and your

brain. ....

3. Keep believing that you can make a difference when bad things happen, AND keep a realistic outlook about what you expect (cautious optimism)
4. Practice self-care no matter what, so you can be in this field for your entire life and remain healthy and happy with strong personal relationships.

**Joyce Carpenter, MSW '83**, received her Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree in 1983 from the University of South Florida. After a successful, diverse career in social work she is happily retired.



#### How did the USF School of Social Work prepare you to enter the field of social work?

In our MSW program there was an excellent integration between coursework and field. As part of our diversity class, our professor took us to Ybor City where we toured a cigar factory and talked to a social worker that had worked for many years with the Latino population. She discussed her upbringing in Tampa and how and why she chose social work as her profession. We also had a speaker from the Tampa NAACP who discussed the problems of racism and integration in the area. Going out into the local communities and meeting with social workers was an excellent introduction to field work.

**Linda Oberhaus MSW'00, BSW'94**, received her Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) in 1994 and her Masters of Social Work (MSW) in 2000 from the University of South Florida. Linda is the Executive Director of The Shelter for Abused Women and Children in Naples, FL.



#### As we celebrate 40 years of engaging, educating and empowering students, faculty and the communities we serve where do you see the field of social work in 40 years?

Given the ever-increasing complexity of our world, there will likely always be a profound need to help

people navigate that world and to meet their own needs within it. It is my hope that technology will help social workers bring scarce resources to greater numbers of people more efficiently. At the same time, social work is about human connection, and we must never let technology tempt us to minimize that connection. I think one of the fundamental challenges facing our field is that a proper balance be maintained here, and that our focus never stray from the humanity of the client.

**Lourdes Villanueva, BSW'00**, received her Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree in 2000 from the University of South Florida. She is currently the Director of Farmworker Advocacy at Redlands Christian Migrant Association.



**If you were able to give advice to yourself as a student looking back, what would it be and why?**

Be open to all possibilities. Make a difference by innovating, and creating your own pathways. Do not hope for change, be the change.

**Robert Brooks, MSW'00**, received his Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree in 2000 from the University of South Florida. He works for the Department of Defense in Landstuhl, Germany.



**How did the USF School of Social Work prepare you to enter the field of social work?**

The preparation, I feel, wasn't only in the content of the program, but in the process of going through it. Being required to produce papers of 10+ pages clarified for me that I was capable of such things. On an existential level, the debates between fellow students provided me with a sampling of what I would later experience as an employee who enjoyed differences with colleagues regarding ethical or other practice issues. It laid the foundation for healthy disagreements with people that you would still need to work with to move forward.

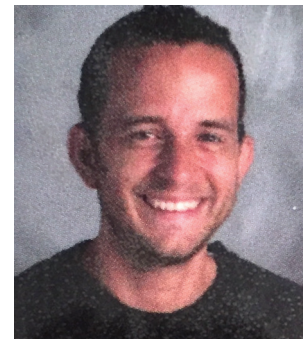
**Tracy Carter, MSW'07**, received her Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree in 2007. Tracy is currently a Licensed Clinical Social Worker who is employed by the Pinellas County Schools district as a School Social Worker.



**How did the USF School of Social Work prepare you to enter the field of social work?**

The USF School of Social Work provided me with a well-rounded education in the field of social work. Each professor was a seasoned professional with a wealth of knowledge. In addition to equipping me with the tools necessary to adhere to NASW standards, the School of Social Work helped me to examine myself as an individual. One of the most powerful experiences that prepared me to enter the field of social work was the collaboration with peers and having the opportunity to obtain insight and feedback from such a broad range of perspectives. Also, having the ability to be immersed into a field placement for three semesters afforded me the opportunity to put the clinical skills being taught in the classroom into practice.

**Joshua Bean, MSW'10, BSW'09**, received his Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree in 2009 and his Masters of Social Work degree in 2010 from the University of South Florida. Joshua is a School Social Worker at a Title I school in St. Petersburg, Florida.



**As we celebrate 40 years of engaging, educating and empowering students, faculty and the communities we serve where do you see the field of social work in 40 years?**

I have always felt the significant need for social workers in our community. We are true change agents. Our profession and the importance of our work has always been valued and respected within every agency or organization I have worked with. We are respected not only locally but also nationally. Since graduating, I have