

# Community Action & Social Change

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## What is CASC?

The CASC Minor is a 16 credit, multidisciplinary minor for students interested in developing knowledge, skills, and experiences in community action and social change.

**Reach Out,  
Raise Hope,  
Change Society.**

## A Reflection on CASC

As I write this, I think back to the very first student who declared the CASC minor in late fall of 2009. Since then, more than 500 students have declared the minor. We've had three graduating classes that, combined, include almost 200 students. Over the last three years, the CASC staff and faculty have had the privilege of working and learning with some of the best students at the University of Michigan. We have seen our students' passion and hope we have nurtured their commitments to community action and social change. In this newsletter, we profile the work of our alums and highlight the actions of our current students. We hope that this newsletter will be a way to connect faculty, staff, alumni and allies in productive and informative ways. Thank you to the many faculty, advisors, and students who have helped to launch CASC over the last four years - we look forward to the future.

*Katie Richards-Schuster*



Class of 2013 CASC Graduates



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
**COMMUNITY ACTION & SOCIAL CHANGE**  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# Current Student Spotlight

## **Munmun Khan, Senior, International Studies**

Munmun grew up in Hamtramck, MI, a diverse community that is home to many first and second generation Americans. As a student at U-M, Munmun participated in the Cosmos Leadership Program, which allowed her to stay connected to the Hamtramck community. As a model of educational success, Munmun used her time tutoring high school students from her hometown encouraging them to apply to four-year colleges. Munmun also connected to Hamtramck through her work on domestic violence intervention and prevention, working with University of Michigan Social Work faculty to assess the needs of the Bangladeshi community and create a model for intervention. Munmun is looking forward to graduating this year and pursuing a Master's in Public Health.



### **Her Advice for CASC Students?**

*“If you want to take service learning to a different level, if you are really passionate about changing the world, and you actually want to do it, CASC is for you”*



## **Jake Heller, Senior, Biomedical Engineering**

Jake grew up in Fort Wayne, IN, where he attended an inner-city high school. Following in the footsteps of his older sister, Jake came to Michigan, where he found a niche in Project Community's Policy Debate section. Having benefited from the policy debate program at his high school, Jake wanted to use his skills and experience to help kids who were in his situation find pathways to greater educational opportunities. Through the LeaderShape program, Jake was introduced to the terminology of social justice and inclusive communities, and he found the language to describe his own experience growing up in a low-income community. Since finding a social justice community at Michigan, Jake is rethinking his career path and considering a Master's in Social Work after he completes his engineering degree.

### **His Advice for CASC Students?**

*“Do CASC because it gives you the space to think about where you are in relationship to others and the community around you.”*

## **Leontine Wallace, Junior, Nursing**

Leontine grew up in Owosso, MI and attended Mott Community College in Flint before coming to Michigan. After two years as a part-time student at Mott, she transferred to Michigan. Leontine moved to Ann Arbor with her 3 ½ year old daughter, Avita, just over a year ago. Inspired by her own experience as a young cancer patient, Leontine wanted to be a part of providing positive patient experiences through nursing. As a Hillman Scholar, Leontine is now part of an accelerated PhD program in nursing. She plans to begin research in community-based intervention with a focus on mental health and mind-body-spirit connections. Working alongside nursing mentors, Leontine will explore macro levels of community-based intervention at local, national, and international levels, keeping an eye on how policy can help push change forward.



### **Her Advice for CASC Students?**

*“CASC will give you a knowledge base that will be important in anything you do – research, nursing, or living your life. It provides critical knowledge for being culturally competent and aware of your environment.”*

# Alumni Spotlight



**Mitchell Crispell** was a 2011 CASC alum and a part of the very first graduating class of CASC.

Today, he works for City Year in Washington, D.C. as a fundraising coordinator, focusing on grant writing and development.

Mitchell notes the importance of CASC's orientation towards respecting the community's knowledge, culture, values and preferences in helping to build effective relationships in his work.

## His Advice for current CASC students?

*"Spend a lot of time reflecting on what you want to do first – not forever, just first – before you start applying to jobs. That initial reflection will help you quickly discern whether a job posting is right for you."*

## Where Do CASC Grads Go?

- ◆ AmeriCorps
- ◆ Peace Corps
- ◆ Social Justice Organizations
- ◆ Community-Based Non-Profit Organizations
- ◆ Teach For America
- ◆ Social Service Agencies
- ◆ Law School
- ◆ Graduate School in Social Work

## Welcome to the MSW Program!

The newest cohort of CASC alumni joined the MSW program this fall. Over 50 CASC alums have matriculated into the MSW program!

- ◆ Marley Andrews
- ◆ Julia Bank
- ◆ Britany Doughty
- ◆ Nikole Hampton
- ◆ Jessica Hermann
- ◆ Andria Kadell
- ◆ Wing Tung Vivian Law
- ◆ Amy Navvab
- ◆ Tha Par
- ◆ Nicholas Renke
- ◆ Michelle Saboo
- ◆ Aditya Sathi
- ◆ Shelby Sauer
- ◆ Diana Saum
- ◆ Urusla Seals
- ◆ Jacqueline Steinberg
- ◆ Kyra Taylor
- ◆ Lauren Davis Tinaglia
- ◆ Stephany Trujillo
- ◆ Palak Vani
- ◆ Jessica Zacny

**Ashley Kryscynski** graduated from CASC in 2011 and decided to stay in Ann Arbor to work for CASC, and pursue her Master's in Social Work at U-M. As a 20-month student concentrating on Community Organization with an emphasis on

Children and Youth, Ashley currently interns at the Washtenaw Alliance for Children and Youth (WACY) in Ann Arbor.

Throughout her studies, she has worked to gain a deeper understanding of

how standardizing data can be used to enhance the effectiveness of community collaborations, particularly in improving educational outcomes for youth.

## Her Advice for Current CASC Students?

*"Take advantage of the relationships and the wealth of knowledge around you.*

*What makes CASC so special is that you're given the tools to take those words — 'community,' 'action,' and 'social change' — and really do something good in this world."*



## Are you a CASC Alum?

Send updated info to [cascminor@umich.edu](mailto:cascminor@umich.edu) to be featured in the next CASC newsletter.

# CASC in Action

## CASC Students Learn in Detroit

CASC students listen as Jason Fiedler of Back Alley Bikes explains the organization's work in Detroit. In October, Twenty-five students, staff, and faculty spent a day learning with community activists in Detroit about the community, organizations, and businesses that make up the Cass Corridor in the Midtown neighborhood of Detroit.



## So Cool, So Just: Second Annual Social Justice Fair

In September, CASC hosted the second annual social justice student organization fair featuring over thirty-five student groups from the Body Peace Corps to Yoni Ki Baat to the Coalition of Queer Students of Color. Students had the opportunity to meet other social justice leaders and check out socially just student groups on campus.

## CASC Student Board Hosts Social Justice Panel

Students took a break from finals in December to learn with seven social justice student organizations. Student leaders from each organization talked about their own experiences joining and creating social change movements. They also spoke about the work they do on campus to make change in their own communities, and in solidarity with communities throughout the world. The event was put on by the CASC student advisory board.



## Congrats to the Fall Graduating Class

Fall 2013 graduating seniors join the CASC alumni network. Pictured clockwise from left: Emily Fisher, Hilary Hunt, Casey Fromm, Kelly Conlon, Abby Mitchell, Sydney Gallup, Diane Lee, Emily Behm, and Asia Blaney.



## CASC welcomes new staff member

Alice Mishkin joined the CASC team as our new program coordinator. She is a recent graduate of the MSW program who comes with experience teaching in LSA, working at IGR and Hillel, and working in international human rights organizations in New York, DC, and Tel Aviv.