

PROMOTING EQUITY

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PROVIDING
RESEARCH, TRAINING, AND OUTREACH
UPDATES FROM THE CURTIS CENTER



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
CURTIS CENTER FOR HEALTH EQUITY
RESEARCH AND TRAINING
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

SPRING 2024 DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Letter from our New Associate Director



Dear Curtis Center Community:

I hope this letter finds you well, rested, and refreshed, as we close out the spring season and embrace the summer of 2024.

I had the immense privilege to assume the role of Curtis Center Associate Director (since Jan. this year) after being involved as a Curtis Center Signature Program Initiative Faculty Lead and Faculty Affiliate (Feb. 2020 – Dec. 2023). What initially attracted me to the Curtis Center was its mission and focus on health equity, which moves beyond describing the disparities but attends to solutions for health equity. I am tremendously proud to continue the Curtis Center's focus on health equity, including physical, mental, sexual/gender health, and many other dimensions of health, as we continue to grow and evolve under the leadership of **Dr. Jaclynn Hawkins**, the Curtis Center Director. Housed in the University of Michigan School of Social Work and well-connected with other health science schools and units across the University of Michigan campuses, the Curtis Center is uniquely positioned to tackle some of the most critical health issues confronting our society. Our network of affiliates has deep expertise in a broad spectrum of health and mental health issues and focuses on accessible and equitable care across diverse populations. Together, we have unlimited potential to untangle the complex intersections of social determinants of health and consider innovative and inclusive approaches to promote health equity. To ensure that the Curtis Center remains at the forefront of health equity research and training, we look forward to further expanding our affiliate network to deepen our support for and collaboration with community members, researchers and providers, and trainees who are passionate about achieving health equity across

fields.

Since the last newsletter, the Curtis Center has continued to reach out to various stakeholders, celebrate the achievements of our members and allies, and reflect on our critical mission to advance health equity. As you browse through this latest issue of the newsletter, I want to highlight the Curtis Center's first annual Art for Equity Contest, a partnership with Michigan Medicine's Healthcare Equity Month to engage undergraduate students at the University of Michigan to express their understandings of and views on health equity through art. We also celebrate **Dr. Katie Schultz** – a Curtis Center Signature Program Initiative Faculty Lead – for her recent R01 grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to study the optimal timing and strategies for culturally grounded prevention of substance use, suicide, and exposure to violence among American Indian youths. These, of course, are just a snippet of all the exciting health equity related initiatives and achievements at the Curtis Center.

I want to conclude my message by noting that May is mental health awareness month, and all of us can benefit from self-care. Mental health is health. I hope you will find time to decompress, reflect, and recharge. Thank you for your continued commitment and dedication to health equity. On behalf of the Curtis Center, I wish you all an amazing mid-year to be filled with growth, joy, and fulfillment.

Anao Zhang, PhD, LCSW, ACSW, OSW-C, ACBT
Assistant Professor, University of Michigan School of Social Work
Associate Director, Curtis Center for Health Equity Research and Training
Clinical Research Director, Michigan Medicine Adolescent and Young Adult Oncology Program

WELCOME NEW RESEARCH ASSISTANTS!

Exciting News! We're thrilled to welcome our newest team members **Stephanie Evangelist** and **Alexis Buckley** to the Curtis Center Team. Both Stephanie and Alexis will be Research Assistants helping with Curtis Center Initiatives and **Dr. Hawkins'** research projects! We're excited to have their talents on board!



Stephanie is currently a second year graduate student in the School of



Alexis is a rising senior at the University of Michigan majoring in

Social Work, specializing in policy and political social work. She is currently working in the field of policy advocacy and has previous experience in several community programs. After graduation, she will be working with advocacy groups and political organizations who recognize the importance of social work, health equity, and evaluating structures of power. She looks forward to expanding her skills in research with the Curtis Center team.

Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience. After graduating she hopes to return to the University of Michigan to pursue a Master of Social Work. Her interests include racial disparities in mental healthcare and health equity research. She looks forward to gaining valuable experience and learning from experts in the field of health equity here at the Curtis Center.

CURTIS CENTER SPOTLIGHT

We would like to highlight Curtis Center Postdoctoral Research Associate, **Dr. Nina J. Francis-Levin, PhD, LLMSW!** Click the video below to hear **Dr. Francis-Levin** talk about her research, her postdoctoral position, and what she has learned through working with the Curtis Center.



ART FOR EQUITY CONTEST

On April 19th, 2024, the Curtis Center hosted its first annual Art for Equity Contest! In partnership with Michigan Medicine's Healthcare Equity Month, the contest engaged undergraduate students to be creative and express what health equity means to them through a medium of their choice.

We are incredibly proud to announce April Hamilton, Eunhae Lee, and Hannah Chang as this year's winners! Among a pool of incredible submissions, these three students blew us away with their creativity and ability to express how they understand and see health equity, through art.

Thank you to all who submitted, we were truly inspired by your talent and passion for advancing health equity. #UMHEM24

You can watch a recording of the event [here](#).



Eunchae Lee

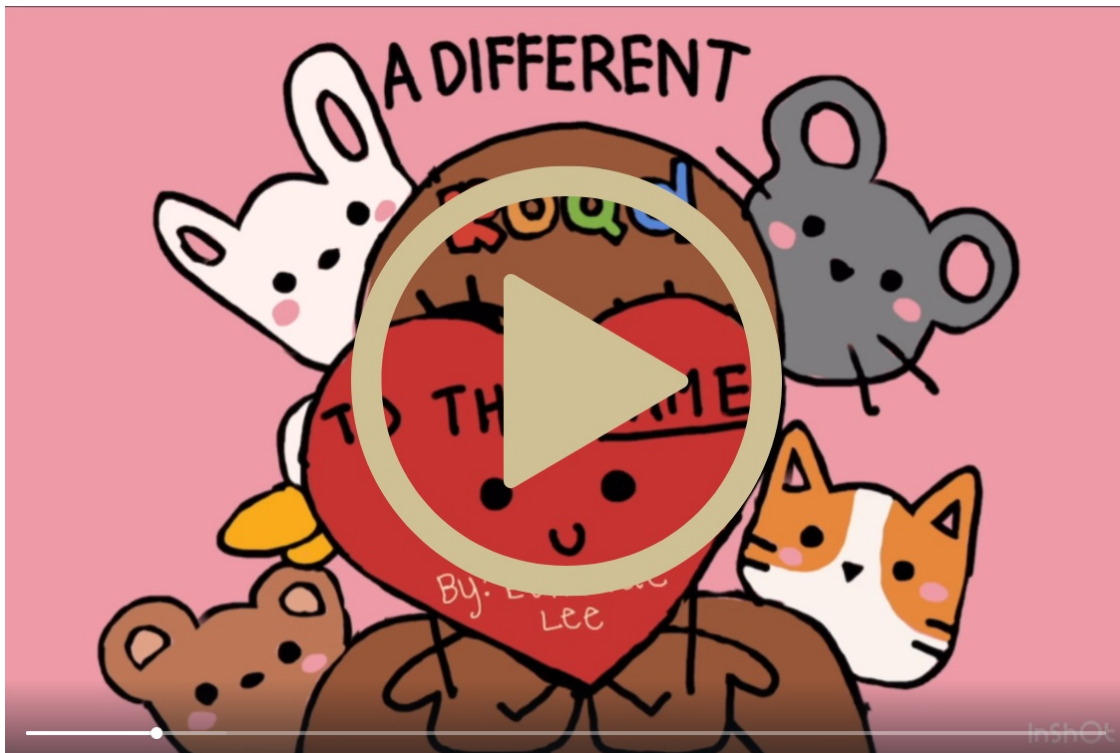


Hannah Chang



April Hamilton

Check out the three winning submissions below:



Eunchae Lee - A Different Road to the Same



Hannah Chang - □□□□ (Dripping water wears stone)



April Hamilton - Cornucopia of Health

ASIAN AMERICAN AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN/PACIFIC HERITAGE (AANHPI) MONTH

This year's AANHPI Heritage Month's theme is Advancing Leaders Through Innovation. The theme pays homage to the visionaries and trailblazers who have shaped AANHPI history and continue to influence its future. To celebrate this theme and the astounding accomplishments of leaders within the AANHPI community, check out the following:

[AANHPI Heritage Month 2024 Event Highlights](#)

Read more about [AANHPI Heritage Month History and other resources](#) put together by the Federal Asian Pacific American Council.

Ways to get involved in Ann Arbor:

[Ann Arbor YMCA AANHPI Heritage Month Events](#)

[Ann Arbor District Library AANHPI Heritage Month Events](#)

[AANHPI Heritage Month Events put on by U-M AAPI Alumni Club](#)

Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Advancing Leaders Through Innovation

May 2024 | #AAPIHeritageMonth

Federal Asian Pacific American Council
1985

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

During National Mental Health Awareness Month in May and every month of the year, your mental health matters.

[Get tips and resources](#) from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to learn how to take care of your mental health.



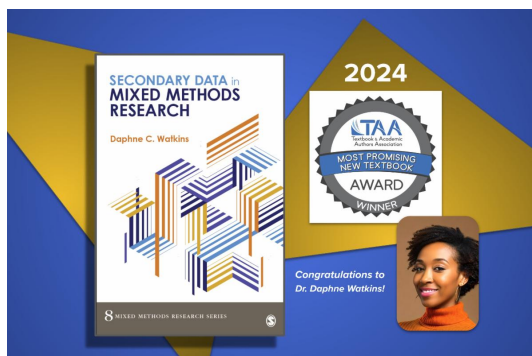
If you are looking for ways to raise awareness about mental health in your community, you can use these [digital shareable resources](#) to spread the word. We encourage you to use the hashtag #shareNIMH in your social media posts to connect with people and organizations with similar goals.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations, **Dr. Daphne C. Watkins**, on your appointment as the [Letha A. Chadiha Collegiate Professor of Social Work, effective April 1, 2024!](#)

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT

Faculty Affiliate **Dr. James Ellis** was one of six UM-SSW Professors who were selected to serve as [cluster co-chairs](#) for the Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) Annual Conference. Cluster chairs play a significant role in the abstract review and development of the abstract-based program content for the SSWR annual conference.



Faculty Affiliate **Dr. Daphne Watkins'** Book "Secondary Data in Mixed Methods Research" has won a 2024 Most Promising [New Textbook Award](#) from the Textbook & Academic Authors Association.

For our sixth talk in the Inaugural Curtis Center Health Equity Seminar Series, **Dr. Derek Griffith** presented his research titled: "A Vision for Black Men's Health and Well-being." You can view this presentation as well as others on our [Training Opportunities Offered by the Curtis Center](#) webpage.



COMMUNITY IMPACT



The YBMen Project will be celebrating 10 years in October! Please consider supporting the project and its 10th anniversary event by visit [The YBMen Harvesting Hope Gift Fund](#). Additionally this fund will offer scholarship support to MSW students in the U-M School of Social Work.

RESEARCH IMPACT

Assistant Professor and Associate Director of the Curtis Center, **Dr. Anao Zhang** has received the 2024 Avery D. Weisman & J. William Worden Award for New Investigators from the American Psychosocial Oncology Society (APOS) for 2024. This award is presented to a junior scientist who makes outstanding research contributions in the field of psychosocial oncology.

Dr. Zhang was quoted: *"I am humbled and honored to receive this year's new investigator award. I appreciate APOS supporting me in attending this year's annual conference. I look forward to continuing my research to advance health equity for adolescent and young adult cancer survivors, especially those from underserved backgrounds."*



Dr. Katie Schultz – a Curtis Center Signature Program Initiative Faculty Lead – recently received an R01 grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to study the optimal timing and strategies for culturally grounded prevention of substance use, suicide, and exposure to violence among American Indian youths.

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EXTERNAL ADVISORY BOARD SPOTLIGHT

In the last few months, the 3rd edition of **Dr. Paula Allen-Meaures'** co-authored book was announced by Oxford University Press!

Franklin, C., Harris, M., & **Allen-Meaures, P.** (Eds.). (2024). *The school services sourcebook: A guide for school-based professionals (3rd ed.)*. New York: Oxford University Press.

In addition, a submission to the LREC Workshop CL4Health has been accepted for a poster presentation on **Dr. Allen-Meaures'** work with a team of faculty on an NSF grant to create a chat bot to educate heart failure patients.

Our esteemed **External Advisory Board** members will be meeting with Curtis Center leadership this month to discuss future directions.

WHAT ARE WE LISTENING TO?

Engaging Native Hawaiian Communities in Clinical Trials

In this podcast episode for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Dr. Christine Lee speaks with Dr. Todd Seto and Dr. Deborah Taira about their research with the Hawaii Health Equity Research and Outreach Network, also known as Hawaii HERON.

Podcast Description adapted from the FDA Office



Click here to listen to this
podcast!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Do you have questions about health equity? Click the button below to ask us your question(s)! We will provide answers in our next newsletter!

Click here to access our Health Equity Question
Form!

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

"We acknowledge that The University of Michigan, named for Michigami, the world's largest freshwater system and located in the Huron River watershed, was formed and has grown through connections with the land stewarded by Niswi Ishkodewan Anishinaabeg: The Three Fires People who are the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi along with their neighbors the Seneca, Delaware, Shawnee and Wyandot nations."

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TODAY TO PROMOTE HEALTH EQUITY?

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Website: <https://ssw.umich.edu/offices/curtis-center>



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