

Kent Connection

NEWSLETTER

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Going Above and Beyond

The University of Louisville's Ready Mentor Program is creating meaningful connections between students and staff, fostering personal and professional growth for both mentors and mentees. This initiative pairs first-generation students with dedicated mentors who provide guidance, support, and valuable insights to help them navigate their academic and career journeys.

This year Kent School staff members are proud participants in this impactful program, offering their expertise and encouragement to students while also gaining new perspectives and rewarding experiences in return.

"As a new mentor for first-generation students in Fall 2024, I have been guiding my mentee throughout the Fall and Spring 2025 semesters. Mentoring has been a rewarding experience, allowing me to connect with someone from a different age group and support her academic journey. While she hasn't faced many challenges, I was able to help her discover an on-campus job opportunity for the summer. This semester, she has adjusted well to campus life, joining a study group to balance school and personal responsibilities, and becoming the social chair of her sorority, where she gains valuable experience in event planning, vendor coordination, and leadership. For anyone considering becoming a mentor, I encourage embracing the opportunity. Listen to your mentee, guide them in problem-solving, and empower them to achieve their goals rather than doing the work for them."

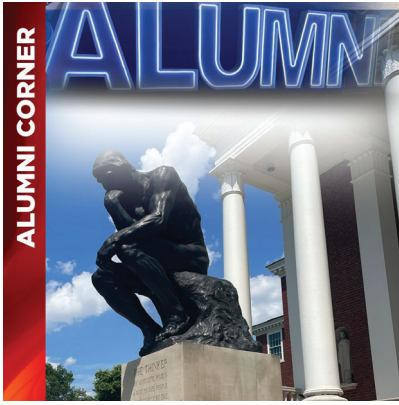
—**Debra Evans, IT specialist in the Kent School**

"I've been a student mentor in the First Year Initiatives Ready Mentoring Program since the beginning of the Fall 2024 semester; this is my first official mentoring of a student although I've been an unofficial mentor to students and staff (within and external to Kent School) for many years. As an official student mentor, I requested to be matched with a student of color as it was important to me for a student to have a resource and, hopefully, a positive role-model from a person who may have had similar life and educational experiences. Scheduling the time for this official obligation in concert with unofficial mentoring (I was recommended for professional and duties/role mentoring for a new LFO/Lead Fiscal Officer at the university) has been a challenge – specifically since the meeting dates are outlined and the student must complete six meetings to qualify for the participation stipend. Additionally, students have challenging circumstances that may require additional time outside of the meeting to identify resources for intervention, if necessary."

I am mentoring a Hispanic student who is the first in her family to attend college, and it has been rewarding to assist her in navigating tutoring resources as well as being an advocate for her through the Office of First Year Initiatives to get answers to problems and seek solutions to challenges. I feel that she has seen me as a positive resource and advocate. I feel that we have established a trusting relationship and rapport that has resulted in her being honest about her challenges and hopefully my advice is seen as valuable and worthy of consideration.

I think that it is beneficial for anyone with a passion for being a role model and encouraging students, especially first gen students, to offer their time and insight. Scheduling can be challenging, but is not insurmountable, and I feel that participating in these initiatives reminds all of us why we work at a University and reminds us of the impact and importance of our mission."

—**Elana Nance, director of administration and operations in the Kent School**



Our alumni embody Kent School's mission, using their expertise and passion to drive change.

Dr. Curtis Nelson, Ed.D., LCSW, MSSW '06

Dr. Curtis Nelson's career is a testament to his dedication to mental health advocacy and the well-being of children and families in Metro Louisville. Since earning his Master of Science in Social Work (MSSW) from the Kent School in 2006, he has made a lasting impact in the field of behavioral health.

With a commitment to leadership and education, Nelson earned his Doctor of Education in Leadership from Spalding University in 2014. He then expanded his reach as a Community Behavioral Health Professional at Boys Haven before taking a bold step in 2015—founding Bluegrass Counseling Associates. As owner, founder, CEO, clinical director and behavioral health professional, he has created a space that provides high-quality, impactful services for children, adults, and families, with a special focus on K-5 students in West Louisville. In 2018, he extended his mission by establishing Bluegrass Community Initiatives, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to furthering social work initiatives.

His contributions to the field have not gone unnoticed. In 2020, he was recognized as one of Louisville Business First's Forty Under 40, and in 2024, he received the publication's Most Admired CEO award. Dr. Nelson is a passionate advocate for mental health, believing that behavioral health services must be normalized and recognized as essential healthcare. He encourages current and future social workers to champion this cause, ensuring that mental health is treated with the same urgency and importance as physical health. His inspiring career path serves as a powerful reminder of the impact that dedicated social workers can have on their communities.

Kristi Glotzbach, LCSW, CADAC V, MSSW '97

Since earning her MSSW from the Kent School in 1997, Kristi has dedicated her career to supporting children and families involved with the child welfare system, in both residential and community-based settings. She currently serves as the chief operating officer at Family Ark and is a part-time instructor at the University of Kentucky's College of Social Work.

Kristi is passionate about the prevention of intergenerational trauma through early screening and intervention for children who have experienced trauma because of parental substance

use and neglect. Her focus is on working with the whole family towards healing.

Reflecting on her time at the Kent School, Kristi credits the program with equipping her with the knowledge and foundation that has shaped her career. "The Kent School ignited in me a passion to make a difference in any way that I can which has been critical in sustaining in this work. The program and the field placement opportunities allowed me to explore the best fit for me as I began my journey as a social work professional." When asked what advice she would give to current Kent School students, she said she encourages them to always be curious about their clients' wants and needs. And never stop learning. "As a lifelong learner, I have found that this is the only way I feel equipped to continue providing the best services I can."

Kristi is eager to continue developing or enhancing programs that support children and families, providing learning opportunities for students as a practicum supervisor and sharing her experience with those who want to provide trauma-informed services.

Bex Young, MSSW '23

Since graduating from the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, Bex has cultivated a career as a therapist specializing in addiction services. Her academic foundation has catalyzed her professional growth, particularly through transformative practicum experiences, honing her skills in program development, behavioral health interventions and advocating for military and veteran communities.

In her role at Seven Counties Services, she leads comprehensive clinical services in a rural setting, addressing substance use disorders with a focus on personalized crisis intervention and long-term recovery support. The ability to create lasting, positive change in individuals' lives is a source of immense fulfillment. Additionally, Bex has been recognized as a top producer for case management referrals, reflecting her dedication to client-centered care that began to blossom at the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science.

Reflecting on her time at the Kent School, alongside her professional accomplishments, Bex has experienced significant personal growth, particularly in her journey of building and expanding her family. This experience has deepened her understanding of resilience, empathy, and the vital importance of strong support systems. Throughout both her career and personal life, she remains unwavering in her commitment to evidence-based practices, holistic well-being and making a profound and lasting impact on the lives of individuals and communities.

When asked what advice she would give to current Kent School students, she stated "none of these accomplishments would have been possible without the invaluable education and support I received from the Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, specifically the dedicated faculty and staff who guided me along the way."

Anthony Munger, BSW '23

Anthony Munger is making a powerful impact in the non-profit sector, using his expertise in strategic planning, harm reduction and partnership development to serve the LGBTQIA+ community. Since 2022, he has served as project manager for the Louisville Pride Foundation. Anthony has

led transformative initiatives that prioritize health equity and advocacy. His work includes overseeing harm reduction programs, managing budgets, engaging stakeholders and evaluating programs to ensure lasting impact.

During his time at the Foundation, Anthony secured a \$1.3 million Ryan White grant to fund an innovative outreach program. This initiative focuses on increasing access to PrEP, a vital medication for preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive the resources and healthcare they need. His commitment to public health and LGBTQIA+ advocacy has positioned him as a leader in the field.

Anthony's expertise and dedication have earned him the opportunity to speak at the upcoming Kentucky Public Health Conference, where he will share insights on harm reduction, vaccine hesitancy and strategies to advance LGBTQIA+ health initiatives. Through his leadership and advocacy, he exemplifies the power of social work to create a more equitable and compassionate world.

Shericka Smith, MSSW '22

We are proud to see our alumni leading important conversations on mental health, equity and social justice. In the month of February Shericka Smith served as the keynote speaker for the Kentucky Judicial Branch's fifth annual Black History Month Celebration held at the Capitol in Frankfort.

Shericka is a mental health coordinator for Fayette County Public Schools. She is a passionate leader in social work. She has dedicated her career to advocating for mental health awareness and increasing access to resources, particularly for Black families impacted by trauma. Her keynote address, "Then to Now: The Enduring Legacy of Black Professionals," reflected on the significant contributions of Black professionals throughout history and their ongoing impact today.

After earning our MSSW degree from Kent School, she received her DSW from the University of Kentucky. In addition to her work in K-12 education, she also serves as a part-time instructor at the University of Kentucky's College of Social Work.

RAYMOND A. KENT SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK & FAMILY SCIENCE

CELEBRATING NATIONAL SOCIAL WORK MONTH KENT'S LISTING OF EVENTS

CHOICES: HAVING A SAFE & HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH ALCOHOL

Sponsored by the Center for Family & Community Well-Being

Date and Time: Tuesday, March 4, 12-1 p.m. EST

via Microsoft Teams

[**JOIN THE SESSION**](#)

Learn how to make informed and low risk choices about alcohol during this one-hour training designed for students. This non-judgmental session is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills to reduce risk and harm for those who choose to drink, and students that abstain from drinking will gain knowledge and support to help others.

STATE OF SOCIAL WORK IN 2025 & BEYOND PANEL

Sponsored by Kent Alumni Council

Date and Time: Wednesday, March 5, 6-7 p.m. EST

Cost: \$5

[**REGISTER NOW**](#)

Join us for a dynamic, virtual panel discussion. Experts will explore the evolving landscape of the social work profession, addressing current challenges, emerging trends and the necessary considerations for the future.

IMPACT OF TRAUMA EXPOSURE ON PROFESSIONALS (1.5 CEUs)

Sponsored by Kent Alumni Council

Date and Time: Monday, March 10, 1-2:30 p.m. EST

Cost: \$22

[**REGISTER NOW**](#)

This training will help participants identify symptoms and warning signs of traumatic stress as well as learn the differences between three common trauma exposure responses: secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue and burnout. We will discuss strategies for responding to trauma exposure and provide resources that professionals can use to mitigate the impact of trauma exposure and improve wellness.

WHAT IS YOUR ETHICS IQ? (1 CEU)

Sponsored by Kent Alumni Council

Date and Time: Friday, March 14, 9-10 a.m. EST

Cost: \$15

[**REGISTER NOW**](#)

A review of NASW Ethical Principles and Standards that Guide Social Work Practice. Participants will have been provided with the guide rails that promote ethical and professional social work practice and will have the knowledge to apply social work principles and standards to their daily work.

ART AND ADVOCACY — in-person event

Date and Time: Monday, March 17, 1-3 p.m.

Location: TBD, on Belknap Campus

Sponsored by the Kent School and the Living-Learning Community

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Lesley Harris, professor in the Raymond A. Kent School of Social Work and Family Science will lead a hands-on learning experience that promises to be fun and educational. Join this arts-based researcher in art-making for advocacy!

Arts-based research is an innovative and interdisciplinary approach to research that integrates artistic methods and practices into the research process. This methodology recognizes the unique ways in which the arts, including visual arts and other creative forms, can contribute to the generation of knowledge and understanding.

Learn more about powerful and evocative ways of expressing societal concerns, sparking dialogue, and driving meaningful change while engaging in art-making. Creating art for advocacy serves as a compelling medium to amplify voices, challenge societal norms, and ignite conversations around pressing matters.

A SOCIAL WORK MONTH CELEBRATION WITH THE CENTER FOR MILITARY-CONNECTED STUDENTS—LUNCH AND LEARN EVENT — in-person event

Date and Time: Tuesday, March 18, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Location: Brodschi Hall

Free swag, food items and a special training session.

Training session is from 12:15-1 p.m.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

If you are a UofL military-connected student, take this opportunity to visit with Kent School representatives during tabling and learn about the growing fields of social work and family science and Kent's degree offerings, minors and certificates.

A special mental health training session will be offered. Individuals interested in attending the training are encouraged to register prior to the event for planning purposes. A certificate and additional resources will be provided upon completion of the training.

RESEARCH SHOWCASE — in-person event

Bridging Gaps: Innovative Research on Treatment, Trauma and Community Care

Date and Time: Wednesday, March 19, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Location: Chao Auditorium, Ekstrom Library

In celebration of social work month, this event welcomes faculty, students, community partners and anyone interested in critical issues across the lifespan—from childhood trauma to substance use treatment to elder care in indigenous communities.

Join us for a morning of thought-provoking research, and opportunities to connect with colleagues committed to enhancing well-being through evidence-based, contextually responsive approaches.

Presentations:

Dr. Martin Hall, professor
Methamphetamine Use, Substance Use Treatment Complexity, and Child Welfare Outcomes

Dr. Heehyul Moon, associate professor

Understanding Dementia Knowledge, Care Needs, and Screening Intentions in the Yankton Sioux Tribe: A Community-Based Mixed-Methods Study

Dr. Lixia Zhang, assistant professor

Beyond Health: How Adverse Childhood Experiences Shape Our Social Environment

KENT SCHOOL APPRECIATION EVENT — in-person event

Date and Time: Tuesday, March 25, drop in between 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Location: BAB 218

Sponsored by Kent School Events Committee

Join us for this drop-in event dedicated to recognizing the hard work and dedication of faculty, staff, students, alumni and community members who contribute to the field of social work and family science. Show your gratitude by taking part in meaningful appreciation activities, including writing appreciation cards, recording short video messages and sending CardGrams.

PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES (2 CEUS)

Date and Time: Wednesday, March 26, 9-10 a.m. EST

Cost: \$30

Sponsored by Kent Alumni Council

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Social Workers will be guided through an interactive learning experience that asks participants to consider the six core values of social work in taking varied stances on policy and practice across the spectrum of professional roles that social workers hold. Participants will be led in discussions about how to maximize policy impacts in a political climate likely to be at odds with the personal values of social workers as well as the NASW Code of Ethics and ethical standards from varying social work affinity groups.

REMEMBER ME: A MUSICAL REFLECTION OF MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS — in-person event

Date and Time: Wednesday, March 26, 7:30-9 p.m.

Location: Comstock Hall, School of Music

Presented in collaboration with the UofL School of Music, Kent School of Social Work and Family Science, Center for Family and Community Well-Being and the Graesyn Foundation.

Join us for an extraordinary musical experience. Cellist Paul York is featured in an emotional journey, exploring vulnerability, loss, and belonging, centered around "Remember Me", a composition by David Maslanka. Guitarist Stephen Mattingly presents captivating works inspired by the writings of David Foster Wallace and Ernest Hemingway.

While raising awareness for mental wellness among our campus community, we share a message of hope and imagine a better future for those in need of vital mental health resources. Access to campus and community resources is most critical for students struggling with mental wellness. It is our mission to cultivate a community of care with support activities and to improve access to mental health resources for students on campus and in the community.

2025 CHAMPIONS FOR CHANGE — an invitation event

Date and Time: Thursday, March 27, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Location: University Club and Alumni Center

The 2025 Champions for Change celebration will recognize the lasting impact of our alumni in the fields of social work and family science. This event honors the contributions of our graduates whose dedication and service continue to shape communities and transform lives. Together, we will celebrate the powerful connections between our alumni, the Kent School of Social Work & Family Science, and the individuals they serve.

SURVIVORLINK

Date and Time: Friday, March 28, 12-1:30 p.m.

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Heather Storer, Associate Professor

Student Presenters: Donna Ross, Sadie Saunders,
Gabriella Sandoval and Katie Melton

ZOOM IN

Gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence, teen dating violence, and sexual assault, is a significant public health and social justice issue. The purpose of SurvivorLink is to build capacity within community-based agencies by training staff to appropriately identify and respond to intimate partner violence within the scope of their practice. The University of Louisville is one of thirteen sites nationally that has been selected to pilot this innovative approach to preventing and responding to intersecting forms of violence.

This training will offer insight into the various forms of intimate partner violence (IPV), cycles of abuse, power and control and strategies for supporting survivors of IPV.

Attention Students: If your agency supervisor agrees to AND if the material ties to your practicum focus, these hours could count toward practicum hours.