Wisdom, Words & Women

“There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers.”

—Susan B. Anthony

Trinh Tran
2015-2016 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award
Maggie Chesbrough

Trinh Tran is one of the six staff members at Michigan State University who are being honored with the 2016 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award! She stated, “Being an Asian woman defines me as a double minority, but by receiving this award, I feel as though my hard work is finally paying off and I get to be recognized based on my achievements rather than being an Asian woman. Receiving this award is such a privilege and I am truly honored! I feel like I’m winning an Oscar!”

Trinh Tran’s story is unlike many others, having immigrated with her mother from Vietnam to the United States when she was just 9 months old, rejoining with her father in the Philippines, and growing up in America with parents who spoke little to no English. Tran has truly excelled and defeated the odds by being the first in her family to attend college. She stated, “I bleed green!” Graduating from Michigan State University Lyman Briggs College in May of 2003, Tran proceeded to volunteer at the MSU Clinical Center and was officially offered a position in December of 2004. Tran has worked at Michigan State University for over 10 years and argued, “My work reflects who I am as a person, which is that I truly care, am honest and passionate in what I do.” In October of 2013, she was asked to work with The Aitch Foundation which is involved with the advancement of cancer research, providing to the community various opportunities and resources to be engaged in their health regarding preventative care, importance of primary care, education regarding diet and health, etc. Tran said, “Working with The Aitch Foundation allowed me to see how various entities share a common goal of cancer screening and shed light on how an individual can be their own advocate regarding their health. It was a privilege to be one of the representatives from the MSU HealthTeam to be involved in reaching out to the community to help them understand the resources available to them.”

Her friends, family, and work colleagues have shown immense support upon Tran receiving this award, by stating how she is so deserving. In return, Tran is very humbled and said that she feels “like a celebrity.” Tran is used to being more behind the scenes or, rather, more of the supportive role, instead of being in the spotlight. Tran stated, “I’m usually more of the background singer rather than Beyoncé!” Receiving this award, for Tran, is exciting, overwhelming, affirmative to her work and the success that she has brought to the University, and surreal. She claims that “being nominated for this award feels like a dream.”

When asked about what advice or words of wisdom she would give to other women in her field she stated, “No matter one’s gender, race, or background, it’s important to remain true to yourself. Forget the stereotypes that work to define who you are or who you should be and instead, set out to be whoever you wish to be, do what you wish to do, and take responsibility for your life.” She also spoke of

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In this issue:
• MSU’s Award Worthy Women 2015-2016
• Interview with Executive Director of the WorkLife Office
• Excellence In Diversity Women Awardees
• Goodbyes Are Never Easy: Tribute to Our Seniors
• Fight Against Human Trafficking
• And much more . . .
Pamela Newsted, Academic Secretary, in the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities (RCAH) at Michigan State University is one of this year’s Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Awardees. This award is presented annually and is highly competitive. The Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award requires its recipients to hold an overall excellence in their job performance, a supportive and welcoming attitude, as well as making contributions to their specific unit and/or University that leads to an improvement in overall efficiency, effectiveness, and provides other valuable services; Pamela Newsted does just that! She explained how receiving this award is a huge honor, not just for her, but also for her college, because it works as a confirmation that the work that she’s doing is successful and making a difference on a campus-wide scale.

Meeting with Pamela Newsted was a great honor. It’s very clear that she is passionate about the work she does, the people she works with, and especially the students she assists. She explains how humbled she feels by receiving such a prestigious award and she attributes much of her success and recognition to her fellow faculty and staff members, claiming that “we elevate each other and support one another and that’s why we are such an effective team.” Her favorite philosophy and words of advice are to treat others with respect and try to imagine yourself in another’s shoes because “we just don’t know what that person is dealing with.”

Newsted began working at Michigan State University in 1984 at the Clinical Center, in 2000 began working in Lyman Briggs College, and ultimately finding her home in the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities in 2007. MSU has always been an important place for her family, having lived in Spartan Village for 5 years while her husband earned his advanced degree, her daughter and son earning their degrees at MSU, and enjoying all that the University has to offer. Although working as a secretary has been dominated by women for many years, Newsted feels that the role has expanded throughout the years and is still very relevant and important. She takes pride in helping others and she is constantly learning and growing from each of the influential staff members and students that she meets on a daily basis. She stated, “Being nominated and recognized for this award gave me confidence…their confidence in me helped me grow.”

You can find Pamela Newsted walking down the River Trail (when the Michigan weather is nice) during her lunch hour or at her home away from home in C210 Snyder Hall, where she’ll be the first smiling face you see when entering the RCAH offices. She stated that Michigan State University is like a community, we’re fortunate enough to meet many different people from many different backgrounds and she’s excited to learn from these people and work together to make a real difference in our community. Congratulations to Pamela Newsted for the incredible passion she establishes in her work and for being recognized as a 2016 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award recipient!

Pamela Newsted
2015-2016 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award
Maggie Chesbrough

Jill Vondrasek, Marketing and Communications Director in the College of Nursing at Michigan State University, is one of the 2016 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Awardees! Upon receiving this award, Vondrasek said, “It is a great honor to be recognized for my dedication to the University and the Lansing community.” Like many of the other awardees, Jill had no idea that she was even nominated for the award and was completely surprised when her friends and colleagues congratulated her on receiving this prestigious accomplishment! She stated how this award works to motivate her to work even harder and to keep proving herself by showing the University that, “Spartans are dedicated and work hard for their passions.”

Vondrasek has four principles, which she calls her principles of distinction, that she follows in order to succeed in her field: 1) learners are leaders, there is never a point in life where one should no longer seek knowledge; 2) nothing is impossible, there’s always an answer, even if you have not yet discovered one; 3) be adaptable, the one

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guarantee in life is that change will happen, so it’s important to be flexible; and 4) being likeable is more important than being smart. For instance, Jill gave the example of how she is able to have supporting staff members willingly go out of their way to help her succeed, as she would for them in return because of her kindness and collegial support. Together, they are able to work as a team and provide the best services in the most effective ways, simply by showing each other respect and empathy.

As a Spartan Alumni and serving on the College of Arts and Letters alumni board, has helped influence Jill to be more of a creative thinker. She implements these skills and her innovation in her current position in the College of Nursing and stated, “In my career at MSU, I am able to harness the power of storytelling. I represent the voice of the talented individuals around me. I get to tell their stories and communicate the impact of their work. I help them to see the extraordinary in what they view as ordinary and share it with the world.” Jill is constantly inspired by her coworkers and students at Michigan State University, so to be recognized by this award is a true honor. Jill’s pep-talk motto, specifically in the workplace, is not to let anyone tell you that you can’t do something. Clear your mind of can’t and use the disbelief or challenge to help you rise above. Use it as motivation, set a goal, and prove them wrong. Jill said, “‘No,’ to me, means new opportunity.” Jill has shown that she is willing to do things outside of her comfort zone and take risks, not just in the workplace, but also in her daily life. She has worked her mind and body through CrossFit exercises and she is now able to successfully achieve a 230 pound deadlift! Between her achievements in CrossFit, her dedication to empower women through the Women’s Networking Association, and her work to support women diagnosed with breast cancer through Susan G. Komen, Jill Vondrasek is a true inspiration for women. Congratulations Jill Vondrasek for being one of this year’s 2016 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Awardees!

M. Beth Courey
2015-2016 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award
Lauren Dietz

Beth Courey is the Director of Scheduling and Student Activities within MSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine, and one of this year’s recipients of the Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award.

Receiving a Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award is extremely significant to Beth, who has worked for 37 years in MSU’s College of Osteopathic Medicine. She is incredibly humbled to be recognized, not only by her college, but by the University as a whole. Beth is fully aware of the immense number of staff members at Michigan State and being a recipient of the Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award for this year is very powerful. This being the biggest award she has received in her career thus far, Beth is incredibly grateful to her peers who had the confidence to nominate her this year.

Receiving the award came as a complete surprise to Beth. A few years ago, a colleague asked her if she’d ever received a Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award. Dumbfounded by this question, Beth had replied “Oh gosh, no!” This colleague concluded the conversation by saying that they intended to nominate her in the future; Beth brushed this off. Having no idea she had even been nominated this year, her colleagues were able to surprise her in what seemed to be a regular weekly meeting. Upon hearing that the subject of the meeting was the announcement of her award, Beth was flooded with emotion. “It was fun… usually I’m the one surprising others,” she said.

Beth has received a lot of admiration and congratulations from colleagues since the announcement of the award. Having the Dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine say that “[Beth is] very deserving of this award” was one of the congratulatory messages that will stick with her for a lifetime. She has had endless calls from family members, friends, and has quite the beautiful array of balloons in her office.

While talking with Beth about her current projects, she stated that she absolutely loves being busy. This time of year is extremely chaotic for her, especially with graduation soon approaching. “I like the chaos. I would be bored without it,” stated Beth. Graduation is the pinnacle of the medical students’ careers, so it is very important to Beth that graduation day is a special, memorable one for students and their guests.

Beth’s advice to others pursuing a career is to consciously involve yourself and to never shy away from additional work. Her willingness to jump in on additional projects is one of the reasons she is in her current position at MSU. Beth also advises others to constantly keep the outcome in mind while working on a project or task. The end products of her hard work are very important to Beth, regardless of what it may be. Whether it be a ceremony, a presentation, or a seemingly simple meeting with students, she is always working toward accomplishing the end goal.

In her free time, Beth has taken the time to learn the art of flameworking. She has been creating beautiful glass beads and designing them into jewelry for over a decade. She learned this art form at Lansing’s Delphi Glass after the passing of her father. Beth’s mother had given each of the children some money and instructed them to do something in remembrance of their father. Beth knew that flamework would have excited her father and has been exploring this passion ever since.

Congratulations to M. Beth Courey for being awarded with the Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award. The MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine is extremely fortunate to have her.

May 2016
Alyssa Hadley Dunn  
*Individual Award: Emerging Progress toward Excellence in Diversity*

Dr. Alyssa Hadley Dunn is an Assistant Professor of Teacher Education here at Michigan State University. She works to create an environment within her classroom where students can feel comfortable speaking about matters pertaining to race, racism, power, and the ever-prevalent topic of privilege. She explores the impact that social, cultural and political movements have on teaching and learning within her research. She said, “I am so grateful for this award that recognizes the importance of diversity initiatives at MSU. As a professor in the College of Education, I am privileged to work with future educators who will someday be agents of change and equity in classrooms around Michigan and beyond. Thus, it’s important to me to help prepare them for working with marginalized youth and communities in ways that build on the youth’s assets and are responsive to the needs of such communities.”

Catherine Feirer  
*Individual Award: Emerging Progress toward Excellence in Diversity*

Catherine Feirer used her knowledge in advertising to kick off her campaign, urging students, staff, faculty and members within the community to join in the quest for wheelchair accessible seating within the student section at Michigan State University's Spartan Stadium. Through Facebook and Twitter, Ferier was able to capture an audience that supported her arguments. In 2015, the University installed new seating platforms in the student section so that students who use wheelchairs can join the rest of the Spartans and cheer on their favorite team. But these new seating platforms were not specific to just the Spartan Stadium. In fact, the University also installed these platforms in the Munn Ice Arena! She said, “Receiving this award to me feels like a celebration for all the work that went into this project over the past two years. I encourage others to always go after what you want and don’t be afraid of the word ‘no!’”

Raven Jones Stanbrough  
*Individual Award: Emerging Progress toward Excellence in Diversity*

Raven Jones Stanbrough is a doctoral student in Curriculum, Instruction and Teacher Education (CITE), whose research focuses on “culturally sustaining pedagogies and literacy practices within an urban debate community.” She works to give underprivileged students a voice through debate. She works within urban communities and schools to empower and inspire students of color by educating them on systematic inequality. Currently, her leadership is dedicated toward helping future educators in understanding the importance of one’s voice, literature, and literacies within marginalized groups. She said, “As a Black wife-mother-scholar in academia, my soul is sometimes well and sometimes vexed. Stemming from the Detroit Public School system, I’ve learned from some of the most caring and effective teachers who’ve inspired me to know that teaching won’t always be a pretty process. Due to that, I don’t mind getting dirty because I know ‘the struggle is real!’ My hankering is to do as much as I can to create spaces and opportunities for the injustices I live and see daily.”

Joyce-Zoe Farley  
*Students Making a Difference through Artistic Expression Award*

Farley’s artistic expression, “EnVISIONing and Remembering Sankofa in NYC,” is a digital photo project that works to recognize forgotten African American history by paring photographs from sites like the African Burial Ground and the Audubon Ballroom with brief narratives and poems that were written by black authors. Farley is a second year doctoral student in African American and African Studies (AAAS) with a graduate certificate in Journalism.

Farley was unavailable for a quote. Source: Office for Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives.
On her popular blog *Bones Don’t Lie*, Meyers Emery continues to practice linking the past with the present. Through her writing, she explores current events and their relation with recent archaeological findings. This platform allows her to engage in public service, where people can ask questions regarding mortuary archaeology safely and openly. Her blog has consistently been ranked as one of the top ten archeological blogs online and even once prompted a *Bones* television producer to ask her a question about one of their future episodes.

“It [the blog] just made me aware of the wide variety of different things that happen in my field,” Meyers Emery said. “As it got more popular, it became a great way to clear up misconceptions.” The linkage between current events and archaeology also draws in readers. Meyers Emery believes interpreting findings under a person’s own background is imperative to looking at issues of today. This is very particular to Meyers Emery, especially as a teacher.

Leading digs and helping students one-on-one with field work is Meyers Emery’s favorite part of her job. As a graduate student, she has the opportunity to conduct archaeological digs right here on campus in which undergraduate students are able to learn about the history of Michigan State University and what it truly means to be a Spartan. Meyers Emery equips students with knowledge about what to look for when analyzing old MSU artifacts or ruins and the contextual evidence associated with it. Helping students is one of the joys of field work for Meyers Emery, so when she found out she won the Teaching-In-Citation Award, it meant the world to her.

“It’s nice to see the work you are doing is being supported by your department,” Meyers Emery said. “It’s a huge honor especially from the fact that it’s not only faculty but from the students.” Achieving the Teaching-in-Citation award gave Meyers Emery a sense of appreciation and validation for her work. As a woman in the field, although minimal, she sometimes faces chauvinism from her male comrades while working in the field, but this does not stop her from encouraging students to utilize their own backgrounds and understandings of themselves to lead them as archeologists of tomorrow. Usually through her lessons, Meyers Emery facilitates an environment where students can feel safe being themselves. “I promote multiple voices in my classes, because we can interpret the past from different viewpoints,” Meyers Emery said. “There isn’t necessarily a single unified truth.”

The way different ethnic groups were able to co-exist peacefully and combine traditions, not only fascinates, but inspires Meyers Emery. Preserving artifacts is important to humankind so that we may understand our cultural origins and share stories of people who do not have such strong voices in history. Archaeology offers an opportunity to bring new evidence into our interpretation of the past. This can sometimes challenge systems of belief that are widely accepted, which are sometimes controversial, but to Meyers Emery it is her duty to amplify voices by bringing different narratives to the conversation and to contextualize the present day with help from history.

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**“Advancing gender equity through education and access to resources”**

**Gender Matters!**

May 2016
Alison Ede
Excellence-in-Teaching Citation Award
Megdi Abebe

Kinesiology Ph.D. student, Alison Ede is one of the 2016 Excellence-in-Teaching Citation award recipients.

Since high school, Alison Ede has always been active and had an interest in sports and physical activity. After completing her bachelor's degree in women's studies at a small school in Minnesota, she set out to obtain her master's degree in kinesiology. While in graduate school, she also coached cross country. It was through this experience that her research interests first shifted away from sports and more into the mental aspects involved during exercising.

Ede is an active volunteer within the Dwarf Athletic Association of America, where she currently serves as sport technical director. She initially became involved when the Association had their 2013 World Games on MSU's campus and they asked her to join them for future endeavors.

Currently, she is finishing her fifth and final year as a doctoral student in exercise psychology. Her dissertation research includes how social factors and influence may affect the way we exercise, such as a person's relationship with their personal trainer. She mostly gathers her data by sending out surveys through gym websites and social media.

Additionally, when the kinesiology department received a grant from NASA to study the exercise psychology of future astronauts, it was one of Ede's responsibilities to engage and interact with involved students every day. The grant entailed that the department study exercise habits of people who were around the same age and fitness level as typical astronauts. Students would sometimes lead the exercise sessions.

As a kinesiology instructor, Ede knows how vast career opportunities are for students studying in the field, which is why it is important for her to get to know a little bit about each student who walks into her classroom. These personal relationships help her to remain aware of how she molds information and presents to students. Ede realizes that sharing information in a way that is valuable to students and their future is crucial.

That time to bond with her students is one of her favorite aspects of teaching. For Ede, being recognized by the University for her role in guiding and molding students is very important. The support from faculty within her department is also very affirming.

After she completes her doctoral program at MSU, Ede will join the faculty at California State University-Long Beach as an Assistant Professor of Exercise Psychology full time. We congratulate her on receiving the Excellence-in-Teaching Citation award and wish her well in all of her future endeavors!

Terry Gibb
Distinguished Academic Staff Award
Megdi Abebe

Terry Gibb from MSU Extension (MSUE) was selected as one of the 2016 Distinguished Academic Staff Award recipients.

If there is one thing to know about Terry Gibb, it is that she is versatile. Her job as a Natural Resources and Government/Public Policy Senior Educator within MSUE requires her to be open to any and every project that is thrown her way. These can range from educating school children about the importance of the health and preservation of the Great Lakes to initiating statewide programs to support and inform homeowners of options and alternatives associated with foreclosure.

She initially started her undergraduate education at Michigan State University before taking a brief break to start a family, later finishing her degree at Wayne State University in consumer economics. She then went on to get her master's from Wayne State in teaching education. After college, she started working for a small environmentally-focused nonprofit in Detroit, MI.

Through a joint conference collaboration, Gibb was introduced to MSUE. She took a temporary position with the Macomb office to assist with the completion of several environmental programs. One of the responsibilities of her job at MSUE was to re-write the job description for a new position they wanted to create in partnership with the county. Ironically enough, once her supervisor realized that Gibb was perfectly qualified for the new position, she hired her full-time.

Gibb has been with MSU Extension for over 25 years and has loved constantly learning about new issues among residents and how to come up with solutions for them. During this time, she has always served the Michigan community with expertise and personal care.

When Gibb received word of the award, her first response was, “You’re kidding right?” Even though it was never a

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Interested in receiving weekly e-mails about upcoming programs and events? To join the **WRC Listserv**, send an e-mail with the subject line “WRC Listserv” to **wrc@msu.edu**. Be sure to indicate your name and e-mail address.

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**WRC Staff**: Lydia Weiss, Educational Program Coordinator; Audrey C. Smith, Office Manager; Cynthia Cotton, Professional Assistant. **WRC Students**: Megdelawit Abebe, Lauren Dietz, Kiana Elkins, and Maggie Chesbrough, Department Aides; **WRC Student Volunteer**: Olivia Vaden.

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**You’re Invited**

The Distinguished Staff Award and Ruth Jameyson Award selection committees and the Office of the Executive Vice President for Administrative Services of Michigan State University cordially invite you and your guests to a reception in honor of the 2016 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award recipients and Ruth Jameyson “Above and Beyond” Award recipient.

**2016 Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award Recipients**

Jeffry Brodie  
Marta Mittermaier  
Pamela Newsted

Beth Courey  
Trinh Tran  
Jill Vondrasek

**2016 Ruth Jameyson “Above and Beyond” Award Recipient**

Anthony Cepak

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**Monday, May 16, 2016**  
Kellogg Center Big Ten Rooms  
Reception 12:30 p.m.—2:00 p.m.  
Awards Ceremony 12:45 p.m.—1:45 p.m.

Validated Parking is available in the parking ramp adjacent to the Kellogg Center.

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The remaining award recipients will be presented in the June 2016 issue of *Wisdom, Words & Women*.

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secret that a co-worker was nominating her, she was still surprised to have been selected because there are so many Extension educators doing such great work. Gibb considers the award a great way for the university to recognize a person for the body of work they have achieved over the course of their career.

Currently, she is working with a team on a curriculum for a new **water school program** intended for public officials and other community leaders at the local and state level. The school will help officials understand the importance of water resources, a topic that is of much concern for the residents of Michigan.

“Extension is nothing, if not flexible,” Gibb said. The projects that she has worked on have truly impacted people and allow her to become well-versed in seemingly random topics. Developing programs and tackling problems keeps her interested and excited in her work, and always ready for the next set of issues to target. Congratulations to Terry Gibb on receiving the 2016 Distinguished Academic Staff Award!
Michigan ACE Women’s Network Annual Conference  
June 6 – 7, 2016  
Radisson Hotel Lansing at the Capitol  
Lansing, Michigan  
Hosted by Oakland University

In concert with the Inclusive Excellence Group of the American Council on Education, the Michigan ACE Network is committed to identifying, developing the leadership of, advancing, and supporting the retention of women in higher education throughout the state.

The theme of this year’s conference is “Make a Difference: Move the Needle in Michigan,” with a focus on the following goals:

- Generate a national sense of urgency elevating the need for advancing women in higher education leadership positions
- Encourage governing boards and other higher education institutional decision- and policy-making bodies to consider recommended practices for recruiting and hiring women to chief executive offices
- Achieve women’s advancement to mid- and senior-level positions in higher education administration by building capacities in women and institutions
- Suggest recommended practices and models and recognize success in advancing women in higher education

For additional information, and to register, please visit https://wwwp.oakland.edu/provost/2016-michigan-ace-network-conference.

“Getting to Know the Executive Director of the MSU WorkLife Office  
Maggie Chesbrough

“As a woman, I have experienced many of the work-life dilemmas that drive this work – multiple family roles, career changes, professional development, commuting between campuses, telecommuting, etc. And I’ve worked a lot with people in conflict in the workplace, so I’m familiar with what helps people be more or less effective, and aligning work and personal roles is one of the many things,” said Dr. Barbara Roberts, Executive Director of the new MSU WorkLife Office.

Dr. Roberts has accepted a very challenging new project, accompanied by her new title and position here at Michigan State University, by creating an entire office that will address work-life concerns faced by the faculty and staff members at Michigan State University. She believes that the way this office is being set up will begin to see work personnel as whole people, the totality of the person, rather than exclusively as a worker from the hours of 8am to 5pm. She describes this process of combining resources offered at Michigan State University and centralizing them all into one office, WorkLife, as being similar to creating a quilt; taking pieces of information and guidance from the resources that have been successful in attaining a healthy work life and environment and combining them with new innovative techniques that will further benefit faculty and staff members all over campus.

Dr. Roberts encompasses this notion into her everyday life, since she too is a mother, wife and employee. Because of this, she is very understanding in the workplace. She is excited to implement her ideas to better the experience of Michigan State University staff and faculty on such a populated and well known campus. She admits that most departments or organizations that are created from the ground up are all about trial and error, but she believes the creation and merging of established resources will be successful and highly recognized and appreciated by faculty and staff members who use the WorkLife Office services.

Dr. Roberts has a background in occupational therapy and uses this knowledge to help establish and maintain an understanding work environment. Dr. Roberts stated, “My background is in occupational therapy, so my inclination is to respect and foster all the parts of a person that make them whole and effective, and this role gives me a chance to do that on a large scale.” Having lived in Canada for 30 years, Dr. Roberts is excited to return home to the state of Michigan and be able to work closely with Michigan State University as she begins this new position as the Executive Director of the MSU WorkLife Office.
Goodbyes are never easy. We watch as our freshmen become sophomore, then juniors, and lastly seniors, before they leave the University and enter the “real world.” It’s a sad day to see our friends, family members, or colleagues graduate, but we must remember how much of an accomplishment it is to receive such an outstanding education and degree from Michigan State University. Congratulations to all graduating seniors on making it through college and finding your passions and purpose! The MSU Women’s Resource Center would like to have a special farewell tribute to not one, but two, of our amazing student staff members who are graduating May 2016. We could not be more proud of them and grateful for all of the incredible work that they put into this unit and all of the contributions they made on a campus-wide level. Congratulations graduates!

Lauren Dietz; Senior Department Aide
Psychology Major with Minors in Women’s and Gender Studies and Peace and Justice Studies

Lauren Dietz is a wonder woman. When she’s not working at the MSU Women’s Resource Center as a Department Aide, she is volunteering at the Listening Ear and working on her capstone on the topic of eating disorders. After graduation she plans to stay with the Listening Ear and potentially work at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, while studying for the GRE and joining the MSU Ph.D. program in the clinical psychology field. She stated, “At first I started out only focusing on classes, but once I began to become more active in clubs, volunteering, work, etc., now I’m way too busy for my own sanity. But, I enjoy being busy!” The MSU Women’s Resource Center is so proud of Lauren and all that she has been able to accomplish in just her senior year alone! She stated, “It’s important to get involved! It helps you find what you’re passionate about and helps build up your résumé with new experiences and skills.” We are going to miss our own “April Ludgate” and the office won’t be the same without her, but we are so excited to see where Lauren Dietz goes in life and she will always have a home at the MSU Women’s Resource Center! Congratulations on making it through college! You will do great things!

Megdi Abebe; Senior Department Aide
Journalism Major with an Additional Major in Interdisciplinary Studies and Social Science

Megdi Abebe has a passionate soul. Not only does she show this passion throughout the work she does here at the MSU Women’s Resource Center as a Department Aide, but she embodies this passion in every aspect of her life. She began as an Environmental Science major, but she soon realized that that didn’t speak to her passions in life, so she transitioned into the Journalism major. However, she felt as though journalism only captured one part of her, so she continued her education by adding an additional major in Interdisciplinary Studies and Social Science. Megdi explained how she is feeling a similar type of anxiety toward graduation as she felt when she first began college. It’s this fear of the unknown, but it’s also mixed with the excitement of new opportunities! The MSU Women’s Resource Center is sad to see her go, but we couldn’t be more proud of our Megdi for staying true to her passions and moving on to greater things. Megdi stated, “Being a student at Michigan State University has truly changed me. I’m a different person from yesterday...you just learn so much here. One of the many things I’ve learned is to be mindful of what you put on your résumé and to jump at the opportunities in front of you. It’ll help you become a better, more whole person.” We encourage you to continue to take these leaps and opportunities in your post-graduation life! Congratulations Spartan!

DID YOU KNOW?

“In 1968 Coretta Scott King, wife of Martin Luther King Jr., used Mother’s Day to host a march in support of underprivileged women and children. In the 1970s women’s groups also used the holiday as a time to highlight the need for equal rights and access to childcare.”

Source: history.com

May 2016
CALLING ALL WOMEN!

The students at the MSU Women’s Resource Center were inspired by the efforts of people like the creator of “Humans of New York” and MSU student Hannah Brenner to start a photography series entitled, “MSU Women of Excellence.” We are looking to photograph various women at MSU, whether they inspire others as the heads of organizations, or by being good-natured interesting people.

If you are interested in being photographed, or you know someone who is inspirational and think they should be a part of this project, email us at wrc@msu.edu to learn more.

Follow us on Twitter: @MSUWRC
www.twitter.com/MSUWRC

Follow us on Tumblr: msu-wrc.tumblr.com

We Are Moving!

The MSU Women’s Resource Center will be moving to Linton Hall on May 24, 2016 as we relocate, evolve and grow as part of the new WorkLife Office. All of the staff of the WRC will retain their current contact information, so as always, you can reach out to us! The WorkLife Office will continue to provide you with great information and insightful programming. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions!

Share in the Celebration!

The MSU Women’s Resource Center is excited to transition into the new WorkLife Office at MSU. In celebration, we would love to hear your stories, memories and ways the MSU Women's Resource Center has impacted your life over the past 24 years. Your comments will be shared at the Women Matter Luncheon on May 2, 2016. We appreciate your constant and continued support. To submit your comments, please complete the survey found here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MSUWRCCelebration or email wrc@msu.edu.
Collaboration is Important in the Fight Against Human Trafficking
Megdi Abebe

Filmmaker Laura Swanson and Michigan Senator Judy Emmons both spoke on Tuesday, April 4, 2016 at a School of Social Work event on human trafficking. Both women took the time to share their respective research on the topic and discussed their projects centered on ending human trafficking, specifically in the state of Michigan. They also highlighted the importance of having multiple, diverse voices in the fight against human trafficking.

Senator Judy Emmons, who has devoted much of her political career to educating the public about human trafficking, also shared the information she has gathered over the years. As representative of District 33, which is a very rural area, Emmons has encountered backlash from constituents who believe human trafficking is only a problem facing urban settings. She counters this by advocating that everyone needs to know how to deal with trafficking because it can happen anywhere.

“We need more training within the state police and more people trained within law enforcement. We need different people involved,” said Emmons. She understands human trafficking to be a problem that everyone needs to play a role in combatting. Her cooperative approach to the issue at hand has led to many pieces of legislation that would not have been passed had it not been for her action.

These laws were either extensions or improvements on existing laws, or entirely new ones. The diversity of legislation enacted by Senator Emmons has advocated that medical professionals be required to be trained to recognize the signs of human trafficking (PA 343); has allowed victims to sue their captors for damages (PA 339); to expanding social welfare and medical assistance benefits to survivors of trafficking (PA 341).

Emmons has also advocated for greater punishment for traffickers, such as adding to fines perpetrators must pay when caught and increasing the types of penalties for child traffickers. While a lot of work has been done, the senator is still pushing for greater progress within at least the next five years.

“I noticed a gap in what our prosecutors are choosing to prosecute. We have to focus on making sure that prosecutors are actually taking on trafficked crimes.” Emmons said, “Sometimes, I don’t think they recognize that this is our goal.”

During the sessions, Swanson shared the trailer for her upcoming documentary film, Break the Chains, which is due to be released May 10. As co-director and producer, Swanson has collected stories from human trafficking survivors, experts and researchers. She credits the film as important, not only in sharing narratives that need to be heard, but it has also helped her grow during the process. “I’ve learned a lot. There have been a lot of different opinions on the road. I just didn’t realize how political this issue was,” Swanson said. “You have to do a lot of in-depth research and try to understand both sides of everything.”

Swanson continued to praise Michigan’s track record with addressing the problem by listing task forces and agencies devoted to dismantling human trafficking. The Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force was cited as a great resource by both Swanson and Emmons. They meet monthly to discuss ways to target the problem.

According to their website, the Task Force is “made up of 90 member agencies committed to a collaborative effort to identify and rescue victims, prosecute offenders, restore victims and educate those about human trafficking, in both sexual and labor exploitation.” Their statement resembles the goals of cross-disciplinary efforts encouraged by both Swanson and Emmons.

The missions of these women, the MSU School of Social Work and other member organizations within the Task Force are simple and inspiring: together, we can end human trafficking.

To join the fight, please consider donating to the MSU LEAD Campaign by visiting our website at www.wrc.msu.edu/human-trafficking. All proceeds support the House of Promise in Lansing.

Source: Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force Website

May 2016
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MONDAY, MAY 2, 2016
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State Coordinator of the MI-ACE Women's Network
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