Meet Tomorrow’s Leaders

45th Annual Scholarship & Fellowship Awards

2015-2016
Celebrating 45 years of awarding scholarships and fellowships.

Deborah and Michael Tirico, for generously underwriting the cost of this booklet and Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, for defraying the cost of today’s event with a generous corporate sponsorship.
Welcome
Welcome

Deborah Loewenberg Ball, PhD, Dean
School of Education, Professor of Education; Director of TeachingWorks
University of Michigan

Remarks

Michelle Segar, PhD, MPH, 1996-97 CEW Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar
Director of the UM Sport, Health, and Activity Research and Policy Center;

Presentation of CEW Scholarship and Fellowship Awards

Candra Gill, MSI, 2010-11 CEW Irma M. Wyman Scholar
Senior User Experience Architect, Home Depot, Inc.

Lorraine M. Guiterrez, PhD, 1984-85 CEW Scholar
Arthur F Thurnau Professor, Professor of Psychology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts;
Professor of Social Work, School of Social Work, University of Michigan

Donald Vereen, MD, MPH, Director
U-M Substance Abuse Research Center,
School of Public Health, University of Michigan; CEW Leadership Council

Samantha Fratus, MEng, 2003-04 CEW Irma M. Wyman Scholar
Project Engineer, John Moriarty & Associates, Inc.

Closing Remarks

Gloria D. Thomas, PhD, Director
Center for the Education of Women, University of Michigan
CEW Leadership Council

Tiffany Ford
Lee Gorman
Christine Green
Susan S. Gutow
Margaret Kephart
Constance M. Kinnear
Rebecca McGowan
Ann Sneed Schriber
Alicia Torres
Don Vereen
Marina v. N. Whitman

Emeritae Council Members

Menakka M. Bailey
Lisa Baker
Nancy Barbour
Norma C. Barfield
Ellen M. Byerlein
Jean W. Campbell
Lois P. Cohn
Desma Reid-Coleman
Julie F. Cummings
Martha Meier Dean
Beverly B. Denbo
Anthony Derezinski
Molly H. Dobson
Anne Duderstadt
Susan S. Florsheim
Twink Frey
Beverley Geltner
Matina Souretis Horner
Rani Kotha
Judith H. Lax
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William Martin
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Ann V. Parfet
Lana B. Pollack
Kathleen K. Power
Karla Scherer
Martha R. Seger
Gil Seinfeld
Carol S. Smokler
Maxine J. Snider
Nellie M. Varner
Erica A. Ward
Irma M. Wyman

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Stephanie Buttrey
Vanessa Campbell
Shannon Clements
Damon Ford
Christine Green
Gwen Thayer Handelman
JJ Jacobson
Leslie O’Donnell
Jane Schwyn
Line Van Nieuwstadt
Smilka Zdravkovska

CEW Scholarship Selection Committee

Lois Alexander
Joy Beatty
Bill Ingram
Susan Montgomery
Virginia Nelson
Frank Stafford

Facilitators

Kirsten Elling
Anne Lehker
Lineve McKie
Doreen Murasky
Gloria Thomas

Menakka and Essel Bailey Graduate Fellowship Selection Committee

Dilip Das
Darlene Nichols
David Schoem

Mary Malcomson Raphael Fellowship Selection Committee

Ted Brader
Anna Kirkland
Damani Partridge

Center for the Education of Women Staff

Kristina Bee
Jacqueline Bowman
Eilisha Dermont
Kirsten Elling
Connie Hansen
Sarah Keovongsak
Catherine Mueller
Doreen Murasky
Janice Reuben
Mary Lynn Stevens
Beth Sullivan
Gloria Thomas
Deborah Willis

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Gloria Thomas
Deborah Willis
THE HISTORY

When the Center was founded in 1964, it sought to understand and address the barriers that kept women from successfully pursuing degrees and careers. CEW’s leaders documented, almost immediately, that a major obstacle to women seeking to return to school was the financial burden. Traditional financial aid required full-time enrollment – an inaccessible luxury for many women, regardless of their ambition, intelligence, and ability to succeed.

Determined to support women on their terms, CEW founder Jean Campbell responded to the growing, evident need. Together, she and her staff designed an innovative scholarship program focused on returning, nontraditional women students, and raised $7,500 in private donations. In the fall of 1970, to mark the 100th anniversary of the admission of women to the University of Michigan, the first CEW scholarships were awarded.

Seeing the impact of these scholarships, new donors stepped forward. In 1990, the Margaret D. and Harry A. Towsley Foundation guaranteed the future of the program with a $1 million endowment; in the 25 years since, 575 women have been named CEW Margaret Dow Towsley Scholars. Many other generous, foresighted individuals and organizations have created dozens of scholarships and fellowships, which CEW now awards – a total of 53 this year. New donors are still creating new scholarships, one of which – the Retirement Income Solutions Scholarship, will be inaugurated today.

The CEW scholarship program has become a signature offering of the Center. We take pride in having awarded over 1600 CEW scholarships and fellowships since the program began – more than $5.8 million to support women’s (and now men’s) ambitions and accomplishments. By connecting private resources with scholars’ intelligence, motivation, and effort, CEW helps to transform not only individual lives, but also families, workplaces, and communities.

Continued on the next page
THE SCHOLARS AND FELLOWS

The scholarships and fellowships celebrated today honor the performance and potential of students who have interruptions in their education, strong academic records, and impressive past accomplishments and future goals. Most have considerable financial need. The awards go to women, and men, in any undergraduate or graduate program on the Ann Arbor, Dearborn, or Flint campuses. While women at the University of Michigan now make up about half the enrolled population, these numbers do not tell the whole story. Behind today’s statistics are the experiences of adult women who have struggled as much as their 1970s predecessors to achieve their educational dreams – or who have given up secure and prestigious careers to devote their talents to solving the world’s social, economic, and environmental problems.

Today’s 53 awardees are, like their predecessors, extraordinary people. While they will all make their own unique paths in life, they share intelligence, vision, perseverance, and potential. Before returning to the University, today’s awardees worked in myriad fields. They have been technicians, artists, researchers, servers, hairdressers, carpenters, realtors, Peace Corps and Americorps workers, and engineers. They are now on their way to solving health disparities, leveraging business acumen, working on environmental improvements, and teaching – to name just a few of their inspiring goals.

On the following pages, you will find a description of all the 2015-2016 awards, the scholars who earned them, and a description of the goals they hope to achieve.

WITH GRATITUDE

On this joyous day, we celebrate a rich partnership among the University community, our loyal supporters and volunteers, and CEW’s staff. We join the scholars, their academic advisors, their families and friends in expressing our sincerest gratitude and admiration to all who have built such a legacy of success for students at the University of Michigan.

Thank you
The Scholarships and Fellowships
**GAIL ALLEN SCHOLARSHIP  Recipient: Amber Williams**
In memory of their daughter Gail, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Allen established the Gail Allen Scholarship in 1997 with support from their family and friends. Gail Allen was the 1995 CEW Dorothy Gies McGuigan Scholar whose goal was to become a teacher who would “engage high school students to think critically about our society and help young women find their voice.” Gail Allen’s excitement for studying history and women’s studies at the University of Michigan was interrupted by illness, but she persisted and earned her master’s degree and teaching certification. She was pursuing further studies in history at the time of her death. The Gail Allen Scholarship is awarded annually to recognize women who are returning to complete an undergraduate or graduate degree at the University of Michigan. To honor Gail’s interests, women enrolled in history, women’s studies, or related fields are given preference for this scholarship.

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN SCHOLARSHIP  Recipient: Cari Carson**
Created in 1990 by the Ann Arbor Branch of the American Association of University Women, the AAUW Scholarship supports women returning to school to complete their degrees at the undergraduate or graduate level. AAUW is a membership organization that promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive social change. The AAUW Scholarship is dedicated to creating better access to education for women.

**AAUW: MARY ELIZABETH BITTMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIPS  Recipient: Helen Maynard**
In 2006, the American Association of University Women joined with the Bittman family to establish the Mary Elizabeth Bittman Scholarship. A member of AAUW for over 50 years, Elizabeth was an Honorary Life Member – Ann Arbor Branch. She was also a 70-year resident of Ann Arbor, active in both business and community activities. Despite economic difficulties, Elizabeth graduated from the University of Michigan in 1941 with a degree in political science – at a time when a college education for women was less common than it is today. In honor of Elizabeth’s belief that, “An education is something that can never be taken away,” this scholarship is designed to help women whose studies have been interrupted to complete degrees in their chosen fields.
MENAKKA AND ESSEL BAILEY GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP  
*Recipients: Mavamarie Cooper; Stephanie Sayler*

Menakka and Essel Bailey, Ann Arbor residents and business professionals, are also long-time friends and supporters of the Center for the Education of Women. In 2011, the Baileys created a new fund, the Menakka and Essel Bailey Graduate Fellowships. This gift enables American graduate students to study abroad – especially in South and Southeast Asia – and to do field work and language study in the fields of public health, health care, and the environment.

CHRISTINE KAHAN BLACK SCHOLARSHIP  
*Recipient: Brian Peck*

The Christine Kahan Black Scholarship is the first CEW Scholarship ever established as a Christmas present! Chris Black has had a lifelong commitment to higher education, advancement for women, and equity of opportunity. As a highly respected administrator and innovator in Research Development Support at U-M Medical School, Chris is a teacher/mentor for researchers as they develop and fund their projects. She specializes in helping young faculty – many of whom are women – develop projects and win their first grant from the National Institutes of Health. Early in her career, Chris developed award-winning videos to inspire young women to pursue careers in science and technology. She’s done similar work for students with disabilities, and, with her husband, supports scholarships for students with physical challenges through the Ann Arbor Community Foundation, as a memorial to their son, Burt. Now, to honor Chris, and her career spent helping people meet their potential to do great things, Chris’s husband, Herb Black, established the Christine Kahan Black Scholarship. He presented it to her on December 25, 2013.

JANE AND BILL BLOOM SCHOLARSHIP  
*Recipient: Keith Dixon*

In 1964, when Jane Bloom walked through the doors of the newly opened Center for the Continuing Education of Women, she was only the second person to seek assistance. Her affiliation with CEW began then – when Jane was a forty-year-old mother of ten and Ann Arbor-area chicken farmer – and it continues to this day. With perseverance and determination, and help from CEW along the way, Jane Bloom completed both an undergraduate and a medical degree at the University of Michigan and had a distinguished career as a physician. Throughout it all, Jane’s husband Bill, who died in 2011, was a supportive partner. Together they established a scholarship endowment with the intention of fully funding tuition for a CEW scholar; their scholarship was awarded for the first time in 2008. With their scholarship for an undergraduate on the Ann Arbor campus, Jane and Bill sent a message to all future recipients to “aim high, raise your sights, and stick with it for a rewarding life.”
RUTH JEANETTE BUTTREY SCHOLARSHIP  Recipient: Brittni Kellom

The Ruth Jeanette Buttrey Scholarship was created in 2004 by her granddaughter, Stephanie Buttrey. It honors Ruth Buttrey, who filled her life with learning and adventure. An early proponent of women’s education, Ruth studied at a teacher’s college as well as at the New England Conservatory and the Chicago Musical College. She then worked with a company in Chicago which sent representatives throughout the country with scripts and costume trunks to produce shows for local organizations using local talent. In that way she met Ted Buttrey in Havre, Montana, who volunteered to be in one of her shows. A few years later, during the depression, Ruth wrote her own show and sent her own producers through the northwest, earning welcome income for the family during those difficult days. In the late thirties they moved to Texas where Ted oversaw the growth of Buttrey Stores, Inc. Throughout her life, Ruth supported various women’s groups, especially as an active participant in the PEO Sisterhood. Ruth and Ted also endowed many scholarships in his home state of Montana. CEW’s Ruth Jeanette Buttrey Scholarship recognizes an outstanding undergraduate on the Ann Arbor campus, with a special focus on the fields of business and engineering.

CEW GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP  Recipient: Sonam Krichbaum

The CEW Graduate Scholarship was established in 2008, the result of a Presidential Donor Challenge launched by University of Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman. The Challenge made it possible for donors to increase the impact of their gift by matching a portion of their funds with a University contribution. The CEW Graduate Scholarship Fund supports promising graduate students, ensuring that the University will continue to attract the “best of the best.” With gratitude, CEW acknowledges Loretta M. Skewes for establishing the CEW Graduate Scholarship Fund, thereby enabling others to contribute and ensuring that we will continue to grant CEW Graduate Scholarships in perpetuity.

LUCILE B. CONGER ALUMNAE GROUP SCHOLARSHIP  Recipient: Safieh Jordan

Established in 1990, the Lucile B. Conger Group provides CEW scholarships for undergraduate women. The Lucile B. Conger Group is one of thirty-two University of Michigan alumnae organizations nationwide. Founded in 1947, the Conger organization has approximately 300 current members. The group is actively involved in raising funds to provide scholarships for women to attend the University of Michigan.

MOLLY H. DOBSON SCHOLARSHIP  Recipients: Sara Baker; Rachel Marple

Created in 1992, the Molly H. Dobson Scholarship supports women returning to school to complete undergraduate degrees. These scholarships recognize women who have shown creativity, persistence, and dedication while striving to complete their education. The scholarships were created through the generosity of Molly Dobson, a dedicated emerita member of the CEW Leadership Council and an active volunteer in the University and larger
Ann Arbor community. Molly created these scholarships because she believes in the value of education. They are designed to be flexible because she knows that deserving women have different educational needs and goals.

**ROBERT BRUCE DUNLAP MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Recipient: Eleanor Avsharian*

This scholarship was established in 2006 in memory of Robert Bruce Dunlap. Robert was a long-time University employee, first at the University Hospital and later at the School of Dentistry, and an even longer-term sometime patient at the University Hospital. As a professor’s son, he was well imbued with the importance of education and the necessity of helping students further their education. Because of Robert’s long association with the University Hospital and his gratitude to all members of the medical teams, it is appropriate that first preference be given to an Ann Arbor campus undergraduate student pursuing a career in a health-related field. The donor has stipulated that this scholarship may be extended beyond one year until graduation.

**ELIZABETH M. DUSSEAU SCHOLARSHIP and MARGARET DUSSEAU BREVOORT SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Recipient: Laney Rupp; Jasimen Bailey*

The Elizabeth M. Dusseau and Margaret Dusseau Brevoort Scholarships, established in 2013, were endowed in the estate of Elizabeth Dusseau, who died in May 2012 at the age of 101. Elizabeth Dusseau earned her bachelor of arts and master’s degrees in public health from the University of Michigan, and became an expert in parasitology. After many years of dedicated service to the University, Ms. Dusseau was promoted to assistant professor, a rank she held until she retired in 1978. Margaret Dusseau Brevoort began her long career as a social worker in Ann Arbor. However, she spent most of her professional life in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as the executive director of Milwaukee Psychiatric Services Agency and a renowned and early proponent of social work education.

Elizabeth Dusseau chose to endow these scholarships in her name and that of her sister to honor their upbringing. Born in Monroe, Michigan, to a family that highly valued education for both male and female children – at a time when such a belief was somewhat radical – their family’s commitment to women’s rights was deeply ingrained. It is no surprise that Elizabeth and Margaret made their marks upon the world. At Elizabeth’s request, her CEW Scholarship will be awarded to “a woman in the field of science,” and Margaret’s will go to a “woman in the field of social work.”

**U-M FACULTY WOMEN’S CLUB SCHOLARSHIP (FWC)**  
*Recipient: Alexis Bailey*

Founded in 1921 to promote friendship and fellowship among its members, the University of Michigan Faculty Women’s Club (FWC) is comprised of women faculty members, spouses or partners of faculty members, and their guests. In keeping with FWC’s commitment to furthering the interests of the University and women, FWC is proud to award this scholarship from the FWC Endowment Fund.
**BETH HALLORAN SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Recipient: Elena Byhoff*

One of the University of Michigan’s most admired fundraising leaders from 2001-2011, Beth Halloran is now a senior executive at Minneapolis Foundation. From 2005-08, she served as Development Director at CEW. Her energy, focus, intelligence, and integrity not only generated fundraising success, but also nourished lasting relationships with CEW donors. Two of those donors, Molly Dobson and Connie Dunlap, connected with Beth in a special way and deepened their friendship even after she left Ann Arbor. In 2013, Connie and Molly collaborated to endow a new CEW Scholarship in Beth’s honor. The Beth Halloran scholarship is to be awarded annually to women students whose academic careers have been interrupted, and/or who are the primary parent responsible for minor dependents.

**BEATRICE KAHN SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Recipient: Autumn Soucy*

Beatrice Kahn began graduate work in the early 1950s, about 10 years before the Center for Education of Women was created. She was then the busy mother of three young daughters and eager to prepare for a career in her newly chosen field of social work. Her entry into the MSW program was hastened by her husband’s unexpected cancer surgery; she was concerned that she might become the sole or primary support of her children. She completed her degree in social work and went on to 29 years as a gifted therapist and marriage counselor at Child and Family Service. Her own experience and her long friendship with Jean Campbell and other CEW leaders made Bea Kahn a dedicated and enthusiastic supporter of the Center. Beatrice died in November 2012 at the age of 94. Her husband, her family, and her many friends established the Beatrice Kahn Scholarship at the Center for the Education of Women in her memory.

**ELSIE CHOY LEE SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Recipients: Stephannie Moore; Alisa Yang*

The Elsie Choy Lee Scholarship assists undergraduate and graduate women pursuing their own work in art, writing, or music. It is also given to students researching creative women who have struggled to find their own voices within these fields. The cultivation of creativity was a vital part of Elsie’s search for life’s purpose and meaning. In “Art in My Life,” a talk Elsie gave in 1991, she said: “Literature, art, and poetry have been my friends all my life; they are my media of expression in good times and bad. Looking back, I can say that these arts not only enriched my life, they have helped me regain part of my health.” Elsie advocated making known the unheard voices of women in the arts in world cultures throughout time. Her eight-year research on an 18th century Chinese woman poet resulted in *Leaves of Prayer: The Life and Poetry of a Farmwife in Eighteenth-Century China* (The Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, 2nd ed., 2000). The Elsie Choy Lee Scholarship was established in 2001 by her husband, the late Joseph T. A. Lee, with the support of family and friends.
SARAH WINANS NEWMAN SCHOLARSHIP  Recipient: KEMI FRANCOIS
The Sarah Winans Newman Scholarship, created in 2001, provides financial support to graduate, undergraduate and professional women pursuing degrees in biological and biomedical sciences and related fields, demonstrating financial need, and showing promise of academic merit. Dr. Newman most recently served as Associate Dean of the Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate Studies and, from 1970 through 1996, was a professor in the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology at the U-M Medical School. A long-time volunteer and friend to the Center, Sarah recognizes the contributions CEW makes to the University community and is pleased to continue her commitment to the education of women.

MARY MALCOMSON RAPHAEL FELLOWSHIP  Recipients: JESS BECK; LUCIE KALOUSOVA
The Mary Malcomson Raphael Fellowship was established in 1985 for women graduate students in a humanities or social science field in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. The fellowships are awards of distinction presented to women held in the highest esteem by their faculty. Fellowship recipients have been nominated by their departments and are selected on the basis of their academic excellence and their potential to make contributions of exceptional usefulness to society. The fellowships are provided through an endowment established by the late Margaret Earhart Smith in recognition of her friend Mary Malcomson Raphael, a singularly resourceful and creative woman who “had a gift for evoking power in people above and beyond their ordinary capacity.”

LINDA J. RIDER SCHOLARSHIP  Recipient: LUCIANA WIECKOWSKI
This scholarship in celebration of Linda J. Rider was established by her family in 2004. When Linda enrolled at the University of Michigan at the age of 41 to earn her bachelor’s degree, she was a professional writer, editor, photographer, and single mother. To honor her accomplishment of earning an undergraduate degree as a nontraditional student, the Linda J. Rider Scholarship is awarded to women who need financial assistance to return to college later in their lives.

RETIREMENT INCOME SOLUTIONS (RIS)  Recipient: GIFT CHOWCHUVECH
This new scholarship, made possible by a gift from local financial advisory firm, Retirement Income Solutions, Inc. (RIS), will be given to a nontraditional student at the University of Michigan in this academic year. CEW Leadership Council member and Senior Vice President and Portfolio Manager at RIS, Margaret Kephart, said the decision for RIS support a CEW Scholarship was clear, “We all believe strongly that education holds the key to a better life and have seen that play out in our own families and communities. And, many of our clients work in higher education, so this scholarship was a natural extension of the work we do.” Margaret herself was a nontraditional college student, and benefited from mentoring and support of women who believed in her. RIS Scholarships have also been created at two other outstanding local organizations, Girls Group and the Ann Arbor Rotary Club.
HELEN HUFF SHELL SCHOLARSHIP  Recipient: Caroline Landau
The Helen Huff Shell Scholarship was established in 1982 by Helen when she retired from her distinguished career in personnel management. Throughout her career, Helen diligently sought to enhance the status of women in the workplace. Her scholarship recognizes that commitment to women in business or the professions.

MARGARET DOW TOWSLEY SCHOLARSHIP  Recipients: Shantell Bennett; Jennifer Bissonette; Michelle Bochinski; Sarah Buranskas; Joanne Chang; Jeannette Chu; Darya Dabiri; Amelia Frank-Vitale; Alejandra Gepp; Ashley Gorton; Sarah Gutin; Priscilla Hohmann; Lisbeth Iglesias-Rios; Chelle Jones; Lorene Kline; Ujwala Kulkarni; Channing Mathews; Kaitlin Meixner; Gianna Petito; Kimberly Reyes; Michelle Ridley; Fatima Salman; Jana Stewart; Amit Weitzer; Angey Wilson

This year, 2015-16, marks the 25th Anniversary of the Towsley Scholarship. Over the last 25 years, 575 Towsley Scholarships have been awarded. CEW is grateful to Margaret Dow Towsley for her vision and the establishment of this endowment that has made such a difference in the lives of so many.

The life and work of Margaret Dow Towsley has opened countless doors for women and children and immeasurably improved the life of the Ann Arbor community. After completing a bachelor’s degree at the University of Michigan and a master’s degree at Columbia University Teachers College, Margaret Towsley taught preschool at the University School in Ann Arbor, married pediatrician Dr. Harry Towsley, and started a family. A neighborhood summer play group in her home became the Children’s Play School, which thrived for more than 53 years. Margaret was one of the first persons in Ann Arbor to acknowledge the special needs of children and working mothers, and her leadership helped inspire and shape the Perry Nursery School. An early believer in equal access for women, Margaret was a major force in creating a gender-integrated Ann Arbor YMCA. When women and their organizations needed a home of their own, she helped establish the Women’s City Club. An active political leader, she became the first woman elected to the Ann Arbor City Council. Those who knew Margaret Towsley describe her as a woman devoted to her family and as a mother who fostered in her five daughters an independence of spirit and a confidence to reach for their own stars. Her quiet and sustained support nourished the CEW Scholarship Program since its founding. Returning women students have benefited in untold ways from her faith in the Center and her belief in educational opportunities for women. Indeed, Margaret Towsley always acted upon the premise that, given support and nurturing, all people can achieve their dreams.
IRMA M. WYMAN SCHOLARSHIP  Recipients: Snehalatha Kaavuri; Stephanie Miller

The Irma M. Wyman Scholarship provides support for women students in engineering, computer science, and related fields on either the graduate or undergraduate level. Criteria for selection also include merit, promise of future contributions, and life circumstances. Irma is a 1949 graduate of the College of Engineering at the University of Michigan, one of two women in her class. She became involved with the computer industry in its early stages and rose to become the first female vice president at Honeywell, Inc., then a Fortune 100 company. After retirement from the corporate world, she served 10 years as Archdeacon of the Diocese of Minnesota. Ms. Wyman is now fully retired. Having benefited during her education from both the financial and psychological support of a Regents Scholarship, she established the Irma Wyman Scholarship in 1996 to provide a similar boost to others.
The Scholars and Fellows
Alexis Bailey notes that she has had “a winding path” to law school. She first recognized her interest in law as a doctoral student in public policy analysis where she saw the links and the overlap between the two fields. However, Alexis had other important work to complete before embarking on this new path.

A graduate of the Air Force Academy, Alexis attended graduate school on a military fellowship; she then had to complete required service in the Air Force. After a few years as a test and evaluation analyst, Alexis applied for an assignment with the Air Force ROTC. In that role, she made another discovery – a love of teaching young men and women in college. She found that not only did she enjoy the teaching, but was also challenged by working with students as they wrestled with the challenges of military service and becoming leaders in their fields.

While her time with the ROTC provided Alexis with a family-friendly work schedule, she recognized that active duty would continue to require new assignments and subsequent moves. Now in the Air Force Reserve, Alexis decided it was time to pursue combining her public policy expertise with a law degree. Her experience and prior education make her an important contributor in class, according to her professors.

Alexis has a goal – to remain in academia as either a professor or a clinical instructor. Her next step toward this goal will be a judicial clerkship, but as one who entered the Air Force Academy aspiring to be an astronaut, Alexis understands that the future may bring as yet unseen opportunities.

As an honored member of the Air Force, Alexis developed her research and teaching skills. Now, she aims to apply her talent and experience to the law. CEW agrees with Alexis Bailey’s statement, “I will be able to serve with distinction within the legal profession” and is proud to name her a University of Michigan Faculty Women’s Club scholar.
Community development and social inequality are not simply academic concepts to Jasimen Bailey. As she worked to earn her bachelor’s degree in sociology, she recognized that many of the issues discussed were affecting her home community. She readily grasped the interconnectedness of multiple social issues, but participation in a summer research opportunity program changed her from “a consumer of ideas to a producer of knowledge.” With that new understanding of herself, Jasimen went from being the first in her family to pursue a baccalaureate degree to considering attending graduate school.

Only a month after beginning her graduate program, however, Jasimen left school to say goodbye to her dying mother and to begin a new chapter: raising an adolescent. Jasimen cared for her 14 year-old sister until her sister was applying to colleges. It was at that point Jasimen understood it was also time for her to reapply to graduate programs. Jasimen chose the U-M School of Social Work after discovering the community organizing major. During her internship at California Capital, her passion for community development grew as she found similar social injustices in each county she researched for the financial development company.

Through her extensive volunteering with community organizations, as well as raising her sister, Jasimen has acquired much knowledge about and respect for the potential of youth. Her emphasis as a social worker will be on creating positive outcomes for children and youth through their involvement in their neighborhoods and communities.

Jasimen Bailey delayed her graduate school education, but in the process she found her passions of community organizing and working with youth. She wants to address the social, economic, health and other issues that affect individuals and communities and lead to inequities. Her ultimate goal would be to open a community development center in her childhood neighborhood.

In support of Jasimen Bailey’s plans to strengthen communities, CEW happily names her a Margaret Dusseau Brevoort Scholar.
Sara Baker’s family sent her from her home in Iraq to the United States, hoping to protect her from the violence in her country. Her first decade was lonely, as she did not speak English and was far from friends and relatives. She spent those years focusing on her children. When they began attending school, however, Sara began to attend parenting classes and that was the start of her journey into a new life focused on education – both her own and that of young children.

Through the parenting classes, Sara found information and resources about how she might achieve greater self-sufficiency. First Sara completed an associate degree in pre-elementary education with honors at Henry Ford Community College. She then transferred to University of Michigan-Dearborn where she is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in special education. Sara has seen the impact special education classes have had on her own son and she has immersed herself in volunteer activities that relate to teaching. As an example, she has served as a teacher assistant aiding children with speech and reading difficulties. Professors who have worked with Sara praise her academic performance, her motivation and her persistence.

As Sara learns more about education her goals have expanded and she now has a long-term plan to earn a PhD in order to improve Michigan public schools. She is particularly enthusiastic about curriculum design that emphasizes “critical, independent thinking across disciplines.”

Described as having “a fierce determination to succeed in life on her own terms,” Sara Baker will clearly make a difference to Michigan’s educational system. CEW is delighted to invest in Sara Baker’s determination by naming her a Molly H. Dobson Scholar.
As a bioarchaeologist studying human skeletal remains from archaeological sites, Jess Beck is interested in the development of social inequality. Studying prehistoric societies that were becoming more hierarchical, Jess asks what effects increased social complexity has on marginalized social groups such as women and children.

Her dissertation research focuses on a large Copper Age village site in Spain that is about four to five thousand years old. Though the archaeological record shows signs of increasing societal complexity, the village still used collective graves to bury their dead. Jess examined skeletons from these burials, analyzing skeletal data, grave goods, dietary analysis and radiocarbon dating in order to ask: Do similar forms of mortuary treatment reflect or conceal significant differences in lived experience? For example, do the skeletal remains of women reveal a restricted diet compared to men, and were disease burdens and activity levels the same for both genders?

Faculty advisors describe Jess as “on track to become a star bioarchaeologist.” Her research is important because “too little attention has been paid to the role of individuals of different ages and genders in developing and maintaining the first complex societies in prehistoric Europe.” In addition to her goal of becoming a faculty member in an anthropology department, Jess wants to further the professional development of female archaeologists. She has already begun mentoring undergraduates in U-M’s Department of Anthropology while working on her PhD.

In conjunction with her coursework, Jess has worked on multiple field projects and has pursued additional training in anatomy and osteology. She has won numerous awards and research funding. However, Jess also dedicates her time to making archaeology’s findings available to the general public. She maintains a blog aimed at general readers and students in order to help disseminate information about the study of the ancient human.

The Mary Malcomson Raphael Fellowship is given to women who combine high intellectual achievement with the potential to affect society. CEW is proud to give this Fellowship to Jess Beck.
Due to a dysfunctional home when Shantell Bennett was a child, she was often kept home from school for various reasons. Sometimes not even being able to complete grades. She felt envious watching other children going to and from school and the play field. At age fifteen she was asked to leave her mother’s home in Detroit and went to live with her father she had just met. Ecstatic at the idea of going to school at last, Shantell was devastated to learn that because she was so far behind she would need to go to an alternative educational program. Shantell, shortly after decided to move out on her own. She quit school, had a baby, and went to work full time. It was not until years later that she received her high school diploma through an adult education program. By now she was married, pregnant, and “starting to feel somewhat normal.”

But within two years Shantell had lost two children, suffered a breakdown, and endured two very difficult years. Shantell credits her recovery to her determination to remain present for her young daughter. A few years later she had another daughter, and then a son and for years her focus was on her children.

Shantell still dreamed of school, though. She spent time at home studying textbooks to prepare herself to try again. She attended Mott Community College and graduated with high honors. She is now enrolled in the teacher certificate program in English at the University of Michigan-Flint. In addition to doing her own writing, Shantell works as a peer consultant in the Writing Center. Her experience there has reaffirmed her commitment to being “the teacher that understands the struggles of what kids go through in school.”

In the words of one professor, Shantell “exceeds expectations” and “remains remarkably humble.” CEW is delighted to assist Shantell Bennett in reaching her dream of not only going to school, but teaching in school, and we name her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
Jennifer Bissonette wants to serve as the best advocate for children she can possibly be. For nearly fifteen years, she worked on behalf of children as a psychotherapist, often working with families involved in the judicial system. All too often she found that her work was interrupted or undermined by archaic or confusing court decisions. Jennifer decided that if she had a fuller understanding of the legal system and, in fact, was a part of it, she could have more direct positive effects on families like her clients.

Jennifer is now enrolled in the University of Michigan Law School, where she has already experienced how her work as a therapist can combine with her legal understanding to create positive outcomes. As an intern working with the Pediatric Advocacy Clinic, she was instrumental in reframing her client’s narrative from one that portrayed her in a negative light to one that highlighted her strengths in the face of challenges. In another situation, her understanding of child behavior and educational interventions proved critical in procuring special educational resources for a mentally ill child.

Professors note that being a nontraditional student in the Law School is daunting, but that Jennifer’s commitment to obtaining her degree is impressive. A single mother of two young children, Jennifer balances multiple responsibilities. In addition, before beginning classes in the Law School, Jennifer had never before taken a computerized exam – college coursework has changed.

Those who have worked with Jennifer point to her expansive understanding of mental health, her ability to advocate for her clients, and her strength in working in teams as indicators of her future success and impact as a practitioner of family law.

CEW gladly names Jennifer Bissonette a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar in order to assist her to reach her goal of being the strongest possible advocate for children’s rights.
After more than twenty years as a nurse, Michelle Bochinski now seeks to improve patient care through a systems approach, using health informatics. To reach this goal, she is beginning a joint master’s degree in health informatics through the University of Michigan School of Information and the University of Michigan School of Public Health. Michelle is standing right in the heart of a socio-technical collision as health care systems transition to electronic health record systems.

As a nurse, Michelle often compared the extensive health care resources and systems of the U.S. to the limited ones in the Philippines, where she completed her nursing education. After working as a nurse for nearly two decades, Michelle enrolled in the U-M School of Nursing certificate program in clinical research management. It was while she was taking the *Systems and Information Technology for Research* course that Michelle found the platform for her next role – health informatics.

While enrolled in the certificate program, Michelle was able to participate as a trainer in the U-M Hospitals implementation of a new electronic record system – a project that had a profound impact on staff. Her work with that implementation allowed Michelle to delve into the core of health informatics and solidified her desire to pursue a degree in that field. Her colleagues expect her to succeed, pointing to her teaching skills as well as her understanding of the system itself as exceptional.

With a health informatics degree, Michelle envisions having an impact on marginalized communities, for example, by designing systems technology that provides affordable solutions to areas of poverty. Michelle has not forgotten what she learned while working as a nurse in a developing country. Instead, she intends to “contribute and make an impact both locally and globally.”

As Michelle Bochinski embarks on a new way of providing optimal care to patients, CEW supports her ambitious goals. We award her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.
Bringing about positive change has been a long-term goal of Sarah Buranskas. As she began college, she expected to do so through teaching, but decided that many problems were systemic and affected children before they even entered school. After an internship at a migrant farmworker clinic, Sarah began to see public health as a way to positively affect people’s lives outside of the classroom.

With a degree in Spanish, Sarah worked first in a Latino grocery store, where she recognized health concerns in patrons’ buying patterns. She then spent a year in HealthCorps, a division of AmeriCorps, to gain more hands-on public health experience. Working in three clinic sites, Sarah interpreted for clients who were primarily women and children. In addition, she often accompanied nutritionists or social workers on prenatal home visits. This clinical experience illustrated for her the lack of health education available to the Latino community and reaffirmed her commitment to the field of public health.

But Sarah still felt the need to prepare herself before beginning the master’s program in public health at the University of Michigan. She moved to Chile for a year in order to improve her language skills and to be immersed in health issues in a Latin American country. There she volunteered at an urban garden program. She discovered that in Chile the urban garden was valued because it provided “an affordable, alternative source of food.”

Building on her work with Latino communities, Sarah will use her master’s degree to advance her understanding of the interactions between health, nutrition, and environment in those communities. With a degree in public health, Sarah anticipates creating positive change around issues of food access and health.

CEW endorses Sarah Buranskas’ desire to create positive change and her “clear and strong desire to serve the community” by dealing with food and health issues in Latino communities. We therefore name her a Margaret Dow Towsley scholar.
As a Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) Clinical Scholar, Elena Byhoff is among a prestigious group of physicians being trained in health policy who are expected to affect national health policy throughout their careers. Elena is well prepared to take on this challenge. After earning an undergraduate degree in environmental economics and policy, she spent two years working for the office of the New York County District Attorney. She found tremendous value in her experiences there, but was interested in developing a more personal relationship to the people she was helping. Her search for a career that combined her government-focused advocacy work with interpersonal connections led her to consider a job in health policy.

Determined to combine direct service with advocacy, Elena decided to become a physician. While enrolled in a post-baccalaureate pre-medical program, she also volunteered in a medical clinic serving homeless shelters. As a medical student at the University of Pennsylvania she explored physician advocacy and social medicine, including working on a WHO project in Uganda. During her residency, Elena served as a primary care physician for a diverse panel of patients, including Medicaid recipients and the uninsured working poor. Each of these experiences fostered her desire to develop new health care policies that would improve medical care for disadvantaged populations.

As an RWJ Clinical Scholar, Elena is now earning a master’s degree in health service research through the U-M Medical School and the School of Public Health. According to one professor, her research interest is “innovative,” “creative” and “wide-reaching” as she explores the relationship between patient social determinants of health and the processes of end-of-life care.

Elena Byhoff is described as “an extraordinary physician-scholar doing work that is both scientifically rigorous and of profound policy importance.” CEW looks forward to the policy changes that Elena may effect in her future career, while applauding her approach to medical care. We honor Elena by naming her the Beth Halloran scholar.
Cari Carson describes herself as a person of color who was advantaged by a “pipeline” of educational opportunities that led her to college and now to professional school. She contrasts her life course with that of many in a system that seems to offer young students of color only a pipeline to incarceration.

Cari is now earning a joint degree in law and social work from the University of Michigan, describing herself as “strongly committed to improving outcomes for minority youth, youth with disabilities, and law students of color.” Her concern with children’s educational prospects goes back nearly a decade, with work at the Children’s Defense Fund and the Yale Child Study Center. After completing her bachelor’s degree at Yale University, Cari served with Teach for America for two years. She taught special education in a rural, impoverished, and predominantly African-American middle school in Louisiana. Working with students others had “given up on,” Cari found that they could indeed learn, but that systems were not in place to provide the learning they needed. She began to feel called to work to fix the education system and to change the opportunities available for youth.

Due to her belief that any change must be interdisciplinary, Cari selected the joint law and social work degree program. She quickly realized that law school students varied greatly in their familiarity with the law and that outreach to Black students must include familiarizing them with the jargon, admissions process, and keys to success in law school. As a result, she has provided outstanding outreach and recruitment through volunteer positions with the Michigan Access Program and the Black Law Students Association.

Law school faculty and staff state that Cari will have an impact on her future profession, “as she is moving toward combating some of the most important social justice concerns of our nation.” CEW looks forward to her continuing contributions and awards Cari Carson the American Association of University Women Scholarship.
Joanne Chang has already proven herself as a researcher in the areas of cancer epidemiology and cancer prevention and control. With a master’s degree in epidemiology from the University of Michigan School of Public Health and seven years of research experience, Joanne is now in the doctoral degree program in epidemiology. In her work at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (FHCRC) and at the National Cancer Institute, she was involved in both statistical modeling and clinical research. Her work in FHCRC and her master’s degree capstone research both led to papers submitted for publication.

In cooperation with a WHO Collaborative Centre for Research and Training in Epidemiology located in Thailand, Joanne will be conducting research on cancer incidence. This research will provide her with experience conducting epidemiological research in a middle-income nation.

In the future Joanne plans to work with a governmental agency or non-profit organization. As she focuses on cancer prevention, she will also look at tobacco use and its relationship to chronic diseases. In her research, she builds prediction models for such diseases in at-risk populations.

Joanne hopes to design preventions and interventions targeted to populations of ethnic minorities. As a Chinese-speaking immigrant from Taiwan, Joanne experienced health care disparities as a young adult. She and other family members were limited both in ability to describe health conditions and in finding resources in their native language. Furthermore, there was a dearth of research conducted on Asian populations.

Faculty who have worked with Joanne describe her as “becoming a first rate epidemiologist” with “a wide range of exceptional research skills.” Pleased to support her in her continuing educational progress, CEW awards Joanne Chang a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.
Gift Chowchuvech’s father had a huge impact on her life course, both before and after his death. It was Gift’s father who supported her desire to become a fashion designer in spite of her family’s history of producing physicians. Although he passed away before she achieved her goal, Gift continued to pursue that dream and spent more than a decade as a successful designer. In spite of achieving her dream, she still felt there should be more to life.

Gift volunteered at the Zen Hospice Project in San Francisco, then in New York City with an organization that served bereaved children and their families. Learning that her father’s “sudden” death was not sudden, but that her family had chosen not to tell her he was dying influenced her interest for this type of work. Now, Gift wants others to have the opportunities for end-of-life communication she and her father were denied.

Gift entered the University of Michigan School of Social Work, majoring in interpersonal practice with a concentration in aging in families and society. She is continuing her interest in end-of-life work as she collaborates with a prison chaplain to develop a Dignity Therapy Program for dying inmates at Duane L. Waters Hospital at the Charles Egeler Reception & Guidance Center. In fact, she hopes to continue working with the Michigan Department of Corrections after receiving her MSW.

Gift credits her early interest in art, her experiences traveling and working in several countries, her training in contemplative care and her graduate school education as factors that allow her to work with end-of-life populations in creative ways. Those experiences also drive her interest in global palliative care in other cultural settings, including in South Africa where she spent a month volunteering with a hospice in Johannesburg.

As a student, Gift has successfully combined coursework, volunteering, and student leadership. She is one of few social work interns selected to present at Social Justice Grand Rounds at the University of Michigan Hospital. In anticipation of Gift’s ongoing contributions to those dealing with end-of-life, CEW proudly names her the inaugural Retirement Income Solutions Scholar.
“I am not your traditional student,” says Jeannette Chu. For Jeannette, high school was not a good experience, and not one she was interested in repeating through college. So she instead joined the Navy, serving in active and reserve service for 31 years. It wasn’t long after joining the Navy, though, that Jeannette realized she would need to continue her education in order to be successful in any field.

She then began her long journey through education. Taking classes part-time, she earned a bachelor’s degree in computer science—10 years after graduating from high school. Ten years later she completed a master’s degree in computer resource and information management. Now, after another 17 years, Jeannette is planning for her next phase of life and is earning a second master’s degree, this time in educational technology at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Along the way, Jeannette interacted with many military veterans who found that their military skills were not useful in the civilian workplace. Often these veterans, like many others she knew who lived in disadvantaged circumstances, lacked the computer proficiency now recognized as necessary for those seeking employment. Jeannette decided that she wanted to give back to society, particularly to those who are “computer illiterate.” Given her career background, she envisions starting a non-profit organization to focus on developing computer literacy for these populations. In order to get a better understanding of educational methodologies and instructional design, she decided to return to school. She is thriving there, achieving academically and contributing to her classes.

CEW welcomes the opportunity to support Jeannette Chu’s next venture in a life of learning and service. We are pleased to award her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.
MavaMarie Cooper’s interest in global public health is not a recent development. She already holds a bachelor’s degree in global health and the environment, and has worked in international and intercultural settings. But it was a four-month intercultural exchange that included an extensive research project with the NGO Corps of Northeast Thailand that provided MavaMarie with a focus on Thailand and the public health issues she saw there. Despite a universal healthcare system in Thailand, disparities still exist due to lack of resources and low educational attainment.

She is now able to blend her interest in Thailand and its public health system with her interest in maternal and child health through the School of Public Health’s cooperative arrangement with Prince of Songkla University in Thailand. MavaMarie’s internship there will include both research and analysis as part of her Thai mentor’s ongoing research on the health system’s role in the disparities still present in child and maternal health in Thailand.

MavaMarie is ready for the challenge – she is familiar with Thai culture and language, is passionate about global public health and according to one professor, “She is extremely sensitive to the issues of being a guest within a new cultural/community environment. MavaMarie will thus be in a position to continue her work on public health in Southeast Asian populations beyond graduate school, collaborating with colleagues in the U.S. as well as in Thailand.”

CEW is pleased to support MavaMarie Cooper as a Menakka and Essel Bailey Graduate Fellow as she continues her research and experience in Thailand. We look forward to her ongoing contributions to global public health.
Darya Dabiri always expected to have a career in a health field. By the time she reached college age, she was determined to be a dentist and was thrilled to be admitted to Iran’s University of Medical Sciences. However, her excitement was short lived. New legislation in Iran restricted the role of women in academia and in health fields, leaving Darya with a difficult choice. She could stay in her home but give up her dreams, or she could leave family behind and continue her professional education elsewhere.

Darya moved to Canada, where she spent two years improving her English language skills before being admitted to the University of British Columbia’s genetic and cell biology bachelor’s degree program. Then she began her dental training at the same university. After completing a residency program at the University of Michigan, she started pediatric dental training at the University of Toledo Medical Center.

Throughout her education, Darya also continued to produce award-winning research. In her pediatric dentistry training, she became increasingly interested in helping pediatric patients with root canals. Now doing a residency in endodontics at the University of Michigan School of Dentistry, Darya is moving into the very specialized field of pediatric endodontics. She plans to continue both clinical and research work. Darya also has held the position of clinical adjunct lecturer at U-M Hospital, where she works with dental and medical professionals from a range of specialties.

CEW is proud to support Darya Dabiri as she continues her studies to become the first female pediatric endodontist in North America by awarding her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.
While Keith Dixon’s love of music has remained the foundation of his career path, he is now expressing it in a new way. Already an accomplished vocal performer, Keith now uses his gift and his understanding of musical performance to teach others.

Keith spent many years training his voice and performing both nationally and internationally. His accomplishments include completing both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in music. But as he began to teach privately while completing his education, Keith recognized his desire to help other musicians. While contemplating this new direction, he returned to his hometown, Detroit, where he connected with mentors in the Detroit Public Schools.

With his experience as a performer, a private teacher, and a church music director, Keith was ready to become a music teacher. However, without a teaching certification, his only option was to work as a substitute teacher. Keith threw himself into that role, only to discover that his ability to influence students was limited. While he used his time as a substitute teacher to hone his communication and teaching skills and to expand his ability to adapt his style to a diverse array of students, he decided to return to the University of Michigan’s School of Music, Theatre & Dance for a second bachelor’s degree – this one in music education.

Keith’s interests include combining music education with other aspects of education, such as dance, poetry or drama, to interest students and increase their involvement. He describes teaching as a team effort, “working with others [to] create opportunities for growth and enhancement in the school and in the community.”

Keith is passionate about music education, and about continuing to serve the Detroit student population. CEW is proud to help support him as he works towards his new goal by completing a second bachelor’s degree. We happily name Keith Dixon the Jane and Bill Bloom Scholar.
After many years, Kemi Francois is pursuing a dream deferred. She has long wanted to be a physician. A successful high school student, Kemi wanted to be independent and so she sought a college major and career that would quickly lead her to financial security. She was highly successful in her choice – actuarial science – but her interest remained in medicine. Nevertheless, it was still years before she was ready for medical school. During that period, she attended several post-baccalaureate programs in order to fill in the pre-medical coursework she didn’t have in college. She volunteered in health-related organizations as she explored the field of medicine.

Kemi’s call to medicine was deepened by the care she received from her physicians during her pregnancy, and by her daughter’s neonatal physicians. She was struck by their knowledge and judgment and impressed by their compassion; Kemi longed to assist others in the way they had assisted her.

Now a student in the University of Michigan’s Medical School, Kemi is an engaged learner. In addition to mentoring pre-medical undergraduates at U-M, Kemi is the secretary for the Black Medical Association. As she continues to clarify her goals post-MD and residency, Kemi knows that she wants to be affiliated with a community hospital. Furthermore, she is interested in making healthcare more holistic. Recognizing that changing the system requires understanding the system, Kemi is interested in adding an MBA to her medical degree. With an MBA, she could be involved in hospital administration and influence the way healthcare is delivered.

Kemi Francois experienced superior medical care, and now wants to provide that to others. She’s also passionate about improving health care delivery, especially in underserved areas. In anticipation of her impact on individuals as well as on systems, CEW names Kemi Francois the Sarah Winans Newman scholar.
Amelia Frank-Vitale is dedicated to the ethnographic study of the departure and journey of Central American immigrants who migrate through Mexico to the U.S. Her focus on the experience of the journey and on the factors that trigger the decision to leave a home country will add greatly to our understanding of immigration decisions and experiences.

Beginning as an undergraduate at Yale, Amelia has been active in the immigrant rights movement. Many service workers in the southwest are immigrants, and after college Amelia determined that Arizona was the place where she could make a difference. She worked as a union organizer for hotel workers in Phoenix, but Amelia began to feel that as a student activist she had actually been more effective.

Amelia returned to school, earning a master’s degree at American University. She narrowed her focus to undocumented immigration, and when she worked at a Mexican shelter for undocumented Central American immigrants, she says, “everything clicked.” She wanted to understand the experience of immigrants traveling through countries where they did not plan to settle.

A prestigious Institute of Current World Affairs Fellowship made it possible for Amelia to travel across Mexico, interviewing immigrants in transit. She became an expert on the immigrant route through Mexico, and in the process learned more about the thousands of immigrants who have simply disappeared on their journey to the United States. Her research for her PhD in anthropology will investigate the factors that led to these losses, and will also include interviews with the families of those missing immigrants.

Well on her way to completing this “groundbreaking” and “unique” research that will enrich her field, Amelia Frank-Vitale now joins the ranks of CEW Scholars as a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
Ashley Gorton has always wanted to be a nurse. After following other paths in life, she is now at the University of Michigan-Flint studying for a joint bachelor’s degree in nursing and healthcare administration. Her professors agree that she will make an exceptional nurse, citing her abilities in both theory and clinical practice.

Ashley admits that her decisions in early adulthood could have left her in a very different place. She had no plan after high school and so, when she graduated, she followed in her family footsteps and joined the service. In the U.S. Navy she learned leadership skills and an appreciation for focusing on work. After her Navy service she worked in the private sector, but her jobs were neither satisfying nor financially rewarding.

When Ashley invited a friend to live with her to save money, she reached a turning point. She realized that she wanted to be able to support herself while doing something that made her happy. She also found that the short-term rental arrangement led to marriage. When Ashley and her now-husband decided to return to Michigan, she took advantage of the GI Bill to begin studies at U-M Flint.

Ashley further defined her goals once she began her program. She wants to be a nurse and administrator who sees each patient as an individual and as a partner in their healing. Ashley says, “A true nurse is a rare breed. I know, without a doubt, it is truly what I am supposed to do with my life.”

Ashley has found her calling, and CEW is eager to help her become a nurse. We name Ashley Gorton a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
Sarah Gutin has returned to the University of Michigan to compete a PhD in public health. She first attended U-M as an undergraduate, receiving her bachelor’s degree in anthropology and zoology in 2003. Since then, Sarah has both worked and studied in southern Africa and narrowed her focus to women’s health—primarily the reproductive health and rights of HIV positive women.

Over the past decade, Sarah has been involved in multiple projects in Africa, as a student, a researcher, and a volunteer. While pursuing her master’s degree in public health from South Africa’s University of Cape Town, she conducted research on the reintroduction of IUDs as a contraceptive choice in that country. At the same time, she volunteered with various organizations to offer HIV education to young adults as well as to home-based caregivers in Cape Town slums. As a Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship awardee, she joined Makerere University in Uganda in research on the family planning choices of HIV positive women and also volunteered at EngenderHealth Uganda. Sarah then became EngenderHealth’s monitoring and evaluation officer. Her most recent experience in Africa was working on a CDC funded project in Mozambique with the University of California-San Francisco School of Nursing.

Having amassed this experience in women’s reproductive health issues in southern Africa, Sarah says “After executing other investigators’ research programs for many years, I had come to the point where I wanted to ask my own research questions.” She is now developing a dissertation study that will explore the entrenched HIV epidemic in Botswana, specifically as it relates to HIV positive women who desire future pregnancies.

Sarah Gutin is described as “a committed Africanist” who has programmatic experience as a foundation for her research. In the future, Sarah anticipates leading an internationally focused reproductive health organization. CEW supports Sarah in achieving her goals and names her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
As a master’s of social work student at U-M, Priscilla Hohmann is integrating her experience and goals from nearly a decade of work aimed at social change. As a divinity student intern with a hospital chaplain, Priscilla came to understand that patients and their families have a need to make sense of their situations and have a need for help in finding resources and making health care choices. Although Priscilla wanted to help patients and their families, she wanted to address social justice issues on a broader basis. This led to years as a teacher and social justice education coordinator, primarily in private high schools.

Moving to Michigan gave Priscilla the opportunity to expand her training and credentials, and she has discovered the career that she believes will combine her focus on social justice with her care for individuals. Having witnessed first-hand the medical system’s lack of services around palliative care, end of life decisions, and dying, Priscilla was inspired to study health social work. Through her training at the School of Social Work, she has acquired new ways of interpreting and discussing both personal and systemic concerns. Her various leadership roles have prepared her to be an active participant in groups both in class and in outside settings, and her volunteer work in counseling settings supports her in-class learning.

At each step along the path from divinity school to teaching to social work, Priscilla Hohmann has gained the skills that will inform her practice as a medical social worker. Her experience teaching, working with individuals, sharing personal experience, and addressing systemic change now work together as she prepares to serve those who find themselves in the maze of medical care. CEW is pleased to recognize Priscilla’s potential and names her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
Lisbeth Iglesias-Rios

Lisbeth Iglesias-Rios has already been recognized as an outstanding scholar for her work in public health. She is now completing her PhD in epidemiology through the University of Michigan School of Public Health, with her proposed dissertation research likely to contribute much to our understanding of the mental and physical health outcomes of trafficked individuals and contemporary slavery.

Lisbeth’s impressive resume includes academic work in three countries, direct service to community members, and independent research initiatives. Earning her bachelor’s degree at the National Autonomous University of Mexico in psychology, Lisbeth continued on to Barcelona, Spain where she received her master’s degree in psychiatry and medical psychology. There she worked in health and substance abuse clinics and continued to conduct research.

After moving to the U.S., Lisbeth worked for the University of New Mexico on a research project focused on Spanish speaking clients. She also obtained her state counseling license and worked with many Latino immigrants. She subsequently earned her MPH at the University and then was awarded two research training fellowships at the National Institute of Cancer (NCI) and the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health Development (NICHD) which is one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and part of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Even before her acceptance into a PhD program, Lisbeth was the lead author of two articles published in premier journals.

All of Lisbeth’s accomplishments are more remarkable when viewed against the many obstacles she has encountered. A declining economy and sociopolitical unease in Mexico led her to further her education in Spain. There, she experienced immigrant status and the resulting exploitation that determined her interest in the health effects of migration.

In planning her dissertation research, Lisbeth decided to focus on the health effects of human trafficking and its related exploitative conditions in three different countries from the Mekong subregion. CEW recognizes Lisbeth Iglesias-Rios as a promising scholar and a future role model for other minority or immigrant women. We gladly name her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
Originally planning a career in women’s health care, it was during college that Chelle Jones realized her passion was not medicine, but women’s rights work. During her undergraduate years at the University of Chicago, she learned of the sexual slavery of Korean women during Japanese colonization in the 20th century, and, that fact that sparked her interest in working with and on behalf of women’s rights.

Chelle completed her bachelor’s degree in history, but she developed a new goal – to do area studies not from abroad, but embedded in Korea. She took language classes, worked in Korea teaching English, and became fluent enough to complete a Korean studies master’s degree program at the prestigious Seoul National University. In order to build academic alliances in Korea, Chelle volunteered in social organizations and facilitated U.S.Korean student exchanges.

Determined to explore the interactions of gender norms, legal and cultural expectations around sexuality, and gender activism in Korea, Chelle returned to the U.S. to study sociological methods. As a PhD student in the U-M Department of Sociology, Chelle will acquire the tools and theoretical knowledge needed to conduct the research that interests her. She will also complete a certificate in LGBTQ studies offered by the Department of Women’s Studies.

Chelle’s work focuses on the nexus of gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, social movements and changing legal and media environments. Her research will have transnational impacts as we work to understand limits to the diffusion of human rights norms and social movement mobilization. She hopes to contribute to transnational feminist work by theorizing the effect of competing rhetoric and ideologies on sexual communities.

Chelle’s long-term plan is to continue transnational teaching and research in higher education. She plans to continue collaborating with both Korean and U.S. academics in sociology and in Korean studies. CEW is proud to acknowledge her PhD path and supports her plans for the future. We name Chelle Jones a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
When Safieh Jordan graduated from high school she started coursework at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. She quickly withdrew in favor of a job opportunity that promised financial success.

Leaving her job in 2013, Safieh re-enrolled at the U-M Dearborn campus, where she is now pursuing a bachelor’s degree that combines the fields of criminal justice and philosophy. In Safieh’s words, “Ultimately my return to education served a purpose of certainty geared towards my humanitarian desires and being a voice for the oppressed. My quest for new knowledge and pairing of experiences is the ignition behind standing for a communal message; a belief in humanity.”

In addition to her long-term goal of founding a non-profit organization that will directly serve orphans, refugees, and the oppressed, Safieh hopes to interact with others working on political theory, and then to continue with doctoral work in anthropology or sociology. Such a path is certainly feasible according to those who know Safieh and describe her as highly motivated, intellectually curious, and open-minded. One of her professors wrote, “She has exhibited the abilities of a veteran graduate student, integrating knowledge from disparate fields (biological, medical, cultural, and psychological) and translating complexities into clear and compelling dialogue in class.”

CEW applauds Safieh Jordan’s determination and intellectual curiosity and names her the Lucile B. Conger Alumnae Scholar.
In her hometown in rural India, Snehalatha is quite an anomaly. Raised in a culture where the typical life course for girls is to marry in their teens and remain housewives, Snehalatha is working on her master’s degree in computer science at University of Michigan - Flint. Snehalatha credits her parents’ emphasis on education and their continued support of her educational plans as critical to her success.

At her local high school, Snehalatha became fascinated with science, particularly with electronics and communications engineering. Wanting to further develop her interest and expertise in science, she was admitted into the Madhira Institute of Technology and Sciences College. There, she participated in science fairs, published an article on NANO technology in her college journal, and presented papers on the subject.

Snehalatha knew by the time she graduated that she wanted to pursue a master’s degree, and that she wanted to do so at an American university. Her long-term plan was to return to India, participate in the economy and create opportunities for others. In addition, Snehalatha wanted to let other girls and women in her hometown know that there were other life paths besides marriage. Instead, she went to work in the private sector in order to help support her family during a difficult period. While there she received certification on ISTQB and was considered a valuable team member at her job.

Completing a master’s degree in the U.S. is a costly proposition. In 2013 her parents offered her the choice of a marriage dowry or using that money to further her education. Her professors certainly believe she made the right choice, noting her commitment and likelihood of success. The Center for the Education of Women concurs, and names Snehalatha Kaavuri an Irma M. Wyman Scholar.
Lucie Kalousova is interested in “social inequalities in financial resources and health behaviors, and how these influence population health and health disparities.”

As she works on a PhD degree in both sociology and public health – health management and policy, Lucie has already produced innovative research on the interactions between socioeconomic status and tobacco use. Her dissertation research is likely to influence our understandings of tobacco use as well as policy efforts to decrease its use.

Lucie describes sociologists and public health scholars as having different intellectual goals, but argues that these are complementary. She designed her own degree program in order to integrate the perspectives of both research communities. At the present time, smoking disproportionately burdens people with the fewest socioeconomic resources. Lucie has already conducted research that counters the generally held sociological perspective on why smoking decreased more rapidly among higher income users than those in lower incomes. She will next look at intergenerational transmission of smoking as well as the impacts of smoke-free policies on persons of different socioeconomic status.

As she enters an academic career as a sociologist, Lucie has already produced multiple published papers and presented her research at major conferences. Her productivity along with her research agenda mean that she “is going to be a credit to sociology and health research in the years to come.” CEW is proud to name Lucie Kalousova a Mary Malcomson Raphael Fellow, anticipating her future contributions to her field and to society.
Brittni Kellom has been advocating for survivors of sexual abuse and at-risk children since she was a teenager. Along the way, Brittni has founded and managed her non-profit *Just Speak*, won numerous awards for community service, and collaborated with schools in programming around the issue of child sexual abuse. *Just Speak* developed programs for different age groups, including safe play for children 5-11, and programming for survivors of trauma ages 12-19. The non-profit also developed workshops for parents and for professionals. Today, Brittni is using her service-learning course to increase her understanding of restorative practices with adolescents.

But her earlier attempts at higher education weren’t as successful as her non-profit work. Her personal challenges as a survivor affected her self-esteem, left her feeling “under-committed” and left little energy to focus on school. Brittni now realizes that her high expectations combined with a fear of failure hampered her academic success.

Yet as her passion for addressing child and adolescent sexual trauma continued to grow, she realized that without the theoretical basis of an advanced degree her expertise and her ability to make an impact were limited. So Brittni made the choice to return to school once again, this time at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, for a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a long-term plan of obtaining a doctorate in the field. Brittni’s aim is to be a clinician who can combine her personal experience, advocacy work, and academic foundation to most effectively assist clients. According to educators she has worked with, as well as professors in her current program, Brittni is poised to become an excellent clinician.

Brittni Kellom has accomplished much since leaving high school, and has assisted numerous survivors of sexual abuse. With a bachelor’s degree in psychology, Brittni is now moving onto a new path leading to a career as a clinician working with children and adolescents. CEW applauds Brittni’s accomplishments to date, and anticipates her great impact on the field in the future. We congratulate Brittni Kellom on receiving the Ruth Jeanette Buttrey Scholarship.
Lorene Kline knew in high school that she wanted to be a dental hygienist, but her family had other ideas. She married and started a family, deferring her education for a decade. Once she returned to school, however, Lorene successfully earned her bachelor’s degree in dental hygiene. She began a nearly 20-year career as a dental hygienist. Lorene loved her work and in addition to her paid employment, she often volunteered her services to those who lacked adequate oral health care.

Lorene had to consider a career change, however, when she began to suffer wrist and hand pain due to osteoarthritis and the repetitive motion of her work. She underwent surgery and began working part time and with children in order to reduce the stress on her hands. Lorene had considered a return to school for an advanced degree but decided against it.

Then her marriage ended, her health insurance disappeared, and Lorene realized that she couldn’t support herself working part time. It took her a year “to overcome her fear of returning to school after so many years,” but she finally applied to the University of Michigan’s master’s degree program in dental hygiene.

Lorene was accepted, and once overcoming her initial fears, has become an outstanding student. Her professors predict success both in her program and in her new career of a dental hygiene educator. They applaud her personal success, but also note the “looming shortage of qualified dental hygiene educators.” Lorene can now envision herself teaching at a major college or university. She says “I have had to re-invent myself…”

CEW has long supported women re-inventing themselves, and sees Lorene as a role model for others. We are delighted to award Lorene Kline a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.
Sonam Krichbaum began her education in nursing 10 years ago. She is now enrolled in the adult-gerontology primary care nurse practitioner program at the University of Michigan School of Nursing with the goal of serving aging patients in the community. Along with social needs, aging patients tend to have complex health conditions. Sonam, along with her colleagues and professors, believes she has the compassion necessary to work effectively with this population.

Sonam’s life history has had a strong impact on her approach to nursing. Born in Tibet, Sonam attended a Chinese school, but as a Tibetan, post-secondary education was denied her. At age twenty she escaped Tibet, first walking to Nepal and then emigrating to India. As a refugee, she had limited options and even after moving to the U.S., she was unable to afford higher education. Sonam says “my culture taught me that giving is the same as receiving.” She credits her experience as a survivor as the basis of her compassion, humility, and desire to treat each patient individually.

Sonam has won multiple awards from patients expressing appreciation for the care they received. Her colleagues praise her patient-centered approach and her focus on individualized patient care. Combined with her excellence in course work, Sonam is on a path to providing critical nursing care to a vulnerable population.

Sonam has overcome many obstacles on the road to nursing education. She offers a role model to patients also dealing with hardships as well as to student nurses learning her approach to nursing.

CEW is pleased to name Sonam Krichbaum a CEW Graduate Scholar, anticipating that she will offer compassionate and professional care to older adults in her community.
Ujwala Kulkarni spent a decade working as a homeopathic physician in her native India. She worked in a maternity hospital that served many disadvantaged women. There, Ujwala worked with women who experienced repeated unplanned pregnancies, yet whose nutrition left them deficient in critical prenatal nutrients. She also volunteered with a non-profit organization that served women sex workers, providing primary care as well as care and information on sexual health and contraception.

When she and her husband moved to Detroit for his job, however, Ujwala’s visa did not allow her to work. She changed her focus to raising her daughter and attending to her family. A move back to India in 2009 provided her with new opportunities. Ujwala began to work as a health and nutrition content writer, reviewing trends in obesity and nutrition education. At the same time, Ujwala completed a certification in clinical research and data management.

As she reviewed what she had learned during that time, Ujwala realized that she wanted to advance in the field of human nutrition and public health. With another move back to the U.S., Ujwala decided to follow her new-found interest and complete a master’s of public health at University of Michigan’s School of Public Health. Once she becomes a registered dietitian, Ujwala will continue to provide clinical services and also plans to conduct research on chronic disease prevention, particularly the connections between maternal health and child health.

Despite not being able to provide the medical care she was trained to give, Ujwala has continued to look for ways to contribute to the health of mothers and children. CEW is pleased to name Ujwala Kulkarni a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar and looks forward to her contributions to the field of nutrition.
Delivering quality healthcare is Caroline Landau’s passion. She has learned from her immersion in health education and research on HIV and AIDS that she wants to lead health delivery strategy in the life sciences or provider space. In order to reach her goal, Caroline is now earning an MBA at the Ross School of Business at U-M. She anticipates adding management, finance and marketing skills to her already impressive understanding of health education and her leadership abilities.

Caroline has proven herself to be an effective manager of health education efforts. As a staff member at the national non-profit Peer Health Exchange, Caroline was unique in assuming management responsibilities; Caroline’s analytical abilities enabled her to manage a significant evaluation of health knowledge acquisition by teens. Her supervisors describe her role there as “expansive and highly complex.” She trained other staff, and facilitated the creation of a new information system working closely with external vendors.

Caroline also has demonstrated research skills, beginning with the award for best undergraduate history thesis in her department at Brown University. She then spent a year in Sao Paulo as a Fulbright Fellow, conducting research on HIV/AIDS prevention practices in Brazil. Through her work with AIDS activists, Caroline developed an understanding of the importance of delivering health education with regard to the specific needs and understandings of the recipients.

As a student in the Ross School of Business, she continues to add to her arsenal of skills. In addition to her coursework, Caroline has connected with the Social Venture Fund and Center for Positive Organizations. She continues to integrate her past experiences with her new learning, including having completed an internship at Genentech, a leading biotechnology company.

CEW celebrates this outstanding health advocate and supports her dream of linking health education with care delivery by naming Caroline Landau a Helen Huff Shell Scholar.
Rachel Marple first went to Haiti as a volunteer in 2010, a trip that she describes as “the turning point in life for me.” There she learned how few resources were available in that country for K-12 schooling, particularly in rural areas. Multiple trips later, Rachel made another discovery. The grandmother of a child with Down Syndrome told her that the child was “crazy and unable to learn.” Rachel’s life course changed in two ways.

First, Rachel joined with colleagues to create Reach-Out:La Fond, a non-profit organization that supports the education of children in one desolate mountain area. Reach-Out:La Fond connects sponsors with individual children and also engages in community development through voluntary work trips from the U.S.

Second, Rachel found a new dream. She wants to be “the first teacher to have a successful special education program in Haiti.” Knowing the capabilities of children with disabilities who receive education in the U.S., she saw the missed opportunities for Haitian children. In order to realize that dream, however, Rachel needed the professional education that would equip her to bring special education to Haiti. She began her studies in education at Monroe Community College and then transferred to the University of Michigan-Dearborn, where she is now earning a bachelor’s degree.

Rachel expects, at first, to spend her summers off working in Haiti. She has already had a successful career in retail management, moving from managing a single store to overseeing the business operations of three stores. Rachel used her associate’s degree in business management to prepare for those positions and so is eagerly looking forward to the success she will find in education after completing her bachelor’s degree.

Impressed with her radical life change, CEW is happy to name Rachel Marple a Molly Dobson Scholar.
How does mentoring by teachers affect student success? Channing Mathews is now examining student-teacher interactions to determine their effects, particularly across cultural differences, and designing the research study for her PhD in the combined program in education and psychology at U-M. Using data from the Center for the Study of Black Youth in Context, Channing will consider how African American middle school adolescents are affected by their relationships with teachers.

Channing cites her personal experience as the foundation for her research interest. Her mother served as a mentor and model, completing her PhD at age 53. Faculty at Duke University, where Channing earned her bachelor’s degree, facilitated her success as a woman of color in a predominantly white institution. As a college student, Channing became engaged in mentoring others – women of color on her campus, and adolescent girls.

Channing decided however that “staying within the safety of the Black community was not enough,” and started her journey of cross-cultural learning. She participated in research and leadership projects that forced her to examine the differences and commonalities in different marginalized populations.

Teaching in the Dominican Republic, Channing challenged her students to examine the racial prejudice between Dominican and Haitian people. When a teaching position became available in the Democratic Republic of Congo, she moved there to teach in an international school with over 50 nationalities represented. There too, Channing incorporated mentorship strategies into her classroom and provided positive cross-cultural interactions.

Channing anticipates working as a professor, or in some aspect of international education. As she states “I am empowered by my experiences to help other teachers develop, translate, and incorporate mentorship strategies into their classrooms.” In naming Channing Mathews a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar, CEW supports her ongoing research and experiential learning as she continues to help teachers mentor students.
Helen Maynard began working on her bachelor’s degree in general studies at the University of Michigan in the 1980s. Now, she intends to complete it. In the intervening years, Helen has worked as a professional journalist, winning accolades for her work, and showing a deep interest in the interplay of social issues in the redevelopment of urban areas. She spent 15 years covering local news in Cleveland before moving to New York City to manage news coverage on the national level.

Helen applied to be a Knight Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan to spend time researching the decline in reporting on local government. Knight Wallace Fellows are chosen from hundreds of applicants in the fields of journalism and communications. As part of this prestigious fellowship, Helen was able to audit classes at the University and took full advantage of that opportunity, attending classes ranging from an introduction to entrepreneurship to an examination of issues in Detroit. In addition to expanding her understanding of urban journalism, however, Helen made a discovery – she wanted to complete that bachelor’s degree and consider a future that includes working in journalism and teaching others about the field.

Helen has been readmitted and will be able to earn that bachelor’s degree. At the same time, her connections with another Knight Wallace Fellow have led her to a new project, one that aims to provide news to the deaf and hard of hearing. In addition, she is developing a platform allowing citizens in local neighborhoods to self-report on issues relevant to their neighbors.

CEW acknowledges Helen Maynard’s contributions to the field of journalism and celebrates her desire to complete her degree. We are happy to name her an AAUW: Mary Elizabeth Bittman Memorial Scholar.
Kaitlin (Kate) Meixner tried several paths as she sought a career that could combine her interests in global health, medicine, teaching, and children. Along the way she was effective in many settings, while none were fully satisfying, each helped her to define her ultimate goal – to become a physician focused on underserved children and youth. Now in her second year of Medical School at U-M, she is already using her prior experiences to make an impact on medicine.

During work trips in college, Kate learned about global health and health disparities in India, Mexico and Kenya. After college, she was inspired to join Teach for America. Kate taught science in one of the lowest performing high schools in Chicago. While she tried to include health education in her science curriculum she felt unable to make a significant difference for the teens she taught.

Then Kate was offered a founding staff position at a new high school in Chicago with a focus on health sciences. Kate coordinated the creation of a four-year curriculum developed in conjunction with faculty from all of the health sciences departments at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). She also taught science classes herself. While she was committed to seeing the first class at the school through graduation, she was beginning to explore the possibility of becoming a physician. Volunteering with pediatric patients led to the realization that she wanted to be more directly involved with their care and with the medical system’s care of children and youth generally.

As a medical student, Kate is already involved in the curriculum transformation begun at the medical school. In addition, she has helped co-found a student organization that uses medical students to deliver health education through junior and senior public high schools.

Kate Meixner believes she’s found her calling, combining her interests in medicine and health education. CEW gladly names her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
Environmental informatics is a young field that applies the methods of information science to environmental science. For Stephanie Miller, it appears to be a perfect fit for her combined interests. After working for many years in the field of information technology, Stephanie became a member of her employer’s environmental resource group. Through her work with that group and her increasing volunteer work with environmental concerns, she began to consider how mathematics and information science could be applied to environmental issues.

Stephanie has brought her extensive experience as an information technology professional to the classroom as she now pursues a dual degree with the School of Information and the School of Natural Resources and Environment in environmental informatics. She expects to work with remotely sensed data, using GIS (geographic information systems). Additionally, Stephanie is interested in incorporating environmental data into MOOCs (massive open online courses) to serve both advanced younger students and those returning to higher education.

Stephanie is at the end of a long journey through higher education. Although she began college at age 14, through a program for the exceptionally gifted, she dropped out due to family needs. It was not until years later that she resumed taking college courses while working, gradually completing her bachelor’s of science in mathematics after nearly a decade. In addition to combining work and school, Stephanie volunteered with an impressive array of environmental and civic organizations.

As a graduate student, Stephanie has impressed her faculty with her ability to excel in the environmental aspects of her program, where she has little academic background. Described as “superb at quantitative reasoning and analysis,” professors comment on her readiness to move into a new professional field.

Stephanie Miller has been described as likely to be “highly successful in her field.” CEW is proud to support her decision to make a career change and to enter an emerging technology field by naming her an Irma Wyman Scholar.
Stephannie Moore is living a dream deferred. Upon receiving her bachelor’s degree, she was planning to become a professional opera singer but a car accident triggered a chronic pain condition that delayed her performance career by 20 years. Today, Stephannie is once again performing in operas and in solo concerts and she has returned to U-M to earn a master’s degree in vocal performance. But she doesn’t want to stop there. Stephannie aims to complete a doctorate in musical arts to further her studies in vocal performance and pedagogy.

Stephannie was not idle during those two decades, however. Rather than performing herself, she opened a studio of piano, voice, and flute students. Working with both amateur and professional musicians, Stephannie learned that she had natural teaching skills.

Though managing health challenges, Stephannie began to study Tibetan Buddhism and learning the Tibetan language. She then embarked on translation study and projects that took her throughout the world to translate ancient Buddhist texts. Living in extreme conditions, Stephannie began participating in service projects to assist women and children, co-founding an orphanage in a Tibetan region of China and assisting with children’s educational programs in India.

Returning to Ann Arbor after her international work, Stephannie served as a program manager for international programs in University of Michigan’s School of Public Health and The William Davidson Institute. She rebuilt her music studio and gradually started performing throughout southeast Michigan.

In spite of living with chronic pain, Stephannie says she is looking forward to “future chapters of my eclectic journey.” Both professional musicians and those who have worked with her in other capacities anticipate an impressive future for Stephannie Moore, expecting her impact on other vocalists and on society to be significant. In awarding her an Elsie Choy Lee Scholarship, CEW concurs.
Brian Peck spent much of his life expecting to become a Catholic priest with a focus on community building and service to society. His bachelor’s degree in sociology from U-M added to his understanding of how he might make an impact through his life’s work. So, after completing college, Brian spent two years in Belize as part of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, serving as a youth minister. That experience led not to seminary but instead to a recognition that his path was one of service through teaching, making a daily impact in a formal role working with young people.

Upon returning to the U.S., Brian worked with youth as a camp counselor and through a local non-profit. He joined Teach for America and was assigned to teach Spanish at a school in one of Detroit’s struggling neighborhoods. There, Brian discovered that he loves the profession, despite working under difficult circumstances. The school is among the lowest performers in Michigan, and suffers a staff turnover of over 50%.

As Brian has explored methods for language teaching, he has found himself engaged in an approach that uses drama and stories to encourage students to acquire language implicitly. This method is called Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling (TPRS). However, this approach lacks resources relevant to students of color.

Brian is now pursuing a master’s degree in Univerisity of Michigan’s School of Education. In addition to his focus on his own learning and development as he aims to “become the best Spanish teacher for my students as possible,” he is interested in researching this new practice as a method for Michigan schools.

Brian Peck sees other Teach for America alumni heading to well-funded schools, but he cannot forget the students he encountered in that low-resource neighborhood school. CEW is proud to support Brian’s ongoing education and dedication to improving language instruction for underserved students by awarding him the Christine Kahan Black Scholarship.
Gianna Petito expected her psychology and biology bachelor’s degree to lead her to a clinical career in psychological research. Her internship in the field, however, left her unmotivated, missing the connection between her work and potential societal benefits. Seeking an adventure when she completed her degree, she leapt at the chance to become a wilderness therapy instructor.

Working in natural public lands was eye-opening for Gianna, who had spent her childhood in the smog of Singapore. She had never camped and wasn’t a fan of nature. After guiding wilderness trips for a year, however, Gianna recognized the comfort and impact that being in nature had on the at-risk children she led. Looking for more environmental engagement, she worked at an environmental education center and then as an AmeriCorps volunteer with the Montana Conservation Corps. In Montana, in addition to clearing diseased trees, maintaining fencing, and eliminating invasive species, she trained and mentored other youth crew leaders.

As she increased her involvement, managing large-scale community service events and designing capacity building efforts, Gianna developed a goal for the future. She says “I envision working for an NGO at the nexus of science, policy, and community relations…my passion is the protection of public recreational and consumptive access to healthy freshwater ecosystems.” In order to do so, she recognizes that she needs to complement her outdoor experiences with specific practical skills. To that end, Gianna is now pursuing a master’s of science in environmental policy and planning at the U-M School of Natural Resources and Environment.

Combining her science background, varied work experience in natural settings, and the analytical and policy skills she will acquire in the master’s program makes Gianna “perfectly situated to become an outstanding professional in the area of watershed management and community-based conservation,” says one professor.

CEW concurs, and proudly names Gianna Petito a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
Kimberly Reyes is experienced in both sides of higher education. Currently a PhD candidate in higher education at the University of Michigan School of Education, Kimberly spent five years working in higher education admissions offices. At her alma mater, Duke University, Kimberly was responsible not only for reading admissions essays, but also for Latino recruitment efforts. She was particularly interested in including low-income schools in recruiting efforts, assisting the Spanish-speaking parents of Latino students, and encouraging the institution to give students with initiative and self-awareness a chance, despite imperfect scores.

Along the way, however, Kimberly acknowledged that she lacked the credentials in higher education to “effectively advocate for and implement the changes I sought in my office.” Although she was one of a very few women of color in selective undergraduate admissions, she felt that her suggestions did not have the impact she had hoped for.

Kimberly first came to the University of Michigan School of Education for a master’s degree. As a graduate student at this elite institution, she experienced for herself the exclusion and isolation of students of color. She joined other students of all ethnicities to encourage classroom discussions of equity and access. In the process, Kimberly relied on academic scholarship in the field of higher education and began to see such scholarship as a mechanism for systemic change in the field. She decided to earn a PhD. Now researching structural changes necessary to provide underrepresented minority students and female students an even playing field in graduate school, Kimberly is also developing “a national reputation,” as one colleague puts it.

Described by a professor as “a rising star among higher education researchers,” Kimberly Reyes is poised to make a difference for future Latino, female, and other students. CEW therefore proudly names her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
Michelle Ridley will be the first person in her immediate family to hold a college degree. After her high school graduation, she tried starting college more than once. Each time, circumstances intervened and she had to put school on hold. Michelle’s extended family didn’t understand her desire for a degree, particularly an abstract degree like the one she originally sought – a degree in mathematics. So Michelle continued to work, caring for family members, and delaying higher education.

Eventually, Michelle decided to try a veterinary technology course. Taking a class on mathematics for medicine administration she rediscovered her dream, and she set a goal. She formed a plan and attended Mott Community College, this time aiming to transfer to the University of Michigan – Flint. Now, she is in her final year in Flint’s actuarial mathematics bachelor’s degree program and is readying herself for the Society of Actuaries exams.

Michelle took on this goal just when other major life events occurred. She had her first child, and at the same time her father was diagnosed with cancer. In addition to coursework, Michelle continued at her job working with disabled adults, cared for her father, and tended to her newborn daughter.

Michelle always knew she had the intelligence and talent to succeed in college. Now she also has a compelling reason to do so. She is aiming for a better life for herself and her daughter. Once she is employed as an actuary, she will continue with the Society of Actuaries’ track of testing. Along the way, Michelle has begun mentoring others through the Flint campus student Actuarial Club.

Along with her faculty, CEW is confident that Michelle Ridley “will be very successful as an actuary.” Therefore, we award her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.
Laney Rupp already has an impressive list of achievements as a social justice activist and program manager. Shortly after college graduation, Laney and a friend decided to create an empowerment project for adolescent girls. In just a few years, ImMEDIAtie Justice had won multiple grants and had a film featured in the Human Rights Watch International Film Festival.

ImMEDIAtie Justice developed a curriculum to introduce girls to filmmaking. Through filmmaking, the girls explore issues of self-worth, sexuality, health, relationships and empowerment. In creating this program, Laney became aware of the complexities of establishing an effective health promotion program. She subsequently expanded her social justice activism and decided to become an AmeriCorps member.

As an AmeriCorps member, Laney’s work was so valuable that she was later hired as a permanent staff member. While working with a volunteer center Laney managed a variety of programs delivering services that ranged from literacy training to mental health support. She also led a county-wide effort training young people on how to provide volunteer services in conjunction with older volunteers.

Laney clearly has the passion and understanding of social issues to make a difference for young people. She credits her bachelor’s degree in gender and women’s studies for providing her with the theoretical foundation that complements her own adolescent experience. Laney has identified a need to incorporate evidence-based methodologies to plan youth development and health promotion programs with long-term, sustained, impact. In earning her master’s in public health (MPH) in health education and health behavior at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, Laney seeks the skills and the understanding of ecological models of development to support her goals.

Laney is determined to make a difference in the well-being of underserved youth, and those who have worked with her expect her to reach her goal. CEW awards Laney Rupp the Elizabeth M. Dusseau Scholarship, and looks forward to her future impact on children’s lives.
As a board member for local, state, and national organizations, Fatima Salman has been able to use her intellectual and analytical skills, along with her organizing abilities, to make an impact on Muslim communities. Now, however, she aims to work more directly in community organizing for change. Fatima is earning a master’s in social work at U-M and is also part of the Community Based Initiative Program that trains social workers who are dedicated to community and social change in urban cities.

Fatima was already involved in community activities as a youth. With her undergraduate degree in Arabic, Persian and Islamic studies she entered teaching through private schools. There she learned much about working with people and systems and youth development. She also learned that it was not teaching, but community organizing, that was her passion. In order to take her passion from voluntary to professional work, Fatima chose to add both theoretical understanding and specific skills to her interests.

As a long-time Michigan resident, Fatima is particularly interested in working with communities in Detroit. Her first internship has allowed her to engage in both management and organizing, serving children and youth in Detroit. Those who have worked with her praise her open-mindedness as she serves youth coming from a variety of backgrounds. In addition, colleagues note her already considerable leadership skills and her ability to execute successful projects.

In naming Fatima Salman a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar, CEW recognizes her potential to serve youth in diverse communities in Michigan’s largest urban setting.
As one professor puts it, Stephanie Sayler is “performing just the type of international research for which the Menakka and Essel Bailey Graduate Fellowship was intended.” We agree.

Stephanie is earning a master of science on her way to a doctoral degree in environmental health sciences from the University of Michigan School of Public Health. She is already experienced in the field, having worked to protect sailors from potential radiation exposure from the nuclear reactor on an aircraft carrier during her career with the U.S. Navy.

She has now designed a project that takes an innovative approach to measuring the levels of silica exposure experienced by workers at a stone processing facility in Thailand. The adverse effects of silica exposure include lung cancer, tuberculosis, and other lung diseases. Yet constant monitoring of silica exposure is expensive and requires laboratory staff for analysis, making ongoing monitoring difficult for smaller or developing countries.

In order to predict the likely exposure in different groups of workers Stephanie has proposed a study that will correlate noise levels from different tasks (and tools) with the amount of silica released during those tasks. Personal noise monitoring is far cheaper and easier and could stand as a proxy for silica levels.

Stephanie will build on previous research on silica exposures conducted by the local Thai university and will collaborate with faculty from that university on this research. Additionally she will be working with her academic advisor as they develop this research relationship between the University of Michigan and Mae Fah Luang University. As Stephanie proceeds to doctoral work, this research will inform her dissertation direction.

Stephanie Sayler’s research project may have a far-reaching impact on the occupational health of stone processing workers, not only in Thailand, but elsewhere. We gladly award Stephanie a Menakka and Essel Bailey Graduate Fellowship.
Autumn Soucy joined City Year Boston after graduating from high school, and their social justice activities have continued ever since. They studied political and legal theory in college, with an emphasis on race and gender studies. As they saw that people of color were disproportionately represented in the legal and child welfare systems, they decided to attend law school in order to correct these inequities.

Autumn started working as a family advocate with a non-profit agency that represents parents on child protective proceedings in family courts. There they assessed client needs and developed individualized family plans of action. Autumn attended family court with clients and worked with them regarding benefits, housing, mental health treatment, and other services.

Autumn also saw, however, the ways in which policies that were designed to assist children and families actually perpetuated the overrepresentation of children of color in foster care. Serving individual clients as a lawyer no longer seemed satisfying; instead Autumn turned their interest to achieving systems change and interrupting the current structure.

Now studying community organizing as they earn their master’s degree in social work at U-M, Autumn intends to develop their skills in two areas. They want to improve as a social justice educator, and they want to learn how to work within communities for legislative and policy change. As they organize community members to lead campaigns through their internship, they plan to learn more about building coalitions between community partners, and creating trainings. Autumn is a board member of the Student Rights Project, a group that trains law and social work students to represent public school students in suspension and expulsion hearings and organizes against institutional threats to educational opportunities for children.

“Autumn will make a phenomenal social worker,” says one professor. In awarding Autumn Soucy the Beatrice Kahn Scholarship, CEW anticipates their impact on the field of social work.
In some ways, Jana Stewart is an unconventional career changer. Highly successful as a journalist focused primarily on sports stories, Jana won multiple awards and, in many ways, loved her job. She enjoyed telling stories, accepted the responsibility of informing her neighbors and fellow citizens, and improved the newspaper’s relationship with its community.

It was a story about food systems that led Jana to her new career – helping organizations and individuals understand our food system and learn environmentally healthy practices for sustainable food systems. As she began investigating the topic, Jana says she “found something I could dedicate my life to.” Educating herself on the topic, Jana did extensive reading, met with farmers and food system leaders, and volunteered at local farms, food banks and events. She left her newspaper job but had not determined her next step when she went to work at the University of Michigan.

Working on campus allowed Jana to connect with the passion for learning so evident around her; it also provided her with time to shape her new career plans. She decided to return to school and is now earning two masters’ degrees, one from the School of Natural Resources and Environment and one from the School of Public Health, both with a focus in behavior, education, and communications. Her work in journalism contributes greatly to her ability to construct environmental messages and develop public health programs. The two fields of study allow Jana to understand more deeply the interrelationships between the environment and food systems.

Jana has continued to work nearly full-time while a graduate student. Her motivation and perseverance indicate her dedication to her new field. In support of Jana Stewart’s career change and her determination to alert others to the impacts of our food system on environmental and public health, CEW awards her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholarship.
Amit Weitzer is committed to the city of Detroit. Since graduating from University of Michigan’s Residential College, Amit has been involved in justice activities in the city as a volunteer and as an employee. As a prisoner advocate, she worked directly with incarcerated individuals and their families. As an organizer for the Michigan Campaign for Justice, she focused on bringing critical reforms to Michigan’s public defense system (the indigent defense system). She has led students in service-learning trips in Detroit and managed youth leadership programming for young Detroiters.

Amit knows that decisions concerning Detroit’s future are currently underway and fears that emerging plans will reinforce regional segregation rather than dismantling it. She is also concerned that such decisions may be made without the input of the marginalized communities that may be most affected.

The solution-oriented coursework that can supplement her already strong understanding of privilege, advocacy, and community participation was a significant factor in her decision to earn her master’s degree in social work at U-M. She was selected as a National Community Scholar, which provided her with funding and an advanced field placement experience. This program’s emphasis on youth and community change fits Amit’s long-term goal of empowering youth to become leaders in neighborhood planning processes. As a former colleague states, “You would be hard pressed to find a more effective advocate for youth and families.”

This past year, Amit has worked with young men on probation in conjunction with the Washtenaw County Juvenile Court. Her summer internship was at a community-based Chicago organization focused on youth organizing.

While many people have given up on Detroit, Amit Weitzer is eager to continue building community there, working with her neighbors to create change. CEW is pleased to assist Amit in fulfilling her goal and names her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
As a young woman, Luciana Wieckowski sought to experience life rather than spend time attending college classes. She dropped out of college in her native country Brazil, and took an English as a second language course in the U.S. After completing the course, Luciana returned to Brazil and began teaching English to women and children in Sao Paulo and in indigenous communities in Peru and Bolivia. Many of the women she met and helped there were determined to improve their lives by working in the tourism sector.

Married and living in California, Luciana began to consider completing college and becoming a social worker. She found, however, that she was consumed by her roles as wife and mother. When she and her husband later separated, she says “I had nothing to begin from…my skills were basically cooking, cleaning, shopping, and caring for others.”

Luciana decided to return to school, beginning at Henry Ford Community College, where she earned an associate’s degree in the Honors Program. Meanwhile, she put her homemaker skills to work first in the hospitality industry, and then as a personal caregiver.

As part of the Honor’s Transfer Innovators program, Luciana enrolled at University of Michigan-Dearborn with peers also interested in creating positive change in metro Detroit. She is now earning her bachelor’s degree in psychology, aiming to become a clinical psychologist. After her first women’s and gender studies class, Luciana says, she declared a second major in that field. She has found a social context for her own experiences in both Brazilian and American culture. Now Luciana intends to combine her post-secondary education with her experiential learning in order to assist other women as they make sense of their lives.

CEW is pleased to award Luciana Wieckowski the Linda J. Rider Scholarship in recognition of her determination to return to school and follow her dream.
As a child who attended numerous schools in both urban and rural districts, Amber Williams learned early about the disparities that exist between schools. She saw the different outcomes of poor schools and those in prosperous neighborhoods. When she attended the University of Michigan for her bachelor’s degree in sociology and women’s studies, Amber experienced the challenges of being a first generation college student and a woman of color at an elite university.

Beginning in her undergraduate years, Amber became involved in student activities namely through the Program on Intergroup Relations in pursuit of diversity, multiculturalism, and a positive campus climate. Her undergraduate work with the University of Michigan Center for Educational Outreach led to her permanent employment as a college adviser in the Michigan College Advising Corps. Amber was a key player in developing a “college going culture” at a traditionally underserved high school.

Amber has worked in several capacities at the U-M Division of Student Life. She has managed programs that promote the retention of underrepresented populations, worked with cross-cultural communication projects for students, and collaborated with other units on student learning programs. First as a student leader in diversity efforts and then as a staff member on the U-M campus, Amber has already had an impact on her chosen field.

Now Amber is pursuing two master’s degrees, one in social work and the other in higher education. “By pursuing both fields,” she says, “I am able to examine through my coursework, research, personal and experiential knowledge how university partnerships can be leveraged in order to support urban communities….” Amber plans to continue her education, earning a PhD in higher education. With this degree, Amber will be in a position to have an impact on how institutions of higher education address equity and inclusion issues on college campuses, thereby serving low-income and first generation college students.

CEW is pleased to invest in the potential impact Amber Williams may have on higher education, and names her the Gail Allen Scholar.
Angey Wilson describes her life as “best defined by how I’ve overcome my life’s challenges.” After having her daughter at 16 she dropped out of high school and after having her son at 18 she obtained her GED. She spent the next 10 years working to support her children and learning to navigate life with an often times crippling anxiety disorder. As her children grew, Angey began volunteering in her community, building her self-confidence and, at age 32 she returned to school.

Since she began college, Angey has been unstoppable. After completing community college, she transferred to U-M, and recently completed her bachelor’s degree in the program in the environment. As a new transfer student, she coordinated a student group called The University of Michigan Permaculture Design Team (UMPDT) and secured a Planet Blue Student Innovation Fund (PBSIF) grant to install a food forest at the U-M Botanical Gardens, completed in the spring of 2015. In addition to her academic success, Angey helped other students in her role as a transfer student mentor and, according to one University staff member the program benefitted from her “strong leadership qualities, organizational skills, and a passion for participants’ transition.”

Angey’s goal is to “run a company that solves major environmental issues.” She wants to work with sustainable food systems and improve the agricultural system in the U.S. She has been accepted into the School of Natural Resources and Environment for Behavior, Education, and Communication (BEC) and Environmental Policy and Planning (EPP) and will be applying to Ross School of Business this fall, with hopes of gaining acceptance to the Erb Institute, a partnership between the School of Natural Resources and Environment and the Ross School of Business. She will also be serving as a program caretaker for the University of Michigan Sustainable Food Program (UMSFP) and advising on the student board at The Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning.

Angey Wilson has claimed her self-worth and is moving forward with the intention of changing the world. CEW is honored to name her a Margaret Dow Towsley Scholar.
Alisa Yang belongs to a very select group: Asian American female artists. She has already demonstrated her vision and expertise, winning numerous awards and having her work featured in multiple exhibits. Now she is pursuing an master’s of fine art (MFA) at the University of Michigan Stamps School of Art and Design, broadening her technical skills and interdisciplinary approach as well as strengthening her theoretical grounding. According to one professor, she is “engaged in groundbreaking and original work.”

Alisa has not had an easy path, however. She is the first woman in her family to attend college and her undergraduate education was intermittent as she worked while attending school, but in 2009, she received her BFA with honors from Art Center College of Design. As an exhibiting artist, she also used her expertise as an artist in work and in volunteer settings.

Alisa has already developed a unique focus on the representation of women in the media and how it relates to female subjectivity. Her current work, a non-fiction film project in Japan (Osaka and Kyoto), is about love hotels. She is also in a planning phase for a project in Bali about erotic tourism for female travelers. Both films address female desires/fantasy in Asia within the global context. Along with a fellow graduate student, Alisa started the Rackham Interdisciplinary workshop “Making Visual Ethnography,” scheduling workshops and speakers for peers in anthropology and art.

According to Alisa herself, the decision to complete a MFA is “a symbolic gesture of self-actualization.” We at CEW applaud her gesture, and look forward to more of her singular artistic voice. We are proud to name Alisa Yang an Elsie Choy Lee Scholar.
Celebrating 45 years of awarding scholarships and fellowships.

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