



# *THE SOCIAL JUSTICE TIMES*

Official newsletter of Ohio Counselors for Social Justice  
A Division of the Ohio Counseling Association and Counselors for Social Justice



## *Greetings from the President!*

**WRITTEN BY DELILA OWENS, PH.D.,  
PRESIDENT 2018-2019**

I would like to give a special thanks to the Ohio Counselors for Social Justice executive board. I appreciate your commitment and dedication to OCSJ in such a gracious manner.

My hope is that OCSJ will continue to flourish and become a key organization in the State of Ohio for counselors and affiliates seeking to: (1) improve access to mental health and quality health care for underserved populations, (2) fight for systemic change, and (3) advocate for equal access and less hostile behavior toward underserved populations. Collective efforts can begin to create a more just society characterized by fairness, equity and equality.

It has been an honor to serve this year. I am looking forward to continuing to work with you.

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## *Thoughts from the President-Elect*

**WRITTEN BY TANYA MIDDLETON, PRESIDENT-ELECT 2018-2019**

As the New Year approaches, I am eager to begin transitioning into the role of President of the Ohio Counselors for Social Justice. Throughout my time as President-Elect, I have enjoyed the opportunity to engage with my colleagues while continuing to advocate and promote equality for all. I am proud of the advancements that we have made thus far and recognize the urgency for our increased visibility during such crucial and divisive times. As we progress into the new season my goal is to increase our visibility through action, my vision is one that includes more of an active approach in our continued journey of respect and dignity for human rights. My goal for visibility would include efforts promoting more research and participation in service related/oriented activities that embrace egalitarianism. These can include attending advocacy day in Columbus, volunteering with local agencies/Universities representing our causes, and continued promotion of a world that is inclusive of individuality. Through continued work, we have identified the importance of social justice and as your next President my push is to move from the identification towards active engagement that can only serve to strengthen our resolve in the never-ending battle against injustice.

## *First Annual OCSJ Awards at the All Ohio Counselors Conference*

**WRITTEN BY TERRA HOWELL-MUTH, PHD, LPCC-S, TREASURER 2018-2019**

On Thursday, November 8, 2018, at the All Ohio Counselors Conference, OCSJ presented two awards to three very deserving individuals. Both Bushra Ismail and Rachel White received the Graduate Student Award, and Dave Murray received the Outstanding Social Justice Organization award on behalf of People 4 Homeless.



Bushra Ismail was nominated by a faculty member at The Ohio State University, who could not speak highly enough about Bushra's accomplishments throughout her master's program at OSU. Bushra has a commitment to social justice for all oppressed persons, and she has worked to help her cohort become interested in social justice advocacy as well. Bushra has worked with faculty to complete a content analysis of ACA conference programs in order to examine social justice professional development offered by ACA, and while working on this research team, she never missed a meeting, and was always timely and accurate in her work. Bushra has also volunteered her time to co-teach a Multicultural Counseling class and was described as "one of the most consistent and thoughtful contributors on the team" by a faculty mentor. Finally, Bushra is the current president of the CSJ Chapter at The Ohio State University and has displayed strong leadership skills and organizational insights. Bushra is described as having the ability to empower others through servant leadership and has worked with others to grow their own leadership skills. Bushra is an emerging leader in social justice in the state of Ohio, and for this reason, she was chosen as one of the recipients of the Graduate Student Award for 2018.



## *First Annual OCSJ Awards at the All Ohio Counselors Conference, con't.*

Rachel White was nominated by a faculty member at Wright State University, who also could not speak highly enough about Rachel's accomplishments as a master's student at WSU. Rachel is described as being "fully committed to compassion, leadership, and public service" by a faculty mentor. Rachel has worked full-time throughout her master's program, all while maintaining a commitment to the community and educational service. Throughout her master's program, Rachel has been an active member of OCA, the Ohio Division of ALGBTIC, and the Ohio Division of CSJ, serving as the Student Representative from 2018-2019. Rachel is the founding president of the CSJ Chapter at WSU. Rachel also collaborates with the Office of LGBTQA Affairs and the Women's Center in order to assist students on campus to fight identity stigma. She also represents student interests on the WSU Diversity Advisory Committee. Rachel has been active and outspoken regarding social justice issues with in the Miami Valley Counseling Association, and frequently promotes awareness and advocacy on different social media platforms for the Chapters and Divisions she is part of. Rachel has been a strong advocate in the Dayton community against HB658 (this bill would require teachers, counselors, and other healthcare professionals to notify parents if their child identifies as transgender, or, is questioning their gender identity). Rachel is a leader in social justice in the state of Ohio, and for this reason, she was chosen as one of the recipients of the Graduate Student Award for 2018.



Dave Murray, Leader of People 4 Homeless (<https://www.people4homeless.org/>), in Akron, Ohio, was nominated by a faculty member at The University of Akron, due to his advocacy efforts in assisting individuals who are homeless in the community. People 4 Homeless is a 501 (c)(3) that was established in Akron, Ohio, to make a difference in the lives of homeless men, women, and children. As part of Dave's advocacy efforts, he began building shelters, called tiny homes, which are designed to house one or two people, and are built to withstand the elements. These tiny homes have electricity in order to run a heater. At the time this award was given, Dave was in the process of locating property on which he could build several tiny homes together, with a main building that would include restrooms, showers, laundry facilities, a pantry, and a kitchen. Because of Dave's efforts to assist the chronically homeless population through building tiny homes, People for Homeless was chosen as the recipient of the Outstanding Social Justice Organization award for 2018, with Dave as the representative.



The Executive Board of the OCSJ Division of OCA would like to again extend our sincere congratulations to all three award recipients. We will be holding another award nomination period prior to AOCC in Fall 2019 and look forward to receiving nominations for any outstanding social justice advocates, both graduate students, and organizations.



## *Social Justice Spotlight*

**WRITTEN BY RACHEL WHITE, STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE 2018-2019**

Racial Justice NOW! (RJN!) Ohio is dedicated to eliminating institutional and systemic racism. This organization works from a political framework that is focused on systemic social change through radical justice and human rights fulfillment in public education. RJN! advocates and organizes around policies that will systemically change educational policies that prevent young people from reaching their full potential with a specific emphasis on Black children. This work is carried out with RJN! advocating with the Dayton School Board, the State, and the Federal Government.

RJN! works to educate Black parents, helping them understand their power in the trajectory of how their children are educated. They organize the parents in a way that helps parents leverage their power so that their children do not unnecessarily end up in "special education" classes. They work with partners at Legal Aid of Western Ohio so that parents fully understand their rights under education law. RJN! also hosts the West Dayton Youth Task Force which educates students in kindergarten through 4th grade on The Seven Principles to foster character development.

You can learn more about RJN! by visiting their website (<https://rjnohio.org/>) or their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/racialjusticenow/>).

## *Social Justice Skill: Empowerment*

**WRITTEN BY COLETTE DOLLARHIDE, PAST PRESIDENT**

Empowerment of persons of oppressed identities involves Power sharing, belief in client/system, to "promote individual and group self-efficacy" (Arredondo & Rice, p. 85), which contributes to a "sense of personal power, confidence, and positive self-esteem". This is much more than cheerleading and empty platitudes such as "You can do it". According to McWhirter (1994), "Empowerment is the process by which people, organizations, and groups who are powerless or marginalized a) become aware of the power dynamics at work in their life context, b) develop the skills and capacity for gaining some reasonable control over their lives, c) which they exercise, d) without infringing on the rights of others, and e) which coincides with actively supporting the empowerment of others in the community" (p. 12). To accomplish this, McWhirter et al (2013) suggest that counselors must engage in four actions.

- **RAISING CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS.** This involves helping clients become aware of power dynamics that influence their lives, and helping clients increase their sense of agency.
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT.** Counselors can help clients to learning how to manage and regulate emotions and improve their communication, self- and other-advocacy, and allyhood skills, so that when clients attempt to communicate their reality to others, the communication process is more likely to be successful.
- **NEW CHOICES AND BEHAVIORS.** Once the skills are acquired, it is important to encourage the client to act on their new awareness of power dynamics and systemic issues that impact their lives.
- **SOCIAL ACTIVISM.** Counselors can help clients contact organizations of social activism, including their families, communities, social organizations. These advocacy and allyhood connections will help clients and their communities to address the social influences that perpetuate oppression.

Organizations such as Counselors for Social Justice provide social justice-oriented counselors with the resources and support to empower clients at all levels. Watch for more newsletters for more information!





## *A View from the "Labeled Disabled" Social Justice Advocacy Front Lines*

**WRITTEN BY BRIANA MILLER, PRESIDENT & CEO OF THE PERFECT SELF LLC  
AND M.S. MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING STUDENT**

As Charmatz and McRae (2003) note, "access to the courts" for people with "labeled disabilities" is more involved than simply "hiring a lawyer, filing a complaint, or proceeding through the numerous stages of the litigation process" (Charmatz & McRae, 2003, p. 333). People "labeled disabled" are also faced with "finding an accessible parking place, getting up the steps, opening courthouse doors, finding the courtroom, sitting at counsel tables, entering the jury box, sitting on the bench, and communicating effectively with judges, lawyers, courtroom personnel, and the jury" (Charmatz & McRae, 2003, p. 333).

As a "labeled disabled" mental health counseling student, I have both personally and professionally been faced with these specific difficulties with our legal system and governmental agencies. As a result, I started a few Social Justice Advocacy Projects specifically to support people with "labeled disabilities". One is called ADAbledU™ ([www.adabledu.theperfectself.com](http://www.adabledu.theperfectself.com)).

Recently, I was advised by an Ohio municipal court judge to contact The Ohio Supreme Court when I asked for ADA Accommodations to represent myself Pro Se at the municipal court concerning a traffic ticket I felt I was given wrongly. Directly from The Ohio Supreme Court, I learned, unlike other states, the Ohio court system does not have an ADA Coordinator or even a formal set of policies or procedures to handle ADA Accommodations or Modifications requests received from people with "labeled disabilities." As a "labeled disabled" individual, I will admit, this fact frightened me!

The ADA has been a federal law from 1990 as signed by President Bush and Ohio has yet to formalize a way for people to ask and be granted ADA Accommodations or Modifications to access court successfully? What? Right after I learned this fact from The Ohio Supreme Court, I walked

over to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission (OCRC) to file a claim requesting an investigation. Sadly though, I just got an email this past week from the OCRC stating courts are not considered part of their jurisdiction per OAC 4112, the law authorizing OCRC activities. Some governmental agency is responsible I am sure; I am just still sorting out who. Next planned call, probably later today, is The US Department of Justice ADA Office.

Even through all this struggle, good news is on the way though, at least, I hope! I recently attended an Ohio Pathways to Justice® ARC Pilot Program Kick-off Event hosted locally in Central Ohio by The Center for Disability Empowerment ([www.disabilityempowerment.net](http://www.disabilityempowerment.net)). At the event, we discussed how Ohio's municipal court system is unique compared to other states. In Ohio, each of our municipal courts are run by their own local rules. There is no general state system, unlike what appears to be most other states, or at least the states with current ADA Coordinators and/or systems to formally handle ADA requests.

Interestingly enough, what appears to have occurred is due to Ohio's uniqueness, or "labeled disability", as a state Ohio is requiring what could be seen as similar to ADA Accommodations and/or Modifications to the National ARC Pathways to Justice® program. This nuance is extremely ironic to me, as a "labeled disabled" individual who has experienced numerous problems with state agencies failing to accommodate or modify their programs for me and my "labeled disabled" colleagues, peers, and clients. I hope to study the journey of how Ohio as a state asks for and is granted ADA Accommodations and Modifications. I feel not only we as a state, but all states, and all other local and federal governmental agencies as well as non-governmental agencies can all learn from such a study.





## *Membership Update*

**WRITTEN BY SHELBY COEN, SECRETARY 2018-2019**

OCSJ currently has 58 active members who are dedicated to advocacy and social justice in Ohio. We continue to be grateful for our incredible members who continue to work and advocate for our clients. Membership in OCSJ comes with a variety of perks, including the ability to vote for executive board positions and OCSJ Award winners, updates from the board regarding opportunities for social justice advocacy, access to the OCSJ newsletter, the opportunity to run for executive board positions in OCSJ, and much more!

Are you or someone you know interested in joining OCSJ? There are a few ways you can join this group dedicated to social justice!

1. Are you already a member of OCA? You can simply join OCSJ as an OCA member for just \$10!
2. Not a member of OCA but are interested in joining OCSJ? You can join OCSJ as an Associate Member with a donation of \$15 to OCSJ! With this donation, you will have all membership privileges that a member of OCA would have as well.

Email OCSJ at [ohiocsj@gmail.com](mailto:ohiocsj@gmail.com) if you'd like to join!

## *Call for Nominees for OSCJ Officers for 2019-2020*

**WRITTEN BY COLETTE DOLLARHIDE, PAST PRESIDENT**

Leadership is a vital part of any organization, and this is especially true of a passion organization such as the Ohio Counselors for Social Justice. Because OCSJ is so new, the challenges for the coming year include growing the organization and meeting the social justice needs of our unique state. To accomplish this, OCSJ is calling for committed volunteers to fill the following offices:

**President-Elect:** This person will serve as President Elect effective July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, then as President from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021.

**Secretary:** This person will serve as Secretary effective July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020, with the option to remain in office for additional year(s).

If you are interested, please send your name and a brief statement of your desire and qualifications to serve in the office you designate to Colette Dollarhide, OCSJ Past President at [ctdollarhide@gmail.com](mailto:ctdollarhide@gmail.com) **no later than February 15, 2019.**

## *Dates to Remember*

**Legislative Advocacy Day** – Riffe Center in Columbus, OH on March 19, 2019

**OCA Spring Conference** – Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin, OH from March 20-21, 2019

**ACA National Conference** – Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, LA from March 28-31, 2019

**ACES Conference** – Sheraton in Seattle, WA from October 10 - 13, 2019