



Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership

A Newsletter from the School of Social Work

May 2025

Editor: Amanda Graves

Dear Title IV-E Alumni, Students, and Friends,

We are pleased to announce the launch of the Faculty Resource Project by the CWP Title IV-E Team! This initiative offers child welfare-related resources, including peer-reviewed journal articles and policy or program documents, to support the integration of child welfare topics into social work courses at Texas State University.

These supplemental resources are available not only to Texas State University instructors but also to child welfare professionals and agencies, promoting evidence-based, effective, and ethical practices while informing decision-making to improve outcomes for children and families.

For more information or to access these resources, please contact Dr. MJ Choi, Principal Investigator of the Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership Program, at m_c951@txstate.edu.

Thank you for your commitment to advancing child welfare practice!

-The CWP Team

There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from fear and want and that they can grow up in peace.

-Kofi Annan

The mission of the Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership is to enhance the values, knowledge, and skills of the child welfare workforce in Texas through social work education, financial assistance, ongoing training, and career support.

[Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership Program Website](#)

Title IV-E CWP Highlights

Congratulations to the Title IV-E CWP Graduates for Spring 2025!

We are excited to celebrate three BSW students who completed their final internships this spring and will be hired to work for Child Protective Services after graduation: **Faith-Ann Zepeda** (San Antonio), **Raeleigh Torrez** (Lockhart), and **Savannah Bolton** (South Austin).

We are also excited to celebrate two CPS employees who will be graduating with their MSW degree in May: **Marjorie Miller** (Region 8) and **Katlynn Young** (Region 7). These two employees both started the MSW program in Fall 2021, and have worked full-time at CPS and participated in the part-time MSW program at Texas State for the past 3+ years. **Congratulations** to Marjorie and Katlynn (both pictured below) on this accomplishment!



*The Title IV-E Child Welfare Partnership Program and the MSW program has played a big role in my compassion to provide safety and permanency for children in care. I learned so many skills to enhance my work in accomplishing positive outcomes for our children in care. I would highly recommend this program to others in the agency as it has allowed me the skills to continue to progress in my career with CPS.—**Katlynn Young (pictured left)***

*Goals and perseverance, turns hopes and dreams into reality. The past three and a half years of graduate school at Texas State University has been an eventful journey. I am so grateful for all I have learned and how the Title IV program gave me the opportunity to further my education. I look forward to continuing to serve and support children and families in South Texas as an LMSW.—**Marjorie Miller (pictured right)***



Faculty Led Research

Review of "The Ohio Adventure Therapy Coalition: A Statewide Trauma Informed Group Work Initiative for Youth Involved in CPS" for Adventures in Academia

By Christine Lynn Norton, PhD, LCSW-S, CCAT, CCTP, CET

In our article published in the Journal of Creativity in Mental Health, "The Ohio Adventure Therapy Coalition: A Statewide Trauma Informed Group Work Initiative for Youth Involved in CPS," my co-authors—Tucker, A., Beale, B., Walsh, H., Keefe, M., Holmes, L., and Wermer-Colan, A.—and I share insights from our work with the Ohio Adventure Therapy Coalition (OATC). As active members of the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) and the Therapeutic Adventure Professional Group (TAPG), we've seen firsthand how adventure therapy can make a significant impact on youth with trauma histories. This article reflects our collective experience and our dedication to advancing the field of adventure therapy.

This study examines a trauma-informed model, developed by Dr. Bobbi Beale, designed to support youth workers across Ohio in leading adventure therapy groups. The model places a strong emphasis on trauma-informed care and introduces a parallel process, where providers actively participate in the adventure therapy experience themselves. This approach allows providers to gain a deeper, firsthand understanding of its impact and effectiveness. Additionally, providers receive specialized training on how to facilitate adventure therapy groups, along with ongoing support to ensure their success in implementing the model.

In our pilot study, which gathered data from youth, parents, and providers, we found compelling results: youth reported significant improvements in their overall mental health, parents noted notable changes across several subscales of the Youth Outcomes Questionnaire, and providers observed decreases in trauma symptoms and risk behaviors, as reflected by the CANS assessments. These findings highlight the potential of adventure therapy as a transformative intervention for youth in the child welfare system and emphasize the need for systemic integration of adventure therapy through professional development training and technical assistance in community-based care.

As a group of professionals deeply involved in adventure therapy, we are passionate about exploring and sharing innovative approaches that can support youth in meaningful ways. Our involvement in AEE and TAPG has continuously inspired our work, and this study is just one example of how we are striving to integrate creative, trauma-informed methods into practice. We believe this article offers both promising evidence and a call to action for further integration of adventure therapy within community-based care settings, child welfare systems, and other organizational settings. We hope this article encourages others in the field to consider the benefits of adventure therapy, and we look forward to continued discussions and research in this area.

Dr. Norton is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a board-approved supervisor in Texas. She has over 30 years of experience working with youth and young adults in various settings, including therapeutic wilderness programs, juvenile justice, schools, mentoring, and campus support programs. She has taught as adjunct faculty at The University of Denver, Prescott College, and Naropa University. She is currently a professor at Texas State University. Her practice and research areas are positive youth development, innovative interventions in child and adolescent mental health, trauma-informed care, adventure therapy, outdoor behavioral healthcare, experiential education, foster care support in higher education, and international social work.



Empowered Wellbeing

Taking care of yourself and your community

Engage in Restorative Justice

Examples: volunteer, donate, random acts of kindness

Doing good for others boosts mental health

Connect with your values

Examples: support local businesses, practice ethical consumption, foster friendships or hobbies

Engaging in what matters to you fosters wellbeing

Cultivate Connection

Examples: join community groups, check in on a friend, organize a neighborhood event

Surround yourself with people who share your vision for a better world

Resources

Bojanowska, A., & Urbańska, B. (2021). Individual values and well-being: The moderating role of personality traits. *International Journal of Psychology*, 56(5), 698–709. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12751>

Nichol, B., Wilson, R., Rodrigues, A., & Haighton, C. (2024). Exploring the effects of volunteering on the social, mental, and physical health and well-being of volunteers: An umbrella review. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations: Official Journal of the International Society for Third-Sector Research*, 35(1), 97–128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-023-00573-z>

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