

NASW-NC Board of Directors

2025-2026 Slate of Candidates

President Elect Candidates 2025-2026 (Vote for 1)

Rachel Mathew, MSW, LCSW



Education: M.A. in Social Work specializing in Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India; LCSW- NC & CT

Current Employer: Private Psychotherapy Practice (Turning Point Psychotherapy, PLLC)

NASW Experience: Member since 1996; Elected Central District Representative, Board of Directors, NC in 2023; Treasurer of PACE Committee; Member of Equity and Inclusion Committee; Wake County LPU presenter- August 2024; Mentor for new board member- 2024

Biographical Statement: Rachel Mathew, MSW, LCSW, is a seasoned trauma-informed psychotherapist licensed in North Carolina and Connecticut. With over 35 years of experience that includes 25 years in private practice, she specializes in individual, couples, family, and group therapy, providing compassionate and culturally responsive care. Rachel holds a Master's degree in Social Work from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India, with a focus on Medical and

Psychiatric Social Work. Having lived in multiple countries and regions across the U.S., Rachel's worldview is informed by diverse cultural experiences, enhancing her empathy and approach to social work. Her leadership roles include directing Domestic Abuse Services at the YWCA of Greenwich, CT, and serving on boards of different non-profit organizations. She currently serves on the NASW-NC Board of Directors. Rachel's passions and interests include photography, travel, the arts, and interior design. She finds joy in her family and close friends and believes in the importance of political engagement to make a difference.

Platform Statement: As a proud member of NASW since 1996 and the current Central District Representative on the NASW-NC Board, I am honored and excited to be considered a candidate for President-Elect. This organization has supported me throughout my professional journey, and I would like to continue to give back by serving and advocating for our diverse and dedicated community of social workers. In the thirty-five years that I have worked as a social worker and clinician I have had the privilege to work alongside individuals and communities whose voices have too often been silenced— people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ and trans individuals, refugees, survivors of violence, and those experiencing grief, mental and medical illnesses, or systemic oppression. I believe it is both our responsibility and our calling as social workers to stand firmly for the rights and dignity of marginalized communities, and to challenge the structures that perpetuate inequality and harm. Grounded in faith, guided by cultural humility, and driven by a deep commitment to mentorship, I bring a leadership style rooted in empathy, compassion, and connection. If elected, I will work to strengthen and amplify our collective voice and walk alongside other social workers from across North Carolina—to listen, to learn, and to lead together. I will continue to advocate for trauma-informed, equitable policies and work to build an NASW-NC that reflects the diversity, resilience, and humanity of the people and communities we serve.

Sarah Regensburger, LCSW, LCAS, MSW



Education: University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, BS; North Carolina State University, MSW

Current Employer: Allison Grubbs and Associates

NASW Experience: Joined Fall 2020, Graduate Student position on Board – 2021-2022; Member at Large – 2022-Present

Biographical Statement: Sarah Regensburger (she/her) took the “scenic route” to Social Work. She previously worked as a high school science teacher and peer support specialist after finishing her undergraduate degree at UNC-Chapel Hill. Her experiences cultivated a passion for seeing others empower themselves to climb life’s mountains to achieve their goals, which led her to social work. Sarah earned her Master of Social Work degree at North Carolina State University. She is currently a Licensed Clinical Social Work and Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist Associate. Sarah Regensburger practices at Allison Grubbs and Associates (private practice) with being an adult and adolescent individual therapist, with a specific focus on emerging adults (16-35 yrs old). She has worked in a primary care setting and in an inpatient psychiatric hospital.

Platform Statement: Sarah Regensburger is committed to advancing the mission of NASW-NC by advocating for equity, empowerment, and social justice. With four years of service on NASW-NC, she has been a dedicated voice for social workers and the communities they serve. She upholds the NASW Code of Ethics, particularly service, integrity, and the dignity and worth of every person.

Passionate about fostering the next generation of social workers, Sarah seeks to increase support and involvement for student social workers, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities to thrive. She is also dedicated to amplifying the diverse voices of North Carolina, ensuring that all perspectives are heard in policy and advocacy efforts. Through collaboration, education, and action, Sarah strives to strengthen NASW-NC’s role as a leader in social change and a pillar of support for all social workers across the state.

Undergraduate Student Representative (BSW) Candidates 2025-2026 (Vote for 1)

Rhianna Day



Education: Bachelor of Social Work 2026 - University of North Carolina Wilmington

Current Employer: Student

NASW Experience: Advocacy Day Attendee, March 2025, and member of NASW-NC

Endorsements: Daysja Terry, MSW, LCSW-A, LCAS, Lecturer, College of Health and Human Services-School of Social Work (University of North Carolina Wilmington); Katy Thiel, MSW, Lecturer, Interim BSW Program Coordinator, College of Health and Human Services-School of Social Work (University of North Carolina Wilmington); Mark Imperial, Ph.D., Professor and Director of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program in the Department of Public and International Affairs at the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

Biographical Statement: Growing up in rural Beaufort, North Carolina, Rhi navigated early challenges that shaped her resilience and commitment to social justice. Becoming a parent at 15, she faced many challenges and personal adversity, including a prolonged struggle with substance use. Achieving recovery eight years ago (as of April 1st) and three years of incarceration became pivotal turning points. These experiences exposed systemic inequities within the penal system and solidified her dedication to advocating for marginalized communities. Today, Rhi channels this energy into academic and professional growth: she is completing her first year in UNC's Bachelor of Social Work program, minoring in Nonprofit Leadership and Management, with plans to pursue graduate studies. Her focus on community outreach, re-entry initiatives, and policy reform reflects her commitment to addressing structural inequities. She is driven to collaborate with professionals who share a vision of sustainable, systemic change, blending lived experience with evidence-based practice.

Position Statement: Joining the NASW-NC Board of Directors represents an opportunity to amplify underrepresented voices while deepening my engagement with policy advocacy. My firsthand understanding of the challenges faced by justice-involved individuals informs my passion to reform re-entry systems, reduce recidivism, and dismantle barriers to equity, while also giving me an incredibly unique perspective. Networking with seasoned professionals on the Board will enhance my ability to bridge grassroots insights with macro-level strategies. Attending Advocacy Day underscored the critical role social workers play in shaping policies—a role I aim to expand through future lobbying efforts. By integrating my academic training, lived experience, and nonprofit leadership focus, I am prepared to contribute meaningfully to NASW-NC's mission while growing as an advocate committed to transformational change. It would be an honor to serve you and the profession of social work for the 2025-2026 term.

Jakub Pawelczak



Education: Bachelor of Social Work (in-progress) Mars Hill University; Associate of Arts, A-B Tech

Current Employer: Student

NASW Experience: Active Student Member, NASW-NC

Endorsements: Bo Hess, MSW, LCSW, LCAS, CCSI, Asheville City Council Member; Anne Hope Kouri, MSW, CNN, Director of Field Placement / Assistant Professor of Social Work, Mars Hill University; Jay Vaughan, Talent Acquisition Specialist, Pyramid Healthcare, (Former Site Supervisor and Substance Abuse Counselor of Real Recovery); Barbara Campbell, MF, BSN, RN, OCN, Duke University Medical Center, Department of Neurosurgery

Biographical Statement: Jakub Pawelczak is a 27-year-old Polish-American senior BSW student at Mars Hill University with a strong passion for juvenile justice reform, substance use disorder recovery, and ethical policy advocacy. His own journey navigating substance use disorder- and both the juvenile and adult justice systems- has given him a personal understanding of the challenges people can face when seeking support and healing. Experiencing Hurricane Helene in Asheville, losing both his employment and housing as a direct result of the storm, Jakub developed a fierce commitment to make sure voices like his are heard and represented. These experiences continue to shape how he views the field of social work and inform his vision for a more trauma-informed and equity-focused future. Jakub believes lived experience is one of the highest forms of expertise and hopes to use his voice to advocate for those often left out of the conversation.

Position Statement: I'm running for the Undergraduate Student Representative position because I've seen too many voices go unheard and I'm determined to change that. I've battled substance use disorder, navigated the court systems, and survived Hurricane Helene. I know what it's like to be overlooked by the very systems meant to support us.

If elected, I will use my position to challenge the status quo and ensure communities impacted by trauma, addiction, and the justice system aren't just represented- but actively listened to in every policy conversation. I will advocate for trauma-informed care, youth justice reform, and equity-driven social work practices that empower people.

I'm not running for this position to fluff up a resumé- I'm running because I've lived through the gaps in our systems and want to be part of building something better.

Graduate Student Representative (MSW) Candidates 2025-2026 (Vote for 1)

Jill Sagetarios, B.A. Psychology



Education: B.A. Psychology UNCA, MSW Capella University Graduating March 2026

Current Employer: Veterans Services of the Carolinas - Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministries

NASW Experience: Member 2024

Endorsements: Brandon L. Wilson, COO – Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry; Dr. Kevin Rumley, LCSW, LCAS - CCS Veterans Treatment Court Director; Benjamin Horton, MA-HSC, QMHP, NCCPSS - Director of Outreach; Candy Strobel- National Certified Board Professor of Biological Science at Trident Technical College.

Biographical Statement: My name is Jillian Sagetarios, I take pride in being a first-generation graduate-level student. My academic journey began at a community college in Ohio and has taken me around the world due to military commitments. I earned my Bachelor's degree at UNC-Ashville. I have developed a strong commitment to empowering individuals and promoting inclusivity across diverse communities. For over 20 years, I have resided and worked in Buncombe County. My goals include finishing my MSW and applying for my LCSW. In addition, I aspire to obtain my LCAS certification. This summer, I will step into a liaison role focused on Veterans Treatment Court, reinforcing my dedication to service within this critical area. I view my role as a student representative as an opportunity to advocate and enhance educational prospects and build connections. This aligns with my values and aspirations, allowing me to make a meaningful impact in my community.

Platform Statement: I am honored to be considered for the Graduate Student Representative position on the NASW-NC Board of Directors. My commitment to the social work profession is grounded in academic growth and community engagement. Following Tropical Storm Helene, I had the privilege of supporting individuals and families during their recovery, deepening my understanding of the role social workers play in crisis intervention and community resilience.

My diverse background shaped a dedication to advocacy for marginalized and underserved populations, including homeless Veterans, the LGBTQIA2S+ community, older adults, and BIPOC individuals. In addition, I have worked in various roles most recently as Lead Case Manager with the Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry supporting Veterans. Through active participation such as Coordinated Entry and Continuum of Care meetings, I have strengthened my ability to collaborate across sectors and promote systemic change.

I respectfully ask for your support and thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Piragio Thompson, QP, CPSS, NADD-DDS



Education: Guilford Technical Community College – A.A Psychology, University of NC at Greensboro – B.A Social Sciences, University of NC at Greensboro – B.S Business Administration, NC State University – MSW Anticipated May 2026

Current Employer: Trillium Health Resources

NASW Experience:

Endorsements:

Biographical Statement: Piragio Thompson is a dedicated social work professional with over 15 years of experience in mental health, developmental disabilities, and substance use services. Currently pursuing his Master of Social Work at North Carolina State University, he is committed to advancing equity and accessibility within social services. His extensive experience includes case management, care coordination, and quality improvement initiatives, particularly in long-term services and supports (LTSS). Piragio is passionate about advocating for marginalized communities, ensuring ethical standards in social work practice, and fostering systemic change through policy development. His leadership extends beyond his professional roles as he has founded initiatives that have provided essential resources to families in need. As a member of the NASW board committee, he aims to contribute his expertise in mental health services, community engagement, and policy advocacy to strengthen the profession and enhance support for vulnerable populations.

Platform Statement: As a dedicated social work professional with over 15 years of experience, I am committed to advancing equity, accessibility, and ethical practice within the social work field. My work in mental health, developmental disabilities, and long-term services has strengthened my ability to advocate for marginalized communities and influence systemic change. As an NASW board committee member, I will prioritize policies that promote social justice, workforce development, and sustainable support for social workers. I am particularly passionate about ensuring that the social work profession remains adaptive, inclusive, and well-equipped to address emerging challenges. My experience in case management, care coordination, and program development has prepared me to contribute meaningfully to NASW's mission. I aim to foster collaboration, amplify underrepresented voices, and support initiatives that enhance professional standards and social impact. Together, we can continue shaping a stronger, more equitable future for social work.

Jack Turnwald, M.A.T.



Education: UNC School of Social Work, Graduate Student, MSW 2024-2026; Duke University, Master of Arts in Teaching 9-12; Miami University, Oxford, OH B.A. English & Psychology

Current Employer: School: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

NASW Experience: Joined NASW immediately upon starting graduate school at UNC. I follow current NASW issues via the email newsletter and have attended both an online and in-person (at UNC) NASW presented session. I am familiar with the kind of advocacy work NASW does as I did similar advocacy work during my 19 year tenure as a high school educator.

Endorsements:

Biographical Statement: Jack Turnwald (They/Them) is a white, disabled, trans non-binary, AuDHD, award-winning educator of 19 years. Having earned a B.A. in English and Psychology from Miami University in Ohio and an M.A.T. from Duke University, they entered the classroom with a lens that prioritized inclusiveness, safety, and challenging academics. They brought with them a global lens after working in South Korea as a Fulbright scholar and educator for six years. Throughout their years in NC Public Schools they became a vocal advocate and builder of culturally responsive curriculum taught from a foundation of trust. They hold central the belief that we must prioritize historical truth telling, experience educational humility, and center lived experiences in order to build schools, workplaces, therapeutic spaces, and communities which are productive and psychologically safe for all. They are currently an M.S.W. student at UNC Chapel Hill.

Platform Statement: As a potential graduate student representative, my platform is very simple. If elected I will advocate in ways that are true to the values of our profession. I will encourage speaking truth to power. I will push for us to resist being complicit in harm to those we serve. I will look for equity of voice and always seek to build power “with” rather than build power “over”. Ultimately, as a trans nonbinary AuDHD future social worker I want to ensure, especially in our current historical context, that our work is to make sure no one is left behind.

Member at Large Candidates 2025-2026 (Vote for 3)*

Katrice Byrd, DSW, LCSW



Education: University of Southern California (DSW); Howard University (MSW)

Current Employer: The Center for Deployment Psychology (CDP)

NASW Experience: Current NASW Member; Current Legislative Committee Member; Former NASW PACE Committee Member; Former NASW Legislative Committee Co-Chair; NASW NC Conference(s) Presenter: Achieving Equal Opportunity within the Social Work Profession; Using Evidenced-Based Storytelling in Advocacy; NASW NC Social Work Panel

Biographical Statement: Katrice Byrd, DSW, LCSW, currently serves as a Military Behavioral Health Social Worker III at the Center for Deployment Psychology (CDP), where she provides evidence-based training to mental health professionals that focus on best practices for Active-Duty and Veteran populations. She is heavily involved in suicide-prevention efforts and implementation research that aims to reduce suicide rates and normalize mental health services among this population.

Dr. Byrd is also an adjunct faculty member at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), where she teaches in the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program.

Dr. Byrd relocated to the Charlotte area in 2016 and has been involved with NC-NASW since that time. Some of her areas of expertise include social justice, using evidenced-based storytelling in advocacy, mentorship, healing trauma, and clinical practice. Dr. Byrd has served the community as a private practice owner, school-based, outpatient, interdisciplinary, and community-based therapist. Additionally, she provides clinical supervision to associate licensed clinicians. She jokingly refers to her home as "the second chance home" due to the number of young adult family members who have been moved in to find their path forward in life. In her spare time, Dr. Byrd enjoys working out, dancing, traveling, reading, and spending time with her husband and family.

Platform Statement: My vision as a Member-at-Large is to foster connections, build community, and use storytelling to drive change. With my experiences as a Marine Corps and Retired Army Veteran, I fully understand the power of community. My commitment has always remained: to be a collective of voices and experiences that represent our profession while maintaining forward momentum. Building community is essential because community is what will get us through.

Tianca Crocker, PhD, MSW



Education: University of Texas at Austin, PhD; George Mason University, MSW; University of Virginia, BA

Current Employer: UNC Charlotte

NASW Experience: Current North Carolina member and past member of DC Metro and Central Texas chapters

[Miss Representation Could Raise Awareness of Media's Negative Images of Women](#)

Biographical Statement: Tianca Crocker is an assistant professor and applied researcher at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, holding affiliations with the School of Social Work and the School of Data Science. Her work is dedicated to fostering economic opportunity and reducing poverty through innovative digital equity policies and programs. Tianca obtained her PhD from the University of Texas at Austin's Steve Hicks School of Social Work with a graduate portfolio in communication and cultural policy.

Platform Statement: I am honored to be a candidate for the NASW-NC Board of Directors. As an academic, my research focuses on digital equity as a social determinant of wealth and health, recognizing technology's modern role in access to resources, opportunities, and connectedness. My background is filled with macro practice experiences, where I learned more about the need for systemic social change through policy initiatives and community partnerships. I bring this insight to the classroom as an educator of the next generation of practitioners, and I carry this perspective in my desire to serve with NASW-NC. I am committed to strengthening NASW-NC's efforts in supporting social workers from all practice settings as we shape effective 21st-century social work practice. It would be my privilege to serve as a Member at Large, and I welcome the opportunity to contribute my experience and perspective to the Board. Thank you for your support!

Alisia Dulaney, MSW, LCSW, LISW-CP



Education: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (BA), Loyola University Chicago (MSW)

Current Employer: Hope Through Change Counseling PLLC (Owner)

NASW Experience: Long Standing member, Current member

Biographical Statement: I am the founder and owner of Hope Through Change Counseling PLLC, dedicated to providing compassionate, culturally responsive mental health care to individuals and families. I am originally from a small town outside of Philadelphia, PA but I found my passion for social work while attending UNC Chapel Hill. While in college I worked as a call center counselor at the CDC National AIDS and STD hotlines and found this experience to be life changing. I earned my Master's in Clinical Social Work with a concentration in Health Care from Loyola University Chicago. During my pursuit for MSW, I was involved in providing counseling for gang impacted youth and their families. Upon returning to North Carolina, I have gained extensive mental health experience in hospital and school settings specializing in MST, CBT, and DBT modalities. My work is rooted in serving women, adolescents, children, families in outpatient care. My work aligns with NASW mission by advocating for equity, social justice, and the dignity and worth of every individual. My passion is grounded in diversity, fairness, and equality. I am committed to serving women, adolescents, children, families, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those navigating systemic barriers.

Platform Statement: As a dedicated clinical social worker and Founder of Hope Through Change Counseling PLLC, I am committed to advancing NASW mission through advocacy, ethical leadership, and professional development. As a Member-at-Large Board Member, I will work to amplify diverse voices, enhance member engagement, and support policy initiatives that advance equity and social justice. My experience spans hospital, school, and outpatient settings where I have provided trauma informed care to women, children, families, people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals. My specialized trainings along with background in juvenile justice and systemic intervention, equips me to advocate for policies that strengthen mental health access and professional standards. I am especially passionate about empowering women and communities navigating systemic barriers. I will bring collaborative leadership, cultural responsiveness and commitment to ethical social work practice to NASW Board of Directors.

Crystal Hayes, PhD, MSW



Education: PhD: University of Connecticut School of Social Work; MSW: Smith College School of Social Work; Bachelors of Art Degree: Mount Holyoke College

Current Employer: Sacred Heart University School of Social Work, Clinical Assistant Professor; Founder and Co-Director of the National Collaborative for Reproductive Justice and Innovation in Social Work

NASW Experience: I do not have previous Board experience with NASW.

Biographical Statement: I cut my first teeth behind prison walls. I grew up the child of incarcerated parents. Today, I am a clinical assistant professor, reproductive justice scholar, and prison-based doula with nearly 20 years' experience in social work education, nonprofit leadership and management, and advocacy. As a first-generation scholar and the child of incarcerated parents, I bring a deep personal and professional understanding of the structural barriers marginalized communities face. My work focuses on reproductive justice, racial equity, and restorative justice, particularly within carceral settings and maternal health. I founded the National Collaborative for Reproductive Justice and Innovation in Social Work, where I lead research, student mentoring, and policy initiatives. My work reflects a commitment to equity, structural reform, and empowering marginalized communities. I am passionate about using my expertise to advance NASW's mission and support the next generation of social workers in creating meaningful change.

Platform Statement: My platform is grounded in reproductive justice, racial equity, and restorative justice. I believe NASW has a unique opportunity to address systemic barriers to reproductive healthcare, maternal health disparities, and the criminalization of pregnancy outcomes. As a prison-based doula and reproductive justice scholar, I have witnessed how structural inequities harm vulnerable communities. I am committed to working with NASW to amplify the voices of marginalized communities, support social workers engaging with reproductive justice issues, and expand resources for students and early-career professionals. My goal is to strengthen NASW's advocacy on reproductive justice and create more mentorship opportunities for underrepresented social workers. I am dedicated to helping NASW become a more inclusive and responsive organization that reflects the diverse needs of our profession and the communities we serve.

Jenny Shealy, LCSW, CST



Education: MSW from San Francisco State University, 2003; BA in Psychology and Women's Studies minor from Clemson University 1996

Current Employer: Self-employed

NASW Experience: NASW experience: a member since 2008, presenter at Asheville Local Program unit events, Clinical Institute and Fall Conference

Biographical Statement: Jenny is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and AASECT Certified Sex Therapist with a psychotherapy practice in Asheville, NC. Before starting her therapy practice in 2009, Jenny provided mental health services in residential treatment, LGBTQIA+ youth housing services, HIV and AIDS research, outpatient medical settings, jails and schools. In 2017, she completed a sex therapy certification through California Institute of Integral Studies and became certified as a Sex Therapist in 2020. Jenny provides psychotherapy to adults exploring their sexuality or asexuality, gender identity and/or relationship structure options, from monogamy to polyamory. She supports clients in processing trauma through EMDR. Jenny believes our optimal well-being is reflected in our minds and bodies, the relationships with ourselves and others and our interconnectedness with nature. She also believes in laughter as a super-charged healing tool!

Platform Statement: Social Work values are such a force of change for me, personally and professionally. Going through Hurricane Helene and the current political crisis have amplified my craving for more Social Work involvement. Collaborating with other Social Work professionals, whether through a conference, an online advocacy update or having coffee together, allows me to refocus on resilience and action. I would like to give back to the NASW because it has always been a welcoming and supportive space for me. It is important for me to support policy that positively affects Social Workers, as well as those we work diligently to provide services for, focusing on racism and equity, LGBTQIA+ rights and reproductive health care. I would like to be an advocate for ongoing professional development opportunities that showcase voices and perspectives that may be undervalued, help increase NASW membership numbers and strengthen community networking.

Victoria “Tori” Thompson, MSSW, LCSW



Education: Bachelor's in social work from Warner University, Masters of Science in Social Work from the University of Tennessee

Current Employer: Self-employed, Oak Therapy Services, PLLC

NASW Experience: I have been a member of NASW off and on since pursuing my Bachelors of Social Work

Biographical Statement: I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and have been working with teens, families, young adults, and parents since 2013. I have a background working in community mental health through Intensive In-Home services, Intensive OutPatient, and group practice. I am now working with individuals and families in private practice. I am originally from Ohio and have been a Raleigh resident for the past nine years. In my personal life I enjoy fantasy and sci-fi movies, playing bass, video games, tennis, and spending time with my family. You can usually find me reading, walking, or perusing the art museum.

Platform Statement: I am excited to be a candidate for a Member-At-Large position. I believe that the NASW has great capacity to support social workers and those we have the privilege to serve through enacting change on an individual and systemic level. I believe in the importance of community and partnering with our community on the local, state, and national level to support social work values. I aim to consistently include a variety of perspectives and backgrounds to educate myself and make informed decisions as a social worker and as a citizen of the world. I am dedicated to helping the NASW to advocate on the behalf of social workers and to explore and address broken and ineffective systems.