2023 NASW-NC Equity and Inclusion Student Award Recipients

The National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter (NASW-NC) has named four North Carolina social work students as the 2023 NASW-NC Equity and Inclusion Student Award recipients. This award supports the vision of inclusive chapter membership and supports students pursuing a variety of social work specialties. These recipients were selected based on their commitment to incorporating and promoting equity and inclusion into their social work practice, their high academic achievement, and their leadership.

Alecia Taylor
NC State University - MSW Student

Alecia Taylor (she/her) is making significant strides in the field of social work. With a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) from Shaw University and several years of experience in the field, including foster care/adoption, adult protective services, and guardianship, Alecia has formalized her education with a second-year Master of Social Work degree at North Carolina State University (NCSU). Currently, Alecia’s field placement is at Wake Medical Center, where she works in community case management with clients referred from the emergency department. Her passion for social work drives her to want to educate marginalized communities about the importance of mental health.

Alecia is active in her community and serves on the Board of Advance Community Health in North Carolina. She is an active member of the Graduate Student Social Work Association at NCSU and has volunteered with Habitat for Humanity for the past 20 years. Alecia’s supervisor at Wake Med, Vinett Daley, describes her as a knowledgeable and professional advocate who provides assurance and support to patients during their most challenging times.

Avianna Hopkins
Winthrop University - MSW Student

Winthrop University’s Master of Social Work (MSW) student, Avianna Hopkins (she/her), is set to graduate in May 2023. Her plans after graduation include earning her LCSW and becoming a licensed clinical trauma specialist to help underserved groups, such as veterans, people with serious mental illnesses, and survivors of domestic violence.

Avianna’s education in psychology, sociology, and public health has provided her with a unique perspective on the world and her role in it. Currently, she is interning at the Salisbury Veterans Affairs office. (Continued on page 2)
Colt Valones (he/they) will be graduating in May 2023 from Warren Wilson College (WWC) with a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree. Colt is a passionate advocate for equity and inclusion for historically marginalized, disenfranchised, and underrepresented communities. After completing his undergraduate studies, he plans to attend graduate school through an advanced standing Master of Social Work (MSW) program, with a focus on macro social work and a specialization in community partnerships/advanced generalist practice.

Colt aims to become a licensed clinical addiction specialist and pursue a Ph.D. in social work. Colt has demonstrated his commitment to social justice through his involvement in a variety of initiatives. He has worked in the Office of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity at Warren Wilson, where he supports African, Latiné, Indigenous, and Asian descent (ALIA) identifying students, by lifting their cultures, identities, and passions. He has also been essential in leading initiatives and creating programs for ALIA students. Additionally, Colt has collaborated with the Racial Justice Coalition, where he has contributed to the development of anti-racist engagement training for volunteers, collaborated with other members of the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission, and participated in research analyzing a community-led approach to reparations. Colt also supports the Every Black Voice campaign, which seeks to gain perspectives and wisdom from every Black voice in the Buncombe County area.

M.Z. Yehudah, the Director of DEI Initiatives at Warren Wilson College, praised Colt's involvement and contributions to both on and off-campus initiatives. Yehudah stated, "I can attest to there being no other student that I’ve known that has been as integrally and meaningfully involved in so many aspects of campus life and off-campus involvement (simultaneously) as Colt Valones. He has devoted his time here at WWC fostering many cross-cultural connections within our campus and off-campus community."
Kashayia Coltrane (she/her) is set to earn her Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) with a minor in gender studies from East Carolina University (ECU) in May 2023. Throughout her time at ECU, Kashayia has been highly engaged and has achieved several accomplishments, including completing the Chancellors Leadership Academy, serving as a panelist for the Dr. Jess R Peel LGBTQ Center, being a part of the e-board for the Bachelor of Social Work Student Association, and completing over one hundred hours of community service.

Kashayia is committed to promoting equity and inclusion and wants to see more Black women like herself in leadership positions across all areas of the social work profession. For Kashayia, obtaining a Master of Social Work (MSW) is a crucial step towards achieving her career goals, which include starting a nonprofit organization. Kashayia believes in providing everyone with the same level of dignity and respect, and she is dedicated to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their past, has access to resources and opportunities for growth. Kashayia's supervisor at ECU's Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, Alex Dennis, spoke highly of her, saying "As her supervisor, I have seen her creativity, work ethic, and compassion for others through the service opportunities that she has helped plan and lead. She is a hard worker who truly cares about people and promoting the mission of our university, service."

More information about the NASW-NC Equity and Inclusion Student Award and how to donate to this award can be found here: www.naswnc.org//EquityAward

The National Association of Social Workers North Carolina Chapter (NASW-NC) is a membership organization that promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW-NC also seeks to enhance the effective functioning and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities through its work and advocacy.