

# ***WISR NEWSLETTER***

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***Western Institute for Social Research***

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# Featured News!

## WISR's STATEMENT AND ACTIONS ON RACIAL JUSTICE— issued July 3, 2020

The Current Voices and Actions in Support of Racial Justice Must Not Be a Moment, but Must Be a Continuing Movement Toward Racial Justice. We believe in Dr. King's famous statement that "We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."

It is the responsibility of all of us to make Dr. King's statement true, and not to be bystanders at this important time. The current and long overdue attention must be sustained beyond a brief moment of outrage in time, especially, given that the United States' founding history was significantly based on the slavery of African Americans and the genocide of Native Americans.

Since WISR's founding, its mission and educational programs have been committed in practice, not just in words, to multiculturalism, inclusive diversity and social justice.

Members of the WISR learning community remain committed to these principles, although each member may demonstrate their commitments in different ways, through their own individual voices as well as through their collaborative actions at WISR and beyond.

To support further the expression of these voices and WISR's actions, we have this webpage [ <https://www.wisr.edu/wisrs-statement-and-actions-on-racial-justice/> ] to publicize our present and past actions. *Members of the WISR community are encouraged to share information about their current efforts on behalf of racial justice, or to suggest possible ways to take constructive action.*



## THE CENTER FOR CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT JOINS WISR

The Center for Child & Family Development officially joined WISR at the end of June 2020. The Center has for 35 years provided children and families, particularly under-served families, with school-based family counseling services in Bay area public, private, and Catholic schools while also providing supervised training and internship opportunities for individuals training to be licensed therapists. Toni Nemia, LMFT is the Executive Director and Jacqueline Shinefield, EdD is Chair of the Advisory Board. This is an important new opportunity for WISR to collaborate with a group committed to education for social justice. The Center will be a very valuable practicum option for those WISR MFT students who wish to gain experience in school-based family counseling in the Bay Area, and an unpaid internship option for recent WISR MFT alums.

More details to come at:

<https://www.wisr.edu/center-for-child-and-family-development/>



## WISR SUPPORTS FACEBOOK AD BOYCOTT IN JULY

WISR faculty voted June 26, 2020 to suspend our purchase of Facebook Ads during the month of July, in support of civil rights groups that have called for boycott of Facebook, because of Facebook's failure to limit "racist, bigoted, anti-Semitic, white supremacist and otherwise violent content."



# WELCOME TO SIX NEW STUDENTS AT WISR

## **Alex Gwozda, student in MS in Psychology/MFT:**

Alex says, "I'm excited to be a part of the MFT/LPCC program. Applied psychology, self-help, and therapy have fascinated me and completely changed my life for over two decades! I'd like to contribute and share that. There's my long-standing care about how life and people work that's reflected by my B.S. Biology and B.A. Sociology degrees from the University of Washington (2010). Now I've enjoyed a successful 9 years of clinical massage therapy, and I'm ready to transition toward deeper life interests. I'm also grappling with how the needs of our time will influence the direction of my (our) studies and work... Even pre-pandemic, my goals have been to have a fulfilling online therapy practice as well as applying psychology in other interests."

## **Forest Borie, WISR MS student in Education and Community Leadership**

Forest is a teacher, who this Fall will be at Longfellow Middle School in Berkeley. Forest says, "Hello WISR People! Greetings. My name is Forest Borie. I'm a school teacher by day, but by night...I'm pretty still a school teacher. I was drawn to this profession and WISR because it is my goal to open minds, empower students and communities with knowledge, and most importantly, generate curiosity, creativity and confidence in my pupils. I hope to build on the work of others who have struggled for positive changes to long-standing environmental and social trends, and to work with my students and various organizations to do a lot of healing and a lot of growing. We have a whole world to re-imagine."



## **Ignacio Ochoa, Doctoral Student**

Ignacio is a Staff Director with the Oakland Catholic Worker in East Oakland. (“The Oakland Catholic Worker serves members of the Latin American immigrant and refugee community as they establish themselves in our East Oakland neighborhood. We provide temporary housing and accompaniment, hot meals, groceries, English classes, cultural events, and other services to people in need. In solidarity with those we serve, we struggle to change the unjust structures of our society through social activism.”) He has been helping recent immigrants with various survival challenges, further heightened by COVID-19. The language challenges of helping immigrants from Guatemala is that many “don’t speak Spanish or English, but Maya-Mam from Guatemala (we have 24 Mayan languages in Guatemala).” He says that in his WISR studies, “I would like to help Guatemalans living in the Bay Area and re-create a binational and cultural exchange, or perhaps, I would like to write some short stories of Central American migrants.” Ignacio has his MA in Latin American Studies from San Diego State. His Master’s thesis was on his insights growing out of having been a former Jesuit from Central America, who was present at the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA) during the time of the Jesuit Massacre of November 16, 1989. The impact of this event on the political landscape of El Salvador was the subject of his Master’s thesis.

## **Elenie Opffer is a WISR student in the MS in Psychology/MFT program**

Elenie says, “Hello Everyone. I’m a faculty member with expertise in gender, multiculturalism and conflict and communication. I teach full-time at California State University Channel Islands. I’ve recently started the MFT program so I can work more directly with families and couples to transform conflict into productive collaboration and support for the creation of more supportive, satisfying, and sustaining relationships. I also have an interest in working with the LGBT community as marginalization continues to plague us in so many ways. When I’m not working, I enjoy hiking, biking, and dancing. I look forward to meeting fellow WISR students!” For the past few years, Elenie has been part-time faculty member at WISR, as well and her professional/academic bio is on our website at: <https://www.wisr.edu/faculty-and-staff/faculty-profiles/> She has a PhD in Communications from the University of Colorado.

### **Nicole Bilorusky is a WISR student in the MS in Psychology/MFT program**

Nicole says, “Hi, I’m Nicole Bilorusky. I am a new MFT student here at WISR. I recently graduated from UC Berkeley with a BA in Social Welfare. There I earned “highest distinction” from the College of Letters and Sciences and received Honors in Social Welfare. Before starting here at WISR, I worked as a behavioral Technician where I worked with kids with autism. Throughout my life I have taken an interest in the health and well-being of all people, doing so through a social justice framework. This is one of the values that has led me to pursue a degree in Marriage and Family Therapy, and more specifically why I have chosen to pursue it at WISR. I am looking forward to collaborating with those in the WISR community and continuing my education at this institution.”

### **Lisa Hobson is our newest student, and is in the MS in Psychology/MFT program**

Lisa says, “I am very excited to be joining the MFT program at WISR. I earned my bachelor's degree at U.C. Berkeley in BioResource Sciences, and after graduation focused on studying herbal and alternative medicines. I have primarily worked as an educator, with an emphasis in sciences, art, and play. In pursuit of creative expression I trained as a machinist, baker, and ceramicist, wrote two novels, co-published a politically radical magazine for 11 years, and have dabbled in stained glass, mosaics, watercolors, jewelry making, and welding. In my spare time I designed, and am building a tiny house art project, and run around the East Bay hills with my two mutts, 12 year old son, and partner of 24 years.”

# UPDATES FROM THE WISR LEARNING COMMUNITY

## **Dalia Liang, student in MS in Education and Community Leadership and WISR Chief Administrative Officer:**

In June 2019, Dalia Liang joined the Contra Costa County Legal Professionals Association (CCCLPA), and in April 2020, became co-chair of CCCLPA's Ways and Means Committee, where she works on fundraising and event registration. Dalia serves as Pro Bono Paralegal and Interpreter with the Low Income Landlord Clinic at the Alameda County Superior Court-Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse, where she assists self-represented low income landlords (including master tenants) in completing eviction notices and unlawful detainers. With the Bar Association of San Francisco-Justice & Diversity Center, Dalia volunteers her paralegal services alongside bono attorneys in defending and prosecuting the causes of indigent clients, including evictions and restraining orders. With the East Bay Community Law Center, Dalia has helped battered women achieve custody of their children, and has served as support person at court for a battered woman on her divorce case. Dalia received her Paralegal Certificate (High Honors) from San Francisco State University, and is fluent in Spanish and Cantonese-Chinese.

## **James Christensen, student in MS in Psychology/MFT:**

James tells us that, "I started my remote practicum at Salvation Army Harbor Light in San Francisco, which is a residential addiction recovery program serving the homeless population. I work with residents who are approaching the end of their stay. I love talking to people who are building a whole new life after losing everything to drugs."

## **Victor Bloomberg, WISR Doctoral student reports:**

That the June 7, 2020 BLM March in Santee, CA outside of San Diego was co-organized by one of the granddaughters of **WISR Board member, Richard Lawrence, MDiv**. See the video at: [https://youtu.be/uX0LL\\_gOxJ0](https://youtu.be/uX0LL_gOxJ0)

**Valuable Resource on Dealing with Stress During a Major Disaster,  
Co-authored by WISR Faculty Member, and Chief Academic Officer,  
Brian Gerrard, PhD: Disastershock: How to Cope with the Stress of a  
Major Disaster**

A 40 person Disastershock Team from 10 countries is currently translating Disastershock into 15 languages for global distribution. Free copies of Disastershock may be downloaded from [disastercopingresources.com](http://disastercopingresources.com) . If you are willing to volunteer some time to assist us with helping our global family, please contact Brian ([brian.gerrard@wizr.edu](mailto:brian.gerrard@wizr.edu)).

