SMITH COLLEGE SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL WORK CELEBRATES SOCIAL WORK MONTH (MARCH 2014)

(Northampton, MA) Smith College School for Social Work is proud to partner with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) to promote Social Work Month 2014 and this year’s theme: “All People Matter.”

“All People Matter” is a value at the heart of the field of social work. For 116 years, social workers have upheld a commitment to improve social conditions and quality of life opportunities for everyone—regardless of life circumstances. Throughout the past century, social workers have created and influenced policies and programs that provide increasing numbers of people with the support and skills to face and overcome life’s challenges. Since 1918, the Smith College School for Social Work has been a pioneer in training social workers.

This year, faculty of the School for Social Work are recognizing Social Work Month far beyond the Smith College campus.

- In the first week of March, the School for Social Work’s Prof. Marsha Pruett presented several workshops on parenting with her husband, Prof. Kyle Pruett of Yale University, in the United Arab Emirates. The workshops were organized by the Sheikha Salam bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation.

- On March 3, Prof. Margaret “Peggy” O’Neill presented about “Resilience in Clinical Practice: Expanding the Light Shining through the Cracks” at The Culture Center of New York. The event was co-sponsored by the Smith College School for Social Work Alumni Association and the Smith College Club of New York City.

- On the same day, Prof. Hannah Karpman presented on “Wraparound Outcomes in Massachusetts: Real Phenomenon or Lessons for Outcome Measurement” to researchers and policy-makers gathered at the Children’s Mental Health Policy Conference in Tampa, Florida.

- On March 5, Prof. Fred Newdom explored “The 20th Anniversary of the Smith College SSW Anti-racism Commitment: a Look Back at What We Have Done and a Look Forward to Where We Need to Go” in a presentation to the School’s DC/Baltimore Alumni group in Washington, DC.
On March 20, Dean Carolyn Jacobs, Prof. Phebe Sessions, and other representatives of the Smith College School for Social Work will join Mayor David J. Narkewicz at the Northampton City Council meeting to recognize Social Work Month. The Mayor will proclaim March to be Social Work Month in Northampton and present a signed proclamation to Dean Jacobs.

“In the field of social work, ‘all people matter’ is much more than a theme for one month of the year. It is a value that guides our work, twelve months a year,” said Dean Jacobs. “At the School for Social Work, we express this value in the courses we teach, in the numerous supports we offer to our students on campus and in the field, in our commitment to being an anti-racism institution, and in our speaking and consulting engagements around the country. The School is deeply committed to being theoretically grounded, relationally based, culturally aware and research informed. This perspective informs our clinical social work education on behalf of all people.”

From the start, Smith College School for Social Work has championed the cause of recognizing the worth of all people—and the ability of all people to make a difference. In July of 1918, 60 women arrived at the campus as part of an “experiment” to provide formal training in the newly expanding field of psychiatric social work. This program began with the express purpose of preparing social workers to provide mental health services to traumatized soldiers who had served in World War I. Major E.F. Williams, acting chief of the Division of Neurology and Psychiatry in the Office of the Surgeon General, praised Smith College for its program, at a time when other schools for social work believed teaching psychiatry to young women was too “radical.”

Today, the Smith College School for Social Work continues to provide graduate-level clinical social work education to women and men around the world. The School is internationally recognized for its dedication to clinical social work and its commitment to academic excellence. It is connected to more than 120 agencies in 20 states and Canada, as part of its field training program that provides students with opportunities to train in schools, family service and child welfare agencies, child guidance and mental health clinics, medical and psychiatric units of hospitals, and college counseling centers. Through these field placements, Smith College School for Social Work students provide more than 250,000 hours of service to individuals and communities, each year.

Social Work Month 2014 provides an opportunity to educate the public about this year’s theme of “All People Matter” and promote the values that all people have dignity and deserve respect. These values are essential to improving relationships within families, making social support systems more effective, and building stronger communities. The
Smith College School for Social Work welcomes this opportunity to share the message that “All People Matter,” a core belief that guides our School's work.