



**Dean's  
Message**

I want to welcome you all back from the holiday break! I hope that each of you had a wonderful break and enjoyed special time with your family and friends. Time away from our everyday tasks can be very restorative, with renewed enthusiasm and vigor.

As you begin the new year, I hope you take time to reflect on who and what is important to you. Being the Dean of the College for Health and Human Services remains an honor and privilege, and I appreciate all of your contributions that allow us to thrive, grow, and advance into the future. This past year was very eventful. I wanted to share some of the achievements.

- ✓ We have received over \$3M between 3 different grants this year, much of which goes directly to students for their education.
- ✓ We have increased our collaborative outreach initiatives with adding more health systems to our list of tuition scholarship partnerships. In addition to MyMichigan, Covenant, McClaren, and Memorial Health, we added Schuerer Health, Sparrow Health System, Mary Free Bed, Great Lakes Health Centers, and HealthSource. We are currently working on 8 more to include the VA, Sanilac County Community Mental Health, UP Health (Bell, Marquette, Portage), Munson Health, Schoolcraft, and Henry Ford Health Systems.
- ✓ Received the credentialing from the Michigan Department of Education for the MSW School Social Worker credential.
- ✓ Our part-time nursing program has enrolled its first class which is going very well.
- ✓ Reaffirmation of Master's in Social Work program and the Nursing Simulation Center.
- ✓ Approval of SVSU's first 4+1 program with BS/MS in Public Health
- ✓ New minor in Behavioral Health-Substance Use and Dependency
- ✓ New dual degree program (DNP/PMHNP programs)
- ✓ New graduate certificates in epidemiology, healthcare compliance, healthcare quality and safety.
- ✓ The MSOT program has begun its transition to dual entry.
- ✓ Announce that we received funding to purchase an [Anatomage Table](#) for anatomy housed in Kinesiology, but used by all of HHS. Hope to see this delivered in early 2025.

As we move into the new year, there will be many upcoming events and activities to look forward to.

- ✓ Our nursing department's reaccreditation site visit is scheduled for Feb 24-26, 2025.
- ✓ Establishment of the Malcom Field Biomedical Sciences Research Institute (MFBSRI) within Bachand Hall. The Vivarium will be repurposed and renovated to a fully functional interdisciplinary biomedical sciences research facility. This will be completed with the generous support of Dr. Malcolm Field.
- ✓ Further advancements of the Medical Diamond Project. SVSU is fully committed to the establishment of an SVSU Graduate Health Sciences Building within the Medical Diamond in downtown Saginaw. The building will be 48,000 square feet/4 floors. In addition, Great Lakes Bay Health Centers has agreed to add square feet for a fully functional occupational therapy clinic run by SVSU, and several treatment rooms for our social work students and PMHNP students to train. More to come as this project evolves.

In addition to all of that, I recognize the fundamental importance of maintaining a healthy balance for our faculty, staff, and students. We will continue to advance our institutional wellness and DIEBA initiatives into 2025. Remember we are only ½ way through our Wellness Challenge.

We will also be welcoming a new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Lisa Boehm will begin January 2, 2025. I will be working with her to schedule times to meet with the various departments. I look forward what 2025 will bring our college, and the university.

# Faculty Association Awards 2024

This year, two of our faculty received awards at the Faculty Association Awards Banquet.



Meghan Baruth, Professor of Public Health  
Received the scholarship Award

Michael Heron, Professor of Social Work  
Received the University Service Award

Congratulations to both!



In addition, the following faculty completed their 1<sup>st</sup> year orientation and received their certificates.  
Congratulations!

- Adrienne Galbraith
- Teir Hill
- Emily Larocque
- Kathleen Woehrle

## Dr. Matt Mitchell



Congratulations to Dr. Matthew Mitchell for being honored as the 2024 Certified Clinical Supervisor (CCS) of the Year by both the Michigan Certification Board for Addiction Professionals (MCBAP) and the International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC)! Well deserved!



## Dr. Kathleen Schachman



Congratulations to Dr. Kathleen Schachman for being honored as the 2024 APNA Psychiatric Nurse of the Year. The American Psychiatric Nurses Association shared the [press release](#) announcing Kathleen as the 2024 recipient of this prestigious award. This award recognizes outstanding achievement in the field of psychiatric-mental health nursing, and we are thrilled to celebrate her accomplishments. She was honored at the APNA 38th Annual Conference in Louisville, Kentucky on October 9-12. Congratulations! Well deserved!

In addition, Kathleen was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN) in November 2024, joining an elite global network of nursing's most accomplished leaders in policy, research, administration, practice, and academia.

## Dr. Jill Brown



Congratulations to Dr. Jill Brown who will be honored with the prestigious "Interprofessional Collaboration Award" at the annual conference of the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) in Philadelphia in April 2025. Jill's unique contributions to interprofessional education will be highlighted.

The following statement will be used during the award ceremony to succinctly summarize Jill's achievements: *"Innovating interprofessional addiction care: Education and practice."* Congratulations! Well deserved!

## Michelle Claypool



Congratulations to Michelle Claypool who received Certified Healthcare Simulation Operations Specialist-Advanced (CHSOS-A) certification. Jill's unique contributions to interprofessional education will be highlighted. The CHSOS-A certification has been designed to recognize the outstanding knowledge, skills, and abilities of leaders in healthcare simulation operations. The certification is obtained through the Society of Simulation in Healthcare.

Congratulations! Well deserved!

## Dr. Catherine Macomber



Congratulations to Cathy Macomber on receiving the Dow Visiting Artist Award for 2025. Her proposal to host Aubrey Geyer from February 11-13 as a Dow Visiting Artist! Aubrey is an independent documentary producer/director. She is the Founder, and Executive Producer/Director of Visions, a non-profit 501(c)3 video production organization, located in Metro Detroit.

Many of Visions documentaries have aired nationally on PBS, been distributed to the educational/home video markets and disseminated through wide sweeping community engagement campaigns. Aubrey will be showing her new film 'Warrior Lawyers.' This is her second Native American documentary. The first was 'Our Fires Still Burn' released in 2013. Please look for more information.

Congratulations Cathy!

## Dr. Melvin McDowell

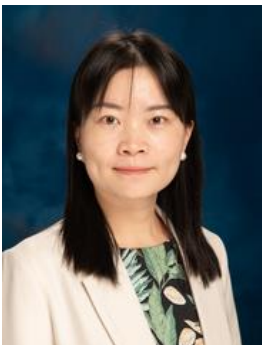


Congratulations to Dr. Melvin McDowell for receiving the Field-Spicer Fellowship Award. Melvin's research project is entitled: Community-Based Mental Health Advocacy: Training Barbers, Beauticians, and Clergy to Identify and Address Mental Health Needs in the Black Community. The SVSU foundation awards no more than two fellowships each year. The awardees receive funding for 3 years to complete their projects.

**In addition, the PPC has voted to support Melvin's tenure and the University Administration supports that recommendation. The Board of Control (BOC) will officially vote on his tenure at their February 10, 2025 meeting.**

Congratulations Melvin!

## Welcome to our Visiting Guest Scholars



Welcome Guo (Keira) Ge and Xiuli Wei, who are spending this year with us as International Guest Scholars. Keira and Xiuli are here from Jinan University. We are thrilled to have them here!



# KAWA River Models – MSOT Student Project

The 2nd Year MSOT students painted KAWA River models to facilitate their occupational balance as future OT practitioners, by painting at the SVSU Museum with Kadie Schultz, Andrea Ondish, and Dr. Jill Brown. The rivers help cultivate self-awareness of the students' occupational lives as they prepare to become healthcare professionals. I virtually presented the benefits of creating KAWA river models in psychosocial OT classes at the Society for the Study of Occupation Conference this October.

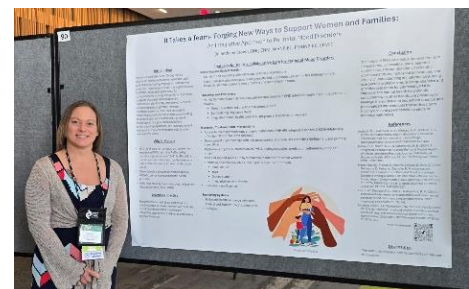


## 38<sup>th</sup> Annual American Psychiatric Nurses Association Conf.



**Trisha Charbonneau-Ivey, Kim Martini and Kathleen Schachman** presented research findings and teaching strategies in their presentation "*Changing Hearts and Minds: Partnering with the Recovery Community to Bring Authenticity and Lived Experience to Addictions-Focused Simulations*". Also included is **Dr. Carol Essenmacher**, "member-at-large" for the APNA Board of Directors. Additionally, she conducted a workshop titled: "*Grab Your OARS and Get Rowing! Practical Applications of Motivational Interviewing (MI) for Nurses*".

**Dr. Bethany Brown** (PMHNP Adjunct Faculty) had a poster presentation to showcase her cutting-edge research: "*It Takes a Team: Forging New Ways to Support Women and Families: An Integrative Approach to Perinatal Mood Disorders*".



## Additional Faculty/Staff Accolades

- ✓ **Jill Brown; Kathleen Schachman; Meghan Baruth**, PhD. Becoming Agents of Change: OT Students in Screening, Brief Intervention, & Treatment for Recovery from Substance Use Disorders. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2024, Vol. 78(Supplement\_2), 7811500070p1. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2024.78S2-PO70>.
- ✓ **Brown, J.M.** (2024). The Kawa Model: A Medium For Cultivating Self-Discovery and Life Flow in MSOT Students, Presented virtually for the Society for the Study of Occupation: USA, Conference held at Science Durham Convention Center in Durham, North Carolina, from October 17th to 19th, 2024.
- ✓ **Brewer, L., Ondish, A., Brown, J.M, Ewend, J. & Schultz, K.** (2024). "Exploring KAWA: A collaborative pilot program", *OT Practice*, 29(10), 36-41. <https://www.aota.org/publications/ot-practice/ot-practice-issues/2024/exploring-kawa-a-collaborative-pilot-program>
- ✓ **Ashley Sanders, Melvin McDowell et al.** The ROUNDTABLE entitled "Untangling Trauma: Exploring the Impact of Misdiagnosis in Black Men's Mental Health" has been accepted for presentation at the SSWR 29th Annual Conference.
- ✓ **Elizabeth Martin, Michael Heron, Marcia Ditmyer.** Navigating Life Skills Support for Students Aging Out of Foster Care. Oral presentation at the 2025 42nd Annual BPD Conference: Navigating BSW Education in a Time of Crisis: Teaching and Learning in a Politically and Philosophically Divided Nation.
- ✓ **Catherine Macomber.** Appointment to the Department of Aging Advisory Committee, Appointed by the Bay County Board of Commissioners. Starting January 2025.
- ✓ **Marcia Ditmyer.** Appointed as Chair of the Distance Education Accrediting Commission, beginning January 2025. Appointed on the Accreditation Review Committee for Dental Hygiene programs by the Commission on Dental Accreditation for another term beginning January 2025.

## Nursing Simulation Center Accreditation Reaffirmed



The Simulation Center accreditation is reaffirmed by the Society of Simulation in Healthcare for Teaching and Learning. This rigorous recognition sets the gold standard for simulation-based healthcare education. It signifies a commitment to excellence, sets you apart from the competition and improves quality of care. SSH-accredited programs are more likely to provide high-quality simulation experiences that lead to better patient outcomes.

This achievement underscores our center's leadership in transforming medical education through state-of-the-art simulation techniques, placing us at the forefront of experiential learning in healthcare training. Our team's unwavering dedication, technical expertise, and commitment to educational excellence have been definitively recognized at the national level. Congratulations to our simulation team for this remarkable accomplishment!

# Welcome Scholars



## Saginaw Valley State University Project ECHO for Substance Use Disorders Launches Cycle 8 with Free Continuing Education Credits for Professionals

Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) is excited to announce the launch of Cycle 8 for its Project ECHO for Substance Use Disorders, began on November 20, 2024. Since October 2018, this ongoing program has provided critical training and resources to health and community professionals, empowering those who work with individuals impacted by substance use disorders.

As a recognized **ECHO Superhub**, SVSU plays a key role in training and supporting other ECHO initiatives, addressing complex healthcare challenges statewide. Through the Substance Use Disorders ECHO, SVSU connects subject-matter experts with professionals across Michigan, enhancing care quality and expanding essential knowledge in substance use treatment and management.

Additionally, SVSU's Project ECHO offers **free continuing education credits** for a variety of professionals, supporting their lifelong learning and career development. Tailored to meet specific needs, these credits are available for the following fields:

- **Substance Use Credits:** Provided by Mid-State Health Network, meeting DEA training requirements for substance use disorder education
- **Social Work Credits:** (pending) Provided by Saginaw Valley State University
- **Medical Continuing Education Credits:** Offered through MyMichigan Health Systems
- **Community Health Worker Credits:** Provided through Michigan Community Health Worker Alliance
- **Educator Continuing Education Credits:** Offered by Marquette-Alger Regional Educational Service Agency (MARESA)

Project ECHO (Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes) at SVSU is a collaborative learning platform where professionals gain expert insights, participate in case discussions, and connect with a supportive peer network—all at no cost. Those interested in joining Cycle 8 of the Substance Use Disorders program or in learning more about SVSU's Project ECHO offerings are encouraged to visit [svsu.edu/echo](https://svsu.edu/echo).

# Welcome Dr. Bethany Brown



## Welcome Dr. Bethany Brown to the SVSU Perinatal Substance Use Disorder Project ECHO Team!

We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Bethany Brown to the Saginaw Valley State University Project ECHO team, where she will be covering for Dr. Kathleen Schachman during her Winter 2025 semester sabbatical leave. Bethany brings a wealth of expertise and dedication to healthcare, with an impressive background in psychiatric mental health, women's health, and sexual health education.

Bethany's dedication to compassionate, inclusive care and her impressive background in clinical practice and teaching make her a fantastic addition to our ECHO community. We're excited to have her on the team and look forward to the expertise and insight she'll bring to Project ECHO in Dr. Schachman's stead.

# Bay College Partnership

In March of 2023, Bay College and Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) partnered to create a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) pathway. On Monday, Bay President Dr. Nerita Hughes and SVSU President Dr. George Grant Jr. met to sign an agreement between the two institutions.

Now, a student who earns an Associate Degree of Nursing (ADN) at Bay College can transfer into SVSU's fully accredited program to complete their bachelor's degree. In addition to providing a simple transfer opportunity for students, both institutions say the partnership will help fill critical roles in the healthcare workforce.

Drs. Grant, Hinton, Thornton, and Ditmyer, along with Mason Kochanski went to Bay for the signing ceremony. We spoke to make of their students who are very excited about joining SVSU RN to BSN program.



## Social Work Students taking time to Relieve some Stress

Students taking some time to relieve some stress by coloring on the board outside Monika Sciba's Office.





# Welcoming Event for the New BSW Students

The Welcome event held October 29, was a successful first effort to engage our Pre-Social Work students. Thank you to the BSW Faculty and Denise Dedman who attended and shared their experience as professional social workers. Thank you to Katherine Woodson and Sofiya Gurung, Student Success Navigators, who helped coordinate the event and orient students to the activities.



## HHS 5K Events – Dr. Gena Guerin

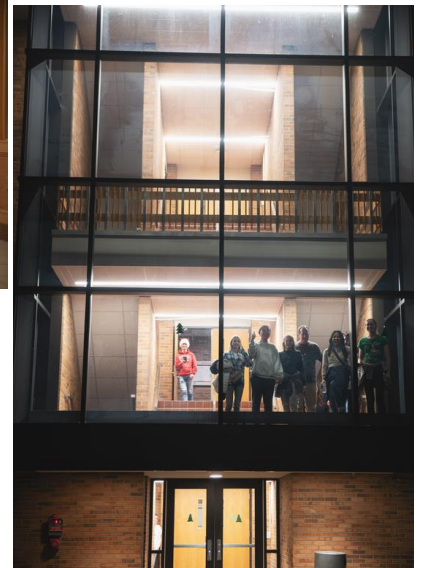
Congratulations Gena for your hard work and that of your students on the success of our 5K walks as part of the Exercise is Medicine program. You may have noticed an increase in walking in the SVSU campus buildings this fall. The 4-week walking promotion was a pilot physical activity program under the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) Exercise is Medicine initiative. Sixty-six participants tracked their walking and reported their mileage logged. A total of 2967 miles was logged by the walking participants. There was involvement around campus to complete the project. Mike Pazdro in Campus Facilities worked on providing maps of all the buildings. Dr. Blake Johnson from the Art Department offered a small student scholarship to create the placard design. Nicholas Baumgarten's design was selected for the placards. Kisha Osterhoff, Kinesiology lab coordinator, helped with creating the routes and 5-K course. There were 43 student volunteers for the 5-K event. See photos below.



On December 4<sup>th</sup> at 5pm, the Jingle Bell 5-K Walk started in the Bachand Hall Lobby to the sound of caroling by members of the SVSU Concert Choir. The mostly indoor 5-K was hosted by Dr. Gena Guerin's KINE 350 Exercise is Medicine students. Student course marshals from Kinesiology, Nursing, and Occupational Therapy played Christmas music, caroled, and encouraged the 53 participants. Several N-2 nursing students made course markers in the form of snowflakes, presents, and trees. The festive decorations in Bachand Hall were part of the Jingle Bell 5-K Decorating Contest for student clubs. SESA, Pre-Chiropractic, Pre-Physical Therapy, Running Club, SNA, His House Christian Fellowship, and St. Paul II Catholic Ministries all took part.

First prize went to SESA for the Jingle Bell themed message, second prize went to Pre-Chiropractic with their tree displays in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor classroom wing, and third prize went to Pre-PT for their decorations in the hallway between Bachand Hall and Gilbertson. Special mention of De-Andre Morris, Matthew Ratajczak, and Kyle Richey is needed for helping place all the snowflakes in the faculty suite, hang the garland and lights in the lobby over Thanksgiving break. Also, gratitude to Dean Ditmyer for supporting the effort and providing prizes for the student club decorating awards. See photos below. For more pictures [click here](#). Enter 5K or Jingle bell walk.

# 5K Walks – Cont.



## Holiday Door Decorating Contest

There were many entrants for the door decorating contest this year. What a festive building HHS was between the doors decorated and the holiday decorations for the 5K Jingle Bell Walk. What a wonderful tradition. This year, the winners of the door decorating contest were:



First Place, Brandi D'Archangel  
*Gingerbread House Cubicle and Candy Land Door!*



Second Place, Simulation Lab  
*Pay It Forward Plinko!*



Third Place, Tammy Hill  
*What's Your Favorite Memory of a Snowman?*

## Holiday Cookie/Desert Contest

This year for our holiday party, we did a potluck. Thank you to everyone who brought a dish to pass. That made this year's holiday luncheon very special. In addition to the traditional cookie contest, we did a desert contest as well, providing us with some very tasty treats. The winners were:



Deserts

First Place: Liz Martin  
Second Place: Jill Brown  
Third Place: Michael Heron



Cookies

First Place: Danielle (Mark) Kato  
Second Place: Kelsey Lipinski  
Third Place: Cathy Macomber

# FAST Program Activities



On Friday September 20<sup>th</sup> the FAST Program, which serves SVSU and Delta College students who experienced foster care, attended a fundraising event for the Fostering Futures Scholarship (FFS) at the Motor City Casino. FFS is a scholarship program under the Michigan Education Trust (MET). The Skills Life Coach who oversees the program is Elizabeth Martin.



This event raised over \$100,000 for scholarships that will go to students across Michigan who experienced foster care. The FAST Program nominated one of their students for the Featured Scholar award. Rebecca Yager, a FAST student at Delta college received this award. As the Featured Scholar she was interviewed by Chuck Stokes on WXYZ-TV alongside Fostering Future's Diane Brewer which was then played at the event. The fundraiser hosted many great speakers

including Carolyn Clifford from WXYZ who emceed, State Treasurer Rachel Eubanks, Todd Bettison Deputy Mayor of Detroit, Rachel Willis of MDHHS, and Michigan's Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II. The FAST Program was proud to represent SVSU and Delta College at this event as well as present this year's FFS Featured Scholar, Rebecca Yager.

# Fall Open House

Fall open house event on November 9<sup>th</sup> brought in many new possible recruits to HHS. I want to thank the faculty, staff and students who participated in making the event a success.



## Things to Remember Winter 2025

### Key events and activities to remember for Winter 2025 semester.

- ✓ Classes begin January 13, 2025
- ✓ MLK holiday January 20, 2025
- ✓ Nursing accreditation site visit February 24-26, 2025
- ✓ Spring break March 3-7, 2025
- ✓ Spring Wellness Pot-Luck Luncheon and Wellness Awards (TBD)
- ✓ Final Exams week April 27-May2, 2025
- ✓ Commencement May 10, 2025

### Wellness Activities for Spring 2025

- ✓ January – Occupational/Volunteerism, February – Environmental, March – Emotional, April – Intellectual

## Welcome Back Becca Schlaff



Dr. Schlaff completed her Ph.D. in Kinesiology at Michigan State University and B.S (dual major) in Exercise Science and Psychology at Saginaw Valley State University. Becca's research aims to promote physical activity and healthy behaviors, while studying associated health outcomes. Her work has focused on investigating physical activity and subsequent physical and mental health outcomes within samples of pregnant and postpartum women. She has extensive experience with community-based research and developing, implementing and evaluating behavioral interventions.

She has been successful in securing both internal and external grant funding since arriving at SVSU and actively publishing within her field. She will be returning to SVSU beginning in the Winter 2025. We are very exciting to have her back with us.

## Personal Coaching Opportunity with Anthony

Are you ready to achieve your personal and professional goals with clarity and confidence? Whether you're looking to enhance your leadership skills, navigate challenging conversations, or foster a collaborative and inclusive work environment, coaching can be the game-changer you need. I've asked Anthony Palatta to provide coaching sessions to all HHS faculty and staff!

### The Coaching Experience Includes:

- **Personalized Sessions:** Focused on your unique needs and goals.
- **Actionable Insights:** Practical tools and techniques you can apply immediately.
- **Confidential Support:** A safe space to grow and reflect.
- **Measurable Results:** Clear progress that aligns with your aspirations.

### Ready to Transform?

Discover how coaching can help you unlock new possibilities. Schedule a consultation today to explore how we can work together to achieve your goals. **Contact Dr. Anthony Palatta at [antpalatta@gmail.com](mailto:antpalatta@gmail.com)**

## Remembering Dr. Rachel Darr



This fall we lost one of our very own. Dr Rachel Darr, PhD, RD, CSSD, an esteemed Associate Professor of Kinesiology, passed away at Covenant Healthcare in Saginaw on October 16th, 2024. Born on August 1st, 1981, in Lansing, Michigan, Rachel's 43 years were marked by an unwavering dedication to her family, a distinguished academic career, and an unparalleled zest for life that inspired all who knew her. Rachel became a tenured professor at Saginaw Valley State University, where she was a beloved figure, known for her meticulousness and perfectionist tendencies.

She left behind her husband Doug and their three children Aristotle, Seraphina, and Leonidas,

She was not just a faculty member but a guiding light, fervently engaged in her field and committed to broadening the horizons of her students and colleagues. Her love of reading, dedication to research, and involvement with sports made an indelible mark on the academic community.

Rachel left behind a legacy of academic excellence, a foundation of strong family values, and a memory that will resonate as a beacon of motivation and perseverance. She navigated life's complexities with grace, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of those who were fortunate enough to cross paths with her. Rachel's spirit, marked by her dedication and vibrancy, will be deeply missed and forever cherished by everyone who knew her.

## NEWSWORTHY INFORMATION

Submit any newsworthy items for the next edition of the HHS newsletter.

We are always looking for faculty and staff achievements, external funding, recent publications, and accepted presentations since the last newsletter, including those you have completed with students, research projects going on, creative activities, community service activities, and anyone special in the college (faculty, staff, or student) you would like to highlight.

To submit information, please send to [mditmyer@svsu.edu](mailto:mditmyer@svsu.edu)

***Deadline for 2nd Quarter 2025 edition is March 21, 2025***