

## **From The Editor: A Social Worker's Audacity to Have Hope**

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In his 2008 visit to New Orleans, Louisiana, Senator Obama, now President Barack Obama signed my copy of his book *The Audacity of Hope*. Overwhelmed with gratitude that he visited the recovering Southeastern Louisiana area, I believed the heightened awareness might result in responsive services and the necessary aid to help rebuild the affected communities. I became an encouraged River Parishes resident and a hopeful social worker.

I love how social workers had the audacity to have hope in our early years of settlement work at Hull House and Kingsley House, while providing scientific charity. More recently, organized social justice efforts have helped revive our cities - New Orleans, New York, New Jersey and Baltimore. Social workers were heavily involved in these efforts and continue to be the artists of social welfare policies. We have prioritized social action as we advocate for policy to increase money for education while we also lobby for lower student loan rates. We are the voice of the homeless, the oppressed, the laid-off public workers; and we are united in our efforts to provide assessable health care for all! As we continue to be the largest providers of mental health services in America, and as we continue to influence best practices of social efforts, I audaciously say there is hope for the growth and success of our nation because we have social workers.

In the current issue, the passion for social work education and the hope for the outcomes of communal support during doctoral education are emphasized by Diedre Lanesskog and colleagues. These authors suggest that much of the success of a social work doctoral student's completion rate may rest in supportive mentoring among students. Next, Prock and colleagues suggest that training and education is key to increasing empathy among social workers who work with individuals who have been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. The authors emphasize the need for self-awareness when social workers are working with our vulnerable populations of society. Heightening awareness is also the priority of Husain Lateef, who offers a non-western framework, Afrocentricity, as a useful theoretical framework when providing preventive services with young Black youth. Then, Pena and colleagues piloted a positionality measure to assess how MSW students understand and respond to issues related to power, privilege, and oppression in field practice settings. Their study suggests that the measure may be adapted and used as a tool to increase the awareness of social work students for the purpose of helping them become more culturally responsive with communities from which they did not originate. Finally, O'Neill's book review of *Reinventing American Health Care* may be persuasive enough for us all to add the book to our 'must read' list. O'Neill suggests that the book offers predictions of a new healthcare system with regard to access, quality, and delivery methods.

Fellow social workers, it is my hope that you read the contributions of our authors and that the articles provide you intellectual stimulation. During the holidays, it is my wish that you will have a balance of self-care, innovative teaching, research and practice, and that you have the audacity to have hope!

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***Editor***

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