FROM THE EDITORS

Although we have been separated from one another this year, the journal gave us the opportunity to come together and share the work of our classmates and friends. How we work, study, and engage in community have fundamentally changed in response to the pandemic. This time has led us to consider and process how our relationship with ourselves, friends, families, and communities must change in ways that push us towards creating a more just and equitable world.

The articles of the journal can be framed as calls to action; calls to speak out against injustice, calls to examine data to inform our policies, and calls to re-examine our thoughts about ourselves and our roles as social workers. The articles underscore how pre-existing disparities have been exacerbated by the conditions of the pandemic and provide us with perspectives and tools to consider how to ameliorate these disparities. Sara Bovat’s article illustrates how structural racism in the US healthcare system results in high maternal mortality rates among Black women and the shortcomings of Medicaid policy. Alexandrea Wilson explores the connection between the environmental justice and defund the police movements, and how symptoms of environmental racism like policing disproportionately impact low-income communities of color. Karlyn Gehring’s article points to the success of renter credit programs in other cities, such as Cincinnati, as a tool to decrease concentrated poverty in communities and promote long-term financial stability. Danielle Maranion offers a critique of current place-based funding strategies in Chicago, warning that they often exacerbate the inequality they are meant to alleviate. Kaitlyn Rippel’s article explores the movement to raise the minimum wage and argues that to assess the true effect of the minimum wage among the working poor, policymakers must consider how increasing income interacts with eligibility for social programs. Abigail Compernolle’s work explores the use of Buddhist principles to inform how social workers can practice de-centering themselves to center the relationship with their client. Poems by Alexandra Galván reflect on the themes of place, identity and belonging as well as the theme of the deserving poor. Derek Nettingham’s poem challenges misconceptions around code-switching and illustrates how it is used as a “mode of survival, not convenience.”

The quality of the submissions and dedication of the authors to their works throughout the past year continually inspired the Editorial Board. We are excited to share these articles with our community, and hope that they will also provide our readers with inspiration as they embark
on further education and their careers. Our board also made an effort to select more art and media pieces this year, and we look forward to seeing more original compositions in future journals.

We would like to thank everyone who made this year’s journal possible. We are grateful to all the authors who submitted their work, and shared their experiences, vulnerability, and insight with us. We would like to thank Daniel Listoe, PhD, for working with our authors on their submissions, Associate Professor Nicole Marwell for her support and guidance as our Faculty Advisor, and Julie Jung for her patience and support throughout this process. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the Dean of Students Office for their service to Advocates’ Forum and the student body at the Crown Family School. Finally, thank you to our dedicated and thoughtful Editorial Board. This journal would not have been possible without each of you.

Caroline Kelly and Matthew Teeters