

CWTAP Quarterly

Child Welfare Training and Advancement Program
Eastern Washington University

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Director's Letter

Greetings CWTAP Community,

Spring quarter is in full-swing and many of our CWTAP students are preparing to graduate. We anticipate thirteen (13) students will graduate from our Cheney full-time day program (2020-2022), and another eleven (11) students to graduate from our Spokane part-time program (2019-2022). While some students were already employees when they started their MSW program at EWU, and some have been hired during their program, we have many graduates seeking work in regions across the state (see below for more information about graduates seeking work). Please join us in congratulating our 2022 CWTAP graduates who have successfully completed their program during this unprecedented time and in the midst of extraordinary challenges. The graduation ceremony for our 2022 graduates will be held in person on June 18.

Along with all of the graduation preparations and “buzz” we are recruiting and admitting new students that will start this summer (Everett part-time program 2022-2025), and fall (Cheney full-time program 2022-2024). We also plan to admit some advanced standing students to the Spokane part-time program (2021-2023) and the Cheney full-time program (2021-2023). So far there appears to be strong interest in CWTAP among incoming students, particularly for the Everett cohort in Region 3.

As always, we are grateful for your support of CWTAP.

Sincerely,
Diana Patterson LeBlanc

CWTAP 2022 Graduates Seek Employment

The graduates seeking employment are listed below with their geographic preferences noted by office location. Also, some students noted their program preference as well. (All students are required to search state-wide once they graduate.)

Miryam G. - Puyallup, Tacoma, Kent

Austin J. - Spokane Central Office, Spokane, west-side offices

Jazmine M. - Wenatchee; prefers CPS

Valeria M. - Tri-Cities

Madison M. - Tumwater; prefers FVS

Michael P. - Spokane



Alumni Spotlight

*Meseret Feser, MSW – CFWS - Spokane North office
By Angie Keith*



Meseret “Messy” Feser is an Advanced-Standing, CWTAP alumni, who graduated from EWU in June of 2021. The unprecedented times of the COVID-19 pandemic did not hinder Messy’s ability to excel in her academics and obtain employment at the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF). Messy is no stranger to overcoming adverse circumstances. Messy was born in Ethiopia and lived in an orphanage for three years with her sister. At the age of eight, Messy and her sister were adopted. After being adopted, she moved to the Tri-Cities where she grew up and graduated from Richland high school in 2016. Messy describes herself as someone that always wanted to help people, even from a very young age. She initially thought she was destined to be a school teacher but after some time as a Paraeducator at Richlands’ Sacajawea Elementary School, she decided that she wanted to work with children and their families in a larger capacity. Messy states that her, “experiences and challenges of being adopted from Ethiopia strengthened my passion to be an advocate at an agency for children who cannot advocate for themselves.”

In 2018, Meseret moved to Spokane to pursue her BSW at EWU and in 2019, while going to school, she became employed at Morning Star Boys Ranch, a Behavioral Rehabilitation Service (BRS) and SOAR Behavioral Services, an intensive day program for children with autism. Both agencies work directly with DCYF which gave Messy, “an understanding of the overwhelming impact the child welfare system plays in the lives of youth and their families.” The two employment opportunities reinforced her desire and passion to advocate for children at a micro and macro level. After she graduated in 2020 with a BSW, Messy applied and was accepted into the advanced-standing MSW program and CWTAP. Since obtaining her MSW, she has worked for DCYF and enjoys the complex and different systems she interacts with such as health care, legal, education, and law enforcement. She has been faced with the challenges of parents struggling to remedy their parental deficiencies yet finds it tremendously empowering and rewarding to be a catalyst that can instill hope for reunification.

Messy describes her CWTAP experience as a time she was able to build and strengthen herself personally and professionally. She felt strongly supported by her Faculty Field Instructor and her Agency Field Instructor. She reports she was provided with knowledge, templates, guidance and support during her time with CWTAP. Messy contributes her success to having an open mind, saying “yes” to new learning opportunities, and knowing that no matter how much you know (or think you know) you can’t be prepared for every situation you encounter. She advises new CWTAP students to approach all situations through a “learning lens” and to remember you can’t fail because you are learning. Always ask questions and be sincere in your own reflection (the areas you are strong and the areas you need to strengthen). Lastly, she wanted to provide some advice for the job: **TRUST BUT VERIFY!**

Messy loves spending time with family and playing with her four nephews; she feels blessed to have them in her life. She is delighted her sister is expecting and bringing a 5th niece or nephew into the family soon. In 2019, Messy and her sister returned to Ethiopia to reconnect with their birth family. Messy enjoys reading, running, hiking, paddle boarding, painting, volleyball and basketball.



Student Spotlight

Regan Pierce – Spokane Part-time By Gerry Charvat

Regan Pierce is a CWTAP student currently working in the Tri-Cities DCYF office and is in her final quarter of the 3-year part-time EWU MSW program.

Regan has known she wanted to be in the helping field since she started college. When she was 18, Regan's mother had a baby on the autism spectrum. Regan went into action to help her mother navigate complex systems to get her brother the support he needed. This process led her to pursue a bachelor's degree in psychology and human development, which she obtained from Washington State University in 2013.

After she graduated, Regan started working as an Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapist, providing in-home services to children of all ages with autism. Regan loved her work but after three years was drawn to challenge herself in new ways. She had heard of a new program being offered at DCYF called Family Assessment Response (FAR) and she eagerly applied to a position. Having experience assessing and intervening with families in their homes benefitted her greatly and she was offered a FAR job in 2016. Regan knew she wanted to continue her education and several of her peers and supervisors at DCYF encouraged her to apply to the EWU MSW program and to CWTAP. She started the part-time MSW program in 2019. Since then she has managed her education, employment, and having a baby. When Regan came back to work from maternity leave she had the perfect opportunity for new practicum learning present itself, she was appointed to a pilot project providing extended FAR services to families who would benefit from ongoing services. She equated the position to a FAR and Family Voluntary Services (FVS) hybrid position. Regan is a strong proponent of the FAR program and loved working with families but again she was eager for a new challenge. She recently applied for and was offered a Child Welfare Social and Health Program Consultant (SHPC) 3 position. In this role, Regan acts as the Child Welfare Early Learning Navigator for her area. This exciting new position ensures all eligible children who become involved in child welfare services in any capacity are referred to early learning services. This position and partnership can have lasting impacts on child success.



Regan strongly recommends the EWU part-time MSW program for working professionals. She states the flexibility of the program fits nicely with her schedule. The 3-year commitment should not be a deterrent for those considering furthering their education, for Regan it has really gone by quickly. The coursework is manageable and it really comes down to time management. She highlighted that 3 years would have passed whether she was in the program or not, so why not go for it? Regan has greatly appreciated the opportunities CWTAP has provided her to network with colleagues across eastern Washington and beyond. She states by being part of a CWTAP cohort she was exposed to programs, innovations, and statewide issues she would not have heard of otherwise. Her advice for anyone joining CWTAP is to develop relationships with other CWTAP students as it can greatly improve success, from carpooling to Spokane for classes to navigating the program in general.

Regan has aspirations to continue her education through licensure and possibly a PhD. In her free time, Regan enjoys spending time with her husband and beautiful 20-month-old child.

	Everett	Cheney/Spokane
<p>Eastern Washington University</p> <p>CWTAP</p> <p>102 Senior Hall</p> <p>Cheney, WA 99004</p> <p>Phone:</p> <p>(425) 405 - 1624</p> <p>www.ewu.edu/cwtap</p>	<p>Diana Patterson LeBlanc <i>Director</i> dpatterson@ewu.edu (425) 405-1624</p> <p>Kara Rozeboom <i>Field Instructor</i> krozeboom07@ewu.edu (360) 651-6915</p> <p>Nancy Fagan (Interim) <i>Program Coordinator</i> nfagan@ewu.edu (425) 405-1625</p>	<p>Mason Hayes <i>Fiscal Specialist II</i> mhayes18@ewu.edu (509) 359-4265</p> <p>Gerry Charvat <i>Field Instructor</i> gcharvat@ewu.edu (509) 720-9894</p> <p>Angie Keith <i>Field Instructor</i> akeith67@ewu.edu</p>
	<p>Please submit suggestions to: dpatterson@ewu.edu</p> <p>Contributors to this issue: Gerry Charvat, Angie Keith, Mason Hayes, Diana Patterson LeBlanc, and Nancy Fagan.</p>	

Helpful Links

Eastern Washington University - School of Social Work: www.ewu.edu/cpp/social-work

[Children's Bureau COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

Includes information for frontline workers, children involved in child welfare, foster care providers, and other general workforce resources

[National Indian Child Welfare Association COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

Includes information for frontline workers, children, caregivers, and other general workforce resources

Alliance for Child Welfare Excellence: www.allianceforchildwelfare.org

Child Welfare League of America: www.cwla.org

Children's Defense Fund: www.childrensdefense.org

Child Welfare Information Gateway: www.childwelfare.gov

Casey Family Programs: www.casey.org