“Our Mission is to work to promote social justice advocacy in our society, through confronting oppressive systems of power and privilege that manifest in a lack of equal access, benefits, resources, and opportunities to large segments of our population. We work to address mental health issues caused by social marginalization, and oppressive issues that affect professional counselors, students, and the clients we serve. Our goal is to work to assist in positive change in our community and society, and call attention to additional ways counselors could be better advocates in their work with diverse, marginalized, and disenfranchised clients, through professional development.” -MCSJ
Letter from President Dr. Chioma Anah:

“The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dear MCSJ Community,

It has been a great honor to be a Founding Member of MCSJ, and a privilege to be its very first President, and I will treasure this moment, and its Legacy for the rest of my life. Under my leadership, MCSJ stepped up to push the counseling field towards social justice advocacy, and, I’m proud and happy to report; we did it with class and enormous success.

Since our Division began only on July 1, 2018, we’ve had so many successful initiatives: Two very informative workshops; and a successful Inaugural conference, with over 55 attendees. In addition: Over 60 counselors and allies joined MCSJ membership; we successfully published four (quarterly) newsletters; and we’ve participated in several outreach initiatives. 2018-2019 has been amazing. Thus far, we have continued to step up, show up, and use our voices via professional development and community outreach initiatives, to effect real change. I think we can unabashedly give ourselves a round of applause for helping to bend that, “arc of the moral universe” towards justice.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to my spectacular board members, who shared in my core vision, mission and goals for MCSJ. Special thanks to Evan Velleman, Dr. Marsha Riggio, and Cathie Eaton for their dedication and unwavering support. MCSJ’s 2018-2019 Term has been a great success because of everyone’s contributions! Thank you.

In this newsletter, we spotlight and highlight special moments from our successful Inaugural Conference held on April 27th at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education, Baltimore, Maryland. In addition, we welcome aboard our new Board Members: Irene Burks-Secretary; Ursula Cerro-Counselor Representative; and Claire Kalala-Student Representative. I am excited about what the next year will bring under the Presidential leadership of my beautiful friend and colleague, Dr. Don Trahan, Jr. I truly believe that our initiatives will keep unfolding as our Division continues to grow.

Thank you, thank you for your love and support. With your help, MCSJ will continue to grow in their advocacy work with counselors, and those individuals and communities on the margins.

Always be bold, use your voice for the greater good, and never give up!

With Hope, Freedom, and Grace,

Chioma Anah, Ed.D., ATR, NCC, LCPC-S, ACS
President, Maryland Counselors for Social Justice (MCSJ)
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Pictures and Highlights from Our Inaugural Conference (April 27, 2019)

Delegate Brooke Lierman
Delegate Brooke Lierman & Dr. Chioma Anah
Dr. Vivian Lee
Dr. Vivian Lee & Evan Velleman
Christopher Fay (Homestretch)

Dr. Janelle Bettis

Kshipra Jain (Recipient of the President’s Award- given by Dr. Chioma Anah)

Dr. Anah & Cathie Eaton (MCA President)
POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Jordan Madison
Brett Kirkpatrick
Sergio Washington

Jordan R. Pearce
Maxine Galloway
Timothy M. Ibutu

Daniel Fleshner
Dr. Lakesha Roney
Message from MCSJ President
Dr. Chioma Anah

In this challenging and exceptional climate, there has never been a greater need for people and organizations to collaborate to identify, address and discourse on mental health and disparities. Like many of you, we are working in a space where the needs of human beings are being highlighted. In this space, we are seeing the impact of human rights violations as well as socioeconomic issues like education, health care, and economic stability. The impact of these issues is profound, and it is clear that we need to collectively address them in order to combat them. It is important to recognize that the work we do is not just about the clients we serve, but also about the communities we serve. We must continue to work together to address these issues in a way that is beneficial to all.

We need to keep pushing towards justice. It is crucial that we continue to work towards a world where everyone has access to mental health care and where no one is left behind. We must continue to push for policies that ensure everyone has access to quality care. We must continue to educate ourselves and others about the importance of mental health and the impact it has on our lives.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication. Together, we can make a difference.

Chioma Anah
President, Maryland Coalition for Statewide ECT"
MCSJ 2018-2019 TEAM

(Missing in this picture- Evan Velleman-Counselor Representative & Daniel Fleshner- Community Outreach Chair)

From Left to Right: Sergio Washington; Brett Kirkpatrick; Dr. Don Trahan, Jr.; Dr. Chioma Anah; Perri Hooper; Kshipra Jain; Grace Abraham Lewis; and Jasmine Templeton.
Announcements/Events:

*SAVE THE DATE*

2nd Annual Maryland Counselors for Social Justice (MCSJ) CONFERENCE

April 18, 2020

*Keynote Speaker *Education Sessions *Poster Sessions *Vendors *Panel Discussions *Networking *Breakfast *Lunch *CE's

“If you assume there is no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, that there are opportunities to change things, then there is a possibility that you can contribute to make a better world.” –Noam Chomsky
IN MCSJ NEWS:

Meet MCSJ’s New Secretary: Irene A. Burks, MS

Irene A. Burks is a retired Major with the Prince George’s County Police Department, Maryland. The philosophy of community-oriented policing blended well with her passion for activism and equal rights. Irene volunteers with several civil rights organizations particularly those focused on equality, LGBTQ youth, and transgender rights. She authored *Building Relationships with Transgender Individuals* (Burks, 2014). She received her Master of Science in Management from Johns Hopkins University and is currently a student at Capella University pursuing a Master of Science, Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Having served in the United States Air Force, she is a veteran of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. She is a resident of Prince George’s County where she resides with her wife and two children.

Reference:

Meet MCSJ’s New Student Representative: Claire Kalala, BFA

Claire Kalala (CMK) is an art therapist in training and multidisciplinary fine artist living and working in the D.C. area. By way of travel and conversing with various voices along the way, her work/art/collab studies reflect an experience living ‘in-between’ moments of cultural, racial, and ethnic intersection. She prioritizes advocating for social justice (centering interests in racial and disability justice) in her clinical work and artistic practice. Claire holds a BFA from UArts (Philadelphia, PA) and is a current MA candidate in Art Therapy at the George Washington University.
BRAVO to MCSJ Board Members- 2018-2019!!
A Job Well Done!

Founder/President- Dr. Chioma Anah, ATR, LCPC-S, ACS
President-Elect- Dr. Don Trahan, Jr., Ph.D, LPC, ACS
Counselor Representative- Evan Velleman, MS
Secretary- Brett Kirkpatrick, MS, Ed.S
Treasurer- Perri Hooper, BS
Student Representative- Kshipra Jain, MA, LPC,
Veteran Representative- Jasmine Templeton, LCPC

Committee Chairs (2018-2019):
Membership & PR- Deneen Robin, MA, LCPC/MCSJ Board/Collective
Community Outreach- Sergio D. Washington, MS
Community Outreach- Daniel Fleshner
Social Justice Advocacy- Grace Abraham Lewis, MSc, NCC, LCPC
Please Welcome MCSJ Board Members-2019-2020

MCSJ Executive Board-Leadership (2019-2020):
President - Dr. Don Trahan, Jr., Ph.D, LPC, ACS
Founder/Immediate Past President - Dr. Chioma Anah, ATR, LCPC-S, ACS
President-Elect - Kshipra Jain, MA, LPC
Counselor Representative - Ursula Cerro, LGPC
Secretary - Irene Burks, MS
Treasurer - Perri Hooper, BS
Student Representative - Clare Kalala, BFA
Veteran Representative - Jasmine Templeton, LCPC

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Membership & PR-MCSJ Board/Collective
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MCSJ is also on LinkedIn & Facebook