

Scholarship Awardees: 2018-2019

In the spring of 2017, under the auspices of the Center for Multicultural & Global Mental Health, William James College (WJC) established the ***Serving the Mental Health Needs of the Underserved Scholarships*** to recruit, train and mentor graduate students committed to pursuing careers in which they provide culturally informed mental health and/or organizational wellness services to historically underserved communities. The highly competitive scholarship, which covers 2/3 of tuition costs, recognizes the achievements and promise of students who are seeking Master's, Certificate of Advance Graduate Studies or Doctor of Psychology degrees at WJC .

The five (5) awardees — **Regina Banks, Presceia Olivia Cooper, Emily Crain, Christopher Rosales, and Jessica Sharp** — were selected based on a combination of academic achievements, volunteer and community service to underserved groups, demonstrable commitment to social justice and advocacy, leadership skills, and financial needs. As CMGMH Fellows, the awardees will actively engage in mentoring, community service, social-cultural, and professional development initiatives at WJC. **The five new CMGMH Fellows and Scholarship Awardees are profiled below.**

Regina Banks *School Psychology, PsyD*



Favorite Quote: *"As long as we are not ourselves, we will try to be what other people are."*

— Malidoma Patrice Somé

A native of Fresno, California, Regina is the oldest of six girls, a wife, and the mother of two children under the ages of two. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree with a teaching emphasis from Fresno Pacific University. After working in education for several years, Regina attended Washington University in St. Louis where she received a Master of Social Work degree with an emphasis in Race, Socioeconomics, and Mental Health. Upon completing graduate school, she taught at Clovis Community College and Fresno Pacific University.

The daughter of a former minister with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Regina is a member of the same denomination where she is currently involved in its mission to meet the mental health needs of African Americans and decrease the stigma linked to service utilization under the Western Episcopal District and California Conference's Mental Health Awareness Initiative.

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New CMGMH Fellows & Scholarship Awardees (cont.)

As a recently appointed member of the initiative's Implementation Team, Regina works to support churches in their capacity to provide mental health screenings and referrals to church members and individuals in the community.



Regina has served as a **Member of the AmeriCorps State and National Program** for three years (2011-2014). Her first year of service was at Central Valley Health Network in Fresno, California where she was a community outreach worker who provided outreach and health education to ethnically diverse populations. Her final two years of service were completed at Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program where she worked with the Behavioral Health Team as a case manager to provide outreach, screening, and health education services to homeless men, women and families.

Regina also served as a **Fellow under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Minority Fellowship Program**. This program was focused on supporting the professional development of rising social work students in their capacity to serve the mental health needs of children and youth from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

During her graduate studies at WJC, Regina intends to continue her involvement in community service, which she describes as *"my personal obligation as a person who benefited from the investment of others."* This includes becoming an active member of the Boston branch NAACP and joining student organizations at WJC.

When asked about the importance of receiving a *Serving the Underserved Scholarship*, Regina reflected,

"Having been awarded this scholarship will defray the cost of an education I never thought I would be able to attain. As a person from an economically disadvantaged background, this scholarship will allow me to focus solely on my studies, without the burden of also working full-time. This is invaluable to me as a wife and mother of two babies. More importantly, I am honored to receive this award and will endeavor to fulfill its mission in becoming an agent of change and social justice in the mental health field."

Regina's research interests are in school psychology, particularly on the experiences of microaggression among African American students enrolled in predominantly white schools. Her primary goals are to increase her knowledge of evidence-based school psychology assessment, intervention, and consultation; and to enhance her capacity to provide culturally competent services to persons of color. Following her graduation from WJC, Regina hopes to serve as a school psychologist with the Boston Public Schools. Later, she plans to join Allay Psychological Services, which is a private practice owned by her sister who is a licensed clinical psychologist. In that capacity, Regina will provide services to students who historically have been underserved by the public school system.

Presceia Olivia Cooper

Organizational Psychology, MA



Favorite Quote: “I get up every morning determined to both change the world and have one hell of a good time. Sometimes this makes planning my day difficult.”
— E. B. White

Presceia is a Boston native who has served the majority of her career in nonprofit and mission driven organizations due to her passion for social justice and social change. This interest emerged while she was enrolled in the Massachusetts’ **Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO)**, a program that busses predominantly inner-city students of color to suburban school districts for greater access to education. Going through this experience, from grades 2-12 as a member of a marginalized group, has fostered Presceia’s deep commitment to advancing equity in all aspects of her work.

Presceia earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Boston College in 2008. She has served in a **leadership role for the NAACP Boston College Chapter** and, in recent years, has led diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts at local organizations to ensure that there were systems and

structures in place that allowed women and people of color to thrive. Supporting and leading DEI programs has been the cornerstone of her career and an area in which she wants to continue to grow and have an impact. Currently, Presceia works at Panorama Education in Boston.

When asked to reflect on the importance of being selected for a *Serving the Underserved Scholarship*, Presceia remarked,

“It means the world to me to have received the Serving the Underserved Scholarship as a Master of Organizational Psychology student. I am driven by a desire and responsibility to leverage my skills to dismantle systems of oppressions that limit women and people of color in the workplace. By receiving this scholarship, I am being granted a tremendous opportunity to further my education and deepen my practice so that I can be more effective as a change agent and leader of talent management.”

During her tenure at WJC, Presceia plans to fully immerse herself in her graduate school experience, take advantage of everything the College has to offer, and apply what she is learning to her day-to-day work. With regards to her long-term professional goals, Presceia wants to be a talent management and a diversity leader. She stated, *“I’ve always loved working with people and finding ways to unlock potential in others. My graduate degree will allow me to be more impactful in this work, and provide me the foundational knowledge to lead change management efforts at an organizational and systems level. This will strengthen my leadership skills as well as my ability to properly diagnose challenges and design appropriate interventions.”*

Emily Crain

Clinical Psychology, PsyD



Favorite Saying: “*Nada te turbe, nada te espante, todo se pasa*”.
(Let nothing trouble you, let nothing frighten you, all will pass.)

Emily Crain is a first-year student in the Clinical Psychology Program at William James College. She graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. While a student at UMass Amherst, Emily served as a **Clinical Intern at the Veterans Administration and Hampshire County House of Corrections**. She also conducted research in the Rudd Adoption Research lab, exploring the impacts of microaggression and resiliency on children adopted by sexual minority couples. Emily has worked as a **Research Assistant at Boston Children’s Hospital and the Wellesley Centers for Women**. Most recently, she was employed with the Department of Corrections where she provided clinical support to individuals in a maximum security prison. Specifically, she worked with individuals transitioning from long-term segregation back to the general population of inmates.

While a student at UMass Amherst, Emily served in a leadership role for a religious organization on campus where there was a lack of visible support for LGBTQ individuals who were seeking acceptance. Through her activism and support from administrators who were equally passionate about the needs of LGBTQ students, Emily started the first initiative to provide religious and spiritual resources to the LGBTQ community. She successfully implemented various outreach programs, identified LGBTQ-friendly clergy, and started a dialogue on campus about spiritual inclusivity and the queer community.

Emily currently volunteers for **Inner City Weightlifting**, an organization whose mission is to “reduce youth violence by connecting high impact youth with new networks and opportunities, including meaningful career tracks in and beyond personal training”. During her graduate studies at WJC, Emily plans to continue her involvement in social justice initiatives and participate in the **Social Justice Student Coalition**.

With regards to her long-term professional goals, Emily is invested in exploring the intersection of psychology and law, and supporting policy initiatives that create systemic changes around mental health care and at-risk populations. Emily is particularly interested in continuing to work with incarcerated individuals and other marginalized communities. Her Puerto Rican and Irish heritage has elicited a strong interest in Latino Mental Health. Emily hopes to build strong connections with colleagues in the field and continue her education and training in a post-doctoral specialization.

Christopher Rosales

School Psychology, MA/CAGS

Christopher Rosales is a first generation Central American-American. His mother migrated to the U.S. from Guatemala and his father migrated from El Salvador. His parents' hard work and dedication led Chris to reach several milestones. He graduated from North Shore Community College then attended Springfield College where he graduated Summa Cum Laude within two years with a bachelor's degree in Human Services.



For five years, Chris served as the **director of an after-school program for a local public school**. He was also a family support advocate at Boston Medical Center's Violence Intervention Advocacy Program. Chris has been involved with various organizations in Boston, including the **Louis D. Brown Peace Institute's Homicide Providers Group, Suffolk County Sheriff's Department for Family Matters Consortium, and Boston Police Department's Shannon Grant Providers Group**.

Personal Statement: "Do not let other people dictate who you can become. Life circumstances can influence the person you become. Be you, as I am becoming me."

When asked about an accomplishment of which he is most proud, Chris stated,

"I have always been praised for my ability to handle 'troubled' students and manage problems in the classroom. One accomplishment that I am most proud of is being able to move into a director's position within a relatively short period of time in a program for underserved youth. While I only had a high school diploma, I was able to demonstrate that I had the leadership skills to run my own program. I began working as a group leader and was promoted to assistant director. In my third year, I became the director of the school that housed a Learning Adaptive Behavior (LAB) Program. The LAB Program, which used a social-emotional curriculum, was for students with a chronic history of school suspensions. It was this position that ultimately led me to seek a career in mental health with a focus on traumatized youth."

During his time at William James College, Chris hopes to continue to volunteer at community-based organizations. Following his graduate studies, his goal is to return to the field of community violence and work in a public school setting. He plans to provide mental health services to youth and families of color who have been impacted by community violence and have limited access to resources.

Jessica Sharp

Leadership Psychology, PsyD

Jessica Sharp is the Director of Volunteer Services at Meals on Wheels Greenville, which delivers meals to homebound individuals in Greenville County. She oversees the volunteer management strategy and volunteer services team. She has prior work experience at Greenville Health System and the YMCA of Greenville in South Carolina. Jessica is the Founder and Chief Educator of **Sharp Brain Consulting**, which works with public service agencies to provide education about the brain and its effects on organizational outcomes.



Favorite Quote: *"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not."* — The Lorax

Jessica is dedicated to advancing the rights of underserved individuals and communities. After earning a marketing degree from the University of South Carolina, she pursued her passion through **Teach for America**—an organization that places recent graduates in classrooms in underserved communities. Jessica also has a Master's degree in Public Affairs from the University of Missouri.

Jessica is the Chair of the Greenville Chamber's Pulse, a program for young professionals, the United Way's YP20 Steering Council, and JL Mann High School's School Improvement Council. She is an active member of the Junior League of Greenville. Jessica has previously held leadership roles with LeadHER Greenville, the Urban League's Upstate Network, and Better Business Bureau of the Upstate. She is a graduate of Leadership Greenville and is a **Diversity Fellow with the Riley Institute**.

Jessica has been named a Rising Star through the Association of Junior Leagues International, one of Greenville's Best and Brightest under 35, and a Talented Tenth Top 10 Young Professionals. She has been recognized in the NextGen section of the Upstate Business Black Box magazine. Jessica volunteers with the YMCA of Greenville and A Child's Haven. Jessica regularly speaks about various topics related to diversity, inclusion and the brain; and is an active blogger for GenTwenty, a website for millennial women.

During her time at WJC, Jessica plans to expand her knowledge of topics related to inclusion, intellectual disabilities, social justice, the intersection of poverty and education, and the criminal justice system and its impacts on people of color. She will continue to engage in community service, volunteering, public speaking/workshop facilitation, and donating to nonprofit organizations.