

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings STSW Members,

It seems we blinked and summer passed, but that is exciting because it means our annual conference is just around the corner. In seven short weeks I'm looking forward to reconnecting with you in San Diego. I'm eager to hear about your work, your programs, and gaining new knowledge that I can add to my practice. The Conference Planning Committee has put together an amazing program that you can review and register for at www.stsw.org/conference. At the conference we will have information about the committees and work that STSW is doing, as well as sign-up sheets so you can capitalize on opportunities to add your own skills and expertise to the Society and the field.

If you're unable to attend the conference there are still many opportunities to engage with each other throughout the year though the forum, organ calls, committees, policy/advocacy, etc. We have received a lot of feedback and requests for virtual education options. We hear you, the board is talking about it, and we're hoping to add some offerings in addition to the annual conference. In the spirit of transparency, when thinking about a hybrid conference there are challenges to finding ways to preserve the experience of the in-person conference. Similarly, in thinking about a virtual conference in addition to our annual in person conference, there are hurdles to finding the synergy of timing, CEU approval, funding, presenter availability and bandwidth. The board and I welcome your suggestions, and until those plans can coalesce, I encourage you to attend the organ group calls and listen to *the [Beats By Social Work Podcasts](#)* for transplant-specific education that is currently available.

If you have interest in a committee or a board position please reach out to us or complete a board interest form, which can be found at <https://stsw.wildapricot.org/Board-Interest>.

One of our goals is to develop a set of practice guidelines that defines our roles. Most of us have encountered team members that have thoughts about what transplant social workers should do, though their perspective may not align with our training, ethics, or the work that actually happens. This will be a big project that will need input from all organ groups. If you have interest in leading or working on this project (or any of the committees) please email us at help@stsw.org.

There's great transplant social work happening everywhere, and there's an opportunity to recognize two colleagues for their outstanding contributions to the field of transplant social work. Please review the information in this newsletter about our annual awards, and you can follow the link to submit a nomination. I like to end board meetings by extending thanks to everyone who is volunteering their time to support the work of the Society and our field. I also extend that thanks to all members who read this – your membership and participation enhances our field, and it's an honor to be counted among such talented professionals. I hope you have a wonderful fall, and I wish you safety in all your travels.

Sincerely,
Clif
Clifton Hill, LCSW, CCTSW
President, STSW

NOMINATIONS REQUESTED FOR 2023 ANNUAL STSW AWARDS

This is a request for your [nominations](#) for our two annual awards that are given out each year at the conference.

Each year at the conference we honor two members for their outstanding work in the field of transplantation. We know there is a lot of amazing work being done by transplant social workers and we ask you to submit nominations for these awards. The award winners will be announced during the conference, and the plaques will be presented to those well deserving individuals.

The two awards are the **Lee Suszycki Memorial Award** and the **Judy Midelfort Memorial Award**. **Lee Suszycki** was the founder and first president of our Society. She was passionate about many things, including education, writing, publication, social work and transplantation. The Society for Transplant Social Workers is a direct outgrowth of her vision for social workers practicing in transplantation. **Judy Midelfort** was a founding member of the Society, one of the first to publish on psychosocial issues in transplantation and a strong supporter of professional growth and education. You can read more about these awards on our website, [here](#).

The nomination form can be found [here](#). Please submit your nomination, **by Friday, September 8th**, and contact clifton.hill@ecuhealth.org with any questions.

FINAL REMINDER FOR ANNUAL STSW SURVEY – DEADLINE AUGUST 29!

It is time for the 2023 membership survey when the Society requests information about your caseload, duties, salary, and benefits. We also ask about staffing in your center. This information helps you know how your responsibilities and compensation compare to those of your peers.

We will break down data by population served: primarily pediatrics, heart/mechanical circulatory support (MCS), MCS only, lung, liver, kidney/pancreas. *You need only gather information about*

your team(s). Here are the facts it would be helpful for you to collect before you begin the survey:

- # of transplants/living donor surgeries done by your team(s) last year (fiscal or calendar; you decide)
- # of durable mechanical circulatory support (MCS) implantations done by your team last year
- # of transplant/MCS/living donation social workers employed on your team(s)
- # of nurse coordinators employed on your team(s)
- If you work full-time, be sure you know your total annual salary. If you work part time, make sure you know your hourly wage.

Your answers are anonymous. We will compile the results and share them at the STSW conference in San Diego in October. They will be available on the website after the conference.

This survey will only take 10-15 minutes to complete. Please take a moment to collect the above facts and answer it right now. The deadline for responses is imminent: **August 29, 2023**.



The survey link is available by the link below or QR code to the left:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/62ZZK68>

Thank you!
 STSW Research Co-Chairs
 Colleen Satarino
 Kate Artin

2023 CONFERENCE UPDATE

Kay Kendall, MSW, LISW-s, CCTSW-MCS
 National Conference Chair

Our 38th annual conference will be held in October. Registration is open and we are pleased with the response. The days are filled with

excellent presentations and there are a number of breakout sessions to choose from during each of those times. There will be a “meet and greet” sponsored by the hotel on Monday evening and our annual Welcome Reception sponsored by our Distinguished Sponsor, COTA is Tuesday evening October 10th. The Poster Session will also be held Tuesday evening. These are wonderful opportunities to connect with STSW members.

We are pleased this year that *Dr. Scott Winder*, an Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Surgery and Neurology at the University of Michigan, will be presenting at our pre-conference workshop on Monday October 9th. Dr. Winder will be presenting a two-part session on substance use and addiction issues – “*Addiction in Organ Transplant: A Practical Toolbox for Social Workers*”.



Our keynote speaker this year, **Kay Kendall**, will review the transplant process over the last four decades, focusing on transplant programs, patients and transplant social work.

We encourage you to register and to make reservations at the Loew’s Coronado Bay Hotel in San Diego. See our conference webpage, [Conference 2023 \(wildapricot.org\)](https://www.wildapricot.org).

See you soon!

REMEMBERING ONE OF THE POWER OF TWO: ISABEL STENZEL BYRNES, 1972-2023

Laurie McDonald, LCSW, CCTSW

The transplant and cystic fibrosis communities have lost a bright light. *Isabel Stenzel Byrnes* died in July 2023.

Isabel (“Isa”) and her sister Anabel (“Ana”) were born with cystic fibrosis (CF) in 1972. They defied the odds by living well beyond their life expectancy of 14 years. Together they wrote [*The Power of Two: A Twin Triumph over Cystic Fibrosis*](#), a candid and inspiring memoir, published in 2007.

The Stenzel twins, who were half-Japanese and double lung transplant recipients, were the subjects of a documentary released in 2011, also called [*The Power of Two*](#). The movie depicts how they coped with CF and transplant, and follows them as they travel to Japan, a country that had very low organ donation rates, to raise awareness and advocate for change.

The documentary was shown as part of the keynote address at the 2012 STSW conference in San Francisco. Isa, who was a licensed clinical social worker, spoke after the viewing. She shared her perspective on transplant social work as a patient and a clinician. It was a powerful session.

Past and present STSW board members recently reflected on Isa’s presentation. **Kay Kendall** said, “That was such a memorable keynote. What an impressive woman! I learned a lot from her.” STSW President **Clif Hill** noted, “She was really great. I still use a statement she made: ‘We have a normal dysfunctional family.’” **Jan Hart** added, “What I remember is the emotion I felt, that she handled the sometimes-conflicting roles of patient and professional with grace and humor. It was a gift to us to get to hear this blend.”

Isa was a hospice social worker and patient advocate. She did a TEDx talk about the art of saying goodbye, and also spoke about the topic on NPR’s Life Kit. She was an athlete, and

competed in the Transplant Games. She volunteered across the transplant and CF communities. She served on the OPTN Patient Affairs and Ethics committees, spoke at the American Thoracic Society's conference, and was involved with the Cystic Fibrosis Research Institute. She was a writer, and contributed a regular column to the *CF Roundtable* newsletter for 16 years.

Isa's social worker, STSW member **Hannah Gordon**, says, "She continues to live on in the way she inspired us (both patients and healthcare professionals) and used her experiences to evolve and grow the world around her. She made me a stronger social worker just by being in her presence, talking with her, and getting to hear her perspective. Often I find myself thinking, 'How might Isa handle this situation?' That question hasn't steered me wrong yet."

Here are Isa's words from her last [CF Roundtable](#) column:

I'd like to believe my spiritual legacy is a reflection from so many CF mentors:
*We fought the good fight. We did our very best.
 We did not become embittered. We chose gratitude. We cherished appreciation. We learned to love ourselves. Our spirits did not break with the hardships of this disease.*

Isabel Stenzel Byrnes was predeceased by her sister Anabel Stenzel, who died in 2013.

STSW COMMITTEE UPDATES

► Tech Committee:

Katie Newton, Chair

Our STSW website continues to showcase new happenings in STSW. Check out a recap of [Chair](#) activity on social media platforms on our homepage and a new events list under the "member content" tab with a list of all upcoming STSW member events. For those who work with a more unique organ group, we have recently added a forum for "Other Organs". This might be a place to post questions or share unique experiences or resources.

Remember, you can control what information is displayed about you on the STSW website. We have a member directory that lists all members' names, email, organization and population they work with. We also list our credentialed members and share when they were credentialed and when their credentialing will expire. If you would prefer your information not be available, you can change your privacy settings by clicking on your name in the upper right corner. Then click "edit profile" and choose what information you feel comfortable sharing under the "privacy" tab.

Please send any website and technology questions or ideas to tech@stsw.org. If you are interested in tech, we are always looking for members to our tech team, please reach out to us by email for more information!



► Research Committee

Colleen Satarino, Committee Co-Chair

Thanks to members who completed the annual STSW survey. There are still a couple of days to get your responses in! The Research committee will analyze the data and it will be available for review

at the conference in San Diego. Your survey responses help STSW members understand staffing, responsibilities of colleagues across the country as well as salary comparisons within each region.



► Credentialing Committee

Molly Dugan, Chair

Thank you to everyone who submitted their re-credentialing applications these past few months. The Credentialing Committee continues to review new applications and we anticipate this picking up again as we approach the conference in San Diego in October.

While exhibiting at the Transplant Management Forum in Denver, CO, in May, **Clif Hill** and I spoke with many center directors about the credentials and there was a lot of enthusiasm on their part to get their social workers credentialed. Not only does a credential support your professional development, but it supports your center in demonstrating excellence in their team's clinical skills. Feel free to reach out at credentialing@stsw.org if you have any questions about approaching your center leadership to get support in earning any of the credentials STSW offers.

The Credentialing Committee needs you!

We are seeking credentialed members to join our team of dedicated folks who help review and approve new credential applications. This committee is a great way for you to get involved in the Society and help members achieve their credential goals! Please reach out to me at credentialing@stsw.org if you are interested and would like more information!



► Mentoring Committee

Susan Walker, Committee Member

The STSW Mentoring committee has maintained sustainability thanks to the efforts of our dedicated committee members and most notably the efforts of our loyal mentors who have unselfishly provided their expertise and time to so many mentees who desired to gain greater awareness and become more proficient in navigating the issues and complexities associated with transplant. We are thrilled to once again have a display table throughout the upcoming 38th Annual STSW Conference in San Diego CA, October 9th - October 12th. An addition to this year's display table, a video is planned to air during session breaks which will showcase those who have experienced the benefits of the mentor program from both the Mentor and Mentee perspectives.

The Mentor committee is also proud to announce that Alexandra Radomsky, Chair of the Mentor Committee, will be displaying a poster focused on the benefit of mentoring in transplant social work at the Welcome Reception and Poster Session on Tuesday, October 10, 2023. This will be a first for our Mentor program and we hope everyone will come out to support this.

We currently have 10 active Mentors and have room to take on more in the areas of pediatric and adult transplant specialties. If you are interested in applying, please visit stsw.org and open the link for the Mentor Program section of the website. You may also send questions to mentor@stsw.org.



► Multicultural Committee

Daniela Matz, Chair

This is my last newsletter as the Chair of the Multicultural Committee, as my term is coming to an end in the Fall. It has been a pleasure and an honor to be part of this group. Keep in mind the position will open, and I would encourage you to

apply if you have the passion for multicultural issues. I wanted to leave you with a message from a Brazilian poet, Carlos Drummond de Andrade.

*I would like to wish you so many things.
But nothing would be enough...
So, I wish only that you have many wishes.
Big wishes, and may they move you further ever
single minute,
on route to your happiness.*

Please, keep in touch.

daniela.matz@unchealth.unc.edu



► Liver Committee

Vanessa Mulsow, Chair

The liver team continues to meet every other month. There is great participation and collaboration amongst liver transplant social workers across the country. We continue to have robust conversation regarding transplant and addiction treatment, ethical dilemmas, and how to have hard conversations with other members of the transplant team. Please e-mail vmulsow@health.UCSD.edu if you would like to be added to our meeting invite.



► Membership Committee:

Sarah Larmore, Chair

Hi everyone, it has been an exciting quarter for STSW. I would like to welcome the *51 new members* who have joined us! Our current membership totals 525 people. I'd also like to thank all those who have renewed your membership, you are all valued members of our society! If anybody has any membership questions or needs, please let me know. You can email me at membership@stsw.org.



► Kidney / Pancreas Committee:

Kristen Bennett, Chair

Hello Kidney/Pancreas Social Workers! Our committee continues to have monthly meetings where we discuss topics and challenges related to our patient work. If you would like to be added to the email distribution list, which is used for meeting calendar invites, agendas, and minutes please send me an email (kbennett6@pennstatehealth.psu.edu)! Meeting dates, times, and links are also on the Kidney/Pancreas page of the website and posted on the Forum – anyone is welcome to join!



► Heart Transplant Committee

Shay Rogillio, Chair

The Community of Heart Transplant Social Workers has had an exciting couple of months. We continue to have our monthly meetings and have had some very good conversations about, “Should patients be allowed to attend patient selection committee meetings?” to reviewing the recent NPR article titled, [“Heart transplant recipient dies after being denied meds in jail.”](#) Everyone has been very gracious in welcoming me to my new role and I know that I have BIG shoes to fill and appreciate the leadership and guidance that **Tiffany Coco** has provided over the years. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the conference and please reach out to me at heart@stsw.org if you have any questions or ideas for topics to discuss.

We continue to have our monthly meetings on the **4th Wednesday of each month at 1pm - Central Standard Time**. Please join us if you can!

STSW Heart Committee Monthly Call

- 4th Wednesday of each month • 1:00 – 2:00pm
- Time zone: Central Standard
- Google Meet: <https://meet.google.com/opa-vtky-kam>
- Phone: (US) +1 574-404-3607
- PIN: 854 790 053#

▶ Living Donor Committee

Chrissi White, Chair

The living donor committee continues to hold quarterly meetings. The committee is a wealth of knowledge, composed of social workers and Independent Living Donor Advocates working in living liver and living kidney donation. During each meeting, new topics are discussed. If you would like to join the committee, please contact Chrissi White at livingdonor@stsw.org.

▶ Social Media Committee

Tiffany Coco, Chair

The Social Media Committee continues to gain momentum as we have officially launched our Instagram Page **@The_STSW**. We are working as a committee to develop a plan for continued content with information, education, and connections. We are hopeful to highlight STSW for those outside of our organization to bring awareness and partnerships, while continuing to foster connections amongst members within the organization. We are hopeful to make this a fun place as well so keep an eye out for that.

If you have any pictures or videos from previous conferences or even workgroups please share them via email to SocialMedia@STSW.org, with a message informing us where/when the photo was taken, as well as consent for us to share this photo on a public forum. This is just the beginning of our social media journey, but we wanted to start small as we grow this committee. Be on the lookout for future content and announcements. Please make sure to follow this account **@The_STSW** and tell your friends as well so we can continue to highlight our unique profession of Transplant/LVAD/MCS Social Workers!

See screenshot of page, to the right.



▶ Lung Transplant Committee

Mike Bielaczyc, Chair

Our lung committee membership continues to grow, as we have welcomed new members and retained familiar faces.

We are continuing with our bimonthly sessions, and our discussions have focused on dealing with changes to the Medicaid system across different states, correspondence between recipients and donor families, managing long length of stays,

retransplantation and coping with the emotional toll of long-haul patients.

The committee looks forward to continuing to support and learn from one another as the lung transplant world continues to push the boundaries of what has been possible until now!



► Pediatric Committee:

Tina Cole, Chair

Greetings from the world of Pediatrics! Special thanks to the tech committee for creating a new email address to easily stay in touch! Please feel free to use the email to reach the Pediatric committee: pediatrics@stsw.org. We look forward to meeting everyone in San Diego!



► STSW Committees

STSW committees are quite active and offer you a chance to be involved not only with STSW, but with specialty areas of your interest. Other STSW committees include the VAD/MCS Committee, and Public Policy and Resource Committee. The upcoming conference will offer opportunities for joining any of these committees, and you can do so at any time by contacting the committee chair(s) or help@stsw.org.

IN THE NEWS

Bill to revamp national organ donation system goes to Biden's desk

Congress has passed a bill that would open the Organ Procurement and Transplant Network to oversight by an organization other than UNOS, through a competitive contract process. The contracts would be overseen by HRSA. Read about it [here](#) and [here](#).

STSW WEBSITE

Hopefully you are all familiar with our website, www.stsw.org, which is chock full of transplant-related information and resources. If you have published and would like that information posted on our [publications](#) page of STSW member authors, or if you are running a support group that you would like to add to or edit on our [support group](#) page, please let us know by contacting help@stsw.org.

SUGGESTIONS?

"Society Pages", this STSW newsletter, is published three times a year, and is intended to keep you updated with current STSW issues, annual conference information, opportunities for involvement in our Society, practice issues and standards, relevant national issues and policies, publications, and more.

Are there items of interest that you would like to see discussed here? Do you have suggestions for improvement? Do you have an idea for an article? Please reach out to **Barbara Levine** (newsletter editor) at help@stsw.org with your suggestions or requests.



"This isn't a donor heart.
It's a tuna on rye."