

CWTAP

Fall 2025

Quarterly

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Director's Letter

Dear CWTAP Community,

Over the summer we welcomed a new Spokane Part-Time MSW CWTAP cohort and our Everett Part-Time MSW students started in their practicum placements. Our second-year Spokane Part-Time students participated in our specialized Public Child Welfare course and were able to design and present cutting edge mock grant proposals for public child welfare.

Fall quarter brings our second-year Cheney Full-Time students back to campus, practicum, and into our non-employee specialized Public Child Welfare course. As part of this course, students will participate in a court simulation in Spokane County Court. The court simulation has been a valuable part of the CWTAP elective since its inception in 2017 and we are happy for our partnerships with the AAG's office, public defense, and family court that allow us to continue it.

Given the current statewide budget reductions, EWU CWTAP will be holding a small scale virtual Student Institute alternative in February 2026 for those students unable to present last year. We will be inviting our DCYF partners and current CWTAP students to attend and support the presenting MSW students.

Our CWTAP team looks forward to a strong academic year with our students and DCYF partners.

-Gerry Charvat, CWTAP Director

Student Spotlight



Amber Burwell

*CPS Supervisor
Sky Valley DCYF Office - Region 3*

By Kara Rozeboom

Amber Burwell (Owens) is an EWU CWTAP student in her second year of the Everett part-time MSW program. She obtained her Bachelor of Psychology with a major in sociology from Washington State University in 2016. While in college Amber volunteered as a DV hotline specialist. Once she graduated, she moved back to Snohomish County and started working at Service Alternatives Cedar House, a group home in Everett as their floor staff. She quickly promoted to the Residential Coordinator role and then became a case manager with the teenagers who lived there. Amber enjoyed building community connections so the teenagers could be successful into adulthood. However, she felt like she wasn't making a big enough difference at Service Alternatives. She decided she wanted to do a job that interacts with families and helps prevent child abuse.

In 2018, Amber started her career as a CPS FAR Social Service Specialist in the Everett DCYF office. In 2020 she moved into the FVS/FRS unit. Amber was promoted to a Social Service Specialist 4 supporting all programs in the Sky Valley DCYF office in 2021. Next, she was the interim CPS FAR Supervisor in Lynnwood for a few months trying out supervision for the first time. Amber briefly

went back to her SSS4 position in the Sky Valley office and then in November of 2023, she was promoted to a permanent CPS FAR Supervisor position. Amber enjoys her work at DCYF by coming up with creative solutions to mitigate risk to children and families so her staff don't have to file a dependency petition. Her MSW practicum new learning is supervising FRS/CFWS Social Service Specialists.

Amber had been working for DCYF for seven years and had heard about CWTAP over the years. She always had thought about getting her MSW. She started talking to her friends who had completed CWTAP and it sounded like a program she wanted to apply to. Amber applied and was accepted into the MSW Everett program and into CWTAP in June 2024. She appreciates participating in CWTAP, learning about current social work knowledge, and best practices and research that she can apply to her job as a supervisor at DCYF. She also appreciates not being financially stressed in this program and the relationships she has formed in the CWTAP community and peer support. Her advice for people considering CWTAP is, "having this opportunity to expand your social work knowledge so you can benefit your work at the department is so rewarding!".

Amber's personal interests include going on walks with her dog Mousse, traveling the world, experiencing different cultures and trying a variety of cuisines. She enjoys spending time with her husband Jesse and her sister Melinda. Amber also has fun being an auntie by doing activities with her goddaughter and two nieces.

Alumni Spotlight

Sydney Gray

*BASW, Social Service Specialist 1, ICW CPS Team
Spokane North DCYF Office– Region 1*

By Kristin Talbott

Sydney hails from Bethel, Alaska. Eastern Washington University brought Sydney to the Inland Northwest. Drawn to EWU to pursue her degree in Social Work, she has always had a heart for Child Welfare work. This passion was further solidified when she was an intern at the Office of Children's Services in Alaska. During this experience she saw the impact those social workers had in her hometown. As she started her BASW journey at EWU, Sydney had a friend who introduced her to the Child Welfare Training and Advancement Program (CWTAP). When Sydney entered her senior year she was accepted in the program. Sydney shared that CWTAP fits her future goals to help families and keep children safe. Sydney expressed interest in conducting her internship in the Indian Child Welfare Unit (ICW) at DCYF for her practicum. This is where she completed her practicum and she now works as a Social Service Specialist 1 after graduating with her BASW.



Sydney stated that she found a great team in the ICW section and is grateful to be starting her social work career there. Sydney shared that one thing she learned during the CWTAP program experience was that working in child welfare is hard. She wanted to continue to learn and grow as part of this supportive team. She saw the enactment of her values occurring in the work they do to assist indigenous people in the Spokane Community. This has led her to stay in Spokane working with the ICW team.

Sydney encourages those who are considering joining CWTAP to make sure they are ready for the personal commitment needed to work in child welfare. It is hard work. Sydney learned quickly to find positive support that encouraged work life balance. Sydney shared that because of this support she learned the importance of good boundaries around her time, keeping social activities in her life, and being active. Sydney enjoys hiking and climbing and does this as much as possible.

Sydney's plans include continuing to learn about all the incredible programs available to the community through DCYF. Sydney is a bright shining example of how passion for your communities' well-being can lead to a future in child welfare.

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