

2022 St. John's University Biennial Poverty Conference Abstracts

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2022 ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY BIENNIAL POVERTY CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

Submitted by Father Patrick J. Griffin and Dr. John Conry

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PRESENTATION 1

Name: Della DeKay

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SJU Faculty – The School of Education

Bio: I am an associate professor in The School of Education in the Department of Educational Specialties. I am also an attorney who works as a Guardian Ad Litem. During the pandemic I helped approximately 100 wards avoid eviction.

Title: THE HOMELESSNESS CRISIS

Keywords: Homeless shelters, housing court, Guardian Ad Litem, mental illness, eviction, elder abuse, undocumented immigrants

Abstract: On March 18, 2020 housing courts in New York City shut down. All evictions were stayed a few days later. For over 22 months no evictions occurred in New York City. In February 2022 evictions started again. The courts estimate over 66,000 people will face eviction by the end of September. This study focuses on the 22 months that housing court was closed. It will focus on a specific population: people who the courts determined lacked the mental or physical ability to avoid eviction. Most of these tenants receive a monthly income of less than \$1,500. The study will focus on evictions scheduled in the Bronx, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. The study will include an overview of the governmental policies, such as the computerized Emergency Rental Aid Program, implemented to help these individuals as well as a discussion of the court procedures introduced to make it easier for these people to understand their legal rights. One of the most popular and consequential court innovations was introducing virtual court appearances. In addition, the presentation will focus on what actually happened in the courts during this time. It will include interviews with judges, court personnel and landlord attorneys to get their reaction to these programs. Further, the presentation will contain an analysis of over 100 actual cases heard in housing court during this period. Four of the tenants in this case study who had severe mental illness which threatened the lives of their neighbors were evicted. One of these tenants was in a mental institution and the other two were in prison. Five people died of COVID related disease, and one is currently hospitalized with life-threatening COVID. Over the summer a record number of evictions will strain the courts' resources, the city's ability to provide emergency assistance to these tenants and the hospitals' ability to provide services for those threatened by homelessness. I will argue that abruptly ending the government policies established during the pandemic has created a new crisis. There were no plans for expanding shelters or providing increased medical or mental illness capacities. In addition, there has been no new legislation regulating rent increases that further endangered these tenants.

PRESENTATION 2

Names: Max Freeman (PI) Sabrina Corbett, Daisy Criollo, Natalie Jordan, Sara Kurutz, Jaqueline Lemus, Maria Tumminaro, Vaneiqua Wilson (students)

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SJU Faculty – St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Bio: Dr. Max Freeman is an Assistant Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders at St. John’s University and a Speech-Language Pathologist. His research examines the cognitive and linguistic effects of bilingualism, as well as language stimulation techniques during early childhood. The research presented in this submission is part of his ongoing research examining the effectiveness of clay-based language stimulation on improving children’s vocabulary and oral language skills.

Sara Kurutz is currently pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Speech-Language Pathology major at St. John’s University. She has been part of the Claylanguage project since August, 2021. She has been properly trained in administering the PPVT-5, EVT-3, SPELT-2 tests, as well as the distinctive expressive language assessment.

Jaqueline Lemus is graduate student and clinician, pursuing a Masters Degree in Speech-Language Pathology with a Bilingual extension at St. John’s University, Queens Campus. Jaqueline’s experience working with children in daycare and her interest in language development drove her to participate in the Claylanguage project. She has been participating in the Claylanguage project since September 2021. She has been explicitly trained in the PPVT-5, SPELT-2, and the distinctive expressive language assessment.

Natalie Jordan is an undergraduate student pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Speech-Language Pathology at St. John’s University. She has been participating in the Claylanguage project since November 2021. She has been appropriately trained to administer the PPVT-5, EVT-3, SPELT-2, and the distinctive expressive language assessment.

Sabrina Corbett is a first year graduate student pursuing a master’s degree in Speech-Language Pathology at St. John’s University. Sabrina’s experience working in pre-k classrooms and in early intervention are what drew her to become a part of the Claylanguage project. Her participation and training in the program have given her a better understanding of how a multimodality approach facilitates children’s oral language development.

Maria Tumminaro is a second-year Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology undergraduate student at St. John’s University. Her participation in the Claylanguage project began in August 2021. Maria has been appropriately directed in the assessment measures of the PPVT-5, EVT-3, SPELT-2, in addition to the distinctive expressive language test.

Vaneiqua Wilson is a first year graduate student pursuing a masters degree in Speech-Language Pathology at St. John’s University. Vaneiqua’s previous research experiences and interest in language development are what drove her to become a part of the Claylanguage project. Through this project, she has been trained in distinctive assessments and multi-modal interventions aimed at facilitating oral language development in children.

Daisy Criollo is a graduate student at St. John’s University, pursuing her Masters in Speech-Language Pathology with a Bilingual Extension. Daisy has been a part of the Claylanguage Project since 2020. Through her participation in this study, she has been trained to administer the PPVT-5, EVT-3, SPELT-2, and the distinctive expressive language assessment. Her interests in language development in early intervention continue to engage her participation in this study.

Title: DOES CLAY-BASED LANGUAGE STIMULATION IMPROVE LANGUAGE OUTCOMES?

Keywords: language stimulation, language intervention, vocabulary, MLU, language scaffolding, language development, preschool language

Abstract: It is well established that early language skills are modifiable with proper instruction (Konishi, et al., 2014). As such, practitioners attempting to follow evidence-based practices have cast a wide net when developing language enrichment programs that will impact later academic success. The current clay-based language stimulation program provides a way to integrate clinical expertise with fun, clay-based activities. The atmosphere in the art classroom setting facilitates improved receptive and expressive communication skills and elicits natural conversation. There are several advantages of clay-based language stimulation that set it apart from other, early language-based stimulation programs. The program integrates left and right brain function, since artistic creativity and language are targeted during the sessions. The lesson plans allow for children to use their imaginations through open-ended materials, which also leads to divergent and creative thinking. The program also provides the opportunity for speech-language pathologists to educate staff and teachers at daycares and preschools about speech and language norms. A pilot study took place at a local daycare in Queens, NY with 14 children, aged 2;0-5;11, from diverse backgrounds. Trained student clinicians performed the intervention. The intervention took place over 8 weeks, once a week for 60 minutes. Pre- and post-test measures (i.e., PPVT-5, EVT-3, SPELT-2, and language samples) were administered one week before and after the intervention. Participants demonstrated improvement in mean length utterance and expressive vocabulary, as evidenced by improvement in scores pre- to post-test. Future directions include a follow-up study with more participants across different daycares.

PRESENTATION 3

Name: Victoria O’Keefe

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SJU Student – St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Faculty Mentor - Dr. Tiffany Mohr

Bio: Dr. Tiffany Mohr serves as an assistant professor and program coordinator of public relations in the Collins College of Professional Studies. Victoria O’Keefe serves as Residence Campus Minister for Social Justice in University Mission and is a Ph.D. student in the Multi-Sector Communication Program.

Title: DISPLACED BY A WOUNDED PLANET

Keywords: Climate, earth, migration, displacement, ecology

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to recognize the emerging displacement of earth’s most vulnerable and impoverished populations due to effects of a damaged ecosystem and to determine how to get humankind to best recognize and respond to the pressing needs of the poor. “The poor you will always have with you.” (Matthew 26:11) Is it a call to act for a common good or a terrible accuracy Jesus knew, perhaps as result of severe abuse and poor stewardship of earth? This study addresses a new type of poverty in the 21st century—that of environmental migrants. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) based out of United Nations states, “Environmental migrants are persons or groups of persons, who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or chose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad”. Each year, tens of millions of people across the globe are driven from their homes by floods, storms, droughts, and other weather-related disasters. Tragically, it is the world’s poorest and most vulnerable communities that are hardest hit. (Refugees International) Island nations in the Pacific already have their share of environmental migrants where ocean flooding has washed saltwater onto agricultural lands and inundated sources of drinking water. In New York City, neighborhoods across boroughs vie for city funding from the mayor’s office, which has set aside a \$20bn portfolio of programs to make the city more resilient to the climate crisis. Around the globe, climate related events and worsening patterns threaten and displace the already impoverished and marginalized. The power in knowing how to elicit response and motivate action of individuals today can make a difference for tomorrow. This study will employ a 2x2 experimental design to test the effectiveness of public interest communication on the problem recognition, level of involvement, and constraint recognition of NGO stakeholders as it relates to climate refugees. Participants (n=200) will be recruited using a panel service to participate in the experiment. Conditions will be manipulated using two independent variables. The first will be based upon exemplification theory, which postulates that people are more likely to be persuaded when an issue is presented as affecting a person (exemplar) versus when an issue impacts a group or number of people (base-rate). The second variable to examine is rooted in journalistic news values: proximity. Research shows that the more proximal an issue or phenomenon is to a person, the more likely they are to care and invest time to understand the problem. In sum, this study will apply an interdisciplinary mass communication approach to examine the urgent issue of climate refugees. This study is a seminal work in the area of public interest communication and environmental migrants. The results of this study will elucidate effective communication strategies for NGOs to employ when communicating with their stakeholders. Elevating stakeholders’ perceived level of involvement has been shown to predict behavioral outcomes such as seeking and sharing information related to the issue along with donating time and monetary resources. Providing NGOs with the tools to mobilize their stakeholders’ to act in preventative ways to stave off the onslaught of potential forced environmental migrants around the world is in the best interest of our planet, communities, and the poorest among us.

Sources: <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/climate-displacement-program>
<http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p328371/pdf/ch16.pdf>
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/sep/20/new-york-city-sinking-climate-crisis-waterfront>
<https://publications.iom.int/books/mrs-no-31-migration-and-climate-change>

PRESENTATION 4

Name: Blanche Palasi

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SJU Student – College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Faculty Mentor - Christine Chim, PharmD, BCACP Associate Professor (chime@stjohns.edu)

Bio: Blanche Palasi is a fourth-year pharmacy student dedicated to inclusion and social justice in healthcare. Through her leadership positions in Philippine Americans Reaching Everyone and Student Society of Health System Pharmacists, she is excited to advocate for marginalized communities in her future pharmacy career. Christine Chim, PharmD, BCACP, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Clinical Health Professions, College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. She precepts pharmacy students and provides patient care as an ambulatory care pharmacist within the Division of General Internal Medicine at Northwell Health. Her research interests include interprofessional education, pharmacist-run home visits, medication adherence, social determinants of health, and healthcare disparities in underserved communities.

Title: THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH ON POVERTY AND MENTAL HEALTH IN MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Keywords: poverty, mental health, social determinants of health, COVID-19, healthcare, vulnerable populations

Abstract: The financial and emotional hardships experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to the rise of mental disorders, especially in underprivileged communities. Racial and ethnic minorities, low-income households, and essential workers face inequitable access to valuable healthcare, education, and social resources. These social determinants of health (SDOH) influence health outcomes, and consequently, health disparities. Rooted in lack of opportunities and structural racism, the health barriers created by SDOH put already vulnerable groups at a disproportionate risk for poverty. Poverty is defined by a financial inability to meet basic needs. The consequences of poverty were exacerbated by COVID-19, accelerating a cycle of food insecurity, limited education, inadequate housing, and unemployment. In the face of stay-at-home orders, low-wage essential workers became critical to the nation's economy yet faced increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 and mental health disorders. The goal for this project was to review current literature describing the impact of SDOH on poverty in the context of COVID-19. Without the opportunities and resources to thrive—as measured by SDOH—poverty will continue to cause poor mental health outcomes. The most vulnerable groups at risk for poverty were those with unfavorable demographic, economic, neighborhood, and sociocultural characteristics. Underserved individuals and communities were more likely to experience suboptimal mental health outcomes, including anxiety and depression symptoms, substance abuse, and suicidal ideation. Healthcare professionals in various settings are key in identifying SDOH and helping patients access necessary resources. Inadequate public policies during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted larger institutional injustices and emphasized the need to advocate for equitable healthcare and access to resources in marginalized groups.

PRESENTATION 5

Names: Vincent Crespo; Faculty Mentors: Joseph Trainor, Ph.D.; Maria Pirrone, Esq.

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SJU Faculty – The Peter J. Tobin College of Business

Bio: The researchers on this paper are Dr. Joseph Trainor and Professor Maria Pirrone, Associate Professors in the Department of Accountancy in the Tobin College of Business. Both Dr. Trainor and Professor Pirrone collaborate on research in business ethics, social justice, accounting education, and taxation issues.

Title: DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 ECONOMIC IMPACT PAYMENTS: DID THE PAYMENTS FROM CONGRESS REACH THE INTENDED RECIPIENTS?

Keywords: Covid-19 Economic Impact Payments Homeless Unemployed

Abstract: Numerous studies suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic affected socio-economic groups in different ways. One of the groups hardest hit by the pandemic, in terms of both health and economic impact, were individuals in lower socio-economic classes. Individuals in these lower classes often found themselves not easily able to transfer to an online work environment, often served in public facing jobs, and found their employment terminated or earnings lowered. Anecdotal reports suggest that individuals in higher economic classes in the workforce had job duties shifted online with little effect on their income levels or career progression. Congress, having identified the plight of many American families who were struggling economically due to lost wages, lost jobs, or the combination of both, passed three consecutive economic relief payments. Starting in March 2020, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) provided Economic Impact Payments of up to \$1,200 per adult for eligible individuals and \$500 per qualifying child under age 17. For a family of four, these Economic Impact Payments provided up to \$3,400 of direct financial relief. Congress provided a second Economic Impact with the Tax Relief Act of 2020, enacted in late December 2020 which authorized additional payments of up to \$600 per adult for eligible individuals and up to \$600 for each qualifying child under age 17. The final Economic Impact Payment resulted from The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (American Rescue Plan), enacted in early March 2021, which provided Economic Impact Payments of up to \$1,400 for eligible individuals or \$2,800 for married couples filing jointly, plus \$1,400 for each qualifying dependent, including adult dependents. Recognizing that delivering these economic impact payments to the homeless, unemployed, and working poor populations was inherently more difficult, the IRS expanded outreach to millions of homeless, rural poor, and other disadvantaged Americans to ensure that eligible recipients received the Economic Impact Payments. The IRS formed new and continued relationships with homeless shelters, legal aid clinics, and provided Economic Impact Payment information in more than 35 languages. Our study examines IRS data at the state level to determine if state characteristics are associated with Economic Impact Payments received by individuals within each given state. We use state-level independent variables such as population size, median wages, number of non-profit organizations within the state, average educational attainment, number of higher-education institutions, as well as other control variables in our regressions. Our a priori expectation is that states with more robust infrastructures serving the homeless, unemployed, and working poor will have higher distribution rates per capita. The results of our study may provide evidence to support the IRS inventions or suggest that additional work is needed when considering unserved populations. Our study also has policy implications for Congress when it considers how best to approach these types of targeted population situations.

PRESENTATION 6

Name: Jordan González, Ph.D.

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SJU Faculty – The School of Education

Bio: Dr. Jordan González is an Assistant Professor of TESOL and Bilingual Education at St. John's University where he prepares the next generation of K-12 educators for teaching certification and instruction within culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. His research interests include feedback in L2 writing development, education policies regarding English Language Learners (ELLs), and technology integration for L2 development. Dr. González is also the Region 1 Delegate for the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) where he represents the Long Island educators, parents, members of community-based organizations, institutions of higher education and advocates involved in the education of ELLs.

Title: BUILDING EQUITY AND ACCESS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS DURING THE PANDEMIC AND BEYOND

Keywords: Education, English Language Learners, Immigrants, COVID-19, K-12, Equity and Access, Instruction

Abstract: The purpose of this poster presentation is to showcase the innovative research completed on building equity and access for grades K-12 English Language Learners (ELLs) and immigrant populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The scope of the presentation is guided by critical questions on the disproportionality present within culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms during the natural disaster. The pandemic has had a profound impact on the way we educate our students, including the way educators and students interact. This has prompted strong implications on the state of the teaching profession. Instructional practices and technology integration that were long overdue are now receiving greater consideration; however, the opportunities gap appear to have widen. ELLs are a rapidly growing population in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017). Yet, less than half of ELLs have graduated with their cohort in states like New York. In June 2020, 46% of ELLs graduated while the statewide average was 84.8% (NYSED, 2021). This occurred during the height of the pandemic when standardized examinations required for graduation, the Regents examinations, were canceled and students were provided exemptions in order to graduate. This is extremely concerning as this suggests that even with the examination exemptions, more than half of the ELL population statewide may have failed academic coursework preventing them from graduating. In contrast, the ELL graduation rate rose to 60.5% the following year in June 2021. The Regents test exemptions continued, but this time there was an increase in ELLs passing courses to qualify of the exemptions and graduate. The shifts in instructional practice prompted a significant increase in ELL graduation and academic outcomes. The method of the presentation includes the identification of the challenges, successes and best practices that have emerged during the pandemic from the data collection that includes surveys and field observations of classrooms with English Language Learners and immigrant K-12 students in one of the largest urban school districts in New York. The content of the presentation is the review of the findings as well as a discussion on the implications on how educators can build equity and access through the lessons learned during the pandemic and beyond.

PRESENTATION 7

Name: Shannon Contino

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SJU Student – St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Faculty Mentor – Dr. Shruti Deshpande

Bio: Shannon Contino is from Huntington, New York. She received my Bachelor of Arts at Hofstra University in Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences with a double minor in Disability Studies and Fine Arts. She is now currently working towards her Doctorate in Audiology from the Long Island Au.D Consortium. Since joining the program, her passion for audiology has just continued to flourish. As a second-year student, she has become co-president of her Consortium’s Student Academy of Audiology Chapter. She also had the wonderful opportunity to give back to the community by interning; where she has learned, tested, and observed what it means to be a truly patient-centered future audiologist.

Samantha Cajas is from Queens, New York. Last year, she graduated from The Mary Louis Academy in Jamaica Estates. Like many high school students, she was indecisive as to what major she would eventually pursue in college. She went through a series of professions that were in contemplation before deciding on the one that best suited her. With that said, she is currently a first-year student majoring in Psychology. A semester and a half later, she is still just as interested in the major. She loves learning about the theories and knowing that one day she’ll be able to analyze, assess, and understand one’s life.

Dr. Shruti Deshpande’s research interest is in auditory perception and processing across different populations. She uses behavioral and electrophysiological techniques with a goal to facilitate assessment and management of hearing-related challenges. At St. John’s University, Dr. Deshpande has led research that focuses on enhancing accessibility, affordability, and improving outcomes in hearing health and audiology for underserved and/or diverse populations via a community-based model. Her full biography is available here: <https://www.stjohns.edu/academics/faculty/shruti-deshpande-phd>

Title: OCTAVE, INTER-OCTAVE, AND EXTENDED HIGH-FREQUENCY HEARING TESTING IN RACIALLY DIVERSE ADOLESCENTS USING MOBILE HEALTH (mHEALTH) TECHNOLOGIES

Keywords: - Extended high-frequency hearing test - mobile-based hearing testing application - HearTest - Adolescents - Young adults - Underserved communities

Abstract: The objective of the present pilot study was to establish the hearing thresholds in octave, inter-octave, and extended high-frequency range of adolescents in underserved communities. By combining octave, inter-octave, and extended high-frequency testing with mobile-based hearing testing technology, such as HearTest designed by HearX, we are able to alleviate the disparities this vulnerable population faces when it comes to accessing hearing care. The study to establish the feasibility of conducting mobile-based audiologic testing was performed at several local schools in Queens and Staten Island, NY. Participants consisted of 76 adolescents (mean age: 16.67 years), 46 males, and 30 females. The racial/ethnic distribution of participants included African American, Hispanic, Asian, White, and others. Mobile-based hearing testing was performed in a quiet room at the local school. For each participant, hearing thresholds were established at each frequency and for both ears. A pilot study consisting of 5 individuals demonstrated good reliability of thresholds obtained in the audiometric booth with a standard GSI61 audiometer and hearing thresholds obtained in a quiet room with the HearX device and the HDA300 headphones. Implementing HearTest as a method of monitoring octave, inter-octave, and extended high-frequency hearing thresholds in young adults and adolescents living in underserved communities will help broaden accessibility, lower the cost of traditional audiological services, and mitigate the need for health insurance when it comes to audiological pure tone testing. By eliminating these extrinsic factors, we can provide individuals and their communities the ability to

detect hearing loss prior to impairment, contributing to a better quality of life.

PRESENTATION 8

Name: Garfield Benjamin

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SJU Faculty + Student– Collins College of Professional Studies

Faculty Mentor - Dr. Tiffany Mohr

Bio: Garfield Benjamin is a PhD student in the Multi-Sector Communication program and serves as an adjunct instructor at the Collins College of Professional Studies and Tiffany Mohr serves as assistant professor and program coordinator of public relations in the Collins College of Professional Studies.

Title: EXPLORING THE UNIVERSITY’S ROLE IN STATUS MOBILITY FOR STUDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED

Keywords: Poverty, Status Mobility, Access, Higher Education, Pedagogy, Mentorship

Abstract: There is an abundance of research highlighting a need for shifts in educational policy and pedagogical practices toward more individualized, student-centered learning experiences (Seale, 2019; Richards, Brown and Forde, 2007; Howard and Terry Sr., 2011; Han et al., 2014). These practices should acknowledge differences in student cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and consider ways these differences affect students learning. Acknowledging these differences is particularly important across traditional college-level learners as students attending colleges come from different global environments, with a variety of experiences where a “one-size-fits-all” model may not contribute to effective learning. For a particular group of students, a college education is crucial in their ability to obtain a job that will allow them to support their families. More frequently, college is becoming a prerequisite for obtaining jobs that did not require it in the past. This poses a challenge for people who consider themselves socially disadvantaged because they come from a lower socioeconomic background or a community where their primary and secondary schooling was under-resourced. This ultimately contributes to the reinforcing poverty as the required college education often leaves these students in debt and can inhibit status mobility. Considering the university’s important role in developing the future workforce and controlling class, this study will question the responsibility of shortening this gap in inequity and look to propose ways in which educators can contribute to their students’ growth, despite any issues with resources or access, making status mobility available for those who might need it most. The purpose of this study is to examine ways in which higher educational institutions in the United States reinforce social marginalization and systemic issues in status mobility across students of color that identify as socially disadvantaged and to propose ways in which educational institutions can foster equitable opportunities that respond to cultural differences that may be associated with historical inequities between well-resourced and under-resourced schooling. This study addresses poverty and the racial divide in the United States by reviewing the impact of the inequities in primary and secondary education on the pursuits of higher education for students of color who self-identify as socially disadvantaged. It is crucial to this study that the participants self-identify, or indicate their perception of their socioeconomic status. The student’s perception of their situation contributes to the ways in which they engage in the learning process and the resources offered at higher educational institutions. This study will examine the ways in which the inequities ultimately contribute to the overall racial wealth gap. Over the course of Summer 2022, this study will collect data from twenty student participants using in-depth interviews to explore how they experience: belonging, mentorship, and availability of resources while studying in a private, Catholic, and metropolitan higher educational institution. The data will be thematically and systematically coded based upon Michel Foucault’s theories on identity, knowledge, and power structures which outlines the idea that power and knowledge are related and people’s identities are created through the relationship between power and knowledge (Foucault, 1977). The result of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on culture and pedagogy with the purpose of developing student support and pedagogical practices that respond to socioeconomic and cultural differences resulting from inequities linked to poverty and a lack of resources that may

hinder students' abilities to fully engage in the learning process for students that identify as socially disadvantaged.

PRESENTATION 9

Name: Seung Eun (Sunny) McDevitt

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SJU Faculty – The School of Education

Bio: Seung Eun (Sunny) McDevitt, Ed.D. is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at St. John's University. Her research interests are centered around the intersection of immigration and disability, particularly focusing on teachers as key agents of inclusion in early childhood education and care. More specifically, she is interested in looking at immigrant women of color in early childhood education and care settings and how their lived experiences and identities inform their inclusive pedagogy. Her most recent publications include work in the *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, and *Teachers College Record*.

Title: FAITH, DISABILITY, AND POVERTY: IMMIGRANT WOMEN OF COLOR CARING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN CHILDCARE

Keywords: Childcare, Immigration, Women of Color, Immigrant Children with Disabilities

Abstract: Women of color comprise 40% of the early childhood education and care workforce (Whitebook et al., 2018). These early educators include immigrants in under-resourced communities who are marginalized with low wages and poor working conditions. Recent policy changes to “raise the bar” in early childhood education have further disenfranchised these immigrant women of color with large-scale standardized measures that neglect their local cultural contexts and diverse childrearing practices. There is a dearth of research investigating these women, their strengths, and the vulnerabilities they face daily while caring for children, particularly those with disabilities and immigrant backgrounds. This research presents the stories of two immigrant preschool teachers of color in New York City, Jada from Jamaica and Vanessa from Guyana, part of a larger multi-case study. I employ portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) as a frame and inquiry method to examine their lived experiences as educators, immigrants, and women of color; their critical care work in childcare; and their Christian faith that shapes their relationships with young immigrant children with disabilities. I utilize qualitative research methods (Yin, 2014) including semi-structured in-depth interviews, ethnographic observations, classroom artifacts, and reflective memos to dig deeper into the complexities and nuances of their stories. Preliminary findings indicate three themes: (1) critical care as a calling, (2) marginal lived experiences as resources, and (3) living in service to others at a cost. Both women shared their faith was central to their work. Jada described her work as an educator as “a passion, purpose, and a calling,” and Vanessa stated, “I pray for the kids. When I go in in the morning, I say a prayer that I'd deliver the day in God's hand and ask Him to help me meet every child's need that day.” Jada, whose visual impairment and lived experiences as an immigrant woman of color served as resources for her teaching and caring, explained, “Because of where God placed me and what I had gone through . . . I could draw on the strength of the experience.” Although she averred, “Money isn't always everything,” the fact is childcare workers are on the lowest rung in teaching (Park et al., 2015). Vanessa often visits her church's food pantry for her own family. Despite the low wages and difficult working conditions servicing immigrant children with disabilities and their families, the two teachers find joy in their work because, as Jada said, “If I only changed one child's life, it would've been worth all of this because I know that I did something well.” This research contributes to our limited knowledge about early educators of color with immigrant origins, who comprise a large percentage of the workforce but have yet to be heard. Their nuanced narratives offer a route to understanding the goodness and the vulnerabilities in their work. My hope is their knowledge, experiences, and commitment to caring for marginalized children are not only acknowledged and accounted for, but also valued and respected to encourage rethinking of equity and inclusion in early childhood education.

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PRESENTATION 12

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Bio: Ishita Khemka, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Special Education at The School of Education at St. John's University. She has many years of experience in teacher preparation and in developing innovative school and community programs to support inclusion and positive support building for children and youth from marginalized groups and those with special needs. Her past work includes developing an education program for migrant children (ages 3-16 years) living in poverty and out-of-school in New Delhi, leading to the creation of a non-traditional model for teaching literacy and self-awareness to early learners using art and play. The poster will be presented in collaboration with Ms. Riya Chandra, High Schooler, Hastings High School, Hastings on Hudson, NY, and a Peer Dance Instructor (Virtual) for a Center Program in Mumbai and Ms. Anuja Khemka, MSW, Columbia University, Executive Director, Children's Hope India.

Title: SOURCES OF RESILIENCE IN MARGINALIZED CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN URBAN INDIA: A LOOK AT INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Abstract: An alarming number of India's urban children and youth live in conditions of poverty and remain vulnerable to high levels of adversity including lack of basic health services and the opportunity to receive formal education (National Institute of Urban Affairs, India, 2020). This creates formidable challenges to their capacity to grow and to thrive. Helping vulnerable children to build resilience, requires intervening and supporting at the individual, family, community, and societal levels. Protective factors at the individual level, allow children and youth to benefit from positive experiences and form key capabilities in favor of better childhood outcomes and overall well-being, even when facing substantial risk. A look at these individual protective factors will be the focus of study. The aim of the poster presentation will be to examine how children living in stressful life situations of poverty construct resilience for their own well-being and promote positive mental health outcomes for themselves. Although the impact of poverty on young children and their development is often studied in terms of negative health and poor life outcomes, there is much to learn from how some children might cope and adapt to stressful life circumstances in ways that mitigate their negative outcomes. Resilience provides the wherewithal to cope and informs the capacity to grow in ways that strengthens the ability to adapt in the face of inequalities and crisis, a common accompaniment of the life experience of children living in poverty. For instance, the recent crisis of COVID-19 pandemic has shown a disproportionate adverse impact on the lives of women and children from lower-income groups, calling upon children and youth to be even more resilient in coping with unpredictable stressors to their health and life, and loss of regular comprehensive care services. Using participatory research methods (e.g. interviews with program directors, qualitative data), portrayal of participant narratives and reflection will be presented as an ongoing effort to develop our understanding of how young children in poverty construct resilience in their cultural and social context. Information will be gathered from a purposively sampled group of children and youth who attend community-based programs supported by non-governmental organization (NGO) programs in India. The programs located in high-poverty urban areas provide education, recreation, and health supports and services to young children and youth from under resourced communities who experience multiple life stressors relating to poverty, homelessness or migration, and lack of basic resources. We will draw on the findings to identify a few key elements in participants' experiences that can serve as a model for designing future interventions for