

Letter From the Editors

The National Organization of Forensic Social Work aspires to advance social justice through the interprofessional collaboration of human service and legal systems support. Ultimately, by educating forensic professionals in best practice standards, we believe we can have a safer and more just society—one in which forensic social workers are sought by law enforcement and the judiciary as collaborators and primary stakeholders at the kitchen table of community leaders. Social workers have always been ‘champions for change’ and must continue to reach across the aisles to not only educate the judiciary about social reform, but other professions as well. In the 21st century, we must re-ignite the call Dr. King made 50 years ago on the mall of Washington, DC, that one day children of all races, ethnicities, and religions would be able to live together equally and freely.

In King’s charge, we must remember he did not focus on the negative aspects of the oppression that he and so many others lived under but instead, focused on the belief that we can have a better world if we join together in a positive, peaceful, and proactive manner. His speech was one of great hope because hope is what inspires and empowers change. As change agents, forensic social workers must lead the charge for social advocacy and justice for all. As Jane Addams, who was often considered to be the first social worker, led the charge for the opening of the first juvenile court in 1899, we must continue to build bridges of social and economic justice. If we are to avoid incidents like Ferguson, MO, we must work harder to educate our social workers and legal colleagues about the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. We must call together the community stakeholders to work on sociopolitical changes to improve racial, economic, and mental health outcomes for all citizens—not just the privileged.

Forensic social workers collaborate not merely to exchange information and ideas, but to create a process that strategically identifies and calls forth all stakeholders to define the real issues and build a means for accomplishing the agreed upon goals. It requires a level of commitment to make sure our Code of Ethics isn’t seen as mere rhetoric but what we live by and how we create a real paradigm shift of cultural humility.

We hope you continue to find issues of the journal thought-provoking and informative as we aspire to guide forensic professionals to improve social justice outcomes for all.

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