



## Shae-Lynn Harris | Social Work Alumnae Student Highlight

Before she started college, Shae-Lynn envisioned herself pursuing a degree in nursing because she always had a passion for helping people. However, once she saw the required science courses, she knew nursing was not the best fit. After conversations with advisors, she discovered social work, and now, five years later, Shae-Lynn is one of the first graduates of the RACC/KU collaborative social work program and is working part-time at Family Promise of Berks County helping homeless youth get back on their feet.

Shae-Lynn's time with Kutztown University did not begin until a little later in her academic career. After graduating from Reading High, Shae-Lynn received a full scholarship from Reading Area Community College. Being a new mom and living close to the RACC campus, she knew this was an opportunity she could not pass up.

**"I always say I can't change the world, but I can make a difference in one person's life and then pass it on."**

When Shae-Lynn graduated from RACC with an associates degree in social work, the RACC/KU collaborative program was brand new. This program allows individuals to be enrolled in KU but take KU classes on the RACC campus. Students complete twelve KU social work classes plus the internship, all taught and supervised by KU professors.

The RACC/KU program intrigued Shae-Lynn because she had received an all-academic paid scholarship through Phi Theta Kappa, valid for a bachelor's degree from any institution in PA. Despite the ability to go anywhere, Shae-Lynn took

a chance and enrolled as one of the first students in the collaborative program because it was convenient for her needs and lifestyle. "I think the best thing for KU to do was to create that program," said Shae-Lynn. "Them having that program and recognizing that there are other students out there. Not everyone can commute to KU. Not everyone [...] can live on campus. We have a lot of adults who are trying to go back to school, who have children and families.

Having this program for these students will give KU insight on these students whose voices aren't usually heard."

Shae-Lynn graduated from KU with her bachelor's degree a year ago, and since then, she has put her knowledge into practice and has become a staff member for Family

Promise of Berks County, an organization that provides services to families,

youth, and individuals facing a housing crisis in the Reading community. Shae-Lynn began her position as a Rent and Utility Case Manager, assisting members of the community by helping stop evictions and finding funds so people could stay in their homes.

After only six months in that position, she was promoted to U-Turn Manager. Now, Shae-Lynn helps homeless youth attain various important documents, such as social security cards, state I.D.s, and birth certificates; secure housing and employment; and go back to school. There

are many crises happening in the Reading community because of the Coronavirus pandemic, and Shae-Lynn attempts to assist people in crisis in whatever way possible, including by calling shelters for openings.

"This position is very rewarding because I remember myself as a youth, and I didn't have anyone to turn to," she said. "I navigated through everything, so to be able to share my story as an inspiration to help youth get back on their feet so they can become something as well. It's very rewarding."

One of Shae-Lynn's favorite memories so far from her time with Family Promise is when she helped an individual who was homeless for over three years get their first apartment. "I always say, I can't change the world, but I can make a change in one person's life and then pass it on," said Shae-Lynn. This person is still living there and doing well today, as a result of Shae-Lynn's assistance.

Shae-Lynn is working towards her Masters in Social Work from Edinboro University and hopes to attain her social work license. Her ultimate goal is to become a school social worker and then, one day, open her own non-profit organization that specializes in assisting young parents.

## Congratulations Graduates!

It is always an honor for me to recognize this milestone as you begin your journeys as graduates and alumni. Your graduation is even more remarkable. More than a year ago we transitioned to social distancing, online classes, Zoom, and great uncertainty. Your resilience, adaptability, and perseverance brought you to this moment. Those qualities will serve you well. We in the Dean's Office celebrate with you and wish you the absolute best. Congratulations graduates!



**DR. DAVID BEOUGH, DEAN**



## Dr. Anita Meehan | Psychology Emeritus Faculty Highlight

Emeritus professor Dr. Anita Meehan had a long and fulfilling relationship with Kutztown University during her thirty-one years as a member of the psychology department. She made a lasting impact on students, fellow faculty, and the department through strong leadership skills and extensive knowledge of psychology. Years after retirement, Dr. Meehan is still engaged in her academic and intellectual life through her assistance in organizing an exchange initiative between Pennsylvania universities and India and her membership with the CLAS Advancement Board.

### Note from the Editor

It has been my absolute pleasure being the Writer and Editor of *The Collage* for the past two years. I loved talking with so many faculty and students of CLAS and learning about all your amazing projects, areas of study, internships, and accomplishments. Thank you to the Dean's Office for taking a chance and giving me this experience, one I will never forget. All the best to the next editor and the many more editors that will follow. I cannot wait to see the newsletters you publish!

Sincerely,  
Courtney Morstatt  
Class of 2021



Dr. Meehan's area of study is developmental psychology and lifespan development. "You can think of any topic in psychology and apply an age perspective to it," said Dr. Meehan. She is trained in the experimental side of the field that focuses on researching as opposed to the clinical side that focuses on counseling.

When Dr. Meehan began her education at Wilkes College, now Wilkes University, in 1974, she was uncertain about what she wanted to do. She thought she would like to teach, so she enrolled in elementary education but became discouraged by the unchallenging level of the material, so

she added French, a language she always adored, as a second major. However, Dr. Meehan also found herself intrigued by her psychology classes, as required for the education major, so she

added psychology as a third major. When it came time for graduate school, Dr. Meehan applied to Temple University for psychology, which led her to becoming a college professor of psychology. "My goal was to teach, and I ultimately ended up in psychology from all the courses I took," she said. "A lot of people fall into what they want to do. It finds you. It happens."

Dr. Meehan enjoyed working on research projects with students.

She worked with many students through independent studies, each one unique, and this pushed Dr. Meehan to continue learning. She completed a memorable project with a student on depression and the mood congruence effect, which is the theory that when you are in a good mood, you remember happy memories and when you are in a bad mood, you remember bad memories. Together, they collected data, presented their findings at the Eastern Psychological Association conference, and won first place in a nationwide National Honor Society of Psychology contest.

For fifteen years, Dr. Meehan served as chair of the psychology department. Throughout her time in this position, she worked closely with fellow faculty members, advised students, and supported the entire department to make it as strong as possible. One of the greatest changes that occurred in the department while Dr. Meehan was chair was combining the B.A. and B.S. psychology degrees. When the two degrees were first created, there were many differences between

the two, but as years went by, they had become more and more similar, the only difference being the language requirement. Dr. Meehan worked with external program reviewers to combine the two and create tracks within the psychology degree: clinical counseling, industrial/organizational, experimental, and paralegal.

When Dr. Meehan was in the process of retiring in spring 2017, former provost Dr. Anne Zayaitz informed Dr. Meehan of a PASSHE initiative focused on working with academic institutions in India, such as Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce. PASSHE needed a person to help plan the initiative from the PA side, and after a few conversations with the organizers, Dr. Meehan decided to jump on board part-time. Dr. Meehan and the India organizer have arranged many events, such as tours of PA schools for students visiting from India, informational workshops, and guest lectures. Dr. Meehan focuses on the administrative side of planning, including arranging partnership agreements between institutions, evaluating program offerings, and creating visitation schedules for touring students and faculty.

**"A lot of people fall into what they want to do.  
It finds you. It happens."**

In addition to her involvement with the PASSHE/India initiative, Dr. Meehan is also a member of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Advancement Board and has been able to help raise scholarship funds for LAS students.

Dr. Meehan did not need to take on these positions and responsibilities, but she wanted to stay engaged in her academic and intellectual life. "I retired early," she said. "If I had wanted to continue teaching, I would have just stayed at KU. But, this is a flexible thing. I can do what I want, it keeps me academically engaged, and I think when you are a person that completed graduate school, a Ph.D. program, and you taught, learning new things is just what you like." She is slowly easing away from full-time academic commitments, and she is enjoying this transition every step of the way.

For now, Dr. Meehan is very satisfied with where she is at. She is engaging with the community she served for so long, helping students find their path in academia, and having fun while doing it.