**Faculty Spotlight: Elizabeth Greeno, PhD, LCSW-C**

**Supporting and Advocating for LGBTQ Youth**

*Editorial Note: Beginning with this issue of newsletter, The Institute will be profiling faculty members from the School of Social Work and other Schools and Universities who partner with The Institute on projects. In particular, we will be highlighting faculty research, teaching, and clinical activities that relate to our newsletter topics.*

I have been with the University of Maryland School of Social Work since 2008, when I joined the Ruth H. Young Center as a Research Assistant Professor. More recently, I have been thrilled to be able to collaborate with The Institute for Innovation and Implementation as the Principal Investigator for Maryland’s recent federal planning grant, Thrive@25, which explores housing stability and resources for youth aging out of foster care and older youth with foster care histories.

My research interests include the child welfare workforce, perinatal addiction and recovery, foster care providers, and child welfare services and innovations for older youth in foster care. I consider myself a mixed methods researcher, bringing a blend of qualitative and quantitative methodology to my work. For the past five years I’ve been the lead evaluator for the University of Maryland School of Social Work Title IV-E Education for Public Child Welfare Program. My efforts with the Title IV-E program have been to explore the perceptions, development, and competency of students entering the child welfare workforce. In 2012, in collaboration with Children & Families First, I was awarded a USDHHS Children’s Bureau *Comprehensive Support Services for Families Affected by Substance Abuse and/or HIV/AIDS* initiative [HHS-2012-ACF-ACYC-CU-0321] grant to study treatment outcomes for women and families addressing perinatal addiction. This work is ongoing and through a mixed methods approach I hope to identify elements for retention and success for perinatal addiction treatment. My work with Maryland KEEP, a training program designed to support and train kinship and foster parents, investigates changes in parent stress and caregiving behaviors and well as behavioral changes with their children.

One of my priorities is to support and advocate for individuals who identify as LGBTQ. I have been working with youth who identify as LGBTQ for the last 10 years through my work in child welfare and as an outpatient mental health practitioner. I saw a need for competent practitioners who could provide specialized services for youth who identify as LGBTQ and decided to step into that gap. In my clinical work with these youth, I incorporate mental health, gender identity, coming out support, and family therapy. In my research efforts, I attempt to gather the experiences of and services and resources available for youth who are LGBTQ.
Thrive@25 provides a unique opportunity to work directly with youth and learn from them regarding their experiences, concerns, and recommendations related to child welfare and more broadly across our child- and family-serving systems. I am placing a special emphasis on experiences and services for LGBTQ youth and through our research with Thrive@25 hope to honor this population that has historically been marginalized and ignored in research.

Dr. Greeno is a Research Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland School of Social Work and Principal Investigator and Lead Evaluator on the Thrive@25 planning grant. She can be reached via e-mail at egreeno@ssw.umaryland.edu.