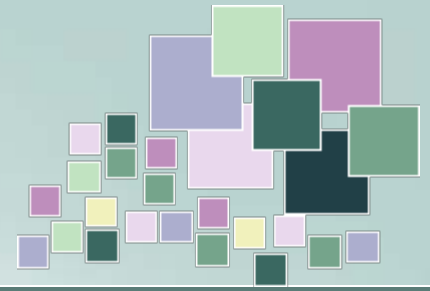


Makenzie Petzel



[Home](#)
[Personal Information](#)
[Educational Experiences](#)
[Volunteer and Work Experience](#)

Welcome!



My name is Makenzie Petzel, thank you for visiting my site! I am from Arlington, Minnesota and am a senior at Minnesota State University, Mankato. I will graduate in May of 2016 with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work with a minor in Spanish. I am also a member of Minnesota State University's Honors program. My academic goals include obtaining a Master's Degree in Social Work with a concentration in families and children and later become a Licensed Independent Social Worker. Professionally, I hope to work in the school system connecting families, students, and communities to resources for positive change. Please browse my site for more information on me and how my undergraduate experiences have shaped and aided my passion for social work!

■ Personal Mission Statement

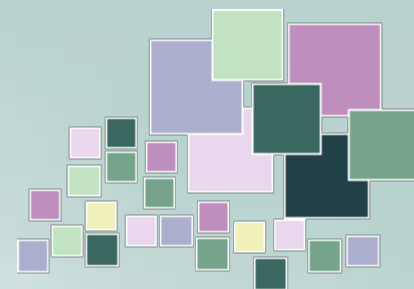
I will strive not only to meet the expectations set forth by the National Association of Social Workers (NSAW), but also my personal expectations to respect, empower, and encourage every client to see the potential inside himself or herself for a better future as God has called me.

[Home](#)
[Personal Information](#)
[Educational Experiences](#)
[Volunteer and Work Experience](#)

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[Home](#) [Personal Information](#) [Educational Experiences](#) [Volunteer and Work Experience](#)

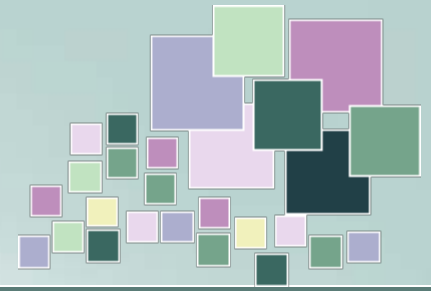
About Me

I am ready to begin my career in a human service agency with the communication, leadership, research, and intercultural skills I have developed throughout my undergraduate career. I chose to study Spanish as a minor in order to increase the diversity of potential clients in my practice. I was also privileged to be accepted in the Honors program of Minnesota State University, Mankato which has significantly enhanced my critical thinking and reflection skills on being a leader, conducting research, and interacting with others of different cultures.

[Home](#) [Personal Information](#) [Educational Experiences](#) [Volunteer and Work Experience](#)



Makenzie Petzel



Home Personal Information **Educational Experiences** Volunteer and Work Experience

In this section:

- [Junior Field Experience](#)
- [Minnesota State University, Mankato Honors Program](#)

The Social Work Profession

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.

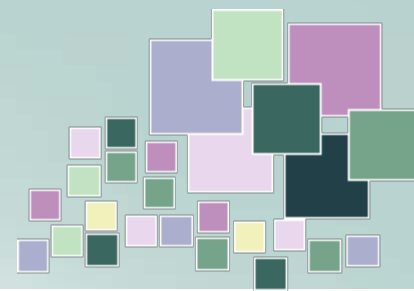


Home Personal Information Educational Experiences **Volunteer and Work Experience**

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Home Personal Information Educational Experiences Volunteer and Work Experience

In this section:

- [Junior Field Experience](#)
- [Minnesota State University, Mankato Honors Program](#)
 - [Leadership](#)
 - [Research](#)
 - [Global Citizenship](#)
 - [Learning Plans](#)

The Honors Program of Minnesota State University, Mankato

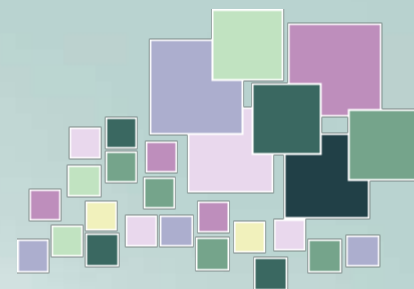
The three competencies of the Honors program include leadership, research, and global citizenship, are designed to challenge students by promoting self analysis and reflection. Coordinators of the Honors Program feel that these competencies are essential to the success of a student in today's current work force. The work that students complete for the Honors program generally falls under one of the competencies in both general education courses and upper-level seminars. Honors courses are designed to encourage forward thinking and deep discussion between students with small class sizes. Many Honors courses fulfill general education credits at MSU.

I am enjoying my time in the Honors program because I love discussion and reflecting on my beliefs and how those are changing as I progress through college in the Honors program and my Social Work major. The three competencies, I believe, focus on developing skills that I will undoubtedly use throughout college and into my career. The Honors program tests my abilities as a student in order to help me reach my full potential.



Home Personal Information Educational Experiences Volunteer and Work Experience

Makenzie Petzel



Home Personal Information Educational Experiences Volunteer and Work Experience

In this section:

- [Junior Field Experience](#)
- [Minnesota State University, Mankato Honors Program](#)
 - [Leadership](#)
 - [Mankato YMCA Brother/Sister Program](#)
 - [My Mentor Philosophy](#)
 - [Hosanna Highland Missionary Resident Community Social Service Project](#)
 - [Growing the Leader in You- Honors Change Project](#)
 - [Honors Student Council Vice President](#)
 - [Mankato Cru Weekly Meeting Team Co-Leader](#)
 - [Research](#)
 - [Global Citizenship](#)
 - [Learning Plans](#)

Leadership



"Students will identify and utilize leadership values as members of campus and community organizations."

"Students will identify roles within teams and utilize them within campus or community organizations."

I believe that there is no one definition of a leader but that there are many ways of being a successful

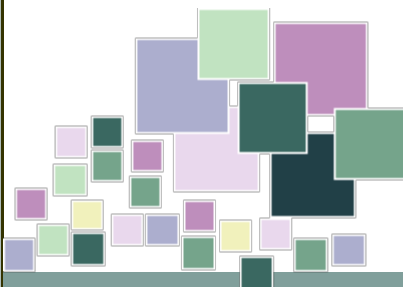
leader. Even as a freshman in the Honors program, I was prompted to evaluate what I envision a successful leader to be and how I can use aspects of my personality to lead effectively. As a leader, I value learning and utilizing opinions of all team members, then making decisions based on the collective need and well-being of the group. In delegation, a leader should allot tasks based on individual strengths and work ethic. I define a successful leader as one who cares about the needs and desires of his or her followers, is consistent, dependable, hard-working, an attentive listener, and someone who is not afraid to step down and allow someone else with a stronger idea or more knowledge to lead in their place. My leadership philosophy has developed through my own leadership positions as well as the opportunities to be led by someone else during my undergraduate career. Through my undergraduate experiences, I have been blessed with ample opportunities to put my leadership values into action as a team member and an individual.

A successful leader makes decisions based on the collective need and well-being of the group and delegates tasks based on individual strengths and work ethic. Using the group facilitation style of my philosophy, I was privileged to serve on the [Honors Student Council](#) as the Vice President and advocate for the student body in promoting positive change in the program. On the opposite side, serving under the president allowed me to be cared for and thought of when my schedule became too busy to attend all of the council meetings. My well-being was put first and the president did not assign me as many tasks to ease my stress level. Serving the community to bring [awareness to bullying](#) and safe, non-violent tactics to handle bullying brought about another experience where my group members ensured I was not taking on the majority of the burden of the project and we all worked together cohesively. As I was cared for and my feelings were taken into consideration, so I strive to do the same for those I serve as a leader. Balancing group member's work ethics, abilities, and feelings came into play during the [Growing the Leader in You](#) seminar course as the other students and myself worked to change the Honors program recognition system for student success. At times during the course I led the group discussion and facilitation, and other times I was being asked for my input by other student leaders. It is from these experiences that I value putting the needs and desires of followers before my own whenever appropriate.

The second portion of my leadership philosophy, remaining dependable, consistent, and hard-working stems from my experiences of being let down by leaders. What was meant to be a co-leadership position with [Mankato Cru](#) turned into me working alone after my partner neglected to show up and I was forced to pick up the slack without help. Unexpected situations can be stressful, but they are also wonderful at revealing weaknesses that which can be improved upon and strengths that can be depended on in all circumstances. Because being let down in this way impacted me heavily, I strive to serve those I am leading by following through with what I say and do; to be dependable, honest, and hard-working.

As an extension of my philosophy, my leadership skills and values are implemented in my work as a mentor with the Honors program to younger students, with the [Mankato YMCA Brother/Sister program](#), and at [Hosanna Highland Lutheran Church](#). My personal mentoring philosophy developed in the honors seminar course, which includes portions of my leadership values, has shaped my attitude and actions as a mentor and future social worker advocating for families and children. [My mentorship philosophy](#) focuses on putting the developmental and emotional needs of a mentee before one's own, and emphasizing the development of emotional intelligence. Growth of emotional intelligence has played a large role in my work at Hosanna Highland Lutheran Church. There, I am the Sunday school teacher for children ages 3-12 and thoroughly enjoy communicating Biblical history with them. This role requires me to use my communication skills, consistency, encouragement, incentives, and activities to keep the children engaged in the lesson. This is yet another opportunity to utilize my values of caring for the needs of others as I attentively listen to the children and tell them how valued and loved they are by Jesus. Children are unpredictable, especially little ones, and I must always be ready to change my tactic of communication to bring them back to attention. Leaders may be trained extensively for their work, but problems will arise; and it is up to the leader to react appropriately and use critical thinking skills to ensure followers that the situation will remain under control.

The leadership roles in which I have served were somewhat designed to be individual roles, but in actuality were improved upon when group input was utilized. My extroverted personality suits me as a leader in that I am not afraid to take charge or include others in my group. However, through my undergraduate experience, I better understand that it is important to balance listening to the group and ask for input as well as promoting my own ideas. When people come together for a common goal, immense positive change can occur for both the group members and others around them. I am grateful for the aforementioned opportunities to be involved in teamwork and enhance my individual leadership skills for they will be an integral part of my career as a social worker. As a social worker, I will appeal to my colleagues to brainstorm ideas and opinions on a situation, making decision by consensus as often as possible, listening to others attentively, being dependable and following through with my word, put my best work forward, and being willing to step aside when someone else is more capable of leading in certain circumstances. By committing to this philosophy, undoubtedly my social work practice with individuals, communities, and at the legislative level will follow the ethical standards set forth by the profession and the personal standards I hold upon myself.



Makenzie Petzel

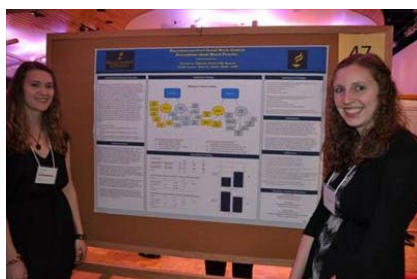


Home Personal Information Educational Experiences Volunteer and Work Experience

In this section:

- [Junior Field Experience](#)
- [Minnesota State University, Mankato Honors Program](#)
 - [Leadership](#)
 - [Research](#)
 - [Service Learning Initiative](#)
 - [Costa Rica Research](#)
 - [Original Research & Dissemination of Results](#)
- [Global Citizenship](#)
- [Learning Plans](#)

Research



"Students will exhibit information literacy skills and the ability to synthesize and integrate ideas. Students will produce original or creative achievement and contribute to knowledge."

"Students will produce original or creative achievement and contribute to knowledge."

The process of conducting research and the dissemination of results are present in all professional fields. Research, data and conclusions open up windows to new ideas, perspectives, techniques, direction, and opinions that all professions need for growth. Being a researcher, therefore, is a role that holds great responsibility. To act as an ethical, professional researcher, an individual must develop a strong purpose and passion for research, utilize and cite previously published research to inform activities and professional practice, develop original hypotheses to address disparities in one's field, and present and submit the results regardless if the data support the hypotheses the researcher sought to prove.

A research project should stem from a professional's passion, and the completed research should inform and improve the professional's practice. In order to improve my performance as a mentor with the YMCA, I completed a **service learning** research project to determine approaches that serve in effective mentoring for youth. In times when an individual does not have a knowledge base on a topic or environment, conducting a literature review of previous research can eliminate some of the unknowns and increase one's confidence. Utilizing my literacy skills to learn of the culture of **Costa Rica** improved my research skills because it provided another opportunity to utilize the campus library resource databases for scholarly articles and also reference books. More importantly, it prepared me to travel to the country and act as a responsible, global citizen. If the intent of a research project is not to utilize an original hypothesis, a researcher should know where to access credible, current information on the topic. From my social work, Honors, and Spanish curriculum, I have mastered the use of the Minnesota State Memorial Library databases as well as Google scholar to develop literature reviews and ethically cite the information to both present and use as foundation knowledge.

In addition to informing one's own practice, research is conducted in order for professional fields to grow and advance in practice. This is done by identifying gaps in the contexts in which they work and utilize previous and original research to experiment with new methods of practice. In response to the persistent lack of social workers practicing in rural areas, my **original research** aimed to identify social work students' perceptions of rural practice. The disparity of rural social workers motivated the hypotheses, and it is

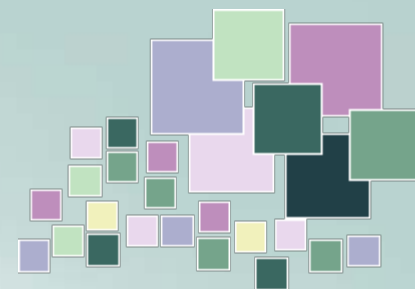
our hope that the conclusions impact the framework for curriculum content of social work educators. Careless research done for the sake of finding new information does not benefit anyone, including the researcher. It is a waste of time and resources that are valuable for advancing professions; therefore a direct aim for research before beginning a project is essential to the project's viability and applicability to the academic world and professional field.

It is not enough for a researcher to simply place the data in a table and put it out for the world to see, within the social sciences it is imperative for researchers to be able to articulate the qualitative components of the projects and how the data conclusions can be used to advance practice. Much time was taken between my researcher partner and me in practicing our synthesis of our project for presentation at the Undergraduate Research Symposium (URS) in order to articulate our findings in a way that those outside of the field of social work could see their importance and level of application. I learned from the URS presentation how important it is to emphasize how the research was conducted, why it is helpful, and what more can be hypothesized in the future to further promote growth of knowledge on the topic. We strived to only present the conclusions we could draw appropriately, because one of the most important responsibilities of a researcher is to present the truth, without adjusting the findings to one's favor.

Social work is an evidence-based profession. It is unethical for social workers to conduct their practice without respect for, or adherence to, the practice theories and methods already approved by the governing bodies of the profession. The National Association of Social Work has established a Code of Ethics for social work practice which provides guidelines in advocating for clients, but ethics in the profession extends to research as well. All researchers hope that the hypothesis they wish to be true will ring true after the data has been analyzed, and when the data proves inconclusive, it can be tempting to modify the results in the researcher's favor. In my original research project, when inputting the written qualitative responses of the students, it was tempting to change the wording of the responses to what I assumed the student wanted to say and to boost my own theory. However, to adjust research results is the greatest abuse of power and a failure to fulfill the responsibility of a researcher and I inputted the data as it was written without drawing conclusions too far off the responses. As a professional, I will strive to seek out previously published research to enhance my practice, document and cite others' work ethically, identify and work to fill gaps in the social work profession, continue to develop original hypotheses throughout my career, and honestly report all findings regardless of any disappointment I may feel as to the outcome of the project.



Makenzie Petzel



Home Personal Information Educational Experiences Volunteer and Work Experience

In this section:

- [Junior Field Experience](#)
- [Minnesota State University, Mankato Honors Program](#)
 - [Leadership](#)
 - [Research](#)
 - [Global Citizenship](#)
 - [Becoming Bilingual](#)
 - [Lincoln Community Center Volunteer](#)
 - [Costa Rica Study Abroad](#)
 - [South Africa Social Work Exchange](#)
- [Learning Plans](#)

Global Citizenship



"Student will exhibit second language and communication competence."

"Student will exhibit cultural competency and awareness."

Every individual is born into a unique set of circumstances, family background, and privilege based on a number of attributes including lineage, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. It is important to not only recognize the differences between

cultures, ethnicities, and backgrounds among people, but to actively seek out opportunities to broaden one's knowledge of how others live. To me, being a global citizen means being aware of, and setting aside, my cultural biases, asking questions to seek out information on other cultures, learning another language if the opportunity arises, immersing myself in other cultures through travel, and lastly advocating for people living in without access to resources through my social work education.

Culture is a broad term encompassing all unique experiences and traditions of individuals. Individual cultural biases influence all behaviors and attitudes. Facing my own cultural biases and how they shape my attitudes of others' decisions came to the forefront during my first study abroad experience to **Costa Rica**. Growing up in a family where a child's education is valued above most other things, to then live in a country where supporting one's family trumps a high school education was an eye opening experience. Even though I value a child's education strongly, I now understand that the Latino culture centers around family, and for a child to give up their education to work to support their family is an admirable decision. As a social worker, in the future I will take each client's family culture into account when determining an intervention plan and not pass judgement on the family for having different cultural values.

After one's individual values are set aside, asking questions about other cultures is a productive way to engage in new levels of thinking. As a volunteer at the **Lincoln Community Center** in the adult education classrooms, it is very important for me to never assume what a student knows, doesn't know, or is or is not capable of doing on his or her own. Instead, I am guided by the staff to wait to be asked for help and encourage the student to explain their problem before I jump in with advice or giving them the answer. The students at Lincoln come from all different countries and backgrounds, and asking them questions shows I care about who they are as a person, value their language and their culture even though they are learning English to improve their life living in the United States.

Continuing a second language study in Spanish was a requirement of the Honors program, but more a goal of my own to become **bilingual** and enhance my future social

work practice. In total, I have studied Spanish for six years, including the one-month study in [Costa Rica](#). I look for opportunities to continue to use the language now that my formal study is complete. A handful of students at the [Lincoln Community Center](#) are native Spanish speakers, and during breaks from classes I am able to converse with them. The students have expressed their excitement having me as a volunteer knowing they can come to me with questions that they are unable to ask in English. Having a second language opens up a variety of doors to enhance cultural experiences, and I intend to keep up my language skills to advocate for a broader range of clients in my social work practice. For the remainder of the students at Lincoln who are not Spanish speakers and are working to improve their English skills, I rely on nonverbal communication gestures and concise instructions and tips to help them improve their reading, writing, and speaking skills in English. Language barriers are not an excuse to disengage from others, they are simply an obstacle to overcome and require perseverance. As diverse as this country has become, all it takes is one small piece of common ground to begin relationships.

My most recent study abroad experience to [Capetown, South Africa](#) was incredibly humbling, and taught me how to use the privileges and blessings of my life to capitalize on the strengths each person possesses to promote positive social change. As part of the university exchange program, traveling to South Africa serves three purposes for MSU students: learn of the social history of South Africa and how it impacts social services, see the country and visit nonprofit organizations, and lastly to assist in the work being done at a nonprofit organization called CATCH. Myself and the other nine MSU students were blessed to create a community garden at CATCH, repair the netball court (similar to basketball), and participate in the community education groups. We encountered a significant language barrier while interacting with native people, but we learned that smile goes a long way to show children you are there to have fun with them. It broke my heart to see the conditions of the neighborhoods we visited and the rampant poverty, but my heart also soared with hope as I met social work students and learned how passionate they are to work toward social justice. The opportunity to engage with the South African people, to see their passion for social justice, both humbled and motivated me to practice with the same passion in the United States. As a global citizen, no matter how large or small a cultural interaction may be, with an attitude and desire to learn from the interaction there will always be growth. I am excited to be entering a profession where I will meet new people every day from all types of backgrounds and use my global citizenship skills to benefit my career.

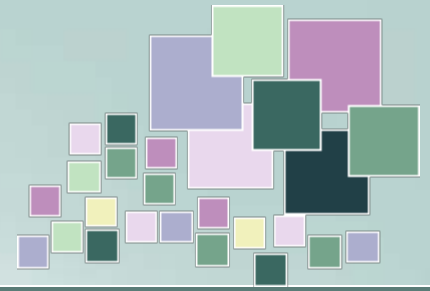


[Home](#) [Personal Information](#) [Educational Experiences](#) [Volunteer and Work Experience](#)

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Home Personal Information Educational Experiences **Volunteer and Work Experience**

In this section:

- [Hosanna Highland Lutheran Church](#)
- [Big Sister Mentoring- Mankato YMCA](#)
- [Volleyball Coach- United States Juniors Volleyball Academy \(USJVA\)](#)
- [Activity Assistant- Oak Terrace Health Care Center](#)
- [Lincoln Community Center](#)

Volunteer and Work Experience

Throughout high school and into college, I have found many ways to volunteer and be employed at jobs that I love. Volunteering my time is very enjoyable for me because it is a break from the classroom and I am able to help others in the Mankato community. Volunteering with a variety of organizations in Mankato has given me an introduction to working with clients and collaborating with agencies to improve my community, as I will do as a social worker. I intend to continue my volunteer work until graduation and also continue to seek out other opportunities to enhance my free time.



Home Personal Information Educational Experiences **Volunteer and Work Experience**

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