

Social Workers Wanted



Jocelyn Groden

Graduation days will soon be here, and the next generation of social workers are eagerly choosing their first jobs out of school. They may not realize it, but the aging sector is full of unique and valuable opportunities for growth. This month, NYC Aging Associate Commissioners Jocelyn Groden, MSW and Anya Herasme, LMSW share their professional journeys and reflect on this rewarding career path.

Inspired by her grandparents, Jocelyn grew up rooted in



Anya Herasme

advocacy, believing in fairness, and the importance of helping others. She envisioned herself tackling big societal issues. Jocelyn chose social work to fuse her commitment to social justice with her career, leading her to work that cares for individuals and changes policies and systems to make life better for everyone. Fresh out of school, she worked with Holocaust survivors, which inspired her to explore the aging sector. Her experience and commitment led Jocelyn to NYC Aging, where she leads the

Bureau of Social Services, comprised of programs, resources, and supports that keep older residents safe and provide them with opportunities that help to reduce ageism in the workforce.

While Jocelyn plotted a clear path, Anya entered the field by accident. As a student, she originally planned to work with children, but a clerical error led to an internship placement at a caregiver program for older adults. Initially dismayed, Anya soon discovered deep fulfillment supporting those who spend their days caring for others. She recalls a moment when she organized an event at the center that was filled with laughter and dancing, turning her dread into delight. This experience was like finding an unexpected treasure in her own backyard. She learned a lot about the needs of older adults and found joy in making their lives better. Fate altered Anya's trajectory and helped discover her true calling. She stayed in the aging sector, quickly rising in the field and landing at NYC Aging. Here, Anya oversees the Bureau of Community Services, which include Older Adult Centers, transportation, nutrition, and other services critical to the

community-care model allowing residents to age-in-place.

Both Jocelyn and Anya cite understanding, kindness, good listening, and standing up for others as critical skills for their roles. These skills help them deal with the often-complex needs of older adults, whether it's helping with health issues, planning fun activities, or advocating for better laws. Their skills have also helped catapult them to executive positions at NYC Aging, where they have continued their dedication to providing the quality of life the nearly 1.8 million older New Yorkers deserve.

To accomplish NYC Aging's ambitious goals, we need committed professionals like Anya and Jocelyn. Their experiences highlight how varied roles in the aging sector can be. Human service workers can find themselves making policies, managing programs, working directly with older adults, or bringing people together to transform communities. This field allows you to work with all kinds of professionals like doctors, lawyers, and policymakers, and have a positive impact on those who truly need it.

For students weighing their future paths, consider this: a career in the aging sector is a chance to make a tangible difference. It's about more than just a job; it's about building an age-inclusive society that cherishes its older adults, ensuring they have the resources and community connections to continue leading fulfilling lives.

Like Jocelyn and Anya, you might find that working with older adults is where your passion and skills converge. By choosing this path, you're not just starting a career—you're making a profound difference in the lives of those who have already given so much to us.



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