

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 00:21

Hello and welcome to the second episode in the second season of Toward a More Just Future, a podcast from Rutgers School of Social Work. My name is Marla Blunt-Carter, and I'm an assistant professor of professional practice at Rutgers School of Social Work.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 00:38

Last season, I spoke with voices in politics to understand what change is, how it unfolds, and how more people can get involved. Our guests show that change can and should happen at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Creating change at any level can be difficult, but it can be done by anyone.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 00:59

This season on our podcast, I'm speaking with another group of inspiring individuals who are working on the ground to make progress toward justice and equality. We hope you find these conversations useful. Whether you're a social work student, a practitioner, or anyone who's interested in learning about how to make a difference.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 01:20

Today, I'll be speaking with Nicole Epps, Executive Director of the World Childhood Foundation, USA. Epps has been a nonprofit leader in the anti-trafficking and street affected vulnerable youth population, both domestically and internationally. Nicole received her MSW with a certificate in Promoting Child and Adolescent Well-Being (ChAP) at Rutgers School of Social Work, so she could expand her knowledge of programming and clinical work with adolescents and to develop solutions to in child sexual abuse and exploitation on and offline.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 01:59

Nicole is also the President-elect of the National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. She has been appointed to the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, and chairs the Outreach and Engagement Committee. She is a member of APSAC's Public Policy Committee, and a member of RAINN's National Leadership Council. In addition, Nicole is a member of the University of Pennsylvania's James Brister Society, and serves in an advisory role for Stop It Now, Gallop NYC and Vision and Pathways.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 02:38

Prior to receiving her MSW from Rutgers, Nicole graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and earned her BA in Political Science and International Relations. She received her MBA in Management and Marketing from the University of Georgia's Terry School of Business. She also studied International Law, Economics and Organization at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 03:12

Hi, Nicole. Welcome!

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 03:13

Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to be here.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 03:16

Well, I'm excited to have you here. Let's just jump right in, tell us a little bit about yourself. Well, tell us a lot. Just tell us who Nicole Epps is.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 03:27

Sure. So I am a Brooklyn born native. I'm one of the few and I am the daughter of a military man and Trinidadian woman. And I'm currently the Executive Director of the World Childhood Foundation USA or Childhood USA, which is one of four international offices founded by Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden, to help support and develop solutions to end child sexual abuse and exploitation around the globe. I actually began my career in finance, and transitioned for the past decade or so, working with vulnerable adolescent populations and anti-trafficking in the US and internationally. So, so excited to be here.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 04:12

Wow, that is a mouthful, and you spoke of finance. So how did you get to social work from finance?

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 04:22

Well, I think it's really interesting in general about how our life changes and how our plans may not often be the plans that we really want to live. So, as I mentioned, I'm the daughter of first generation Trinidadian and so in the West Indies, you know, when you come to the US, your children are expected to be either a banker or a doctor or a lawyer. And I have always been drawn to working in nonprofits but I also thought that that was something you know you did when you're when you're older when you're sort of winding down your career, and so I embarked on a career in private investment management, and I hated absolutely every second of it. And then Lehman Brothers went bankrupt. And I was one of the only people who is really smiling and excited about that. So that should probably be a sign that this is not the career for you. And the idea of working in finance, again, just seemed horrific to me.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 05:23

So I really took the time off to volunteer with the Boys and Girls Club in Atlanta. And then I also watched a documentary called Girls Like Us, which was about trafficking in the United States with the focus specifically on sort of black and brown bodies, and these girls that, you know, in the, in the documentary were girls that looked like me, looked like my daughter, looked like my nieces. And I just couldn't believe that this was happening in the United States and happening, and Atlanta and New York and all these places that I was a part of, and I think it was at that moment that I was like, this is what I meant to do. And there is no safe job. So why not just do what you love. And I've really dedicated my life since that moment in 2009, to hopefully creating a better world where all of our children are safe from abuse and exploitation.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 06:13

Yeah, so it's been over a decade since you began

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 06:16

It is! But we don't have to focus on that decade.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 06:21

So in the course of the last 10 years, have you seen a difference in this issue?

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 06:27

I mean, I think 10 years ago, it was still a very taboo subject. And it was something that I think many people thought was, you know, an other. This happens in other countries that didn't happen here. And now, it's a conversation that we have in all levels of our society, our students are being trained in schools, our teachers are trained to identify, our police forces are being educated. I also think that there has been a radical transformation in what we view as a victim or survivor of trafficking.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 07:01

It's not you know, oftentimes, when I have talks like these, I say, it's not taken, you know, it's not Liam Neeson all the time. It's girls and boys who look like your children, who could be in school with your children, there are particular vulnerabilities. But for many children and youth who are trafficked, they think they're in a relationship, they think that they're in love, or they're running from something. So something is worse staying than being in the life. So I think that that has been helpful and transformative. We've included more survivor voices and creating solutions.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 07:36

But there's so much work to be done. I think that we can see this in all levels of society that you know, there are the cute victims, the victims that people feel sorry for. And then we have our boys and girls who may not be as cute, who may look older, who may be minorities, who may live in communities that people don't want to speak of. And so we need to put just as much attention, you know, again, bringing up Taken to the Liam Neeson we need to have just as much attention in Newark and Trenton as we do in you know, a wonderful suburb in Virginia when they went to Paris for, you know, a senior trip.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 08:15

So that's been there. But I think the one thing I would just add is having spent over a decade working in trafficking. And that has been, again, my life's work. And it's been difficult. I think what was the most shocking to me is now that I've moved into working in the prevention of child sexual abuse, that's a much harder conversation. And I never thought that that would be the hard conversation. But the reality is, for many people, trafficking remains again, this other this thing that happens rarely. Yet we know here in the United States, by the time a child is 18 years old, about one in six girls and one in 10 boys will have a lived experience of abuse. So I think that's really where we need to focus our attention and our energy. Because if we can prevent abuse for

our children, then hopefully we'll never even have to get into the prevention of trafficking because we've kept them safe.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 09:12

So true. So true. So how can our listeners or viewers assist you in this work? I know that you started in social work as a volunteer. So I know that there are many people that want to make a difference want to be a part of something positive. And I know as an individual that has worked in nonprofits, volunteers, they are the boots on the ground.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 09:36

They are

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 09:37

So, how can we help you in this work?

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 09:40

You know, I think that we are nothing without our volunteers are our lifeblood. I'll say one in broad strokes and then specifically for World Childhood- I think the first is having the conversations, have the conversations with the children and the adults in your life. So, when we were growing up, we learned a lot about stranger danger and man in the van, the reality is that the danger is the people you have in your lives. So keep your eyes wide open.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 10:08

You know, when people say to me, Nicole, what is the, you know, what are the things I need to do to keep children in my life state one, talk to your children, let them know that your job is to protect them and to keep them safe. And keeping them safe means that you will believe them, no matter what they say. I think oftentimes we minimize our children's voices, and say " oh it wasn't like that". No, believe their emotions. Show respect as you're raising your child that no matter if you don't feel comfortable, I'm going to ask you why. And I'm not going to make you do something that's uncomfortable.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 10:37

The second is keep your eyes wide open. There's no reason for an adult to be alone with a child. You know, when you're in spaces where you feel something in your gut, trust your gut, it doesn't steer you wrong. Abuse is a crime of opportunity. So minimize those opportunities at the World Childhood Foundation USA, one, we're always looking for volunteers, we always want people who can share on social media are helpful tips that we give out every Wednesday.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 11:04

Most importantly, we have a new initiative called the Care Coin that we're piloting in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. And these are coins that will be in area businesses, and all places where children access the delis, you

know, daycare centers, and their coins that a child's can give to any adult in their life that said they need to talk. And we know that it's so hard for children to disclose. So by giving that coin to an adult, they trust they're saying that they need to have a conversation. And then we've provided links on the back of the coin for adults for resources and referrals if there's crisis, or if they need to know what questions to ask or where to get help. And we think that just having spaces where these coins are available, are you know, one, it's going to change community behavior. But two, we need places where our kids can have resources, and it needs to be your library, your business- asking your school if they'll do that. And those I think, are the helpful first steps for World Childhood Foundation, but also for our kids in general.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 12:07

Yeah, you know, when you spoke of the coin, I know recently, there was a story in the news of a young girl that signed to someone that she was in danger, and she learned it from Tik Tok.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 12:19

I love it.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 12:20

I love it, too. And so my question, my next question is, you know, are you able to communicate to all generations as it pertains to this issue? I think a lot of times we tried to educate the parents. But I want to know, how are you educating the children? Because that young girl, you know, learn that on Tik Tok? And so you know, are you in the schools?

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 12:48

So, we have kind of a multi-prong approach. We are a foundation and so we help support programs in the ground, in addition to our community engagement. So what we like to do is have education on all levels, we actually believe that the prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation is an adult responsibility. So often our focus is on the education of adults. But we also use our social media platforms, because we don't know who else is there. It's funny that you mentioned Tik Tok, because we had a meeting yesterday saying that we need to be where our kids are, right? So we do a lot on Instagram, but it looks like I'm gonna have to start doing Tik Tok because that's where the kids are.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 13:26

But you know, the overarching message for us, to our children is that it's never your fault. It's never your shame to hold. And, you know, please find adults that are safe. But we think the real work and the real responsibility is for adults. And you know, people will say to us as an organization, how come you don't do as much we do, you know, community outreach, but not specific programs. But beyond that not being our mandate, it's because I always give this analogy, the Me Too movement, which was actually started to discuss the lived experience of survivors of child sexual abuse, right? It has taken women, powerful women 20 to 30 years to disclose. And yet we ask a five year old to disclose to say, no, that's a responsibility that comes with age and with time.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 14:17

And so really, what we believe is children have the right to be children, which means they need the right to be free to enjoy themselves. And we as adults, our job the same way that we vaccinate our children- that might be controversial right now- the same way that we asked, you know, we go to parent teacher conference, and we want to find out what's going on with our kids. We're asking questions about the safety of you know, the sports and who's the coach? That's the same responsibility we need to do for child sexual abuse. And we need to acknowledge that sometimes we let the monster in our home.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 14:50

Yes

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 14:51

We do. And we need to own that. And we also need to own sort of the multi- generational patterns where this abuse can continue or it can be minimized. So we need to break those patterns. And when we do that we have safer kids. So it's more of a holistic approach for us.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 15:11

Yeah. And I'm glad that you did mention the role that you play, not in creating programs, but the macro impact. And so I guess this is where your MBA comes in handy. I want to hear from you, what is the value of the MSW in your work and the value of the MBA in your work?

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 15:31

Well, I'll start with the MBA, and then I'll go to the MSW. I think the value of the MBA is that at the end of the day, as a nonprofit, we are a business. And we need to make sure that the majority of our spending is going to our programs and keeping our children safe. And so using my MBA, it's a lot of finance, it's a lot of Excel spreadsheets and pro formas. Really making sure that we are balancing programmatic work with the administrative costs to absolutely do that.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 16:03

And then as an MSW, which I received from Rutgers University, this August, which I'm so excited about and it's, you know, I say second to my daughter, it's the thing I'm most proud of, it informs all of my work. So I was a clinical social worker, working in a foundation, oftentimes, we've done so much on the macro level, we have worked with The Economist, increasingly out of the shadows index, which is a benchmarking index of over 60 countries around the globe in the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation, we're now doing the US version of that index, identifying by region what that response is, but including sort of the online space. So one, that that's the policy work, right, that's the policy side of our social work, what are the gaps? What are we missing? What can we do better? What are the unintended consequences of policy, but then using my clinical social work lens, the end of the day, right? We as social workers have an obligation for the integrity of human relationships, that we are respectful that there's a universal human, right, we're matter where you're born about what you deserve. And that informs all of our work, the work we do and community engagement, it's not

only lifting up our clients individually, it's lifting up our communities. It's the way that we treat our community elders with respect and knowing how to interact in communities and coming in humble and listening to what the needs are.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 17:26

And not just kind of, I would say, sort of the older generation, if we go in the history of social work, where it was kind of we're going to tell you how you're supposed to live. No, you're going to tell us how you live and how we can support you in that. And then at the end of the day, I had the honor at convocation to speak. And he talks about the fact that we're the light. So we eliminate the darkness. And we actually show what we can be the best in our society as individuals and as a whole. And that is what drives our work to make that world because I want a world that safe for my daughter, for her friends for the children that I know. And I want it just as safe whether we're here in New Jersey, whether we're in New Mexico, or we're in India, it doesn't matter. I want every child to have the opportunity to grow up to be a healthy, emotionally healthy adult, as well.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 18:21

Nicole, let me ask you this. I'm sure that in most rooms where you are, you may be one of the only women of color.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 18:31

Oh, yes.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 18:33

Where do you find your safe space? In a world where they're not used to seeing someone with an MBA and an MSW and beautiful melanin in their skin?

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 18:49

I think you're very gracious and saying one of, I walk into rooms and I am the only Yeah, they have never seen anyone like me. You know, at the end of the day, regardless of your degrees and you know this, it doesn't matter. I am a black woman in spaces where I'm not expected to be. And I can tell you countless times where people are assume or put you in boxes of you must be this or you're a survivor and not that there's anything wrong being a survivor. But yeah, I am the only and where is my safe space to whom much is given much as expected in return. So my safe space is and this is not political is I may be the first in the room like Kamala Harris has stuck. But I want to ensure that when I leave that there is more and my safe spaces, looking at a world one day where I know at the end of the day, take away all the degrees take away my job. My daughter is watching me and I am the proud daughter, granddaughter niece of strong black women. We've had it so much harder than me. So who am I and how dare I think that my struggles are are insurmountable.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 20:01

And so that's what drives me is the fact of who came before me who even gave me the opportunity to study in these universities, and who will come after me. And then in terms of self care and safe spaces, I think it's the

importance of community, you need to form that community when you need to, I'm very blessed to have a great sister network of friends who are like family where you can share those moments, there are some moments that being a woman of color, I'm sorry, nobody else is going to understand. Yeah, like, there's a way that you know, whether you call it code switching, but it's just understanding and I, you know, and gives me joy.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 20:42

Now, I would say, after a decade, to now walk into some rooms, and there, there are other women of color. And there's something that is just joyful when you see someone because you're like, yeah, there's another one, we're here. And you know, what, we're here, we're not going anywhere. And we're going to open up this table, and we're going to make sure that you know, here at childhood, we now have an obligation and I have implemented, we will not support programs, where the board is not reflective of the communities that they serve, we will not employ people for a position unless we have semi finals that include all diversity in all inclusion. And you know what the reality of it is whether you choose to believe the census or not, the world is changing. And we need to reflect that change.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 21:29

Wow. So it hasn't been challenging for you to challenge the organization that you're working for now, to make those changes hasn't been a heavy lift. Is there resistance that you face,

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 21:43

I think that for the majority of people in my organization included, there is a desire to do the right thing. There may not be an understanding of how, and often you know, I work for an international organization, as I mentioned, and so it is Swedish in background, Sweden is a very progressive country. However, there are just tones and words that mean things in translation. So I would say that we have had tough conversations we've had, I've been with the organization for six years, when I started, I was the only American in the organization, I was the only me and the organization there.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 22:23

That is why I'm such a big proponent of diversity in the room, because you'll hearing experiences that are not your own, there is nothing to be gained. I will be honest about this. If we all sit in a room with all women of color, who have the same experience, we're not learning anything. So yes, we've had challenging conversations. Yes, you know, we pushed back sometimes, but I do feel thankful that I'm in an organization that is accepting of who I am, and all of who I am, and that we're willing to do the work. And let me be clear, my passion is the ending of child sexual abuse and exploitation, yes, if I do not feel that I will be respected, and my views will be valued, I won't be in that organization, right, because life is too short. And there's too much work to be done.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 23:09

It's too short. I'm overwhelmed with gratitude for the work that you do, because it's hard. And I can only imagine how lonely it is being in that position of leadership. With no roadmap, you know, you're called a trailblazer for a reason, because there was no trail. You know, so I'm grateful for you for that. And I just feel just

a connection between the two of us because I know that you were a political science undergrad, Major. Yeah. And international relations. It was political science. And so we talked about the business. We talked about the social work, let's talk about the politics. I want to know your foundation. Is there a part of your organization that focuses on policy, and how you can be instrumental in creating stronger protections for children around the world? Is that a part of your portfolio of things that you have to do?

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 24:06

Well, I would say yes or no. So we don't directly work in policy or legislative action. But what we do do is advocate and educate. So I think that you can think of it as an iron fist in a velvet glove. Yes, so you will never see us truly having statements, but we will educate and we will discuss and we may reference policies. But we also are very client centered in our focus. I think the benefit, as I mentioned, is that we're one of four offices. So we have offices in Brazil, Germany and Sweden, in addition to the United States. And while we do work independently, we are still under the umbrella of the World Childhood Foundation. And so each of our offices, I think, show the dynamics within their countries and within their international portfolios, and it informs our work. So I'll give you an example. We have been around for over 20 years, and in the United States, we were one of the first foundations to support child advocacy centers.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 25:07

And child advocacy centers for your listeners who may not be aware are centers where a child who's disclosed abuse will meet with a forensic trainer or a psychologist, where they're asked questions about, unfortunately, the traumatic event. The beauty of the center is that it's child friendly, and it's child focused. But behind the interview room, is the police department is a psychologist and pediatrician, a district attorney and lawyers. And that means the child tells the story once so they don't have to go all over, you know, again, Brooklyn girl, so everything kind of relates to me in the subways. But I know they don't have to go all over the city to disclose, they don't have to tell their story five or six times they don't have to be questioned and read questions. And I know there's some child advocacy centers that have dogs and pets, and it makes it you know, a very warm environment. And when a child, oftentimes we hear from our children, that it was not the act, it was the act of not being believed. And it was the retraumatization of having to tell the story 15 times to be questioned, to feel that, you know, maybe I didn't say the right thing there.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 26:15

And so we took this model that we supported we one of the first, and now in Germany, they never had a child advocacy center. And so they created the Barnahus, which is German for the house of children. And it's based on our child advocacy centers. And so we were able to share the experience of the work of our programs. And as they were building out Barnahus, and I don't know the plural Barnahus in German. Maybe someone can tell us that, but like the, you know, multiple Barnahus they learned from the US, right? And so it's these interactions. At the end of the day, we're working to end child sexual abuse and exploitation.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 26:52

Unfortunately, the the root of these crimes which they are their crimes, yes, are the same. Yeah, the trauma that our children face, is the same. And so I think that that's how we sort of, you know, to get back to how we sort of learn from each other, we learn the policy, we come up with ideas that maybe we hadn't thought of, and all that works in your country, you know, I bring up Brazil, because of the fact that they have done a lot of videos for education on YouTube. And it really showed us guess what, our world is borderless online. So it really doesn't matter. There's a real child when we see Child Sexual Abuse material, but that child could be in Texas, and that video can be in Brazil, right? So we need to work together to figure out how to make that better.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 27:41

Wow. Well, working together is a core principle of our profession as social workers, the importance of human relationships, I want to finish this off with you giving a piece of advice to our listeners, based on the experiences that you've had, and what you think is the most important as we all work together to protect the most vulnerable our children,

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 28:06

I would say two words that my grandmother Grace Beckles raised all of us with, and it is go brave. No matter what you do, whether your voice reverberates if you're nervous, if you don't know what you're can do, go gray, I think it's important to know that we all have a role to play in keeping our children safe. And it doesn't mean that we have to be sort of Wonder Woman. But it means that we all have a role.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 28:35

Your role may be being a safe adults, in the children in your communities lives, be that safe space, where neighborhood children feel that they can come talk to you if something's going on. Your role may be policy, it may be learning from the work of other programs, your role can also be a donor, right? That's just as an as a nonprofit very important for us. So we all have a role to play. But we need to go bravely. Right?

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 29:03

We need to be brave, we need to do the hard thing, not the easy thing. And people are going to say this is something that can never be solved. Child abuse is always going to happen. Children will always be abused. It's horrible. But oh no, I don't want to talk about that. And you need to be brave. And I always kind of you know, I'm kind of a bit of a history buff just because something was done before doesn't mean it needs to continue. And so I think that if you have been last like new horribly blessed to have a childhood free of abuse and exploitation, that's a world you should create.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 29:39

If you have lived experience, then that is not your shame to carry. You are a survivor and whatever that survivorship looks like. And being a survivor doesn't mean that you need to talk about it. Being a survivor means waking up every single day when it could be easy to not that's survivor leadership as well. Just be brave, be brave in your opinion. and be brave to not be silent. But my grandmother always said, You go brave, and the world's gonna open up to you. So it served me well for the past two decades. So I, you know, I hope it continues.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 30:13

Go brave

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 30:14

Go brave

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 30:15

Go brave. Thank you so much.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 30:18

And I'm going to hold you to this.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 30:20

I'm ready to do this work with intention, and to join you and other social workers as well, I don't believe that there is just one way to do social work.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 30:30

Absolutely.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 30:31

And I am grateful for the work that you're doing and just for sharing with all of us because I think that everything that you are is a representation of the diversity of social work, you know, we need to be in different spaces. We don't all need to be doing the same thing the same way. Because the world needs us.

Nicole Epps, Executive Director, World Childhood Foundation USA 30:52

Now more than ever.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 30:54

Yeah, now more than ever, and I am glad that you are a part of the School of Social Work as an alum but always family and so thank you so much for today.

Marla Blunt-Carter, Assistant Professor, Rutgers School of Social Work 31:14

This season is all about talking to people who are on the ground making progress toward a more just future and how every person can be involved in creating change the advocacy and organizing. Nicole exemplified this in the diversity of her experiences, both professionally and personally. From her career and volunteerism, furthering child well being to her personal journey, as a daughter of a military man and a Trinidadian woman, and trailblazer in her own work. She has taught us all to go brave and believe in the service of your passions.