

Professor Pia Hargrove Delivers New York City National Association of Social Workers Keynote

NEW YORK CITY , NEW YORK , USA, July 24, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The practice of social work often describes navigating diverse challenges in underserved communities such as inadequate housing, underfunded education, inaccessible healthcare, crime, and violence. Addressing the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\) New York City Chapter](#) this summer, licensed master social worker [Pia Hargrove](#) flipped the script on this narrative.



Pia Hargrove, LMSW, SIFI

The New York University Silver School of Social Work professor and Creating Legacies non-profit founder

affectionately known as “Professor Pia,” delivered the keynote at the organization’s annual conference, “Walk the Walk: Social Work Practice in Action.” Within her speech, she painted a vibrant picture of Umma Park located in Brooklyn.

“For the first time in a long time, the ebony iron gates are open, inviting passersby with the forest green sign carved with golden letters to read, and those golden letters say, ‘Umma Park.’ The name itself, rich in its Arabic meaning, ‘people, community,’ inspires neighbors to unify beyond intersectional identities, but on the social work core value of the importance of human relationships,” Hargrove said. “The screeches of excitement reverberate with the melodic laughter of children and intergenerational family presence.”

The Brooklyn native explained how the outdoor recreation space was historically prone to violence in the area and rarely frequented by caregivers and children. As part of a multi-faceted approach to assist nearby residents, Hargrove and Creating Legacies helped revamp the park. The anecdote presented the heart of the keynote, “Finding Joy in the Journey of Social Work.” She added that in collective crisis, the power of love and joy persists.

Professor Pia also reflected on the optimism within a social work key principle, meeting the client



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where they are.

“The most beautiful thing about New York City is that we are common dwellers,” she said. “From the person experiencing homelessness to the billionaire, we take the same subway, walk the same streets, and call the same blocks our own. At the same time, that beauty can bond us, break us, or simply separate us by the boardroom table.”

Changing themes, Hargrove asked each conference attendee to examine their “why” in the profession.

According to the public speaker and activist, the awareness of oneself and experience shapes the social worker in practice. She explained that she saw the field of work as less of a profession and more of a lifestyle, and a passion for and commitment to change through growth.

“I was clear that we are purposed to grow collectively, and I have a responsibility to inspire vitality anywhere I go,” Hargrove said. “I didn’t know that the name for this was social worker, but I was clear that this was who I was, and who I will forever be.”

NASW’s New York City virtual continuing education conference was held June 5-6 with speaking presentations, workshops, networking opportunities, and sponsorship exhibits. The chapter is one of the largest in the organization.

About Professor Pia Hargrove: New York licensed master social worker Pia Hargrove is an award-winning educator, speaker, and activist with over two decades of experience serving diverse communities. As a professor at New York University’s Silver School of Social Work she mentors and advises on the needs of immigrant communities and those reflective of the African Diaspora. Outside the lecture hall, over 800,000 listeners tune into her monthly segment “Mental Health First Fridays,” on Caribbean Power Jam’s radio show, “The Reset.” Hargrove’s other speaking engagements include voicing the film “[Semata](#),” for the international exhibit, “An Archaeology of Disability” in addition to appearing as a guest on podcasts and other online platforms. In 2012 she founded the non-profit organization Creating Legacies, which inspires community building through nurturing entrepreneurs and offering families diverse social and educational experiences. The following year, Hargrove became a children’s author publishing the book, *Celebrate Smiles*. As an activist, she ran for New York City Council in 2017 and continues community organizing through leadership in several civic organizations including the New York City Hate Crimes Review Panel.

About the National Association of Social Workers: The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. It consists of 55 chapters across the U.S. and its territories in addition to welcoming international

members. The NASW's mission is to enhance professional growth and development and create and maintain professional standards for social workers as it advances sound social policies.

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