

Dr. Francine Zysk PhD Honored by Influential Women for Her Resilience, Innovation in Community Development and Education

ADRIAN, MI, UNITED STATES, November 20, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Empowering Communities Through Emotional Intelligence and Lifelong Learning

Adrian, Michigan – Francine Zysk, PhD, embodies resilience, purpose-driven work, and an unwavering commitment to service and lifelong learning. As a Community Development Coordinator, Master Adjunct Professor, and received her PhD at Walden University, Francine has dedicated years to teaching and facilitating transformative language programs within correctional facilities. Her invaluable experiences in these environments have equipped her with the empathy and structure necessary to lead impactful workshops, literacy initiatives, and college-preparation sessions. Her signature teachings are Words Are Power, for which she has authored a book titled “Words Are Power by Ms. Zysk”.



Throughout her journey, Francine has encountered numerous challenges, particularly during her PhD studies, which have taught her the importance of growth through adversity. “The challenges I faced shaped who I am today,” she explains. “Instead of allowing difficulties to define me, I embraced them as opportunities for growth.” Her strong commitment to community development has further enhanced her success, as she has coordinated community partnerships, assisted in managing land bank properties, and secured grants to support housing and revitalization efforts. Her advocacy work against the opioid crisis and her initiatives to support vulnerable populations underscore her dedication to fostering meaningful community support.

Academic achievement has been another pillar of her journey. Francine is a proud member of several prestigious societies and has completed a highly competitive leadership and community service program through the National Society of Leadership and Success. As she completed her PhD dissertation, she simultaneously balanced multiple community commitments, strengthening her discipline, time management, and sense of purpose.

The best career advice Francine ever received was to practice emotional intelligence in every setting. Over the years, she has learned that the ability to read a room, manage her emotions, and respond with intention can be just as valuable as any technical skill. Emotional intelligence has empowered her to navigate conflict, lead with clarity, build trust, and connect with people from all backgrounds. It's a guiding skill that anchors her approach to both leadership and service—and continues to shape how she shows up, professionally and personally.

For young women entering the fields of community development and criminal justice, Francine offers the following invaluable advice:

1. Embrace Discomfort: "Growth rarely happens in familiar spaces. The moments that feel the most challenging often lead to the greatest breakthroughs."
2. Develop Emotional Intelligence: "Technical knowledge matters, but the ability to manage yourself, read a room, and connect with others will carry you further than hard skills alone."
3. Listen More Than You Speak: "In community development and criminal justice work, meaningful change begins with understanding the people you serve. Empathy is not optional—it's foundational."
4. Own Your Story: "Your path doesn't have to look like anyone else's. The experiences that make you different can become your greatest assets if you choose to lead with them."

Currently, Francine navigates significant challenges in her field, particularly within underfunded correctional education systems that often lack resources and stigma. "There is a pressing need to find innovative ways to deliver meaningful programs despite these constraints," she notes. Balancing a full-time role, PhD completion, multiple teaching commitments, and ongoing community service can be daunting, but Francine views these challenges as opportunities to model resilience, time management, and integrated leadership.

Navigating systemic barriers while advocating for reforms in the criminal legal system requires persistence, strategic thinking, and collaboration. "It's demanding work, but the rewards of creating meaningful change are immeasurable," she states. Additionally, Francine emphasizes the importance of recognizing the often-invisible emotional labor that fuels advocacy and leadership efforts.

Guided by her core values of integrity, community, and growth through adversity, Francine

strives to lead with accountability and service in every interaction. Her career reflects a deep commitment to social impact, whether in corrections education, community development, or advocacy.

Francine's efforts to uplift marginalized communities are exemplified through tangible initiatives, such as leading programs that distributed sleeping bags and meals to 134 individuals during the holiday season. This year, we have doubled the distribution for the 2025 delivery of sleeping bags and blankets. "These efforts are a reflection of the principle I live by: growth through adversity—and the power of using one's skills and resources to uplift others," she affirms.

As Francine Zysk continues her journey, she remains a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change, inspiring others to embrace their paths and advocate for a brighter future.

Learn More about Francine Zysk, PhD:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/francine-zysk>

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