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## Local VA Recovery Coordinator Recognized with Emerging Social Work Leader Award

**Champaign/Danville, IL**— Every day the nation's 650,000 social workers act as advocates, champions, and leaders who make our society a better place to live. In continuation of this year's National Professional Social Work Month theme, "Elevate Social Work," the National Association of Social Workers, Illinois Chapter (NASW-IL) is honoring the work of some exceptional Illinois social workers and individuals whose work promotes social justice and social change with and on behalf of the people and clients they serve.

One such exemplary Illinois social worker being honored this year is statewide Emerging Social Work Leader Awardee Nina O'Brien. **Nina O'Brien** (MSW, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; LCSW) is local recovery coordinator for VA Illiana Health Care System where she works to promote whole health and recovery-oriented care within the VA system. As a mental health clinician, Nina has experience working with children, families, and veterans of all eras, including survivors of combat trauma and military sexual assault. She is a registered yoga teacher and launched a trauma-sensitive yoga program at VA Illiana in 2015. Nina believes in the healing power of connection and enjoys incorporating interventions for the mind, body, and spirit into her daily social work practice.

In support of her nomination of Nina, colleague Katie Weber wrote: "[Nina] has advocated and pushed for services based on the Recovery Model. She has also single handedly started trauma-informed yoga classes for Veterans as well as yoga classes for VA employees to promote self-care. [She] continues to teach these classes out of passion despite her very limited availability. She is a great resource for Veterans and employees."

The NASW-Illinois Chapter is proud of the work of Nina O'Brien and others like her who fight every day for the underserved and underprivileged in Illinois. Nina is one of four individuals being honored at this year's NASW-Illinois Chapter Statewide Conference taking place November 5-7, 2019, at The Westin North Shore in Wheeling, IL. To learn more about the other statewide awardees, please visit the NASW-Illinois Chapter website ([www.naswil.org](http://www.naswil.org)) or contact Joel L. Rubin, executive director, at [jrubin.naswil@socialworkers.org](mailto:jrubin.naswil@socialworkers.org).

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*The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with over 120,000 members. The NASW-Illinois Chapter is one of the association's largest chapters with over 5,500 members in Illinois alone. NASW strives to advance social work careers, grow social work businesses, and protect the profession.*