



**INVITATION TO
PARTICIPATE**

**The Dr. Mit
Joyner**



**MONUMENTS
OF THE FUTURE**

Project



**WHAT DOES
THE FUTURE
OF
LIBERATION-BASED HEALING
AND
SOCIAL JUSTICE
LOOK LIKE?**

THE SOCIAL WORK FUTURES LAB INVITES YOU TO EXPLORE THESE DREAMED FUTURES IN A GLOBAL ACTIVITY

It is an important time in history to consider not only the future in general but also the future of community, equity, justice, and well-being. In the recent article “What should our monuments of the future look like?” well-known artist Hank William Thomas wrote:

Monuments are critical tools in shaping the values and identity of society. Most of what we know about many ancient cultures – Egypt, Great Zimbabwe, Greece, Rome – are through public monuments. So we have to imagine that much of what future generations will know about us is through the monuments we choose to put up and preserve. There isn't that much public space dedicated to contemplation. Many of the images and objects we see outside are advertisements that are directing us to buy something rather than asking us to reflect on something.

There have been a handful of interesting, groundbreaking efforts to imagine monuments of the future. These include explorations from the [US National Park Service + National Capital Planning Commission + Van Alen Institute](#) and the [National Monument Lab](#), as well as from authors like [Andrew Shanken](#).

We hope to begin a similar exploration.

SOCIAL WORK FUTURES LAB,
January 2023
www.socialworkfutureslab.org

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DREAM THE FUTURE OUT LOUD WITH US

In May 2024, the Social Work Futures Lab will hold a first-of-its-kind virtual forum on the future of the profession:

**Shaping Social Work Futures:
Utopias, Dystopias, and Everything
in Between.**

We will showcase the monuments created in this shared creative “futures” experience as part of an interactive gallery with awards set for exemplary entries. The forum will also feature visionary keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and networking opportunities.

We invite social workers near and far to put on their most imaginative thinking caps for a journey into a future where real change and evolution are not only possible - they’ve happened.

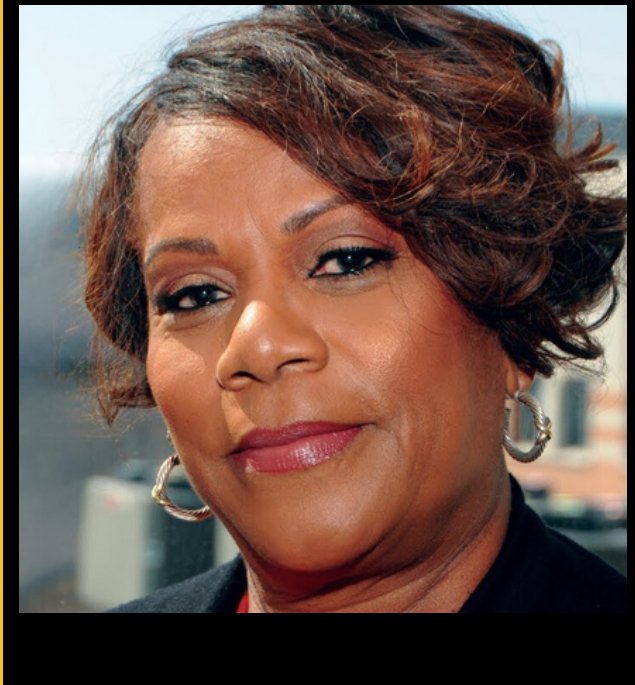
We hope you’ll join the process!

DR. MIT JOYNER

In remembrance of our respected colleague, we named this project and its associated awards after Dr. Mit Joyner, an esteemed elder social work leader, recent President of the NASW, and member of our Social Work Futures Lab National Advisory Board.

Dr. Joyner passed away in July of 2023, and we wish to honor her vision, determination, and dedication to the pursuit of more equity-centered futures.

**Read more about
Dr. Joyner's
legacy.**



What if
you could visit
a place in the future
that contained
an incredible garden
of monuments
to the resolution
and commemoration
of our world's most
pressing social, ecological,
and political issues?
This activity invites you
to do just that...and
you'll be part
of constructing this place
through a shared creative process.

THE DR. MIT JOYNER MONUMENTS OF THE FUTURE PROJECT IS AN IMAGINATIVE FORESIGHT ACTIVITY THAT ANYONE CAN JOIN.

It will encourage and challenge you to envision possible futures in which **the social issues that you care about deeply have been resolved** - and a monument has been constructed in celebration of the achievement.

We invite each contributor to **create an image of a monument**, accompanied by a brief, detailed explanation of how its social breakthrough occurred.

This activity will introduce you to a few foresight methods and tools like **speculative design futures, artifacts of the future, and backcasting.**

The **Monuments from the Future** game was created by Dr. Jane McGonigal for use in the Institute for the Future's Urgent Optimism group and is being used with permission for this forum.

HOW TO PLAY

The Dr. Mit Joyner Monuments from the Future project is a **foresight activity** for social workers!

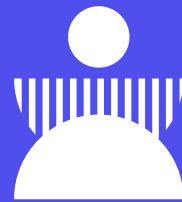
This section includes details about:

- i. **Creating your Monument**
- ii. **Writing a Backstory inspired by Signals**
- iii. **How to Submit your Monument**
- iv. **Important Deadlines**
- v. **Awards Information!**

i.

Creating Your Monument

This activity requires image-making. You are free to construct your image with human hands and art materials or you may choose to use a variety of AI image generators to extend your artistic vision. The choice is yours!



Social Issue

Resolution

Monument

What is an issue that you care about?

Look 10-20 years into the future.

Envision a monument that celebrates this future resolution.

This can be any ongoing social issue or area of interest that moves you & is an ongoing problem.

Imagine a future where the social issue of your choice has been resolved.

Create your monument in any way that utilizes visual depiction and can be digitally shared.

For example: climate change, the Covid-19 pandemic, racism, mass incarceration, etc.

It is likely that change has occurred at a massive scale to usher in this resolution.

Image generators can be used, as well as digital arts & traditional mediums like collage or painting.

ii.

Backstory & Signals

Once you are happy with the monument image you've produced, write a brief backstory (500 words or less) about the future in which your monument exists. Consider the following:



01. How Did It Happen?

How did the resolution of your chosen social issue come to be? What steps did we have to take to achieve the social breakthrough? [This is a foresight technique called backcasting.](#)



02. The Dedication

If your monument had a plaque, what would it say?



03. Signals of Change

Entries are strengthened with the inclusion of at least one "signal" of this future that you find in the present. A signal is a little bit of the future seen in the present: it can be a news item, artifact, or link that directly relates to your dreamed future. [The use of signals is an important part of foresight.](#)

Ultimately, this activity is an example of a foresight technique called [speculative foresight](#). When we imagine worlds together, we gain insight and have the opportunity to practice radical hope while developing the methods and strategies needed to get to those preferred futures.

iii. Submission Guidelines

Each entry must include your information along with the following elements. Reviewed monuments will be displayed in a **virtual gallery**.

MONUMENT TITLE

Specificity is encouraged.

MONUMENT IMAGE

Supported filetypes include: JPG, PNG, PDF

BACKSTORY

How did your monument come to be? What were the steps that led to its construction? (500 words or less)

SIGNAL

Link to at least one signal of this future found in the media, online or in the world around you today. As a reminder, "signals are evidence of the future that we can find in today's world" (IFTF).

REFLECTION

Include any reflections or insights you'd like to share regarding your work!

CREDITS

If you used generative AI, note which program and the prompt(s) you used. If you commissioned work from an artist or collaborated with a group in some way, please credit them accordingly.



**APPLY
HERE**

Awards & Timeline

The activity can be done by individuals or in groups. Formal experience in foresight is not required. All degreed social workers and social work students are eligible to participate.

Awards 3 monuments will be awarded \$1000 each

- Plus 7 honorable mention prizes of \$200 each

Process

Create
monument

Finalize
submission

Selection
process

Winners
announced



- All 10 finalists will be invited to present at the May 2024 forum

Timeline

Deadline for submissions: March 15, 2024

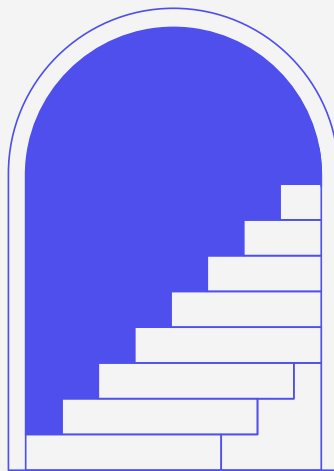
- Participants agree to share their work with the Lab

Judging will be done by a specially-created panel of guests. Monuments will be selected based on creativity, clarity of vision, and overall impact. Winners will be contacted directly with additional information. Participants agree to share their work with the Social Work Futures Lab.

RESOURCES

★ **EXAMPLES OF MONUMENTS** developed by members of the Social Work Futures Lab can be found **HERE**.

GENERATIVE AI TOOLS:
Midjourney | **Dall-E**
Wonder | Artbreeder



GENERATIVE AI TIPS:
Generative AI for beginners.
AI prompt guidelines.
Enhancing your AI prompt.

★ **LEARNING SESSIONS:** The Social Work Futures Lab will host Happy Hour orientation sessions led by the Social Work AI Art Group during the January-March submission window.

Dates will be added and confirmed on our site:
socialworkfutureslab.org

Learning assistance and tips for using generative AI will be the primary focus of these sessions. We welcome all social workers (from students to practicing social workers and social work faculty) to join! We're also available to offer additional assistance at any point throughout the activity. Feel free to get in touch via our website!

A Quick Intro to **Signals**

What it is:

In foresight, a signal is an example of the future in the present day. Signals can be used to track emerging issues and prepare for possible innovations and disruptions. They can come from anywhere - the news, technological advancements, cultural shifts, fashion trends, etc. [Learn more HERE!](#)

Examples:

If you're interested in how people interact with personal technology like smartphones and health-tracking apps...

[This article](#) about emerging charging technology that uses acoustics to wirelessly charge electronic implants is an example of a signal connected to the interest area above. It's not widely adopted tech yet, and more research is needed, but it might be an early indicator (or signal) of a shift in how humans interact with tech in the future.

Based on the article, we could play around and begin to imagine a future where our smartwatches and other devices are implanted in our bodies. They still need to be charged somehow, so maybe our beds have been adapted to serve as charging stations for these devices while we sleep.

If you're interested in how social work might change in a future where it has become a globalized profession...

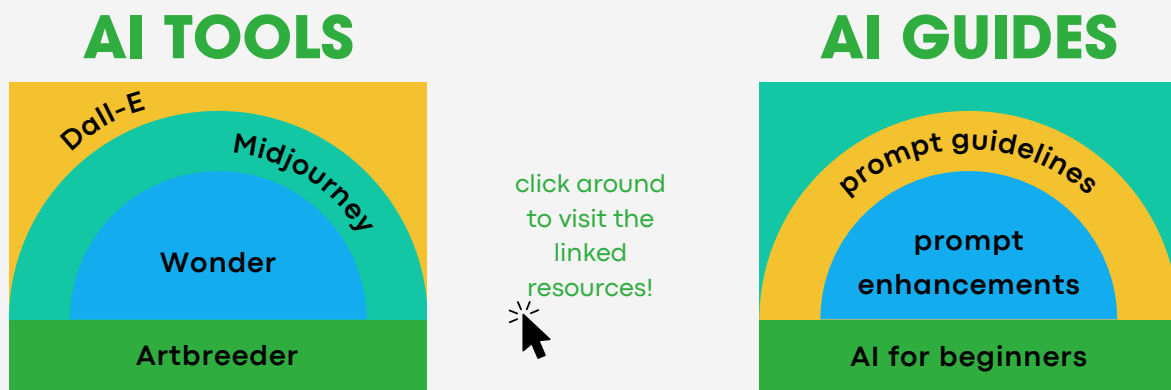
[This article](#) about how AI can use satellite data to predict locations where children are most likely to face critical nutrition deficiencies is an example of a signal connected to the interest area above. The social work profession doesn't currently have the infrastructure to deploy workers to areas with emerging crises (like traveling ER nurses), but it might be an early indicator (or signal) of a shift in how social work could grow to meet the changing needs of the planet and people we serve.

Based on the article, we could imagine a future where one branch of social work is a nomadic discipline that travels proactively as part of international disaster response.

Tips for Creating Your Monument

If you're working with an AI image generator, you'll want to play around with a prompt description of your monument until you get an image you like. Your prompt might include details about your desired aesthetic, location, monument scale and material, or any other contextual information.

If you've never used an image generator before, you may find that generating an image that captures what you're after takes a little time. We encourage you to play around to see what works best for you! Below are some examples of AI platforms you could use, as well as references for beginners and guides to improve your prompts.



You may also choose to do this activity using traditional materials with your own hands, and then scan or photograph your creation to upload later.

You may choose to produce an image gallery of multiple social issues or multiple monuments for the same issue - it is entirely up to you. However, for your final submission, you will need to choose just one monument.

Here are a few examples of prompts we've used with various AI image-generating tools (a link to detailed examples can be found at the top of page 13):

- Monument in the style of Afrofuturism that commemorates the elimination of prisons using many colors
- Monument in the style of classical Roman architecture featuring lots of nature to commemorate the end of homelessness
- A warm towering monument to nature in the middle of a tree-lined city video game style

We welcome you to **share and post your monuments** as well the process of creating them!

Our hope is that as many social workers as possible get a chance to participate, so feel free to tag or share this with your colleagues, classmates, students, and any local groups that might be interested in joining the project.



@socialworkhealthfutureslab



@swfutureslab



@swfutureslab

#SWMonuments

#SWFuturesForum2024

#SWFutures

#SWFuturesLab

#AnticipatorySW

#thefutureiscoming

Summary Guide

The Dr. Mit Joyner Monuments from the Future Activity at a glance.



Creating Your Monument

Generate an **image** inspired by a social issue you care about and present-day **signals** of that future. Include a monument **title** and brief reflective **essay**.



Important Dates

Applications open: January 19, 2023

Applications close: March 15, 2024

Awards: May 7-10, 2024 at the Social Work Futures Lab virtual forum



Application & Awards

3 finalists will win **\$1000** each

7 semi-finalists will win **\$200** each

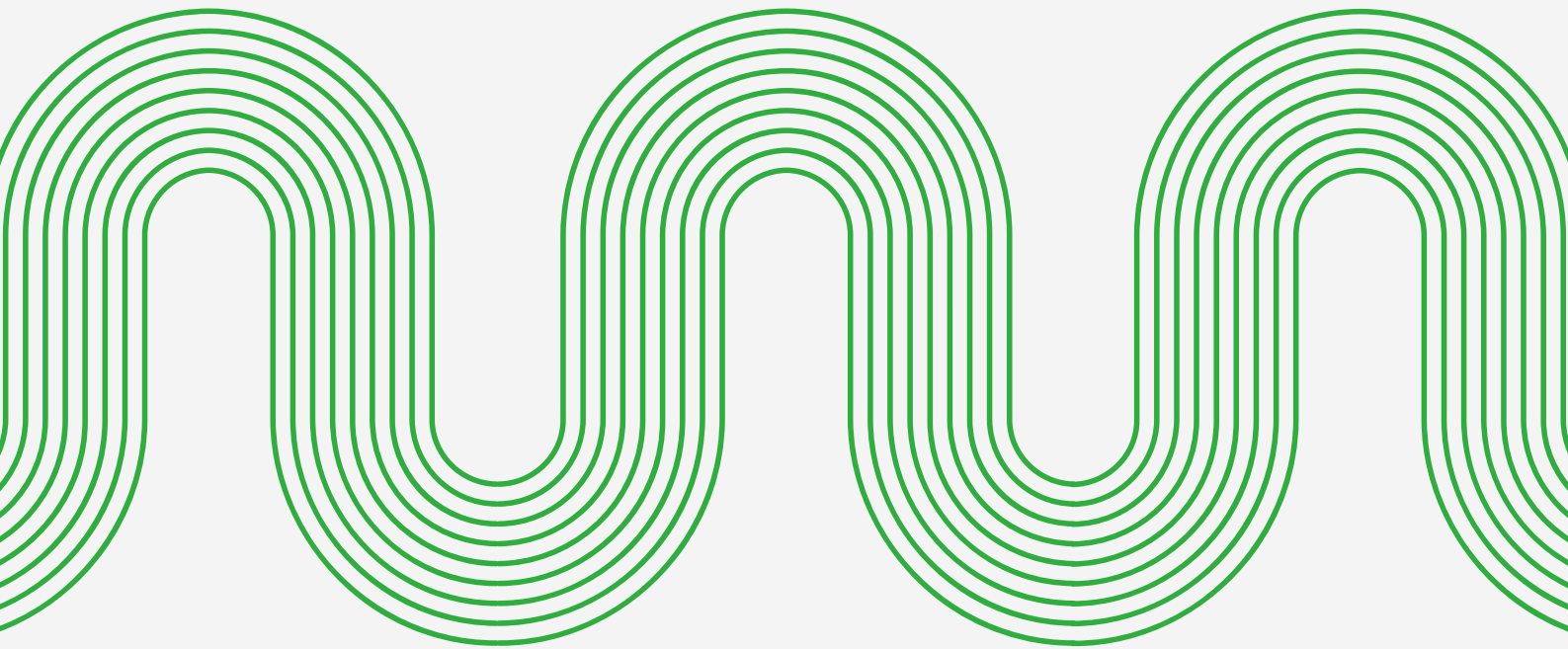
This activity is open to all degreed and student social workers.



**We can't wait to
see your monuments
and celebrate these
future social achievements
with you at the
Shaping Social Work
Futures
virtual forum
May 7-10, 2024!**

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr. Jane McGonigal for supporting this effort and graciously allowing the Monuments from the Future game to be shared and adapted for the Social Work Futures Lab in memory of Dr. Mit Joyner.



Questions? Reach out!

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Designed by Lillian Beaudoin

SHAPING SOCIAL WORK FUTURES: UTOPIAS, DYSTOPIAS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

A VIRTUAL FORUM
MAY 7-10, 2024

REGISTER NOW >

