Dear Friends,

As this first edition of *Inquiries in Social Policy* “goes to press,” it is clear that the current recession is increasing the burdens on our most vulnerable populations, as well as others who are finding themselves for the first time in great need. Many across the socio-economic structure are struggling and increasingly seeking for the first time government assistance in the form of unemployment insurance, job training and counseling, food stamps, and housing assistance. At the same time, social services, nonprofits, and government agencies are being forced to scale back programming. This is clearly the time for rethinking socially just policies and programs, grounded in theory, dialogue, and research.

It is our hope that this publication will help to shed some light on five current issues in social policy in a way that highlights the multiple perspectives being cultivated at the Heller School. In the following articles, you will find two different perspectives on re-entry strategies for incarcerated populations and coverage of population concerns that include disability services for adults with autism, the effects of quality care on children, and the role of policy in the well-being of the LGBT community. The papers include M.P.P. Capstone policy analysis papers, as well as research papers exploring new topics for the first time.

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We hope that you enjoy the inaugural issue!

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