

Panther Caucus University of Northern Iowa

Educating tomorrow's community leaders

University of Northern Iowa graduates with a degree in social work are spread out across the state. That's good news for Iowans because their work is improving the quality of life for children, seniors and every age in between.

Social work majors find employment everywhere from schools and hospitals to government agencies and service organizations. They perform everything from counseling and substance abuse treatment to mediation and advocacy. In fact, professional social workers are the nation's largest group of mental health services providers. There are more clinically trained social workers than psychiatrists, psychologists and psychiatric nurses combined.

Kaydee Vraspier chose to major in social work at UNI because she wanted to make a difference. While working with children in the ASPIRE therapeutic horse riding program, she recalled an autistic child who didn't like being around people. After three sessions with Vraspier, the child gave her a hug. This was the moment the senior from Iowa City knew she was in the right field. "I was like, 'I can totally do this for the rest of my life and be completely happy,'" she said.

The social work department at UNI makes it easy to go from practice to real-world application thanks to classes focused less on lecture and more on role-playing and hands-on learning. The [Department of Social Work](#) is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, which means students can receive a license in social work upon graduation. And unlike some licenses, this license is transferable across state lines.

All of this means Vraspier will leave UNI ready to take on the world and create a better community. "Our program really emphasizes public policy issues. I feel like if I saw a problem, I would have the skills to go out and change it on a bigger level."