Each year, the Department of Social Work designates one Field Instructor to receive our Field Instructor Award. This award is given to a social worker in a community agency for distinguished service as an educator in preparing students in the field for social work practice. This year the award goes to:

Ellie Breitmaier for her exceptional work with our students at the State of Vermont - Department for Children and Families.

Ellie has worked with our Advanced Standing and Concentration Year Students multiple times over the years, starting in 2001. She was nominated by our Faculty Field Liaisons and her student evaluations were reviewed as a part of that process. I spoke with her current student, Danielle Heaney, and asked for her reflections. Consistently students and liaisons have shared that Ellie truly and deeply embraces her role as social work educator. The liaison voice couldn't say enough about the depth and teaching that happens simply in her written feedback on process records let alone the dialogue that occurs during site visits.

The Student Voice includes these comments:

· Ellie’s supervision was by far the best part of this field placement – she created a non-intrusive supervision environment where I could explore, reflect, grieve, question and heal.
· Ellie is a most patient and present listener.
· At times I felt like my learning WAS Ellie’s full-time job – she was so attentive. And she always asked about my coursework. She read many of my papers and offered feedback early on. She helped me think through my final paper for the program and encouraged me to send it to the Deputy Director and the Commissioner.
· Ellie is tuned into the “absent but implicit” content that helped me develop insights into myself as a professional.
· Ellie took great care to pace the work – thoughtfully thinking through what I would do alongside her and what work I would do on my own.
· Ellie challenges me to go beyond surface thinking – and she thinks along with me. She practices by example.
· Ellie is non-discriminatory, competent, culturally sensitive, respectful and has a great deal of integrity.
· Not to be overly dramatic but Ellie changed my life – I thought I would be doing one thing after graduation and now I know I have the tools to do another.