

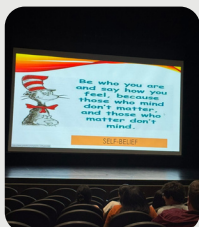


RURAL AREA MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT & DEVELOPMENT



2nd Annual Mental Health Symposium

On September 24th, during Suicide Prevention Month, the KCISD-RAMPED Grant hosted the 2nd Annual Mental Health Symposium in the KCHS - Performing Arts Center. Students from Karnes City, Kenedy, Pawnee and Pettus schools teamed up with the RAMPED Residents for a powerful day of learning and connection! Together, they explored resilience and self-worth, practiced real coping strategies, and left feeling confident, empowered, and ready to take charge of their mental wellness. Students also received wellness bags with calming strips, stress balls, fidgets, stickers and mental health resources - the perfect tools to support self-care and everyday coping. The RAMPED Team would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the presenters, KCISD staff, RAMPED residents and all who helped make this event a success!



District Partners

Karnes City ISD

Kenedy ISD

Pawnee ISD

Pettus ISD

Runge ISD



*RAMPED funding is made available through the U.S. Department of Education's Mental Health Service Professional Demonstration Grant.



Meet Our New Counseling Residents



Hi! My name is Chris Bridges, and I hold a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Houston–Victoria. I'm pursuing a Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, with a triple track toward licensure in clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and marriage and family counseling. I believe a well-rounded counseling approach involves a thoughtful balance between child, family, and community.

My career has been rooted in direct service, healthcare, manual therapies, and hospice care—experiences that have shaped my understanding of empathy, resilience, and the diverse needs of individuals across the lifespan. I'm passionate about helping young people develop a strong and positive self-concept and about equipping them with the internal tools they need to navigate a complex world. As I grow into the role of a school counselor, I'm committed to fostering spaces where students can build confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging.

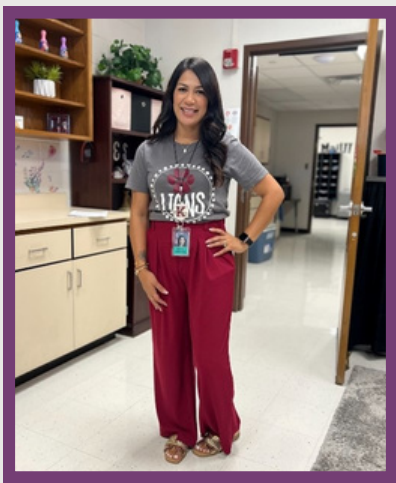
My name is Caley Jackson. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Biology and am currently working on my Master of Education in School Counseling at Lamar University. I just began my 5th year of teaching Biology at Karnes City High School. As a KCHS alumna, I'm proud to serve my community in my current role. Obtaining the knowledge and skill set that I am learning as a RAMPED Resident is bringing me more drive and compassion for our small town.

My ultimate goal is to encourage and empower each student I have the opportunity to meet. I'm looking forward to collaborating with my site supervisor, Patricia Huber, who has been a true advocate and mentor. When I'm not seeking to build relationships or studying, I enjoy spending time with my family/friends and baking!



Hello! My name is Denise Hernandez. My journey into higher education began a little later in life, as I first dedicated myself to raising my children. While it wasn't always easy, I embraced the challenge and began my education at Texas A&M University–San Antonio, where I completed a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with minors in Criminal Justice and Sociology.

Currently, I am pursuing a Master of Science in Counseling at Texas A&M University–Kingsville, to become a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) and earn a certification in school counseling. I have a passion for improving the lives of children and for speaking light and life into others. My hope is to be a positive influence, to help students reach their dreams, and to encourage new mindsets that lead to lasting growth. I look forward to continuing this journey of learning, serving, and making a difference in the lives of those I have the privilege to counsel.



Hello all, my name is Felicia Martinez. I am currently working on my Master of Education in School Counseling at Lamar University. This is my first year as a school counselor at Kenedy Elementary. I am excited to begin my internship with the RAMPED program and to continue supporting our students in meaningful ways. I look forward to helping students work through any challenges they may face, providing engaging guidance lessons in the classroom and creating a safe and supportive space for students who may be struggling with their emotions. Together, we can ensure every child feels seen, heard, and supported.



Hi! I'm Joshua Jarma, a new resident counselor-in-training with the RAMPED program! I am currently enrolled at Texas A&M University-Kingsville to become both a Licensed Professional Counselor and a School Counselor. I am also a part-time high school teacher, teaching statistics and forensic science, as well as a part-time pastor. So, I have a lot going on! On a personal note, I've been married for 20 years and have two children, a 13-year-old daughter and an 8-year-old son. Also, I'm a big nerd! I love learning just about anything, and most of my hobbies lean towards the nerdy side.

I am drawn to the counseling profession because I've interacted with many people who are struggling and need a little help getting their lives back on track. I've been fortunate enough to have people in my life who have helped me when things were tough, and I want to be that person for others. I've been told that I'm very good at relating to people and helping people feel comfortable around me. I am especially good at listening to and connecting with children of all ages. I plan to utilize all of my skills and training to help the students I will interact with get "unstuck" and move forward with confidence.

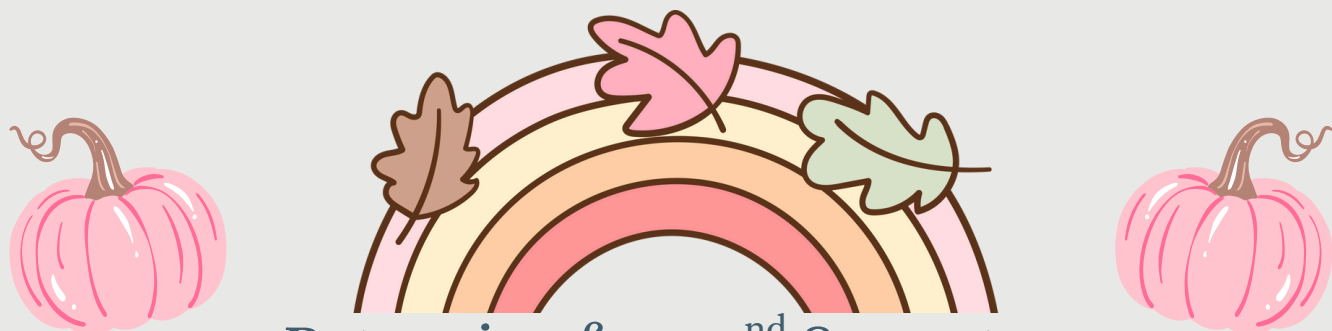
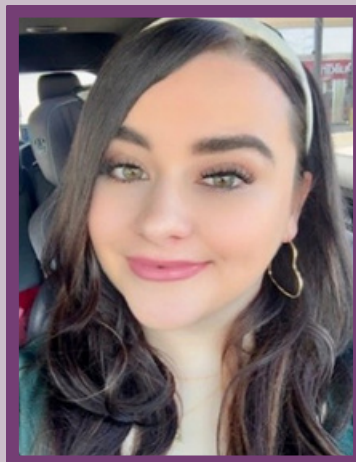


Hi! I'm Teresa Mireles and I'm very excited to be one of your School Counselor Residents this Fall. I hold a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology from UIW and am currently pursuing a Master of Arts at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Entering my 4th year in education, I have cultivated cognitive, instructional, emotional, and adaptive skills that have aided me in and out of the classroom. I am excited to further grow and add skills to my toolbox, as I embark on this journey to see education in a different lens of mental health.

Mental health is not just a topic I care about—it's a calling that has shaped my values, my work, and my relationships. As a teacher, I've witnessed how emotional well-being directly impacts a student's ability to learn, connect, and thrive. I've seen the quiet struggles behind bright smiles, and I've learned that compassion and awareness can be just as powerful as any lesson plan. I believe in the power of education not just to inform minds, but to heal hearts. My goal is to be a voice for those who feel unheard, and a source of strength for those learning to stand tall again.



Hi! My name is Melissa Nelson, and I am so honored and excited to join RAMPED as a counseling intern this semester. I currently hold a bachelor's degree in psychology from The University of Texas at San Antonio, and I am completing my graduate studies in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, at Texas A&M San Antonio. I have an extensive professional background in the medical field that has prepared me greatly to help people at their lowest and has made me passionate about supporting individuals through all of life's challenges. My academic background has provided me with a strong foundation in counseling theories, ethical practice, and culturally responsive care. As an intern, I am committed to offering a respectful and safe environment where the students I meet feel supported and valued. I look forward to being a part of your journey and I am thankful to be a part of the process of healing and self-discovery.



Returning for a 2nd Semester



Sheriffa Dennis
Texas A&M Univ. - SA



Star Macias
Texas A&M Univ. - SA



Luis Lezama
Texas A&M Univ. - SA

Meet Our New Social Work Residents



Hi, my name is Marivel Blount, and I am a Master of Social Work student at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. I am deeply passionate about helping others, particularly through research in areas such as mental health and domestic violence, examining contributing factors at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. I strongly believe that children are the greatest predictors of the future we want, which is why the work we do with them now is so important. Programs like RAMPED play a crucial role in supporting children and shaping a better tomorrow and I am glad I can be apart of the team.



In All Things Give Thanks



Hi everyone! My name is Bianca Lane, and I'm an MSW intern with RAMPED, working with students around Karnes County. Before grad school, I spent several years working in a residential treatment center for youth, where I led groups, coordinated intakes, and later served as treatment supervisor. I also worked as a Risk Reduction Program Coordinator for the Army, focusing on behavioral health and substance abuse prevention. These experiences deepened my commitment to trauma-informed, client-centered practice—especially with youth navigating complex environments. At RAMPED, I've been co-facilitating SEL groups and helping adapt curriculum to better meet the needs of elementary and junior high students. I'm passionate about accessible mental health services, especially increasing access to support in rural communities. Outside of work, I love reading, hiking, and spending time with my family. I'm excited to continue growing through this internship and contributing to the incredible work being done here.

Hello! My name is Teniola Okeyemi, and I'm proud to be one of the social work residents working with RAMPED. I'm currently in my final year of earning my Master's in Social Work (MSW), and I couldn't be more excited about what's ahead. My ultimate goal after completing my practicum and degree is to become a licensed school social worker. I have a true passion for working with children, and social work has opened the door for me to make a meaningful difference in their lives. I'm originally from Houston, Texas, and I plan to return home to continue this important work in my community. I'm especially looking forward to collaborating with the amazing staff in this district and neighboring districts as I continue to grow as a learner and a professional. Most of all, I'm excited to make a lasting impact on the lives of the students and families I have the privilege to work with!





Hi everyone! My name is Eva Rivera, and I am one of the new RAMPED residents for the 2025-2026 school year! I am currently in the MSW program at the University of Texas at San Antonio. I will be graduating in May! I am currently placed in Karnes City High School, Pettus Elementary, and Pawnee K-12. After graduation, I hope to become a licensed therapist, offering services like TF-CBT and equine therapy. I have worked with children ranging from ages 5-18, so I'm very excited to work with the kids at Pettus, Pawnee, and Karnes City ISD! When I am not at school or in the RAMPED office, you can probably find me somewhere outside with my dogs or watching the Detroit Lions game during football season! I am so excited to get to know and work with everyone!



Hello, my name is Kristin Parsons, and I am a social work graduate student at Texas State University. I am originally from far Northern, CA, close to the Oregon border. I moved to Texas in the Fall of 2013 with my husband, who is from Falls City, after serving four years in the United States Air Force. I attended Texas State University for my undergraduate degree and graduated in December of 2016 with a Bachelor's of Family and Consumer Sciences degree with a concentration in Family and Child Development. I was a stay-at-home mom until September 2021, when I served as an AmeriCorps member with Communities in Schools of San Antonio, working with high school students. In June 2022, I started a full-time position with Communities in Schools San Antonio and continued to work with high school students for the next two years. I started the Master of Social Work graduate program in the fall of 2024. I currently live in Falls City on a family farm with my husband and two little boys. I enjoy fitness and the outdoors. During this internship, I am excited to learn more about and serve the local communities.



My name is Chandra Wagner; I am a graduate student at Our Lady of the Lake University working on my Master of Social Work. I graduated from The University of Texas at Arlington with my Bachelor of Science in Psychology. I've done case management work in social services for the last twenty years, focusing primarily on the elderly and intellectually disabled population. Throughout the years of working in the social service field, I have seen the disadvantages many individuals face and seen a need for services within the community. Working alongside other professions I have been able to offer assistance with gaining access to services, in addition to collecting and providing resources for individuals and their families.

Being a student resident of the Ramped program, I hope to learn how to identify the needs of our youth and continue to collect and provide resources for families. As a resident, my goal is to continue to learn and grow as a social worker while advocating for those whose voice might seem small.



University Partners



School Counseling Program Partners

Lamar University
Our Lady of The Lake University
Texas A&M-Kingsville
Texas A&M-San Antonio
Texas State University
UTSA, TAMIU, Walden University
University of Houston - Victoria
Midwestern State University

Social Worker Program Partners

Our Lady of the Lake University
Texas State University
Texas A&M-Kingsville
University of Texas - Arlington
UTSA