

RAMPED

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RURAL AREA MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT & DEVELOPMENT



LIVE WELL TO LEARN WELL

The RAMPED grant team has embraced a holistic wellness approach towards academic growth and personal success that includes ten components of thinking and living that contribute to positive mental health, strength, wellness, and self-care. When we purposefully approach these components and intentionally make them a priority in our way of thinking and living, our mental health improves. When our mental health improves, all aspects of our lives improve too. In August, our emphasis was on GRATITUDE and how powerful the practice of being thankful significantly alters your thought patterns. In September, we drew our attention to OCCUPATIONAL wellness. Occupational wellness focuses on building relationships, balancing work, school and home, valuing others, developing skills and knowledge, and time management. INTELLECTUAL wellness is our highlight for October. Intellectual wellness is the practice of stimulating and resting your brain to support creativity, curiosity, and critical thinking. We hope you consider making gratitude, occupational, and intellectual wellness part of your daily routine. Look out for our newsletters in the future to see the wellness component of the month and discover why our students and we must live well to learn well.

District Partners

Karnes City ISD

Kenedy ISD

Pawnee ISD

Pettus ISD

Runge ISD



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Stories From the Field



For the month of September, I have had the wonderful opportunity of working with different ACE programs and continuing work centered around social-emotional learning. Most of the activities I facilitate are grounded in emotional growth and coping skills development. I ensure a safe environment for the students I work with and advocate for the exploration of feelings. I feel these strategies are important in the development of our rural population, as they can foster the growth of stress management into adulthood. Other work I have contributed towards this past month has been the bridging relationship between local mental health services, specifically crisis response, and our rural schools. It is crucial for our schools to have an ongoing dialogue with the local mental health authority to provide adequate and relevant services to our youth and families. Today we have a great need to address mental health services for all demographics and I am ecstatic to be a part of that growing dynamic. As an individual with a similar upbringing as the students I am working with, I feel it is my responsibility to advocate and address areas of need. The work I have started this month reflects the ongoing needs identified by staff, students, and the community. I will continue to contribute towards collaborative and adaptive interventions that best suit the population I am working with. - **Alex Palacios, Masters Social Work Resident**

This month has been full of learning, planning, and fun. I have been getting to know students and staff at all of my campuses. I have been spending time in student and teacher lunches and passing out lots of stickers. I started seeing students at the high school and I'm in the process of planning groups at the primary. I have also been working on some tips and treats for teachers that will be coming soon. I have attended several trainings this month that have been amazing. At Runge I have been passing out student affirmations and visiting classes. I have been assisting with guidance lessons and even led a guidance lesson. My favorite part has been connecting with the kiddos! Some of the things I am looking forward to coming up in October are starting groups at the primary, getting to use their sensory room, and planning for the upcoming symposium! - **Cheyenne Williams, Masters Social Work Resident**

September was a great month! Finally had the chance to see the schools, meet students and the staff. Handing out affirmation cards has been fun, especially when students ask what they are, that gives me the chance to give some fun examples and explain the importance of them. I have also had the chance to partake in ACE at a couple different schools and that has been a great experience. I have realized that my activities have been too structured (in a boring way) and may need to make adjustments. I am in the process of mentoring some students and I am excited for that journey. Overall, it's been a great experience with RAMPED and I am beyond thankful to have the support system that I have. - **Fernando Arambula, Masters Social Work Resident**

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND

Heart & Mind Connection

Patricia Huber, MSC

Happy Fall Y'all! I hope you are all enjoying the first signs of cooler weather coming upon us! With the transforming of the season comes proof that change can be beautiful! There are many changes taking place in the RAMPED grant as we are in full swing of Year Two. As the new school year unfolds, we are thrilled to add three school counselor residents to our team! The RAMPED initiative is aimed at increasing the number of mental health professionals in rural schools which results in enhancing student support, promoting mental well-being, and creating a more inclusive environment for all our learners. The demand for mental health resources in schools has never been greater. With rising academic pressures, social challenges, and personal issues that students face, having additional mental health professionals ensures that every student has access to the guidance and support they need. By having RAMPED residents available, we aim to foster a safe and nurturing environment where students feel comfortable discussing their concerns. There are many benefits to having many opportunities to interact with our RAMPED residents. Some advantages include accessibility, enhanced programs, a focus on mental health, deeper connections, and more support for families. We encourage you to take advantage of the resources RAMPED provides. As we look ahead, please remember that we are committed to nurturing a supportive school culture. The addition of our school counselor residents is just one step in our ongoing efforts to prioritize student mental health and well-being. With the right support, every student can thrive both academically and personally. Please continue reading to learn about James, Ashley, and FeeDee!

Social Work Spotlight

Frances Ehrlich, LMSW

"Be patient because soon you will be busy." Words I share with each resident at the start of a semester and sure enough we are at the beginning of October and referrals for groups and individuals are coming in. Managing a busy caseload starts now and will continue through their career as a social worker. Our Residents assist with group and individual counseling and support DAEP students returning to campus, ISS students, and truancy students. They are also stepping in to help with mentoring and guidance lessons. Lastly, residents are being asked to present on the topics of vaping, bullying, and fentanyl. Busy they are! Our Texas State Social Work resident must complete a capstone project. After a visit to Kingsville ISD's Save a Life Symposium she decided she wanted to replicate a similar symposium for our high school students for our RAMPED districts. This month she plans to have a mental health symposium with several speakers. See our Save the Date announcement in our newsletter.

Our current residents are starting to settle in, but by mid-October, we will have 2 more residents from Our Lady of the Lake start their field placement. After onboarding they will be ready for their assigned campuses. We are very thankful for the support from our counselors, administrators, and staff.

Patricia and I received official approval from the Department of Ed to be Co-Directors for our grant. We have jumped right into work on our Interim Progress Report. This has allowed us to see all the great things taking place with the grant. We are on track to meet our year 2 goal for the number of residents and Grow Your Own staff. This report is due October 11th. Look for more information in our next newsletter.

Meet Our School Counselor Residents



Hello, my name is James Peralta, and I am a school counseling intern with RAMPED this semester. I am currently completing my master's degree at Lamar University, and I will graduate this December. I have been in Education for the past 18 years, teaching all level English language arts and special education. Through my experiences over the years, I have noticed a surge in mental health issues, and my goal is to help anyone I can overcome problems they are dealing with. I have always been the type of teacher students like to confide in and to tell all their issues. I feel I can help more people and have a bigger impact by transitioning to the role of a counselor. A little about myself, I love to experience cultures and food through world travel alongside my wonderful family. My wife and two kids make every day a blessing for me. I am also an avid reader, writer, and gamer. I look forward to finishing my educational journey with RAMPED.



My name is FeeDee Langrehr, I am a School Counselor Practicum student this semester at RAMPED and am so excited! I am completing my Masters in Clinical Mental Health with a concentration in School Counseling at Midwestern State University. I have two children; my 22 year old is attending classes at Texas Tech, completing her Bachelor of Arts in English with a concentration in Literature & Language. My youngest, 17, is in their Senior year of high school and deciding on a college for next year. I am a Navy Hospital Corpsman veteran of seven years. I earned my teaching certification and was a special education teacher for seven years before transferring to the College, Career and Military Readiness coordinator at my current school, Kenedy Secondary. I am in a unique position this and next semester in that I am currently employed as a school counselor. I know I am very lucky in this regard and appreciate the opportunity to do my practicum and internship at my place of employment. This is my third year working at Kenedy ISD and I have found a place in our community that I cherish everyday. My goal is to provide a safe space for all my students and staff.



My name is Ashley Cavazos, and I am thrilled to join RAMPED as an intern this semester as part of my master's degree program at the University of Houston-Victoria (UHV). I am excited to embark on this journey and contribute to the dynamic environment.

I am currently pursuing a master's degree in clinical Mental Health and School Counseling at UHV, where I have developed a strong foundation. My academic journey has equipped me with a deep understanding of educational theories and practical strategies that I am eager to apply in a real-world setting.

My passion for education stems from a belief that every student has the potential to succeed when given the right support and opportunities. I am particularly interested and looking forward to working with the dedicated staff and enthusiastic students here within the RAMPED program to create a positive and impactful learning environment. During my time here, I aim to:

Support and Learn: Work closely with teachers and staff to support classroom activities and gain practical experience.

Innovate: Contribute fresh ideas and perspectives to enhance student learning and engagement.

Build Relationships: Develop meaningful connections with students, parents, and colleagues to foster a collaborative and supportive school community.

Outside of my academic and professional pursuits, I enjoy fishing, volunteering, and spending quality time with loved ones. I believe that a well-rounded life enhances one's ability to connect with and inspire others, and I am eager to share my enthusiasm with the students and staff within the RAMPED program.

I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to learn and grow as a school counselor and to contribute to the success of the students and the school. I am confident that this internship will be a valuable experience, and I am committed to making a positive impact during my time here.

Thank you for welcoming me into your community. I look forward to meeting everyone and working together to achieve our shared goals.



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
University of Houston - Victoria
Midwestern State University

Social Worker Program Partners

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