



RAMPED

December 2024 | Volume 04

RURAL AREA MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL
ENHANCEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

MERRY
Christmas

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

LIVE WELL TO LEARN WELL

This month's "Live Well to Learn Well" component of thinking and living is "environmental wellness." Environmental wellness supports mental strength by helping you maintain a sense of safety, comfort, and connection with your physical surroundings. Your environment can play a significant impact on your mental health and wellness. Simple ways to maintain environmental wellness are to declutter any spaces by removing excess items, connect with nature by taking time to channel what you see, hear, and feel, practice the 3 R's (reduce, reuse, recycle), invest in your community by volunteering, donating, or playing an active role in your community, and spending time outdoors. By participating in environmental wellness, you can reduce stress and anxiety, boost creativity and well-being, and enhance positive energy. We hope you consider making environmental wellness part of your daily routine. Look out for the newest wellness component of the month in the next newsletter and discover why we and our students must live well to learn well.

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.*

BE KIND TO YOUR MIND BE KIND TO YOUR MIND BE KIND TO YOUR MIND



Heart & Mind Connection

Patricia Huber, MSC

As the role of school counselors continues to evolve, the future of student support lies in the hands of enthusiastic and dedicated interns who are gaining valuable experience in school settings across our RAMPED districts. Four graduate students currently working through their internships in school counseling programs spent the fall semester making a significant difference on their campuses, and the impact of their services are a reminder of the inspiring power of compassionate, student-centered care.

As part of their program and placement, they have had an array of exposure to the field of school counseling from raising awareness around mental health among staff and students, reducing stigma, coordination of guidance lessons, facing barriers and challenges, exploring career development and post-secondary goals, fostering social emotional learning skills, making responsible decisions, exploring scholarship opportunities, helping with academic struggles, conflict resolution, burnout among staff, and many, MANY more. The work of these future school counselors highlights the profound impact internships can have on both the students they serve and their own professional development. Through firsthand experiences in our rural schools, these residents are already demonstrating the strategies and skills necessary to serve as a school counselor.

Of the four school counselor residents, two will be graduating in December. We extend a grand congratulations to Anthony Warzecha and James Peralta on their graduations from Texas A&M International University and Lamar University, respectively. Other residents, FeeDee Langrehr and Ashley Cavazos, will join us again in the spring where they will resume with their programs and continue to learn and grow. These emerging counselors will no doubt shape the future of school counseling. Their contributions today lay the foundation for a more supportive, empathetic, and proactive school environment for generations to come.

For more information on how RAMPED school counseling residents are helping campuses, stay tuned to upcoming newsletters and updates from the RAMPED grant team.



Social Work Spotlight

Frances Ehrlich, LMSW

Gratitude helps people realize that they would not be where they are without the help of others. Robert Emmons defines gratitude as having two parts. The first is an affirmation of goodness: People can learn to wake up to the good around them and notice the gifts they have received. The second part of gratitude is recognizing that the source of this goodness rests outside of oneself.

I wouldn't be where I am today without the guidance and knowledge of others. I was an investment to many people as an employee and my supervisors who took the time to grow me as a social worker and an individual. I am very grateful to those supervisors. Today, I can support new social workers through our grant. I try to encourage and challenge the residents during their internship. Our residents share what their classmates are experiencing in other field placements and Patricia, and I are proud of the time we can dedicate to the residents. We can provide thoughtful reflection and guidance to individuals new to the field. It is rewarding and I am truly grateful. I wake up and see the gift of working with developing social workers. I recognize that this goodness is truly from the social work residents participating in our program, our RAMPED staff, and the staff and students in our districts. Gratitude!



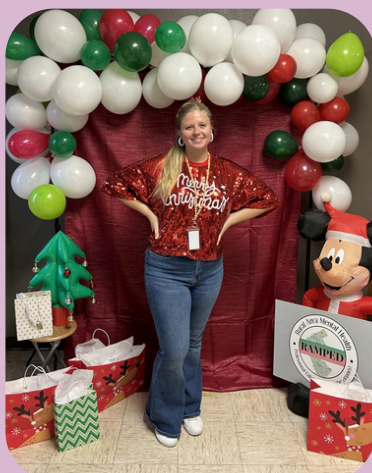
Alex Palacios-UTSA-Masters Social Work graduate December 2024

As my time as a social work intern in rural schools comes to a close, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude and reflection. Over the past six months, I've had the privilege of working with both students and staff in ways that have shaped me not only as a social worker but as a person. Leading individual and group sessions, teaching social and emotional learning, and being present for moments of growth and connection have been some of the most rewarding experiences of my professional journey. The relationships I've built with students—seeing their struggles, triumphs, and everything in between—have been heartfelt and inspiring. I've also developed strong bonds with the school staff, and together we've created an environment of support and understanding. As I look ahead to graduating and moving on to the next chapter of my career, I feel excited and confident in the skills and knowledge I've gained during this internship. It has deepened my passion for social work and solidified my commitment to supporting others in their emotional and mental well-being. This experience has not only enriched my understanding of the challenges students face, but also how to empower them with the tools to navigate life's obstacles. I feel an indescribable sense of reward towards my time working in an area so close to home. I have taken great pride in my role of emotional enhancement and development with the students and staff and hope to have planted a seed of never-ending growth. Moving forward, I'll carry these lessons with me, knowing they'll continue to shape my work and the way I support future clients, and I'm eager to continue this journey of growth and service in my career as a social worker.



Cheyenne Williams-Texas State-Master Social Work graduate December 2024

I want to start by saying thank you to everyone for the experiences I have gained over the last few months and the memories I will keep. I have loved getting to know everyone and work with the kiddos. This time has been nothing short of amazing, and I've had the opportunity to learn and grow in ways that I never anticipated. Overall, I have greatly enjoyed developing relationships with my students and getting to truly invest in them. The lessons I've learned here, both professionally and personally, will stay with me. I feel like this experience has prepared me well to step into a school social work role. I will hopefully be working in a school this coming school year. I appreciate everyone I have worked with over these last few months!





James Peralta-Lamar University-Masters of Education in School Counseling graduate December 2024



This year has been integral to my growth and understanding of the role of a school counselor from various perspectives. I am grateful for the opportunity to expand my skills as a counselor and learn from all the great students and staff I have worked with in the past year. I am very appreciative of all the people who took the time to help me understand the responsibilities and day-to-day duties I must undertake in my new career. I anticipate becoming a full-time counselor in the near future and will utilize all the newfound knowledge and confidence I have acquired through this experience to become the best and most effective counselor I can be. Thank you to all the wonderful people at Pettus ISD who helped me along the way and especially to my site supervisor, Mrs. Patricia Huber, for all the support and great conversations we have had. Even though my time with RAMPED is coming to an end, her perpetual optimism and encouragement will always stay with me.

Anthony Warzecha-Texas A&M International-Masters of Education in School Counseling graduate December 2024

Thank you to the Ramped program and Patricia and Frances for all of your help this past fall semester. I appreciate the support of the Ramped program to guide me in my internship for school counseling. I really enjoyed the time with Patricia and our advising meetings. I plan to continue my school counseling position at Kenedy Elementary and continue to grow the counseling program at the elementary campus.



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

Our Lady of the Lake University
Texas State University
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