

RAMPED

January 2025 | Volume 05

RURAL AREA MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT & DEVELOPMENT



LIVE WELL TO LEARN WELL

This month's "Live Well to Learn Well" component of thinking and living is "physical wellness." Physical wellness supports mental strength, resilience and wellness by helping you maintain a strong and healthy body. Physical wellness positively impacts academic growth, focus, and concentration, feeling happier, weight management, increased levels of energy, brain development, better sleep, illness and disease prevention, and much more. Simple ways to maintain physical wellness are get plenty of sleep, stay away from sweets or processed food, participate in a fun activity, lift weights, dance, work towards a goal, go for a walk, eat a balanced meal, drink water instead of sugared drinks, and basically just move your body. By participating in physical wellness, you can reduce stress and anxiety, boost creativity and well-being, and enhance positive energy. We hope you consider making physical 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

Social Work Spotlight

Frances Ehrlich, LMSW



January marked the start of a new semester for our graduate social work students. We currently have EIGHT graduate students in field placement! FIVE returning students and THREE new students. They join us from UTSA, TX State, and Our Lady of the Lake. We have a wonderful mix of residents helping our campuses with individual and group counseling, classroom presentations, guidance lessons, and parent connections. Coordinating schedules and activities takes time. We are very thankful for the time our Counselors and Administrators take to assist.

We have also been working on our Year 2 Annual Progress Report this month. We hope to share the findings next month, but I can tell you that we are on target for our goals. This demonstration grant provides graduate students great opportunities to work with students and the community. Having 13 residents this Spring to work with students across the 5 Districts is an amazing sight to see.



Heart & Mind Connection

Patricia Huber, MSC



Happy 2025! As the new semester begins, the RAMPED grant team is excited to welcome several new school counselor residents who will contribute greatly to our mission and commitment to provide mental health services to students in our catchment area. The new residents have been hard at work completing onboarding assignments while also getting to know campus administration and learning about how they will be of service to the campuses in which they are assigned. They will work hand in hand with principals, assistant principals, and counselors to provide mental health support, guidance, and resources to students throughout the semester. As always, the RAMPED grant provides an ongoing effort to ensure that all students have access to the tools they need to navigate both academic and personal challenges. For students, the addition of counselor residents means more opportunities for personalized care. In addition to providing counseling services, the residents will help with mental health education, aiming to reduce stigma and raise awareness about the importance of self-care and emotional well-being. These efforts are offered at the perfect time, as sometimes students return from winter break feeling stressed about different things. Our hope is that every student has access to the support they need, not just for today, but for their long-term success and well-being. With a fresh start to the new semester, there's no better time for students to take advantage of these resources. We anticipate a meaningful and successful spring semester. Please look to next month's newsletter for an introduction to Ashley Cavazos, Luis Lezama, FeeDee Langrehr, and Sheriffa Dennis!

Meet Our New Spring 2025 Social Work Residents



Hello, I'm Deven Murray, a fourth-semester Master of Social Work (MSW) student at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). My journey into social work started with my time in the Army where I was overseas in Alaska and Germany for 3 years each. I found my passion for addressing social issues by meeting people from different backgrounds but with the same needs. While enlisted, I received an A.S. in Business Administration and B.A. in Sociology from Southern New Hampshire University. I work part-time as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) for UTSA where I help on projects that benefit people who are blind or vision impaired with Type 2 Diabetes and live in San Antonio. Outside of academics and work, I enjoy gardening, reading, and pursuing creative projects. I share my life with my partner, who has been my best friend for over a decade, and we are beyond excited to be expecting twins at the end of July.



My name is Lauren Baltensperger, and I am currently pursuing my MSW at the University of Texas at San Antonio. I hold a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and have experience teaching pre-k, kindergarten, and second grade. After taking a career break to be a stay-at-home-parent, I am excited to return and integrate my background in education into my social work practice, with a focus on mental healthcare. My family and I reside in San Antonio and my husband serves as a pediatric neurologist in the Air Force at BAMC. We are proud parents of three wonderful children—two sons and a daughter—as well as two Labrador Retrievers. In my free time, I enjoy spending time outdoors, walking, hiking and enjoying good food with family and friends.



My name is Fernando Vargas, and I am in the final stage of my master's in social work (MSW) program through Texas State. Some of my passions include cooking, exploring BBQ restaurants across Texas, and learning how to play guitar in my free time. I initially earned my bachelor's in social work (BSW) from Texas State in December 2020. Since then, I have had several wonderful opportunities to apply my skills and talents in working with at-risk populations such as young adults in a rehabilitative setting, unaccompanied immigrant children, youth within a juvenile detention center, and as of most recently, with foster youth exiting foster care in preparation for adulthood.

I deeply enjoy working with families and children, as I have found it to be the most rewarding – not for personal gratification, but to see how appropriate support can bring in a new season of positive change and meaningful growth. I look forward to finishing this semester strong, and to be a source of support and guidance for our students, their families, and staff.



Returning Social Work Residents



Fernando Arambula



Isaiah Gallegos



Michelle Gomez



Martha Schauer



America Wilson



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
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UTSA