

# LA VOZ UNIDA

## E-NEWSLETTER

### SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

As we close out March 2023 and commemorations of social workers and women, I hope you enjoy the many stories about your colleagues and the cultural factors that contributed to who they are today! I encourage us to continue this journey enhanced via our newsletters of discovering our rich heritages and cultures, and identifying the many things that affirm our similarities often outpace our differences. Let's continue to celebrate each other, culture, diversity, social workers, women, and our individual and collective successes throughout the remainder of the Spring semester and beyond! We are a pretty awesome bunch that is significantly contributing to the social work profession and making a difference throughout San Marcos, central Texas, and along the I-35 corridor! Enjoy!

## NASW SOCIAL WORK MONTH

### SOCIAL WORK BREAKS BARRIERS

Although social workers work in a variety of settings, the profession's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence, highlight how social workers help break down barriers that prohibit others from living more enriched and fulfilling lives.

In their roles, social workers serve individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations through direct practice and systems-level change to advocate for equity and well-being.

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# *SOCIAL WORK MONTH 2023 PROCLAMATION: SOCIAL WORK BREAKS BARRIERS*

WHEREAS, Social Workers enter the profession because they have a strong desire to help empower individuals, families, communities, and our nation overcome issues that prevent them from reaching their full potential;

WHEREAS, Social Workers have worked for more than a century to improve the human well-being and enhance the basic needs of all people;

WHEREAS, Social Workers follow a Code of Ethics that call on them to fight social injustice and respect the dignity and worth of all people;

WHEREAS, Social Workers positively touch the lives of millions of Americans each day and in a variety of places, including schools, hospitals, the military, child welfare agencies, community centers, and in federal, state and local government;

WHEREAS, the 2023 Social Work Month theme, "Social Work Breaks Barriers" embodies how social workers help empower individuals, families, communities and our society to overcome hurdles that prevent them from achieving better well-being;

WHEREAS, Social Workers are the largest group of mental health care providers in the United States, working daily to help of Americans overcome mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety;

WHEREAS, Social Workers are on the frontlines of the nation's opioid addiction crisis, helping people get the treatment they need and prevail over substance use disorders;

WHEREAS, Social Workers have help people cope with death and grief and helped people and communities recover from natural disasters that are increasingly fueled by our warming climate, including hurricanes, drought and flooding;

WHEREAS, Social Workers have helped this nation live up to its values by advocating for equal rights for all, including people of color, people who are Indigenous, people who LGBTQIA2S+, or people who follow various faiths;

WHEREAS, the Social Work Profession is one of the fastest growing careers in the United States, with about 708,000 social workers today and more than 60,000 more social workers expected to enter the profession over the next decade;

WHEREAS, Social Workers have continued to push for changes that have made our society a better place to live, including a livable wage, improved workplace safety, and social safety net programs that help ameliorate poverty, hunger, and homelessness;

HEREAS, Social Workers endeavor to work throughout our society to meet people where they are and help empower people and our society to reach the goals they wish to attain;

NOW THEREFORE, in recognition of the numerous contributions made by America's Social Workers, I \_\_\_\_\_  
proclaim the month of March 2023 as National Social Work Month and call upon all citizens to join the National Association of Social Workers and \_\_\_\_\_ [your organization] in celebration and support of the Social Work Profession.

# *From Women's History Week.....*

By presidential proclamation, every March honors women's contributions to American history.



In 1978, the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women, in Santa Rosa, California, held a "Women's History Week" celebration.

Susan Scanlan and the History of Women's History Month

Across the country, other communities held Women's History Week celebrations the following year.

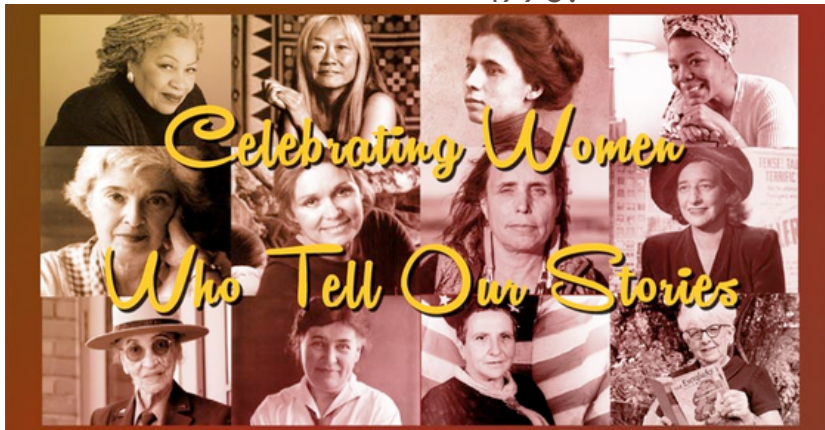
The National Women's History Project (now the National Women's History Alliance) advocated for national recognition and a Presidential Proclamation declared the week of March 8th 1980 as National Women's History Week.

## *....to Women's History Month*

In 1987, Congress passed Public Law 100-9 , designating March as "Women's History Month." Additional resolutions authorized the President to proclaim the month of March each year as Women's History Month. Annual proclamations have designated March as Women's History Month since 1995.

The National Women's History Alliance announced the theme for 2023 as "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories."

This theme recognizes and honors women who have devoted their lives to producing art, pursuing truth, and reflecting the human condition.



Top: Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong Kingston, Jovita Idar, Maya Angelou  
Middle: Gerda Lerner, Gloria Steinem, Winona La Duke, Lillian Hellman  
Bottom: Betty Soskin, Willa Cather, Gertrude Stein, Marjory Stoneman Douglas

# *Mr. Richard Brooks*

Mr. Brooks describes his cultural identity/ethnicity as a white anglo male. His family origins can be traced back to European roots, verified by Ancestry.com, covering back to 1780. During the summer of 2022, he and his family traveled to Scotland, Ireland, and London, and getting to experience the different cultures and historical sites was priceless.

Growing up, military, teacher/education, farming, and religion were the main influences in his family's lives. Family traditions included Sunday being a day of rest and going to church and church events. Holidays and summer vacations were important as they seemed to be the only time extended family would get together.

One of Mr. Brooks' relatives was a soldier in the Civil War. His job was to protect one of the high-ranking officials and he was given land in Pennsylvania. He built a church (that is still standing today) and became the Pastor of the church. Mr. Brooks' life is heavily influenced by religion and acts of service within his church.



Mr. Brooks holding his niece, his son standing behind him, and his daughter standing next to him

## **Most Important Aspects of Mr. Brooks' Culture**

1. Everyone has culture. He has taught cultural diversity workshops during his time at CPS. He experienced a lot of white people believing they do not have culture.
2. Cultural identity and awareness are a journey. You must be committed to the journey to keep moving, hopefully forward.
3. Give Grace when it comes to your journey and others. Our journey will not always go down the path that we intended. It might take you back before you move forward again. Conversations around culture and race are challenging. Mr. Brooks believes it is not his job to change anyone's mind, his job is to plant the seed and have conversations to help himself and others be more aware. He needs conversation to help him better understand what someone else is going through as he only has his experiences and exposure to really connect to understand and better help others.

*Food cooked when growing up and for special occasions: homemade beef and noodles and homemade fried chicken*

*Favorite Bible verse: Romans 5:3-4*

*Mr. Brooks was inspired to become a social worker by Dr. Hawkins, Dr. Selber, and Dr. Travis from his time in the MSW program at TXST. He remembers Dr. Hawkins being so passionate about research. He remembers Dr. Selber being so passionate about her son's first deployment and the military. Dr. Travis, was Mr. Travis at the time, had a big influence as a male in social work. Their passion was inspiring, each showed leadership, most important was how to have high expectations while still helping others on their educational path to becoming a competent social worker.*

# *Dr. Kelly Clary*



*Dr. Clary's family*

Dr. Clary describes her cultural identity/ethnicity as German, Polish, Slovakian, Bohemian, and Czechoslovakian. Growing up, she celebrated every Christmas at her maternal grandparent's home, this typically wasn't on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day as her mom worked almost all holidays. They would eat prime rib and shrimp, pray before dinner and pass around the oplatek, and then open presents. This was special as she and her sister were the only grandchildren on that side of the family.

Every Sunday during the NFL season, they would have family over to watch the football games. Her mom would make her famous taco dip, they would order pizza, and they would always end up going out for ice cream. Once Dr. Clary went off to college, it turned into a weekend full of football - as family would also come over on Saturday to watch college games, and they would cheer for her now husband, Tim, who played for the University of Illinois.

These are significant to Dr. Clary because she grew up in a tight-knit family that truly cherished the time they had together. Her grandparents were very involved and attended almost all her school activities, softball games, and cross-country meets. During the summer, they also went camping at their summer campground where they would fish, have campfires, and she learned to swim, water ski, and wakeboard.

*Food cooked when growing up and for special occasions:* On special occasions and holidays her grandma made Polish sausage and sauerkraut and stuffing and her papa cooked fish (bluegill) he caught at their summer campground

*Favorite poem:* Philippians 4:13: I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. - This is Dr. Clary's favorite poem because it constantly reminds her that there is always something bigger and more important and powerful than her.

*Favorite music genre:* Country. Nothing like a summer country concert! Two favorite songs - God Gave Me You (Blake Shelton) and My Wish (Rascal Flatts)

*Dr. Clary's mom inspired her to be a social worker, and her professors and mentors solidified her passion and inspiration. While her mom was not a social worker herself, she did work as a 911 dispatcher for 20 years. Over those 20 years, she shared countless stories about her callers who were suffering from mental health and substance use issues/challenges - who she wanted to so badly assist, but in her role, she did not have the resources or training to do so. Her stories stuck with Dr. Clary, and she knew that she had to find a way to support those who were struggling with mental health or substance use problems. When Dr. Clary worked as a crisis social worker at an emergency department, there were so many times she interacted with police officers who showed empathy and a desire to help - just like her mom did - those they came into contact with.*

## *Ms. Miriam Nisenbaum*



Ms. Nisenbaum describes her cultural identity as Jewish. Growing up, her family traditions included celebrating Jewish holidays to recognize and reaffirm her identity. She shares that while she is not religious and observant, she strongly identifies as Jewish and will always speak out and take action about anti-Semitism, racism, misogyny, and any other discrimination. Having experienced a lot of anti-Semitism and discrimination as a woman, she will fight for equal rights for all.

Her parents were in the Holocaust and declined to speak of it. Her grandparents perished in the concentration camps.

Ms. Nisenbaum speaks Yiddish and some Spanish.

Her father loved opera as he was in a displaced persons camp after WWII in Milan, Italy, and was able to attend some operas at La Scala

*Food cooked when growing up and for special occasions:* Jewish food, chopped liver, gefilte fish, blintzes, and bagels

*Favorite poem:* The Road Less Traveled - it speaks to her about doing things that are not expected of her

*Favorite artist:* The Beatles - she does not need to say anymore!

*Ms. Nisenbaum is the former NASW Texas Executive Director, she is proud of all the bad legislation they were able to stop and is proud that they were able to put into place a loan forgiveness program for social workers who provide mental health services.*

*She felt that becoming a social worker seemed like the best way to make a difference in the world.*

# *Dr. Christine Norton*



Dr. Norton's family

*Dr. Norton comes from English, Scots-Irish, and German descent; however, privilege and ignorance buffered her from ever really considering or feeling connected to her cultural heritage. Her grandfather, a Marine and working class mechanic, used to tell her mom "Tell them you're just poor white trash." Dr. Norton's mother shied away from exploring her own heritage and nothing was ever really "passed on" to her from her mom's side of the family - except for that story. On her dad's side of the family, there was a bit more information, but there were also huge gaps. Only now, as an adult, being married to someone who strongly identifies as Puerto Rican and Irish, and having children who identify as "Quarterican," she has begun to think about her own culture.*

Dr. Norton speaks Spanish and studied Spanish in high school, minored in Spanish in undergrad, studied abroad at the University of Alicante, and has since traveled to many Spanish-speaking countries. She has led study abroad at Texas State to Panama and the Dominican Republic and has been able to practice her Spanish there as well. Her daughter is minoring in Spanish in college, so they get to practicar juntos.

*Traditional music:* Scots-Irish music, often referred to as Celtic music, is the foundation of her family's roots, and is at the heart of modern bluegrass and roots Americana music, which she loves  
*Foods cooked when growing up:* Simple and delicious homemade food; very Midwestern, seasoned largely with butter, salt, and pepper; and lots of delicious baking

*As an Outdoor Behavioral Healthcare Research Scientist and Certified Clinical Adventure Therapist, Dr. Norton was recently awarded the Heart of Adventure Therapy Award by the Association for Experiential Education's Therapeutic Adventure Professional Group. As women, we're taught not to brag or self-promote but this award is selected by her colleagues, and it means the world to her to have her hard work and contributions to the field of outdoor, adventure therapy recognized by people she respects so much.*  
*Dr. Norton's undergraduate sorority sister, Sarah Haines, inspired her to become a social worker. Dr. Norton wanted to study abroad and still graduate in four years, which wasn't possible with her degree plan. She returned to school three years later as an MSW foundation student.*  
*Dr. Norton valued her time in Spain and wouldn't have traded it for the world. She was able to come back to graduate school with a lot more real world experience in helping others, as well as more of a global perspective.*

# Dr. Laura Summerhill



Dr. Summerhill's family

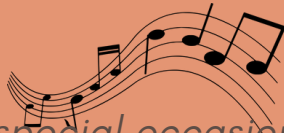


Dr. Summerhill describes her cultural identity or ethnicity as white (of mixed European ancestry) and southern. She has traced her roots to Ireland and Scotland. Growing up, she and her family were at church three times per week. She doesn't attend church nearly as much as an adult, but spirituality is a foundation for her. When Dr. Summerhill was a kid, she and her family also took a lot of road trips from Florida to Kentucky to see extended family and her parents always stopped along the way to see historical places or tourist spots. She loves adventures on the road!

Dr. Summerhill did not know her grandparents and her parents were born during the Great Depression. Their experiences significantly impacted her views on financial management, consumerism, and "making do" with what you have.

Dr. Summerhill has attended Spanish immersion school in Costa Rica four times and takes Amharic and Mandarin lessons with her kids who are from Ethiopia and China, respectively.

*Traditional music:* Bluegrass/Americana



*Food cooked when growing up and for special occasions:* Country ham, red eye gravy, beaten biscuits at Christmas made by her mom and dad (both Kentuckians!), and boiled peanuts any day of the week (especially if purchased by a man selling them on the side of a rural road near her childhood home in Gainesville, FL)

*Favorite poem:* Final stanza from *A Psalm of Life* (Longfellow)



*Dr. Summerhill volunteers monthly with Texas Department of Criminal Justice as a Team Leader in a prison in Dayton, TX, recording incarcerated mothers reading to their children via Women's Storybrook Project of Texas. Books and recordings are mailed to the children each month. Such a simple, but powerful intervention!*

*Dr. Summerhill's mother inspired her to be a social worker. Her ideas on people were progressive for the time and she selflessly and relentlessly served others by volunteering via a wide variety of organizations in their town. She included Dr. Summerhill in many of her volunteer efforts.*



# Dr. Fena Vasquez

Dr. Vasquez describes her cultural identity or ethnicity as Chicago Irish Catholic. Her sister has traced their roots and discovered they are 50% English and 50% Irish. Growing up, she and her family would see the beautiful Christmas window displays at Marshall Fields on State Street, have a holiday dinner under the spectacular 45-foot Christmas Tree in the Walnut Room at Fields, and ice skate in the park.

Her paternal grandmother was born in 1911 and graduated college as a young woman in the early 1930s. Her maternal grandmother was part of the WAVES program in WWII and worked in Washington DC as part of the effort to bring the boys back home. These two stories impacted Dr. Vasquez and her understanding of her lineage from strong and independent women.



Dr. Vasquez's family at the Walnut Room Christmas tree

## Most Important Aspects of Dr. Vasquez's Culture

1. They dye the Chicago River green every year for St. Patrick's Day
2. The longest running mayor of Chicago was Richard M. Daley who is Irish Catholic and was reelected 6 times until he declined to run a 7th time with a 22 year term from 1989-2011, surpassing his father Richard J. Daley, who was Chicago mayor for 21 years
3. The White Sox are the far superior Chicago baseball team



*Traditional music:* Chicago is known for house music and the blues

*Food cooked when growing up and for special occasions:* Her family loved Italian food, one of their favorite restaurants is Lou Malnati's for Chicago deep-dish pizza

*Favorite poem:* An Irish Blessing hung on the kitchen wall growing up



Dr. Vasquez interned at NASW in Chicago during her MSW program. On the day of her final field visit, the White Sox had a ticker-tape parade for winning the World Series in 2005 vs. the Houston Astros. Dr. Vasquez, her field instructor, and field liaison went down to watch the parade after her final field visit. What a fun day!

Dr. Vasquez's mother was a counselor, her sister is a psychologist, and her son is also a social worker - it runs in the family genes!

# Dr. Lea Velez



## Most Important Aspects of Dr. Velez's Culture

Dr. Velez's cultural identity has been shaped by the regions where she has lived throughout her life. She spent her formative years in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Mississippi. She spent a significant amount of time in rural Mississippi and loved being in nature and with animals. This shaped her love of being outdoors. Her culture has a strong connection to nature, family gatherings, and food.

Dr. Velez describes her cultural identity/ethnicity as eclectic and in some ways a mystery. She wants to learn more and has pieced together stories of the past and sharing this with everyone has created a greater longing to learn more. Other family members have traced their roots, and Dr. Velez's roots are Scotts-Irish, French, and Native American.

Growing up, her family traditions centered around time with family during holidays. A large Sunday lunch was a weekly tradition. She loved the comfort food and relaxed atmosphere.

Her grandparents shared stories of using the land to survive, finding resilience during the Great Depression, and the challenges of living in rural environments. Her parents told her stories of mentors they had in high school and college that made a significant impact on their decision to pursue higher education. For them, education was a way to create a better life for themselves and their children.

*Traditional music:* The music she associates with her family is gospel and traditional hymnals. Church attendance was part of her upbringing, several times a week.

*Food cooked when growing up and for special occasions:* Pot roast, black-eyed peas, butter beans, cornbread, green beans, and red beans and rice


*Favorite poem:* *The Ivy Crown* (William Carlos Williams) - This has been her favorite poem for over 20 years. It's a poem about long-term love enduring all the ups and downs of life and still finding a way to thrive.

*A fun fact pertaining to Women's History Month is her lifelong love and advocacy of sport. She has started her own running club. It is currently an all-women's group, but all are welcome. It started with one other woman in 2020 and they now have 16 members. They are accepting new members if anyone would like to join. :)*

*Dr. Velez's father inspired her to be a social worker. She was originally a psychology major in college. He worked with social workers throughout his career and has tremendous respect for the profession. While she was a freshman in college, he suggested that she take Introduction to Social Work to find out more. Once she took the course, she changed her major.*

# Social Work Month

Happy Social Work Month 2023 | Social Work Breaks Barriers #shorts

 National Association of Social Workers



**SOCIAL WORK  
BREAKS BARRIERS**

Social Work Month in March is a time to celebrate the great profession of social work. The theme for Social Work Month 2023 is Social Work Breaks Barriers.

 **N A S W**  
National Association of Social Workers

Videos for Social Work  
Month 2023



IT'S TIME TO  
**THANK A  
SOCIAL  
WORKER!**  
Social Work  
Month  
March 2023

[socialworker.com](http://socialworker.com) 

# Women's History Month



## National Women's History Alliance

The National Women's History Alliance formerly, the National Women's History Project, is a leader in promoting Women's History and is committed to the goals of education, empowerment, equality, and inclusion.



### Women's History Month 2023

Women's History Month is a celebration of women's contributions to history, culture and society and has been observed annually in the month of March in the United States since 1987. Women's History Month 2023 will take place from Wednesday, March 1 - Friday, March 31, 2023.

A photograph of a woman in a white lab coat working on a complex mechanical assembly. A graphic overlay on the left side of the image reads "WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH" in large, bold, orange and teal letters.

**March is Women's History Month**  
The Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum join in commemorating and encouraging the study, observance and celebration of the vital role of women in American history.



## The Surprising History of International Women's Day

**A Proclamation on Women's History Month,**  
**2023 | The White House**