

# ELEVATE *SOCIAL WORK*

## THEME & RATIONALE FOR SOCIAL WORK MONTH — MARCH 2019

**Social workers touch the lives of millions of people each day, helping them overcome life's hurdles so they can live to their full potential.**

The #MeToo movement has bypassed many girls and young women in migrant communities across the United States. Many are unlikely or unable to report they are being sexually or physically abused due to cultural barriers or because they fear they will be arrested or deported.

But Indiana social worker Kimber Nicoletti-Martinez reached out to uplift and empower these girls and young women who are invisible to most of society. She is founder and director of Multicultural Efforts to End Sexual Assault (MESA), an organization that mobilizes farm worker and low-wage Latin immigrant worker communities in Indiana, California, Pennsylvania and Arizona to prevent child sexual abuse.

"There are social forces and systems at work in our country that not only permit but promote a subjugation of the bodies of women and children, especially women and children of color," Nicoletti-Martinez said. "Preventing child sexual abuse is our highest calling and priority. We cannot end child sexual abuse without dismantling this systemic oppression."

Nicoletti-Martinez, 2018 National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Social Worker of the Year, is just one example of the heroic work the nation's 680,000 social workers do each day to elevate others.

### WHY THE THEME MATTERS

Social workers are trained to examine and address life's problems in a holistic way. They elevate and empower people, giving them the ability to solve problems, cope with personal roadblocks and get the resources they need to succeed.

Social workers also bring together individuals with other people, their communities, local and state government and agencies to address wider problems in our society, including lack of affordable housing, hunger and equal rights for all.

You can find social workers literally everywhere — including in schools and colleges, hospitals, veteran centers, mental health facilities, local and federal government, the corporate world and in agencies that help children find new families through adoption and protect children from abuse and neglect.

***The 2019 campaign will honor contributions of social workers and put the spotlight on social work salaries.***

During Social Work Month 2019, NASW will launch the "Elevate Social Work" Campaign that will educate the public about the contributions social workers have made to our society and why the profession is so vital to our nation.

NASW also wants to use the campaign to begin a conversation to help social workers get better compensation for the work they do.

Social workers go through years of education to learn and hone their professional skills so they can help others reach their full potential. Many social workers also take continuing education courses each year to make sure their skills remain cutting edge.

Yet, despite the invaluable services social workers give to others, social work salaries tend to lag behind those of others helping professions, including registered nurses, psychologists, police and detectives and teachers, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

This is troubling, considering there is a rising need for social workers in the United States to help us cope with societal problems, including caring for our aging population. The BLS predicts there will be more than 100,000 more social workers in the United States in just seven more years.

During Social Work Month NASW will give social workers and their allies tools to elevate the public image of the profession and explore ways to boost compensation for one of our nation's fastest growing professions.

## 2019 CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

- » **Social Work Month Online Toolkit:** The toolkit will offer social workers and their allies tools they can use to educate others about the positive impact of social workers. The toolkit will include an official proclamation that social workers can have their lawmakers distribute, downloadable logos, and a sample press release and letter to the editor.
- » **NASW Social Work Talks Podcast Series:** Leading experts on social work salary levels will discuss why social work salaries are lower than similar professions and what social workers can do to increase their pay on an individual and group level. Social workers and their allies can listen to the podcasts and submit their comments and suggestions. This will lead to a report on activities social workers and NASW can do in the months and years after Social Work Month 2019 to increase pay.
- » **Infographic:** NASW will release infographics based on the latest research that will look at social work salary levels, what kinds of social work offer better pay, and what parts of the nation offer higher social work salaries.
- » **Video Public Service Announcements:** What if the nation did not have social workers? What would life be like? A video public service announcement that can be shared on social media and aired on television will look at this.
- » **Public News Service:** NASW will engage Public News Service to report on social work and social work compensation in states with large numbers of social workers. These articles will appear throughout 2019.
- » **Merchandise:** Social Work Month merchandise will be used to promote the "Elevate Social Work" theme. Jim Coleman LTD is our official vendor.
- » **Media Awards:** NASW will award reporters, TV shows, film and other media that positively portrayed social work or issues important to social workers.
- » **Proclamations:** The Social Work Month online toolkit will also include a sample proclamation that social workers can send to city, local or state government officials. The proclamation will include information on the contributions of social work and why the social work title is so valued.
- » **Logos:** NASW will offer logos the public can use on Social Work Month promotional materials.
- » **Social Media Campaign:** NASW will host a social media Thunderclap or Twitter storm during Social Work Month to raise awareness about the profession.

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For more information on the 2019 Social Work Month "Elevate Social Work" Campaign contact NASW Public Relations Manager Greg Wright at [gwright.nasw@socialworkers.org](mailto:gwright.nasw@socialworkers.org).