



The American Indian Caucus Newsletter

A Message from the Chair of the American Indian Caucus

Hello. My name is Hilary Weaver, and I am Lakota. I currently serve as chair of the American Indian Caucus at NASW. Some of you may not be aware of the caucus and its activities, so I'd like to take a few moments to give you an introduction.

NASW has caucuses made up of its members affiliated with various ethnic groups. I first got involved with the American Indian Caucus in 1987 when I attended the NASW conference in New Orleans. Native people who were attending the conference would gather annually for a couple of hours to talk informally about our concerns and to network. For me, it has been a great way to get to know Native social workers from all over the country. This annual gathering was something that I really came to look forward to at NASW conferences. In addition to the caucus meeting, at this year's conference there will be sessions with Native content and other content on populations of color such as the Town Hall meeting sponsored by the National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity the morning of November 3rd and a panel on human rights issues and people of color sponsored by the Peace and Social Justice Committee on the afternoon of the 4th.

In recent years NASW, like all dynamic organizations, has gone through some changes, one of which was to move away from the format of having a national conference annually. Some of the other ethnic caucuses were able to maintain their cohesiveness through avenues such as newsletters, but unfortunately the American Indian Caucus became inactive. We have a national NASW conference coming up in November in Baltimore and, we hope this will serve as a first step toward revitalizing our group. The American Indian Caucus is scheduled to meet at 5:15 Thursday November 2nd. If you're going to be at the conference, check your program for information on the location.

I know a number of Native social workers who have become disillusioned with or inactive in NASW for various reasons, but it doesn't have to stay that way. In the past few years, I think NASW has made important efforts to reach out to its Native American members. NASW has made a commitment to having more Native people in leadership positions, including two Native people on the National Board of Directors, as well as Native

people on the National Committee on Nominations and Leadership Identification, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Issues Committee, and the National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity has made a point of including the ethnic caucuses in much of its work.

NASW is your membership organization, and it is there to serve your needs. Likewise, the American Indian Caucus exists to meet the needs of its members and is a place where you can receive support and have your concerns heard. Please take a few minutes to respond to the following questionnaire (*see insert*) and let's work on revitalizing the caucus together. Please return this survey by August 1, 2000, via fax (202) 336-8311 or mail to:

American Indian Caucus
Attn: Leticia Diaz
National Association of Social Workers
750 First Street, NE, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20002-4241

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A Statement from Ruth Mayden, President, NASW

I am honored to be asked to contribute to this inaugural communication to the American Indian Caucus. NASW has been interested in developing a vehicle for communication among the members of our four caucuses—The American Indian, the Asian/Pacific Islander, the Black Caucus, and the Latino Caucus—for many years. Each group makes an important contribution to the strength of the association. NCORED, under the leadership of Sandra Starks, has made communication a central theme in its activities. I am certain that the new chair, Clara Simmons, will continue the work Sandra began.

The first year of my presidency has gone by so quickly. Much of what I had hoped to do is still on my agenda. One of the top priorities for this, my last, year is meeting with as many of you as possible. I know that our upcoming November 1-4th conference in Baltimore, Social Work 2000, will be an excellent opportunity for us to talk. I will ask Hilary Weaver to assist in gathering members of the board to meet with us during that time.

You play an essential role in helping NASW be more inclusive. The Board of Directors and I will make every effort to support the caucus and its goals and to keep the doors of communication open.✿

A Message from the Chair of the National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity

Dr. Sandra Starks, LCSW, BCD

As chairperson of the National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity (NCORED), I am pleased to present some of the accomplishments of the committee and to invite your continued participation and leadership with an active role in directing the associations' initiatives. This committee is charged by the NASW Board of Directors with promoting conditions that encourage respect for the diversity of cultures, including equality of opportunity in all activities of the association. A particular focus is on those groups that have historically been subject to racism.

With this charge, we serve as the voice of the membership of color to the board and represent the interest of the collective caucuses—American Indian, Asian Pacific Islander, Black, and Latino. Throughout this past year, the following goals have become a reality: a beginning draft of cultural competence standards for the association; a panel training for

leadership of the association during the annual leadership meeting that addressed the issues of cultural competence in the political arena—specifically voter registration and the 2000 census; and inclusion of the caucus chairs in the agenda for NCORED committee meetings and in program planning. A successful increase and clarification in the communication between the caucuses and the board through the establishment of a liaison process. Each caucus is assigned a liaison who contacts their chairperson for information, to discuss concerns, and to allow for caucus input to committee activities.

In outreach activities Ada Deer and I addressed the meeting of the American Indian Educators Association at the annual program meeting of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The focus of our presentation was to open a dialogue between NASW members and CSWE members to work toward our mutual concerns and issues. This dialogue was positive and resulted in several members expressing an interest in active involvement with NASW and with the American Indian Caucus.

To highlight a few other initiatives of NCORED, check the section on upcoming events and prepare to join us at Social Work 2000 in Baltimore, November 1-4. We are sponsoring two major events. The Town Hall meeting will be held on Friday, November 3, 2000, 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., followed by one-hour session on the draft cultural competence standards. The Town Hall meeting will include a dialogue between the members of color, the caucus chairs, and the association leadership. The invitational panel will be held on Thursday, November 2, 8:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. and will include speakers who address the issues of ethnic minorities transitioning to majority status and diversity for the new millennium.

Although this is the first and last single newsletter that will be sent, we look forward to future communication through a collective newsletter. The scope will be broad and multicultural as it is inclusive of items of information and concern relative to the joint members of color. The format and structure will include sections from each of the caucuses as well as a section from NCORED on National Board activities that relate significantly to people of color.

This is a new millennium with new realities that require a clearer vision using new creative, strategic, and culturally relevant vehicles for accomplishing change. In closing, I again invite your active participation and encourage each of you to become a part of these changes by increasing your visibility and contributions through active membership and leadership both at the chapter and at the national levels.✿

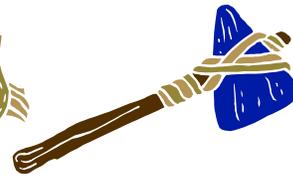
QUESTIONNAIRE

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- An illustration on the left side of the page features a vertical wooden post. A large feather with a light blue and white gradient is tied to the post with red string. Below the feather, a yellow bag with colorful geometric patterns (orange, purple, green, and red) is also tied to the post. The bag has several circular openings, some with cross-like symbols inside. The entire scene is framed by a yellow border.
1. What should NASW do to better meet the needs of its American Indian members?
 2. What would you like the American Indian Caucus of NASW to be doing?
 3. Are you interested in becoming active in the American Indian Caucus?
If so, in what way?
 4. If you are interested in becoming involved, please list your name, address, phone number, e-mail, and tribal affiliation*. (*Note: although the vast majority of caucus members have always been Native people, we have a few committed members who work with Native people or are interested in Native issues but are not Native themselves.)
 5. Do you plan to attend the American Indian Caucus meeting at the NASW conference in Baltimore?

Thank you for your attention, and I hope to hear from you and see you in Baltimore. *Hilary Weaver*
Chair, American Indian Caucus



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Social Work 2000

Baltimore, MD

November 1-4, 2000

Special Interest Sessions for People of Color

The National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity (NCORED)

has organized a Town Hall Meeting and a Panel session as follows:

Members of Color

Town Hall Meeting

Constructive dialogue between NCORED, NASW, and attending members on the critical issues encountered by social workers of color and the communities where they work and represent

Panel

The Changing Face of America: Diverse Populations in Transition

To Majority

Invitational panel focusing on issues that affect ethnic communities and exploring solutions for the future. Perspectives of inclusion, equality, and other cultural competence issues will be promoted within the context of new political agendas for the 21st century.

Committee for Peace and Social Justice

is

sponsoring

a

Panel Discussion

Human Rights, Indigenous People, and Social Work Practice

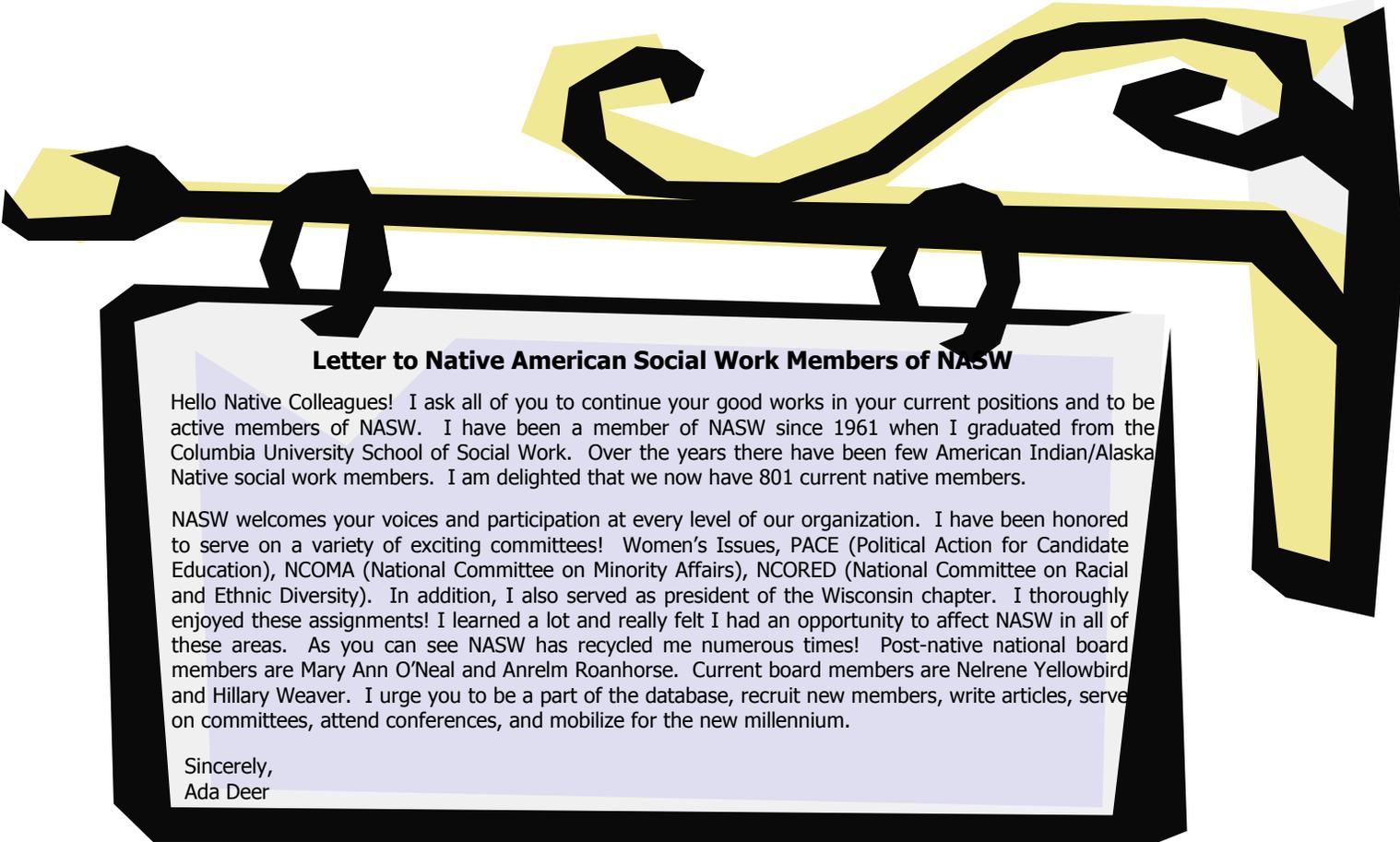
including

Dr. Christine Lowery (Laguna/Hopi)

Associate Professor, School of Social Welfare, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

The panel will address, from several perspectives, issues of human rights and practice as they affect people of color.





Letter to Native American Social Work Members of NASW

Hello Native Colleagues! I ask all of you to continue your good works in your current positions and to be active members of NASW. I have been a member of NASW since 1961 when I graduated from the Columbia University School of Social Work. Over the years there have been few American Indian/Alaska Native social work members. I am delighted that we now have 801 current native members.

NASW welcomes your voices and participation at every level of our organization. I have been honored to serve on a variety of exciting committees! Women's Issues, PACE (Political Action for Candidate Education), NCOMA (National Committee on Minority Affairs), NCORED (National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity). In addition, I also served as president of the Wisconsin chapter. I thoroughly enjoyed these assignments! I learned a lot and really felt I had an opportunity to affect NASW in all of these areas. As you can see NASW has recycled me numerous times! Post-native national board members are Mary Ann O'Neal and Anrelm Roanhorse. Current board members are Nelrene Yellowbird and Hillary Weaver. I urge you to be a part of the database, recruit new members, write articles, serve on committees, attend conferences, and mobilize for the new millennium.

Sincerely,
Ada Deer

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Native American Newsletter

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED