

Social Work Month puts focus on how profession helps people communities overcome hurdles that prevent them from thriving

The theme for 2023 is Social Work Breaks Barriers

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) will help lead the 2023 Social Work Month celebration in March with the theme “Social Work Breaks Barriers,” which underscores the innovative ways in which social workers for more than a century have empowered people to overcome challenges so they can live to their fullest potential.

OR AN ALTERNATE OPENING:

CITY – (ORGANIZATION NAME) is helping celebrate this year’s Social Work Month in March with the theme “Social Work Breaks Barriers,” to highlight how social workers have enriched our society by empowering people and communities to overcome hurdles that prevent them from living life to the fullest.

BODY:

The annual Social Work Month campaign in March is a time to inform public, policymakers, and legislators about how social workers have always broken barriers when it comes to the services they provide in an array of sectors, including hospitals and mental health centers, federal, state and local government, schools, community centers, and social service agencies.

People become social workers because they have a strong desire to help others and make society a better place. Social work is one of the fastest growing professions in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). More than 700,000 professional social workers are hard at work nationwide, but that number is expected to rise to more than 800,000 by 2030, BLS said.

Social work began more than a century ago. The profession can trace a large part of its origins to Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Star, who in 1889 opened Hull House in Chicago to provide social services to the area, which had a large immigrant population.

Other social work pioneers included anti-lynching advocate and women’s rights activist Ida B. Wells and George Edmund Haynes, a social worker who was co-founder of the National Urban League.

In the 1960s, past NASW President Whitney M. Young Jr., worked in collaboration with President Johnson and other leaders during the turbulent Civil Rights era to break down the barrier of employment discrimination so Black people could get access to better paying jobs.

Social workers have helped drive significant, positive changes in our nation. Frances Perkins, the first female Labor Secretary during the Great Depression, and others helped secure benefits we

continue to see used today, such as the 40-hour work week, minimum wage, and Social Security benefits.

Here are a few examples of other social workers who are continuing to break barriers today:

- Caitlin Ryan at the Family Acceptance Project work to help families overcome cultural and faith hurdles that prevent them from embracing and supporting children who are LGBTQIA2S+.
- Social workers such as Suzin Bartley, former executive director at The Children's Trust in Massachusetts, helped strengthen families by helping them break through economic, psychological, and other barriers so they can provide better care for their children.
- And social workers such as Kristina Whiton-O'Brien, director of partnerships at Vot-ER, an organization that helps remove obstacles that prevent people from exercising their right to vote.

[PUT YOUR EXAMPLES OF THE GREAT WORK SOCIAL WORKERS DO HERE, INCLUDING SOCIAL WORKERS THAT WORK AT YOUR ORGANIZATION, OR USE THE EXAMPLES BELOW.]

So, during Social Work Month, NASW will provide tools to help promote the profession. They include:

- A Social Work Month online toolkit at www.socialworkmonth.org
- An online quiz to test your knowledge about the history of social work and the services that social workers provide
- An official proclamation that you can get local, state, or federal politicians to endorse.
- Social Work Month merchandise from official vendor Jim Coleman Ltd.
- A draft letter that can be shared with news media.

And a great deal of other content, including graphics and videos, that can be found on NASW's website: socialworkmonth.org

[PUT CLOSING QUOTE HERE. SEE THE EXAMPLE BELOW. PLEASE TAILOR IT TO ADDRESS YOUR ISSUES.]

“Each day, social workers break barriers in a plethora of innovative ways that help millions of Americans live their best lives. Social workers also work in politics and in communities to improve living conditions for all. During Social Work Month we urge you to educate yourselves about our amazing profession, thank the social workers in your lives, and help support the profession.”