



National Professional Social Work Month 2009



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Introduction

Each year, the National Association of Social Workers honors social workers across the country with National Professional Social Work Month. This important observance is an annual opportunity for the profession to reflect on its history, celebrate the important work that is being done and look toward a promising future for all those social workers serve.

This year we are focusing on the future of social work and the need to recruit more social workers into the profession. Our recruiting focus for Social Work Month in 2009 – *Social Work: Purpose and Possibility* – defines the social work profession. People who become social workers do so because they seek a purpose for their career, and recognize that there are many different paths where a social work degree might lead. We know that social workers are passionate, purpose-driven individuals who want to do an excellent service for individuals and communities. We need to bring more of these compassionate people to the profession to ensure its future.

We also know that social workers have the unique training and education to see the purpose and possibility in the lives of those they serve. Professional social workers are educated at a program or school of social work in the theory, practice and policy of social work. Through their education, social workers participate in field placements that allow them to get hands-on experience with individuals, families and communities. They understand that the potential of clients and communities is plentiful.

The Social Work Month 2009 logo conveys the infinite possibilities and connections that social workers make in the lives of individuals, families and communities.

In addition to our traditional media outreach tools, this year we are adding some exciting new tools to the Social Work Month promotions. We are building a Web-based application that will give people more information about the profession of social work. This application, called “50 Ways to Use Your Social Work Degree,” will draw people into the minds and hearts of dedicated social workers. We will also be working with programs and schools of social work to encourage people to become social work students. To find out more about these new tools, please see page 28 in this toolkit.

Goals of Social Work Month 2009

NASW, with the help of chapters and sister social work organizations, hopes to accomplish the following with Social Work Month outreach:

1. Recruit more social workers to the profession
2. Expand the public perception of the breadth and depth of social work
3. Reach out to the media, both nationally and locally, to promote the importance of social work services and social work professionals to society
4. Promote a theme that builds pride among social workers.

This online toolkit includes:

- History of Social Work Month
- Key messages for Social Work Month 2009

- Information on NASW year-round initiatives, such as the National Social Work Public Education Campaign and the Social Work Reinvestment Initiative
- Facts about social work and recruitment
- Press Release Templates
- Sample Letters to the Editor
- Sample Op-eds
- Social Work Month Proclamation
- Public Service Announcements
- Media Outreach Tips
- Suggestions for leveraging Social Work Month 2009
- Information about the forthcoming interactive social work recruitment Web application

If you have any questions about Social Work Month 2009, please contact NASW Communications at media@naswdc.org or 202-336-8212.

History of Social Work Month

The White House officially recognized National Professional Social Work Month in 1984. From 1984 until 1998 – the centennial year of the profession – NASW selected a social issue to promote every year. Topics included the health care crisis, hate crimes, violence prevention, racial and ethnic harmony, HIV/AIDS, children in poverty, aging parents, value of work, homelessness and more. From 1998 to 2004, Social Work Month themes promoted the profession with general campaigns about who social workers are and how they benefit society.

The [National Social Work Public Education Campaign](#), a multi-year effort to improve the public perceptions of social work, launched in 2005. Since then, NASW has coupled a specific area of practice with general promotion of the profession.

The following is a history of themes for Social Work Month since 1984:

- 1984 Listen to the Children
- 1985 Work is a Family Affair
- 1986 Aging Parents: Return the Gift of Caring
- 1987 Children in Poverty
- 1988 AIDS: We Need to Know. We Need to Care.
- 1989 There's No Place Like Home
- 1990 Strengthening America's Families
- 1991 Vital Signs of a Healthy Nation
- 1992 Global Family Ties
- 1993 National Health Care: Vital Signs of a Healthy Nation
- 1994 Stop the Violence with Justice for All
- 1995 Stopping the Violence Starts with Me
- 1996 Hate Crimes: Not in My Life
- 1997 Racial and Ethnic Harmony: Respect, Understanding, Cooperation and Peace
- 1998 Celebrating 100 Years of Social Work
- 1999 The Business of Social Work: Helping People Help Themselves
- 2000 Social Work 2000: Change Is Our Business
- 2001 The New Face of Social Work
- 2002 The Power of Social Work: Community Needs, Human Connections
- 2003 Preserving Rights, Strengthening Voices
- 2004 The Power of Social Work: Pass It On
- 2005 Social Workers. Help Starts Here
- 2006 Life's Journey. Help Starts Here
- 2007 Hope and Health. Help Starts Here
- 2008 Building on Strengths. Help Starts Here.
- 2009 Social Work: Purpose and Possibility

Key Messages for Social Work Month 2009

When speaking to the media and others about Social Work Month 2009, the messages need to be concise and engaging. We encourage you to incorporate these key talking points when discussing Social Work Month 2009:

- Social workers make a wide range of contributions in every community throughout their careers.
- Some social workers work to resolve systemic issues that plague a community. Some work in education or research, furthering the knowledge-base of social work. Others work as elected officials or work in other capacities in government to create real and lasting change for communities.
- Most social workers serve individuals and families. Working one-on-one with these groups through private practice, agencies and organizations, they provide resources and support to the lives of individuals and families.
- People who become professional social workers believe that there are no limits to human potential and use their talents to help others create better lives for themselves and their families.
- Social work is a profession of hope, grounded in practical problem solving expertise.
- Social work is a desirable field of study for bright, socially engaged, and committed people of all ages.
- Professional social workers are those people who have a bachelors, masters or doctorate in social work from a program or school of social work.
- While child welfare is an important area of social work practice and the one that comes to mind most often when thinking about social work, it is only one of the places where you can find a social worker.
- Social workers are in schools, courtrooms, drug clinics, hospitals, senior centers, shelters, nursing homes, the military, disaster relief, prisons and corporations.
- Social workers are society's safety net, providing vital resources and support when they are most needed.

When you're seeking general talking points about the social work profession and about social work issues, the best place to look is the [Help Starts Here](#).

NASW Initiatives

Social Work Month is an opportune time each year to organize multiple outreach activities that enhance the public awareness of social work. It adds the value of timeliness to any information you distribute to the media and your community.

The National Association of Social Workers coordinates activities that promote awareness of social work every day. Work goes on all year long through NASW National, NASW Chapters, Schools of Social Work, sister social work organizations, and individuals to promote and advance the profession.

Social Work Month is the time to combine these activities—highlighting ongoing activities of the Association with timely local celebrations in March.

Connection to the National Social Work Public Education Campaign

[The National Social Work Public Education Campaign](#) is a multi-year effort led by NASW to improve public perceptions of social work. The goals of the campaign are to:

- Increase awareness of and respect for the social work profession
- Educate the public on the breadth and depth of social work practice
- Expand perceptions of who can benefit from social work services
- Attract young people and career changers to the profession.

This year we are choosing to focus on the fourth goal of the National Social Work Public Education Campaign—recruiting new social workers to the profession. We hope that the increased focus on recruitment will mean that more people will enter the field of social work in the coming years.

The tools for the campaign are designed to complement annual Social Work Month efforts. Feel free to integrate information that is provided through the campaign with the tools provided here for Social Work Month 2009 to offer the public the most compelling view of social work.

NASW Consumer Web site

The social work consumer Web site—HelpStartsHere.org—is the cornerstone of the National Social Work Public Education Campaign. This robust, award-winning Web site highlights many different social work practice areas, providing information to consumers from professional social workers. This unique Web site also provides real life stories of social workers helping others and the opportunity to find a local professional social worker. Email consumer@naswdc.org for more information.

Materials from the National Social Work Public Education Campaign

On Any Given Day: Social Workers Help. The Public Education Campaign created a five-minute video to educate people about all the important work that social workers do. It highlights three social workers who work to effect change with individuals, families and communities. Use this video to educate people about the importance of the social work profession. Email media@naswdc.org for more information. Click [here](#) to obtain a copy.

The Public Education Campaign has created advertising and other outreach materials that will enable social workers to educate others about their work. Click [here](#) to obtain that toolkit.

Connection to the Social Work Reinvestment Initiative

This year marked a major legislative milestone when the National Association of Social Workers kicked off the national [Social Work Reinvestment Initiative](#). As Social Work Month is our annual opportunity to educate people about the profession and issues important to social workers, there is a direct connection that can be made between the profession's reinvestment and public education goals. The goals of the Social Work Reinvestment Initiative complement the goals of Social Work Month and the Public Education Campaign.

The 2009 Social Work Month theme "Social Work: Purpose and Possibility" provides a good frame from which to make the case for reinvesting in the profession.

The Social Work Reinvestment Initiative is a collaborative effort among social work organizations to secure federal and state investments to recruit, train and retain professional social workers – and to support research that improves social, human and health service outcomes.

NASW, with the Action Network for Social Work Education and Research Coalition acting in an advisory capacity, introduced the Social Work Reinvestment Act into the U.S House of Representatives on February 14, 2008 and into the U.S. Senate on April 15, 2008, World Social Work Day. There are currently 81 cosponsors in the House and 14 in the Senate, including President-Elect Obama. We will be reintroducing this important piece of legislation into the 111th Congress in early 2009.

General Facts about Social Work

A 2006 study of licensed social workers conducted by the [NASW Center for Workforce Studies](#) revealed the following about the profession of social work:

- Social workers have advanced educational preparation and practice experience. A master's in social work is the predominant social work degree for licensed social workers (79% of active practitioners).
- Social workers' most frequent specialty practice areas are mental health (37%), child welfare/family (13%), health (13%) and aging (9%).
- Social workers spend the majority of their time providing direct client services (96%), followed by consultation (73%) and administration/management (69%).
- With 12% of respondents planning on leaving the workforce in the next two years and the increasing need for social work services, there will likely not be enough social workers to meet the needs of clients.

Social workers have the right education, experience, and dedication to help people help themselves whenever they need it. It takes a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral social work degree - with a minimum number of hours in supervised fieldwork - to become a social worker.

- More than 600,000 people in the United States hold social work degrees.
- Social workers help people in all stages of life, from children to the elderly, and in all situations from adoption to hospice care.
- You can find social workers in hospitals, schools, police departments, mental health clinics, private practices, military facilities, and corporations.
- Professional social workers are the nation's largest group of mental health service providers. Social workers provide more mental health services than psychologists, psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses combined.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs—the largest employer of social workers in the country—employs more than 6,000 social workers to assist veterans and their families with individual and family counseling, client education, end of life planning, substance abuse treatment, crisis intervention, and other services.
- Forty percent of mental health professionals working with the Red Cross Disaster Services Human Resources system are social workers.
- There are hundreds of social workers in national, state, and local elected office, including two U.S. Senators and seven U.S. Representatives.
- According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the need for social workers is expected to grow twice as fast as any other occupation, especially in gerontology, home healthcare, substance abuse, private social service agencies, and school social work.

For more information about social workers, please go to the NASW Consumer Web Site—[HelpStartsHere.org](#), by clicking [here](#).

Facts about Social Work and Recruitment

- Social workers serve individuals, families and communities. They are consultants, managers, supervisors and administrators. They serve at all levels of government. They are educators. They are therapists and researchers. They are elected political leaders and legislators.
- The social work profession has its own body of knowledge, Code of Ethics, practice standards, credentials, and a nationwide system of accredited education programs.
- To be a social worker, you must have a degree in social work from a college or university program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
 - The undergraduate degree is a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW).
 - Graduate degrees include the Master of Social Work (MSW) and the Doctorate in Social Work (PhD or DSW).
- As of 2008, the Council on Social Work Education accredited 462 bachelor's programs and 191 master's programs. The Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education listed 74 doctoral programs in social work (DSW or PhD) in the United States.
- According to NASW's Center for Workforce Studies, social work salaries vary depending upon a number of factors, including geographic location, highest social work degree and gender.
 - Median salaries range from a high of \$55,129 among those working both full-time and part-time social work jobs to a low of \$24,067 among those working only part-time social work jobs.
 - The most commonly reported salary category for full-time licensed social workers is \$40,000-49,999 with 25 percent of social workers falling into this category.
 - Nearly 60 percent of social workers earn between \$35,000 and \$59,999.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics:

- Social workers held about 595,000 jobs in 2006.
- About 5 in 10 social work jobs were in health care and social assistance industries and 3 out of 10 are employed by state and local government agencies.
- Employment by type of social worker in 2006:
 - Child, family, and school social workers – 282,000
 - Medical and public health social workers – 124,000
 - Mental health and substance abuse social workers – 122,000
 - Social workers, all other – 66,000
- The need for social workers is expected to grow twice as fast as any other occupation, especially in gerontology, home healthcare, substance abuse, private social service agencies and school social work.
- Employment of social workers is expected to increase by 22 percent during the 2006-2016 decade, which is much faster than the average for all occupations.

Recruitment Press Release Template

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

Contact: [Name]

[Phone number]

[E-mail Address]

**[Insert Organization] and the National Association of Social Workers Celebrate
National Social Work Month in March 2009**

[City]- If you're looking to find a sense of purpose in your work, consider the countless possibilities of the social work profession. Social workers are society's safety net, providing vital resources and support to those who need it most. Pursuing a career in social work satisfies your sense of purpose, while providing infinite possibilities for your career path.

[Insert Organization Name], along with the [National Association of Social Workers](#) (NASW), proudly celebrates National Social Work Month 2009.

This year's theme - [Social Work: Purpose and Possibility](#)—highlights the special characteristics of individuals who choose social work as a profession. Social workers are purpose-driven, compassionate individuals who work across a range of areas to help those most vulnerable in our society. Social workers have a vital role in hospitals, help children in schools reach their educational goals, provide treatment at mental health facilities and play many other fundamental roles in our community.

“People who are looking for a career with meaning, action, diversity, satisfaction, and an abundance of options are often drawn to social work,” says Elizabeth Clark, PhD, ACSW, MPH, executive director of NASW. “Social workers are highly trained professionals who care about people, who want to make things better, who want to relieve suffering, who want their work to make a difference.”

Social workers believe there are no limits to human potential, and use their talents to help others create better lives for themselves and for their families. Some social workers help clients who face a disability or a life-threatening disease. Some assist families that have domestic conflicts involving children or spousal abuse. Other social workers conduct research, advocate for improved services, or are involved in policy development.

“Social workers are essential to our society, providing services across a range of needs,” says [name, title] of [local chapter or organization]. “Individuals with passion and an inherent sense of purpose would be an excellent addition to the social work profession.”

This year, NASW has developed a “50 Ways to Use Your Social Work Degree” Web site at 50ways.helpstartshere.org. This tool showcases the various ways in which actual social workers are working with individuals, families and communities—and explores what experiences and interests led them to the profession.

[Optional section]

To honor the achievements of its members and highlight the important work of social workers, [Organization Name] is celebrating Social Work Month by:

- 1-3 bullets mentioning specific activities/events planned in your area/by your organization to celebrate Social Work Month
- Don't forget to connect with your local school or program of social work since this is a recruitment campaign. We share the same goals of recruiting more social workers to the profession.

[Insert quote from local representative of organization about the role of social work in the local community.]

For more information on how [name of organization] is supporting National Social Work Month, please contact [name] at [phone number] or via e-mail at [e-mail address]. Or visit [Insert URL].

[Insert Boilerplate information. Note: A boilerplate is a short paragraph that best summarizes who you are and your mission as an organization or chapter. The paragraph should remain constant throughout all media information. See example below.]

[About the National Association of Social Workers](#)

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), in Washington, D.C., is the largest membership organization of professional social workers with nearly 150,000 members in 56 chapters throughout the United States and its territories. It promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its advocacy for social justice.

###

Recruitment Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

The idea of living a purpose-filled life has attracted much attention in recent years, but what does this actually mean? Ask a social worker and you'll understand.

There are very special individuals in our communities who are driven to serve and help others, who take action to make an impact on society. They can be found in hospitals, schools, mental health clinics and group homes. They are social workers, trained professionals committed to a mission of great purpose and infinite possibilities for themselves and for their clients.

Social workers are society's safety net, providing vital resources and support to those who need it most. Their compassion and skills drive them to this helping profession, which offers a wide range of opportunities to make a difference.

March is National Social Work Month, a time to celebrate the more than 600,000 social workers throughout the nation. This year's theme, "*Social Work: Purpose & Possibility*" highlights the unique characteristics of individuals who choose social work as a profession, and the many ways they contribute to our communities.

The need for social workers is growing rapidly. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the need for social workers is expected to grow twice as fast as any other occupation, especially in gerontology, home healthcare, substance abuse, private social service agencies, and school social work. A career in social work provides the perfect fit for someone who wants to help others and has an inherent desire to serve.

Information about the many ways social workers help can be found at www.50ways.HelpStartsHere.org.

Signed,

[Name]

[Title]

[Chapter/Organization Name]

[Phone Number]

[E-mail address]

Recruitment Sample Op-ed

By [Name, Title, Organization]

The idea of living a purpose filled life has attracted much attention in recent years, but what does this actually mean? Some of society's most compassionate, purpose-driven people choose social work as a career because of the countless ways these professionals can make a difference in our community. Giving back to society's most vulnerable is a valuable way to live a life of purpose.

Social workers are society's safety net, providing vital resources and support to those who need it most. From working in hospitals and schools, to providing clinical services in mental health clinics and group homes, social workers work across a range of practice areas to make the greatest impact on the individuals and families they serve.

Social workers are skilled professionals who use their talents to help others create better lives for themselves and for their families. Some social workers help clients who face a disability or a life-threatening disease. Some assist families that have domestic conflicts involving children or spousal abuse. Other social workers conduct research, advocate for improved services or are involved in policy development.

March is National Social Work Month, a time to celebrate the more than 600,000 social workers nationwide. This year's theme, *Social Work: Purpose & Possibility*, highlights the special characteristics of individuals who choose social work as a profession, and the growing need for more social workers in our community.

[Optional section: provide an example of a local social worker who is using their social work degree in a unique way and how their work has had an impact on the community.]

More information about the growing need for social workers and the many ways social workers make a difference can be found at www.50ways.helpstartshere.org.

By [Name, Title, Organization]

Consumer Press Release Template

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[Date]

Contact: [Name]

[Phone number]

[E-mail Address]

**[Insert Organization] and the National Association of Social Workers Celebrate
National Social Work Month in March 2009**

[City]- When life's challenges become overwhelming, social workers can help. Social workers are society's safety net, providing vital resources and support to those who need it most. Finding [help from a social worker](#) sheds light on the great potential and countless possibilities in every person's life.

[Insert Organization Name], along with the [National Association of Social Workers](#), proudly celebrates National Social Work Month 2009.

This year's theme—[Social Work: Purpose and Possibility](#)—highlights the many ways that social workers help in all communities. Social workers are purpose-driven, compassionate individuals who work across a range of areas to help those who are most vulnerable. Social workers provide assistance in hospitals, help children in schools, provide treatment at mental health clinics and play many different roles in our society.

“Social workers tirelessly advocate in federal and state legislatures for individuals, families and communities to receive the supports they need to thrive,” says Elizabeth Clark, PhD, ACSW, MPH, executive director of NASW. “Social workers also help people meet their immediate needs through counseling and resource referrals.”

Social workers are skilled professionals who use their talents to help others create better lives for themselves and their families. Some social workers help clients who face a disability or a life-threatening disease or a social problem. Some assist families that have domestic conflicts involving children or spousal abuse. Other social workers conduct research, advocate for improved services or are involved in policy development.

“Social workers are a critical asset to our society, providing services across the lifespan, says [name, title] of [local chapter or organization]. “Social workers work with people facing difficult situations and help them overcome barriers that keep them from leading positive and productive lives.”

More information about the many ways that social workers help can be found at www.helpstartshere.org.

[Optional section]

To honor the achievements of its members and to bring to light the important work of social workers, [Organization Name] is celebrating Social Work Month by:

- 1-3 bullets mentioning specific activities/events planned in your area/by your organization to celebrate Social Work Month

[Insert quote from local representative of organization about the role of social work in the local community.]

For more information on how [name of organization] is supporting National Social Work Month, please contact [name] at [phone number] or via e-mail at [e-mail address]. Or visit [Insert URL].

[Insert Boilerplate information. Note: A boilerplate is a short paragraph that best summarizes who you are and your mission as an organization or chapter. The paragraph should remain constant throughout all media information. See example below.]

[About the National Association of Social Workers](#)

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), in Washington, D.C., is the largest membership organization of professional social workers with nearly 150,000 members in 56 chapters throughout the United States and its territories. It promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its advocacy for social justice.

###

Consumer Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

When life's challenges become overwhelming, many people [turn to a social worker](#) for help. Finding help from a social worker brings to light the great potential and many possibilities in every person's life.

March is National Social Work Month, a time to celebrate the more than 600,000 social workers throughout the nation. This year's theme, "Social Work: Purpose & Possibility" highlights the many ways that social workers help in communities across the country.

Social workers help people in all stages of life, from children to the elderly, and provide assistance to families dealing with what sometimes appear to be insurmountable obstacles. As society's safety net, social workers provide vital resources and support to those who need it most.

From end of life decisions to depression or addiction, social workers have the education and experience to help people through some of life's toughest decisions. Social workers are in schools, courtrooms, drug clinics, hospitals, senior centers, shelters, nursing homes, the military, disaster relief, prisons, and corporations.

Social workers work across a range of practice areas to help those most vulnerable in our society. Some social workers help clients who face a disability or a life-threatening disease or a social problem. Some assist families that have domestic conflicts involving children or spousal abuse. Other social workers conduct research, advocate for improved services or are involved in policy development. Social workers believe there are no limits to human potential, and use their talents to help others create better lives for themselves and their families.

Information about the many ways social workers help can be found at www.helpstartshere.org.

Signed,
[Name]
[Title]
[Chapter/Organization Name]
[Phone Number]
[E-mail address]

Consumer Sample Op-ed

By [Name, Title, Organization]

When life's challenges become overwhelming, many people [turn to a social worker](#) for help. They do this because social workers have the education and experience to help people overcome some of life's toughest obstacles.

March is National Social Work Month, a time to celebrate the more than 600,000 social workers nationwide. This year's theme, "Social Work: Purpose & Possibility," highlights the many ways that social workers provide support to those who need it most. Finding help through a social worker sheds light on the great potential and countless possibilities in every person's life.

Social workers are society's safety net, providing vital resources and support to those who need it most. From working in hospitals and schools, to providing clinical services in mental health clinics and group homes, social workers work across a range of practice areas to make the greatest impact on the individuals and families they serve.

Social workers are skilled professionals who use their talents to help others create better lives for themselves and their families. Some social workers help clients who face a disability or a life-threatening disease or a social problem. Some assist families that have domestic conflicts involving children or spousal abuse. Other social workers conduct research, advocate for improved services or are involved in policy development.

[Optional section: Provide an example of how a local social worker has had an impact on your community.]

More information about the many ways social workers give back can be found at www.helpstartshere.org.

By [Name, Title, Organization]

Social Work Month Proclamation

WHEREAS social workers have the right education and experience to guide individuals, families, and communities through complex issues and choices;

WHEREAS social workers connect individuals, families, and communities to available resources;

WHEREAS social workers are dedicated to improving the society in which we live;

WHEREAS social workers are positive and compassionate professionals;

WHEREAS social workers stand up for others to make sure everyone has access to the same basic rights, protections, and opportunities;

WHEREAS social workers help people help themselves, whenever and wherever they need it most;

WHEREAS social workers have been the driving force behind important social movements in the United States and abroad;

WHEREAS a social work career is one filled with purpose and possibilities;

NOW, THEREFORE, in recognition of professional social workers and their commitment and dedication to individuals, families, and communities everywhere through service delivery, research, education, and legislative advocacy.

I, _____, proclaim the month of March 2009 as **Professional Social Work Month** and call upon all citizens to join with the **National Association of Social Workers** and ___[your organization]___ in celebration and support of social workers and the social work profession.

Radio Public Service Announcements

“Social Work – Help Starts Here”: 15 Second Spot

[Local Chapter or Organization Name]
[Local Chapter or Organization Address]
[Local Chapter or Organization City, State, Zip]
[Local Chapter or Organization Contact – Name, Phone, E-mail]

(Announcer): FROM ADOPTION TO GERIATRICS. FROM SUBSTANCE ABUSE TO DISASTER RELIEF. IN SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS, BATTLEFIELDS AND COURTROOMS. SOCIAL WORKERS HELP. TO FIND A SOCIAL WORKER OR TO BECOME A SOCIAL WORKER, VISIT HELP-STARTS-HERE-DOT-ORG. SOCIAL WORKERS. HELP STARTS HERE.

(Announcer): IN HOSPITALS AND SCHOOLS. IN CORPORATIONS AND THE MILITARY. IN SENIOR CENTERS AND ADOPTION AGENCIES. ANYTIME, ANYWHERE. HELP STARTS WITH A SOCIAL WORKER. VISIT HELP-STARTS-HERE-DOT-ORG TO FIND OUR MORE. SOCIAL WORKERS HELP STARTS HERE.

(Announcer): SOCIAL WORKERS HELP. IN HOSPITALS AND SCHOOLS. ADOPTION AGENCIES AND SENIOR CENTERS. ANYTIME, ANYWHERE. TO FIND A SOCIAL WORKER FOR YOU, YOUR PARENTS, YOUR CHILDREN, VISIT HELP-STARTS-HERE-DOT-ORG. SOCIAL WORKERS. HELP STARTS HERE.

“Social Work – Help Starts Here”: 30 Second Spot

[Local Chapter or Organization Name]
[Local Chapter or Organization Address]
[Local Chapter or Organization City, State, Zip]
[Local Chapter or Organization Contact – Name, Phone, E-mail]

(Announcer): FROM HELPING A SENIOR CONNECT WITH NEW FRIENDS, TO HELPING A YOUNG COUPLE ADOPT A CHILD. FROM HELPING DISASTER VICTIMS REBUILD THEIR LIVES, TO HELPING TEENAGERS RESIST DRUGS. IN SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS, NURSING HOMES AND CORPORATIONS, HELP STARTS WITH A SOCIAL WORKER. IF YOU’D LIKE TO FIND A SOCIAL WORKER FOR HELP AND ADVICE, WHETHER IT’S FOR YOUR PARTNER, YOUR PARENTS, YOUR CHILDREN, OR YOURSELF, YOU’LL FIND A WORLD OF HELP ONLINE AT HELP-STARTS-HERE-DOT-ORG. SOCIAL WORKERS. HELP STARTS HERE.

Media Outreach Tips

General Media Tips

- **Seek out journalists who have written about your issue or topic recently.** These individuals will be more likely to cover the topic again.
- **Double check your contacts.** Journalists, especially those in smaller media outlets, tend to change beats and outlets frequently. Those who you spoke with for last year's Social Work Month may not be the appropriate contacts this year. The media organization's Web site can be an excellent resource for contact information and beat information for journalists.
- **Use the local angle.** All of the materials NASW has provided should be modified to include local information or activities. Local media are more likely to cover a local angle to a national observance.

Tips for Facts Sheets about Social Work

- **Make fact sheets available for the press.** They are good items to have on hand to provide to reporters at events.
- **Include local statistics about social work in your fact sheets.** Local reporters gravitate toward facts that have a local angle.
- **Give fact sheets to stakeholders.** When holding an event, conference or presentation, have local social work facts on hand to provide to all attendees.
- **Make sure to include these facts in your press kits.** A press kit is a collection of background materials that you can send to media outlets. Other items to include in a press kit can include a press release about the event and bios of key spokespeople for your organization.

Tips for Press Releases

- **Present a well thought out story.** Provide the journalist with not only the idea, but also the key players in the story. Provide experts who convey both sides of the story, including an expert or two who conveys your messages. Give real life examples of how this story affects people and allow the journalists to speak with those people.
- **Research the appropriate contact to send the pitch.** You can research the reporters' beats, or topical areas of coverage, by reviewing the Web site for the publication or broadcast program. Reporters appreciate when you understand the beats that they cover and pitch a story idea that is relevant to their work.
- **Determine the best way to reach out to a journalist.** Most journalists prefer to be contacted initially by e-mail. The days of faxing and snail mail are slowly drifting away. A simple phone call can be effective follow up, but only when you have something additional to add to your pitch. Don't send attachments of press releases or photos unless they have been solicited by the journalist.
- **Make the pitch compelling.** Use an interesting subject line, keep the copy of the pitch short and keep them reading with a couple of compelling paragraphs (at most) about your story idea. Keep in mind that reporters receive hundreds of emails a day and they need to be selective about the ones that catch their attention.

- **Connect your pitch to a timely news event.** If you can connect your story idea to a larger story or to a community event, then the pitch is more likely to be considered.
- **Provide contact information.** It might seem basic, but providing your e-mail address and daytime and nighttime phone numbers to a reporter will only help your chances of getting them to cover your story.

Tips for Interviews

- **Know your message.** Before your interview, review your key message points, such as those provided in this toolkit for Social Work Month. Identify two or three essential points that you must get across during the interview.
- **Be prepared.** Prepare several facts and anecdotes from your experience that you can share to underscore your main points.
- **Try to avoid space fillers, such as “um” and “ah.”**
- **Be engaging, natural and firmly in support of your message.**
- **Make sure your message is simple and compelling.** Focus on answering questions succinctly, but don’t leave out key points to save time.
- **Try to incorporate one key theme in all of your responses to a journalist.**
- **Avoid speculation and hypotheticals.** It may lead to being misquoted.
- **Avoid technical terms, jargon and acronyms.** Only people who are familiar with your program are familiar with your terms.
- **Do not say “no comment.”** If you cannot answer, explain why.
- **Do not be afraid to say, “I don’t know...but I will find out for you.”**
- **Be confident.** You’re the expert in the interview!

Tips on Placing Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor usually relate to a story that was in the newspaper.

- **If you feel passionately,** either way about a topic, you should consider writing a letter the editor.
- **Letters to the editor are usually 250-300 words** (many times less) so you need to make sure that you are able to get your point across in a succinct and compelling way.
- **Timing is everything with letters to the editor.** Try to respond to an article the same day or the next day.
- **If you have statistics or examples that back up your stance, use them.**
- **Look on the Web site of the publication** to which you want to send the letter to the editor for guidelines.
- **Most papers will confirm with you before they print the letter.**
- **Make sure that you include day and evening phone numbers.**
- **Sign your name,** and include any information that would indicate why you have a specific interest in this topic.
- **Most publications and many TV and radio stations allow their Web site visitors to post comments.** These comments can be read by thousands of people in a day. This is another way to get your position or response heard.

Tips on Placing Print Op-Eds

- **Identify your message.** What is that you want to happen in the end? Be focused and clear with your message.
- **Back it up with facts.** You need to express an opinion and then back it up with facts.
- **Write for the reader.** The standard way to make an argument is to state your main point, present evidence to support that opinion and then offer a recommendation or conclusion.
- **Try different angles with different outlets.** If your Op-ed is not published by your media outlet of choice, then consider re-submitting it to a smaller, local or regional paper.
- **Timely and relevant increase odds.** Current issues affecting a community or a national topic that can be tied to an issue facing the entire community is more likely to be published.
- **Stick to the guidelines.** Most publications have submission requirements. Make sure you draft your Op-ed within these guidelines.

Tips for Radio Outlets

Most large cities have radio stations with an all-news or all-talk format. These stations feature in-depth coverage of issues and present many interview opportunities. Other radio outlets rely on “feeds” from network newscasts (like NBC, CBS and ABC) and wire services.

- **Contact the News Director** to gauge their interest in covering social workers and social work issues.
- **Interviews may be live or taped.** But most will take place over the phone.
- Apply many of the same rules for print interviews to a radio interview: **stay on message and answer with a clear, concise response.**

Tips for Web Outreach

The newspaper industry is seeing a decline in print readership and an increase in online readership.

- Many of the same stories that appear in the print edition also appear online.
- There may be additional content for the Web, since the pages are endless. But, many times articles are written differently for the Web than for print.
- Web content is more immediate than print content, so be ready with breaking news.
- Look on your local newspaper’s Web site to determine who the best person to contact about getting a story online. Sometimes it is the print reporter, while other times there might be an entire online editorial staff.

Tips for Promoting Events

- **Write a press release.** Write a release announcing the event, including the who, what, when, where and why for the public. Disseminate the press release two to three weeks before the event.
- **Remind them.** Send a reminder about the event and make follow up phone calls with the press.

- **Include calendar listings.** Send a press release about the event to the “calendar” and “week ahead” section of the local paper. The Associated Press (AP) also has a daybook listing for each city. Contact your local AP office and ask how to get a listing in their daybook.
- **Have press kits on hand at your event.**

For more media tips, download the full [NASW Media Kit](#) by clicking here.

Suggestions for Leveraging Social Work Month

Social Work Month is an excellent opportunity to showcase social workers to key audiences – consumers, media, opinion leaders, and even other social workers. These efforts bring attention to your chapter or organization, while focusing on the extraordinary efforts of local social workers. From small gatherings to large events, the media likes to hear about people in the community. Look for information in the [Social Work Month section](#) of the [NASW Web site](#), on the [National Social Work Public Education Campaign](#) site and on the [Social Work Consumer Web site](#).

Each gathering or event can recruit more social workers to the profession. Each outreach opportunity is a great chance to familiarize people with the profession and all of its possibilities. Invite someone who might be interested in social work to an event and make sure that he or she knows how much important work is being done by social workers across the country and around the world.

Here are some suggestions of ways to leverage Social Work Month:

- **Schools of Social Work** – Connect with your local program or school of social work to create a local campaign to recruit more social workers to the profession. Think about open houses at the schools with alumni who have taken their social work degrees down a unique path. Or consider hosting a joint meeting with leaders from the school to determine the best recruitment strategies and challenges in your area.
- **Town Hall Meeting** – Hold a Town Hall Meeting to engage lawmakers, state, city or county officials in a dialogue about the efforts to address issues of importance to social workers in your area. Discuss social work's vital role in the community, emphasizing how things would be different without the support of social workers.
- **Press Conference** – Conduct a press conference at which the Mayor and/or Governor issues a proclamation designating March as National Professional Social Work Month. Highlight local social workers in your area who are making a difference, as well as initiatives led by your organization or chapter this year to promote social workers and their work with families and communities.
- **Speaking Opportunities** – Arrange for speaking opportunities for the executive director or president of your organization or chapter, or local school of social work dean, to highlight the important role of social work in your community.
- **Career Days** – Check with your local high school or middle school about the opportunity to speak at a career day for students to learn more about all the career possibilities with a degree in social work. Organize this outreach with a local school or program of social work if possible.
- **Panel Discussion** – Hold a conference or panel discussion for social workers about what can be done in your local community to recruit more social workers to the profession.
- **Editorial Board** – Set up a meeting with your local paper editorial board to discuss their coverage of the topics important to social workers in your community. You can provide the social work perspective to the conversation to ensure that they know all the contributions that social workers are making.

- **Information Dissemination** – At every meeting, panel, or conference you attend, make sure that you have information available about Social Work Month and the National Public Education Campaign for those in attendance.
- **E-newsletter** – Create an e-newsletter that captures all that your chapter or organization is doing surrounding Social Work Month. Rotate different areas of practice each time you send it out so that it appeals to a wide range of audiences.
- **CE Workshop** – Offer a workshop for CE credits on the recruitment and retention issues for social workers and what can be done on a local level.
- **Exhibit** – Set up an exhibition booth at a local hospital, school or community center to disseminate information about social work.
- **Banners** – Display banners in highly visible areas promoting March as National Professional Social Work Month. Use the current theme and artwork.
- **Web site** – Make sure that your chapter or organization’s Web site has the most up-to-date information about the celebration of Social Work Month 2009 and provide a link to the “50 Ways to Use Your Social Work Degree” Web tool.
- **Consumer Site** – Link from your Web site to the Social Work Consumer Site – www.HelpStartsHere.org.
- **Advertise** – Advertise in local newspapers, magazines and billboards using the [National Social Work Public Education Campaign](#) materials. From small and large ads to billboards and banners for Web sites, NASW has advertising that will fit your need. Also consider buying sponsorship time on local radio programs. Contact media@naswdc.org for more information.

These are just a selection of suggestions that chapters, organizations and schools can use to promote the profession during Social Work Month 2009 and throughout the year.

For more information about Social Work Month 2009, please contact NASW Communications at media@naswdc.org.

New Social Work Recruiting Tools

From the growth of the Social Workers: [Help Starts Here](#) campaign, we know that the depth and breadth of who social workers help and how they help is positive news. We are expanding on this strategy by developing recruitment tools and promotions that demonstrate the widest career options for people interested in serving those in need.

With the Social Work Reinvestment Initiative and the NASW Career Center taking off, this is a great time to show potential social workers all that a degree and career in social work has to offer.

For starters, we are building a highly interactive tool as part of www.HelpStartsHere.org that will give people more information about career paths in the profession of social work. The tool is called “50 Ways to Use Your Social Work Degree.”

In the 50 Ways tool, we will identify social workers of different ages, ethnicities, practice specialties, geographic locations and responsibility levels to profile. Some will have written profiles, while others will have more interactive elements including blogs, interviews or photo albums.

We will launch the site in March with the first 50 social worker profiles, and then encourage other social work professionals to write about their experiences in the profession. The goal is to build a positive online conversation between seasoned professionals and prospective social workers. The stories will showcase many different career possibilities.

In addition to the “50 Ways” profiles, we are including more information about different social work areas of practice, quizzes to help guide people to a career in social work and other recruitment tools.

NASW will be working closely with the programs and schools of social work to bolster the recruitment efforts of the entire profession. We all share the same goal of recruiting socially conscious and talented students to become professional social workers.

Be on the look out in March 2009 for this exciting new recruitment tool for social workers at www.50ways.helpstartshere.org.

For more information, contact media@naswdc.org.

Social Work Month Resources

[Insert SMW Logo] [Social Work: Purpose and Possibility](#)

Here you will find the Social Work Month Toolkit.

[50 Ways to Use Your Social Work Degree](#)

Here you will find social work recruitment tools and information about the profession of social work.

[Insert NASW Logo] [National Association of Social Workers](#)

Here you will find the Web site for the National Association of Social Workers.

[Insert HSH logo] [National Social Work Public Education Campaign](#)

Here you will find the Web site for the National Social Work Public Education Campaign, designed to educate the public about the breadth and depth of social work.

[Insert SWRI logo] [Social Work Reinvestment Initiative](#)

Here you will find information about the Social Work Reinvestment Initiative.

[Insert HSH logo] [NASW Consumer Web Site – Help Starts Here](#)

Here you will find the link for the award-winning social work consumer Web site.

[Insert DVD thumbnail] [On Any Given Day – the Social Work Consumer video](#)

Click here to see On Any Given Day, a 5-minute video about social work.

[Insert Center for Workforce Studies logo] [NASW Center for Workforce Studies](#)

Here you will find information about the research being done at NASW about the social work profession.

[Careers in Social Work](#)

Here you will find the career center for the social work profession.

[Media Outreach Tips](#)

Learn media outreach tips and tricks through this Medial Toolkit.

Contact NASW – media@naswdc.org