

UNIVERSITY of **HOUSTON**

GRADUATE COLLEGE of SOCIAL WORK

**15th Annual Greater Houston Area
Social Work Awards Breakfast**

***“Health Reform and What Social Work
Has To Do With It”***

Keynote Speaker

David S. Buck, M.D., M.P.H.

*Associate Professor, Baylor College of Medicine
President, Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston*

Friday, March 6, 2015
Elizabeth D. Rockwell Pavilion
M.D. Anderson Library
University of Houston

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

David S. Buck, M.D., M.P.H.

Associate Professor, Baylor College of Medicine

President, Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston

Dr. Buck is a Professor at Baylor College of Medicine's Department of Family & Community Medicine and an Adjunct Professor at The University of Texas School of Public Health – Houston: Management, Policy and Community Health Division. He began working with the underserved developing medical and dental clinics for the indigent population in Houston in 1984 after working with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, India.

In 1999, he founded Healthcare for the Homeless—Houston (HHH), where he is now President. Dr. Buck is the recipient of many awards and honors, including: the 2014 TMAF John P. McGovern Champion of Health Award and the 2013 American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Public Health Leader National Award; in 2012 Dr. Buck represented HHH at the First Lady's Luncheon hosted by the Congressional Club to honor First Lady Michelle Obama in Washington, D.C.; 2011 St. Luke's Episcopal Charities Community Health Leadership Award and 2010 The University of Texas School of Public Health Leadership Luminary in Public Health.

He has authored many peer reviewed publications. He has served on local, national and international boards. He has recently launched a new non-profit, Primary Care Innovation Center to improve quality and reduce costs through coordination of care for the most costly and vulnerable patients in our health care system.

EVENT PROGRAM

Event Registration and Breakfast Buffet

8:00 – 9:00 am

Greetings and Welcome

José Ramirez, Jr., LCSW
MHMRA Harris County

Speaker Introduction

José Ramirez, Jr., LCSW

Guest Speaker

David S. Buck, M.D., M.P.H.
Associate Professor, Baylor College of Medicine
President, Healthcare for the Homeless

Speaker Q&A

Awards Presentation

University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work
University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work – Alumni Association
Association of Black Social Workers – Houston Branch
National Association of Social Workers – Houston Branch
University of Houston-Downtown – Social Work Program
University of Houston-Clear Lake – Social Work Program

Closing Remarks

Renia Butler
Constituent Relations Events Specialist, GCSW

AWARDS

University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work Alumni Association

Distinguished Alumni Award
George Bement, LCSW

Charlotte Campbell Scholarship Award
Elizabeth Frost
Paige Reitz

Association of Black Social Workers

Social Worker of the Year
Brenda Coleman

Community Service of the Year Award
Dr. Thomas F. Freeman

Community Advocate Award
Sonya Lucas–Roberts

National Association of Social Workers - Houston

Lifetime Achievement
Tony Carroll, LCSW

Social Work Student of the Year
Melanie Espinosa Pang, LMSW

Public Citizen
Deb Murphy

Media
Charles Kuffner

University of Houston–Downtown, Social Work Program

Outstanding Social Work Student of the Year Award
Sheila Wainwright

Student Leadership Award
Karla Banic

Community Engagement Award
Mayra Garza

UHD BSW Field Instructor of the Year
To be announced at breakfast

AWARDS

University of Houston–Clear Lake, Social Work Program

Field Instructor of the Year

Marla Turner
Valerie Zanders, LMSW

Social Justice and Service Award

Heather Green

University of Houston – Graduate College of Social Work

2015 Outstanding Field Instructor of the Year

Kathleen Guziak
Houston Methodist Hospital

2015 Outstanding Field Instructor of the Year Nominees:

Leticia Castro
KIPP Academy Middle School

Ophelia Mok
Child Advocates of Fort Bend County

Kathleen Guziak
Houston Methodist Hospital

Telicia Rittiman
National Smart Healthcare Service

Meggin Lorino
NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services

Jessica Smith
Communities in Schools-Lee High School

Juleena Masters
Michael Debakey VA Medical Center

Susan Szczygielski
The Children's Assessment Center

Jeannine Matthews
Davita Dialysis

Renee Traweek
Champion Therapy

Patricia McElliott
The Council on Alcohol and Drugs

University of Houston - Graduate College of Social Work

Outstanding Field Instructor of the Year

Kathleen Guziak

Kathleen Guziak with Houston Methodist Hospital has 30 years of experience providing field instruction. Lynn Hajdik, a current advanced clinical social work student, has the following to say about Kathleen:

Patients and families that are in the Surgical ICU at Houston Methodist Hospital need support throughout different stages of illness and possible loss. Kathleen exemplifies social work values and ethics as she helps patients and families navigate through difficult medical decisions. My relationship with her is based on respect and admiration. I could not have asked for a better supervisor, teacher, or social work role model. She has helped me to develop my professional identity by being open and collaborative during my internship experience. She has created an environment where I am able to bring what I have learned in the classroom to the internship. Kathleen continues to challenge me to step outside my box. She also graciously guides my growth as a social worker by sharing her many years of experience, allowing time to process situations, and encouraging my own self-reflection. She demonstrates social work values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of a person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence every day by ensuring the patient's voices and wishes are heard. Kathleen is a true example of a social worker.

University of Houston - Graduate College of Social Work - Alumni Association

Distinguished Alumni Award

George Bement, LCSW

George Bement received his Master of Social Work from the UHGCSW in 2000 with a concentration in mental health. He holds a BS in Human Services from California State University at Fullerton, 1977 and a Master of Divinity from Luther Seminary, St Paul, Minnesota 1982.

As a GCSW student, George was the lead for a class project that resulted in the establishment of the Houston Outreach Medicine, Education, and Social Services (HOMES) Clinic. The only student-run clinic in Houston, HOMES, is a joint collaboration with Baylor College of Medicine, University of Texas Health Science Center and the University of Houston College of Pharmacy.

Prior to pursuing a career in social work, George had a history of service as a Lutheran minister and founded churches in Grand Junction, Colorado and in Kihei, Maui, Hawaii. Today, he still wears his Hawaiian shirts and his office is decorated

with reminders of his time in Hawaii. His dedication to helping the homeless as a student put him on a career path that has landed him as a case manager and therapist at Healthcare for the Homeless – Houston (HHH). George is the Program Manager for the Jail InReach Project at HHH that provides continuity of care for homeless people in jail and who may have a serious mental illness and/or substance abuse issue; in his role with Jail InReach, George initiates contact with the homeless and mentally ill inmates during their incarceration in the Harris County Jail and works to provide them with the necessary resources to reintegrate them into the community.

Although the purpose of the Jail InReach Project is to meet with individuals and identify their resource needs, George demonstrates a passion for initiating and maintaining a trusting and working relationship with the person. He has developed and implemented a holistic, all inclusive discharge plan from jail that helps prevent an individual from falling through the cracks due to lack of resources and therefore ending back in jail where he works diligently and collaborates with other agencies to provide the client with access to a number of diverse resources.

George has been instrumental in making the Jail InReach Project a huge success. The measured results show a 60% reduction rate in re-incarceration and number of days in jail. This not only helps the client but saves taxpayer dollars. The demonstrated success of this program has ensured its continued funding and is vital to helping the homeless in our community. It keeps these individuals from falling through the cracks and ending back in jail. His tireless work and dedication provides the social justice needed to increase the value of the homeless person's life, one person at a time. He bridges an existing gap between services provided in jail with services the person needs to live and sustain themselves within the community. George's work embodies the best of social work by helping those without a home gain their dignity and increase their self-worth.

George Bement deserves this recognition as the UHGCSW Alumnus of the Year because of his commitment and thorough diligence in serving the homeless with passion, empathy, and, compassion. The social work profession benefits when we have outstanding people like George Bement, who, on a daily basis, demonstrate all the social work values in working with clients.

Charlotte Campbell Scholarship Award

Elizabeth Frost

Elizabeth Frost is an outstanding GCSW student with a 3.95 GPA. Elizabeth is a dual degree student also pursuing her MPH in conjunction with the UT School of Public Health. Elizabeth has been a member of the UTSPH Frontera de Salud since 2014 where she established collaboration with the UT Medical School so that students of public health, social work and medical school could come together and make service trips to the Rio Grande Valley. She leads trips to the border, trains other new leaders, recruits students and applies for grants. Elizabeth is a recipient of the Albert Schweitzer Fellowship from 2014 to present where she created a proj-

ect to empower Burmese refugee women. She is responsible for conducting focus groups to better understand the community's struggle and create health educational workshops, connect women to various services in their community and lead excursions to assist the Burmese women to better acclimate to the Houston community. Additionally, Elizabeth has been the Operational Director for the UTSPH Student Society for Global Health from August 2013 to May 2014 where she coordinated and planned the community service activities and located community partners willing to dialogue with students on global health topics.

Elizabeth's essay outlines how she has modeled behavior through her actions so that others could see the importance of believing that the world could be a better place. Elizabeth prefers to set higher standards and lead others to take action as well. She outlines change as "believing in ourselves, having the courage to see the world differently, and moving forward with an action plan."

Charlotte Campbell Scholarship Award

Paige Reitz

Paige Reitz is an outstanding second year GCSW student with a perfect 4.0 GPA. She graduated Summa Cum Laude from Longwood University. Although she has received numerous scholarships, her leadership and determination set her apart from other applicants. Paige worked as the Assistant Director of the MACRO Network at the University of Houston during the fall 2014 semester where she organized events such as A Day in the Life of a MACRO Social Worker. Paige held the position of Vice President for Alpha Delta Mu from 2012 to 2013 where she organized activities for the social work honors society to participate in that related to social work values. Additionally, Paige was the Chair of the Social Activism Committee for the Student Diversity and Inclusion Council where she organized activities to increase awareness about various social issues including a panel discussion after the tragedy that took place in Sandy Hook. She has volunteered at the Crisis Text-line providing crisis management to those teens who text in.

Paige has volunteered at Big Brothers/Big Sisters, providing mentorship to a twelve year old living with her grandmother, while her mother was in jail. She volunteered for a boy with cerebral palsy assisting with activities of daily living through the Achievement and Human Potential organization. Finally, she assisted with the startup of an Alateen chapter in her area.

Paige's essay outlined the perseverance that is fundamental in advocating for clients. She identified her vision of change as something that can be as small as changing an individual's derogatory language but reports that she will not be happy with just small change. "I have to work toward the challenging changes if I expect others to fight for change or to accept the change once it's implemented."

Association of Black Social Workers

Social Worker of the Year

Brenda Coleman

Ms. Brenda Coleman is one of the hardest working members of ABSW. Her position as Treasurer is very demanding, to which she gives more than you could expect. She exemplifies the mission of the organization through her present choice of work serving those who are experiencing end-of-life issues. To further facilitate her commitment to her patients, she provides in-service training to staff of nursing homes and personal care homes.

Ms. Coleman attained a Bachelor of Social Work Degree from Texas Southern University in 1999. She immediately enrolled in the University of Houston, Graduate School of Social Work, and attained a Master's in Social Work in 2001. She is a licensed Master's of Social Worker.

Ms. Coleman's work history includes twenty-six years in social services at the Veterans Administration Hospital; ten years at Christian Home Health and Hospice and, is presently employed at Resolution Hospice where she earned Employee of the Year for 2013. She pays special attention to those patients in nursing homes and personal care homes who do not have family or a guardian. She does this by providing birthday parties and dinners for each person and their fellow residents; seeks financial assistance for burials and Christmas parties in which teddy bears are given as gifts. She also responds personally to other dire needs such as persuading a reluctant client to grant access to her home so that she could address an insect infestation for which she denied help from Adult Protective Services. Ms. Coleman bought the insecticides, fumigated the home and alleviated the problem. Needless to say, the patient was very grateful. In-service training to family members has also been done on topics such as: Advanced Directives, Power of Attorney, DNR status, Caregiver Burnout, and How to recognize Alzheimer's disease and Dementia.

Community Service Award

Dr. Thomas F. Freeman

Dr. Freeman was selected in recognition of being an outstanding educator for 65 years by teaching, motivating and guiding students who became great debaters, orators, politicians, teachers and other leaders in our local community and in the world. Because of his legendary accomplishments, he has received proclamations from Presidents, Governors, Congressional members and others, including actor Denzel Washington whom he worked with on the movie "The Great Debaters." Denzel said on the "Oprah Winfrey Show" that when he decided to make the movie he wanted the best debate coach in the world to train his actors in the art of debate, so he called Dr. Freeman.

Dr. Freeman has marshaled his expertise as a scholar and a trailblazer to improve the quality of life for Black students. He has provided meals for students who did not have food, accommodations for those who found themselves without a place to sleep, secured scholarships, helped students find gainful employment, paid tuition from his own funds and much more. Without judgment, he meets the students where they are. It is within that spirit that he has probably kept many students in school when they may have otherwise given up. Many of these students would then transform into writers, lawyers, teachers, preachers, business owners, politicians, artists and other professionals. One man has changed so many lives for so many years.

Under Dr. Freeman's leadership, the TSU Debate Team claims an unusual record: won at least one award in every tournament in which it participated; won over 26 awards in some tournaments, including international championships. He masterfully helped hundreds of students develop skills and competencies which propelled many into local and national prominence. It is entirely appropriate to pay homage to the founder of the TSU Debate Team for a legacy of love, commitment and service. His profound and prophetic wisdom has benefited many.

Community Service Awards

Sonya Lucas-Roberts
"Sister Mama Sonya"

Sister Mama Sonya is being honored because of her activities in the Black community, her desire to improve the Black community and her talents in the field of communication. She is an author, a playwright, a servant leader, an ordained minister, poet and an actor. Armed with her law degree, she is a spokesperson for the underserved population who cannot speak for themselves.

She has written poems to honor outstanding citizens of Houston and written and produced plays for Veterans at the VA Hospital during holiday celebrations. With two of her sisters, she is involved with 3 Sisters in The Spirit Theatre Ministry designed to harvest hope, healing and harmony in the lives of women and girls through education and entertainment in the theatre arts. The group has dealt with such topics as adoption, abuse, HIV/Aids, self-esteem, spirituality and women's health issues, especially diabetes. She has been a member of The Black Child Development Institute and as an adoptive parent has participated in various "Calling Out" ceremonies where children available for adoption have been named.

Several years ago, Sister Mama Sonya and her husband, Craig, decided to celebrate their December birthdays by collecting and distributing gloves, socks, hats and scarves to the homeless. Each year over 1000 items have been collected and distributed on these occasions. Additionally, she continues to compile and share her wealth of knowledge of community resources as was demonstrated during a time when the impact of Katrina was felt by many.

Finally, you may be at a book-signing (her first book “Sweet Sensations for the Spirit”; attend meetings; participate in marches and prayer walks with Sister Mama Sonya in and around local public schools scheduled for closing..joining with the PTOs, Alumni groups and the surrounding communities in Third Ward area addressing the needs of people.

National Association of Social Workers - Houston Branch

Lifetime Achievement Award

Tony Carroll, LCSW

Tony has been a trailblazing leader in providing culturally sensitive, compassionate care for LGBT individuals, based on extensive research and study, pioneering a unique approach in the 1970s and 1980s, during a time of homophobia, violence and oppression directed against gay Texans. In addition, over the last four decades, he has emerged as indefatigable civic activist, a generous philanthropist, a passionate supporter of the arts, and – most significantly -- a leader in the struggle for full equality for LGBT people.

While maintaining a high level of community involvement, Tony also found time to assume a leadership role in his profession, serving on the board of directors of the Texas Society for Clinical Social Work from 1996 to 2006 in a variety of roles: chair of the ethics committee, conference and education chair, editor of newsletter and president. He is widely respected for his broad expertise and knowledge as a therapist specializing in assisting LGBT clients.

It is clear and fortunate for the Social Work community that Tony’s passion has broadened from striving for change in the individual through his work in psychotherapy to working toward broader societal changes.

Social Worker of the Year

Melanie Espinosa Pang, LMSW

During her undergraduate years at the University of Houston (2007-2011), Melanie soared as the President of GLOBAL (Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Alliance) and as an all-around outstanding student activist. She was a strong advocate who had courageous direction and the admirable confidence to stand up for others, especially when they couldn’t have a voice of their own. She later went on to attend the Graduate College of Social Work at UH where she excelled in many leadership roles, earning her the honorable Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award by the GCSW’s Student Association.

Melanie’s dynamic position with First Person and her work with CAN DO! Houston has allowed her to grow into her full professional potential. Melanie is a

natural community organizer and social justice advocate. She's a true champion of the community, and she has the dedication and talent to inspire change in anyone's heart. She lives and breathes social justice, making an impact every single day.

Outstanding Public Citizen

Deb Murphy

Montrose Center, HATCH

Deb is the Youth Services Specialist for the Montrose Center's HATCH program, which serves LGBT and questioning youth ages 13-20 in the Houston area. This program includes three-hour meetings, three evenings per week and offers numerous services for youth, including health, a supportive and supervised environment for socializing, educational sessions on topics, including: substance abuse prevention, HIV prevention and testing, suicide prevention, tutoring, and healthy dating and relationships, among other topics. In the 12 years that Deb has served this vulnerable population, she has earned the reputation as the "go to" expert on LGBT youth issues. Deb is highly sought out for her public speaking and training skills, not only in Harris County, but across the state and nationwide.

Although Deb is not trained as a professional Social Worker, she embodies all the core values that the profession works to uphold. She is the consummate professional, extremely vigilant about ethical issues and considerations, ever mindful about upholding firm boundary issues and ensures that all her staff and volunteers are highly trained, as well.

Outstanding Media

Charles Kuffner

Off the Kuff blog - offthekuff.com

Charles Kuffner is the author of Off the Kuff, a progressive blog focusing on local and state politics since January 1, 2002 and the state's longest continuously published progressive political blog according to Texas Monthly. Kuffner publishes daily, highlighting timely articles, adding his own commentary and offering guidance on where to seek more information. The topics range from those that impact the Houston community such as the HERO (equal rights ordinance) and the Sobering Center to statewide issues such as open enrollment and the expansion of Medicaid. One reason Kuffner decided to blog more about state and local politics and less about national issues was that he recognized there was almost no one talking about what was going on in our own backyard. The blog is a must read for policy wonks and Capitol regulars, but Kuffner also reaches the general public through the Houston Chronicle and as a frequent panelist on KUHF's "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly" segment of "Houston Matters."

It is apparent through his professional contributions that Kuffner not only embodies social work values such as the dignity and worth of every Texan and the

importance of human relationships but that he makes significant contributions to the social work profession by informing us and our clients about the social policies that impact us all.

University of Houston–Downtown, Social Work Program

Outstanding Social Work Student of the Year Award

Sheila Wainwright

Sheila Wainwright is our Student of the Year because on a daily basis in our Program she demonstrates outstanding leadership, true academic excellence and competence in social work practice that is grounded in compassion and justice. Sheila came back to school to pursue a second career and has found her home in gerontology, chosen as our Program's recipient this year of the AGIFT gerontology fellowship from the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work.

As just one example of Sheila's student leadership, last semester when a faculty member was out with a family crisis, Sheila took over much of the management of our annual Person of the Year Ceremony, a major event for our Program, by organizing and leading student groups, being the point person and ultimately responsible for some of the key components of the awards and the ceremony.

In her work in field practicum, and something that we love to see in a student, when Sheila started making home visits at her field placement with Adult Protective Services, she struggled with the poverty and the poor living conditions of the older adults she was visiting. She was visibly shaken, tearfully compassionate. She was not however paralyzed or without hope. She fell back on her social work knowledge and skills regarding the causes and conditions that create inequality, and has become resolved to do something big. We are proud of Sheila for her courage in returning to school after an already successful career, for being a fully present and inquisitive learner, and for standing out and distinguishing herself as a leader and developing practitioner from an impressive crowd of student.

Student Leadership Award

Karla Banic

Even on the first day of class, during her first semester, it was clear that Karla Banic had "great leader potential" written all over her! Well past her age and experience, she is poised and comfortable in her capacity as a developing leader. When arranging her field placement, Karla was an easy choice for one of only two Betsy Schwartz Scholar awards, our most prestigious scholarship. Since being placed at Mental Health America, Karla has been described as a person that "steps up" in a crisis, or when a leader needs to arise to meet an important organizational need. Also at Mental Health America, she has demonstrated superior leadership in terms of curriculum development, taking on the research and presentation of training

curriculum for programs such as HIV and Depression, African American Mental Health, Incarceration and Depression and more. Like all great leaders, she knows how to maximize supervision to continue to build knowledge, skills and confidence as a social worker.

Karla has also exhibited promising leadership skills in our Program as Treasurer of our Social Work Student Organization (SWSCAN) and as an active member and leader in the Organization's service to the community.

Karla has also been a role model for our BSW Program as we have worked on developing our Spanish track for BSW students. Karla is exactly the kind of social work leader that we want to develop—One that is going to usher our city, in its ever growing diversity, towards inclusion and opportunity for all.

Community Engagement Award

Mayra Garza

It is said that the “heart” of the social work degree is field experience or practice. Field is the time in preparation for social work students in which the “rubber meets the road.” The skills, knowledge, training and “heart” students receive and form during this period of their education stays with them during their future careers as social workers. For Mayra Garza, she has not only developed skills, knowledge and training to help those who are in need of services at Baker-Ripley Neighborhood Centers, but also has become a “heart of hope” for the numerous clients she has encountered there. Mayra has been a beacon for groups of immigrant and refugee women at Baker Ripley. Through her community service this semester and in Fall 2014, she has helped nearly 300 applicants with general assistance applications including SNAP, TANF, voter registration, the Naturalization Process and medical forms. She has linked women to Work Source Solutions for job placements. She has been an active listener for participants at the Center for refugee women in programs such as Community Engineers and Voices Breaking Boundaries.

Mayra has assisted women at the Center to have a “voice” for themselves through her involvement with writing workshops and the Women's Empowerment Forum. Mayra has profiled ESL students at the Center based on need and educational backgrounds to help link them to job opportunities. When there was a need to focus on the needs and activities regarding job placements/internships of refugee and immigrant women in the Gulfton area, Mayra worked tirelessly with the team at Baker-Ripley through Project Place to ensure their needs were addressed and communicated to her superiors. Mayra is always seeking refugee resources such as housing and benefits for the women at Baker-Ripley. Mayra is a “go-getter” for her clients at her field placement. One day, she encountered a survivor of domestic violence from another state who had an infant. Mayra worked effortlessly that day to obtain food stamps for this client and refer her to safe housing so that she was able to decide her next steps. Mayra's tenacity and advocacy for her clients is not

only an inspiration to the UHD-BSW faculty, but to her fellow students as well. Mayra has impacted the community that she serves at Baker-Ripley and in doing so has made it a “brighter” place for her clients.

University of Houston–Clear Lake Social Work Program

Field Instructor of the Year Award

Marla Turner and Valerie Zanders, LMSW

Marla Turner and Valerie Zanders, LMSW with Catholic Charities Senior Services have been exemplary Field Instructors to the students of the UHCL BSW Program. Marla Turner, Director of Social Services and Valerie Zanders, LMSW, Social Worker II are both dedicated to the support and development of our students. Under Ms. Zanders’ tutelage, our students grow and gain tremendous confidence as budding social workers and as generalist practitioners. Ms. Turner is a program director that stands behind her commitment to support students’ growth and development and who models an appreciation for the skill that social workers bring to the table in professional practice. Valerie has a gift for honest and authentic educational supervision and has found the exact balance between challenging and supporting our students. Marla is present and engaged with our students and also invests time and energy to ensure that supervision and educational opportunities are made available to the Field Interns in her department. We are fortunate to have this ‘Dynamic Duo’ on our team!

Social Justice and Service Award

Heather Green

Heather Green is currently a senior in the BSW program at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. Heather is completing her internship at Adult Protective Services where she is learning a great deal about promoting justice for the most vulnerable seniors in the Houston/Galveston Community. In addition to having been a leader within the UHCL BSW Social Work Student Organization, Heather is a student member of NASW, and was a participant and volunteer at the last two state conferences. In addition to her activism for older adults, Heather is a vocal advocate for the transgender community having committed herself to continually learning more and directly supporting the community by being active in local social support networks. Heather contributes her time to local and state level organizations that promote justice and equality. After graduation, Heather plans to pursue a Master’s Degree in social work while continuing to stay involved in advocacy.

EVENT SPONSORS

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National Association of Black Social Workers
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National Association of Social Workers
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