



The mission of TVSA is support, education, and recognition for victim service providers.



# Texas Victim Services Association

## Newsletter

### Summer 2023



Members of the TVSA Board of Directors and Staff at the 25th Anniversary Celebration Conference

## **In This Issue**

Message from the Executive Director

President's Column

Membership Matters

Professional Development and Training

Texas Victim Friendly Initiative

TAAVA Alumni Network Updates

Board of Directors

Welcome New Members

Board Spotlight

Updating Profiles

Job Board

Save the Dates

## **Board of Directors**

President  
Rose Luna, MSLC  
Austin

Secretary  
Jessica Serrano, MPA  
Plano

Treasurer  
Suzanne Bradford, BBA, CPA  
Lockhart

Region A Coordinator  
Vacant

Region B Coordinator  
Roya N. Williamson, MA, LCDC  
San Marcos

Region C Coordinator  
Jennifer Sterling, LCSW  
Arlington

Region D Coordinator  
Vacant

Region E Coordinator  
Vacant

Region F Coordinator  
Brenda Fuentes  
Edinburg

At-large Member  
Mary Breaux, PhD  
Huntsville

At-large Member  
Jim McKee, BA  
Tyler

At-large Member  
Christina L. Richardson, MS, LPC  
Dallas

Ex Officio  
Executive Director  
Natacha Peláez-Wagner, M.Ed.  
Austin



**We welcome the following new members who have joined TVSA in the last quarter:**

Toni Cormier, Houston

Brandi Fitzgerald, Houston

Megan Gutierrez, Houston

Anna Lewis, Plano

Wysonda "Torri" Smith, Austin

Bailey Vautrain, Austin

**New Agency Member:**

Family Shelter, San Angelo

Rebecca Alexander

Jennifer Porras

Carol Salazar

Beth Thompson



## Board Spotlight



**Christina L. Richardson, MS, LPC**

We welcome our newest board member, Christina Richardson. Christina is an alumna times two of our advanced academy for victim assistance, having attended in 2019 and 2022. Christina is the Program Services Director for Trauma Support Services of North Texas and feels her most significant accomplishment is being able to work with victims as a licensed professional counselor.

Christina has been in the nonprofit sector for 20 years. Her wide array of experience includes working with women and children diagnosed with cancer, supporting development teams and implementing training for a children's hospital.

As an undergraduate, Christina worked on a suicide crisis line which piqued her interest in working with those in crisis. Working towards her master's and during her internship, Christina worked with battered and abused women in a domestic violence shelter. Christina would later provide crisis counseling via her school to those in need after the Downtown Dallas ambush in July 2016 which left five officers dead. These hands-on experiences shifted Christina's career focus from marriage/family therapy to crisis, trauma and disaster. "My road to working with victims was unexpected, but it is a path I believe I am supposed to be on."

Christina proudly supports TVSA's mission and "being a part of TVSA helps me partner with other agencies who need our assistance and agencies our clients need. Even if the client doesn't need therapy services, we want to be able to provide resources to them wherever they live and being a part of TVSA helps me to learn about resources through the state."

"This is my first time serving on a board, but I have been in positions where I have had direct board contact and working relationships with board members. I understand the importance of the work in spreading the word about the organization and gaining support to execute the much-needed programming that TVSA provides for service providers throughout the state. I have been with Trauma Support Services for five years, and in each of those years, I have made sure I am a part of the great things TVSA is doing. Serving on the board is beyond an honor to help them continue to provide what I have received from this organization."

Welcome Christina!

### Is your [TVSA profile](#) up to date?

Keeping your profile updated ensures you receive all TVSA communications, including training events and notices. Follow this link to view and edit your TVSA profile: [txvsa.org/Sys/Profile](https://txvsa.org/Sys/Profile)

# Did You Know?



TVSA has a job board on our website! We have retooled the job board to make it easier for employers to submit job postings. Employers wishing to post a victim services position opening can fill out a form online to submit their posting to TVSA. Please send us your available job listings!

Victim services professionals engaged in job searches can view postings as well, with links to the human resources departments of pertinent agencies and/or applications directly for the listed positions. The job board is available at this link: <http://www.txvsa.org/Active-Job-Postings>



## **TAAVA Alumni Network Quarterly Meeting**

September 20, 2023, 12:00-1:30 PM CST

Virtual

## **2024 Texas Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance (TAAVA)**

January 24-26, 2024

Deputy A.W. Grimes Law Enforcement Training Center/ Hutto, Tx

## **TVSA Annual Membership Meeting**

May 7, 2024

# Message from the Executive Director



By Natacha Peláez-Wagner, M.Ed.

We have emerged from a busy spring into our continued work and projects throughout the summer.

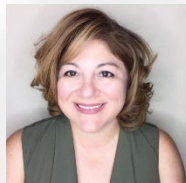
In May, we celebrated TVSA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary during a luncheon at our biennial conference on South Padre Island. Yes, our silver anniversary was actually last year (1997-2022) but we felt such a milestone was worthy of waiting until our next statewide conference to properly acknowledge it.

We celebrated with a program sharing with our TVSA members and other victim services colleagues our timeline of development and accomplishments. From our grassroots, nascent days in the late 1990s, through to our present time of multiple programs, services and activities, we shared the strides we have made in supporting and educating our victim services professionals in Texas, and elevating the profile of the profession as a career choice among the roles to be filled in the justice system. The strength of TVSA is attributable to the active role of so many of our victim services professionals all across Texas, and this was a time to celebrate and collectively acknowledge everyone who has been at the TVSA table throughout these 25 years. We were also proud to read a proclamation issued by our state governor Greg Abbott, recognizing TVSA's success in its 25 years of existence and the contributions of so many in giving of their time and talent to helping our fellow Texans at times where they are most vulnerable and in need.

Our annual membership meeting was also held in May. I delivered my "state of TVSA" remarks, looking back at our accomplishments over the past year, and our board President, Rose Luna, issued her remarks looking ahead at our next year. We thanked outgoing board members Julie Jespersen, John Dominguez, and Lacy Hensley for their contributions to our board governance during their terms of office, and installed Rose Luna and Dr. Mary Breaux for their second terms on the board.

Notwithstanding the Texas summer heat wave we are now busy post-conference, working with our TVFI sites to complete their year-long trauma-informed planning projects and with planning for our upcoming TAAVA Alumni Network training. Following closely on these heels is the planning for our next advanced academy in management and leadership, coming up in January. A busy fall season is upon us very soon!

## President's Column



By Rose Luna, MSLC

Happy Summer!!

This summer the heat is almost unbearable! I hope you all are managing the hustle and bustle of summer vacations and preparing kids for school. TVSA has been busy this summer with closing out our conference and preparing for the exciting changes this winter. I hope you all have time to disconnect and recharge. We need each and every one of you in this fight! TVSA is working to reset, reconnect, and recharge as well.

The board of directors will be meeting to set the strategic direction of TVSA, an exercise we undergo every five years, and we will keep you posted on the outcome. We are also preparing for our upcoming Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance in management and leadership. We are proud of this TVSA signature event as it is the only one of its kind in the nation. We are thankful to all who participate, the faculty, and most of all to our Director, Natacha, for enhancing and streamlining this event into the successful model for the nation to copy.

As always, we welcome your feedback and ideas on how to improve TVSA. Our members are the guiding lights the Board of Directors follow. Please feel free to connect with me at anytime. I love talking shop with such dedicated professionals.

Take care,

Rose Luna



By Brooke King, M.A., Membership Committee Chair

I hope you are staying cool this summer and have taken time for some well-deserved self-care!

This is a summer of transitions for our regional coordinators, our board members who support and grow membership in our regions. We said farewell to Julie Jespersen (region B) and John Dominguez (region E) in May, who reached their term limits for board service. We have welcomed Roya Williamson of the San Marcos Police Department back to the board as Region B Coordinator. Roya last served in this position in 2019, when she reached her term limit on the board. We are thrilled she has the interest and commitment to serve in this role once again and look forward to working together anew!

We also recently welcomed Brenda Fuentes to her service as Region F Coordinator. Brenda is with the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office and has almost 20 years of work in victim services and is a long-time TVSA member and graduate of our advanced academy.

After our annual membership meeting in May, where our attendees sat at regional tables to meet and network with their closer-to-home colleagues and regional coordinators, we still have three regional coordinator vacancies for positions on our board not filled during our spring elections. We have open Regional Coordinator positions in Regions A (panhandle area), D (southeast Texas area), and E (west Texas area). As a membership driven organization our regional coordinators serve a crucial role at TVSA. As regional coordinators

we meet monthly to discuss membership numbers, recruitment opportunities, and to coordinate trainings and networking opportunities for our members. If you are interested in joining our team, please reach out to myself and Natacha at [info@txvsa.org](mailto:info@txvsa.org) for more information!

Thank you for everything you do to support crime victims in Texas.

## Professional Development and Training

Our post-pandemic return to an in-person biennial training conference was a success! Our regular, loyal conference attendees were happy to be back and able to network with their colleagues and many new attendees joined us for the first time.

The conference, held May 9-12 at the Hilton Garden Inn on South Padre Island, delivered its high quality training program for which it has been known for over two decades: a half day pre-conference ethics training for victim services providers, followed by an opening keynote session on Post-Traumatic Growth in Victim Services, on the changes to victim services post-pandemic, and two days of breakout workshops in four tracks: Empowerment: From Victim to Survivor; Working with Marginalized Populations; Research and Promising Practices, and Management and Leadership. Workshops were available at the beginner, intermediate and advanced levels, with something for every victim service professional regardless of their years of experience in the profession. A well-attended closing session delivered an update on the 88<sup>th</sup> legislative session and the potential impact of key bills to services for crime victims.

Further opportunities for spending time together, renewing professional ties and getting acquainted with new colleagues were available at our evening networking reception, our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration luncheon and our annual membership meeting, open to all at the conference and where seating was by geographic regions, enabling service providers to get to know fellow professionals closer to home.

Many attendees stopped by our TVSA resource table, to learn more about our programs and services supporting and educating them in their career advancement. Our exhibit hall with referral and resource organizations for serving crime victims received many visitors as well. Based on our conference evaluations, we have many folks ready to return to our next conference in 2025!

We are now beginning to plan for our eighth annual Texas Advanced Academy for Victim Assistance in management and leadership, to be held in January 2024 at the Williamson County Law Enforcement Training Center in Hutto. The academy is open to victim services professionals with a minimum of three years in victim services and who are in management and leadership positions already, or for emerging leaders aspiring to move into these roles in their career path. Applications for the academy will open later this fall, and notices will appear on our website and social media, as well as via email. For more information on the academy please contact us at [info@txvsa.org](mailto:info@txvsa.org).

## Texas Victim Friendly Initiative





By Shelly Muncy, AA, Education and Engagement Coordinator

We are nearing the end of our second Texas Victim Friendly Initiative (TVFI) program year. The goal of this project is to help agencies to become more trauma-informed so they will be able to better understand and serve victims of violence. Seven sites from across the state representing law enforcement, prosecution and non-profit victim services are participating in this year's program. Our staff has met with the sites' project teams and lead staff regularly to facilitate their self-directed, TVSA-supported process in becoming more victim-friendly organizations. Early this fall, the sites will undergo post-organizational self-assessments and staff surveys to determine their level of increased agency victim-friendliness from the start of the project, and to receive their respective designations from TVSA as trauma-informed organizations. They will join our initial six sites from the program's first year in receiving their victim-friendly designations by TVSA.

## TAAVA Alumni Network Updates

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023, during TVSA's Biennial Conference, we held an invitational workshop for our TAAVA alumni on Assertive Communication for Victim Service Leaders and Supervisors. The learning objectives included: identifying and understanding three styles of communication; why the assertive approach is best for problem solving and resolution; and how to use the IDEAL (identify, Describe, Express, Ask and List) model for an assertive approach with subordinates. At the end of the training, we designated time to have "alumni conversations", asking the participants where they would like to see TVSA go in the future and what they saw themselves, as individuals, doing to help TVSA grow as well as sustain programming and services.

Our next TAAVA Alumni Network virtual meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 20<sup>th</sup> from 12:30 to 1:30 pm. Our "lunch and learn" presenter will be Rita Flores of Collective Capacity Consulting, who will present on Top Tips for a Healthy Workplace. Further announcements and opening of registration will be coming soon via our website, social media and alumni emails!

**THE TEXAS VICTIM SERVICES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER IS PUBLISHED QUARTERLY. Please forward articles, announcements, shout outs, job openings, training information, reviews, information and other items of interest to [info@txvsa.org](mailto:info@txvsa.org). Be sure and let us know if your email changes.**

**Texas Victim Services Association is very grateful for the support of its sponsors, members, friends and colleagues. TVSA does not specifically endorse or recommend any referral resources or vendors over others.**

You are receiving this message because you opted in.  
[Unsubscribe](#)