

FALL/WINTER 2023

HORIZONS

A Publication of Planned Parenthood South Texas



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***We provide and protect the
health care and information
people need to plan their
families and their futures.***

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SERVING HUMANITY TO HONOR GOD



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Message from the President & CEO

I've been reflecting on leadership lately: leadership in times of crisis, times of growth, times of change. And leadership in the in-between times. It's a curious thing that Planned Parenthood South Texas is in all of these times at once.

I've learned so much in the last 15 months about leadership from **Merritt Clements**, now in the last few months of his tenure as Board Chair. Merritt is the keel of our ship — his equanimity keeping us balanced in even the choppiest waters, and his shrewd legal mind and nuanced understanding of Texas skillfully guiding us forward. PPST and I have benefited tremendously from his wise and steady counsel.

I've also learned a great deal about leadership from **Elise Boyan**, former Board Chair and director for 13 years, who terms off at the end of 2023. Elise taught me on day one how we define success in Texas, and it's quite simple: every single time a patient walks through our health center doors is a win. It's a win for them, their family, our communities, and us. With her laser focus on patients, Elise has been an anchor, keeping us from drifting away from our mission of care, no matter how distracting the political and legal waters have become.

And I'm so grateful for the lessons in leadership that I've taken from **Alison Kennamer** — PP Cameron County Board Chair and PP South Texas Board director who terms off in 2023. Alison is the wind in our sails. Her passion for our mission, commitment to our work in the Rio Grande Valley, and absolutely ferocious work ethic have been a continuous reminder of how much we can do with the opportunities we have when we roll up our sleeves and refuse to be deterred.

These amazing individuals have held high-profile leadership positions with PPST, and their influence will be felt here for years to come. But I've also learned so much from the grassroots leaders I've had the pleasure of meeting and working with. On November 4, I spent a profoundly moving night in Brownsville celebrating four truly extraordinary individuals who are also just "ordinary" gente.

Humanitarian **Ruth Wagner** organized an effective response to one of the nation's biggest immigration crises and pressured the U.S. government to change its policy. **Jennifer Harbury**, founder of Angry Tias and Abuelas of the Rio Grande Valley, also took on governments — ours and Guatemala's — to combat torture and the shielding of war criminals by the CIA.



Elise Boyan and Laura Terrill

Elise taught me on day one how we define success in Texas, and it's quite simple: every single time a patient walks through our health center doors is a win.

Activist **Denisce Palacios** organizes for immigrant justice and environmental justice and helped lead the fight to stop the execution of Texas prisoner Melissa Lucio. And at a time when Texas is leading the charge for the banning of books, **Gilbert Hernandez** opened Búho — the only book store in Brownsville and a community gathering spot. If this isn't leadership, I don't know what is.

We've become ever more responsive to the needs of our patients, ever more reflective of our community, and ever more suited to flourishing in the hostile environment where we were planted back in 1939.

My theory of leadership? It isn't a solitary endeavor. One of my most trusted advisers reminded me recently how many ways there are to tackle a problem. A leader working on their own may come up with three or four solutions. But when that leader gathers a group of leaders around them and shares the problem, dozens of solutions manifest, thereby creating exponentially better options for consideration.

PPST would never have survived so many challenges without the shrewd, dedicated leadership of Board members who were willing to make bold, strategic decisions. But more than survived, PPST has grown. We've become ever more responsive to the needs of our patients, ever more reflective of our community, and ever more suited to flourishing in the hostile environment where we were planted back in 1939.

None of that would be possible without the collaboration of philanthropic leaders, thought leaders, organizing and activist leaders, political leaders, volunteer leaders. PPST is part of a movement that leads the charge for women's equality, reproductive freedom, and the right to self-determination and bodily autonomy. But here at PPST we are all leaders. PPST belongs to the community, to each of you.

As we approach our April trial date in the meritless False Claims Act lawsuit, and strive to provide more and better care than ever before against the backdrop of the chaos caused by the abortion bans in Texas, we need the whole community to come to this work with a leadership mindset. The challenges are profound. But we have the solutions. **We are the leaders we have been waiting for.**

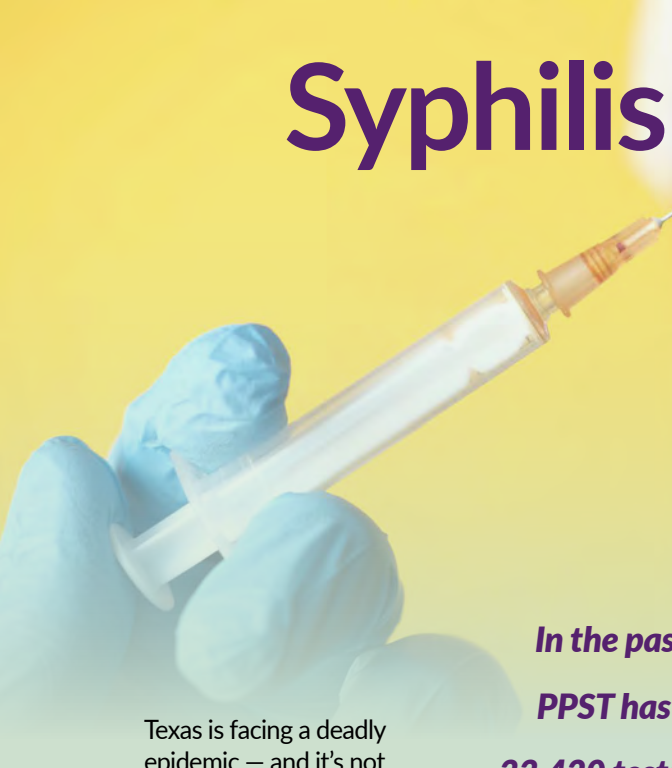
Yours in service,


Laura Terrill



PPST President & CEO Laura Terrill and Community Engagement Manager Nubia Reyna with community leaders in reproductive health education and advocacy in Guatemala. (See story on page 4.)

Syphilis treatment saves lives



If babies are born with syphilis and do not receive treatment right away, they can develop health problems such as seizures, blindness or deafness. Congenital syphilis can also lead to death. Most infants with congenital syphilis are asymptomatic at birth.

With increased rates of syphilis among adults comes increased numbers of babies born with the disease. **In fact, syphilis affects**

more newborns in Texas than anywhere else in the country, according to the *San Antonio Express-News*.

“Syphilis is easy to test for and easy to cure in its early stages, so the services we provide are lifesaving,” said Polin

C. Barraza, RN, Senior Vice President & COO at Planned Parenthood South Texas. ***“No baby should be born with syphilis in Texas or anywhere else. We are proud to do our part to decrease syphilis rates in the state.”***

In the past decade,

PPST has provided

33,420 tests for syphilis

Texas is facing a deadly epidemic — and it's not COVID-19.

Syphilis, the sexually transmitted infection that has been around for hundreds of years, has reached alarming levels in Texas. **In fact, the number of syphilis cases reported in 2022 was more than double the number reported five years ago.**

Rates have been climbing due to reduced access to routine medical care during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the *Texas Tribune*.

Planned Parenthood South Texas has long tested for syphilis. In response to epidemic levels, in summer 2023 we began offering treatment for the infection.

Previously, PPST would refer patients with syphilis to the local health department for treatment, but we found that many patients failed to follow up at the health department. Introducing treatment in our health centers increases access to this service.

Left untreated in adults, syphilis can lead to serious health problems over the long term, ranging from vision and hearing problems to dementia.

But there's another danger when it comes to syphilis. **Pregnant people can pass the infection on to their baby.** The result can cause miscarriage, low birth weight, premature delivery or stillbirth.

In the past decade, PPST has provided 33,420 tests for syphilis, which is diagnosed with a blood sample. Testing is crucial because the STI is often asymptomatic.

Anyone who has sex could get syphilis, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend regular testing for pregnant people, men who have sex with men, people with HIV, and/or people with partners who test positive for syphilis.

In people who aren't pregnant, treatment of early stages of syphilis involves an injection of a type of penicillin. Patients who have an allergy to penicillin can take a two-week course of a different antibiotic.

To schedule a syphilis test at one of our health centers in San Antonio, Brownsville or Harlingen, go to ppsouthtexas.org or call 1-800-230-PLAN(7526). To donate to Planned Parenthood South Texas to support syphilis testing and treatment, as well as other health care services, go to ppsouthtexas.org or call 210-726-2244 ext. 340.



PPST goes global

There is a lot we can learn from our sisters across the border. **While access to abortion is evaporating in the United States, it is growing in Latin America.** Mexico has decriminalized abortion at the federal level. Argentina legalized the procedure in 2020. Colombia did the same in 2022. Activists in Guatemala continue to fight for these rights.

In July, our Community Engagement Manager in the RGV, Nubia Reyna, visited Guatemala to embed with grassroots organizations working to expand reproductive health and rights for indigenous and marginalized communities. PPST President & CEO Laura Terrill joined Nubia to meet with leaders in the reproductive rights movement in Latin America.

This incredible learning opportunity was made possible by Planned Parenthood Global. Nubia, an immigrant from Mexico, was one of three people selected in the United States by PP Global to serve as a Global Youth Ambassador.

While in Guatemala, Nubia and Laura traveled to the Guatemala-Mexico border to gain a better understanding of what immigrants endure as they make their way to the U.S. to request political

asylum, and what innovative groups are doing to help protect women on the journey. **Some offer pop-up clinics in bus stations where women can get the birth control shot. Some offer hygiene packs, similar to the ones PPST offers to migrants at the border, with menstrual supplies and emergency contraception.**

Nubia and Laura also met with organizations and collectives that provide abortion care and train abortion providers, counsel and treat victims of trafficking, and run successful sex education programs in the most remote and underserved communities.

“These organizations are helping their communities thrive despite hardships that those of us on this side of the border can hardly imagine,” Nubia said. “They define resilience and determination and remind us what can be accomplished when ordinary people are unrelenting in their demands for bodily autonomy and access to reproductive health care and information.”





In October, members of TAN UX'IL, a nonprofit that provides sex education in Guatemala, paid a visit to Texas. They visited PPST health centers in the Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio and met with PPST community partners.

TAN UX'IL's Helen and Eddlyn said in Spanish that it was "shocking" to learn about the social and political context in which PPST carries out our work, especially the abortion bans in Texas.

"There is the idea that the U.S. is a developed country, with access to health and education," they said. "However, the reality is different and shows that much needs to be done. That's why we value the work of the colleagues and counterparts of PP Global in that difficult and insecure context in which they work. **We admire and respect them for that.**"



READING AS ACTIVISM

As part of the Global Youth Ambassador Fellowship, Nubia is hosting a Feminist Book Club where community members can discuss topics such as immigration, abortion and LGBTQ rights.

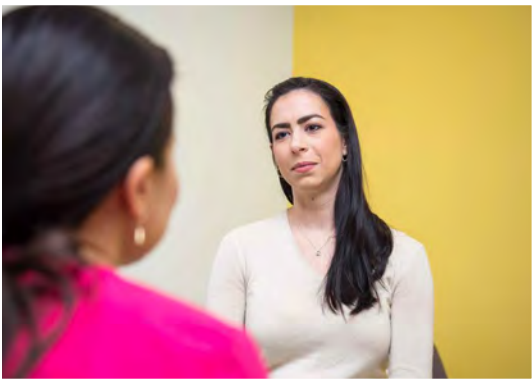
In September, at the first of three monthly meetings, more than 40 people gathered to discuss Isabel Allende's latest book, *"The Wind Knows My Name."* The bilingual book club attracted people from all over the Rio Grande Valley as well as from border towns in Mexico such as Matamoros and Reynosa.

Members of Angry Tias and Abuelas of the Rio Grande Valley, a grassroots nonprofit that supports asylum seekers at the border, were guest speakers at the discussion.

The book club meets at Buhó, the only bookstore in Brownsville, and features a pop-up repro pantry with free emergency contraception and period packs.



Care, no matter what



Planned Parenthood South Texas is no longer able to directly provide abortion care to patients after the fall of *Roe v. Wade*. But that doesn't mean we're not here to help patients access that care.

This fall, we re-launched our abortion navigation program. Trained staff at our Contact Center provide patients seeking abortion care with information about abortion providers in New Mexico, Colorado and other states where abortion is legal.

Patients who need more help can work one-on-one with a specially trained navigator who can provide them with personalized logistical support to help them obtain abortion care.

The navigator helps with information on the logistics of travel and lodging. Every effort is made to navigate patients to providers where they can access abortion at no cost.

"People who find themselves in this position need a partner they can trust," said Valerie Mascorro, MBA, PPST's Associate Vice-President for Operations & Growth. "We are committed to helping people obtain the care they need, even if that care isn't with us. **We do everything we can within Texas law to assist our patients when they need us.**"

PPST staff help patients understand their options, book their appointments, and connect them to funding for their travel and procedure.

After Texas implemented SB 8, the six-week abortion ban, in September 2021, we developed a navigation program to help patients who needed to access care out of state because their pregnancies were past six weeks in gestation.

When the Supreme Court overturned *Roe*, allowing the state's pre-*Roe* laws to end access to legal abortion care, we paused navigation in order to assess the legal ramifications of resuming. It has been crucial to work with expert

legal counsel before relaunching our navigation services, because we do not want to place our staff at risk, nor harm our ability to provide other non-abortion health care to tens of thousands of patients every year.

Unfortunately, even with navigation services, not all pregnant people who need abortions are able to travel out of state, whether due to lack of documentation or other logistical reasons. As a result, too many Texans are being forced to continue pregnancies they do not want.

*“People who find
themselves in this
position need a partner
they can trust”*

While we continue to fight to restore access to legal abortion within Texas, navigation to out-of-state services will help countless people who need this essential care. **They deserve nothing less.**

In the meantime, we're focusing on prevention of unintended pregnancy--offering a method for every body and lifestyle--and providing free emergency contraception at our health centers and in the community.

Q&A WITH A PLANNED PARENTHOOD SOUTH TEXAS PATIENT ADVOCATE

What does a Patient Advocate do?

People can get all kinds of care at Planned Parenthood South Texas, but sometimes they need other sorts of care or services, such as abortion care, oncological care, or maybe help with issues like food insecurity or utility bills.

We have a referral guide with carefully vetted providers and resources to refer them to. Some patients just need a referral, but some patients need more help, so I'm here to connect them to whatever they need.

What are some examples?

One patient needed a breast ultrasound and diagnostic mammogram. I referred her to a provider who provides financial assistance for imaging, but they were booked for months. She was concerned about cost and was very nervous about having to wait for an appointment. I called around and found another provider who accepted Medicaid and had an opening much sooner so she didn't have to wait.

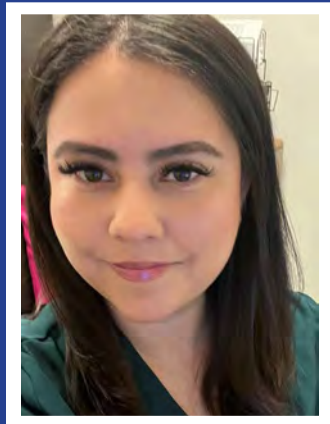
How do you help with people who need abortion care?

Some people find out they need an abortion and can figure out how to find a provider in another state, book plane tickets, and do everything on their own. But many people are overwhelmed by all the options. In some cases they have never traveled outside Texas before.

It can be a stressful time, and they don't know who to turn to. I'm there to offer advice, find care, make appointments, and just talk to them and give them reassurance. Lawmakers put up barriers to prevent people from getting care, but I'm here to remove those barriers.

Is your job difficult?

Sometimes it's very hard for me to listen to stories from patients who are struggling so much to get an abortion and are scared and desperate. But it's very fulfilling to know I'm helping them and they feel like they have an ally on their side. I tell them they can call or text me at any time. **They are so relieved to get care.**



Tonie, Patient Advocate



Uplifting women in San Antonio

On August 31, San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg appointed Mara Posada, PPST Director of Public Affairs, to the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women.

Established in 1970, the commission advises the Mayor and City Council on matters affecting the employment opportunities, education, and social, civic, and political participation by women.

Every year, the commission leads the City's commemoration of International Women's Day, organizing a summit that typically features sessions and resources on women's health, mental health, economic opportunities and advancement for women, and support services for survivors of intimate partner violence.

The commission is comprised of 11 members: a representative of each council district and a mayoral appointee.



"I'm deeply honored by this appointment to the Commission," Mara said. "As a lifelong advocate of women's health and rights, I plan to lift up the voices and experiences of San Antonians who are disproportionately affected by the state's onerous laws and policies — including the numerous abortion bans. Now more than ever, it is important to center women of color and those with low incomes and do whatever we can at the local level to support them."

The Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women aligns with the mission of Planned Parenthood South Texas, which has an 84-year track record of empowering women in San Antonio and beyond. When women can control whether and when to have children, they are more likely to graduate from high school and college, attain their professional goals, and support themselves and their families financially.

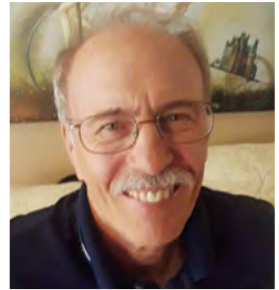
Letter of letters

A retired UT-Brownsville Professor of Rhetoric and an avid Planned Parenthood supporter, Lyon Rathbun has combined his passions into a new volunteer project.

Lyon is hosting online workshops for PPST volunteers and the community to learn about writing for advocacy and how to get opinion pieces published in local newspapers and beyond.

“Women cannot live freely or fully when they are prohibited from choosing when to begin a family or when to limit the size of a family already begun.”

—Excerpt from opinion piece by Lyon Rathbun published May 1, 2023 in the Brownsville Herald



Since May, nearly 20 people have attended Lyon's free virtual workshops. No writing experience is required.

As attacks on reproductive rights continue, it is vital to have supporters use their voices and stories to let their communities know just how important the services provided by Planned Parenthood South Texas are.

“Advocacy on behalf of Planned Parenthood is important no matter what form that advocacy might take,” Lyon said. “Advocacy through writing can have a special power because when we write, we slow down the thinking process and have an opportunity to choose words, ideas, and arguments that have a greater chance of hitting their target.”

Opinion pieces help educate the public on current happenings surrounding the hostile environment states like Texas create for reproductive health providers and patients. Published works get the attention of elected officials as well.

To attend a virtual workshop or to learn more about writing a letter to the editor, email Kate at kate.sanchez@ppsouthtexas.org. And if you have talents and skills you'd like to share to further our mission, please let us know!

• A1 THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD MONDAY, MAY 1, 2023

EDITORIAL

SET RULES

Thomas' behavior makes clear high court ethics code needed

“Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants,” Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis wrote in a 1913 essay. The dictum has proved so apt over the years as to become a cliché. Unfortunately, it now needs to be applied to the court itself. Few U.S. institutions are subject to as little formal scrutiny as the Supreme Court. In theory, members of the court are subject to the same financial disclosure rules as other high-level federal officials. Yet with no one empowered to enforce those rules but themselves, the justices have all too often seemed to be above the law. Take Justice Clarence Thomas' relationship with Texas real-estate developer Harlan Crow. A major conservative donor, Crow has for decades entertained Thomas and his wife on annual vacations that have included cruises on his yacht, flights on his plane and stays at an exclusive California retreat. Although federal law requires disclosing gifts worth more than a few hundred dollars, Thomas has divulged hardly any of Crow's largesse, citing advice from colleagues early in his tenure that such arrangements were “personal hospitality.”

Complicating matters further, Crow bought Thomas' mother's home in Georgia as well as other adjacent family-owned property for \$13,000 in 2014. Again, federal officials, including justices, are required by law to report any real-estate transaction above \$10,000. Thomas claims the matter was an oversight. The Supreme Court is the only federal bench in the nation without an explicit written code of conduct makes such behavior almost invisible. All other federal courts are governed by a longstanding central ethics code. Administrators of the Judicial Conference of the United States, the policymaking body that oversees the judiciary, the code offers little guidance. “A judge should avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all activities.” What should be done?

In a 2011 report, Chief Justice John Roberts asserted that the Supreme Court shouldn't fall under the same set of rules as the rest of the judiciary. Because the high court was created by the Constitution, not Congress, it was due an added measure of self-governance. In his view, the ideal balance for justices making ethical questions would be to “create” the code of conduct while seeking advice from the court's legal office and “from their colleagues.”

Such an arrangement is almost an invitation to abuse. Roberts should instead invoke his authority as chair of the Judicial Conference to establish a formal ethics code specific to the high court. In fact, there's precedent for the court and Congress working together on issues where legislative and judicial prerogatives intersect. In the 1990s, the rules of habeas corpus were significantly revised after then-Chief Justice William Rehnquist assembled a commission of federal judges to study the issue. Congress picked up the commission's recommendations and passed them into law.

A similar commission should be established to create rules of the road for the high court itself. It should specify how those rules will be enforced, and by whom. And it should add a bit of sunlight to an institution that has for too long resisted it.

Blazing Opinion

The Herald

Born on the Fourth of July 1892
An independent newspaper published by
202 N. Main St., Brownsville, TX 78130
(361) 834-1111

Stephen Wiegert
Publisher

Carlos Rodriguez
Opinion Editor

AIM
MEDIA TEXAS
The newspaper's editorial board meets weekly to discuss, edit and write and approved editorial content. The board's decisions are subject to review by the board's editor who will make any necessary changes.

JOIN THE DEBATE

The Brownsville Herald welcomes letters. Letters must be signed and give the writer's address and daytime telephone number for verification. Letters of 200 words or fewer will be given preference. Letters may be edited for length, grammar and clarity. Letters may be submitted to The Herald at 202 N. Main St., Suite 100, Brownsville, TX 78130. Email: letters@brownsvilleherald.com.

CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS, JUSTICE THOMAS, JUSTICE ALITO, JUSTICE GORSUCH, JUSTICE KAVANAUGH AND JUSTICE BARRETT!



Supporting Planned Parenthood

Ever since I was a high school senior when my girlfriend and I needed advice about birth control, Planned Parenthood clinic has always been nearby, ready to provide advice, medical treatment, fertility treatment, and abortions — which seemed to be available in 23 states after the Supreme Court overruled *Roe v. Wade* in June of 2022.

In Texas, Planned Parenthood stopped providing abortion care after September 2021, when the so-called “heartbeat bill” passed, allowing private citizens of Texas to sue anybody who helps a woman obtain an abortion.

I wanted to volunteer for Planned Parenthood after becoming alarmed by the unreasonable steps the state has taken to restrict, restrict and undermine Planned Parenthood. This quintessentially American institution has become a target because it views abortion as an essential healthcare option for women.

In our post-natal world, where every profession is open to women, abortion is an essential option. Women cannot live freely or fully when they are prohibited from choosing when to begin a family or when to limit the size of a family already begun.

Many sincere opponents of abortion by opposing it. But the recent human being, just as an unborn child, has been staked out, and fear is millions of women and men. In states where abortion is banned, hospitals are turning away women who have miscarried or have

ectopic pregnancies because these conditions are treated with procedures that resemble abortions. Are we doing the Lord's work when we help a woman and her unborn child survive from serious injury or death?

Roe v. Wade gave us a shared legal framework that acknowledged the full human complexity of abortion. The decision honored women's need to control their own bodies, while also addressing the legitimate moral concerns of opponents. The decision made abortion permissible during the first trimester, before viability. After the first trimester, when a fetus becomes increasingly capable of surviving outside the womb, abortions were only permitted to preserve the health or life of the mother.

Under *Roe*, the vast majority of abortions took place during the first trimester. This outcome mirrors the views of most Americans, 85% of whom, according to a recent poll, think doctors are justified only in a pregnancy that should be restricted after viability.

Because they see no distinction between a fetus and a baby, opponents believe that abortion is a desecration of the sacred Christian tenet that all life is sacred. But this is a contested view that many biologists, historians and philosophers reject as a category error. A fetus before viability is a potential human being, not an actual human being, just as an acorn is a potential oak tree, but not an oak tree. As a citizen, I am a potential president of the United States, but not the acting president. The difference is real.

The Catholic Church treats abortion as an absolute wrong, but does not routinely give the fetus aborted in miscarriage a public burial. In practice, even the Catholic Church treats a fetus differently than a baby, an irreparably independent being, fully deserving of protection and support.

The 13 rabbis and ministers using the state of Missouri for its extreme abortion ban are standing on solid moral ground. Alulian, recognizing that life is never back and white but complex and tangled, sanctions abortion as an option that some women need to protect their well-being. The Florida synagogues, using to overturn its state's abortion ban stands on solid moral ground.

The bans on abortion in Texas and other states are robbing women of the freedom they need to be full human beings. The same freedom we all need to pursue our own versions of the American dream. There have been coming anguish, and pain in the lives of women who need abortion or who are being deprived of medical treatment for miscarriages and typical pregnancies.

We Americans are compassionate and practical people. Eventually we'll recognize, as have countries like Ireland and Argentina, that the real need of women must be balanced against the legitimate right of the unborn. Until the political pendulum swings back toward the middle, it's becoming time, energy and money to Planned Parenthood. I hope you'll consider doing the same.

My Americaners are compassionate and practical people. Eventually we'll recognize, as have countries like Ireland and Argentina, that the real need of women must be balanced against the legitimate right of the unborn. Until the political pendulum swings back toward the middle, it's becoming time, energy and money to Planned Parenthood. I hope you'll consider doing the same.

Lyon Rathbun lives in Harlingen, Texas.

NOTABLE QUOTES

- ▶ The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize. —Franklin D. Roosevelt
- ▶ If we have order, we have peace. If we have peace, we have doing. It would not be called. —Albert Einstein
- ▶ The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it. —Barack Obama
- ▶ To attain knowledge, add things every day. To attain wisdom, remove things every day. —Lao Tzu
- ▶ The only person you will live with your entire life is yourself. —Seneca
- ▶ Love yourself enough to set boundaries. Your time and energy are precious. You must learn to say no. Teach people how to treat you. See if they're willing to let you go. See if they're willing to let you go. —Jesse Jackson
- ▶ A life without cause is a life without effect. —Paulo Coelho
- ▶ The first and best victory is to conquer self. —Lao Tzu
- ▶ Why fit in when you were born to stand out? —Duke Ellington
- ▶ I have learned that to be with those I love is enough. —Oscar Wilde
- ▶ Perfection is not attainable, but if we perfect our work, we will approach excellence. —Walt Disney
- ▶ Music is a charm which has so much influence over the senses. —Franz Liszt
- ▶ If you want things to be different, perhaps the answer is to become different yourself. —John Lennon
- ▶ Anybody who has survived childhood has enough information about life to last him the rest of his days. —John Lennon
- ▶ Walk as if you are kissing the earth with your feet. —Rumi
- ▶ When one teaches, two learn. —Chinese proverb
- ▶ Life is about the adventures you take and the memories you make. So travel often and live life with open eyes and an open heart. —Robert M. Pirsig
- ▶ Don't wait for the right opportunity. Create it. —George Bernard Shaw
- ▶ Success isn't about how you look to others, it's about how you feel to yourself. —Michelle Obama
- ▶ I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination. —William H. Murray
- ▶ Only the wisest and stupidest of men never change. —Confucius
- ▶ Luck is what you have left over after you give up everything else. —Lao Tzu
- ▶ Your most unhappy customers are your greatest source of learning. —Bill Gates
- ▶ The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart. —Helen Keller
- ▶ Winners must have two things: definite goals and a definite desire to achieve them. —Brad Pickett
- ▶ Be who you were created to be, —Lao Tzu

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER



**Erika Prosper and her husband,
San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg**

There are many ways to think about our work here at Planned Parenthood South Texas. At our recent Annual Luncheon, the Honorable Stacey Abrams offered up this one: “The mission is to protect access to the American dream. You can not live that dream if you can’t control your body.”

No matter how we think about our work, we can’t even begin to imagine it without you.

There’s a three-way partnership between Planned Parenthood, its patients, and its



(l-r) Luncheon Co-Chair Jennifer Hwa Dobbertin, PPST President & CEO Laura Terrill, the Hon. Stacey Abrams, and Luncheon Co-Chair Josie Negley Gill Schlather



Stacey Abrams and Wendy Davis

investors. It’s been working for 84 years, propelling the whole community forward, inspiring dreams and giving people the tools they need to achieve their version of the American dream.

***“The mission is to protect access
to the American dream.***

You can not live that dream

if you can’t control your body.”

The fact that 1,500 people showed up for the Luncheon and collectively contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars for patient care demonstrates the enduring strength of our partnership. We are profoundly grateful.

We hope that Stacey’s remarks reignited your energy for the work ahead. The work is slow. It has and will continue to span generations. But along the way we are “lifting up so many allies” and this absolutely “replicates power.” **It’s the power of good, y’all. And it will prevail.**



If you would like to see a video of the Luncheon remarks or read a transcript, please reach out to Angela at engage@ppsouthtexas.org or 210-736-2244 ext. 317.



PARTNERS IN SOLIDARITY

Patient care is only one aspect of our shared work of building a more equitable Texas of the future. We're so honored that our partner organizations turned out for the Luncheon to help us all understand how interrelated our efforts are. Sincere thanks to the following partners:

Angry Tias & Abuelas of the Rio Grande Valley

Annie's List

Center for Refugee Services

Empower House

Equality Texas

Frontera Fund

Human Rights Campaign San Antonio

Jane's Due Process

League of Women Voters

Moms Demand Action

Move Texas

Planned Parenthood Texas Votes

The Pride Center San Antonio

SA Youth

San Antonio AIDS Foundation

Radical Registrars

Thrive Youth Center

Youth Center of Texas

YWCA San Antonio



Remarks from the stage by Josie Negley Gill Schlather, Co-Chair of the 2023 Annual Luncheon

Fred Rogers, known to us as our beloved Mr. Rogers, once said, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

Planned Parenthood serves as a helper to countless women and men in our community. In fact, an

estimated one in five of all American women have visited a Planned Parenthood health center, and those visits tell stories that are sad or happy or frightening or ordinary.

We talk about and hear in the news the stories of people who need abortions after failed pregnancies put their lives at risk, about child victims of abuse crossing state lines to get abortions, but there are also more ordinary abortion stories we need to tell. Like mine. I've only shared it with a handful of people, but it's a very common one.

Twenty-eight years ago I was a college sophomore and 19, just a few months older than my daughter Adele who is here today. I was unquestionably in my mind universes away from being ready to be a mother. I had school, I had plans, I had law school, I had a life to live that did not include being a parent.

Trembling with the magnitude of where I found myself, the very first thing I concluded out of that fog of fear was, *I'm going to Planned Parenthood tomorrow.*

I remember thinking it like it was yesterday. I recall walking by the protestors outside the center in Houston, feeling the attendant shame they intended me to feel, and through the doors of Planned Parenthood. And from that moment onwards, I had found, as Mr. Roger's mother described to him, the helpers.



They took my teenage panic and they assuaged it. They looked me in the eye and they let me make a choice, and they helped me. In every possible way, they helped me, and my life, as I chose and wanted it to be, has been better for it.

Not long after I had an uncle tell me he had never known anyone who had ever had an abortion, and I was too ashamed to say, "Do you know me?" It was said as

though to do such a thing would be reflective of the kind of person he would never associate with. Wrong. **To choose for yourself what to do with your own body is our fundamental right as human beings, and I have no shame over the choice I made.**

When I was ready, I had three beautiful children, and that was because Planned Parenthood helped me realize the life I wanted for myself.

We are all of us here to honor these helpers, Planned Parenthood, and to in turn be their helpers. We are here to help this organization continue to help others in their hours of need.

It is a particular kind of casual cruelty to deny help to those desperate to receive it or to vote for someone who would, because that is what they will enact with your vote. It is a callousness that seems devoid of the milk of human kindness to not be able to step back and say "I do not know your situation, I will not tell you what to do."

The imposition of no choice over the course of your life is a terrifying tyranny for anyone, and we must do everything within our power to fight such despotism. Imagine your daughter. Would you want her to have the right to choose the course of her life like I did? I know I do for mine. So in that spirit let us join here today to plan and to protect these helpers whom our community so desperately needs.



THE 2024 PLANNED PARENTHOOD ANNUAL VALLEY BRUNCH

FEATURING **SANDRA CISNEROS**

**Transforming darkness to light
in times of challenge and change.**

**Sunday, April 14
11 AM**

**VENEZIA THE VENUE
5 EVENT CENTER BLVD
BROWNSVILLE, TX 77820**

Art helps us envision a more just and perfect world than the one we live in. And art can inspire us to take an active role in the creation of that better world. On April 14, iconic feminist, artist, and pioneering author Sandra Cisneros will join us for a masterclass on transforming anger into art, and using art to inspire change-making activism.

Sandra Cisneros is a poet, short story writer, novelist and essayist whose work explores the lives of the working-class. Her numerous awards include NEA fellowships in both poetry and fiction, the Texas Medal of the Arts, a MacArthur Fellowship, the PEN/Nabokov Award for International Literature, the National Medal of Arts, the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, and the Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award from the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation.

Her novel *"The House on Mango Street"* has sold over seven million copies, has been translated into over twenty-five languages, and is required reading in elementary, high school and universities across the nation. A new collection of poetry, *"Woman Without Shame,"* Cisneros's first in 28 years, was published in 2022. It is a moving collection of songs, elegies and declarations that chronicle her pilgrimage toward rebirth and the recognition of her prerogative as a woman artist.

Cisneros is a dual citizen of the United States and Mexico. As a single woman, she chose to have books instead of children. She earns her living by her pen.

By sponsoring this Brunch, you will keep birth control, cancer screening and prevention, abortion navigation, STD testing and treatment, primary care, gender-affirming hormone therapy and an array of other services accessible and affordable in the Rio Grande Valley. Sponsored tables of 10 are available at the \$1,500, \$2,500 and \$5,000 levels. Contact nubia.reyna@ppsouthtexas.org with questions or to sponsor a table, or visit www.ppsouthtx.org/valleybrunch

Dudley Harris pottery sale

Master potter Dudley Harris will once again open his beautiful studios exclusively to friends of Planned Parenthood South Texas for a private sale.

As always, Dudley will donate 100% of the proceeds from the day's sales to fund health care at Planned Parenthood. Last year's sale funded more than \$20,000 in health care for uninsured patients.

Enjoy a studio tour, stroll through Dudley's urban oasis, drink a mimosa or two, and browse beautiful handmade pottery ideal for holiday gifting.

Learn more about Dudley's pottery here: TheBeautifulBowl.com



ANNUAL STUDIO OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, December 3

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

219 Palo Grande

San Antonio, TX 78232



Planned Parenthood South Texas

2140 Babcock Road

San Antonio, Texas 78229-4424

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