

2021 SUMMER

HORIZONS

A Publication of Planned Parenthood South Texas



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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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President's Message



With his signature on Senate

Bill 8, Greg Abbott has approved a law that I view as the worst, the most severe abortion restriction bill this nation

has seen. You can read the painful provisions and particulars of this new law on pages 4-5.

In my time as president of Planned Parenthood South Texas, I have seen a lot of disappointing news from the Texas government when it comes to family planning, sexual health and abortion care. This is a new high, or low I guess, and we should all be very worried.

First, let's be clear about how we got here. Mitch McConnell decided that he alone determines when a president may and may not fill a vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court and the final year of Obama's presidency was off limits. That gave us Neil Gorsuch. Next, some 18 months later, McConnell shepherded the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh with a final vote of 50 to 48; such a tight margin had not been seen since 1881 (we should note that the Clarence Thomas, Gorsuch, and Amy Coney Barrett confirmations are all nearly as tight). Then flipping his flop, Mitch decided that Trump **would** be allowed to fill a vacancy on the Court with only 12 weeks left in his presidency, giving us Coney Barrett.

Three justices out of nine should not be on the high Court.

I read that Chief Justice Roberts worries about the legitimacy of the court. He should.

Three justices out of nine should not be on the High Court. I read that Chief Justice Roberts worries about the legitimacy of the court. He should.

What does this have to do with a new abortion law in Texas? In 2016, the Supreme Court ruled against Texas in *Whole Women's Health v. Hellerstedt* – sending a clear message that a ridiculous law like SB 8 is dead on arrival. As a result, our detractors in the Texas Legislature modified their worst aspirations into something less-than-completely egregious. Now, with a different composition at SCOTUS, these laws are passed with the spoken intent to make abortion impossible.

Today, the Supreme Court is comprised of nine people, five of whom were appointed by presidents who did not win the popular vote. More pointedly, as reported by the *Washington Post* in October 2018, Kavanaugh has the distinction of being "the first justice nominated by someone

who **lost the popular vote** to earn his seat on the bench with **support from senators representing less than half of the country** while having his nomination **opposed by a majority of the country.**" Hello democracy, the clue phone is ringing and the call is for you. It is bad news.

And don't overlook this disgraceful irony: The upcoming Mississippi case (see page 3) will be decided by

President's Message (cont.)

a Supreme Court that includes two justices (Thomas and Kavanaugh) who have outstanding sexual assault charges against them; charges that still appear to be entirely credible. This is unthinkable: the ability of our daughters, sisters, and mothers to maintain control over their own bodies will be decided in part by these two men.

Something has to change, indeed many things. But I'm going to lift up one. The activism necessary to undue this damage will need to be different than what we've seen in the decades since *Roe v. Wade*.

I am reading Sarah Schulman's new book, *Let The Record Show*. In it, using oral histories and her own first-person participation, Schulman tells us the story of ACT UP, the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power, and its work in New York during the years 1987-1992. In short, from her view (and I agree), a group of marginalized people with essentially no rights who were dying at a frightening pace organized direct action that forced changes in the most powerful government on the planet. In so doing, ACT UP saved countless lives. Had it not been for their willingness to abandon respectable, polite behavior, hundreds of thousands more people would have died in this country, millions more worldwide.

Our annual luncheon will resume this fall with John Meacham talking to us

about lessons from history. Meacham says, "To know what has come before is to be armed against despair." I refuse to despair. I would rather fight.

Schulman has constructed her book as a documentation of how ACT UP forced the U.S. government to adopt now policies on matters related to HIV. But beyond the history of AIDS activism, Schulman frequently points out how the strategies and impact of ACT UP are instruction for future successes in organizing for social change.

If abortion becomes impossible in Texas come September 1, then getting abortion rights back is going to require activism of a different order – not just a difference of degree, but a difference of kind.

The people who have taken away the bodily autonomy of our daughters, sisters, and mothers are not going to learn the folly of their laws, change their minds and reinstate those rights unless they are forced to do so. Let us recall the wisdom of Frederick Douglass:

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and it never will."



Jeffrey Hons
President & CEO

Challenge to *Roe v. Wade* heads to the Supreme Court



In May, the U.S. Supreme Court announced that it

would hear its first abortion case since Justice Amy Coney

Barrett's confirmation tilted the court's majority further to the right. The case, which focuses on Mississippi's 15-week abortion ban, is a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade* and puts patients at risk of losing abortion access.

Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization is a challenge brought by Jackson Women's Health Organization, the sole abortion provider in Mississippi, represented by the Center for Reproductive Rights, to that state's 2018 ban on abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy.

Both the lower court and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals applied nearly 50 years of precedent, beginning with *Roe v. Wade*, that a state may not ban abortion pre-viability and invalidated the Mississippi law.

Given that precedent, the Supreme Court's decision to review the case is certainly alarming. If the court intended to leave its precedent in place, it could have simply refused to hear the appeal and leave the ruling of the lower courts in place, thereby underscoring the continuation of the precedent. By

selecting the case, we can only assume that this newly composed SCOTUS has something to say, something to change, about that precedent.

The court will next set a schedule for the case to be briefed and argued to the court, with a decision issued some time in 2022.

"Anti-abortion politicians have exploited their power for this exact moment: the opportunity for the newly comprised Supreme Court to take away our right to abortion,"

Alexis McGill Johnson, president of the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, said in a statement.

"Whether it's in the state house or in the courthouse, we must demand our rights and freedoms be protected by those in power. By taking this case, the court will be reviewing nearly 50 years of precedent guaranteeing our right to abortion. In a country where your ability to access abortion already depends on your income and ZIP code, the court's decision could even further decimate access. Planned Parenthood Action Fund and our supporters have been preparing for this moment, and we will continue working with our partners to ensure every person who needs access to abortion can and will get the care they need."



2021 Texas Legislative Session: Politicians Pass Two Extreme Abortion Bans



Years ago, Molly Smith helped her friend get an abortion.

Her friend was a single mother, barely staying afloat financially and fighting constantly with her ex-husband about child support and his absence in their daughter's life. When Molly's friend found out she was pregnant, she determined an abortion was the right thing to do for her family. But she faced a major barrier: She would have to wait until her next paycheck to cover the cost of the procedure.

So Molly stepped in to help her pay for the abortion. It was the kindhearted action of a friend helping a friend in a time of need.

Under new legislation signed by Governor Abbott on May 19, someone like Molly could be sued for a minimum of \$10,000 for helping a loved one get an abortion.

Senate Bill 8 bans abortion after approximately six weeks gestation, before many people know they're pregnant. The new law, which is scheduled to take effect September 1, includes a private cause of action that allows anyone (regardless of whether they have been harmed and even if they are not directly involved in the situation) to sue someone who helps a person obtain an abortion. It is arguably the most extreme abortion ban in the country.

"It's outrageous, unconstitutional and a complete overreach of government," says Molly. "People who get an abortion often need support – financial, emotional or even practical support like babysitting or a ride to the health center."

Under this law, a private citizen can sue the physician who performs a surgical abortion procedure or who hands a patient the pills for a medication abortion,

even though abortion is legal in all 50 states. Someone could also sue the nurse who assists the patient, or the clinic staff member who answers the telephone to set up the appointment.

The Texas legislature also passed House Bill 1280, known as a “trigger ban,” which would ban abortion if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned by the Supreme Court. HB 1280 criminalizes abortion in Texas at any stage of gestation and provides only an extremely narrow exception for medical emergencies that threaten the pregnant person’s life. Gov. Abbott signed the bill on June 16.

“Clearly this legislative session was tough, but with the support of our legislative champions, we were able to strategize to effectively defeat more than 40 other bills attacking abortion access filed this legislative session,” said Dyana Limon-Mercado, Executive Director, Planned Parenthood Texas Votes, the political and advocacy arm of Planned



Parenthood affiliates in Texas.



“We mobilized our growing base of more than one million Planned Parenthood supporters in Texas to stand up for reproductive health and rights. Thousands of advocates from all across the state called their legislators, joined our Advocacy Week of Action, sent messages to the Governor, showed support online, and shared their stories.”

As evident from the fierce advocates for abortion rights who rallied at the Capitol on May 26 to protest SB 8, we are not letting this law go unchallenged.

We will pursue all legal options to prevent this law from taking effect, because we know state bans on abortions don't prevent abortions.

They just prevent safe abortions. If you're wondering if you can wait this one out or if you feel that now is not the time for you to jump into the fray, think again. We need everyone to stand up and fight.

Here's how you can help:



- **Sign Planned Parenthood Texas Votes' petition!** Add your name to the petition against Gov. Abbot and his attacks on abortion access now. Sign the petition here: ppsouthtx.org/sb8petition
- **Volunteer.** We need your help! Get trained to table at our health centers and events, or to be a front desk volunteer, or Safety Aide. Safety Aides welcome and escort clients on

the days we provide abortion care. They provide needed reassurance to clients who are frequently shouted at by protestors on the sidewalk. Sign up here: ppsouthtx.org/volunteer

- **Become an advocate.** Help influence the public narrative about reproductive health, including abortion. Be willing to do media campaigns, letters to the editor, and media interviews (don't worry, we'll provide training and support). You don't need to be a PPST patient to participate, but former patients and even friends and family of patients are welcome. *We especially need people willing to publicly share how they helped a loved one get an abortion (we don't need the identity of the person who had the abortion, although if they were willing to share their story that would be helpful too.)* Sign up to be an advocate here: ppsouthtx.org/advocate.





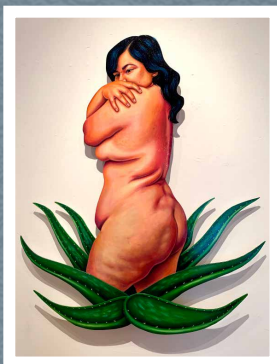
The Love Float: Every Body Cared For



In April, 13 South Texas artists – all women – transformed the exterior of the Presa House Gallery in San Antonio into a celebration of love, sex, body positivity, gender identity, and feminism.

The Love Float: Every Body Cared For was a unique collaboration between Planned Parenthood South Texas and Presa House Gallery, 725 S. Presa St. The exhibit was part of the House Float Parade organized by the King William and Lavaca Neighborhood Associations. For the 11-day “parade,” nearly 80 homes and businesses turned into stationary parade floats for passersby to admire.

“We were looking at narratives of body positivity and self-love and women’s health and the issues pertaining to that,” said Rigoberto Luna, co-owner of Presa House and the exhibit’s curator.



Courtesy of Josie Del Castillo

“Most of the artists are from Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Bryan, San Antonio, Austin. So they represent a lot of different places and there are a lot of different voices. Planned Parenthood is important to a lot of people, and I think this is a perfect example of that.”

Participating artists were Jennifer Arnold, Alexandria Canchola, Josie Del Castillo, Jenelle Esparza, Andie Flores, Lauri Garcia Jones, Calder Kamin, Bailey Kidder, Audrey LeGalley, Gaby Magaly, Ashley Perez, Angelica Raquel and Wendy Yamilett.

We thank the John Newman Family Charitable Fund for supporting this exhibit.





An enduring legacy



Every July, we remember the brave group of women in 1939 who opened San Antonio's first birth control clinic.

From humble beginnings, the Maternal Health Center grew into Planned Parenthood South Texas, which served 24,900 patients in San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley in 2020.

This year, we mark PPST's 82nd anniversary. We celebrate our history of service, the dedicated staff and volunteers who provided compassionate health care, the patients who trusted us with the most intimate aspects of their health and lives, and the community of supporters who made it all possible.

But our anniversary is also time to reflect on the endurance of an organizations that has faced opposition from the very beginning. Easily accessed contraception for women was a radical idea for many back in 1939 – and vestiges of that attitude remain today.

And today, we continue to fight against those who want to deny our bodily autonomy. Those who want to dictate our health care decisions. Those who want to limit our reproductive rights under the guise of morality.



Mrs. Frederick G. Openheimer

Things have changed a lot in 82 years. Our founding mothers could never have envisioned the range of health care services we now offer, from contraception to HPV vaccines to gender-affirming hormone therapy to primary care. But they would have recognized our passion for empowering people to plan their families and their futures.

We stand on the shoulders of our founders and continue to fight every day for the communities we serve. We have withstood decades of ideological attacks, government funding cuts, and egregious laws targeting reproductive rights. Despite it all, we're not only surviving, but growing.

As we face new attacks on abortion rights in Texas and nationally, we remember our legacy of service and of endurance. With the help of our supporters and advocates like you, we will continue to move forward and become what our patients need us to be – no matter what.

“We talk a lot these days about all that’s gone wrong with our society, but, in fact, I feel privileged to have witnessed something that’s gone right. Studies show that over the past few decades, more and more women have taken advantage of the choice to have their children when they’re ready, and when they have the means and the maturity to raise them. Planned Parenthood is a big reason why these women have that choice. We not only provide free and reduced cost contraception, but we also provide women with the information they need to make important decisions about their future, and we actively promote policies that protect women’s health. This is why I feel so proud to support Planned Parenthood. We really are making a difference in people’s lives.”

– Pat Kalmans
Former PPST board member

**Easily accessed
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Planned Parenthood
of
San Antonio



Spotlight on emergency contraception



While it's ideal for people to use effective birth control during sex, sometimes people need emergency contraception. This can happen after unprotected sex or sex during which birth control fails (such as a condom breaking) or is used incorrectly.

Often called the “morning-after pill,” emergency contraception (EC) pills can actually prevent pregnancy if taken within five days after unprotected sex. They primarily work by preventing or delaying ovulation.

In 2020, more patients came to PPST for EC as the COVID-19 pandemic intensified.

“We saw increased demand of 51.8% for emergency contraception in 2020 compared to 2019,” said Valerie Mascorro, PPST’s Associate VP for Operations & Growth. “We believe many of our patients wanted to avoid pregnancy during a time of uncertainty and economic hardships, and our patients can count on Planned Parenthood to be there for them.”

FACTS ABOUT EC:

- **PPST provides two types of oral EC. The ulipristal acetate pill is 85% effective and maintains effectiveness through 120 hours after unprotected sex. It requires a prescription.**
- **The levonorgestrel pill is 75-89% effective against pregnancy and is less effective after 72 hours. This pill does not require a prescription.**
- **The copper intrauterine device can also be used as emergency contraception. It is more than 99% effective if placed within 120 hours of unprotected sex and continues to provide this protection for up to 12 years.**
- **EC pills are not the same as medication abortion. If fertilization and implantation have already happened, EC pills will not end the existing pregnancy.**
- **Weight affects how well EC works. The levonorgestrel pill may be ineffective in patients who weigh 155 or more. The ulipristal acetate pill may be less effective in patients who weigh 195 pounds or more.**

“The story of America is . . . one of slow, often unsteady steps forward. If we expect the trumpets of a given era to sound unwavering notes, we will be disappointed, for the past tells us that politics is an uneven symphony.”

– Jon Meacham

Lunch with Jon Meacham



The recently concluded Texas Legislative Session sounded some majorly discordant notes. For 82 years, our mission and movement have been stepping forward, often over and around bad pieces of legislation and backwards politicians. But moving forward at this moment in time, in the face of the nearly total ban on abortion in Texas, is going to require strength unlike anything we’ve previously had to marshal.

You are that strength. Your voice – informed, reasonable, compassionate – helps cut through the cacophony of misinformation coming from anti-choice, anti-woman politicians. And your philanthropy allows us to give patients the health care and information they need to take control of their bodies, their lives and to step forward into the futures they imagine for themselves.

So if you are ready to act, contact us at engage@ppsouthtexas.org about hosting a salon, writing a letter to the editor, or speaking on camera and to reporters as an advocate. **If you are ready to make another gift, consider sponsoring a virtual table at Lunch with Jon Meacham on October 6.**

Presidential historian, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and former *Newsweek* editor Jon Meacham will bring us another deep and important talk about our history, our tumultuous present and where our nation might go from here. If his last appearance is anything to go by,



he'll also bring us hope – an essential ingredient to the change we're all (still) fighting for.

Virtual tables cost \$1,000 and may be paid for over time, or any time before December 31. Virtual sponsors will have the opportunity to pick up a party in a box which includes lunch for up to eight and other goodies.

Sponsoring a virtual table will also make you a Patron, and as such you can look forward to many special opportunities throughout the year, including our in-person Patron Party in the spring. All that's on top of the knowledge that **you are investing in a very significant way in birth control, cancer screenings and prevention, HPV vaccines, gender-affirming hormone therapy, primary care, and abortion care. You are also supporting the fight to preserve/restore abortion access and, if necessary, the navigation of patients out of state for abortion care.**

If you'd like to help but don't feel up to organizing a whole virtual table, **consider buying a single virtual ticket** to Lunch with Jon Meacham. To commemorate our 82nd anniversary in July, **we'll be selling virtual tickets throughout the month for \$82.**

(Hello dear friends in California, Washington, Oregon, New York, Massachusetts and just about every other state in the union. This is a perfect

opportunity for you to be part of our most important gathering of the year. We're so grateful and proud to have you as allies.)

Contact Angela at angela.koester@ppsouthtexas.org to secure your virtual tables or tickets, or visit ppsouthtx.org/luncheon for more information.

"Planned Parenthood is a fierce force for reproductive healthcare here in South Texas. Planned Parenthood was there for each of us as teens/young women and has earned our support and commitment. This non-profit continues to innovate, adapt and expand with agility. We couldn't be more proud of the work done by PPST."



We hope you feel the same way and encourage you to join us at the Luncheon, either in person or virtually, on October 6!"

**– Joan Wyatt
and Katy Flato,
Co-Chairs**

No-cost HPV vaccines at our Valley health centers



Cervical cancer is one of the few cancers that can be prevented with a vaccine.

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine protects against the sexually transmitted infection that causes virtually all cases of cervical cancer, according to the National Cancer Institute.

And now through the end of the year, **Planned Parenthood health centers in Brownsville and Harlingen are offering HPV shots at no cost for all patients ages 9 through 45.**

“These vaccines can save lives,” said Polin C. Barraza, RN, PPST’s Senior Vice President & COO. “No one should die of a preventable cancer. We feel it is a moral imperative to increase access to this vaccine in our Cameron County health centers.”

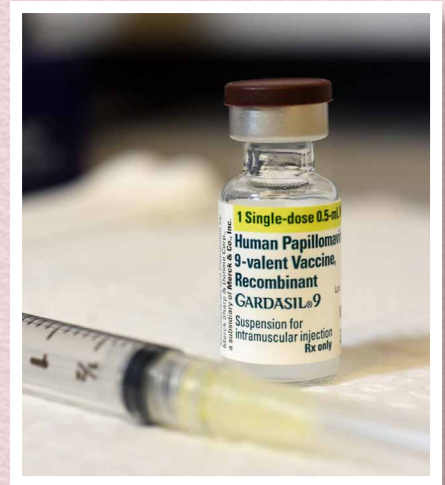
The HPV vaccine is recommended for everyone through age 26 and can be given to people through age 45. It works best when given between ages 9 and 12.

But Texas ranks 41st out of 50 states for HPV vaccine rates among adolescents ages 13 to 17, according to the American Cancer Society. As of 2019, only 48.4% of kids had received the vaccine. And the COVID-19 pandemic has caused HPV vaccinations to drop more than 20% nationally, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Cervical cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in Texas women ages 20-39, and women on the border are disproportionately affected. **In the Rio Grande Valley and Laredo regions, the cervical cancer death rate is approximately 30% higher than the rest of the state due to lack of access to health care.** Planned Parenthood wants to reduce this disparity.

Besides cervical cancer, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has also approved HPV vaccines to prevent vaginal, vulvar and anal cancers, as well as genital warts. The vaccine also protects against cancers in the throat and back of the mouth.

Two or three doses are required, depending on age. For more information, go to ppsouthtexas.org or call the Harlingen health center at (956) 423-8584 or the Brownsville health center at (956) 546-4571.





Biden-Harris administration takes steps to support reproductive health care



Under the former Trump-Pence administration, reproductive rights took a giant step back.

Now a new administration is working to strengthen reproductive health care, although there is certainly more work to be done to make health care more equitable.



We will always provide and protect your access to care.

#PROTECTX

Title X gag rule: In April, the Biden-Harris administration issued a proposed rule to undo the dangerous Title X gag rule, which forbids providers that receive Title

X federal family planning funds from referring patients for abortion care or even discussing abortion.

The Title X program is the nation's only dedicated family planning safety net. The Trump administration implemented the gag rule in 2019, forcing more than 1,000 health centers across the nation – including Planned Parenthood health centers – out of the Title X program.

The gag rule undermines access to birth control, STI services, lifesaving cancer screenings, evidence-based information and other care that is critically important for people's health and futures. The gag rule mostly hurts people in rural or medically underserved areas, people without insurance, and people with low incomes. It disproportionately undercuts

access to care for Black, Latino, and Indigenous communities.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services expects to announce the final rule this fall.

Hyde Amendment:

In May, President Joe Biden released the first budget proposal of his presidency, which outlines the administration’s fiscal and policy priorities for FY 2022. This budget does not include the Hyde Amendment, which has blocked federal Medicaid funding for abortion services since 1976.

Because of centuries of systemic racism and bias, people who use Medicaid – a state and federal program that provides health coverage for people with very low incomes – are disproportionately from Black, Latino, and LGBTQ+ communities. The Hyde Amendment is racist and discriminatory, and eliminating it would mark a historic step in the fight for reproductive justice.

Planned Parenthood believes that no one’s financial situation or type of health insurance should determine what type of essential health care services they can receive. Everyone deserves access to the full range of reproductive health services, including abortion.

Due to political ideologues, the state of Texas no longer allows people with Medicaid




to use their coverage to obtain any type of care at Planned Parenthood. Patients could use Medicaid at independent abortion providers in Texas if the federal budget passes without the Hyde Amendment, provided they accept Medicaid.

The proposed elimination of the Hyde Amendment marks a commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights.



However, the budget proposal maintains other abortion coverage restrictions, including for people in federal prisons and for federal employees. It also maintains the Weldon Amendment, which prohibits “discrimination” against health care entities that refuse to provide, refer for, or cover abortion care. The budget also maintains the Helms Amendment, which limits the use of U.S. foreign assistance for abortion.

Due to political ideologues, the state of Texas no longer allows people with Medicaid to use their coverage to obtain any type of care at Planned Parenthood.



Honoring women through service



We may not have been able to march together in person for International Women's Day this year, but our passionate volunteers turned the occasion into a day of service.

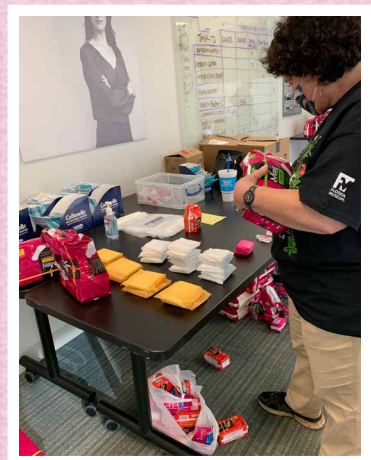
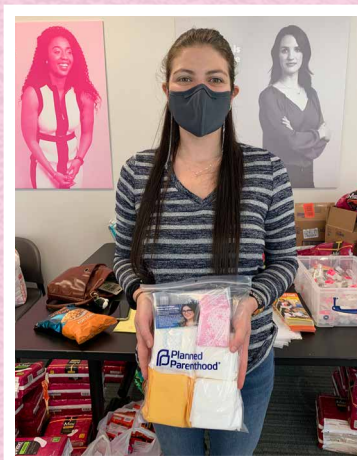
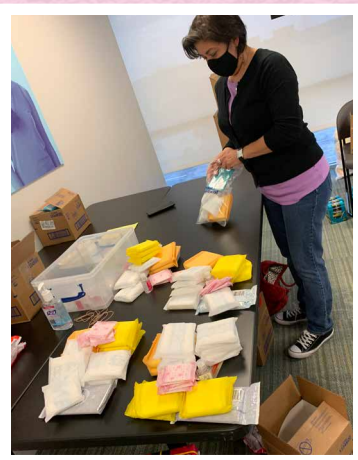
Beginning on Monday, March 8, volunteers gathered at our Babcock health center in San Antonio to create period packs to donate to partner organizations.

Using tampons, menstrual pads, personal wipes, hand sanitizers and other essentials, they assembled period packs for people who may have challenges affording these supplies.

Over the week, 12 volunteers spent 33 hours assembling 1,000 packs.

We distributed the packs to several partner organizations in San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley, including Family Service, Angry Tias and Abuelas, The Center for Refugee Services, the Rape Crisis Center, the Brownsville Independent School District Homeless Youth Connection, Interfaith Welcome Coalition, and Martinez Street Women's Center.

Thank you to our volunteers for assembling the packs and to our partner organizations for distributing them to those in need!



Upcoming and ongoing ways to give

Save the Date! The Big Give is scheduled for Thursday, September 23

Will you support your community by donating to Planned Parenthood South Texas during the Big Give on September 23?

Everyone deserves access to essential healthcare, no matter what. Your gifts during the Big Give make health care accessible to patients who struggle most by underwriting discounts on our sliding fee scale. All donations received through the Big Give in 2021 will be used to provide essential health care to our patients.

Last year, during a global pandemic, you supported the patients in your community by donating \$21,447 to Planned Parenthood South Texas through the Big Give. We and our patients were so appreciative of this generosity. Our goal this year is to raise \$25,000.

Go to www.thebiggivesa.org between midnight and 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, September 23 to make a gift. For more information, contact Dawn at dawn.kahley@ppsouthtexas.org or (210) 736-2244 ext. 340.

Anytime giving

Of course, any day may be the right day for you to make a gift, and we'll gratefully and gladly accept them in whatever form is most convenient for you! Give directly online by going to ppsouthtx.org/Donate. If you are making a gift through the national Planned Parenthood website, click on the "Specific Giving" tab on the donation page and make sure to choose "Planned Parenthood South Texas" as the destination for your gift.

We also welcome gifts by check, EFT, over the phone, via stock transfers, IRA or bequests. For help with giving, contact Angela, Gladys or Dawn at **210-736-2244**.

Amazon Smile

If you shop on Amazon, make purchases at smile.amazon.com and select Planned Parenthood South Texas as your charitable organization. Every time you make a purchase, AmazonSmile will donate to PPST at no cost to you. Last year we received \$14,560 from AmazonSmile.



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