



For decades, many different people have been called “social workers” in the United States who have no formal training in the profession. In fact, most states still allow some misrepresentation of the social work profession despite accepted licensure laws and a nationally accredited educational system.

NASW members adhere to a highly regarded Code of Ethics which prioritizes “client self-determination,” “human dignity” and “social justice” as key tenets. Unfortunately, we have no way of knowing if the people you are including in your Dan Rather Reports story are real members of the profession or not.

NASW can only speak on behalf of the country’s current 650,000 educated social work professionals. While a good portion of social workers are mental health experts and health and human services advocates, many others have saved millions of children’s lives through private and public child protection services. They have also facilitated the creation of new families by connecting loving adoptive parents with abused, neglected or orphaned children without permanent homes.

We appreciate the advance notice on your May 1 story, and encourage you to incorporate some of the following resources and interviews into your segment as time permits.

- 1) The U.S. Children’s Bureau is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2012. It was created and has been led by several social workers.
- 2) NASW’s public policy statement on Foster Care and Adoptions provides a brief historical perspective. Other related topics are covered in the NASW News.
- 3) Social work experts in adoptions provide consumer advice through the HelpStartsHere.org website.
- 4) NASW believes that training for those employed in the nation’s child welfare system is essential. In 2004, the NASW Center for Workforce Studies published a report called “If You’re Right for the Job, It’s the Best Job in the World.”
- 5) The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides a breakdown of where professional social workers work, the education required, licensure provisions and more. The entry was last updated in March 2012.

6) The NASW Press publishes several texts on adoptions and child/family services and the Social Work Policy Institute provides an overview of recent child trauma research and other topics of interest. In addition, the Social Work Practice Department creates and disseminates a range of publications related to child welfare issues including NASW Standards for Practice in Child Welfare .

7) NASW promoted the compelling film of a British social worker who discovered the truth about children sent to Australia and other colonies in "Oranges and Sunshine" and spent her career reuniting families.

8) Social worker Irena Sendler saved thousands of Jewish children from the Nazi death camps through adoptions during WWII. A PBS documentary on her life aired nationally in 2011.

9) May is National Foster Care Month and is coordinated by Casey Family Programs. NASW is an active partner.

10) *Adoptions Today and Fostering Families Today Magazine* just won a 2012 NASW Media Award.

All professions have historical practices that were negatively shaped by the mores, politics and prejudices of previous eras. The medical industry is a perfect example of such an evolution. Social work and its members have made mistakes as the profession matured from its founding in the late 19th century to the present. However, to suggest that the majority of social work interventions in adoptions or other children's services in the mid-20th century were negative—or possibly criminal—is irresponsible journalism.

Social workers have been instrumental in achieving civil rights and human rights advances in the United States and across the globe for more than a century. The primary mission of social work is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic needs of all people, especially the most vulnerable. Social workers have always stood up for people in need when it was extremely unpopular, and sometimes dangerous, to do so.

They still do.

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