

Jesutofe Salau: Hello to all of our listeners. My name is Tofe and today is another great day to be a social worker group. Welcome to social work, amplified a podcast, hosted by speak, speak stands for social policy, education, advocacy, and knowledge. And our mission is to amplify the voices of social workers by providing resources, increasing students, political engagement, and facilitating networking opportunities. Speak will like to gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Simmons sister funds at Texas women's foundation. I would like to introduce our guest for today's podcast. Renae Perry, Renae Perry is the chief operating officer at The Senior Source, a nonprofit organization, serving older adults and family caregivers in the greater Dallas area. For more than 60 years, Renae has worked various roles over the past 20 plus years at The Senior Source. And she has served in her current position for more than nine years.

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Jesutofe Salau: She has extensive experience in nonprofit leadership and program development and loves working with at The Senior Source to support older adults, caregivers, and volunteers, to ensure the best quality of life possible. She has a bachelor's degree in social work from Howard paying university and a master's degree in social work from the university of Texas at, at Arlington, and is licensed by the Texas state board of social work. She has served on numerous advisory boards and councils, including the Parkland geriatric advisory board, the aging mind foundation advisory board and the family violence prevention council. And she has shared the Dallas senior employment council. She is also an alumnus of the leadership Dallas class of 2018 Renae and her husband, Michael have three children and Renae also enjoys volunteering at her kids' school and coaching her daughter's volleyball team through the local Y M C a welcome Renae. We're so excited to have you today. How are you doing

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Renae Perry: Thank you so much. It's great to be here. I'm doing well. How are you?

Jesutofe Salau: I'm doing pretty well as well. You have a fully loaded biography, and I'm just so excited to get, to pick your brain to date and get to know about your 20 plus years of experience like 20 plus years. Wow.

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Renae Perry: I know it's a lot. I'm going to I'm aging in place and I'll be eligible for our services before. I know it. So time flies.

Jesutofe Salau: It does fly. So what, what led you into pursuing a career in social work to begin with especially 20 plus years ago? What was that motivating factor for you?

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Renae Perry: Well, I, I actually took intro to social work as an elective. It happened to be at the right time in my schedule when I was a student working on my undergraduate degree, uh, initially thinking about business and I took that intro to social work, just think would be an interesting class. And I really just fell in love with the thought of being engaged in a career that gives back and, and helps different populations. And I really liked the thought of just how many different types of opportunities there were for social workers. And so I changed my major and the, the rest is history. I, I

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[00:04:00] loved and then working in my masters at, at UT Arlington you know, just, I think, strengthened that desire and then having the opportunity to do an internship here at The Senior Source actually. Um, I, I really came to appreciate the opportunities of taking what we learned in class and then applying it in the field with the population that I was really interested in.

Jesutofe Salau: Yeah, that's good. So how, when did you get your master's at UTA?

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Renae Perry: I graduated in December of 1994. So a long time ago.

Jesutofe Salau: So cause you mentioned that The Senior Source where you did your internship, so you just kinda like find your way back there because you've only been working in that your current for nine plus years. So

[00:05:00] Renae Perry: Well, so I, so I did my internship here and then they offered me a position when I graduated working in one of their programs recruiting and placing older adult volunteers in just different, engaging, meaningful volunteer roles with community partner. And then I've worked in, in different positions here at the organization. I, uh, was the director of our employment program for a few years. And then I was the director of another program, our senior companion program, which is a federal program for a number of years. And so I've been at the organization this entire time, just in different roles. And so I've been in this role for, uh, as chief operating officer for the last nine years or so.

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Jesutofe Salau: Oh, wow. So you've been at The Senior Source kind of like your entire social work career.

Renae Perry: So yes, I have. I know it's so rare, but I love it. And you know, I've, I've gotten bored yet, so that's a good sign.

Jesutofe Salau: And you said you've moved around within that organization, so I'm pretty sure you know, that organization very well by now.

Renae Perry: So I should. Yes, hopefully.

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Jesutofe Salau: So so while you were in your at taking your master's level classes and I know UTA, I don't know if they did it back then, if they offer like different paths to follow, like right now as a student, they offer like aging, they offer children and family, then they offer like the macro path. So did you end up going the aging route or the macro route, or was that even a theme back then?

[00:06:30] Renae Perry: You know what, there was not an aging track at the time when I went through. And so I did the the macro track and was thrilled to learn a number of years ago when they started an aging track because, you know, I think it's definitely needed. And at the time, and even today, you know, I feel like there aren't as as many

- [00:07:00] opportunities or the same level of interest in working with older adults as with some other populations. And so I'm glad to see that it's, it's gay gain some momentum and there are more and more people interested in this for their profession and, and in the aging track specifically.
- Jesutofe Salau: Mm that's true. That's true. So what made you decide you wanted to concentrate in macro social work versus, you know, maybe the other that were available to you at that time?
- Renae Perry: Uh, I knew that I didn't want to do counseling. Like I didn't want to work. Um, I
[00:07:30] enjoyed engaging with people and I loved you know, having deep engaging conversations, but I didn't want to do counseling. And I really wanted to be able to use my skills to support multiple people. Like I liked this idea of taking and, and enhancing what, you know, that can help direct service and one-on-one support, but using it more broadly. And when I worked as a, or when I did my internship here
[00:08:00] at The Senior Source, one of the, of things that I saw that was so appealing is that we had staff who were engaging working one on one with older adults. And then we also had staff who were engaging in more of a macro way with community organizing around services and needs for older adults and, and supporting, uh, advocacy initiatives to support older adults across the state or across the country even.
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Renae Perry: And so I loved that idea of working in a different way, using social work skills, advancing our, our practice, but working with more than just a single client. And I love that older adults, you know, all oftentimes I, and it certainly felt like this at the time I did my internship, they were really underserved in terms of the, the
[00:09:00] opportunities and the services. You know, there, a lot of people are, you know, focused on children and families, which is wonderful and I have kids. And so I'm glad there are services for children, but older adults were so often overlooked. And I love the idea of working with a population that does get overlooked at times. And, and, you know, when you think about vulnerable populations, there are a lot of
[00:09:30] really vulnerable, older adults out there. And, and so there are direct service opportunities to support them individually, or there are legislative needs to support, you know, good practices around financial exploitation and holding perpetrators accountable. And so there are just a lot of different avenues to support this population that, and I love that.
- Jesutofe Salau: Yeah. So like have you ever, have you ever worked in the clinical role or you just
[00:10:00] meant, cause I feel like as a social worker, no matter what role you do, even in the macro field, you're going to do some form of direct practice, you know, but like for you, I know you started off in the macro field, but did you ever maybe do any type of clinical work or you mainly just stay in the macro field, your entire career?
- Renae Perry: You know, I think when I worked with our senior employment program you know, a
[00:10:30] lot of the supporting counseling supportive counseling we did with those clients was very much direct practice. Um, you know, we had a number of clients who

[00:11:00] spent their career working and then were laid off and, you know, for, for a lot of individuals and, and particularly for the older men that we served, their identity was so tied to what they did professionally, that when you took that away, they were incredibly fragile and really unaware of what to do next or how to move forward. Um, and so there was a lot of, of direct counseling and support that were, was provided at that time, in that role which I really valued and appreciated. And, and then, you know, now in, in my role, I, I work with our staff a lot more than I work directly with our clients.

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Renae Perry: And, you know, I think that support of counseling is also important when you're working with staff who do really challenging emotionally taxing work. And, and especially if you think about these last two years and just how stressful it's been for everyone, and particularly for our staff who worked with older adults, uh, the staff who worked with, with older adults in long-term care facilities and the impact that COVID has had on those facilities and those residents has been challenging. And so, you know, I'm very appreciative of my social work skillset to be able to support and serve our staff in addition to the, the clients that we

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Jesutofe Salau: That's good. So basically in the macro field, just because we enter or anybody who chooses to enter the macro field, it does not mean that you're never going to do direct practice because like you said, you know, there's going to be those job titles or those, those, those duties where it's going to be heavily focused on direct practice and working with the visual while at the same time, you can still make that broader impact because you are in the macro field.

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Renae Perry: Absolutely. Yeah.

Jesutofe Salau: So can you tell us a little bit about The Senior Source, a little bit about the organization itself?

Renae Perry: Sure. So we just celebrated our 60th birthday last year. The Senior Source has been around, uh, since 1961 really is that one stop shop for older adult needs and family caregivers. And so when you think about how someone ages and that spectrum of, we work with healthy, active, older adults who are looking for volunteer opportunities and meaningful employment, and, and then we serve all the way to the most FRA vulnerable seniors who may be in nursing homes or assisted living facilities or in need guardianship protection. So in everything in the, in between, and really are supporting older adults and their families with financial and emotional wellbeing supporting folks who have financial needs, helping older adults who are in poverty helping folks who have been victims of frauds or scams

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advocating for quality of care and quality of life for nursing home residents and assisted living facility residents, and then helping family caregivers who are navigating that challenge of caring for an aging loved one. And, and, you know, when they're in a situation, which is so often the case, everything is fine until something happens and mom falls or grandma you know, is diagnosed with, with something that is just horrific and the family doesn't know what to do. And, and

mom age safely at home, what do we need to do to ensure that that she's supported and care for? Um, and so all of those things are, are things that we address and support older adults in, in the greater Dallas area. And

Jesutofe Salau: Cool. So, so it seems like you guys do a variety of stuff, like as a, like just a source for seniors. I feel like the name of the organization really gives an insight to what you guys do. Like just a source for, You know, for seniors. And I like how you guys support, not just the seniors, but also the people who support the seniors, such as the caregivers and the volunteers, which is really important to support system. Um, so, so you mentioned is The Senior Source only located in Texas or is it national organization?

Renae Perry: That's a good question. So we have several different programs that are in our organization, our, as an organization, we're local we're, uh, stand and alone nonprofit organization, but four of the programs that we have are national programs that exist throughout the country. And we're just fortunate to have all four of them under one umbrella in this organization. And then the other programs that we have are programs that we've developed based on the, and you know, anticipating needs of, of the growing older adult population.

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Jesutofe Salau: Oh, okay. That's cool. So for upcoming social work students that might be interested in a position like yours, chief executive officer of The Senior Source. And I know it took you a while to just get to that position. It didn't happen overnight. Can you provide insight into what you do overall or what a day looks like for you?

Renae Perry: Sure. So I'm the chief operating officer at The Senior Source. And so I work very closely with our programs and our service delivery. So do our programs and services align and, and meet the needs in the community. Do we have the right staffing and personnel in place? Do they have the right training? Um, I work a lot with partnerships. Do we have good partnerships to, to really amplify and you know, help ensure we're are meeting needs throughout the community and, and in communities and neighborhoods where the need is greatest. Um, you know, a lot of metrics are we meeting our goals. We have a lot of different funding sources. Are we providing accurate, important information and feedback for those funders to know that they, that the dollars that they invest in our organization are being well spent and, and we're having an impact on the older adults we serve measuring for, you know, we'd say we want financial wellbeing and emotional wellbeing for older adults.

Renae Perry: Um, how do we measure that? How do we ensure that, that we are having that impact? Um, and then working with our, the program directors of each of our programs and really ensuring that they have what they need to, uh, do the work that they do every day and that their teams are supported. Um, and so it's just every day is a little bit different. Um, I meet weekly with each of our program directors and, uh, work with our, our CEO and, and the strategic planning committee of our board. And just ensure that we're all in alignment and that we are

really serving her mission and meeting our mission. Well, that's what I do. And it's a lot of fun.

Jesutofe Salau: Yeah. It seems like you do a variety of stuff and, you know, do you guys only have one branch or is it multiple branches?

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Renae Perry: We just have the one location that we work out of. And then for some of our programs, they are out in the field a lot of the time, uh, for example, our long term care on Budsman program they advocate for residents and nursing homes and assisted living facilities. And so they're actually out at those facilities going, you know, to multiple facilities and, and visiting with, with residents and addressing concerns and issues that they may have. So they're not in the office very much.
[00:19:00] They're, they're working out in the field a lot. And then we have other staff who are in the, the office you know, handling incoming calls or meeting with clients to help them pay utility bills or apply for benefits or get employment counseling. So it really just depends on the, the nature of the position as to where the staff work from. Oh, okay. But our singular location is on Harry. He Boulevard just north of downtown Dallas.

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Jesutofe Salau: Okay. Because of like all the stuff that you do at the was like, okay, maybe there might be multiple locations,

Renae Perry: But just the one.

Jesutofe Salau: Yeah. Well, with your job description, it included like program evaluation, really, you know, intense program evaluation and making sure that the entire program is operating. Like you guys say that you guys are operating and partnerships, so like you, you do lot. I'm pretty sure every single day is different. And did you ever, were you always like working towards that chief operating, uh, position, or did you ever see yourself in that position?
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Renae Perry: You know, I knew that I wanted to you know, support our organization and our staff and, and I liked the idea of being in a, a more management type of role and being able to, you know, offer my perspective and my voice to support the mission. Um,
[00:20:30] but, you know, I was also very happy as a, as a program director and, and, you know, working as a director within a, a program. Um, so it's not something I, I necessarily thought about, especially early in my career, but you know, it's the opportunity presented itself and I'm certainly very grateful that it did. Um, and I
[00:21:00] love, I mean, this is really my dream job. So I getting to support staff and, and our mission and, you know, not do the same thing every day. It really is. It days are different from each other. And you know, getting to feel like you've made a difference at the end of the day is really a, a good feeling to have.

Jesutofe Salau: Yes. That, that is really a good feeling. So are there any do you have any significant moment in your career of social work so far that maybe like sticks out to you or that you would like to share with us?
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Renae Perry: You know, I think one of the things that I'm most proud to have been involved in is the development of our elder financial safety center. Uh, you know, we recognized a number of years ago, how vulnerable older adults were to frauds and scams and really wanting to do something to help strengthen that financial stability. And so I was part of the team that really helped submit the grant and support when we got funding to be able to launch that, to work through how that could look and creating the job descriptions for the staff in that position, in that role and in supporting that center. So that was incredibly meaningful for me. Um, you know, we're now at a point where the center has been in existence for, uh, several years now that launched in, in, uh, 2014. And, you know, last year we served, uh, 9,000 clients through that center alone and helped a lot of those older adults support themselves financially better and address frauds and scams and work closely with the district attorney's office to seek justice in cases where older adults have been, uh, the victim of fraud or exploitation.
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Renae Perry: And so that has been really meaningful. And then I think also, you know, just personally getting the opportunity to go through the last, we were so elected as an organization to go through uh, a special racial equity training with Dallas, uh, truth, racial healing and transformation, and being part of the three member cohort team that went through that nine month training that really developed a racial equity outcome and building blocks for the organization to really ensure that we were embedding equity in all of the work that we do and in having and ensuring that our staff understand diversity and inclusion and equity and the difference between BI in and belonging and, and really making sure that we have good pillars to support true equity in the work that we do with older adults that has been incredibly meaningful as well.
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Jesutofe Salau: Yeah, those things, those ex examples that you gave me, they do seem very meaningful and very like significant, especially the elder financial safety center. Um, it's, it's really admiring that, you know, you were able to participate from that participate in and like, kind of started from like, you know, like, I'm pretty sure it took a team. It wasn't just, you, you
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Renae Perry: Know, absolutely. Absolutely. Yes.

Jesutofe Salau: Yeah. I'm, I'm, it's really admiring that you were able to start that and, you know, work, work on that team and get that going. And now it's been in existence for a few years. That's really, really significant and that's the type of stuff I, I want to do in my career, you know, and I think as a student, sometimes we have like these desires, these big dreams to start this and start that. And you just kind of like give us as students. And the listeners hope that, you know, it is possible. It just takes
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time, takes a lot of patience and takes a lot of diligence. And eventually what we do aspire to have one will come to pass if we just work towards it.

Renae Perry: Absolutely. And I tell you, I've talked with a few classes and, and students at UTA and, you know, the last year or two, and I am just so impressed with the passion and the voice and energy that the current students have and just, I there's a lot of, of need in our world right now. Um, whatever population, you know, people want to serve. And so there, there's a place for that voice and, and sharing what you're learning and there's a place for you to make a difference that only you can make. And so I'm excited for this next generation of social workers to, to join the, the working world and, and make a difference and, you know, chart your own path.

Jesutofe Salau: Yes. So now we're going to move on to our advocacy questions, and I'm just, I'm excited to hear from you since you've been in the field for 20 plus years. And I want to know like how things, you know, how things used to be done in the past and how it's changed. I think you're going to offer a very unique perspective. So the first question is there are many ways to be politically engaged. What are some of the ways that you choose to remain politically and for you specifically, like, do you feel like the ways that you choose to remain politically engaged? Have they changed? Um, since, you know, from the first time you started the career, can you tell us a little bit about that?

Renae Perry: Well, I will say first and foremost, if, uh, if you're eligible to vote and, and, you know, over 18 and I vote, I mean, that is the most basic way for all of us to be engaged citizens and, and to participate in our democracy. And, and that's something, unfortunately, you know, when I was 18, 19 20, like I did not vote as much, you know, like I voted in the presidential election, but then I didn't really vote as in the local elections as much until I got a little bit older and recognized. That's really where we're able to make a difference that we are able to, to, you know, use our voice and participate in all levels of government. There's so much that happens at the local level. So if there's somebody who is not voting in your local elections, please get registered to vote and vote in your local elections, as well as in national elections.

Renae Perry: Like that's the most basic way that anyone can be involved in advocacy. Um, and then, you know, if there are issues that you care about, find out about them, are there, are there, uh, legislators that are championing those causes or who are a writing counter to those causes that you can share your voice? It only takes a few minutes to just to send an email or a phone call. And now there are so many tools where, you know, social media, you can, you know, I mean, Twitter is an incredible platform to be able to reach elected officials and, uh, staffers and share and gain momentum around an issue or a cause. And that's something, you know, that obviously did not. Wasn't the case when I first started in social work 20 years ago, more than 20 years ago. And so you know, there's a lot of opportunity out there to elevate your voice and to, uh, let legislators know your thoughts and what you care about and issues that you are passionate about.

Renae Perry: And, you know, I think also sometimes, you know, we get disappointed because we
[00:29:00] care about an issue and, you know, and for example, this last state legislative session, there were a lot of people who were interested in some bills that, uh, related to snap benefits and, and, you know, there were some bills that were passed, but there were a couple that didn't get passed, but just because it didn't happen at that time were continuing to speak up about these issues and gain more
[00:29:30] support. And so when we come back at the next legislative session, we will be, you know, ready and have a stronger base of support hopefully to advance those bills. Um, there are other bills around elder, uh, financial protection nursing home supports for older adult residents who are living in nursing homes. And, you know, so like every step forward is a step forward, but there's still more work to do. And,
[00:30:00] and we can't get frustrated when, when, you know, we don't get at the bills past or things don't happen as quickly as we would like. Um, so that, that's something it's hard, you know, that's easier said than done, but it is so important if you know, you're, you're going to continue and engage and be part of advocacy efforts over the long fall. You know, you can't, you can't, you've gotta keep going.

Jesutofe Salau: Yeah. You gave us a lot of advice there. I really, I really appreciate that because, you
[00:30:30] know, there was a few questions I was going to ask you, but you really loaded us with advice on how to remain politically engaged, you know, especially when it comes to like bills being passed and just getting involved at the local level. Just to my, I know the Texas local, local elections, they're coming up soon and we just need to get registered. I don't know if the cutoff has come, but it's really important, you know, even as a social work student, just to maintain that involvement. And I was
[00:31:00] going to ask you what do you do to keep your momentum in the field of advocacy? Like you work within the, that field and also just politically just being politically engaged. Like, what do you personally do to keep your momentum? Because like you were mentioning in your previous reply, sometimes it can get, you know, discouraging, especially when there's so many bills sent up, but not all of them passed, but you were saying how, like, you know, a step forward is a step forward, but is there anything that you do like personally just to keep your momentum and keep yourself going in the field of advocacy?

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Renae Perry: I, I follow a lot of, of individuals and groups that are involved in advocacy efforts. And so getting to see, uh, wins that they have or challenges that they've overcome helps as well. And, and, you know, I think just continuing to stay engaged and know,
[00:32:00] you know, you can go onto whatever, if it's local government or state or federal, you can actually see where in any given bill is in the process. And so, like, I have alerts set up and so I get those notifications about how things are going or if there's been some movement or some traction. And so that really helps. Um, and then in terms of just being able to continue, you know, when over the long haul, when
[00:32:30] things get frustrating or challenging, I think you know, practicing good self care. I mean, that's foundational to any kind of social work that anybody is going to be engaged in at all. You have to take care of and listen to your inner voice and, and ensure that you're staying grounded and that you have ways to take care of

yourself and support good mental health for yourself to continue to support and serve others. Well. Um, I think that is critically important.

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Jesutofe Salau: Good. So you keep momentum by following groups. And I think what I got from your response is like celebrating like other people's wins, you know, especially in the field of, it may not always be your win or your success, but just celebrating others really helps motivate you, you know, to just continue to, you know, fight for what you are path and also keeping tabs on those things that you want to change. You know, cause sometimes we do move. Maybe it might be a small move, but they

[00:33:30] do move up in the process and just keeping tabs on that just to keep yourself encouraged. Well, that's really good advice

Renae Perry: And that's a great synopsis.

Jesutofe Salau: So what would you say to a social work student who is nervous about getting started with political social work or an advocacy, what would you say to put their mind at ease?

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Renae Perry: That's a good question. Um, I guess I would ask them what they're interested in. Like what are they passionate about or what type of impact do they want to see and start from there and, and build on that enthusiasm so that when you're getting, you know, you're nervous, if you have a chance to, you know, test, you know, provide testimony at a city council meeting or some sort of, you know, public platform reminding yourself of why you're doing this, what it is that is important to you, that that's helped me sort of call my nerves at times, thinking about the why and, and why it's important. And I think also just even taking baby steps, you know, maybe you start with making sure that you're, uh, register to vote and you're voting in all your elections. And then maybe there's an issue that's coming up at city council.

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Renae Perry: Maybe you don't start with, you know, calling your, your national, you know, representative or Senator. If you start with your city council member and, and schedule a meeting with that person to talk about issues at the local level that are important to you and then you build from there. Um, but I think when people are talking about things that they're passionate about and that they care about as you get started talking about that, and as you, you know, if you've educated yourself, then you know the issue well that helps alleviate some of the nerves as well.

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Jesutofe Salau: Yes, I really do believe that too. Like sometimes our passion, what we're really passionate about that zeal can help override that nervousness because it's not that the nervousness is not going to be there, but, you know, you know, when somebody starts peek speaking about something that they're so passionate about, you know, that words, the words starts to flow out, especially if they have like life experiences where they can draw from and things like that. So I think that's a really

[00:36:00] good question to start off with, like, what are you passionate about? Like start there versus, you know, yeah. Studying somewhere where you're not as passionate about not that it doesn't matter, but maybe in that area where you're passionate, you might be able to just gain that confidence and that boldness that you need a little bit, much more, a little bit more quicker than, you know, yeah. Another area. So, I think I'm going to round off with this question in, and this is going to be like a little bit of just giving advice to our listeners. I know you've been in the field for 20 years, 20 plus years. And if you could start all over again with political social work and advocacy, what would you do a lot more of,

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Renae Perry: You know, I think I would've really engaged age legislators more and, and made a phone call or sent an email. Um, they want to hear from their constituents and they have staff there to note responses. And if they get, you know, 15 is on one issue and two on, you know, countering that that makes a difference. And, and, you know, there, aren't a lot of people who really engage in, in advocacy and, and actually reach out to elected officials and share their story and tell, you know, what their, what they care about and what they want to see in their district or city or state or whatever you know, geography it is for, for that legislation. Um, that I think that I would've done that more. I, I really did not have the confidence or didn't really think, think necessarily that one voice could make a difference, but you know, over time I've seen that that really is so important.

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Renae Perry: And so I, and, and also it helps you have some credibility. So if I'm talking to groups and I'm trying to get enthusiasm for an issue, and I want, you know, other fo to contact their legislators and talk about an issue or support an issue that is important to me, I have to have already done the work of reaching out and speaking up to my elected officials about it. And so that gives them credibility. So that I think that's really important. And, and it, it's easier than, you know, it's ever been. I mean, you can EAs easily and quickly send an email. You can actually go to their, whatever government, uh, website and for the most officials, you can actually email them from that side. And then there are a lot of, uh, platforms where you're able to you know, put in your contact information and it'll tell you who your elected officials are. And then you can like respond to them at the same time through that platform and indicate your support, or, you know, if you're against an issue to speak out about it. So,

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Jesutofe Salau: Yes, that's a, that's one of the advices that we haven't heard yet engage our legislators more because after all they are representing us, and I know there's so many ways to remain politically engaged, and that's one of the, one of the ways that we shouldn't like force sake, because like you said, they want to hear from us. And if there's, if like there's one group of people engage, I mean, engaging our legislators for one thing, they're, you know, that, that situation, that issue BEC it brings that situation or issue at the, to the forefront of their clients versus, you know, another issue that might not receive much engagement. Now they put that on the back burner. So it's really important. And like you said, I really like the fact that you said that it builds credibility, especially when you're talking to people, you

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[00:40:00] know, like what have you done in order to fix the problem or to address the problem? You know, it kind of like really motivates the other, the next person that you're talking to. And after all, like you said, it's easier than it's ever been before, or, I mean, I know that sometimes we, we used to write letters like back in the days, and you can still write a letter to your legislator, but now you send an email, you can pick up the phone and call and it's, it's very easy. And it's just all about coming up with the worst to say, and just making that all, just taking that action.

Renae Perry: [00:40:30] Yeah. Yeah. I, I worked with a person here on staff who retired about a year ago and she was coordinating all of our advocacy efforts at the state level. And her saying was always, democracy is not a spectator sport. And she really instilled, I think, in all of the staff, a love and appreciation to get involved and to let your voice be heard. And so, like, I she's, I, you know, learned so much from her and am trying to articulate that well and, and pass that on to others to get engaged and to not let [00:41:00] democracy be a spectator board and to be involved and, and speak out about issues that are important to you and vote ultimately vote.

Jesutofe Salau: Yeah, I like that. And democracy is not a spectator sport. Definitely. You can't just be on lookers, you know, on sidelines and just expect change to happen. You can't just follow the post on Facebook or to Twitter or Instagram. It just, you know, hope that's

Renae Perry: Going to have hope for the best.

Jesutofe Salau: We definitely have engaged. So thank you so much.

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Renae Perry: Oh, you're welcome. Thank you. These are, are great questions.

Jesutofe Salau: Yes. Learned a lot from you today. Thank you. You Renae for spending time with me today. Thank you to all of our listeners for joining us for another episode of social work amplified. I hope you were able to learn something today that empowers you to become more politically engaged and helps you for better tomorrow until next time.