

Harris County Department of Education Blog Archive

January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019



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1. 2019

1.1 January

HCDE Behavioral Specialist James Reshapes Young Lives (2019-01-09 16:32)

- hcdetx





While it's a challenge to understand and redirect the behavior of multiple special needs students, Harris County Department of Education behavioral specialist Melissa James considers it the perfect job.

James exudes calm and smiles as she routinely greets students by name on her journey through school hallways. Students are referred to HCDE's four special schools on a contractual basis by client school districts in greater Harris County. Two schools serve students ages 5-22 with emotional and academic special needs. One school helps high school students who are recovering from addiction while a fourth serves adjudicated and troubled youth.

"Each and every student at HCDE is different and has his or her own individualized education program within our small classroom settings," said HCDE Schools Senior Director Anthony Mays. "Ms. James observes student behavior and works one-on-one with students and teachers to identify solutions and to support and eliminate inappropriate student behavior."

James has extensive experience as a counselor and holds master's degrees in psychology and education administration. She is a certified special education administrator and spent numerous years educating children with behavioral challenges at public, private and nonprofit institutions, including Avondale House, which specializes in autism services and resources.

When evaluating each student in meetings called the admission, review and dismissal (ARD)

process, James looks for triggers or antecedents that will lead to inappropriate behavior. What works with one student won't work with another. Student Julia came to Academic and Behavior School West from her home district in Fort Bend Independent School District. Her future looks starkly different today than it did when she came to her new special school several months back.

The 15-year-old's aggression is put in check as the teen gets frustrated. She holds up an orange card to her classroom teacher as a coping strategy, signaling she needs quick help. James will take Julia for a cool-down walk, reassuring her and discussing behavior solutions. In the beginning, James rode the bus home with the young girl who had repeatedly fought and been in trouble with the law. Today, Julia is working on returning to her home campus so she can become a cosmetologist.

By coaching teachers like Stephanie Stamps, sharing behavior strategies with teachers also becomes part of James' daily routine. Stamps, a veteran, 20-year teacher, leads a class of five adolescents with severe behavioral challenges and varying degrees of autism. Bad behaviors are redirected, not punished.

"We have to provide coping skills and ways to handle frustration because students can lose control very quickly sometimes," Stamps said. "When Ms. James is here, it gives me a break from the behavior. Sometimes the student needs to hear it from someone else besides me."

The ultimate goal at HCDE's special schools is for students to return to their home campuses, but sometimes the behavioral school becomes the home school, especially in the case of life skills students with intellectual as well as behavioral challenges.

"My goal is to help students learn to assess their own behaviors and understand how their actions affect their own learning and safety, as well as the safety of those around them," James said.

In shaping student behavior, the behavior specialist knows that young futures are charted as well.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/20181130_sped_0072.jpg

3 Newcomer Trustees Welcomed to Harris County Department of Education Board (2019-01-11 15:13) - hcdetx





Three Harris County Department of Education Board of Trustees were sworn into office in January 2019 to represent Harris County students and community. The new faces who will help preside over HCDE matters are Richard Cantu', Position 3, At Large; Josh Flynn, Position 4, Precinct 3; and Danyahel (Danny) Norris, Position 6, Precinct 1.

Richard Cantu' is the deputy executive director of the East Aldine Management District and has held a number of nonprofit and municipal leadership positions. The self-proclaimed community and education advocate sees himself as a representative of working families. He supports increasing opportunities for citizens to access early childhood education, afterschool services for youth, workforce development initiatives and teacher professional development.

As the son of a Mexican immigrant who worked hard to achieve the American dream, Cantu' says he knows the importance of education in transforming lives of working-class families.

"I am committed to improving access to existing critical services and developing partnerships to address community needs and challenges," he said.

Josh Flynn is a licensed tax professional chartered through the IRS and specializes in non-

profit accounting. He formerly served as trustee for a university in Bethany, Oklahoma. His immediate goal in office is to make HCDE as transparent as possible. Long-term, he will promote efficiency, directing maximum benefits to Harris County students.

Flynn's decision to enter public service occurs as the last of his three, publicly schooled children graduated in 2018. Choosing HCDE as a vehicle for public service seemed the logical progression for him to share his parenting skill-set.

"Knowing (that) my first grandchild will be entering the school system, I want the best system in place for him and future generations of children," he said.

Danyahel (Danny) Norris is law instructor of legal research and associate director of the Thurgood Marshall School of Law Library at Texas Southern University. He is a practicing intellectual property attorney, principal partner of Norris & Norris Attorneys and Counselors at Law and is part president of the Houston Lawyers Association. He shares his leadership skills through various professional organizations, including the New Leaders Council, Houston chapter.

Norris' immediate goal as trustee is to partner with local school districts and state legislators to help revise the school finance formula. Long-term, he values continuing HCDE partnerships with local districts and initiating innovative education practices in the county to eventually share statewide and nationally.

"I believe by strengthening the education in our county, we help strengthen the future of our county, and I'm looking forward to helping do so," Norris said.

The incoming HCDE trustees join fellow board members at 1 p.m. on Jan. 16 at the monthly meeting at 6300 Irvington, according to Eric Dick, presiding board president. Prior to the meeting, HCDE employees join HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. and the board for the School Board Recognition Month Appreciation Reception from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Photo: (left) Harris County Superintendent James Colbert Jr., newcomer trustees Josh Flynn, Danyahel (Danny) Norris, Richard Cantu and HCDE Presiding Board President Eric Dick.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/20190111_board_0003.jpg

‘School Threat Assessment Training’ Jan. 22 Features Former U.S. Secret Service Psychologist (2019-01-11 16:01) - hcdetx





Demands for threat management trainings increased in the aftermath of the active shooter tragedy in Santa Fe, Texas. On Jan. 22 from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Target Restoration Services and Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools present "School Threat Assessment Training: Creating a Safe Environment for Students." Sigma Threat Management Associates' Dr. Marisa R. Randazzo—an expert on threat assessment, target violence and violence prevention—leads the training. Joining her are members of the first responder team from Texas City as they discuss lessons learned from the Santa Fe ISD shootings.

"Districts need tools to work through threat scenarios," said Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Ecomet Burley. "This workshop provides practice by working through threat scenarios. Educators walk away with the know-how to develop a case management plan for their district/campus through an expert whose threat assessment best practices are depended on by national security agencies and major media outlets."

School Threat Assessment Training expert Randazzo served for 10 years with the U.S. Secret Services and as the agency's chief research psychologist. An accomplished presenter, she has trained over 10,000 professionals in law enforcement, management, administration, mental health and the intelligence community. She has been featured in interviews through 60 Minutes, the Today Show, 48 Hours, Dateline NBC and Good Morning America.

During the presentation, Randazzo talks to school leaders about identifying and investigating potential campus threats. She also demonstrates how to build an effective threat assessment management program.

Cost for the training is \$35 and includes breakfast and snacks courtesy of Sprouts and lunch

courtesy of Target Restoration Services. To register, go to [2]www.hcde-texas.org and enter workshop number 12201 or date. Parking is free. The workshop is conveniently located in a central area of Houston. Texas Commission on Law Enforcement credits are available for attendees.

(This project was supported by grant number 2018-YS-BX-0153 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Program, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.)

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/school-kids-running-in-elementary-school-hallway-pzrca39-1.jpg>
2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/>

Fortis Academy Culinary Students Certified, Ready to Cook (2019-01-17 11:03)

- hcdetx



Fortis Academy Culinary Arts Teacher Ouindetta Thomas could not help but smile with excitement as her kitchen was fully operational the first week of the spring semester.

Let's get cooking," she said, in anticipation of the first lesson.

Fortis Academy is the county's first public recovery high school. This school will help students who have completed a substance abuse or dependency rehabilitation program continue their high school education in a sober environment.

Five students were presented with their jackets, aprons and hats as they passed the ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification Examination, which is accredited by the American National Standards Institute-Conference for Food Protection.

"This certification makes them eligible to get a manager position at a restaurant after they graduate from high school," Thomas said.

Students also benefit from internships with Gordon Foods and local restaurants.

At the beginning of the year, students prepared for the certification exam by learning basic techniques, such as proper food handling and how to handle kitchen equipment, when working in a restaurant. Students must pass the exam in order to cook in the class.

"My main goal for when I teach a culinary class is to have the students by month two to be dressed and be ready to work on their own, and usually they are," she said.

Seventeen-year-old Roberta Vasquez chose to participate in the culinary program because it was something new and fun.

"I enjoy making caldo with my grandma," she said.

Vasquez hopes to learn new dishes to make, especially ones that are difficult to prepare and perfect.

"I've always wanted to work at a fancy restaurant and look forward to in the future," she said.

For 18-year-old Isaac Hinojosa, he said his interest in participating in the program is the certification being offered that are available outside of school.

"I like to cook, especially spaghetti, and have experience working in the food industry at various fast-food restaurants," he said.

His goal by taking this class is to be able to cook independently.

"I would like to be able to cook independently because sometimes I need help and want to learn how I can successfully do it myself," Hinojosa said.

Students prepared po-boys and paninis during the first week. Pastries such as cake baking, decorating and fruit-dipping are also on the to-do list and would be just in time for Valentine's Day.

"They will learn everything you would learn in a basic culinary arts class and food preparation

techniques; it's more about skill than dishes," Thomas said.

Threat Assessment Training Shares Lessons Learned, Facts from School Violence Study (2019-01-23 17:03) - hcdetx





School Threat Assessment, a training for delivering school safety strategies, provided opportunity for conversations between 75 teachers, administrators and school security officers on Jan. 22 at Harris County Department of Education through its Center for Safe and Secure Schools and Sigma Threat Management Associates.

"I encourage you to look at how we are going to work together—police departments, communications and parents," said Thomas Munoz, emergency manager and homeland security director with the city of Texas City. Munoz is a 24-year veteran with the Houston Fire Department and became the assistant chief of homeland security and planning with HFD. Munoz stressed the importance of teamwork between different agencies, including the district.

Mike Matranga, executive director of security and safety at Texas City ISD, stressed how the school landscape has changed, especially with students using social media throughout the school day. He said Texas City is taking a proactive approach to threat assessment and urged other districts to follow.

"We're at a place in our society when our kids need professional help in our schools in terms of security," Matranga said. Matranga is a former special agent for the U.S. Secret Service.

Keynote Marisa Randazzo served 10 years with the Secret Service as chief research psychologist. She shared the presentation: "Best Practices in Threat Assessment: Building a Program and a Process."

In the largest federal study of school shootings in the United States, the U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education collaborated by studying 37 incidents through 41 attackers.

Focus was on operational information: What could be detectable and usable from the incidents?

Randazzo supplied these major facts about findings of school-based attacks:

1. School-based attacks are rarely sudden, impulsive acts.
2. Prior to the attacks, others usually knew of the attacker's idea/plan.
3. Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to the attack.
4. There is no accurate or useful profile of the "school shooter."
5. Most attackers had seriously concerned others in their lives prior to the attack.
6. Most attackers had significant difficulties with losses or failures. Most were suicidal.
7. Many felt bullied, persecuted, or injured by others prior to the attack
8. Most attackers had access to weapons—and had used weapons—prior to the attack
9. In many cases, other students were involved in some capacity.
10. Despite prompt law enforcement response, most incidents were stopped by means other than law enforcement intervention. Most were very brief in duration.

Practical application was provided as tabletop exercises with threat assessment scenarios helped attendees make observations and suggestions about school security. For additional information about upcoming Center for Safe and Secure workshops at HCDE, go to www.hcde-texas.org/register.

View news coverage of event:

Fox: [2]<https://youtu.be/UmF46l-T1A0>

Univision: [3]<https://youtu.be/xl6H5t4pEpA>

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/threat-assessment-3.jpg>

2. <https://youtu.be/UmF46l-T1A0>

3. <https://youtu.be/xl6H5t4pEpA>

YouTube Celebrity Steve Spangler Opens Early Childhood Conference Jan. 26 with Science Magic (2019-01-24 11:47) - hcdetx





Emmy award-winning and YouTube celebrity Steve Spangler will bring his science magic to the stage for the 33rd Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference Saturday, Jan. 26 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Kingdom Builders' Center, 6011 W. Orem Dr., Houston.

Over 1,000 early childhood educators are expected this year and will have the chance to network with experts in the field. Topics of interest include classroom safety and security and developing social emotional intelligence.

The Harris County Department of Education conference – a tradition for generations of educators of pre-k through second grade since 1986 – features over 60 breakout sessions for educators.

Keynote speakers are best-selling author Steve Spangler, who will do just about anything to get people excited about science, and bilingual specialist Laurie Weaver, who will focus on differences between English and Spanish and how those differences affect early literacy instruction.

Local Partnership Project Funding Helps Deliver Afterschool with All the Toppings (2019-01-28 12:13) - hcdetx



[1]



Two years ago, 11-year-old Ilia Rivera's grandmother got sick and was hospitalized. Her mom Karen reached out to get afterschool help for babysitting. She got much more when she enrolled in a program funded by the CASE for Kids Partnership Project.

The Partnership Project is a locally funded collaboration between Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment, or CASE for Kids, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the Texas Workforce Commission and local afterschool sites like Ilia's school: Houston Independent School District's Park Place Elementary.

The 20-year-old program is unique because multiple partners—local, state and federal—contribute funding.



The Partnership Project fills funding gaps with a variety of resources. The CASE for Kids lending library provides curricula, educational games, sporting equipment and STEM-based materials like robotics kits. Vendors specialize in academic focus areas that highlight math and language. Social and emotional learning skills help children to understand and manage their emotions.

In Karen Amaya's Latina culture, kids stay with family members when parents are working, so the notion of afterschool was a bit hard to accept. After Ilia's abuela (grandmother) got well, she remained in afterschool and has been busy with activities like robotics, art, tennis, choir, cooking and academic tutorials.

"I was impressed by the program," said Amaya. "I really do think CASE for Kids is an exceptional program. I work in school settings and have never seen an afterschool program like this one."

CASE for Kids is an afterschool intermediary which provides resources, training and afterschool services for over 9,000 students in greater Harris County.

"As CASE for Kids celebrates its 20th anniversary, we look to the Partnership Project as one of the ways we expand our reach to local families and the education communities we serve during times when public school budgets are lean and federal funding for afterschool is diminished," said

Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, CASE for Kids director.

Ilia likes the time she gets to socialize with her friends after 3 p.m. and admits she would be on her electronic devices, otherwise. Her mother likes the community environment offered through afterschool at her neighborhood school in southeast Houston.

“The more exposed she is to different hobbies and careers, the better,” said her mom. “I am first-generation college, so college is a must for her too.”

Teacher and afterschool robotics coach Yasin Puertas took Ilia and her classmates to Ecobot Challenge last year, a large-scale CASE for Kids robotics competition funded through the Education Foundation of Harris County, a nonprofit which provides support for education initiatives.

Puertas’ team of students won first place in the competition.

“Funding for local afterschool initiatives is very important,” said Puertas. “We need support from the community, and this is the best example of how local dollars are converted into local resources.”

Last month, Puertas brought a robotics show-and-tell to parents at a local PTA meeting at Park Place.

“Parents were literally in tears because they were watching their children who are doing engineering as fourth and fifth graders,” the afterschool coordinator said. “These are future engineers, and they don’t have to have the money to study. They have the brains and the will.

“Afterschool gives them that place to wonder and get inspired.”

Ilia likes to show off her afterschool art project, a multi-media art piece with a motorized arm she engineered with a robotics kit from Puertas’ afterschool robotics class. She says she likes to build things and see them work.

[youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7QNTGi3eWc>]

Though the preteen cherishes the time she spends with her grandmother and other family members, she also craves the afterschool time she gets with classmates and teachers to build creativity.

“Think of plain vanilla ice cream,” Ilia said, illustrating her analogy by circling the air with her hands to fashion the mountain of sugary goodness.

“Even though I like ice cream, I don’t get all the toppings,” said the fifth grader. “In afterschool, I get all the toppings—all the toppings for my brain.”

To learn more about the CASE for Kids collaboratives, go to [2]www.hcde-texas.org/after-school or call 713-696-1331.

(View Ilia Rivera’s afterschool art GIF: [3]<https://media.giphy.com/media/1zh70-30>)

I8C23xuox7CII/giphy.gif.)

About Good News You Can Use: “Good News You Can Use” showcases the partnerships between Harris County Department of Education and school districts and organizations.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/20181217_case_0013-e1548698882529.jpg
2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/after-school>
3. <https://media.giphy.com/media/lzh70I8C23xuox7CII/giphy.gif>

1,000 Educators Receive Valuable Takeaways from Annual Early Childhood Conference (2019-01-28 12:26) - hcdetx



[1]



View photo gallery: [2]<https://bit.ly/2sZYQtv> (password hcde1889)

Many wow moments and new ideas were taken away from the 33rd Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference, sponsored by Harris County Department of Education and the Teaching and Learning Center.

HCDE Assistant Superintendent for Academic Support Services Jonathan Parker welcomed the nearly 1,000 early childhood educators from around the state.

“By being here today, you are demonstrating your commitment to your students and the pursuit of excellence,” Parker said.

Former HCDE Board Trustee and conference namesake R.T. Garcia was also in attendance and praised the teachers for being first responders to children.

“There is no finer group than teachers,” Garcia said. “You are my heroes because you take our kids and develop them; you are first responders for kids.”

This year’s keynote speaker was YouTube celebrity and best-selling author Steve Spangler. He showcased a few of his magic tricks that gave teachers ideas to take back to their students.

Deer Park Independent School District Early Childhood Center teacher Vigyatha Gopeechan enjoyed Spangler’s presentation and even took in his second presentation of the morning. This was her fifth year attending the conference.

“I enjoyed his session because I can always take back something and show the kids how wow it is because that’s how I feel and it’s awesome,” Gopeechan said.

Throughout the day, more than 60 breakout sessions were offered with science activities and how to keep your classroom safe and secure.

For many attendees, this was the first time attending and found out about the conference from friends. Kaci Moore is a student at East Texas Baptist University and student teaching at Jefferson ISD. She wanted to attend to learn ideas for her classroom when she becomes a full-time teacher.

“I wanted to learn more about early childhood development and how I can bring that into my classroom and use it especially while I am student teaching,” Moore said.

Next year’s early childhood winter conference is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 25, 2020. For more information about the Teaching and Learning Center, visit [3]www.hcde-texas.org/teaching-and-learning-center/ or call 713-696-1315.

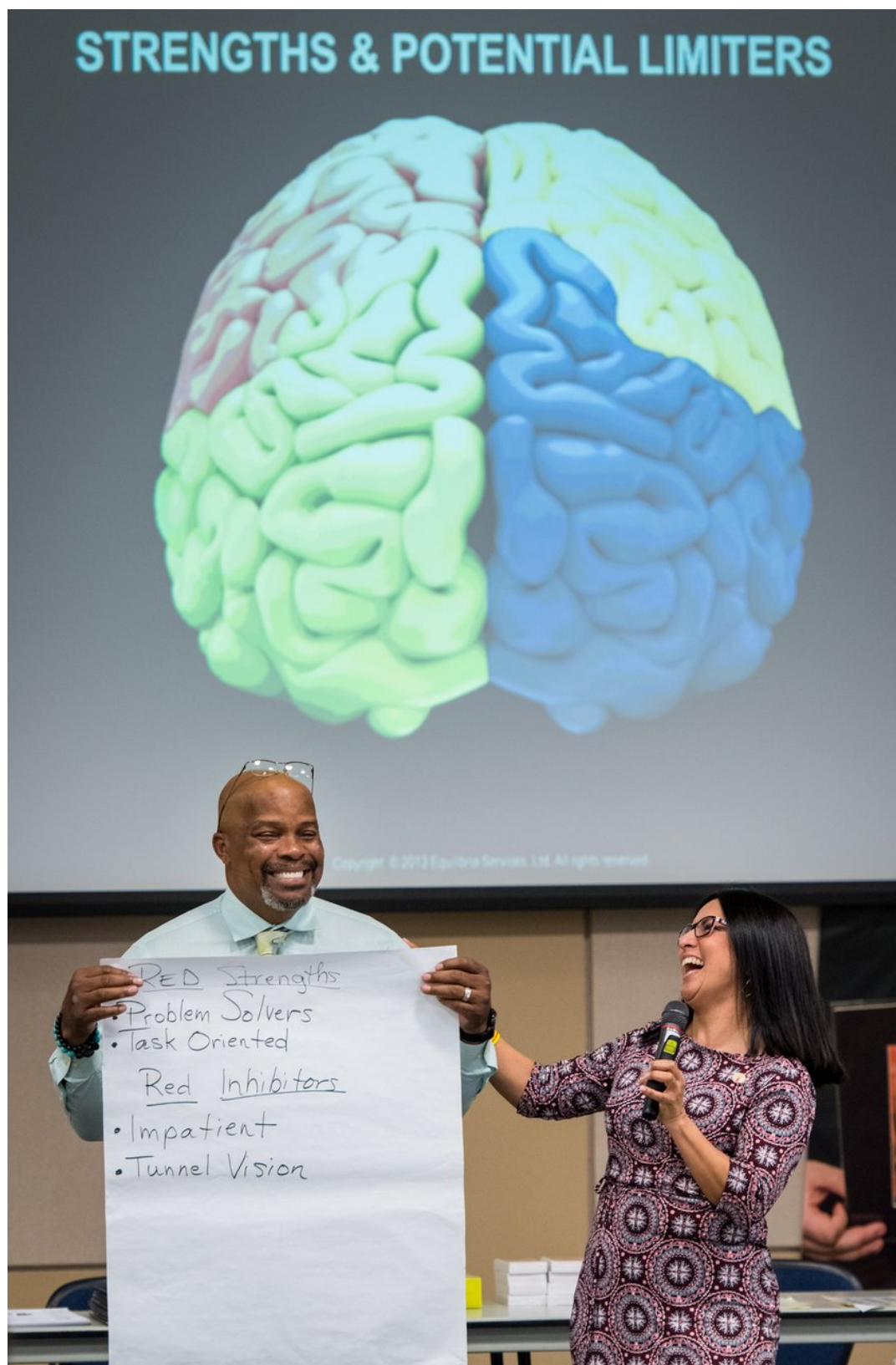
1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/20190126_ecwc_0273-e1548704296572.jpg

2. <https://bit.ly/2sZYQtv>

3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/teaching-and-learning-center/>

Show Your Colors to Build Teamwork, Leadership through HCDE, E-Colors in Education (2019-01-29 11:31) - hcdetx





Understanding your peers' personalities is providing a new frontier in education leadership and team communications. Classes offered through E-Colors in Education are available through a collaboration with Harris County Department of Education's Teaching and Learning Center.

The workshops begin in February and continue through June with various teamwork themes which focus on a personality profile and personal intervention. Customized campus workshops are also available.

Discovering your E-Colors is as simple as going to the Equilibria website and completing the free inventory at www.equilibria.com/PDI-home. Once discovered, the collaboration begins.

E-Colors in Education CEO Rosalinda Mercado created the educational arm of the company after experiencing the power of human performance coaching through professional development in education six years ago.

Her ah-ha moment came as the 17-year veteran in education applied E-colors as a principal at a charter school in a gang-riddled area of Houston. Knowing how to have conversations with students and staff based on differing character traits helped her to create a safe zone in the school populated with rival gangs: the MS-13 and Cholos.

“As a result, we were able to decrease gang violence,” she said.

HCDE Curriculum Director for Special Populations Brenda Arteaga was an administrative colleague and friend to Mercado at the time. She too saw the impact.

“It enhanced relationships across the board, from student-to-student, teacher-to-student, teacher-to-teacher and between schools and the central office,” she said. “It worked all the way around, and we saw a drastic reduction in bullying among students.”

E-colors in Education works with eight characteristics of high-performing teams through the series of workshops at HCDE. They are self-and-team awareness; shared visions and values; clarity of roles and processes; trust; diversity and inclusion; commitment; accountability and learning; and continuous improvement.

Personalities are expressed as a combination of two of the total four colors: blue, yellow, red and green. Red is a doer. Green is a thinker. Yellow is a socializer, and blue is a relator or people-oriented personality.

E-Colors has been used in the corporate world through the work environment arm for years. In addition to E-Colors in Education, Equilibria also has a sports component arm to promote teamwork.

“We are finding tremendous demand for E-colors in Education because people see that it works to help build teamwork and leadership skills,” said Arteaga.

For information about workshops offered at HCDE, email Arteaga at [2]barteaga@hcde-texas.org or call 713-696-1304.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/01/20190118_colors_0061.jpg

2. <mailto:barteaga@hcde-texas.org>

Space: The Next Giant Step Kicks Off Ecobot Challenge 2019 Robotics Competition (2019-01-29 17:43) - hcdetx



All-Earth Ecobot Challenge 2019 takes elementary students in grades fourth through sixth to the colonization of Mars and beyond through a robotics journey. The challenge reveal is held each year and kicks off the Ecobot Challenge. This year's unveiling was delivered at Galena Park Independent School District on Jan. 26.

View the promo video about the 2019 challenge:

[youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8NITtBJp94>]

The competition for the elementary-level challenge will be held on April 27 at Berry Center, Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, 8877 Barker Cypress Road. An estimated 400 students will participate this year in 80 teams of 4 students. Students come from both public, private and home school environments.

The competition is funded through Harris County Department of Education and organized by HCDE's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids.

Using Lego Mindstorms robotic kits, students conquer the challenge table which is organized in quadrants. One quadrant has the robot orbiting Earth. The next requires a module landing, moon samples and planting the U.S. flag. On the third mission samples of Mars are collected, and the rover is repaired. Finally, Mars is colonized as kilopower panels, batteries, oxygen, water and food are provided. Asteroids are redirected. Bonus rounds include rocket launches.

The next practice day is set for Feb. 23 from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington.

Registration for the elementary challenge is open until April 5. Go to [1]www.ecobotchallenge.com for more information and to register as a participant or volunteer.

A middle school challenge for seventh and eighth graders provides a drone competition on May 17 at Space Center Houston, 1601 E. Nasa Parkway, Houston. Practice day for that event is set for March 23 at HCDE. Registration for that event has closed.

1. <http://www.ecobotchallenge.com/>

1.2 February

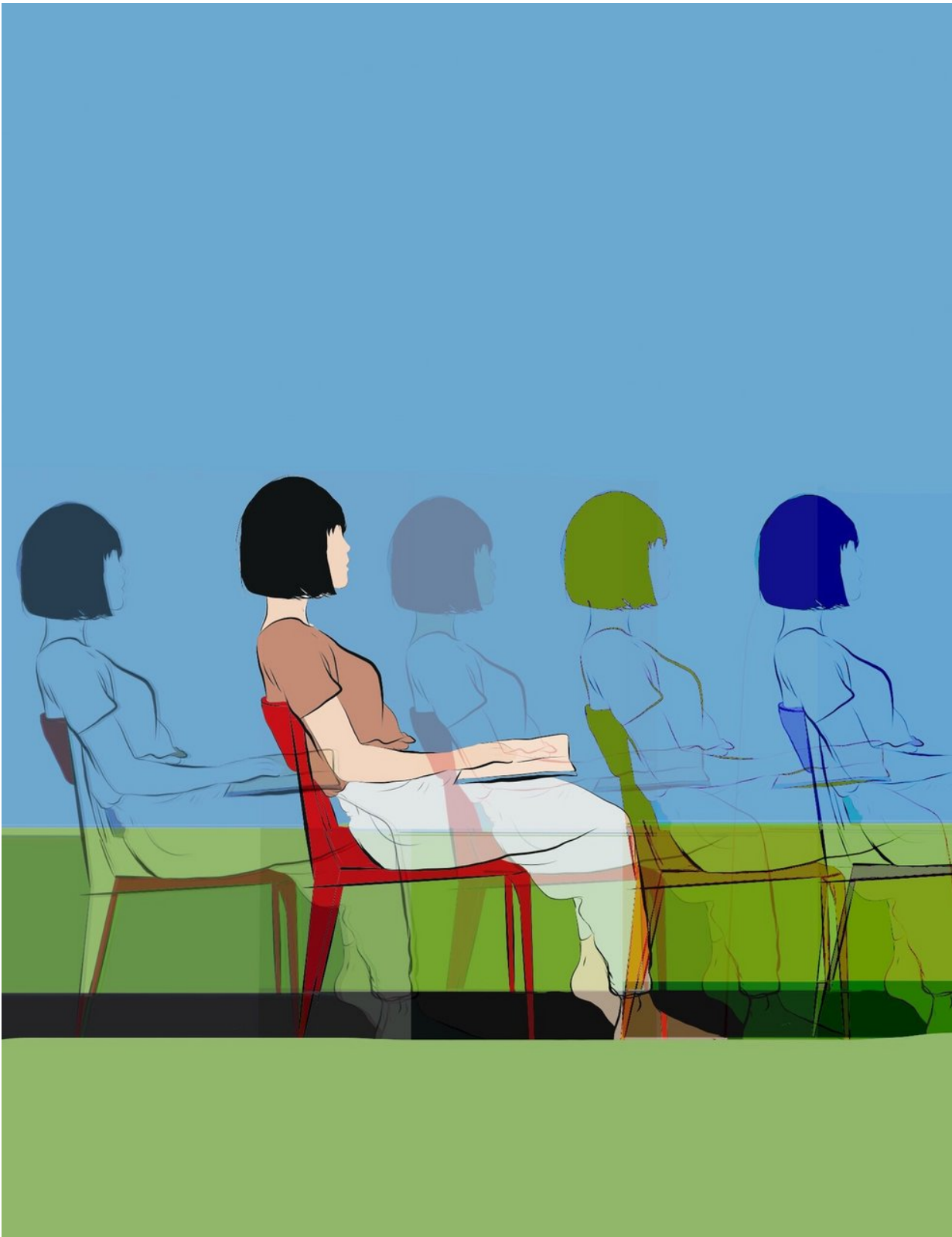
3,263 Talented Teens in Harris County Earn Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards through HCDE (2019-02-04 09:43) - hcdetx



































Harris County Department of Education recognizes the art and writing talents of teens throughout Harris County as regional sponsors of the celebrated 2019 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Artist award ceremonies, receptions and scholarships are announced as 3,263 Harris County students from public, private and home schools receive awards.

View the student awardees: [1]<https://hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards/awardees/> .

Twenty-two school districts, 26 private schools and home schools are represented as students earn Gold Key, Silver Key and honorable mention awards. Top-award Gold Key recipients advance to national judging to be considered for Gold and Silver Medals which are announced March 12 and awarded on June 6 through a ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

Awardees find common ground with alumni Scholastic Art & Writing honorees and famous writers and artists such as Stephen King, Dan Fogelberg, Sylvia Plath, Robert Redford, Truman Capote, Andy Warhol, Joyce Carol Oates, Marc Brown and Jaida Jones.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, founded in 1923, provides young artists and writers in grades 7-12 with the opportunity to showcase their art and writing talents. The competition's mission is to bring outstanding visual art and writing created by teens to a national audience by showcasing the work and encouraging creative and career development.

"Judges who are writing and art professionals volunteered to judge an amazing record number of 7,742 entries of art and writing this year ranging from photography to poetry to mixed media to short stories," said Andrea Segraves, regional coordinator for Scholastic Art & Writing at HCDE. "In addition to being beholden to our judges, we recognize the dedication of teachers who help these young artists cultivate their talents and assist them in entering their work."

Students submitted their work through the 759 teachers who support and participate in HCDE's regional competition. Several hundred volunteer art and writing professionals judge the submittals.

"We are grateful for the supporters of Scholastic Art & Writing in Harris County—from the community supporters who offer space to showcase art and writing to the companies who offer student scholarships to the hundreds of judges who volunteer their time," said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. "There is a deep well of artistic talent represented, and we are proud to host, showcase and support this iconic program."

The following area school districts are represented: Aldine, Alief, Alvin, Clear Creek, Crosby, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Houston, Huffman, Humble, Katy, Klein, New Caney, Pasadena, Pearland, Spring Branch, Spring, Tomball and Waller.

Private school students with awards include: British International School of Houston, Concordia Lutheran High School, Duchesne Academy Of Sacred Heart, Emery Weiner School, Episcopal High School, Houston Christian High School, Incarnate Word Academy, Kinkaid School, River Oaks Baptist School, St Agnes Academy, St Francis Episcopal Day School, St. John's School, Veritas Christian Academy, the Village School, Awty International School, Incarnate Word Academy, Kinkaid School, Presbyterian School, River Oaks Baptist School, St. Agnes Academy, St John XXIII Preparatory High School and St. Thomas Episcopal School.

Through the art categories, students gain 361 Gold Keys, 514 Silver Keys, and 835 honorable mentions. In the writing categories, students earn 359 Gold Keys, 579 Silver Keys, and 615 honorable mentions.

Ten students earned recognition through the American Voices and American Vision awards. These 10 awards are judged nationally through Scholastic Art & Writing in New York City for American Voices/American Visions Medals. One in each art and writing category will be selected and announced in March.

American Visions (art) nominees: Carolina Colon, Clear Lake Intermediate School, Clear Creek ISD; Julia Espino, Cypress Woods High School, Cy-Fair ISD; Axel Maldonado, Sam Rayburn High School, Pasadena ISD; Anthony Vega, Sam Rayburn High School, Pasadena ISD; and Annie Zhu (individual entry).

American Voices (writing) nominees: Nyla Hartigan, St. John's School, private; Kahani Malhotra, Village School, private; Luke Stein, Klein Collins High School, Klein ISD; Jack Trent, St. John's School, private; and Elizabeth Willms, Deer Park High School-North Campus, Deer Park ISD.

For more information about HCDE's regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and opportunities to sponsor, judge and enter the competition, go to [2]www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic .

1. <https://hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards/awardees/>

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic>

Chavez Honored as 2019 Next Generation of Afterschool Leaders

(2019-02-06 09:10) - hcdetx



[1]



Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids) Program Coordinator Jacqueline Chavez was recently honored as one of the National Afterschool Association's (NAA) 2019 Next Generation of Afterschool Leaders. The NAA chooses up and coming young afterschool leaders under age 30 for the award.

"The feeling of having all of your hard work recognized is wonderful," Chavez said. "It made me think of all the people who helped me get to this point in my career. It also motivated me to keep going and continue helping kids reach their full potential."

In selecting honorees, the NAA sought to highlight emerging professionals who are active in the afterschool community—young leaders who possess passion, creativity and a commitment to youth; who embrace professional development; and who embody the NAA core competencies. Twenty-four individuals were profiled in the winter 2019 issue of NAA's Afterschool Today magazine. To view the digital edition of the magazine, go to [2]<https://bit.ly/2R7MYz9> .

She has been in her current position for about two years and provides support and consultation to service providers and community-based, out-of-school time programs. CASE for Kids provides resources, training and afterschool services for over 14,000 students in greater Harris County.

After graduating from Katy High School and the University of Texas in Austin, she served as an AmeriCorps member with United Way of Greater Houston and Project GRAD Houston, two partners of CASE for Kids. With these programs, she started working with youth outside the classroom through reading programs and mentorships.

While working at the United Way, she would go to different elementary schools during after-school hours and facilitate a peer tutoring program in reading and math. Her ah-ha moment came at the end of the school year when an older student tutor asked if she could be involved in the program every day because she loved working with her buddy.

"I knew the older student tutor made a new friend, but also gained confidence in her math skills," she said. "It truly was a joy to work with kids in a more informal setting."

Chavez had a chance to interact with AmeriCorps members from CASE for Kids through different service projects and started to get an idea of what CASE for Kids was all about.

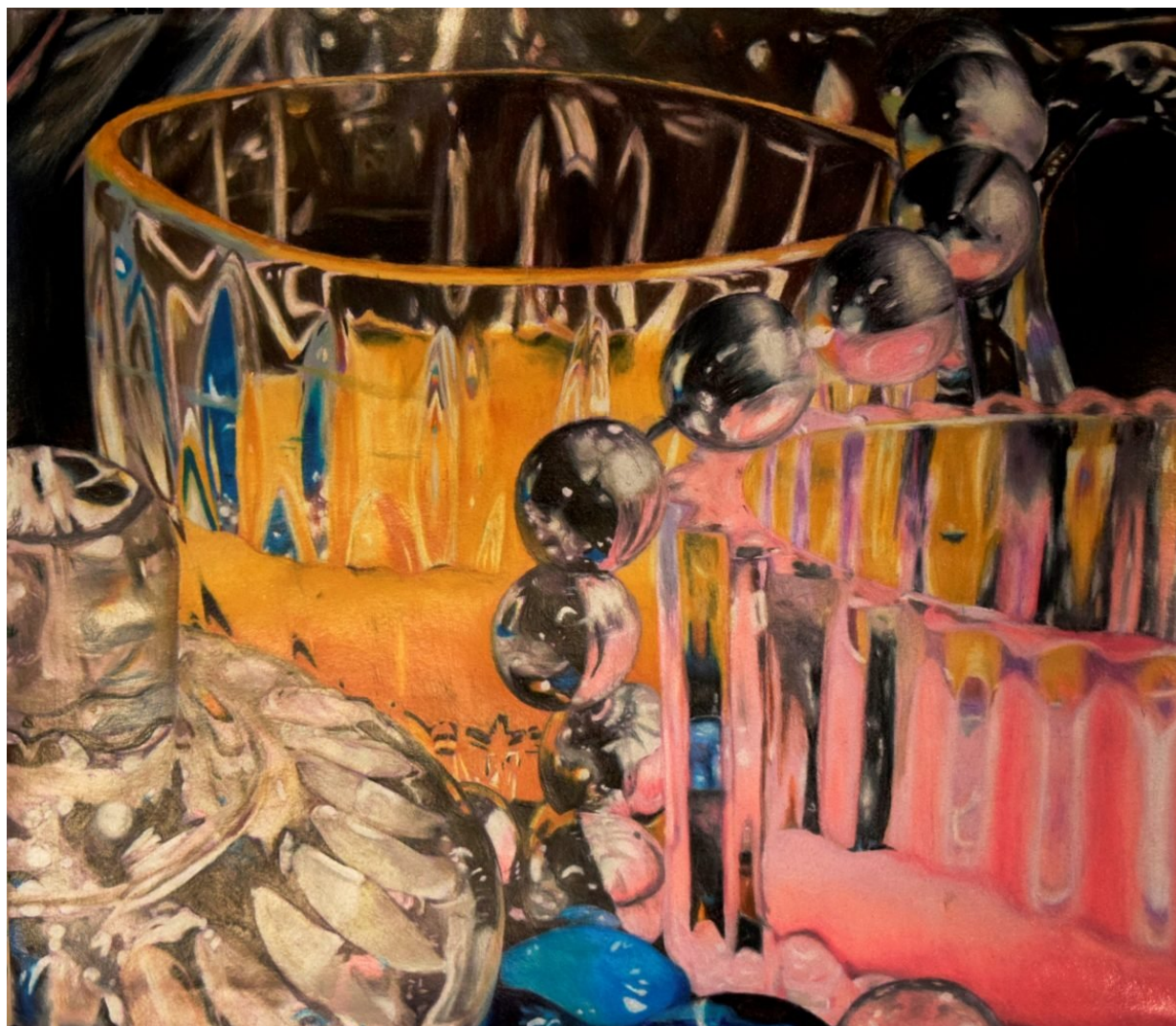
"When my service term ended, I knew I wanted to continue working in the afterschool field and the assistant director of Project GRAD recommended me for a job with CASE for Kids," she said.

Afterschool and CASE for Kids provides so many opportunities for youth to learn about different careers and hobbies.

"I saw politicians and activists in the making at CASE Debates tournaments where they debated about climate change and education policies," Chavez said. "Kids in afterschool are exploring and discovering their interests around Harris County, and we need to continue giving them the opportunity to learn about them in a safe space."

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/20181025_lightson_0192-e1549465232383.jpg
2. <https://bit.ly/2R7MYz9>

Artistic Talent of Harris County Teens Showcased at 2 Local Exhibits for Scholastic Art & Writing Awards (2019-02-12 17:12) - hcdetx





Art and writing created by Harris County teens in grades 7-12 is showcased from Feb. 18 through March 17 at Spring Street Studios and Texas Art Supply. Harris County Department of Education supports The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards as the regional affiliate and celebrates the talents of awardees through two artists exhibits and receptions.

Spring Street Studios, 1824 Spring St., Houston, Texas, 77007, opens its doors to the public with several hundred student works on view from Gold Key and Silver Key recipients in grades 9-12 from public and private high schools. A reception is planned from 4:30-6 p.m. on Feb. 28. For studio hours, go to www.springstreetstudios.info .



Texas Art Supply, 2001 Montrose Blvd., Houston, Texas 77006, hosts art from students in grades 7-8 from public and private schools and provides a reception Feb. 21 from 4:30-6 p.m. Go to www.texasart.com for store hours to view the exhibit.

Since 1923, Scholastic Art & Writing has showcased the artistic vision, ingenuity and talent of youth and includes notable alumni like Andy Warhol and Joyce Carol Oates. Students this year submitted nearly 350,000 original works in 29 different categories of art and writing. HCDE, the regional affiliate, judged over 7,000 entries in 2019.

Support our teen artists and writers by viewing their amazing work and encouraging their promising futures.

 Harris County Department of Education

Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Exhibit/Reception

Spring Street Studios
 Students Grades **9-12**
 1824 Spring Street, Houston, Texas 77007

Exhibit Feb. 18-March 17 **Meet the Artists Reception** Feb. 28, 4:30-6 p.m.

Texas Art Supply
 Students Grades **7-8**
 2001 Montrose Blvd., Houston, TX 77006

Exhibit Feb. 18-March 17 **Meet the Artists Reception** Feb. 21, 4:30-6 p.m.

 **Scholastic Art & Writing Awards**

Our students are honored among alumni like Andy Warhol, Dan Fogelberg, Joyce Carol Oates and Robert Redford. Harris County Department of Education is Regional Affiliate of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. Support, enter or judge the Awards: www.hcde-texas.org/Scholastic-Awards.

View our postcard pdf: [4]<http://hcde-texas.org/media/uploads/2019/02/ScholasticPushcard2019.pdf>

For more information about The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, go to [5]<https://hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards/awardees/>.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/rubio_g_i_13099776-e1550013024238.jpg
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/scholasticpushcard20192.jpg>
3. <https://hcde-texas.org/administrator/upload.php?item=5278>
4. <http://hcde-texas.org/media/uploads/2019/02/ScholasticPushcard2019.pdf>
5. <https://hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards/awardees/>

Persistence Helps Adult Student Bike the Distance to Gain GED, State Award (2019-02-15 09:26) - hcdetx





GED student Silvia Cruz, 58, rode her bike nine miles each way to her class at Harris County Department of Education last year and ultimately earned her high school equivalency degree.

Her persistence literally paid off this month as she received a \$500 check from Burlington English along with the “English as a Second Language Persistence Award” through the Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE). The nonprofit provides professional development, networking and state-wide recognition to adult education programs in Texas.

HCDE Adult Education Manager May O'Brien nominated Cruz for the award after learning about Cruz's dogged determination to get to class. Through heat, humidity and rain, the Mexico native braved the elements and served as a role model to her fellow students as she logged in 473 class hours.

Cruz attended classes at the Spring Branch Family Development Center as an ESL adult learner and Memorial Assistance Ministries for GED classes, two of the 50-plus community locations where HCDE holds adult education and workforce classes. Teacher Rosie Coleman called her student an inspiration to her fellow students as she assisted them as a peer tutor.

Although Cruz couldn't attend the TALAE Conference to claim her award, she got the proverbial "check in the mail" after moving to her new home in New Mexico.

O'Brien said Cruz expressed her gratitude for the award via phone.

Each Texas region awards one "persistence" award to an ESL student who is an exceptional student, according to O'Brien.

"The coastal region is quite competitive for the award because it serves more than 50 percent of adult learners of the whole state," she said.

Adult Education Director Stephanie Ross explained that HCDE Adult Education offers 10,000 adults the opportunity to go back to school each year through its flexible scheduling that includes morning, afternoon, evening and online or distance learning. GED, ESL and workforce training classes help adults gain the skills necessary to take advantage of better job opportunities or move into higher education.

For more information about adult education classes, go to [2]www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/20180519_grads_0181_crop-e1550244060918.jpg

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education>

HCDE Public Recovery High School Provides Wrap-Around Approach for Addiction (2019-02-20 13:01) - hcdetx





Cy Lopez, 18, found out about Harris County's first public recovery high school through his therapy group while recovering from addiction.

The bright, determined young man, who takes advanced academic courses, visited the school called Fortis Academy after trying to return to his home school in north Houston while recovering from his addiction. There, peer pressure provided too much temptation.

"He's been one of our leaders here since joining our school this year," said Anthony Moten, principal at Fortis, a Latin term associated with strength, courage and determination.

Fortis is building its student roster this year as Harris County Department of Education administrators spread the word about the campus in the 25 school districts it serves, who send students to Fortis on a contractual basis. The school represents a huge paradigm shift in treating substance abuse.

"It's moving educators to understand a punitive-discipline model versus a restorative-therapeutic model," said James Colbert Jr., superintendent of HCDE and a strong proponent of the recovery school.

The school combines counseling, recovery coaching and academics in a low, student-to-faculty ratio

for students who have completed substance abuse or dependency rehab programs. The goal is for students to continue their high school education in a sober environment.

[2]



Omar Lopez, Cy's father, attends meetings with his son and counselors at the school. One of the school's foundational principles is that it is important for parents to be active in their children's sobriety.

"The main thing about this school is the support it gives to kids to stay sober," said Omar as he visits his son at the school. "He is doing good with his grades and being sober."

Fortis has all the academic elements of a regular high school, with certified classroom teachers for core subjects. Small classes are coupled with computer electives, including physical education. Last month the school opened its culinary component, a kitchen where students get certified in safety and sanitation before learning to cook and bake. In the kitchen, students come together as a team and collaborate as they gain new skills to bolster their preparation for life after high school, as well as their self-esteem.

Senior Juan Garcia finds his cooking skills handy in winning the approval of his girlfriend, he said while learning to make crepes. Garcia will be the school's first graduate, walking the stage in May at his home school in Galena Park ISD.

Cy's father is impressed by the culinary program at Fortis and appreciative of the recovery support his son receives each day. He's a strong advocate for public recovery high schools such as Fortis, even though they are relatively rare, with only three in the state of Texas.

"Private recovery schools are not affordable for many people," he said. "What you don't know, you don't know, and more people should know about this school. Recovery education has to be shared with low-income parents too."

He points to the benefits to taxpayers with public recovery schools tackling problems of addiction early on versus having residents go through the penal system later.

"The amount of taxpayer money we can be saving by having these kids here for four years versus 10 years in jail is amazing," he said, circling his arms to demonstrate the greater good. "Can't you see the difference in the money and lives saved?"

Omar insists his son Cy is learning how to live a good life without drugs or alcohol, despite the temptations of society. He credits Fortis for that change in attitude and said one of the greatest benefits of the school is Cy's ability to have a personalized recovery coach and meetings at the school during the day.

Cy said this model allows for problems to be tackled head on.

"We share what we're going through, and they give us feedback and help us learn to deal with issues," he said. "They listen to me, and I listen."

For more information about Fortis Academy, go to [3]www.hcde-texas.org/schools/fortis-academy.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/20190206_culinary_0036-1-e1550690160960.jpg

2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/20190206_culinary_0003-e1550689085811.jpg
3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/schools/fortis-academy>

HCDE Communicators Earn Multiple Prestigious Texas School Public Relations Association Awards (2019-02-25 15:05) - hcdetx

[1]



Harris County Department of Education communicators earned 16 awards for outstanding education communications from the Texas School Public Relations Association. Communications and Creative Services staff received the awards at the 57th Annual Texas School Public Relations Association Conference in Cedar Creek, Texas on Feb. 20.

This year, over 1,700 entries were judged through categories including photography, writing, video, advertisements, social media, brochures and posters. Categories of entries are divided based on merit, including Bronze Star, Silver Star, and Gold Star. Judges reviewed highest-scoring Gold Star winners and selected Best of Category awards. The Crystal Commendation category consisted of a multifaceted promotional program or campaign employing a variety of media, occurring over a period of time and encompassing well-defined goals, strategies or activities. One Crystal Commen-

ation award was given out per category.

A top-category Crystal Commendation award was awarded for photography portfolio to Dave Einsel.

In addition, the communications staff gained six Gold Star awards for the following entries:

- Harris County School District Calendars, Schools division, calendar/planner, Angela Hider, Lindsey Sanders and Carol Vaughn
- HCDE- Holiday Card, Communications division, holiday/commemorative, Angela Hider
- Free, Skilled Medical Classes at HCDE Supply Building-Block Approach to Medical Careers, Adult Education division, published news releases, edited, Carol Vaughn
- HCDE Pocket Folder, Communications division, advertisement-other, Angela Hider
- 10th Annual All-Earth Ecobot Challenge!, Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment (CASE) for Kids division, video-general event, Daniel Villarreal
- The Hub, Communications division, e-newsletter internal, Carol Vaughn, Lindsey Sanders, Daniel Villarreal, Juan Lopez, Angela Hider, Dave Einsel and Tammy Lanier

Six Silver Stars and three Bronze Star were awarded:

- Head Start Annual Report 2016-17, Head Start division, annual report, Angela Hider and Lindsey Sanders
- Emotional Harvey Narrative Earns Kinkaid Student HCDE Regional Best-in-Class Award, Scholastic Art & Writing, Writing, Carol Vaughn
- Moving Forward: A Bicycle and Determination Propel ESL Student to GED, Adult Education division, published news or feature, Carol Vaughn
- Storybooks Come to Life through HCDE Occupational Therapist Assistant, Girl Scout, School-Based Therapy Services division, published news or feature, Carol Vaughn
- Team Building, Teaching and Learning Center division, photo-other subjects, Dave Einsel
- Go Public: Why you should support public schools, Client Engagement division, video-promotional, Dave Einsel and Daniel Villarreal
- First Day Friends, Schools division, photo-other subjects (Bronze Star), Dave Einsel
- HCDE's Tax Rate!, Administration division, video-marketing (Bronze Star), Dave Einsel, Lindsey Sanders and Daniel Villarreal

- Making Afterschool Real: 3 Community Projects, CASE for Kids division, video-marketing (Bronze Star), Dave Einsel, Lindsey Sanders and Daniel Villareal

The Texas School Public Relations Association is a nonprofit, professional organization dedicated to promoting public schools through effective communications. With more than 900 members, TSPRA is comprised primarily of public information and communications professionals who serve public school districts and education organizations of Texas. Membership also includes superintendents, administrators, principals, web/technology/electronic media and graphic professionals, education foundation executive directors and their boards, association executive directors, school consultants, vendors, and others who support public education in the state. TSPRA is a chapter of the National School Public Relations Association.

Photo: Members of the Harris County Department of Education's Communications and Creative Services and Client Engagement attend the 2019 Texas School Public Relations Association Conference where the team earned 16 awards for work which benefits Harris County students and educators.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/tspra-group-1.jpg>

1.3 March

HCDE Teaching and Learning Center Supports 650 Teens at Youth Symposium (2019-03-01 15:15) - hcdetx















The [1]Teaching and Learning Center supported the Youth Symposium in Feb. 22 as more than 650 teens and their parents attended the career exploration day at Moody Gardens in Galveston. The day is sponsored annually in collaboration with the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators Conference.

Colleges provided information booths and career professionals supplied breakout sessions in areas ranging from medicine to the military. Several motivational speakers opened the symposium. Parents were supported through a parent roundtable discussion which focused on the rigors and routines of college and offered mentorships.

“We’re concerned about engaging with our local students and informing them of their options,” said Frances Watson-Hester, senior director for TLC. “Also, our data supports that some kids that make it to college don’t know how to navigate once they get there. When parents haven’t attended, they often don’t know either.”

The TLC division’s primary mission is providing support for educators, but Hester stressed the need to also support local students by letting them hear about career options outside the school day.

“It’s a great opportunity to learn something new,” said Galveston Independent School District

senior Barb Goodeaux, 18, an aspiring youth counselor.

Goodeaux will be a first-generation college student and admits she didn't have the best childhood, but she's using those experiences to begin her path to help others.

HCDE Assistant Superintendent for Education and Enrichment Kimberly McLeod, who also served as board president for TABSE this year, said the turnout for the symposium was the largest in history, with students attending from Houston, Aldine, Galveston and Manor school districts as well as Provision Academy Charter School. TABSE provided two, \$5,000 student scholarships to needy students in the foster care system.

"We wanted to provide access for the students to meet people who can teach and guide them and give them hope for the future by providing support resources," McLeod said.

1. <https://hcde-texas.org/teaching-and-learning-center/>

\$10,750 in Scholarships Announced, Teens Earn HCDE Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards (2019-03-05 09:53) - hcdetx

[1]



Student and teacher scholarships totaling \$10,750 were awarded to Harris County students in public and private schools as Harris County Department of Education announces regional affiliate recipients of the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. The Scholastic Awards are the largest, most prestigious awards program in the country for creative teens in grades 7-12.

Including in the recognitions are students from Klein, Deer Park, Cy-Fair, Pasadena, Clear Creek, Galena Park, Spring, Aldine, Houston, Humble, Crosby, Spring Branch, Katy and Crosby independent school districts. Private school awardees are from St. John's School and the Village School. A meritorious teacher award is delivered to Pearland Independent School District. Student works now advance for judging at the national level in New York City.

[2]



“We are grateful to our corporate sponsors as well as Harris County Department of Education administration and trustees for providing these monetary awards for our students,” said Andrea Segraves, coordinator for HCDE’s Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. “Their support validates the significance of these students’ fine arts achievements.”

Corporate donors this year included Texas Art Supply, Glassell School of Art and an anonymous donation.

The following students have been awarded scholarships:

ART:

American Vision Nominees (\$250 each, donated by HCDE):

- Carolina Colon, Clear Lake Intermediate School, Clear Creek ISD, teacher Terri Nicolosi
- Julia Espino, Cypress Woods High School, Cy-Fair ISD, teacher Charlotte Stuart
- Axel Maldonado, Sam Rayburn High School, Pasadena ISD, teacher Victor Raygoza
- Anthony Vega, Sam Rayburn High School, Pasadena ISD, teacher Gabriel Flores
- Annie Zhu, Home School, teacher Ping Zhao

Superintendent’s Award (\$250 donated by HCDE): Maria Cortes, Galena Park High School, Galena Park ISD, teacher Antonio Hurtado

HCDE Trustees’ Incentive Award (\$500 donated by HCDE): An Nguyen, Spring High School, Spring ISD, teacher Amanda Beisert

HCDE Trustees’ Exemplary Award (\$1,000 donated by HCDE): Evieh’bi Jan Nia Braddy,

Chester W Nimitz High School, Aldine ISD, teacher Jorge Vazquez

Texas Art Supply Award Winners (\$500 each, donated by Texas Art Supply):

- Chloe Cornor, Langham Creek High School, Cy-Fair ISD, teacher Bohye Na
- Josue Hernandez-Navarro, Spring High School, Spring ISD, teacher Amanda Beisert
- Ashley Monroe, Meyerland Performing & Visual Arts Middle School, Houston ISD, teacher Christina Gonzalez
- Swapna Ramchandra, Clear Springs High School, Clear Creek ISD, teacher Lisette McClung
- Daniela Soto Borboa, Summer Creek High School, Humble ISD, teacher Lynnette Gilbert
- Marco Sosa, Sam Rayburn High School, Pasadena ISD, teachers Daniel Reyna & Victor Raygoza
- Ruby Zhou, Memorial High School, Spring Branch ISD, teacher Marilyn Guerinot
- Charles Danna, Klein Oak High School, Klein ISD, teachers Richard Cornall and Jennifer Schiebel
- Angel Luo, Cinco Ranch High School, Katy ISD, teacher Patricia Kuhn
- Issak Haffelfinger, Crosby High School, Crosby ISD, teacher Tyra Baxter

WRITING:

American Voice Nominees (\$250 each, donated by HCDE):

- Nyla Hartigan, St. John's School, Private, teacher Kemberly Kemp
- Kahani Malhotra, Village School, Private, teacher Diane Fanning
- Luke Stein, Klein Collins High School, Klein ISD, teacher Amber Wallace
- Jack Trent, St. John's School, Private, teacher Warren Rawson
- Elizabeth Willms, Deer Park High School, Deer Park ISD, teacher Joshua Nebrida

Superintendent's Award (\$250 donated by HCDE): Khanh Dang, Albright Middle School, Alief ISD, teacher Adriana Hernandez

HCDE Trustees' Incentive Award (\$500 donated by HCDE): Ahnia Leary, Lamar High School, Houston ISD, teacher Yi-Shan Chen

HCDE Trustees' Exemplary Award (\$1,000 donated by HCDE): Rodrigo Milan, Klein Cain High School, Klein ISD, teacher Eric Cloninger

Susan O'Conner Educator of Excellence Teacher Award (\$500 anonymous donation): Teacher Susan Henson, Pearland ISD

For more information about the Awards receptions and awardees, go to <https://hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards/awardees/> .

View our blog posts for more information about awardees and receptions: [3]<https://wp.me/p4QJFI-U1> and [4]<https://wp.me/p4QJFI-T9>

Photo: Superintendent's Award (\$250 donated by HCDE) Spiraling by Maria Cortes, Galena Park High School, Galena Park ISD, teacher Antonio Hurtado

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/cortes_m_i_spiraling-e1551800996801.jpg
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/good-news-yellow-sun-logo.jpg>
3. <https://wp.me/p4QJFI-U1>
4. <https://wp.me/p4QJFI-T9>

CASE Debates Wraps Up Year with City Championship Winnings

(2019-03-05 17:32) - hcdetx













A Harris County Department of Education funded program called CASE Debates culminated its second year at the 2019 Houston Urban Debate League (HUDL) City Championships held at the Bob Casey Federal Courthouse on March 2. Several teams placed first and second and will move on to national competition.

The program operated by the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids) is an expansion of a program designed by HUDL to serve Houston Independent School District. CASE Debates provides debate for other Harris County school districts, including charter schools. This year the program served 284 students.

The following schools and students will be advancing to national competition. These students also earned scholarships after placing first and second at the city level, underwritten by the family of Benjamin Donald Hatfield and the HUDL Young Professionals Council.

Each first-place winning team receives a “Traveling Trophy” that features their names and school name engraved on a plate along with previous winning teams and schools. The trophy will stay at their school until the next year’s City Championship.

Policy Debate (Cross Examination) Winners

1st Place

Alief ISD-Kerr High School
Queen Eche and Hillary Nguyen

2nd Place

Harmony Public Schools-Harmony School of Advancement
Khalida Amla and Riley Hardwick

World Schools Debate Winners**1st Place**

Alief ISD-Kerr High School
Rahawa Ghebrelul, Bao Nguyen and Catherine Nguyen

2nd Place

Spring ISD-Spring Early College Academy
Bodehousse HoundekonAhmad Howard, Kennedy Scott and Ifeoma Neobolisa

2 in 5,000: Pasadena ISD's Sam Rayburn High School Artists Earn American Visions Nominations (2019-03-08 14:35) - hcdetx

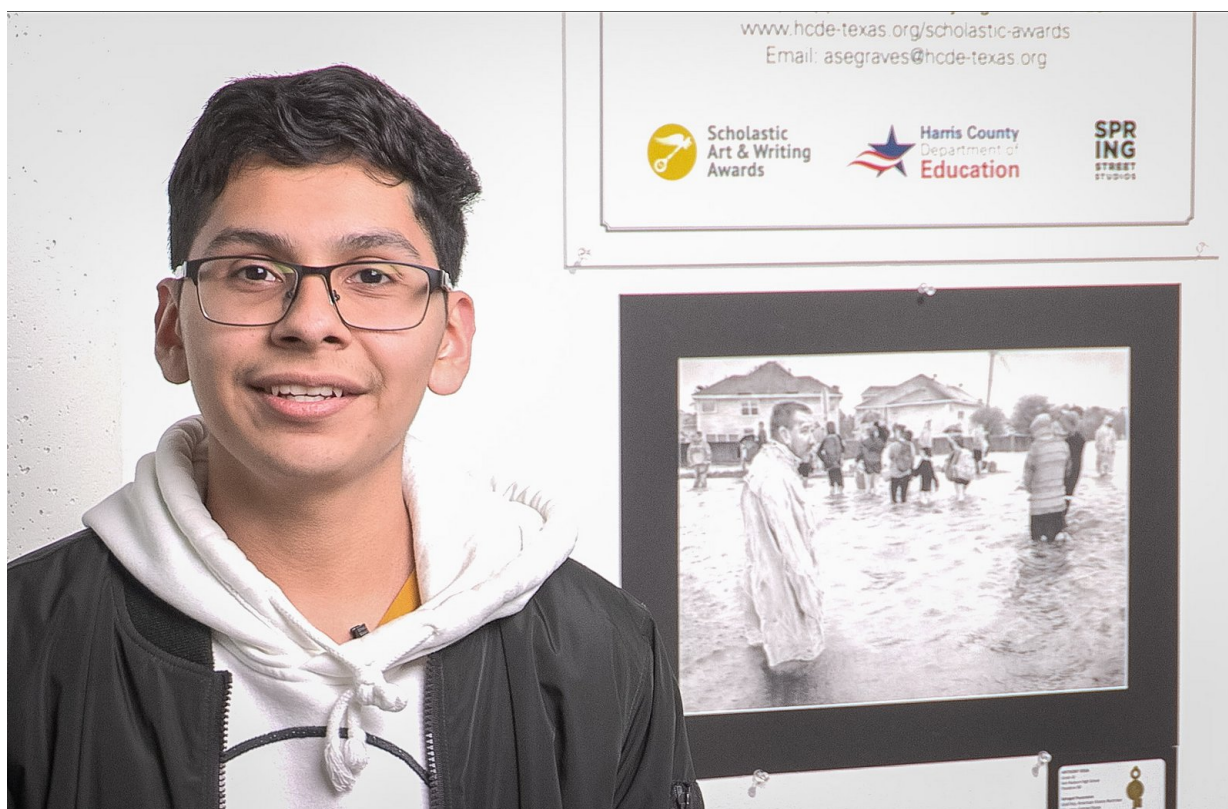
[1]



It is an incredible honor to be named an American Visions nominee, especially with over 5,000 Harris County Department of Education Scholastic Art entries this year. However, Sam Rayburn High School in Pasadena Independent School District is honored to have two students who were nominated for this prestigious art award.

Senior Axel Maldonado and junior Anthony Vega are two of the five American Visions nominations from our region.

[2]



Five works of art from each region are selected by HCDE's regional judges as American Voices & Visions nominees. Each receives a cash award of \$250 from HCDE. From the pool of five, a panel of jurors in New York City selects one artist from each region to receive an American Visions Medal. These Medalists from throughout the nation are celebrated during national events and exhibits in New York City in June.

[3]

GOOD NEWS
you can use!

"Five works, from across all categories and grades, are selected from those earning Gold Keys as
100

the 'Best of Show' for each local program as nominees for the American Visions & Voices Medals," HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Regional Coordinator Andrea Seagraves said. "To have two from one campus is a reflection of both student talent and powerful art instruction."

SRHS has had students nominated for the American Visions award in the past, but never two at the same time.

"It's a great honor," SRHS Art teacher Victor Raygoza said. "I think it hits the educators a little bit more than the students because we feel that we are doing something right, and the students are appreciating what we are teaching them more."

"The students are seeing that it's just not a picture, it has to tell a story and have some emotion behind it," SRHS Art teacher Gabriel Flores said. "They are learning to portray that within their images to get a story across."

In his first year of entering the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, Maldonado also received a Gold Key for his painting, Push Through. His inspiration for the painting came from a picture of a friend's brother touching a brick wall and taking a moment to think.

"You can see how he is trying to overcome certain obstacles in life, and I like the colors in the painting to bring it to life," he said.

From days of taking paper and placing it on the TV screen to trace objects that were being shown, Maldonado plans to pursue his love of art by attending an art school in the fall. He hopes to become a graphic designer/painter in the future and wants people to recognize him as an artist.

Vega's drawing and illustration, Salvaged Possessions, also received a Gold Key award. His drawing is of people walking through a flooded neighborhood after Hurricane Harvey hit the Houston-area in 2017.

"I chose to do this piece because it was a dark moment for us all and many friends and family were affected by the flooding," he said. "Seeing people struggling and losing their homes was emotional. I was able to capture their emotion in my artwork from a picture my teacher took after the storm."

Art gives Vega the chance to express his feelings and emotions into a piece for someone else to see.

He plans to continue creating art and make people feel great when they see his pieces.

The five nominees will find out the identity of the American Visions Medalist at the Scholastic Art & Writing Regional Gold and Silver Key Ceremony on March 26 and 27 at The Ballroom at Bayou Place.

Gold and Silver Key art pieces from high school students are on display until March 17 at Spring Street Studios, 1824 Spring St., Houston, TX 77007.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/axel-maldonado.jpg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/anthony-vega.jpg>
3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/good-news-yellow-sun-logo.jpg>

Bomb Prevention Awareness School Safety Series Hosted by HCDE and FEMA (2019-03-18 10:40) - hcdetx





School bomb threats cause anxiety and disrupt learning within the school community, especially since they are reoccurring more often.

Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools (CSSS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are hosting a free series of trainings with a 2019 Safety Series: An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure. The workshops dealing with the awareness, prevention and planning for potential campus threats are presented by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Explosives Specialist Bill Shockley.

Immediately following Columbine, schools across the nation experienced spikes in bomb threats and related incidents.

"As schools continue to build upon safety strategies, the threat of bombs must factor into that education," said Ecomet Burley, director of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools. "These trainings are critical for district and campus personnel."

A 2015 national study of more than 800 violent school bomb threat and shooting threats took research to a higher level by collecting original data and dissecting critical trends and patterns. It was revealed that more than 70 percent of the threats involved shooting and/or bomb threats. Thirty percent of these schools were evacuated, and 10 percent closed, oftentimes unnecessarily doing so, revealing a need for school threat assessment training.

These introductory courses provide an understanding of how to identify and respond to an improvised explosive device threat and protective measures to mitigate an IED threat. Various IED devices are examined and discussed.

The first training, Bombing Prevention Awareness, is scheduled for Thursday, March 28, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 6005 Westview, Houston, TX 77055. Register for the workshop: [2]<https://bit.ly/2NQdDA>
.

The second training, Protective Measures Course, will be held April 11 at 6005 Westview, Houston, TX 77055. Register for the workshop: [3]<https://bit.ly/2SS9XPE> .

Two other advance workshop trainings will be held later in the year: Threat Management Planning and IED Search Procedures Course are planned on June 25 and July 23 respectively. For more information contact school safety and security specialist Janice Owolabi at [4]jowolabi@hcde-texas.org.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/bomb-threat_1784x1162.jpg
2. <https://bit.ly/2NQdDA>
3. <https://bit.ly/2SS9XPE>
4. <mailto:jowolabi@hcde-texas.org>

HCDE Adult Learners 'Learn in Own Space at Own Pace' through TWC Grant

(2019-03-20 10:45) - hcdetx





Native Spanish speaker Liliana Martinez began learning English online six months before she walked into her adult learner classroom at Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) in northeast Houston. A Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) grant of \$174,798 recently awarded to HCDE Adult Education will give almost 3,000 additional students like her the opportunity and convenience of learning in their own space at their own pace.

The grant expands distance learning opportunities, virtual learning which can be accessed at home, on portable devices or through a public computer connection such as the library. Learning scenarios include using distance learning alone or combining it with traditional face-to-face classes as reinforcement.

Martinez, an immigrant from Michoacán, Mexico, came to America with a green card five years ago. Long work hours kept her from going to school. When she did go to class, she fell asleep due to exhaustion.

“I knew I wanted to study and improve my life, so I needed to learn,” she said.

After her work schedule became less hectic, Martinez contacted HCDE Adult Education and learned about the distance learning program. She decided to try it and committed to studying English online for five hours a week while she was wait-listed to begin free GED classes.

Six months later, Martinez retested for her English comprehension level and was accelerated to the ESL advanced level. Since September, she has been studying for the GED exam and will soon take the high school equivalency tests.

“Distance learning is beneficial because it reduces the obstacles many adults face when going back to school—lack of time, childcare issues, work schedule and no transportation,” said Stephanie Ross, director of HCDE Adult Education. “A great benefit is the study reinforcement it provides as homework reinforcement for all levels of learning.”

Students use online curricula for multiple levels of ESL, adult basic education for reading and writing, and advanced adult education for GED preparation. Software used includes GED Academy, USA Learns, Burlington English and Sed de Saber.

According to the TWC, students who engage in distance learning along with traditional learning outperform students who solely rely on classroom learning. In 2016-2017, 13,545 adults statewide engaged in distance learning. Of those, 60 percent completed one or more education levels, compared to 40 percent who did not participate.

Despite the favorable statistics, only 15 percent of all adult education students were utilizing distance learning. TWC is working to introduce more adult learners to the benefits of distance learning models.

“We are already seeing the benefit of our students using distance learning,” said Ross. “Our students benefit by using the hybrid model where they learn face-to-face along with distance learning. They also have the option of studying completely online.”

Martinez still likes the option of reinforcing her classroom learning with online learning.

“For me, online is good for learning grammar,” she said. “I need to listen and speak too, so classroom is better for that.”

At 37, Martinez is glad she decided to take advantage of online learning before entering the classroom.

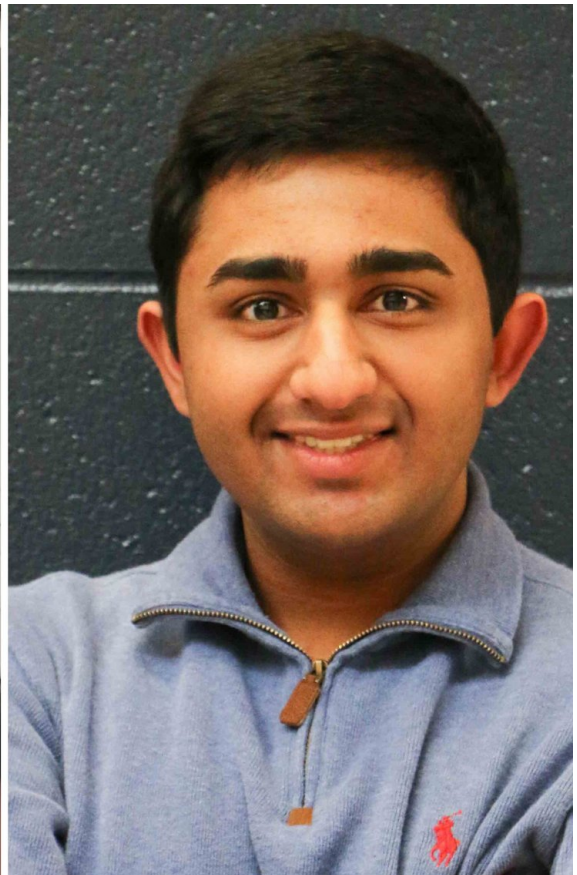
“You ask me why now?” she said. “I say, why not.”

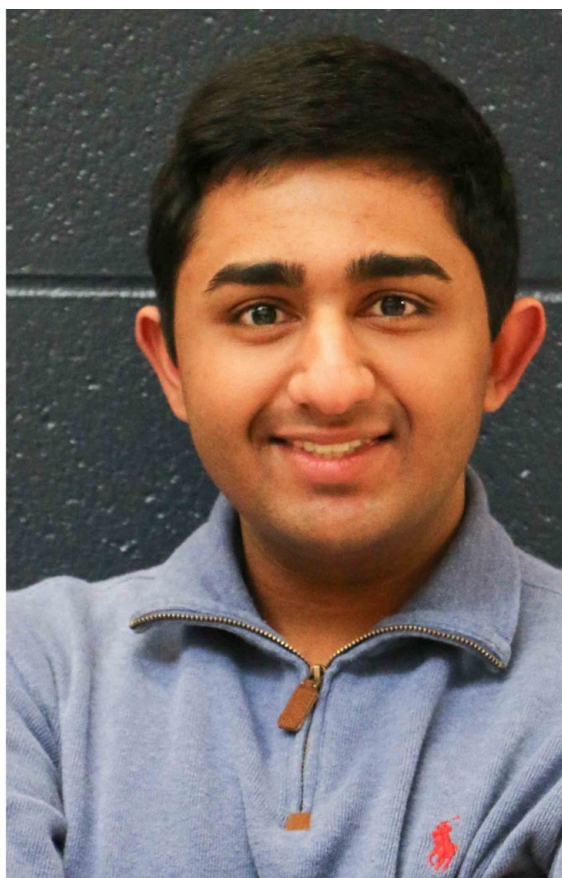
(HCDE Adult Education provides academic and workforce learning opportunities for adults at more than 50 community locations throughout greater Houston from highly qualified teachers, including classes in ESL, adult basic education and GED test preparation. Workforce classes include study areas such as medical assistant, pipefitting and construction. Classes are free on a first-come, first-served basis. For information, go to [2]www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education.)

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/20190220_distance_0005-e1553096576839.jpg

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education>

96 HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing Teens Earn National Bragging Rights at Carnegie Hall (2019-03-20 16:51) - hcdetx

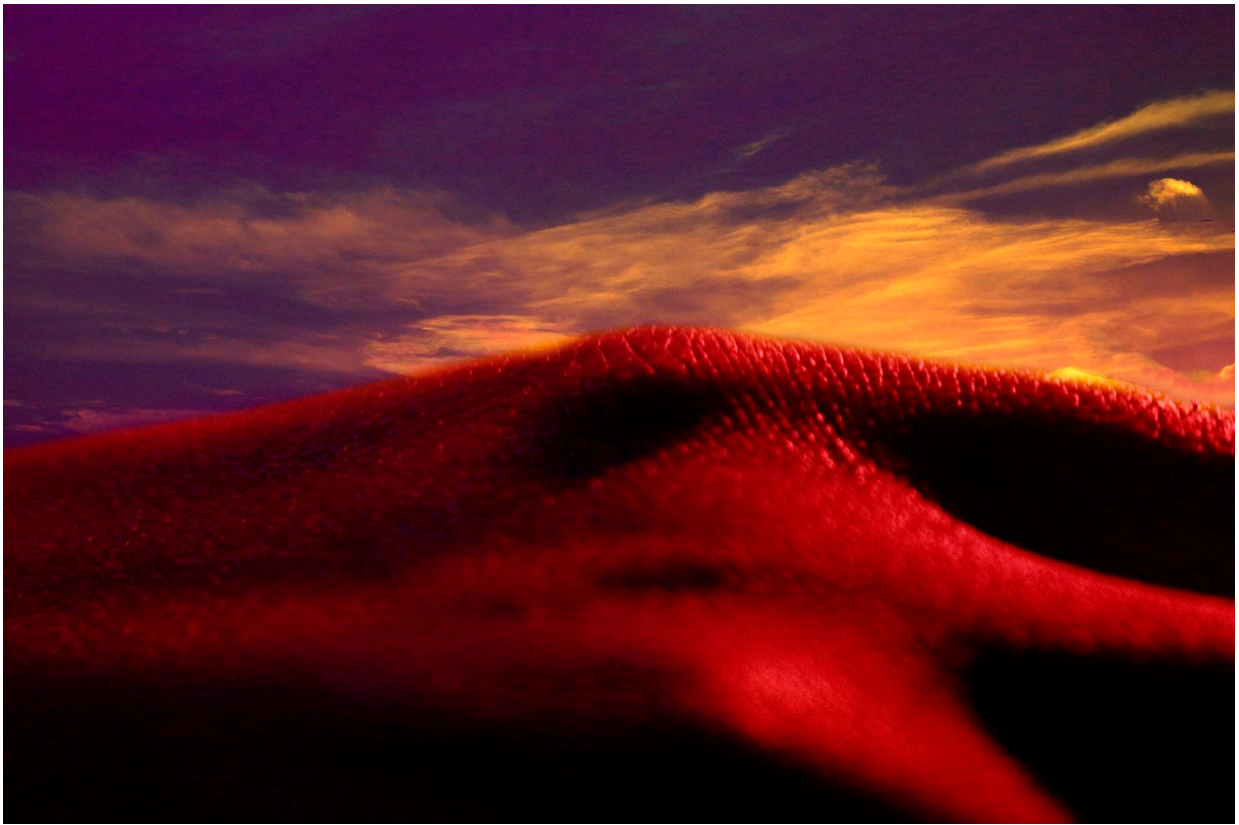




2 Seniors Gain Top Honors with \$10,000 Scholarships

Harris County teen artists and writers in grades 7-12 received a record-breaking 96 national Scholastic Art & Writing Medals and two of the 16 top, national \$10,000 scholarship honors from the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artist & Writers. View the list: [2]<https://bit.ly/2TOhoMj> .

“As the regional sponsor of Scholastic Art & Writing, Harris County Department of Education is proud of the students and teachers who share their talent and passion through this national platform,” said Andrea Segraves, HCDE’s Scholastic Art & Writing Regional Affiliate coordinator. “It’s an incredible level of talent and dedication as we report a 57 percent increase in national Medals this year and two, \$10,000 high school senior scholarship recipients.”



Taylor Powers

The two seniors named by the Alliance to each receive \$10,000 scholarships are artist Taylor Powers of Cypress Woods High School in Cy-Fair Independent School District and writer Divjot Walia of Glenda Dawson High School in Pearland Independent School District. The Gold Medal Portfolio is the Alliance's highest honor. Powers' sponsoring teacher is Tina Fox and Walia's sponsoring teacher is Susan Henson.

Two students gained American Visions and Voices awards, two best of class, Gold Medal distinctions for the region. They are student Axel Maldonado (sponsoring teacher Victor Raygoza), American Visions awardee from Sam Rayburn High School in Pasadena Independent School District, and student Kahani Malhotra (sponsoring teacher Diane Fanning), American Voices Medalist from the Village School.



Axel Maldonado, Pasadena ISD

This year, 2,700 teens received national recognition from the Alliance and earned the opportunity to attend the national ceremony at Carnegie Hall in New York City on June 6. In 2019, 340,000 art and writing entries in 29 categories were judged which were submitted by students through their teachers in every state in the nation.

“We celebrate the creativity of our Harris County students and the dedication of their mentoring teachers,” said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr.

Since 1923, the Awards have recognized the creative promise of artists like Andy Warhol, Kay WalkingStick, Sylvia Plath, Stephen King, Richard Avedon and Zac Posen.

Sharing the national limelight are students from Houston, Tomball, Klein, Katy, Alief, Galena Park, Pearland, Spring, Spring Branch, Cy-Fair, Pasadena and Aldine independent school districts. Private school recipients are from St. John’s School, the Village School, Episcopal High School, Duchesne Academy, River Oaks Baptist, St. Francis Episcopal Day School, Awty International, Kinkaid School, St. Agnes Academy and Emery Weiner School.

About Scholastic Art & Writing: Founded in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are the nation’s longest-running, most prestigious educational initiative supporting student achievement in the visual and literary arts. Through the Awards, students receive opportunities for recognition, exhibition, publication and scholarships. Past winners include celebrated artists and writers such as

Robert Redford, Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, John Lithgow, Joyce Carol Oates and Sylvia Plath. More at [5]www.artandwriting.org .

About Harris County Department of Education: HCDE provides special education, therapy services, early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax of approximately \$9 per homeowner. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.40 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. We operate four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated or recovering youth who require a low, student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. We are governed by an elected board of seven trustees and have 1,076 employees and 33 facilities, including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [6]www.hcde-texas.org .

[7]



About Good News You Can Use: “Good News You Can Use” showcases the partnerships between Harris County Department of Education and school districts and organizations.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/taylorpowers_divjot-walia-e1553118132251.jpg
2. <https://bit.ly/2T0hoMj>
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/powers_t_p_13052142_13104670.jpg
4. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/axel-maldonado.jpg>
5. <http://www.artandwriting.org/>
6. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/>
7. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/good-news-yellow-sun-logo.jpg>

'Genesis' Delivers \$1,000 HCDE Check, New York City Dream to Aldine Teen Artist (2019-03-25 20:14) - hcdetx

[1]



(Harris County Department of Education is the regional sponsor of The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. This year HCDE is proud to announce the record 96 teens from Harris County, students who advanced to become national Gold and Silver Medalists. Many will attend ceremonies at Carnegie Hall in New York City June 6. View the blog announcing national winners: [2]<https://wp.me/p4QJFI-Vs> .)

The idea for “Genesis” popped into the head of a Nimitz High School teen artist as the sun shone on her brother’s face. That defining moment led to dreams of a trip and future career in New York City for Evieh’bi Jan Nia Braddy from Aldine Independent School District.

Earlier this semester, the Aldine ISD junior was notified by Harris County Department of Education Scholastic Art & Writing Awards coordinator Andrea Segraves that she had won a regional Gold Key for her reduction print, along with \$1,000 scholarship check for the HCDE Trustees’ Incentive Award.

[3]

GOOD NEWS

you can use!

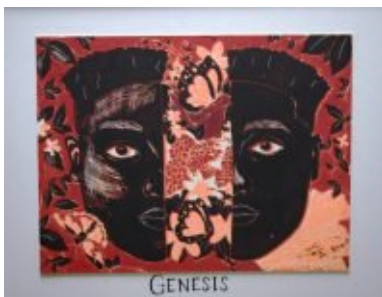
On March 13, the young artist heard about her Gold Medal for her artwork from the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. As part of the award, she may travel to New York City to get her award at Carnegie Hall.

“I want to know what New York is like,” said Braddy, eyes wide with the possibility. She has applied to attend the Pratt Institute pre-college program in New York City and would like to visit other visual art colleges in the Big Apple.

Like many artists who struggle with their piece to get it just right, Genesis became an old friend to the 17 year old.

“Hardships?” she said, referring to her print project. “I had a good amount.”

Genesis is a reduction print, which includes several hues of red and black with a pearlescent finish. In printmaking, artists must carve away or reduce portions of the printing block of linoleum, imprinting one color at a time at intervals through a baby press. Subject matter is sketched and colors are planned well in advance.



Initially Genesis was smaller and got a perfect score at a visual scholarship competition but didn't advance to state.

"I made a lot of corrections," said the wise teen. "I think all these little mistakes added to the charm and makes Genesis more human."

Quick to acknowledge the support she received for Genesis from her art teacher Jorge Vasquez, she said she learned and benefitted from her teacher who specializes in printmaking as an artist.

"He challenged me and made suggestions that helped," said the 17 year old.

Aldine ISD Director of Visual Art Michaelann Kelley said she is proud of all the Aldine students and teachers who commit time to Scholastic and all their artistic endeavors.

"It takes a lot of extra work in class and outside of the regular school day," Kelley said. "Evieh'bi Jan Nia Braddy put in that extra time and creativity to have her voice heard through her artwork."

Braddy's dream is to be able to create art and make a living off of doing what she loves.

She challenges other teens to follow in her footsteps.

"When you have the imagination and drive and ideas, there is nothing that you really can't do," Braddy said, pointing to her print hanging in an HCDE exhibit at Houston's Spring Street Studios.

"This came from nothing--and from nothing came this great thing that is my proudest piece so far."

About Good News You Can Use: "Good News You Can Use" showcases the partnerships between Harris County Department of Education and school districts and organizations.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/photo-e1553561997320.jpg>

2. <https://wp.me/p4QJF1-Vs>

3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/good-news-yellow-sun-logo.jpg>

4. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/braddy_e_i_13125617-e1553562050245.jpg

Unique Career Day Provides Options for Students with Intellectual and Emotional Disabilities (2019-03-28 17:19) - hcdetx

[1]



Students ranging in age from 6-21 were introduced to career options as an array of traditional and atypical professionals visited Harris County Department of Education's Academic and Behavior School East for Career Day 2019 on March 22.

Career fair guests at the special school for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities included a judge, a deejay, an inspirational speaker, a lawyer, a nurse, a radio personality and a makeup artist/photographer as students were introduced to a myriad of career options.

View event photos: <https://bit.ly/2Wy39ZH> (password is hcde1889)

Exhibitors included the Aquarium, the Marines, a canine drug unit, a caricature artist, trade professionals from local community colleges, a technology school, a barber college, and a comedian radio personality.

Vocational teacher Kimberly Curtis coordinated the event for the past four months, acquiring speakers and presenters. She was challenged to find topics which would catch the interest of students from elementary to middle to high school.

“Eventually all our students are going to be in high school, so they need to get exposure to careers as early as possible,” Curtis said. “If you make this fun, kids will soak in more of the possibilities.”

Students at AB School East are enrolled in the special school by local school districts on a contractual basis. A low student-to-teacher ratio, individual education plans and a behavioral specialist are among the ingredients the school supplies for students to be successful. The ultimate goal is for students to return to their home school environments. The school’s population includes students with intellectual disabilities, autism and behavioral disorders.

“Many of these students may not go to college, but there are so many viable options in trades, technical careers and apprenticeships,” said Keith Oliphant, principal at AB East, located near Gulfgate Mall in southeast Houston.

As a vocational specialist, Curtis stressed the importance of bringing the outside world into the classroom, especially when some students may not have the opportunity to travel outside their Houston neighborhoods.

“Exposure to professions goes a long way,” said the vocational counselor. “Years from now they will still remember this experience. Events like this also go a long way towards boosting students’ self esteem.”

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/20190321_career_0035-e1553811152516.jpg

Autism Summit Set for April 9-10 at HCDE during National Autism Awareness Month (2019-03-29 09:43) - hcdetx



[1]



A two-day Autism Summit will be provided for teachers, special education counselors and administrators by Harris County Department of Education on April 9-10 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd. in Houston, Texas.

Presenting is education consultant Paula Kluth, expert in differentiated instruction, or tailoring instruction to meet needs of individual students.

Kluth provides two presentations for the two-day summit: “You’re Going to Love This Kid: Educating Students with Autism in Inclusive Schools” and “Text Maps to Memory Caps: Differentiating Instruction in K-12 Classrooms.”

April is National Autism Awareness Month, and the Autism Society says autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability. Prevalence of autism in the United States is estimated at one in 59 births.

The summit is supported through the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. Cost is \$150 for in-county registrants (Harris County) and \$165 for out-of-county. Register: [2]<https://bit.ly/2Fk1JL9>

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/fuf08_kluth-1-1-e1553870502951.jpg

2. <https://bit.ly/2Fk1JL9>

HCDE Breaks Ground on New School for Students with Intellectual, Developmental or Emotional Disabilities in Greater Harris County (2019-03-29 09:49)

- hcdetx



[1]



Harris County Department of Education breaks ground on a 47,970-square foot school which will reside on 6.5 acres in southwest Houston. Academic and Behavior School West (AB West) is being relocated and serves students with intellectual or developmental disabilities and challenging behaviors throughout the greater Houston region.

The groundbreaking is set for Wednesday, April 3, from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at 12772 Medfield Drive, Houston, TX 77082. The school borders S. Dairy Ashford and Westpark Tollway.

AB West is one of two HCDE schools in west and east Houston which provides special education services on a contractual basis to high-need students in area school districts. Features of the school include a low, student-to-instructor ratio; small classes; and individualized learning plans.

HCDE Board of Trustees will join Superintendent James Colbert Jr. and other HCDE administrators at the ceremony, along with area superintendents, including special guest Alief ISD Superintendent H.D. Chambers (district where the school resides). Parents and community members are also attending.

Special features of the school include: 28 classrooms serve to provide small classrooms for special population of 110 students (capacity 150); gated outdoor walking trail, courtyard with outdoor basketball court; domestic lab for life skills students; elevated flood plan with added retention and emergency generator to serve high health-risk students; and ballistic-rated, glass walls in lobby with strict security system.

(View renderings of the school: [2]<https://bit.ly/2Yy1Uvi>; password is hcde1889.)

Media inquiries may be made to HCDE Communications. Contact Carol Vaughn, 281-660-9205, cvaughn@hcde-texas.org or Danielle Clark, (970) 682-9391, dclark@hcde-texas.org.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/ab-west-e1553870905563.jpg>

2. <https://bit.ly/2Yy1Uvi>

1.4 April

6 Scholastic Students Receive Glassell Junior School Summer Scholarships (2019-04-01 11:28) - hcdetx





Six students who received a Gold Key or Silver Key in the 2019 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards were selected by the Glassell Junior School to receive a summer scholarship. The Awards are the largest, most prestigious awards program in the country for creative teens in grades 7-12. Harris County Department of Education is the regional affiliate for the Awards.

Six students chosen for this summer's art camp, valued at \$165, are:

- Sophia Fu, Pearland ISD- Pearland Junior High West, 8th grade
- Adriana Landin-Seneriz, Katy ISD- Tays Junior High, 8th grade
- Emily Rosales, Pasadena ISD- Southmore Intermediate School, 8th grade
- Megan Margraves, Episcopal High School, 10th grade
- Isabella Concepcion, Katy ISD- Obra D. Tompkins High School, 11th grade
- Alaina Sibley, Clear Creek ISD- Clear Springs High School, 11th grade

Glassell summer camp art classes include a choice of drawing, painting, ceramics, fashion, digital and other art genres. The weeklong camps run from June-early August.

The Glassell Junior School of Art is the teaching wing of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Glassell has supported the HCDE regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for many years by sponsoring the scholarships and hosting art receptions. Glassell Junior School faculty judged the art selections this year and awarded the scholarships.

"A distinguishing feature of the Glassell School is ready access to the museum's encyclopedia collection of incredible works of art," said Pam Perez, Glassell Junior School administrative dean.

For more information about Glassell, go to [2]<https://www.mfah.org/visit/glassell-junior-school/>. Visit www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards for information about entering, judging or sponsoring Scholastic Art & Writing at HCDE.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/sibley_a_i_13151924-e1554136004565.jpg
2. <https://www.mfah.org/visit/glassell-junior-school/>

Groundbreaking News: New School to Meet Increased Service Demands for Area Students with Behavioral Disorders, Autism (2019-04-04 16:09) - hcdetx





View event photos: [2]<https://bit.ly/2lhh3vt> (password is hcde1889)

View school renderings: [3]<https://bit.ly/2Yy1Uvi> (password is hcde1889.)

Harris County Department of Education kicked off construction on a new, 47,970-square-foot school to replace Academic and Behavior School West at a ceremonial groundbreaking April 3 at 12772 Medfield Drive in southwest Houston. County and city officials, school district leaders, staff and students attended the event backdropped by a bulldozer, shovels and hardhats.

HCDE Superintendent James Colbert said the new school is needed to provide additional opportunities for students who need specialized education services in the districts HCDE serves. Students attending AB West are challenged with behavioral disorders, autism spectrum disorder and other significant physical and emotional needs.

The new school, which will serve up to 150 students ages 5-22 with intellectual, developmental and behavioral needs, borders Dairy Ashford Road and Westpark Tollway.



AB School West Principal Victor Keys

“With the addition of our new school, we will have the best education facility to educate students who are autistic and emotionally disturbed from local school districts in greater Harris County,” said Victor Keys, principal at AB School West.

HCDE operates four special schools in Harris County which serve children from area school districts on a contractual basis. AB West and East educate children with intellectual and emotional disabilities while two other schools provide services for recovering, adjudicated or troubled teens. The goal is for students to return to their home districts and schools, with newly learned behavior tools to successfully continue their education and graduate.



HCDE Board President Josh Flynn

“I’m really looking forward to giving these students a great facility,” said HCDE Board of Trustees President Josh Flynn, who introduced guests and gave opening remarks at the groundbreaking. “We will be placing students in this special, unique environment where they feel safe.”

The replacement school for AB West provides considerable support for students from Alief Independent School District, where it resides.

“I’m grateful for the taxpayers of Harris County, the Board, Superintendent James Colbert and HCDE staff for realizing these students need a voice,” said H.D. Chambers, Alief Independent School District superintendent. “If there is a flagship behavior for any kids coming out of AB School West, it’s the air of confidence that they probably didn’t have before.”



Alief Superintendent H.D. Chambers

Features of the school include a low, student-to-instructor ratio, small classes and individualized learning. A behavior specialist provides support to students to help change or improve behaviors.

[7]



AB School West, designed by Houston architectural firm Cre8, will be elevated above the flood plain, and an emergency generator will help to serve highly impaired students in bad weather.

Layout of the school provides for 28 classrooms; use of sensory-sensitive color palettes for walls; rounded-corners throughout the school's interior construction to prevent student injury; and a domestic lab for life-skills students. Outdoors there is a gated outdoor walking trail, courtyard and basketball court.

Student Deven Wright, a fourth grader who attends AB School West from Fort Bend Independent School District, said he has high hopes for the new library and computer lab.



Student Jimmy Jones, Superintendent James Colbert and student Deven Wright

“I will be happy to attend this new school,” the 10-year-old said.

AB West is scheduled to be completed in early 2020. A special opening ceremony, complete with tours, is planned before the school opens.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190403_abswest_0201.jpg
2. <https://bit.ly/2Ihh3vt>
3. <https://bit.ly/2Yy1Uvi>
4. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190403_abswest_0054.jpg
5. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190403_abswest_0147.jpg
6. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190403_abswest_0163.jpg
7. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/03/ab-west-e1553870905563.jpg>

8. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190403_abswest_0218-e1554411458712.jpg

Recovery School Culinary Students Get Sushi Savvy (2019-04-08 10:52) - hcdetx



Students at Fortis Academy, Harris County's first public recovery high school, take the sushi challenge as they explore a new culinary genre. Culinary arts is added to the school's traditional academic curriculum. View the video:

[youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PJj5HKN0m0> &w=560 &h=315]

Superintendent Certification Program Launches at HCDE with Optimistic Job/Pay Forecasts (2019-04-08 12:09) - hcdetx

[1]



The employment outlook is positive for aspiring school superintendents as an increase in jobs and pay is forecasted. Harris County Department of Education launches its 11-month, accelerated [2]Superintendent Certification Institute on Aug. 10, 2019 to meet demands for the growing profession and an expanding, ethnically diverse student population in Texas.

The program features onsite, weekend seminars and weekday forums, each held once-a-month in small-group settings. Heading the leadership initiative is Educator Certification and Advancement, a HCDE division currently offering alternative teacher certification and principal certification programs with average test pass rates of 99.7 percent for the past seven years.

Staffed with experienced school leaders, the superintendent prep institute is personalized with one-on-one feedback, coaching and mentorship before, during, and after the certification process.

“There is never a better time if you are considering being a school district leader,” said ECA Director Lidia Zatopek. “With a projected 25 percent growth in education administrators and an average pay increase maintained at three percent for the past six years, it’s a burgeoning profession.”

Currently, Texas ISD.com, which lists superintendent employment opportunities, has 40 superintendent vacancies posted. Of the 99 districts with new superintendents this year, 62 districts hired a novice superintendent with no previous experience. The average superintendent salary in

2018-2019 is \$148,854. In large Texas districts with more than 50,000 students, average based pay is \$321,253.

Aspiring candidates for the superintendent program must have a master's degree, hold a principal certification, or equivalent, or have three years of managerial experience in a public-school district.

A hallmark feature of the new superintendent program is its focus on bridging the cultural equity gap through culturally responsive leadership and emphasis on social justice issues.

"The role of the 21st century superintendent is immensely complex and challenging," said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. "Our curriculum mirrors the complexities of this one-of-a-kind job. We want to equip candidates with tools to be effective district leaders who can set strategic priorities to improve the performance of disadvantaged students."

The program features TExES exam intensive preparation support. Participants engage in common practicum experiences with extensive support and feedback from program personnel. Candidates for the program will become part of an alumni network.

"Our faculty are sitting and former superintendents with extensive expertise in superintendency, coaching and executive-level leadership development," said Zatopek.

Upcoming free, live information webinars are set for April 10 and 23 and May 9 where benefits, requirements and payment options are discussed. Register for information sessions:

April 10 [3]<https://bit.ly/2WxfwoO>

April 23 [4]<https://bit.ly/2FPy2Dt>

May 9 [5]<https://bit.ly/2TR5Gw4>

Deadline to apply for the superintendent program is June 20, 2019. Go to [6]<https://hcde-texas.org/teach-and-lead/superintendent-certification> for information or contact Lidia Zatopek, [7]lzatopek@hcde-texas.org.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20180213_leadership_0355-e1554743253625.jpg

2. <https://hcde-texas.org/teach-and-lead/superintendent-certification>

3. <https://bit.ly/2WxfwoO>

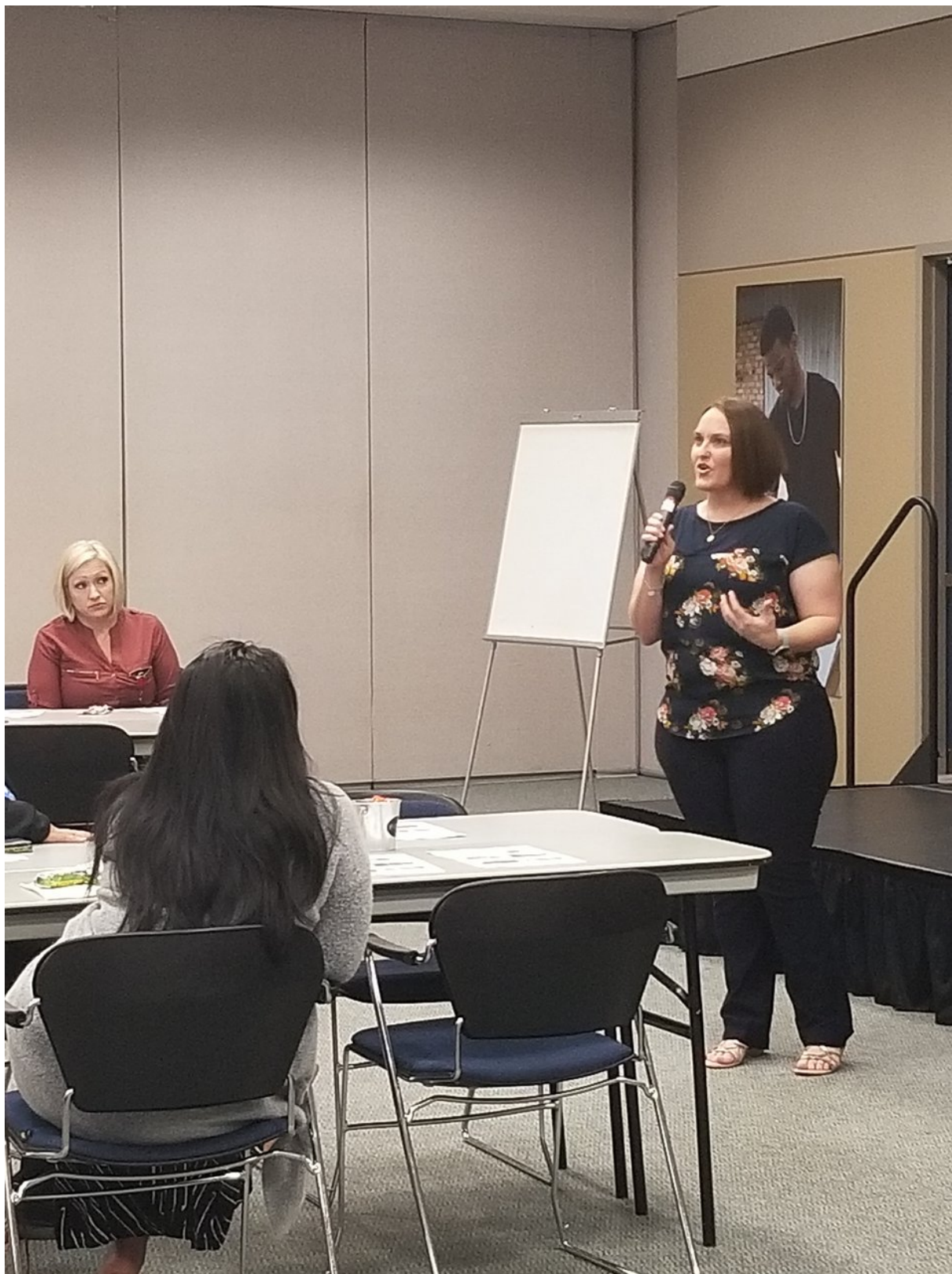
4. <https://bit.ly/2FPy2Dt>

5. <https://bit.ly/2TR5Gw4>

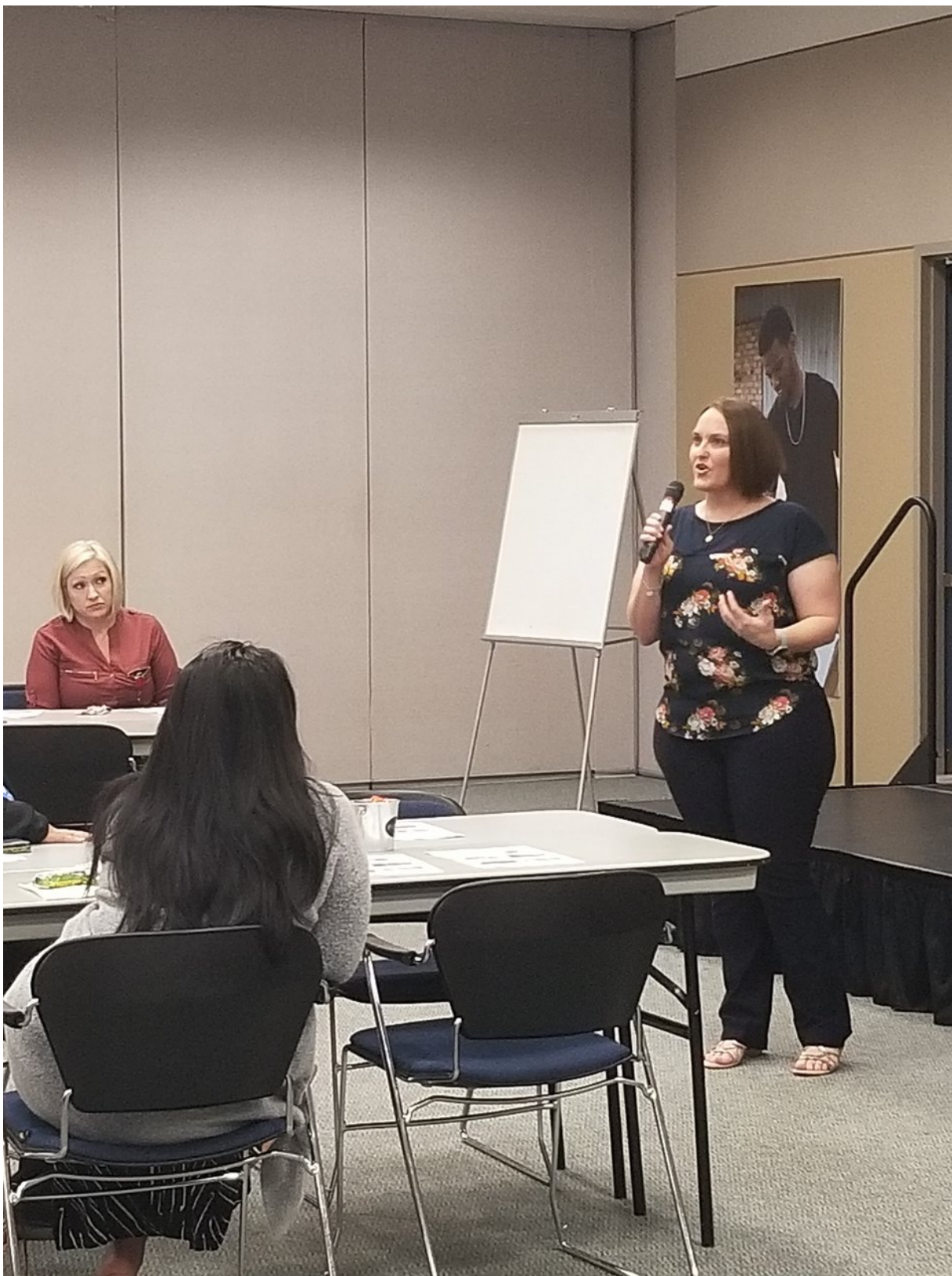
6. <https://hcde-texas.org/teach-and-lead/superintendent-certification>

7. <mailto:lzatopek@hcde-texas.org>

Galena Park ISD Autism Specialist's Service Story Shared at Autism Summit
(2019-04-11 15:32) - hcdetx



[1]



Going above and beyond the call of duty is exactly what Galena Park Independent School District Autism Specialist Blair Overman did recently.

One of her students with autism was involved in a tragic car accident that killed his brother and mother.

Her story of service was shared with attendees at the Autism Summit at Harris County Department of Education on April 10.

Blair spent countless hours at the hospital following the accident to help the student cope with his injuries and the loss of his family while relatives from out of state were traveling to Houston.

Letters from hospital staff praised her commitment to her student. Overman received a standing ovation from Autism Summit attendees for helping this student in his recovery. #Autism

View video: [youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KMqY_r-s1M]

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/autism-3.jpg>

Power of Debate Attested by 2 CASE Debaters at Luncheon (2019-04-12 14:47)

- hcdetx





The power of debate was the focus of the Houston Urban Debate League Annual Awards Luncheon in downtown Houston on April 4 at the J.W. Marriott. Harris County Department of Education joined HUDL as several CASE Debates students provided testimonials.

Toni Candis, CASE for Kids project coordinator, and CASE for Kids AmeriCorps VISTA member Aundrey Mosley represented CASE Debates at the event.

“Two of our students talked about their life experiences, how debate has influenced their lives and how it will shape their futures,” said Candis.

CASE Debates pairs a successful, established debate model created by HUDL with CASE for Kids, an afterschool intermediary. While HUDL provides debate opportunities for high school teens within HISD, CASE Debates expanded the program to provide opportunities to other districts in Harris County, including charter schools.



“While many of our students spend a lot of time debating about policy and global issues, this event which addressed supporters of the program gave two of our students the chance to share their life stories in front of an audience,” said Mosley.

[3]



Kennedy Scott, a junior from Spring Early College Academy in Spring ISD shared with the crowd of 115 how debate fueled her ambition to become a criminal defense attorney and community leader.

[4]



Hamza Bouderdaben aspires to become a lawyer. He is a junior from Harmony School of Advancement. He was inquisitive about debate after thinking that a classroom of peers was engaged in a yelling match. The teacher explained the process of debate and welcomed him into her classroom. Since that day, he was hooked.

Both students plan to be involved in CASE Debates during their senior year.

In 2018-2019, CASE Debates served almost 300 students in six school districts and three charters. Students have earned numerous awards and scholarships through the CASE Debates program.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/kennedy_scott_aundrey_mosley_hamza_bouderdaben.jpg
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/file5-1.jpeg>
3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/file1-2.jpeg>
4. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/file6.jpeg>

Students with Autism Nurtured in Small Classes with Behavioral Curriculum in HCDE Special Schools (2019-04-12 15:36) - hcdetx



(April is National Autism Awareness Month. Autism now affects one in 59 children and greatly varies from person to person. Children with autism do progress; early intervention is key according to the National Autism Association.)

[youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOtdHmbExk>]

When John Clark learned that his son with autism would be placed in a special school to deal with his behavior issues, he was dumbfounded, then upset. The father of 9-year-old Hunter hired an advocate to represent his son. By the time he toured Academic and Behavior School East, a special school for children with behavior and intellectual challenges, he was already looking into private schools for his son.

Upon meeting principal Keith Oliphant and his staff and walking the hallways, he began to issue apologies.

"If every school could be run like this one, they would be in a lot better shape," said Clark.

Since Hunter was placed in Harris County Department of Education's AB School East this year by his home school district, the Clarks have seen a transformation in the independence of their

third-grader. He engages in conversation in restaurants and talks to neighbors.

Instead of banging a water bottle on the table to show he's disgruntled, he says: "Daddy, I'm not happy."

[1]



Teacher Tabori Grayson with Hunter Clark

Autism is a bio-neurological developmental disability that generally appears before age 3, when Hunter was diagnosed. Children with autism usually have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions and leisure or planned activities. It is diagnosed four times more often in boys than girls.

Harris County Department of Education has two specialty schools called AB School West and East to serve children with autism, behavioral disorders and other significant physical and emotional needs. The schools use Boy's Town curriculum to promote positive behavior and dismiss the negative.

Each of the 104 students currently attending AB School East is assigned an individualized education plan and benefits from small classrooms with a low, student-to-teacher ratio. Children are sent to the special schools through a district contractual agreement with a goal of returning to the

home school district.

“We like having Hunter here, but our job is to get him to be independent and equipped with the skills he needs to be successful to return to his home school,” said AB East Principal Oliphant.

[2]



Principal Keith Oliphant poses for a photograph with Hunter Clark

When Hunter goes back to his school in La Porte Independent School District next September, he will be equipped with improved social and academic skills or habits.

“I’ve seen his academics improve,” said Clark. “Hunter still struggles and will resist homework like any kids, but before he would throw a fit. He sighs but has learned that this is what we have to do. Homework is first.”



[3]

Parent Flobert Tiam visits son Kyle

Parent Flobert Tiam, father to Kyle, says his son was diagnosed with autism and ADHD and has severe mood swings. He came to AB School West in 2016. He is thankful for the basic things his son has learned to do now like eat at the table, help dress himself and listen to instructions. He has this advice for parents:

“I would tell parents to get involved with a forum for parents of autism in order to have support,” Tiam said. “Consider a specialized school. These children need special attention.

“When they feel that love, I think these children are able to do more.”

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190402_autism_0075.jpg
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190402_autism_0070.jpg
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/flobert_and_kyle_tiam.jpg

E-Colors in Education: Understand Your Team's Personalities (2019-04-15 07:40)

- hcdetx

Understanding your peers' personalities provides a new frontier in education leadership and team communications. Classes offered through E-Colors in Education are available through a collaboration with Harris County Department of Education's Teaching and Learning Center.

E-Colors in Education CEO Rosalinda Mercado created the educational arm of the company after experiencing the power of human performance coaching through professional development in education six years ago.

[youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNlgtl2Dq8Q> &w=560 &h=315]

Three leadership-themed workshops are available this spring and summer:

May 3 - E-Colors & Intentional Leadership: Diversity & Inclusion [1]<https://bit.ly/2UAZddn> **June 4** - E-Colors & Intentional Leadership: Accountability & Commitment [2]<https://bit.ly/2WVqMvs>
June 18 - Leadership Institute for Social & Emotional Learning (E-Colors & Personal Intervention) [3]<https://bit.ly/2YX6Rht>

(Discovering your E-Colors is as simple as going to the Equilibria website and completing the free inventory at [4]www.equilibria.com/PDI-home .)

View video through HCDEtx You Tube: [5]<https://youtu.be/RNlgtl2Dq8Q> .

1. <https://bit.ly/2UAZddn>
2. <https://bit.ly/2WVqMvs>
3. <https://bit.ly/2YX6Rht>
4. <http://www.equilibria.com/PDI-home>
5. <https://youtu.be/RNlgtl2Dq8Q>

CASE Debates Duo from Alief ISD Takes Historic Win at Urban Debate National Championship in Washington D.C. (2019-04-15 17:44) - hcdetx



Alief Independent School District Kerr High School teen CASE Debates students Queen Eche and Hillary Nguyen made history as the first debate team from their school to place in the Urban Debate National Championship in Washington D.C.



Queen Eche and Hillary Nguyen

The pair competed in the national tournament and narrowly lost to a Chicago team but earned second place and a college assistance scholarship. Eche was also recognized as the second-best individual speaker in the tournament. Forty-two teams from across the nation with a total of 83 students competed in the policy debate competition for the national champion title.

Also qualifying for the national championship but not placing was a team from Harmony School of Advancement, Riley Hardwick and Khalida Amla.

This year the qualifying national teams gathered at Georgetown University to debate about immigration reform.

“We are extremely proud of our CASE Debates students who have only participated in CASE Debates for the two years the program has been in existence,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director for the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids. “We are thankful for the support for high school debate from our HCDE Board and Superintendent James Colbert.”

CASE Debates pairs a successful, established debate model created by the Houston Urban Debate League with CASE for Kids, an afterschool intermediary. While HUDL provides debate opportunities

for high school teens within HISD, CASE Debates expanded the program to provide opportunities to other districts in Harris County, including charter schools.

In 2018-2019, CASE Debates served almost 300 students in six school districts and three charters. Students have earned numerous awards and scholarships through the CASE Debates program.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/queen-eche-_hillary-nguyen.jpg

HCDE Occupational Therapist Working with Katy ISD Students Honored with Horizon Award (2019-04-15 18:26) - hcdetx





(April is National Occupational Therapy Month. Harris County Department of Education served 7,426 students and 6,391 teachers in the 2018-2019 school year. Over 100 occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are part of that success story.)

Sometimes a smile from a child is all you're looking for to know you've made a difference. Harris County Department of Education occupational therapist and Horizon Award winner Adele Brunson knows that to be true daily as she works with children with physical challenges in the school environment.

Brunson, who joined HCDE's School-Based Therapy Services in 2018-2019, earned the Horizon Award from the Texas Occupational Therapy Association. The state award recognizes a new occupational therapist who has five years or less of experience in the field.

"The Horizon Award is meaningful to me in allowing me to feel that my love and passion for occupational therapy, through deed and word, is reaching and inspiring others," said Brunson. "Occupational therapy enables people to live their best life—to its fullest—by giving people of all ages back their independence."

Over 100 school-based occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants work for HCDE and provide occupational services in 28 school districts and charter schools in greater Harris County. They help children to fulfill their role as students by supporting their academic achievement and promoting positive behaviors necessary for learning.

Occupational therapists and occupational therapist assistants support academic and non-academic outcomes, including social skills, math, reading and writing, behavior management, recess, participation in sports, self-help skills, prevocational/vocational participation, transportation and more.

Brunson works for HCDE and services the Katy Independent School District at elementary, junior and high schools through a partnership that HCDE has with the district.

As an example of the impact she makes with children, she remembers the student with cerebral palsy she was helping with handwriting. The little girl who was right-handed was forced to learn to write left-handed because her cerebral palsy had affected the control of her right hand.

"She told me that she did not like being left-handed because it made her stand out and be different from all her other classmates," Brunson said.

Brunson is left-handed herself and told the little girl during her evaluation that left-handed people were awesome, creative and fun.

"At the end of the school day, she came up to me, smiled, giggled and told me that she felt so cool to be left-handed," Brunson said. "To me, seeing her smile so big was the greatest gift that day."

After spending several years as a teacher, Brunson decided to return to school to become an

occupational therapist. She wanted to make an impact through occupational therapy with children in the school setting.

“Children are honest and have a genuine thirst to grow,” she said. “I wanted to be involved in supporting their growth in accessing their education to the fullest.”

Brunson urges fellow occupational therapists to join professional organizations to keep up-to-date on research and topics that affect the profession, including legislation.

She has worked the past four years on a project with the Texas Occupational Therapy Emerging Leaders Mentoring Program. The program allows occupational therapist newcomers to become involved and assume leadership in the profession. She also serves as secretary on the board of directors for the Texas Occupational Therapy Association.

HCDE School-Based Therapy Services Director Carie Crabb says through the Horizon Award, the Texas Occupational Therapy Association recognizes several outstanding qualities in the awardee. Among those are community involvement; leadership in a professional organization; and advocating for the profession.

“It’s especially meaningful to honor Adele during National Occupational Therapist Month,” said Crabb.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/adele-brunson-headshot-photo.jpg>

Personal Struggle for Deer Park Student Leads to Scholastic Regional Recognition and Nomination (2019-04-24 09:35) - hcdetx



[1]



Elizabeth Willms struggled with an eating disorder while in junior high and wanted to address it through her writing.

"I wrote a letter to anorexia about the process of how it took over my life and how I took it out of my life," Willms, a Deer Park High School-North Campus ninth-grader, said.

Her letter was awarded a Gold Key in the 2019 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, sponsored by Harris County Department of Education, and an American Voices Nominee. She also received a \$250 scholarship as an American Voices Nominee.

She was fortunate to have a teacher this year who let her express herself even though the topic was one that not everyone wants to talk about.

"I think a big part of Scholastic is addressing things that people don't like to think about because it could be painful, confusing or controversial," Willms said. "I think a big part of writing is expecting those things."

This journey began when she was in elementary. She feels when she is dealing with pain, writing is the best way to express herself. She started writing to express either her depression or if she was going through something.

"I know writing is what got me through the death of my grandfather, and I know he would be very proud of me today," she said. "I think it comes full circle because the things that got me into writing is the journey that is never going to start or end."

When she started paying attention to Hollywood and the modeling industry in fifth grade, it transferred to her own body image. She still struggles with her eating disorder today, but not like before.

"I am not sure how long it will affect me or if it will stop affecting me, but I know that I will stop letting it have such an impact on me," Willms said. "I know that one day it won't be something that we can see anymore, it will be something that empowers me. Until that day, I will just have to keep staying strong."

With this personal experience and having gone through it recently, it took her only eight minutes to write the Scholastic entry. She had her mother, a former English teacher, and English teacher friends of her mother look over her work.

"They didn't have much to say, as far as critiquing it, because when you have something so important to talk about there's not much editing that can be done," she said. "It should be broad and come right from the heart."

She believes she got recognized for her letter because the emotions are real, and they all occur in the heart, not the brain.

Her first Scholastic entry was in seventh grade as a mandatory assignment, which led to national recognition and a goal to submit entries each year. She was awarded a national gold key medal for her topic on the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

When she grows up, she would like to be a published author by either writing a novel or have

a collection of poetry or short stories.

“I want to be able to speak to people and let them know that it’s OK to not be OK, and they are not alone,” Willms said. “All I really want to do in life is to help people find writing because that’s what I am best at, and I think that’s the best job I have to make the world a better place.”

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/elizabethwillms.jpg>

Bank of Texas Execs Deliver \$7,020 Check, Books to Support Literacy Across HCDE Head Start Centers (2019-04-24 16:02) - hcdetx

[1]



Bank of Texas delivered approximately 150 children's books to Harris County Department of Education Head Start centers along with a \$7,020 check as continued support for the HCDE Head Start "Read-Excel-Achieve-Lead" (REAL) SuperMENTors literacy program.

REAL SuperMENTors is a volunteer program that encourages male mentors to read aloud to children in HCDE's 15 Head Start centers and four Early Head Start Partnerships. Children receive books from each SuperMENTor visit to build home libraries. Bank of Texas has provided support and volunteers since 2014. To date, the company has pledged and delivered \$42,000 to the literacy program.

A recent [2]Child Trends research brief found that young people who participate in mentoring programs have better attendance, are more likely to pursue higher education and have positive attitudes toward school than those without mentors. More information about volunteering is available at [3]<https://bit.ly/2Gvv4mm>.

"We appreciate and revere Bank of Texas' commitment and support for child literacy early-on," said Venetia Peacock, senior director for HCDE Head Start. "We also recognize the community commitment several officers provide as they volunteer their personal time to read and mentor students in our centers."

[4]



Funds donated by Bank of Texas and gifted to HCDE Head Start were acquired through the Education Foundation of Harris County, a nonprofit which supports HCDE programs and services.

Photo: Bank of Texas donates check and books to Harris County Department of Education Head Start. (left) Chris Frey, assistant vice president, commercial banking, Bank of Texas; Gary Whitt, senior vice president, commercial banking, Bank of Texas; Venetia Peacock, senior director, Harris County Department of Education Head Start; Steve Bradshaw, CEO, BOK Financial; Armando Rodriguez, community partnerships manager, HCDE Head Start; and Randy Walker, market CEO, Bank of Texas

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/rrr08831-e1556139576271.jpg>
2. <https://www.childtrends.org/>
3. <https://bit.ly/2Gvv4mm>
4. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/rrr08828-e1556139678748.jpg>

Fore! Young CASE for Kids Golfers Showcase Afterschool Accomplishments at Kids' Day Event (2019-04-24 17:41) - hcdetx





Video: Sheldon ISD students talk about the game of golf: [2]<https://youtu.be/5WqxoAzwclM>

Students are using the game of golf to learn math-and-science concepts and character development as Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids) joins with Kids' Day with Little Birdies Mobile Golf Academy.

The Kids' Day event was held April 24 at F.M. Law Park, 8400 Mykawa Road. Students ages 4-12 who studied the Kids' Day curriculum in their CASE for Kids afterschool programs showed off their golfing acumen and competed with other schools.

Students attending were from Aldine ISD's Raymond Academy, Alief ISD's Liestman Elementary and Martin Elementary, Houston ISD's Benbrook Elementary, Pasadena ISD Frazier Elementary, Sheldon ISD Garrett Elementary and Sheldon Elementary and the Academy of Accelerated Learning Charter School.

Kids' Days are supported by CASE for Kids and Houston-Galveston Area Council funding.

CASE for Kids provides Kids' Days as the culminating day where students showcase what they've learned and celebrate their accomplishments," said CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers. "Afterschool activities can reinforce social-emotional learning (SEL) so that children get to explore and understand their emotions. We also provide academic reinforcement. In addition, kids get an opportunity to sample the fine arts and hobbies such as golf, dance or even fencing."

Little Birdies' Archie Craft, owner and lead instructor, said the curriculum he uses for Kids'

Day reinforces academics, character education and SEL.

“We talk about how far you hit the ball with this club versus the other club,” he said. “How much force do you need to put on the putter to make a three-foot putt? How can the wind effect your ball in flight?”

[3]



Afterschool vendors such as Little Birdies Mobile Golf Academy work with CASE for Kids to supply the extracurricular expertise through afterschool contracts. Students are enrolled in after-
170

school programs through their schools, community centers and child care facilities benefit.

CASE for Kids is an afterschool intermediary which provides resources, training and afterschool services for over 14,000 students and 2,800 teachers in greater Harris County. Partnering vendors like Little Birdies Mobile Golf Academy teach concepts, skills and fundamentals for particular subjects and interests.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/kids-day-2-e1556145526739.jpg>

2. <https://youtu.be/5WqxoAzwc1M>

3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/kids-day-3.jpg>

HCDE Brings Museums to Social Studies Educators (2019-04-26 10:05) - hcdetx





As the phrase goes, “Ask and you shall receive it,” and area social studies educators sure did receive. Harris County Department of Education Teaching and Learning Center Curriculum Director for Social Studies Kelly Tummy was asked by her social studies leadership team about bringing in area museums, so they could obtain information to use in their curriculum.

The social studies leadership team is a free support program offered by HCDE’s TLC division for area social studies teachers. Topics of interest are provided throughout the year.

“They don’t have a lot of resources and money, so this would give them the chance to network and help plan curriculum at their districts,” Tummy said.

She was approached about this idea last May and was able to bring 15 libraries and museums to about 20 members of the leadership team.

New Caney Independent School District Secondary Social Studies Instruction Specialist Leslie Sproat enjoyed being able to talk to many museums and libraries in one location.

“It was a great way for us who have limited resources and money to do research in one place,” she said. “It also provided networking with others within our subject area from other districts.”

Sproat enjoyed visiting with representatives from the Texas Foundation for the Arts and San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site because they are out of her area and she would not have been

able to visit with them if it had not been for HCDE.

Eleanor Stoddart, educator/interpreter with San Felipe de Austin State Historic Site, visited with districts who are miles away from the site.

“I have gotten a lot of interest from teachers today because they said our information fits into their curriculum,” Stoddart said.

Tumy is already working for a second event for February 2020 and has secured the three presidential libraries in Texas. For more information, email Kelly Tumy at ktumy@hcde-texas.org.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190425_094446.jpg

Demand for Certified Nursing Assistants Fuels Enrollment in Free HCDE Adult Education Program (2019-04-30 18:48) - hcdetx





Andrea Rodriguez put her family first for almost 20 years. One day a neighbor convinced her to attend a Harris County Department of Education GED class. From there, a teacher encouraged her to enter a free certified nursing assistant (CNA) program.

Nervous doesn't even begin to describe the beginning days for Rodriguez, a ninth-grade dropout with Spanish as her first language.

"I wanted to quit, but then I was always telling my girls to never give up," she said. So I put everything into God's hands and carried on."

She passed one of the five GED tests and felt a bit more confident; then she aced another and another.

HCDE Adult Education Manager May O'Brien visited Rodriguez's class as she was studying to pass the remaining two tests and told her about the CNA program.

"She said, there's a difference if you want it or wish for it," the mother of three girls said. "I knew I

didn't want to waste my time. I wanted it."

[2]



Once she passed her high school equivalency exams, Rodriguez was able to join the CNA program, a free, six-week training program offered in collaboration between HCDE Adult Education, the Texas Workforce Commission and Pioneer Nursing School. Upon completion, students take the CNA certification test.

The hybrid program mixes CNA training with content-enriched adult education classes. Students switch classes every-other week. One week they learn patient care and safety procedures and eventually train in clinicals with patients with teacher Dele Jokodola. The next week students gain

experience with vocabulary and cultural competencies from their HCDE adult Education teacher Lavenia Cole.

All the while, the adult students prepare to take the CNA certification test. Upon completion, salary benefits range from \$12- \$15 an hour, depending on the employer. Students may work in nursing homes, hospitals, rehab centers or home-care settings.

Student Estella Tchilendou is one of many students from Africa who are enrolled in a 20-student class. Her first language is French, and she is from Cameroon. She holds a master's degree in finance and had a 14-year career in business before moving to the United States in 2015.

[3]



“In our English class, we practice language, and I am learning vocabulary for the health care industry while improving my listening and speaking skills,” she said. “I am learning how to take care of my patients and must learn bedside manner, which includes being friendly and confident.”

Adult Education teacher Cole says health care industry careers are in high demand as boomers get older, and the sky is the limit in terms of opportunity.

“You can build on your CNA,” she said. “There are other certifications you can add on like phlebotomy and CPR training.”

Cole works with students on reading comprehension strategies like finding the key words, as well as testing strategies. She has even devised an ethical bingo game to broach subjects such as religious and cultural differences in the workplace.

“She was so patient,” said Rodriguez about her teacher. “The one thing I know for sure now is that it’s never too late to learn.”

HCDE Adult Education is the largest, no-cost adult education program in Texas, with a variety of health care and construction career training options in Harris and Liberty counties. Students may also take English as a second language classes and high school equivalency degree classes simultaneously in a traditional classroom setting or online. For more information, go to www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/andrea-rodriguez2.jpg>
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190415_cna_0001-e1556667303969.jpg
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/04/20190415_cna_0045-e1556667147961.jpg

1.5 May

200 Students Take Robotics Next Giant Leap at HCDE's All-Earth Ecobot Challenge (2019-05-03 15:46) - hcdetx





Photos: [2]<https://bit.ly/2VgoURm> (hcde1889)

When students orbit the Earth, collect Moon samples and colonize Mars, a host of things can go right or wrong. The All-Earth Ecobot Challenge 2019 provided moments of uncertainty as well as celebration as 29 teams of elementary students competed through robotics and commandeered Lego robots through space challenges on April 27 at Berry Center In Cypress, Texas.

Students prepare for the event through afterschool or out-of-school time programs after being

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prepped on details of each year's challenge, which has been an 11-year tradition at Harris County Department of Education. The challenge is provided through the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, and the Education Foundation of Harris County, the nonprofit foundation which supports HCDE programs and services.

Park Place Elementary teacher Yasin Puertas, whose team finished first in the challenge last year and 10th this year, says his school's robotics program has grown systemically because of support from parents, community and the principal. His school is located in southeast Houston in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood with a cadre of cultures.

[3]



"It very important for our kids to find and see the amazing things they can do," the robotics teacher said.

CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers said while she knows the program helps

builds confidence and leadership in the students involved.

“What robotics also does is promotes problems-solving and teambuilding skills,” Caruthers said. “It helps students build critical thinking skills and introduces them to careers in science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM.”

Judges and volunteers helped make the event a success with funding from CenterPoint Energy, the Wood Group, the Education Foundation of Harris County and volunteer assistance from the Assistance League of Houston, the Wood Group, Oceaneering.

KPRC reporter Sophia Beausoleil volunteered at the event on behalf of the Assistance League of Houston.

[4]



“We are helping out today because we know how important it is for kids to get STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education,” Beausoleil said.

Student Hudson McCulley of Spring Forest Middle School, Spring Independent School District, was a bit disappointed in his team’s first round one of judging.

“Everything worked perfect for us in the practice round, but when we were judged, everything messed up,” said the sixth grader. “My hope for round two is all goes as planned. We’ve got a 65 percent chance of it working.”

Jose Hernandez from Golfcrest Elementary is a novice to robotics but is committed to having fun while learning to program and build his team's robot.

"I'm new to the team but I'm learning," he said.

[5]



Teams competing traveled from as far as Seguin, Texas and included students from Huffman, Spring, Spring Branch, Cy-Fair, Galena Park and Cleveland.

The approximate 200 students competing in the challenge enjoyed activities from the Eco-Genius Lab when not competing. The lab was staffed by afterschool vendors who provided hands-on

science experiments with real-world examples of science, technology, engineering and math and included: Mad Science, Nutty Scientist of Houston, BotShop and MaKrU, LLC.

The following teams gained the top 10 awards in the All-Earth Ecobot Challenge:

1. **James DeAnda Elementary, Tigerbots, Houston ISD**
2. **Mindstormer Robotics Homeschool Team**
3. **Falcon Ridge Elementary School, Eliminators, Huffman ISD**
4. **Smith Middle School, Ecomartians, Cy-Fair ISD**
5. **Shirley Williamson Elementary, Robotic Lions, Houston ISD**
6. **Shirley Williamson Elementary, Wall-E, Houston ISD**
7. **Academy of Accelerated Learning Center Charter School, AALC Team B**
8. **Normandy Crossing Elementary, NCE Robotics Team 2, Galena Park ISD**
9. **Seguin Elementary, Seguin Stallions, Seguin ISD**
10. **Park Place Elementary, EcoBuilders, Houston ISD**

For information about sponsoring or competing in the All-Earth Ecobot Challenge 2020, go to [6]www.ecobotchallenge.com.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190427_ecobot_0112-e1556916092379.jpg
2. <https://bit.ly/2VgoURm>
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190427_ecobot_0154.jpg
4. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190427_ecobot_0172-e1556916221330.jpg
5. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190427_ecobot_0138.jpg
6. <http://www.ecobotchallenge.com/>

HCDE Hosting Cybersecurity Career Connection Conference for Students, Educators May 15 (2019-05-07 11:07) - hcdetx





The cybersecurity profession is growing as technology evolves and becomes a fabric of society, especially with the younger generation. Harris County Department of Education is hosting the 2019 Cybersecurity Career Connection Conference for local educators and students May 15.

“When it comes to students and what’s available, we want to bring in colleges and professionals in the field so they can learn more specific skills to be successful,” Colina Poullard, HCDE Director of Digital Education and Innovation, said.

She said this field is new to the career and technical education classes in schools.

“This is a new pathway being offered in high school and teachers need additional ways to focus on in this new subject,” Poullard said.

Students will get the chance to meet with industry professionals such as an FBI agent and IT professional, colleges and universities including Houston Baptist University and University of Houston. Teachers will learn how to sharpen their craft and give their students better insight and instruction on becoming a cybersecurity professional.

Attendees will have the chance to ask questions to four industry professionals such as what is needed to get into the profession and what pathway they took in school.

The conference will be at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, TX 77022, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. with registration beginning at 8 a.m.

Cost to attend is \$25 for teachers and \$10 for students. Teachers who bring 25 students are free. Breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Make sure to register by Tuesday, May 14. Payments will be taken at the door on Wednesday, May 15. Register online at <https://bit.ly/2KV499f>.

For more information or sponsorship opportunities, contact Colina Poullard at cpoullard@hcdetexas.org.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20171116_gis_0180.jpg

HCDE Names Educator of Year Finalists (2019-05-13 12:13) - hcdetx



Finalists for “Teacher of the Year” as well as “Educational Aide of the Year” have been named at Harris County Department of Education’s four Special Schools. The two honorees will be named on May 13 from 6-7 p.m. at HCDE, 6300 Irvington Blvd.

The four HCDE schools provide three specialized education programs and feature individualized learning and small-group instruction in highly structured classes. Programs are for students with intellectual, developmental or behavioral disorders; troubled or adjudicated youth; and recovering youth.

“We’re very proud of all our educators who work extremely hard with our special populations students,” HCDE Superintendent James Colbert said. “We celebrate all their successes, and this event gives us pause to think about all they accomplish on behalf of the children of greater Harris County.”

Educator nominations:

Kenneth Davis, nominee from Academic and Behavior School East

Jeffrey Sam, nominee from Academic and Behavior School West
Zachary Wikstrom, nominee from Fortis Academy
Ashley Johnson, nominee from Highpoint School

Educational aide nominations:

Alejandra Garza, nominee from Academic and Behavior School West

Byron Clay, nominee from Academic and Behavior School East

Wikstrom, Clay Named HCDE's 2019 Teacher of the Year and Educational Aide of the Year (2019-05-15 16:23) - hcdetx





First-year Fortis Academy Math Teacher Zachary Wikstrom was surprised May 13 by being named Harris County Department of Education's 2019 Teacher of the Year while Academic and Behavior School East Educational Aide III Byron Clay was named the 2019 Educational Aide of the Year.

"I'm at a loss for words as this is my first year teaching and it was very unexpected," Wikstrom said. "It's a quite an honor to be selected and I know there were such high-quality candidates I was going against."

It's special to Wikstrom to be able to work with the students at Fortis Academy because he says they are real treasures. Fortis Academy is the first public recovery high school in Harris County.

"To be able to reach them with one-on-one time is a special experience to get to see these kids grow," Wikstrom said. "To see them as A and B students now when they were failing all of there classes is amazing."

Clay always tells youth, especially his daughter, regardless of whatever the position, title or challenge you're up against you always put your best foot forward.

"I sent her a text telling her I wasn't sure what the outcome was going to be, but I always give my best," Clay said.

He wants to set an example for his daughter and youth he comes in contact with. His work environment as an educational aide allows him to do it on a daily basis.

“It’s more rewarding now because these kids are hurting,” Clay said, “The reason I can relate is that I’m able to reach them on how they can take their experiences in class to life. When there’s an adverse challenge, I try to convert that to a learning lesson when given an opportunity.”

Other Teacher of the Year nominees included: ABS East teacher Kenneth Davis, Highpoint School teacher Ashley Johnson and ABS West teacher Jeffrey Sam.

The second Educational Aide of the Year nominee was ABS West Alejandra Garza.

The four HCDE schools provide three specialized education programs and feature individualized learning and small-group instruction in highly structured classes. Programs are for students with intellectual, developmental or behavioral disorders; troubled or adjudicated youth; and recovering youth.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190513_toy_0141.jpg

Avant-Garde Graduation 2019: 3 GED Adult Grads from HCDE Share Stories
(2019-05-16 16:45) - hcdetx





Virginia Haracha
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Veronica Davila



Andrea Rodriguez

Attend our avant-garde graduation as 65 adult learners ranging in age from 17-65 celebrate gaining their high school equivalency degrees with family, friends and their teachers. The ceremony takes place on Saturday, May 18 from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education Adult Learning, 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas.

Adult graduate Virginia Haracha, 56, Pasadena, Texas:

With 25 years of service in the public sector, Virginia Haracha, 56, feared she might lose her job because she had not told the truth about earning her GED. Rather than dismiss her, Haracha's employer gave the Pasadena resident three weeks to earn her high school equivalency degree. After getting her GED, she also received a promotion and raise.

Through the help of her teacher, support from her family and encouragement from the president of her place of employment, she walks the stage on May 18 at 11 a.m. at Harris County Department of Education through the Adult Education program.

“I can’t believe I got it that quick, and I’d been scared of doing it forever,” she said. “I did it, and I’m proud of myself.”

View Virginia’s story: [1]https://youtu.be/tl_-ljFIBL0

Adult graduate Veronica Davila, Baytown, Texas:

Spanish-speaking student Veronica Davila moved to the United States two years ago. A registered nurse in Mexico, she started over to receive her credentials in the United States. Upon passing her high school equivalency diploma, she enrolled in free certified nursing assistant classes, as well as free phlebotomy classes. She is employed at a local nursing home as a CNA. She continues to take English conversation classes with HCDE to improve her conversation skills with her patients. Her future plans include enrolling in nursing classes at Lee College.

View Veronica’s story:[2] https://youtu.be/BSyn_0ROU-Y

Adult graduate Andrea Rodriguez, Alief, Texas:

Mother and wife Andrea Rodriguez tried to go back to school twice. The third time was the charm. Her inspiration was encouragement from a friend who showed her a photo of two women posing in a grad photo from HCDE.

“If they could do it, so could I,” she said.

Math was hard for Andrea, but she persisted with the help of her teacher. Once she completed her GED, she enrolled in CNA classes and plans to work in the medical field with her credentials.

“I’m excited about helping other people,” Rodriguez said.

View Andrea’s story: [3]<https://youtu.be/EjljvoRayAY>

About HCDE Adult Education: HCDE Adult Education is the largest, no-cost adult education program in Texas, with a variety of health care and construction career training options in Harris and Liberty counties. Students may also take English as a second language classes and high school equivalency degree classes simultaneously in a traditional classroom setting or online. For more information, go to [4]<http://www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education>.

About Harris County Department of Education: HCDE provides special education, therapy services, early education, adult education and after-school programming. Services are funded by government grants, fees and a local property tax of approximately \$9 per homeowner. For every dollar in local property tax collected, HCDE provides \$4.86 in services to the 25 Harris County school districts. We operate four campuses for students with profound special education needs and adjudicated or recovering youth who require a low, student-teacher ratio and highly structured environment. One-hundred percent of students served on HCDE campuses are at-risk. We are governed by an elected board of seven trustees and have 1,100 employees and 33 facilities,

including 15 Head Start centers. More info at [5]www.hcde-texas.org.

1. https://youtu.be/tI_-1jFIBL0
2. https://youtu.be/BSyn_OR0U-Y
3. <https://youtu.be/EjljvoRayAY>
4. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education>
5. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/>

Ribbon Cutting for Baytown Early Head Start/Head Start Set for May 23

(2019-05-17 11:09) - hcdetx



[1]



Harris County Department of Education Head Start celebrated the opening of its new 20,000-square-foot facility on about 3 acres in Baytown with a ribbon cutting. The facility will house Early Head Start and Head Start under one roof.

HCDE Board of Trustees were joined by Superintendent James Colbert Jr. and other HCDE administrators along with City of Baytown Mayor Brandon Capetillo. Baytown Head Start students performed songs for those in attendance. Parents and community members were also guests.

Special features of the Head Start center include: seven Head Start classrooms, five Early Head Start classroom, a training room, offices and two playgrounds – one for Head Start and another for Early Head Start. The facility has a capacity of 180 students – 140 Head Start students and 40 Early Head Start students. About 45 staff members will be assigned to this location, including Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships staff.

The facility opens this summer to Early Head Start students and welcomes Head Start students this fall.

This build-to-suit lease project was funded by KQC Investors, LLC and took two years to complete.

HCDE Head Start is an educational program providing students and their families with the skills they need to be ready for the demands of school. For more about Head Start, visit: www.hcde-texas.org/head-start/.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/baytown-head-start.jpg>

See the Impact: HCDE Launches Awareness Campaign (2019-05-20 13:30) - hcdetx



[1]



HCDE recently launched a multi-media campaign called “See the Impact” to raise public awareness about our programs and services. The campaign also highlights how critical HCDE services are to the success of public education in the Houston region and how it only costs the average homeowner 73 cents a month to support our programs and services.

We realize we have a lot to talk about, and everything HCDE does is important. The campaign features the five pillars of service programs that directly impact students in greater Harris County: Adult Education, CASE for Kids (afterschool), Head Start, Special Schools and School-Based Therapy Services. Our support divisions like the Teaching and Learning Center, Choice Partners, Records Management, Educator Certification and the Center for Safe and Secure Schools are also highlighted in certain aspects of the campaign.

[2]



GRADUATE
DEDICATED
PURPOSEFUL
CATALYST
PERSISTENT

A young boy with short brown hair is smiling at the camera. He is wearing a dark polo shirt. The background is a classroom with other students at desks, but it is heavily overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. Overlaid on the left side of the image is a list of terms, each with one letter highlighted in yellow: STUDENT, ACADEMIC, ACHIEVER, SCHOLAR, OPPORTUNIST, and LEARNER.

STUDENT
ACADEMIC
ACHIEVER
SCHOLAR
OPPORTUNIST
LEARNER





The campaign is being carried out through various marketing publications, such as a new annual report and quad-fold brochure with the “See the Impact” slogan along with a video and other

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advertising collateral. The video, built around the concept of “[6]See the Change Your Change Makes,” showcases the impact HCDE makes by leveraging tax dollars through grants, fees and the purchasing cooperative to turn \$1 of property taxes into \$5 of services. It emphasizes that all of HCDE’s services are possible for an average of 73 cents a month in property taxes.

[youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEF_a2uus5Q]

In the upcoming months, the campaign will appear on local radio stations, YouTube, Facebook display ads and through organic posts on other HCDE social media platforms. [7]A short video will also play this summer in movie theaters around the Houston area before blockbuster films including Godzilla and The Lion King.

You may ask what all this has to do with you? We know we are better together. So, we want to share the impact of who we are and what we do through this campaign within our social circles. We can all do this by sharing social media posts and mentioning HCDE impact in simple conversations with friends and family.

The impact we make on the lives of children and educators in Harris County is tremendous, and we want to share the value of our efforts in our local communities.

Use the hashtags **#HCDEimpact** and **#Seetheimpact** to help spread the word.

View our annual report or see the video: [8]See the Change Your Change Makes. Like our [9]Facebook, [10]Twitter and [11]Instagram pages to catch new items as they are created. Check out our LinkedIn page and [12]YouTube pages.

HCDE plays a critical role in public education in our region and our public needs to know who we are, what we do and how we affect schools around the greater Houston area. We hope you’ll help us share the impact!

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/hcde_annualreport_pdf-non-print_page_43.jpg
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/hcde_annualreport_pdf-non-print_page_16.jpg
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/hcde_annualreport_pdf-non-print_page_28.jpg
4. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/hcde_annualreport_pdf-non-print_page_01.jpg
5. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/hcde_annualreport_pdf-non-print_page_02.jpg
6. https://youtu.be/JEF_a2uus5Q
7. https://youtu.be/JEF_a2uus5Q
8. https://youtu.be/JEF_a2uus5Q
9. <https://www.facebook.com/HCDetx>
10. <https://twitter.com/HCDetx>
11. <http://www.instagram.com/hcdetx>
12. <https://www.youtube.com/HCDetv>

Games of Drones: CASE for Kids Teens Contest Space at All-Earth Ecobot Challenge (2019-05-21 15:07) - hcdetx



View event photos: [1]<https://bit.ly/2QhmrRe> (password hcde1889)





Steady hands, calculated moves and calm behaviors prevailed at the 2019 All Earth Ecobot Challenge drone competition as teams of 80 teens contended for titles May 17 at Space Center Houston.

The competition hosted by Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, supplied a full day of challenges, including broken parts and drained batteries.

"It builds teamwork and makes students more responsible," said Christyna Ferrell, lead science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) teacher at Yellowsto

ne Academy, a state charter school.

Ferrell, a baby boomer, said drones didn't even exist when she was growing up. Today, drones deliver the promise of engineering and IT careers. Drones are becoming staples in business, medical and technology industries.

HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. joined volunteers and sponsors from Workshop Houston, Spindletop Charities, CenterPoint Energy, Wood and the Education Foundation of Harris County. Curiosity was an initial reason the HCDE superintendent observed and met with students at the

competition. He soon became impressed by the programming, coding and piloting challenges the teens surmounted.

[2]



“These students are engaged in thinking outside of the box, and these are the very skills they need to cultivate as young adults,” said Colbert.

Houston Independent School District Holland Middle School student Precious Hunter believes being a female drone pilot will give her opportunities she might not normally get, like being able to go to places like the Space Center Houston at NASA.

“It also allows me to look into careers in STEM, and I like that opportunity,” Hunter said.

CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson Caruthers said the drone competition is in its inaugural year as the 2019 Ecobot Challenge split challenge vehicles this year. Younger elementary students work with Mindstorm Lego kits in robotics while the middle school students moved to drones.

“The dynamics and capabilities of drones is expanding, and we thought it would be beneficial for teens to explore drones and the careers made possible by using geographic information systems,” said Thompson-Caruthers.

Specific programming challenges were required for the competition. Team drones were timed to race through obstacles as they demonstrated piloting skills. An EcoGenius lab allowed for leisure learning and introduced games and software supplied by CASE for Kids' Sharing Multiple Afterschool Resources and Technology Zone, or SMART Zone, free resources available to students through their afterschool providers.

[3]



1st Place: Westchester Academy, Spring Branch ISD

Five Winners of the 2019 All-Earth Ecobot Drone Challenge:

1. Westchester Academy for International Studies (district charter), Spring Branch ISD
2. Mindstormer Robotics Homeschool Team
3. Yellowstone Academy, YCP Flyers Team, state charter school
4. Spring Forest Middle School, Game of Drones, Spring Branch ISD
5. Spring Oak Middle School, Purple Alliance, Spring Branch ISD

CASE for Kids is an afterschool intermediary which provides resources, training and afterschool services for over 14,000 students and 2,800 teachers in greater Harris County. All Earth Ecobot Challenge is the largest event hosted by CASE for Kids and allows students from greater Harris County to compete through STEM challenges. More info at C[4]<http://www.hcde-texas.org>.

1. <https://bit.ly/2QhmrRe>
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190517_ecobot_0085.jpg
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/img_8614.jpg
4. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/>

Class of 2019 GED Grads Reinforced by Messages Promoting Lifelong Learning (2019-05-23 10:36) - hcdetx

Words of motivation, tears of joy and the sound of laughter were highlights of Harris County Department of Education's Adult Education Graduation 2019 on May 18.

Commencement speaker Mike Temple, director for Gulf Coast Workforce Board, encouraged the 65 graduates with three pieces of advice: Be curious, always learn and look for the good jobs.

"Do what you like to do and want to do, but remember you always have to learn," he said.

Temple pointed to jobs in medicine, technology and education as being in demand positions in the employment sector. Before leaving the stage, he urged the grads to be proud, happy and have fun.

New teacher Emmanuel Nieves-Aviles from the HCDE Baytown Learning Center handed out the diplomas and later talked about his own struggles learning English as a native Spanish speaker. The instructor provides classes in Spanish for GED students who are also learning English while studying for the GED. Many of his students have degrees and are professionals in their native countries but must start over when they come to America.

"I try to be a teacher but also a friend," he said.

Handshakes and congratulations were delivered collectively by Temple and HCDE Board President Josh Flynn; board members Danyahel Norris and Richard Cantu; HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr.; assistant superintendents Kimberly McLeod and Jonathan Parker; and Adult Education director Stephanie Ross.

Valedictorian Allison Poindexter, 18, is a homeschool student who went back to get her GED in order to attend her college of choice. She gave words of inspiration and urged her fellow classmates to never give up their dreams.

"My speech was to remind people that they have a purpose and that they are loved and to tell people they have a future and will do great things with it," she said.

Many of the students are continuing to attend workforce classes in the medical and construction fields offered through HCDE and Gulf Coast Workforce. For more information, go to [1]www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education.

View photos from graduation (password hcde1889): [2]<https://bit.ly/2EiMMtm> and [3]<https://bit.ly/2M6x8au>

1. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education>

2. <https://bit.ly/2EiMMtm>

3. <https://bit.ly/2M6x8au>

Baytown Early Head Start/Head Start Officially Opens New Location (2019-05-31 11:04) - hcdetx



[1]



Students and staff will start occupying the new 20,000-square-foot Baytown Early Head Start/Head Start, located at 323 Massey Tompkins Rd., this summer and fall.

View photo gallery: [2]https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/20190523-Baytown/G0000EYA3T8io8vo/C0000n9_gZ3qT8fl (password is hcde1889)

Harris County Department of Education Superintendent James Colbert, Board of Trustees President Josh Flynn, trustees Richard Cantu and Danny Norris and Head Start Director Venetia Peacock were joined by City of Baytown officials, Head Start staff, community partners and parents Thursday, May 23 for a ribbon-cutting and tours of the new center.

[3]



“Today marks a really important day for us as we celebrate not only our Head Start program, but a school that is going to house over 40 little ones in Early Head Start,” Colbert said. “This facility is consistent with the caliber of the staff we have; and more important, it is consistent with the potential of the students inside it.”

Special features of the Head Start center include: seven Head Start classrooms, five Early Head Start classroom, a training room, offices and two playgrounds – one for Head Start and another for Early Head Start. The facility has a capacity of 180 students – 140 Head Start students and 40 Early Head Start students. About 45 staff members will be assigned to this location.

[4]



“This is the realization of a project that has been over five years long,” Peacock said. “We have a standard and want to provide high-quality facilities, instruction and services to our families to help them move to the goal they desire and meet the goals they have for their lives. Having an awesome facility is a part of that because it can support you in services you are trying to provide.”

HCDE Head Start is an educational program providing students and their families with the skills they need to be ready for the demands of school. For more about Head Start, visit: [5]www.hcde-texas.org/head-start/.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190523_baytown_0261.jpg
2. https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/20190523-Baytown/G0000EYA3T8io8vo/C0000n9_gZ3qT8fI
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190523_baytown_0041.jpg
4. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190523_baytown_0349.jpg
5. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/head-start/>

Game of Chess Provides Life Plays for HCDE Special Schools Students

(2019-05-31 11:21) - hcdetx



[1]



Chess players are constantly strategizing, making choices including how to get out of a fork: choosing

220

the least impactful bad option. For students with intellectual, developmental and behavioral disorders at Harris County Department of Education's Academic and Behavior School East and West, chess lessons are life lessons.

"One of the things we teach is you never lose, you learn," said coach James Hudson from PerfectPlay, an instructional nonprofit chess organization. "You calculate your mistakes and move on in chess. If you win, you shake hands because you could have just as easily lost. It's an honor to play the game."

Students met for the third annual chess tournament this May after receiving yearlong instruction from Hudson, teachers and administrators at both schools. As a first, AB School West won the competition over two-time winning rival AB School East.

Principal Victor Keys says he introduced chess to his students several years ago after seeing the positive effects of the hobby.

[2]



Besides the obvious benefits of building math skills reinforcement and critical thinking, chess can build confidence, pride, discipline, respect and patience, said HCDE Superintendent James

Colbert Jr., a longtime chess player who makes a practice out of playing the top chess player at the tournament.

This year that player was Michael Carley, 14, an avid player diagnosed with a mild form of autism spectrum disorder. Mother Brandy Carley said her son's temper flared and stress rose when he tried sports like football and baseball.

Coach Hudson says Carley's love for the game is obvious. He plays up to 10 matches with focus without hesitation.

"He loves chess," Hudson said. "It's like any other thing we do. If we're good at it, we have to like it."

[3]



View photos from the event: [4]https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/20190522-Chess/G0000zrdH5LxHMc8/C0000n9_gZ3qT8fl (password is hcde1889)

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190522_chess_0216.jpg

2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190522_chess_0106.jpg

3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/05/20190522_chess_0001.jpg

4. https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/20190522-Chess/G0000zrdH5LxHMc8/C0000n9_gZ3qT8fI

1.6 June

Newcomer Teacher Tran Credits HCDE Training, Mentors for Early Success in Profession (2019-06-04 18:05) - hcdetx



[1]



Soft-spoken teacher LanVy Tran's classroom runs like a well-oiled machine. Students transition from one workstation to another with confidence, trading iPads for pencils and papers where students can use virtual manipulatives. Like runners stretching, fourth-grade minds warm up as Tran asks for

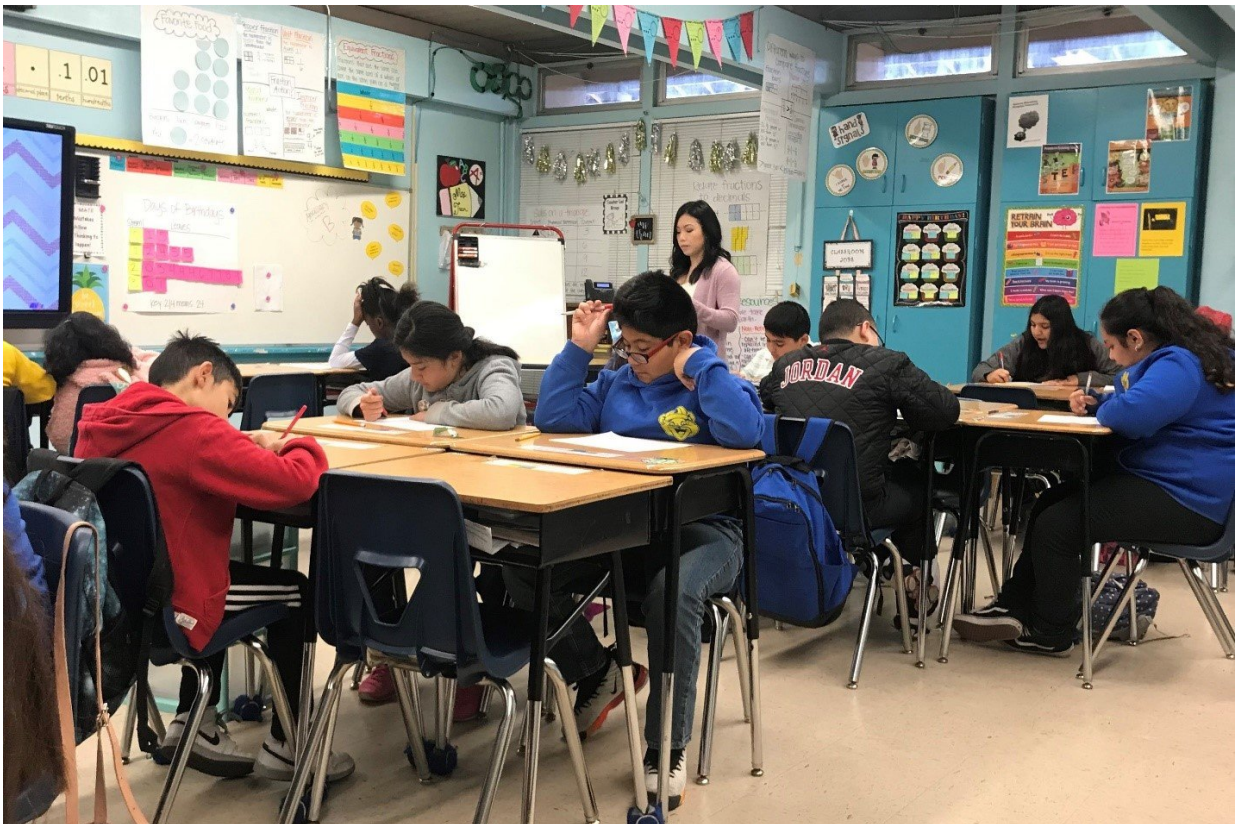
predictions as numbers are placed on a grid.

In the classroom of 21 at Burbank Elementary in Houston ISD, no one is redirected or reprimanded by the second-year teacher. All are engaged on the math and science front.

Tran was enrolled in Harris County Department of Education's teacher alternative certification program for seven to 10 months in pre-service training, taking teacher preparation courses. The next 12 months were spent teaching and taking additional courses. Mentors such as HCDE's Director of Math Curriculum Nicole Shanahan helped her along the way and are still here for her today.

"I was with HCDE for about two years and they gave me plenty of tools and advice to prepare for teaching," Tran said.

[2]



Since 2007, HCDE's Educator Certification and Advancement (ECA) Division has helped college graduates and second-career seekers to transition into teaching. For the past seven year the teacher preparation program reports a 99 percent pass rate for students completing courses and taking the certification exams, according to Lidia Zatopek, director for HCDE's ECA. The division also trains and prepares principals for certification. Recently it added the Superintendent Certification Institute to help further elevate school leaders.

Tran is confident, well-organized and patient, three traits that go a long way in the teaching

profession, said Shanahan. Even though some of a good teacher's traits are inherent, most are learned.

"I had amazing mentors at HCDE whom I still lean on for support," Tran said. "My mentor Ms. Shanahan has been wonderful and taught me a lot about engaging activities and classroom instruction. I go to her math workshops and enjoy making workstations for my students, and they enjoy the activities."

The best part of teaching, Tran said, are the "ah-ha" moments when her students make connections between theory and practice.

"Then they say, oh, I see now Ms. Tran," she said.

HCDE is recruiting teachers for its Teacher Alternative Certification Program. For more information, go to [3]www.hcde-texas.org/teacher-and-lead .

(LanVy Tran was recently nominated for the Texas Alternative Certification Association Intern of the Year Award. Winners will be announced this summer.)

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/tran.jpg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/tran-2.jpg>
3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/teacher-and-lead>

32 Harris County Teens Travel to Carnegie Hall for Scholastic Art & Writing Medals (2019-06-07 12:47) - hcdetx





Thirty-two teen writers and artists from Harris County Department of Education's Scholastic Art & Writing Awards Regional Affiliate program traveled to New York City to Carnegie Hall June 5-7 to gain national Gold Medals as young writers and artists. Their prestigious, artistic endeavors were selected from 340,000 national entries in 2019.

View photos: [2]<https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/Scholastic-Art-Writing/Scholastic-NYC-June-2019> (password is hcde1889)

Teen artist Taylor Powers of Cy-Fair ISD and writer Divot Walia of Pearland ISD each earned \$10,000 national scholarships as two of 20 recipients national recipients.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recognizes student achievement for grades 7-12 in the visual and literary arts in 29 categories, including editorial cartoon, poetry, graphic design, fashion, science fiction, video game design and more. The Awards offers opportunities for creative teens to earn recognition, exhibition, publication and scholarships.

"This experience for students at Carnegie Hall in NYC is indescribable. Having the opportunity to be recognized for their creativity and talent at the highest level is monumental in their lives," said Andrea Segraves, coordinator for HCDE's Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

Each year, students are surprised by a guest appearance from a celebrity during the Awards. This year, actor/comedian Tina Fey appeared.



[3]

Gold Medalists attending the ceremony:

Writing:

Theijja Balasubramanian, Klein Oak High School, Klein ISD; Lilliana Cadet, Fairmont Junior High School, Deer Park ISD; Sophie Caldwell, Noelle Alexander, Oliver, Adonai Ross, Indrani Maitra and Jack Trent, St. John's School; Riya Keswani, TH Rogers Middle School, Houston ISD; Emily Lara, Cypress Falls High School, Cy-Fair ISD; Kahani Malhotra, Village School; Yuan Malubay, Krimmel Intermediate School, Klein ISD; Sierra Ondo, Presbyterian School; Zoe Price, Kinkaid School; Hallie Thomson, Langham Creek High School, Cy-Fair ISD; Eliana Veeningen, Veritas Christian Academy; Divjot Walia, Glenda Dawson High, Pearland ISD; Trina Zhang, Killough Middle School, Alief ISD

Art:

Mary Ayers, Episcopal High School; Axel Maldonado and Mario Barron, Sam Rayburn High, Pasadena ISD; Evieh'biJan Nia Braddy, Nimitz High, Aldine ISD; Rachel Chang, Cypress Ridge High, Cy-Fair ISD; Sophia Early, Stratford High, Spring Branch ISD; Sophia Fu, Pearland Junior High West, Pearland ISD; Colby Gregory, Cypress Woods High, Cy-Fair ISD;; Hattie Meehan, St. Agnes Academy;; Chloe Pertuit, Clear Falls High, Clear Creek ISD; Taylor Powers, Cypress Woods High School, Cy-Fair ISD; Austin Reppert, Episcopal High; Jordan Smith, Carver High, Aldine ISD

The regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards begins the 2020 awards in the fall of 2019. For more information about judging, sponsoring or entering, go to [4]www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards.

2. <https://hcdetx.smugmug.com/Scholastic-Art-Writing/Scholastic-NYC-June-2019>
3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/scholastic1-1.jpg>
4. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards>

Principal Certification Academy at HCDE Affords Flexibility, Support
(2019-06-07 12:56) - hcdetx





Educator Anae Ntasin juggled school, a full-time teaching job and a large family this year as she attended the Principal Certification Academy at Harris County Department of Education. The Spring Independent School District biology teacher is on track to complete the program and take the principal certification exam by the end of the year.

Ntasin and 14 of her fellow classmates recently met to share their research action plans for tackling school issues. The trifold presentations included an oral report which was graded by program coordinator Chaney Ledet, curriculum and compliance officer for HCDE's Educator Certification and Professional Advancement Division.

Ledet reminds students that collaboration in the school community is key to being a great school leader. As coordinator for the Principal Academy, she believes the success of the program is attributed to the program's hallmarks: flexibility and support.

"We have a 99 percent pass rate on the principal and teacher certification exams," said Lidia Zatopek, director of ECA. "While passing the test is a major focus, we also make sure that we help support students throughout the beginning years of their careers as school leaders."

The Principal Certification Academy is a hybrid program that includes an onsite monthly Saturday seminar, online assignments and plenty of one-on-one support, including mentors. As a rolling cohort, the program allows students to enter classes at any time during the semester. A boot camp helps candidates prepare for the actual exam and to gain experiences by shadowing a principal.

Tuition is reasonable, and payment plans are available. To enroll, candidates must have a master's degree or be enrolled in the final semester of graduate school.

Jason Hill, a second-grade teacher at Frost Elementary in Houston ISD, passed his principal exam through the program and is propelled by the self-assurance he gained.

[2]



“This program has given me the confidence to actually be an instructional leader,” he said. “Not knowing everything a principal does left me skeptical, but now I’m learning about skills I need to have, and I believe I can be a successful school leader.”

Dora Garcia is a high school counselor in Deer Park Independent School District. She joined the program to learn about the administrative aspect of being a principal. As a counselor, she already knows how important emotional stability is for student success.[3]



“This program has helped me tremendously, preparing me to be hands-on with the budget and everything that goes on behind the scenes,” she said. “As a principal, you must employ equity with your employees, including everybody and equipping them with the necessary resources.”

For more information about the principal program, go to [4]<https://hcdetexas.org/teach-and-lead/principal-certification/>.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/image00004.jpeg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/image00036.jpeg>
3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/image00019.jpeg>

4. <https://hcde-texas.org/teach-and-lead/principal-certification/>

**Partnership Project Provides \$550,000 to Fund Houston-Area Afterschool
During 2019-2020 School Year (2019-06-12 21:18) - hcdetx**





Local afterschool funding for approximately 1,500 students is being provided for the upcoming 2019-2020 school year through \$550,787 in afterschool funding supplied through the Partnership Project.

The Partnership Project is a 20-year-old program founded by Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, which fills afterschool funding gaps through a unique collaborative between local, state and federal partners.

Partnership Project is a collaboration between HCDE's CASE for Kids, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, the Texas Workforce Commission and local afterschool sites in which all parties contribute funding.

Services will be provided from Oct. 1, 2019 through Aug. 31, 2020 to 25 afterschool sites located in schools throughout Harris County. Awards range from \$10,000 to \$30,000. Districts include Alief, Houston, Pasadena and Sheldon independent school districts and charter schools the Academy of Accelerated Learning Chimney Rock and Belfort.

"The Partnership Project allows us to expand our reach to local families and education communities we serve during times when public school budgets are lean and federal funding for afterschool has lessened," said CASE for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers.

CASE for Kids supplies resources, training and funding for students in afterschool programs in schools, childcare families and community centers. In 2017-2018, CASE for Kids served 14,627

students and supported 2,814 educators.

The goal of Partnership Project is to provide supplemental funding to comprehensive after-school programs for disadvantaged students ages 4-12, or children with disabilities up to age 19. The program promotes social and emotional learning skills and increases support for academic programs which promote math and reading.

The Partnership Project fills funding gaps with a variety of resources, including the CASE for Kids lending library which provides curricula, educational games, sporting equipment and STEM-based materials like robotics kits. Afterschool vendors affiliated with CASE for Kids specialize in academic focus areas that highlight math and language and social and emotional learning.

For more information, including specific schools and award amounts, visit [2]<https://bit.ly/2XIPd5z>

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/20181217_case_0050.jpg

2. <https://bit.ly/2XlPd5z>

Fortis Academy Celebrates First Year as Recovery School (2019-06-13 15:42)

- hcdetx



[1]



Students and staff at Fortis Academy came together at the end of the school year to celebrate students on their road to recovery and their academic accomplishments.

Two students were recognized for completing their course work and graduating from their home campuses at the end of May. Another student was recognized for being sober for five months into sobriety.

Harris County Department of Education Superintendent James Colbert spoke to those in attendance about how his vision of Fortis Academy came about.

“Society is built around punishing people and somewhere we need to stop this cycle and start helping,” he said.

There are people and their families begging for help to get away from addiction, he said. School districts, teachers, counselors and principals want to help someone, but punishment is the only answer.

Fortis Academy is symbolic in a sense that it’s trying to change that paradigm and look at things through a different lens, Colbert noted.

“I have a vision to go big by having more than one Fortis Academy campus to spark and inspire others to do exactly what we are doing in Harris County,” Colbert said. “Maybe we can even inspire others outside of Texas.”

HCDE is positioned uniquely to help because of all the wraparound services it can offer to the community.

“We will think of it and don’t care what the obstacles are because we are going to try it and find a way to pull it off,” Colbert said.

Colbert said he is extremely proud of principal Anthony Moten and his staff, the parents who let them help their children, and students—especially those who sought out shelter and found it at Fortis Academy.

One parent spoke about her daughter going through a lot of changes after starting at Fortis Academy, but they were for the better. The mother never thought she would see her daughter transform in a positive way.

Fortis Academy Principal Anthony Moten marveled at the significance of a Fortis student’s pledge to remain sober. Research shows because of environment or friends the risk of relapse is higher when students must return to their pretreatment schools.

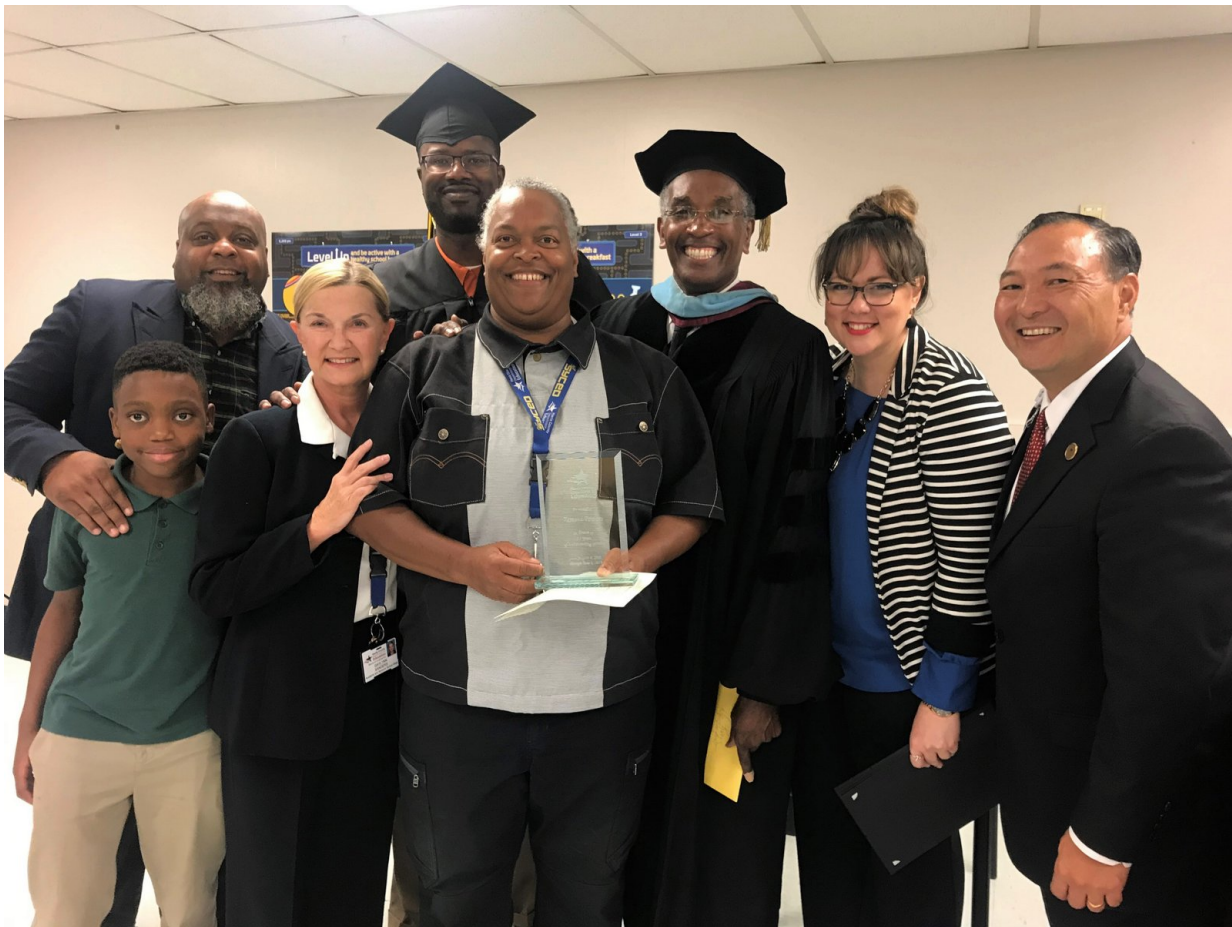
“Think about the commitment these young people are trying to make for the rest of their lives at 16 or 17 years old,” Moten said. “I’m so very proud of our kids and honored to be your principal,

because you are doing something that a lot of people wouldn't attempt to do."

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/20190530_fortis_0203.jpg

Graduation Recognition at ABS West Recognizes Small, Large Milestones

(2019-06-13 15:48) - hcdetx





Academic and Behavior School West held “Graduation Recognition” on June 5 with 29 students being recognized for their achievements. Twelve students graduated from high school and will go on to job training programs and career opportunities. Other students celebrated their promotions to middle and high school.

Achievements, both small and large, are emotional milestones at ABS West, a school for students with behavioral challenges and intellectual disabilities.

Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker thanked faculty, staff and parents for contributing to the students’ success.

A special presentation was given to teacher and coach Tamara Powers, an 18-year employee at ABS West. She thanked her students for giving her almost two decades of personal growth.

“We learn so much from them every day,” she said, accepting a special plaque from principal Victor Keys.

Senior Andrew Isadore wants to train in the Job Corps so he can work and make money. He aspires to be a car salesman and later attend school to become an engineer.

“The school has helped him with his behavior and his attitude towards life and towards helping him achieve his goals,” said his mother Kim Isadore. “His whole attitude and behavior has

changed for the best, and I'm happy they have helped him here," she said.

Students ended the afternoon with hugs, tears and graduation cupcakes. A celebratory "Celebrate Good Times" dance provided closure after the turning of the tassels.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/dfdf.jpg>

Head Start to Host Job Fair June 20 (2019-06-13 16:15) - hcdetx



[1]



Harris County Department of Education is hosting a job interview fair to recruit teachers, teaching assistants, family service providers and cooks to join any of its 15 locations throughout northeast Harris County. The recruitment event will be held Thursday, June 20, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd.

Qualifications for Head Start teaching assistant, Early Head Start teacher and Head Start teacher include experience working with young children and an interest in early childhood education. Those who hold child development associate (CDA) degrees are strongly encouraged to apply. Interested candidates can apply online at www.hcde-texas.org or call 713-696-8287 for information.

HCDE Head Start provides services to facilities in Barrett Station, Baytown, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Dogan, Fifth Ward, Fonwood, Humble, J.D. Walker, La Porte, Pugh, San Jacinto, Sheffield and Tidwell. Head Start ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to families.

Find more information on positions available and qualifications, visit: [2]<https://bit.ly/2HPXMPJ>. Visit [3]www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart for general information about HCDE Head Start and locations.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/hcde_annualreport_pdf-non-print_page_43.jpg
2. <https://bit.ly/2HPXMPJ>
3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/HeadStart>





Have an interest in working with infants to 5-year-olds?

Harris County Department of Education is hosting a job interview fair to recruit teachers, teaching assistants, family service providers and cooks to join any of its 15 locations throughout northeast Harris County. The recruitment event will be held Thursday, June 20, 2018, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd.

“We are looking for highly energetic, passionate individuals who enjoy working with young children to join our team,” said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. “Our employees help transform lives of children and their families, along with making a difference each day.”

Qualifications for Head Start teaching assistant, Early Head Start teacher and Head Start teacher include experience working with young children and an interest in early childhood education. Those who hold child development associate (CDA) degrees are strongly encouraged to apply. Interested candidates can apply online at www.hcde-texas.org or call 713-696-8287 for information.

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1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/20190418_earlyhs_0310.jpg

HCDE Head Start Recruits Students for Openings in 2 Communities

(2019-06-19 16:50) - hcdetx





Two Harris County Department of Education Head Start centers (La Porte and Tidwell) are recruiting students ages 3-5 for preschool for the 2019-20 school year.

Head Start ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to the families. Healthy meals and snacks are provided for students during the day.

Parent involvement opportunities are provided along with service referrals to meet family needs. Family engagement activities are hallmark to the program.

Eligible children are those from low-income families and with disabilities between ages 3-5.

Applicants should present the following at registration:

- Proof of age- child's state birth certificate, state birth facts or passport
- Proof of address- lease contract, current utility bill, state ID, benefits letter or paycheck stub
- Proof of income- current tax form (W-2 or 1040), 12 months of check stubs, child support payment record, verification of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Supplemental Security Income

The centers are located at 927 South 1st St. in La Porte and 8302 John Ralston Rd. in Houston (Tidwell).

Other openings may become available at the 15 centers HCDE operates in east and northeast Houston. For more information about registration, call the Head Start main number at 713-672-9343,

La Porte Head Start at 713-696-3123, Tidwell Head Start at 713-696-3124 or visit www.hcdetexas.org/head-start.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/20190523_baytown_0217.jpg

**Cy-Fair ISD Graduate Grabs NYC Dream at Carnegie Hall with Celebrities,
\$10,000 Art Scholarship (2019-06-20 13:27) - hcdetx**





Tina Fox and Taylor Powers

Within a whirlwind of 24 hours, Cy-Fair ISD graduate Taylor Powers met actors Tina Fey, Rose Byrn and designer Zac Posen. The young photographer was treated like a celebrity herself at Carnegie Hall as one of eight, \$10,000 art portfolio recipients awarded by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards through the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artist & Writers.

The Cypress Woods High School student traveled to New York this June with her family and photography teacher Tina Fox for the prestigious national awards ceremony. This year Scholastic recognized 800 teen Gold Medalists selected from more than 340,000 national entries from young artists and writers in grades 7-12. Locally, Taylor's portfolio was chosen last winter by a panel of art

professionals from Harris County Department of Education, regional affiliate of the Awards.

“New York City was like a fairytale to me,” said the 18-year-old. From visiting the Today Show and seeing the Jonas Brothers to getting lost on the subway and experiencing Times Square, the experience mimicked a movie, a dream come true, she said.

Backstage at Carnegie Hall, visiting celebrities greeted the top-award students. Tina Fey posed for a personal photo with Powers, and the Saturday Night Live star even complimented the teen on her dress.

[2]



Taylor Powers and Tina Fey

“I was smiling so hard that I could barely get out the words “thank you’,” she said. Photography teacher Fox has been an art teacher for almost 30 years and has been involved with HCDE’s regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for 27 years. Through the validation and

recognition students gain from Scholastic, she sees student confidence rise. As Powers began working on her senior photography portfolio this year, her teacher knew it was unique and powerful as she created the body of images.

“This is the first time I’ve had a student receive this type of award,” she said. “I know this award has opened opportunities for her that she otherwise might not have had.”

HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing Coordinator Andrea Segraves sees the power of expression that Scholastic Art & Writing Awards lends to young student artists and writers as they gain notoriety for their artistic talents.

“The Awards have identified and honored so many talented writers and artists over the years like Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, Robert Redford, Lena Dunham and Ken Burns,” said Segraves. “To join in those ranks is such an empowerment for these teens.”

Powers’ future career plans include attending community college until she hears back from the esteemed Savannah College of Art and Design, her dream college.

“I hope to be able to commission art pieces for clients one day and do photo shoots for anybody seeking a photographer with a keen eye,” she said.

She is quick to credit her teacher for encouraging and pushing her artistic endeavors while thanking Mom Letitia for influencing her creativity and buying the digital camera to help her forge her artistic pathway.

(For information about entering, judging or sponsoring the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards through Regional Affiliate Harris County Department of Education, go to [3]<https://hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards/> or email [4]asegraves@hcde-texas.org.)

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/fox_powers_2.jpg

2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/img_2891.jpg

3. <https://hcde-texas.org/scholastic-awards/>

4. <mailto:asegraves@hcde-texas.org>

**Trevino-Jones Named Principal at Harris County Department of Education
Academic and Behavior School East (2019-06-24 18:23) - hcdetx**





Donna Trevino-Jones is the new principal of Academic and Behavior School East (ABS East) at Harris County Department of Education. As mother to two college graduates, the Conroe resident believes in the power of education in supplying opportunity.

“All students should have choices to pursue their passion, and education provides that access,” she said.

In joining Academic and Behavior School East, Trevino-Jones said she is eager to be part of the school's progressive, dedicated team. ABS East is a school in southeast Houston for students with emotional and intellectual challenges, including autism. Students are served through contracts with their school district. Classes are small, with a low, student-to-teacher ratio. A behavior specialist and academic team implement a growth plan for each ABS student, with the goal for students to return to their home school districts to be successful in their school environment.

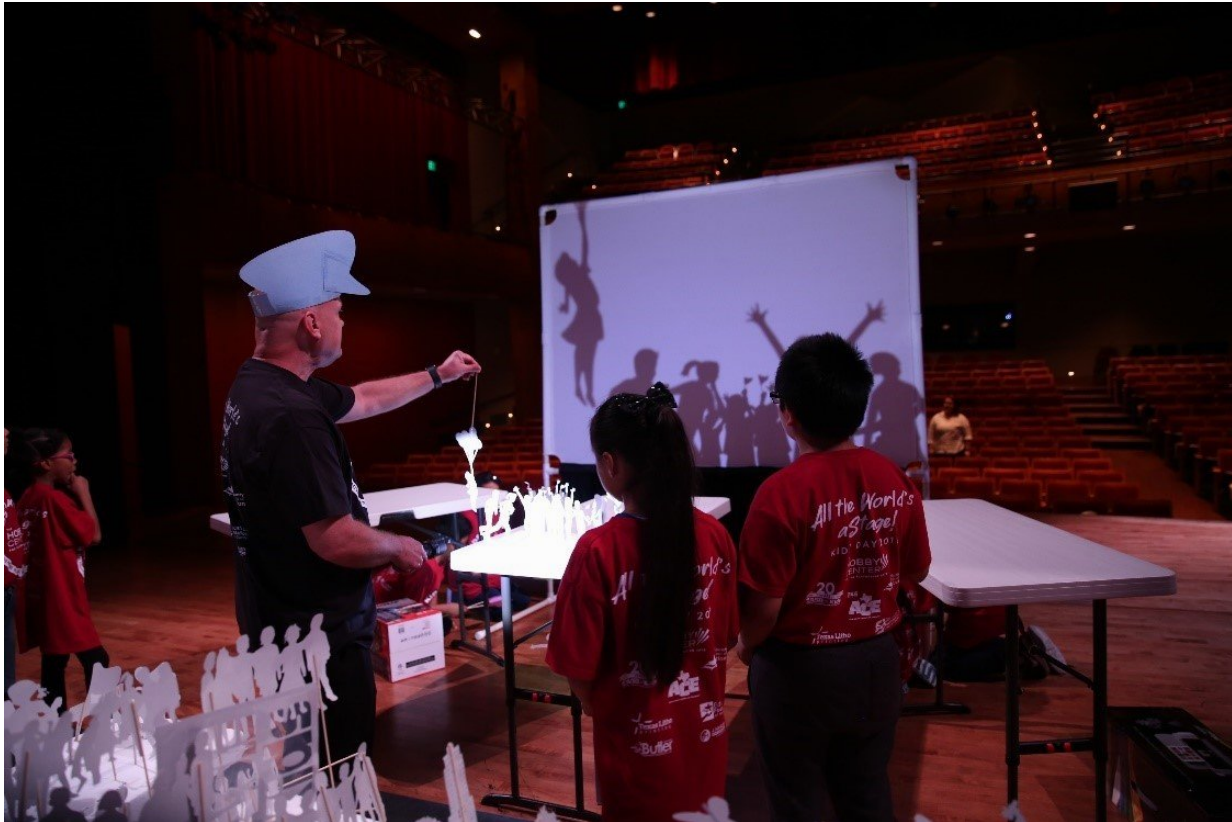
Trevino-Jones earned a Bachelor of Arts from Southern Methodist University, a Master of Science from Texas A &M-Commerce and is currently pursuing a doctorate degree. Most recently she served as principal of Beth Anderson Elementary in Arlington ISD. Throughout her school leadership career, she has inspired both students and staff through her roles as principal, assistant principal and dean in Spring, Dallas and Pflugerville ISDs.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/20190620_jones_0001_r_f.jpg

HCDE Summer Enrichment Programs Prevent 'Summer Slide' (2019-06-27 16:48)

- hcdetx

[1]



In a break from school-year routine, 150 kids enrolled in summer enrichment programs are dancing, singing, acting, drumming and creating poetry. Little do they know while they have fun, they are preventing “summer slide” or summer learning loss.

Over the summer, students typically lose one month of school-year learning, and declines get worse the higher the grade level, according to “Review of Educational Research.”

Summer learning programs lessen the effects of summer slide and help teachers start the school year off with less reviewing.

Harris County Department of Education’s Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, has hosted a program called Kids’ Day at Hobby Center for approximately 10 years. Students in elementary through high school are grouped with performing and visual artists, who are also known as afterschool service providers. The four-week program culminates with a

performance at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts.

“Summer learning opportunities are important because it allows students to explore interests they don’t get to pursue during the regular school day, especially fine arts curriculum,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director for CASE for Kids.

The service providers who may be professional actors, singers or dancers weave literacy and numeracy inside of their lessons. Step counts in dance provide opportunity for math sequencing. A video artist includes history in her video projects so that young videographers are doing research. Reading, discipline and memorization are interwoven in most of the fine arts projects.

“Our job is to find the providers that can ignite the passion in the kids while providing high-quality content,” Thompson-Caruthers said.

Chris Cortez, founder of Houston Healthy Hip-Hop, found his passion in afterschool as a middle-school introvert. When he found his purpose, his grades began to climb.

“It helped me break out of my shell,” Cortez said.

Thompson-Caruthers said another benefit of summer enrichment and fine arts is the social-emotional learning component. Today’s school schedule provides less time for self-expression, voicing opinion or creating personal relationships to share problems and find solutions.

[2]



For fourth grader Asher Hill, who says he is growing up in a tough neighborhood, participating in a poetry writing class gave him the chance to reflect on who he is and what he can become.

"I use my poetry to explain my identity," he said.

Hip-hop performer Jackelin Miche from Baker-Ripley Charter School said her summer class in hip-hop has inspired her to take up dance as her new hobby.

"I get to make new friends, hang out with my current friends and have lots of fun," she said. "I do activities I wouldn't normally get to do when I might just be sitting around at home."

Thompson-Caruthers assures skeptics that fine arts teaches kids to focus and pay attention and gets them to think about consequences. Without knowing your lines, you might not land the lead role in the school play. Without practice steps, you can't build your dance progression.

"The key is to embed the learning into activities kids are passionate about, so they don't even know they are working on higher-order thinking," she said.

(National Summer Learning Week is celebrated July 8-13 to advocate the important of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every summer and ensuring they return to

school in the fall, ready to succeed. CASE for Kids provides resources and activities to promote the weeklong awareness campaign at [3]www.afterschoolzone.org.)

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/slide.jpg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/case-kids-day-interview-girl.jpeg>
3. <http://www.afterschoolzone.org/>

‘Financial Math’ to Help Houston-Area Teens Make Sound Financial Decisions (2019-06-27 17:17) - hcdetx





Harris County Department of Education is providing teacher training and materials for “Financial Mathematics,” a high school course about money management. The course will help students apply critical-thinking skills to analyze personal financial decisions.

HCDE Curriculum Director Nicole Shanahan teamed with curriculum writer, presenter and “Mathematics of Money” author Arthur Howard to offer the training. Shanahan also worked on the state curriculum with the Texas Education Agency through scope-and-sequence committee.

The Texas Financial Education Endowment provided HCDE’s Teaching and Learning Center with a \$19,000 grant to fund the training for high school math, social studies and career and technical educators. For more information, email [2]nshanahan@hcde-texas.org.

Consultant Howard offers these sage, tried-and-true financial tips to teens (and their adults).

5 tips of financial advice:

1. **Train for success:** Get a part-time job. If you plan to go to college, apply for scholarships and grants and get an associate degree and transfer. Get an education that gets you a job.
2. **Be the employee everybody wants:** Be willing to take an internship. Show up early every day and be willing to stay late. Three requests from employers—take time to study how your company works; learn to work well with others; and be a pioneer.
3. **Live within your means:** Don’t finance your lifestyle on credit. Buy what you need, not what you want. Build up an emergency fund. Start saving now for your home down-payment.

4. **Spend like this “is” a tomorrow.** Budget, making savings a priority. Pay as little withholding as you can. Use IRAs and take advantage of employer matching.
5. **Protect your love ones:** Buy a burial policy when young, and term-life later. Save to replace you. Plan for your children’s education.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/06/20180425_toy_0059.jpg

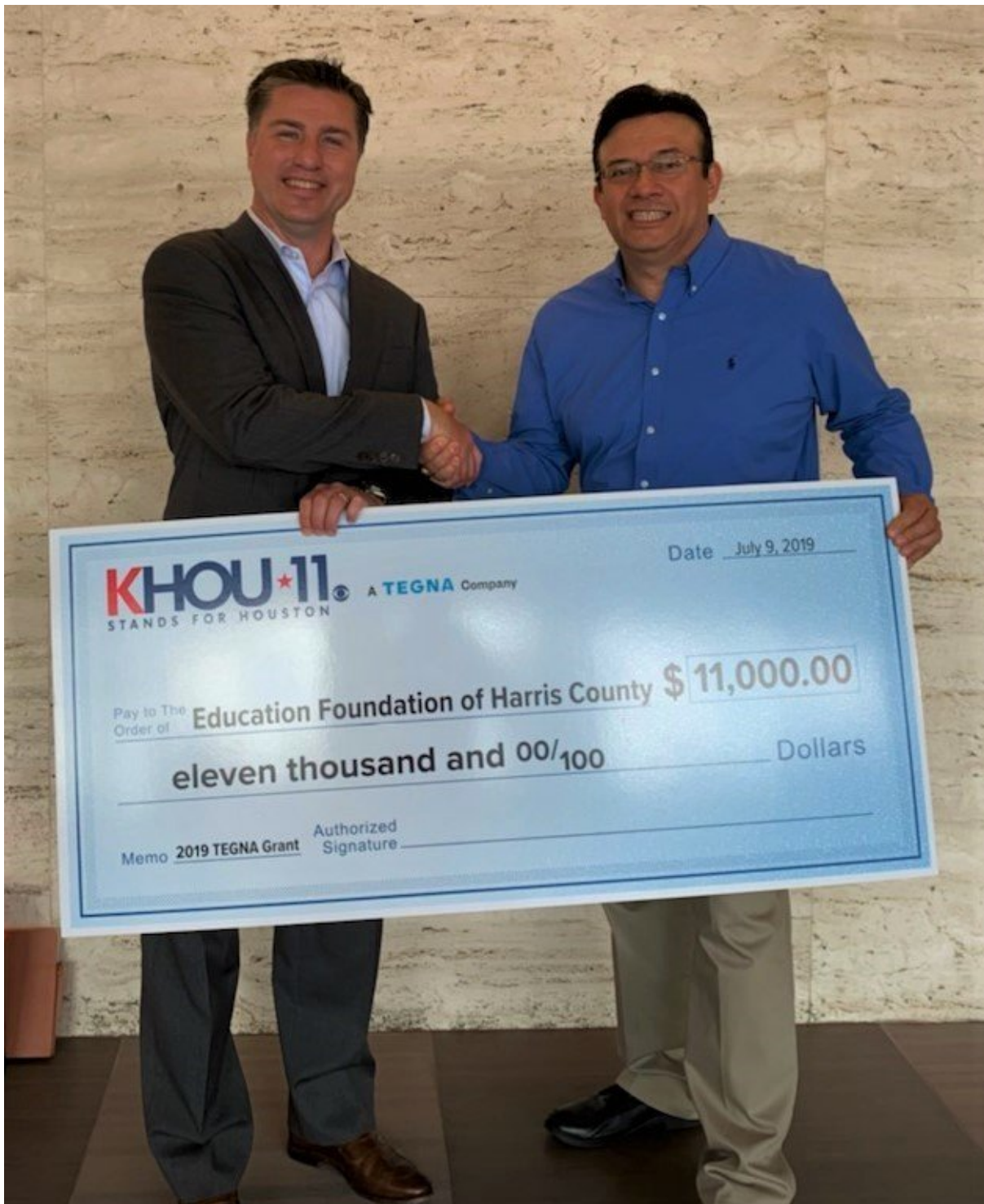
2. <mailto:nshanahan@hcde-texas.org>

1.7 July

Head Start SuperMENTors Receives Grant From TEGNA (2019-07-11 15:52)

- hcdetx





The TEGNA Foundation awarded the Education Foundation of Harris County \$11,000 to support the Harris County Department of Education Head Start REAL SuperMENTors Read program. This program promotes literacy and a love of reading for young children. A key feature of the program is recruiting male volunteers to read aloud to children participating in the Early Head Start/Head Start program. Awarded funds will go toward the purchase of age-appropriate book sets from Scholastic, Inc. TRGNA is the parent organization for KHOU-TV, TEGNA is the philanthropic arm. Nonprofits which received the checks were surprised by anchorwoman Debra Duncan at Channel 11. View the story: [2]https://youtu.be/IPM3or9n_xl. Pictured are Education Foundation of Harris County's

Board Chair James Edgar (left) and HCDE Head Start Community Partnership Manager Armando Rodriguez accepting the grant check.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/img_0218.jpg

2. https://youtu.be/IPM3or9n_xI

Students Learn About Houston-Area Colleges Through Afterschool Program (2019-07-11 16:14) - hcdetx





Who was the first African-American female to serve in the Texas Senate and has a building named after her on the Texas Southern University campus? What is Hofheinz Pavilion is now named?

These are some of the questions students from the Texas ACE 21st Century Community Learning Center had to answer during The Amazing Race: College and Career Exploration June 27. This event was designed as a culminating activity for students from Aldine, Humble, Sheldon and Spring ISDs to see and learn more about local colleges and universities. Students engaged in an interactive

and fun experience by taking virtual and actual college tours.

Despite the heat, the students said they enjoyed the chance to visit many colleges and riding the METRORail.

“I enjoyed being able to visit many of the colleges in Houston and see what they have to offer,” said Cryshelle Johnson, a student from Bammel Middle School.

The event is a collaboration between the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, Houston Community College, Texas Southern University, University of Houston Main Campus and University of Houston-Downtown.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/20190627_091549.jpg

CSSS Trains Harris County Juvenile Probation Officers in Restorative Justice (2019-07-11 16:19) - hcdetx



[1]



More than 25 employees from the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (HCJPD) and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program attended a two-day training with Harris County

Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools about disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline.

HCJPD Education Specialist Beverly Nolan said in order to provide optimal resources to their youth based on best practices, they are constantly searching for programs to fit their unique setting.

"The Restorative Practice program based on the Circle Forward Concept, is one of those programs," she said. "It will allow us to respond to challenging behavior in a non-invasive, yet redirecting, way."

The social emotional component allows for building perspective and helps the youth understand the problem and its impact by encouraging them to voice their needs. These county employees will use it as a "community circle" to build foundational relationships; a "responsive circle" when something is happening to respond to the behavior; and a "restorative circle" when harm has been done to someone to repair the harm.

Officials with the HCJPD around the country to see if other juvenile justice departments were using this concept, but came across the training at HCDE and decided to send staff.

"After meeting with Julia Andrews about the program, we decided to have a customized training for our HCJPD staff," Nolan said.

Later, they found out that a school in New Orleans was using the program and after a site visit decided this was a program they needed to implement.

Nolan said she sees numerous benefits coming out of having this program implemented at HCJPD such as creating a positive school climate through the development of community norms and guidelines.

"This will help youth deal with triggers, hurts and anger in a safe space through the social emotional component," she said. "This will also help our staff by building positive working relationships and helping them sustain in a difficult working environment. And finally, the development of youth-led and peer-to-peer circles to help youth focus on a positive vision for their future."

For more information about the Restorative Practice program, visit the Center for Safe and Secure School website at <https://hcde-texas.org/safe-and-secure-schools/> or email Julia Andrews at jandrews@hcde-texas.org.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/423a2950.jpg>

Early Childhood Winter Conference 2020 to Feature Storyteller, Illustrator Peter H. Reynolds (2019-07-11 18:37) - hcdetx



[1] Famed storyteller, illustrator and humanitarian Peter H. Reynolds is keynote speaker for the upcoming 34th Annual R.T. Garcia Early Childhood Winter Conference Feb. 1, 2020 from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. in Houston, Texas. Hosted by Harris County Department of Education, the value-priced, daylong conference held at the Kingdom Builder's Center, 6011 W. Orem, attracts approximately 1,000 early educators and is one of the largest early childhood conferences in Texas. Back by popular request is bilingual keynote Dr. Gilberto Soto, music and guitar professor at Texas A & M International. Soto weaves music and movement into instruction and his interactive presentations are generally standing room only. Breakout sessions provide attendees with innovative ideas in subjects like bilingual education, reading, math, social-emotional learning, fine arts and more. Vendors provide educational materials and novel educator products.

"The beauty of this conference is that many of our presenters are accomplished educators themselves, and they make it easy to take these lessons and materials back into the classroom to use the next day," said Andrea Segraves, coordinator for the conference and director for the HCDE Teaching and Learning Center.

Reynolds is known for uplifting messages about nurturing creativity in young learners. He wrote and illustrated a trilogy or "Creatrilogy" based on developing the creative spirit called "The Dot, Ish and Sky Color. The Massachusetts native also illustrated "Plant a Kiss," written by Amy Krouse Rosenthal, a children's book which topped the New York Times bestseller list. He owns a homespun bookstore in Dedham, Massachusetts called Blue Bunny Bookstore. Cost for the conference is \$100 before Dec. 1 and \$125 afterwards. Register: [2]<https://hcde-texas.org/teaching-and-learning-center/ecwc/>.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/dddd.jpg>
2. <https://hcde-texas.org/teaching-and-learning-center/ecwc/>

HCDE Trains Harris County Juvenile Probation Officers in 'Restorative Justice' (2019-07-11 18:41) - hcdetx



[1]



More than 25 employees from the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (HCJPD) and 280

Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program attended a two-day training with Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools about disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline.

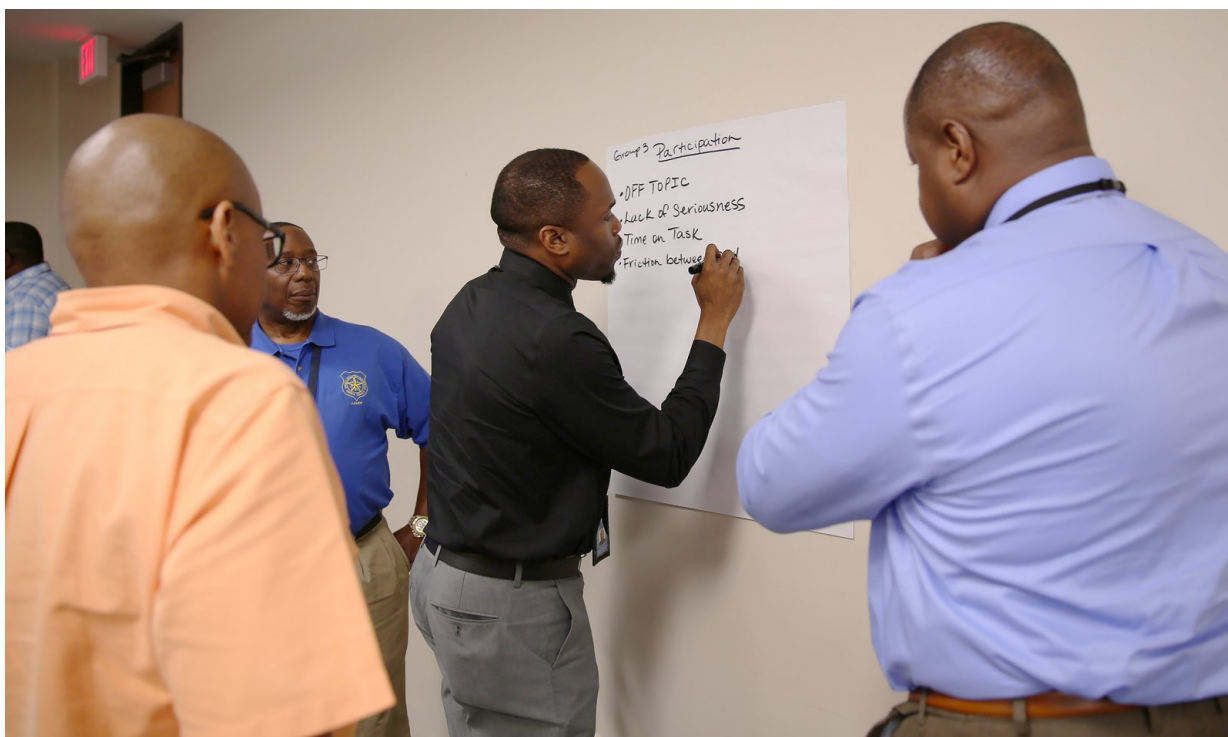
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1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/423a2950-1.jpg>

2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/423a2968.jpg>
3. <https://hcde-texas.org/safe-and-secure-schools/>

Grant Funds Summer Camp for Students Interested in Cybersecurity Careers (2019-07-29 10:14) - hcdetx





Thirty secondary education students learned about careers in cybersecurity beginning July 22 through a weeklong cyber camp funded through the National Science Foundation.

The Teaching and Learning Center's Digital Education and Innovation Division facilitated the \$32,523 grant through a collaboration with the Center for Grants Development. The iLearn GenCyber Student Camp allowed the students to construct hardware and software models that represented best practices in network design and computer systems.

The camp was a collaborated between TLC; InfraGard, a partnership between local FBI offices and private/public institutions; and Houston Community College Felix Fraga Campus. Field experts provided information about careers.

[2]



1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/20190724_cyber_0105.jpg
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/20190724_cyber_0087.jpg

Promise of Support, Mentors Convinces Award-Winning Teacher to Train with HCDE (2019-07-29 13:44) - hcdetx



[1]



Bilingual teacher Maria Camila Escobar Fuller doesn't mince words when she gives advice to aspiring teachers.

“Think twice about it,” she said. “It is not just a job. Teaching is a responsibility and a vocation.”

Post-college, Fuller was a behavior therapist for children with autism. When pursuing alternative certification programs to become a certified teacher, the college grad did extensive research and chose Harris County Department of Education. Reasons included a stellar customer service reputation; face-to-face classes combined with online offerings; and teacher support.

The native Spanish speaker from Columbia now teaches kindergartners at Love Elementary in the Houston Independent School District. She was recently honored as one of the top three winners of Texas Alternative Certification Association’s Intern of the Year Award. She will be presented with a \$1,000 check and trophy at the Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education annual conference in Dallas in October.

Fuller is also nominated for the National Association for Alternative Certification’s 2020 Outstanding New Teacher Award to be announced in December.

The first-year teacher benefitted from veteran teacher mentors within HCDE’s Educator Certification and Advancement Academy (ECA) Division. Ongoing professional networking and support are cornerstones of the program.

“Ms. Ellie, my field supervisor, literally adopted me and provided me feedback when I was desperate at the beginning of the school year,” Fuller said. “At first I felt like teaching was the most overwhelming thing I encountered and now I am at peace and really enjoy being with my students every day. (Now) I am starting to love teaching.”

For 12 years, HCDE’s teacher educator program has provided teacher training to college grads and second-career seekers. The ECA division also trains and prepares principals and superintendents for certification.

“For the past seven years, our program has reported a 99 percent pass rate for students completing course and taking the certification exams,” said Lidia Zatopek, a veteran teacher and administrator who leads the program as division director.



Through the teacher prep program, Fuller gained theories of education which helped in laying a foundation for her career, especially as a bilingual educator. She said the veteran educators leading it delivered a treasure-trove of resources, including graphic organizers and templates.

“It’s funny, but I use them every day during my (lesson) planning,” said Fuller.

Still, it’s the support, she said, which is the most asset of the teacher alternative certification program.

“I am genuinely grateful for the community I have in this program and the incredible role models,” she said.

HCDE is recruiting teachers for its Teacher Alternative Certification Program. For more information, go to [3]www.hcde-texas.org/teach-and-lead.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/lovees-5-of-6.jpg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/lovees-6-of-6.jpg>
3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/teach-and-lead>

HCDE Partners with Harris County Sheriff's Office for School Safety Forum 2019 (2019-07-29 13:50) - hcdetx



[1] Save the date for the School Safety Forum 2019 Oct. 15 at 6300 Irvington as the Center for Safe and Secure Schools partners with the Harris County Sheriff's Office to help improve school security.

The workshop empowers students, teachers, parents and the community with tools needed to recognize, respond to and prevent acts of violence. Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez is the featured speaker.

Topics to be included:

- Emergency preparedness
- Vulnerabilities in schools
- Gang awareness
- Mental health awareness
- Threat Assessment Awareness and Actions
- School safety updates from the Texas Legislature

Cost for the forum is \$85, and breakfast and lunch are included. Register at [2]<https://bit.ly/30QTPSP>

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/th7.jpg>

2. <https://bit.ly/30QTPSP>

HCDE Earns Financial Transparency Award from Association of School Business Officials International (2019-07-29 14:06) - hcdetx



[1]



Harris County Department of Education has earned the “Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting” for its fiscal year 2018 comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The award was issued by the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) International. The award helps to promote and recognize excellence in financial reporting, specifically through a district’s CAFR, according to ASBO.

“This is the 15th year that HCDE has received this award,” said Jesus Amezcua, HCDE’s assistant superintendent of finance. “We are proud that the HCDE Business Services Division achieved this important milestone to meet ASBO’s high standards for financial reporting and accountability.”

By participating in the COE program, school districts demonstrate their commitment to financial transparency. Applicants submit their CAFR for review by a team of professional auditors who provide feedback to improve future documents. If the CAFR meets the requirements of the program, the document may receive the Certificate of Excellence.

Founded in 1910, ASBO is a nonprofit organization which represents approximately 30,000 school business professionals worldwide through its members and affiliates.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/coe-recipient-logo2-jpg.jpg>

Equine Therapy Introduced Via AB School West Summer Program

(2019-07-29 14:23) - hcdetx





Horse therapist Stephanie Twellman spent three years working with her 9-year-old client, training him to care for and ride a horse. The client with emotional and physical disabilities now rides independently and competes in horse shows, and his maturity level has skyrocketed, she said.

Students at all four Harris County Department of Education special schools will be participating in the equine therapy programs called Self-Improvement through Riding Education (SIRE) during the 2019-2020 school year. The 35-year-old program, which began on the east coast, builds self-esteem, confidence and relationship skills for all students through feeding, grooming and caring for horses.

Academic and Behavior School West Principal Victor Keys and several students visited SIRE this summer for an introduction to the program. Students learned how to approach a horse and were introduced to the SIRE program.

“There is a special bond between humans and horses,” said Joe Wappelhorst of SIRE.

“Bottom line is horses have been bred for thousands of years to work in partnership with humans. Horses can sense our needs, emotional state and are excellent at reading nonverbal communications. To have a personal relationship, humans learn to modify actions and emotions to meet the needs of the horse.”



Students with emotional, mental and physical disabilities and troubled youth will all benefit from the equine program. Services include therapeutic riding which is individualized for each rider to meet specific life goals.

A student with cerebral palsy will be tasked with building core strength, stretching leg muscles and communication skills. Autistic students gain social skills.

“SIRE also provides nonriding sessions, usually in 4-10 weeks’ time periods to engage participants with horses for a specific purpose such as leadership skills, team building, and addiction work,” Wappelhorst said. “For many students just the work of feeding, grooming and caring for horses builds esteem, confidence and relationship skills.”

Keys looks forward to building the program into the AB School West curriculum next year and cites the benefits of social emotional learning with all populations at the school.

“The students were really excited about the program, and we look forward to learning more about horses next semester as both the students and horses get to know each other,” Keys said.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/equine-3-of-5.jpg>

2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/equine-2-of-5.jpg>

How Head Start Helps Shape Mother and Son's Futures: Enroll for 2019-2020 (2019-07-29 15:40) - hcdetx





When Tasha Crockett was growing up in Livingston, TX, her parents enrolled her into the Head Start program to help her get the social and academic skills she needed for school.

Fast-forward to April 2008 when her son, Christian, turned 3 years old and would be enrolled in the Harris County Department of Education Head Start Program in Humble.

“I knew I wanted him in the program because it’s family-centered, it helped me grow when I was his age and I knew it would help him, too, especially with his speech impediment and dyslexia,” she said.

The program continued to shape her as a parent volunteer with the policy council.

"I was going through a divorce at the time and participating with the Head Start Policy Council was life-saving by helping with the changes I was going through," Crockett said.

Being involved with decision-making through leadership in the policy council motivated her to go back to school to get a degree in social work. She graduated summa cum laude from the University of Houston-Downtown in December 2018 and will receive her master's degree in May 2020 from Stephen F. Austin State University.

As she was learning so was Christian because of the programs Head Start offered. He started speech therapy at age 2, and his therapist continued working with him during the two years he was at the Humble center.

"His academics and personality blossomed during those two years," Crockett said. "He even graduated early from speech therapy. He would have been in longer if he didn't have the help from the therapist and Head Start."

Christian is now a well-rounded middle school student and his teachers have said they would have never guessed he had a speech impediment.

HCDE Head Start is now enrolling children at its 15 Head Start centers. Visit [2]<https://hcde-texas.org/head-start/> or call 713-679-2510 for information.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/tasha-crockett-and-son.jpg>

2. <https://hcde-texas.org/head-start/>

1.8 August

High School Students Learn About GIS, StoryMaps (2019-08-05 08:20) - hcdetx



[1]



Did you know a map can be used to tell a story? More than 10 Harris County students attended the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Summer STEM Academy July 29 – Aug. 1 to learn about

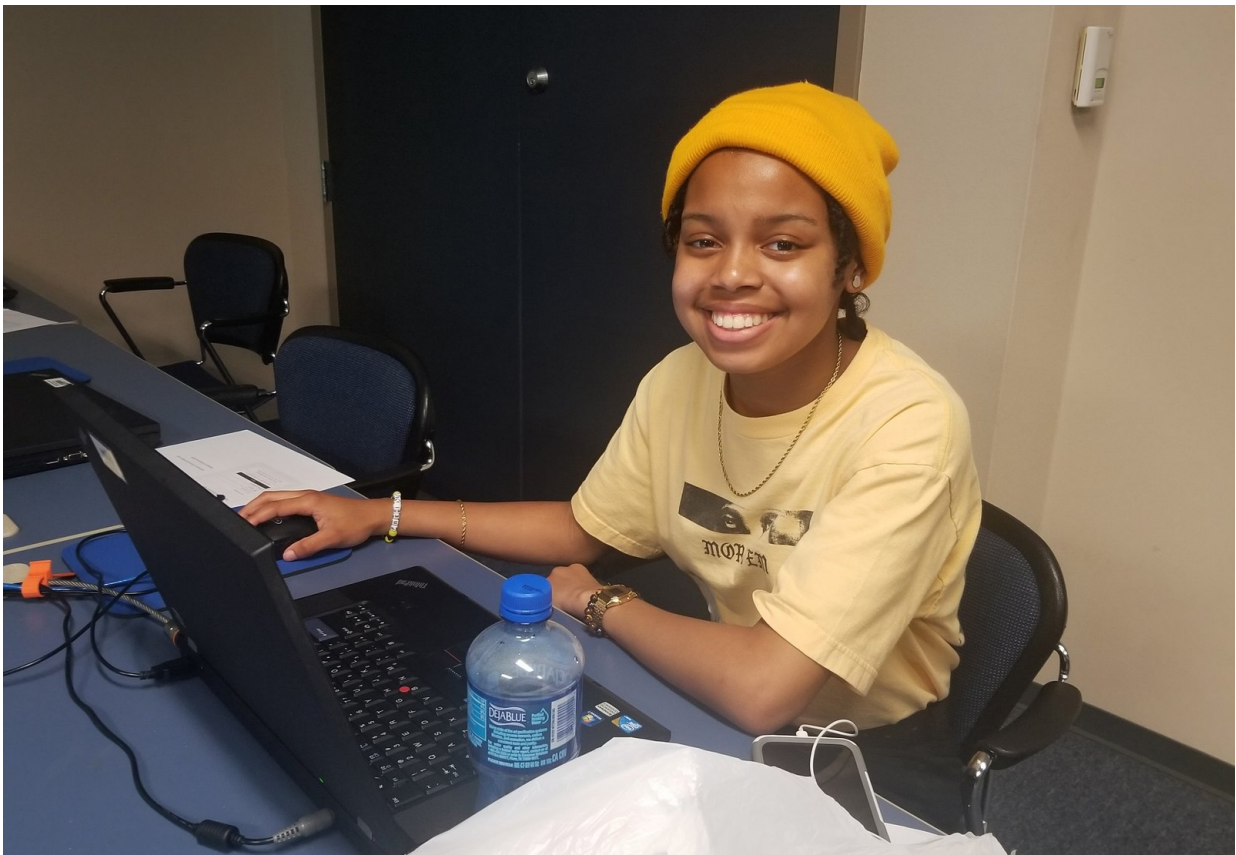
302

geocaching and developing a personal StoryMap.

During the four-day camp, students also took two field trips and interacted with professionals who use mapping technology on the job. In order to create the StoryMap, students used the Esri ArcGIS platform, which combines interactive maps with text, photos and effects to create a dynamic storytelling tool for informing others about topics containing geographic information. Students were able to share their StoryMaps with each other on the last day of the camp.

HCDE Curriculum Director for Science Lisa Felske oversaw the camp with the help of volunteers Hank Deslaurier, an advanced placement U.S. History teacher from Houston ISD, and Linda Brack, a science teacher from Conroe ISD.

[2]



Hailey Thomas, a junior from Alvin ISD's Shadow Creek High School, was looking for summer camps that involved computers and engineering, and her and her mother came across HCDE's GIS camp. Her mother works with GIS as a pipeline designer and engineer.

"I didn't know anything about GIS and my mom makes it seem really fun, so I wanted to see what it's like," she said.

Not knowing anything about GIS, Thomas learned how some jobs are tied into GIS along with how to layer maps, how they can be designed and how maps are key to GIS.

“It’s cool to see how the different types of maps that GIS brings into the job such as where to build a fire station or where we should be able to track a hurricane and evacuate people in a safe manner,” she said. “To be able to do all of that on a piece of paper is really cool.”

Her StoryMap was about the evolution in history of recreation of hip hop. It illustrated how hip hop spread across the country, the origin, how it was started, what it is like, how it has changed and the types.

“I’ve been interested in learning about it for so long, but never took the time out until now and this camp gave me the opportunity,” Thomas said.

This camp was put on in collaboration with the Education Foundation of Harris County and HCDE Teaching and Learning Center after receiving a combined total of \$12,500 from the Dudley T. Dougherty Foundation, Kinder Morgan Foundation and the Susan Vaughan Foundation.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/gis.jpg>

2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/gis-camp_1.jpg

Andrews to Lead as Director for HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools
(2019-08-06 11:05) - hcdetx





Julia Andrews is the new director of the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, a division of Harris County Department of Education.

Andrews has served since early 2018 as the school culture and climate specialist for the center. She has been responsible for conducting numerous school safety audits; leading and facilitating restorative practices training; and developing threat assessments for schools and districts.


Prior to coming to HCDE, she was a teacher and assistant principal in Cypress Fairbanks and Houston ISDs. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa, master's degree from Prairie View A & M University and is actively pursuing her doctorate in organizational leadership at Abilene Christian University.

The center partners with federal, state and local entities and is a nationally recognized leader in the development of increased safety and security strategies, standards and best practices in school security.

Andrews said her goals for the center include meeting the needs of area school districts and charter schools by providing exclusive, relevant trainings to support legislative-related mandates in youth mental health, school safety and social emotional learning.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/20180206_safesecure_0011.jpg


Back-to-School Resource: HCDE Compiles 2019-2020 School Calendars from 25 Harris County Districts (2019-08-12 12:11) - hcdetx

<div> <div>Harris County School Districts</div> <div>2019 - 2020 Calendars</div> </div> <div>  <div> Harris County Department of Education </div> <div>www.hcde-texas.org</div> </div>						
District	Classes (begin/end)	Thanksgiving	Winter Break	Spring Break	Other Holidays (students/staff off)	Staff Inservice Days (students off)
Aldine	Aug. 20 May 28	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 9-13	9/2, 10/14, 1/20, 2/17, 4/10-4/13, 5/25	8/6 - 8/9, 8/12 - 8/16 8/19, 10/11, 12/20, 1/6, 5/29
Alief	Aug. 14 May 21	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 16-20	9/2, 10/14, 1/20, 4/10, 5/25	8/6 - 8/9, 8/12 - 8/13, 1/6, 2/17, 5/22
Channelview	Aug. 15 May 22	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 9-13	9/2, 1/20, 4/10-4/13, 5/25	8/7 - 8/9, 8/12 - 8/14, 10/14, 1/6, 2/17, 5/26 - 5/28
Clear Creek	Aug. 19 May 28	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 9-13	9/2, 4/10, 5/25	8/12 - 8/16, 10/14, 11/5, 1/6, 1/20, 2/17, 5/29
Crosby	Aug. 15 May 28	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 9-13	9/2, 1/20, 4/10, 5/25	8/5 - 8/9, 8/12 - 8/14, 10/14, 1/6, 2/17, 5/29
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Deer Park	Aug. 21 May 28	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 20 - Jan. 3	March 9-13	9/2, 4/10, 5/25	8/12 - 8/16, 8/19 - 8/20, 10/14, 1/6, 1/20, 5/29, 6/1
Galena Park	Aug. 21 May 28	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 9-13	9/2, 10/14, 1/20, 2/17, 4/10-4/13, 5/25	8/12 - 8/16, 8/19 - 8/20, 10/11, 1/6, 2/14, 5/29
Goose Creek	Aug. 13 May 20	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 9-13	9/2, 10/14, 1/20, 2/17, 4/10, 5/25	8/1 - 8/2, 8/5 - 8/9, 8/12, 9/20, 10/31, 11/1, 1/6 - 1/7, 1/31, 2/18, 5/21 - 5/22
Houston	Aug. 26 May 29	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 16-20	9/2, 1/20, 3/30, 4/10, 5/25	8/12 - 8/16, 8/19 - 8/23, 10/9, 12/20, 6/1 - 6/2
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Humble	Aug. 12 May 29	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 9-13	9/2, 1/20, 4/10, 5/25	8/1 - 8/2, 8/5 - 8/9, 10/7 - 10/11, 1/6, 2/3 - 2/7, 6/1 - 6/4
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Sheldon	Aug. 26 June 3	Nov. 25-29	Dec. 23 - Jan. 3	March 9-13	9/2, 10/11, 1/20, 2/7, 4/10, 5/25	8/13 - 8/16, 8/19 - 8/23, 10/9 - 10/10, 12/20, 1/6 - 1/7, 2/5 - 2/6, 6/4
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Compiled by Harris County Department of Education						
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[1]

Harris County School Districts

2019 - 2020 Calendars



Harris County

Department of Education

www.hcde-texas.org

District	Classes (begin/end)	Thanksgiving	Winter Break	Spring Break	Other Holidays (students/staff off)	Staff Inservice Days (students off)
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Compiled by Harris County Department of Education

Harris County Department of Education is a unique, educational hybrid serving school districts, governmental agencies, nonprofits and the public in the third-largest county in the U.S. HCDE annually serves a quarter-million students and educators through schools for students with profound special needs; the largest adult education program in Texas; Head Start early childhood education; school-based therapy services; and afterschool programs. Educator professional development and certification, school safety, records management, and a purchasing cooperative are also provided. #SeeTheImpact at www.hcde-texas.org.

Calendar: [2]<https://bit.ly/2KLnq9R>

Key dates for the 2019-2020 school year for all 25 Harris County school districts are available through Harris County Department of Education's comprehensive school district calendar.

Harris County Department of Education compiles the calendar each year which includes the school year's beginning and end dates, holidays, and teacher workdays for multiple districts.

About half the districts return to school on Aug. 14 or 15. All public schools are back in session by Aug. 26, including the largest district in the state, Houston Independent School District.

Thanksgiving holidays are observed by all districts from Nov. 25-29 and winter break begins Dec. 20 in some schools and Dec. 23 in the remainder. All staff return to school in 2020 on Jan. 3.

Spring break is generally observed from March 9-13 or from March 16-20.

Staff workdays and other holidays vary from district to district. Classes end as early as May 21 (Alief, Katy and Pearland) or as late as June 3 (Huffman and Sheldon).

(The Harris County School Districts Calendar is published as a courtesy of HCDE.)

About Harris County Department of Education: HCDE is a unique, educational hybrid serving school districts, governmental agencies, nonprofits and the public in the third-largest county in the U.S. HCDE annually serves a quarter-million students and educators through schools for students with profound special needs; the largest adult education program in Texas; Head Start early childhood education; school-based therapy services; and afterschool programs. Educator professional development and certification, school safety, records management, and a purchasing cooperative are also provided. #SeeTheImpact at [3]www.hcde-texas.org.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/calendar-final.jpg>

2. <https://bit.ly/2KLnq9R>

3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/>

Dave Einsel Named Director of Communications at Harris County Department of Education (2019-08-14 17:20) - hcdetx





Dave Einsel is the new director of communications at Harris County Department of Education.

The veteran journalist was named director after serving as multimedia manager at HCDE since 2017. He acted as the Department's chief photographer, created a variety of printed marketing materials and created graphics and videos for web and social media.

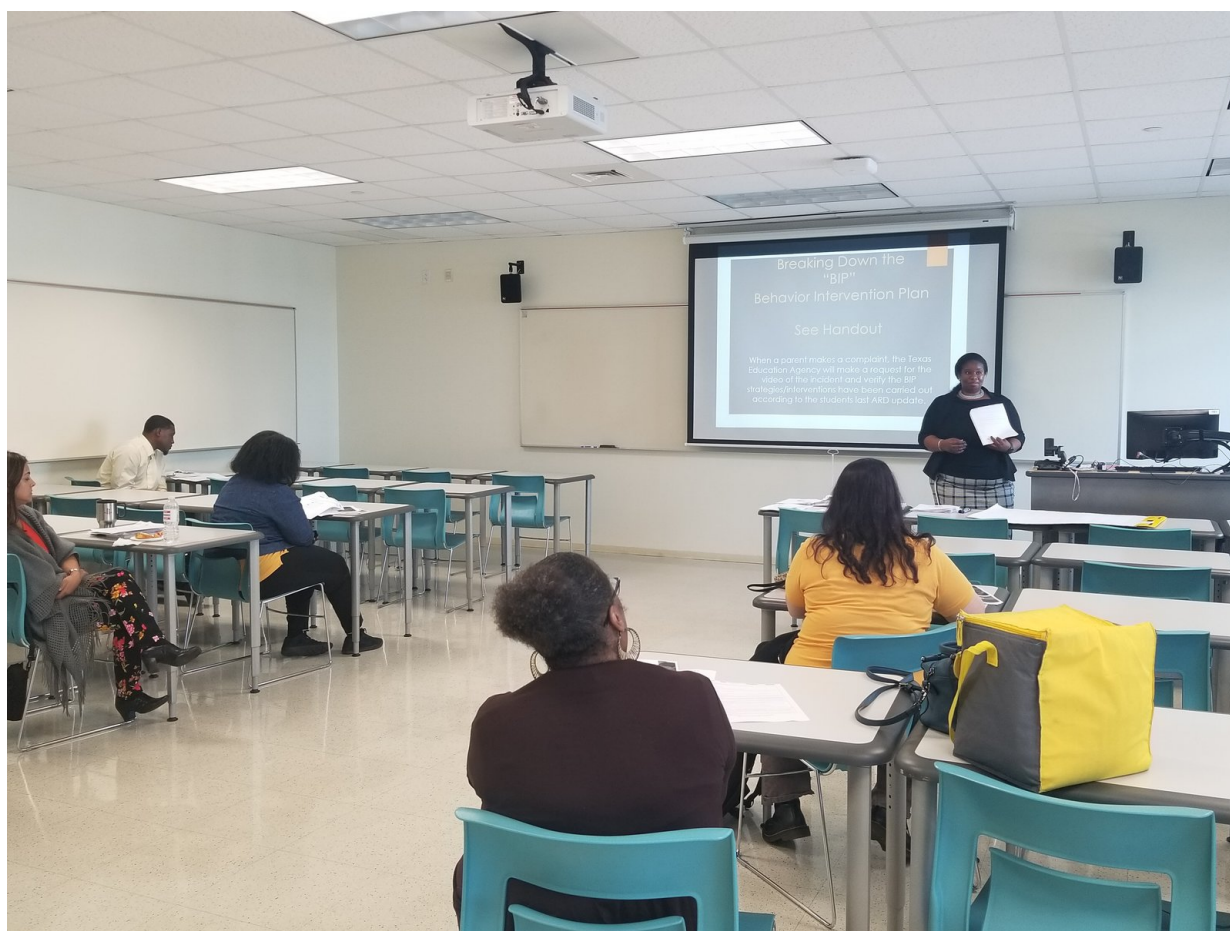
Before joining HCDE, Einsel was senior manager for communications and publications at Houston Independent School District. Previously he led the photography department at the Houston Chronicle, where he worked for 18 years.

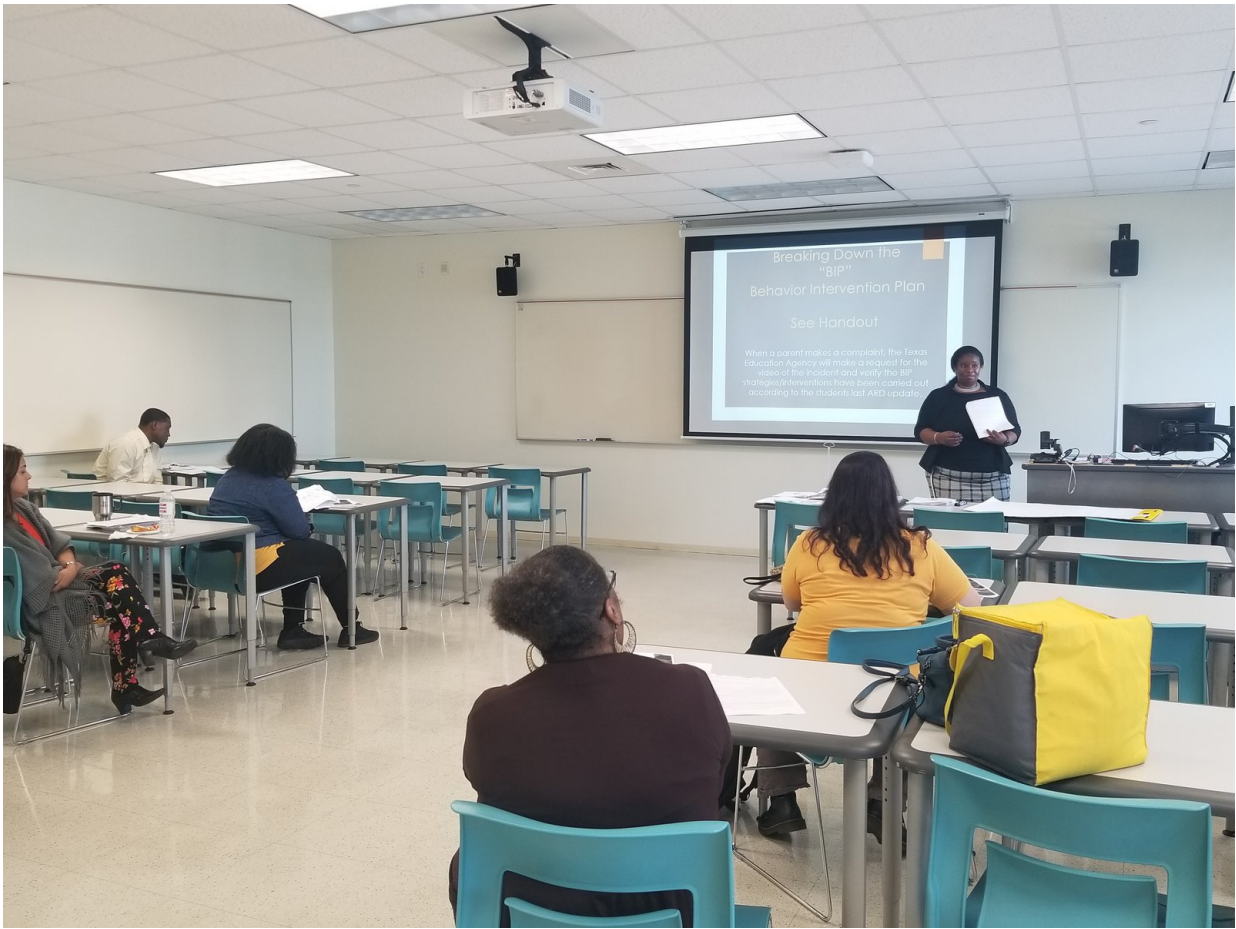
The Friendswood resident is an alumnus of Texas A &M University and has won numerous photography awards throughout his career. Most recently he earned the 2018 Crystal Commendation for photography portfolio from the Texas School Public Relations Association. He was also awarded the Hearst Newspapers Eagle Award, a one-time award given for outstanding contributions, as well as the inaugural Amnesty International Media Spotlight Award.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/20190805_einsel_0003_r.jpg

HCDE Schools Partners with UHD for Professional Development

(2019-08-16 09:11) - hcdetx





The four Harris County Department of Education schools attended two days of professional development workshops Aug. 13 and 14 hosted by the University of Houston Downtown's College of Public Service (CPS).

Workshops such as legal updates, unique learning, applied behavior analysis (ABA), behavior intervention plan de-escalation and many more were offered to staff members of Academic and Behavior School East and West, Highpoint and Fortis Academy. Community partners and CPS faculty provided the resources to effectively support students who deal with a variety of social, emotional, academic and behavior challenges.

Prior to the training, first-year ABS West teacher Ivernoner Fultz reviewed the agenda so she would have a basic idea of what to expect.

"I didn't know the unique learning workshop would go into so much depth and there are so many benefits it provides to staff and students," she said. "I was really excited to hear about it and have the support now in the classroom to help develop our students and the lessons that are more centered towards the individual student and that student's particular need."

She also enjoyed the ABA training because they were given resources and information about social autopsy, which is reteaching a lesson if there was a misconception.

"When it comes to social issues such as a student pushing someone, that's considered an er-

ror too because they're pushing and they don't know not to do it, so we have to go back to reteach those social errors like we teach academic errors," Fultz said. "I really enjoyed learning this because if you don't know, then you have to reteach it."

[2]



When looking for a university to collaborate with to help grow HCDE staff professionally, senior director of schools Anthony Mays said UHD came forward last year.

"We continue to collaborate and think about ways to support their students and our staff with professional development opportunities," he said.

HCDE hosts several CPS student interns at the schools to work with students. In return, UHD supports the opportunity for HCDE teaching assistants to earn their teaching degree and teachers to work on their master's degree.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/20190813_101837.jpg

2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/colbert-uhd.jpg>

HCDE Therapists Offer Backpack Safety Tips as Students Head Back to School (2019-08-20 14:16) - hcdetx





Students are heading back to school starting this week and physical and occupational therapists at Harris County Department of Education offer tips for backpack safety.

Five tips you can practice to help prevent backpack strain with your child:

- The bottom of the backpack should rest in the curve of the back and be no more than four inches below your child's waist
- Have padded and adjustable shoulder straps. Make sure your child uses both shoulder straps when wearing the backpack to evenly distribute the weight of the pack.
- Have a padded back that will provide cushioning against your child's spine.
- Have compartments to secure items in place and pack heavier items closest to the child's back.
- Weigh less than 10 percent of your child's weight when fully packed.

"Make sure only necessary items are inside your child's backpack and that it is adjusted and worn correctly to prevent back strain and long-term effects on posture and the developing spine," said Carie Crabb, senior director of HCDE School-Based Therapy Services.

HCDE's therapy specialists work with students in school districts and charter schools through-

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out greater Harris County. Specialists include physical therapists and assistants, occupational therapists and assistants, and music therapists.

For questions about backpack safety or HCDE School-Based Therapy Services, contact Crabb at ccrabb@hcde-texas.org.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/20170925_backpacks_037.jpg

5 Ways Families Can Reduce Summer Learning Loss for Back to School

(2019-08-20 14:20) - hcdetx





Post-summer “brain drain” or summer learning loss for students is real, according to Harris County Department of Education Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids) Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers. Most teachers spend at least three weeks re-teaching last year’s lessons at the beginning of each school year, she said.

Research outlined by the National Summer Learning Association reveals that most students lose two months of math skills every summer, and low-income students lose another two-to-three months in reading.

“Summer camps and activities for children are important for a number of reasons,” said Caruthers. “During the summer it’s important to keep kids engaged, maintain regular sleep routines, provide social interaction with other kids and practice following rules.”

Regardless, gaining a healthy transition back to school can be achieved, Caruthers said.

Here are some tips for getting kids back into their academic routines:

1. Jumpstart a healthy family routine. Get back to normal sleeping schedules.
2. Identify a child’s interests in books. While school ramps up the academics, it’s important for kids to access books based on their interest areas. Visit the library to check out books that compliment school-day learning.
3. Prime the mental pump. Museums are abundant in the greater Houston area, and many have free or discounted hours or days. Mix in educational apps to the games your kids play. along with their favorites. Have them watch educational YouTube videos and report back what they learn.

4. Get homework help and enroll in afterschool. When homework is completed inside an afterschool program, family stress is reduced, leaving more quality time at home for family time. Afterschool provides a variety of activities that reinforce school-day learning, encourage social interaction and help youth develop skills.

5. Add incentives to your child's learning with quality family time. After homework is over, play a family game. After six weeks of school, let your child plan a weekend excursion. Make a wish list of places your child wanted to visit this summer, but time ran out.

CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for afterschool programs, serving students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, childcare facilities and community centers throughout Harris County. For more information go to www.hcde-texas.org/afterschool . For research about summer learning loss, go to www.summerlearning.org/at-a-glance.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/20190302_debate_0074.jpg

CSSS Offers Driver Safety Tips as Students Head Back to School

(2019-08-20 14:57) - hcdetx



[1]



School is now back in session for most of the school districts around Harris County. This means children will be walking to-and-from schools in the early morning hours and late afternoon. Harris

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County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Julia Andrews offers tips to drivers to prevent accidents this school year.

"It is so important for drivers to slow down and pay attention when children are present- especially before and after school," Andrews said.

If you're dropping off:

- Do not double park; it blocks visibility for other children and vehicles.
- Do not load and unload children across the street from the school.
- Carpool to reduce the number of vehicles at the school.

Sharing the Road with Young Pedestrians

- Do not block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn, forcing pedestrians to go around you; this could put them in the path of moving traffic.
- In a school zone when flashers are blinking, stop and yield to pedestrians crossing the crosswalk or intersection.
- Always stop for a school patrol officer or crossing guard holding up a stop sign.
- Take extra care to look out for children in school zones, near playgrounds and parks, and in all residential areas.
- Do not honk or rev your engine to scare a pedestrian, even if you have the right of way.
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians wherever they may be, no matter who has the right of way.

Sharing the Road with School Buses

- Never pass a bus stopped to load or unload children from either direction if you are on an undivided road.
- If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop.
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus.
- Be alert; children often are unpredictable, and they tend to ignore hazards and take risks.

According to the American School Bus Council, passing vehicles cause an estimated two-thirds of school bus loading and unloading fatalities.

"By exercising a little extra care and caution, drivers and pedestrians can co-exist safely in school zones," Andrews said.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/20180827_fds_abw_0001.jpg

HCDE Staff Launches New School Year with Theme 'Realm of Possibility'

(2019-08-29 16:03) - hcdetx

Annual Staff 2019 energized HCDE staff and provided inspiration for the upcoming year as Superintendent Colbert, Board members, administration and staff came together at the Kingdom Builder's Center on Aug. 23.

View HCDE Goals Video: <https://youtu.be/4bZYgplaurg>

[youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bZYgplaurg>]

With a theme called "the Realm of Possibility," the convocation supplied a synergy across all divisions demonstrated by the reactions of the 900 HCDE employees who attended.

Superintendent James Colbert Jr. provided an inspiring presentation based on the theme "Realm of Possibilities."

"The past few years, the annual staff meeting has focused on how we find and meet the blind spots in public education and serve our communities and clients," said Colbert. "This innovative perspective has made me realize one thing: Anything is possible with HCDE when we come together as a team and support children. So that makes today's theme 'Realm of Possibility' even more fitting."

Employees took advantage of the Twitter Wall, a social media message wall which gathered employee tweets and provided responses based on the hashtag #HCDEConvo19. From many of the postings, it was evident that Annual Staff is an opportunity to network and share inspiration with old friends as well as new colleagues.

"The talent in this room is astounding, and I am proud to be on this journey with you," Colbert said.

Stephanie Wright Chosen as Chief Accounting Officer for Harris County Department of Education (2019-08-29 16:29) - hcdetx





Stephanie Wright is the new chief accounting officer for Business Services at Harris County Department of Education.

The Texas certified public accountant formerly served as executive director at Lone Star College for seven years where she provided leadership and strategic direction within the accounting and financial reporting divisions. In addition to preparing monthly financial statements and board

reports for the college, she facilitated the annual external audit and prepared the comprehensive annual financial report.

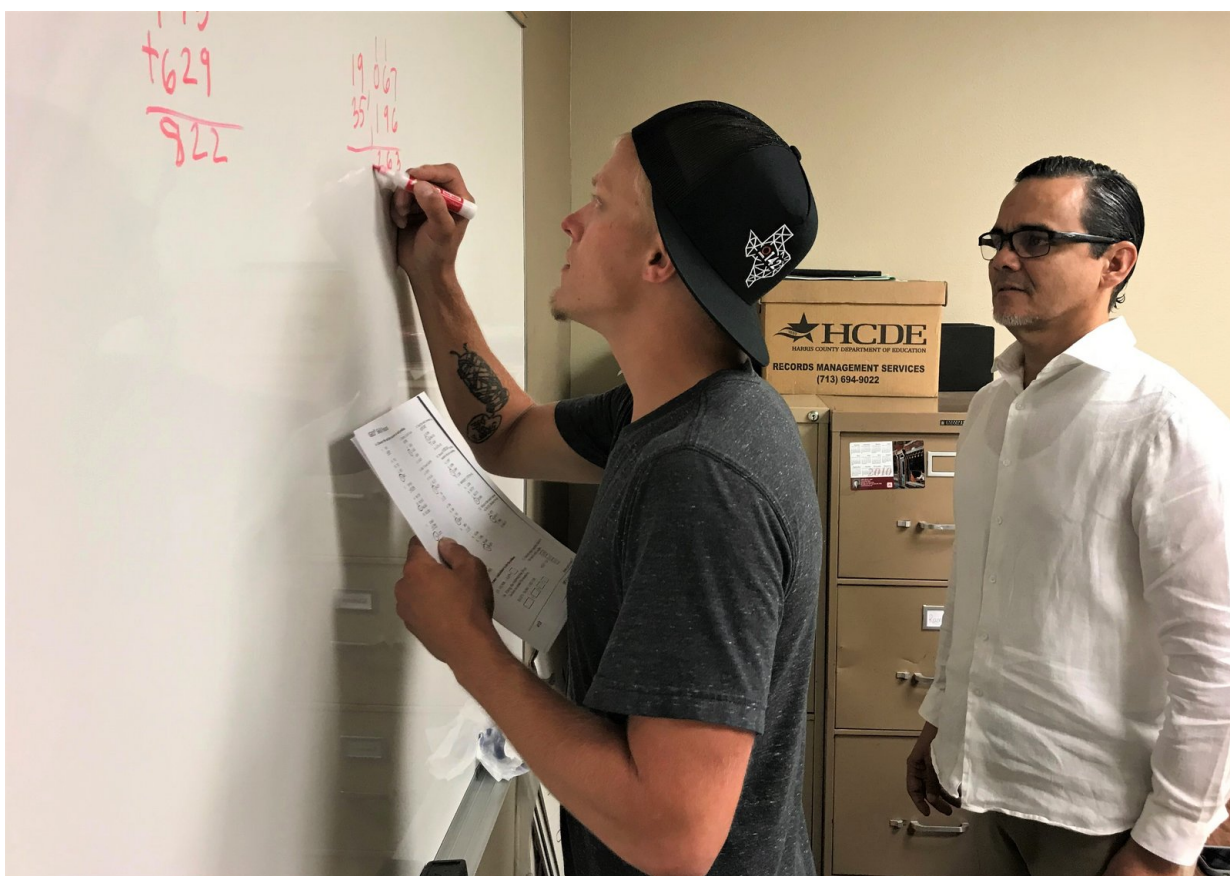
The Woodlands resident earned her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Houston-Clear Lake and Master of Science from Texas A & M University-Commerce. Her broad financial experience spans both private and public sectors.

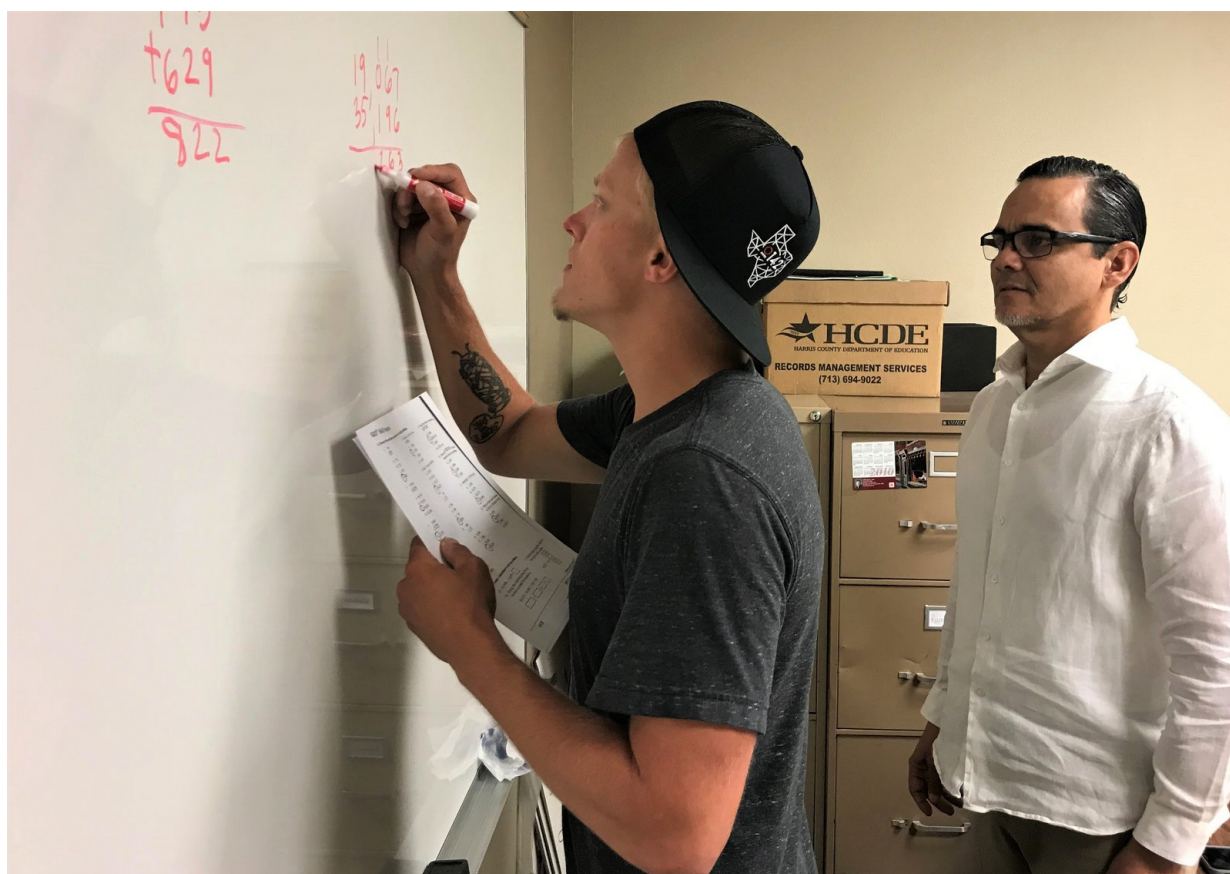
“My goal at HCDE is to continue a legacy of financial transparency and fiscal diligence with the Department’s financial matters while also supporting and collaborating with not only the Department’s internal divisions but also among area school finance professionals from our greater Harris County school districts,” said Wright.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/20190813_wright_0008_r.jpg

1.9 September

From Student to Teacher: Story of English Language Learner's Success Inspires His Adult Students (2019-09-03 17:20) - hcdetx





When adult learner Emmanuel Nieves Aviles returned to school 10 years ago, the native Spanish speaker never dreamt he would someday be teaching English as a second language. Aviles moved to Houston from Puerto Rico after teaching there for almost 20 years. In Texas, as he acquired a new language, he discovered his teaching certification didn't transfer.

Bold and bent on providing for his family, he enrolled in basic ESL classes at Harris County Department of Education's Baytown Learning Center. Several semesters later, he progressed to advanced ESL with teacher Laurie Jensen.

The Switch: Student to Teacher

Something strange happened one day when his teacher was discussing his academic future. Aviles couldn't believe his ears when Jensen advised him that he could teach the ESL class himself and was well-equipped with his past teaching experience.

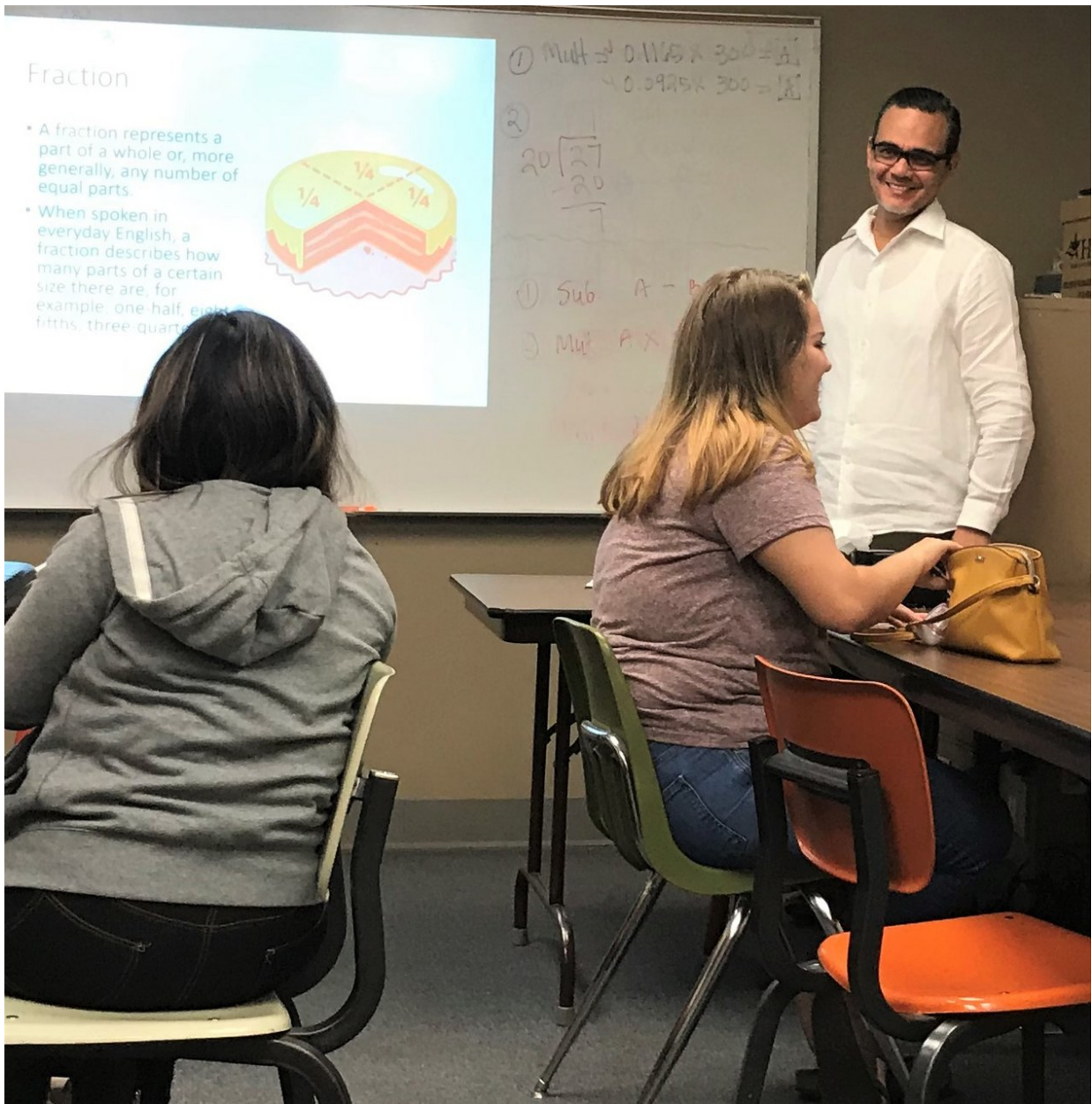
HCDE Adult Education Baytown Center Manager Guillermo Medina recalled the day he addressed the accomplished yet nervous student in his office.

"I called Emmanuel to my office for a brief interview," said Medina. "I saw his potential, and he's been with me now for nine years.

"I've hired many teachers in 17 years as manager, and Emmanuel has been outstanding and one of my best

choices.”

[2]



Recipe for Relating

Empathy allows Aviles to relate to his students, as he has traveled the road himself.

“Students have many things going on in their lives, worrying about childcare and the money they need,” he said. “I try to keep them on track the best I can.”

Sometimes that means phoning disgruntled students whose adult problems get in the way of

coming to class.

"I can't lose them," said Aviles, throwing up his arms in show of mock despair.

Aviles packs a punch when he addresses his students. He challenges them by introducing math word problems through everyday situations.

A lesson in buying a Lexus includes analyzing whether the used car salesman is offering a bad deal or not.

"Is the car affordable?" he asks. Heads nod yes.

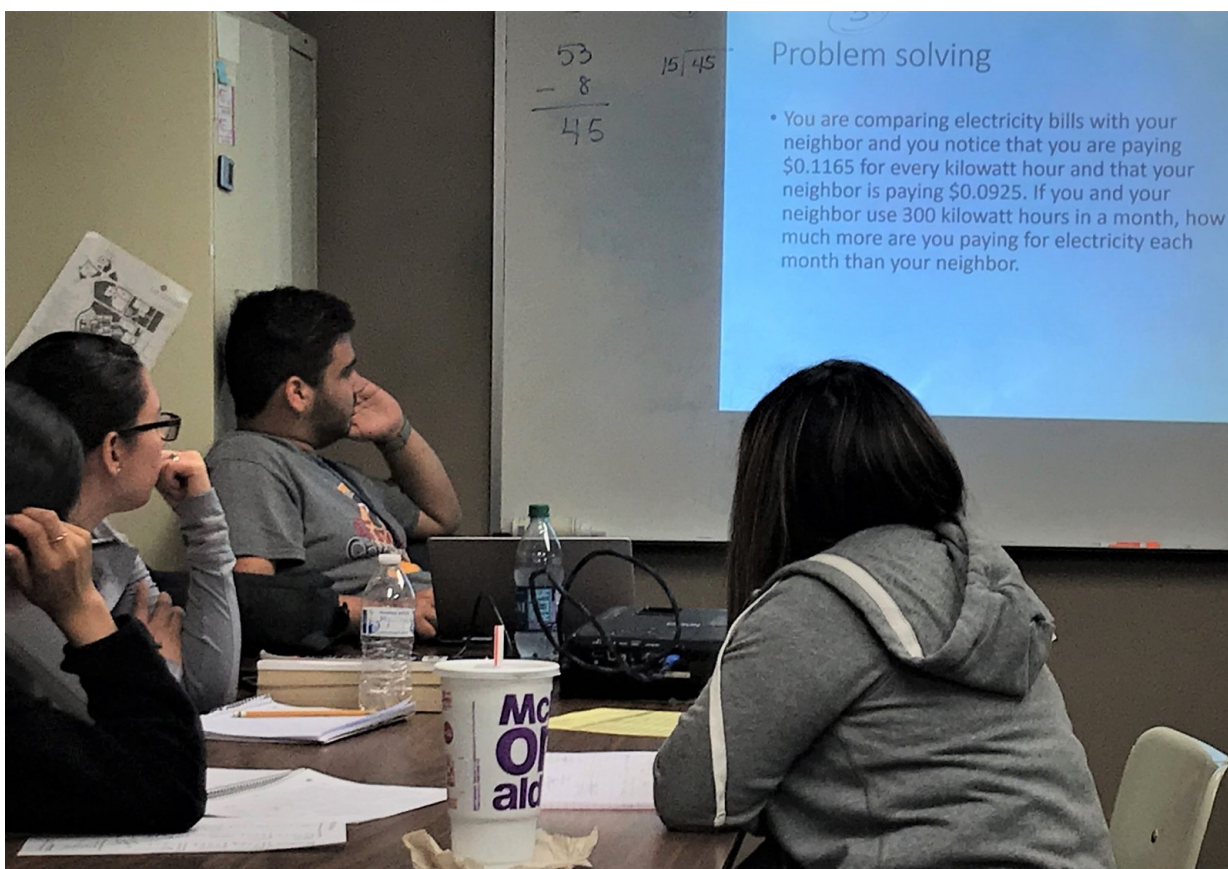
Throughout the exercise, students are adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing while also being introduced to percentage rates. They get a dose of reality when realizing they can't afford \$2,000 down and 48 payments of \$200, plus substantial interest.

"Wake up and do the math," says Aviles, walking students through his own journey of buying a used minivan. "Take the car back."

Heads nod yes again as students understand the rationale of high interest rates.

Similar exercises involve measures for recipes. Is there enough milk to make all the meal? Will there be enough for four people?

[3]



Student Talk

Student Jordan McCain, 29, has enrolled in the GED class to take care of his growing family with the addition of a third child this year.

“He’s good,” McCain said, pointing at his teacher. “He makes math easy to learn.”

Student Jecenia Chavez, 20, works in retail and is pregnant with her third child. In the past, she has suffered with depression. Her children keep her centered.

“The only thing that can stop me right now is me, and that’s not going to happen,” she said.

Aviles encourages her to believe in herself, she said.

“I want to get my certification to be a phlebotomist and get more medical training after that,” Chavez said.

To keep himself centered and humbled, Aviles need only to think about the first day he walked into his ESL class with a limited number of English vocabulary words.

“As teachers, we need to be facilitators,” he said. “What do I gain if I ignore them?”

“I’m here to help them overcome their life obstacles.”

(HCDE Adult Education is the largest, no-cost adult education program in Texas, with a variety of health care and construction career training options in Harris and Liberty counties. Students may also take English as a second language classes and high school equivalency degree classes simultaneously in a traditional classroom setting or online. HCDE offers free adult learner classes this fall beginning as early as mid-September. For more information, go to www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education.)

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/aviles-photo.jpg>
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/img_0097.jpg
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/img_0094.jpg

School Safety Forum Enlists 3 Dynamic Safety Experts Oct. 15
(2019-09-08 10:01) - hcdetx





School Safety is the topic as three international and local safety experts talk about school violence and solutions at Harris County Department of Education Oct. 15, from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Psychologist Scott Poland, emergency preparedness expert Michael Dorn and Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez lead the discussions.

The Center for Safe and Secure Schools, a division of HCDE, and the Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) partner to present the School Safety Forum 2019.

Learn to recognize, respond to and prevent acts of violence as the forum equips parents, teachers, students and the community with an empowerment toolkit. Cost is \$95. Register at [2]<https://bit.ly/30QTPSP>.

Presenters:

Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, keynote speaker, served 18 years in the Houston Police Department before joining the Harris County Sheriff's Office. He served on the HCSO hostage

negotiation team and was assigned to homicide as an investigator prior to becoming sheriff. As chair of City Council's Public Safety & Homeland Security Committee, Gonzalez broke new ground with initiatives to protect vulnerable seniors from elder abuse. He has also expanded the HCSO's fight against human trafficking, His law enforcement background strengthens his ability to improve public safety and protect area neighborhoods.

Scott Poland, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and international recognized school safety expert. His presentations include youth suicide, self-injury, bullying, school crisis prevention/intervention, threat assessment and parenting during challenging times. He co-authored Suicide Safety School Plans for the state of Texas and was the former psychological services director for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.

Michael Dorn is executive director for Safe Havens International where he shares his expertise in safety, security, culture, climate and emergency preparedness assessments. Dorn is an established school safety expert who works internationally; he has authored or co-authored 27 books on school safety and emergency preparedness. As a renowned public speaker, he known to speak on topics ranging from bullying prevention to student supervision.

(This project was supported by Grant No. 2018-YS-BX-0153 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Program, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.)

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/gonzalez-2.jpg>

2. <https://bit.ly/30QTPSP>

HCDE Provides Technology Safety Tips as Students Head Back to School

(2019-09-09 14:28) - hcdetx



Technology continues to factor heavily in children's school lives. As students go back to school, computers and cell phones are being used for research assignments and communicating with teachers and classmates. However, families should set technology boundaries for the school year.

Studies have found that one in five students is bullied each year.

Harris County Department of Education Teaching and Learning Center Curriculum Director for Digital Education and Innovation Colina Poullard reminds parents to keep an eye on their children's use of technology.

One thing Poullard says parents can do to keep children safe is to install a form of spyware on phones.

"You can do this with your child's knowledge or not to keep them safe from cyberbullying," she said. "You can also use the spyware for setting timers for how long they can be on social media and as a locator to know where they are at all times."

Other tips include keeping tabs on your child's emotions. If there is a change, learn a child wants to be on social media apps. Follow the account to see what is going on. Also, let the teen know what is appropriate or not to post online.

People who cyberbully will hide behind different online accounts to either get attention or to be hurtful towards others. Either way, it's harassment and includes serious ramifications.

“Cyberbullying is defined in the law, but not in people’s mind,” Poullard said.

Parents should talk to a child up front about bullying, discuss what the student can do to stop it and set consequences if their child is the bully.

“Most kids will hide and not come forward about being cyberbullied because they don’t want to make a big deal about it,” she said. “However, it can cause long-lasting damage to the child.”

If cyberbullying is taking place, make sure to keep all the evidence to get both sides of story when reporting to campus leaders to solve the issue.

“The key is safety-first while children are using technology and taking these steps,” Poullard said.

[1]



1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/cyber-safety.jpg>

Schools Creates New Positions to Provide Support, Community Partnerships (2019-09-10 15:22) - hcdetx



Two newcomers are introduced this school year as the Schools Division adds a parent engagement liaison and instructional coach. Meet Gabriela Hernandez and Nkechi Ihejirika.

New Parent Engagement Liaison Hernandez Helps Ease Challenges, Strengthen Relationships

Gabriela Hernandez is the new parent engagement liaison for Harris County Department of Education's Schools Division. She is passionate about helping families of children with behavioral and learning disabilities because of her own family members' challenges and successes.

"I am grateful for all my personal and professional experiences because both environments helped me understand the challenges both families and professionals face," she Hernandez said.

Hernandez's role includes supporting students with autism, intellectual disabilities and emotional disorders and advocating for them within the community. Specifically, the counselor will develop community partnerships which support vocational training for students, as well as Special Olympics opportunities.

The California native has a bachelor's degree in child psychology will soon receive her master's degree in clinical counseling. She has supported students with special needs for four years as a counseling professional and has worked with families in therapeutic settings for two years.

In her support capacity, Hernandez will provide counseling, resources and activities for the special education students enrolled in HCDE's Schools Division, specifically at Academic and Behavior School East and West campuses.

"It is my goal to help children achieve success by providing resources from their community and matching parents with community-based tools to strengthen their family life," she said.

New Instructional Coach Ihejirika Supports Teachers of Special Needs Students

Nkechi Ihejirika is the new instructional coach within Harris County Department of Education's Schools Division. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Prairie View A & M University and a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of St. Thomas.

She couples her entrepreneurial spirit with her learned skills in making research-based, data-informed decisions. She has used those skills in both education and business. In business, the Galleria-area resident coached small business owners. In education, she uses research-based decisions to impact student success.

"I'm able to use those very same skills to promote student success," she said.

As instructional coach, she has supported students with autism, emotional and intellectual disabilities and generalized learning disabilities in the Houston area for more than 10 years. Her responsibilities at HCDE will be to provide campus and teacher support by modeling lessons and facilitating instructional strategies and planning for teachers.

"My goal is to positively impact classroom environments through increased student engagement," Ihejirika said. "I believe all students can learn."



Hernandez and Ihejirika

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/gabby-neinketchi.jpg>

**CASE for Kids Program at Local High School Rocks with Activities Before,
After School (2019-09-12 15:34) - hcdetx**





Lluvia Lopez with Justin Sambula

Huy Tran, principal Dr. Luis Landa, Mary CastilloCASE for Kids Program at Local High School
Rocks with Activities Before, After School

Sophomore Lluvia Lopez gets dropped off by her working mom on school mornings at 6:45 a.m. at Chavez High School in southeast Houston.

The petite, high-spirited sophomore is a newbie from Corpus Christi, and she comes inside the gym to finish her homework and watch her friend Justin Sambula play basketball.

Chavez has a mixing bowl of offerings, including the running club, the Asian-American club, chess club, the business-entrepreneurial club, and tutorials and sports.

The gym is hopping by 7 a.m., and head basketball coach Julius Jackson is there to supervise. The program is called out-of-school time because services are offered before-and-after the school day, on weekends and in the summer.

Chavez's program serves approximately 175 students and is a 21st Century Community Learning Center federally funded through the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education. It's also infused with funding

through City Connections, a program provided through the city of Houston through each council district and operated through CASE for Kids.

[2]



Huy Tran, principal Dr. Luis Landa, Mary Castillo

“When people think of out-of-school time programs, they typically envision programs at lower grade levels,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director for CASE for Kids. “High school programs are equally as important because they allow teens to have a safe space to go before school starts and after school ends, as well as Saturdays and summer. Afterschool enriches teens lives and exposes them to new hobbies and career possibilities.”

Over 70 percent of students at Chavez are from low-income families. The predominantly Hispanic school has an English as a second language population which also includes Asian-speaking students.

Chavez’s coordinator Carolyn Teas gets to school as early as 5 a.m. to prepare for the school day and oversee teens in the running club. The Houston Marathon is involved in the program and

donates funds for tennis shoes, as does local petrochemical company TPC.

Junior Mary Castillo arrives at school at 7 a.m. to plan activities for the Asian-American club with president Huy Tran, a senior. She is also involved in the business club and will help develop an entrepreneurial product this year through Junior Achievement. After school, both Castillo and Tran stay late for extracurricular activities.

[3]



Chavez Business Club makes decorated bottle opener

"It's nice to have a commonality among students where there is less fighting and more getting along," said Castillo.

At Chavez, all ethnicities join the ranks of the Asian-American club because of the popularity craze of K-pop and K-dance brought on by boyband BTS, often compared to the Beatles.

For Lopez, before- and after-school activities are important, and she is giving her new school

a thumbs-up.

“It’s good to have things to do around here, because if you don’t, kids will get bored and tired,” she said. “And that’s not good.”

(CASE for Kids is an afterschool intermediary which provides resources, training and after-school services for 17,441 students and teachers in greater Harris County. For more information about how to get involved with afterschool, go to [4]<http://hcde-texas.org/after-school>.)

Why do teens need afterschool or out-of-school time?

- Juvenile crime triples between 3-6 p.m., and youth are more like to become victims.
- Self-care and boredom increase the likelihood that youth will experiment with drugs and alcohol as much as 50 percent.
- Teens need additional help preparing for college and the workforce.
- Reaching out to teens can be challenging, and afterschool helps by providing mentors.

(Research through [5]www.afterschoolalliance.org.)

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/lluvialopez_jastinsambula-1-e1568319698921.jpg
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/huytrain_drluislanda_marycastillo-e1568319672661.jpg
3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/chavezbusinessclubmakesdecoratedbottleopener.jpg>
4. <http://hcde-texas.org/after-school>
5. <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/>

HCDE Head Start Hosts 5th Annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference (2019-09-16 08:49) - hcdetx



Harris County Department of Education Head Start is hosting the 5th annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference Sept. 27 from 9 a.m. to 4p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd.

The conference is open to early childhood educators, families, members of the Head Start community and other who work with children with challenging behaviors. The focus of the event is to provide attendees with tools for providing emotional support for young children and their families, increase attendees' awareness of mental health issues among children and provide strategies for self-care.

Cost of the conference is only \$10 and includes lunch.

The conference is made possible through a grant-funded initiative from the Hogg Foundation, which advances recovery and wellness in Texas by funding mental health services, policy analysis, research and public education.

To register, visit [1]<https://bit.ly/2lut0Va>.

For more information about the conference, contact Taiwan Reliford at 713-696-2170 or [2]treliford@hcde-texas.org.

[3]



1. <https://bit.ly/2lut0Va>
2. <mailto:treliford@hcde-texas.org>
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/20190418_earlyhs_0320.jpg

HCDE Staff Helps Struggling GED Student Succeed (2019-09-17 08:37) - hcdetx



[1]



Forty-eight-year-old Jaime Chavez came to Harris County Department of Education over a year ago to work on his General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and connected with a few staff members who helped him achieve his goal.

Chavez dropped out of school in the ninth grade in the late 1980s. In order to stay at his full-time job with Metro he needed to obtain his GED.

He started the GED process in Spring Branch, but with his work schedule always changing his teacher told him about HCDE. Chavez joined an online learning program at HCDE's Adult Education Irvington Center. When he needed more help, he was introduced to HCDE tutoring volunteers Robert Bell and John Kracht from the Technology Division and Special Schools Assistant Superintendent Jonathan Parker.

Chavez was able to pass all portions of the test except for math, and that's where his tutors helped.

"Mr. Bell was my main tutor, but the other two helped me out with their knowledge of the subject," he said.

Bell would spend about eight hours a week of his own time for a year helping Chavez with math problems that would be on the test.

"I appreciate all three of them for being patient with me during this process and not giving up on me," Chavez said. "It was not an easy road for me, but I started opening my eyes."

Last month, Chavez received his score back on the math portion, and he passed.

"I'm so grateful for Mr. Bell for the help he gave me by showing the process and breaking it down," he said.

Bell is happy to know he was able to help change someone's life by tutoring eight hours a week.

"I am proud of him, and it makes me realize the work we do and how it impacts individual lives," he said. "This shows how important our organization is in people's lives."

Bell said he will continue to volunteer by tutoring adult education students in the content area they need to pass the test.

Chavez is set to graduate in May 2020.

For more information about HCDE Adult Education classes, contact the office at 713-692-6216 or visit <https://hcde-texas.org/adult-education/>.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/chavez-ged.jpg>

HCDE Board Lowers Property Tax Rate as 'Good Stewards for Taxpayers'

(2019-09-23 09:56) - hcdetx



[1]



With the welfare of county taxpayers in mind, Harris County Department of Education's Board of Trustees voted for a fifth consecutive year to lower its tax rate.

Fiscal accountability continues to be top of mind as HCDE trustees adopted the 2019 tax rate of \$0.0050 in a vote of four to three. While the rate is lower than the 2018 rate of \$.005190, it will support the FY 2020 adopted budget and will produce more revenue than last year, due to rising property values.

"HCDE continues to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars for the citizens of Harris County," said James Colbert Jr., Harris County school superintendent.

For a home valued at \$150,000, the adopted rate of \$0.0050 means the taxpayer will pay HCDE \$7.50 a year. For a home valued at \$250,000, the tax bill will be \$12.50 annually.

HCDE benefits school districts and the community at-large by providing wraparound services which include adult education, special schools, school-based therapy services, Head Start and afterschool programming.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/hcde-head-start-students-002.jpg>

Balint Charities Donates Books to Head Start Students (2019-09-25 15:49) - hcdetx





Students at the 15 Harris County Department of Education Head Start Centers now have a new book to add to their home library thanks to Balint Charities, a nonprofit seeking to strengthen school success by enriching young lives with reading and music.

Four members of the Balint family toured the Fifth Ward Head Start Center and learned what students do each day. Barbara Balint read *Curious George Museum Mystery*, the book each student received, to a class.

"I didn't realize the extension of the Head Start program here like serving breakfast, lunch, the curriculum and visiting the homes of students; it's amazing," said Steve Balint. "We're happy to donate books because it helps children grow and they have something to enjoy at home."

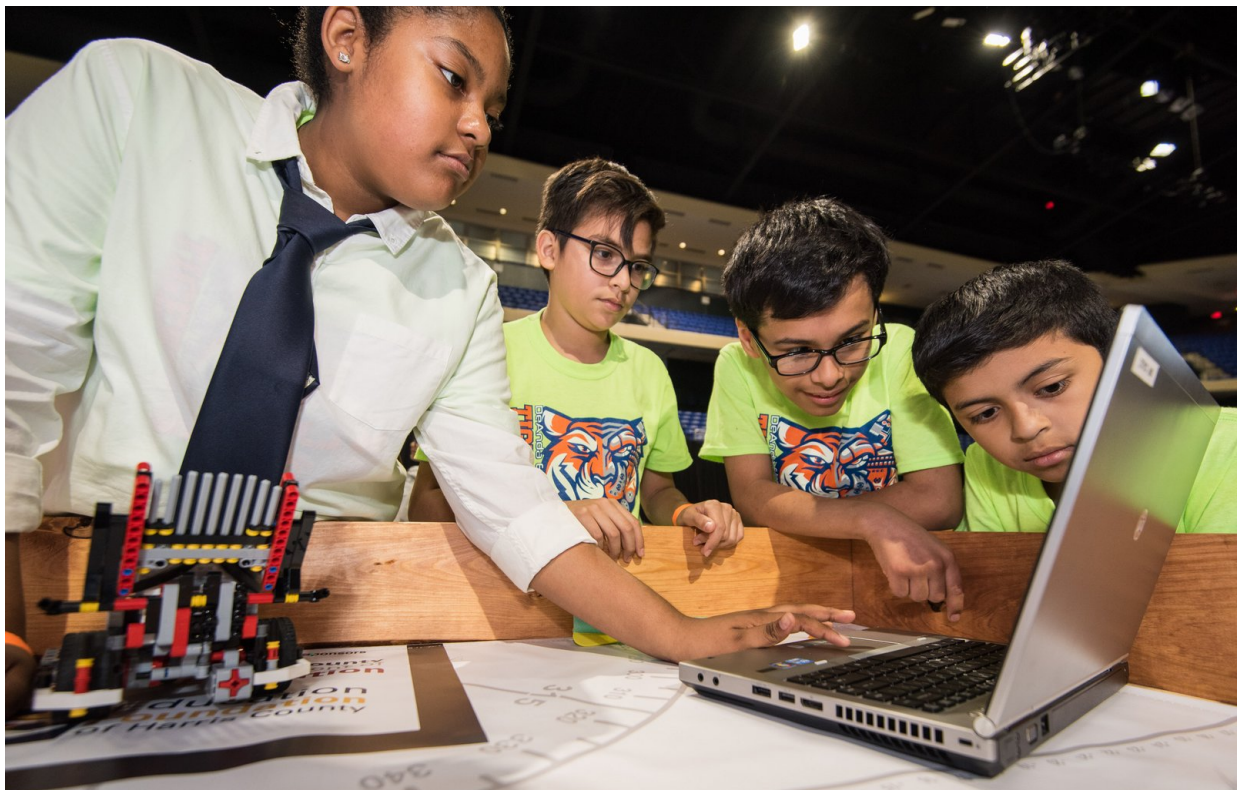
Balint Charities began working with HCDE Head Start in 2017 after Hurricane Harvey affected the Houston area. To date, they have donated over 5,000 books to head start students.

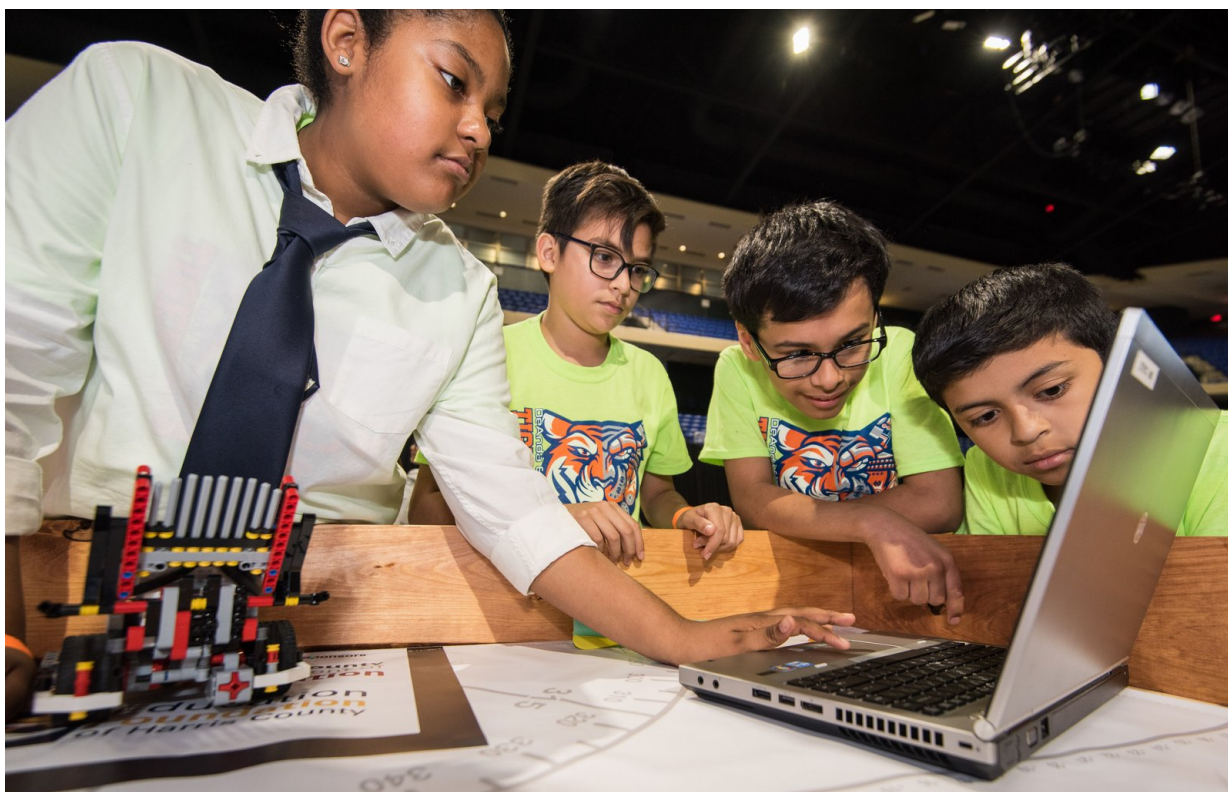
To learn more about Balint Charities, visit <http://www.balintcharities.org/>.



1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/423a3483.jpg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/423a3488.jpg>

**Afterschool Infused by City Connections Funding to Promote Youth Safety
Via CASE for Kids (2019-09-26 13:55) - hcdetx**





Afterschool in Houston this school year receives a \$770,000 funding infusion through City Connections, monies from the city of Houston. The program is administered by the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Environment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education.

For a sixth consecutive year, families in 11 Houston City Council districts benefit from the city funding. Nonprofit organizations in each of the council districts receive \$22,250 from Oct. 14-Dec. 31. The city and CASE for Kids encourage nonprofits like arts organizations, faith-based organizations and civic groups to apply through a request for proposal.

In January, new funding opportunities of \$22,250 will be available through a request for proposal in each council district as the new city council is sworn into office. Those afterschool funds will be used from March 9-May 15.

“City Connections gives Houston youth opportunity to grow, develop skills and discover hobbies,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids. “Besides promoting child safety, afterschool supports social and emotional learning. We are grateful for the continued support of afterschool by city of Houston leaders, including the mayor and the council members.”

As an afterschool intermediary, CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, childcare facilities and community centers. As a branch of Harris County Department of Education, the division was founded in 1999 with a goal to keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement.

According to the national nonprofit Afterschool Alliance, more than 15 million students—including approximately 3.7 million middle schoolers—are alone and unsupervised between 3 to 6 p.m., the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex.

HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. said CASE for Kids City Connections is critically needed as one or both parents or guardians work in many families, leaving unwatched children vulnerable during out-of-school time.

“We are thankful the city continues to invest in our children and their families, especially as afterschool funding is being cut through other sources,” Colbert said.

To find out about the organizations in each council district that will provide services or to contact CASE for Kids about new opportunities in January 2020, visit [2]www.hcde-texas.org/after-school.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/20190427_ecobot_0057.jpg

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/after-school>

1.10 October

**Students, Child Nutrition Directors Pleased with Food Options at HCDE
Choice Partners Nutrition Expo (2019-10-03 14:27) - hcdetx**





Pizza and chicken nugget choices were top with students from school districts around Harris County at this year's Harris County Department of Education Choice Partners Nutrition and Product Expo at the Humble Civic Center.

This annual event brings about 100 vendors who offer products through HCDE's co-op showcase their foods in their uniquely beach-themed booth. A few of the new offerings this year included PizzaBoli from Tasty Brands and the maple seasoned beef sausage and pancake breakfast sandwich from Integrated Food Services.



Students and child nutrition directors from Channelview, Galena Park, Huffman and Humble ISDs and HCDE's Fortis Academy sampled various lunch options for their districts. Many of the products showcased this year will end up in their school cafeteria lines soon.



To view more pictures from the event, visit <https://bit.ly/2oMKcqs>. (Password: hcde1889).

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191002_nutrition_110.jpg

2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191002_nutrition_002.jpg

3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191002_nutrition_006.jpg

Healthy Minds Healthy Families Provides Helpful Information to Educators

(2019-10-03 15:56) - hcdetx





Start early and young in regards to recognizing any mental health symptoms in children is what early childhood educators learned at the 5th annual Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference Sept. 27.

The conference was sponsored by the HOGG Foundation for Mental Health and Harris County Department of Education Head Start.

“We believe in order for our communities to be whole and well, that children and families have to be well,” said Vicky Coffee, HOGG Foundation for Mental Health director of programs. “By supporting this conference that focuses on learning and education around mental health, the signs and symptoms of what to look for with young children we are starting early in recognizing their needs in ways we can support them in their future endeavors.”



This year, over 200 attendees participated in breakout sessions ranging from depression, infant mental health, ADHD, stress, etc.

Dr. Dawn Brown, a double-board certified child psychiatrist, founded The ADHD Wellness Center in Houston.

"I love working with ADHD because I have it," she said. "I do recommend medication management to my patients even to children as young as 5. There are roadblocks and detours, but I am wanting to change that perspective. We are meeting your child where you are and teaching positive reinforcement."

Licensed professional counselor and registered play therapist Haley Garth believes play is children's truest language, and toys are their words. She always gets asked what the toys mean, and she responds that they can mean whatever they want them to mean.

"When a child asks me this question, I say it's whatever you need it to be," Garth said. "We have a wide array of toys, physical and spiritual, animals, inanimate objects, highly aggressive and non-aggressive animals. The treatment cycle varies from 16 to 20 weeks to a few years, depending on the circumstance."

Attendees benefitted from specialists and also heard from keynote Dr. Melitón Moya. The goal is for early childhood providers to be mindful of mental health issues and to be able to connect families to resources, said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/img_0605.jpg

2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20190927_123232.jpg





Harris County Department of Education is hosting a job interview fair to recruit teachers, teaching assistants, family service providers and cooks to join any of its 15 locations throughout northeast Harris County. The recruitment event will be held Friday, Oct. 18, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 6300 Irvington Blvd.

“We are looking for highly energetic, passionate individuals who enjoy working with young children to join our team,” said HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock. “Our employees help transform lives of children and their families, along with making a difference each day.”

Qualifications for Head Start teaching assistant, Early Head Start teacher and Head Start teacher include experience working with young children and an interest in early childhood education. Those who hold child development associate (CDA) degrees are strongly encouraged to apply. Interested candidates can apply online at [2]www.hcde-texas.org or call 713-696-8287 for information.

HCDE Head Start provides services to facilities in Barrett Station, Baytown, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Dogan, Fifth Ward, Fonwood, Humble, J.D. Walker, La Porte, Pugh, San Jacinto, Sheffield and Tidwell. Head Start ensures future success for students both academically and socially and provides comprehensive health, education, nutrition and financial services to families.

Find more information on positions available and qualifications, visit: [3]<https://bit.ly/2Oqnmj5>. Visit [4]www.hcde-texas.org/head-start for general information about HCDE Head Start and locations.

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/head-start.jpg>
2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/>
3. <https://bit.ly/20qnmj5>
4. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/head-start>

Cy-Fair ISD Middle Schoolers Take Action in Hurricane Preparedness

(2019-10-17 15:14) - hcdetx





The Houston area has been hit by numerous tropical storms and hurricanes in the past, and the public may not know what happens behind the scenes with emergency personnel. Thanks to a collaboration between multiple agencies, several dozen students were educated about the role of first responders.

More than 40 eighth graders from Cy-Fair ISD's Hamilton Middle School participated in an interactive exercise with the Harris County Office of Emergency Management and Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools where they formed their own government and planned and recovered from a major weather event.

StormZone is a program out of Miami, FL that teaches students about the science of severe natural hazards, the effects of climate change, and how emergency management agencies work with local governments to prepare for and recover from such disaster.



"I've always wanted to bring this program to the rest of the gulf coast especially to students in Texas," said StormZone Executive Director Lucien C. Proby III. "We look forward to coming out each year and educating a new group of students about preparing and recovering from hurricane-related disasters.

Hamilton Middle School Principal Kim Sempe said that the eighth graders are beginning to look at their high school endorsement program to see what careers interest them and choose high school electives for next year.

"We're excited to have this unique and special hands-on opportunity with StormZone and the Harris County Office of Emergency Management," she said. "The challenges students participated in ties into some of eighth grade focus and curriculum. This also gave them the chance to talk to professionals from a variety of professions in one place."

Eighth-grader Ryan Wolfram portrayed the judge during the mock exercise.

"I was assigned to oversee everyone doing their respective duties and after each challenge I read aloud what each did to solve the problem," Wolfram said. "I thought it was a great experience and something that I will hold with me forever."

[3]



1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191009_disaster_152.jpg
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191009_disaster_028.jpg
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191009_disaster_005.jpg

HCDE Salutes 4 Principals During National Principals Month (2019-10-17 17:33)

- hcdetx



[1]



Harris County Department of Education celebrated National Principals Month during October. Our four school leaders are put in the spotlight for their endless commitment to the principalship.

The four principals celebrated include Marion Cooksey, Highpoint School; Donna Trevino-Jones, Academic and Behavior Center East; Antony Moten, Fortis Academy; and Victor Keys, Academic and Behavior School West. Plaques and accolades were given by HCDE board members and administrators.

“Principals are near and dear to my heart because being a principal is one of the most challenging jobs in public education,” said Superintendent James Colbert Jr. “The principal is responsible for every person on the campus. Our principals do an exceptional job. Our principals don’t ask

questions; they take every student and promote a culture where everyone loves that student. We appreciate everything you do.”

We asked our four principals several questions. Here are a few of our favorite answers:

Marion Cooksey: Tell us something your co-workers don't know about you?

Next year will be 30 years in education for me. I did not attend college immediately following graduating from high school. Life took me in a different direction, and it wasn't until several years later that I attained my bachelor's in elementary education. Seven years after that, I earned a master's in educational administration. Earning both degrees was a testament that it is never too late to pursue your dreams.

Victor Keys: What made you want to become a principal?

I wanted to implement programs to help my students be more successful. For example, a day care at my last school. At ABS West, we have a vocational program, web-based curriculum, golf and chess programs. We have positive relationships with our community partners.

Donna Trevino-Jones: What motivates you each day?

I love helping our students, parents and teachers with whatever they may need. There are times they just need someone to talk to and I am happy to be that set of ears that can listen, reserve judgment and see how I can support them. This has been such a unique opportunity for me, and I do my best to make a difference every day.

Anthony Moten: What made you want to become a principal?

One of my old campus principals told me that I would be a good principal and allowed me to serve as principal for a day. I saw how principals can impact the learning outcomes for every child. I became enamored with the challenges and responsibilities of ensuring that every child received a 21st century education.

Photo: Holding plaques and being celebrated during Principals Month by administration and board members are principals Anthony Moten, Fortis Academy; Donna Trevino-Jones, ABS East; Victor Keys, ABS West; and Marion Cooksey, Highpoint School (not present, but treasured).

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191016_board_003.jpg

New School Year Welcomes SuperMENTors (2019-10-18 14:08) - hcdetx





Students at the Fifth Ward Head Start Center greeted their favorite SuperMENTors with smiles and hugs as their adult volunteers came to ready “Bear’s Big Day” to them Oct. 9.

The four men volunteer for the REAL SuperMENTors Read program, a mentoring program in which men from the Houston community commit one hour of their time to read, once a month. The program is a part of the ongoing HCDE Head Start Significant Male Initiative formed in 2002 to encourage male involvement throughout the HCDE Head Start centers.

The program works by recruiting, selecting and assigning mentors to each school. Mentors commit to at least one hour, once a month between October and May to read to students. During the month of May children celebrate their SuperMENTors.

Chris Frey, Bank of Texas vice president of commercial banking, is in his fourth year of participating in the SuperMENTor program and is one of three from the bank to mentor at the Fifth Ward Head Start Center. Bank of Texas also donated to the program this year to supply books.

“It’s always great getting to know the new students,” he said. “They were super engaged and eager as they are every year. I love doing it and look forward to it the mst every month.”



Frey also said the great thing about the program is that he gets to see the same students throughout the year and by the end of the year they all know his name.

"I find that part very rewarding especially being able to see them progress in the learning experience through the school year is a great feeling and they definitely make my day," Frey said.

SuperMENTor volunteers come from a multitude of businesses and are community members from across the greater Houston area. Additionally, through corporate sponsors, participating students receive a copy of the book read to them each month to grow a home library.

Reading dates are the second Thursday of each month beginning in October through May. Each school site will work with its mentor, as needed, for scheduling reading dates.



To sign-up to be a mentor, fill out the form at [4]<https://bit.ly/32mBEFD> and email to [5]SuperMENTors@hcde-texas.org.

For more information on the REAL SuperMENTors Read program at HCDE Head Start, please contact Armando Rodriguez at 713-696-2179 or e-mail [6]SuperMENTors@hcde-texas.org.

[7]



1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/sp3.jpg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/sp1.jpg>
3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/sp4.jpg>
4. <https://bit.ly/32mBEFD>
5. <mailto:SuperMENTors@hcde-texas.org>
6. <mailto:SuperMENTors@hcde-texas.org>
7. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/sp3-1.jpg>

School Safety Forum Receives Positive Acclaim from Attendees, Supports Efforts of Senate Bill 11 (2019-10-18 16:05) - hcdetx





Concerns over implementing new mental health initiatives in schools and general care for school safety brought approximately 240 educators to Harris County Department of Education Oct. 15 for the School Safety Forum. The event hosted by the Center for Safe and Secure Schools and the Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) supplied international and local speakers on topics ranging from mental health to gang violence to emergency operations planning. Those included Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, renowned psychologist Scott Poland and emergency preparedness expert Michael Dorn.

Many administrators attended to learn more about mental health and compliance with Senate Bill 11, a bill supported by Gov. Greg Abbott as an effort to prevent school violence and protect Texas children.

"The bill better prepares and equips schools to handle security threats and provide resources to support the mental health of students and staff," said CSSS Director Julia Andrews. "The center is committed to helping our area districts with school safety concerns."

Superintendent James Colbert Jr. welcomed the administrators and safety experts as the forum opened:

"I ask you to find something purposeful out of what you learn today so that we can all be proactive at trying to prevent some of these problems," Colbert said.

Assistant principal Raymond Lowery from Alief ISD said he came to the forum to learn about what the community is doing overall to keep schools safe and what kind of preventative measures are in place to help him gauge where his campus stands in terms of school safety enhancements. He left reassured about his campus and district's social and emotional learning efforts and safety updates. His testimonial: [2]https://youtu.be/RxB5_gBs-ek

Tina Seamon, Katy ISD assistant principal, complimented the quality of information she took away from the forum. Her testimonial: [3]<https://youtu.be/-GcCy2dqqu4>

“Not only were the speakers full of knowledgeable information, we also heard from Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez,” she said. “He shared his passion for wanting to help not only students and their parents, but the entire community.”

[4]



Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez addresses the School Safety Forum, October 15, 2019.

[5]



[6]



Michael Dorn addresses the School Safety Forum, October 15, 2019.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191015_safety_112.jpg
2. https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2FRxB5_gBs-ek&data=02%7C01%7Ccvaughn%40hcde-texas.org%7Cef9336628b5c44ce91c208d7530fd
3. <https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fyoutu.be%2F-GcCy2dqu4&data=02%7C01%7Ccvaughn%40hcde-texas.org%7Cef9336628b5c44ce91c208d7530fd>
4. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191015_safety_119.jpg
5. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191015_safety_038.jpg
6. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/20191015_safety_002.jpg

Fortis Academy Students Experience New Foods and Books (2019-10-23 08:58)

- hcdetx





Hummus, dill, *Names Will Never Hurt Me* and *Pistol* were some of the new foods and books Fortis Academy students tested during a recent class assignment.

Fortis Academy teachers Rachel Finley and Ouindetta Thomas wanted to introduce their students to new flavors and peak their interest in different genres of books.

“Thus, the food and book tasting was invented,” said Finley.

Students sat at an elegantly dressed table and were treated to multiple samples of food. They each tried five samples and wrote a brief description of the taste, texture and whether they liked it or not.

Senior Karen Espinoza liked the prosciutto ham after never eaten it before.

“I like ham and cheese, but it looked different and didn’t seem appealing,” she said. “It does have a different taste so it was new to me but was good.”

The French macaron was a favorite for freshman Elmer Cante.

“It had a sweet taste to it and was good,” he said.

[2]



Next, students experienced a literary dessert. Books were covered at each place setting and walked around the table with music. When the music stopped and the place they were standing at was the book they were going to try. Students were given eight minutes to read the front and back cover and read the first few pages of the book. When time was up, they recorded their thoughts about the book and repeated the exercise for five books.

After the teens completed the tasting, they had a table discussion to discuss their favorite foods and books along with their least favorite foods and books. Students filled out a reflection napkin to let Finley and Thomas know what they liked and did not like about the overall tasting.

“In doing this tasting, Ms. Thomas wanted to help her students get a better understanding of food flavors for future recipe and culinary projects, and I wanted to get them excited about the Fortis library and help them recognize other literary interest that they did not know they had,” Finley said.



1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/423a3650.jpg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/423a3680.jpg>
3. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/423a3703.jpg>

Beating Breast Cancer Twice Strengthens HCDE Therapist's Empathy

(2019-10-23 13:49) - hcdetx





After being diagnosed with breast cancer a second time, school-based occupational therapist Meredith Miller considers herself a "thrivor" versus a survivor.

Like many of the students with disabilities she serves, Miller knows how difficult it can be to navigate the medical or therapy world to get the services you need.

She feels the pith of anxiety that goes with tending to family, work and fighting cancer—twice.

“My journey has taught me the importance of extending grace to others, and how to do it,” said the Harris County Department of Education therapist from Katy who works in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District.

As a school-based occupational therapist, the 12-year HCDE employee supports students’ academic achievement and social participation in all school routines, including recess, classroom, and cafeteria time.

Her boss, Amy Collins, calls Miller a “tremendous asset to Cy-Fair ISD and HCDE.” She is talented as a therapist and committed to students and schools she serves, says her manager.

The Scary Ride:

In 2012 at age 34, Miller was diagnosed with stage 0 breast cancer. It had not spread to other cells in the breast or to other organs.

Similar to actress Angelina Jolie who has the BRCA1 mutation gene, Miller had the BRCA2 mutation gene, causing an increased risk of breast and ovarian cancer. She opted for a double mastectomy followed by immediate reconstruction of the tissue.

As she neared her five-year mark of being cancer-free, Miller was doing a self-check exam and felt a lump as small as a grain of rice during a self-check exam.

“And so begins the whirlwind of tests,” said the wife and mother.

An ultrasound followed, then a mammogram and biopsy. The phone call from the doctor came next.

“Are you sitting down?” the doctor asked. “It’s cancer. I’m so sorry.”

Two weeks later, there was a plan to do a lumpectomy followed by four-to-six rounds of chemo. Results looked good, but tests showed her silicone implants were leaking.

“We go back to surgery, but this time I opt to have both implants removed and will not undergo reconstruction,” she said. “The medical community considers this a second double mastectomy.”

Summer of 2017, Miller underwent more chemo and returned during the fall to do daily radiation.

On Thanksgiving week, she rang the bell to signify she was cancer-free.

Life After Cancer:

Cancer is a nasty voice in Miller’s head which is always there. She tries to live in the now and not focus on the trivial. Faith, she says, carries her forward each day.

“After all of this, I don’t think I will ever feel like cancer is behind me,” she said. “It raises its ugly head every time I have a new pain, or something is off in the way I feel. I battle this every day to try to stay positive and focused on the joy in my life.”

It’s important to pull strength from the people who support you, she says, and from God.

“I recalled many days I could barely get out of bed and I would call out to God,” she said.

Her advice to others includes doing self-exams and yearly mammograms.

“Be cognizant of your body and listen to that little voice inside your head,” she said. “I thank God every day that I listened.”

About HCDE’s School-Based Therapy Services: We support children with disabilities and their families in the areas of occupational (OT), physical (PT) and music therapy (MT) since 1978. Support comes through assessment, intervention, consultation, training and direct service in the student’s classroom at their neighborhood school and district. We serve more than 7,000 students yearly, providing more than half of OT, PT and MT services to districts/charters in the county.

[2]



1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/meredith1.jpg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/meredith2.jpg>

HCDE Honors 5 Area Media Representatives with Media Honor Roll 2019 Awards (2019-10-28 09:50) - hcdetx





Gilbert Hoffman



Kaitlin Monte
404



Rose-Ann Aragon



Juan Beltran

Harris County Department of Education named five media representatives to the 2019 Media Honor Roll for 2019. Representatives being honored this year by HCDE are Rose-Ann Aragon, KPRC 2; Kaitlin Monte, KRIV 26; Gilbert Hoffman, North Channel Star, Highlands Star and Crosby Courier (Grafikpress Corporation); Juan Beltran, KTRK 13; and Chris McDonald, formerly with KIAH 39.

The Media Honor Roll, sponsored by the Texas Association of School Boards, honors media representatives statewide who deserve recognition for fair, accurate and balanced reporting of news about public schools. Plaques and a media release provide recognition.

Each year HCDE selects local media representatives for recognition of their outstanding contributions to education. Criteria for HCDE's selection process include the media representative's efforts to report school news in a fair, accurate and balanced manner and give a high profile to positive news about education.

Multimedia journalist and education reporter Aragon is honored for a feature story she reported on regarding a car giveaway to a needy Head Start mother. Fox co-anchor Monte served as emcee for a

ceremony recognizing afterschool providers for the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or Case for Kids. Publisher Hoffman is celebrated for his continued support in publishing information about HCDE education events which benefit the community. Multimedia journalist Beltran shared a story about teens recovering from addiction who attend the county's first public recovery high school called Fortis Academy. Videographer/reporter McDonald provided coverage of a fine arts summer program which helps disadvantaged children.

"We believe it's important to single out individuals who deserve recognition for their outstanding contributions to education and celebrate them," said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. "We are grateful for these talented professionals."

This year's honorees appear on the Texas Association of School Board's website at [1]www.tasb.org as more than 300 representatives from Texas newspapers, radio and television stations and online publications representatives are honored statewide.

1. <http://www.tasb.org/>

Human Trafficking Summit Equips Educators, Parents with Awareness Tools Nov. 5 (2019-10-30 10:05) - hcdetx



[1]



Educators hear about how to protect children from human trafficking at the Human Trafficking Summit Nov. 5 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington, Houston.

View video: [2]<https://bit.ly/2MW94FG>

From thoughts from Congressman Ted Poe to stories from human trafficking survivor Sandy Storm, the collaborative between Children at Risk and HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools supplies wrap-around prevention approaches to the widespread problem of human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to control victims for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex acts or labor services against their will.

"In order to break the cycle, we must understand the magnitude and how Houston families fall victim to human trafficking," said Julia Andrews, director for the Center for Safe and Secure Schools. The center supports school safety best practices, safety audits and restorative discipline for area schools and districts.

“The I-10 corridor is a huge hub for trafficking, and we must realize the threat and act to protect our children,” said Andrews.

Cost to attend is \$20. Register: [3]<https://bit.ly/humantraffickingsummit>

Summit Agenda:

Demand and Data, Jamey Caruthers, senior staff attorney, Children at Risk (8-9 a.m.)

What Parents Need to Know, Joe Madison, executive director, Children at Risk (9-10 a.m.)

Protecting Kids in the Porn Age, Sandy Storm, survivor, author, speaker and human trafficking abolitionist (10:15-11:15 a.m.)

Lunch and Networking (11:15 a.m.-12 p.m.)

Project 180, a wraparound approach between multiple Houston agencies, including the Harris County District Attorney’s Office (Noon-1:30 p.m.)

Former U.S. Rep. Ted Poe discusses human trafficking initiatives (1:30-2 p.m.)

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/d.jpg>

2. <https://bit.ly/2MW94FG>

3. <http://www.Bit.ly/humantraffickingsummit>

Choice Partners Brings Vendors, Members Face-to-Face to Share Products, Services (2019-10-31 08:49) - hcdetx





Longtime Choice Partners vendor Facility Sources likes to use a Hurricane Harvey story to illustrate why school district and municipality members of the Choice Partners national purchasing cooperative benefit from easy-to-use, legal contracts for their facilities solutions.

At the 2019 Annual Vendor Exhibit “Catch the Procurement Wave” held in southeast Houston, the company’s project manager Wayne Bryant took a few minutes to reflect on the past two busy-yet-productive years.

Rewind back to August 2017 when Humble ISD’s Kingwood High School took in six feet of water. District officials estimated a full year for repairs in order to get students back onto campus from the neighboring Summer Creek High School where they had to share space.

“They had called a couple of job order contractors and one had backed out because they didn’t know if they could handle the task,” Bryant recalled. “We were able to expedite the project and get the kids back into school by Spring Break 2018,” he said.

The 700-plus vendors in Choice Partners co-op offer services ranging from construction JOC to consulting services to food supplies and equipment. Some approximate 1,500 members benefit from time-and- money saved, plus legally bid contracts.

“During this annual vendor exhibit event, our members and vendors are able to exchange valuable information face-to-face,” said Jeff Drury, Choice Partners director.

More than 100 members networked with the 119 attending vendors at the event held at Bayou City Events Center.

[2]



One of the newest vendors showcasing services at the expo was Versa Creative, who joined the co-op to offer a variety of marketing and advertising services to Choice Partners members. Founder Mary Shekari and client services specialist Karaline Harrell staffed the booth in Hawaiian attire, providing detailed information about the types of service Versa Creative offers.

“We’ve been in business for 10 years but have recently become a Choice Partners vendor and are honored to have been awarded a contract with Choice,” Harrell said. “We’re excited to partner with all the members because we have a special place in our hearts for nonprofits and educational entities.”

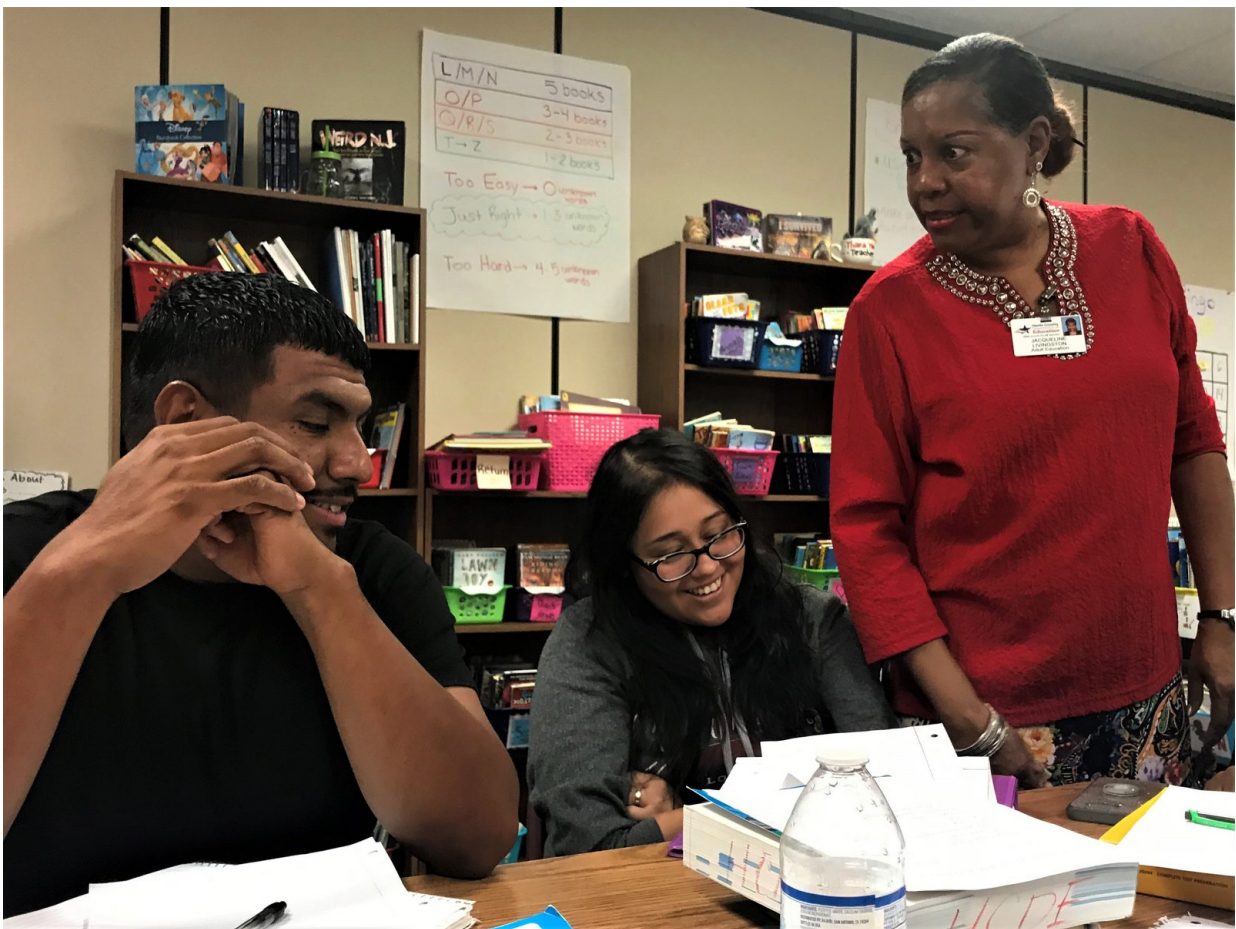
For more information on how to become a Choice Partners vendor or a member, go to [3]www.choicepartners.org.

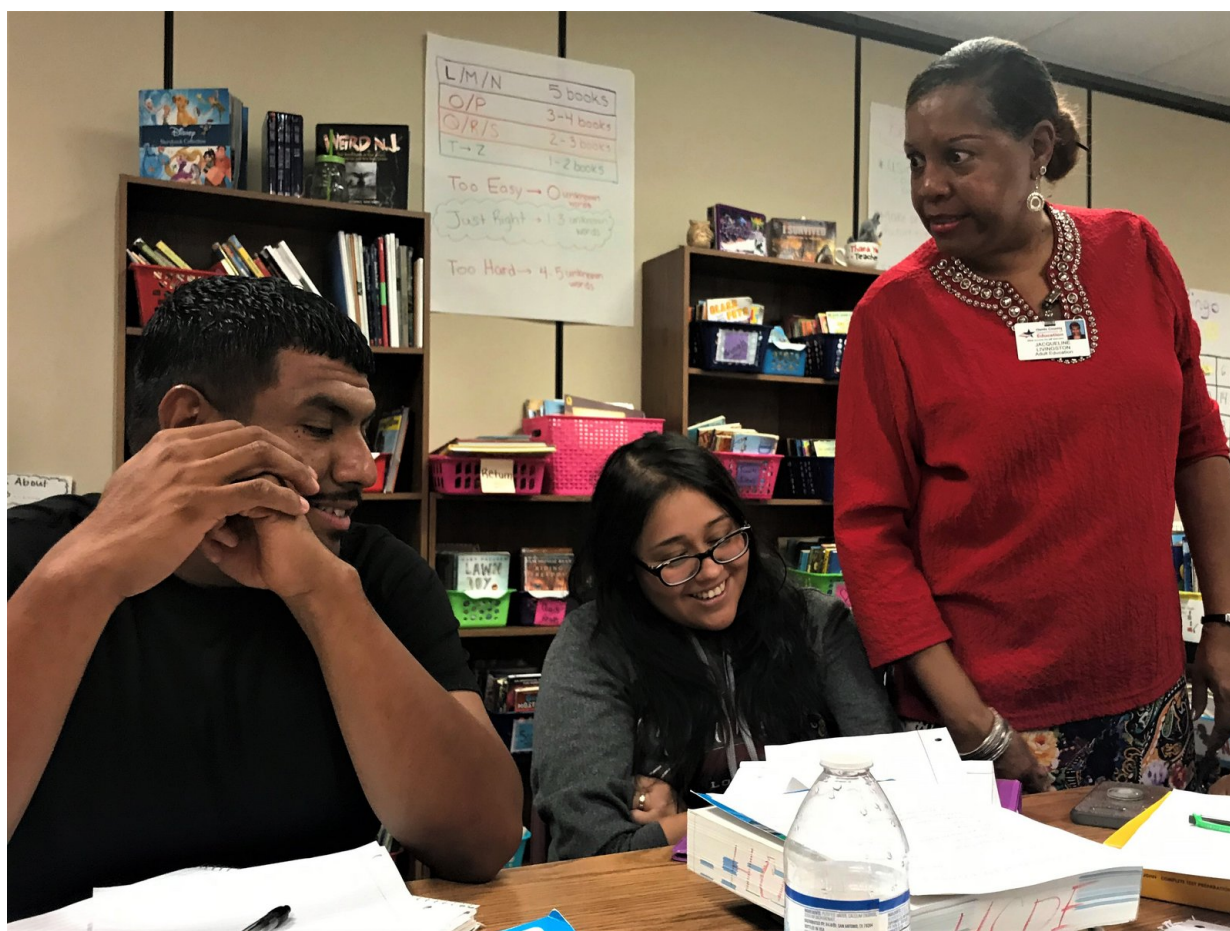
1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/facilities.jpg>

2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/versa.jpg>
3. <http://www.choicepartners.org/>

1.11 November

GED Teacher Makes Lifetime Vocation to 'Help Others Help Themselves'
(2019-11-07 10:41) - hcdetx





Helping others help themselves is a life vocation for 30-year Harris County Department of Education GED teacher Jackie Livingston.

Her commanding presence is mesmerizing, and her class is a theatrical performance of exaggerated movement and knowledge.

Today her community classroom in Spring Branch is abuzz with inferences. Is a truck or a car better? Students orally share their preferences.

“Kiss your brains because you have it going on,” their teacher exclaims.

Now, the moment of truth is at hand.

“Did anyone do their homework assignment?” she asks.

It’s so quiet you can hear the air.

“What is that you say?” asks Livingston. “The dog ate it? Okay now.”

It’s only week three into class, and her adult learners are building confidence. Slowly, two students

turn over their thesis statements. Teacher “Jackie” likes challenge and urges others to follow.

Over the years, she remembers the toughest tests. The student who battled cancer came to class with her life-thread supply of oxygen. An immigrant who knew not one word of English faithfully attended GED class for almost two years before he got his high school equivalency degree. All the while, his family discouraged him.

“Perfect attendance,” Jackie said, smiling at the memory.

Math hater Chris De La Cruz is returning to school after a decade to get his GED for a work promotion as a pipe cutter.

“She’s really patient,” said De La Cruz, 29. “When I find things are difficult, she explains.”[2]

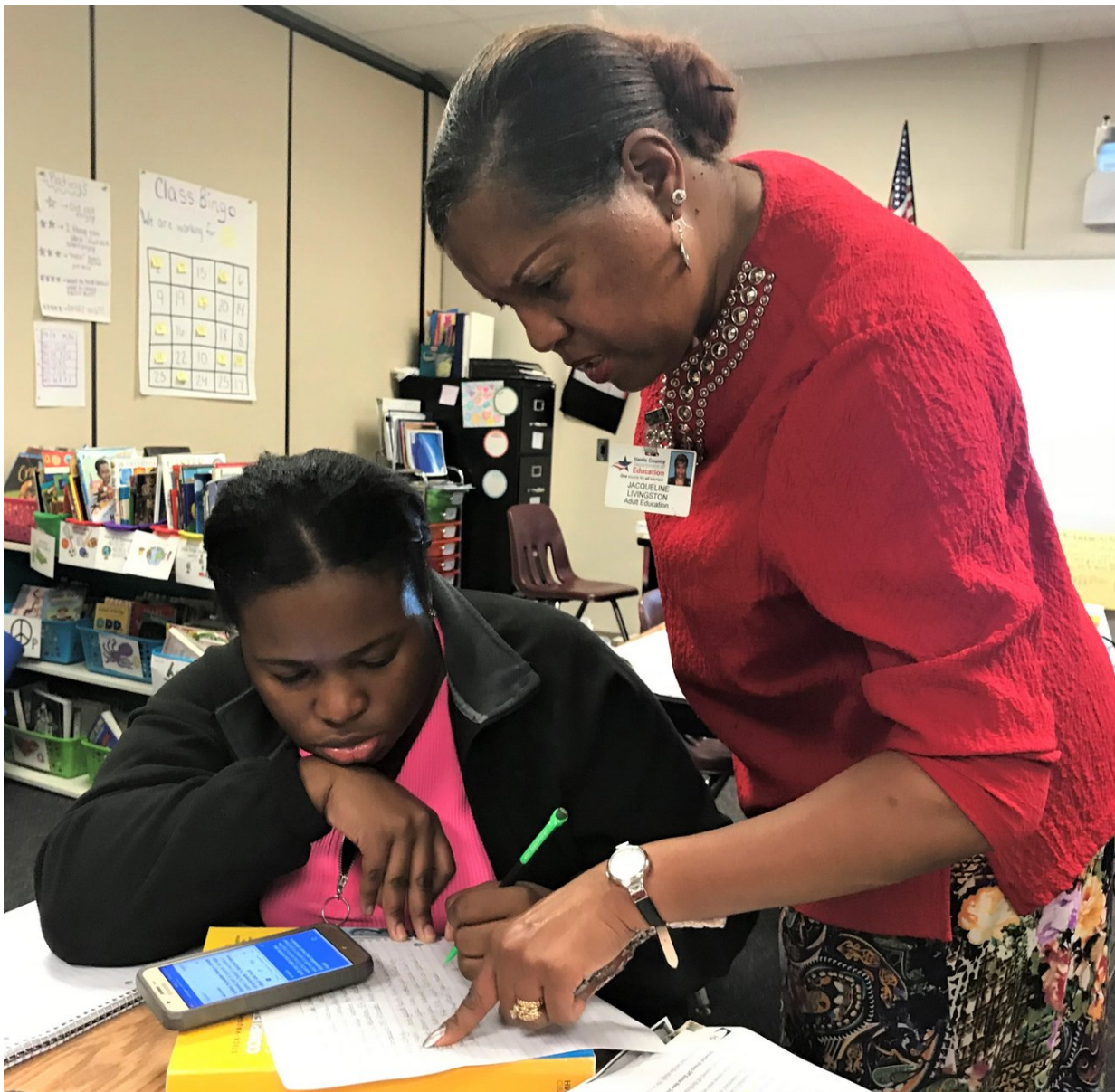


In Ms. Jackie’s class, students work together to solve equations and answer reading passages. She encourages collaboration. That’s the way of the workforce, she says.

HCDE Adult Education Manager May O'Brien said Livingston has never complained about completing the tedious, mandatory attendance reports. She also calls students to encourage regular attendance. Livingston goes above-and-beyond by encouraging students to become members of the Texas Association of Literacy and Adult Education, where they can earn GED scholarships for test registration.

Although GED classes are free on a first-come, first-served basis, tests can prove costly to students if they are taken repeatedly.

[3]



Livingston encourages students to take practice tests to prove they're ready. That's just half

the battle. She must follow up and encourage hesitant students to take the test plunge.

Over the years, she's tried to retire. Retirement just doesn't stick.

"I'm just passionate about helping others," she said. "When you get that ah-ha moment, it's rewarding to the students and to me as well. I can do something to help someone else, and that's all I know."

HCDE Adult Education Adult Education is the largest, no-cost adult education program in Texas, with a variety of health care and construction career training options in Harris and Liberty counties. Students may also take English as a second language classes and high school equivalency degree classes simultaneously in a traditional classroom setting or online. For more information, go to [4]www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_0802.jpg
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_0768.jpg
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_0777.jpg
4. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education>

Human Trafficking Summit Exposes Epidemic, Supplies Solutions

(2019-11-07 11:55) - hcdetx





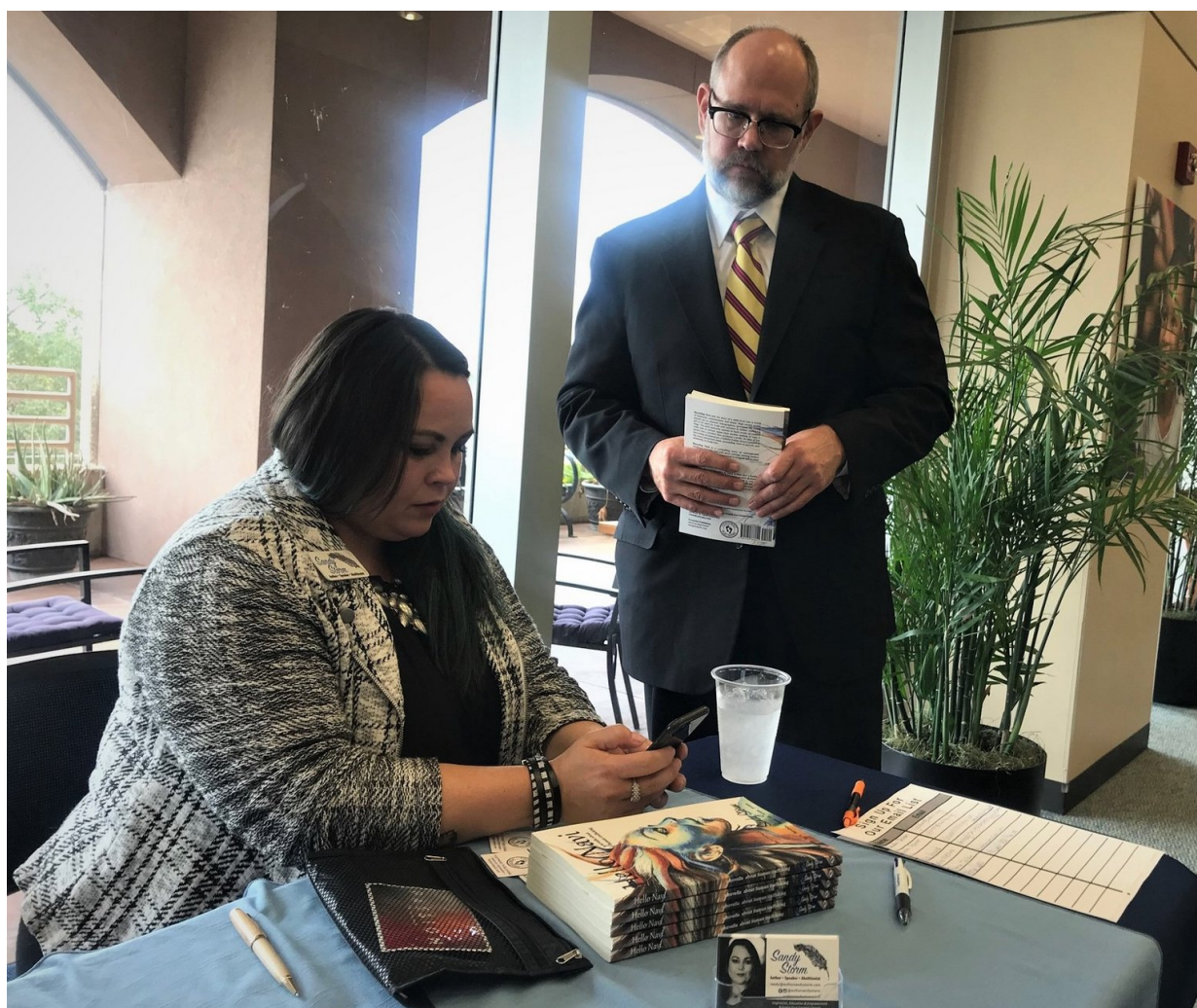
An estimated 80 percent of humans trafficked in our country are American, disputing the notion that most are immigrants.

Former U.S. Rep. Ted Poe shared statistics and his passion for helping human trafficking victims in an event hosted by Children At Risk and the Center for Safe and Secure Schools held Nov. 5 at Harris County Department of Education. Presenters included Children At Risk staff, Love People Not Pixels organization, the Harris County District Attorney's Office for Sex Crimes and Trafficking, human trafficking survivor Sandy Storm and Poe, an ardent supporter of victims' rights.

Survivor Storm shared her personal story as a victim of human trafficking. American born, Storm was raised by her single mother who was influenced by a businessman who victimized both mother and daughter. Later, Storm turned to drugs to numb her life experiences. She was awakened by a human trafficking awareness event where she realized that she was a victim. Today she is writing her third books about the experience and presents throughout the nation to raise awareness.

"All it took was a man with power and money and me being vulnerable," Storm said.

Storm explains human trafficking as being a buying and selling of bodies and souls and differentiates porn as the renting and leasing of bodies and souls. Storm recognizes technological advances for enabling and proliferating pornography and human trafficking.[2]



Children at Risk attorney Jamie Caruthers urged educators to look for red flags with children and teens Those include dramatic changes in behavior, talking about sexual activities that exceed age-group norms, barcode or ownership tattoos and physical signs of abuse or reluctance to explain injuries.

In Texas, approximately 900,000 children attend school within one mile of illegal massage businesses acting as fronts for human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

“It is important that educators, parents and community members are aware of this growing epidemic of Human Trafficking across the country, but specifically in Harris County,” said Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Julia Andrews. “Our young students are being trafficked and raising the awareness of what to look for can literally be a life-or-death situation. HCDE’s Center continues to provide the Human Trafficking Summit and awareness trainings throughout the year to put a stop to this horrible crime in our city.”

Johna Stallings from the Harris County District Attorney’s Office of Sex Crimes and trafficking

422

discussed Project 180, a local program that helps female victims ages 18-24. About 90 percent of the women helped have backgrounds of child sexual abuse, she said.

“Almost every single one of these women have been victimized,” she said. “There is an escalation of risky behavior, and after that their self-worth diminishes.”

Project 180 helps the women get away from their pimps and connects them with social services.

Stalling also shared the district attorney office’s aggressive campaign to expose and prosecute sex buyers and sellers.

[3]



In closing the summit, Poe urged attendees to contact their legislators to support victims of human trafficking.

“A 13-year old girl that is trafficked is not a prostitute,” he said. “They can’t consent. “Treat these people like victim of crimes. They need help.”

For more information about human trafficking—the problems and possible solutions—go to

[4]www.childrenatrisk.org, [5]www.lpn.org or [6]<https://hcde-texas.org/safe-and-secure-schools>.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_1101.jpg
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_1086.jpg
3. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_1096-1.jpg
4. <http://www.childrenatrisk.org/>
5. <http://www.lpn.org/>
6. <https://hcde-texas.org/safe-and-secure-schools>

Head Start Holding Community Sale Nov. 16: Furniture, Books, Toys
(2019-11-07 16:15) - hcdetx





Harris County Department of Education Head Start is hosting a pre-school equipment and materials community sale on Saturday, Nov. 16, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 709 Melbourne St., Houston, TX 77009. Items included in the sale include child size furnishings such as: cubbies, tables, chairs, shelves, pretend-play furniture, Letter People early childhood curriculum, books and more. Only cash will be accepted the day of the sale and items must be taken away immediately.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/20190523_baytown_0320.jpg

'No Place for Hate' Movement Addresses Cyberbullying through Youth Summit (2019-11-13 15:02) - hcdetx





In today's school landscape, cyberbullying replaces the old-school modes of bullying: folded paper notes shared in class or messages written on bathroom stalls. With prevention strategies in mind, teens and counselors from eight area school districts met for the "No Place for Hate Youth Summit" Nov. 8.

The event, spearheaded by the Anti-Defamation League held at University of Houston Central Law School, was funded in part by the federally funded STOP School Violence grant provided by Harris County Department of Education (HCDE) Center for Safe and Secure Schools (CSSS).

"The primary goal of the grant is to reduce school violence by creating a positive school culture and climate through various adult and student training sessions, and the Youth Summit is focused on the same outcome—reducing school violence through anti-bullying awareness training. The synergy couldn't have been better," said Dennis Calloway, grant manager for the CSSS.

Jason Brown, seventh-grade counselor at McAuliffe Middle School in Fort Bend Independent School District, said the use of social media platforms like Snapchat and Instagram for cyberbullying

has increased 100 percent in recent years.

“What the Internet and social media allows is for someone to hide behind their computers and not face the person who they are negatively impacting,” said Brown.

He credits David’s Law, Texas Senate Bill 179, making it a crime to cyberbully during and after school hours.

“Cyberbullying is not just wrong morally, but it’s also now criminally wrong,” said the counselor who praised his district for being proactive in reducing cyberbullying.

Julia Andrew is director for HCDE’s CSSS and says the summit helps support positive school climates. Besides providing services such as safety audits for school districts, the CSSS promotes trainings which help build healthy relationships on school campuses, part of a larger initiative called social-emotional learning.

“Students sometimes feel there is no place to go and just accept cyberbullying,” said Andrews. “There are 261 students here today who are saying that it is not okay.”

Students Macian Fussell and Emilia Strother attended the summit to gain strategies to take back to McAuliffe Middle School. Proactive tactics include taking screen shots of bullying on social media and sharing the proof with teachers and administrators at the school.

Macian Fussell interview: [2]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pteBAwMsS0> &feature=youtu.be

Emilia Strother interview: [3]<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XIJpJ46RAM> &feature=youtu.be

“We are learning how to deal with cyberbullying, but it’s difficult,” said Strother.

“I tell my friends to ignore it (cyberbullying) and don’t let it get you off-track. You can go to an adult and talk all your problems away.”

As students who can connect to classmates in several different social circles, the two girls are what Counselor Brown calls “influencers.”



Julia Andrews, Jason Brown, Janice Owalabi

"We are looking for workable solutions that the kids will take back into their schools and spread to their friends," said Brown. "That's our goal."

One idea the teen influencers invent is "Free Compliments Monday," a day to build relations versus eroding them. Another is "Blue Shirt Day," a suicide awareness day to bring awareness to the results of bully.

At day's end, students and teachers have cultivated some good ideas—concrete solutions to combat the negativity of social media and cyberbullying. They know what they can do to stop bullying

when they see it, but they also have ideas about building a positive school community.

[youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pteBAwMsS0>]

(This project was supported by Grant No. 2018-YS-BX-0153 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Program, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U. S. Department of Justice.)

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_1106.jpg
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pteBAwMsS0&feature=youtu.be>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XIJpJ46RAM&feature=youtu.be>
4. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_1115.jpg

AREA GIS Day Held at HCDE Helps Teens Map-Out Career Futures

(2019-11-14 13:40) - hcdetx





Geographic information systems, or GIS, is the mapping bedrock used in meteorology, city planning and medical fields. Houston Area GIS Day held Nov. 14 at Harris County Department of Education allowed 140 high school students the chance to learn about growing career opportunities in the field of GIS.

“GIS is new and exciting, and it’s a very stable job to have,” said Nicole Ceranek, coordinator for the event and GIS manager for Montgomery County.

Although GIS isn’t a core curriculum in Texas, several schools incorporate the mapping software from Esri in their class offerings. Waltrip High School in Houston Independent School District provides a three-year GIS track which culminates in a GIS practicum with area companies.

“What teens can expect in GIS is to analyze data and problem-solve,” said Ruby Blackmon, GIS instructor for Waltrip.

GIS is used to study migration of diseases such as mapping of the Zika virus, a project her students worked on several years ago. The teens also helped Houston ISD Transportation revamp their bus routes using GIS.



Senior Lisette Corona will use GIS to major in computer science, and she believes she'll have a one-up on her classmates in college.

Junior Guillermo Perez-Negron is a ROTC student is using GIS to inspect maps for military applications. He'll also use it as he becomes a medical oncologist, post high school.

"It's also very practical in real life situations because you will use geography in every single location you will be in, from finding a home to tracking job opportunities," he said.

GIS computer software is used for analyzing events ranging from flooding disasters to elections, said Lisa Felske, HCDE science curriculum director. She is a huge proponent of the GIS Day as the event has been held for a fourth year at HCDE.

This year Tye Payne, leader of the Lone Star Unmanned Aerial Systems Center at Texas A & M Corpus Christi, provided the keynote presentation to students.

Students also worked in stations with drones, competed in a geography bee and mapped with GIS software in computer labs and spoke to industry experts about career opportunities.

View photos: [3]<https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/20191114-GIS/G0000D2cqkTx.8>
434

pA/C0000pY8VX0A_b7I

1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/dfd.jpg>
2. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/gis.jpg>
3. https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/20191114-GIS/G0000D2cqkTx.8pA/C0000pY8VX0A_b7I

Harris County Department of Education Ranks Top 25 in Houston's 2019 Top Workplaces (2019-11-15 15:15) - hcdetx



[1]



Harris County Department of Education was recognized as one of Houston's Top 25 large businesses Nov. 14, as part of the Houston Chronicle's 2019 Top Workplaces program.

Chron.com: [2]<https://bit.ly/2rLY3id>

HCDE received the award at a special ceremony at the Royal Sonesta Hotel. Companies recognized are awarded solely on anonymous workplace surveys completed by their employees.

“HCDE is the best of both worlds as it is a dynamic place to work which encourages excellence and fosters an entrepreneurial spirit in an ever-changing educational environment,” said Superintendent James Colbert Jr. “We also gain the personal satisfaction of serving area school districts and helping a wide array of students succeed, from pre-k students to students with special needs to adult learners.”

Top Workplaces rankings are determined by a scientific employee survey process provided by Energage, an independent research company partnering with the Chronicle for the past 10 year. This year, 150 employers earned recognition as Top Workplaces in three categories: small, medium and large. HCDE was ranked no. 24 in the large-company category.

In all, 134,258 employees from 257 companies took the survey. Questions included issues relating to workplace culture such as management, benefits, employee appreciation, workplace flexibility and more.

Longtime employee Laura McFarland nominated HCDE for the award after seeing an ad in the Houston Chronicle requesting company recommendations for Top Workplaces. McFarland is an occupational therapist and manages therapists who work with students in Houston Independent School District and several other districts through HCDE’s School-Based Therapy Services. She has been employed with HCDE for 21 years.

“Because of the culture of excellence that exists at HCDE, everyone is encouraged to show initiative and professional growth,” McFarland said. “We are constantly evolving and adapting to best meet the community’s needs.”

About HCDE: HCDE is a unique, educational hybrid serving school districts, governmental agencies, nonprofits and the public in the third-largest county in the U.S. HCDE annually serves a quarter-million students and educators through schools for students with profound special needs; the largest adult education program in Texas; Head Start early childhood education; school-based therapy services; and afterschool programs. Educator professional development and certification, school safety, records management, and a purchasing cooperative are also provided. #SeeTheImpact at [3]www.hcde-texas.org.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/20191114_twp_0024.jpg

2. <https://bit.ly/2rLY3id>

3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/>

Principal for Day Program Helps Build Community Partnerships

(2019-11-19 13:51) - hcdetx





Visitors Angelina Brown of the National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI), Jim Thompson from nonprofit Center for Pursuit and Jaishree Ellis of Greater Houston Disability Chamber of Commerce (GHDCOC) walked away from the experience of being named “Principal for the Day” with much more than a certificate and a lunch.

After shadowing staff at Academic and Behavior Schools, the visitors representing nonprofit health organizations were fueled with information about the Harris County Department of Education schools in east and west Houston. The schools serve 25 area school districts by providing services for their students with emotional and intellectual and developmental disorders on a contractual basis. The intent is for students to return to their home districts and schools once they are equipped with behavioral and life-skills tools to be successful.

“I have a son who is in an therapeutic environment with his school district and I know how it works as a parent, but being here today is giving me an insight on how the administrators think and how they’re building things around their campus,” Ellis said. “That helps me one as a parent, but also in my role at the chamber because we are trying to build relationships with transitional directors at the different school districts.”

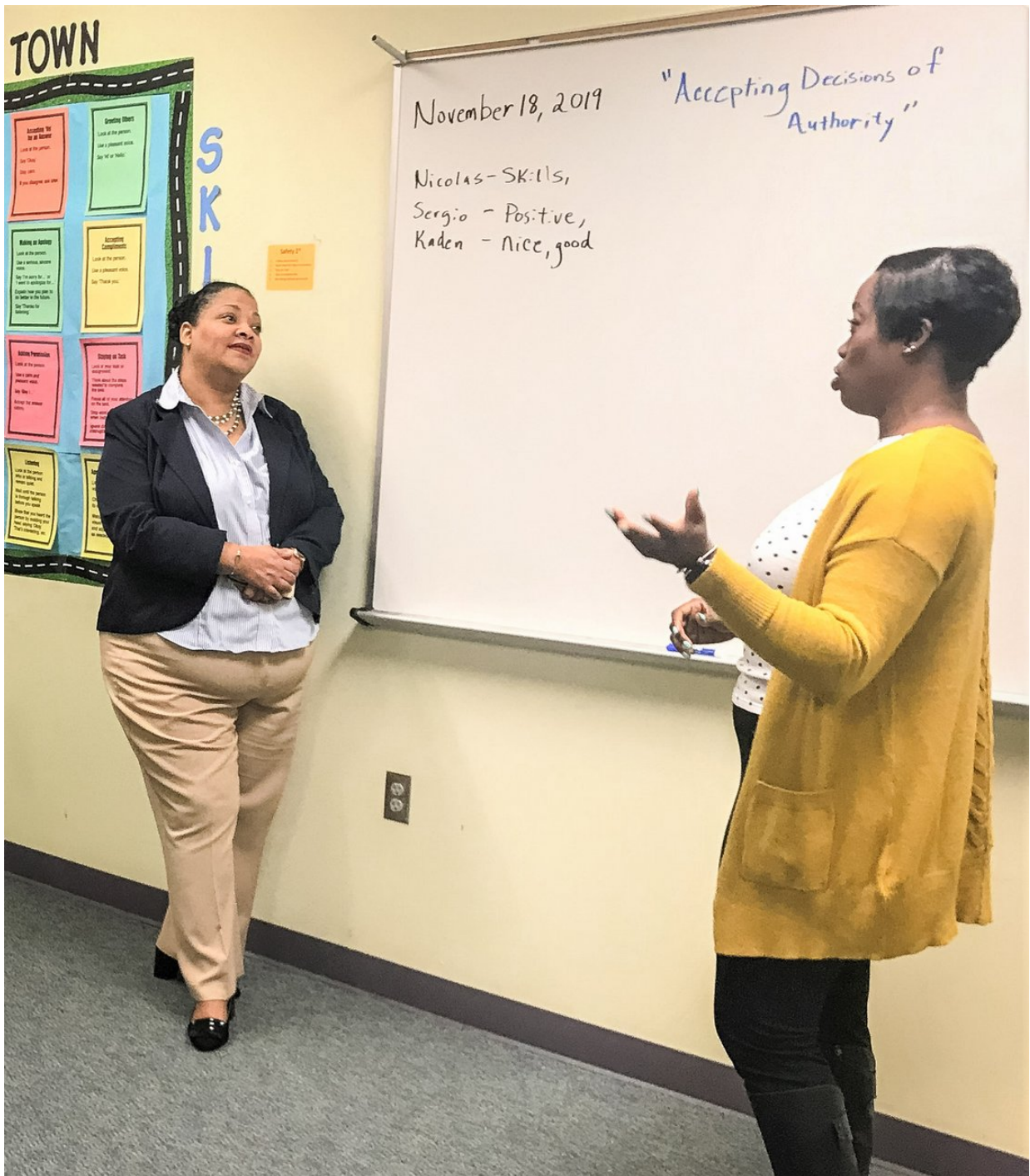
Ellis was able to meet with administrators and teachers at Academic and Behavior School West and learn more about what takes place each day. Along with getting a tour of the campus, she met with school officials, including ABS West Principal Victor Keys.

“I am impressed the techniques with behavior management are being incorporated throughout their processes and they focus on small achievements that are frequently rewarded and teaching the kids that they can get more at the end of the cycle,” Ellis said. “Ultimately, students are allowed to become independent enough that they no longer have to write down their progress because they have earned trust.”

Ellis compliments the model ABS West is using with its students because she hasn’t seen one like it anywhere else.

“It’s encouraging and eye-opening to see it all under one roof,” Ellis said. “The staff members here are so authentic and I can see the desire that they really want to help the students here. I appreciate that they show the students dignity and respect. At the end of the day, the prevailing message is that they (staff) love the kids but they shouldn’t stay here because they want to see them grow and be included in the community.”

Thompson acknowledged that the shadowing process helped him learn more about HCDE school services.



"I've known of the Department (HCDE), but now I know more about what you do," said Thompson, Center for Pursuit. "Now I see ways we can collaborate on things moving forward."

The Center for Pursuit promotes the pursuit of choice, growth and personal independence for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. NAMI providers support for adults and families with mental illness. The GHDCOC provides transitional workforce opportunities for adults with disabilities.

"It's been very interesting and enlightening for me," said NAMI's Brown. "To see the enthusiasm and energy I see around here is pretty amazing," she said of the staff.

Principal for the Day is an inaugural program at HCDE Schools which links community partners with one of four HCDE schools which serve children with emotional and intellectual disabilities, recovering teens and adjudicated or troubled youth.

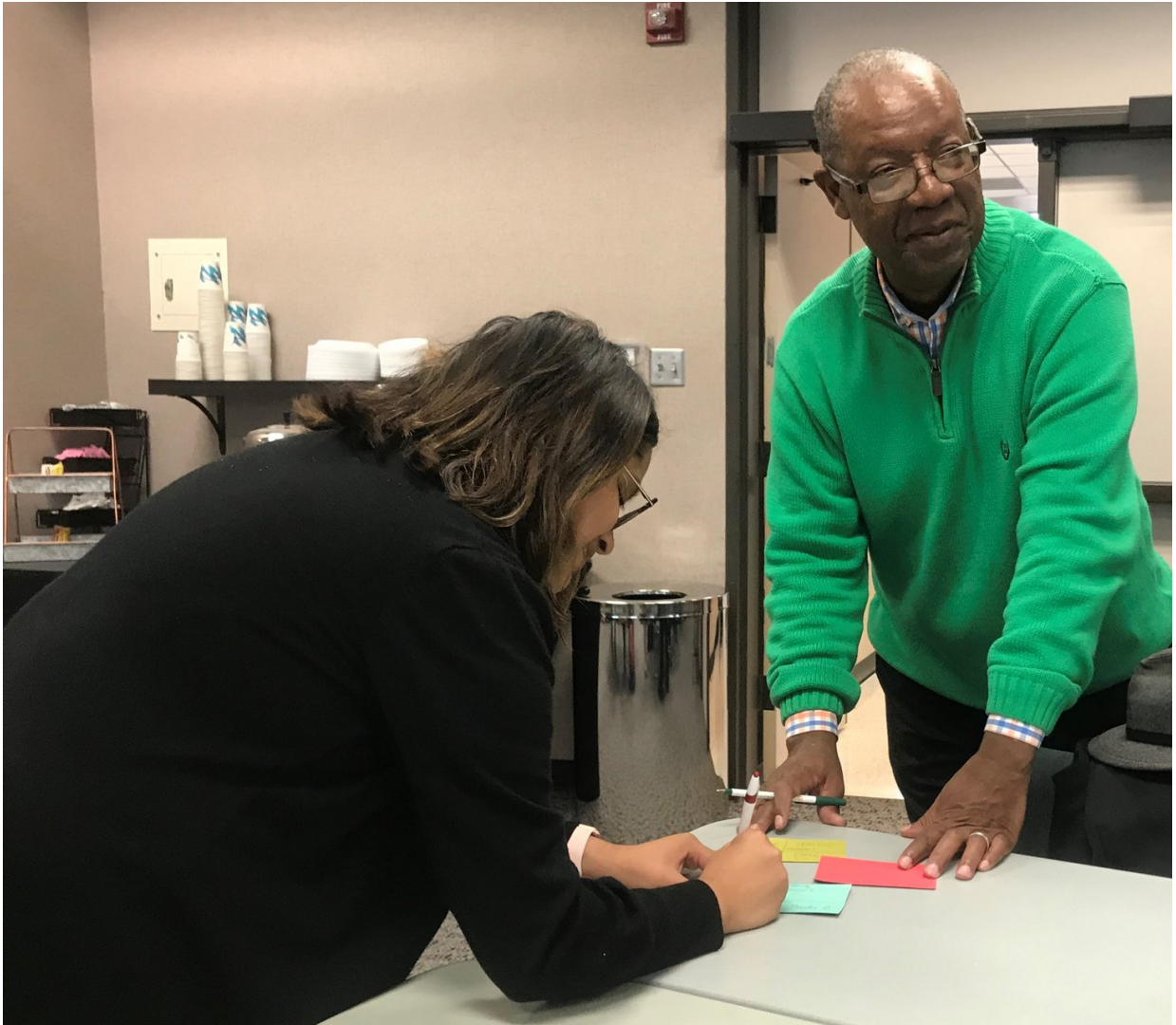
After touring the school and its classrooms, principals for the day met some students and staff. Later, questions fielded by the visitors ranged from topics like classroom size, behavioral programs, transitioning techniques to help students become productive adults, and transferring learned school behaviors to home life.

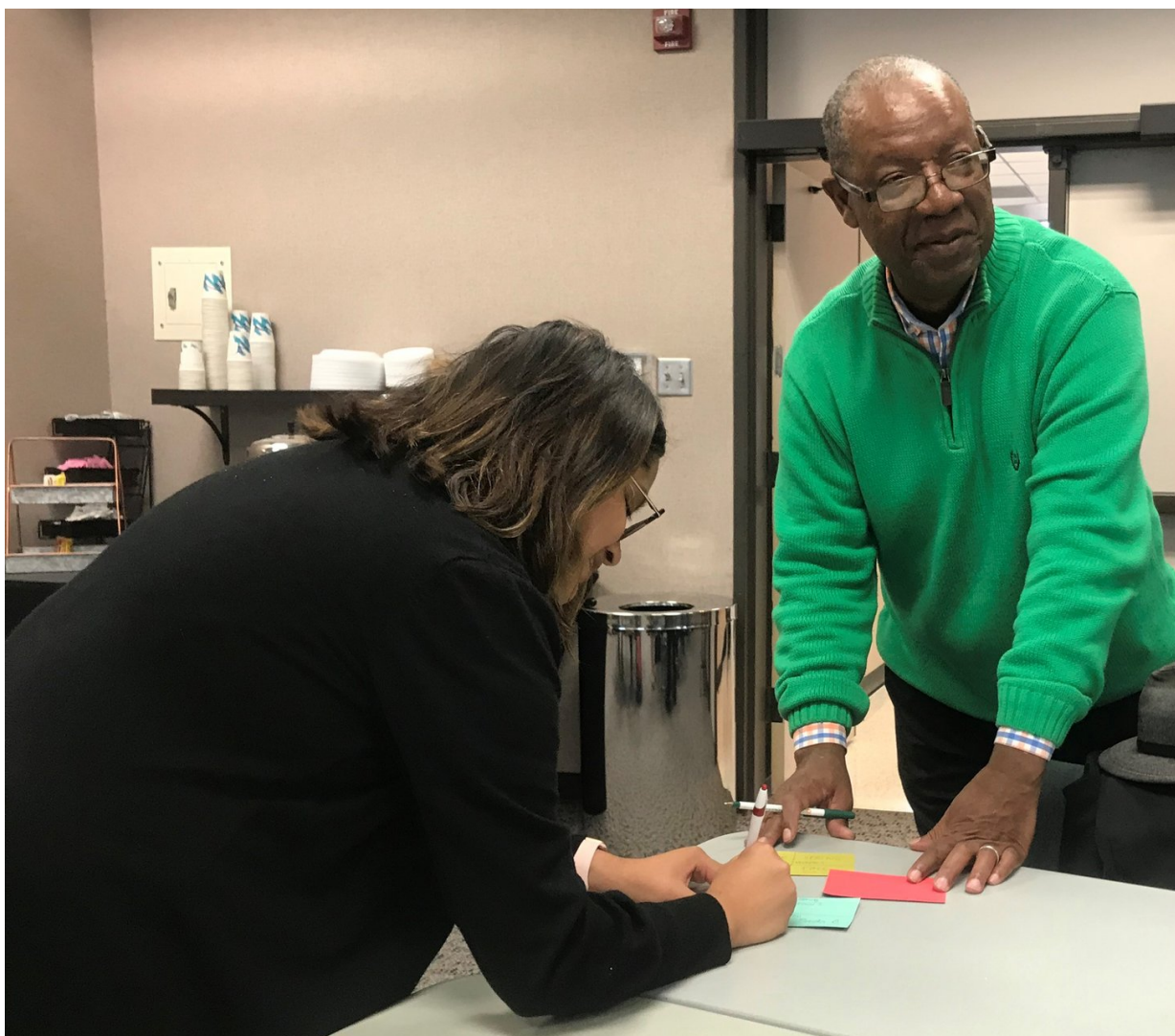
"I am impressed by the level of training that I have seen here today," said Brown.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/20191119_100942.jpg

2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_1277.jpg

Classroom Management: Teachers Fill Their Toolboxes by Sharing Strategies (2019-11-22 13:56) - hcdetx





Four-year Highpoint School teacher Craig Perry considers himself an organized teacher who runs a tight ship in terms of behavior management. Yet he knows he can always use help building his classroom management toolbox.

He enrolled in Harris County Department of Education's Classroom Management class provided through Teaching and Learning Center Curriculum Director for Special Populations Brenda Arteaga. When working with teens, he believes in sharing strategies: what works and doesn't.

"It's very important to give kids the right tools to focus," said Perry, who teaches students in a self-paced computer lab where they earn high school credits online. Students transitioning to Harris County Department of Education's Highpoint, then back to their home schools, are either adjudicated teens or troubled youth.

"Kids might be coming into my classroom with some real problems," he said. "Where they are coming from can affect what is happening in the classroom."

Arteaga, who is seasoned in classroom management strategies, agrees wholeheartedly. As a former teacher, principal and superintendent, she has a stockpile of human relations experiences.

[2]



“All teachers need a refresher and new ideas for classroom management,” she said. Arteaga trains teachers using the STOIC model. Structure and organize your room for success. Teaching expectations and rules/norms. Observe and monitor. Interact Positively. Correct misbehavior fluently.

She says a common complaint from teachers is disrespect from their students.

“One of the tools that we utilized in the training is a social contract or agreement which focuses on values and how you want to be treated in the classroom,” she said. “After discussing those values and writing them down, everyone signs the document. It is a way to level out the playing field and make it equitable for everyone.”

In addition to the social contract, Arteaga has these tips for teachers:

- Build positive relationships with your students.
- Let students know that you care about them and are interested in who they are as a person.
- Have high expectations for every student.

- Communicate in a positive way, without tone or elevated pitches and voice.
- Consistency is key. Ensure that behaviors and consequences match for all students.

For more information about upcoming workshops, go to [3]<https://hcde-texas.org/teaching-and-learning-center>.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_1191.jpg
2. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/img_1253.jpg
3. <https://hcde-texas.org/teaching-and-learning-center>

1.12 December

Gifted Rehabbed Car from Bates Collision Rewards HCDE Head Start Parent

(2019-12-06 11:25) - hcdetx





Head Start mom Jessica Bouldin is a single parent who juggles three schedules without a car. On Tuesday, Dec. 17 at 10 a.m. that all changes, courtesy of Bates Collision Centers, 15532 I-10 East in Channelview.

Bouldin struggles with transportation on many fronts. Her two boys attend school and must be on time. She needs rides to work. Doctors' appointments are planned well in advance and some-

times must be canceled. Recreation trips to places like the park or pizza parlor are sheer luxury.

In its 21st year, Bates Collision Centers' "Responsible Parenting Award" continues to award keys to brighter futures with restored vehicles. Car number 37 is reconditioned and ready for the Bouldin family as Jessica earns the award.

"When you're car-less in greater Houston, transportation issues are overwhelming," said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. "The city spans a 60-mile radius, and public transportation can test your flexibility."

Bates owners Lee and Leila Bates have made the annual giveaway a priority because they recognize the sacrifices parents make in order to provide for their children.

"We're giving a helping hand up for responsible parents with a drive to succeed," said Leila Bates, vice president. "Responsible parenting is so important and it's a big job in every family. But it becomes even harder when all the pieces aren't in place, like transportation."

Bouldin, 31, was nominated for the award by the manager at the Head Start Center where her 3-year-old son Jyrie attends. In addition, she wrote an essay which was selected from a group of nominees.

Bates employees donate time to work on the cars and help fill them with gifts, and other community members and businesses donate gas, insurance and materials needed to rehab the cars.

Lee Bates says both he and Leila are proud of their employees who continue to supply time and resources to families they have yet to meet. The Bates call the work their employees do "a labor of love" as they prepare the car inside and out to look like new.

HCDE Head Start Senior Director Venetia Peacock knows that the Bouldin family desperately needs the car to reach its goals. Bouldin wants to further her career by attending college. She would like to volunteer at her sons' schools, including the northside Fonwood Head Start Center where Jyrie attends.

"We continue to be thankful for our partnership with Bates Collision Centers," said Peacock. "These cars make a difference in the lives of families who are already committed to making the world a better place for their children."

HCDE Head Start and Early Head Start are no-cost, federally funded programs that prepare children from 6 weeks to 5 years old for success in school. Programs support and promote parent participation in order to build stronger families. Low-income families or families of children with special needs benefit from services. HCDE Head Start serves families residing in east Harris County, providing 15 area centers for 1,250 children and their families. For more information, go to [2]www.hcde-texas.org/Head-Start

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/20181212_bates_0017.jpg

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/Head-Start>

Head Start Moms Thankful for Program this Holiday Season (2019-12-06 11:30)

- hcdetx





Many parents of first-year Head Start students are thankful this holiday season for how their children have improved with learning and verbal skills in just a few short months.

Fifth Ward Head Start parent Justice Pugh is pleased that her 3-year-old son Justin has developed well with his writing and reciting the alphabet.

“I have noticed his words the most and he loves to talk plus he’s very adventurous,” she said.

Pugh was at the school to enjoy a turkey lunch with her son before the holiday and commented that he enjoys eating at the table and using his manners.

“He tells me that he wants to have lunch every day because he does while at school,” Pugh said.

She found out about HCDE’s Head Start program while researching online and liked the reviews she saw, so she knew it would be a good fit for her son.

Miracle Valdez also has a 3-year-old son who is in his first year at Fifth Ward.

"I wanted to put him in the Head Start program because I thought it would help him more in his development," she said.

In the last three months, Valdez has noticed that he is talking more and understanding conversations.

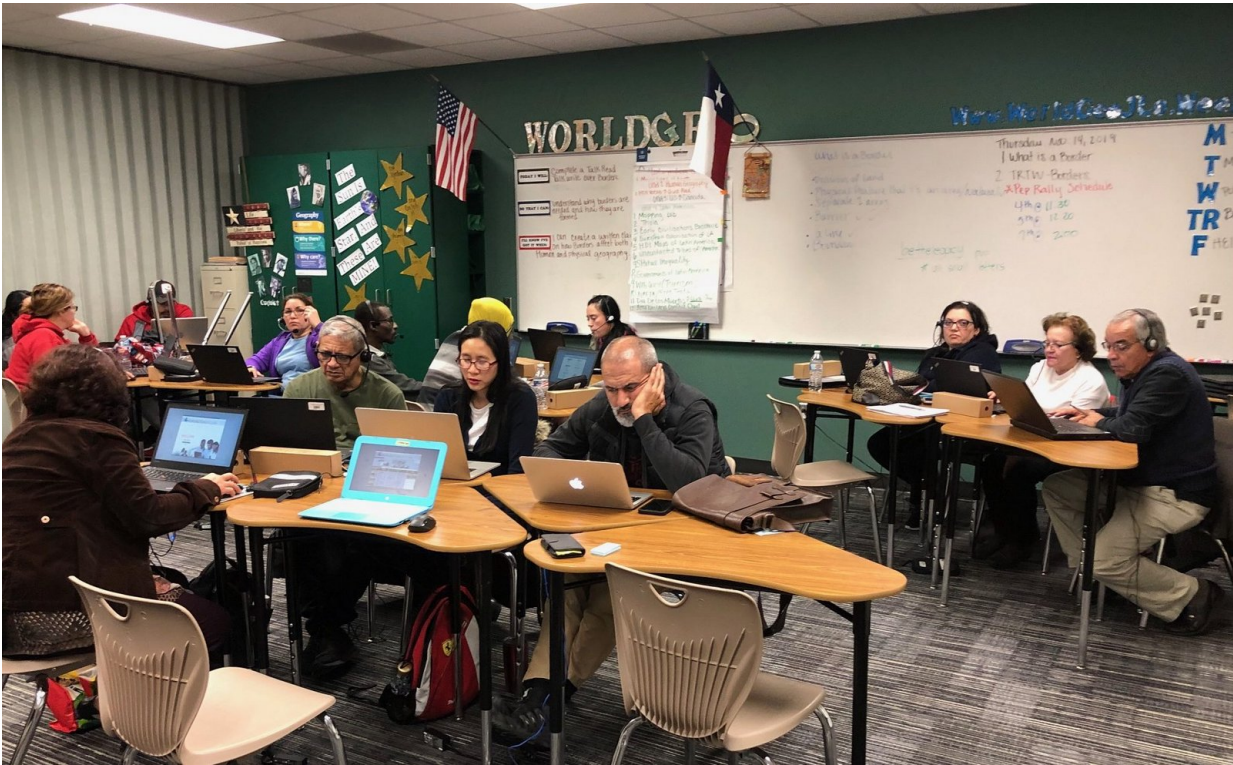
"He now gives me books to read to him and likes to sit at the table to eat and wants me to sit with him," she said.

For more information about Head Start: [2]www.hcde-texas.org/head-start.

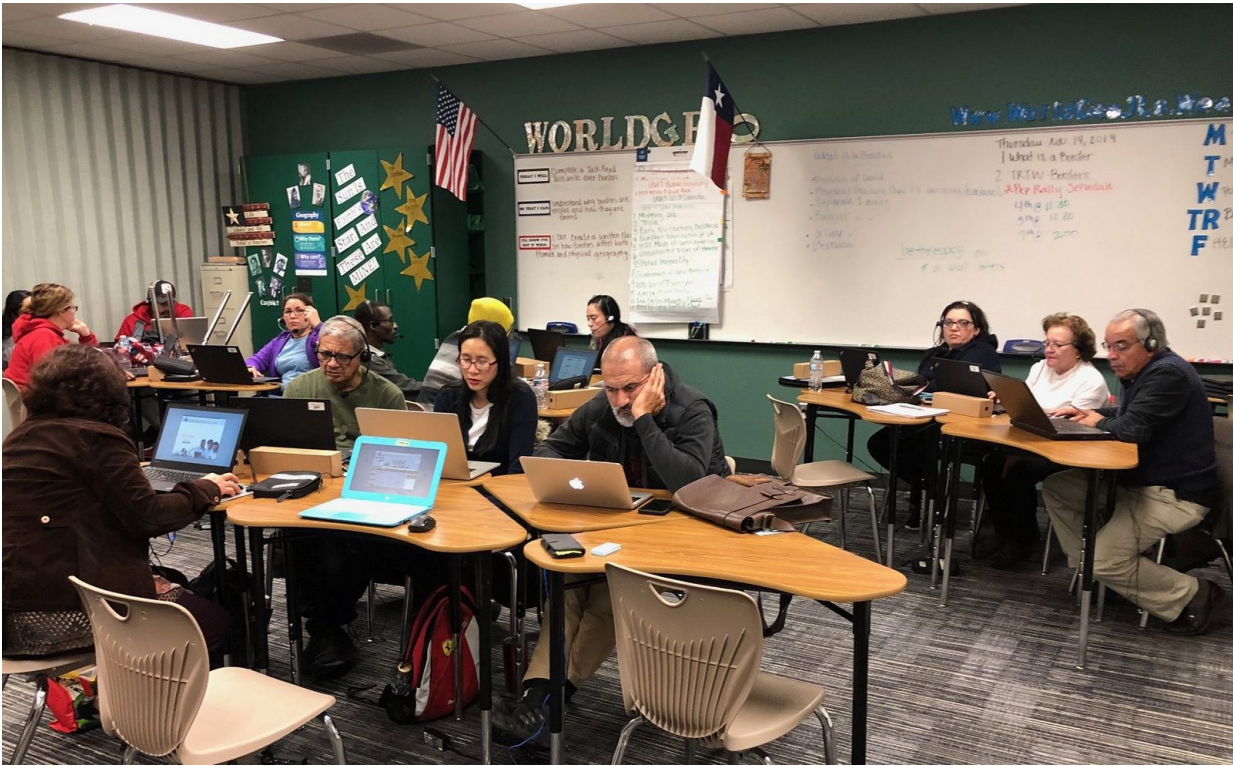
1. <https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/justice-pugh-and-justin.jpg>

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/head-start>

ESL Class for Foreign Professionals Provides Immediate Benefits for New-comers (2019-12-06 11:37) - hcdetx



[1]



Immigrant Robert Jordan moved to Katy, Texas from his homeland in Venezuela. With 30 years of chemical engineer experience under his belt, he found his professional options in the U.S. were limited because he didn't speak English.

He enrolled in an English as a second language class at HCDE. Six months later, he is moving to Louisiana to work for an oil company.

Teacher Zsa Zsa Caburao has taught the ESL class for foreign professionals for a year. She relishes the rewards her students gain as they learn English and return to practicing their professions or find new ones.

This semester her class of 20 students at Mayde Creek High in Katy had a wide range of job credentials. Professions ranged from engineering to interior design to orthopedic surgeon to accountant to chemical engineer. Many were unemployed or turned to minimum wage jobs to make ends meet while gaining English skills.

"These classes have been highly successful and help accelerate the career process for adult students who are learning to speak, read and write English in a new country," HCDE Adult Education Stephanie Ross said.

New classes in ESL for foreign professionals begin in January. For more information, go to [2]<http://www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education>.

(HCDE Adult Education is the largest, no-cost adult education program in Texas, with a variety of health care and construction career training options in Harris and Liberty counties. Students may also take English as a second language classes and high school equivalency degree classes simultaneously in a traditional classroom setting or online.)

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/img_2892.jpeg

2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education>





The Harris County Department of Education Board of Trustees is seeking qualified applicants to serve as Trustee Position 1, Precinct 2, formerly held by George Moore.

The individual appointed to fill Moore's position will serve the remainder of the current term that runs until November 2022 when elections are held. The appointee and any other qualified person may run for the position during regular elections held in November 2022. The elected individual would then serve a full six-year term beginning January 2023.

Individuals interested in Position 1 must complete a letter of interest; submit a resume; and include a notarized affidavit affirming the individual's eligibility qualifications. Qualifications include a requirement the appointee live in Precinct 2 for at least six months preceding the date the application is filed.

Additional details about eligibility and the application process are available online: [2]<https://tinyurl.com/u2pvv2t> or [3]<https://hcde-texas.org/board-trustees/>.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/20190116_board_0114_r-1.jpg

2. <https://tinyurl.com/u2pvv2t>

3. <https://hcde-texas.org/board-trustees/>

Needy HCDE Head Start Families Gain Gifts for Children Thanks to Houston Children's Charity (2019-12-12 13:42) - hcdetx





Through the generosity of nonprofit Houston Children's Charity, more than 450 Harris County Department of Education Head Start students and their siblings will have gifts this holiday season. That's a sigh of relief for Fonwood Head Start parent Jasmine Samuel.

"At the time, I wasn't so sure about Christmas for us," Samuel said. "My mom passed away from cancer about two months ago. I didn't think I would be able to afford Christmas presents for my daughter."

Kailyn Samuel-Clark, 4, attends the Head Start program at Fonwood, one of 15 Head Start centers in east and northeast Harris County administered through Harris County Department of Education.

Income-eligible families and children with disabilities gain free Head Start services to help equip children with academic and social skills for school. Families receive support services in the school readiness program through community partners like Houston Children's Charity.

Siblings in HCDE Head Start families will also each receive three gifts from the nonprofit, even the teenagers, said Michael Muniz, marketing communications and social media manager for Houston Children's Charity.

"This partnership with HCDE Head Start is particularly meaningful because we get to share our community's giving spirit and joy of Christmas with so many families as the blessed recipients of donations collected through the U.S. Marines' Toys for Tots program," he said.

Muniz said the goal for this year is for the nonprofit to provide 6,500 Houston families with toys for more than 20,000 children.

Families receive their toys at George R. Brown Convention Center on Dec. 20 and 21. The preidentified families will be provided wristbands and a letter to enter the toy store. Giveaways range from plush toys to Lego sets to bikes to board games.

Head Start mother Samuels is excited about seeing the look on her daughter's face on Christmas morning as she opens the gifts donated to her family.

"I'm grateful and really appreciate them for doing this for us and everyone else," Samuels said. "It will help me put a smile on her face and see her happy to receive something on Christmas morning."

If you would like to donate gifts to the Houston Children's Charity for the holiday gift giveaway, learn more at [2]www.houstonchildrenscharity.org.

Head Start and Early Head Start centers at HCDE serve children ages six weeks to age 5.

For more information about HCDE Head Start, go to [3]www.hcde-texas.org/Head-Start.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/samuel_clark.png

2. <http://www.houstonchildrenscharity.org/>

3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/Head-Start>

Gift of Rehabbed Nissan Provides Road to Success for HCDE Head Start Family (2019-12-18 11:07) - hcdetx





Harris County Department of Education Head Start Mom Jessica Bouldin and two sons Jyree, 3, and Jasious, 6, were gifted a shiny, blue, rehabbed Nissan Altima this Christmas through Bates Collision Centers.

View photo album: [2]<https://tinyurl.com/txsz2w9>

Bicycles, gifts and car were presented by Lee and Leila Bates and employees as they volunteered their resources through the Responsible Parenting Award, a philanthropic project which has been ongoing for 20 years.

The Bouldins received car number 37. Bates employees rehab the car and community members help with resources such as insurance, gas, tires and gifts.

"I think the important thing we need to recognize is that sometimes life gets in the way for whatever reason," said HCDE Superintendent James Colbert Jr. "Someone needs a helping hand to get them back into a direction that can change their lives forever."

Bouldin is a victim of domestic abuse and is raising her sons as a single parent with the help of her aunt. She must find transportation to get herself to work and her sons to separate schools each day. Recently she was promoted on her job.

"I know that this car is going to make a big difference in your life," said Leila Bates. Bates said she and husband Lee organize the event, but staff volunteer hours to rehab the car.

"They put cars back on the road every day," she said. "That's what they do for a living. But for this they are putting a family back on the road."

HCDE Head Start programs like the one Jyree attends in northeast Houston are free and help prepare children and their families for success in school. Bouldin looks forward to volunteering in her son's classroom now that she has wheels.

"I watched my aunt take people in that really needed help," she said. "It taught me that helping others is very important."

For more information about Head Start services and enrollment, go to [3]www.hcde-texas.org/head-start.

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/20191217_bates_097.jpg
2. <https://tinyurl.com/txsz2w9>
3. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/head-start>

Ready, Set Drone: Educators Get Behind Drone Controls (2019-12-18 16:50)

- hcdetx





At first, afterschool coordinator Susana Salinas was skeptical about commandeering a drone. Once she was behind the controls, she owned the experience.

Salinas is one of 30 educators attending drone training hosted through HCDE's CASE for Kids which introduced curriculum to use drones in afterschool programs as part of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs.

Educators may borrow the drones from the SMART Zone, which stands for Sharing Multiple Afterschool Resources and Technology. The afterschool resource is a comprehensive collection of materials available to all out-of-school time programs in Harris County. The drones are housed there, as well as sports and fitness equipment, electronics, activity books and curriculum.

First, the afterschool adults must learn how to manage the drones themselves.

"This was my first time working with a drone, and it was definitely a lot more difficult than I thought," Salinas said.

Afterschool educators were introduced to control panels using Androids or I-pads. Salinas sees the flexibility which drones offer as afterschool curriculum through her organization called Sewa International, a nonprofit which serves underprivileged youth.

"Working with drones you can go anywhere—with the kid who likes art to the one who

loves science,” she said.

Teachers attending the drone training Dec. 13 and 14 learned about flying and gained certificates. They may borrow drones from the SMART Zone. For more information about CASE for Kids SMART Zone, go to [2]www.hcde-texas.org/after-school/resources .

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/20191213_drones_073.jpg
2. <http://www.hcde-texas.org/after-school/resources>

HCDE Board of Trustees Appoints 2 Trustees, Elects New President and Vice President (2019-12-18 17:33) - hcdetx



[1]



The Harris County Department of Education Board of Trustees voted Dec. 18 to replace trustees

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George Moore, Position 1, Precinct 2 and Josh Flynn, Position 4, Precinct 3 with Amy Hinojosa and Andrea Duhon, respectively.

Both Moore, board vice president, and Flynn, president, had tendered their resignations prior to the meeting.

“I give my sincere appreciation to Dr. George Moore and Josh Flynn for their service to the students and citizens of Harris County,” HCDE School Superintendent James Colbert Jr. said. “Dr. Moore is an outstanding man and has left a significant fingerprint on this organization as a fierce advocate for the underserved and as a great supporter for our 1,100 employees. Mr. Flynn was a good leader who is very well read, extremely efficient and took pride in his leadership post, and I wish him well in his new endeavors.”

Hinojosa, a Pasadena resident, was sworn into office shortly after her appointment. She is a 16-year, oil-and-gas project manager. She serves as a board director with an education advocacy group called ProUnitas.

“I’m passionate about serving my community and about improving student outcomes,” said Hinojosa. “I look forward to the work ahead, and I’m excited.”

Duhon, a Katy resident, is a small business financial advisor who has a record for advocating for public education programs such as Head Start. HCDE currently serves 1,250 Head Start children and families in northeast and east Harris County.

“I look forward to serving the community on behalf of the students of Harris County,” Duhon said.

At the meeting, the board also named Eric Dick as president and Danyahel “Danny” Norris as vice president. Dick called the new trustee appointments “a breath of fresh air.”

1. https://hcdetexas.files.wordpress.com/2019/12/colbert_hinojosa_duhon.jpg