

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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May 9, 2016

11 Harris County school superintendents study leadership strategies through Gettysburg Campaign at U.S. Army War College

Army generals and colonels shared leadership development strategies employed at historic battlefields with Harris County public school superintendents earlier this month at the United States Army War College.

The 11 superintendents traveled to the Army institution in Carlisle, Pennsylvania April 13-15 through an Army initiative as a means to increase public awareness of the high quality of Army leadership education. Focal Point/Executive Leadership in Action is a delegation of Harris County superintendents organized through James Colbert, Jr., county school superintendent at Harris County Department of Education.

“The Battleship Leadership Seminar Program takes place at historical battlefields and employs a proven experiential method used at the War College to educate senior military and interagency leaders,” said Colbert. “What we learn from these practices can enhance our local education systematically.”

Education leaders studied leadership styles, communicating leader vision, the hazards of inner circles or nepotism, weighing risk versus reward, and transforming tactical success into strategic effect.

The experience is based on the varied leadership styles employed during the most pivotal points of the Gettysburg Campaign, the series of battles fought in June and July 1863 during the American Civil War. It is organized to develop leadership skills for academic institutions, governmental organizations and private corporations.

Harris County superintendents participating included delegation organizer Colbert, Harris County Department of Education; Robert Bostic, Stafford Municipal School District; King Davis, Sheldon Independent School District; Charles E. Dupre, Fort Bend ISD; Lloyd Graham, La Porte ISD; John Kelley, Pearland ISD; Huey Kinchen, Tomball ISD; Keith Moore, Crosby ISD; Randal O’Brien, Goose Creek ISD; Benny Soileau, Huffman ISD; and Rodney E. Watson, Spring ISD.

Curriculum included stops at nine sites of Gettysburg, with decisions and leadership styles of each military leader during the Civil War. The final day included a tour of the School of Strategic Leadership at the War College and an after-action review.

“This three-day, professional development experience was, unequivocally, the most effective, life-altering learning opportunity I’ve ever been a part of,” said Colbert. “Similar sentiments were shared by all the education leaders who attended.”

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Oct. 31, 2016

3 Harris County Department of Education teen writers featured in national Scholastic Art & Writing Awards traveling exhibition at MFAH

The “Art.Write.Now.Tour” showcases creations from some of the nation’s best teen writers and artists as it travels to the Museum of Fine Arts Houston (MFAH) Nov. 1, 2016 through Jan. 8, 2017. The exhibition is produced by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, the nonprofit organization that presents the national Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

Featured in the tour are essays and short stories from three Houston writers who qualified for national acclaim through Harris County Department of Education’s Scholastic Art & Writing Regional Awards. Through the tour, Gold Medal works are showcased from the 2016 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards National Exhibition from teens in grades 7-12.

The MFAH Kinder Foundation Education Center Gallery where the traveling exhibition will reside is located at 1001 Bissonet. Houston is the second of four stops for the “Art.Write.Now.Tour” which features more than 50 art pieces this year and multiple prose.

The three local teens writers included in the showcase come from Deer Park and Houston:

- Peyton Vasquez, 13, of Bonnette Junior High School in Deer Park Independent School District, wrote a personal essay called “The Floppy Arm,” a situation backlash from his cancer treatments: <http://www.artandwriting.org/media/294881/> . Vasquez also won a revered The RBC “Flaunt It” Award.
- Amy Dong, 17, from St. John’s School, crafted a critical essay: “Hoping for Disaster”: <http://www.artandwriting.org/media/250213/> .
- The Village School’s Melanie Menkiti, 14, is introduced in the show with her short story called “The War”: <http://www.artandwriting.org/media/295203/> .

“We are proud that Houston gains the opportunity to display the amazing work of these visionary teens through this traveling exhibition,” said Andrea Segraves, coordinator for the regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards and director of the Teaching and Learning Center at Harris County Department of Education. “We are exceptionally proud of these writers who are representing Houston in this national art and writing tour.”

The show arrived in Houston from Grand Rapids, Michigan and visits Bozeman, Montana and Jackson, Mississippi later this year. For information about MFAH hours and admission fees, visit: <https://www.mfah.org/visit/hours-and-admissions/> .

In its seventh year, the Art.Write.Now.Tour was curated this year by Johanna Burton, Keith Haring Director and Curator of Education and Public Engagement at the New Museum in New York City. The exhibition is renowned for showcasing exemplary work from teens across the country. Now in its 94th year, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards reported a record-breaking 320,000 works submitted at the regional level for judging in 2016. Noted alumni include Sylvia Plath, Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, Joyce Carol Oates, Ken Burns and Zac Posen.

Regional art and writing entries are currently being accepted for the 2017 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, sponsored by Harris County Department of Education. The deadline is Dec. 15, 2016. For more information, go to www.hcde-texas.org/Scholastic .

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3 HCDE Adult Education GED graduates hope to motivate others: 'If we can do it, so can you'

Going back to school later in life involves overcoming the fear factor. A father-daughter duo makes a pact to go back to school and support each other. A mother whose first language is Spanish makes a promise to her 6-year-old daughter to finish school. Three 2016 GED grads from Harris County Department of Education share their stories in hopes they can motivate others.

"If I can do it, so can you" is their unified message. The trio joins 77 classmates on May 21 from 11 a.m. to noon at HCDE, 6300 Irvington Blvd., for the Class of 2016 GED Graduation.

Valedictorian Carmen Guandique, 36, native of El Salvador:

Nine months ago Carmen Guandique mustered the nerve to enroll in a GED class with HCDE at a community center in Pasadena.

"My first language was Spanish, so it was challenging," she said. At first she considered her age a disadvantage, but she knew she must get her GED to be an example for her daughter.

"It doesn't matter—your age," she said. "I believe the U.S. is the land of opportunity and there is no age discrimination here. You must follow your dream and do something about it." Two weeks ago her GED scores came back after testing. Not only had she passed the test, but she also had the highest scores of any GED student within the academic year at Harris County Department of Education.

"My husband and daughter are so proud of me," she said.

Carmen will wait until her 2-year-old son is in preschool. Then she plans to go on to college and maybe pursue a medical profession.

Father Glen Pitts, 47, and step-daughter Kristen Lightbody, 20:

Glen Pitts has worked since he was 14-years old. He kept saying that he would return to school someday. Someday he would take some time off and get his GED. Last year his health deteriorated. The pipe machinist had back problems, and arthritis set in.

"I never finished high school but kept saying I would do it later," he said. "Well, later finally came."

Glen and his step daughter Kristen made a plan to go back and get their GEDs together. She needed to advance for her future. Without change, he said he wasn't going to have a future. Her biggest fear was English. His greatest fear was math. After taking a GED class together, they took the tests they feared and passed.

"We were supporting each other and working together," said Lightbody. "It was a great bonding experience."

-more-

Today they are both enrolled in Lee College. He is working towards a four-year degree in logistics. She will become a nurse.

Getting my GED makes me realize I'm not done," said Pitts. "For your future and your education, the GED is everything. It provided me with the first stepping stone. I can now get back into the "workforce and support my family."

About HCDE Adult Education: With a 30-year track record, HCDE Adult Education provides classes to adult learners with a goal to "learn to earn," including adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon, Spring Branch and Liberty. Corporations also benefit from HCDE services provided to English language learning employees aimed at improving productivity and safety in the workplace. For more information access www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation .

About HCDE: Harris County Department of Education provides education services to the general public and 25 school districts throughout Harris County and beyond. Services include adult education, programs to promote safe schools, after-school programs, therapy services, professional development for educators, special schools, alternative certification for principals and teachers, Early Childhood Intervention and Head Start programs. We offer purchasing procurement, grant development, program research and evaluation, records management, and school finance support. Since 1889, our services continue to evolve to meet the needs of our education public. Visit us at www.hcde-texas.org .

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July 25, 2016

3 Houston journalists honored by HCDE through statewide Media Honor Roll 2016

Three Houston journalists are honored by Harris County Department of Education through the Texas Association of School Boards Media Honor Roll 2016 on July 26 at 1 p.m. at the HCDE board meeting, 6300 Irvington Blvd. The recognized communicators are Lauren Talarico, reporter and fill-in anchor for KHOU-TV Channel 11, Jessica Rivera, managing assignments editor for KXLN-TV Univision 45 and Sylvia Oben, multimedia journalist for Semana News.

Three Houston journalists are honored by Harris County Department of Education through the Texas Association of School Boards Media Honor Roll 2016. The journalists are being honored for their contributions to public education with fair, accurate and balanced reporting.

“These journalists abide by their public duty to report bad news, but they also supply good news by sharing the success stories of our students, teachers and educational services,” said James Colbert, Jr., superintendent at HCDE. “By honoring them, we are showing our appreciation for their support of public education in Harris County.”

Talarico reported about HCDE’s school for students with intellectual or behavioral disabilities. HCDE serves area school districts that have children with severe emotional and physical special needs through its Academic and Behavior Schools, schools with low student to teacher ratios and individualized student learning plans.

Rivera assigned several news stories related to HCDE’s Adult Education program and its teacher alternative certification program. The stories helped with recruitment of students and teachers.

Rivera and Talarico also both served on a media panel for the Houston Area School Public Relations Association, an event that supports networking between school district communications and local media.

Oben provided vital information to the public about bullying through HCDE’s Center for Safe and Secure Schools and also helped with student recruitment for Adult Education through a GED graduation story. Both stories were delivered through print and online through video.

The three journalists will receive plaques and accolades through a video presentation at the HCDE board meeting on July 26.

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Aug. 10, 2016

\$5.4 million, 3-year grant funds afterschool through HCDE's CASE for Kids in 10 area schools

A \$5.4 million afterschool grant was awarded to the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, by the Texas Education Agency Texas Afterschool Centers on Education through the federal 21st Century Community Learning Center Program. The grant awards \$1.8 million annually for three years and funds 10 afterschool centers, serving 800 students and 400 parents.

Collaborating school districts in the Cycle 9 grant award include Aldine, Alief, Clear Creek, Galena Park, Humble, Pasadena, Sheldon, Spring and Southwest Charter Schools. CASE for Kids is a division of Harris County Department of Education. It provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

Activities included in the afterschool programs include academic skill mastery, social-emotional learning, youth leadership, college exploration and family engagement.

Specific schools benefitting from the grant include Drew Academy and Marcella Intermediate in Aldine ISD; Albright Middle School in Alief ISD; Clear Creek Intermediate in Clear Creek ISD; North Shore 9th Grade in Galena Park ISD; Sterling Middle School in Humble ISD; South Houston Intermediate in Pasadena ISD; Null Middle School in Sheldon ISD; Southwest Middle School in charter school Southwest Schools; and Bammel Middle School in Spring ISD.

"We are grateful for this grant award, especially during times when public funding for afterschool is waning," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids. "Houston and Harris County is committed to providing safe and enriching programs for our youth. CASE for Kids continues to support that goal as we unite the community."

About the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment (CASE) for Kids: CASE for Kids, formerly the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment, was launched by Harris County Department of Education in 1999. CASE for Kids is an after-school intermediary which leverages community resources and strengthens the capacity of the out-of-school time field. Services benefit approximately 12,000 kids in greater Harris County. CASE for Kids programs happen before and after school, on weekends and during the summer. Go to www.afterschoolzone.org for information.

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50 national Scholastic Art & Writing Medals earned by area teens after regional advancement through Harris County Department of Education

Harris County student artists and writers in grades 7-12 earn 50 national Scholastic Art & Writing Medals through awards announced by the New York Nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers on March 14. The students advanced from a regional competition sponsored by Harris County Department of Education and their work was exhibited at art exhibits and celebrations in Houston.

Area teens competed among 320,000 art and writing entries across 29 different categories. Through the 2016 Awards, students receive opportunities for recognition, exhibition, publication and scholarships. Past winners include Robert Redford, Andy Warhol, Truman Capote, John Lithgow, Joyce Carol Oates and Sylvia Plath.

"We're extremely proud of the hard work and dedication of our teens and their teachers," said Andrea Segraves, HCDE coordinator for Scholastic and director for the Teaching and Learning Center at HCDE.

Sharing in the national limelight are students from public school districts Aldine, Clear Creek, Cypress Fairbanks, Deer park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Houston, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Pearland and Tomball. Private school medalists are from Episcopal High School, The Kinkaid School, River Oaks Baptist School, St. Agnes Academy, St. John's School-Middle School and Upper School and The Village School.

Three distinguished awards go to students in Deer Park and Houston independent school districts and The Kinkaid School.

Deer Park Bonnette Junior High School student Peyton Vasquez earns the RBC "Flaunt It" Award sponsored by RBC Capital Markets, along with a \$1,000 scholarship. The award recognizes two teens nationally among 10,000 submissions whose writing or art explore the theme: "The things that make me different, make me."

Two Harris County students earned the American Voices and American Visions awards, awards that recognize one "best of category" from five nominated Gold Key regional entries.

Houston ISD's Carnegie High School student Jaelynn Walls earns the American Voices Award for her personal essay/memoir entitled "Prime."

Kinkaid High School student Lenox Butcher was awarded the American Visions Medal for a sculpture entitled: Getting Closer to the Stars.

Gold Key Medalists are invited to a ceremony in New York City's Carnegie Hall on June 2 with appearances from award-winning filmmaker and commentarian Ken Burns along with other surprise celebrities.

Work from more than 1,000 students is exhibited from June 2-12 at several prominent New York galleries. For a complete list of the 50 national awards for Harris County teens, go to www.hcde-texas.org/Scholastic .

Photo: Drawing and illustration called "Hair Cut" by artist Erin Del Paggio, Kleb Intermediate, Klein Independent School District, earned a Gold Medal. Del Paggio earned two national Gold Medals. Her sponsoring teacher is Vivian Fridley-Hereford.

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June 8, 2016

9 Harris County students travel to New York City's Carnegie Hall to accept national Scholastic Art & Writing medals

Nine of the best student artists and writers from Harris County traveled to New York City's Carnegie Hall last week to be honored at the 2016 National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. This year, Harris County teens received a total of 50 National Scholastic Art & Writing Medals. The Awards are sponsored regionally by Harris County Department of Education.

During the National Ceremony on June 2, 660 teens from across the U.S. were honored by filmmaker Ken Burns, Emmy award-winning writer and actor Sonia Manzano, Emmy award-winner and bestselling author Tim Gunn, former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins and surprise guest, award-winning actor Alec Baldwin.

In addition to the Gold Key Medals received by the nine Harris County students, Deer Park Bonnette Junior High School student Peyton Vasquez was honored with the RBC "Flaunt It" Award, sponsored by RBC Capital Markets, and a \$1,000 scholarship. Vasquez was one of only two teens nationally to be recognized with this award.

"For more than 90 years, Scholastic Art & Writing Awards has recognized the vision, ingenuity and talent of our students and provided opportunities for creative teens to be celebrated," said Andrea Segraves, Harris County Department of Education coordinator for Scholastic Art & Writing. "With more than 320,000 entries nationally, we are proud of our Harris County medalists."

The students who traveled to New York City were Andrea Conley, Houston ISD; Erin DelPaggio, Klein ISD; Judy Labib, Cypress Fairbanks ISD; Jasmine Mack, Katy ISD; Bradlee Few, Kincaid School; Taylor Gleason, Deer Park ISD; Autumn McMillian, Galena Park ISD; Melanie Menkiti, The Village School; and Peyton Vasquez, Deer Park ISD.

For more information, photos and videos from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, visit <https://goo.gl/EnGcZY>.

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HCDE Adult Education Workforce Students Construct Little Houses to Make Big Literacy Impact

Harris County Department of Education Adult Education students enrolled in workforce development classes are giving back to children in the community by helping to assemble and paint “little libraries” which could make a big literacy impact.

The community service project with the Houston Public Library is called “Groomed for Literacy” and provides “little libraries” constructed and painted by students who are gaining workforce skills while studying for their GEDs. The 60 little boxes feature a barber shop storefront complete with red-white-and-blue barber poles, supplies donated by the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation and the Little Free Library organization. The boxes filled with books will be delivered to barber shops in targeted areas with low-literacy, low-income youth who have low access to quality books.

“We are excited about representing Harris County Department of Education through the Houston Public Library literacy program called Groomed for Literacy,” said Eduardo Honold, director of Harris County Department of Education’s Adult Education. “Our students are excited to help with the literacy effort as they realize the importance of promoting reading to area youth.”

Adult Education workforce student Joshua Doyle is enrolled in a construction class this fall and volunteered to assist with the project. In 10th grade, the 25-year old dropped out of high school. He believes helping youngsters to be able to pick up a book is a good thing.

“There are other things to do besides get into trouble—like educating your mind,” he said. “It’s a project for us to work together to help the next generation.”

Houston Public Libraries located near the barber shops will replenish and service the little houses filled with books. Service areas include Fifth Ward, Third Ward, East Little York, Independence Heights, Clinton Park, Sharpstown, Gulfgate, Hobby and several dozen additional neighborhoods.

For more information about workforce development GED or ESL classes offered through Harris County Department of Education Adult Education, visit www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation . For volunteer or collaborative initiatives with HCDE Adult Education, contact Angela Johnson, ajohnson@hcde-texas.org.

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Sept. 22, 2016

Adult Education workforce students construct little houses to make big literacy impact

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Nov. 7, 2016

Harris County Department of Education CASE for Kids coordinator Adrian Fields earns national afterschool leader award

The Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids employee Adrian Fields, 29, is officially a force to be reckoned with in the field of afterschool. Fields was selected for the “AfterSchool’s Next Generation of Afterschool 2017,” awarded by the National Afterschool Association. He was selected from a field of 100 young afterschool leaders under age 30 throughout the nation.

Fields has worked for CASE for Kids as project coordinator of strategic partnerships for a year and a half. The University of North Texas grad taught in South Korea post-college and also worked as a Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa.

In his position, he creates and promotes partnerships with public and private agencies to support afterschool programming. The partnerships he shapes in afterschool include schools, churches and community centers in Harris County.

The Braeswood resident’s strong background in project management and community development is recognized through the National Afterschool Association award. As a skilled organizer, he creates opportunities for youth.

“I decided to work in afterschool because I feel it’s the best way to address gaps in youth development, decrease risky behaviors of students and provide students with more diverse learning opportunities,” he said.

He remembers afterschool as a youth and the opportunity it afforded to play music. As the “orc dork,” slang for orchestra members, he played cello. Doing so, he says, helped him foster skills in self-expression and sharpen his concentration abilities.

“Through my afterschool program, I learned the importance of working in a team and developed organizational and time management skills as well,” he said.

Watching kids write code for websites, program through robotics and master musical pieces through their afterschool experiences showcases the value and need for afterschool, he said.

“Most of these students would not be exposed to these experiences without the work of CASE for Kids,” Fields said.

His own life experiences have helped set the stage for carrying out his career goals. Someday Fields hopes to run a nonprofit consulting agency that guides local and international non-governmental organizations on effective business strategies and sustainable practices.

Behind that dream is an adolescent who once struggled to squeak out a tune on a cello in afterschool but today is confidently mastering the song.

(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, child care 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.)

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



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July 25, 2016

Aldine ISD Area Educators Get Creative at You Gotta Have Art Workshop

Harris County elementary teachers got creative during the 11th Annual You Gotta Have Art workshop July 20-21. This two-day workshop allowed teachers to create art projects that they are able to recreate with their students in the classroom, complete with lesson plans.

Under the instruction of artist and consultant Joe Culotta, teachers were able to explore new ways to use existing and new media to make art exciting and fun for students.

“I use art as a teaching tool for educators to help kids get excited about school,” said Culotta. “During the workshop, we also infuse art with social studies, math and language arts to create interdisciplinary art projects.”

For more than 20 years, Culotta has traveled throughout school districts in Texas to assist art teachers and other educators who incorporate art into their lessons.

A few of the projects completed during the workshop include relief sculptures from a flat surface, fabric design with applied design techniques on cotton and silk fabrics, and art pieces with five canvases to practice design flow.

For Aldine ISD’s Sara Gomer, You Gotta Have Art provided a foundation for her classroom and an outlet to share ideas with other art teachers. Previously a kindergarten teacher, she will begin her first year teaching art in the fall.

“Art is important for students because it provides them with an opportunity to let go and express themselves creatively,” said Gomer. “Through this workshop, I gained fundamentals for my classroom and experienced working with new art materials.”

For more information about workshop opportunities, visit www.hcde-texas.org.

Photo: Aldine ISD Teacher Sara Gomer gets creative at the You Gotta Have Art workshop held at HCDE July 20-21.

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March 2, 2016



Aldine ISD senior earns HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Key Award with first art entry

Aldine Independent School District senior José Cortés discovered a love for art at a young age. His drawings began as simple doodles and stick figures. As he grew, his artistic ability and passion for drawing advanced. The shy artist's talent was apparent to family, friends and teachers, but his meticulousness and attention to detail stopped him from entering his artwork into competitions.

"I've drawn for a long time, but I never felt like my artwork was ready for contest," said Cortés. "I'm kind of a perfectionist, so I always wanted my art to be perfect before I entered it."

While in art class at Davis High School this year, Cortés' art teacher Marilyn Venne noticed a realistic drawing in his sketchbook and asked to see more work like it. She encouraged him to focus on his love for drawing rather than his mistakes and continued to uplift him throughout the process. With his teacher's support and a blue ballpoint pen, Cortés created his first contest piece, "Agua."

"Ms. Venne pushed me to show my heart in my drawings," said Cortés. "That really motivated me."

Shortly after the piece was entered, Cortés and Venne were ecstatic to learn that "Agua" was selected for the regional Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Key Award by Harris County Department of Education and advanced to be judged at the national level. Additionally, "Agua" was selected for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston artist reception and exhibit. Cortés, in attendance with his family, was honored at the reception on February 20, and his drawing will hang in the exhibit until March 31.

"It is absolutely wonderful to have José win the Gold Key award and be featured in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston exhibit," said Venne. "I saw his talent the first year I taught him, and I couldn't be happier for him."

"The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards recognize the vision, ingenuity and talent of our students and provide opportunities for creative teens like José to be celebrated and gain exposure for their art," said Andrea Segraves, Harris County Department of Education coordinator for Scholastic Art & Writing. "This year, entries in the Awards grew by 40 percent. HCDE is recruiting professional artists and writers as judges for the 2016-2017 school year. Sponsors are also needed to host receptions and fund scholarships for students to travel to Carnegie Hall in New York City to gain their national awards."

All regional Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Key pieces advance to the national level to be judged, and winners will be invited to attend an awards reception at Carnegie Hall in New York. Cortés hopes to be among those invited to Carnegie Hall, but is proud to have been selected for the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston exhibit. He plans to continue drawing in the future and is considering art school or a career in architecture.

For more information about the national Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, visit <http://www.artandwriting.org/>. To sponsor, enter or judge the regional awards, visit www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting. Photo: Aldine ISD Davis High School Art Teacher Marilyn Venne and senior José Cortés stand with his Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Key artwork, "Agua" at the artist reception on February 20.

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For more information about the national Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, visit <http://www.artandwriting.org/>. To sponsor, enter or judge the regional awards, visit www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting. Photo: Aldine ISD Davis High School Art Teacher Marilyn Venne and senior José Cortés stand with his Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Key artwork, "Agua" at the artist reception on February 20.

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Aldine ISD senior earns HCDE Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Key Award with first art contest piece

Aldine Independent School District senior José Cortés discovered a love for art at a young age. His drawings began as simple doodles and stick figures. As he grew, his artistic ability and passion for drawing advanced. The shy artist's talent was apparent to family, friends and teachers, but his meticulousness and attention to detail stopped him from entering his artwork into competitions.

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Photo: Davis High School Art Teacher Marilyn Venne and senior José Cortés stand with his Scholastic Art & Writing Gold Key artwork, "Agua" at the artist reception on February 20.

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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March 6, 2016



At-risk youth gain worksite-based training, education through \$148,000 community collaborative with HCDE Adult Education

Unemployed, at-risk youth will be trained both vocationally and academically by Harris County Department of Education's Adult Education division through a \$148,000 community collaborative funded through Gulf Coast Workforce Board and the Texas Workforce Commission.

The partnership provides workforce training through multiple local companies in high-need, designated geographic areas where the youth reside. The grant awarded and administered by Dynamic Educational Systems, Inc., a workforce service contractor for youth services. My Brother's Keeper is leading the outreach campaign to recruit young candidates for the program. The Houston nonprofit's mission is to provide emergency assistance, social services and training for individuals and families in crisis.

The first classes begin in late February in northeast Houston at Building Specialties, Inc., a contractor that provides mechanical, thermal and acoustical insulation in southeast Texas.

As the project expands, other local companies will be recruited to join the collaboration, said Eduardo Honold, director of HCDE Adult Education.

"Access to education and vocational training is challenging for these youth," said Honold. The goal is to provide opportunities within their communities, he said.

The project engages youth in immediate and extensive worksite-based training and employment along a high-skill, high-growth occupational pathway. HCDE will provide integrated vocational instruction which will lead to National Center for Construction Education and Research certification coupled with basic skill instruction in reading, writing and math at worksites.

HCDE Adult Education provides classes to adult learners with a goal to "learn to earn," including adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon and Spring Branch and Liberty. Corporations also benefit from HCDE services provided to English language learning employees aimed at improving productivity and safety in the workplace. For more information access www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation .

Photo: HCDE Adult Education math teacher Brigett Bentley works through order of operations problems with students Manurica Cheatham, Herbert Joseph and Hassan Ahmed. Vocational teacher Clifton Hypolite (not shown) provides training in hands-on tools, basic safety, employability skills and introduction to construction.

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New contracts awarded in August for access through HCDE Choice Partners

New contracts for construction (JOC-IDIQ), promotional items and educational travel services were awarded at the August 2016 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

The newly awarded contracts include

Construction, (JOC-IDIQ): *Aggieland Construction LLC; RMB Management LLC doing business as Corestone Construction Services; Geoffery Daenen doing business as EcoXstream LLC; Dura Pier Facilities Services Ltd. doing business as Facilities Sources; Generocity Services Inc.; Brown & Root Industrial Services LLC; Lee Construction and Maintenance Co. doing business as LMC*

Corporation; Mitchell Paint & Wallcovering Inc. doing business as Mitchell Contracting; Nash Industries Inc.; Quad-Tex Construction Inc.; Radius Design Works LLC; AKS Holdings Inc. doing business as ServPro of Spring/Tomball; Edu-Source Corp. (The); and The Ratliff Group LLC;

Promotional and Related Items: *4imprint Inc.; Authentic Promotions Inc.; Buffalo Specialties Inc.; Butler Business Products LLC; Blue Ribbon Promotions LLC doing business as Calfee Specialties; Challenge Office Products Inc.; Marketing Magic International Ltd.; and OTC Direct doing business as Oriental Trading Co. Inc.; and*

Student and Educational Travel Services: *Vagabond Travels Inc. doing business as Educational Travel Adventures; Grand Fund Inc. doing business as Green Light Group Tours; and STA Travel Inc.*

Other contracts were renewed and include

Art and Artwork Advisory Services: *Art + Artisans Consulting Inc.;*

Automotive Equipment, Tires, Parts and Services: *A to Z Tire & Battery Inc.; Batteries Holdings LP doing business as Batteries+Bulbs; and Creative Bus Sales;*

Award Jackets, Screen Printing, Embroidery and Related Items: *Price and Recognition, Inc. doing business as Balfour; Butler Business Products LLC; Corporate Incentives Inc.; Keith Kouba doing business as DBS Texas-Houston; JW Drouin & Associates doing business as J. Harding & Co.; and Marketing Magic International Ltd.;*

Copiers (Rental, Lease or Purchase) and Related Items: *Bob Peckham & Associates doing business as Office Systems of Texas; and Zeno Digital Solutions LLC doing business as Zeno Imaging;*

Curriculum, Instructional, Assessment and Intervention Materials and Supplies: *Curriculum Associates Inc.;*

Digital Archiving, Imaging and Related Services: *DataBank IMX, Inc.; Delta-T Digital Archiving*

Ltd.; and The Windward Group LLC;

Disaster Mitigation Services: *Blackmon Mooring Services/BMS CAT; Dura Pier Facilities Services Ltd. doing business as Facilities Sources; Gerloff Co. Inc.; Mooring Recovery Services; Power Vac America Inc.; AKS Holdings Inc. doing business as ServPro of Spring/Tomball; S & R Operations Inc. doing business as ServPro of The Woodlands/Conroe; and Texas General Contractors Inc.;*

Energy Conservation Services: *Ameresco Inc.;*

Managed Print Service Program: *Dahill Office Technology Corp. doing business as Dahill; and Zeno Digital Solutions LLC doing business as Zeno Imaging;*

Pest Control and Pool Services: *Copesan Services Inc. doing business as Holder's Pest Solutions;*

Scientific Equipment and Related Items: *Carolina Biological Supply Co.; Educator's Depot Inc.; Flinn Scientific Inc.; School Specialty Inc. doing business as Frey Scientific; SJS Partnership WRS Group Ltd. doing business as Health Edco Childbirth, Health Impressions; Childbirth Graphics; 259 Holdings Ltd. LLC doing business as Microscope World; Priscilla M. Ayerite doing business as NAO Global Supply; Pitsco Education; and Carol Espensen doing business as Southern Science Supply;*

Trenchless Technology Rehabilitation and Related Items and Services: *Layne Inliner LLC; and SAK Construction LLC;*

Vocational Products and Services: *ASI Associates Inc. doing business as Arbor Scientific; The Burmax Co. Inc.; Cengage Learning Inc.; Digital Quest Inc.; Education Associates Inc.; Henry Schein Inc.; A Peace of Health Agency LLC doing business as Matters of Health; Southeast Texas Horizons LLC doing business as New Horizons CLC of Houston; Odesseyware; Penn State Industries Inc.; Teaching Systems Inc.; Technical Laboratory Systems Inc.; and Texas Pride Marketing; and*

Web Design Services: *Vision Technology Solutions LLC doing business as Vision Internet Providers; and Short Enterprises Inc. doing business as WebRevelation.*

New Members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Aug. 16 include city of **Centerville**; **Chaparral Star Academy Inc.**, Austin; city of **Coppell**; **The Harris Center for Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**, Houston; **Harris County Emergency Service District 50**, Channelview; **Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas**, Dallas; Williamson Burnet County Opportunities doing business as **Opportunities for Williamson Burnet Counties**, Georgetown; and city of **Wylie**.

About Choice Partners: Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are

competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need, saving time and money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit www.choicepartners.org.

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Bank of Texas volunteers become superheroes at Fifth Ward Head Start Center

Once a month, students at Harris County Department of Education's Fifth Ward Head Start Center eagerly await visits from their superheroes, Chris Frey and Gary Whitt with the Bank of Texas, Houston. Frey, commercial relationship manager, and Whitt, senior vice president, are community volunteers with the Real SuperMENTors Read program and serve as consistent, positive role models for Fifth Ward students.

Three years ago, Frey and Whitt eagerly joined SuperMENTors to promote community involvement, encourage reading and, most importantly, support Head Start students. Since they began volunteering, they've watched students become more engaged as their relationships with the professionals grow.

"You can see the difference from the beginning of the year to the end, and from the 3-year-old to the 4-year-old students," said Whitt. "The students we've known for a year and developed relationships with are much more engaged."

While the 3-year-old students at Fifth Ward are always excited to see Whitt, excitement erupts when he enters the 4-year-old classroom and he is greeted with big smiles and a group hug.

The SuperMENTors program is part of the ongoing Head Start Significant Male Initiative established to encourage male involvement throughout the HCDE Head Start centers. Community volunteers like Frey and Whitt provide more than a fun, engaging lesson. They promote reading and writing while creating a consistent support system for students.

"I think there's value in professionals coming in and spending time with students in their environment," said Frey. "The SuperMENTors program is easy to commit to and is very rewarding. That's why I keep coming back."

Frey and Whitt also hope to use their superhero status with the students to demonstrate the importance of community involvement.

"We want to instill that even though we work and are involved in business, we're still involved in our community," said Whitt.

For more information or to participate in the Head Start Real SuperMENTors Read program, visit <https://goo.gl/XOYTYU>.

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Baytown native Wilks retires from 27 years of helping adult learners

Baytown native Jane Wilks is retiring after registering close to 27,000 adult learners for classes in English as a second language and GED over the past 27 years. The Harris County Department of Education Adult Education administrative assistant started helping adult learners in 1988 during the amnesty years.

Those were the days of chalk boards for instruction. Registration consisted of a one-page application with an accompanying essay to determine reading and writing levels. Teachers, says Wilks, were and still are the constant in education.

“Our teachers are still very good, and they are dedicated,” said Wilks, who turned 72 this year. “Adult students want to learn, and teachers know their students need help, whether it’s learning English or getting their GED.”

She remembers helping many disadvantaged students with basic needs—helping find housing, food pantries and services for students’ children. Although it was not her job duty, she considered it her civic duty.

Wilks acted as mediator for students who had petty fights or classroom conflicts as students were sent to her office. Sometimes her position required that she put the paperwork down and take on the role of problem-solver.

“I was working late one evening and a young lady was crying outside my office,” she said. “She was homeless with nowhere to go, so I found her a spot at a shelter.”

Her husband of 53 years, Dean Wilks, helped get an older student into Lee College on scholarship to pursue a welding career. Dean worked at Lee College as an industrial liaison. The student came back to pay his respects for the hand up.

“HCDE Adult Education manager Bill Medina commends his employee for her dedication to adult learners. He also says she knows her job inside out.

“We will miss those years of experience she takes with her,” he said.

Wilk possesses a wealth of information about the history of our learning center and students, Medina said. When limited English-speaking students come to register for classes, she eases their anxiety by asking them the registration questions in Spanish, a quality that her boss finds most impressive.

“It makes me feel good to know someone is in a better situation because of gaining an education,” said Wilks, remembering the students she has helped through her job.

Throughout her 27-years of service with HCDE and in the 11 years he has known her, Wilks had only had a few absences, said her boss Medina. Hip surgery made her miss a few weeks, but she has many perfect attendance certificates.

-more-

Wilks gives all the credit for her work ethic to her parents.

“My parents taught me values and morals,” she said. “Be at work on time, work hard and give your employer the hours you are supposed to because people depend on you.”

Coaxing from her husband helped Wilks decide to retire. She gets up at 4:30 a.m. in her home in the Highlands to eat at Cracker Barrel each morning before going to work.

Now she may sleep a little longer, return to quilting, play more with the grandchildren—and occasionally visit the casino.

(HCDE provides free classes and other educational services to approximately 6,000 adult learners each year ranging from teenagers to senior citizens. Classes include adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris County. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon and Spring Branch and Liberty County.)

For more information about upcoming HCDE Adult Education classes, go to www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation or call 713-692-6216. To make donation to fund costly GED testing for economically disadvantaged adult students, call 713-691-8765.

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Tactics to Prevent Bullying: Workshop at HCDE helps teachers empower students Feb. 5

Bullying is both psychological and physical so safeguarding students against bullies has much to do about empowerment, says bullying prevention expert and presenter Fabian Ramirez. Ramirez talks to educators about bullying prevention on February 5 from 9-11 a.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington, Houston, Texas.

The national presenter who is a Houston native was victimized by bullying in middle school, and he uses that experience to talk to students about how to deal with bullies. His videos and lesson plans are directed to empower both students and teachers.

Ramirez says what you don't talk out, you act out. Most bullies are dealing with internal issues that they project on others.

He points to studies from the Secret Service which show that 71 percent of school shooters were bullied themselves. Most were loners and got picked on during school.

Venting, Ramirez says, is one solution which helps unleash emotions. He urges students to vent, and he defines venting as releasing or transferring your emotions through words.

In a free lesson provided through his bullying prevention series called EveryOne Matters, Ramirez talks directly to students and empowers them with ways to vent:

1. Analyze: See where you are and work through it with the other party. Sometimes it's really not that bad.
2. Assume the best: Have a follow-up conversation with the person who is acting like a bully. Maybe you heard it wrong. Sometimes people don't mean what they said.
3. Don't take it personally: It's about them and not you. Don't think something is wrong with you.
4. Act upon your feelings: Don't bottle up feelings. Find a release. Draw. Journal. Get into sports.
5. Find one person to trust to talk to: Don't try to find affirmation with multiple people. Trust that one person and share your negative emotions through words.

For more information about the workshop, call the Center for Safe and Secure Schools at 713-696-3142.

Register for the workshop:

<https://workshops.hcde-texas.org/iebms/portalsearch/Results.aspx?Workshop=10316>

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CASE for Kids Celebrates Summer Learning Day July 14 with Superhero-Themed Event

In collaboration with Harris County Precinct 2, Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, will celebrate Summer Learning Day on July 14 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Youth Education Town Center II (YET Center II) located at 10918 Bentley Street in Houston.

Summer Learning Day is an annual national advocacy day led by the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) to elevate the importance of keeping kids learning, safe and healthy every summer.

Children ages 5-17 attending the summer program at the YET Center II and various CASE for Kids Child Care Centers will participate in the event based on the theme, "Kapow! Zap! Read! Every Superhero has a Story."

The event will feature guest readers from the community, including Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Jack Morman, City Council Member Mike Knox, CASE for Kids Director Dr. Lisa Thompson-Caruthers and Kashmere High School Alumni Association President Huey German Wilson.

The Houston Public Library mobile reading unit and interactive learning stations will also be available for students during the event.

The NSLA recently launched a national awareness campaign and new website to support hundreds of communities across the nation hosting Summer Learning Day events. As part of the campaign, Clear Channel Outdoor is displaying 10 digital billboards throughout Harris County to promote Summer Learning Day on July 14.

Learn more about this effort by visiting <http://goo.gl/aWslC>.

About the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment (CASE) for Kids: CASE for Kids, formerly the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment, was launched by Harris County Department of Education in 1999. CASE for Kids is an after-school intermediary which leverages community resources and strengthens the capacity of the out-of-school time field. Services benefit approximately 12,000 kids in greater Harris County. CASE for Kids programs happen before and after school, on weekends and during the summer. Go to www.afterschoolzone.org for information.

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Conference equips professionals, parents, caregivers of children with challenging behaviors, mental issues

Helping children with challenging behaviors is the focus of the Healthy Minds Healthy Families Conference scheduled for May 6 from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington. Cost of the workshop held through HCDE Head Start is only \$10 and includes lunch and free parking through a grant-funded initiative from the Hogg Foundation.

Training sessions with health professionals and others who work with children with mental health issues cover subjects like growing up with bipolar disorder, ADHD, transforming the challenging child, food choices and mental health, and suicide prevention for children and teens. Additional topics include yoga for kids, understanding behaviors of abused children, keeping children with special needs safe, managing meltdowns, domestic violence 101, and positive guidance and discipline. Continuing education credits are available upon completion of the conference.

Conference funder the Hogg Foundation advances recovery and wellness in Texas by funding mental health services, policy analysis, research and public education. Sponsors for the conference include United Healthcare and Legacy and Community Health.

"We hope that teachers, parents, caretakers, early childhood educators and members of the Head Start community take advantage of the quality workshops being offered through our conference," said Venetia Peacock, senior director of Harris County Department of Education's Head Start division.

To register for the conference, go to <http://wms.hcde-texas.org> and search by date or workshop number 10381. For information, call 713-696-2170.

HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Child Care Partnership: Through Head Start/Early Head Start, we serve 1,270 students ages 6 weeks to 5 years in northeast Houston. Within the Early Child Care Partnership, we serve 60 additional children at seven community child care centers in our service area. Students receive free healthy meals and snacks as well as vision, hearing, nutrition and developmental screenings. Our students benefit from indoor/outdoor play in a healthy environment. Centers follow curriculum approved by the Texas Education Agency. Health, education, nutrition and financial services benefit enrolled children and their families to ensure success. Head Start recognizes the role of parent as first and foremost teacher. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and grow through the program.

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Technology contracts renewed in December for access through HCDE Choice Partners

Contracts for technology products and services were renewed at the December 2016 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

Renewed contracts include

Electrical Vehicle Charging Stations and Related Items: *ABM Building & Energy Solutions Inc. doing business as ABM Building Services LLC;*

Fleet Fuel Monitoring System, Maintenance, GPS System, Tank Automation and Related Fueling Products and Services: *WEX Inc. (Wright Express Financial Services Corp.) doing business as Fleet Fueling; and Fleetcard Inc. doing business as Impac Fleet;*

Plumbing and Related Services (IDIQ): *Gowan Inc.; and Letsos Co. Mechanical Contractors;*

Technology Products and Services: *Accudata Systems Inc.; GTS Technology Solutions Inc. (formally ARC Government Solutions Inc.); AVES Audio Visual Systems Inc.; Best Buy Stores LP doing business as Best Buy for Business; Carahsoft Technology Corp.; CDW LLC doing business as CDW Government LLC; Critical Infrastructure Solutions (CIS) LLC; PCMG/Global Gov/Ed; HiEd Inc.; Houston Communications Inc.; ImageNet Office Systems Ltd.; Ion Wave Technologies Inc.; JADE Distributing; JANGA Technology LLC; K12 Alerts; Exebridge; Mark III Systems; Micro Integration; PC Care Inc.; PCPC Direct Ltd.; Pinnacle Office Group Inc.; Presidio Networked Solutions Inc.; Prime System; Troxell Communications Inc.; and Unique Digital Inc.;*

Vocational Products and Services: *United Rentals (North America) Inc.; and ATech Training Inc.;*
and

Waterproofing/Masonry, Restoration, Cleaning and Related Services: *Centennial Moisture Control Inc.; LD Tebben Co. Inc.; PRC Roofing Co. Inc.; Reliable Commercial Roofing Services Inc.; Tecta America CS LLC; Tri-Lam Roofing & Waterproofing; and Weatherproofing Services.*

New Members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Dec. 13 include **Celina ISD**, Celina; **Cisco College**, Cisco; and **Generations Community Federal Credit Union**, San Antonio..

About Choice Partners: Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need,

saving time and money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for education, facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit www.choicepartners.org.

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MEDIA ALERT



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Annual Event gathers out-of-school time, expanded learning leaders for conversations, connections and professional development Sept. 25 and 26 at The Westin Houston, Memorial City

WHAT: **CASE for Kids**, a division of Harris County Department of Education, hosts the **2015 CASE for Kids Out-of-School Time Conference on Sept. 25 and 26 at The Westin Houston, 945 Gessner Road in Memorial City, Houston, Texas. The annual event gathers leading out-of-school time and expanded learning professionals in one location for a two-day journey that sparks deep conversations and establishes life-long connections. The conference which adopts the notion that “every minute matters” is packed with unique, energy-charged professional development activities.**

Keynote speakers and presenters provide workshops which are designed to be applicable to any youth program, including schools, day cares and community centers.

COST: Cost for the conference is \$100 for the full conference, including all meals or \$75 for Friday only, including the sit-down luncheon and beverage station. The “State of After-School” sit-down luncheon is \$50
\$100 for the full conference including all meals
\$75 for Friday only (includes sit-down luncheon and beverage station)
\$50 for ENRICH After-School “State of After-School” sit-down luncheon only
\$25 for Saturday only (includes beverage station and box lunch)

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July 7, 2016

‘Every Hour Counts’ selects HCDE’s CASE for Kids for 13-member national coalition to promote expanded learning

The New York City-based coalition Every Hour Counts selected the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enriched Learning for Kids, or CASE for Kids, as one of 13 organizations nationwide that will launch an initiative to broaden expanded-learning programming. The initiative is called “Every Hour Counts National Learning Community.” Every Hour Counts works to increase access to quality learning opportunities, particularly for underserved students.

CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education, provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

The network of 13 cities and counties that will join Every Hour Counts includes CASE for Kids from Harris County, Allegheny County Pennsylvania, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Fresno, Greenville, King County Washington, Newark, Richmond, Rochester, San Francisco and Saint Paul.

The new initiative involves a peer learning community which is composed of expanded-learning systems-builders ready to take their system to the next level, according to Every Hour Counts.

The initiative involves conversations between nationwide leaders in afterschool.

“It’s exciting to become a part of a national conversation about afterschool and the new initiatives on the horizon,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director for CASE for Kids.

Thompson-Caruthers said a team of Houston community leaders will be traveling this summer to Chicago for a collaborative meeting with other members.

Every Hour Counts supports partnerships with more than 3,500 schools, districts and community-based organizations that provide quality expanded-learning programming and initiatives that reach more than 500,000 students.

About the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment (CASE) for Kids: CASE for Kids, formerly the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment, was launched by Harris County Department of Education in 1999. CASE for Kids is an after-school intermediary which leverages community resources and strengthens the capacity of the out-of-school time field. Services benefit approximately 12,000 kids in greater Harris County. CASE for Kids programs happen before and after school, on weekends and during the summer. Go to www.afterschoolzone.org for information.

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Former Student, Teacher Reconnect during HCDE New Employee Orientation

As we grow up, the teachers we remember most are those who went above and beyond to support and encourage us and provide a foundation for the future. For HCDE Facilities employee Juan Lira, the teacher who made a profound impact on his life is now also his colleague.

When Lira walked into his new employee orientation in September, he was surprised to find his former first-grade bilingual teacher, Dr. Chaney Williams Ledet, was also attending orientation as the new curriculum and compliance officer for HCDE's Educator Certification and Professional Advancement.

Ledet became a first-grade bilingual teacher at Richard Brock Elementary in 1989, after a year of working in the social service field. While teaching that class she met Lira, a young boy who grew up in a Spanish household with six other siblings.

Ledet became close to Lira as she helped him work through the difficulties of learning English. Although he struggled, she refused to let him fall behind and began working with him during recess and after school. She even took him on field trips to places like the rodeo and the zoo as a reward for good behavior and to promote learning outside of the classroom.

"She was a very loving person, and still is. She was motherly and always went beyond being just a teacher," said Lira. "I always enjoyed spending time with her."

Since her time at Brock Elementary, Ledet has served as an assistant principal, principal, bilingual supervisor, alternative certification supervisor and written a proposal for a language immersion charter school. However, she never forgot the impact Lira made on her in her early days of teaching.

"Words can't quite explain how it feels to see someone I cared for and worried about become successful," said Ledet. "Juan was a child that touched my heart and I'm so proud to see he's doing well."

Lira is now married with two children and has more than 10 years of air conditioning and electrical experience, but when he heard Ledet call his name at orientation, it was like he was back in that first-grade classroom learning from his beloved teacher.

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Free teacher resources available through free, 30-minute iTeach iLearn webinar from HCDE

Teachers get help through a new webinar which delivers free monthly teaching resources called iTeach iLearn, a service provided by Harris County Department of Education's Teaching and Learning Center.

The webinar supplies resources on a gamut of topics for pre-k through 12 teachers. Each topic is advertised in advance and presenters include objectives and lesson.

Teachers can opt to listen live during the 30-minute presentation and benefit from a question-and-answer session at the end or listen to the recorded, archived webinar later.

Save the date for April 13 presenter Chris Kesler, a middle school science teacher, blogger and podcaster. Kesler's session is called "Increased Student Engagement and Retention with Student-Led Station Labs." He is a nationally known seller on TeachersPayTeachers.com, a marketplace where teachers share, sell, and buy original educational resources.

More details about iTeach iLearn are available through the following link: <http://hcde-texas.org/users/0221/docs/Connector/iTeachiLearnFlyer%20%283%29.pdf>

To register for the session, go to <http://goo.gl/forms/Fd1xVorRpt> . For more information about iTeach iLearn, email dmcgeary@hcde-texas.org or lhockaday@hcde-texas.org .

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HCDE Adult Education employee, Highlands resident Wilks retires after 27 years of helping adult learners

Baytown native Jane Wilks is retiring after registering close to 27,000 adult learners for classes in English as a second language and GED over the past 27 years. The Harris County Department of Education Adult Education administrative assistant started helping adult learners in 1988 during the amnesty years.

Those were the days of chalk boards for instruction. Registration consisted of a one-page application with an accompanying essay to determine reading and writing levels.

Teachers, says Wilks, were and still are the constant in education.

“Our teachers are still very good, and they are dedicated,” said Wilks, who turned 72 this year. “Adult students want to learn, and teachers know their students need help, whether it’s learning English or getting their GED.”

She remembers helping many disadvantaged students with basic needs—helping find housing, food pantries and services for students’ children. Although it was not her job duty, she considered it her civic duty.

Wilks acted as mediator for students who had petty fights or classroom conflicts as students were sent to her office. Sometimes her position required that she put the paperwork down and take on the role of problem-solver.

“I was working late one evening and a young lady was crying outside my office,” she said. “She was homeless with nowhere to go, so I found her a spot at a shelter.”

Her husband of 53 years, Dean Wilks, helped get an older student into Lee College on scholarship to pursue a welding career. Dean worked at Lee College as an industrial liaison. The student came back to pay his respects for the hand up.

“HCDE Adult Education manager Bill Medina commends his employee for her dedication to adult learners. He also says she knows her job inside out.

“We will miss those years of experience she takes with her,” he said.

Wilk possesses a wealth of information about the history of our learning center and students, Medina said. When limited English-speaking students come to register for classes, she eases their anxiety by asking them the registration questions in Spanish, a quality that her boss finds most impressive.

“It makes me feel good to know someone is in a better situation because of gaining an education,” said Wilks, remembering the students she has helped through her job.

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Throughout her 27-years of service with HCDE and in the 11 years he has known her, Wilks had only had a few absences, said her boss Medina. Hip surgery made her miss a few weeks, but she has many perfect attendance certificates.

Wilks gives all the credit for her work ethic to her parents.

“My parents taught me values and morals,” she said. “Be at work on time, work hard and give your employer the hours you are supposed to because people depend on you.”

Coaxing from her husband helped Wilks decide to retire. She gets up at 4:30 a.m. in her home in the Highlands to eat at Cracker Barrel each morning before going to work.

Now she may sleep a little longer, return to quilting, play more with the grandchildren—and occasionally visit the casino.

Photo: Bill Medina, HCDE Baytown Learning Center Manager; Eduardo Honold, HCDE Adult Education director; Dean Wilks, retiree from Lee College; Jane Wilks, HCDE Baytown Learning Center administrative assistant

(HCDE provides free classes and other educational services to approximately 6,000 adult learners each year ranging from teenagers to senior citizens. Classes include adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris County. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon and Spring Branch and Liberty County.)

For more information about upcoming HCDE Adult Education classes, go to www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation or call 713-692-6216. To make donation to fund costly GED testing for economically disadvantaged adult students, call 713-691-8765.

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February 22, 2016

HCDE Adult Education launches \$250,000 Texas Workforce Commission grant to improve industry-specific workforce literacy with business partners

Several workforce literacy projects provided by Harris County Department of Education Adult Education are being funded by an estimated \$250,000 grant with the Texas Workforce Commission. The 14-month grant will fund contextualized instruction in reading, writing, math and English language-learning skills to support industry-specific employee development and employer operations.

The grant allows HCDE to expand its contextualized adult learning services with five companies. One of those partners will be Marek Brothers System, a large specialty construction firm in Houston.

Contextualized learning is aimed at developing the skills and knowledge that adult learners need to deal with specific situations or to perform specific tasks. HCDE's role in the process is to provide industry specific materials and instruction for English language learners along with accelerated English language classes designed to improve productivity and safety in the workplace.

"We are both excited and proud to continue our working relationship with Marek Brothers so that we can continue to create a robust, competent workforce within the Houston construction industry," said Eduardo Honold, Adult Education director at HCDE.

HCDE is recruiting four additional industry-specific companies to partner with through the Texas Workforce Commission grant. About 180 employees will be screened by HCDE to be enrolled in the programs.

"We expect that we will have quite a bit of interest from prospective students who want to gain access to these high-demand industries that require specialty training," said Honold. "These type of collaborative projects combining adult education services with industry-specific skills are the way of the future, and we embrace these opportunities to serve the community."

HCDE Adult Education provides classes to adult learners with a goal to "learn to earn," including adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon and Spring Branch and Liberty. Corporations also benefit from HCDE services provided to English language learning employees aimed at improving productivity and safety in the workplace. For more information access www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation .

For more information about opportunities to join the project as a corporation or student, email ajohnson@hcde-texas.org .

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HCDE alternative certification teacher named 'Rookie Teacher of Year' at HISD's Hilliard Elementary

Rookie teacher Faamao Ridgeway spent her 34th birthday in her summer school classroom wearing a big smile and fielding questions about the storybook characters in the “big bad wolf.” The past month was a whirlwind in her banner school year.

The petite, soft-spoken woman from Samoa, an island in the South Pacific, is a first-year teacher who enrolled in the Harris County Department of Education Teacher Alternative Certification program in 2014. Last year she took evening and Saturday courses through classroom settings along with online courses. Veteran educators who are experts in teaching pedagogy and curriculum provided training and mentoring. A grant scholarship helped pay her tuition. She also observed other practicing classroom teachers before her own paid internship of teaching reading to second graders.

“I would say that teaching is not as easy as one believes,” Ridgeway said. “There’s a whole level of skills you need, but if you find the right program it can be rewarding.”

Ridgeway, a former diplomat who holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from her home country and a master’s in business administration, decided that teaching would be her new career when she moved to the U.S. in 2013. She had married a Houstonian and they have a boy, now 4. Learning about child development, she said, would help her own parenting skills.

HCDE Teacher Alternative Certification director Lidia Zatopek says it has taken about 21 months for Ridgeway to complete the certification process. The process includes one full year of teaching as a teacher of record in the candidate’s certification field. A content exam is completed prior to being hired as a teacher intern. Passage of a pedagogy exam is required before a teacher is recommended for a standard teaching certificate.

Houston Independent School District’s Hilliard Elementary principal Mokysa Benford is proud of the progress of her teacher intern Ridgeway. The student population at the school is 95 percent economically disadvantaged and 80 percent at risk. At first she had her reservations about the soft-spoken Ridgeway, but that quickly changed after she saw her interaction with her students.

“We have a rough population,” said principal Benford. “But she has been excellent for our kids because she has a loving spirit about her.”

Ridgeway is patient and tender with her second graders. In return, they treat her with respect and show off an amazing vocabulary they acquired this year. The eight-year olds talk about inferences, context clues and character traits, words they never came across before.

“Parents shouldn’t build a house out of straw or wood,” says an eager little girl named Brooklyn, clad in pigtails and summer shorts. “You need nails to hold the house down.”

Ridgeway smiles and congratulates Brooklyn for applying book knowledge to the “real world.”

Good news arrived last month, and the victory was no small feat. Most of Ridgeway’s students had raised their reading levels significantly. One student’s scores were raised 10 levels. More good news was delivered when her colleagues named her “Rookie Teacher of the Year” for her enthusiasm and perseverance.

-more-

The new teacher is most proud about building a kinship with her students who each day face issues like poverty, violence and sometimes prejudice. She is sharing a global prospective through the power of reading--and through her own experiences from an island 6,000 miles from America.

To attend an upcoming information meeting about joining the HCDE Teacher Alternative Certification program, email hcdeacp@hcde-texas.org or call 713-696-1348.

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January 21, 2016

HCDE Board of Trustees honored during School Board Recognition Month

Members of Harris County Department of Education's Board of Trustees were honored at the January 21 board meeting and reception as part of School Board Recognition Month. This year's campaign was "Super-Heroes for Schools."

After the reception led by HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert, Jr., board members received framed certificates during their monthly meeting.

Board members honored include Angie Chesnut, president; Louise D. Evans, III, vice president; Erica Lee Carter, trustee; Marvin W. Morris, trustee; Don Sumner, trustee; Diane Trautman, trustee; and Mike Wolfe, trustee. Kay Smith, who recently resigned, was recognized for her leadership role as former vice president.

Each January, the Texas Association of School Boards organizes the School Board Recognition Month campaign to focus on the crucial role an elected board of trustees plays in our communities and schools.

Photo: Louise D. Evans, III, vice president; Erica Lee Carter, trustee; Angie Chesnut, president; James Colbert, Jr., superintendent; Mike Wolfe, trustee; and Don Sumner, trustee.

About Harris County Department of Education (HCDE): Serving students, teachers, schools and communities throughout Harris County and Liberty County, HCDE is a local governmental organization providing value for school districts while supporting educational opportunity. Partnering with Harris County school districts, HCDE maximizes local resources and respond to the needs of locally elected school boards and education leaders. HCDE services include school-based therapy for students, afterschool programs, Head Start, educator training, adult education and programs to promote safe schools. To learn more about how your county department of education can help you: www.hcde-texas.org .

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



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HCDE Communication and Client Engagement Staff Earn 9 State Awards from Texas School Public Relations Association

Harris County Department of Education Communication and Client Engagement earned nine awards at the 2015 Texas School Public Relations Association Star Awards competition. Awards were announced at the association's 54th annual conference near Austin, Texas.

Awards for HCDE staff include two Best of Category, two Gold Awards, three Silver Awards and one Bronze Award. The association received 1,159 entries for 44 categories in communication, including website, newsletter, writing, annual report and social media.

Best of Category and Gold Awards

- Computerized Presentation: "HCDE Infographic," featured through HCDE website and WhatIsHCDE.org, Louise Henry and Chelsea Hardy, (Best-of-Category and Gold)
- Published News or Feature: "The Formula for Telling Your Story," published in Texas Association of School Administrators Insight Magazine, Carol Vaughn, (Best-of-Category and Gold)

Silver Awards

- Internal Newsletter: Choice Partners "Leader's Choice" newsletter, published for Choice Partners members/contract partners, Louise Henry
- Brochure: "Come Learn with Us," printed for Head Start, Angela Hider and Carol Vaughn
- Annual Report: "Head Start Annual Report," published for Head Start, Angela Hider and Carol Vaughn
- E-Newsletter Internal: Choice Partners "Co-opportunities e-news," published for Choice Partners

Bronze Award

- Writing: "School Bell Blog: Bullying in Schools—Problems and Solutions," HCDE School Bell Blog, Carol Vaughn

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July 6, 2016

HCDE communicators earn 15 media awards for excellence in communications from 2016 National School Public Relations Association

Harris County Department of Education communicators gained 15 national awards from the 2016 National School Public Relations Association. The awards include branding, blogs, videos, writing, newsletters, and special publication.

HCDE's entries of publications and electronic media competed with 965 entries, including 581 publications entries and 264 videos. HCDE Client Engagement and Communication division staff members are honored for the awards which acknowledge excellence in communications.

A top award includes the Award of Excellence for branding package for the Choice Partners Vendor Exhibit and Food Expo. This Award of Excellence created by Client Engagement will be recognized and on display at the national conference in July in Chicago.

Awards and the communicators collaborating on the awards are as follows:

Award of Excellence (branding package): Choice Partners Vendor Exhibit and Food Expo, Louise Henry, Juan Lopez

Award of Merit (blog): Library Collaboration Checks Out, Justin Jannise, Louise Henry

Award of Merit (branding package): Choice Partners Branding Package, Juan Lopez, Louise Henry

Award of Merit (branding package): Safe and Secure Schools Branding Package, Juan Lopez, Louise Henry, Justin Jannise

Award of Merit (print newsletter): Leader's Choice, Louise Henry, Justin Jannise, Juan Lopez

Award of Merit (video): 2015 All-Earth Ecobot Challenge, Daniel Villarreal

Honorable Mention (special publication): Scholastic Art & Writing Poster, Angela Hider, Carol Vaughn

Honorable Mention (blog): School Bell Blog, Carol Vaughn, Angela Hider

Honorable Mention (video): Why HCDE? Louise Henry, Justin Jannise, Daniel Villarreal

Honorable Mention (video): HCDE: How Many Lunches Do We Provide? Joe Perez, Louise Henry, Justin Jannise,

Honorable Mention (video): 85 Million Lunches, Louise Henry, Justin Jannise, Joe Perez

Honorable Mention (video): Special Schools, Joe Perez

Honorable Mention (video): Scholastic Art & Writing, Daniel Villarreal

Honorable Mention (writing): Refusing to Give Up on Afterschool, Carol Vaughn

Honorable Mention (writing): Student Overcomes Emotional, Learning Obstacles to Gain Diploma, Carol Vaughn

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HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start recruits families of children ages 6 weeks to 4 years for free childcare services

Harris County Department of Education Head Start is accepting applications for families of children 3-4 years old for pre-school for the 2016-2017 school year at its 15 Head Start centers in northeast Harris County. In addition, Early Head Start services for children 6 weeks to 3 years of age are available at the Baytown Head Start Center. Details:

- Children are provided pre-school education along with healthy meals and snacks.
- Head Start delivers developmental screening for children.
- Parent involvement opportunities are provided along with service referrals to meet family needs.
- Family Engagement activities are hallmark to the program.
- Low-income families and children with disabilities are eligible. Children must be 3-4 years old.
- For more information about registration, call 713-672-6393.

Applicants should have the following for registration: Details:

- 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
- Shot record—proof of up-to-date immunizations
- Additional documentation, if applicable—child's health insurance card, legal documentation of guardianship, ARD/IEP documents

About the HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start/Early Child Care Partnership: Through Head Start/Early Head Start, we serve 1,270 students ages 6 weeks to 5 years in northeast Houston. Within the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership, we serve 60 additional children at seven community child care centers in our service area. Students receive free healthy meals and snacks as well as vision, hearing, nutrition and developmental screenings. Our students benefit from indoor/outdoor play in a healthy environment. Centers follow curriculum approved by the Texas Education Agency. Health, education, nutrition and financial services benefit enrolled children and their families to ensure success. Head Start recognizes the role of parent as first and most important teacher. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and grow through the program.

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July 25, 2016

HCDE Head Start/Early Head Start recruits families of children ages 6 weeks to 4 years for free childcare services

Harris County Department of Education Head Start is accepting applications for families of children 3-4 years old for pre-school for the 2016-2017 school year at its 15 Head Start centers in northeast Harris County. In addition, Early Head Start services for children 6 weeks to 3 years of age are available at the Baytown Head Start Center.

Locations include Barrett Station, Baytown, Channelview, Compton, Coolwood, Fonwood, Fifth Ward, Humble and J.D. Walker. Other neighborhoods served are La Porte, Pugh, San Jacinto, Dogan, Sheffield and Tidwell.

Facts about Head Start:

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HCDE Head Start recruits teachers for Early Head Start program in Baytown

Energetic and nurturing professionals who like working with children from infancy to 3 are invited to apply for Early Head Start teaching positions at Harris County Department of Education.

Job fairs will be held to interview candidates on June 7 from 1-5 p.m. and June 9 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Job fairs will be held at 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, Texas in northeast Houston.

The Early Head Start positions are available in Baytown and surrounding suburbs.

To reserve an interview at the job fair, candidates should call 713-696-2177 or email HSeducation@hcde-texas.org. Applicants must also complete an online application at www.hcde-texas.org. Items to bring include current ID, resume, transcript, diploma, certifications or other relevant professional information.

Qualifications for the position include two to three years of experience working with infants to 3-year olds. Candidates should be an infant-toddler child development associate or have an associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education. In lieu of credentials, candidates may attend an HCDE sponsored child development associate classes and gain credentials as a child development associate within eight months.

HCDE benefits include a competitive salary, a work schedule which matches school district calendars, major holidays, free professional development and teacher retirement and social security benefits.

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February 25, 2016

HCDE leader Louise Henry named 'Most Valuable Member' of Texas School Public Relations Association

Harris County Department of Education Client Engagement division director Louise Henry was named “Most Valuable Member” of the Texas School Public Relations Association for 2016.

TSPRA is a professional organization which represents 900 school public relations professionals in Texas. School Messenger, a national communications-solutions company, sponsored the award. The prestigious award recognizes a professional who has contributed significantly as a leader in public relations in public schools. The announcement was made at the TSPRA 2016 Conference held near Austin, Texas on February 24.

Henry, a Spring Branch resident, earned her bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Kansas and a master’s degree in business administration from Loyola University in Chicago. She also holds an accreditation in public relations and has received more than 80 state and national awards for effective branding, communication and marketing.

After a career as a news reporter in radio, TV and newspaper, Henry transitioned to school public relations, serving in positions in Round Rock, Grapevine-Colleyville and Region 4. Later, Henry led a full-service public relations and marketing firm in the Dallas area for six years. In 2010, she joined HCDE to coordinate marketing efforts.

Jimmy Wynn, HCDE special assistant to the superintendent, thanked TSPRA for recognizing Henry for her career accomplishments, as well as her dedication to school public relations.

“Her professional life in service to our public schools is a model for all of us who have made it our career to tell the story of what’s great about public education,” said Wynn. “We join TSPRA in saying ‘great job’ to our valued colleague and friend Louise Henry.”

Melissa Tortorici, director of communications at Texas City Independent School District and Houston-Beaumont area vice president of TSPRA, nominated Henry for the award. A selection committee votes on the nominees.

“Louise is known in public relations circles as an innovative, strategic thinker and leader who can problem-solve, as well as make you smile, Tortorici said.

Photo: HCDE executive director for Choice Partners cooperative Les Hooper congratulates HCDE Client Engagement director Louise Henry which was delivered by School Messenger representative Frank Catalano.

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Highpoint East Teacher Eric Joseph Provides Students with Options after Graduation

When students at Highpoint East walk into Eric Joseph's social studies classroom their eyes are immediately drawn to the large, colorful "Knowledge is Power" poster hanging above the white board. Joseph believes that knowledge and exposure to college and job opportunities are his students' first steps toward creating a successful future.

Highpoint East is one of two Harris County Department of Education alternative schools that offer adjudicated youth a safe and highly-structured learning environment with low student-to-teacher ratios. Highpoint Schools also offer students the skills needed to succeed in both academic and social settings. Joseph, a middle school teacher at the campus since 2008, believes exposing his students to the idea of college and other options after graduation will get them excited about their futures.

Joseph wasn't exposed to the idea of college at a young age, so he took a different route to get into the education field. When he was 19, Joseph took a job building drill bits at Hughes Christensen, a division of Baker Hughes in the Woodlands. He loved the job, but something changed after Sept. 11, 2001.

"The events of Sept. 11 made me realize I wanted to make a change," said Joseph. "I'm a people person and I wanted to be able to use my career to help others."

After talking with a friend who attended Prairie View A&M University, he visited the campus and ultimately decided to attend. While at Prairie View, Joseph took a history class with Dr. James Jones, III that changed his life. He became a history major and studied under James throughout his time in college. After graduation, Joseph decided to combine his love of history with his desire to help others and became a teacher.

Since he began teaching at Highpoint East, Joseph has worked to provide his students with opportunities and resources he didn't have at their age. Just this year, Joseph was nominated as the Event Committee Leader for the College and Career Fair held in November.

The College and Career Fair brought in representatives from Everest Institute and College, the U.S. Army Recruiting Office, Prairie View A&M University and Sheldon Fire and Rescue to talk with students about the opportunities available to them and how to reach their goals after secondary school, including how to apply for financial aid.

"I truly believe that knowledge is power, and to get my students thinking about their future I need to expose them to the different opportunities available to them," said Joseph.

Joseph's position at Highpoint East allows him to support and guide his students in a variety of ways, from establishing an educational foundation, to providing the knowledge and resources to take their next steps in creating purposeful lives.

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March 11, 2016

HISD ‘Secondary Teacher of Year’ Lopez says HCDE Teacher Alternative Certification helped shape his career

Houston Independent School District “Secondary Teacher of the Year” Vladimir Lopez earned his title of distinction in the largest school district in Texas less than five years after entering the field of education.

The science, technology, engineering and math teacher believes the equation to becoming a good teacher is to believe in the power of education to change lives. That transformation began for him in 2010 when he joined the Harris County Department of Education Teacher Alternative Certification Program.

The Spain native who had earned a science degree in his country moved to the United States in 2010. Though he wanted to become a teacher, the American education system was foreign to him.

“I was guided all the way by the HCDE certification program,” he said.

The HCDE Teacher Alternative Certification Program trains college-degreed candidates to become teachers and helps them gain their teacher certification to work in Texas public schools. Throughout the process they are paid teacher interns. Grant funding for tuition reimbursement is available.

Vladimir worked with veteran educators who lead the HCDE teaching program to gain teaching and classroom strategies and understand the Texas education system. Eventually he became a teacher at Madison High School in HISD. Later he moved to HISD’s East Early College High School.

Throughout the process—even through his first years of teaching—he was supported by his HCDE teacher mentors.

“The team is awesome,” he said. “They are truly committed educators, and they have tons of experience in all aspects of being a teacher. They helped me with the certification process, the tests I needed to pass in order to be certified, and the hours I needed to observe other teachers.”

Lidia G. Zatopek, director of HCDE’s Educator Certification and Professional Advancement, said the courses Lopez took to become a teacher are done in a classroom and through online settings with instructors who are content and pedagogy experts. Next, teachers spend time observing classroom teachers.

Paid teacher internships begin as teachers become comfortable within the educator setting. The one-year internships are supported through field supervisors who assist the new teachers with content knowledge and instruction skills. Teachers who agree to teach as certified teachers in at-risk schools are eligible for scholarships for tuition reimbursement through a grant.

“I acknowledge that if you care about education, about people and you love science as is my case, then teaching is a very rewarding career,” he said. “The contact with students keeps you always learning new things, and working with other teachers can be a reward too,”

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With a science degree, Vladimir knows the theories and principles required to teach physics. To connect with his students, however, he says he must make science important to their everyday lives. He must make science significant.

To those considering a future in teaching, Vladimir says there is a thoughtful combination of things that make the profession worthwhile.

“I am lucky to teach physics,” he said. Physics can connect with absolutely everything people do in their lives, from driving (or even walking), to the science behind cell phones.

“I always relate everything in my class with the world outside.”

(In addition to earning the HISD Secondary Teacher of the Year Award, Vladimir also received the KBR Science Teacher of the Year in 2014, yielding a \$6,000 cash prize. KBR is an international engineering firm that rewards teachers using new and effective models of instruction.)

For more information about HCDE’s Teacher Alternative Certification Program, including scholarship opportunities, go to www.hcde-texas.org/teachercertification or call 713-696-1348.

Photo: HISD "Secondary Teacher of the Year" Vladimir Lopez works with students on a robotics project. (Photo courtesy of HISD Communications.)

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Houston families to benefit from \$464,550 in Houston City Council funding for out-of-school time programs through CASE for Kids City Connections

Houston children benefit from \$464,550 in funding for out-of-school time programs through the end of the school year through a collaborative called CASE for Kids City Connections. The partnership between the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, and the City of Houston supplies funding to all 11 city council districts A-K through nonprofit organizations and schools.

The spring afterschool funding award is part of a \$700,000 city ordinance passed earlier this year and amended and expanded by \$200,000 in February 2016. The first phase of the grant awarded \$280,000 to 81 afterschool locations from October through December 2015. The \$900,000 continues to equip Houston communities with out-of-school time programs in fine arts, academic enrichment, college exploration and fitness classes.

Council members choose the 62 nonprofit organizations to be funded in their districts based on requests for proposals provided through CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education. Spring semester funding ranges from \$2,000 to \$18,000 per nonprofit organization and includes 102 locations throughout the city. The funding is administered to the organizations through CASE for Kids. Funding from the second grant term continues through May 31 and will supply much needed afterschool opportunities for about 4,000 children and their families.

“Communities need afterschool programs to keep their children safe and to provide enriching activities during out-of-school time,” said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director of CASE for Kids. “We remain grateful to our city leaders for their commitment to better the lives of Houston children and families.”

CASE for Kids is an afterschool intermediary which provides funding, professional development and networking for the local out-of-school time community. Funds support students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers.

City Connections is an innovative program initiated by former Houston City Councilmember C.O. Bradford during the summer of 2014. The out-of-school time funding is intended to help fight juvenile crime and to promote child safety during the hours of 3-6 p.m. when parents are working.

“This funding is critically needed to keep Houston communities safe as state and federal funding decreases,” said Thompson-Caruthers.

A full list of organizations in each Houston City Council district receiving funding is available through the CASE for Kids website at www.afterschoolzone.org or http://www.afterschoolzone.org/default.aspx?name=City_Connections .

About the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids): CASE for Kids, formerly the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment, was launched by Harris County Department of Education in 1999. CASE for Kids is an after-school intermediary which leverages community resources and strengthens the capacity of the out-of-school time field. Services benefit approximately 12,000 kids in greater Harris County. CASE for Kids programs happen before and after school, on weekends and during the summer. Go to www.afterschoolzone.org for information.

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Dec. 6, 2016

**Adult learners, leaders inducted into Adult Education National Honor Society
*'It's never too late to learn'***

Going back to school as an adult requires grit and determination. Factors like age, health, children and work often affect the journey. Twenty-four students share stories of strife and success as they are inducted by Harris County Department of Education into the Adult Education National Honor Society.

The event set for Wednesday, Dec. 7 from 10-11 a.m. at 6300 Irvington is an emotional hour filled with pride and gratitude as student leaders are commended by their teachers. Included is a student from Galena Park who overcame drug problems and suffered from low self-esteem. Another 84-year-old student from Mexico dropped out of school in fourth grade to work to feed his family before attending HCDE's learning center in Pasadena. A third Alief-area mother of five suffered domestic abuse but is determined to get an education to raise her boys.

The National Adult Education Honor Society recognizes adult learners who excel as leaders and overcome difficult circumstances to pursue adult learning successes. Inductees also visibly improve their lives and others' through learning.

Students are nominated for induction into the honor society by their teachers and live in neighborhoods throughout greater Harris County. Students are given positive recommendations for employment and educational advancement recommendations as a result of the inductions. They receive a pin and certificate at the ceremony. GED graduates receive a gold honor cord to wear during commencement to recognize the honor.

"Our adult students are dedicated and eager to learn when they come into our classes," said HCDE Adult Education Director Eduardo Honold. "There are so many success stories, but these students are recognized as leaders among their peers."

The following students are being inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society at HCDE in 2016: Nancy Aguilar, Victoria Andrade, Maria Arias, Carolina Bustos, Eva Castillo, Marina Cebrian, Adela de la Cruz, Maria Dominguez, Joshua Doyle, Salvador Escobedo, Veronica Espinola, Astrid Gamarra, LaShanda Glass, Adolfo Gomez, Norge Gomez, Kelsey Hess, Jucelin M. Linares, Marlon Maitland, Yuri Mandujano, Maria D. Marcial-Gallardo, Job Neasbitt, James Quinn, Daniel Rodriguez and Shawnetta Talton.

Profiles of three inductees:

Salvador Escobedo, 84, Pasadena, (teacher Evelyn Steptoe):

When Salvador Escobedo first walked through the doors of HCDE Adult Education's Sunset location, he had a fourth grade education and knew very little English. Now, due to remarkable attendance and dedication, Salvador reads and writes English very well and is teacher Evelyn Steptoe's nominee for the National Honor Society Outstanding Learner award. In his native Mexico, Salvador was not able to finish his studies because he had to work to help support his family. That teamwork spirit carried over into his GED and English as a second language (ESL) classrooms, according to Steptoe.

“Salvador has been a mentor to many of the students in the GED classroom,” Steptoe said. “He loves working in groups.”

Formerly a TV repairman, Salvador is looking into new career paths and is even considering enrolling in college to advance his options.

Josh Doyle, 26, Irvington Learning Center, (teacher Brigett Bentley):

Josh Doyle is an HCDE Adult Education student who broke the mold and excelled in his construction class. Before enrolling at HCDE’s 6311 Irvington location, Josh was a high school dropout from a family that did not produce many male role models; most men he knew were not successful, and some were incarcerated.

His teacher, Brigett T. Bentley, nominated Josh for the National Honor Society Outstanding Learner award because he not only showed extra dedication and zeal for learning but also shared his time with struggling classmates.

“Josh came to class daily with a sense of purpose, vigor and appetite to learn,” said Bentley. “He encouraged other students to have an open mind and saw them as team members rather than as individuals.”

Now that he has completed his six-week course, the Galena Park resident is applying to jobs and looking forward to making his family proud.

LaShonda Glass, 32, Alief, (teacher Barbara Booker):

As a mother of five boys, LaShonda Glass strives to lead by example and demonstrate the importance of education. Glass has overcome mountainous obstacles to get to where she is today, including homelessness, but her determination and resilience allowed her to persevere.

“I’m very determined and know that with a better education, life has so much more to offer,” said Glass.

Glass possesses natural leadership abilities in her current job as an office manager, as well as in the classroom. Her GED teacher Barbara Booker says Glass is always willing to assist other students in class.

“She grasps the concepts quickly and is willing to share what she learns with others.” Glass dreams of one day owning her own company and says that dream, along with her five boys, keeps her motivated and positive.

About HCDE Adult Education: With a 30-year track record, HCDE Adult Education provides classes to adult learners with a goal to “learn to earn,” including adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon, Spring Branch and Liberty. Corporations also benefit from HCDE services provided to English language learning employees aimed at improving productivity and safety in the workplace. For more information access www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation or 713-692-6216.

Facilities services contracts renewed for access through HCDE Choice Partners

Contracts were renewed for facilities services related areas at the January 2016 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

Renewed contracts include

Construction Services: *Adept Facilities and Design, Inc.; Falkenberg Construction Co., Inc.; and Panhandle Steel Buildings Inc.;*

Janitorial Services: *Ambassador Services, LLC; Hospitality Cleaning Solutions; and Metroclean Commercial Building Services;*

Landscape and Maintenance Services: *Houston GroTech Services;*

Moving and Relocation Services: *Pioneer Contract Services, Inc.;*

IDIQ Roofing, Waterproofing & Moisture Control Services: *American Contracting USA, Inc.; Atlas Universal; CS Advantage USAA Inc.; D&G Quality Roofing, Inc.; Facilities USA, LLC; Hi-Mark Roofing & Waterproofing; J Reynolds & Company; John A. Walker Roofing Co., Inc., Sea-Breeze Roofing, Inc.; and Tadco Roofing;*

and

Waterproofing/Masonry, Restoration, Cleaning and Related Services: *Lydick-Hooks Roofing Co. of Lubbock, Inc.*

New Members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Jan. 21 include **Abilene Housing Authority**, Abilene; **Bannockburn Baptist Church**, Austin; **Brock ISD**, Brock; **Cibolo Valley Baptist Church**, Cibolo; **Hawley ISD**, Hawley; **Holy Family Catholic School**, Galveston; **Karnes ISD**, Karnes City; **city of Lavon**; **city of Leander**; **Saint Christopher's By the Sea Episcopal Church**, Portland; and **United Christian Church of Austin**, Austin.

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###

AB East's Haywood Jeffires Inducted into North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame

Haywood Jeffires, employee at Harris County Department of Education's Academic and Behavior (AB) School East, is being honored in May as one of nine 2016 inductees into the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame during the 53rd annual induction banquet.

Before teaching at AB East, Jeffires was a two-sport star at Page High School in Greensboro, North Carolina, and had the opportunity to play either football or basketball at the collegiate level. Jeffires accepted a football scholarship to North Carolina State and was chosen as a first-round draft pick in 1987 for the Houston Oilers.

Jeffires played as the Oilers' wide receiver for 10 years and was a three-time Pro Bowl selection from 1991 to 1993.

"Being selected for the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame is unbelievable," said Jeffires. "Anytime you're selected by your peers for something at the top of your profession, it's an honor."

In addition to his professional accomplishments, Jeffires serves the community through his involvement in Special Olympics programs and provides inspiration and motivation to young students.

The induction banquet will take place on Friday, May 6 at the Raleigh Convention Center in North Carolina.

New contracts awarded in July for access through HCDE Choice Partners

New contracts for energy providers, frozen and chilled beverages, and more were awarded at the July 2016 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

The newly awarded contracts include

Frozen and Chilled Beverage Products: *Sunny Sky Products; and Trident Beverage;*

Digital Duplicators (Rental, Lease or Purchase) and Related Items: *Dahill; and*

Energy Purchase and Aggregation: *Reliant Energy Retail Holdings LLC; and TXU Energy Retail Co.*

Other contracts were renewed and include

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Intervention Materials and Supplies: *AbleNet Inc; Accelerate Learning Inc.; Cengage Learning Inc.; Delaney Educational Enterprises Inc.; Discount School Supply; DrumFIT Inc.; Educator's Depot Inc.; Turning Technologies LLC doing business as eInstruction; Escue & Associates; Inter-State Studio & Publishing Co.; KAMICO Instructional Media Inc.; Kaplan Early Learning Co.; Lerner Publishing; Lightspeed Technologies Inc.; McGraw-Hill School Education LLC; Margaret M. McGuire doing business as Peggy McGuire, M.A.; Peoples Education Inc.; Positive Promotions Inc.; Rally! Education; School Specialty Inc.; Southwest Education Inc.; TCC Learning LLC; Teaching Systems Inc.; Triumph Learning LLC; and Troxell Communications Inc.;*

Electrical Services (JOC-IDIQ): *Lee Construction and Maintenance Co. doing business as LMC Corp.; Climatec LLC; and Trio Electric Ltd.;*

Energy Procurement and Management Consulting Services: *Amerex Brokers LLC;*

Ice Cream Products: *Champion Concessions LLC (Dippin' Dots);*

Medical Supplies and Related Items: *AOSS Medical Supply; HeartSafe America Inc.; Henry Schein Inc.; NAO Global Supply LLC; and School Health Corp.;*

Rental, Lease and Purchase of Copiers and Related Items: *Dahill; and Marimon Business Systems Inc.; and*

Signage and Scoreboards (Interior / Exterior) (JOC-IDIQ): *Kaiser Graphics; and National Signs;*

New Members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by

the HCDE Board of Trustees on July 26 include **Bee County; Covenant Preparatory School (The)**, Kingwood; **Family Service Association**, San Antonio; and **Your Paracletus CDC**, Houston.

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###

Food distributor and video surveillance camera contracts awarded for access through HCDE Choice Partners

New contracts for food distributors, video recording equipment and installation for special education classrooms and other categories were awarded at the June 2016 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative.

Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

The newly awarded contracts include

Athletic and Physical Education Supplies: *Custom Sportswear Inc.; Educator's Depot Inc.; Michele M. Summerall doing business as Getpoms.com; The Prophet Corporation doing business as Gopher Sport/Play with a Purpose/Gopher Performance; Gulf Coast Athletic Supply; North Houston Athletics LLC; Richey & Son Inc. doing business as Richey Athletics; School Specialty Inc.; Sideline Interactive LLC; Sign Solutions Inc.; Soccer 4 All Inc.; The Soccer Wall Company doing business as Soccer Innovations; Lifeguard Store Inc. doing business as All American Swim; Swim Shops of the Southwest; and Varsity Brands Holding Co. Inc./BSN Sports LLC doing business as U.S. Games;*

Boxes, Packaging Supplies and Freight Services: *Cardinal Delivery Service LLC; and Veritiv Operating Company formerly known as xpedx;*

Commercial Food Distributor: *Gordon Food Service Inc.; Jake's Finer Foods; and Labatt Food Service;*

Construction Photographic Documentation: *Multivista Systems LLC doing business as Multivista;*

Building Controls (JOC-IDIQ): *Automated Logic Contracting Services Inc. doing business as Automated Logic-Houston; Digital Air Control Inc. doing business as DAC Inc.; and Unify Energy Solutions;*

Fire, Safety, Security Surveillance Equipment Installation Services (JOC-IDIQ): *Active Campus LLC doing business as All Campus Security; IVS Inc. doing business as Angel Trax; ARC Government Solutions Inc.; ; CLS Technology Inc.; Duke Communications LLC doing business as DukeSys; LVC Technologies LLC; PSX Inc.; and VIP Systems Inc.; and*

High Quality Printing and Copying: *Houston Independent School District doing business as Houston ISD/PS1; Long Plan/3RD Printing doing business as LP Printing; Pamela Printing Company; Color One Systems Inc. doing business as Texas Litho; and Thomas Reprographics Inc. doing business as Thomas Printworks.*

Other contracts were renewed and include

Food Service Management: *Lagniappe Dining Services;*

Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment: *Butler Business Products LLC; D3 Inc. doing business as 9 to 5 Seating; Carroll's Discount Office Furniture Co.; Challenge Office Products Inc.; Computer Comforts Inc.; Allsteel Inc. doing business as Contract Resource Group LLC; Educator's Depot Inc.; ESI Ergonomic Solutions LLC; Facility Interiors Inc.; Hallmark Office Products Inc.; John R. Green doing business as Harrison & Co.; Indeco Sales Inc.; Kaplan Early Learning Company; Kay Davis Associates LLC; Lakeshore Learning Materials; Library Interiors of Texas; School Specialty Inc.; Lavaca County Office Supply Inc. doing business as South Texas School Furniture; Palmieri Furniture; TESCO Industries LLC; Rick Griffith doing business as Todays Classroom LLC; Vanguard Environments Inc.; Watson Furniture Group Inc.; and Wood Etc. Co.;*

Maintenance and Operations Parts and Equipment: *AOC Welding Supply/Praxair; Acme Architectural Hardware; All Tire Supply Co.; BEVCO Consultants LLC; Gulf Coast Paper Co.; H&V*

Equipment Inc.; High Point Sanitary Solutions Inc.; Supply Works doing business as Interline Brands; Johnson Supply & Equipment Corp. doing business as Johnson Supply; Lansdowne Moody Co. LP; Lennox International; McCoy's Building Supply; QSS LC doing business as Quality Security Systems; Karen Cato doing business as Texas Storage Systems - Cato Industries; and Zimmerer Kubota & Equipment;

Musical Instruments: *Band Star Musical Instruments; Universal Melody Services LLC doing business as Brook Mays Music/H&H Music; Music and Arts Centers; Taylor Music Inc.; The Mariachi Connection Inc.; and The Washington Music Sales Center Inc.;*

Doors, Windows and Hardware (JOC-IDIQ): *ERC Environmental & Construction Services Inc.; and Lee Construction and Maintenance Co. doing business as LMC Corp.;*

Painting, Drywall, Acoustical Ceilings and Flooring (JOC-IDIQ): *BaseLine Paving & Construction Inc.; ERC Environmental & Construction Services; and Lee Construction and Maintenance Co. doing business as LMC Corp.;*

Solid Waste and Recycling Services: *Waste Management of Texas;*
and

Textbooks and Library Books: *American Reading Co. Inc.; Barnes & Noble Booksellers Inc.; Coughlan Companies Inc. doing business as Capstone; Cengage Learning Inc. doing business as Gale Group; Complete Book and Media Supply LLC; DLB Educational Corp. doing business as DLB Books Inc.; Lektro Inc. doing business as Escue and Associates; Express Booksellers LLC doing business as Express Booksellers; KAMICO Instructional Media Inc.; Keystone Books and Media; Rainbow Books Inc.; Rourke Publishing LLC doing business as Rourke Educational Media; Scholastic Library Publishing Inc. and Library Sales Inc. doing business as SEBCO Books; Steps To Literacy; Teacher Created Materials; Universal Time Release Publishing; and WT Cox Information Services.*

New Members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on June 21 include **Building and Restoring Hope Inc.**, Houston;

Diocese of Dallas Catholic Schools Office, Dallas; **Fannin County**, Bonham; **Forney ISD**, Forney; **Gainesville ISD**, Gainesville; **Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority**, Houston; **Medina Valley ISD**, Castroville; and **Poteet ISD**, Poteet.

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‘Learn to Earn’ graduates at HCDE gain certification, training, employability for oil and gas industry

When jobs in the oil and gas industry began disappearing this year, Lashae Johnson knew she had to gain more workforce skills. She found her opportunity in the craft instruction class in the Adult Education division at Harris County Department of Education.

At 40, Johnson had seven years of varied experience when she was laid off. She moved to Houston from Louisiana so she has no family here to lean on. Although she has experience, she needed the basic certification required in the industry, the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10.

Johnson joins a growing number of women looking at the oil and gas industry as a new frontier. Pipefitting, industrial maintenance and welding are a few professions which remain in industry high demand.

Baby boomers are leaving the industry for retirement and taking their expertise with them. The gap creates opportunity for younger workers like Johnson. However, bosses are looking for forward thinkers, not workers pegged for just one job.

“It used to be who you know, and now it’s what you know,” Johnson said. “Refinery companies are looking for people willing to take on opportunities, but they need you to know the basics.”

Johnson coupled her on-the-job training with a basic core class at HCDE which combines basic safety, construction math, introduction to hand tools, power tools, construction drawing, materials handling, employability skills and communication skills. Fifty percent of the time was spent with a craft instructor while the other 50 was spent with an academic instructor.

HCDE craft instructor Clifton Hypolite says construction drawing was the hardest subject for his 48 students, but most picked up the concepts quickly. A math tutor provided help for those who needed it. The power tools instruction was a little unnerving, but along with experience came empowerment.

April 6 was graduation day. On hand to pass out NCCER certificates was Nolan Davis, career navigator at Capital IDEA, a nonprofit which partners with HCDE to get students trained for employment and helps them get paid while learning a trade.

Along with gaining her certificate and her experience, Johnson has applied for a part-time job teaching the craft instruction class with HCDE. She will also continue with her training, learning more crafts to help her get ahead in the oil and gas industry.

“With the downturn, it gave me a humbling experience because I was used to making good money,” she said. “When it stopped, I had to rebrand myself to be competitive and attractive to employers.”

-more-

The 48 graduates in the NCCER/OSHA core curriculum class are either continuing their training at San Jacinto College in welding or industrial training, or starting ground-level jobs in the oil and gas industry.

“The more you know, the quicker you advance,” said Johnson, giving sage advice to her classmates. “We have to broaden our horizons—period.”

(For information about craft instruction classes or other “Learn to Earn” programs at Harris County Department of Education, email ajohnson@hcde-texas.org or call 713-692-6216.)

Photo: Harris County Department of Education Adult Education student Lashae Johnson receives her NCCER/OSHA 10 certificate from Nolan Davis, career navigator at Capitol IDEA Houston. The workforce certificate is a basic certification required in the oil and gas industry and is the platform for building crafts expertise.

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Oct. 14, 2016

Lights On Afterschool pep rally celebrates, raises awareness for afterschool

Greater Houston rallies for afterschool during the *Lights On Afterschool!* national celebration for out-of-school time on Oct. 20 from 1:30-2 p.m. at the Houston Texans YMCA, 5202 Griggs Road.

View invite: <http://192.168.22.36/media/4290/lights-on-2016-invitation.pdf>

Mayor Sylvester Turner supports the cause as keynote, and several youth give their testimonials about how afterschool has influenced their lives. The event is hosted by the Greater Houston Lights On Alliance and is staged to be a high-energy event complete with cheerleaders and ceremonial fanfare.

"Afterschool programs meet a basic need for a majority of Harris County families, and we recognize and celebrate it," said Harris County Department of Education's Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids Director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers. "The city of Houston is an ongoing supporter of afterschool education, and we're thankful for that support."

City leaders support afterschool by investing funding in each council district to support programs provided by nonprofits. This school year, City Council invested \$550,000 into programs.

Members of the Greater Houston Lights On Alliance include the YMCA of Greater Houston, the City of Houston, Texas, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston, South East Texas After-School Association (SETAA), United Way of Greater Houston, Houston Independent School District, HCDE's CASE for Kids, Harris County Precinct 2, the After-School Achievement Program and the Houston Parks & Recreation Department.

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, child care facilities and community centers. CASE for Kids, a branch of Harris County Department of Education, was founded in 1999 with a goal to keep kids safe, help working families and improve academic achievement.

CASE for Kids plans celebrations with students, families and staff at three afterschool locations Oct. 20:

Alief Independent School District, Best Elementary, 10000 Centre Parkway, Houston, 77036, 5 p.m.
Description: Stations will be set up in different areas on campus including making healthy snacks, creating/writing stories, and discovering healthy lifestyles with exercise.

Aldine Independent School District, Francis Elementary, 14815 Lee Road, Houston, 77032, 5 p.m.
Description: Living light bulb to celebrate *Lights On Afterschool!* with humans outlining the shape.

Sheldon Independent School District, Null Middle School, 12117 Garrett Rd., Houston, 77044, 6-7 p.m.
Description: Five schools join in to participate in glow-in-the-dark Zumba sessions and goal-writing sessions with goals being launched in balloons.

About the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids or CASE for Kids: CASE for Kids, formerly the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment, was launched by Harris County Department of Education in 1999. CASE for Kids is an after-school intermediary which leverages community resources and strengthens the capacity of the out-of-school time field. Services benefit approximately 12,000 kids in greater Harris County. CASE for Kids programs happen before and after school, on weekends and during the summer. Go to www.afterschoolzone.org for information.

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###

Food contracts awarded for access through HCDE Choice Partners

New contracts for commodity processing of USDA foods were awarded at the May 2016 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

The newly awarded contracts are effective July 1 and include

Commodity Processing of USDA Foods: *AdvancePierre Foods Inc.; Alpha Foods Co.; Chinese Food Solutions Inc. doing business as Asian Food Solutions; Basic American Inc. doing business as Basic American Foods; Bongards Creameries; Cargill Kitchen Solutions; ConAgra Foods Inc.; Lamb Weston Sales Inc.; Goodman Food Products doing business as Don Lee Farms; ES Foods; Foster Poultry Farms doing business as Foster Farms; Pilgrim's Pride Corporation; High Liner Foods (USA) Inc.; Let's Do Lunch doing business as Integrated Food Service; Smucker Foodservice Inc. doing business as J.M. Smuckers; J.R. Simplot Company; Jennie-O Turkey Store Sales LLC; J.T.M. Provisions Company Inc.; Land O'Lakes Inc.; M.C.I. Foods Inc.; Maid-Rite Specialty Foods LLC; McCain Foods USA Inc; Michael Foods Inc.; National Food Group Inc.; Out of the Shell, LLC doing business as Ling's; Peterson Farms Fresh Inc.; Red Gold LLC; Rich Chicks LLC; Rich Products Corporation; Rose & Shore; Schwan's Food Service Inc.; Tabatchnick Fine Foods Inc.; Tasty Brands; The Father's Table LLC; Trident Seafoods Corporation; Tyson Prepared Foods Inc.; and Wawona Frozen Foods Inc.;*

Other contracts were renewed and include

Athletic (Indoor/Outdoor) Surfaces JOC-IDIQ: *Adventure Playground Systems Inc.; Jellison Inc. doing business as Jelco; PTI Sports & Recreation Construction formerly known as Playgrounds Today Inc.; and Soil Express, Ltd.;*

Bottled Drinking Water, Coolers: *DS Services of America Inc. doing business as Sparkletts and Nestle Waters North America;*

Bread Products: *Kurz & Co.;*

Dairy Products: *Borden Dairy Co.;*

Energy Purchase and Aggregation: *Reliant Energy;*

Exterior Building Cleaning: *Americlean; Hardy & Hardy Inc.; and Mid-Continental Restoration Co.;*

Exterior School Bus Surveillance Violation Detection System: *American Traffic Solutions Inc.; Redflex Guardian Inc.; and Dallas County Schools doing business as TexServe;*

Food Equipment, Parts, Repair Installation, Maintenance, Small Wares: *Ace Mart Restaurant Supply Company; H.A. Franz & Company; Heritage Food Service Group Inc.; ITW Food Equipment Group LLC doing business as Hobart Service; ISI Commercial Refrigeration, Inc.; Tari Inc. doing business as Jean's Restaurant Supply; Terry Woodard Enterprises Inc. doing business as Kommercial Kitchens; Pasco Brokerage Inc.; Preferred Foodservice Design/Supply Inc.; Crazy Cousins Inc. doing business as Shepard Food Equipment; and Texas Food Service Equipment Co.;*

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) JOC-IDIQ: *ABM Building & Energy Solutions LLC; A/W Mechanical Services, LP; Climatec LLC; Custom Air Products & Services Inc.; Dominion Air & Heat LLC; Dura Pier Facilities Services Ltd. doing business as Facilities Sources; ERC*

Environmental & Construction Services; Gowan Inc.; Heat Transfer Solutions; HVAC Mechanical Services of Texas Ltd/Hunton Services; Letsos Company; and The Brandt Companies LLC;

Ice Cream Products: *La Brisa;*

Insurance and Third Party Administration Services: *Brown & Brown Insurance Services of San Antonio Inc. doing business as Alamo Insurance Group; Financial Benefit Services LLC (FBS); Curtis M. Finley doing business as Finley Financial Services; TCG Group Holdings LLP doing business as JEM Resources Partners; TRISTAR Insurance; and U.S. Employee Benefits Services Group LLC;*

Kitchen Cleaning (Chemical) Products and Services: *Auto-Chlor Services LLC; Ecolab Inc; Hygeia Enviro-Clean Inc.; Magnus Procurement & Logistic Solution Inc.; and PortionPac Chemical Corporation;*

Modular Buildings and All Occupancy Ready Related Services: *GroundFORCE Building Systems LLC;*

Office Supplies: *Bosworth Paper Company; Butler Business Products LLC; Challenge Office Products Inc.; Hallmark Office Products Inc.; Reliant Business Products Inc.; School Specialty; Tejas Office Products Inc.; and U R Investments Inc. doing business as Texas Teacher Supply;*

Produce and Other Specialty Items: *Brothers Produce; Anyway you Slice It Inc. doing business as Chef's Produce; Hardie's Fruit & Vegetable Co.–Houston L.P.; and Scarmado Produce;*

Site-Based Pizza Program: *Bull's Eye Brands Inc. doing business as Smart Mouth Pizza; and*

Technology Hardware, Software and Related Items: *Dahill Office Technology doing business as Dahill; Conference Technologies Inc; Summit Integration Systems; and Zeno Imaging.*

New Members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on May 17 include **Central Valley School District #356**, Spokane Valley, Washington; **East Central ISD**, San Antonio; **Hudson ISD**, Lufkin; **Midland Academy Charter School**, Midland; **Mexia ISD**, Mexia; **Red Oak ISD**, Red Oak; **St. Mary's Charter School**, Beeville; and **The TSTC Foundation**, Waco.

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February 2, 2016

National AfterSchool Association selects CASE for Kids director Lisa Thompson-Caruthers for leadership award

Houston afterschool leader Lisa Thompson-Caruthers was named “Most Influential in State and Local Government” through an award issued by the National AfterSchool Association, the national membership organization supporting afterschool and youth development professions.

Caruthers, director of the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, is one of 39 state and local leaders being honored nationwide. CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education, provides resources, trainings and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, child care facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

Awardees this year are an impressive group of mayors, superintendents, state legislators, agency leaders and others who are working to support afterschool in their communities said Gina Warner, president and CEO of the National AfterSchool Association. The distinction recognizes state and local government officials who are strong advocates and supporters of afterschool and out-of-school time programs.

Caruthers has led CASE for Kids for 14 years and has dedicated a total of 20 years to out-of-school. Before joining CASE for Kids, Lisa provided management support to the Houston arts community and taught in afterschool and summer arts-based programs in both Houston and St. Louis. She received a bachelor of fine arts from the University of Louisiana, a master's in social work from Washington University in St. Louis and a doctorate from University of Houston's Graduate School of Social Work. Her research specialty is youth engagement, out-of-school time programming and systems that equalize access for low-income youth.

Caruthers was nominated for the award by Steven Villano, board member for the South East Texas Afterschool Association and an afterschool director for Pasadena Independent School District.

As the only national membership organization supporting afterschool and youth development professionals, the National AfterSchool Association represents over 20,000 afterschool professionals.

Leaders selected for the award will be featured in the spring edition of the association's magazine. Other Texas leaders selected include Texas State Senator Royce West and Fort Worth Mayor Betsy Price.

About the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment (CASE) for Kids: CASE for Kids, formerly the Cooperative for After-School Enrichment, was launched by Harris County Department of Education in 1999. CASE for Kids is an after-school intermediary which leverages community resources and strengthens the capacity of the out-of-school time field. Services benefit approximately 12,000 kids in greater Harris County. CASE for Kids programs happen before and after school, on weekends and during the summer. Go to www.afterschoolzone.org for information.

Harris County Department of Education Participates in National Bullying Prevention Month

October is National Bullying Prevention Month and Harris County Department of Education will join schools and communities across the nation to raise awareness and support bullying prevention. Celebrating its 10-year anniversary, Bullying Prevention Month was initiated by PACER's National Bullying Center in 2006 and has since grown to an entire month of education and awareness activities recognized by schools and communities throughout the world.

"Every child has the right to feel safe and supported in school," said Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Ecomet Burley. "National Bullying Prevention Month is a time when educators, students, parents and community members can come together to support bullying prevention and make schools safer for our children."

There are many ways schools and community members can get involved this October for the 10-year anniversary of National Bullying Prevention Month:

- **Celebrate Unity Day:** Students, teachers and community members will wear orange and send a united message of support on Unity Day, Wednesday, Oct. 19.
- **Hold events and activities:** Schools and communities around the country recognize National Bullying Prevention Month through creative events and initiatives. There are many resources available at www.PACER.org/Bullying.
- **Participate in the You're Not Alone campaign:** This new campaign provides resources and education on ways communities can show they care and are united against bullying, including classroom and event toolkits.

For more information and resources on National Bullying Prevention Month, visit www.PACER.org/Bullying.

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Head Start Father, Volunteer Recognized for National Parental Involvement Day

Every year, National Parental Involvement Day celebrates the powerful contributions parents provide at school and home to support student success. There are many studies that highlight the positive impact parents play in their child's education and HCDE Head Start parent Lawrence Simmons understands the importance of his presence as a parent volunteer.

Simmons is a father of five children ranging from high school to pre-k. His youngest, 5-year-old Miosotis, attends Sheffield Head Start Center and is used to seeing him while she is at school. Simmons stops by the Sheffield center almost daily to help with everything from office and clerical work, to monitoring the front doors and helping teachers with classroom activities.

Additionally, he was elected as this year's Head Start Policy Council Chairperson and regularly leads a group of parents and guardians that act as the parents' voice in making decisions for the program.

"I volunteer because it benefits not only my individual child, but all of the children who attend Sheffield," said Simmons. "They know there is another adult on their side and it gives them a feeling of community."

Although he is most active at the Sheffield center these days, Simmons continues to volunteer at his children's elementary and high schools as well.

"It's important to stay involved in your children's education, even after they leave elementary school."

This National Parental Involvement Day, HCDE recognizes the many dedicated parents like Simmons who volunteer their time and resources to create healthy, effective school environments for their children.

9 Harris County Students Travel to New York City's Carnegie Hall to Accept National Scholastic Art & Writing Medals

Nine of the best student artists and writers from Harris County traveled to New York City's Carnegie Hall last week to be honored at the 2016 National Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. This year, Harris County teens received a total of 50 National Scholastic Art & Writing Medals. The Awards are sponsored regionally by Harris County Department of Education.

During the National Ceremony on June 2, 660 teens from across the U.S. were honored by filmmaker Ken Burns, Emmy award-winning writer and actor Sonia Manzano, Emmy award-winner and bestselling author Tim Gunn, former U.S. Poet Laureate Billy Collins and surprise guest, award-winning actor Alec Baldwin.

In addition to the Gold Key Medals received by the nine Harris County students, Deer Park Bonnette Junior High School student Peyton Vasquez was honored with the RBC "Flaunt It" Award, sponsored by RBC Capital Markets, and a \$1,000 scholarship. Vasquez was one of only two teens nationally to be recognized with this award.

"For more than 90 years, Scholastic Art & Writing Awards has recognized the vision, ingenuity and talent of our students and provided opportunities for creative teens to be celebrated," said Andrea Segraves, Harris County Department of Education coordinator for Scholastic Art & Writing. "With more than 320,000 entries nationally, we are proud of our Harris County medalists."

The students who traveled to New York City were Andrea Conley, Houston ISD; Erin DelPaggio, Klein ISD; Judy Labib, Cypress Fairbanks ISD; Jasmine Mack, Katy ISD; Bradlee Few, Kincaid School; Taylor Gleason, Deer Park ISD; Autumn McMillian, Galena Park ISD; Melanie Menkiti, The Village School; and Peyton Vasquez, Deer Park ISD.

For more information, photos and videos from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, visit <https://goo.gl/EnGcZY>.

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Security officer contracts awarded in November for access through HCDE Choice Partners

New contracts for security officers were awarded at the November 2016 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

The newly awarded contracts include

Security Officers: *Executive Threat Solutions LLC; Houston Enforcement Inc.; and Vets Securing America.*

Other contracts were renewed and include

Curriculum, Instructional, Assessment and Intervention Materials and Supplies:

MyOfficeProducts LLC doing business as Unity Education Resources; and Scholastic Inc. (Classroom & Community Division);

Educational and Instructional Software: *3P Learning Inc; Attainment Co. Inc.; Reed Debra Howard doing business as Brain Hurricane/Wowzers; Carnegie Learning Inc.; DynaStudy Inc.; Imagination Station Inc. doing business as Istation; Lakeshore Equipment Co. doing business as Lakeshore Learning Materials; Neufeld Learning Systems Inc.; Pitsco Inc.; Rosetta Stone Ltd.; and TPR Education LLC doing business as The Princeton Review;*

Motor and Aviation Fuel, Alternative Fuel, Lubricants and Related Items: *R & C Distributors LLC doing business as Blender Direct; Diplomat Petroleum LLC; Octcet Inc.; Petroleum Traders Corp.; Sun Coast Resources Inc.; and Sundance Fuel Ltd. and*

Parking and Street Cleaning Services: *Satco Services Inc. doing business as Southern Care Sweeping and Paving Co.*

New Members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Nov. 15 include city of **Chino**, Calif.; county of **Solano**, Fairfield, Calif.; **Houston Gateway Academy Inc.**; **La Pryor ISD**; **Lutheran Education Association of Houston**; **Midland College**; **Paris ISD**; **Wichita County**, Wichita Falls; and **Little Rock School District**, Little Rock, Ark.

About Choice Partners: Choice Partners national cooperative offers quality, legal procurement and contract solutions to meet the purchasing needs of governmental entities. Contracts are competitively bid so governmental entities can act immediately to access the contract they need, saving time and money on the bidding process and purchase. Choice Partners includes contracts for

education, facilities, food, services, technology and supplies, including a unique supply catalog. For more information, call 877-696-2122 or visit www.choicepartners.org.

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Student information system contracts awarded in October for access through HCDE Choice Partners

New contracts for student information systems were awarded at the October 2016 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

The newly awarded contracts include

Student Information Systems: *Focus School Software; SunGard Public Sector LLC (an FIS Company) doing business as SunGard K-12; and Tyler Technologies Inc.*

Other contracts were renewed and include

Curriculum, Instructional, Assessment and Intervention Materials and Supplies: *3P Learning Inc. doing business as 3P Learning; Achieve3000 Inc.; Gregory D. Laufer doing business as Adventures In Learning; B.E. Publishing; Carnegie Learning Inc.; DLB Educational Corp.; DynaStudy Inc.; Eric Armin Inc. doing business as EAI Education; Education Plus; Frog Street Press Inc.; Richards Investments Inc. doing business as Hands-On Tasks Inc.; John R. Green doing business as Harrison and Co.; Imagination Station Inc. doing business as Istation; Jarrett Publishing Co.; Keystone Books & Media; Lab Resources Inc.; Lakeshore Equipment Co. doing business as Lakeshore Learning Materials; Kimco Educational Products doing business as Learning Zone; Lectorum Publications Inc.; LEGO Dacta-Pitsco LLC doing business as LEGO Education; Mentoring Minds LP; ProLiteracy Worldwide doing business as New Readers Press; Northwest Evaluation Association; Pitsco Inc. doing business as Pitsco Education; Primary Concepts Inc.; Saddleback Educational Publishing Inc.; Scholastic Library Publishing Inc.; Steps To Literacy; Teacher Heaven Inc.; and UR Investment Inc. doing business as Texas Teacher Supply;*

Elevators and Related Services: *EMR Elevator Inc.;*

Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS): *ARC Government Solutions Inc.;*

Integrated Technology Learning Laboratories (Furnish and Install): *Learnsapes Inc. doing business as Creative Learning Systems;*

Janitorial Products and Services: *Buckeye International Inc. doing business as Buckeye Cleaning Center-Houston; Complete Supply Inc.; and Cordell Inc. doing business as Ridley's Vacuum & Janitorial Supply;*

Road Products and Equipment (Signage, Chemicals, Gravel and Concrete): *Cambell's Signs of Texas LLC; and Southwest Geo-Solutions Inc. doing business as Geo-Solutions Inc.;*

Telemedicine Services: *Lone Star Telemedicine Services Inc.; and Phonoscope Health Network Inc.; and*

Temporary Personnel Services: *ExecuTeam Staffing LP; ObjectWin Technology Inc.; RLS Interest doing business as Prime Systems; CBS Personnel Services LLC doing business as Staffmark; and Superior Talent Resources Inc.*

New Members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Oct. 18 include **Everman ISD**, Everman; city of **Highland Village**; and city of **Rockwall**.

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March 1, 2016

'Restorative Justice' training held at HCDE aimed at replacing punitive justice for troubled teens in schools

A new alternative to student discipline called “Restorative Justice” is aimed at helping schools prevent students from becoming products of the “school to prison pipeline.”

Trainer and program director Sherwynn Patton brings the program to the Center for Safe and Secure Schools at Harris County Department of Education, 6005 Westview Drive, on March 7-9 with an in-depth training and implementation session for educators. Patton said he partners with the Texas Education Agency and the Institute of Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue to training personnel in education service centers and schools throughout Texas.

Restorative Justice focuses on the needs of victims and offenders, as well as the school and community as a whole. A group discussion model, including talking and healing circles, seeks to repair broken bonds between students or between students and teachers.

Center for Safe and Secure Schools director Ecomet Burley says the sessions are in high demand because schools are looking for open-and-honest, permanent solutions to conflict versus Band-Aid solutions which don't get to the heart of issues.

"When we use exclusionary practices like in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions and expulsions, it leads the student to wander the streets," said Patton. "In many cases, these practices lead to jail time or criminal records.

"Our goal is to build healthy relationships between students and teachers—ones in which teachers can teach and students and peers can learn."

In addition to reforming discipline, Patton says restorative practices have been shown to reduce suspensions and improve attendance. The benefits for individuals are immeasurable as they learn how to resolve conflicts and improve their lives. Rather than being simply abandoned, at-risk students are given a chance to address the problems that caused them to misbehave in the first place.

Patton released a documentary about Restorative Justice last spring called “Chasing Smoke.”

"The way we handle discipline, in our schools, prison and even our homes, is like throwing water on smoke," he says in the video. "We see the smoke so we attack smoke, completely ignoring the fire that is completely consuming everything around us. This movie is an attempt to get people to look at the fire rather than just chasing smoke."

To register for Restorative Justice training, go to <http://wms.hcde-texas.org> and search by workshop date or title. For more information about the workshop or the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, call 713-696-2127.

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July 20, 2016

Roberta Scott Joins HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools as School Safety Solutions Specialist

Harris County Department of Education's Center for Safe and Secure Schools has appointed Roberta Scott to a new position as safety solutions specialist. The center was formed in 1999 by HCDE at the request of local superintendents to provide increased safety and security strategies in school environments for students and educators.

Scott's tenured experience in education will enhance the center's ability to serve area school districts with increased safety and security strategies, said Center for Safe and Secure Schools Director Ecomet Burley.

Her diverse résumé reflects many areas of expertise, including more than 10 years of experience enhancing educational standards for schools. She worked for Baltimore County Public Schools as counselor coordinator and also served students in Houston Independent School District as academic program manager for Apollo 20, an initiative created six years ago to increase academic performance and close the achievement gap.

Originally from Beaumont, Scott has lived in the Houston area for 24 years. She earned a doctorate in educational leadership and a master's degree in counseling education from Prairie View A&M University and a bachelor's degree in speech communication from Texas Southern University.

"Roberta Scott is a smart, dedicated professional whose vast experience in education will be a huge asset to the center as she brings knowledge and enthusiasm to her new role," said Burley. "Her ability to put in place long-term strategies to improve the lives of students will help us continue to increase safety and security in area schools, which now more than ever is extremely important."

Scott, also a parent of a school-aged daughter, emphasized the critical and timely nature of her role, which among other things involves conducting safety audits to ensure that schools are prepared for the unexpected.

"As educators, it's so important that we do not forget our responsibility to protect and nurture the stars of our future, our students," she said.

About the Center for Safe and Secure Schools: Developed at the request of local superintendents in the spring of 1999 to advance safe and secure environments for learning and teaching, the Center for Safe and Secure Schools is a leader in the development of increased safety and security strategies in school environments for students and educators. Learn more about the trainings and other opportunities we offer at www.safeandsecureschools.org.

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HCDE Head Start children benefit from Houston CPA Society's massive goody bag assembly, distribution Dec. 9

The 46th Annual Santa Houston CPA Goody Bag Stuffing Campaign is providing 7,000 extra stocking stuffers for children enrolled in Head Start Centers throughout Harris County. The bags filled with apples, books, dental kits and healthy snacks will be assembled by an army of volunteers on Dec. 9 from 8:30-10:30 a.m. At 11 a.m., Houston CPA volunteers visit Harris County Department of Education's Pugh Head Start Center located at 1042 Henke in northeast Houston to make the holiday delivery to 3-5 year olds at the center.

Partners in the program are the Houston Area CPA Society, Southern Dental and the U.S. Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston. At Harris County Department of Education, 1,200 students benefit from the donations.

The Houston CPA Society has 8,000 members who represent 13 area counties surrounding Houston, according to Jennifer Poff, the organization's executive director. The event is a signature event for the organization.

As the executive director of The Houston CPA Society, I believe it is important for me to help lead the charge in our community service endeavors with Santa CPAs being one of our signature events. Plus, who doesn't get excited when you see a child get a gift and meet Santa during the Christmas holiday season.

Head Start programs are federally funded and provide educational services for low-income families of preschool children, including those with disabilities.

"HCDE Head Start is thankful for these community members for providing these extras for our families during the holidays," said Venetia Peacock, HCDE Head Start senior director.

For more information about Head Start, visit www.hcde-texas.org .

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MEDIA ALERT



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Science Teachers and Industry Workshop at HCDE helps educators, students understand local industry through hands-on training July 18

What: Teachers throughout Harris County gain a better understanding of the chemical industry and area chemical plants through a summer workshop hosted by Harris County Department of Education sponsored by the Texas Chemical Council. In turn, area middle and high schools benefit by learning how science applies to the workplace.

Media invite includes a hands-on session where educators collect buckets of produced products at local plants. Teacher interviews available. Included in bucket collections are Rubbermaid snack containers, highlighters, Ziploc baggies, diapers, Ivory soap, Matchbox cars, EXPO dry erase markers, Gorilla gel and masking tape.

When: Tuesday, July 19, 2016. 1-1:30 p.m.

Where: 6300 Irvington Blvd., Houston, TX

Who: Middle and high school science teachers and local representatives from chemical plants

Etc: Contact Carol Vaughn, 713-696-0756 or 281-660-9205 for details

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New contracts awarded in September for access through HCDE Choice Partners

New contracts for chemical supplies, lighting services and web-based electronic bidding systems were awarded at the September 2016 board meeting of Harris County Department of Education and are accessible through HCDE Choice Partners cooperative. Governmental entities that have signed an interlocal contract with HCDE may access these legally procured contracts.

The newly awarded contracts include

Chemicals, Supplies and Related Services: *Ecolab Inc.; Cordell Inc. doing business as Hygeia Enviro-Clean; Magnus Procurement & Logistic Solutions Inc. doing business as Magnus; Priscilla M. Ayerite doing business as NAO Global Health LLC; Pollock Investments Inc. doing business as Pollock Paper Distributors or Pollock Packaging; and Winfield Solutions LLC;*

Lighting Supplies, Services and Installation (JOC-IDIQ): *Fine Line Production Co.; Inline Electric Solutions of Texas LLC; Lee Construction and Maintenance Co. doing business as LMC Corporation; Rexel Inc.; Spark Lighting LLC; and XtraLight Manufacturing Ltd.; and*

Web-Based Electronic Bidding System: *E-Bid Systems Inc. doing business as eBid Systems; EqualLevel Inc.; and Ion Wave Technologies Inc.*

Other contracts were renewed and include

Affordable Care Act (ACA) Auditing/Reporting Service: *Businessolver.com Inc.; Eligibility Tracking Calculators LLC; and U.S.R. Health LLC doing business as Employee Benefits Services Group;*

Direct Delivery of Ice Cream: *Dippin' Dots; and Southern Ice Cream;*

Technical Services and Products for Food Service : *Robert Beyer Enterprises LLC doing business as Automated Financial Systems; Water Walkers Inc. (Health-e Meal Planner Pro); Heartland School Solutions, a division of Heartland Payment Systems Inc.; Education Management Systems Inc. (Meals Plus); PCS Revenue Control Systems Inc.; and ISITE Software (School Nutrition and Fitness); and*

Third Party Code Inspection Services: *Bureau Veritas North America Inc.; and Robert Correy Woods doing business as ProTech Group.*

New Members

Organizations and governmental entities that became members when contracts were approved by the HCDE Board of Trustees on Sept. 20 include **Bastrop ISD**, Bastrop; **Baylor College of Medicine**, Houston; **Focus Learning Academy**, Dallas; town of **Prosper**; **Puyallup School District**

No. 3, Puyallup; **Royse City ISD**, Royse City; city of **Sherman**; and **Windcrest United Methodist Church**, San Antonio.

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Dec. 8, 2016

HCDE CASE for Kids, Pasadena ISD afterschool programs to host traditional tamale-making party at South Houston Elementary and Intermediate schools

Every year at this time, many Latino families gather to celebrate a fragrant tradition: the tamalada, or tamale-making party. These family gatherings serve as social affairs where members of the extended family get together to prepare food, catch up on family news and just enjoy spending time together.

This year, the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids) Texas ACE 21 Century afterschool programs at South Houston Elementary and South Houston Intermediate are hosting a **Tamalada Party on Friday, Dec. 16**. The day's festivities will kick off with the making of tamales from **9 a.m. to noon** at **South Houston Elementary, 900 Main St.** in Houston. Sharing of community resources and games will take place in the afternoon until 4 p.m. and will be followed by a celebration and dinner lasting until 6 p.m.

"This is an innovative way that both schools will be promoting their afterschool programs and their family engagement component to the families and the community," said Lisa Thompson-Caruthers, director for CASE for Kids, a division of Harris County Department of Education.

Rich with Latino culture, these two campuses sit a couple of miles from each other. The elementary feeds into the middle school in Pearland ISD. Parents are familiar with each other, and some even have children that attend both elementary and intermediate afterschool programs. Like many of the families that benefit from HCDE-CASE for Kids Texas ACE Programs, however, many work and have busy schedules that might keep them from participating on campus.

Parents from both campuses, under the leadership of HCDE CASE for Kids' Family Engagement Specialists, have come together to host their children's first tamalada. Two types of tamales will be made Mexican and Central American Tamales. Families will be sharing recipes and learning from each other's culture.

Those interested in participating should text the message @tamalada to the number 81010.

About the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment (CASE) for Kids: 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, child care facilities and community centers. Services benefit approximately 12,000 kids in greater Harris County. CASE for Kids programs happen before and after school, on weekends and during the summer. Go to www.afterschoolzone.org for information. 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.

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January 28, 2016

Teen awardees named by HCDE for Scholastic Art & Writing Awards 2016 as volunteers judge record 8,177 art, writing entries

Talented teen artists and writers in Harris County schools earn regional awards in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards 2016. Harris County Department of Education announced the Gold Key, Silver Key and honorable mention awardees on January 26 through its website at www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting.

Teen recipients of awards hail from 18 Harris County school districts, 16 private schools, two charter schools and a home school. A total of 8,177 entries were submitted—2,100 writing and 6,077 art. Of the 2,100 writing entries (including 33 portfolios), awards consist of 124 Gold Key, 172 Silver Key and 302 honorable mentions. For the 6,077 art entries (including 324 portfolios), awards consist of 252 Gold Key, 352 Silver Key and 506 honorable mention.

“This year we judged 40 percent more entries, allowing for more opportunities for young writers and artists in Harris County,” said Andrea Segraves, coordinator for the regional Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, sponsored regionally by Harris County Department of Education. “We thank community professionals who volunteered to judge this unprecedented increase in student entries. We celebrate the support we have from corporations and nonprofits who value the futures of these talented teens.”

Local receptions and showcases for Scholastic Art & Writing awardees will be announced on the website at www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting. Venues include The Museum of Fine Arts Houston Glassell School of Art, Archway Gallery, Texas Art Supply and Harris County Department of Education.

Teens gaining Gold, Silver and honorable mentions this year come from the following school districts: Aldine, Alief, Clear Creek, Crosby, Deer Park, Fort Bend, Galena Park, Goose Creek Consolidated, Houston, Huffman, Humble, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Pearland, Spring, Spring Branch and Tomball. Charter schools include Calvin Nelms High School and KIPP schools. Private schools are Art Studio, Cypress Christian School, Duchesne Academy, Episcopal High School, Houston Christian School, Incarnate Word Academy, Presbyterian School, River Oaks Baptist School, St. Agnes Academy, St. John’s School, St. Thomas Episcopal School, St. Thomas High School, The Branch School, The Kinkaid School, The Post Oak School and The Village School.

Gold Key Awards in art and writing advance to the national level. Winners will be announced in May, and many students will gain the opportunity to attend ceremonies in Carnegie Hall in New York City where Scholastic Art & Writing is located.

Since its beginnings, the Awards has established a track record for identifying the early promise of our nation’s most accomplished and prolific creative leaders. Alumni artists include Andy Warhol, Robert Indiana, Kay WalkingStick, and John Baldessari. Writers include Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, Joyce Carol Oates, Zac Posen, Robert Redford, Lena Dunham and Ken Burns.

For more information about Awards recipients or to judge or sponsor, go to www.hcde-texas.org/scholasticartandwriting.

Photo: Katy ISD student Stephanie Zhou from Seven Lakes High School earns a Gold Key Award for her painting entitled "Summer Blues." Gold Key Awards advance nationally to be judged in New York City.

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Time for Toys: A time for giving back for adult learners at HCDE

A holiday toy campaign called “Time for Toys” launched by Harris County Department of Education employees grew into a community giving campaign for adult education students attending classes through the department. The students are learning English, working on academics to pass their GEDs and gaining workplace skills. They’re also getting life lessons about being model citizens by giving back through the toy drive.

Santa will deliver many of the toys donated to children at the HCDE Compton Head Start in northeast Houston on Dec. 14 at 11:30 a.m., 9720 Spalding St., Houston, Texas, 77016.

Hilda Ramos, program assistant for HCDE Adult Education promoted the toy campaign originally organized by HCDE Human Resources to her teachers and students enrolled in night classes. The notion of giving toys to needy Head Start children grew like wildfire.

Once tallied, the students enrolled in four GED and English as a second language evening classes collected 300 cars, dolls, puzzles, books, stuffed animals and other items for 3-5 year olds.

“Most of our students are working students, trying to improve their lives to get better jobs,” said Ramos. “They want to be better citizens in the community and to be role models for their children.”

HCDE County School Superintendent James Colbert said he is humbled by the generosity of the adult learners, the teachers and staff.

“Many of our students struggle financially, yet they find the resources to give back,” Colbert said.

Student Salvador Cardenas, 45, a student enrolled in Monica Hampton’s ESL class, remembers a time when he was 12 and received a toy truck when his family needed help at Christmas.

“I now have the opportunity to share something with kids in need,” said the father of three. “People helped me when I was a kid, and I was happy because of it.”

A pizza party was organized by Ramos for the top two winning classes. Although the incentive of food helped, ESL teacher Lucinda Guevara says her students participated because the campaign is about feeling good about giving. She recently took her students to the Houston Food Bank to volunteer to reinforce good citizenship.

“It’s the attitude of helping people out there,” Guevara said. “I have been enjoying it, and my students enjoy it too.”

About HCDE Adult Education: With a 30-year track record, HCDE Adult Education provides classes to adult learners with a goal to “learn to earn,” including adult basic literacy and math skills, GED, English as a second language and vocational training. Classes are held in 35 community locations throughout Harris and Liberty counties. Communities include Baytown, Alief, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon, Spring Branch and Liberty. Corporations also benefit from HCDE services provided to English language learning employees aimed at improving productivity and safety in the workplace. For more information access www.hcde-texas.org/adulteducation or 713-692-6216.

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



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March 3, 2016

Tumy named new director for English, Social Studies at HCDE Teaching and Learning Center

Kelly Tumy is the new director for English/language arts and social studies within the Teaching and Learning Center at Harris County Department of Education.

Tumy is formerly the secondary English/language arts coordinator for Crosby Independent School District and has worked for 25 years as an educator. She earned her bachelor's degree in education from Texas Tech University and her master's degree in literature from the University of Houston Clear Lake.

Her leadership initiatives include serving as vice president-elect, membership and affiliates to the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts. She was elected to that post in January 2016.

As director of ELA for the Teaching and Learning Center, Tumy is responsible for implementing English/language arts and social studies training and coaching to teachers and administrators through workshops delivered at Harris County Department of Education. Her division also supplies customized trainings for teachers within school districts.

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Turning from Anger to Success: Amari Harrison shares her HCDE Highpoint East story

Amari Harrison's favorite colors are pink and blue, but there were days when the 17-year-old only saw red. Temper outbursts brought on by her brother's death plagued her school history.

"I had built up anger released toward everyday strangers," she said, remembering those times.

Harrison is all smiles two days before she returns to her home school in Humble, and "excited" is her new favorite word. Her graduation date in May is etched in her checks-and-balances along with the credits she has gained from Highpoint East, her eight-month, transitional school.

Highpoint East is Harris County Department of Education's alternative school for troubled youth. Highpoint East uses a multi-pronged approach to helping students get back on track and return to their home districts to graduate. A low student-to-teacher ratio along with a personalized plan for social and academic reform helps students become successful.

"What makes it different here are the teachers," she said. "They put a lot of effort and work into you so you can be a better person."

At Highpoint, rules and regulations are rewarded with a point system that reinforces good behavior and adherence to academics. Emphasis is placed on improved social skills.

Eleven districts in greater Houston contract to send students to this special school. Students have a history of unruliness when they arrive, but a sweep of the classrooms with 15 to 1 student-to-teacher ratios shows focused students working to achieve their goals.

Each morning, buses from neighboring school districts drop off students from their middle and high schools as the school services students in grades 6-12.

Harrison is a student that Highpoint transition specialist Garland Greene calls: "receptive to those whom she believes cares."

"She's a listener and is committed to being successful—the type of person that, even though she makes mistakes, she knows she can turn herself around," Greene said.

Harrison points to her grandmother, Alice Scott, as her role model in life.

"I aspire to be like her," she said. "She's a two-time cancer survivor from colon and breast cancer and she's done everything for me."

The senior who wants to be a physical therapist is admittedly a survivor herself. When she walks across the stage in May at her high school in Humble ISD, she visualizes making her family happy.

“I tell other kids to pray on it and when they have problems, go to counseling,” she said. “Some things that make you mad are not worth the trouble, so just walk away.”

Aldine ISD

Area Educators Get Creative at You Gotta Have Art Workshop



Harris County elementary teachers got creative during the 11th Annual You Gotta Have Art workshop July 20-21. This two-day workshop allowed teachers to create art projects that they are able to recreate with their students in the classroom, complete with lesson plans.

Under the instruction of artist and consultant Joe Culotta, teachers were able to explore new ways to use existing and new media to make art exciting and fun for students.

“I use art as a teaching tool for educators to help kids get excited about school,” said Culotta. “During the workshop, we also infuse art with social studies, math and language arts to create interdisciplinary art projects.”

For more than 20 years, Culotta has traveled throughout school districts in Texas to assist art teachers and other educators who incorporate art into their lessons.

A few of the projects completed during the workshop include relief sculptures from a flat surface, fabric design with applied design techniques on cotton and silk fabrics, and art pieces with five canvases to practice design flow.

For Aldine ISD’s Sara Gomer, You Gotta Have Art provided a foundation for her classroom and an outlet to share ideas with other art teachers. Previously a kindergarten teacher, she will begin her first year teaching art in the fall.

“Art is important for students because it provides them with an opportunity to let go and express themselves creatively,” said Gomer. “Through this workshop, I gained fundamentals for my classroom and experienced working with new art materials.”

For more information about workshop opportunities, visit www.hcde-texas.org.

Photo: Aldine ISD Teacher Sara Gomer gets creative at the You Gotta Have Art workshop held at HCDE July 20-21.

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Katy ISD Art Teacher Sherry Doll has been attending the You Gotta Have Art workshop since it began 11 years ago. In addition to experiencing new art projects and learning about new materials, Doll uses these workshops to engage with other art teachers and share ideas.

“I learn something new every time I attend this workshop,” said Doll. “There are always new products and technology to use for art projects, and the teachers who attend learn from each other and continue to share ideas throughout the school year.”

Doll explains that even though she has a very diverse student population with different backgrounds, all of her students can appreciate and express themselves through art. “Art is a universal language,” said Doll.

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Photo: Katy ISD Teacher Sherry Doll works on an art project at the You Gotta Have Art workshop held at HCDE July 20-21.

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“Art is so important for students because it encompasses everything,” explains Casares. “Language arts, science, social studies – they all contain elements of art.”

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Photo: Spring Branch ISD Teacher Maria Casares works with artist and consultant Joe Culotta at the You Gotta Have Art workshop held at HCDE July 20-21.

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