

Of Note...

The first semester of this academic year is drawing to a brisk close. By the end of next week, our client school districts will have begun Winter Break. All districts will resume session no later than January 5. The Department will follow suit, resuming normal operations Wednesday, January 3. To that end, the Department has been engaged in a variety of festive activities throughout the various divisions and programs.

I began this week, as usual, with a meeting of my Executive Leadership Team, followed by presenting to the Region 13 Principals Academy in Austin (after several consecutive years). This year, I presented Leadership Judo. The group was engaged and the presentation was well-received. It was an honor to provide professional development and motivation to this group of leaders in education.

I continued the week with my volunteerism efforts through the SuperMENTor program and Humble Head Start, followed by Board Orientation for two more newly-elected board members.

On Wednesday and Thursday, HCDE celebrated two decades of Bates Collision gifting rehabbed cars to two Head Start mothers. This annual event occurs during the month of December, with cars filled with gifts for the children, while gas and insurance are provided for a period of time by various area sponsors. This event has become a great tradition within the Head Start division as well as with Bates Collision. I offer continued thanks to the Bates family for improving the quality of lives for our parents by providing them with reliable transportation. The Channelview event was held Wednesday, while the Baytown event was held yesterday.

I am pleased to announce that on yesterday, the Adult Education division hosted its National Adult Education Honor Society for those outstanding learners who go above-and-beyond to better themselves. The division honored 32 honorees, each with a unique story of triumph.

Also, on yesterday, the Human Resources division hosted their annual Holiday Reception at NPO. The Irvington Holiday Reception will take place next Wednesday, immediately before the regularly-scheduled Board Meeting.

This week, in the area of teaching and learning, the Department continued to host a plethora of workshops and sessions to advance teaching and learning in Harris County and beyond. HCDE continues to lead in professional development.

Looking ahead into next week, I will begin the week as usual with a meeting of the ELT, followed by a tour of Avondale House the following day. Again, both the Irvington location's holiday event will be held Wednesday as well as the December Board Meeting. The Academic and Behavior West location will host its annual Christmas Celebration, which is sure to be a treat. I will close the week and head into the Winter Break with internal meetings with staff.

As always, thanks for your service to HCDE and I hope you have a relaxing weekend. Please enjoy this issue of **The Connector**.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Holiday Reception, Irvington—Wednesday, December 19, 2018 (Noon-1pm)

December Board Meeting—Wednesday, December 19, 2018

Academic and Behavior Center West Christmas Celebration—Thursday, December 20, 2018



WEEK OF DECEMBER 10, 2018

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Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Kids' Day Entrepreneurship Fuels Career Exploration



Kids' Day Entrepreneurship held last week provided plenty of buying-and-selling action and allowed afterschool students enrolled in CASE for Kids to get hands-on experience with business marketplaces.

Bankers from Wells Fargo and Bank of Texas, as well as Business Services employees, took care of the business end of the experience. Students provided marketing presentations about their products before the market began. Plastic banking cards allowed students a real-world glimpse at balancing business and budgets.

View the Houston Chronicle photo which appeared the next day in the City/State section: http://hcde-texas.org/media/uploads/2018/12/Kids-Day-Chronicle_121218.pdf

View photo album: https://hcdetexas.photoshelter.com/gallery/20181207-KidsDay/G0000AixJuoOTCj4/C00004_TOcMx6zuQ (password is hcde1889)



Santa Visits Head Start



Jesus Amezcua and his Business Services staff deliver presents to children at Compton Head Start where Amezcua also volunteers as a SuperMENTor.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

Older Learners Honored at HCDE Share Stories of Struggle, Success



Older learners share stories about learning English, gaining new careers and balancing adult responsibility as they were honored on Thursday, Dec. 13 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington. The 32 adults were inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society as outstanding learners who go above-and-beyond to better themselves and help and inspire others.

- Nanny from Mexico gets three medical certifications through free GED and workforce education programs at HCDE, allowing her to make up to \$20 an hour once she earns her GED.
- Former doctor and immigrant from Venezuela who is taking English as a second language (ESL) classes talks about moving from saving lives in the hospital emergency room in his homeland to earning minimum wage as a restaurant employee as he learns English.
- Venezuela native progresses through English as a second language classes and works her way up from dishwasher to service manager to general manager of Chipotle Restaurant. Her employer sings her praises in a letter of commendation for the honor society award.
- Mother who finishes raising her high-achieving children gets her turn to go back to school to prove to her children that she can get her GED.
- City utility laborer working through the havoc of Harvey gets passed up for a promotion because of his lack of education--decides he can do better by getting his GED.

It's not grades that distinguish the 32 adult learners. Life journeys, academic perseverance and acts of kindness helped the honorees make the short list for induction.

“Some of the biggest fans of our students who are being celebrated include their teachers, family and fellow students,” said Stephanie Ross, HCDE Adult Education director. “We are eager to share their stories and celebrate their successes.”

Students come from 35 Harris County Department of Education Adult Education learning sites throughout Harris and Liberty counties and are enrolled in GED, English as a second language and workforce classes that include construction and medical professions. Students are nominated by their teachers who recognize them as leaders who make an impact in their communities and by helping their classmates.

Induction into the National Adult Honor Society brings recognition and written recommendations for future employment and education advancement. Each student gains a pin and certificate.

HCDE provides free classes and other educational services to approximately 10,000 adult learners each year, ranging from teenagers to senior citizens. Classes are held in 35 community locations such as schools, churches or community centers. Communities include Alief, Baytown, Channelview, Cy-Fair, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Katy, Klein, Pasadena, Sheldon and Spring Branch and Liberty

For more information about upcoming HCDE Adult Education classes which are offered in collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission, go to www.hcde-texas.org/adult-education/ or call 713-692-6216.

Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS



Teaching and Learning Center Senior Director Watson-Hester Earns Doctorate

Senior director of the Teaching and Learning Center Frances Watson-Hester has received her Doctor of Philosophy in Education from Prairie View A&M University. She is a veteran educator who has spent 27-years as a teacher, principal, school counselor, district coordinator, assistant principal and principal. We congratulate her on her latest accomplishment.



Pugh Head Start student's artwork chosen for HCDE holiday card

Five-year-old Pugh Head Start student Giselle Gomez drew a festive holiday picture for the cover of the annual Harris County Department of Education holiday card. She included a decorated Christmas tree, snowman, six colorful presents, a penguin, star, flower and even herself. Behind a shy smile, she was very excited about having her artwork chosen. Giselle was presented with a set of holiday cards to send to family.

Employees Invited to Obsolete Technology Sale



HCDE employees were invited to purchase obsolete technology items at the Obsolete Technology Sale Dec. 8 held at 6005 Westview and North Post Oak. Desktop and laptop computers, monitors, printers and accessories like keyboards were sold at HCDE first

technology sale. Chief communications officer Danielle Clark and Technology director Lowell Ballard, who both organized the sale, deemed it a success and received considerable positive feedback from employees who took advantage of the bargains for the holiday season.



Opportunity

PROGRAM CONNECTIONS

20 Years of Gifting Cars: Bates and HCDE Head Start Celebrate Community Partnership



Holiday celebrations with Bates Collision and HCDE have become tradition. Two

Head Start moms gained cars this week as the Bates celebrated 20 years of gifting keys to rehabbed cars to Head Start single parents. Here's a little about the moms:

About Sheena Gulley, HCDE Head Start Fifth Ward Center, recipient of the 35th rehabbed car: Sheena

Gulley is a single mother of two sons Marcus, 13, and Jay'Me, 2, and two daughters Zyriah, 8, and Myriah, 4. Gulley relies on Metro and Uber to get to and from work. She is unable to spend much time with her children or attend their

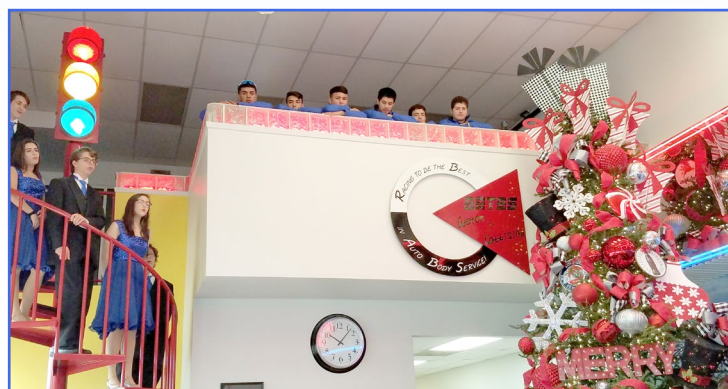


school activities because of no transportation and work schedule. She will soon begin taking online GED classes with HCDE, which are free and offer flexible learning opportunities for busy adults.

About Parishellia Banks, HCDE Head Start Baytown, recipient of the 36th rehabbed car: Parishellia Banks is currently raising her niece's two-year-old son, Jayce, after she passed away during childbirth. Banks relies on family and friends to take her and her great nephew to work and school. She also suffers from diabetes and high blood pressure and finds it difficult to make doctor appointments because of no transportation.



Sterling High School baseball team seniors provided gifts for car recipients.



Systemic Achievement

...with purposeful intent

Community Relations

In an effort to meet the elements associated with this expectation of performance for me to

- **Establish and maintain a program of public relations to keep the public well-informed of the activities of the Department, affecting a wholesome and cooperative working relationship between the Department and the community; and to**
- **Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way**



the mothers receive resources for gas and insurance for a limited period of time.

The events are heartwarming, and the cars make such a difference in the lives of our families. Each year, two families are gifted with cars from the Baytown and Channelview areas.

HCDE is proud to be part of this relationship and look forward to it continuing for many years to come.

By HCDE continuing this worthwhile endeavor, I am continuing my efforts to present a positive, professional image of both the Department and myself; maintain visibility in the community; be open to the ideas and needs of the community; and communicate the needs and accomplishments of the Department.



For the past two days, Bates Custom and Collision and HCDE celebrated a 20 year partnership as the company has gifted cars to deserving Head Start families over the last two decades. The cars are filled to the brim with gifts for the children, while

HCDE BOARD

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

December Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 19, 2018

