

# The CONNECTOR

A weekly publication of Harris County Department of Education for the HCDE Board of Trustees

## UNITING COMMUNITIES

### TOP STORIES INSIDE



Choice Partners Vendor Exhibit



Parents, Students Celebrate Lights On Afterschool

NOV. 5  
2019

**STOP**  
SCHOOL VIOLENCE

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

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Human Trafficking Summit

# The CONNECTOR



## Of Note...

Sometimes we forget how large of an impact HCDE has on our community. This week we were reminded of our footprint with several community engagement activities including the Choice Partners Vendor Show and the CASE for Kids celebration of national Lights On! activities.

There is no doubt HCDE makes its presence around the county and region known. But sometimes that influence is bigger than we imagine. This week, HCDE participated in various local events that showcased our role in the community. On Tuesday, our Choice Partners Vendor Show highlighted more than 100 of the cooperative's 500 vendors to approximately 120 local members. At this show, vendors showcase their products and services so that local school districts, governments and non-profit organizations can see how they can take advantage of Choice's legally bid contracts and save an average of 10% off retail pricing. The event emphasized the diversity of products and services that Choice Partners contracts supply to members around the country, which provide more than \$28 million in economic impact to Harris County school districts.

Lights On! is a national event honoring the importance of programs that support students during out-of-school hours. Typically, activities are designed to allow parents and students to experience afterschool programs together. HCDE's CASE for Kids hosted a local Lights On! celebration at the Hobby Center featuring professional orchestra and opera artists from around the area. During this evening activity, about 400 parents and students were able to learn about music composition and sing along with tunes together.

I began the week with my Executive Leadership Team, internal meetings and time with one of my mentees on Monday. Tuesday and Wednesday were filled with more internal meetings as well as our annual dinner at Perry's Steakhouse in celebration of Principal Appreciation Month. This was a wonderful time in fellowship and watching the Astros game. I truly appreciate the leadership our principals bring to the county and their support of our children.

Tomorrow, I am proud to be the keynote speaker for the Educator Certification Academy at their monthly principal academy class, where I will guide aspiring administrators in their efforts to learn how to lead a campus successfully.

It's hard to believe it is already November, but next week we begin to discuss end-of-semester activities and plans for January.

Enjoy the beautiful fall weather!







Head Start Fifth Ward gets ready for the Astros game six of the World Series as they return to Houston Oct. 29.



Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events training at North Post Oak provides training in applying a tourniquet as one of the hands-on activities. Topics discussed at the event, sponsored by the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, included stress response, current events and what works and doesn't.



Academic and Behavior School East students show-off their red hands as they pledged to be drug-free during Red Ribbon Week.



ABS East teacher Tabori Grayson and her students wear crazy socks to Sock it to Drugs during Red Ribbon Week.



Texas Education Agency's Dr. Jeffrey Cottrill discusses the importance of data and measuring success at the Education Summit 2019 Future Schools: Leading Schools into Equity and Excellence. The summit was sponsored by Children at Risk, Shell and the Harris County Department of Education's Research and Evaluation Institute.



CASE for Kids brings the Out-of-School Time Leadership Symposium to area afterschool leaders Nov. 8 at Irvington. The symposium provides opportunities to strengthen leadership skills for afterschool professionals. Topics at the event include dealing with stress, helping build a team, leading from the heart and more.



# PROGRAM

## CONNECTIONS

### Choice Partners Vendor Exhibit Brings Vendors, Members Face-to-Face to Share Products, Services

Longtime Choice Partners vendor Facility Sources likes to use a Hurricane Harvey story to illustrate why school district and municipality members of the Choice Partners national purchasing cooperative benefit from easy-to-use, legal contracts for their facilities solutions.

At the 2019 Annual Vendor Exhibit “Catch the Procurement Wave” held in southeast Houston, the company’s project manager Wayne Bryant took a few minutes to reflect on the past two busy-yet-productive years.

Rewind back to August 2017 when Humble ISD’s Kingwood High School took in six feet of water. District officials estimated a full year for repairs in order to get students back onto campus from the neighboring Summer Creek High School where they had to share space.

“They had called a couple of job order contractors and one had backed out because they didn’t know if they could handle the task,” Bryant recalled. “We were able to expedite the project and get the kids back into school by Spring Break 2018.”

The 700-plus vendors in Choice Partners co-op offer services ranging from construction JOC to consulting services to food supplies and equipment. Some approximate 1,500 members benefit from time-and- money saved, plus legally bid contracts.

“During this annual vendor exhibit event, our members and vendors are able to exchange valuable information face-to-face,” said Jeff Drury, Choice Partners director.

More than 100 members networked with the 119 attending vendors at the event held at Bayou City Events Center.

One of the newest vendors showcasing services at the expo was Versa Creative, who joined the co-op to offer a variety of marketing and advertising services to Choice Partners members. Founder Mary Shekari and client services specialist Karaline Harrell staffed the booth in Hawaiian attire, providing detailed information about the types of service Versa Creative offers.

“We’ve been in business for 10 years but have recently become a Choice Partners vendor and are honored to have been awarded a contract with Choice,” Harrell said. “We’re excited to partner with all the members because we have a special place in our hearts for nonprofits and educational entities.”

For more information on how to become a Choice Partners vendor or a member, go to [www.choicepartners.org](http://www.choicepartners.org).



# PROGRAM

## CONNECTIONS

### Human Trafficking Summit Equips Educators, Parents with Awareness Tools Nov. 5

Educators hear about how to protect children from human trafficking at the Human Trafficking Summit Nov. 5 from 8 a.m.-2 p.m. at Harris County Department of Education, 6300 Irvington, Houston.

**View video:** <https://bit.ly/2MW94FG>

From thoughts from Congressman Ted Poe to stories from human trafficking survivor Sandy Storm, the collaborative between Children at Risk and HCDE's Center for Safe and Secure Schools supplies wrap-around prevention approaches to the widespread problem of human trafficking.

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to control victims for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex acts or labor services against his/her will.

"In order to break the cycle, we must understand the magnitude and how Houston families fall victim to human trafficking," said Julia Andrews, director for the Center for Safe and Secure Schools, which supports school safety best practices, safety audits and restorative discipline for area schools and districts.

"The I-10 corridor is a huge hub for trafficking, and we must realize the threat and act to protect our children," said Andrews.

**Cost:** \$20 to attend.

**Register:** [www.bit.ly/humantraffickingsummit](http://www.bit.ly/humantraffickingsummit)

**Agenda for the day:**

Demand and Data, Jamey Caruthers, senior staff attorney, Children at Risk (8-9 a.m.)

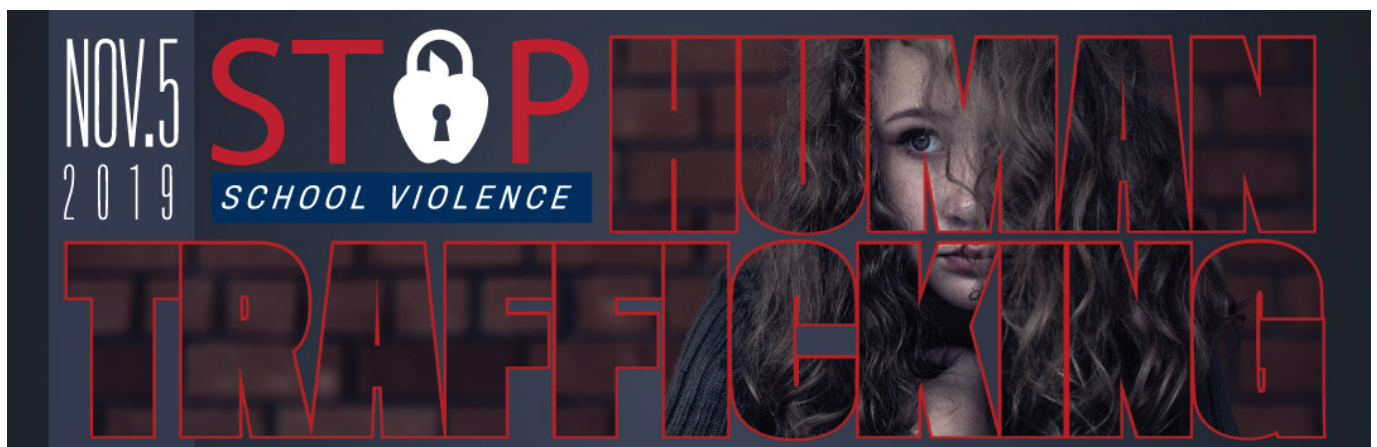
What Parents Need to Know, Joe Madison, executive director, Children at Risk (9-10 a.m.)

Protecting Kids in the Porn Age, Sandy Storm, survivor, author, speaker and human trafficking abolitionist (10:15-11:15 a.m.)

Lunch and Networking (11:15 a.m.-12 p.m.)

Project 180, a wraparound approach between multiple Houston agencies, including the Harris County District Attorney's Office (Noon-1:30 p.m.)

Congressman Ted Poe discusses human trafficking initiatives (1:30-2 p.m.)





# PROGRAM

## CONNECTIONS

### Parents, Students Celebrate Lights On Afterschool at Hobby Center

Hundreds of students and parents from the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichments for Kids Partnership Project campuses attended a folk music performance by local arts organization Musiqa at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts Oct. 24. This event was part of the Lights On! Afterschool celebration held nationwide.

Lights On! Afterschool is the only nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs and their important role in the lives of children, families and communities. It's held each October.

Students and their parents participated in the interactive musical which featured songs from many cultures. Each family received a collection of books featuring folk tales to promote literacy skills.

Alief ISD parent Carrie McMillin thinks the free afterschool program her son Xander attends is fabulous, and he is now in his second year. Another great thing for her is that his school Youens Elementary buses him to Mahanay Elementary after school each day to take part in the program.

"We are really happy and pleased about the program especially since his school buses him to the other school which is great for us and we pick him up there," she said. "It does surprise me about the program. Some have to pay for their afterschool program, and the quality is sometimes questionable."

It makes her feel good knowing that that the ones who work with my her are qualified and consistently use a curriculum.

"He is learning entrepreneur skills and gets to socialize with a different group of kids outside of his class," McMillin said.

For Rozeli De Los Santos's parents the afterschool program is a big help because they both work and she gets help with her homework, too.

"It gives us a piece of mind knowing she's in a safe place and learning new things," said her father, Jazzahi. "I have noticed she is better at socializing with the other kids outside of her age group in the program."

The 6-year-old attends Heflin Elementary in Alief ISD. She enjoys going to the afterschool program especially when they go to the gym and can play a game of their choice.

CASE for Kids provides resources, trainings and funding for afterschool programs, serving students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, childcare facilities and community centers throughout Harris County.

For more information go to [www.hcde-texas.org/after-school](http://www.hcde-texas.org/after-school).

For research about summer learning loss, go to [www.summerlearning.org/at-a-glance](http://www.summerlearning.org/at-a-glance).



# IN THE NEWS

## In the News: HCDE Communications Honors Fox Anchor Monte



HCDE Communications delivered the final Media Honor Roll presentation to Fox 26 anchor Kaitlin Monte. Monte acted as emcee last year for the CASE for Kids End-of-Year Celebration. Staff surprised Monte with a plaque and balloons as she came to work. Fox aired the presentation on Facebook Live and mentioned the presentation on its evening news broadcast.

### View the story:

<https://www.fox26houston.com/video/618977>





# SYSTEMIC

ACHIEVEMENT...WITH PURPOSEFUL INTENT

## Community Relations

In keeping with the Board's expectations of 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 community
- Work with other governmental entities and community organizations to meet the needs of students and the community in a coordinated way.

This week finds us preparing for the Human Trafficking Summit to be held on Nov. 5 as we collaborate with Children at Risk to talk about this huge issue that infiltrates greater Harris County through the I-10 corridor. Joining us this week are Congressman Ted Poe and several staff members from Children at Risk as well as human trafficking victim Sandy Storm. I'll be sharing the results and recommendations with you later.

Lights on Afterschool! held last week at the Hobby Center allowed for celebration and reflection on the need for afterschool in Houston. Families heard from folk music artists in an hour of sing-along performances. We share several stories from families benefitting from Afterschool in this issue. Later in the month CASE for Kids will be hosting a symposium for afterschool leaders.

Finally, the vendor expo hosted by Choice Partners allowed for vendors and members to connect and share new resources. This event joins our school district members and municipalities with the products/services they need to be successful. One story



shared involves the job order contract between a company and Humble ISD during Hurricane Harvey.

Through these community service initiatives, I am ensuring that I function as the primary ambassador for the Department through the programs and services we offer. We also present a positive, professional image of ourselves and the Department through these venues—community, political, educational, business and board. We are maintaining visibility and involvement in the community with elected officials, community leaders and the HCDE Board. Finally, we are open to ideas and needs of our constituents.



## HCDE BOARD

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### Vice President

George Moore

### Board Members

Richard Cantu

Eric Dick

Danny Norris

Don Sumners

Michael Wolfe

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### Stop the Bleed

November 4, 2019

### Capturing Kids Hearts

November 7, 2019

### Out-of-School Time Leadership Symposium

November 8, 2019

### Board Meeting

November 20, 2019

