

January 2019

WEST FORT BEND

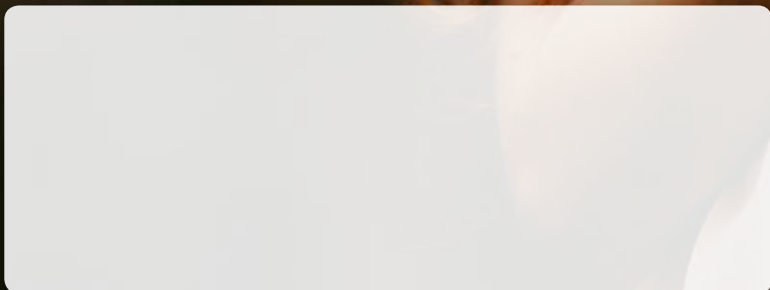
Living

An 'Enchanting Evening'

Children are at the core of Fort Bend Cares' 14th Annual Road Trip Fundraiser

Mustard Seed Farm & Market

A Richmond family plans to champion adults with disabilities through a horticulturally-based nonprofit



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CONTENTS & STAFF

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WEST FORT BEND *Living™*

GENERAL MANAGER

Lee Hartman

leehart@fbherald.com

ASSISTANT MANAGING EDITOR

Marquita Griffin

mgriffin@fbherald.com

COMPOSITION & GRAPHICS MANAGER

Alfred H. Dubé

adube@fbherald.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Melinda Maya

mmaya@fbherald.com

Rachel Cavazos

rcavazos@fbherald.com

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A Richmond couple has founded a new nonprofit—Mustard Seed Farm & Market—as a work program for adults with disabilities

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A Mustard Seed of Faith

Richmond couple creates a new nonprofit to help adults with disabilities

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com

It was an idle Wednesday morning when Ashely Grubb, who was minding her five-month-old daughter Charlie at the time, anxiously awaited a scheduled phone call. This was the conversation she had been looking forward to for days. This was the chance to share some joyful news.

This was her opportunity to express how sometimes the most worthy efforts begin with a mustard seed of inspiration. At the very least, that's what's happening in the Grubb household in Richmond.

When her phone finally rang that bright winter morning, Grubb shared that she and her husband were thrilled to find a platform to share the news about Mustard Seed Farm & Market, a newly-formed nonprofit in Fort Bend County that serves as a work program for adults with disabilities.

"This has been 10 years in the making," said Grubb, regarding the efforts she and her husband Derick have put forth. And founding a nonprofit that would directly benefit adults with disabilities "has been a lifelong passion for us, both individually and as a couple," she added.

The Grubbs, who met in 2008 and married in 2011, initially crossed paths while working at The Brookwood Community, a God-centered educational, residential and entrepreneurial community for adults with functional disabilities found in Brookshire, Texas. The couple also helped start a group home in Colorado and were the first set of live-in houseparents for four young men who had varied disabilities.

And it was through their experiences in these settings — as well as Derick's work as an elementary special education teacher in Katy ISD — that a figurative mustard seed was firmly planted into the core of their being.

"We realized that we both shared very similar dreams in terms of what we hoped to accomplish with our lives," Grubb said. "As we dated, and eventually married, the vision for what we hoped Mustard Seed could be someday was always a fun topic of conversation and speculation."

But speculation has grown into a reality for the Grubbs, who said Mustard Seed Farm & Market is available to adults who live in Rosenberg, Richmond, Fulshear, Sugar Land and Katy — "from anywhere in Fort Bend County," Grubb stressed.

As a horticulturally-based organization, Mustard Seed Farm & Market will provide participants with skills and knowledge that will further benefit them in their lives. Grubb added that once participants graduate from the program, they can even go on to work at other nurseries within the community.

"I think that there just can't be enough resources for people who have disabilities and their families," Grubb said. "We both feel like we have been blessed with a great compassion and ability to work with the special needs community. On top of that, we've managed to gather experience along the way that gives us the appropriate tools to really make a difference.

"It's our calling," she said with a smile.





Derick Grubb, 34, played basketball for Pepperdine University and graduated with a degree in Liberal Arts with an emphasis on Education.



Ashely Grubb, 35, graduated from Texas A&M University with a BS in Conservation Biology and Biodiversity and a second major in Entomology.



The Grubb's daughter, Charlie, may not understand what her parents are achieving but she is included in their efforts and celebrations nonetheless.

It will be a place of opportunity and acceptance.
Derick Grubb

'HELP US GROW'

Mustard Seed Farm & Market is settled on 11 acres in Richmond off FM 723 and currently features a greenhouse, with plans for future construction on the main building where the work program will be held.

"This way our program participants can work year-round away from Houston's weather extremes," Grubb said.

The plan is for Mustard Seed Farm & Market to open in Spring 2020, so the Grubbs are in the middle of a capital campaign — cleverly named "Help Us Grow Fund."

"All money raised right now will go towards the construction of our work program building, outfitting our greenhouse with the appropriate equipment and paving pathways to make everything wheelchair accessible," Grubb said.

The Grubbs currently have three grants in process, but as of press time, none were official. The couple is also accepting additional partnerships and donations through their website.

"The sky is the limit," Grubb said. "We would love to talk to anyone who wants to get involved."

Once the nonprofit opens, it will have a paid and volunteer staff.

"We are hopeful that we can partner with garden clubs and other organizations within the community as well," Grubb added.

GROWING GREAT PLANTS, PRODUCE & PEOPLE

As a day program, Mustard Seed's objective is to provide its participants with a safe, encouraging and engaging environment, Grubb explained, adding that the nonprofit's motto is "growing great plants, produce and people."

"When our program starts, we will first be primarily focusing on teaching basic techniques that people who work in the greenhouse and plant-growing industry need to know," Grubb said. "For example, planting seeds, filling pots with soil, weeding, watering, etcetera. These are all very teachable skills, and working with your hands in the dirt can be very therapeutic."

Some of the skills that will be taught include germination, propagation and sustainable organic care of plants.

Adults with any disability, and who have aged out of public school and are no longer eligible for those services, are welcomed to participate. There is a monthly tuition fee to attend the work program.

Grubb added that eligible adults are welcomed to participate in Mustard Seed Farm & Market "as long as they want to, or until they have learned the necessary skills to build a resume and apply for other horticultural jobs within the community."

The program, however, is also designed to operate in a self-contained manner.

"We not only wanted to have a program that teaches skills, but



I think that there just can't be enough resources for people who have disabilities and their families.

Ashley Grubb

also we needed to develop a business model that would allow for us to produce something that could generate revenue and allow Mustard Seed to keep growing and operating successfully," Grubb explained. "That's where the idea for growing native butterfly milkweed came into play."

Grubb, who graduated from Texas A&M University with a BS in Conservation Biology and Biodiversity and a second major in Entomology, explained that native milkweed plants require multiple steps in the growing process to successfully produce a crop — and this is what made native milkweed perfect for the nonprofit's training program.

"These steps and the repetitive nature of the process can be great jobs for people who have disabilities," she said. "In addition to creating jobs, once the milkweed plants are sold, they will also help the environment by restoring lost habitat for monarch butterflies.

"With our climate and location, there is an almost constant demand for milkweed plants to feed monarch caterpillars where I work," said Grubb, who works at Enchanted Gardens in Richmond. "Tropical milkweed is widely available, but the hardier, better, native milkweed species are almost impossible to find. There is a market for them, and with my background in conservation biology and entomology, it makes me happy to know that we can help adults who have disabilities and the environment at the same time."

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN LIVES & THE COMMUNITY

Through their nonprofit, the Grubbs are also trying to set an example of how a community can support itself.

Grubb said once she and her husband finalize the process and procedures of Mustard Seed, they will expand into heirloom vegetables and other crops. Those organic crops, she stressed, will be sold to the public with 100 percent of the proceeds returning to the nonprofit to continually develop the Mustard

Seed's program.

"Mustard Seed is the culmination of a dream we have had for years and countless hours of work," said Derick Grubb. "It will be a place of opportunity and acceptance. We hope someday Mustard Seed becomes a place where people with all different backgrounds, skills and abilities can work together and create products that people want and will travel for."

The Grubbs already have a trial garden growing in their Richmond home, which is where Ashley and Derick are testing potential Mustard Seed crops.

"In addition to our primary focus on native milkweed, we also have a list of great tomatoes, beans, squash, cucumbers, and some other fruits and veggies that have grown really well for us," she added excitedly.

A portion of the crops will be donated to local parks gardens, churches, retirement communities and schools, and, Grubb added, the participants will be involved with the delivery and/ or the planting of all the donations.

"We want to find ways where our participants can be involved in the community and feel good about the work they are doing," Derick and Ashley explained. "We think it's important to give back and try to have a positive impact on the lives of others and especially to support schools and nursing homes."

While the process of founding a nonprofit has been a bit intimidating, and even slightly scary, Grubb said it equally exciting and inspiring.

"Seeing how much we have been able to accomplish already, and how so many wonderful people in our lives believe in us and our mission, I also feel brave and confident that we are doing what we were always meant to do," Grubb said. "It makes my heart feel happy knowing that with a little effort to learn about running a nonprofit and a commitment to integrity and hard work, we will be able to make a positive difference in a lot of lives, and contribute to a community we love." ✨

Get Involved

Anyone who wants to donate to Mustard Seed Farm & Market can email mustardseedfarmandmarket@gmail.com or donate through the nonprofit's website www.mustardseedfarmers.org.

Anyone interested in participating in the work program can also email mustardseedfarmandmarket@gmail.com to be placed on the waiting list. Once construction commences, interviews will begin.

The nonprofit will also have a volunteer milkweed planting day in the spring that will be open to anyone who wants to participate. Details will be sent via email.

Follow Mustard Seed Farm & Market on Facebook and Instagram at [@mustardseedfarmandmarket](https://www.facebook.com/mustardseedfarmandmarket).

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A Night of Enchantment

Fort Bend Cares 2019 Road Trip: Moroccan Nights will highlight why community support is vital

by **MARQUITA GRIFFIN** | mgriffin@fbherald.com



2019 Road Trip Committee members from left, front row: Gail McClendon, Cheryl Brown, Angela Mason, Cindy Gazouleas, Lisa Murphy, Debbie Thelin; back row: Terri Sitter, Melanie Anbarci, Dana Cart, Sandra Lowe, Karen Nemesi and Robbin Mallett.

Children. That is who is at the heart of the plethora of nonprofits found in every corner of Fort Bend County and several residents who recognized this 15 years ago, wanted a means to enrich this trend, hence the creation of Fort Bend Cares in 2004.

A nonprofit itself, Fort Bend Cares' sole purpose is to raise money for charitable organizations that provide essential

services to children and families. To do so, the foundation secures funding from private individuals or corporations, as well as through its own fundraising activities held throughout the year.

According to the foundation, 51 percent of donations come from individuals and small businesses; 25 percent of donations come from auction sales; 22 percent of donations come from corporations; and one percent of donations come from the



New Fort Bend Cares Board Chair Mary Joyce with John Benevides, Suzanne and Brad Whatley.



From left, volunteers Karen Nemesi and Colleen Flint with Fort Bend Cares Executive Director Angel Tapia.

group, Friends of Fort Bend Cares.

“I have learned that Fort Bend is a thriving county that believes in community engagement and support,” said Fort Bend Cares Executive Director Angel Tapia, who joined the foundation in 2017. “Meeting various leaders and residents, I have seen a culture of kindness and teamwork. It is apparent that we all see how it takes a village to support our youth and our environment. People here look out for each other and also those less fortunate. It is a generous and empathetic community.”

One of Fort Bend Cares’ primary means of raising funds to support other nonprofits is its annual Road Trip event, which is set for 6:30 p.m. Feb. 2 at Fluor Corporation, 1 Fluor Daniel Drive in Sugar Land.

“Road Trip is our major fundraiser for the year,” said the event’s co-chair and Fort Bend Cares board member Gail McClendon, who added that the event began with “a group of grass roots volunteers who wanted to make a difference.”

“It also provides a concentrated time when we highlight what we are about and how we accomplish helping disadvantaged children.”

As part of the event, guests will be able to meet members of the nonprofits that have received grants from Fort Bend Cares. This allows donors to see precisely who benefits from their contributions and the intentions of each nonprofit, McClendon said.

“They will be there again to show what Fort Bend Cares and our donors have accomplished to help the children in our county,” she said. “This is a highlight for many of our guests because they realize the need we have in this community.”

In 2018 Fort Bend Cares awarded \$184,000 to 26 organizations

including: Access Health, American Diabetes Association, Attack Poverty, Boys & Girls Club of Greater Houston, Child Advocates of Fort Bend, Clothed By Faith, Creative Dreams, DePelchin Children’s Center, East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, Edison Arts, Fort Bend Children’s Discovery Center, Fort Bend Community Partners Rainbow Room, Fort Bend Family Promise, Fort Bend Women’s Center, Gigi’s Playhouse Sugar Land, Lunches of Love, Memorial Hermann Foundation, Reigning Strength, Rosenberg-Richmond Helping Hands, Sam Houston Area Council, Second Mile Mission, SIRE, Texana Center, Undies for Everyone, Westside Saints and T.W. Davis YMCA.

AN ‘ENCHANTING EVENING’

“We ‘travel’ each year to a place where you are transported to that location via decorations,” McClendon said of why each Road Trip event has a theme. “So we chose Morocco with its exotic and lively colors and ancient history.”

Presented by sponsor Covia, the the 14th Annual Road Trip: Moroccan Nights — boasted as an “enchanting evening” — will feature food from 12 restaurants, who have donated their cuisine, silent and live auctions, a live band for dancing or just enjoying the music, interaction with others throughout the venue, belly dancers, wine and spirits pull and more, McClendon noted.

“Road Trip is like a dinner party at your home on a grander scale,” McClendon said. “Guests are in a relaxed atmosphere — jeans are appropriate — and they can visit with friends or network and meet new people.”

Guests will also have the opportunity to roam the room without being assigned to a specific table, and have a chance to participate in a wide range of auction items, and even a Kendra

Scott jewelry pull.

“There are ways to participate that suit any wallet,” McClendon added. “Any person or age will enjoy the event. We also have seniors in high school who earn volunteer hours by helping with our event.”

Individual tickets are \$75 and \$50 for young professionals 35 years old and younger. Sponsorships are available ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

For more information or to become a sponsor, call 832-819-2005, email angel@fortbendcares.org or visit www.fortbendcares.org.

A TRUSTWORTHY ORGANIZATION

Tapia said Fort Bend Cares is somewhat of a gateway to contributing to those in need around the county.

“We are an asset to those looking to get involved and don’t know where to start,” added Tapia, who is 15-year veteran in the nonprofit sector.

Fort Bend Cares not only strives to support other charities, she said, but to also be a trustworthy steward of any

contributions it receives, especially those from business who want to know exactly how their donations are being used.

“If you are a resident, or work in Fort Bend, then your contributions should be used to support your community,” she stressed. “As ‘gatekeepers’ we ensure that fundraising dollars are used for direct impact services and not overhead.”

For each dollar collected, 77 percent of it is used “directly to assist anywhere from 20-30 nonprofit organizations.”

“That means we are keeping the contribution in Fort Bend County and supporting disadvantaged youth and non-profits in good standing,” Tapia explained.

The 2018 grant recipients are supporting the youth through

various efforts, such as, providing summer camp for children with Type 1 diabetes or equine therapy for children with disabilities; supporting the education of homeless children; and offering supplies that range from clothes, sports gear and school supplies to theatre, arts, dance and after-school programs.

Since its inception, Fort Bend Cares has awarded more than \$1.9 million in grants to other nonprofits in the community. A team of 40 volunteers and board members review grant applications and before a grant is awarded, members make site visits and conduct a financial review.

“I respect the stewardship we show in using the money we raise in the community. Our board, staff and grants committee

looks at the needs of our youth and non-profits in Fort Bend and diligently works to ensure that funds are distributed fairly and to the areas and services most needed in our community,” Tapia said. “My hope [for the future of Fort Bend Cares] would be to increase our engagement and visibility with Fort Bend businesses to



Supporters Lisa and Jim Short and Board Member Phillip Butler.

increase their social responsibility to the community.

“Many companies are moving to the Fort Bend area, and engaging them in the culture and nature of giving that our residents live by, will ensure that we have full buy-in for creating a safe and positive community for the future.

“It would also be wonderful to encourage young professionals to have a stronger engagement with our organization so they are exposed to the need in the community that disadvantaged youth are experiencing,” Tapia added. “It is a way to also have them invest in the next generation which will create an environment where they want to continue living, working and raising a family in.” ✨

Fort Bend Cares dedicates swingset in honor of founder

Fort Bend Cares supporters gathered at Tony Becerra Park in Rosenberg on June 29 to dedicate a new swingset in honor of Dr. Bob McClendon, one of the co-founders of the organization.

Funded by memorial contributions, the swingset was added to the playground Fort Bend Cares funded and opened in March 2016.

The initial project included a playground with slides, climbing features, a sliding pole and more, along with two benches, a picnic table and a shade structure.

Dr. McClendon passed away in September and is remembered by many for his 40-year career in family medicine, his long-time participation with the Boys Scouts of America and his involvement in diverse community nonprofits.

In the early 1990s, Bob saw a need in Fort Bend County that existed beyond medical care. Along with his good friend, Jim Rice, he founded Fort Bend Cares to help provide financial support to non-profits addressing the physical, emotional, educational and recreational needs of local children and their families.

For the next 12 years, he remained a driving force in the non-profit.

“Bob’s vision and compassion have made a difference for so many children. This new swingset represents his legacy of caring for kids,” said Fort Bend Cares Executive Director Angel Tapia. “It will bring joy to children for years to come.”

PHOTO ON RIGHT: Gail McClendon at the dedication of a swingset installed by Fort Bend Cares at Tony Becerra Park in Rosenberg in June 2018 in honor of Dr. Bob McClendon.



Join Friends of Fort Bend Cares

Friends of Fort Bend Cares is a group of community members that support the mission and vision of Fort Bend Cares. For an annual membership fee of \$40, people can join and be included in periodic, free social events made partly possible by in-kind donations. All Friends of Fort Bend Cares members are invited to bingo night, the Annual Cookie Exchange and Christmas Market as well as other fun socials. Annual membership runs January through December. For more information visit fortbendcares.org or contact the coordinator Alison Burrows at aliburrows21@gmail.com.

The 2018 Road Trip event was themed “Adorable Eighties.” From left are Terri Schnakenberg, Diana Moorner, Lee Ann Stubenrouch, Stacy Borgfeldt, Donna Hine and Pam Gray.

DA Healey honored at retirement roast

Story & Photo by **TYLER JOHNSON** | sjohnson@fbherald.com

Dozens of well-wishing residents and elected officials came together in November to say good-bye to longtime Fort Bend County District Attorney John Healey at his retirement roast benefit. Healey, who served as district attorney for 26 years, said the idea of having a roast in his honor was not his own.

"It was the idea of a number of people and it was talked about for the last year or since I announced my retirement," he said.

He said Rocket Rosen, a prominent Texas attorney based in Richmond, who once worked with Healey in the DA's office, was leading the charge to have the retirement roast. The event took place in the lodge of Safari Texas Ranch in Richmond and Fort Bend County Sheriff Troy Nehls served as master of ceremonies.

People laughed and mingled while looking back at Healey's career, which began in 1982 when he was assistant district attorney.

"I think I've grown in my judgment," he said. "I'm a little more patient than I ever was."

Since taking over as district attorney following the removal of predecessor Jack Stern, Healey said the office has nearly quadrupled in size. There were 17 prosecutors when he took over, and now the office has spots for 72.

"Technology has made a huge impact, just like it has in our

everyday lives," he said. "We've done a lot in that area and there is still more to come."

He also noted that he and the district attorney-elect Brian Middleton have a strong relationship.

"I hired Brian and he expressed his gratitude for hiring him when he left. He was the only one to give me a departing present when he left the office.

"He's a thoughtful, wise and kind individual, and he'll do a great job as district attorney."

Healey's decision to retire was a long time coming.

In fact, it was a decision that was almost made in 2014. But Healey felt that there was still too much to do in the office at the time. While roasting Healey, people chowed down on a vegetable medley, their choice of vegetable or meat lasagna and chicken marsala. Apple pie and chocolate cake were served for desert.

Proceeds from the retirement roast benefited three local nonprofit organizations: Fort Bend Women's Center, Child Advocates of Fort Bend and Parks Youth Ranch.



Fort Bend County District Attorney John Healey interacts with friends at his retirement roast. From left are Rocket Rosen, Chief of the Juvenile Division Tyra McCollum, Healey and Felipe Rendon.



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Gov. Abbott appoints Morales to Texas Juvenile Justice Board

Gov. Greg Abbott has appointed Fort Bend County Precinct 1 Commissioner Vincent Morales, Jr. to the Texas Juvenile Justice Board for a term set to expire on Feb. 1, 2019. The board is charged to develop and implement rules to govern the department, executive director, and staff and to establish the mission and set goals for the department to emphasize keeping youth in home communities while balancing rehabilitative needs with public safety.

"I am very honored to have been appointed to The Texas Juvenile Justice Board by Gov. Abbott," Morales said in November after the announcement.

Morales, former mayor of Rosenberg, was vice president of GreenScapes Associates, LLC. He serves as president of Fort Bend PAWS, benefiting Fort Bend County Animal Services, and

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previously as a board member for West Fort Bend Management District, Child Advocates of Fort Bend, Lamar Education Awards Foundation, and Central Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce. Morales attended the University of Houston.



Fort Bend County Precinct 1 Commissioner Vincent Morales, Jr.

FBJSL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE BY FEB. 1

Female high school seniors or adult residents of Fort Bend County who are planning to pursue higher education may qualify for assistance through the Fort Bend Junior Service League scholarship program.

Each year, the service league awards up to four \$1,000 volunteer scholarships and one \$2,000 new beginnings scholarship. The volunteer scholarships are awarded to female high school seniors in Fort Bend County who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in volunteerism and community service.

Recipients must have completed at least 100 hours of high school community service, have a minimum GPA of 2.5, and plan to attend an accredited two or four year college or university.

The new beginnings scholarship is offered to help Fort Bend County females improve their career opportunities by furthering their education. Recipients must have been accepted into an accredited college, university, or vocational school after having taken a break in their education and establish financial need.

Qualified applicants can learn more about these scholarships and obtain a copy of the applications by visiting the FBJSL's website at www.fbjsl.org. Applications and supporting documentation will be accepted until Feb. 1.

The FBJSL is a non-profit organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, to developing the potential of women and to improving the Fort Bend County community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose

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is exclusively educational and charitable as well as providing an atmosphere of friendliness, goodwill and camaraderie for all members.

Many of its members reside in the western portion of Fort Bend County, including Rosenberg and Richmond.



The 2018-2019 Fort Bend Junior Service League Beneficiary Review Committee are, back row, from left, Kelly Evans, Misty Gasiorowski, Heather Scantlin and Lori Gier. Front row are, from left, Jenny Nelson, Stephanie Reilly and Pam Spencer. Not pictured is Melissa Arcache.

FORT BEND COUNTY ALUMNAE PANHELLENIC ANNOUNCES RECRUITMENT WORKSHOP

Fort Bend County Alumnae Panhellenic will host their Annual Recruitment Sign-up on Feb. 2, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The event held at Parkway United Methodist Church, 5801 New Territory Boulevard, is for young women who are high school seniors or collegians, along with their parents that wish to know more about the recruitment process or are planning to participate in sorority recruitment in the Fall of 2019/Spring 2020 school year. Attendees will learn about participating in Recruitment and membership in the 26 National Panhellenic Conference Sororities. RSVP is not required to attend the event. For more information about the workshop visit www.fortbendpanhellenic.org.



Representing their individual chapters, from left, are: Lauren Schultz, Delta Delta Delta Texas A&M Corpus Christi; Lauren Dean, Kappa Delta, Texas Tech University; Kate Hartman, Zeta Tau Alpha, Texas Christian University; Kathryn Dzierzanowski, Kappa Kappa Gamma, University of Texas; Blair Morgan, Pi Beta Phi, University of Texas, Mary Kate Ryan, Chi Omega, Texas Tech University and Madison Shook, Delta Gamma, University of Mississippi.



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CHILD ADVOCATES AND PARTNERS CELEBRATE NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

The Honorable Ron Pope, The Honorable Brenda Mullinix, and The Honorable Judge David Perwin finalized 18 adoptions in November in celebration of National Adoption Day.

National Adoption Day is sponsored by a coalition of national partners — The Alliance for Children's Rights, Casey Family Services, Children's Action Network, The Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Freddie Mac Foundation and Target Corporation — to draw special attention to the more than 110,000 foster children waiting for adoption in the United States and to celebrate all loving families who adopt.

An additional 10 children were adopted out of the foster care system earlier this year.

The Fort Bend County 328th, 387th, and 505th District Courts joined courts across the country in opening their doors on

National Adoption Day to complete adoptions and celebrate all families who adopt.

“This year’s National Adoption Day was a wonderful celebration” said Metoyer Martin, CASA program director and chair of the event. “It is always great to see the attorneys, CPS, Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers and judges all work together to finalize the adoptions and ultimately give these children safe, permanent and loving homes. It is wonderful to see them all settled in loving homes. In August of 2017, there were 29,954 children in foster care in the state of Texas and 8,055 were free for adoption.”

In Fort Bend County, the District Courts, Child Advocates of Fort Bend and its partner agencies: Texas Department of Family Protective Services, Fort Bend Bar Association, Fort Bend County Child Welfare Board, Fort Bend County Attorney’s Office, Fort Bend Lawyers Care, the Fort Bend Court Team for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers, H.E.B., Bikers Against Child Abuse and the Rosenberg Exchange Club worked together to celebrate the joys of adoption and encourage more families and individuals to give children permanent homes through adoption.

Southern Ice Cream, Twist It Up Balloons, Marble Slab, Chick-fil-A, and Alyssa Villegas Dance Team all donated items to help with the event.



Theresa Egly hugs daughter Sophie at Fort Bend County National Adoption Day Celebration. Sophie was one of 18 children who were adopted at the Fort Bend County Courthouse during the superhero themed celebration.



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GOLF FOR GREATER HOUSTON AND FLUOR IMPACT FOSTER YOUTH

Fort Bend foster youth will receive thousands of hours of specialized services provided by Child Advocates of Fort Bend thanks to Fluor Corporation and the many volunteers and supporters who took part in the 11th anniversary Golf for Greater Houston Golf Tournament. Event Chair April Nemeč and Co-Chair Paul Miller led a volunteer committee of Fluor employees in the year-long effort to raise more than \$410,000 for charity.

Child Advocate's N.E.S.T. and WINGS programs, for school-aged and aging-out foster youth, received a \$70,000 grant award as result of the event, and nine other local charities received a share of the proceeds.

"We are so thrilled to receive this tremendous level of support to help a growing number of foster youth in Fort Bend County, many who unfortunately will age out of care before finding a forever home," said Child Advocates of Fort Bend CEO Ruthanne Mefford. "Thankfully, this gift will help us reach more youth this year. If a youth shows an interest in a specific career path or decides to attend college, we connect them with the resources they will need to pursue their dreams. We literally drive youth to colleges, universities and trade schools every summer through this program. It is very inspiring to see them reach for the stars, especially after all they have been through."

Barbara Jones, senior manager of community and public affairs at Fluor, said the company was honored to contribute to the programs.

"We are thankful to our many partners from all over the region who gave their support for our most successful golf tournament to date," Jones said. "We are so pleased the event was a huge success and that we can give back to the community in this way, especially to help so many foster youth in need."

Community support, stressed Child Advocates of Fort Bend CASA Program Director Metoyer Martin, is key to the children's success.

"We do whatever it takes to help each child succeed in life," Martin said. "Thanks to Fluor's generosity, the outlook for foster youth in Fort Bend County is very bright. We literally change lives because youth are able to move past whatever brought them into the child welfare system, and turn things around. Without this support, we could not achieve these positive results. This year we held our very first College Signing Day and, we look forward to having more youth sign up for trade schools and colleges which will place them on a path to sustainable careers. This funding also helps us provide equitable access to hands-on S.T.E.M. activities as we know these are skills in very high demand."

Get involved with Child Advocates of Fort Bend

Child Advocates of Fort Bend is a non-profit agency that has been making a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children for 27 years. Its mission is to provide a voice, heal the hurt, and break the cycle of child abuse in Fort Bend County.

Through its Court Appointed Special Advocates Program, Children's Advocacy Center and more than 200 trained community volunteer advocates and staff, Child Advocates of Fort Bend improves the lives of more than 400 children each month and has served more than 15,500 children since opening its doors in 1991.

Child Advocates of Fort Bend is one of only a few programs in the country that is able to provide a volunteer advocate for every child in foster care. Volunteers are needed to help in the agency's Children's Advocacy Center and in the Court Appointed Special Advocates Program.

For more information on Child Advocates of Fort Bend or to become a volunteer, visit www.cafb.org or contact Casey Davis at cdavis@cafb.org or 281-344-5172. The next volunteer training session begins on February 11.



Presenting a check to Child Advocates of Fort Bend are, from left, front row: Corey McShannon, Alex Gaeto, April Nemeč, Jessica Jubin, Ruthanne Mefford, Dan Spinks and Kurt Wendt; and back row: Rebecca Shoenherr, Victor Vann, Barbara Jones, Jennifer Strader, Tendai Mushambi and Paul Byrnes.

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HOPE FOR THREE NEWS LOCAL FAMILY 'ALWAYS HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER'

Melissa Covarrubias and her family of six are frequent givers, and use a simple method for earning what is given, and deciding whom to give to.

"Our kids have to work for their money," said Covarrubias. "And once they earn it, we make them save some, spend some and give at least 10 percent."

The girls have household chores and the boys have a lawn service for the neighborhood, plus they put away some cash from those annual birthday cards, too.

"The children are also given the flexibility to give wherever they feel there is a need, it may be the church, an animal shelter or close friends in need, but they must find a place to donate," Covarrubias said.

Recently, the family collaborated on their choice and selected to help a family who receives assistance from Hope For Three, the only non-profit in the Greater Houston area to focus on autism and provides financial assistance to families in need in the Fort Bend County area.

Hope For Three estimates that it takes around \$60,000 a year to support just one person with an autism spectrum disorder. Laura Guerrero is a single mom of three young kids, all diagnosed with autism. She is a teacher and has no family support, so she is grateful for the help of Hope For Three and her local church.

When the Covarrubias family heard about Guerrero's plight, they jumped right in to grant the family's "wish list." Guerrero's biggest request was simply to at least be able to provide her

daughter with a birthday present.

With the earnings from just a few month's work, the family was able to provide Guerrero's daughter with a doll, some Playdoh and a book for her birthday. Plus, they gave all three children new backpacks, clothes, school supplies and a few toys. Guerrero also received \$200 in gift cards, which she wisely used on groceries and gas.

Autism is the fastest growing children's disorder, more prevalent than AIDS, cancer and diabetes, combined.

Children on the spectrum may be uniquely different but, not less, said Darla Farmer, executive director of Hope For Three.

Autism acceptance and inclusion is a crucial component in building relationships and learning life skills, regardless if it is through therapy, education on the playground, church, store or restaurant, Farmer explained.

Children with autism want to enjoy, and do, what other children enjoy, too, she continued. When the uniquely challenging task of raising children is supported within a diverse community, it benefits families and society and, creates communities of

inclusiveness and respect.

"Awareness is key to acceptance. The more people know, the more they will do," Farmer said.

To learn more about Hope For Three, or to provide volunteer services or a tax-deductible donation to support families like the Guerrero's, contact Hope For Three at 281-245-0640 or email contact@hopeforthree.org.



From left: Alejandro, Melissa, Valentia Artem, Alex, and Renata Covarrubias, front center.



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BEHIND THE EYES

Richmond artist's new work is an exhibition of emotions

A new collection of contemporary portraits painted by Richmond artist Carolyn Hancock flickers through the film world, from silent movies to the talkies, Silver Screen and Technicolor. Inspired by legendary film stars, the paintings go beyond beauty into emotions of today's woman.

The collection, titled "Behind the Eyes," premiered recently at Mossrock Studio and Fine Art Gallery in The Woodlands in November.

"Emotion, expression and empathy is what is captured in these paintings, showing the courage it took to live their lives," said Mossrock owner Andy Sankowski.

The Cultural Activities Center in Temple, Texas invited Hancock to combine this collection with her expressive figurative paintings for an exhibition in its Saulsbury Gallery. The center will host "Behind the Eyes" Feb. 15 through March 23.

The portraits, all distinct but of the same model, add a contemporary twist with their range of expressions, from the pained posture of a Frida Kahlo to the seductiveness of 1930's star Jean Harlow. While most of the art uses the vivid colors of the pastel medium, Hancock chose charcoal pencil to render the haughty darkness of Joan Crawford and the quiet "I Give Up" of Greta Garbo.

Behind the Eyes combines traditional portraiture with the vibrancy of today's representational work.

An all pastel show, Hancock pushed the boundaries of technique. Each portrait is enhanced with various backgrounds, from vintage wallpaper, crumbling stucco, Paris, to a 1920's boudoir.

New to Hancock's portraits are enhancements of gold and silver leaf.

"The metal leaf is a fun challenge," she said. "It's tricky to use around pastel but it's a treat watching how the light changes it."

Before beginning the series, Hancock asked herself: What is it

like to be famous? What does it take to succeed? What toll does it extract? What emotions lie just under the surface?

Behind the Eyes tackles those ideas by closely identifying with real women, but going beyond a pretty face, to a personal moment, the artist explained.

To complete this collection, Hancock and her model, Karen Borne, researched the lives of women in Hollywood. Borne immersed herself in the character, from vintage costumes to perfection in makeup, arriving at photo sessions completely in character.

"And the camera saw it," Hancock said. "As I painted, I felt the emotion and let the painting flow in its own direction."

There are stories beyond each painting in the new collection. The women painted existed. They had histories. They had stories.

"We chose this collection to represent women who existed," Hancock explained. "Their life stories are mostly the same — poverty or abuse. They had beauty and talent, but they had to make tough decisions to succeed. They broke the rules and didn't accept no. My paintings have always had a back-story. This series takes that idea a step further, by relating to people we all know."

"Behind the Eyes' isn't a simple title, it's what we can see if we just look."

The past year was filled with honors for Hancock. She received the Best of Show award at the Pastel Society of Southeast Texas national juried exhibition, had portraits exhibited in Breckenridge with the Texas Members Portrait Society of America, at the statewide Georgetown Art Hop 2018, and with the Frida in Red exhibition held at Hinnovations Art Gallery in McAllen. Glimmer and Gloves from The Glamour Women was one of 161 out of 1700 chosen for the prestigious International Association of Pastel Societies Web Show 2018. Visit carolynhancock.com or follow Carolyn Hancock at

[facebook.com/carolyn.b.hancock](https://www.facebook.com/carolyn.b.hancock); [facebook.com/CarolynHancockFineArt](https://www.facebook.com/CarolynHancockFineArt) or [instagram.com/carolynhancockportraits](https://www.instagram.com/carolynhancockportraits).



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Inspired by Carole Lombard, this 24x18 painting is called "What do you think, Mr. Gable?"



Inspired by Elizabeth Taylor, this 12x12 painting is called "Our Song."



"Hope."
Pastel and silver leaf, 6x8

Local church serves several cities

Richmond's Calvary Episcopal Church members, with many community volunteers, gathered at the church to prepare and then deliver more than 900 Thanksgiving dinners in Richmond, Rosenberg, Fulshear, Needville, Missouri City and Sugar Land.

"This ministry has an interesting history. When we started serving Thanksgiving dinner nearly 30 years ago, people came to the church to eat. We learned that the need was far greater than just the Richmond area, so five years into this ministry we began delivering the food," said Father Paul Wehner. "We deliver to all the individuals normally served by Fort Bend County Meals on Wheels, plus we receive suggestions from the local elementary schools and fire departments for families not fortunate enough to have a nice Thanksgiving dinner.

"It really is a gift of love."

Molly Powell, chair for this annual event, thanked Dozier's

Market in Fulshear for the donation of more than 30 smoked turkeys.

"We couldn't do this without their help," Powell said.

Church members donate pies, cook the turkeys, prepare the mashed potatoes, stuffing and green beans in the church kitchen, and then deliver the food. Mid-morning everyone pauses for the Thanksgiving worship service, followed by packing the hot meals.

Nearly 200 volunteers come not only from Calvary Church, but from Scout Troop 1000, Calvary Episcopal Prep students and parents, and neighboring churches.

"This year for the first time we had a large team of volunteers from Lighthouse Indian Baptist Church in Missouri City," Powell added.

For more information about Calvary Episcopal Church visit www.calvaryrichmond.org



LEFT: Chair Molly Powell distributes smoked turkeys from Doshier's.



RIGHT: John Lyons and Oscar Lozano on kitchen duty.



From left, Sherre Packard, Anna Estes and Kay Hardee slice pies.



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RICHMOND MOM TO COMPETE ON NEW SEASON OF WORST COOKS IN AMERICA

As the 15th season of the Food Network's Worst Cooks in America opens on Jan. 6, the nation will be introduced to the new recruits who will be whipped into tip-top culinary shape — and among the 15 recruits is Richmond's Allison Wolfe.

"This will be the craziest, most hilarious, entertaining, and fun season of Worst Cooks that you have ever seen!" said Wolfe in a post on her Facebook page. "Watch as my 14 cast mates and I take on boot camp, led by world renowned chefs Tyler Florence [and] Anne Burrell."

In the nine-episode season, Burrell and Florence will each lead a team of recruits through a rigorous culinary boot camp designed to improve their food skills. In the end, only the one recruit who makes the most impressive culinary transformation wins a \$25,000 grand prize and bragging rights for their mentor.

"Our viewers love the hilarious and inspiring journey of Worst Cooks in America recruits," said Courtney White, Food Network president. "When they meet Anne and Tyler, most can barely boil water and by the end, the recruits are preparing restaurant-quality meals — the progress is



remarkable."

Worst Cooks in America premieres Sunday, Jan. 6 at 9 p.m. (all times ET/PT) on Food Network.

"Whose team will I be on? Will I become a great cook? Or will I still be one of the Worst Cooks in America?" teased Wolfe. "You'll have to watch to find out."

After teams are selected, the competitors must flock together like birds of a feather to prepare a chicken dish. The least successful member of each team is sent home, and the remaining recruits head into week two.

Upcoming episodes include a casino-night challenge featuring a game of Egg Roulette, carnival-themed pie battle and the return of crowd-pleasing game Remote Control Chef.

The season culminates in the finale on Sunday, March 3 at 9 p.m. with the two most-improved recruits preparing a three-course restaurant quality meal for guest judges Debi Mazar, Michael Psilakis and Jessica Tom, who will sample the dishes in a blind taste test and determine the winner of \$25,000 and bragging

rights for their team leader.

Uncover the very best of the worst at FoodNetwork.com/WorstCooks and across Food Network's social platforms.

THE 25TH ANNUAL PUTNAM COUNTY SPELLING BEE RETURNS

Sugar Land's national award-winning community theatre, Inspiration Stage, is bringing The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee back to the historic Sugar Land Auditorium, 226 Lakeview Dr.

Originally produced and performed at Inspiration Stage in May 2015, this show will feature many of its original cast members for this greatly anticipated encore, but instead of a junior/youth production, this cast features adults.

Pecan Grove's Annelea Bootle is excited to be reprising her role as Rona Lisa Peretti, the former Spelling Bee champion and current-day Spelling bee moderator.

"I am beyond thrilled to bring Spelling Bee back for this encore run. This show has been such a fantastic experience for me and my fellow cast mates," Bootle said. "This show is such an amazing culmination of wit, humor and full character expression!"

"Before performing Spelling Bee for the first time back in 2015, it was just something I'd heard about but never had much interest in. It now sits very high on my list of favorite musicals and has the most special place in my heart," she added. "It's a must see show with audience interaction, countless moments of laughter and fun creative storytelling."



An eclectic group of six mid-pubescent vie for the spelling championship of a lifetime. While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home lives, the tweens spell their way through a series of (potentially made-up) words, hoping never to hear the soul-crushing, pout-inducing, life un-affirming

“ding” of the bell that signals a spelling mistake. Six spellers enter, one speller leaves, but at least the losers get a juice box.

Other returning cast members include Steve Kobrin as Vice Principal Douglas Panch, Logan Vaden as Chip Tolentino, Daniel Edwards as Leaf Coneybear, Andrea Richards as Olive Ostrovsky, and Renee Hinojosa as Trish Mahoney.

Vaden, a Morton Ranch resident in Katy, was thrilled to be cast in 2015, and can't wait to do it again.

“Spelling Bee and Chip were a dream show and role from the time it opened on Broadway when I was in high school. To get to be in it not once, but twice, with such a brilliant and talented group of people is beyond my wildest dreams!” Vaden said. “The show has a huge improv component to it. Because of that, everyone in the cast has to be in perfect synch with each other and really be on our toes. This caused our cast to get incredibly close to each other.”

“I would say it's the closest cast I've ever worked with in my 20 years of theatre,” he continued. “We have remained close friends throughout the last few years and there's something so exciting about returning to the exact situation that brought so many wonderful people into my life.”

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee runs Jan. 25 - 27, with two evening shows and two matinees: Friday, Jan. 25 at 8 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 26 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.; and Sunday, Jan. 27 at 3 p.m.

For tickets and more information, visit inspirationstage.com/shows.

TOP: Aldrich Chica as Barfee. Annelea Bootle as Rona Peretti. Steve Kobrin as Vice Principal Panch. *Photo courtesy of Mandy Seymore-Sensat*
 BOTTOM: Far right: Daniel Edwards as Leaf Coneybear. Renee Hinojosa as Trish Mahoney.



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BAD WEATHER DIDN'T STOP FUN TIMES AT THE PECAN FESTIVAL

by TYLER JOHNSON | sjohnson@fbherald.com

Despite the gloomy weather on that Sunday in November, Fort Bend County residents went nuts at the third annual Pecan Festival.

From pecan pies to candy pecans, there were plenty of treats for people to enjoy. Vendors and food trucks were parked throughout historic downtown Richmond and between Fifth and Sixth streets by the railroad tracks, a kids zone was set up that included pony rides and a petting zoo.

Kids had the chance to play games, make crafts and learn about pecans from local growers like Liz Stegint and Angie Pavlovsky, who were this year's pecan grand champion and reserve grand champion.

Stegint was a double grand champion in classical and commercial pecans. Pavlovsky was the reserve grand champion in the classical category. However, she acknowledged she has won the competition many times before.

"I have a box full of ribbons," she said. "I've been growing pecans for a number of years. It takes a lot of work."

Neither Stegint nor Pavlovsky would give away any of their secrets about how to grow the perfect pecan.

Tom McCusker, owner of Rosie's Honey and Pecans located in Fulshear, was last year's commercial grand champion.

He said the Pecan Festival is one of his favorite events of the year, but this season wasn't the best for harvesting because of the amount of rain.

Amber Leung, 4-H program coordinator, brought by a pair of quails, a bird native to Southeast Texas. She said the pecan is one of the food choices for quails.

A FRIENDLY BAKE-OFF

Dr. Mazza's Wellness Center was the place to be if you were looking for a tasty treat. The best dessert submitted was David Burnett's pecan layered cake with brown sugar frosting. It won grand champion.

Damon resident Kaylee Carter, 25, entered her cider pecan caramel fudge candy into the competition. Despite being the only contestant to show up at the announcement of winners, she left empty-handed.

The judges voted Helen Medve, not present at the time of the announcement, had the best candy with her sugared pecans.

Local musician Elle Lutrienne plays her guitar and sings to people on Morton Street during the Pecan Festival.



For more photos from the festival see On The Fort Bend Scene on page 32

Tina Kovar had the best pecan cookies with her turtle cookies. Elizabeth Morino had the best cake, aside from Burnett's, with her momma's famous carrot cake, which did have pecans in it.

Only five pecan pies were entered in this year's competition and Medve had the best with her fudge pecan pie.

In downtown Richmond on Morton Street, a car show took place with dozens of classic cars and trucks.

Jack Garrison of Spring entered a 1930 Ford Model A, which earned him the People's Choice Award.

Fulshear resident Joe Wood's 1958 Impala earned him the Committee Choice Award.

Gene Wall of Richmond earned Best of Show for his 1952 Willys Aero Coupe.

2ND ANNUAL JIGSAW PUZZLE COMPETITION CONTINUES AUTISM AWARENESS

Young and seasoned puzzle lovers will unite during the second annual Jigsaw Puzzle Competition, presented by LearningRx Sugar Land, set for Jan. 19, at Constellation Field Insignity Club. The puzzle piece is the international symbol for autism and, since every piece is unique, it accurately represents the diversity of a person with autism, said Hope for Three organizers.

Hope For Three curated the Jigsaw Puzzle Competition in an effort to bring the community together for a race against the clock to complete a 500-piece puzzle. Novice and experienced puzzlers are encouraged to participate — ages 10 years old and older — in this two-hour timed competition raising autism awareness. Prestigious awards and bragging rights guaranteed.

Proceeds help children with autism attain access to various resources, therapies, and the support systems they're in need of. To learn more, or register your team for \$100, visit hopeforthree.org or call 281-245-0640.



Seasoned puzzler, Adrian Trejo, Syndee Howgate, Center Director, Sugar Land Learning Rx, show our young Co-Chair Bianca Schnakenberg winning puzzle strategies.

FORT BEND BRASS QUINTET TO PERFORM AT GEORGE MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Live music by talented local musicians in the Fort Bend Brass Quintet will be featured at Fort Bend County Libraries' George Memorial Library on Sunday, Jan. 20, from 1 to 2 p.m., in the meeting room of the library.

The group will play a variety of musical pieces, from the 1930s to the 1980s, arranged for a brass quintet, from jazz and Dixie to swing and contemporary. Reminisce with old favorites like As Time Goes By or Happy Trails, sway to the mellow sounds of New York, New York, or tap your toes to the Pickles & Peppers Rag and much more.

The quintet features two trumpets, a French horn, a trombone, and a tuba. Between them, the musicians have more than 100 years of combined musical experience, including performing with the Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra.

The performance is free and open to the public. For more information, call George Memorial Library at 281-342-4455 or the library system's Communications Office at 281-633-4734.



From left are Dan Patterson, Larry Olson, Coleman Locke, Dave Terrall and Milt Cousins with the Fort Bend Brass Quintet

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January



Third

BOBWHITE QUAIL: CANARY OF THE PRAIRIE

The Texas Master Naturalist Coastal Prairie Chapter will host its free Master Naturalist program, Bobwhite Quail: Canary of the Prairie, presented by Chapter President Amber Leung, at 6:30 p.m. at the Rosenberg Civic Center, 3825 Texas 36 South, Rosenberg. Many people grew up hearing the distinctive “ah bob WHITE” call of quail. Where are the quail now? The Northern bobwhite lives all over Texas, but their population has been declining in the past 40 years. Guests will hear reasons for this decline and what we can do to reverse it. Speaker Amber Leung’s co-presenters are a pair of tame bobwhite quail. The birds were hatched and raised to become animal ambassadors and put a feathered face on the effects of habitat loss. The Texas Master Naturalists are sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. For additional information call 281-633-7033 or email mmcdowell@ag.tamu.edu

Fifth

THE SUPER RUN 5K

The Super Run is a national series of superhero-themed 5K fun runs that partner with nonprofit organizations to put on events to help raise funds and awareness for their cause. The run will take place from 8 - 11 a.m. at Brazos River Park in Sugar Land. Visit www.TheSuperRun.com.

Eighth

RESUMÉ WORKSHOP

At 2 p.m. in the George Memorial Library Computer Lab you can learn the basics of putting together a resumé. Those attending this informal program will receive one-one-one help formatting a resumé. For assistance on a pre-existing resumé, please have a digital copy available on a usb flashdrive, saved to the cloud, or have access to it via email. Registration required.

Tenth

UP & OUT: JOB-SEARCH SKILLS

Richard Prather from Texas Workforce Solutions will speak at the George Memorial Library from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. in

the meeting room about accessing the “hidden” job market. Learn how to make effective phone calls and leverage social-media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to find jobs that are not advertised through traditional means.

NEW FRUIT TREES FOR FORT BEND COUNTY

At 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library, Fort Bend County Master Gardener Deborah Birge will talk about varieties of fruit trees that can thrive in the Gulf Coast climate. Hear about proper planting techniques and recommended maintenance tips to encourage fruit production, such as pruning, feeding, and watering. Birge will also talk about new fruit trees that are available, as well as some of the varieties that will be at the Annual Master Gardener Fruit-Tree Sale.

Twelfth

A HISTORY OF FORT BEND COUNTY

Carol Beauchamp, from the George Memorial Library’s Genealogy & Local History department, will share a brief history of the county, from its beginning through the mid-1900s from 10 - 11 a.m. in room 2C. Founded in 1837, Fort Bend County has been home to many fascinating people and events. Hear about its colonization, its role in the Texas Revolution, the American Civil War and Terry’s Texas Rangers, the Jaybird-Woodpecker War, Imperial Sugar, and World War II.

ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS: EGYPT

In this first of three programs on different ancient civilizations at the George Memorial Library, former architecture professor Sheba Akhtar will talk about the significance of the Nile River to the history of Egypt at 1 p.m. in the meeting room. Learn about the evolution of the pyramids in the Old Kingdom to the rock-carved tombs of the Middle Kingdom. Akhtar will also talk about the architectural wonders of the New Kingdom, such as King Tut’s Tomb in the Valley of the Kings, the Temple at Karnak, Queen Hatshepsut’s Mortuary Temple, and Ramses II’s Temple at Abu Simbel.

GOAT YOGA

Goat Yoga Katy will host a goat yoga and

wine tasting event at 4 p.m. at 7738 Fulshear Katy Road in Katy. Goat yoga is like regular yoga, with stretching, postures and breathing, except with adorable and friendly goats wandering around. People of all fitness levels are welcome. Visit www.goatyogakaty.com.

Fourteenth

FAMILY-HISTORY RESEARCH: GENEALOGY 101

Staff from the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library Genealogy & Local History department will provide a basic introduction to many of the resources that are available to the beginning genealogical researcher at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room. Items that will be discussed include print resources, materials that are available on microfilm, and online tools. Learn how to fill out basic genealogy forms and organize research.

Fifteenth

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS

The George Memorial Library staff will provide an overview of different online, social-media platforms that can be used to grow a business at 2 p.m. in the computer lab. Learn how to use sites such as Facebook and Instagram to connect with existing customers, reach new customers, and increase brand loyalty. Registration required.

Seventeenth

CRAFTING WITH CONVERSATION

Fort Bend County Libraries offers a program for individuals of all nationalities who would like a place to practice their English language and conversation skills. These “Conversation Circles” provide an opportunity for non-English-speaking people to gather in a relaxed setting, and discuss topics of their own choosing while practicing their English skills. Participants are also invited to bring a small craft project to work on or talk about. This new monthly program at the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library will meet on the third Thursday of every month, unless that date falls on a holiday. This month’s meeting takes place at 1 p.m. in the meeting room.

Eighteenth

SENIOR SERIES: THE TRUTH ABOUT STAYING INDEPENDENT AS YOU AGE

GIVE THE FAMILY READING WINTER CHALLENGE A TRY

From Jan. 28 through March 2, Fort Bend County Libraries is challenging local families unite.

This five-week program is designed to encourage families to read, learn and have fun together. Families participate in the program by reading books, logging the number of minutes they read, and earning virtual badges.

All Fort Bend County families are eligible to participate. Families who complete the program by reading for a total of five hours collectively (300 minutes total per family) are eligible to receive a book bag for the family, and will have their named entered into a drawing for a \$50 dining gift card, donated by the Friends of the Library.

Each branch library will have a drawing for the gift card on March 4.

A single registration is required for each participating family. Upon registering, families will then have their own online page

on which to record their reading time.

An adult (parent or guardian) is asked to register the family online by going to the library's website — www.fortbend.lib.tx.us — and clicking on the "Family Reading Winter Challenge Sign-Up" image, which will become available Jan. 28.

Families may also register and log reading time by downloading the free Beanstack Tracker app to their mobile device from the Apple App or Google Play stores.

Fort Bend County Libraries and the Family Reading Winter Challenge will appear as options when the program starts on Jan. 28. Registration may also be done by visiting the Youth Services desk at any of the libraries in the Fort Bend County library system.

There is no charge to join the Family Reading Winter Challenge. The program is sponsored by Fort Bend County Libraries and the Friends of the Library organizations that support the county library system.



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MORE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT HAPPENINGS NEAR YOU

LEARN ORIGAMI

The George Memorial Library will teach patrons how to make an elegant decoration or gift from a simple piece of paper on Jan. 2 from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. in room 2C. Library staff will demonstrate how to create a swan and a dragon by simply folding and twisting paper into whimsical shapes. Materials for this program were provided through the support of the Friends of George Memorial Library organization.

'ART I BECOME' EXHIBIT

Opening-Day Reception for the "Art I Become" exhibit at the George Memorial Library is set for Jan. 6 from 2 - 4 p.m. in the Bohachevsky Gallery. The exhibit, which showcases the artwork of Claire Payne and her daughters Kathryn Payne Bright and Terri Payne-Bieber, will be on display through Feb. 28.

BOOK CLUB

The University Branch Library's Book Club will meet in conference room 1 on Jan. 8 at 7 p.m. The book to be discussed is Carnegie's Maid, a novel written by Marie Benedict. New members are invited to attend.

GOODREADS: SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BOOK LOVERS

Get a basic introduction to Goodreads, a popular social-networking website specifically designed for people who love to read books on Jan. 9 at 2 p.m. in the computer lab of the University Branch Library. One of the world's best websites for readers and book recommendations, Goodreads is an online interactive community where readers can network with other book lovers, participate in reading challenges, see book reviews, keep track of their reading lists, and get book recommendations. Registration required.

OPEN-MIC NIGHT

The George Memorial Library's popular Open-Mic Night will be held, once again on Jan. 16, from 6-8 p.m. in the Meeting Room. Open-Mic Night is a casual event for amateur performers to take the stage and express themselves. Step into the limelight to share original poetry, music, comedy, or one-act plays, or to showcase any other unique talents. Performances are limited to five minutes or less, and they must not contain any profanity or other insensitive topics. This event is for adults and teens aged 14 and above. Registration required to perform only.

CULINARY BOOK CLUB

The theme is "Soup's On!" at the University Branch Library's Culinary Book Club meeting set for Jan. 16 at 1:30 p.m. in meeting room 2. Cooking enthusiasts of all ages and experience levels — from beginners to advanced — are invited to join. Those attending are welcome to bring their own cookbooks and recipes, or they may browse the library's collection of cookbooks. Share tips, get ideas and enjoy the camaraderie of other individuals who have an interest in cooking and good cuisine. The club meets on the third Wednesday of every month and different cooking genres are explored each month.

STORY SPINNERS WRITING CLUB

The George Memorial Library's Story Spinners Writing Club will meet Jan. 17 from 5:30 - 8 p.m. in room 2c. This month's topic will be "Plot Twists." From beginning blogger to published novelist, writers of all genres and experience levels are welcome to write, share, learn, support, network, and critique each other's work. Writing prompts, brainteasers, and brief exercises will be available to ignite the imaginations of any and all wordsmiths who wish to hone their craft. This program is recommended for adults and teens aged 14 and up.

DIGITAL PHOTO-EDITING BASICS

Learn how to use free, online photo-editing tools to fix or fine-tune photos or to create special photo effects that can make your photos more exciting and visually appealing at the George Memorial Library, Jan. 23 at 7 p.m. in the computer lab. Get tips on adding special effects, borders, or overlays. Those attending the workshop should have a working email and password. Registration required.

BOOK BREAK

On Jan. 17, at noon in room 2A of the George Memorial Library, the book "The Underground Railroad," written by Colson Whitehead will be discussed. Readers are encouraged to bring their favorite book for discussion. Those attending may bring a lunch.

HEAVY INKS GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB

On Jan. 19 at 11 a.m. in room 2B of the George Memorial Library, readers of all ages who enjoy illustrated novels and comic books are invited to join this book club specifically for graphic-novel enthusiasts. The book to be discussed is American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang.

FULSHEAR BOOK CLUB

On Jan. 28 at noon in the meeting room of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library, the book to be discussed is "The Book Thief," written by Markus Zusack.

FULSHEAR NIGHT READERS GUILD

On Jan. 28 at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room of the Bob Lutts Fulshear/Simonton Branch Library, the book to be discussed is "The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie," a Flavia de Luce novel written by Alan Bradley.



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Liz McNeel, a senior real-estate specialist and certified senior-housing professional, will share tips on how senior citizens can remain independent, but prepare for the day when they need more help to manage their affairs at the University Branch Library at 10:30 a.m. in meeting room 1. McNeel will discuss important questions that will need to be addressed, including: What happens if I can no longer manage on my own? Who is available to help me with my financial and household affairs? Are my kids or other family members the best choice as trustees or executors? What are the most important documents to have in place as I reach my later years?

Twenty-Second

CACHE YOUR MONEY: PAY YOURSELF FIRST

John Rebeles, Jr., will talk about the importance of saving money and the different ways of doing so at 7 p.m. in the meeting room of the George Memorial Library.

Twenty-Sixth

FAMILY-HISTORY RESEARCH: GENEALOGY ONLINE

Learn more about some of the online

resources that are available for family-history research, including FamilySearch.org, HeritageQuest, and FindaGrave.com at 10 a.m. in the computer lab of the George Memorial Library. Tips and strategies for a more efficient Internet search will also be demonstrated. Registration required.

FIRST-TIME HOME-BUYER WORKSHOP

Courtney Bryant, Family and Community Health County Extension Agent, will provide an overview of the home-buying process, from beginning to close from 2 - 4 p.m. in meeting room 2 of the University Branch Library. Learn about the pros and cons of home ownership, credit scores, mortgage loans, home inspections, down-payment assistance programs, purchasing a home, and protecting one's investment. This program is for first-time homebuyers as well as others who are interested in the home-buying and financing process.

Twenty-Eighth

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE HOUR

Start your week off by sharing a cup of coffee, exchanging news or a corny joke, and chatting with friends at the George Memorial Library's new monthly social

hour celebrating the multitude of diverse cultures found in Fort Bend County. People of all nationalities are invited to this informal gathering to get to know one another, share cultural experiences, and learn something new and fascinating about each other in a casual and comfortable environment. The International Coffee Hour will take place on the last Monday of every month. This month's event will take place at 9 a.m. in the meeting room.

CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK

Every Fort Bend County baby born Jan. 28 through Feb. 1 may receive a special baby book bag, courtesy of the Friends of Fort Bend County Library. Each bag contains a book, a bib, a special certificate, a list of suggested reading for children, and information on parenting and on library services. Baby book bags will be given to babies born during that week at area Fort Bend County hospitals, but all Fort Bend County babies who are born during Children's Book Week are eligible to receive one, while supplies last. Families of Fort Bend babies born at other locations during Children's Book Week should call the Youth Services department, at 281-633-4762, to receive their book bag.



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2018 Pecan Festival

Photos by TYLER JOHNSON

PHOTOS



1 Richmond City Commissioner Terry Gaul poses for a photo with his granddaughter Charly Russell and a plate full of pecan-baked treats. [Herald photo by Tyler Johnson]
2 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent Boone Holladay and Texas Pecan Growers Association Associate Director of Membership Erin Diserens pose for a photo at the third annual Pecan Festival in downtown Richmond.
3 Richmond resident Jerry Jackson wipes down his 1967 Chevy Camero. He's spent \$50,000 on it since he purchased it. "It's not really a show car," he said. "I don't enter it into shows. I just enjoy working on it."

4 Fort Bend County residents Liz Stegint (right) and Angie Pavlovsky (left) were named the pecan grand champion reserve grand champion. Stegint was doublet grand champion in commercial and classic pecans. Pavlovsky was reserve classic pecan grand champion.
5 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agent and 4-H Program Coordinator Amber Leung educates kids about quails, a native bird to Southeast Texas.
6 Judge Amber Wisdom jots down notes while she judges the classic car competition.
7 Fulshear resident Tom McCusker, who is originally from Scotland, was last year's Commercial Pecan Grand Champion.

If you'd like to see your photo in the next edition, email them to us! All we require is that the everyone in the photo be identified, by first and last name, left to right, and that you include a short description about what is happening in the photo. The photos can spotlight community events, efforts or just happy smiling faces. Send photos to Marquita Griffin at mgriffin@fbherald.com with "Monthly Photos" in the subject line.



1 The Vaders are all smiles on National Adoption Day. Pictured are Kevin, son Jonathan, Melissa and son Logan. *Photo by Averil Gleason*

2 Needville High School varsity running back Ashton Stredick was presented with the Ford Texas High School Football Player of the Week Award for Week 5. From left are Needville ISD Athletic Director Michael Giles, Lee Beeler of Legacy Ford in Rosenberg, Stredick, and Patrick Sexton of Legacy Ford, who presented the award.

3 Calvary Episcopal Preparatory Art teacher Mary Duval created an inspirational wall of angelic feathers with every student's words for what lifts them.

4 Fulshear High School color guard Capt. Jocelyn Clark helps entertain. *Photo By Scott Reese Willey*

5 Fulshear Chargers Storm Dance Team Co-Capt. Hayley Jeansonne and dad Troy dance at midfield during the Bob & Sue Dance. Troy struggled to mirror his daughter's movements, but like the other fathers on the field seemed to enjoy the experience.

6 Foster High School freshman Trayniece Parker, and other members of the Color Guard, help entertain Falcons' fans.

7 Celebrating Superhero Day at Needville Middle School were front row, from left, paraprofessional "superhero" Ashley Rainosek, "Batgirl" Maylee Smith, "Flash" Aiden Daughtery, "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle" Cheyenne Dobbs, "Batman" Kaleb Lott and "Isis" (also known as fifth-grade reading teacher) Connie Neelon; back row: Assistant Superintendent-by-day/"Superman" by night Jamie Valentine and Principal-by-day/"Wonder Woman" by night Marla Sebasta.

8 Lamar Astros' Trey Moore hugs Lamar Reds first baseman Riley Harris, a friend, during a recent Lamar Little League game. They are both 5 years old and attend Kindergarten at Pecan Grove Elementary. Trey hit a single and once he reached first he turned to Riley and they shared a moment, much to the delight of parents and fans.

9 Members of the J.A.Y.S. (Jesus at Your Side) club from Needville Middle School held a food drive to help Lunches of Love. From left are Landon House, sponsor Amy Rangel, Nolan Wendt, Cole Harris, Lita Meyer and Cassidy Harrison.

10 John and Sylvia Royal of Rosenberg check out the Mexican Army artifacts unearthed at the site known as "The Sea of Mud." The artifact is part of a cane. Wharton pediatrician Dr. Greg Dimmick provided a discussion about the Mexican Army's travels through Texas immediately after Santa Anna was defeated at the battle of San Jacinto.

Calvary Episcopal Preparatory

An educational opportunity that is unique, accelerated and has a reputation for excellence'

by KRISTA KUPERUS

While outstanding academics are a trademark for Calvary's reputation of excellence, its pride as Fort Bend County's premiere Christian school is how students and faculty treat each other and grow in their understanding of God's expectations for them.

The Calvary 3 R's: Reverence for God, Respect for others, and Responsibility for self are the cornerstone for every aspect of the child's educational journey.

In addition to a rigorous and accelerated academic environment, the Calvary experience includes service learning, leadership opportunities and enrichment programs for student creativity and expression.

These programs include a successful athletic department, Student Council, National Honor Society, and visual and performing arts that encompass a Thespian Troupe, a National Arts Honor Society and competitive band.

Calvary consistently wins district competition against other private schools in Private School Interscholastic Association (PSIA) for lower and middle school. Upper school students compete in Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS), sending many students to state each year.

Small classrooms and individualized attention assure that students enjoy a safe and nurturing environment.

Christian Character classes, Bible instruction and three chapel services weekly foster an emotionally safe environment.

Calvary is unique in that students learn to live together regardless of age, as the school enters PK-3-year olds and graduates students in grade 12.

Students freely interact, with the older students mentoring the younger in a diverse student body that is accepting of all faiths and nationalities. Calvary is an international school and issues the F-1 visa.

The lower and middle grades accelerate the curriculum so that students are instructed a grade above the national average. This results in median achievement test scores that range from two to four grades above. High school students are encouraged to take Advanced Placement courses, Dual Credit courses and graduate with a distinguished diploma and an average



Calvary Episcopal Headmaster Malcolm Smith, seventh-graders Paul Lazarou, Genesis Griffin and Maddie Iversen present a poetry reading at the 2018 Lamar Day honoring at the Morton Cemetery in Richmond. [Photo by Diana Nguyen]

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Don Carter Elementary School

officially dedicated to former Lamar Consolidated football coach
Photos by TYLER JOHNSON



1



2



3



4



5



6

1 Former Lamar Consolidated football coach Don Carter speaks to gym full of students, teachers and family members after having Don Carter Elementary School officially dedicated in late November.

2 Don Carter's family joined him in the dedication of the elementary school named in his honor. Pictured in the front row from left are his grandchildren Carter Wilcox, Grace Wilcox and Caleb Wilcox. In the back row from left are Mike Pitz, Meredith Pitz, Karen Carter, Don Carter, Stephen Wilcox and Courtney Wilcox.

3 Don Carter Elementary School principal Henva Medlow presented a plaque to former Lamar

Consolidated football coach Don Carter after officially dedicating the school in his honor.

4 Former Lamar Consolidated football players Clarence McCullough (Class of 1991) and Roger Adamson (Class of 1995) celebrate with their former coach Don Carter on Tuesday. Pictured from left are McCullough, Carter and Adamson.

5 Faculty members at Don Carter Elementary School give Don Carter a standing ovation after his speech about encouraging others and perseverance.

6 Don Carter Elementary School is led by Principal Henva Medlow (right) and Assistant Principal Leann Imrie (left).

Send us your school news stories and photos! Email Marquita Griffin at mgriffin@fbherald.com with "School News" in the subject line.

HOUSTON METHODIST SUGAR LAND HOSPITAL

—earns eighth 'A' in a row for patient safety—

The Leapfrog Group, a nonprofit organization committed to driving quality, safety and

available hospital safety data to assign grades to more than 2,600 U.S. hospitals twice a year. The Hospital Safety Grade's

transparency in the U.S. health care system, recently released the Fall 2018 Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grades, which assign A, B, C, D and F letter grades to hospitals nationwide. Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital was one of 855 hospitals to receive an "A" for its commitment to reducing errors, infections and accidents that can harm patients.

"Leapfrog's Hospital Safety Grades recognizes hospitals like Houston Methodist Sugar Land that focus on advancing patient safety. This ranking provides an important resource for patients, and a benchmark for hospitals, to determine how care at one hospital compares to others in a region," said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "Hospitals that earn an A Hospital Safety Grade deserve to be recognized for their efforts in preventing medical harm and errors."

Developed under the guidance of a national expert panel, the Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade uses 28 measures of publicly



Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital was recently recognized by The Leapfrog Group.

methodology is peer-reviewed and fully transparent, and the results are free to the public.

"Patient safety is central to our mission, and we are proud of our results," said Chris Siebenaler, regional senior vice president and chief executive officer at Houston Methodist Sugar Land. "Our success depends on the daily actions of our physicians, nurses, technicians and other staff

members. Receiving our eighth consecutive 'A' grade since 2014 shows that we are making a significant difference in keeping our patients safe while under our care."

Visit hospitalsafetygrade.org to see Houston Methodist Sugar Land's full grade, and to access consumer-friendly patient tips for staying safe in the hospital.

For more information about Houston Methodist Sugar Land Hospital, visit houstonmethodist.org/sugarland or call 281-274-7500 to find a doctor in your area.

Visit the hospital's Facebook page at [fb.com/methodistsugarland](https://www.facebook.com/methodistsugarland) for the latest news, events and information.

Fort Bend awarded the 2018 Workplace Health Assessment Wellness Champion Award

Fort Bend County has earned the American Cancer Society's Workplace Health Assessment Wellness Champion Award for providing excellent wellness opportunities for its employees.

The county received second place in the greater Houston area for providing wellness services such as nicotine cessation programs, exercise programs, wellness classes and multiple health screenings. Also included in these benefits is an employee health clinic providing basic medical care to all that work for the county.

Fort Bend County Risk Management has been a partner of the American Cancer Society for many years by serving on the ACS Wellness Committee and being an integral part of planning and executing the Annual Houston Corporate Wellness Forum each fall. Each year at this forum, the American Cancer Society awards top performing companies in the Workplace Health Assessment.

This award represents Fort Bend County's commitment to building a culture of health and wellness within their employee base and their community.

The Workplace Health Assessment Tool is a free service through the American Cancer Society that provides companies with customized recommendations based on a 60-question survey.

The survey, conducted by Society staff, evaluates benefit design, policy, programs, tracking and communication. Companies then receive a customized, action-based report measuring their offerings against national best practices and benchmarks surrounding tobacco control, cancer screening, healthy eating, physical activity and cancer care. Companies then work with Society staff to design and implement their action plan throughout the year.

For more information visit www.fortbendcountytx.gov, and select Risk Management under the Government tab.



HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

Blue Cure's New Year Night Run

The Blue Cure Foundation will host its inaugural New Year Night Run on Jan. 5 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Constellation Field, 1 Stadium Drive in Sugar Land. The family-fun 5K running event will shine a light on prostate cancer and feature t-shirts, live entertainment, Zumba, dance, a new batting-cage experience, games and more. Visit www.bluecure.org.

Healing Spices and Soups workshop

Hosted by Nourish Your Life, this workshop, set for Jan. 20 from 2-5 p.m. at 1435 Hwy 6, Suite 101 in Sugar Land, will discuss the healing power of functional foods and nutrition. Integrative and Functional Medicine physician, Dr. Manisha Ghei, and Health Coach, Ruchika Behal, will teach you how to use phytonutrients, anti-inflammatory and healing herbs and spices for chronic disease prevention in easy and quick to prepare delicious recipes. Visit www.ruchikabehal.com.

Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body

The University Branch Library will host "Healthy Living for Your Brain & Body" on Jan. 28 at 6:30 pm in Meeting Room 2. A representative from the Houston and Southeast Texas Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association will discuss ways of achieving a healthier brain and body by focusing on nutritional health, physical and mental activity, and social wellness. Get tips on how to make lifestyle choices that will help one's body and brain remain healthy throughout the aging process. Learn how to incorporate diet, nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity, and social engagement into a plan for healthy aging.

From left: JT Pena, Risk Management Loss Control Manager; County Judge Robert Hebert; Shayla Clift, American Cancer Society Program Manager; Elexis Delgado, Wellness Coordinator; and Wyatt Scott, Risk Management Director



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