

March 2019

FULSHEAR LIVING

monthly

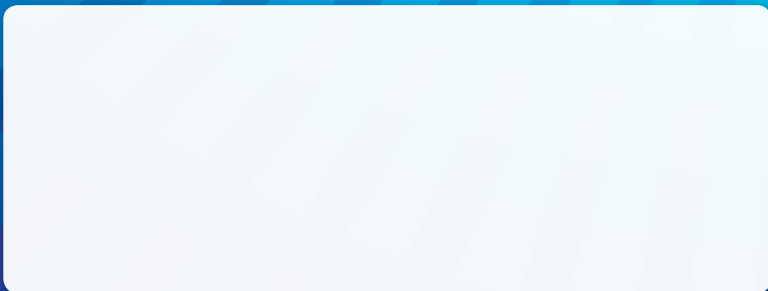
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monthly™

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NEW HIGH WATER RESCUE TRUCK PREPARES FULSHEAR POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR FLOODING EMERGENCIES

by CLAIRE GOODMAN | Photos courtesy of MIKE MCCOY



The newly acquired high water rescue truck will enable Fulshear police to navigate flood waters.



The vehicle is a 2019 Ford F-250 with a turbo diesel engine capable of towing the police department's rescue airboat.



When not in use for rescue efforts, the truck will be used at police events.

After the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, the Fulshear Police Department realized they were lacking adequate vehicles to address catastrophic flooding. And while Fulshear was relatively unscathed compared to other areas, there was still a need for rescue equipment capable of high water rescue.

In the badly flooded areas, Fulshear police had to rely on other nearby emergency services to aid in rescue efforts. Captain Mike McCoy of the Fulshear Police Department noted, "Not a lot of Fulshear flooded too badly, but there were some areas that did get some water. Since we didn't have the equipment, we were at the mercy of everybody else. We had to wait until (other rescue groups) were finished to come help us out, so we had to basically wait for resources."

Now, thanks to a donation by Legacy Ford in Rosenberg, the Fulshear Police Department has a high water rescue truck that can push through flood waters. Legacy Ford donated the use of a raised 2019 Ford F-250 with a turbo diesel engine.

The department previously relied on a Hummer to move through flooded areas, but it was unable to drive through high-level water. The new truck is raised much higher than the Hummer and can maneuver through deeper waters.

The truck has benefits beyond high water rescue. Not long after Hurricane Harvey, a local home builder donated an airboat to the police department. The rescue truck has a powerful engine that can easily tow the airboat.

The truck will not be used for regular patrol, so when the truck isn't being used for rescue efforts, it will be

used at Fulshear Police Department events. Onsite Decals donated the truck's wrap. The wrap design is similar to the existing fleet decals, but McCoy said, "We did this design more contemporary. We have a big flag on the side. It looks a lot cooler."

McCoy anticipates that the truck will be a popular feature at police events. "I think the kids will love it. We do a lot of events for young children and teenagers, and I think this truck will be a huge hit. We've already had some kids look at it, and it's been a big hit with the kids. They love the size of it," he said.

The police department is grateful to the donors who contributed to the acquisition of the truck. Legacy Ford donated the use of the truck, meaning that the police department will keep the truck for a year, but then Legacy Ford will take the truck back, remove the wrap, and sell the truck. In its place they will donate a new high water rescue truck so that the police force always has the most recent year model for their use.

Because Onsite Decals sponsored the wrap and Sidons-Martin will be donating new lights for the truck, the rescue vehicle was completely free to the police department and tax payers.

"It's not going to cost the city a penny other than gas," McCoy reported.

McCoy encourages the public to attend upcoming police department events and see the new truck. The next big events for the Fulshear Police Department are the St. Patrick's Day Shamrock Shindig on March 16 in downtown Fulshear and the Fulshear Police Department Gumbo Cook-Off on April 27 at the police station, 29255 Farm to Market 1093.



ABOVE PHOTOS: Here, Lynda Morgart's awards are proudly displayed.

LEFT PHOTO: Lynda Morgart's hard work and dedication have been recognized by Lamar Consolidated ISD in 2012 with the LCISD Elementary Teacher of the Year award, and in 2018, when she was named LCISD Secondary Teacher of the Year for her work with students.

Veteran Leaman teacher inspiring students, has honors to prove it

by VALERIE SWEETEN

Inspiring junior high students to embrace their lessons can be a daunting task, but longtime veteran teacher Lynda Morgart is not giving up on making sure her students have the best experience in her classes.

Morgart, a seventh-grade ELA Writing teacher as well as Writing Department Chair and ELA Facilitator at Dean Leaman Junior High, said providing the best education a student can have has always been a driving force in her life.

As an honors student graduate in the Top 10 percent of her class from James E. Taylor High School in 1995, Morgart had plans of becoming a pediatrician. While at Texas A&M, Morgart began working with children at a small private school and volunteered for community service projects. It was this outreach that Morgart found appealing on many levels.

"While immersing myself in the environment of young children and experiencing the world through their eyes while nurturing their curiosity, I learned incredible lessons about individual character growth, learning styles and the unique development of each child," she said. "The wonder in their eyes, the excitement in their discoveries and the joy that each day revealed allowed me to reflect on my love for learning in every moment I spent with them. It ignited a passion that would alter the path my life would take."

By the spring of 1998, Morgart decided to follow her heart. Her new major became Interdisciplinary Studies. She said it's this same passion that still drives her everyday mission with her students.

"I continually strive to educate myself, expand my professional learning community and build strong relationships with my students in order to provide them with the highest quality education they each deserve," Morgart said.

Her hard work and dedication were recognized by Lamar Consolidated ISD in 2012 with the LCISD Elementary Teacher of the Year award. In 2018, Morgart was named LCISD Secondary Teacher of the Year for her work with students.

"I am humbled and extremely grateful to work for LCISD," Morgart said. "It is amazing to be recognized for the dedication that I have for my students, their families, and our community. It is surreal to not only be the Elementary District Teacher of the Year in 2012, but to also have been able to continue in my profession, which I absolutely love, and be recognized as the Secondary Teacher of the Year in 2018."

Morgart finds inspiration everyday in her profession.

Working with students of different ages, background, learning abilities and emotional circumstances has shaped and transformed her into the educator she is today she said. Moving from elementary school to junior

Continued on page 23

FORT BEND COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

— *helicopter fleet unique to area* —

by CLAIRE GOODMAN

Fort Bend County is one of the largest in Texas. With a jurisdiction of 885 square miles, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office has a considerable territory to serve. With a small fleet of helicopters, the sheriff's office is able to patrol the county and surrounding areas. The Harris County Sheriff's Office has a helicopter fleet, but for areas outside of Houston, helicopters are rare.

Sheriff Troy Nehls first acquired the helicopters during his first term as sheriff. Nehls served in the military for more than 20 years, so he was familiar with the 1033 Program - a program through which law enforcement agencies can obtain surplus military vehicles and supplies.

Nehls said, "I found out that there were OH-58 helicopters from Kentucky, so I immediately flew to Kentucky and I met with the military there. I picked up two of them, flew back to Fort Bend County, and I received authorization through the commissioner's court to have those flown to Fort Bend County. Then they became part of our fleet."

The helicopters are housed at the Sugar Land airport. Missouri City, Sugar Land and Rosenberg provide the personnel and fuel for the aircraft.

The helicopters have proven an invaluable resource for the sheriff's office for rescue efforts in emergency situations. Nehls said that during Hurricane Harvey and the Memorial Day flood, the helicopters were frequently deployed to transport important members of the city to various sites.

"We did things like pick up the mayors of Fulshear and Simonton and took them where they needed to go when the streets were flooded out," he said.

The sheriff's office also uses the helicopters for search efforts with missing civilians. "We have found individuals that have wandered away from their homes, whether they are seniors or elderly people," Nehls said.

Because helicopters are rare in rural counties, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office has often been asked by other law enforcement for assistance. "The helicopters have been used several times to support law enforcement- not only the sheriff's office - but other law enforcement offices in the region and municipalities. We've also been asked to come out and help in some of our surrounding counties as well," added Nehls.

The primary use of the helicopters is to enable the deputies to apprehend criminals and uphold the law. "Having this air support - the words we use are 'force multiplier.' It helps our patrol division. Whether it's a pursuit situation or there are burglars on the ground, having the ability to see to view things from 300 to 400 feet in the air is certainly nice. It gives the patrol deputies a sense of security as well. When they're out looking for

someone, there's our helicopter overhead keeping a good eye on everything," Nehls said.

The helicopters are equipped with state-of-the-art law enforcement technology. The aircraft feature forward-looking infrared (FLIR) cameras that use thermographic technology to view infrared imaging.

The digital mapping technology onboard the helicopters is military-grade, creating an enhanced spatial-awareness for the pilots.

Nehls strongly encourages anyone interested in learning about the helicopter fleet to come by the sheriff's office and see the aircraft personally.

"If anybody would like an opportunity to take a look at our helicopters, we can schedule a time. We love the community. We want the residents of Fort Bend County to know what type of equipment we have to keep everybody safe."

To learn more about the Fort Bend County Sheriff's office helicopter fleet or to request to see the aircraft, call the administrative offices at 281-341-4700.



The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office utilizes two OH-58 military helicopters to serve Fort Bend County.

LIVABLE CENTER STUDY

— lays out plans for development of downtown Fulshear —

by CLAIRE GOODMAN



As the population and development of Fulshear grows, city officials are tasked with an important issue: how to embrace the ever-expanding change while maintaining the qualities of a city known for its quaint and family-friendly environment. In essence, how does a city maintain its “small-town charm” when it is no longer a small town?

To address this quandary, city officials formed a council made up of a diverse group of Fulshear representatives to create a Livable Center Study. The purpose of the study is to design a road map for the growth of the city to insure that Fulshear continues to be a place known for its picturesque landscapes and family-friendly nature in perpetuity.

Similar Livable Center programs have been implemented in other areas with positive results. According to the Fulshear Livable Center Study, “Suburban communities in the Houston Metropolitan Area benefit from these plans by promoting denser development patterns, reducing the need for vehicular trips, providing opportunities for walkability, bicycling and transit, and developing unique destinations that result in increased economic development.”

The primary goals of the Fulshear Livable Center



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Study are creating a walkable and pedestrian-friendly area, encouraging development of downtown that perpetuates the “small-town charm” of Fulshear and creating a sense of identity for Fulshear to preserve its character moving forward.

The first step in developing the study was to form an advisory group comprised of citizens from different facets of Fulshear’s culture.

Don McCoy is president of the Fulshear Katy Chamber of Commerce. He was selected for the advisory board because of his knowledge of local commerce, but other members of the committee are pastors from local churches, local small business owners and other strongly involved members of the community.

“The city staff selected the council based on what they perceived that each person could bring to the table in the way of creativity, vision, or management. There's a good cross-section of people. It's not from all one point of view,” McCoy said.

The general public has an open invitation to join in the planning process as well. “We also engage with the public on a regular basis. The public comes in and sees what we're doing,” he added.

The study considers the land within the city limits and extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) over a span of approximately 4,531 acres with a strong focus on

downtown Fulshear.

There are many issues in the downtown area that need to be addressed in order for Fulshear to preserve its best traits while embracing a growing population boom. “We’re taking a conceptual approach. We had to look at the existing conditions and what's hampering our town,” McCoy said.

PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY DOWNTOWN

One of the biggest frustrations to Fulshear residents is the lack of walkability through the city. The current layout of the downtown area would be conducive to foot traffic if there were better accommodations for pedestrians. “The existing street grid network provides an excellent framework for a pedestrian-friendly environment,” the study notes.

The study proposes implementing one-way streets in downtown to reduce traffic on the roads, thereby making it easier for pedestrians to cross the streets. It would also make it easier for large groups to move through the city during the major events and festivals that are so popular in downtown.

The council unanimously agreed that making downtown more accessible by foot was a top priority in revamping the city. McCoy acknowledged, “There's no sidewalks. There's no walkable area. One thing we all agreed on was we need to find a way to get traffic in and out of downtown more efficiently.”



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Specifically, the council proposed that Wallis Street would be a south-bound one-way street, and Main Street would be a north-bound one-way street.

Once the traffic in downtown flows more efficiently, sidewalks and bike lanes would be added to make foot traffic safer and easier. Main Street and Wallis Street would have a buffered bike lane, sidewalks and a green space added to the streets.

ENCOURAGING “SMALL-TOWN CHARM” DEVELOPMENT

Currently, businesses in Fulshear are overwhelmingly small and locally-owned. These businesses vary between retail, dining, office and industrial uses, but their size and organic roots contribute significantly to the “feel” of Fulshear.

As Fulshear grows, however, the area is becoming increasingly attractive to large-scale retail developers. City representatives want to embrace the development, but they are acutely aware of some of the problems that large retailers can bring to a growing city.



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Most notably, “big box” retailers can detract from the uniqueness of a town. They also drive up rental rates and pull customers away from the small businesses.

To prevent the loss of independent businesses that edify Fulshear’s charm, the study determined, “New retail space should be focused on facilitating local businesses in the categories of food and drink... personal services... and fitness, health and wellness businesses. Boutiques for “soft goods” such as clothing and specialty commerce such as art galleries can mesh well with these businesses.”

“We want to have quaint, different types of shops that would be a character for us. We don’t want to be just ‘Any Town, USA’ with big box stores. Instead we want unique shops and unique little restaurants that just keep the character we have. So we said, ‘With new builds, let’s take that into consideration.’ It’s so important,” McCoy explained.

The study recommends limiting new retail shops to 10,000 square feet “in concert with adjacent public space improvements. Building design needs to balance between attractiveness and affordability for tenants.”

FULSHEAR’S VISUAL IDENTITY

The building design requirements are part of a larger effort to create an aesthetic that will be unique to Fulshear.

McCoy explained, “We want to set up cohesive design and branding so that when you’re in Fulshear, you know you’re in Fulshear. It’s a certain kind of architecture that says you’re here, with buildings, signs and streetscapes that define the area.”

Fulshear has some existing signage like the “Welcome to Fulshear” sign as the major gateway leading into the city from the highway. The study calls for smaller signs throughout the city that would be unique to Fulshear.

The study states, “The design of the gateway signage should showcase the existing character of the downtown district, incorporate branding, and include enhanced landscaping with plants native to the Fulshear area.”

Essentially, if all the buildings, signs, and landscapes have a cohesive look, Fulshear will have its own visual identity unlike any other city.

The time frame for the implementation of all the changes spans between five and 20 years. Simpler, less-costly changes like improved parking will take effect within the next five years. Other improvements, such as reconfiguring the street traffic and pedestrian environment are expected to be completed in the 20-year time span.

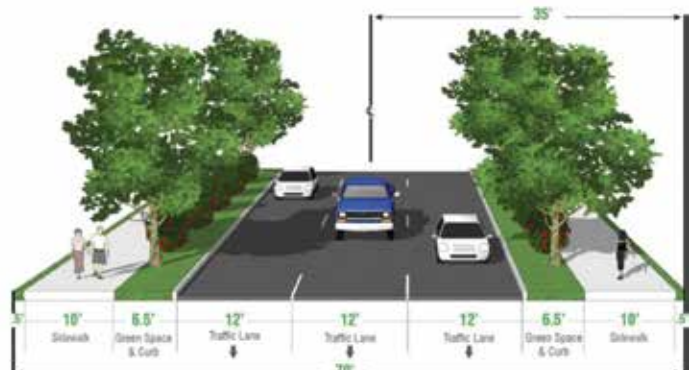
The implementation of so many strategic plans seems daunting, but the study council is confident that with proper planning the efforts will come together smoothly. “Whether its five years or 20 years from now, you can’t discount the importance of future planning. Some things may seem unattainable, but unless you go out and reach for the stars you’ll never get off the ground,” said McCoy.

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CITY NATURE CHALLENGE

approaching at nature park



by TOM BEHRENS

Lace up your hiking boots, don't forget the camera, carry a small notebook/pencil, and maybe a pair of gloves, too.

The 2019 City Nature Challenge takes place April 26-29 in cities all over the world, using the iNaturalist app. Observers and gatherers will be competing to see who can make the most observations of nature and find the most species.

More than 75 cities on six continents are asking residents and visitors of these urban areas to explore nature all around them and document the species they find. It's a bioblitz-style competition where cities are in a contest against each other to see who can make the most

observations of nature, who can find the most species, and who can engage the most people. According to the www.iNaturalist website, 15,508,788 observations have been collected by 423,656 observers.

Last year more than 126,000 observations were logged in five days by more than 4,000 scientists, representing more than 8,500 species in the United States alone. Meaning that an observation was made almost every three seconds of the City Nature Challenge.

Seabourne Creek Nature Park, just a short distance south of Fulshear, is the focus of people in the Fulshear, Simonton, and Richmond-Rosenberg area.



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A new “Insect and Spider List” for the Seabourne Creek Nature Park has been created using all the sightings shown on the Park page on the iNaturalist website. The SCNP has been an active location on iNaturalist with lots of observers uploading their sightings weekly, especially during the iNaturalist City Nature Challenge.

HOW IT WORKS:

With the iNaturalist app, you take a picture of a plant or animal, and the community will help identify which species it is. The City Nature Challenge at Seabourne will be led by volunteers from the Texas Master Naturalist program.

A Texas Master Naturalist, the Coastal Prairie Master Naturalists, are a group of volunteers who share their appreciation and knowledge of nature with the community through out-reach, education and conservation restoration projects (txmn.org/coastal).

In Texas, Houston leads in observations with 4,125, 3,006 species by 286 members. Other Texas cities/areas that have participated include Amarillo, Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth, El Paso, Lower Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio.

The first part of the City Nature Challenge on April 26-29 consists of taking pictures of wild plants and animals. The second part of the challenge, April 30-May 5, is the identifying of what you have observed in a “bioblitz.”

The event is not limited to Seabourne Creek Nature Park. Gather some friends of like nature and take pictures of nature’s creatures in the natural areas in the Fulshear-Simonton area. Any observation in the greater metropolitan area of Houston will count during the four-day challenge.

Taking part is easy. Find wildlife; it can be any plant, animal, fungi, slime, mold, or any other evidence of life (scat, fur, tracks, shells, carcasses) found. Take a picture of what you find and be sure to note the location of the critter or plant. Share your observations by uploading your findings through iNaturalist or your city's chosen platform. The platform is Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

There is nature all around us, even in our cities. Knowing what species are in our city and where they are helps us study and protect them, but the ONLY way to do that is by all of us - scientists, land managers, and the community - working together to find and document the nature in our area. By participating in the City Nature Challenge, not only do you learn more about your local nature, but you can also make your city a better place - for you and other species (citynaturechallenge.org/participate).

Results will be announced Friday, May 4, so be sure to upload your observations by then.

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Chad M. Jones was awarded the 2019 Skyward Leader in Excellence Award

by Skyward honoring the most innovative individuals and districts throughout the Skyward family.

by VALERIE SWEETEN

The latest in technology in the school district is about the people behind the scenes ensuring that teachers, students and administrative leaders have the tools they need to do their jobs.

Chad M. Jones, Ed.D., director of Digital Learning, Lamar CISD is that person. He recently was awarded the 2019 Skyward Leader in Excellence Award by Skyward honoring the most innovative individuals and districts throughout the Skyward family.

Jones was recognized for his success utilizing Skyward to inspire others with new ideas and initiatives. He will be recognized later this year at Skyward's iCon Conference.

Skyward is a software company specializing in K-12 school management and municipality management technologies including Student Management, Human

Resources and Financial Management. Skyward is partnered with more than 1,900 school districts and municipalities worldwide. Their applications are used in 22 U.S. states and multiple international locations in schools and municipalities.

Jones' history in education and teaching began as a high school English teacher in 2004. In his fourth year, he moved to an Instructional Technology Specialist position where he assisted teachers find powerful and creative ways to use technology in their lessons.

"I helped teachers find powerful and creative ways to use technology in their lessons," said Jones. "I loved finding ways to make the everyday lesson a little more engaging or relevant to students. In 2009, I accepted a central office position in LCISD which has evolved into



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the position I have today as the Director of Digital Learning.”

After nine years in LCISD, Jones had the opportunity to roll out numerous systems to teachers and staff including the Skyward Student Information System. In addition to serving as project manager for district wide initiatives, Jones leads a team of 13 Digital Learning Coaches and Digital Learning Specialists. He is also the District Library Coordinator for 40 campus librarians.

How effective can the use of technology be in a school district? Jones finds ways to use it all over.

“One thing that I think most defines me is video trainings,” Jones said. “I have literally filmed hundreds of short three to five-minute trainings for LCISD covering the everyday activities of things like taking attendance, entering grades and on and on.”

In the age of YouTube, Jones said that these variety of trainings and tutorials have been a huge influence on him and prompted him to bring the best practices of online learning to LCISD.

“The ability for our staff to learn a task online when it’s convenient for them has saved our district thousands of work hours and allowed our teachers to focus on

more important things,” Jones stated.

Keeping the district on top of its game technology wise keeps Jones busy. His average day could range from jumping from meeting to meeting to coordinating with different departments across the district, filming a short how-to video for a new tool and visiting a campus.

His inspiration is LCISD’s educators and leaders he said.

“I am amazed everyday with how hard my team, my librarians, our teachers, EVERYONE, works to provide the best education for our students. You can’t help but work hard in Lamar because you know that everyone has their priorities straight. We do what’s best for kids! LCISD is truly the best district in the state of Texas, and it’s because of the amazing people that work here,” Jones said.

Jones said he is honored to be selected for this award but credits it as a reflection on his “amazing team.” Their goal is to support our teachers and staff in the most efficient, effective ways possible.

Said Jones: “I’m fortunate to have had some amazing bosses that supported my vision for implementing this tool in an innovative way. I consider it an honor to support this tool and to have been recognized as a leader in implementing it.”

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PreKindergarten aide honored for work at Huggins Elementary School

by VALERIE SWEETEN

Having passion for your job, especially if working in education with teachers and children, begins with dedication to be the best you can be.

Angelica Aguilar, a PreKindergarten aide, is that person.

Aguilar, a 2008 Alief Taylor High School graduate, said her dream has always been to become an elementary teacher. After becoming certified as a Medication Aide, she made the decision to pursue a career in education.

“I worked as a substitute for PreK for one year,” said Aguilar. “After a lot of hard work and with the help of my coworkers and my family, I got certified to become a paraprofessional.”

Her hard work hasn’t gone unnoticed.

In May 2018, Aguilar was listed as Paraprofessional of the Year for Huggins Elementary by the Lamar Classroom Teachers’ Association (LCTA). In 2017, Aguilar was honored by Lamar Consolidated ISD at their volunteer award luncheon along with 23 elementary school Volunteers of the Year for her work at Huggins Elementary.

Aguilar’s duties as a paraprofessional are assisting the teacher with class instruction.

“These duties include working with small groups of children to reinforce lessons, providing one on one instructions if they need it and supervising students in

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classroom,” she said.

According to Wikipedia, paraprofessional educators have many duties. These can range from assisting teachers in the classroom, supervising students outside of the classroom, or providing administrative support for teaching.

Job duties can also include filling teaching positions to supplementing regular classroom curriculum with additional enrichment activities for students. Some in this career can also possibly work directly with students such as practicing reading aloud, helping understand and complete assignments or help with students with special needs.

Watching progress of the Kindergarten class is inspiring for Aguilar.



Angelica Aguilar is pictured with her son, Isaac, and her husband Fernando.

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“My favorite part of my job is when I get to know the personality of every child, watching them grow during the school year, and seeing how they are ready to start Kindergarten. It’s very rewarding,” said Aguilar.

Being selected for Paraprofessional of the Year is a great honor Aguilar stated.

“I feel very loved, lucky, and special because I have been chosen by my coworkers as a Paraprofessional of the Year that make me very happy,” she said.

Aguilar, happily married and mother of a 11-year-old son, enjoys volunteering in free time in nursing homes where she enjoys seeing their smiles.

Continued from Page 7

high was a natural progression for Morgart as she strived to build strong relationships to foster authentic learning in the secondary classroom.

“Our interactions are a window to their potential, which allows me to support them as they change, grow and develop into the future leaders. Watching my students navigate this world with curiosity, humor, compassion, and confidence has been one of the greatest honors in my life,” she said.

Through her years of teaching, Morgart, who has lived in Fulshear for 15 years, has built long lasting bonds with her students.

“Without a doubt, the students and families that I have met have become true friends along the way. It’s an amazing community. I have been truly blessed to have the opportunity to experience my students grow up alongside my beautiful daughter and witness them all becoming productive, caring, and contributing members of our community,” Morgart said.

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Award-winning administrative assistant part of winning formula at Fulshear High School

by VALERIE SWEETEN

A thriving school is a sign of dedication and determination to create a welcoming learning environment where things run smoothly on every level.

Maria Socorro Torres is part of that formula at Fulshear High School as administrative assistant to principal Daniel Ward ensuring that all parts and pieces stay on track with her job.

Her responsibilities are many and begin with overseeing finances of the school with managing staff time cards and ordering supplies and materials for students. In addition, she handles any building

maintenance needs, as well as overseeing that school's copiers, printers, and computers are serviced when needed.

One of her biggest responsibilities was when she had the unique opportunity and privilege to open Lamar Consolidated ISD's fifth new high school. She had her hand in mostly everything you see and touch inside the building and used her past experiences to guarantee students would receive the best education the district has to offer.


"This is an accomplishment that I will cherish for the rest of my life," Torres said.

Employees such as Torres, who are devoted to their profession, were recognized for her commitment. She was awarded the 2017-2018 Secondary Professional of the Year by the Lamar Classrooms Teachers' Association at their annual Teacher of the Year banquet.

Any day can bring a wide spectrum of interactions between students, parents, and staff throughout her everyday experiences. This energizes her focus to do her absolute best she said. These could range from mentoring students or a Spanish to English translation, handling parent communications through letters and walk-ins, helping in student fundraisers, and actively participating to help families in need.

"I do my best to give students, parents, and staff the same attention and respect as I would want for my own family," Torres said. "To me, everyone matters no matter who they are or where they come from."

Torres has long been inspired to be the best mother and caregiver she could possibly be. With two sons and as the wife of a firefighter/peace officer, she realized that a banking career wasn't going to fit her lifestyle and decided to change her path.



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Maria Socorro Torres holds her 2017-2018 Secondary Professional of the Year award.



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“Many nights I prayed asking God for a job that met the needs for my family and desire to positively influence people in my community despite only receiving a high school diploma and completing one year in college,” said Torres. “Then one day, my life was forever changed. I was hired to be a paraprofessional for LCISD and for the past 22 years and counting, my prayers continue to be answered.”

Choosing to be a paraprofessional for LCISD was an easy decision for Torres since education and student success is her passion. Her sons have both pursued advanced degrees for their careers.

Her motivation is the students standing right before her.

“I see our future in the eyes of our students every day. As a paraprofessional, I ensure that my team and I do

our jobs to the best of our abilities so teachers and administrators have extra time to spend with a student who may be struggling with math or science or whatever life challenges they may be facing. I do this so our students can have every opportunity this world has to offer and never be told a goal is too high or dream too big,” Torres said.

With her award, which took her breath away and filled her heart with thankfulness, Torres continues to focus on the big picture at Fulshear High School and that’s the children.

“In all my years of working in education, I know one thing, it takes a lot of people to educate one child. I am proud to be part of a team whose goal is to ensure that our children are being taught to be better citizens of the world. I am extremely proud to say I am a paraprofessional for LCISD,” she said.





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