

VOLUME LXIII, NUMBER 3 - SPRING 2013

the TESA CONNECTION

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STAFF ASSOCIATION, INC.



President's Message



Pat Crawford
President

The 2012-2013 year is more than half over. Winter is near its end and spring is fast approaching. The excitement is building as we all look forward to the end of the school year, summer and Summer Work Conference where we will be going home to Austin. You do not want to miss this conference because Jana and her committee have planned some fun and exciting surprises for you. You can find the registration forms and information on the new TESA website www.tesatexas.org.

Everyone has been working hard this year to keep TESA strong. Our membership and affiliates are growing each day. I'm proud to say that we have had two workshops scheduled. One at the University of Houston Clear Lake, hosted by UHCL ESA which was held in February where we Sailed to New Horizons and the second was held on March 23rd in Garland, co-hosted by Garland ESSA and Mesquite EPA where we had a Boot Scootin' Good Time. I am very excited about the two workshops being held this year. With this being the first year in over 60 years that we have not had a Fall Conference the workshops are like mini conferences where our members can come together for a day of professional development in different areas of the state and not have to travel far. Thank you to Garland, Mesquite and UHCL for helping to keep TESA strong.

It has been an honor to serve as TESA President this year and because you had the confidence in me, you helped me step out of my comfort zone and grow stronger. Each year the President and Executive Board have to make decisions concerning the future of TESA. This year was no different. I, along with the board, have had to make decisions to ensure that TESA would stay strong for our current members as well as our future members and leaders. You are the future of TESA and you are its core.

Voting for the 2013-2014 Executive Board has been completed. Thank you to all of those who exercised their rights as members of TESA and voted.

I look forward to seeing each of you in June at the Omni Southpark in Austin.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Crawford".

Pat Crawford

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From the Editor

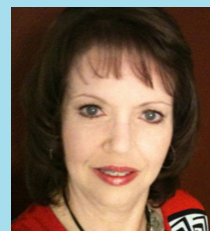


Dianne Lemons
Editor

I wish a Happy Spring to all of our TESA members. I hope you are looking forward to some beautiful spring weather this year. Of course you probably figured out by now living in Texas that the weather here is as we all put it, extremely unpredictable! It is mine and my committee's pleasure to present you with the spring issue of the TESA Connection. I hope this issue finds you doing well and that you have pursued the opportunity for professional growth through each of your affiliations, STEM classes, college classes or NAEOP.

In this issue you will find great feature articles as well as wonderful affiliate articles that demonstrate an array of ways to keep you strong to the core in your professional growth. Please take time to read these, as they offer so much insight and helpful information for each of us to use for both our personal lives and professional careers. You will also be provided with helpful information pertaining to our upcoming 2013 TESA Summer Work Conference to be held in Austin, Texas, June 19-22, 2013 at the Omni Austin Hotel Southpark.

I encourage you to look for ways to find new beginnings, taking full advantage of the remarkable opportunities TESA and the National Association of Educational Office Professionals (NAEOP) have to offer. Remember, I truly believe we all have dreams and goals that we still want to accomplish. Search for new ways to grow and believe in yourself. You can do it!



Darcy Blackstock
Assistant Editor



Paula Lambright
Advertising Manager

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Purpose Statement

We the members of the Texas Educational Support Staff Association, hold that the primary purpose of the educational support staff association is to assist, as a team member, in developing citizens who will safeguard, strengthen, and improve America. The TESA Connection is published four times a year – fall, winter, spring, and summer. Membership in TESA entitles the individual to an annual subscription to the TESA Connection magazine, circulation approximately 2,000. Subscription rate for libraries and nonmembers is \$10 per year. Send request for subscriptions to: TESA Central Office, 1460 E. Whitestone Blvd., Suite 175, Cedar Park, TX 78613.

Please send information for the Summer Issue to :

Dianne Lemons

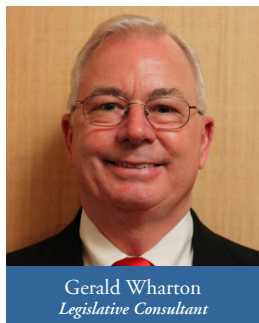
Mesquite ISD

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Guns and/or Money



Gerald Wharton
Legislative Consultant

The hot topics in our news media are all about GUNS and MONEY. I am inundated, daily, with stories that this district or that district is discussing employees carrying guns, the legislature

creating an avenue to pay for public school security, etc. Are you for school employees carrying guns or are you against school employees carrying guns? There are pros and cons to both. As many of you may know, a small school district in northwest Texas currently allows certain school employees to carry guns. Other school districts have their own police departments. My school district, like many others, has School Resource Officers (SROs) on mostly secondary campuses. Obviously, every public school district, college, or university will be examining all aspects of security and selecting the

best solution for them. I am sure the discussions will continue at the state and local levels for some time. Unfortunately, gun violence or the threat of gun violence remains an issue for us all, every day.

The other hot topic is money. Comptroller Susan Combs estimated the 2014-2015 biennial revenues to be \$101.4 billion available for the next budget cycle. In the current biennium, general revenue is \$92.6 billion and a projected rainy day fund of \$8.8 billion. The current legislature is projecting 2014-2015 general-purpose spending at \$101.4 billion and the state's rainy day fund to be \$11.8 billion. It currently appears that the legislature will not use the rainy day surplus to increase education funding.

Both the Senate and the House have filed their budgets, for 2014-2015. These budgets are allowing for enrollment growth in public schools. However, House Bill 1 contains no funding for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Read-

ness (STAAR) tests, while Senate Bill 1 provides approximately \$94 million for the annual testing. Obviously, this will be resolved in conference meeting, as the legislature continues to meet. School vouchers apparently will also receive a great deal of attention, again this session. I expect this to garner substantial opposition from public schools. If a voucher program passed it would take money and students out of public schools into private schools.

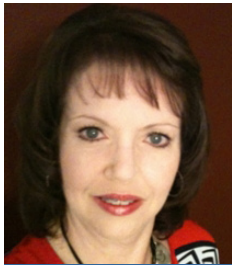
What impact will this legislature have on para-professionals? Unless more money is designated for public schools, colleges, and universities, we will likely continue working for the same wages and likely fewer of us working. What can you do? Contact your state senator and representative. Let them know your concerns about public education funding, school safety, or any other area of concerns. To contact your state senator or representative, go to <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>.

*"You can't turn back the clock.
But you can wind it up again."*

- Bonnie Prudden

Strengthening School Safety

By Darcy Blackstock, CEOP, Channelview ISD



Darcy Blackstock, CEOP
Channelview ISD

In the wake of recent tragic events across the United States, many school districts, private schools, colleges and universities are reviewing their current crisis management plans to find

ways to improve and strengthen security at their campuses. Crisis management plans are designed to address prevention, intervention and follow-up to crisis situations. The plan provides uniform predictable applications in all situations identified as potential crisis situations. Practice drills of these various scenarios serve to prepare staff and students in the event of an actual emergency. Many educational facilities are reacting to these recent events by considering the addition of armed officers on all campuses – not just middle schools and high schools. Some districts are installing fingerprint readers in school buses to scan every student before they step on board. Implementation of metal detectors, x-ray

machines, buzzer/camera systems at the main entrances and other monitoring devices are under consideration as well.

Reaction from government officials, parents and educators has placed school safety at the forefront of discussion. Part of President Barack Obama's recently announced gun violence plan suggests providing schools access to federal grant money to hire more armed officers and increase security efforts. Three Texas lawmakers; Senator John Whitmire, Senator Tommy Williams, and Representative Dan Huberty; are expected to announce the "Texas School District Security Act." This bill is designed to give districts more options for increased law enforcement and other security measures in schools. Lt. Governor David Dewhurst has proposed providing state-funded special weapons training to school teachers. While opinions are split on allowing school employees to carry concealed weapons, it is reported that two Texas districts have already implemented the necessary policies for some employees with the appropriate license and additional training to do just that.

The safety and well being of all students and staff at every educational level are always a priority to administrators throughout the state. School officials are reminded that these horrific incidents are a warning that we need to be prepared. Educational facilities for the most part take a proactive viewpoint and continue to reinforce current practices and procedures; consider ways to improve or obtain additional security; continue to build relationships with health professionals, local officials, your faith community, parents and youth for support services and collaboration; and establish a district-wide culture of preparedness through a collaborative effort in emergency planning, training and drilling. We all need to sharpen our skills and be more observant of our surroundings, our students, and our community as we face the challenges that are a direct result of these heinous and senseless acts that plague today's society. Our children are our future and it is the responsibility of every professional and paraprofessional to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for the success of education and the strengthening of our nation.

"Throughout life, one does not miss any chance to hold onto the things that are really precious, if one is truly wise."

- Ed Greenwood

Awards/Scholarship/Journalist Committee



Awards/Scholarship/Journalist Committee



The TESA Awards/Scholarship/Journalist Committee is working its way through all of the TESA orchards looking for **Themed Apple Baskets** stuffed and ready to win and raise money for scholarships.

Awards for "Apple Basket" Theme will be given to the following categories:

Best Country
Theme Apple
Basket

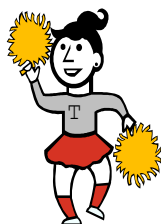
Apple Basket Best
Representing
Texas



Apple Basket Best
Representing
Conference Theme

Most Unusual
Apple Basket

We will also be having the **Spirit Award** once again. We are asking all Affiliates to bring the spirit and make your association proud. Entries will be judged on overall creativity and originality. Members are encouraged to wear their "Spirit" item to the Opening General Session.



- Eligible participants must be current active TESA members or affiliates.
- Spirit items must be items of wear (shirts, hats, vests, visors, etc.)
- Entries must be at the TESA booth by Thursday, June 20th at 4:00 p.m.
- An entry form can be obtained and completed at the TESA booth.

Entries for yearbook, newsletter, Scholarships, Nelda Van Dyke Award, Administrator of the Year Award, have all been submitted and will be announced at the Summer Work Conference.

This is our main fundraiser for TESA Scholarships and everyone is invited to participate - all Affiliates, committees and members bring your Apple Baskets to the Summer Work Conference.

Bonnie Tomczyk, CEOP – Chairman, Killeen ISD - bonnie.tomczyk@killeenisd.org
Kristin Hiney, CEOP, Mesquite ISD - khiney@mesquiteisd.org
Sherry Gray, CEOP, San Jacinto College - sherry.gray@sjcd.edu





TESA... Strong to the Core

2012—2013

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

<http://www.tesatexas.org/membership>



IT IS NOT TOO LATE! TESA NEEDS YOU

Please take a moment and renew your TESA membership.
If you are **not** a member—DON'T WAIT! JOIN NOW!

- Membership Year is August 1, 2012 – July 31, 2013
- Enter your preferred mailing and email address for correspondence
- Check the appropriate box that defines your job description

Be a friend and share the membership form with your co-workers and encourage their membership in this great organization. Remember, you can always surprise a co-worker with a gift membership.

TESA BENEFITS

- Affiliates and their districts receive discounted fees for Affiliate Services presentations and Area Workshops
- National award winning *The TESA Connection* magazine published four times a year included in your membership dues
- Member discounted registrations fees for Summer Work Conference and, if held, Fall Work Conference
- Member scholarships-Lorene Roby Rogers Memorial Scholarship and Michael Zolkoski Technology Scholarship.
- Founders scholarships for children or grandchildren of TESA members
- Staff development through one day Area Workshops, STEM classes, Affiliate Services presentations and state conferences
- Retirees discounted membership
- Networking opportunities with others in education from all across the state
- Legislative proceedings and updates relating to education
- A lifetime of friendships

2012-2013 TESA Membership Council Committee

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Spring Cleaning of Space and Time

By Elizabeth Gongora, Librarian, McAllen ISD



Elizabeth Gongora
McAllen ISD

For many people, spring is a time for cleaning closets, the home, and the yard. Others use this time to plan and undertake new projects.

Either way, it is a

time for change. Whether the change is in the professional or personal realm, the constant is you. It is so easy to get caught up in the plans and responsibilities that come with our daily lives. The potential danger lies in the lack of time and attention to caring for ourselves.

I challenge each of you to sit down and make a list of every hat you wear in life. For example, I am a daughter, sister, granddaughter, friend, and librarian. If you have the time, write a few of the major responsibilities that come with each different hat. The reason I ask you to do this is that it gives us an opportunity to take stock of where our time is being spent. It is like taking all our clothes out of the closet to get ready to clean it out. When you have the clothes out on the bed, you begin to sort it out into piles of clothes to keep, give away or sell, and throw away. In a similar fashion, we can look at our list of responsibilities and begin to think about how important each of those responsibilities is to the success of our goals in life. Which of those responsibilities must be done directly by us? Can some of those tasks be delegated to someone else? Do some of those responsibilities need

to be deleted from our list? The truth is that every task we do consumes lifetime. Whether it is 5 minutes or 5 hours, we exchange lifetime to complete each task. The question we have to ask ourselves is whether that task contributes to our overall success in reaching our life goals.

There are several benefits to cleaning out our closet. The clothes we give or sell is put to use by someone who really needs it. It is no longer latent and just taking up space in our closet. If you decided to sell it, you now have extra money for other things. Maybe you just enjoy seeing more space in your closet. Some people may even decide that now they have room, and yes, even a little extra money, for new clothes. It works quite the same in the organization of our life roles and responsibilities. The tasks we delegate give other people something to do. If we choose to pay someone for doing one of those tasks, they have the opportunity to make a few extra dollars. Perhaps you can use that free time to just rest and relax. It is also possible to reallocate some of our time to tasks that add meaning or quality to our life such as working out to improve our health or spend time with our loved ones to improve relationships.

As you take inventory of your investments of time, try to maintain a balance by allowing time for tasks related to the different areas of your life. Look at your list of responsibilities one more time. This time, group your

tasks into the following four areas: physical, emotional/mental, social, and spiritual. A balanced and healthy lifestyle contributes to your overall health. As a result of your improved self, you are able to complete your tasks and responsibilities with a better attitude, focus and greater chance of success.

Yes, spring is a time for change and new beginnings. It reminds us that after a hot summer, cool fall, and cold winter, we can count on spring coming once again with a renewed hope for a better year ahead. If a year is too long to wait for you to get a “do over” or a fresh start, think of every morning as a new opportunity. If we fail in some way, remember that every morning brings a new set of 24 hours in which we can learn from our mistakes and determine to make better choices and live better today than yesterday. Breathe, relax, and enjoy!

2013 Summer Work Conference

2013 TESA Summer Work Conference

June 18-22, 2013

Omni Austin Hotel at Southpark - Austin, Texas

It won't be long and we will all be together in Austin! Conference materials and information are posted at www.tesatexas.org.

The hotel link is there, and a schedule overview to help you with arrival and departure dates. Reservations are going fast—don't delay!

STEM classes will be offered all day Tuesday and Wednesday. A 3 hour session will be offered on Thursday afternoon. You will find more information in this issue and online.

Wednesday evening will be a special time of recognition with our CEOP Celebration.

Everyone is invited to help us welcome and meet our first time participants at a reception on Thursday morning. We will then have our opening session complete with the TESA Flag Ceremony, a special keynote speaker, and the announcement of our newest Nelda Van Dyke Award recipient and Administrator of the Year Award.

You definitely won't want to miss the Apple Basket Bistro (aka President's Lunch). We have a very unique surprise for those in attendance.

Thursday night put on your comfy clothes (lobby appropriate) and come to the movies with us! We will sing and maybe even dance the night away to GREASE!

The Black and White Gala on Friday night will be an elegant affair. We will have dinner and our installation of officers, and then an evening of dancing. Please wear black, white, or black and white to this event.

The Core Celebration on Saturday morning will be the perfect send off. Come ready for fun!

See you in Austin!



**Take a BITE out of Austin and enjoy
shopping the vendors
at the Omni Southpark during
TESA SWC 2013!**

Wednesday, June 19 11:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, June 20 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Friday, June 21 8:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Know anyone interested in being a vendor?
Send them my way!**

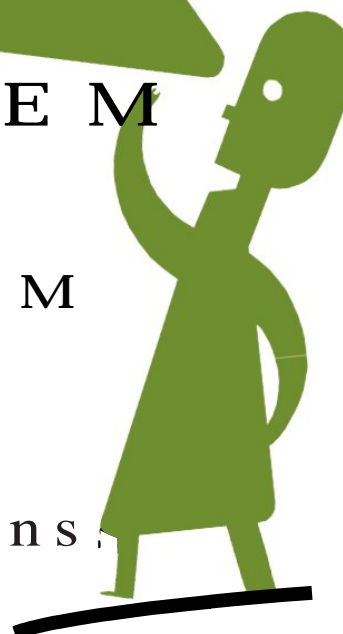
**Debbie McFadden, 281-283-3703
mcfadden@uhcl.edu**



Searching for



T E S A and S T E M
are offering
39 hours of S T E M
classes
and
3 Extended Sessions
at
Summer Work
Conference!



Go to www.tesatexas.org
Check the STEM Calendar for regularly scheduled classes
and
review the 2013 SWC registration forms and information.

Affiliate Services

Want to build a strong Association?.....
Become a TESA Affiliate!

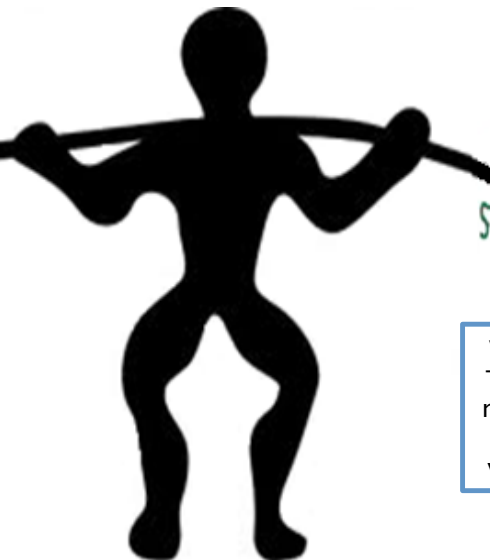
Assistance
in the
Installation
of officers
for your
local group

Consultant in-service
presentations
(Customized to fit
your association
needs)

Assistance
in the
formation
of a new
association



Professional
Development
Advisory
Sessions



Visits from
TESA Board
members to
ascertain
your needs

Affiliating with TESA has many benefits and
can make your Association and Members
“Strong to the Core”

Affiliate Services Committee

Ruth Lyday, Chairperson
Wanda Honeycutt
Sandy Salazar

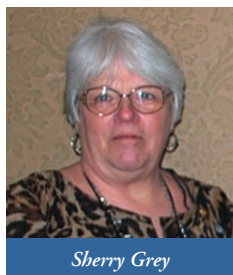
Region 10 ESC
Retired, UHCL Part time
Mesquite ISD

ruth.lyday@region10.org
honeycutt@uhcl.edu
ssalazar@mesquiteisd.org

Application for affiliation can be found on the website:
www.tesatexas.org under the Affiliate Services tab.

CELEBRATE! COME ON! IT'S SJC AEOP'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

By Sherry Gray



San Jacinto College Association of Educational Office Personnel (SJCAEOP) celebrate our 30th anniversary this year!

WOW! SJCAEOP is extremely proud to be in our 30th year! So many people have been a part of SJCAEOP, and we have seen many changes over the years.

We started our year of celebration with our Annual Bosses Luncheon. We enjoyed having our Dr. Laurel Williamson, San Jacinto College Vice Chancellor of Learning & Student Success and Interim President for both Central and South Campuses as well as an SJCAEOP Advisory Board Member, as the keynote speaker. The highlight of the event was the awarding of the prestigious 2012-2013 Boss of the Year! The winner was Ms. Serita Dickey, Dean of Natural Science/ Allied Health/SACS Compliance, at SJC North Campus. Some words taken from the nomination form sent in by Sandra Curry: "She has been employed by the college for thirty years, and she is a boss who always looks beyond what is in front of her."

We are especially excited this year to have yet another SJCAEOP member being installed as TESA President this summer. Patti Walling will be installed as TESA's 63rd President in

June in Austin. We are looking forward to bringing a big cheering squad to support her! Yeah Patti!!

Below is a story of SJCAEOP's History that we'd like to share. This has been written and added to over the years, of which credit goes to Barbara Jennings, Debbie Wade and Sherry Gray.

The San Jacinto College Association of Educational Office Personnel (SJCAEOP) began in 1982 with a handful of dedicated secretaries who were interested in forming a group to meet and share ideas and to better themselves in the workplace. Those charter members became the backbone of an organization that would weather ups and downs in membership, successes and failures in ways and means ventures, special projects, and programs, fluctuating meeting times and budgets, and yearly changes in leadership during its 30 year existence. Ironically, the success of this organization, which is affiliated with the Texas Educational Support Staff Association (TESA), can also be credited to the struggles it has endured

Throughout the years, membership in SJCAEOP has changed as rapidly as the Texas weather because of shifts in employment and interest levels. Beginning with merely 14 members, the membership has peaked at 85 members. Each member has contributed her time and talents in numerous ways to make the organization stronger not only locally but

statewide and nationwide.

SJCAEOP members have tackled a variety of ways and means to ventures during its history some being repeated and some being for one time only! Three editions of the successful SJCAEOP cookbook have been printed and sold. Pecans will forever be embedded in our taste buds! The old timers will fondly remember the early days of garage sales and bake sales to raise funds for scholarships and to keep our budget in the black. Larger membership and more needs of the organization have guided the budget to a steady increase. SJC students and AEOP members have ultimately become benefactors of the increased scholarships amounts given yearly. Several local organizations and individuals have also been recipients of our members generosity through our community service program.

SJCAEOP has been fortunate to have its share of recognition in recent years including seven first place, three second place, and three third place state awards for our newsletter, The Notepad. The yearbook has also garnered seven first place, two second place and one third place awards in the TESA competition.

We have also had six winning entries for the TESA Spirit Award and eight awards for our table decorations at the TESA Summer Work Conference. SJCAEOP can also brag on several of its members serving on the executive board for TESA and as TESA president. One member has also served two terms as TESA's First Vice

President and editor of The Texas Connection, which has won many times the first place Rachel Maynard Award for Excellence in communication given by the National Association of Educational Office Professionals. Two other SJCAEOP members served as assistant editors for this publication. Several other members have served on the TESA board in a variety of offices and committees. Another SJCAEOP member was honored with TESA's Nelda Van Dyke Award Employee of The Year Award. Success has been tasted by several of our members who have completed their Certified Educational Office Professional (CEOP) certification through TESA. Many others continue to work toward that certification through the TESA Staff Training for Effective management (STEM) program.

Programs for the monthly SJCAEOP meetings have been as diverse as our membership through the years. Program topics have included office organization, proofreading, professional dress, grief, stress management, teamwork, communication, community outreach, legislative issues, the judicial system, customer service, diversity, and pet therapy. Through trial and error, a number of different meetings days, times and location have been tried. These have included evenings and lunchtime, on campus and at local restaurants, and virtually every day of the week. Our current meeting arrangements are on the third Thursday of each month at one of the campuses or district (with travel time approved for which we thank our District administration).

Twenty two presidents have served SJCAEOP since its humble beginnings with each president bringing her own unique style of leadership, experiences and important issues to conquer. Eight of these presidents proudly served for more than one term. Many other members have served in equally important roles as members of the executive board, committee chairs, and members of a host of committees all of which work together to make SJCAEOP a success.

Though constantly changing leadership of these dedicated members, SJCAEOP has survived. Collectively, our members and our organization have become stronger, larger in number and ready for the changes that we face.

Affiliates in Action

Pasadena Association of Educational Office Personnel



Robin Pool, PAEOP President, presents donated items to Kim Kankel of The Bridge over Troubled Waters.

The Pasadena Association of Educational Office Personnel held their November craft night where everyone created 3 necklaces to take home with them. Closing out 2012 in December with our annual "Caring and Sharing" meeting where we donated items to The Bridge. Kim Kankel was here to accept the donation and to share information on the Bridge. The Bridge over Troubled Waters, located in Pasadena, is a comprehensive crisis center which assists women, children and whole families in southeast Harris County.

We enjoyed a wonderful 'pot-luck' party dinner and played the ever popular 'Wright Family Christmas' gift card exchange.

In February, Jicela Longoria from Harris Health Systems was our guest speaker on the very fitting topic of Heart Health Awareness. Our March program featured technology training to keep our members aware of the latest updates in our district.

MEPA'S Bazaar Fundraiser

For the past forty-three years, Mesquite Educational Paraprofessional Association (MEPA) has hosted an event so special to our community that we become overwhelmed with excitement in the results that unfold.

MEPA holds our Holiday Bazaar annually in December to raise money for student and para scholarships. Each high school senior is encouraged to apply for our scholarship each spring. We award two scholarships per high school and one scholarship to our alternative education campus blessing eleven graduating seniors each year. For our 2011-2012 school year, each student received \$750 to use toward the beginning of their college education. Paraprofessionals are encouraged to apply for the Para Scholarship as well. With all that applied, four paras were awarded \$500 to either begin or continue their education.

This past December, our Bazaar brought in 124 vendors to line the hallways of one of our local high school campuses, Dr. Ralph Poteet High School. There are six main hallways, along with the entire cafeteria, which serve as the grand shopping route. Each hall is lined with booth after booth of unique merchandise and surprising finds! Just entering into the main hall is jaw-dropping at the sight of stuff! As a result of all the vendor booth rental fees, we raised over \$10,000 to add to our 2012-2013 Scholarship pot! Good luck to all those applying this spring!

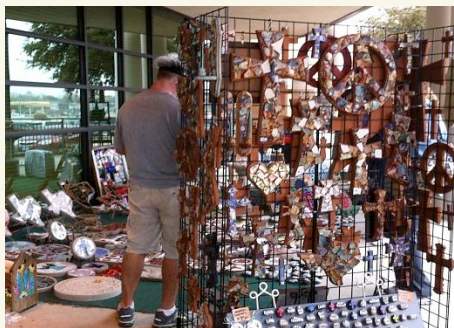
One of the best things that our community loves about the Bazaar is that it

is absolutely free admission. The only money spent is on the one-of-a-kind surprises they find throughout our halls!

Scholarships are the biggest deal of the Bazaar, but what is a MEPA Bazaar without the MEPA Baskets? There are over sixty facilities within our district and each site is encouraged to donate a basket for ticket sales to raise money for our general fund. Our paraprofessionals do a beautiful job piecing together the most exceptional baskets. There were over 40 baskets donated this past December and we raised nearly \$3,000 alone on basket ticket sales. Our incentive to our campus paras is the basket that sells the most tickets, earns a free lunch for their MEPA members, provided by MEPA. The basket that comes in second place earns dessert for their campus MEPA members, also provided by MEPA. Each winning campus looks forward to their treat. Believe it or not, the basket sales challenge is quite rewarding; for the winners and for MEPA.

It is only the beginning of the 2013 New Year, but we have already received a call or two wanting information about this year's Bazaar! It is one of our community's biggest events and it is all for the students.

We look forward to seeing YOU at our 44th Annual Holiday Bazaar this coming December!



Garland Educational Support Staff Association (GESSA) Supports Garland Police Department By Collecting Stuffed Animals With “Operation Fuzzy Friends”

In September Sherri Hart, “Service Project Chairman” of GESSA, contacted Officer Mike Hatfield in the “Community Relations” Department of the Garland Police. She inquired about their need for stuffed animals which officers carry with them on patrol. Officer Hatfield was very intrigued by the idea. He said they had not had any offers in the past few years and they were getting low on animals. He recommended GESSA collect 500 items, if possible. Below are a few uses for animals:

- Interviews with children of abuse
- Children involved in car wrecks
- Domestic violence calls
- Impoverished children
- Holiday gifts
- Other needs as they arise

Ms. Hart sent a request asking for volunteers from GESSA members. She was able to

recruit approximately 50 locations throughout the district, including schools, administration offices, and many other facilities. She created flyers for them to use at their locations and encouraged them to be creative and have fun with their collection boxes. “Operation Fuzzy Friends” ran from November 5th – December 7th, with delivery at the station culminating on December 11th. GESSA was able to use the training room at the Police Station as the drop off location. Officer Joe Harn lead tours of the station after delivery for volunteers who dropped off their Fuzzy Friends collections.

There was a buzz of activity that night as the location liaisons started arriving at the station. Local news stations were called to cover the arrival and Ms. Hart did several interviews regarding the wonderful reception to the GESSA project by all those who helped. Officer Hatfield said he was shocked at the

number of cars and vans arriving loaded to the brim with stuffed animals. Ms. Hart said she was, “astounded by the large numbers of items that were brought in.” It was more than we had ever hoped for! Our goal was 500 but by the time all the animals were counted we had collected more than 7000!!!”

GESSA is planning their next service project for March of this year dubbed “Paws Pals”. Ms. Hart states, “GESSA will be collecting items needed for the Garland Animal Shelter’s “Garland Pawsibilities” group. They help families with low-cost spay and neutering, adoptions, and many other needs. With a large percentage of our students coming from low-income families we want to be able to help them take care of the furry members of their families as well. We hope it will be as successful as Operation Fuzzy Friends.”

*“Only the curious will learn and only the resolute overcome the obstacles to learning.
The quest quotient has always excited me more than the intelligence quotient.”*

- Eugene S. Wilson

Rio Grande Valley Educational Support Staff Association (VESA) Supports the Rio Grande Valley Food Bank

Where did the first semester go? It seems like we just started the school year and here we find ourselves already in the second semester of school. VESA held its monthly December Meeting and Christmas Social on December 13, 2012 at J.S. Adame Elementary in Donna. After a short meeting, members enjoyed a nice dinner of tamales, rice, beans and of course buñuelos. Members also had an evening of Karaoke Christmas songs. Everyone had a great time. All members also brought non-perishable items to donate to the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley in Pharr, TX to help the needy. Along with the non-perishable items, VESA donated \$100 to the Food Bank. The check was presented to Ms. Terri Drefke, Executive Officer of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley. She said that the \$100 donation equaled approximately 1,000 pounds of food.

Our January meeting was hosted by the Mercedes ISD VESA members on January 10, 2013. Our speaker was Isabel Garza. She was representing Organ Transplant. She spoke to us on how one young man's organs were able to help 5 individuals. She encouraged those present that if they were not already organ donors, to consider becoming one. Our February meeting was held at A.M. Ochoa Elementary and hosted by the Donna ISD VESA Members on Tuesday, February 12, 2013.

VESA members are currently working on their Raffle Annual Fundraiser. We were able to get 35 prizes/gift cards donated. Tickets are selling fast. All members are being asked to sell 2 books of 10 tickets, 50% of everything they sell after the 2 books would be credited towards their Banquet expense and the other 50% would stay in the VESA treasury.

Plans are coming along for the Annual Bosses Banquet to be held on April 26, 2013 at J.S. Adame Elementary in Donna, TX. The theme

this year will be "Circus" with a Barbeque plate and many desserts/sweets being served. Banquet Committee members are excited and have been meeting to plan the event and ensure that everyone has a great time at the "Circus."



Picture above are left to right: Lisa E. Gonzalez, VESA Parliamentarian, Terri Drefke, Executive Officer of the Food Bank of the Rio Grande Valley and Ofelia Barrón, VESA President.

"Luck is what you have left over after you give 100 percent."

- Langston Coleman

SBESA Members Getting Involved!

On October 3, 2012, Spring Branch Educational Support Association (SBESA) members and Spring Branch ISD employees took to the streets in Houston to participate in the Susan B. Komen Race for the Cure. It was a beautiful morning for the race with thousands of people coming together for a great cause with

We had a great time enjoying the games and meeting our athletes. Our Spring Branch Bears really exhibited that can do spirit and they all won Silver medals! Way to go, team! Our holiday gathering was held on December 13 and was a lovely evening. We enjoyed a delicious supper prepared by the Guthrie

Center Culinary Arts students. Thanks to member Carla Stevens for making all the arrangements! We also collected bags and bags of non-perishable food items for a local food pantry as coordinated by member Marquita Neumann. The white elephant gift exchange was a lot of fun and full of surprises.

wonderful participants want to share. Last year we awarded \$5,000 in scholarships to Spring Branch ISD seniors with the proceeds from the silent and live auctions. It was another outstanding evening this year.

We are blessed to have an outstanding board guiding our association this year with President Shirley Labiosa at the helm! We wish a happy new year to our entire sister organizations.

Submitted by Carroll Harkins, Newsletter Chair, Spring Branch Educational Support Association



Komen Race for the Cure

Left to right: Eileen Gaines, (Trans) Chae Horvath, (Trans) Felipe Campos, (Police) Maria Campos, (Trans) Nancy Martens, Stella Montel, Pat Schulz, (Trans) and Karen Reyes (Meadow Wood)

everyone ready to be part of a memorable day! On Saturday, November 10, a group of our members headed north to the Willowbrook Volleyball Complex and provided lunch for SBISD's Special Olympic volleyball team.

The annual SBESA FUN-Raiser Night (formerly called Bosses' Night) was held on Thursday, February 21. We presented SBISD'S GOT TALENT, a talent-filled night of singing, dancing, or whatever talent our



Shirley Labiosa, Dana Harkins, Carroll Harkins, Maria Campos (and Felix Campos, photographer not in the picture)

University of Houston-Clear Lake Educational Support Association

By Terri Culbert

The University of Houston-Clear Lake Educational Support Association (UHCL ESA) held a TESA Area Workshop on February 9, 2013. Participants were welcomed at the registration table in the Atrium where a continental breakfast was served along with shopping opportunities from an array of vendors. The workshop was attended by 53 members from across the state as well as 12 vendors, 4 speakers, and 7 presenters.

ESA President Margaret Garcia, opened the workshop by welcoming the participants, vendors, guest speakers, and presenters to the workshop. The colors were presented by the Clear Lake High School Falcon JROTC as Terri Culbert lead the Pledge of Allegiance for the United States and Texas. UHCL President William Staples warmly greeted everyone to the campus and thanked each of the participants for their dedication to education as well as being a valued resource in their respective roles. He applauded everyone for attending the workshop to acquire new skills, knowledge, and networking. TESA President Pat Crawford, greeted the group and introduced TESA board members who were in attendance and shared TESA information on upcoming events including the CEOP Celebration and the TESA Summer Work Conference to be held in Austin.

Ron Klinger, keynote speaker and UHCL's Associate Director of Organizational Development, took the participants on a journey of "Sailing into New

Horizons" (ESA President's Theme). Our journey began with an activity called "Mingle-Mingle-Mingle" where we met others randomly and shared information about ourselves. Then Ron, our cruise director, guided us through a relaxation technique so that we were relaxed and ready to begin our journey. Our journey helped us to identify what is important in our lives, what is going on in our lives, where we want to go, and what we want to do. As our journey continued, a vision began to appear for each of us with goals that we wanted to set and ways to use our time wisely to accomplish those goals. Our journey was a great segway into the workshop sessions.

The workshop sessions were carefully selected by Workshop Co-chairs Debbie McFadden and Terri Culbert. They envisioned the workshop as culmination for those seeking credit hours toward the TESA CEOP or recertification or the NAEOP's PSP and CEOE program and to provide support staff with training in three key areas: 1) learning about healthy habits, 2) updating of baseline knowledge and skills, and 3) acquiring technology knowledge and skills. First, healthy habits promote well-being and increase job performance. Second, baseline office skills and knowledge need to grow and evolve as knowledge skills and practices change. Job effectiveness increases as we acquire new skills, gain new knowledge, and new understanding that are relevant to our job responsibilities. Third, technology skills need to be updated

based on changes and advances in the world of technology. Technology affects every aspect of our jobs from using a copy machine to a new phone system to the workstation computer. With this vision in mind, they selected key presenters who were experts in their respective fields to conduct workshop sessions. Presentations included Google Forms, Publisher Document Creation, Photography, Healthy Habits and Bodies, Ergonomics, Telephone Skills, Customer Service, and 3M Products. The presenters were given glowing evaluations and workshop session topics were well received by the participants.

The luncheon was held in the Garden Room with a BBQ feast of chicken and brisket, potato salad, beans, and topped off with cake for dessert. Luncheon guests were treated to an abundance of door prizes. In, there was a door prize for everyone in attendance.

The workshop ended on a high note with participants enjoying a day of professional growth, learning, and fun! The fun lasted until the very end as the winners of the raffle items were announced. The raffle items included a Japanese Raku Vase, bracelets, necklaces, four gift baskets, a gift card for a manicure and pedicure combo, and a lottery tree with scratch-off cards. We had a lot of excited winners who went home very happy!

