

February 28, 2013

## District alum Yara Luna named Trinity Prize nominee

No wonder this year's representative for one of Bexar County's most prestigious honors feels right at home in an SAISD classroom.

Not only is De Zavala ES 3rd-grade Gifted and Talented teacher Yara Luna a District alum, mom Lucia Garza is a 42-year veteran SAISD educator and her primary source of inspiration.

"I was blessed with a mother, a teacher, who ensured that I not only received a traditional education but also learned outside of the classroom with others," she wrote for her nomination.

"My success in life and in education has never been mine alone."

Her appreciation for her mother's role as a caring teacher and mentor are attributes Luna strives to exemplify as an educator.

These qualities also were among the reasons principal Joseph Cerna nominated her for the 2013 Trinity (University) Prize for Excellence in Teaching, to be announced this spring.

"Ms. Luna provides her current and former students with a great amount of support and motivation in their educational experiences," he wrote in his nomination letter, adding:

"It is without question that Ms. Luna has impacted hundreds of students' lives in a positive manner and will continue to do so without fail. Her nomination for the Trinity Prize for Excellence in Teaching is well deserved and carries with it my full support."

In addition to the example set by her mother, Luna's desire to teach evolved from her experiences at the Child Protective Services legal department, where she worked after graduating from Vermont's Middlebury College in 2004.

After obtaining alternative teaching certification, Luna began substituting at De Zavala in September 2006 and was hired full-time in January 2007. Besides 3rd grade, she also has taught at the 2nd- and 4th-grade levels.

"I realize that teaching is a calling and privilege as well an enormous responsibility," she wrote as part of her nomination.

For her, that responsibility goes far beyond the school day and extends to mentoring students and making home visits to encourage parent involvement.

Neither does her commitment end when they leave her classroom. Because Luna believes that "once they are my student they are always my student," she continues to follow their progress.

This includes mentoring those she helped achieve admittance into the Young Women's Leadership Academy. She also feels a particular kinship for seniors at her alma mater, Brackenridge HS, whom she assists in preparing for college, even volunteering to chauffeur and chaperone students on out-of-state campus visits.

Her other commitments include: serving on the District Advisory Committee for curriculum; co-coordinating De Zavala's student newspaper; Positive Behavior Intervention Support efforts; University Interscholastic League competition; Junior Achievement partnership with the San Antonio Business Hall of Fame; PTA leadership; the University of Texas Explore UT field trip; founder/sponsor of the Taste Buds culinary club; recruiting at District job fairs; and endeavors promoting improved attendance.

As an SAISD student, Luna attended Woodlawn ES, and studied German through the multilingual magnet programs at Tafolla MS and Brackenridge. This helped prepare for her for spending her junior year in Germany as a

foreign exchange student.

She received a full scholarship for the trip through the efforts of her teacher, Ulrike Schulz.

Luna returned to Germany as a college student as part of the Middlebury Study Abroad Program, and later continued her higher education at UTSA, where she earned her master's degree in 2010.

Besides her mom and family members, Luna credits her success to Cerna, Schulz and other District educators including Margaret Mireles - who taught 5th-grade at Woodlawn prior to serving as an SAISD School Board president - and wishes to share her honor with them all.

"I have been blessed with a loving family, rich educational experiences and many wonderful teachers," she said.

"I may be the one who is receiving this recognition and award but I could not and have not been on this journey alone."

### Trinity Prize candidates

Luna was one of 10 educators considered as SAISD's nominee. Following are the schools represented and their outstanding candidates.

- Fox Tech HS - Robert Martinez
- Jefferson HS - Isabel Fears
- Connell MS - Vicky Driver
- Longfellow MS - Rolando Ruvalcaba
- Poe MS - William Chermak
- Rogers MS - Emilie Borchardt
- Bonham Academy - Nathan Busse
- Franklin ES - Aleida Gomez
- Rogers ES - Virginia Boyce



Courtesy photo  
Yara Luna (right) with her source of inspiration, mom Lucia Garza, who teaches 1st grade at Woodlawn ES.



Adding their congratulations (l to r) are Interim Superintendent Dr. Sylvester Perez, principal Joseph Cerna, Associate Superintendent Human Resources Toni Thompson and students.

## SAISD continues to earn accolades for quality of budgeting



Once again the District has been recognized for fiscal excellence.

For the eighth-consecutive year, the Department of Planning and Budget has received the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the

United States and Canada.

This is GFOA's highest honor for governmental accounting and financial reporting, and being chosen "reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff to meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting."

The award is bestowed upon entities that

satisfy nationally recognized guidelines for effective budget presentation.

Selection is based upon the budget serving as: a policy document; financial plan; operations guide; and a communications device.

The department's director is Dottie Carreon.

## School Board filing period ends March 1

The deadline for qualified SAISD residents to file for Trustee serving Districts 1, 3, 4 and 7 is fast approaching.

Informational packets are available until Friday, March 1, and can be obtained during regular business hours at the Department of Governmental & Community Relations, 518 E. Magnolia Ave., the former Gonzales AC site.

Early voting runs April 29 to May 7, and Election Day is Saturday, May 11.

Terms expiring and their current SAISD Trustees are: District 1, Rubén D. Cuero; District 3, Debra Guerrero; District 4, Adela R. Segovia; and District 7, Ed Garza.

For filing information call:  
554-2230

For election and candidacy  
questions call: 335-VOTE  
or visit:

www.saisd.net  
www.ethics.state.tx.us  
www.sos.state.tx.us

## Art champ

Grand champion steers weren't the only ones bringing in top dollar at auction this rodeo season. Highlands HS senior Betty Clay - competing in the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo's Western Art Contest - took in a total of \$22,000 for "Yum Flowers."

Her depiction of a steer angling its head through barbed wire for a tasty bite of bouquet placed second of 25 entries. Betty was one of only two San Antonio artists who qualified (and the first ever from SAISD) for this annual event held to help high school students raise money for college. She also was among a select group of contestants invited to attend a three-week Western Art Academy program at Schreiner University. While this was Betty's first rodeo triumph, she's no novice in the winner's circle. The talented teen has won the SAISD Holiday Card Art Contest for two consecutive years. Joining her at the easel (right) is teacher Annette Hoffman.



## Making history!

Bound for the State History Day competition based upon their strong performances at the San Antonio Regional History Day are historians from the Young Women's Leadership Academy (top photo) and Brackenridge HS (below). YWLA won the Oral History Award for documentary and also placed second in junior group documentary for "LULAC: Change for Latinos. Shown (l to r) with their teacher Adrean Springer are Zoe Lopez and Alyssa Pacheco. Brackenridge won the Best in Show Award and also placed first in senior group performance for "The Mothers of Argentina." Shown with their teacher Gilbert Flores (l to r) are Thalia Ruiz and Valery Lara. Not pictured are Anna Castallenos and Joseph Mendez.



## SAISD Foundation accepting Innovative Grant applications

Good news for those whose educational visions are bigger than their budgets. You just might qualify for an SAISD Foundation Innovative Grant.

Applications now are being accepted to fund school-based projects for the 2013-14 school year, and the process is open to all employees, not just limited to educators.

Amounts ranging from \$250 to \$5,000 will be awarded in the categories of classroom, grade level, department, or full campus.



This year, grants for multi-campus projects will be awarded up to \$10,000.

Winners will be notified of their status during surprise visits this May so that projects will be ready for implementation at the start of the school year.

This will be the ninth cycle of grants awarded by the foundation, formed to support innovation and education excellence in SAISD.

Mailed applications must be postmarked by Wednesday, March 20, or hand delivered by 4:15 p.m. that day to the SAISD Foundation,

518 E. Magnolia Ave.

New this year is that applicants were required to attend a January workshop on innovation, grant writing and evaluation.

Those who were unable to attend or would like more information are asked to email Judy Geelhoed, [jgeelhoed@saisdfoundation.com](mailto:jgeelhoed@saisdfoundation.com).

Applications are available at the SAISD Foundation website, accessible from the SAISD home page: [www.saisd.net](http://www.saisd.net).

## Register now for 4E Run/Walk and Health Festival

Celebrate the start of spring through an activity that's not only fun for the entire family but also benefits SAISD students.

Mark your calendars for the annual 4E (Education, Exercise, Engagement, Empowerment) 5K and 10K Run/Walk set for 8:30 a.m. Saturday, March 23, along the Mission Reach portion of the San Antonio River, starting at Brackenridge HS. Cheering participants on will be the Spurs Coyote. There also will be a Districtwide Health Festival on the track from 9 a.m. to noon featuring giveaways, free screenings and more.

**Register by March 2 and save!**

Rates are: \$15 for SAISD employees who sign

up by March 2; \$25 thereafter; \$30 for families; and \$5 for students. Community members can register at an early rate of \$25 and \$35 after March 2.

Participants including community members and alumni can run or walk on a school's behalf by indicating their desire to do so upon registration.

SRG Athletics is the title sponsor for the event, and all proceeds benefit the SAISD Foundation.

For more information and to register online go to the event section at:

[www.saisdfoundation.com](http://www.saisdfoundation.com).



## Happy spring break!

All SAISD schools and most offices will be closed March 11-15 for spring break, and re-open Monday, March 18.

**Be safe and enjoy your holiday!**

## Safety First

## Don't be tripped up by those hazardous STFs



While modern day office equipment such as calculators, computers, copiers, fax machines, printers and paper shredders are tremendous assets in helping us do our jobs more efficiently, there is a downside to these conveniences: namely STFs, aka slips, trips and falls.

Did you know STFs are the leading cause of accidents in SAISD? But no need to let them be your downfall. Check out the following tips to make your work environment safer.

### Keep equipment and furniture under control

STFs and other potential dangers such as electric shock and fires can be prevented by:

- Properly grounding electrical equipment and keeping its environment dry.
- Clearing pathways of wires, cords, clutter and

open file cabinet and desk drawers. Not only can open drawers be tripped over or walked into (potentially resulting in cuts and bruises) they can cause cabinets to tip over - especially when the top drawer is fuller than those on the bottom. Avoid these hazards by always closing drawers when not in use.

### Watch your step...

Use a step stool or ladder for reaching high areas. Standing on a chair creates an unnecessary hazard that could cause a serious fall. Certain chairs will tip over if leaned on, and many are not designed to hold the weight of a standing person.

### ... and that weight ...

Never lift a load too heavy to carry. This can cause not only STFs but back and other injuries as well, which could result in permanent disability and lost

wages if you are not able to work.

Take the time to learn to lift properly and get help when the load is too large or too heavy for you.

### ... and watch out!

Never carry an object that can block the view of the path in front of you. This can cause a serious collision or accident.

Likewise, approach doors that might swing toward you with caution.

### Be prepared

Following these simple tips and keeping your work environment clean and clear can do wonders in improving work place safety.

For more handy tips, including STF training sessions, call the Human Resources office of Employee Benefits, Risk Management and Safety, 554-8540.



# in the Spotlight

## Now under construction

Dust is flying throughout the District as construction projects are under way to bring a variety of anticipated amenities to benefit SAISD students, staff and the community. These include a \$93,000 basketball court and walking trail (adjacent photo) for Harris MS. The campus is one of five in the District to get a sports court through a total of nearly \$207,000 from the city of San Antonio on behalf of Metro Health. The funding was courtesy of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work federal grant the city received to help fight obesity. When completed, the sports courts will be open to the public after school and on weekends. Other recipients are Lowell, Rhodes and Rogers middle

schools and the Young Women's Leadership Academy. Turning the ceremonial shovels at the groundbreaking (l to r) are: Dr. Thomas Schlenker, Metro Health District director; Adela R. Segovia, School Board assistant secretary; Mona Lopez, associate superintendent, middle schools; David Medina Jr., District 5 council member; Lourdes Correra, Harris principal; and Roger Rodriguez, health and PE senior

coordinator. At Cotton ES (photo below right), students and canine construction mascot Buddy take starring roles in an assembly celebrating the start of school renovations under SAISD Bond 2010. Shown here, a student puts Buddy through the paces of an obstacle course, one of several tricks the dog performed to entertain celebrants in honor of the occasion.



Courtesy photo

## Battle of the brains celebrants

Coming home with some coveted hardware earned at the state Academic Decathlon contest are these Sam Houston HS students. Competing in the small schools category, Team Hurricanes placed second in Super Quiz and also won two first- and three third-place medals in individual categories. Sam Houston was one of a trio of SAISD high schools that qualified for state. In the medium schools category, an Edison student took gold in math. The Hurricane coaches are Kathleen Sadler (left) and (not shown) Veronica Marines.

## Mastering the martial arts

Getting a preview of some of the honors that might someday be theirs if they continue karate are these Cameron ES students. To inspire them, their coach Charles M. Hornbeak shared certificates representing some of his own highlights.



This includes his recent appointment as chief examiner for the black belt exam. In addition to teaching PE at Cameron and coaching sports after school at M. L. King Academy, the third-degree black belt provides martial arts instruction at sessions outside SAISD whose attendees include other District students as well. After a sports career that included semi-pro soccer, the product of SAISD returned home to teach, where he is a 29-year veteran employee. Hornbeak is a Fox Tech HS graduate and also went to Bowden ES and the former Emerson MS.



1

Courtesy photo



2

Courtesy photo



3

## Outstanding athletes

It's been another stellar week for SAISD high school athletes including the following. **1.** Headed to the next round of the playoffs is the Sam Houston boys basketball team. The Hurricanes qualified for the 3A regional tournament this weekend in Corpus Christi by knocking off Fredericksburg 90-63 in the quarterfinals. In orange shirts are (l to r) Ike

Thornton, head coach, and Erik Coleman and Michael Davis, assistant coaches. **2.** Blonds not only have more fun they also excel at center court. This year's Lanier boys basketball team carried on team tradition by dyeing their tresses blond for the playoffs. Sporting a new 'do as a show off support is (foreground, right) principal Miguel Elizondo. The Voks bowed out to Alamo Heights in the regional quarterfinals

on Feb. 26. It was the 11th time in 15 years Lanier made the playoffs. Their coach (not shown) is Rudy Bernal. **3.** Honored by retired Dallas Cowboy linebacker Dat Nguyen as ESPN Player of the Week is Fox Tech boys swim team captain Aaron Peña for excellence in and out of the pool. Adding their congratulations are coach Jesse Snelson and interim principal Sarah Croft.