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# Masons present YWLA principal Community Builder Award

Delia McLerran has been recognized for the outstanding accomplishments that the Young



Delia McLerran shows off her 2013 Community Builder Award, presented for her contributions as YWLA principal.

Women's Leadership Academy has achieved under her leadership.

The 23-year educator recently was presented the Grand Lodge of Texas' Community

Builder Award "for distinguished service and personal commitment to San Antonio" during a ceremony at the Scottish Rite Cathedral.

Five local Masonic lodges joined together in nominating McLerran for the honor.

"It is very humbling to have our efforts in building our future leaders recognized," she said.

"My commitment is to create a learning environment at YWLA that allows my students to build their self-esteem, their pathways to college and career, and consequently, build a stronger San Antonio community."

McLerran - in her third year as YWLA

principal - was nominated by a lodge member who was impressed by the school.

The accolade pays tribute to non-Masons who have made notable contributions to their communities and have not sought recognition for their accomplishments. The award presenter is the world's oldest and largest male fraternal organization, which also is known for educational and charitable endeavors.

Among YWLA's highlights include achieving the state's highest accountability rating of exemplary throughout its existence.

# Increased efforts put students on fast track to college aid

SAISD doesn't want personal finances to be a barrier to a college education for any of its graduates. That's why it has implemented a focused effort to ensure that all seniors submit applications for federal or state aid, including enlisting the help of part-time counselors to help get the job done and teaching students the ins and outs of the financial aid process in a newly launched program.

Whether or not students complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid is a primary indicator of whether or not they will go on to enroll in college, making it a key focus for the District.

Last year, for the first time, SAISD hired parttime counselors to support the high schools with the sole focus to work with students and their parents through the financial aid and college application process. And in late December, FAFSA counselors arrived again to

work through the school year with students, answering questions and nudging them to move forward when they need a little push.

"Financial aid information can be a very complex process for many students and having someone they can go to for help is instrumental in student success," said Fox Tech HS FAFSA counselor Carmen Rodriguez.

"When students complete their financial aid application and are awarded money they start to believe in their potential and have a certain sense of empowerment."

The District has added a new layer to its support network this year with the introduction of the financial literacy classes - four days of lessons provided during economics classes giving students valuable information they and their families need to understand the college applications process and related financials so they can make informed decisions regarding

college packages.

These new lessons are being taught by San Antonio Education Partnership and Advise Texas College Advisors representatives. Other partners on the project include Alamo Colleges and the San Antonio Financial Aid Council.



Brackenridge HS media students videotape a San Antonio Education Partnership presentation. The footage is for a four-part series they are producing on financial aid for www.cafécollege.org

# Schools invited to join Family-School-Community Partnership



designed to improve academic achievement through parent and family

engagement will be available starting Feb. 15.

Funded through United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, the Family-School-Community Partnership offers services via partner agencies the Family Service Association and Presa Community Center including parent-to-parent home visits, parent rooms, parent leadership development and training, community-based referrals to services, parent engagement opportunities, translation systems

Applications for a program to use during meetings and much more.

The partnership currently serves 18 schools, up from six when it was initiated in 2005-06, and ranges from early childhood centers through high schools. Since then, United Way has invested nearly \$6.3 million in the program.

"My students get the 'above and beyond' because of the work of the partnership," said Herff ES principal Dr. Traci Smith.

The focus is on improved student achievement, initially placed on grades 4th through 6th in accordance with the District's long-term goal of increasing the graduation rate of economically disadvantaged youth.

"To transform to a culture where parents are engaged as partners will take a serious investment of time, talent and commitment on the part of all school leaders," said Katie Pace, United Way manager, issue council, adding:

"However, in the end, the research is clear that this is the recipe that wraps children - and our future - in success."

All interested schools must apply, including current participants. Applications will be available under "In the News" at:

#### www.unitedwaysatx.org.

For more information call Pace, 352-7031 or email kpace@unitedwaysatx.org.

#### tinue search for next superintendent Irustees opt to con

To help achieve their goal of finding the right leader for SAISD, School Board members will further review applicants for a permanent superintendent and continue the interview process.

In a special meeting held Feb. 11, the Board met to deliberate on candidates they had interviewed in late January for the superintendent position and chose to not name a finalist.

"The Trustees all have a sense of urgency but at the same time we are being very deliberate through this process to find a permanent superintendent," said Board President Ed Garza.

"This is a critical process and our goal is to find that right candidate to lead the District."

The Board plans to schedule a special meeting with the search firm, PROACT, to determine next steps. PROACT's extensive search process has yielded 88 applicants for the superintendent position.

# Thanks to generous employees, charitable contributions on the rise

Giving to United Way in general and gifts to the SAISD Foundation through that organization both rose this year.

The District's total contribution was \$225,620, a more than \$7,500 increase over last year.

SAISD also ranked third in giving among the area's school districts, where it consistently is one of the top in employee participation.

This year, 1,264 employees directed their gifts to the SAISD Foundation, amounting to an 88

percent increase.

And while virtue is its own reward, it also sometimes pays in tangible ways as well. In the case of the Carroll ECEC, Herff and Riverside Park elementaries, Davis MS and Jefferson HS, the generosity of their employees resulted in \$1,000 grants to those schools.

The funding was an expression of appreciation from the foundation for the schools' outstanding efforts to encourage giving on their campuses.

"Thanks to all employees who gave to us and others," said Judy Geelhoed, foundation executive director.

"We have an incredible culture of giving in SAISD."

Although the campaign period has ended, opportunities for giving have not.

Payroll deductions to the SAISD Foundation can be arranged any time of year. Interested employees are asked to contact the District's Department of Payroll to make arrangements.





Dr. Peggy Stark-Wilson, the District's interim deputy superintendent of teaching and learning and Javier C. Leal, SAISD Foundation board member (far left and right, respectively) commend ( to r): principal Homer Rivera, Riverside Park ES; director Sandy Chavarria, Carroll ECEC; principal Anita O'Neal, Davis MS; and assistant principal Theresa Salinas, Jefferson HS. Not shown is Dr. Traci Smith, principal of Herff ES.



### Aspiring archaeologist 'dig' the past

Students from Lamar ES and Hawthorne Academy are acquiring a fresh appreciation for ancient history by creating and burying their own artifacts for others to find. Through participation in the Legacy: Hands on the Past and Brackenridge Park Conservancy's Archaeological Exploration



halting to measure longitude artifact's Hawtho (adjace display inspired to its be Assistin were WI Legacy coordinand sch

Program, they create culture and learn how to set up their own excavation sites. Shown top photo, Nathan Heep, Legacy assistant coordinator, oversees Lamar students halting their dig to measure latitude and longitude to obtain an artifact's coordinates. Hawthorne students (adjacent photo) display their Aztecinspired artifact prior to its being buried. Assisting the students were Whitney Lytle, Legacy Program coordinator (in blue) and school librarian Bonnye Cavazos.

#### A hero's welcome

SAISD Police Chief Jeff Ward (right) presents Officer Armando Olguin

a certificate bestowing upon him the Medal of Valor. Olguin was honored during the Feb. 11 School Board meeting for his role in helping to secure the suspect in a December shooting at the Mayan movie theater. At that time, the officer was off duty and at the theater with his family.



### **Retirement sessions set**

Employees considering retiring at any time during the 2012-13 school year are invited to learn about their options at upcoming:

Retirement Information Sessions Feb. 20, Feb. 28 or March 20 5 to 7 p.m. Fox Tech HS, 637 N. Main Ave.

Posters have been provided to all schools and departments by sponsor the SAISD Employee Benefits, Risk Management and Safety Department.

Already have your retirement packet from the Teacher Retirement System and would like to schedule an individual appointment? Please call Natalie Martinez, **554-8664** or email **nmartinez9@saisd.net**.

Customer Service Corner

## Good customer service = making everyone feel important



Ever heard of Mary Kay Ash, founder of the very successful Mary Kay Cosmetics, who rewards her employees with pink Cadillacs?

Due to an incident she

encountered early in her sales career, Ash learned the value of making the people she met and her customers feel important.

When new to the world of sales, Ash attended her first sales convention where she asked the No. 1 salesman his strategies for success.

Instead of taking a few minutes to inspire a person who held him in high esteem, he walked away. This left a lifetime impact on Ash, who vowed to never treat any person like "Mr. I'm No. 1 and don't have time for you" treated her.

Ash declared that if she ever achieved success, she would visualize a room full of people all

wearing signs reading "Make me feel important!"
You may be asking, "What in the world does

Mary Kay, cosmetics and pink Cadillacs have to do with me? I work for a school district."

As SAISD employees, we encounter customers everyday, whether our rooms be a classroom, office, cafeteria, clinic or bus. These are parents, students, community members or fellow SAISD employees. And they all want to feel important.

Want to further please parents? Let them know their children are important to you and that you are there to assist them.

As ambassadors for SAISD, I challenge and invite you to look at each person who comes into your "room" today. Please honor their invisible sign proclaiming, "Make me feel important!"

#### We value our parents

Our names says it all in proclaiming the importance we place on parents. That's

paramount among the reasons the District's Department of Community and Parent Partners is sponsoring the:

Spring 2013 Parent Summit Feb. 15 (Fri) - 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wonderland of the Americas Mall's Norris Conference Center 4522 Fredericksburg Road

Registration will start at 8 a.m.

Sessions will include "The AWESOME Parent in You!," and "Easy & Exciting Learning Activities to Engage Your Child." Featured guest will be educational trainer Aric Bostick.

This is the second of two summits held annually by CAPP, designed to engage families in the District's vision of preparing students for success in their educational careers.



## **Certifiably excellent**

Receiving some well-deserved recognition at the Feb. 11 School Board meeting are (I to r) Ophelia Torres, Kay Whelchel and Martha Stolowski.



They were honored for earning Certified Educational Office Professional Certification by completing the Texas Educational Support Staff Association's 60-hour course of study. The program was developed in cooperation with the Texas Education

Agency, Texas Association of School Administrators, Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association, the University of Texas and other professional educational associations. Stolowski is the District Initiatives Office's administrative secretary, Torres supports the deputy superintendent as senior executive secretary and Whelchel is the Student Support Office's administrative clerk.



## Goodness, gracious great balls of fire!

Spur Matt Bonner assists Edison HS biology teacher Rita King in igniting methane bubbles. The power forward's visit was part of the school's selection as a TEAM UP Challenge semi-finalist, through which teens are mentoring middle school students for academic success. Also in attendance were Twain MS youngsters, who were there that day to learn about science careers.



## Estrada AC counselors

Having no doubt how much they are appreciated are (I to r) Rebecca Castillo, Shelvia Woolridge and Miguel Acosta. The Estrada AC counselors were recipients of gifts and accolades in honor of National Counseling Week.



## **Hurray for learning**

Maverick ES kinder teachers (I to r) Susan Correa, Debbie Christenson and Jesus De La Torre welcome students to the 100th day of school. Maverick was among SAISD campuses hosting celebrations marking this milestone.

### **Happy Founder's Day!**

Mark your calendars for the: SAISD Council of PTAs Founder's Day dinner

> Feb. 15 (Fri) - 6 p.m. Brackenridge HS, 400 Eagleland Drive



everychild.one voice.







## **Good sports**

From participating in National Signing Day ceremonies to a variety of other recognitions, it's been a banner month for SAISD athletes including the following. 1. Brackenridge HS head football coach Willie Hall (I to r), principal Moises Ortiz and SAISD Athletic Director Gil Garza stand in support of Kenny May, who signed to play for the Atlanta Sports Academy. Joining the wide receiver at the table are his mom Brenda Spears

and sister Brittany May. 2. Celebrating the signing of two Highlands HS Owls to college football are (I to r) Charles and Claire Sheppard, their son Deon Sheppard, coach Humberto Lopez II, Aaron Ladson, his mom Donna Brooks, uncle Tim Rankin and SAISD Athletic Director Gil Garza. Deon will play offensive tackle for New Mexico Military Institute while defensive back Aaron has committed to Mary Hardin-Baylor University. 3. The WNBA's

San Antonio Silver Stars are among those cheering for the Brackenridge HS girls basketball team for their statewide selection as the Army Strong Team of the Week. The honor is presented by the U.S. Army to high school teams that demonstrate qualities exhibited by this branch of the armed forces. These include leadership, commitment to excellence and a desire to make a difference as a team member.



School District 141 Lavaca St. San Antonio, TX 78210 phone: 554-2250 fax: 299-5790 www.saisd.net

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Leslie Price, Executive Director René Lynn, Newsletter Coordinator John Lawler, Photographer Central Office Printing Services, Design and Layout

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