

May 22, 2014

## SAISD Foundation awards nearly \$110,000 in Innovative Grants

The creative ideas of educators Districtwide will become realities next school year, thanks to funding for 37 projects from the SAISD Foundation.

Details were announced during a May 20 news conference at Woodlawn Hills ES, followed by surprise visits to the first round of winners.

The \$109,630 in funding will benefit thousands of SAISD students.

Since the fall of 2007, the SAISD Foundation has awarded more than 1,000 grants and gifts totaling over \$1 million to schools.

Following are the first round of recipients by school, team leader and project name.

### Elementaries

- **Barkley-Ruiz**, Analisa Spicer - "Getting SMART with STEM."
- **Maverick**, Paul Perea - "Dragon Network News."
- **Woodlawn Hills**, Consuelo Luna - "Beyond Classroom Walls with *La Clase Magica*."
- **Woodlawn Hills**, Stephanie Ratliff - "RoboLearning 2.0: Proud to be LEGOGEEK."

### Middle schools

- **Irving**, Cirilo Campos - "The Evolution of Mariachi Education."
- **Irving**, Ernest Gonzales - "Digital Music Production Lab."

### High schools

- **Jefferson**, Patrick Tejada - "Surveying the Landscape with STEM."
- **Lanier**, Ana Lisa Harvey - "San Antonio Branch Living Library & Think Park."

### Coming soon: more surprise visits

Grants will continue to be presented to winners throughout May and visits will resume the first week of classes for the 2014-15 school year.

As soon as all winners have been notified the complete list of recipients will be posted at: [www.saisdfoundation.com](http://www.saisdfoundation.com).



Among those at the Innovative Grants news conference include (far left and right, respectively) School Board Vice President Olga M. Hernandez and President Ed Garza, Superintendent Dr. Sylvester Perez (fourth from left), SAISD Foundation Board Chairman Bob Raymond (fifth from left) and other foundation board members and donors.



Donor Bartell Zachry (second from left) joins Woodlawn Hills ES principal Laura Roberts, staff and students in celebrating their "RoboLearning 2.0: Proud to be LEGOGEEK" grant.

## Wounded dog's plight touches hearts from around the globe

One act of senseless cruelty has sparked a worldwide counter response of kindness and generosity, resulting in a second chance at life for a stray canine now known as Roland.

"This experience with Roland has taught us ALL that ordinary people can do extraordinary things," said Tammie Bennett, a sponsor of the Highlands HS organization Voices for Animals, which took in the young shepherd-terrier mix after a gunshot wound left his back legs paralyzed on May 6.

And while Roland, named for the street where he was rescued, could not have found himself in better hands, members feared lack of funding for his extensive veterinary care and rehabilitation might make euthanasia their only viable option.

But that all changed when news of his plight and Voices for Animals' dilemma ran locally on WOAI-TV, with the station including contact information for those wishing to contribute.

Response from the San Antonio area was immediate, followed by another outpouring after the story was picked up by NBC affiliates nationwide and also shared internationally through social media and other means, all resulting in a special student activity fund set up for the donations that came in for his care.

"In this situation goodness prevailed at a 1 to 100 ratio," Bennett said, referring to the more than 100 people who have helped.

The first was tire shop owner Carlos Rivera, who regularly fed the dog and was the one who carried him to safety upon seeing him struggle to cross Roland Street on the morning that he was shot.

Because Rivera was familiar with Voices

for Animals, he flagged down SAISD police officers who were passing by.

Accompanied by co-sponsor Mary Shearer, Bennett took Roland to Southeast Animal Hospital and was touched by his disposition.

"He is incredibly sweet and has never tried to bite any of us, even when he was in excruciating pain after being shot," she said.

Thanks to contributions and well wishes from animal lovers everywhere, the furthest of which from Dublin, Ireland, Roland is on the road to recovery and soon will be ready for adoption.

He currently is being treated at South Texas Veterinary Specialists where he is adjusting to the new wheel cart needed to compensate for his back legs' lack of mobility.

Thus far, Bennett estimates his care to be about \$3,000. Because of Roland's special requirements, Voices for Animals will continue to help support him after adoption.

"He will need someone who loves him unconditionally and who can equip their home with ramps or any other

accommodations to help with his handicap. Ideally, it will be someone who is at home with him throughout the day," she said, adding that he will be well worth it.

"Roland will make an outstanding pet because he will be grateful to whoever adopts him."

In addition to contributions for Roland, Voices for Animals, which was established in 2007 to help strays and promote responsible pet ownership, has garnered praise from around the globe.

"We are very proud of our students," Bennett said. "They are learning to be selfless and to value and respect all living things."

### The lowdown on Roland

This lovable pooch is thought to be about a year old. He gets along well with other dogs and will be neutered prior to being adopted.

For more information on Roland, Voices for Animals and to read some of the fan mail his rescue has generated visit:

[www.highlandsvfa.weebly.com](http://www.highlandsvfa.weebly.com).



Courtesy photo

Roland sports his Spurs spirit while taking a break from his wheel cart with Tammie Bennett, a Voices for Animals sponsor. Pet photographer Cindy Kelleher donated her services for this photo shoot.



Later, he shows off his new wheel cart skill and enjoys basking in attention from Voices for Animals members, co-sponsor Mary Shearer (center) and Tammie Bennett.

## SAISD 5th-grader competes on 'Sabado Gigante'

Isabel Marie Sanchez's fan base soon is set to expand far beyond San Antonio and Maverick ES, where her classmates and teachers can say they knew her when.

The 11-year-old recently competed on the popular Univision Spanish-language program "Sabado Gigante," or "Giant Saturday," the world's longest-running TV variety series.

Her appearance was pre-recorded for airing next month. Prior to flying to Florida with her parents for the taping, Isabel was treated to a going-away party the school hosted in her honor.

And although a confidentiality agreement prohibits her from revealing how she placed, upon her return to school this week Isabel was able to describe her experience on the program as "Pretty cool," adding:

"What I really enjoyed was being treated like a star. The experience made me really want to pursue a musical career," she said.

Isabel hopes to hone her vocal skills by attending the renowned Julliard School.



Back at Maverick following her performance on the internationally televised "Sabado Gigante," Isabel Marie Sanchez and teacher Paul Perea go over her solo for SAISD's annual Choir Fest on May 30.

Among those predicting a bright future for her include her music teacher of three years, Paul Perea. Isabel's talents were brought to his attention by PE teacher Shelley Kuhn, who had heard her sing.

"So I can't take the credit on finding her, but I can say that I have had a hand on

guiding her through her musical aspirations," he said.

From the beginning, Perea found her tone and intonation to be remarkable, and compares Isabel to the late music icon Selena Quintanilla-Pérez.

While Perea was quick to praise all Maverick students for their own unique talents and the school's family atmosphere in helping to nurture them, he did have this prediction for one in particular:

"In the future, I envision Isabel holding a Grammy and thanking all who have been in her journey.

"Deep down inside, I hope in her speech she may say, 'To coach Kuhn and Mr. Perea from Maverick Elementary in San Antonio Texas, thank you.' That would be epic."

### Tune her in!

Isabel's segment is scheduled to air:

**June 14 (Sat) - 7 p.m.**

**Univision channel 41**

## Academy to help educators fuel student interest in science

Teachers from five SAISD elementaries will spend part of their summer back in the classroom, discovering new ways to make science lessons more exciting.

As participants in an all-expenses-paid professional development program courtesy of the Mickelson ExxonMobil Teachers Academy, they will learn innovative hands-on projects designed to engage students in this important subject at an early age.

Upon returning to their home campuses,

academy attendees also will serve as peer teachers for others.

"This program looks for teachers who are enthusiastic about learning, willing to share what they learn with their colleagues, and will bring inquiry-based instruction to their students," said Becky Landa, senior coordinator of the science and curriculum management departments.

The academy includes a five-day professional development seminar in

Houston to run June 15-20. It is offered in partnership with the National Science Teachers Association to promote science and innovation in science teaching and learning.

Participants, their grade levels and schools are: Diane De Leon, 3rd grade, Brewer; Gladys Hernandez, 5th grade, Bowden; Sandra Medina, 5th grade, Barkley-Ruiz; Kimberly Nwosu, 5th grade, W.W. White; and Adam Rodriguez, 5th grade, Smith.



## Award encore

Young Women's Leadership Academy students and principal Delia McLerran (center) show off a certificate for their campus placing first on a list of Top Middle Schools in the Greater San Antonio area, comprising six counties. This was the second straight year that YWLA was rated the best by the Houston-based advocacy group Children at Risk. The rankings were announced May 19 at a news conference hosted by the school. Well-wishers included (far left) School Board President Ed Garza and Vice President Olga M. Hernandez and (far right) Superintendent Dr. Sylvester Perez and District 5 Trustee Patti Radle. In special honors, Franklin ES and Hawthorne Academy's middle school received Gold Ribbon ratings for high performance despite a high number of economically disadvantaged students. For the complete list of area schools visit: [www.childrenatrisk.org](http://www.childrenatrisk.org).

## Set the date!



Mark your calendars for this very important date and occasion and please join us at the:

**SAISD Convocation**

**The morning of Aug. 20**

**AT&T Center, 1 AT&T Parkway**

**Details coming this summer**

## So long 2013-14!

As the school year ends, the insider newsletter is transitioning into its summer schedule. While publication will be on an as-needed basis, the Communications Department invites you to continue sending your news, events and photos. Thanks also for your contributions throughout 2013-14.

In the meantime, we invite you to stay informed by following us on Facebook, Twitter and at [www.saisd.net](http://www.saisd.net).

*Have a safe and happy summer!*

## Bygone grads

Much like every generation before and after them, these dapper 9th-graders from SAISD's former Emerson JHS pause to celebrate a major milestone in their lives with bright hopes for the future. For some, the next step would be high school. For others, the work force, since these were the days of the Great Depression. Our thanks to Monica Pesek for contributing this family heirloom. Her great-grandmother Ruby Meeks (unidentified) is one of the girls shown here. To check out the commencement schedule for SAISD's class of 2014, go to the Parent page at [www.saisd.net](http://www.saisd.net).



**About Emerson:** The campus, which was one of SAISD's eight original junior schools, opened in 1924 at 1023 N. Pine St. and was named for American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson. Although this site was closed in 1972, the Emerson name lived on until 1988 at another SAISD school. Its building houses the Ella Austin Community Center.



## Momentous milestone

Sharing a landmark moment in Angela Soriano's and Cooper Academy's lives are (l to r) Geri Barnes, teacher; Jose Medellin and John Johnson, part-time tutors; Sylvia Rendon, interim principal; Patricia Cardenas and Anne Shipman, teachers; David Udovich, executive director, secondary initiatives; Mamoun Rafati, teacher; and Daniel Escobar, school counselor. Soriano is the 600th graduate of the alternative education program allowing students to recover high school credit and their diplomas in a flexible learning environment. Next stop for Soriano, who aspires to become a police officer, is San Antonio College.



Principal Delia McLerran cuts the old net to symbolize the gym's new beginning.

## Part of a winning team

The term "home-court advantage" takes on special meaning for the Young Women's Leadership Academy. Thanks to its selection as a WNBA Cares Week campus, the school's 74-year-old gym got a makeover courtesy of a partnership between the San Antonio Silver Stars, the H-E-B Tournament of Champions and Silver & Black Give Back. As a recipient, \$5 of every Silver Stars ticket will benefit YWLA's scholarship fund when purchased at: [http://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/group\\_corp\\_start.html?l=EN&team=silverstars&owner=20000190&group=5177&err=&event=&customerID=](http://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/group_corp_start.html?l=EN&team=silverstars&owner=20000190&group=5177&err=&event=&customerID=), special code: stars.



## Life savers

As Mary Esther Macias, an SAISD assistant superintendent, makes the introductions, Bonham Academy principal Will Webber (left) leads applause for his staff members recognized at the May 19 School Board meeting. Counselor Margaret Alvarez (l to r), PE coach Mary Westfall, nurse Stacy George, PE coach Ruben Ruiz and head custodian Jesse Peña were honored for quick action that possibly saved the life of a colleague who suffered a heart attack last month at the school. While Alvarez, George and Ruiz administered CPR, Westfall retrieved the automated electronic defibrillator used twice and Peña and porter Daniel Moreno (not shown) helped secure the area and directed EMS to the site. The coaches and nurse had learned this life-saving procedure offered through SAISD's summer CPR training course. Best news of all, after being hospitalized, the Bonham employee now is back on the job!



## Outstanding architects

Proudly displaying the oversized check received for placing first in the group category of the Claycomb Student Architecture Contest are (l to r) Highlands HS teacher Alvaro Gamillo, student Federico Matamoros, Claycomb representatives Bo Ledoux and Jolie Willi and students Ashley Acevedo and Tommy Ruiz. Not shown is their winning group team member Patrick Kinser.



## Author! Author!

Two SAISD educators take center stage this month as first-time published writers. A book signing for Dr. Traci Smith's novel (photo left) "A Reason, A Season, A Lifetime" will be held 5 to 8 p.m., May 31 at the Candlelight, 3011 N. St. Mary's St. The story about friendship and how people come into our lives for specific reasons recently was published after first being available as an Amazon.com e-reader. Smith, a 30-year educator and third-year Herff ES principal, now is working on her second book "Fifteen Summers." Also just published was Rachele Killian's "Roxy and Maddie: Ready to Race." Killian describes this inspirational tale of two best friends going on a 5K obstacle course race as autobiographical. The reluctant koala Roxy is based upon her while Maddie, the encouraging panda, represents her own best friend. The four-year Poe MS special education Read 180 and System 44 teacher plans to turn Roxy and Maddie into a series. Check them out at [www.mascotbooks.com](http://www.mascotbooks.com), [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or contact Killian for a copy.



## Award-winning artists

Showing off their certificates of recognition for high scores at the regional Visual Arts Scholastic Event (l to r) are Jose Becerra of Brackenridge HS and Jefferson HS' David Tejada. Zoe Palacios, also of Brackenridge, received the Gold Seal award, qualifying her artwork to tour in exhibits throughout the state and nation through November. Her teacher (right) is Maggie Bennett and Jose's is Kim Bishop. Four of Bishop's other students also earned high scores. Joining David is his teacher Joshua Gonzales. The award-winning artists were recognized at the May 19 School Board meeting.