

May 25, 2012

## District's homeless liaison considered a national expert

SAISD's Transitions Program is so successful in serving the needs of homeless students and their families that it is garnering nationwide attention. The expertise of the program's coordinator and family/student support homeless liaison has been sought for several recent venues.

This month, Estella Garza was invited by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan to take part in a conference call with school superintendents across the country where she provided information on services available to students in homeless situations.

This followed her being asked to testify before a congressional subcommittee hearing. There, Garza addressed the HEARTH (Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing) Act, which reauthorizes and amends the 25-year-old McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act with substantial changes.

Under debate is whether those who are "doubling up" - living with friends or relatives because they have no homes of their own - will still be legally defined as homeless. Based upon her experiences working with families in this situation, Garza testified that this definition should be included in the new HEARTH.

"Children who are homeless reside in an array of locations. The issues of homelessness are



Highly regarded in her profession is veteran SAISD employee Estella Garza.

complicated, especially involving the language of the laws, interpretation and the politics of federal inter-governmental services," she said.

At stake are resources and other services accessible to doubled-up families through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which administers HEARTH.

Garza also shared some of the District's best practices. These include identifying homeless children, ensuring their legal rights, collaborating with other area school districts and working with agencies for services.

"As school districts we need to be proactive to ensure that all kids are provided the opportunity to learn no matter where they live," said the 20-year SAISD employee, 17 of which working with the homeless.

"Being selected to testify has been quite an honor. It is because of the work done in the SAISD Transitions Program that has given me the opportunity to do so. These children deserve to be educated as any other child."

More than 2,400 SAISD students were defined as homeless in 2011-12.

In another highlight, the program also will take the lead in facilitating the San Antonio metropolitan area's Unaccompanied Youth Task Force.

Comprised of a variety of city and county agencies, this group will focus on creating solutions for the challenges facing unaccompanied, homeless youth.

San Antonio is one of nine U.S. cities to participate in this three-year project in collaboration with the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

These appearances and others also have attracted the attention of LPR Publications, which will feature Garza's work in articles scheduled soon to appear in numerous online and print publications, including Education Daily.

## Gil Garza to be inducted into THSADA's Hall of Honor



Gil Garza is headed for THSADA's Hall of Honor

SAISD's executive director of athletics is receiving a prestigious statewide tribute for outstanding service to his career field.

Gil Garza has been selected for induction into the 2012 Texas High School Athletic Directors Association Hall of Honor.

The ceremony will take place July 29 here in San Antonio during the Texas High School

Coaches Association Convention/Coaching School.

"Being recognized by your peers and being inducted into the Texas High School Athletic

Directors Hall of Honor is very exciting for me," Garza said.

"I feel very honored to share this experience with the SAISD family and very thankful for our staff and their support."

Garza - who has served SAISD since 2002 - oversees nine high schools and 16 middle schools.

He came to the District following 14 years as athletic director for the Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD where he was in charge of three high schools and five middle schools.

Highlights there included the 1990-91 school year when, in addition to his duties as AD, Garza coached both the football and baseball teams to area

championships.

His nearly 40-year career began in his native Edinburg, Texas, as a teacher and coach for the ECISD.

In 1983 Garza was named athletic director and head baseball and football coach for the Edcouch-Elsa ISD.

During his five-year tenure there the football squad qualified for the playoffs twice and baseball team advanced four times.



## Bonham's Madrid named SAAABE Teacher of the Year

For the second year in a row, an SAISD educator has been recognized by the San Antonio Area Association for Bilingual Education for excellence and commitment to teaching those whose first language is not English.

Desirre Madrid is SAAABE's Dual Language Teacher of the Year.

"By learning in two languages, students have the opportunity to become productive and contributing

citizens with a rich bilingual, biliterate, and bicultural background," Madrid said.

"In a world where

technological advances have created a competitive work field and global village, learning another language is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity."

The SAAABE award commends outstanding educational expertise and exemplary professional service.

As local recipient Madrid - who is in her fifth year at Bonham Academy - is nominee for the statewide honor.

In 2011 SAISD's Senior Coordinator for Bilingual Education/English As a Second Language/Languages Other Than English Luz Garcia-Martin received her second SAAABE Bilingual Administrator of the Year award.



Accepting her award from SAAABE for excellence in bilingual education is Bonham Academy teacher Desirre Madrid.



# SAISD Foundation funds one of the largest amounts ever for Innovative Grants

The creative ideas of educators will become realities next school year thanks to funding for 35 projects from the SAISD Foundation.

Details were announced during a May 22 news conference at Edison HS.

Traditionally presented in the fall, grants were given earlier this year so that projects can begin immediately in 2012-13.

Through more than \$95,000 – one of the largest amounts ever given since the foundation started the Excellence in Education grant program nearly five years ago – recipients will be able to finance specially-designed lessons.

Innovative Grant recipients, projects and schools or departments are:

## Early Childhood Education Center

- **Knox**, Maggie Rath — “Interactive Learning Walls.”

## Elementaries

- **Arnold**, Natalie Urbina — “Tots and Trikes.”
- **Beacon Hill**, Katherine Sickel — “Sci Kids 2.0.”
- **Beacon Hill**, Lois Anders — “DIG: Discoveries In Ground.”
- **Bowden**, Jessica Bellow — “Science Made Fun!”
- **Brewer**, Maria Garza — “Reading Readiness.”
- **Fenwick**, Cassandra Grim — “See, Be Seen and Be Heard!”
- **Graebner**, Elise Lopez — “The Woodwind Beneath Our Wings.”
- **Kelly**, Debbie Guardia — “STEM Initiative.”
- **Lamar**, Bianca Gebhart — “Slow Food



Repeat recipient (center) Cassandra Grim and students express appreciation to the SAISD Foundation by showing off drums purchased through last year's grant. Celebrating with them is Fenwick ES principal Dr. Tambrey J. Ozuna.

South Texas School Gardens.”

- **Maverick**, Paul Perea — “I-Guitar.”
- **Maverick**, Mary Ellen Ramon — “All Aboard the IWB Express to Exemplary.”
- **Rogers**, Kathyln Gordon — “Apps for Autism.”
- **Woodlawn**, Margaret Vasquez — “Health Restoration Project.”

## Academics

- **Bonham**, Bianca Gebhart — “Slow Food South Texas School Gardens.”
- **Bonham**, Desirre Madrid — “Eating Our Words and ‘Chewing’ Our Way Into Learning Fun.”
- **Bonham**, Erica Pardo — “Reading Takes You Places: Let’s Reflect on Diverse Cultures.”
- **Bonham**, Maria L. Rosales — “Young Monarch Scientists.”
- **Bonham**, Sheila Vardiman — “Don’t Worry, Learn Healthy.”
- **Mission**, Rachele McFarland — “Read to Me.”
- **Young Women's Leadership**, Jessalyn Bernhard — “Making Music.”
- **Young Women's Leadership**, Adrean Scott — “Documenting History in the Making.”

## Middle schools

- **Longfellow**, Pedro Rodriguez — “Read to me...?”
- **Longfellow**, Pedro Rodriguez — “What does this mean? ¿QUE? & Read to Me....”
- **Rhodes**, Rebecca Lopez — “iLEAD.”
- **Rhodes**, Salvador Tellez — “The Middle School Partners Program Peer Mentoring Initiative.”

## High schools

- **Burbank**, Claudio Garcia — “SAT Campus College Readiness - Raising Standards.”
- **Edison**, Alexandra Rios — “Framing the Pathways to Science Careers - From High School to College.”
- **Highlands**, Jaqueline C. Martinez — “The Renaissance Musical Club.”
- **Sam Houston**, Kathleen Sadler — “Welcome to Our World - English 1 Book Publishing Project.”
- **Jefferson**, Billy Odam — “Alternative Energy: Production Scale Biodiesel.”
- **Jefferson**, Shelby L. Parker — “Floral Design Start Up.”
- **Lanier**, Allen Wilson — “LabQuests Program.”

## Departments

- **Community and Parent Partners**, Janice Hannon — “Home+School+Community= Student Achievement.”
- **Governmental & Community Relations**, Carmen Vázquez-González — “Gamma Sigma Pearls.”
- **Special Education**, Caroline Gonzales — “Establishing Bully-Free School from Day 1.”



## Encore honor for quality of budgeting

For the third year in a row, superior online financial transparency has garnered SAISD a gold award - the Texas Comptroller Leadership Circle's highest rating.

The District's Department of Finance qualified by scoring 19 out of 20 possible points for making the District's budget and other financial documents - as well as contact information - available online for easy accessibility to

the public.

The Leadership Circle program was initiated in 2009 by the Comptroller of Public Accounts to recognize governments and entities such as SAISD for displaying a high level of online financial transparency.



Comptroller  
Leadership  
Circle Member

## Mark your calendars!

Take note of this very important date and occasion and please don't miss the:

**SAISD Convocation**

**The morning of Aug. 21**

**Freeman Coliseum, 3201 E. Houston St.**

*Details coming this summer*

## For Your Benefit

### Summer need not mean a break from good health



No matter where you go this summer you will still be no further than a mouse click away from valuable assistance and resources to help you make wise and healthy choices.

And while wellness is certainly its on reward, monitoring your health through HumanaVitality also can provide tangible ones as well in terms of cash and prizes.

In this final edition of For Your Benefit for the 2011-12 school year, we provide details on this exciting program.

#### The health rewards

HumanaVitality not only assists you in staying

healthy now, but also provides preventive care by helping you identify future risks - and all in a safe, secure and confidential setting.

The program also offers advice on what kind of exercise makes sense for you, how to set goals and forming good habits such as picking up fruits and vegetables at the market instead of chips and taking a walk instead of being a couch potato.

#### The tangible rewards

Making healthier choices including these and others such as preventive screenings and quitting smoking can earn you Vitality Points in the form of name-brand products, travel, and resort stays.

#### Get started!

Begin exploring all the benefits of HumanaVitality by logging in to your secure member page at the Humana website.

Once logged in click on the “Vitality” link and take your health assessment to evaluate your current status and determine your “Vitality” age.

You also will receive your recommended goals to improve or maintain your health.

Not yet registered? No problem! Just go to “Register” in the log-in box and follow the instructions at **Humana.com**

For more information please call your Humana Representative Angel Orozco, 554-8674 or email: **AOrozco@humana.com**.





# in the Spotlight

## Brackenridge HS Eagle to embark for Japan

By special invitation, Andrew Juarez is among only 32 teens nationwide selected to spend 18 days this July in the "Land of the Rising Sun."

The Brackenridge HS senior qualified for the JET Memorial Invitation Program following a rigorous process that included his high performance on the National Japanese Exam, an essay on how he can be a bridge between America and Japan, and an online video interview conducted in English and Japanese.

Through JET, Andrew will have a unique opportunity to meet other third-year Japanese-language high school students while experiencing the culture of the country they have been studying.

The program was created in memory of two

American English teachers who lost their lives during the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami that devastated Japan. Funding for the trip is provided through the Japan Foundation

Andrew is a member of the Brackenridge World Languages Magnet. In addition to Japanese, he has been studying Spanish since the 6th grade.

He plans to major in international and global relations at UT-Austin in preparation of a career as an interpreter for the government or a company or organization that does business with Japan.

Andrew's parents are Cesar and Terry Juarez. His mom is a specialist for the District's Department of Human Resources.



Bidding Andrew Juarez a fond *sayonara* are (l to r) his principal Moises Ortiz, teacher Lisa Li and Mary Bordes, World Languages Magnet coordinator.

## Introducing Dr. Radle



District students aren't the only ones in the SAISD family to don caps and gowns this May. District 5 Trustee Patti Radle (shown with the Rev. Ron Rolheiser, president of the Oblate School of Theology) recently did so as recipient of an honorary doctorate in Humane Letters. Oblate conferred the degree in recognition of Radle's longtime humanitarian efforts.

These include her work with organizations that provide assistance to families and individuals in need such as Inner City Development, Haven for Hope, Habitat for Humanity of San Antonio and others.



Courtesy photo

## A hero's honor

Congratulating SAISD's Rene Cano (left) for being selected "Officer of the Year" is Chief Jeff Ward. Cano received this honor from the American Society of Industrial Security for his actions that prevented a potential suicide. The officer, who is assigned to Brackenridge HS, has been a member of the District's Police Department since 2005.

## Partner in education

Fifteen SAISD seniors have an additional \$1,500 for college, thanks to scholarships from C. H. Guenther and Son Inc. They and their high schools are: (front, l to r) Emily Montoya, Fox Tech; Samantha Perez, Sam Houston; Lauren Montoya, Edison; Dulcie Gomez, Highlands; Brenda Ruiz, Travis Early College; Karina Martinez, Burbank; and Diana Luna and Jeanette Parra, both of Brackenridge. Also: (back, l to r) Gerardo Juarez, Fox Tech; Bria Webb, Sam Houston; Christopher Roberson, Highlands; Carol Alavedra, Navarro; Mitzi Torres, Burbank; Venus Rich, Jefferson; and Omar Rodriguez, Lanier. With them (far right) is Steve Phillips, the donating company's senior vice president of corporate services.



Courtesy photo

## So long for 2011-12!

This is the final regular edition of insider for the school year. The Communications Department appreciates everyone who has taken the time to share their news and photos with us. We invite you to stay informed by following us on Facebook and Twitter and at [www.saisd.net](http://www.saisd.net)

*Have a safe and happy summer!*

## Graduation ceremonies for the class of 2012

June 7 - Navarro HS  
Jefferson HS • 7 p.m.

June 8 - Burbank HS\*  
Alamodome • 4 p.m.

June 8 - Sam Houston HS\*  
Alamodome • 8 p.m.

June 9 - Edison HS\*  
Alamodome • 10 a.m.

June 9 - Brackenridge HS\*  
Alamodome • 2 p.m.

June 9 - Fox Tech HS\*  
Alamodome • 6 p.m.

June 10 - Lanier HS\*  
Alamodome • 1 p.m.

June 10 - Highlands HS\*  
Alamodome • 4 p.m.

June 10 - Jefferson HS\*  
Alamodome • 7:30 p.m.

June 11 - Cooper Academy  
Jefferson HS • 7 p.m.

June 14 - Travis ECHS  
McAllister Auditorium • 7 p.m.

Aug. 23 - Summer graduates  
Jefferson HS • 7 p.m.

To purchase a DVD copy of your graduation, please call 554-8350.

\*Log on to [www.saisd.net](http://www.saisd.net) for a live webcast.



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