



# SCHOOL ZONE

An Online Publication for Employees of Spring Branch ISD

Dec. 14, 2005

## Helping Hands

A donation from Deutsche Bank to the Spring Branch Education Foundation, combined with staff gifts to the district Employee Hurricane Relief Campaign, has made the lives of hurricane evacuee families in SBISD a little richer.

Foundation partner Deutsche Bank Alex Brown's \$60,000 donation matched with more than \$17,000 from the recently held SBISD Employee Hurricane Relief Campaign paid for 770 Wal-Mart gift cards. The families of qualifying students received the \$100 gift cards late last month.



Superintendent of Schools Duncan Klussmann met with Deutsche Bank officials Artie Kieval and Mitch Cox recently and thanked them for their donation.

The hurricane relief campaign raised about \$21,000 from district staff. Donations were also used to help evacuee students with basic needs, including school supplies.

Since the two devastating hurricanes struck New Orleans and the upper Texas Coast, SBISD has been actively involved in assisting displaced students and families.

Enrollment figures vary somewhat from week to week, but SBISD schools have welcomed up to 1,000 students and, often with the help of parents, students and staff, have been able to provide them with needed school supplies and clothing.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of the way that the Spring Branch family has addressed the needs of these new students. You have given generously to the

employee campaign and many of you have given your own time outside the school district to volunteer in so many ways,” Superintendent of Schools Duncan Klussmann says.

For the latest updates, visit <http://www.springbranchisd.com/news/120905cards.htm>

## **Business Honors**

A highly regarded Austin-based business coalition has named two SBISD campuses to its annual Honor Roll list for sustained academic success.

Named to the 2005 Honor Roll by the Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC) and Just for the Kids (JFTK) are Memorial Drive Elementary and Spring Oaks Middle schools.

The middle school has been named to the business group’s honor roll three separate times during recent years.

In all, 83 elementary, 33 middle schools and 12 high schools in Texas earned the Honor Roll recognition this year. Campus leaders were honored Dec. 6 during a reception and dinner at the Hyatt Regency Town Lake in Austin.

For details, please visit <http://www.springbranchisd.com/news/120205honor.htm>

## **SPARK Park**

Buffalo Creek Elementary School celebrated completion of its new SPARK Park with a Nov. 18 dedication that included appearances by program founder Eleanor Tinsley and Houston Mayor Bill White.



Students and parents sold candles, t-shirts and memorial bricks to help pay for the park, which includes an outdoor playground and play equipment, a covered basketball court, soccer fields, a new track and a tiled pavilion that can be used as an outdoor classroom.

Architect Steve Durham of Kirksey Architecture donated his design services. SBISD contributed

\$5,000 and another \$85,000 in federal community development funds was also received.

The park pavilion's student-designed tile artwork is featured on the cover of the 2006 SPARK Art calendar. The campus park project is also described inside the calendar.

In addition to other local officials, SBISD Board of Trustees members Susan Kellner, Theresa Kosmoski and Mary Grace Landrum attended the afternoon dedication. SBISD Associate Superintendent Jennifer Blaine represented the district. The Guthrie Center-based Navy JROTC unit led the Presentation of Colors.

In separate Buffalo Creek Elementary news, Channel 11 newswoman Shern Min Chow filmed a fifth-grade "Mad Science" program on campus Nov. 14. Students participated in the recent national Mix It Up Day, too.

To learn more, please visit <http://www.springbranchisd.com/news/120105park.htm>

## **J. Landon Short Mini Grants**

Seventy grants totaling more than \$32,000 have been awarded to 107 SBISD teachers and teaching teams through the annual J. Landon Short Mini-Grant Awards program. A special reception for 2005-2006 mini-grant winners was held Dec. 12 at the SBISD Administration Building. Grant winners were also honored during the Board of Trustees meeting that evening. Grants valued at up to \$500 will touch the lives of about 4,300 students.

The annual awards program is sponsored by The Spring Branch Education Foundation, The Robert and Janice McNair Foundation, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, First Community Credit Union, and Sasol North America Inc. For details, please visit [http://www.springbranchisd.com/partners/PART\\_DEV/grants/mg-about.htm](http://www.springbranchisd.com/partners/PART_DEV/grants/mg-about.htm)

## **Speaks the Language**

Texas foreign language teachers have honored Pamela Butler, Director of Westchester Academy for International Studies, as the group's Administrator of the Year.

The director of the public charter middle and high school won the top honor from the Texas Foreign Language Association, a state



group representing foreign language teachers, during an October meeting in El Paso.

Since it opened six years ago with about 200 students, Westchester Academy has increased its foreign language staff. The 820-student school now offers Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Japanese (offered on Saturdays), and has a growing Dual Language program.

This fall, Westchester Academy began offering the International Baccalaureate diploma program, an advanced academic curriculum that is recognized by colleges and universities worldwide.

## **Honoring Veterans**

Hundreds of American military veterans and family members gathered at SBISD campuses Nov. 11 as district schools observed Veterans Day with special patriotic events and campus commemorations.

At Spring Forest Middle School, the district's largest ongoing patriotic program attracted about 100 veterans and family members to a "Celebrate Freedom" Veterans Day Salute, which included a library buffet breakfast followed by an assembly held in the new school gym.

The middle school program included patriotic songs and military medleys performed by the student choir and orchestra, and a keynote address by World War II Army veteran B.O. Willkins, who survived prison camp after the Battle of the Bulge.

Spring Forest Middle's program, now in its fifth year, attracts veterans of all ages – and even active duty soldiers.

To read more about it, visit <http://www.springbranchisd.com/news/111605vet.htm>

## **Hispanic Honors**

The Spring Branch ISD Board of Trustees honored five more SBISD students as recipients of the College Board's National Hispanic Recognition Program award. In all, 12 SBISD students have earned this award so far this year.

The National Hispanic Recognition Program identifies outstanding students who are at least one-quarter Hispanic and among the highest scoring Hispanic students on the Preliminary SAT, or PSAT, and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

Information about these academically well-prepared high school students is shared with participating colleges and universities. Only about 3,300 students across the nation are admitted to the recognition program each year.

Honored Nov. 28 were Stratford High School students Nicholas David, Rita Diaz, Yara Ramirez and Evelin Vaquiz. Also honored was Memorial High School student Veronica Sagestegui.

Memorial High students honored earlier this year were Taylor Anderson, Ian Dominguez, Desiree Lagrappe, Steven Powell, Katherine Rendon and Jeff Van Wageninen. Northbrook High School's Leonel Olmedo was also recognized.

In separate, but related news, 20 SBISD students qualified as 2006 National Merit Scholarship Program semi-finalists, and one student was awarded the National Achievement Scholarship Program. Please visit SBISD's news index for more information and student names.

## **Making a Difference**

The Houston-based Institute of Real Estate Management has partnered with SBISD to honor students with monthly community service awards for high personal character.

Honored at monthly luncheons with Making a Difference Awards so far this year are Mariam Ahmed, a Memorial High student and Navy Jr. ROTC student officer, and Stratford High School students Rita Diaz and Nicole McDonald.

Last year's award winners: Jonathon Bohannon, Spring Branch School of Choice; Anh Hoang Huynh, Northbrook High; Hae Jean Kwon, Stratford High; Marina Khalid-Ali, Thornwood Elementary; Kaitlin Loewen, Cornerstone Academy; Jessica Terry, Spring Woods High; and Ruben Cols, Spring Branch School of Choice.

SBISD Character Education Facilitator Phyllis Wells coordinates monthly awards.

## Creating Art

Edgewood Elementary School student Eliza Quintana has been named the winner of the Fund for Teachers' Fund Run Poster Contest. The 10-year-old is a pupil in Katie Sucato's art class. The Houston-based Fund for Teachers supports summertime travel and professional development projects for teachers.

The Altharetta Yeargin Art Museum, meanwhile, located on the Westchester Academy campus, reopened in November after being temporarily closed last year. The museum will host tours for more than 2,500 second graders during January, followed by its "road shows" for all first-grade students. The museum is open to the public 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and by appointment Fridays or during the weekends. The museum can also be rented for private events. Call 713-365-5652 to learn more.

In separate art news, students of Kathy Bean and Amy Schmidt at Woodview and Ridgecrest elementaries, respectively, displayed traditional masks and drawings at Lawndale Art Center's Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos, Celebration, which was held during November. Kathy Bean has since learned that the works of four of her former students from Edgewood are featured in a "School Arts" magazine article.

## District News

The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership (CGP) is awarding grants up to \$5,000 for small-scale education initiatives in Texas. Proposals are reviewed on a rolling basis. Deadlines are July 1 and December 1. For details, contact Grants Department Administrative Assistant Pat Dillon at 713-464-1511, ext. 2326.

SBISD's Sharon Pope, president of Texas Council for the Social Studies, presided over the state council's three-day conference of social studies educators earlier this year.

Two separate Intermediate Spanish Seminars for district employees who have taken the Accelerated Spanish Advanced Beginners Course, or for those who know present, past and future verb tenses, will be offered in the months ahead. The independent, seminar-style classes are available through EDMIN. Each class also offers students up to three non-contract credit hours. For details, please call 713-464-1511, ext. 2264.

## **Campus News**

International Education Week was featured Nov. 16 at Westchester Academy with two student performances and presentations. A day later, student projects were available for public viewing.

Almost 50 French language students from Northbrook High attended a bilingual performance of Alex Dumas' "Les Trois Mousquetaires," or "The Three Musketeers," on Oct. 24 at the Kaplan Theatre. Costumed actors greeted the students in French and spoke with them after the play. The class is led by Northbrook High's Penny Korenek.

Northbrook High students who take part in the Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE) Club have earned regional recognition for donating about 500 toiletry items to Hurricane Katrina evacuees. In addition, Northbrook High senior Crystal Nicholas has won the regional TAFE speech contest. She will now compete for a \$1,000 scholarship at the upcoming state speech contest.

Two Memorial High students have been named top winners in the National Council of Teachers of English 2005 Achievement Awards in Writing. Only 628 students nationwide, and three in the Houston region, won the national awards. Memorial High winners are students Nancy Cheng and Samantha Gilley.

Stratford High foreign language teacher Mary Moreno will be recognized Dec. 31 as Educator of the Week by the Houston-based Fund for Teachers. The recognition will occur during a University of Houston basketball game and be broadcast on radio. A Fund for Teachers winner, Mary spent six weeks at the Universidad de Alcala earlier this year in Spain.

## **Guthrie Kudos**

Since October, the Guthrie Center has offered a Tuesday after school J.A.M. Session (Join Academic Mentoring) until 5 p.m. in the library. Student mentoring is available free of charge to all SBISD students seeking academic help. For more details, call the Guthrie Center at 713-365-4610.

Two Guthrie Center staff earned recognition recently. Film instructor Michael Radler was named Teacher of the Year for his integrity and high expectations by a Houston-based philanthropy, Cultureshapers. The same fine arts group honored several digital filmmaking students. In separate honors, Ag Science teacher Sheyenne Krysher was

chosen to represent Texas at the National Association of Agricultural Educators meeting held Dec. 6-9 in Kansas City. At the meeting, Sheyenne also received the group's national Teachers Turn the Key award.

In student honors, Navy Jr. ROTC cadet officers Aaron Runge and Nick Clark have been nominated to attend either the U.S. Naval or the U.S. Air Force academies.

## Mentors Needed



As a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, caring adult volunteers are needed to work with evacuee students as adult friends and encouragers. Some evacuee students have academic and economic needs and, in particular cases, are several years behind their peers academically. To learn more, email [partner@springbranchisd.com](mailto:partner@springbranchisd.com) or call the Volunteers, Partnerships and Community Engagement Department at 713-464-1511, ext. 2287.

## Looking Ahead

SBISD's Advanced Academic Studies Department will sponsor a Gifted & Talented and Pre-Advanced Placement Institute for the parents of current fifth graders from 6:30-9 p.m. on Jan. 11 at Spring Woods High School. The Gifted & Talented meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. in the mini-auditorium, The Pre-AP meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the main auditorium. For Gifted & Talented questions, call 713-365-4820. For Pre-AP queries, call 713-365-2460.

Families interested in enrolling prekindergarten and kindergarten students in Cedar Brook Elementary School's Spanish/English Dual Language Program for the 2006-2007 school year are invited to attend a parent orientation at either 8 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 19. Both meetings will be held at Cedar Brook Elementary. For details, please call 713-365-5020.

The annual SBISD Technology Showcase will be held from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Instructional Technology Training Center, which is located in the Spring Branch Education Center on Westview. Showcase sessions focus on the use of technology in the classroom. Edmin registration is encouraged. For more details, call 713-365-5688, ext. 3210.

H-E-B will kick off its Excellence in Education Awards campaign in Houston with a special press conference at Ridgecrest Elementary School on Jan. 11.

## **Nominate a Shining Star**

SBISD sponsors two recognition programs designed to honor our “unsung heroes” who help make Spring Branch an outstanding school district.

The **Employee of the Month** Program, now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, publicly recognizes special employees who quietly and consistently make a difference in the lives of children, staff and customers. All district employees (except Central Office administrators) are eligible.

Employees must be nominated by at least two co-workers, parents or other patrons. Nomination forms are available at

<http://www.springbranchisd.com/admin/cd/eom/eomforms/eom-nom-form.pdf>

The **Volunteer of the Month** Program began nine years ago. Its purpose is to recognize the wonderful volunteers who give unselfishly of their time and energy in various capacities throughout the district. Nomination forms are available at

<http://www.springbranchisd.com/admin/cd/vom.htm>

Please fax completed nomination forms to 713-365-4855.

***Do you have School Zone news to share? E-mail [School Zone](#) using the district e-mail service. Or for details, call Andrea Resendiz or Steve Brunsman in the Communications Dept. at 713-464-1511, Ext. 2272.  
Next deadline is Jan. 15***