

Gulfton Neighbors

July 2005

The American dream

America for many immigrants is the land of a long-lived dream. It was the dream of Nelson Reyes, Executive Director of GANO. Reyes left El Salvador with his family during the Central American Civil War at the age of 16. As many others, he arrived in Houston with hopes of a better life. As a teenager at Lee High School, he saw life as an adventure but felt a strong commitment to help his family and relatives back home. "Transitioning to a big city from a rural area was very intimidating but you really have to be willing to make a difference in your life," Reyes said. Today, he aims to empower immigrants and their families to become self-sufficient. Through GANO, Reyes is able to help low income individuals who are in need of education, representation and legal aid. Reyes continues to support the Latin American culture in Houston and hopes other sectors will come together to improve the lives of residents



A heart of gold

Farewell to a beloved friend of Gulfton. A native Jamaican who began her public service career in New York, Verita Duncan now leaves her home in Gulfton. As manager for Kroger, she always cheered for sponsored teams at the park, attended community events, and held fundraisers for HPD. Instrumental in the redesign of the store, she embraced Kroger's vision to celebrate diversity. Her goal to inspire a welcoming atmosphere led to a partnership with Ser Ninos, where she and her team took Spanish classes. "We are our environment; I don't separate myself from where I work," she says. Duncan now passes stewardship to the promising hands of Robert Ochoa.



The best of friends make the best of summer

As the scorching heat signals the onset of summer and the end of school, Campo del Sol provides enriching and fun activities to 100 Gulfton youth, ages 6 to 17. This free camp operates in summer months from June 6 to August 8 through a partnership between the Community Youth Development program, run by Ramiro Guzman and the City's Weed and Seed office, run by Jesse Gutierrez. With the second session underway at Burnett Bayland Park, youth have visited the Zoo, Children's Museum, the Houston Symphony, the Port of Houston and the Astros.

Each morning, Director Dirk Warner reminds camp counselors that they "could change a child's life;" which is exactly what they do. Mentors develop a bond with each youth. Patricia Fernandez, Assistant Director recalls one shy 14-year-old, "I saw myself reflected in that girl and wanted her to see herself able to do what I am doing in a couple of years." Fernandez became a mentor, teaching her to become a counselor. "Her attitude was 100% better - she will never forget that experience." As an eager volunteer, she now works at Campo del Sol, mentoring other youth in the program.

Last month, Neighborhood Centers Inc. also began its new Head Start Youth Mentoring Initiative at Gulfton's New Horizon Head Start Center. This program pairs 50 youth ages 10 to 16 with 100 Head Start children from ages two to four years old. "I wanted to alert the youth of the many choices they will have to make in life and that graduation is a tangible goal for every one of them," said one of the mentors.

Youth enjoy field trips to the Japanese Gardens, Houston Symphony, Museum of Fine Arts, and the Houston Sculptor Garden. They also learn how to become better leaders during group meetings and by assisting teachers with classroom activities, office duties and community projects, such as creating a Resource Book for Gulfton youth. The "youth have been able to build on their strengths and acquire new skills to develop a healthier base for better decision making," said Rene Pope, Project Manager.

Neighborhood Updates

Meetings
Houston Police Department, 5980 Renwick, 713-668-4141
Contact: Officer Walter Parker

PIP: Positive Interaction Program Meeting 4th Tues every month 12 - 1pm

Courses/Enrollments
The BRIDGE/EL PUENTE, 6114 Renwick Drive, Apt. 199B, 713-592-0288
Contact: Marisol Casarez

ESL (English as a second language) classes	M - Th	8:30 - 11am
	or M - W	6 - 9pm
El Civic classes (English literacy and civics education)	M - Th	11am - 12pm
	or Tues	6 - 9pm
Computer classes	T or Th	12 - 1:30pm
	or Tues	6 - 7:30pm
PACT (Parent and child time together classes)	Wed	12:30 - 2pm
Early Childhood education classes (ages 0-7 yrs old)	M - Th	8:30am-2pm
Parenting classes (ESCAPE family resource center)	Fri	9 - 11am

Houston Community College System, 5407 Gulfton, 713-718-7720
ESL classes 7/25 - 8/25

Cunningham Elementary
Registration Open House 8/1 - 8/5
9/15 5:30 - 7pm

HISD
School Starts 8/15



OYE!

The next Gulfton Service Providers meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 21 at 12 Noon - location to be announced. If you would like additional information about this meeting, please contact Ramiro Guzman with TRIAD Prevention Program at 713-314-3551. Your input will make Gulfton Neighbors an even stronger resource for the community. Call Oriana Garcia at 713-669-5228.



Immunization Providers

Superkids Mobile Pediatric Clinic

6635 Alder Dr.	Th, 7/28	9am - 12pm
	or F, 7/29	9am - 12pm
5858 Chimney Rock, 713-295-3870	M, 8/1	9am - 12pm
5100 Gulfton, 713-295-5223	M, 8/1	1 - 3pm
8302 Braes River, 713-778-3480	T, 8/2	9am - 12pm
7707 Rampart, 713-295-5210	M, 8/8	9am - 12pm
6201 Bissonnet, 713-773-3600	M, 8/8	1 - 3pm
5909 Chimney Rock, 713-661-1670	T, 8/9	1 - 3pm
7504 Bissonnet	Th, 8/18	9am - 12pm

Shalom Mobile Health Ministry

6625 Alder Street, 713-926-3947	M, 8/8	9:30am - 5pm
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Trouble Shooting for Health Mobile Program

5815 Alder Dr., 713-873-8687	W, 8/10	9am - 3pm
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Promotora program

The Promotoras is a group of Latina women, trained as educators who conduct presentations to women and families. They strive to educate and inform Latino communities about reproductive health. If you are interested in a presentation or wish to become a Promotora, please call 713-454-1799.



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LIFTING HEARTS. BUILDING FUTURES.