



ONE TO ONE

ISSUE NO. 1 • FEBRUARY 2014 • NORTH/SOUTH

A Report to the Residents of Harris County Precinct One ... from Commissioner El Franco Lee

Construction projects will enhance Hester House services



Terry Dixon, right, project manager with Harris County Public Infrastructure Department, shows Precinct One staff member Brian Purnell the future location of the basketball goal in the gym portion of a 24,535-square-foot building being constructed at the Julia C. Hester House, 2020 Solo St.

Harris County Precinct One is overseeing a major construction project at the Julia C. Hester House to help expand its comprehensive social programs in the Fifth Ward area.

Precinct One also will work with Hester House to enhance the services the 70-year-old community center offers at 2020 Solo St. A United Way agency, the Hester House provides after-school and other youth programs; senior citizens' services; housing and utility assistance; case management; and employment-assistance services.

The first construction phase, completed in August 2010, included renovating the swimming pool and demolishing all but the structural frame of the gymnasium.

The second phase, which is

(Continued on page 5)

Seniors Holiday Celebration kicks off the festive fall season

Bessie Holmes, an avid line dancer, is accustomed to starting her holiday season with some fun at the annual Seniors Holiday Celebration.

The dancing, the holiday meal and the fellowship were enough reasons to jump-start the season for Holmes and about 3,500 other Precinct One seniors at Reliant Center on Nov. 21. Holmes considers it a time for her to enjoy a great meal without having to cook.



The dance floor stayed crowded at the Seniors Holiday Celebration.

"Oh, absolutely it's a great kick off to the holidays, especially one week before Thanksgiving," she said. "You have a

chance to unwind before you have to do the cooking."

To help those who are less fortunate, the seniors donated nonperishable food upon entering Reliant Center. The food later was donated to the non-profit Cathedral Health & Outreach Ministries that provides social and health services to poor and homeless men, women and children; and the Bread of Life, a ministry of St. John's

(Continued on page 5)



Precinct One

Commissioner El Franco Lee

Comments on current and future activities

Public Defender fights for Better outcome for indigent

A recent report has confirmed to me that the Harris County Public Defender's (HCPD) office is performing its mission. In fact, according to a Council of State Governments Justice Center study, HCPD delivers better defense case outcomes than court-appointed attorneys.

"As demonstrated in this evaluation, the public defender office can bring specific, targeted expertise to the table, such as representation of the mentally ill, successful appellate advocacy, advice to the criminal bar on issues such as a conviction's impact on immigration status, as well as the ability to help respond to systemic issues," says the Sept. 30, 2013,

report entitled "Improving Indigent Defense: Evaluation of the Harris County Public Defender."

Representing indigent clients

HCPD started operations in 2011 as a pilot program. Created by Commissioners Court, it represents indigent people charged in misdemeanor, felony and juvenile courts. The cases are appointed by judges. The office handles only 6% of the county's indigent defense trial-level cases, according to the Justice Center, a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at local, state and federal levels from all branches of government.

However, judges also assign private attorneys to represent indigent defendants and juve-

niles. Those lawyers are not associated with the HCPD.

It has never been Harris County's intent to halt the court-appointed system.

According to the report's executive summary, misdemeanor dismissals were five times more likely for HCPD clients with mental health diagnoses than for a matched group of similar defendants with assigned counsel.

More likely to try cases

On the felony level, HCPD lawyers achieved a greater proportion of dismissals, deferred sentences and acquittals, and a smaller proportion of "guilty" outcomes than assigned counsel. Also, HCPD counsel was far more likely to take their cases to trial than appointed

counsel or retained counsel.

In addition, more investigation time spent by HCPD results in positive case outcomes – case dismissals or a grand jury finding of no probable cause for a criminal charge brought by law enforcement.

HCPD seeks case dismissals

Appointed counsel reduced charges for 23 percent of clients. That's more than HCPD and hired attorneys, but appointed counsel also achieved the fewest dismissals – 11% versus HCPD's 17% and retained counsel's 18%.

"This suggests that HCPD and retained counsel are more likely to achieve dismissal of weak cases, where appointed counsel is more likely to plead them down," the report says.



High school students in the 4-H Achieving Respect Through Success (A.R.T.S.) prepare a healthy pizza at Finnigan Park. The 13-week program, which ends in May and is conducted by Prairie View A&M University's Cooperative Extension Program, teaches nutrition, music, photography and videography. The students are Jonee Moore, left, Wiley Parker, Amber Bennet and Tatyana Soularie.



Ms. Knight (Margaret Williams), seated, is consoled by her attorney (Sharon Harrison) while Wayne King sings during the Seniors Drama Program's play "Seniors go to Court." Written by playwright Thomas Meloncon, the play promotes the message of seniors staying active.

215 youth get a tasty lesson at the 19th annual Fish Fest

When Arshia Porter hooked a catfish at the 19th annual Fall Kids Fish Fest, it immediately became a family affair with the 8-year-old and her sister, Mya, 12.

Arshia kept her distance, but Mya held the tail fin as Harris County Precinct Two Constable Christopher Diaz, a Fish Fest volunteer, removed the hook on Oct. 19 at Challenger Seven Memorial Park.

When Arshia was asked what she was going to do with her fish, she replied: "I'm going to eat it."

Undoubtedly, there was a lot of fish frying that weekend because several of the 215 youth who participated in Fish Fest caught one or more fish.

Fish Fest, sponsored by Commissioner El Franco Lee and America's Promise Alliance, is designed to give youth the opportunity to fish at the 3½-acre lake.

The event teaches youth about fish life and aquatic habitats. It also teaches the im-

portance of protecting the fish and their habitats.

The Porter sisters were among a group that attends the NFL Youth Education Town (YET) at Finnigan Park. Other youth were from Lincoln Park Community Center, the Julia C. Hester House, Seguin Elementary and Attucks Middle School.

Before fishing, they first visited the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Aquatic Fish Habitat Kiosk Trailer, which provides information and pictures about safety, tackle and fish species. They were also given a lesson on casting.

The fishers were divided into groups, each of which were assigned volunteers — including 19 students from Pasadena's Dobie High School and eight from Houston's Jones High. Both schools are members of the Challenger Seven Learning Center's service learning high schools.

Other high school students also volunteered.



Arshia Porter, 8, right, looks on as Harris County Constable Christopher Diaz, with assistance from Arshia's 12-year-old sister, Mya, remove a hook from a catfish the younger girl caught at the Fall Kids Fish Fest. The event attracted 215 children.



There weren't too many vacant spots around the 3 ½ -acre lake.

Houston Texans sponsored holiday events at the NFL Youth Education Town at Finnigan Park.



Houston Texan DeAndre Hopkins gives Alayah Hall, 10, left, a passing-route pattern during his pre-Thanksgiving visit to the NFL YET. Hopkins and two cheerleaders also served meals to youth.



Jeremiah Felder, 9, center, smiles after he and 114 other YET participants received bikes as early Christmas gifts from the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Houston, which operates the YET.

Wassail Tea and Hershey's Kisses warm seniors' holiday spirits

Instead of snow, there were bubbles at the annual Wassail Tea, which promotes the theme: "Let it snow. Let it snow."

Instead of kisses, there were Hershey's Kisses Milk Chocolates handed out to all senior citizens on Dec. 11 by host David Benson, Precinct One's special programs manager.

There was, however, no substitution for the holiday spirit shared by about 100 seniors who filled the Precinct One Kashmere Annex two weeks before Christmas.

"I love to celebrate the Christmas season," said Frankie Atkins, a senior who attends the Julia C. Hester House. "It all seems so spiritual to me. It's a different spirit – a good one."

That spirit was displayed in



Alice Smith-Moffett, standing in the foreground, gets the audience involved in a Christmas carol.

more than one way, including tea, which warmed the body and the spirit for the occasion.

several red and green Christmas outfits, and the joyful Christmas carols that everyone sang.

And there was the placement of ornaments on the Christmas tree in memory of loved ones.

Oh, don't forget the Wassail in the Seniors Program, which

also provides fitness, wellness, nutrition, social services, gardening, special events, and arts and crafts.

"And that's kind of the spirit of the season," Lee said, "and the spirit of what we do here."

Finnigan and Lincoln seniors' chair volleyball rivalry now tied at 1-1

Moments after the chair volleyball best-of-three competition, senior citizens who attend Precinct One's Lincoln and Finnigan community centers started selling wolf tickets for next year's games.

On Oct. 29, Finnigan took a two-game sweep to claim the 2013 title in the second year of competition. In 2012, Lincoln was victorious in the games played at its home gym in Acres Homes.

"We are pumped up spiritually and physically," said Wallace Theriot, a player for Finnigan in the Fifth Ward. "Our minds were made up to win the game. We didn't want to whip



Jerri Bailey of Finnigan Park serves to the Lincoln Park team during a best-of-three chair volleyball competition held Oct. 29.

them too much, but we did want to whip them."

Then he added: "And next year we are going to do it again."

Not if Rubye Saddler and her Lincoln teammates can help it.

"It's a friendly rivalry," Saddler said. "And it's just

good competition that's all in fun. But we are coming back next year – strong!"

Sounds like trash-talking, but for players on both teams – many of whom know each other – it's all done in jest. The competition was created as a form of exercise and a chance for the players to come together to socialize.

In chair volleyball, there are 20 players per team on the court. They are seated in chairs and cannot leave their chairs during volley of the ball that's the size of a beach ball. Each team has its cheering section, complete with pompoms and mini megaphones.

Harris Health System opens first of six same-day clinics in Precinct One

The Harris Health System has opened a same-day clinic in the India House, a community center in Precinct One operated by the Indo-American community.

The Sareen Clinic at India House at 8888 W. Belfort is the first of six same-day facilities Harris Health will open this year. Each will take walk-in visits.

The 7,500-square-foot facility at India House will have six exam rooms and serve patients 18 months and older.

Several medical insurance, CHIP and Medicaid plans are accepted. For those without proof of insurance, the cost ranges from free to \$76 based on a financial screening.

The clinic will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturday. Additionally, the clinic will house a gymnasium for physical and occupational therapy as part of medical referrals made within Harris Health System.

"I think in true Indian style, I will say that this is the best way of giving back," Parvathaneni Harish, the consul general of India, said at the clinic's ribbon cutting Jan. 24. "Feeding somebody, helping to improve the health of somebody, helping people have a center and helping people have a home, these are traditionally the best ways of giving."



Vivian Dunlop, center, Harris Health System's administrative director of rehabilitation services, talks to Durga Agrawal, right, an India House board member, and Parvathaneni Harish, the consul general of India, about the rehabilitation facility at the Sareen Clinic. Harris Health will provide same-day health services at the clinic at 8888 W. Belfort.

Holiday Celebration: Seniors donate food to feed homeless and poor people

(Continued from page 1)

United Methodist Church.

This year marked the 21st anniversary of the Seniors Holiday Celebration for people 55 years and older.

Line dancing, a form of exercise especially for seniors, is one of the many components of Commissioner El Franco Lee's

missions to keep seniors physically active.

"I like line dancing," said Jimmy Mallard, who regularly practices his steps by line dancing at the YMCA on Wallisville Road. "It's a great event and I really enjoy the food. I also like being with all the people."



Precinct One employee Ed Edwards helps volunteers serve lunch.

Hester House: 24,535-square-foot building is main attraction



A 24,535 building is being built at the Julia C. Hester House.

(Continued from page 1)

under way, involves a 24,535-square-foot building that will include the gym, metal enclosure of the pool for year-round use, multipurpose space, offices and parking improvements.

The final phase entails more modifications to the administration building and improvements to the adjacent Boyce-Dorian Park, which Precinct One now maintains.

The community garden also is

being expanded.

Hester House will participate in the Harris County Aquatics Program, which provides Learn-to-Swim classes as well as competitive swimming. Seniors also can take advantage of water aerobics and Learn-to-Swim classes.

Daisy Stiner is Hester House's interim director. The board members are Charles McCloud, Dr. Carlos Vital, Kathy Flanagan Payton and Hannah Chow.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION



Traffic flows with ease on West Montgomery Road between Gulf Bank and Breen streets after a Precinct One construction project improved the road to a divided, four-lane thoroughfare with storm sewers.

The completion of another phase of Scott Street construction has opened a total of 2 miles of four-lane traffic between Orem and Beltway 8. Most recently, workers completed this 1.2-mile stretch between Beltway 8 and Alameda Genoa. An .8-mile portion was finished in mid-2013.



ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

- Workers have completed roadway with storm sewers. a four-lane, divided, concrete roadway. That work will complement similar improvements to Scott between Alameda Genoa northbound to Orem, which was completed earlier last year.
- A 1.2-mile portion of Scott Street between Beltway 8 and Alameda Genoa Road is now open to traffic. Workers in December completed the project that involved constructing
- Work has started to improve a 3.1-mile section of East Mount Houston between Beltway 8 and Mesa Road to a four-lane, concrete roadway with bike paths.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS



Splash pads like this one at Gene Green Beltway 8 Park will be constructed at El Franco Lee Park. During the summer months, youth will be able to cool off under the water-spraying devices.

Construction workers place a modular men's and women's restroom at Dixie Farm Road Park. Park patrons will have the option to use this facility or the portable toilets.



PARK CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

- A modular restroom for men and women is being installed at **Dixie Farm Road Park**. The work also includes a waterline, lift station, sanitary sewer line and electricity.
- Precinct One plans to install a children's splash pad at **El Franco Lee Park**. The colorful pads will spray water in which children can play in warm months. The Precinct currently has a splash pad at Gene Green Beltway 8 Park.
- Construction work has started to renovate the **El Franco Lee Community Center**. The work involves changing the floor plan in an area previously occupied by park maintenance personnel. In 2012, Precinct One workers completed a maintenance building near the community center.

Harris County Precinct One
 El Franco Lee, Commissioner
 1001 Preston Ave., Ste. 950
 Houston, TX 77002
www.co.harris.tx.us/comm_lee

PRSRT STD
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Houston, Texas
 Permit No. 813

Precinct One Parks' Reservations

All reservations are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Please read the park rules and regulations for reserving pavilions and community buildings prior to making reservations. This information can be found on our website at hcp1.net/parkreservations.

Refer to the following schedule when making 2014 reservations:

Reservations for the months:	Reservations will be accepted on or after:
Jan. 2014 – March 2014	8 a.m. Monday, Nov. 11, 2013
April 2014 – June 2014	8 a.m. Monday, Jan. 13, 2014
July 2014 – Sept. 2014	8 a.m. Monday, March 10,
Oct. 2014 – Dec. 2014	8 a.m. Monday, May 12, 2014

For southside reservations, call **713-440-1587**. To reserve Deussen Park and Jordan Community Center, call **281-591-6951**.

PRECINCT ONE SITES and PHONE NUMBERS

REGIONAL OFFICES


El Rio Service Center	713.991.6881
Downtown Office	713.755.6111
El Camino Office Annex	713.741.1096
Kashmere Office "Annex 36"	713.675.0004
Leland Office "Annex 31"	713.697.1104
Neartown Office "Annex 1"	713.755.9300
Hardy Service Center	281.820.5151

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Christia Adair Community Center	713.991.6881
Tom Bass Community Center	713-733.3717
Challenger Seven Learning Center	281.332.5157
Deussen Seniors Center	281.454.4108
EFL Community Center	281.464.9708
Finnigan Community Center	713.678.7385
Hardy Seniors Center	281.260.6772
Barbara Jordan Community Center	281.591.6951
Kashmere Office "Annex 36"	713-675.0004
Lincoln Park Community Center	281.445.1617
YET Center @ Finnigan Park	713.676.0519

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Aquatics Program	713.748.7333
Discovery Camp Program	281.332.5157
Northeast Adolescent Program	713.673.1655
Seniors Program	713-733.3717
Street Olympics Summer Games	713.741.0851


www.HCP1.net


[CHECK](#)
[OUT](#)
[OUR](#)
[NEW](#)
[WEBSITE!](#)

- 3D virtual tours of park pavilions
- Online reservation system for park facilities
- News stories and photos from recent Precinct events
- Translation button provides more than 50 language options
- New high-definition photos of each park
- Fully compatible with mobile devices

[More](#)