



Plano ISD Staff Newsletter

• Volume 37, number 5

• November 5, 2009



Isaacs Early Childhood panda bears invite community to November 10 school dedication

The Plano ISD Board of Trustees and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Doug Otto will join the Isaacs Early Childhood School students, parents, staff and community in dedicating the district's newest campus at a dedication ceremony to be held at 6:50 p.m. on Tuesday, November 10. One of three early childhood schools in Plano ISD, Isaacs is home to more than 600 young learners whose mascot is the panda bear and motto is "We're climbing high!" Principal Dr. Elaine Schmidt explains that "high expectations" and "happy choices" are the hallmarks of Isaacs, whose namesake, retired Plano ISD educator Sara Isaacs, will be guest of honor at the dedication. [Read More](#)



Red Ribbon Week celebration emphasizes drug abuse prevention

Plano ISD's faculty and staff encouraged and challenged the district's 55,000 students to live drug abuse-free lifestyles during October's national Red Ribbon Week anti-drug



PTA celebrates state's 100th anniversary with historic gift to district

The Plano ISD Council of PTAs celebrated the centennial birthday of Texas PTAs with a gift to Plano ISD's historic classroom located at the Cox Building on Avenue H in downtown

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11/10 Isaacs ECS Dedication

11/11 Veterans Day

11/15 American Education Week

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employee Spotlight



Jana Fry Captures Award for Outstanding Teaching of Humanities

"'Project' is usually a dirty word to students," says Williams High School Teacher Jana Fry, but in her class it's the one word that students use to describe what they love most about the two-year course. She teachers Advanced Placement World History and Humanities.

For exhibiting exemplary leadership in her field, Ms. Fry has captured an "Outstanding Teaching of the Humanities" award from Humanities Texas / National Endowment for the

campaign. Creative and educational activities flourished at schools district wide. Visit the district website to view our [Red Ribbon Week photo gallery](#) for district wide images and reports.

Plano. An historical PTA scrapbook is now showcased in the classroom. Council officers and past presidents were honored by the school board this week. [Read More](#)

Humanities, a nonprofit educational organization that supports research, education and public programs in the humanities.

Next week, Ms. Fry will be presented with a \$5,000 award and \$500 for the Williams High School Humanities program during an official visit by U.S. Congressman Sam Johnson.

Currently a curriculum and instruction doctoral student at the University of North Texas, Ms. Fry is constantly sharpening her teaching skills and is reinforced by fellow doctoral students that Williams High School and Plano ISD provide an exemplary humanities education program.

Digest: What sets Williams High School's Humanities Program apart from other programs?

Jana: An interdisciplinary approach to teaching. Students learn best when they can make connections across disciplines. Our academic teaching teams support groups of approximately 150 students each to constantly monitor student achievement and ensure their success. Math, science, social studies and English teachers all plan units together to support these small learning communities.

Digest: What is involved in the teaching of the district's Humanities course?

Jana: Honor students in grades 9 and 10 enroll in Humanities to earn an English credit and AP World History credit over a two-year period. Humanities I explores ancient civilizations through the Renaissance. Humanities II, we study history and cultures of man from the Renaissance

Around the district



A "moon tree" has landed at Plano Senior High School, bringing NASA officials who spoke to students about caring for the environment in a global sense. [Read More](#)



The Plano ISD Education Foundation kicked off its annual Ski Plano event with a "Gift Giving Party." The first-ever event helped raise donations for Ski Plano's silent auction. [Read More](#)



A new law enacted by the Texas legislature prohibits the use of cell phones and texting while driving through a school zone, unless the driver is using a hands-free device. [Read More](#)

Board briefs

School trustees took the following action at their November 3 meeting.

Recognitions

- [National Inclusive Schools Week Resolution](#) - Board Vice-president Brad Shanklin read a resolution in honor of this special week and presented the resolution to Teri Kuchur, chairman of the Plano ISD Council of PTAs SAGE (Special and Gifted Education) Committee.
- [Texas PTA's 100th Anniversary Resolution](#) - Karla Oliver, executive director for government and community relations, shared comments about the Texas PTA centennial anniversary and the Plano ISD Council of PTAs (see article in this newsletter)
- ["Best Places to Work 2009" Resolution](#) - Tamira Griffin, executive director of human resource services, accepted a "Best Places to Work" resolution on behalf of all employees. Board Vice-president Brad Shanklin read the "Best Places to Work" resolution.

Consent Agenda

- The board approved several routine business items, including bids, purchases, construction items, financial reports, the flexible benefit plan document and employee health benefit plan document and new course recommendations for 2010-2011.

Reports

- [Annual Financial Reports](#) - Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2009 - Richard Matkin, associate superintendent for business services, reviewed the function of the Board Audit Committee. The district's audit firm, Weaver and Tidwell, provided highlights of the annual financial reports for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009. Trustee Duncan Webb spoke for the Board Audit Committee and recommended adoption. The board approved the required Annual Financial Reports for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009.
- [2010 -2011 Budget Calendar](#) - Richard Matkin presented a budget report outlining the budget calendar.
- [Bond Sale Report](#) - The district's financial advisor First Southwest Company reported the result of the bond sale that was authorized by trustees at the October 6, 2009, board meeting.
- [Diversity Advisory Committee Report](#) - Niyaz Ansari, committee chair, presented the annual report from the Diversity Advisory Committee.
- [Highly Qualified Teachers Report](#) - Tamira Griffin, executive director for human resources, presented the Public Reporting of Progress in Meeting Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements on No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The NCLB Act requires districts to publicly report progress of the district and its campuses toward meeting highly qualified teacher standards no later than December 15, 2009.
- [Student Mobile Device Project Update](#) - Mary Hewett, executive director for instructional technology, and Kary Cooper, principal of Robinson Middle School, presented a report on the student mobile device project set to begin this month at Robinson.

period through modern day.

Digest: What makes humanities such a unique course of study?

Jana: The humanities unlock creativity, which is one of the highest levels of thinking. By having students design lessons, projects, presentations and class discussions, my students operate at higher thinking levels.

District: What is the foundation of a humanities course?

Jana: The humanities are not just about developing an appreciation for all things cultural or artistic. True humanities courses focus on critical thinking processes that foster deep understanding, truth and problem-solving.

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Policy Adoptions

- [CRD\(LOCAL\)](#) - Insurance and Annuities Management: Health and Life Insurance - first and final reading
- [FFAC\(LOCAL\)](#) - Wellness and Health Services: Medical Treatment - revised and first reading

View the agenda with all supporting documents on [BoardBook](#). 

Watch the November 3 school board meeting [video](#).  (Length: 1:07:16)



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Isaacs Early Childhood School dedication (cont.)

Built with funds from the 2008 facilities and technology bond program, Isaacs opened in August at the corner of Parker Road and San Gabriel Drive and serves three- and four-year old students in the district's east cluster.

The students and staff were previously housed in the building that has been converted back to Barron Elementary School. "I like to say that we brought our hearts - the children and staff - and our minds but now we have a beautiful new body," said proud Principal Elaine Schmidt.



Inside the brand new facility are six "neighborhoods" of learners, jungle, arctic, prairie, forest, ocean and garden. The Isaacs panda bears are "climbing high" thanks to very high standards, explained Dr. Schmidt. "Our counselors and teachers do a great job of talking to the children about making 'happy choices.' And the children are amazing in how they respond to high standards."

For most of the children, this is their first time in a group setting. A well-articulated curriculum prepares them for kindergarten. "We hear all the time from kindergarten teachers that our students are prepared. They function well in a group, follow directions and are independent learners," said Dr. Schmidt, who has taught special needs children and served as an elementary school principal in schools in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Texas. She joined Plano ISD as principal intern at Thomas Elementary School and then served briefly at Wyatt Elementary when it opened. She opened Barron (now Isaacs) in 2002.

Dr. Schmidt explained that what makes Isaacs unique is its large population of second-language learners and children from low-income families. "We've redefined diverse as the norm," she said. "Part of our asset is that we work hard

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to demonstrate respect for everyone who walks in the door, including fellow classmates and adults."

A great school begins with the a staff that has "the right attitude," she believes. "They are empathetic people who learn to listen and try to put themselves in the shoes of others. We are diverse as a staff intentionally because it is beneficial to us all. It took us a while to build such a strong culture."

Serving special populations is an honor that this seasoned principal does not take for granted. "America has come a long way since the late 1970s when federal laws first went into affect for IEPs (individual educational plans) for special needs students," she said. "Our school district is fortunate to have such vision and support of early learners and all learners with special needs. That makes it an honor to work here."

About Isaacs Early Childhood School

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Open Date | August 24, 2009 |
| Location | Parker Road and San Gabriel Drive (serving early childhood students in the district's east cluster schools) |
| Enrollment | 626 (expected end-of-year enrollment 700) |
| Mascot | Panda Bear |
| Motto | "We're climbing high!" |
| Colors | Black and white (panda) and green (bamboo) |
| Website | http://k-12.pisd.edu/schools/isaacs/ |

About Sara Isaacs

Sara Isaacs, retired Plano ISD educator, directed the district's first early childhood programs. In the early 1970s, Sara served as the school district's first elementary curriculum coordinator, making her the very first female administrator in Plano ISD. She continued working with educationally-disadvantaged early childhood children at the time.



Sara and her husband Edward, Jr., have two sons, Edward, III, who works in the Plano ISD facility services department, and Jason Isaacs who lives in Decatur. The Isaacs' have seven grandchildren. Pictured are (l-r) Edward

III, Edward, Jr., Sara and grandchildren Jessica and Sara.

As public school kindergarten (1/2-day program) began, she wrote the guidelines for Plano ISD's program. Ms. Isaacs is proud of the fact that Plano ISD's kindergarten served as the model program in Collin County, since it was the first to be offered in the county.

In 1973, Ms. Isaacs became the first female principal in Plano ISD when she opened Christie Elementary School. She served as principal there until she retired in 1986.

"The first love I had was for the young early childhood children and working with the teachers of young learners," said Ms. Isaacs.

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Jana Fry, outstanding humanities teacher (continued)

One other beautiful aspect of humanities is that the discipline fosters an appreciation for diversity in our world. My students are better prepared for college and beyond because they know how to think creatively, engage in intellectual discourse, cooperate with others and understand the diversity in the world that they must negotiate and will one day lead.



District: What do you most appreciate about teaching humanities?

Jana: I have always been drawn to history and cultures, but I do not teach history, first and foremost, I teach kids. History is simply the vehicle. I love teaching the humanities class because we get to explore all of the cultural aspects of history such as art, music, philosophy and literature.

District: What is your favorite thing about teaching high school students?

Jana: I've always wanted to teach older kids. We get each others' humor, we can communicate at a more intellectual level, and it is at this level that students are truly learning the skills to be independent young adults.



District: How do you stay abreast of emerging best practices in the teaching of humanities?

Jana: I am currently a student myself right now, pursuing a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction at the University of North Texas. I want to teach in a college of education at the university level to teach future teachers how to be great teachers.

More About Jana

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Education

- **2008-present**- Doctoral student at University of North Texas seeking a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction
- **1989**- M. Ed. from Texas Tech University- Secondary Education
- **1988**- B.S. in Secondary Education from Texas Tech University- certified in Composite Social Studies

Professional Experience**Williams High School, 2003-Present**

- Social Studies Department Chair
- Gifted and Talented Specialist
- Instructional Specialist
- Differentiation Coach
- Professional Learning Period Implementation Team
- World History Team Leader
- Teacher- Humanities G/T program
- Teacher- AP World History
- Mentor teacher
- Coach- Speech, Debate, and Oral Interp Team

Curriculum Writer, 1998-Present

- 2008-2009- Will be developing curriculum for Humanities, the high school G/T program
- Currently developing and writing on-line curriculum for high school World Geography and World History
- 1998-2003- Curriculum writer for 6th grade World Cultures, 7th grade Texas History, and 8th grade U.S. History

Hendrick Middle School, 1989-2003

- Social Studies Department Chair
- Teacher- 6th grade World Cultures, 7th grade Texas History, and 8th grade U.S. History
- National Junior Honor Society Sponsor
- Whiz Quiz Coach
- Future Problem Solving Coach

Professional Honors and Achievements

- 2009- Recipient of Humanities Texas Excellence in Teaching Award
- 2007- Nomination to Whoâ€™s Who Among American Women
- 1997- Nomination to Whoâ€™s Who Among American Teachers
- 1996- Hendrick Middle School Experienced Teacher of the

- 1990- Hendrick Middle School Beginning Teacher of the Year

Recent Professional Development

- AP Summer Institute- University Texas at Dallas; Carolyn Buchanan, presenter
- AP Summer Institute- University Texas at Dallas; Paul Phelp, presenter
- Gifted and Talented Certification
- Institute for the Study of Islamic Culture, University of Texas, Austin
- AP World History Reading- University of Nebraska and Colorado State University

Quotes from Colleagues

Mark Wellborn, director of professional learning and advanced academics: "As educators, we all should know our 'stuff,' but what makes Jana infinitely more effective in the classroom is, in addition to her 'knowing her stuff,' she knows and cares about young people and how to communicate with them. Every student knows he/she matters! Jana brings this focus and these skills into our program meetings and decisions and helps us all remain student-focused."

Tina Pilgrim, Murphy Middle School science department chair and co-writer of Jana's award nomination: "Jana possesses the gift of being great with kids of all ages. She understands them and 'gets' their humor. She diligently works to stay current in her field. She's very passionate about education and finding ways to reach all of her students. She challenges her students to think critically and come up with solutions. Her calm demeanor sets the tone for her classroom, and her students know she cares about them."

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Texas PTA 100th anniversary (continued)



School trustees on November 3 recognized PTA officers and past presidents. Introducing Karla Oliver (left), executive director for government and community relations. PTA officers and past presidents included (l-r) Terrye Reeves, youth protection chair; Graciela Katzer, diversity chair; Kelly Waterman, second vp for programs; Dana Bilbray, first vp aide; Teri Kachur, SAGE chair; Gretchen Abner, legislative chair; Joa Muns, centennial chair; Cara Mendelsohn, president; and former Plano PTA Council Presidents Becky Brown, Mary Beth King, Ginny Skelly, Betty Wright, Robin Tatman and Karen Schultz.

Plano ISD Council of PTAs President Cara Mendelsohn joined fellow Council officers and past-presidents at the November 3 school board meeting for recognition and the reading of a PTA resolution by Board Vice-president Brad Shanklin.

Karla Oliver, executive director for government and community relations, explained to trustees and guests that PTA's historical scrapbook is a "special treasure overflowing with notes, letters and memorabilia that focuses on a period of the district from 1951 through 1958. In addition, there is a separate PTA program from 1932-33 that lists board members with familiar last names such as Mathews, Harrington, Haggard, Haynes and Schell.

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Plano ISD Council of PTAs President Cara Mendelsohn (in pink) is pictured with past Council presidents (l-r) Becky Brown, Karen Schultz, Betty Wright, Robin Tatman and Ginny Skully.

This Centennial year has been remarkable for the Texas PTA. It began with a large crowd of supporters at the Texas PTA Day at the Capitol last February. The official 100th birthday event, also attended by a vast number of supporters, was celebrated on October 19, 2009, at Hillsboro Elementary School in Hillsboro, Texas, the actual birthplace of Texas PTA.



Plano ISD Council of PTAs Officers (l-r) Dana Bilbray; May Li, community outreach; Joa Muns, centennial chair; Gretchen Abner, legislative chair; Cara Mendelsohn, president; Terrye Reeves, youth protection chair; Graciela Katzer, diversity chair; and Teri Kachur, SAGE chair.

The Plano organization, with more than 36,000 members in 68 PTAs, was named the "Outstanding PTA Council" in Texas in 2008 and 2009 and received the Texas PTA Chairman Award for Legislative Action in 2009. Ms. Oliver remarked, "We are also proud that Plano's Sharon Goldblatt is serving at the state level as the first vice-president to the current Texas PTA Board of Directors."

Ms. Oliver continued, "As we celebrate tonight, I want to commemorate the Plano ISD Council of PTAs, which is celebrating its 21st birthday. Although PTAs have been part of the district for many years, we are honored to mark this special observance of the PTA Council."



PSHS moon tree dedication (continued)

NASA officials, Plano Senior High School (PSHS) students, staff and the PSHS LASER (Learning About Science and Research) and Environmental clubs celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Apollo Program at a Moon Tree dedication ceremony held on November 4 at the school. Although Moon Trees have been planted throughout the United States, the sycamore is the first to be planted at a North Texas school.



Pictured at PSHS are (l-r) Teacher Karen Shepherd, NASA's Kristen Erickson, Associate Principal Glenn Davis, Teacher Kim Wolff, Counselor Nancy Erickson and Kristen Erickson's children. Kristen presented the school with a framed pin set of Apollo missions which included a medallion containing metal that orbited the moon and a signed image from famed space artist Paul Calle.

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About the Moon Trees

The Apollo 14 launched on January 31, 1971 and was the third trip to the lunar surface. Five days later Alan Shepard and Edgar Mitchell walked on the moon while Stuart Roosa, a former U.S. Forest Service smoke jumper, orbited above in the command module. Packed in small containers in Roosa's personal kit were hundreds of tree seeds for a NASA/USFA joint project. Known as the "Moon Trees," the resulting seedlings were planted throughout the United States and the world.



The young sycamore "moon tree" will be nurtured and cared for by students in the LASER and Environmental clubs.



Karen Shepherd, PSHS science department chair, wore a flight suit presented to her during a NASA educator camp in 2006.

These trees stand as a tribute to astronaut Roosa and the Apollo program. American Forests, the nation's oldest conservation organization, continues the legacy of this Apollo-era program by maintaining second generation Moon Trees and making them available through its Historic Trees Program.

T-shirts designed and sold by LASER and Environmental club students bore the quote:

"We came all this way to explore the Moon, and the most important thing is that we discovered the Earth."

-William Anders

Lunar module pilot Apollo 8



Following the morning tree dedication ceremony, Kristen Erickson, NASA director of communication planning, spoke to some 1,200 students during their class periods throughout the day about NASA's mission to acquire more

scientists to protect our future. "I believe this tree can become symbolic of the Plano Senior High School experience because this school has been the seed of inspiration and imagination for thousands of students," she told students.

"Similarly, the seeds that NASA has planted in the space program have sowed nothing short of miracles and accomplishment, reaching far beyond the extraordinary technology that launched men and women into space time and again."



Kristen Erickson shared [NASA resources and Web links](#) with students.

Ms. Erickson led students through exploration exercises designed to discover areas of science that are important to them. She explained to students career choices that are in high demand, like engineering and biology, and encouraged them to pursue college degrees in science and math fields. And, she shared recent hubble photos with students.

LASER and Environmental club sponsors Karen Shepherd and Kim Wolff help lead Moon Tree dedication program

Karen Shepherd, Plano Senior High School science department chair and LASER Club sponsor, wore the flight suit that she was presented while attending a 2006 NASA International Space Camp Educator Academy in Huntsville, Alabama, when she was Texas Teacher of the Year.

Karen commented that the moon tree planting and NASA visit prompted discussions among students about the environmental movement and science careers. "Once we saw the first picture of that giant blue marble against the blue background, that changed our views of the Earth," Ms. Shepherd said of space exploration. "I reminded my students that science is an expensive endeavor, but one that is very much worth it for our safety. It is our scientific mind in the United States that keeps us ahead of the rest of the world."

Ms. Shepherd and Kim Wolff, Advanced Placement Environmental Systems teacher and Environmental Club sponsor, helped plan the tree dedication ceremony, along with Nancy Erickson, PSHS counselor and sister of NASA's Kristen Erickson.



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Ski Plano 'Gift Giving Party' (continued)

The Foundation's "Gift Giving Party" was attended by more than 75 guests at the home of Linda and Peter Raphael on October 21. Guests were asked to bring an item or gift certificate valued at \$50 or more, amassing a remarkable number of items such as restaurant gift cards, power tools, toys, home decor and much more.



Lisa Raskin, Ski Plano co-chair, and Sue Kay, Foundation board.



Foundation "Gift Giving Party" hosts Linda and Peter Raphael

The 2010 [Ski Plano](#) fundraising event is themed "Icy Hot" and will be held on January 30 at Southfork Ranch in Parker. Eight-hundred guests, including community leaders, school board members, teachers and Plano ISD administrators, will enjoy dinner, live music, an exclusive VIP reception for major underwriters and the Neiman Marcus "Avalanche" raffle.



Lloyd Jenkins, school board president, and Ralph Stow,



Beth Webb, Foundation president; Stacy Urtso, Ski Plano committee;

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**Education Foundation immediate
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**and Monica Shortino, Foundation
executive director**

Guests will also have an opportunity to bid on one-of-a-kind live auction items like a Lexus sampler, dinner for 10 catered by Central Market and a shopping spree from The Shops at Willow Bend, to name a few. Ski Plano is open to the public, and sponsorship opportunities and tickets are now available at www.pisd.edu/foundation. Proceeds from the event benefit students and teachers of Plano ISD.



**Rebecca Egleston-Caso, Ski Plano
underwriting chair, and Mary Jo
Dean, Foundation past president.**



**Jennifer Misencik, Kurt Pimentel
and Kim Gleason, Ski Plano
auction co-chair.**

About the Plano ISD Education Foundation

The Plano ISD Education Foundation is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization with the mission to generate private support for priority projects identified by Plano ISD not funded by tax dollars. The Foundation provides grants to educators, programs that support academic enrichment to Plano ISD students, emergency assistance for teachers and staff members in crisis, as well as programs aimed at recruiting and retaining quality teachers. To learn more about the Plano ISD Education Foundation or to make a donation, contact Executive Director Monica Shortino at 469-752-8091.

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New cell phone law(continued)



Texas House Bill 55 prohibits drivers from using wireless communication devices within school crossing zones. The bill requires the posting of signs to inform vehicle operators of the prohibition.

On Friday, October 30, the City of Plano announced that the required signage has been installed in all schools zones within the city. Therefore, hand-held cell phone use while driving in Plano ISD school zones is prohibited.

The new state law took effect on September 1, and with the completion of the sign installation, will be enforced in Plano. "City of Plano staff notified Plano ISD early on about their planning for signage and enforcement," said Plano ISD's Deputy

Superintendent Danny Modisette. "We appreciate the City of Plano's efforts in this and other public safety issues."

The Plano Police Department has announced that, until November 30, 2009, officers will continue their educational efforts regarding this new law by issuing warning citations and reminding drivers of the new law. On December 1, 2009, the educational grace period will cease and violators will be issued citations that carry a fine of up to \$200 for each infraction.

"As always, we appreciate endeavors to create and support safe practices in and around our schools," Mr. Modisette added. "Beyond the cell phone ban in school zones, we urge drivers to pay attention to the speed limits, school bus arrivals and departures and to pedestrian traffic."

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Achievements



ATPE Awards Andrews Elementary \$1,000 in Curbside Appeal Contest

Andrews Elementary School was presented with a \$1,000 check by Texas ATPE (Association of Texas Professional Educators), delivered by ATPE's Doug Ekart of Austin. Accepting the check was Melissa Duffey, Andrews ATPE representative, and colleagues. The school won the award in ATPE's "Supporting Your Freedom to Teach" Campus Curbside Appeal Contest. Andrews is one of three schools in the state awarded through the program for projects or items that would benefit the entire school not just ATPE members. With the winning funds, Andrews will order a much needed poster maker, walkie talkies to increase student safety for outdoor recess and staff raincoats and umbrellas to wear for arrival and dismissal duty on rainy days.

Student Services Coordinator Awarded by Plano Community Forum



James Thomas, III, student services coordinator / homeless liaison, was recently honored by the Plano Community Forum with an educator award during its 28th annual awards banquet in October. The Forum is a nonprofit community organization of African-American leaders which provides scholarships to minority graduates of Plano schools and promotes cultural enrichment and community involvement among African-

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Mr. Thomas has served 25 years in education. In his current role, he is responsible for disciplinary, security and truancy related issues. He facilitates constant communication with administrators, judges, probation officers, parents, security agencies, local police departments and other social and community organizations. He is further responsible for the district's elementary summer school programs and is the district's homeless persons liaison. In the latter role, his duties include providing resources such as food and shelter for homeless families in Plano ISD. Mr. Thomas takes an active role in multiple school and community service related organizations, and he is the proud father of three sons and the proud grandson of James Thomas, namesake of Thomas Elementary School in Plano.

National Forensic League Honors Plano Teachers

Nancy Lewis, Plano West Senior High School speech and debate teacher, has joined the select company of coaches who wear two diamonds in their NFL pins. The total of 30,000 points earned by students in her program is indication that they are provided comprehensive training in the art of communication. Ms. Lewis has attained a total of 3,473 points (1/10th of her students' points). In June, Nancy received special recognition at the Lincoln Financial Group/NFL National Tournament for her devotion in training effective leadership skills.

Cheryl Potts, Plano Senior High School speech and debate teacher, has earned significant recognition from the National Forensic League because her chapter achieved 200 degrees or more last year, placing it in the top 5% of NFL chapters nationwide and qualifying it for the NFL "200 Club." The award demonstrates the program's commitment to teaching essential life skills - communication, research, listening, writing and organization - to a large number of students.

Robinson Choir Earns National Honor Under Director's Leadership

Director Kimberley Ahrens and the Robinson Middle School Choral Department were recently notified that the Robinson 2008-09 A Cappella Women's Choir was selected as a national winner in the 2009 National Choral Honors Project. Top candidates for the award are selected national winners based on submitted tape recordings of the students. The Robinson choir emerged as the top national winner among 155 recordings from 28 states.

Rice / Jasper Choir Director Announces First Published Composition



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Notable Notes

Congratulations to the following parents and grandparents:

Fabiola Lozano, Barron Elementary School fourth grade bilingual teacher, and her husband **Juan** became the proud parents of a son **Wilson Seton** (9 lbs. 11 ozs.) on June 8.

Tina and Ken Hardison, Head Start principal and Schimelpfenig Middle School assistant principal, respectively, welcomed granddaughter **Madison Lynn** (6 lbs. 14 ozs.) on July 14. Proud parents are **Kristi and Brent Arnwine** of Melissa.

Kara Fields, Christie Elementary School second grade teacher, and her husband **Shane** proudly announced the birth of daughter **Kayden Rene** (5 lbs. 10 ozs.) on September 26.

Melanie Kelley, academic and technology services special assignments coordinator, and her husband **Ken** became the proud grandparents of **Scout Kelley** (8 lbs. 2 ozs.) on October 6. Proud parents are **Kendra and Jason Kullman** of Little Elm. Kendra is a former Plano ISD teacher.

Sympathy is extended to the following employees:

Vines High School staff members **Brenda Pinckney**, FANS manager, whose mother **Ora Reagan** died on September 26; **Nicole Dillon**, drill team director and body mechanics teacher, whose father **Bill Dillon** died on October 6; and the fine arts department whose violin tutor **Damien Pegis** died recently.

Renner Middle School's **Billie-Jean Lee**, assistant principal, whose father **William McGraw** of Arkansas died in October, and **Debra Phelps**, science teacher, whose mother **Cassie Smith** of Mississippi died on October 28.

Rice Middle School staff members **Nathan Cassidy**, eighth grade math teacher, whose mother-in-law **Loraine Goode** passed away on October 3; and **Margareta Coveney**, sixth grade math teacher, whose father **Eskil Tuneblom** died on October 5.

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notable Notes

Achievements

upcoming Events

- 11/10 Isaacs ECS Dedication
- 11/11 Veterans Day
- 11/15 American Education Week

[View full calendar](#)

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