

The Heart of HCPS



Harris County Protective Services
for Children and Adults
At the Heart of Families

Volume 14, Issue 1

Winter 2017

Guardianship Program gives warmth to clients for the holidays



Mona Cabler, left, and friend deliver blankets to the Guardianship Program.

Mona Cabler delivered her annual contribution to the HCPS Guardianship Holiday Drive. To her dismay the 2016 drive had not yet met its goal.

"When I found out there weren't enough (blankets), I became a woman on a mission," Cabler said.

Cabler rallied her fellow New Hope Church members to donate more than 200 blankets to the HCPS Guardianship Program. With that donation and a donation of more than 750 blankets from Duchesne Academy, the Guardianship sailed passed its 1,175 goal to 1,237 blankets.

The annual holiday drive for the Guardianship Program began three years ago to ensure each adult in HCPS care opens a gift during the season.

"Most of our clients do not have any family or friends and the holiday season can be a sad and lonely time," said Claudia Gonzalez, Adult Services Administrator. "We want to thank every one of our donors, whether they gave one blanket or 100," Gonzalez said.

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HCPS is moving the quarterly newsletter online. Subscribe at hcps.harriscountytexas.gov for all future HCPS news and updates.

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BEARing Gifts breaks records in 2016 drive

With the aid of dedicated volunteers and donors, BEAR... BE A Resource for CPS Kids (BEAR) overcame a never-before demand of holiday gifts for children in CPS care.

"Initially, the task of fulfilling all the wishes submitted in the BEARing Gifts system seemed impossible," said Bernadette Cashin, director of BEAR. "At the conclusion of the program, it was mind-blowing to realize that we were able to accomplish serving more children than we ever had," Cashin said.

BEAR served more than 11,000 children with the help of a record-breaking 849 volunteers.

BEARing Gifts provides children involved with the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) with presents to open during the holiday season. Each child receives three gifts from their wishlist.

After Cashin issued a call to the community to help with the influx of requests, hundreds answered the call, packing the Heights BEAR warehouse.

To learn more about BEAR, visit bearesourcehouston.org.



A record-breaking number of volunteers helped package toys for BEARing Gifts 2016.

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CPS in Harris County

Texas Department of
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A word from the Executive Director

This edition of the HCPS newsletter features our new logo for the first time, one of two major steps in our rebranding efforts to better inform the community of who we are and the help and services that are available here. The other is an updated website.

The redesign of the department's logo began a few years ago after the HCPS Board met to discuss the HCPS brand. They determined our logo would be blue, ending a years-old practice of displaying the HCPS logo in a variety of colors.

The process to decide on a new logo involved input from staff, focus groups, community partners and the board. Ultimately, we selected a logo reminiscent of the image we have known for decades. But the figures in the new logo are more representative of the overall populations we serve: children, youth and adults. The heart surrounding our "clients" reiterates our first-ever tagline: At the Heart of Families.

The board also requested a new website, which was recently launched. It provides a more modern, user-friendly and informative online presence for our department. Visitors to our website can find information on ways to help children and families by volunteering and/or donating to the Harris County Fund Board.

We encourage you to visit and share the website with others, as we aim to reach and help more families and continue to better the lives of children and adults in Harris County.

Visit our new website for events, news and program information at hcps.harriscountytx.gov.

HCPS joins Houston's 'My Brother's Keeper' initiative

HCPS is one of more than 20 local agencies pursuing a better future for young boys in Houston, and ultimately, for the community at large.

Harris County Commissioners approved in January a grant to work with the City of Houston - My Brother's Keeper program to implement an early warning system and a comprehensive approach to provide services to students and their families at various HISD school districts.

Houston accepted the presidential "My Brother's Keeper" challenge in 2014. It aims to provide additional support to boys of color in an effort to lessen educational and economic gaps. Research found black males are two times more likely to be suspended than white youth, and black and Hispanic youth are two times more likely to live in hyper-poverty communities.

HCPS will provide assessments and in-school counseling.

For more information about the initiative, visit www.mbkhouston.org.



Working together AS CPS

Harris County Protective Services works in close partnership with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in the delivery of the "Child Protective Services" program to keep children safe in Harris County. HCPS provides enhancement services for DFPS, as well as its own prevention and support services to at-risk children and families.

Foster youth celebrate another year at The HAY Center



Volunteers and staff from The HAY Center pose with Mr. and Mrs. Claus during an annual holiday party for foster youth and their children.

More than 170 foster youth, volunteers and their children enjoyed an annual holiday party at The HAY Center.

The Houston Bar Association sponsored the event along with The HAY Center. Oasis Petroleum and The HAY Center Foundation provided gifts for youth and their children.

The HAY Center, a public/private partnership under the HCPS umbrella, helps older foster youth transition to independence. The Center focuses on employment, education and housing.

"One goal at The HAY Center is to provide older foster youth with experiences other youth have, including holiday parties. Some don't have families to celebrate the holidays with, so we become that family," said Mary Green, director of The HAY Center.

To learn more about The HAY Center, visit www.haycenter.org.

DFPS unveils 2017 motto "All Hands On Deck" at staff appreciation

DFPS launched the 2017 motto "All Hands on Deck" at a Staff Appreciation event that HCPS sponsored.

The motto encourages DFPS staff to work as a team to achieve child safety and permanent living arrangements for every child in Harris County.

Regional Director CJ Broussard-White described in a New Year video the changes in Region 6A that will aid in the support of the motto, including stronger mentorships of new case workers.

The HCPS Board contributed \$1,500 to the DFPS staff appreciation event.

Staff placed their hand prints on signs that are now displayed throughout the Murworth Drive building. After the motto unveiling, staff also enjoyed music, games and food.



Texas Department of Family and Protective Services staff placed hand prints on banners promoting the agency's new "All Hands on Deck" motto.

On the Radio: HCPS speaks on KYND about Adult Services



HCPS Adults Services Program Manager Tyra Hinton (right) appeared on KYND 1520AM with radio host Richard Harper (left) and Paris Eley (not pictured) to discuss the HCPS Guardianship Program and Senior Justice Assessment Center.

Little known fact: the average person in the HCPS Guardianship Program is between 40 and 60 years old, according to Tyra Hinton, Adults Services program manager.

Hinton spoke about the Guardianship Program and its clients and other HCPS adult services during an interview on the “Life Talk Mornings” radio show at KYND 1520AM in February.

HCPS serves as the legal guardian of more than 1,100 incapacitated adults in Harris County. Hinton explained, though this includes seniors and previously homeless adults, it is not the case for every client in care.

“Our wards come from different socioeconomic backgrounds and different cultural backgrounds,” Hinton said. “We have people in our program that have been principals, that have been teachers, doctors, engineers, nurses.”

Hinton explained that clients in HCPS care sometimes have family who cannot properly care for their aging relative or who live in other states, but there are also instances in which a senior client has outlived all of their relatives.

Hinton also spoke to radio hosts Richard Harper and Paris Eley about the coming Senior Justice Assessment Center, which will help assess and coordinate services for suspected abuse victims. It is a partnership between several Houston and Harris County agencies.

To learn more about the services offered to adults, visit harriscountytexas.gov.

HCPS lobbies Texas legislators for kids



HCPS joined fellow members of the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards and other child welfare advocates from across the state to speak with state legislators during Child Protection Day in Austin.

HCPS Executive Director Joel Levine, Community Relations Director Estella Olguin and Board Members Janet Stansbury, Marilyn DeMontrond and Phil Kunetka worked from dawn to beyond dusk delivering “Be A Life Saver for Texas Kids” mugs and materials about the role HCPS plays in supporting the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Top: HCPS Board Members pose at state capital, where they spoke to legislators about the role of child welfare boards during Child Protection Day, partnering with the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards and TexProtects.

Right: Texas Rep. Gene Wu poses with materials HCPS delivered to legislators.



HCPS clients enjoy Texas Bowl



Youth On B.O.A.R.D. members pose at the 2016 Advocate Texas Bowl, as part of a group of HCPS clients who received donated tickets. Foster children and youth from the Kinder Emergency Shelter also attended the game and experienced, for the first time, generosity of strangers.

Meet your new Exec Team members: Jackie and Anna

The HCPS Executive Team has two new members, one filling a brand new position.

Anna Bell, a program improvement expert, filled the newly-created position of Director of Organizational Development and Strategic Initiatives. She began her HCPS career in the Community Youth Services program, where her duties aiding program development made a perfect fit for the Program Improvement and Technical Assistance Team (PITA) and, now, her new role.

Jacquelyn McMillon, a career social work supervisor, is the new Children’s Services Director. McMillon -- whose career has centered around abused and neglected children -- has worked with HCPS for 15 years, leading the Children’s Crisis Care Center and HCPS Integrated Clinic.



Programs Wishlist

- HAY Prom Event: The HAY Center needs donated items for older foster youth to attend prom and build memories. Deadline: March 20.

Visit haycenter.org for more information.

Happenings AT HCPS

4Cs mural boosts morale



Staff with the Children’s Crisis Care Center (4Cs) once again spent the holidays adding a mural to an area where children receive assessments.

New look for HCPS Murworth lobby

Visitors to the HCPS Murworth building have a new environment to observe while awaiting services from departments located in the building. The lobby refresh took inspiration from “A Day in the Park,” producing family-centered scenes in a vibrant array of colors.

