

# The Heart of HCPS



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## HCPS, Trini Mendenhall honored at 50th anniversary luncheon



*Trini Mendenhall, a Harris County philanthropist and supporter for child welfare, was honored at the first fundraiser luncheon benefiting HCPS.*

The Harris County Children's Protective Services Fund raised more than \$160,000 during the "At the Heart of Families" luncheon, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of HCPS and honored former board member Trini Mendenhall.

"We are grateful to those who contributed," said Marilyn DeMontrond, co-chair of the luncheon. "The funds raised will assist the most vulnerable populations in Harris County."

The luncheon was sponsored by the HCCPS Fund, a non-profit that works to benefit HCPS programs with funding not available through other sources.

"As a bonus, the luncheon was an opportunity to introduce many of our guests to the great work done at HCPS," added co-chair Ellie Sweeney.

Guests enjoyed an interview between KHOU news anchor Len Cannon and former Houston Texans player Chester Pitts and were also treated to songs from Kymora Simone, vice president of Youth On B.O.A.R.D.

To learn more about Kymora, see [page 5](#).



## Grant for HCPS Senior Justice Center accepted

The Office of the Governor's Criminal Justice Division awarded a \$383,000 Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant to HCPS for the creation of a Harris County Senior Justice Assessment Center.

"These are not just one of our most vulnerable populations, but also the most valuable. Seniors have already contributed to our community; ensuring their continued safety from others and themselves is the community's way of contributing to them," said Claudia Gonzalez, Adult Services administrator.

The Center will assess and develop interventions for seniors suspected of being abused, neglected, exploited or experiencing self-neglect.

It will be a partnership between HCPS, Adult Protective Services, Houston Police Department, Harris County District Attorney's Office, the Harris County Sheriff's Office, Harris County Attorney's Office and UT Health.

The center is in the planning phase, with Gonzalez leading the team on the development of its structure and management.

"As an organization dedicated to bettering the lives of children and adults in Harris County, we are excited to lead the charge in safeguarding this ever-growing population," said Joel Levine, executive director of HCPS.

As Baby Boomers age, experts expect exploitation to increase. The 2010 U.S. Census counted 3.8 million seniors in Texas, a number that is expected to triple by 2050.

The tentative launch date of the center is 2017.

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### Executive Director, HCPS

Joel Levine

### Harris County DFPS Regional Director

CJ Broussard-White, LLM

## A word from the Executive Director

Thank you to everyone who has extended your support for my new role as executive director of Harris County Protective Services. While I am honored to have been selected, the gravity of this responsibility is ever-present. I have spent my first two months reviewing and planning in three major areas that can increase efficiency and effectiveness of this 50-year organization: organizational structure, rebranding and culture.



- HCPS has evolved into a multi-pronged organization, offering more programs in more focus areas than when we began in 1966. This has presented opportunities to streamline some programs and functions.
- We will also focus on developing an effective culture. Through guiding principles and values, we will develop a culture that encourages department-wide staff interactions and communications.
- Over the past year, we have initiated rebranding efforts aimed at packaging an external message that communicates how HCPS serves the community. I am proud of our history supporting the mission of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), and this remains the core of HCPS. As we finalize our brand, we will highlight how our varied programs directly and indirectly support the mission of DFPS and assists the public.

I am thankful for the leadership Mr. George Ford, the former HCPS executive director, exhibited for more than 40 years and am inspired to build on it. I invite you to join us in the HCPS vision to better the lives of children and adults in Harris County.

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### CPS in Harris County

Texas Department of  
Family and  
Protective Services  
(DFPS)

Harris County  
Protective Services  
(HCPS)

## Summer Jobs enriches foster youth

For the first time in the history of The HAY Center's Summer Jobs Program, a youth worked in a restaurant setting this summer.

"She got to work in every position, front and back of the house, to determine if this was something she'd like to do for a career," said Sherri Lee, Employment and Career Development Coordinator at The HAY Center.

The youth, who worked for Longhorn Steak House, was one of more than 40 who The HAY Center placed in summer positions. The program aims to build job skills in foster youth, as well as aid them in their career path.

The HAY Center, a public/private partnership that is also a HCPS program, helps older foster youth transition to independence.



**For more information about The HAY Center, visit [haycenter.org](http://haycenter.org).**

*HCPS Executive Director Joel Levine speaks to employers and youth at a luncheon recognizing Summer Jobs participants.*



# 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.*

## HCPS sponsors luncheon recognizing foster parents

HCPS sponsored an October brunch for nearly 40 foster parents in Harris County.

Through a close partnership, the event was hosted by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and sponsored by HCPS.

Paul Shanklin, of Precinct 4, served as master of ceremony, enriching the programming with a song and encouragement that all should enjoy the morning.

The usual December event was held in October this year to relieve some of the holiday pressure and encourage family time.

HCPS also arranged for an ice cream social where 26 foster youth could mingle while their guardians enjoyed brunch.



*Award recipients pose with DFPS and HCPS staff at annual event honoring foster parents in Harris County, which was held in October this year.*

## BEARing Gifts hopeful after Back-to-School volunteer interest



*Volunteers pose with donated back-to-school supplies in the BEAR warehouse. High donor and volunteer participation makes staff hopeful the upcoming BEARing Gifts program will earn the same interest.*

Through the commitment of volunteers and donors, the BEAR Back-to-School program ensured more than 4,000 children in CPS custody began the school year with needed supplies.

"Many of the people who volunteered or gave for Back-to-School also participated in our BEARing Gifts program from last year," said Michelle Searles, volunteer coordinator for BEAR. "We're hoping this is a strong indicator of the support we will get for the upcoming BEARing Gifts program."

BEAR...BE A Resource for CPS Kids (BEAR) provides hope and help to children in the care of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services through basic necessities, school uniforms and supplies and holiday gifts.

This year, BEAR received \$30,605 in cash donations and \$15,700 in in-kind donations

**For more information about BEAR, visit [bearesourcehouston.org](http://bearesourcehouston.org).**

# HCPS retirees honored for combined 125 years of dedication

HCPS proudly recognized four retirees whose totaled years of dedicated service to HCPS surpassed 125 years.

The four retirees were:

- Debra Andrews **Training Institute Director**  
Andrews retired with 20 years of service. In her final position as Training Institute director, she headed the department revamp and helped develop a unique prevention assessment tool.

- Ross Galizio **CYS Supervisor**  
Galizio retired with 27 years of service to HCPS, finishing his tenure as a vital member of the Community Youth Services (CYS) team, which helps youth and their families through in-community crisis intervention.

- Claudia Flores **Administrative Support**  
Flores retired with 43 years of service to HCPS. She held several administrative positions over her tenure, the last with the HCPS Parent/Teen Survival program.

- Robbie Pennington **Accounting Supervisor**  
Pennington retired with 39 years of service. She was instrumental in the financial organization of the Guardianship Program, which HCPS acquired in 2003.



*Above: Retirees Claudia Flores, Debra Andrews and Ross Galizio (left to right) pose during a special board recognition of their achievements.*



*Right: Robbie Pennington, who retired from HCPS this year, poses during a luncheon funded by her colleagues to honor her.*

## Happenings AT HCPS

### 50-years celebrations continue at HCPS



*HCPS continued 50th Anniversary celebrations with tours of the Youth Services Center, where prevention programs are housed.*

### HAY Center director recognized

Mary Green, director of Transitional Services at HCPS, received the June Bucy Award for Excellence from the Texas Network of Youth Services for contributions to foster youth at The HAY Center.

For more information about The HAY Center, visit [haycenter.org](http://haycenter.org).





## Youth On B.O.A.R.D. vice president active in community, career



*Kymora Anderson, 16, is one of many youth participating in the HCPS Youth On B.O.A.R.D. program, which encourages leadership.*

The unassuming teenager, slim and soft-spoken, took the stage. Suddenly, a sweet, smooth jazz rendition of "The Children are Our Future," filled the Houston Junior League ballroom during the "At the Heart of Families Luncheon."

Kymora Anderson, 16, is that teenager. She has been part of the HCPS Youth On B.O.A.R.D. for three years, but it is just one item on her growing pre-collegiate resume.

The high school junior sings all genres. She said Youth On B.O.A.R.D. gave her the confidence to pursue and thrive in other areas of her life. She was instrumental in the youth's anti-stigma workshop and another improving youth and adult relationships.

Youth On B.O.A.R.D. encourages teenagers to have a voice. By all appearances, Anderson has found hers.

## DeMontrond receives Volunteer award



*HCPS Boardmember Marilyn DeMontrond received the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards. Pictured (from left): DFPS Commissioner Hank Whitman, HCPS Boardmember Janet Stansbury, DeMontrond, HCPS Executive Director Joel Levine.*

## New HCPS board members: Sheila Aron & Darryl King

An author and a Houston-based entrepreneur joined the HCPS board this quarter, nearly filling the seats on the 15-member board.

Sheila Aron is a parenting book author who has a passion for child abuse prevention. In October, Aron donated 100 copies of her book, "I'm Glad I'm Me: Weaving the Thread of Love From Generation to Generation" to foster parents.

Darryl King is co-founder and CEO of management consulting firm Principle Partnering Group, LLC. King serves on several local and statewide boards for organizations dedicated to outreach, business and youth.

Commissioner Steve Radack, Precinct 3, appointed Aron. Commissioner Jack Cagle, Precinct 4, appointed King.



## Programs Holiday wishlist

- **BEARing Gifts:** Gifts for abused and neglected children in DFPS care. Visit [bearesourcehouston.org](http://bearesourcehouston.org) for more details.
- **Guardianship Holiday Blanket Drive:** Warm blankets for vulnerable adults in Guardianship Program care. Visit [facebook.com/hcps1966](https://facebook.com/hcps1966) for more information.