



## Office of Neighborhood & Strategic Initiatives

### Campus Newsletter

March 2017

#### Education

The University of Houston (UH) College of Education (COE) has been partnering with Houston Independent School District (HISD) since 2015-16 to work in six high-need schools in Third Ward. Blackshear, Hartsfield, Thompson and Foster elementary schools; Cullen Middle School; and Yates High School. The goal is to raise academic achievement and student success while creating a sustainable model that can be replicated nationwide. UH students in teacher preparation, counseling and social work degree programs are assisting the schools' teachers and professional staff and learning from them.

#### Recent New Initiatives

My Home Library – This new program allows students at Blackshear elementary and the Cuney Homes public housing project to create a wish list of books for donors who can then provide a child six books for \$30.

After School Program – COE has partnered with the Cuney Homes and the YMCA to deliver after school and summer programs to children where they live. The 30 participants in the after school program were also provided bicycles from a generous supporter of the program.

CHAMP – This mathematics and stem outreach program connects Cullen Middle School students with Natural Science and Mathematics' graduate and undergraduate tutors.

College Readiness – UH Honors College students teach SAT preparation and provide mentoring to better prepare Yates High School students for college.



Jack Yates High School Mentorship Program by ENACTUS (Entrepreneurial, Action, Us)

ENACTUS is a global student organization with chapters at universities in over 35 countries around the world. Under the leadership of professor Jamie Belinne, the BAUER Enactus students established this program in the fall of 2016 as a group project under the BAUER Connecting Bauer to Business Class, GENB 3302. Fifteen juniors selected by Yates were mentored one-on-one by eight UH students who led the Yates students in SAT preparation. The high schoolers were taught better study habits and introduced to financial aid and college applications. This spring 15 more Yates juniors were added to the program. The UH contingent is comprised of students who receive course credit and volunteers who used to be in the class.

Hermann Park Rotary Club THIRD WARD MENTORING/TUTORING INITIATIVE

The initiative hopes to provide each student at Blackshear Elementary, Lockhart Elementary, Cullen Middle School and Jack Yates High School with a mentor and tutor. Over 200 individuals attended the kick-off event on February 23, 2017 at Yates High School. The program was explained and volunteers solicited. An implementation Task Force is being assembled to identify best mentoring practices and training materials. The Club leadership has asked UH to assist with the training of mentors. The goal is to provide each student from these four schools with a mentor and tutor. See <http://tinyurl.com/houstonmentors>

Third Ward Advancing Community Engagement Institute

June 2016 the COE received a \$1.3 million grant from the Department of Economic Administration in the Department of Commerce for the purpose of constructing a building that would provide space for business

development; the coordination of the Third Ward Initiative activities (workshops, training and orientation sessions); as well as an information center for materials on college admission, summer programs, and jobs. The estimated size of the building is 4000 square feet. The proposed building site brought to the UH System Board of Regents was on land owned by the UH just west of Cullen boulevard. On February 23rd, the Board deferred action on the project and requested that efforts be made to locate a more visible site. The deadline for holding the ground breaking is December 2017.

## **Economic Empowerment**

### **SURE – Stimulating Urban Renewal through Entrepreneurship Program**

SURE is an entrepreneurial boot camp program that utilizes UH Bauer students to serve as mentors and consultants to aspiring entrepreneurs. Positions in this 10-week program are coveted and difficult to secure. The Third Ward Initiative has recruited applicants recommended from neighborhood organizations. Under this process 15 recommended applicants participated last fall, and 17 are participating this spring. Of the 15 who participated last fall nine have opened or expanded their businesses. Examples include a relocation service, two bakeries, a candle shop and a women's yoga studio. Of the nine businesses, five are located in Third Ward. SURE is directed by Professor Saleha Khumawala.

### **Young Mother's Employment Pilot Program (YMEPP)**

The YMEPP is a collaborative partnership involving Project Row Houses' Young Mother's Residential Program (YMRP), the Emancipation Development Council (EEDC) and the University of Houston's Third Ward Initiative. The aim is to nurture and train these young mothers so that they qualify for jobs at the University of Houston and/or other anchor institutions. The Kinder foundation is supplying funds that will allow the 10 young mothers to be paid \$10 an hour while they train for several months. Using the partnership's collective resources and contacts the mothers will learn time management, parenting, etiquette, computer skills, financial literacy, how to dress, job interview techniques, and presentation skills. Participants will be required to engage in community service in order to instill in them the notion of giving back. Interim Dean of Technology Neil Eldin and Vice President Elwyn Lee are on the planning committee with Third Ward representatives. Various UH departments will make contributions as the program moves forward.

# Health

## Preventing and Treating Obesity in Underserved Communities



The proposed project will implement evidence-based obesity, prevention and treatment interventions in Third Ward. Led by Dr. Ezemenari Obasi and Dr. Dan O'Connor, the UH team will use an integrated approach based on collaboration with community-based partners. The ultimate objective is to create a model by which the program may be replicated at scale and sustained in communities across the greater Houston area, Texas, and the United States. The project will be launched later this spring.

## Smart Cougars

### Substance Use, Mental Health and HIV/Risk Assessment and Testing

Hispanics and African Americans account for 57 percent of the Houston metropolitan area population, but represent 82 percent of the new HIV diagnoses and 73 percent of the people living with HIV. To respond to this crisis the Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) partners with Community Services (HACS) and neighborhood organizations to stem the increasing number of minority individuals diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. The program uses graduate social work students who provide counseling and free rapid-HIV testing. The principal investigator for the grant is Dr. Luis Torres, Associate Dean for Research, GCSW, the Co-PI is Dr. Samira Ali, and the Clinical Project Coordinator is Ms. Maria Wilson. Texas Southern University (TSU) is a partner in the effort to halt the rise in HIV and has a similar program that complements the UH initiative.

## **Mental Health**

While there have been isolated workshops on mental health and suicide prevention by UH faculty, a coordinated focused effort has not been mounted. Community residents and stakeholders have repeatedly indicated that there is a pressing need to address mental health issues. The campus Third Ward Initiative health leaders, Dr. Obasi and Dr. Torres would like to establish a sustainable plan for addressing the mental health needs. This would include at a minimum: psychoeducation, prevention, and early detection training and treatment in the soon to be opened UH comprehensive community health clinic. Initial thoughts include establishing a task force of psychology, social work and nursing faculty to discuss how best to proceed.

## **Art**



## **Fellowship Program Launched**

The Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts (CotA) and Project Row Houses (PRH) Fellowship program was launched at a reception at the historic Eldorado Ballroom in the heart of Third Ward on February 16. The program involves the development of a multi-year, tiered fellowship program that builds on the social practice and community engaged art projects established by Rick Lowe, PRH founder, 2014 MacArthur Fellow and now, Adjunct Associate Professor at CotA. The program will be administered by the Center for Art and Social Engagement (CASE) directed by Sixto Wagan and Ryan Dennis, Public Art Director at PRH.



*(Wagan, Schneider, Lowe, Zou, Dennis)*

Thanks to the philanthropy of Suzanne Deal Booth, the first two fellows have been selected: Carol Zou and Carrie Schneider. Schneider is a Houston-based artist active in social engagement projects across the city, and Zou is an Austin based artist who is the project manager for Translation, an arts and cultural platform located in the immigrant and refuse neighborhood in Vickery Meadow in Dallas. At the festive reception speakers included Elwyn Lee, (UH VP), Andrew Davis (CotA Dean), Eureka Gilkey (PRH Executive Director) and Rick Lowe. Lowe noted that the eyes of the nation and parts of the world are watching what PRH is doing, and that the CoA/PRH fellowship program can be a mechanism for spreading the techniques of socially engaged art around the world.

## **Art for Health Walk**

UH proudly presents its Art for Health Walk. Each Friday at noon, from February 17 to April 21 the walk encourages improving personal health while touring the university outdoor Public Art Collection. A leader explains the significance of various installations of art during the free 30-minute tours. Third Ward community organizations have begun to publicize this opportunity.

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