

## September 8, 2021 Update

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### EDUCATION

- Principal Traci Lightfoot of **Foster Elementary** announced on July 20<sup>th</sup> that FOSTER has been accepted and verified as an official International Baccalaureate (IB) World School.
- Foster becomes only the fifteenth school in Houston ISD to offer the Primary Years Programme (PYP). PYP curriculum framework begins with the premise that students are agents of their own learning and partners in the learning process.
- This is indeed a proud moment for Foster, HISD and the greater Third Ward community for just a few years ago Foster had received Improvement Required (IR) three years in a row.
- **Blackshear welcomed its “scholars” back with its “Million Father March”**. Fathers and adult male school supporters greeted the students with warm smiles, high fives, fist bumps and words of encouragement on the first day of school August 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- **Enrollment Woes** – With TEA continuing to expand charter schools in Third Ward, public schools continue to struggle to maintain enrollment. Blackshear has two new competitors in the last two years; now, it's struggling to stay above 300 students.
- **Study of Charter School Impact** – Change Happens will begin to study this issue with assistance from a graduate student available through a CITE funded project submitted by Professor Josiah Rector.

### ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

#### SURE Program

- Outside consultants working with SURE's Dr. Khumawala, VP Lee, and the Law Center's clinic on Community Engagement have developed a federal CDFI (community development financial institution) and secured its non-profit status. A board has formed and interested bank partners have been identified.
- All classes were held virtually.
- Entrepreneurs were celebrated at a meet and greet in the Houston Room on August 14, 2021
- Admitted – **202** Graduated **141**. (Graduated means entrepreneurs that completed all the SURE program requirements)
- TW residents (4 graduated, 1 did not graduate)
- TW affiliated (ever lived in TW, 20 graduated)
- Number of businesses launched of those who graduated: 82 total. Of these, 13 businesses were launched by entrepreneurs who have lived in TW, and 2 businesses by entrepreneurs currently living in TW.

## **HEALTH**

### **The Healthy Start Program**

- Has begun virtual meetings with male fathers and potential fathers teaching them how to be supportive of their wives and girlfriends.
- **Back to School Fresh Produce Mart** – Held on Saturday, August 28<sup>th</sup>, at Trinity United Methodist Church. Lone Star Circle of Care , the FQHC on campus, is participating.
- **MacGregor Park Master Plan Update** – The CORE planning group held its 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting on August 18<sup>th</sup>. The consultants and planners have garnered the views of hundreds of people. They are now doing focus groups and surveys. They have met with TSU and UH representatives as well as Metro and other governmental bodies. Major issues include what to do about the adult baseball field and the location and amount of parking. Next CORE meeting is September 15<sup>th</sup>. The final updated plan should be revealed on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- **New Health Center** will open this fall on the first floor of the new Emancipation Center located on the corner of Elgin & Emancipation Avenue. CenterWell's primary focus will be on medical care for seniors.
- **Hurricane Ida Relief Effort** – Trinity United Methodist Church was designated as a drop off site for Hurricane Ida relief supplies. NSI assisted by spreading the word to community and faith-based organizations and identifying UH volunteers to assist with the sorting and boxing of supplies on September 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup>. Many Third Ward residents have family from Louisiana who were severely affected and/or had to evacuate to Houston.

## **ART & CULTURE**

- **Turkey Day Classic historical marker** was approved in mid-July, 2021 by the Texas Historical Commission. The marker will celebrate the Thanksgiving Day football rivalry between Jack Yates high school and Phillis Wheatley high school that took place between 1947 – 1966. Over 20,000 fans would attend. It was like a big bowl game with festivities lasting an entire week. There would be huge parades in Fifth and Third Wards with elaborate floats. One year the homecoming queen for Wheatley arrived at half time in a helicopter. The game was played in Jeppesen stadium, the site of the current TDECU stadium. That land was purchased by UH in 1970, a transaction that contributed to the distrust of UH for many years. The site was hallowed ground for so many years and the fact that UH will help to preserve that history is meaningful.

The invoice for the marker has been paid. Now the Commission staff will begin to draft the marker inscription, though one was suggested in the application. Due to the current backlog, it will take almost year to create the actual marker giving us plenty of time to decide how to announce and whom to invite to an unveiling during the fall of 2022.

- **SOA Camp** –The second year of the School of Art Community Artist Mentorship Program completed this spring. Six practicing artists mentored BIPOC UH students. The artists included well-known local artists such as GONZO247 and Jamal Cyrus. By embedding the students in the daily workings of practicing artists/mentors the students become introduced to professional networks that will benefit students post-graduation. The SoA Camp is funded thus by the Cougar Initiative to Engage (CITE) program. CITE is UH's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to increase the number of high impact co-

curricular learning activities).

- **Blaffer Gallery Programs**
- July 21, 2021, 6:00-8:00 p.m., a conversation took place with three African American creative artists: Jamal Cyrus, Jamal Williams, and DJ Flash Gordon Parks. The talk focused on the influence of black religious expression on American popular culture.
- [JAMAL CYRUS \*The End of My Beginning\* exhibit](#) in the main first floor gallery space is on view through September 19, 2021. Cyrus is a local African American artist.
- **A Third Ward Community Roundtable** was hosted by the College of Architecture DEI Action Task Force on July 21<sup>st</sup>. The intent was to reinforce connections to Third Ward and give students and faculty opportunities to work with the community on projects that might impact Third Ward. Leaders of the Mayor's Third Ward Complete Communities Action Plan, and Super Neighborhood 67 spoke. The event was the first of many future roundtables supporting collaborations between Third Ward organizations and the College of Architecture.

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