



ONE TO ONE

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A Report to the Residents of Harris County Precinct One ... from Commissioner El Franco Lee

Chess adds mental move to 2015 Summer Games



Ryan Aherne, left, and Carlon McClerkin face off in chess at the Final Event. Right photo, Lillian Fowler, 8, competes in hopscotch.

While about 2,300 children were hopping, jumping, throwing and kicking at NRG Arena, Tivis Hall, Carlon McClerkin and about 70 other youth were sitting face to face in a quiet, secluded area engaged in fierce competition. Their game of choice at the 29th Annual Harris County Street Olympics' Final Event: chess.

This year, Street Olympic officials added chess as a demonstration sport to the array of "street games" such as kickball, hopscotch, jacks and Hula Hoop. After the event, they decided the board game will be a permanent fixture.

Many of the chess players were elated.

"I think it's very good that we have it in the Street Olym-

pics because people can have the ability to go into a sport where they can actually think rather than just doing things that are physical," said Tivis, a 15-year-old who won the advanced-players competition for the Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club. "So now those who are not physically able can get a mental advantage."

Carlon, the second-place finisher in that division who competes for the Harris County Aquatics Program, agrees. "They should make it bigger," he said.

Held Aug. 7, the Final Event is the culmination of the Street Olympics' Summer Games, which are conducted at 90 youth sites operated by 45 participating agencies, including

Houston Parks and Recreation Department community centers, churches, YMCAs and other summer youth programs. Youth at each site compete against each other for the opportunity to be invited to the Final Event, where the top-three finishers in each category receive first-, second- and third-place medals.

"Be safe, be strong and be your best in whatever activity you participate and bring home the gold," Harris County Commissioner El Franco Lee, the Street Olympics founder, told Final Event contestants.

Then it was on to the competition and the Bright Futures Fair, an educational opportunity for the young athletes to learn more about health, safety and

careers from 115 vendors who manned information booths.

After stepping off the winners' podium, Hyacinth Davenport, 15, attributed her victory in football pass accuracy to growing up with her brothers. "I learned to throw from them," she said. "I have four brothers and a father, so I'm the only girl."

Unlike Hyacinth, the majority of the youth who participated in the Summer Games didn't attend the Final Event. Nevertheless, those who didn't make it did enjoy educational and recreational activities this summer.

Other summer activities included:

•3-on-3 Basketball, which cul-

(See Summer Games on page 2)



Precinct One

Commissioner El Franco Lee

Comments on current and future activities

Hurricane Preparedness

Hurricane season is upon us again at least until November. Safety and preparation are the best ways to save lives and reduce property damage. Please take advantage of the information provided by several agencies, including the National Hurricane Center's website at nhc.noaa.gov and the Harris County Flood Control District's site at hcfcd.org. If you plan on riding out a storm, remember to get necessary supplies in advance such as gasoline for your vehicle, food, water, flashlights, batteries and a battery-operated radio. For those who prefer evacuation, please plan your routes and leave early to avoid traffic jams.

Flood Control Project

The Flood Control District is expected to start construction in September on two stormwater detention basins in the Greens Bayou watershed. Commissioners Court has awarded a \$63.7 million contract to Ceres Environmental Services Inc. to build the two basins. They are: Kuykendahl Basin, a 300-acre site west of Kuykendahl Road and Ella Boulevard in north Harris County; and Glen Forest Basin, a 160-acre site near Greens Road and Interstate 45. The combined sites will require the excavation and removal of more than 5.7 million cubic yards of soil. The sites will store more than 1,633 million gallons of water. When completed in three years, the two

basins will reduce flooding risks for more than 1,100 structures along Green Bayou. In February, the Federal Emergency Management Agency authorized Phase II funding under the Hurricane Ike Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and awarded \$39.2 million for construction.

Hardy Toll Road

The Harris County Toll Road Authority plans to convert the Hardy Toll Road to an all-electronic (cashless) payment system starting in summer 2016. Commuters will need an EZ TAG or some other type of electronic toll tag to use the Hardy. EZ TAG rate is always less expensive than cash payments.

Summer Games provides youth recreation and education

(Summer Games from page 1)

minated with a Championship Tournament July 22-23 at Fonde Recreation Center

- Learn-to-Swim lessons that also included the July 31 Splashdown, a friendly, competitive swim meet
- Day-long trip to Discovery Camp at Deussen and Challenger Seven Memorial parks to learn about nature and the environment

By far, the Final Event is the biggest and most popular Summer Games' event. Street Olympics sends its representatives to the agencies to teach youth how to compete and to help them practice for the events, which include softball throw, basketball free throw, shuttle relay, jump rope and basketball dribble.

In nearly three decades, the

Summer Games has helped thousands of youth during the vulnerable summer months. In addition to the Summer Games, the Street Olympics has year-round programs that reach about 10,000 youth, teens and young adults annually. The four core components are:

- The **Summer Games** that includes **3-on-3 Basketball**, **Final Event** and **Bright Futures Fair**.
- The **Discovery Camp/Traveling Naturalist Program** that provides a fun and exciting way to learn about nature and the environment.
- The **Harris County Aquatics Program** offers Learn-to-Swim sessions and competitive swimming.
- The **Northeast Adolescent Program** – a partnership with Baylor College of Medicine, Houston and Aldine school



Torchbearers Kaelyn Small, 9, left, and Timothy Giddens, 6, watch Daniel Torrez, 13, light the Olympic flame at the Final Event.

districts, and the Harris Health age pregnancy and other health and social issues. for teens and young adults to address infant mortality, teen-

April in Paris brings spring colors to Kashmere Gardens

Earline Davis-Green is a firm believer that clothes make a woman. And so does the hat.

"This hat really makes me feel good," Davis-Green said of her award-winning hat she adorned at this year's April in Paris Spring Tea, "because it makes me look good."

She wasn't alone. The hat contest judges at the Seniors Program's annual event on April 29 felt the pink, sequin hat with a veil hanging in the back was lovely enough to award it the No. 1 headwear at April in Paris. It beat out some stiff competition, considering many of the seniors appear to have given you a sneak preview to the Kentucky Derby hat show.



Earline Davis-Green, right, won the best hat contest at April in Paris. Thelma Spencer, center, was second and Linda Riggs was third.

"We probably should have had the entire parking lot covered with red carpet because you are wearing red-carpet-level attire," Harris County Commissioner El Franco Lee said.

The 300 men and women were stylishly dressed in their

spring fashions. They socialized with friends, listened (some even danced) to a band from the Imani School, and enjoyed poetry written and recited by Precinct One's Bruce Austin. They also sipped tea while enjoying a tasty lunch.

"Oh, I love it," said Artie

Pipkin. "I live for it. I would say (I enjoyed) the socializing and getting a chance to see all the women come out in their Sunday best."

Robert McIntosh, who attended the event with his wife, SanJuana Mendez, said he loves the "fellowship and to get to see old friends I haven't seen in a while." Oh, he added, the lunch, too.

Along with Davis-Green, the other winners in the hat contest were Thelma Spencer (second place) and Linda Riggs (third).

The event also featured a teacup contest. The winners were Marjorie Burford (first), Lizzie Sweat (second) and Arnetta Sessor (third).

Precinct One Construction Projects

Three Construction Projects

Harris County Commissioners Court has given approval to start design phases on three structures in Precinct One – an 11,400-square-foot community center at **Barbara Jordan Park**, a 13,000-square-foot community service center at the **Kashmere Annex** and a temperature-controlled enclosure for the John Biggers' mural at **Christia V. Adair Park**.

At Jordan Park, the building will include a large, subdividable meeting room, classrooms, exercise room, lobby and office space. The existing community center will remain in place until the new building

is open for use. The old structure then will be demolished. Also, additional parking spaces will be added.

The Kashmere Annex building will provide additional space for programs at the location. The existing 5,000-square-foot building will be renovated to house a clinic and social services programs, both of which will be operated under contract. Also, additional parking will be provided.

At Adair Park, the structure will be about 1,400 square feet, about the same size as the open-air pavilion that houses the "Christia V. Adair" mural that depicts the life of the Houston educator and civil rights activ-

ist. The mural, which has been damaged by weather, is being restored under a separate contract. It's permanently mounted on a raised, concrete curb and is secured to the existing building with metal channels.

Lockwood Drive

Construction is under way to widen **Lockwood Drive** from North Lake Houston Parkway to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The work along the 2-mile stretch in northeast Harris County includes improving the existing two-lane asphalt roadway to a four-lane concrete divided street with traffic signal upgrades.

Beamer Road

Workers have started construction to improve a 1.3-mile section of **Beamer Road** between Tall Ships and West Bay Area Boulevard to a four-lane, concrete, divided roadway with traffic signal upgrades, storm sewer and drainage improvements.

T.C. Jester Boulevard

Work has started to extend **T.C. Jester Boulevard** from Spears Road to FM 1960. The 1.25-mile addition will be a four-lane concrete street with curb, gutter and signal improvements.

Local Olympians use weights to lift YET students' desire to succeed in life

Aaron Madrigal, 7, braced himself as he peered down at the massive-looking weights he was asked to lift on Olympic Day at the Finnigan Youth Education Town (YET) gym. But he wasn't alone in this seemingly difficult task.

Standing in front of him was Breanne Havard and squatted to his left was Dominic Stolle, both members of Team Houston Olympic Weightlifting. Bending his knees, the second-grader grabbed the bar and lifted up with the weights, which were only a mock version that wasn't heavy.

"It was fun," Aaron said. "I learned about lifting stuff and having fun doing gymnastics."

Aaron and about 150 other YET participants attended a



Aaron Madrigal, 7, left, gets some weightlifting tips from Breanne Havard and Dominic Stolle, both members of Team Houston Olympic Weightlifting, on Olympic Day June 23 at Finnigan Youth Education Town.

weightlifting clinic and met eight local Olympians, including Mark Henry, a U.S. National powerlifting champion who is now a professional wrestler in the World Wrestling Entertainment.

Olympic Day is celebrated annually on June 23 to teach children the values of the Olympic movement.

The event also promoted Houston as the 2015 site for the International Weightlifting Fed-

eration World Weightlifting Championships Nov. 20-28 at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Some weights from the competition will be donated to the YET.

Jason Watson, 12, said he learned the proper techniques for push press and squats.

"It's important because it gets your muscles up ... so you can be able to lift stuff," said Jason, who wants to increase his strength for his basketball game.

Kennede Thomas, 12, said she learned a valuable lesson that she will apply to her school work. "If you want to be successful in life, you have to try hard and focus," she said.

Precinct One takes over as Finnigan YET's sole operator

The Finnigan Youth Education Town is now solely operated by Harris County Precinct One, whose staff will implement Commissioner El Franco Lee's vision of education, recreation and wellness services for the children.

The Precinct One staff has taken over the duties that were performed by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston. The YET, along with the Finnigan Park Community Center, will provide a variety of programs for youth and seniors in the area.

"Precinct One employees

and I are excited about the opportunity to provide services that will have a tremendous impact on the lives of youth," Lee said. "The programs will mirror the first-class youth services we have at other Precinct One community centers."

The 16,500-square-foot YET at 4900 Providence, which opened in 2004, was constructed with a \$1 million donation from the National Football League after the Super Bowl in Houston. Over the years, it was sponsored by Precinct One, NFL Charities and operated by the Boys & Girls Clubs.



The Finnigan Youth Education Town, which offers educational and recreational programs for Fifth Ward-area youth, is now being operated solely by Harris County Precinct One.

Now, the after-school and summer programs will be pro-

vided free to the youth ages 7 through 17 in the Fifth Ward.

Hester House music program plays role in children's academics

At age 10, Yonatan Barce-nas knows what career he wants to pursue – electrical engineering. To get there, he's traveling the rhythmic route of music, which he studies at the Julia C. Hester House.

"Actually, yes (it helps me in my studies)," he confirmed after a performance. "That calms me."

Yonatan and about 30 other Hester House students participate in the music program presented by Touch of Keys, which is directed by Eric Wright. It's sponsored by the nonprofit Precinct One/McCarty Road Landfill Community Service Corp.

Classes are held at the Hester House from 4:45 p.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesdays and Fridays in two age groups – 4-7 and 8-12. During summer months, the classes are from 10 a.m. to noon Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

It teaches music apprecia-



Eric Wright with Touch of Keys directs the youth choir at the Julia C. Hester House Spring Showcase.

tion, vocals, keyboards, drums and performance strategies.

At a May 6 Spring Showcase, the students received on-stage-training to show off their performance strategies. They had individual piano recitals as well as group drumming and singing.

"I love it," Yonatan said after the performance. "I love the rhythm, the beat and all kind of stuff. I like to sing. I like to express myself of who I am."

The program's goals are to teach fundamentals of music, discipline, self-management and art enrichment.

Daisy A. Stiner, Hester House's interim executive director, said several studies show that music improves a child's ability to learn in non-musical subjects.

"Listening and making music tend to make one happy – it's mood and mind altering," Stiner said. "It enhances their state of wellbeing – that in and of itself is worth all of the time

and money invested to make it happen."

Jada Olagoke, 8, whose mother, Diamond Jackson, attended the performance, said her favorite instrument is the guitar.

"I love it," Jada said. "I love singing."

Said Jackson: "It's fantastic. I'm very excited that she's able to do something musically because she enjoys listening to music and stuff like that at home."

Lincoln Park officials recognize students in after-school program

When the Lincoln Park Community Center after-school program's awards ceremony concluded, Kamdynne Brinson, 6, paused briefly to entertain the question of why she likes the program. Without a word, she dashed off to dance with her friends after hearing one of her favorite songs.

Her actions, in essence, answered the question before she did verbally.

"(I like it) because they have

you do a lot of exercises – running and playing and doing all kinds of programs. And I like dancing," Kamdynne said later.

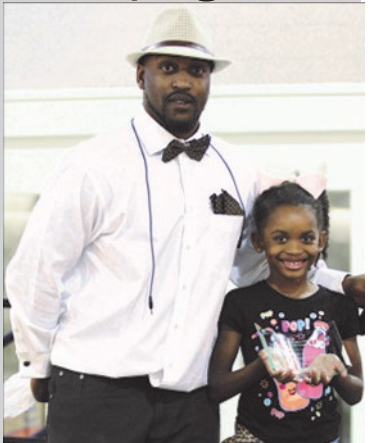
The May 6 awards ceremony, complete with a meal for children and parents, marked the end of the after-school program and acknowledged the accomplishments of the 45 students who attended from 3-6 p.m. on weekdays. The youth also put on a fashion show and performed dance routines.

The program is operated by

Precinct One and City of Houston staff. The children, ages 6 through 13, participate in recreation, sports, Learn-to-Swim and homework assistance, among other activities.

The site also has a Summer Enrichment Program that children attend during the weekdays.

"It's amazing because they never want to leave. If it's something going on and they can't come here, their soul is crushed," said LaCandra Gainous, Kamdynne's mother.



Kedrick Kelley, left, presents Kamdynne Brinson, 6, with the Lincoln Park Award for good grades and behavior.

Earth Day teaches 103 youth how to conserve the planet



Cody Griffin, left, a Quest Early College High School student, shows a rabbit to children from Haverstock Hills Apartments at the Earth Day Celebration on April 18 at Alexander Deussen Park.

Nine-year-old Renard Smith gets to the point when describing the importance of Earth Day.

“So we can live on it (Earth),” the third-grader said

fun activities to teach 103 children about recycling, reducing and re-using products to cut pollution and conserve the environment. They also discussed how long it takes discarded items to decompose.

“If we don’t (conserve), we won’t have anywhere to sleep,” said Renard, who participates in the Rainbow Housing Assistance Corp.’s youth program at Haverstock Hills Apartments. “The air might mess up.”

The students, divided into groups, rotated between four activities that included: a presentation about animal habitats that featured live critters; a room filled with exhibitors from the Eddie V. Gray Wetland Center, Harris County

Flood Control District, East Texas Herpetology Society and the Downtown Aquarium; an outdoor session on recycling; and another on decomposition.

Three of the activity areas were designed and presented by the Precinct One Environmental Education Program’s Service Learning schools’ students: six from M.C. Williams Middle School and five from Quest Early College High School.

The children were from youth programs at Champion Townhomes on the Green, the Julia C. Hester House, the Finnigan Youth Education Town and Lincoln Park. Also, there were some walk-ins.

Easter Egg hunts attract hundreds to two parks in Precinct One

Scott Parrish and his daughter, Emily, 4, waited patiently on a soccer field sideline with nothing to do but gaze at the colorful, plastic eggs in anticipation of the signal to start the Easter Egg Hunt.

While waiting, Emily and hundreds of other anxious children got a surprise visit from the Easter bunny, who brought smiles to their faces at El Franco Lee (EFL) Park on March 28.

Since there was no one to take the photo of the father-daughter duo, they posed with the white bunny while Dad

took a selfie at the annual event sponsored by Harris County Commissioner El Franco Lee, Justice of the Peace Jo Ann Delgado and Constable Chris Diaz.

Emily didn’t have much luck getting her hands on any eggs once the hunt began. But they still enjoyed the outing.

“We had a good time,” the father said moments before volunteers handed eggs to Emily and other children who weren’t so fortunate.

The South Belt-area event also included free snow cones, soft drinks

and hotdogs. Earlier in the day, a similar hunt was held at Judson Robinson Sr. Park in Pleasantville.

At each park, the eggs were placed in four areas that separated the children by age group. Each area had a golden egg, which allowed the children who found them to get Easter baskets.

At EFL Park in the South Belt community, the winners were Natalie Villagomez, 7, Alayna Rodriguez, 4, Abigail Ortiz, 11, and Raymond Collins, 2.

“I actually found it,” Abigail exclaimed as she

was leaving the park with her family. “I had fun looking for the eggs.”

The winners at Robinson Park were Edgar Cantera, 7, Stephania

Cantera, 4, Jamier Juarez, 2, and Trevonne Chenier, 10.

“I’m going to play with the basketball and eat all the candy,” Stephania said.



Scott Parrish and his daughter, Emily, 4, take a selfie with the bunny at the annual Easter Egg Hunt held at El Franco Lee Park.

Public input sought for park amenities at Homestead basin

Hunting Bayou Suggestions

Please let Precinct One know what amenities you'd like to have at the Homestead Stormwater Detention Basin such as trails, exercise stations, fishing pond, dog park and parking.

Email your ideas to: huntingbayousuggestions@cp1.hctx.net

For seven years, Harris County Flood Control District contractors have been constructing a 75-acre detention basin to help relieve flooding along Hunting Bayou. Phase I was completed in July 2009 and Phase II is expected to be completed later this year.

Although incomplete, the Homestead Stormwater Detention Basin near Homestead and the North Loop did help prevent major flooding during the May 25-26 heavy rains, which dropped 4-6 inches in the Kashmere Gardens area.

"I'm convinced that it did create an overall improvement," said Bill White, president of the Northeast Concerned Citizens Civic League. White said there was no major flooding of homes and streets.

The basin is functioning with more than 647,000 cubic yards of soil excavated from the site. It stored more than 564 acre feet, or 184 million gallons, of stormwater during the Memorial Day storms that flooded other Houston areas. When complete, the site will store more than 1,000 acre feet of stormwater.

The Flood Control District



Members of the Northeast Concerned Citizens Civic League and the Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhood Council No. 52 stand near the 75-acre Homestead Stormwater Detention Basin that's designed to provide flood relief for their community.



Bill White, president of the Northeast Concerned Citizens Civic League, surveys the Homestead Stormwater Detention Basin that he says prevented major flooding during the Memorial Day storms.

uses basins to temporarily store large amounts of water to help reduce peak stormwater runoff that enters the bayou systems from roads, parking lots, residential neighborhoods, commercial areas and industrial sites. The Homestead basin is located northeast of the North Loop and Homestead Road just north of Hunting Bayou and west of the Union Pacific Railroad Co.'s Settegast Railroad.

El Franco Lee, Commissioner

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PRECINCT ONE SITES and PHONE NUMBERS

REGIONAL OFFICES

El Rio Service Center	713.991.6881
Downtown Office	713.755.6111
El Camino Office Annex	713.741.1096
Kashmere Office "Annex 36"	713.675.0004
Leland Office "Annex 31"	713.697.1104
Neartown Office "Annex 1"	713.755.9300
Hardy Service Center	281.820.5151

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Christia Adair Community Center	713.991.6881
Tom Bass Community Center	713-733.3717
Challenger Seven Learning Center	281.332.5157
Deussen Seniors Center	281.454.4108
EFL Community Center	281.464.9708
Finnigan Community Center	713.678.7385
Hardy Seniors Center	281.260.6772
Barbara Jordan Community Center	281.591.6951
Kashmere Office "Annex 36"	713-675.0004
Lincoln Park Community Center	281.445.1617
YET Center @ Finnigan Park	713.676.0519

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Aquatics Program	713.748.7333
Discovery Camp Program	281.332.5157
Northeast Adolescent Program	713.673.1655
Seniors Program	713-733.3717
Street Olympics Summer Games	713.741.0851

