CONNECTIONS SPRING 2018

HISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION AWARDS 24 TEACHING GRANTS

A

The musicians of Hillsboro Junior High School (HJHS) hit a high note this year, with a record 12 students earning an invitation to perform with the All-Region Band.

The concert, which was held in Groesbeck on January 20, featured around 700 students from 29 schools. HJHS Band Director Glenn Doyle said previously the most instrumentallists Hillsboro ISD sent to this event was three.

“I’m so blessed to have great and talented kids to work with,” Doyle said. “This is the third consecutive year of first-division ratings for us, and we’re working toward number four.”

Just down the hall, HJHS’s thespians cheered their second-place win at the UIL District One-Act Play competition in January. Facing seven other schools, these bright actors put on a relatable retelling of the Cinderella story that underscores the importance of self-confidence and perseverance.

Led by theater arts teacher Hannah Kellar, the troupe brought home awards for Best Actress (Maddison Bills), All-Star Cast (Jackson Steele), Honorable Mention All-Star Cast (Herminio Hernandez, Jr.), and All-Star Crew (Annette Castaneda).

Kellar had high praise for the entire crew, including Maddison Bills as The Ash Girl.

“She portrayed a 17-year-old who goes through a complex emotional transition. It was a very mature performance,” said Kellar.

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FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY

Learning Outside the iPad
• Kandy Faris, Kahl McClain Tucker and Felipe Barragan

HILLSBORO ELEMENTARY

Full STEAM Ahead!
• Margie Jan Briggs, Leann Castillo, Cindy Marwhardt and Cassandria Sexton
Along Came a Spider
• Margie Jan Briggs
Do the Hokki Pukey
• Jan Cole
Learning While You Wiggle and Wobble
• Sherry Wakerland
Sail the C’s with Cubelets: Compare, Contrast, Create, and Code
• Christine Robinson
Learning with Osmo
• Taylor Sanders
Creating Gems Through STEM
• Cristal Compan and Lindsay Higgins

HILLSBORO JUNIOR HIGH

Headsets for Hillsboro
• Hannah Kellar and Glenn Doyle
Brain Building Science Breakouts
• Crystal Bukinikamp and Tammy Fry
SiGM MindWing for HJH EagleWings
• Laura Moulder, Janissa Ivy and SPED Department
Photo/Film Say Cheese!
• Katherine Poley
Eagletots: The Next Phase
• Tammy Fry and Sara Wisley
Learning and Moving
• Laura Moulder
Keeping In Tune With The Beat
• Glenn Doyle and Rick Kline

HILLSBORO HIGH

“Lettuce” Learn with Hydroponics Gardening
• Jennifer Kolar
Earth and the Final Frontier
• Vicki Dobbs
From the Stone Age to the 21st Century: Math that Matters
• Molly Hall, Melissa Springfield, Dana Marshall and Blanca Campos
All Creatures Great and Small
• Jennifer Faulkner
Eagles of the Round Table
• Michael Chirhart
Blurred Reality
• Lynnea Sparks and Taylor Sullivan

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2017–2018 GRANT RECIPIENTS!
Candids for Local State Representative and Lt. Governor came to speak to voters on February 14. The forum started with the candidates speaking to seniors at Hilsboro High School (HISD) and then moving to Historic City Hall to have a public session with staff of Hillsboro ISD, and community members.

“Meeting state and local candidates at the forum was a unique privilege that I was honored to be a part of,” senior Karston Varejig said. “This amazing experience allowed me to hear about what each candidate plans to do for our state and community. Hearing about what each candidate plans to accomplish for the future of public education was very important to me since I aspire to become a music educator. The forum allowed me to ask a question and answer session with topics including Defending Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), property taxes, and school vouchers.

“I must say, the forum was provoking and informative. What I took away from the candidates for Local State Representative and Lt. Governor came came came to the same name, came to visit Hillsboro Elementary School (HES) on January 22. His owner, Texas educator-turned-author Hanson said it wouldn’t have been possible for him to serve as sponsors for the Destination Imagination (DI) tournament. Parents volunteer to be team managers but the creativity, ideas, props, costumes and more are all up to the kids. Parent Coaches Help DI Soar.

“DI is challenging on so many levels and STEM principles are a big part of the future...so being able to introduce kids as early as possible only benefits them.” Lobato said.

For parents like Erin Lobato, helping out with DI is something she’s been doing for years, and something she says is crucial for the student teams to be successful at the tournament. Parents volunteer to be team managers but the creativity, ideas, props, costumes and more are all up to the kids. My favorite part about being a team manager is that I get to truly be involved in the creative process with my children and help challenge them. My involvement with DI has helped me learn how to help my child know how to figure out problems because sometimes there can be a multitude of solutions,” Lobato said.

“DI is challenging on so many levels and STEM principles are a big part of the future...so being able to introduce kids as early as possible only benefits them.” Lobato said.

Students from across the district participated in a DI tournament in Abilene on February 24. From Hillsboro Junior High, teams Super 7 and Musical Creatures won 3rd place and 5th place, respectively. From Hilsboro Intermediate, teams Dino-Mite and Team Divin won 4th and 5th place, respectively.

BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE BUILD US ‘POCKET PARK’

Every other year, Leadership Hillsboro takes on one big project to beautify the city. This year, they decided to take on the corner lot by Franklin Elementary School (FES). The lot, which is a high traffic area, most recently housed a senior citizen center; however, it has been sitting vacant for years. Leadership Hillsboro has proposed that the corner be turned into a ‘pocket park’ for families and the community to enjoy. The area will be decorated with grass, indigenous wildflowers, and plans to encourage Monarch butterflies to stop in Hillsboro on their migration path.

“The project revitalizes the area and creates a tranquil space for students and families to enjoy.” Tiffany Oliver, Pre-K Coordinator and Daycare Director at FES, said.

The project will cost $10,250 and several grants have been awarded to help offset the cost. The park is projected to be finished on June 15th.

GRADE SCHOOLERS GREET CELEBRITY GOAT GUEST

Maybe it’s not uncommon to see farm animals during Hill County Fair Week. But how often do you meet a celebrity goat? Cabo, the Goat, the subject of a book by the same name came to visit Hillsboro Elementary School (HES) on January 22. His owner, Texas educator-turned-author Arthur Mann, Hillsboro Economic Development Corporation administrator, said, “Hillsboro residents and the seniors at the high school were very fortunate to be able to hear from all four of the candidates in the race for the District 8 state representative race and two of the candidates for lieutenant governor as the start of primary early voting approaches.”

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HES Parents Participate in Literacy Night

More than 185 Hillsboro Elementary School (HES) students and parents in kindergarten through 2nd grade recently attended the school’s first-ever Family Literacy Night. Activities centered on different aspects of literacy including phonics, sight words and comprehension. Teachers also showcased computer reading programs such as Lexia and Accelerated Reader.

HES reading teacher Kimberly Bogue said literacy night is a hands-on way to involve parents in their child’s education.

"Parents are our students’ first teachers," she said. "It’s our goal to communicate with each parent and equip them with as many literacy resources as possible.”

WORK AS PLAY: Second Grade STEM Activities Blur the Line

So far this year, Hillsboro Elementary School (HES) 2nd graders have been launching foam air rockets into the air; building plastic bridges out of K'Nex pieces, and making paper chairs.

"It looks like play if you don’t know what you’re looking at," cautioned HES 2nd grade teacher Margie “Jan” Briggs.

It’s actually math, physics and engineering lessons cleverly hidden inside the daily 30-minute Eagle Soar period. It’s part of the school district’s ongoing effort to boost student proficiency in STEM — the fields of science, technology, engineering and math — so they will be prepared to enter an increasingly global and knowledge-based economy.

HES Principal Robin Ralston said these lessons are appropriate at this age because these students are moving to intermediate school next year where they will have more independence as well as responsibility.

"After graduation, they’ll get jobs that haven’t even been created yet," Ralston pointed out.

"Children need to learn to adapt and be solution-focused now.”

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"We gain common sense through our experiences,” Briggs explained. “You can’t teach it; there are no lesson plans for that.”

"After graduation, they’ll get jobs that haven’t even been created yet,” HES Principal Robin Ralston pointed out.

"Children need to learn to adapt and be solution-focused now.”

Support for the evening came from many different sources. Hillsboro High School student council members dressed as book characters and Hillsboro ISD (HISD) administrators read stories. A retired teacher shared folktales through storytelling with the participants. The Hillsboro City Library and Sonic partnered with Hillsboro Elementary to help make the event a success.

"Literacy night provided parents with both specific literacy skills and activities to use at home," said HES Librarian Christine Robinson. "Any help parents can give their children to become solid readers will contribute to their overall success in school.”

"Children need to learn to adapt and be solution-focused now.”

In West, TX. Our “Iron Eagles” fought back from an early deficit to tie the game at 69 at the end of regulation, but the district-leading Connally Cadets (ranked 16th in Texas) prevailed in overtime, 75-80. While that wasn’t the result they were looking for, making it to that game was a victory in itself. The last time an HHS team reached regionals was in 1985.

Coach Hewitt feels confident that, despite the loss of the seniors, this team is only beginning to ascend. High scorer Jadarius Baxter will return next season to lead the team forward and Hewitt believes they’ll just get better.

"Expectations are going to be high. The younger guys have tasted success and now they’re hungry for it.”

BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM RISES ABOVE THE RIM

"Iron Sharpens Iron” — The motto of the 2018 Hillsboro High School (HHS) boys basketball team

"They are there for each other, they push each other and they’re like brothers," Coach Courtney Hewitt reported.

That attitude took them further than any HHS basketball team has gone in 33 years.

Led by seniors D'Iversen Dowell, Courtney Hewitt, Jr. and Jamal Leng, this team proved their mettle as the first to advance out of round one of district playoffs since 2001, swatting down the Athens Hornets (ranked 24th in Texas) 92-85 in overtime. They took their game of control to the next level, stifling the Caldwell Hornets 75-59 to win the area championship.

The subsequent regional quarterfinals game against Connally High School was a battle royale in front of a standing room only crowd in West, TX. Our “Iron Eagles” fought back from an early deficit to tie the game at 69 at the end of regulation, but the district-leading Connally Cadets (ranked 16th in Texas) prevailed in overtime, 75-80. While that wasn’t the result they were looking for, making it to that game was a victory in itself. The last time an HHS team reached regionals was in 1985.

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Two University of Oklahoma Orange Bowl appearances, Distinbulished Military Graduate, U.S. Army Ranger School, 101st Airborne Division, 27-year Army officer...

"And it all started with the football scholarship I earned playing at Hillbros," recalled Mickey Jackson, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret). "I'd never even left the state of Texas before."

Jackson (56), who was inducted into the Hillsboro Athletic Hall of Fame (HOF) last November 18, said his life might have been radically different if not for the opportunity sports provided him.

"I was shopping cotton, delivering bread, and hauling hay for two cents a bale during the summer," he recalled.

But the multi-sport, four-year letterman worked hard on the field and off, earning himself a future he never would have dreamed possible. It is that work ethic that is common to all athletes inducted into the Hillsboro Hall of Fame; it's the reason they reach their goals.

Hillsboro Elementary School Principal Robin Ralston — who, at the time, was a first-year assistant coach — witnessed that same work ethic from the members of the 1984–85 District and Bi-District championship high school girls basketball team.

"We had to kick them out of the gym after practice," Ralston laughed. "They were hustlers and they held each other accountable."

Team captain DeShun Williams said her squad was tight from start to finish, find camaraderie and not dwell on her loss. She was able to pour herself into the things she loved.

"I was a soccer player, a basketball player, and a volleyball player," she said. "I was able to use my emotions to help me.

A 13-year-old who moved to Hillsboro in junior high after her mom passed away, Williams found basketball and other activities that held her accountable.

"I never had a mom to tell me what to do, just that I had to work hard."

1951 Peabody High School Football Team
State Finalists

1984-1985 Lady Eagle Basketball Team
District 15-3A Champions
Bi-District Champions
Record 20-8

Derel Walker, ’09
Hillsboro High School – Super Center
Honorable Mention
Trinity Valley Community College – 2nd Team
All-SWJC Football Conference 2011, Citizens Bank Bowl Offensive MVP 2011
Texas A&M University 2012-2014
Tennessee Titans (NFL) 2014
Omaha Mammoths (EFHL) 2015
Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL) 2017

Mickey Jackson ’56
Hillsboro High School – Four-Year Football Letterman, Th-Captain (1955), All-District (1955), Super Center (1955), All-State (1955), State Runner-Up Team (1955), Four-Year Basketball Letterman, Four-Year Baseball Letterman, University of Oklahoma – Three-Year Letterman, Two Orange Bowls (1959 & 1959), Student Assistant Coach (1960)

Stacy Brown ’91

Odeessa College – 6th Place NCAA Long Jump (1992)


Do you know a Hillsboro athlete or team that deserves recognition?
Contact John "Doc" Robertson, Hillsboro High School Athletic Trainer, at 254-582-4100.
Hilltop Intermediate School 4th graders recently had the opportunity to dive deep into the details surrounding the sinking of the Titanic. With a unique cross-curricular lesson developed by 4th grade reading and writing teacher Britney Wilson and Riana Hewett, the entire Titanic learning unit was carried out over a month’s time with various activities in each subject area.

“As a grade level, we strive to incorporate as many interdisciplinary projects and activities as we can,” said Wilson. “We felt putting a focus on the Titanic would allow for real world applications, as well as carry over throughout all of our Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.”

In math, students studied measurements of the ship, and in social studies, they researched the stories of real individuals and families who were aboard the Titanic. In Wilson’s reading class, students worked in groups to analyze the text structure of an article about the Titanic. Students then created graphic organizers and presented what they learned to the class.

The events of the Titanic really came to life in December with students and their families attending a dance “aboard the Titanic,” a culminating event for the learning unit.

The dance was held in the school’s gym, with two photo booths available. One was a selfie booth that included props, and the other was a green screen of the Titanic operated by the school’s TechSprints.

Wilson said the goal of the dance was to give students a social/emotional experience to connect to their interdisciplinary learning.

“Our 4th grade team of teachers is really trying to find a balance between making learning memorable and engaging so our students remember both the experiences and the learning that accompanied them,” she said.

“By reading the articles they chose for the project, students were able to learn about the problems faced by the crew on the Titanic and work together to develop possible solutions to prevent the Titanic from sinking,” Wilson said. “We wanted to really engage students by providing them with authentic learning experiences.”

HISD IMPLEMENTS NEW NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Hilltop Intermediate and Church on the Hill have partnered to provide food-packed backpacks to students.

“Share tables” are stations where children can receive taste-testing ratings on their smoothie product.

In January, Hillsboro ISD’s Director of Dining Services Stewart Murray implemented the “Share Table” program at the elementary, intermediate and junior high campuses.

“Share tables” are stations where children may return approved shareable food items they choose not to eat such as prepacked or whole foods. These items are then available to other children who may want additional servings.

“The purpose is to give students the opportunity to share food that they dislike or don’t prefer while reducing overall food waste within the district,” said Murray. “This program also helps us teach kids the importance of both sharing and not wasting food.”

MAKING WISE CHOICES

Franklin Elementary is partnering with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Education Service in Hill County to provide monthly nutrition education sessions for parents called “It’s Time for a Fresh Start to a Healthier You.”

The events are hosted in the school’s cafeteria with interpreters. During each session, parents are provided with nutrition tips, food safety tips, recipe demos and food tastings.

Franklin’s Pre-K Coordinator and Daycare Director Tiffany Oliver said the program is teaching parents about healthier meal and snack alternatives and the importance nutrition has on cognition and overall student performance.

“Nutrition is essential to early childhood development,” said Oliver. “Our goal is to build good habits that will last a lifetime.”

BACKPACK PROGRAM

Hilltop Intermediate and Church on the Hill have partnered to provide food-packed backpacks for students. The events are hosted in the school’s cafeteria typically advertised by the media.

Alternatives to refreshing drinks than those typically advertised by the media.

Hillsboro ISD students and parents are learning more about nutrition and how to make healthy eating choices thanks to several new district initiatives and campus programs.

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