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SPORTS | B1

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THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024

Briones celebrates \$249,700,000 EPA solar grant

Harris County will lead a coalition of Texas counties to expand affordable, reliable energy

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

In a watershed moment for Harris County, Commissioner Lesley Briones celebrated the award of the \$249,700,000 Solar for All grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to Harris County and the Texas Solar for All Coalition (Texas Coalition) on April 22.

"The Solar for All grant funding is a generational opportunity for Harris County to take another bold step forward as the global leader

of the energy transition. The \$249.7 million will give us the ability to aggregate electricity on behalf of residents and change the way we deliver power to their homes," Commissioner Briones said. "I am grateful to the Biden-Harris Administration for investing in large-scale, transformational change that will bring high-paying union jobs, affordable and reliable electricity, decreased dependence on ERCOT, and resilience in the face of climate change. By expanding access to rooftop and community solar, we will assist families facing high-energy costs and help keep Harris County the epicenter of the energy transition."

The EPA's Solar for All grant is a \$7 billion program, and a key portion of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction

See **SOLAR**, page A3

Waller County seeks feedback on hazard mitigation plan

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Waller County officials are seeking public input as they update the Waller County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

In coordination with Waller County, the Cities of Brookshire, Hempstead, Pattison, Prairie View, and Waller, the Town of Pine Island; Independent School Districts (ISD): Katy, Royal, and Waller, Prairie View A&M University, and the following special districts: Waller Harris ESD 200, Brookshire-Katy Drainage District, Brookshire Municipal Water, and San Jacinto River Authority, are updating the Waller County

Hazard Mitigation Plan.

A public meeting will be held May 8th at 5 p.m. at Waller Community Center, 21274 FM 1098, Prairie View to solicit community feedback.

The Plan Update will address hazards that affect the area, including natural hazards. The goal of the Plan Update is to minimize or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from known hazards through effective mitigation.

Waller County is holding the public meeting to gather public input for updating

See **FEEDBACK**, page A3



SUSAN ROVEGNO

The traffic signal at Clay Road and Porter is expected to be fully operational by the end of May, according to the Harris County Precinct 4 infrastructure department.

Clay Road widening project showing slow progress

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

Clay Road — a critical transportation artery serving Katy's fast-growing quadrant west of the Grand Parkway and north of I-10 — is slowly showing signs of improvement.

The segment of Clay Road now being widened and improved — roughly from Peek Road west to Porter Road — has been a two-lane section but now all four lanes are expected to be completed and open in early June, according to a statement from Harris County Precinct 4's infrastructure department.

The long-awaited traffic signal at Clay

See **ROAD**, page A3



SUSAN ROVEGNO

The section of Clay Road going west from Peek to Porter is expected to expand to four lanes by the end of June, says the Harris County Precinct 4 infrastructure department.

FORT BEND COUNTY HOSTS CONSULAR LUNCHEON



Fort Bend County Judge KP George (left, at podium) listens attentively as program panelist Meg Austria, manager of the new Seafood City in Sugar Land (far right) speaks about the Filipino seafood market's reasons for coming to Fort Bend County. The panel, which also included (left to right) Asian Chamber of Commerce Director of Community Development Paul Gor, the Honorable Herbert Espinoza who is the Consul General of Costa Rica, the Honorable Khalfanai Omari Fullerton who is the Consul General of Jamaica, and Louis A. Browne who is the Consul General of Barbados. Presenters discussed opportunities for economic partnerships with Fort Bend County. George hosted the county's fourth annual consular general luncheon, with the theme "Together We Can," at the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center, 9550 Harlem Road in Richmond on April 17th. The facility, which opened in July 2023, was described by host Faisal Momin, president of the Ismaili Council for the Southwestern United States, as a "house of community."

SUSAN ROVEGNO

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STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DISTRICT 132



SUSAN ROVEGNO

Chase West, a Democrat who is running for Texas House District 132, meets with constituents at a candidate "meet and greet" at Fuzzy's Pizza, 613 S. Mason Road on April 25. West listed his top priorities as universal health care and education. He said that he would like to see the Medicaid program expanded, and championed raises for teachers. West said that he opposes school vouchers and that, while he is not against charter schools, he would like to look further into how effective these schools are. "A lot of these are just flying by the seat of their pants," he said. West said that he would also like to see the state make better use of solar power and to make it accessible for all Texans.

Schofield provides updates on legislative issues at Rotary and KBA meetings

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

Speaking to two different Katy audiences in April, State Representative for House District 132 Mike Schofield provided updates on recent legislative action affecting the area's small businesses as well as issues of importance to Katy residents.

Schofield is in his fourth term serving in the Texas House of Representatives, where he represents Katy and part of Cy-Fair in Harris County.

At the April 17th meeting of the Rotary Club of Katy, held at the Club at Falcon Point, 24503 Falcon Point Drive in Katy, Schofield reported on three issues that consumed a lot of time during the last legislative session: health care, broadband access and public safety. He said that the legislature spent a large amount of time

See **UPDATE**, page A3



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Libraries support aspiring writers with special workshops in May

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Fort Bend County Libraries will present a variety of programs, classes, and activities in May that encourage fledgling writers, or anyone who has ever wanted to write a novel, to take the plunge and pursue their dreams in a helpful, supportive environment. Throughout the month, Fort Bend County Libraries will host programs that are intended to

encourage new writers by providing tips and tricks, writing and publishing advice, and support from other aspiring novelists.

These programs are free and open to the public.

- **Prose Pros Writing Group** - Monday, May 6, 6 to 7:30 p.m., Cinco Ranch Branch Library (2620 Commercial Center Blvd, Katy). The featured topic this month is "Exposition." During the latter half of the workshop, participants will

have an opportunity to share their manuscripts with others and get constructive feedback.

- **Writer's Workshop** - Thursday, 2 to 3 p.m., Fulshear Branch Library (6350 GM Library Road, off Texas Heritage Parkway). In this new monthly series, learn the basics of creative writing. Get tips on story structure, characterization, setting, tone, and more. The topic for May is "Setting, Tone, and Timeline." Registration required.

- **Story Spinners Writing Club** - Thursday, May 16, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., George Memorial Library (1001 Golfview, Richmond). From beginning blogger to published novelist, writers of all genres and experience levels are welcome to write, share, learn, support, network, and critique each other's work at this monthly meeting. Writing prompts, brainteasers, and brief exercises will be available to ignite the imaginations of any and

all wordsmiths who wish to hone their craft. This program is recommended for adults and teens aged 14 and up.

For more information, or to sign up for the programs requiring registration, see Fort Bend County Libraries' website (fortbend.lib.tx.us), click on "Classes & Events," select the library, and choose the program on the online calendar, or call the library system's Communications Office (281-633-4734).

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Fort Bend Master Gardeners offer free class on growing plants

Learn how to grow plants from cuttings, division and seeds in a free class offered May 4 by Fort Bend County Master Gardeners. The class "Growing Plants from Seeds/Cuttings" is part of the Grow Your Own Series and will be offered at the Bud O'Shieles Community Center, 1330 Band Road in Rosenberg, beginning at 9 a.m. Registration is required for the 90-minute class. Register at fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own/grow-your-own-a/. All registered attendees will receive a link to the class recording. The class will be presented by Boone Holladay and Samiha Qureshi. Qureshi of Missouri City has been a Master Gardener since 2021. Holladay is Fort Bend County Extension Agent-horticulture. The series has one more class this season: "Cool Season Vegetables & Herbs" on Aug. 3. Visit fortbend.agrilife.org/grow-your-own/ for more information or contact Brandy Rader at 281-342-3034 or brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu. All FBMG fundraisers, courses, and events are brought to the community by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Fort Bend County.

org/grow-your-own/ for more information or contact Brandy Rader at 281-342-3034 or brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu. All FBMG fundraisers, courses, and events are brought to the community by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Fort Bend County.

Chess players invited to practice, share tips at May 4 Cinco Branch Library event

Chess players of all ages and skill levels - from beginners to advanced - are invited to practice their strategies and share tips with others at the "Chess Day at Cinco Ranch" event on Saturday, May 4, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the Multi-purpose Room at Fort Bend County Libraries' Cinco Ranch Branch Library, located at 2620 Commercial Center Blvd in Katy. Learn a new chess move (or two) during this come-and-go event. A limited number of chess sets will be provided,

but players are welcome to bring their own sets as well. Materials for this monthly program are made possible by the Friends of the Cinco Ranch Branch Library. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, see Fort Bend County Libraries' website fortbend.lib.tx.us.

Katy Theatre presents car show at American Furniture Warehouse on May 11

Bring the whole family for a day of fun - with classic cars, awards, face painting, a coloring station, food, live music, and more! The festivities begin at 9 a.m. in the parking lot of American Furniture Warehouse at 500 Pin Oak in Katy. The event is a project of Katy Theatre, which is dedicated to bringing educational outstanding theatre to the students and community of Katy High School.

Acoustic Jam returns to Serene Beans on May 11

Join the acoustic jam from 4 to 7 p.m. on May 11 at Serene Beans, 5609 East Third in Katy. The event occurs monthly.

Katy AARP chapter meeting May 14

The Katy chapter of AARP will meet Tuesday, May 14th, at Midway BBQ, 6191 Highway Blvd in Katy. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. with a short meeting and announcements. Afterwards, singer/songwriter Tanya Courey will perform. Tanya has been part of various Country, Bluegrass, Jazz, Blues, and R&B groups. She now performs solo or with her own band in Texas restaurants, wine bars, private parties, and other events. Visitors are welcome. Allow time to purchase any food before the meeting starts.

Juventus Academy Houston to host soccer fundraiser on May 25

Juventus Academy Houston, a non-profit 501(c)(3) soccer organization, will host "Let's Go Famiglia," a fundraiser featuring family-friendly activities on May 25th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Held at the British International School at 2203 N. Westgreen Blvd. in Katy, the event will have various stations set up, including Inflatable Bumper Balls, friendly and entertaining competitions, a fire truck display, raffles, scavenger hunts, and giveaways. Each activity station will require tickets priced between \$1 and \$10 for participation. And -- of course -- there will be friendly soccer matches for boys and girls at the end. The goal of the event is to bring the community together while raising funds to directly support young Houstonians who love soccer, providing them with affordable and high-quality soccer development opportunities, said organizers. The event is FREE to enter and open to the public of all age groups.

Dogs dash at the Dugout on May 26th

Join the crowd at Home Run Dugout on Sunday, May 26th as the dogs race to bring home the bacon at the inaugural Wiener Dog Races. Races start at 12 p.m. and continue until 4 p.m. at 1220 Grand West in Katy. Enter your pup in the races at facebook.com/events/1362120474503726. It's free to enter and free to watch! For more information, call 833-384-6881 or email info@homerundugout.com.



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CLUES ACROSS

1. ___ fi: popular genre
4. Curved shape
7. Defunct airline
10. Beverage receptacle
11. Corporate bigwig
12. Belong to he
13. They cover cuts
15. Cost per mille
16. Walk into
19. Power-producing machine
21. Part of one's character perceived by others
23. Emotionally appealed to
24. Protected
25. Wrestling icon Okerlund
26. Thailand's former name
27. Muscle weaknesses
30. Chooses
34. American film studio
35. Expression of satisfaction
36. Mythical winged horse
41. Ballplayers
45. Edible seaweed
46. Chinese politician
47. Tested for fertility
50. Glove worn with medieval armor
54. Basaltic lavas
55. Small shoaling fish
56. Surrendered
57. Taxi
59. Potato part
60. Female sheep
61. Trouble or difficulty
62. Put into service
63. Soviet Socialist Republic
64. 17th letter of Greek alphabet
65. Type of student

CLUES DOWN

1. Frighten
2. Partner to corned beef
3. Parts
4. Agrees to a demand
5. Elected official
6. Navigator's tool
7. Relating to heat
8. Attractive
9. Wealthy US merchant
13. Engine additive
14. A passage with access only at one end
17. Midway between northeast and east
18. Cool!
20. Brazilian NBAer
22. NW Pennsylvania city
27. Young dog
28. Mimic
29. Large truck
31. The NFL's Newton
32. One and only
33. Diego, Francisco, Anselmo
37. Julie __, actress
38. More nourishing
39. Compound
40. A small carrier attached to the side of a motorcycle
41. Object of fear or alarm
42. __ Ladd, actor
43. Sacred place
44. A way to express enjoyment
47. Trigonometric function
48. A team's best pitcher
49. Intersecting shapes
51. Roundly pointed
52. Adam's partner
53. God of battle (Scandinavian)
58. Human hormone

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

SUDOKU

	5	4						6
1				7				9
						8	5	
			8					2
		7	2					
	9		5	1	4			
8	1							
		2						9
						4	3	6

Level: Intermediate

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Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

SOLAR

from page A1

Fund, borne out of the Inflation Reduction Act. This highly-competitive grant program aims to expand the number of low-income and disadvantaged communities with residential solar investment — enabling millions of low-income households to access affordable, reliable, and clean solar energy.

Funding from this grant will bring relief to Harris County residents and Texans statewide who have lost confidence in the state's power grid due to recent, catastrophic grid failures, according to a statement from Briones' office. Some residents could see their electricity bills go down by as much as 20% through the expansion of access to rooftop and community solar, with the anticipated annual household savings for certain low-income households averaging \$1,700. Statewide, Solar for All will significantly reduce carbon emissions, the statement continued.

"Strengthening our energy infrastructure is critical, especially for our most vulnerable communities. I saw firsthand during the last two winter freezes how dangerous it is when families do not have access to reliable and affordable energy," Commissioner Briones said. "I am proud that Harris County is leading a coalition of major cities and counties in Solar for All, and I am especially excited that we are joined by partners in my hometown of Laredo, Brownsville, and areas of the Rio Grande Valley. Together, we are fighting for working families, finding solutions for Texans, and working to keep Texas the global energy leader of tomorrow."

As the Commissioner for Precinct 4, which is home to the Energy Corridor, Commissioner Briones also praised Solar for All for bringing together leaders in the energy industry along with labor unions to spur further economic growth. The program is designed to support workforce training and apprenticeships at the high school, pathway, and community college levels; support minority- and women-owned businesses; and collaborate with unions and many community-based organizations.

"I am energized by the spirit of innovation behind Solar for All that will help keep Harris County the energy capital of the world," Commissioner Briones said. "We are driving progress that will power not only the state and the country, but also the entire world for generations to come."

CORRECTION

In a story on Calvin Nelms Charter School in our April 4 edition, one of the student's names was misspelled. Emma Byford was incorrectly identified as "Emma Buford." The Times regrets the error.

UPDATE

from page A1

during the last session trying to bring down Medicare/Medicaid costs and that a bill was passed requiring hospitals to provide itemized billing. "You should be able to determine ahead of time how much a non-emergency procedure will cost," he said. In addition, Texans can now legally import prescription drugs from Canada, obtaining the same high-quality medications from the same manufacturers at a much cheaper cost than buying them in the United States, he said. "If we allow an open market, it will drive the prices down."

Schofield also addressed public safety improvements which included a measure ensuring police protection for citizens living in unincorporated areas such as western Harris County, and border security, including Operation Lone Star and the passage of SB 4.

He also highlighted the legislature's action in providing a raise to retired teachers, who do not automatically receive a cost-of-living adjustment. "Few teachers retire wealthy," he said.

At the April 24th meeting of the Katy Business Association,

also held at the Club at Falcon Point, Schofield reminded attendees of the May 4 elections for school board and for various positions on the Harris County Appraisal district and some MUDs and EMS issues. "All of these positions serve you directly so make a point of learning about them," he said. "A lot of you are giving money to these organizations and you need to have your say." Polling places differ for the various elections, he said, and a voter may have to visit as many as three different locations in order to vote in all elections that affect them.

Schofield described how property tax reform passed in the last legislative session benefited small business owners as well as homeowners. For the first time a cap has been approved on year-to-year increases in a business' property tax, with the cap set at 20 percent; the program is in place for a three-year trial period and is limited to \$5 million. "We will be working to leave it in place," he said.

Schofield also summarized action on procedures for exiting an extra-territorial jurisdiction, such as the Houston ETJ. He said that his district

covers 16,000 people who live in the City of Katy and 200,000 who live in Houston's ETJ. Under a new law led by Schofield, a business may petition the ETJ to be released and then that business may petition the City of Katy for annexation, so that they may receive services from Katy rather than from Houston. An added benefit, he said, is that this change allows the land-locked City of Katy to experience further growth through annexation.

Expansion of broadband access throughout the state is also a critical achievement, Schofield said. Although Katy area residents have access to decent broadband, that is not true of the entire state, he said. But the broadband initiative does benefit Katy residents, allowing access to online education and to educational programs that may not be available through a local district. It also enables online medical appointments and remote access to medical specialists, he added. The third reason the initiative is important is that it facilitates business transactions — buyers and sellers don't have to be in the same room to do business.

Schofield also listed ongoing

mobility improvements coming to the Katy area, such as the widening of I-10 and the widening of two segments of the Grand Parkway. He said that the expansion of FM 529 is planned but has not been funded.

The legislator is also already at work on issues for the next legislative session, during what he labeled as "the interim" -- the months prior to the start of the January session — which he said is a good time for citizens to contact their elected officials about concerns that need to be addressed in the next session.

"Contact us now while we have time to delve into them," he told the Rotarians.

Among the 22 bills that Schofield is drafting is a measure that would deal with "squatting," which occurs when a residence is taken over by persons without a valid lease. Schofield said that the drug cartels are training people on how to take over property and that squatters are often successful in remaining there because the eviction process is lengthy. The proposed bill not only offers a shorter process, but makes squatting a Class A misdemeanor, he said.

ROAD

from page A1

and Porter is now blinking and it is expected to be fully operational by the end of May, the department said. For safety, the signal will flash red until the road configurations are complete. Residents should treat the flashing red signal as a four-way stop sign.

Construction materials are scheduled to be removed by early June when construction is completed. When asked about potential improvements to the median, the infrastructure department referred the Katy Times to local MUDs or HOAs who may be conducting beautification projects.

When asked about recent traffic counts for the area, the department

responded that the last traffic count is from 2018.

"At Harris County Precinct 4, public safety is our top priority," said the department in an email to the Katy Times. "On our website, cp4.harriscountytexas.gov, under the 'Community Assistance' section, residents may submit a request for a study in their neighborhood. Constituents may also call the Precinct 4 Community Assistance Department at 832-927-4444 or email service@hcp4.net. Precinct 4's Infrastructure Department uses a data-driven approach and community feedback to identify and design infrastructure projects."

FEEDBACK

from page A1

the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of the public meeting is to provide a project overview from H2O Partners, Inc., consultant to the project, and solicit information from citizens. Public input will help the project team to analyze potential hazards affecting residents and recommend possible actions to reduce their impact.

Residents may also share their feedback by taking a survey at <http://tinyurl.com/WallerHMAP>.

For questions or more information, contact:
• Stevie Ann Hodgson-O'Donnell Mitigation Outreach Coordinator H2O Partners (631) 921-2460 sodonnell@h2opartnersusa.com
• Brian Cantrell Fire Marshal Waller County (979) 826-7785 wcfmo@wallercounty.us



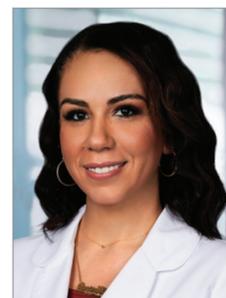
Houston Methodist Welcomes Mariana Hurtado, DO

Mariana Hurtado, DO, is an internal medicine physician who is passionate about providing quality care to her patients and their loved ones. She believes good health is most important and looks forward to serving the diverse community of Houston.

She joins Houston Methodist Primary Care Group in West Houston, where she will be seeing new and existing patients in person and virtually.

Her expertise includes:

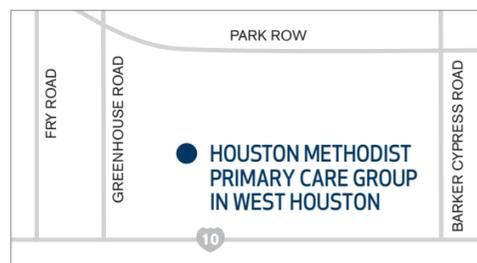
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- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Men's health
- Preventive care
- Routine immunizations
- Weight management
- Women's health



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Consolidated Communications employees lend a hand to build stronger communities

Company celebrates employees, who volunteer more than 8,000 hours annually, during National Volunteer Week

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Consolidated Communications celebrated the dedication of its employees in the communities where they live and work this National Volunteer Week (April 21 - 27), the annual week which recognizes the contributions of volunteers and the impact they have on organizations they serve.

In support of the YMCA of Greater Houston, J.R. Richardson, senior account executive at Consolidated Communication, exemplifies this volunteer spirit in Katy. A lifelong volunteer, J.R. attributes his volunteerism to the guidance of his late mom, and he



J. R. Richardson

SUSAN ROVEGNO

got involved with the YMCA after benefiting from the organization's programs in his youth.

"I volunteer at the YMCA because I was once a child who went to the YMCA," Richardson said. "Raised in a single-parent household, I had options to do good or bad. At that crossroad with the guidance of my mom, she guided me in the right direction to go to the YMCA. From there I met people of

all different nationalities, learned how to communicate with others, played team sports and so much more. That was my upbringing."

Years later, while working at Consolidated, Richardson was asked by a friend about volunteering at the YMCA in Katy. After being introduced to the local director, he started off emceeing at the annual YMCA Turkey Dash, the annual Thanksgiving Day marathon. The event annually sees about 25,000 runners and raises more than \$100,000 thanks in part J.R., volunteers and YMCA staff. In addition to his emcee duties at the race, Richardson volunteers at other events throughout the year supporting the YMCA.

"The biggest part of volunteering for me is knowing you are making someone else's life better," said Richardson said. "You're putting a smile on their face and they're thanking you for what you're doing out of pure love and generosity. You want them to know you are there for them. I do it because I like to make people smile, and if I can take them away from that problem they might be going through,

even for just that instant, all those worries go away."

Employees from Consolidated Communications volunteered more than 8,700 hours in 2023, supporting nearly 200 organizations across the company's 20-plus state service area. Since 2019, Consolidated employees have reported more than 33,000 hours of volunteer service.

"We are incredibly proud of our employees' dedication and effort in giving back to the communities where they live and work," said Jennifer Spaude, senior vice president of corporate communications for Consolidated. "Investing in our communities is at the heart of what we do, and we are thankful to each of our employee volunteers for the positive impact and difference they make in their communities."

To support and recognize employee volunteers, Consolidated created the Consolidated Cares Employee Volunteer Program in 2022. Through CCI Cares, the company makes contributions of \$250 to local non-profits on behalf of employees who volunteer 25 or more hours. As a result of the program and the

dedication of employees to their community, since 2022 Consolidated has contributed to 100 non-profits on behalf of employees.

In addition to CCI Cares, the company supported more than 625 nonprofits and community organizations in 2023, contributing more than \$1.6 million to more than 200 rural communities. To learn more about Consolidated Communications' CCI Cares program, employee volunteerism and more community programs, visit consolidated.com/about-us/community-matters.

About Consolidated Communications

Consolidated Communications Holdings, Inc. (Nasdaq: CNSL) is dedicated to moving people, businesses and communities forward by delivering a wide range of high-speed internet, data, phone, security, cloud and wholesale carrier solutions. With a network spanning 58,000 fiber route miles, Consolidated is a top 10 U.S. fiber provider. Learn more at consolidated.com.

Catholic Charities recognizes Katy resident during National Volunteer Month

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

During April, National Volunteer Month, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston Houston recognized the exemplary service of Michael Sullivan, a Katy resident whose dedication to education and community support has significantly impacted the lives of refugees and immigrant individuals in the Houston area.

For the last two years, Sullivan has volunteered with Catholic Charities, focusing on tutoring refugee and immigrant high school students in English. Utilizing his extensive teaching experience at various institutions, including Houston Community College, Sullivan conducts one-on-one tutoring and coordinates the efforts of other volunteers who selflessly dedicate their time and efforts toward the cause. Collectively, the group has helped many Catholic Charities' clients pass STARR testing, obtain their GEDs, and given them much-needed confidence to succeed in school and eventually get jobs.

"I've seen the growth of these young people firsthand, and it's gratifying," said Sullivan. "Whether I'm helping them master the English language, guiding them through schoolwork, or offering mentorship and support, I feel like I'm making a difference."

A devout Catholic, Sullivan has always found ways to give back to his church community. He spearheaded the development of an employment ministry at his church,



Katy resident Michael Sullivan was honored by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston Houston during National Volunteer Month.

St. Faustina in Fulshear, to help others who had fallen on hard times. Getting involved in English as a Second Language tutoring for Catholic Charities' St. Jerome Emiliani Fos-

ter Care program was a natural fit for him.

The St. Jerome Emiliani Foster Care program recruits loving foster families for youth who come to the U.S. with no parent or guardian. The program works with the foster parents to provide ongoing support for each youth to help them adjust to life in the U.S. The youth are prepared to be self-sufficient when they reach adulthood through language instruction, life skills training and education.

Sullivan describes his approach to tutor-

ing as both compassionate and practical, recognizing his students' diverse backgrounds and educational experiences. Many of the students enrolled in the Catholic Charities program are orphans, come from war-torn countries, or have experienced some other type of suffering.

"One student at a time, one to two hours a week - it's about making a personal connection and offering consistent support," said Sullivan. "We aim to empower these individuals, helping them gain confidence and skills to succeed in their education and beyond."

Ashley Hudson, director of Catholic Charities' St. Jerome Emiliani Foster Care program, is grateful to Sullivan for his work with her clients and his role in leading the other volunteer tutors.

"Michael has helped many of our clients pass the STARR test, obtain their GEDs, and give them the confidence to succeed in school. Many clients now want to further their education and attend college because of the support Michael has provided. He has done exceptional work with St. Jerome, and we are so blessed to have him as part of the Catholic Charities family," said Hudson.

Beyond his volunteer work with Catholic Charities, Sullivan's commitment to education and community service extends to his personal life. His wife, also an educator at Katy ISD, shares his passion for helping others, and together, they embody the spirit of giving back.

"Catholic Charities reaches out to the segments of the population that need help. All their programs, not just the tutoring program, make an impact physically, mentally, and psychologically for those who have fallen through society's safety net," said Sullivan.

SECURING THE TEXAS GRID, POWERING KATY'S FUTURE

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Ochoa Energy Storage is a proposed 250-megawatt Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) project that can bring sustainable, reliable energy to support the Texas grid. This project would be located adjacent to a major electrical corridor in Katy, TX, on privately owned land, creating a new, long-term source of funding for the community.



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TRIBUTE

Janice, cherished widow of Edward Errol Markus and beloved matriarch of her community, passed away peacefully on Friday, April 12, 2024, at her home in Katy, Texas. Born on March 19, 1944, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Frank and Helen Rudrow, Janice's life was marked by her compassion, intelligence, and unwavering dedication to her family and community.

On July 31, 1965, Janice married the love of her life, Edward Errol Markus, at the First Christian Church in Lufkin, Texas, the same church in which they professed their faith in Christ through baptism. After some years living in Dallas and West Houston, the couple moved to Katy in April of 1979, where they built a life filled with love, laughter, and shared passions until Edward's passing on August 18, 2021. She called the same house her home for more than 45 years, up until the moment she came into her place in God's Kingdom.

An avid reader and enthusiastic fan of British television, Janice also possessed a love for art and history. Her extensive knowledge enriched the lives of all who knew her. She seemed to know at least a little bit about just about everything and, whether sharing something she knew or learning something new, she was always excited to engage in conversations on just about anything.



JANICE LOUISE MARKUS
1944-2024

Janice plied her God-given gifts in myriad pursuits throughout her lifetime. A 1962 graduate of Will Rogers High School in Tulsa, she went on to attend the University of Oklahoma and later Stephen F. Austin State University as an undergraduate, receiving both Bachelor's and Master's degrees from SFA. As a young adult, she worked as a school teacher in Huntington, Texas. After moving to Katy, while working as a home maker, she also started a boutique catering business out of her home called Jan's Basket of Goodies, which specialized in baked desserts, such as wedding cakes and other treats like panorama sugar eggs and petit fours. She worked as a substitute teacher in Katy ISD for many years, even having the opportunity to sub for her children's classes, on occasion. She was also

a volunteer at her children's schools, including starting the APPLES parent volunteer program at Katy Elementary School. Janice's leadership shone brightly as she helped to foster a tight-knit community and worked to enhance the educational environment through her efforts. She later worked as a Farmers Insurance agent, before embarking on a career in Booking & Reservations with Continental / United Airlines that lasted more than 20 years.

Renowned among her neighbors as "The Dean of Hackberry Lane," Janice's kindness and cheerful demeanor made her a beloved figure in her community. Over the years, Janice attended a number of churches in the old-town Katy area, strengthening existing relationships and forging new friendships, as well as occasionally attending her children's churches in The Woodlands and Clear Lake in her later years.

Her love for animals mirrored her nurturing spirit, almost constantly caring for and enjoying the company of numerous, beloved pets, as well as the "wild critters" that called her yard home throughout her life. She instilled this same, lifelong love for animals in both of her children.

Janice leaves behind a legacy of selflessness, devotion, wisdom, and community spirit that will continue to

live on through her friends and family. She was a guiding light, a source of strength, and the epitome of a matriarch.

Janice was preceded in death by her husband, Edward Errol Markus, and her parents, Frank and Helen Rudrow. She is survived by her children, Edward "Ted" Markus, Jr. and his wife Eileene of Clear Lake, and Mandy Markus Drake and her husband David of Spring; granddaughter, Maddy Drake; her beloved cat, Ladybug; and many other relatives and friends.

A celebration of Janice's life will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 5, 2024, at Schmidt Funeral Home Grand Parkway Chapel, in Katy with Pastor Karl Garcia of Clear Creek Community Church officiating. If you plan on attending, please come as you are, and feel free to wear bright, vibrant colors, if you like. Janice would enjoy that. In lieu of flowers, you may make a memorial contribution to The Salvation Army at www.salvationarmy.org or animal rescue charities Mac's Mission at www.macsmision.org and Houston-based Street Life to the Sweet Life at www.streetlifetothewsweetlife.com

Funeral services held under the direction of **Schmidt Funeral Home**
1344 W. Grand Parkway South ~ Katy, Texas 77494 ~ (281) 391-2424

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



SUSAN ROVEGNO

At the April 22nd meeting of the Katy City Council, Councilmember Janet Corte read a proclamation recognizing May 2024 as National Mental Health Awareness Month. Honorees included (left to right) Dr. Michael Lindsay and Lashawn Davis of On Time Halo Kidz Home LLC, Corte, Katy Mayor Dusty Thiele, Marisa Cockrell of Here Comes the Sun Counseling and Elizabeth Westbrook of Here Comes the Sun Counseling.

INTERNATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS DAY



SUSAN ROVEGNO

May 4th was recognized as International Firefighters Day at the meeting of Katy City Council on April 22 in a resolution read by Councilmember Dan Smith (sixth from left).

The Katy Times

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COURTESY OF ROYAL ISD

Falcon community partner Mission Education donated boxes of pencils to Royal Junior High at the end of April -- just in time for STAAR testing season. To learn more about Mission Education's work with Royal ISD and other schools, visit missioneducation.org/

SAYING THANKS



COURTESY OF ROYAL ISD

On April 24th Royal ISD thanked and celebrated the district's support staff team on Administrative Professionals' Day. The day recognizes the work of secretaries, administrative assistants, receptionists, and other administrative support professionals.

Harmony Schools earn cyber security award

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The Texas Department of Information Resources has awarded Harmony Public Schools the Texas CyberStar certificate for the school system's ongoing commitment to robust data protection and information security practices, the charter school system announced in an April 29th press release.

The Texas CyberStar Certificate awards the implementation of essential safeguards and protocols to protect systems and student data from potential cyber threats. This involved risk assessments, incident response planning, employee training and several collaborative task completions by the Information Security and IT teams. This certification underscores

Harmony's dedication to maintaining the highest standards of cybersecurity, the press release said.

About Harmony Public Schools

Harmony Public Schools is a free, open-enrollment public charter school with 60+ locations across Texas. To learn more about Harmony Public Schools please visit harmontx.org.

Local charity Hope Impacts benefits from British International School's 'Food for Friends' program

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Students from the British International School of Houston recently seized the opportunity to use the funding from a "Social Impact grant" to expand and enhance their community activities, aligned to addressing the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. This allows them to take their community service to another level and address Sustainable Development Goal #2: Zero Hunger.

Over 60 students from grade levels 8-12 have been busy planting and re-building their greenhouse, and have already provided spinach, beets, carrots and herbs for Katy-based homeless program Hope Impacts, as well as supporting the Brookwood community in Brookshire and Houston Food Bank, with more to come.

"This is a great partnership and promoting good health too," said Hope Impacts on their Facebook page in late April. "We appreciate our school partnerships that have a heart for helping others."

Every Nord Anglia student can apply for a Social Impact grant by submitting an application outlining their project, how they will use the funds, and how they will measure the impact. Nord Anglia's Student Advisory Board, a group made up of student representatives from across its 87 schools, review each funding application to ensure students' voices are heard during the approval process. Proposals are then evaluated by Nord Anglia's Grants Committee,

which includes members of the Education Advisory Board, as well as Nord Anglia Principals and teachers.

In 2023, students at BIS Houston were successful with their application and awarded the Nord Anglia Education Social Impact Grant, for their "Food for Friends Project" and received a grant of \$6,600 to re- renovate a greenhouse on campus and establish a new community farm to grow produce for food-insecure communities locally.

The NAE Grant Committee commented, "The longstanding dedication of your school community to SDG 2 is very clear and it is exciting to see how you all are creatively problem-solving to deepen and sustain the impact you are making on this SDG. This is an exemplary application and social impact initiative. It is sustainable in the long term, it creates opportunities for the whole school to get involved and you have developed a relationship with an external community in a respectful, collaborative way. Furthermore, the milestones you have set out for yourselves and the benchmarks to measure the progress of your initiative is excellent. Well done BIS Houston and thank you for your commitment to #SDG2!"

Being part of the leading international school group Nord Anglia Education, not only offers global reach but students at The British International School of Houston enjoy a learning experience like no other, said school officials. A key element of Nord Anglia's education strategy is

to help students develop their sense of purpose and global citizenship as they create and lead community impact initiatives.

Dr Leslie Williams, Senior Programme Lead for Social Impact and Giving at Nord Anglia, said: "As well as taking the initiative to make a change in their communities, these grants are about learning valuable skills that have real-world impact. Whether that's budgeting for supplies or balancing schoolwork with their projects, these are the skills that can set up our students for real future success."

A key element of the school's education strategy is to help students develop their sense of purpose and global citizenship as they create and lead community impact initiatives. Social purpose is embedded in the curriculum and students are encouraged to become global change-makers - ready to take on the world's most pressing problems. A global partnership with UNICEF also helps open students' eyes to the world around them and encourages them to develop their own sense of purpose. Each year, students at BIS Houston support local causes through activities with UNICEF and on the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. On top of that, students are encouraged to deliver meaningful change through local outreach activities where they can join fundraising and volunteering activities on issues they truly care about.

The campus is located at 2203 N. Westgreen Blvd. in Katy.

Six KISD students earn National Merit Scholarships

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

On April 24, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) released the names of the first group of winners in the 69th annual National Merit Scholarship Program, including six students from the Katy area. Five recipients attend Seven Lakes High while one goes to Tompkins High.

- Winners were:
- Sarah Jane Clarridge Of Seven Lakes High School, National Merit Air Liquide America Scholarship. Probable career field: law.
 - Aayush K. Ishware Of Seven Lakes High School, National Merit Aspen Technology, Inc. Scholarship. Probable career field: computer science.
 - Anagha K. Menon of Seven Lakes High School, National Merit Marsh McLenan Scholarship. Probable career field: medicine.
 - Sankalp Prashanth of Seven Lakes High School, National Merit Emerson Electric Co. Scholarship. Probable career field: computer engineering.
 - Yui Yamaashi of Seven Lakes High School, National Merit Occidental Petroleum Corporation Scholarship. Probable career field: biomedicine.
 - Kenneth J. Yao of Obra D. Tompkins High School, National Merit Chevron. Probable career field: music.

Approximately 770 distinguished high school seniors have won corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarship awards financed by about 94 corporations, company foundations, and other business organizations.

Scholars were selected from students who advanced to the Finalist level in the National Merit Scholarship competition and met criteria of their scholarship sponsors. Corporate sponsors provide National Merit Scholarships for Finalists who are children of their employees, who are residents of communities the company serves, or who plan to pursue college majors or careers the sponsor wishes to encourage. Most of these awards are renewable for

up to four years of college undergraduate study and provide annual stipends that range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per year. Some provide a single payment between \$2,500 and \$5,000. Recipients can use their awards at any regionally accredited U.S. college or university of their choice.

This is the first announcement of National Merit Scholars in 2024 by National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). NMSC will name recipients of National Merit® \$2500 Scholarships on May 8, and winners of college-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards on June 5 and July 15. By the conclusion of this year's competition, more than 6,870 academic champions will have won National Merit Scholarships worth approximately \$26 million.

Corporate-Sponsored Merit Scholarship Winners Funding for these National Merit Scholarships is provided by corporate organizations that represent nearly all

sectors of American industry. Sponsors from the business community have underwritten awards offered in all 69 competitions, expending or committing more than \$870 million to support the intellectual development of the nation's scholastically talented youth.

To be considered for a National Merit Scholarship, Semifinalists had to fulfill requirements to advance to Finalist standing. Each Semifinalist was asked to complete a detailed scholarship application, which included writing an essay and providing information about extracurricular activities, awards, and leadership positions. Semifinalists also had to have an outstanding academic record, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, and earn SAT® or ACT® scores that confirmed their qualifying test performance. From the Semifinalist group, over 15,000 met Finalist requirements.



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U.S. News & World Report names all high schools in Harmony Public Schools-Houston Districts to list of America's top high schools

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Harmony School of Innovation - Katy has been named the number one high school in Katy and number one charter high school in the Houston area by U.S. News & World Report in its highly anticipated annual rankings of U.S. public schools, according to an April 23rd press release from the charter school system's communication office. The campus is located at

22400 Grand Corner Drive in Katy.

The publication has also named all of Harmony Public Schools' high schools in its Houston Districts among its top high schools in America. The following Harmony high schools are part of Harmony Public Schools, the largest STEM-focused charter public school network in Texas and also made the 2024 list of U.S. News & World Report's Best High Schools.

- Harmony School of Innovation - Katy
- Harmony School of Innovation - Sugar Land
- Harmony School of Discovery - Houston
- Harmony Science Academy - Houston
- Harmony School of Advancement - Houston
- Harmony School of Ingenuity - Houston

In determining its top schools, U.S. News & World Report looks

at a variety of factors, including college readiness (30%), math and reading proficiency (20%), math and reading performance (20%), underserved student performance (10%), and college curriculum breadth (10%).

Harmony's Houston District offers 25 campuses serving PreK-Grade 12 students in six cities, including Houston, Sugar Land, Katy, Cypress, Beaumont and Bryan.

Harmony's curriculum places a heavy focus on STEM skills, Character Education, project-based learning and college readiness. The system has a 98 percent graduation rate for its high school seniors, and 100 percent college acceptance rate among its graduating seniors, according to the press release.

Harmony Public Schools is currently accepting applications for both students and team members.

Texas Woman's University, Harmony Public Schools partner for free college tuition

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Texas Woman's University has partnered with Texas-based Harmony Public Schools — a system encompassing 60 pre-K-12 schools, — to offer its high school students tuition-free college and support services to help them become successful graduates, according to an April 22 press release from the charter school system.

Eligible students who pledge to participate in the program can attend Texas Woman's the fall after they graduate from high school. The program includes access to the university's Zero Tuition Guarantee, which covers the cost of tuition and fees not covered by federal and state financial aid or institutional scholarships.

The partnership is aimed at creating a stronger college-going culture among high school graduates, and offers a more affordable higher education pathway that won't result in high debt, said Javier Flores, TWU's vice president for enrollment management.

"Texas Woman's is committed to providing an outstanding education to students from all backgrounds, particularly those for whom a college

education is financially out of reach — and this partnership helps achieve that," Flores said.

"Harmony Public Schools is proud to partner with TWU, which shares our mission of empowering scholars through student-centered learning approaches and high-quality educational opportunities," Harmony Public Schools CEO Fatih Ay said.

The partnership with Harmony is particularly relevant to Texas Woman's because of the institutions' shared mission of providing equitable outcomes for female scholars, which has long been a hallmark of a Texas Woman's education, the press release said. As an example, Harmony has a stated goal of narrowing the gender gap between male and female students in career fields related to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Among Harmony's female graduates, 60% go on to pursue STEM-related college degrees, compared with only 24% nationally.

Leaders from both institutions signed an agreement April 22 to launch the partnership, which is the latest in a series of such agreements between Texas Woman's and other school systems to provide greater access to college.

MUSIC TEACHER HONORED



COURTESY OF KATY ISD

WoodCreek Junior High Principal Andrew Lowry (left) was honored with the prestigious Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA) Distinguished Administrator Award, according to a recent post on Katy ISD's Facebook page. Each year, the TMEA recognizes exemplary upper-level school administrators across the state who have played pivotal roles in preserving and advancing quality music education programs. In mid-April, board members (starting second from left) Rebecca Fox, Dawn Champagne and Lance Redmon, as well as district officials, family, friends, and the Timberwolves came together to surprise and celebrate Lowry for his achievement as well as his contributions to the WCJH school community. "Dr. Lowry's unwavering commitment to championing high-quality music education has truly enriched the musical experiences of our students and the entire WoodCreek school community," said the post.

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Did you know? More phone calls are made on Mother's Day than any other day of the year. These holiday chats with Mom often cause phone traffic to spike by as much as 37 percent.
Source: History.com

Mother's Day was officially signed into law in 1914 by President Woodrow Wilson with the holiday set for the second Sunday in May. The law was the culmination of efforts by three women - Ann Reeves Jarvis of West Virginia, who helped start "Mothers' Day Work Clubs" in the 1800's to teach local women how to properly care for their children; abolitionist and suffragette Julia Ward Howe, who in 1870 wrote the "Mother's Day Proclamation," a call to action that asked mothers to unite in promoting world peace and later campaigned for a "Mother's Peace Day" to be celebrated every June 2; and Juliet Calhoun Blakely, a temper-

ance activist who inspired a local Mother's Day in Albion, Michigan, in the 1870s. Jarvis' daughter, Ann, carried on her mother's work by organizing the first official Mother's Day celebration at a Methodist church in Grafton, West Virginia, in May 1908.
Source: History.com

Mother's Day is celebrated across the world, in more than 50 countries, though not all countries celebrate it on the same day.

Countries that celebrate Mother's Day on the second Sunday of May include Australia, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Switzerland, Turkey and Belgium. In Mexico and many parts of Latin America, Mother's Day is celebrated on May 10th of each year. In Thailand, it is celebrated on August 12th, the birthday of the current Queen.
Source: officeholidays.com/holidays/mothers-day



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Katy ISD 'shines a light' on district's volunteers

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

Music, excitement and energy were in the air as Katy ISD saluted its campus volunteers at the annual Volunteers in Public Schools breakfast conducted by the district's Partners in Education program. The breakfast was held Friday, April 26 at the Merrell Center, 6301 S. Stadium Drive in Katy. Guests were entertained by Morton Ranch Junior High Jazz Band as they entered the arena.

"One of the things that makes Katy ISD so special is our partnerships," said Superintendent of Schools Ken Gregorski as he welcomed attendees.

Members of the VIPS Executive Board, chaired by Margarita Paolinetti, came on stage to "shine a light" on the volunteers who contribute to the school system. Together with volunteers who work on campuses, and including after-school and weekend volunteers, more than 41,000 local volunteers serve the district, they said.

The featured speaker was Mike Van Hoozer, a Katy resident and leadership expert and sports performance coach who is also married to a Katy ISD teacher and the father of five boys who attend Katy schools. Van Hoozer is a graduate of Baylor University and a former Senior Executive with Accenture with over 30 years of consulting experience with small and large companies helping to develop high performance individuals, teams, and organizations. In sports, he works as a peak performance coach to high school, college, and professional athletes, coaches, and teams including NBA, NFL, and MLB players including members of the 2005 World Series' Houston Astros team helping them develop focus,

mental toughness, confidence, and improved mental recovery time as well as guiding them through career development and transitions.

Van Hoozer spoke about the importance of "responding in the moment" - stating that a decision made in a split-second moment can affect outcomes over a longer period of time. He shared an acronym that he uses with some of his athlete clients - CAR (Choices, Attitude, Response) and counseled that a response need to be "in the moment" - not stuck in the past or weighed by fear of the future. He compared "moments" as measured by clocks and by hourglasses, noting that clocks work all the time but that the sand in an hourglass eventually runs out and advising that attendees make the most of moments in their lives and not just go through the motions.

Van Hoozer also commented on the "PIE" - Partners in Education - acronym used by the district, and re-envisioned it as "Possibilities, Impact and Encouragement." Using the story of a third string NFL quarterback for the Pittsburgh Steelers, he advised the crowd to focus on "possibilities" rather than "probabilities." Staying focused on "possibilities" gives hope to somebody, he said, leading to impact and encouragement.

He also advised attendees to focus on what they could control and to be "outcome driven and process focused." "Be faithful with the reps you are given," was the mantra he shared, also advising an "I will" mindset.

Van Hoozer's last admonition was to "take the moment that you've been waiting for and make it happen." Through that accomplishment, "we can be the light," he said.

The event also included performances by the Bonnie Holland Elementary School Harmony Choir, who sang "Unwritten," and the drumlines from Katy ISD high schools.

Leadership expert and sports performance coach Mike Van Hoozer was the keynote speaker at Katy ISD's annual salute to volunteers on April 26 at the Merrell Center, 6301 S. Stadium Lane in Katy.



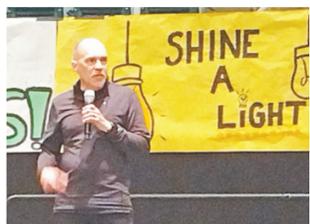
School emblems lined the Merrell Center as campuses honored their volunteers at Katy ISD's annual salute to volunteers on April 26 at the arena, 6301 S. Stadium Lane in Katy.

SUSAN ROVEGNO

VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

Katy ISD principals recognized the "Volunteer of the Year" from each one of the district's campuses, who stood to be recognized.

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Mayde Creek Elementary | Melva Moreno | Seven Lakes Jr. High | Quenisha Phillips |
| Bryant Elementary | Rebekah Smith | Randolph Elementary | Jessica Mahdi |
| WoodCreek Elementary | Ivy Nguyen | Kilpatrick Elementary | Samantha Rich |
| Williams Elementary | Anita Nybo | Memorial Parkway Jr. High | Claudia Stone |
| Rylander Elementary | Susana Carballido | Leonard Elementary | Stacy Vice |
| Paetow High School | Karen Segura | Cardiff Jr. High | Channary Wu |
| Hayes Elementary | Lindsey Pickrel | Schmalz Elementary | Samantha Asmatey |
| Morton Ranch High School | Tamara Hall & Labyron Hall | Rhoads Elementary | Ashley Miller |
| Katy Elementary | Brandi Traylor | Wilson Elementary | Sam Rader |
| McRoberts Elementary | Ashlynn Bensusuk | Campbell Elementary | Jamie Wong |
| Morton Ranch Elementary | Dani Sanchez | Faldyn Elementary | Joseph Adkins |
| Cimarron Elementary | Morgan Williams | McDonald Jr. High | Melissas Gaston |
| Seven Lakes High School | Eloisa Patel | Shafer Elementary | Brittany Dyal |
| Tays Jr. High | Julie Ingram | Katy High School | Roy Frankum |
| WoodCreek Jr. High | Shannon Nemic | McRoberts Elementary | Ashlynn Bensusuk |
| Robertson Elementary | Jessi Daigle | Memorial Parkway Elementary | Cynthia Gomez |
| Creech Elementary | Nicole Slusz | Mayde Creek Jr. High | Anna Mansfield |
| Golbow Elementary | Denise Cupit | Sundown Elementary | Kathleen Preece |
| Nottingham Country Elementary | Sarah Easterling | Franz Elementary | Beatriz Hercules |
| Holland Elementary | Tina Park | Morton Ranch Jr. High | Monica Rexach |
| Davidson Elementary | Paola Maidla | Mayde Creek High School | Tania Morales |
| Hutsell Elementary | Marisol Ramirez | King Elementary | Tianna Delude |
| Pattison Elementary | Jessica Doherty | Exley Elementary | Amanda Hyman |
| Fielder Elementary | Jennifer Harvey | Cinco Ranch Jr. High | Rachel Yelin |
| Jenks Elementary | Lisa Ortiz | Griffin Elementary | Vicky Tillerson |
| Taylor High School | Tara Weatherwax | West Memorial Elementary | Holly Ybarra |
| Katy Jr. High | Jackie Henderson | Alexander Elementary | Amy Haskell |
| Stephens Elementary | Maria Benumea | McMeans Jr. High | Lori Katragadda |
| Wolman Elementary | Melanie Campbell | Adams Jr. High | Gina Cummings |
| Youngblood Elementary | Susan Gaston | Wolfe Elementary | Laura Wolf |
| West Memorial Jr. High | Cori Harbuck | Beckendorff Jr. High | Kim Carter |
| McElwain Elementary | Alisia Broussard | Winborn Elementary | Yumi Rawlinson |
| Beck Jr. High | Sara Seraj | Jordan High School | Amber Chatten |
| Haskett Jr. High | Walter Thomas | Bear Creek Elementary | Jen Weston |
| Bethke Elementary | Beth Vedros | McDonald Jr. High | Melissa Gaston |
| Stanley Elementary | Christy Black | Cinco Ranch High School | Candace Perkins |



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Cinco Ranch's softball team celebrates after Lindsey DeLeon hit a grand slam during Saturday's bi-district game between Cinco Ranch and George Ranch at the Cinco Ranch softball field.

Cinco Ranch rallies past George Ranch, advances to area

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Suzanne Reeve woke up confident on Saturday morning.

The Cinco Ranch head coach and her team were in a tough situation Saturday, going up against District 20-6A winner George Ranch in a winner take all game three of their bi-district series, but Reeve had a good feeling, and when she walked into the Cinco Ranch softball field that feeling only got stronger. She knew that the Cougars were going to find a way to keep their season going.

"I went home last night and I said 'we are going to win this game on Saturday,'" Reeve said. "Then when I saw the girls this morning, saw their

body language and the way they were ready to go, I just knew it right then. I felt it, these girls were going to find a way and they did that. I'm so proud."

Cinco (15-14) did find a way, scoring five runs in the sixth inning of the deciding game to beat George Ranch (24-7) 5-2, as the Cougars advanced to the area round for the third straight season. It took everything from Cinco Ranch — the team fell behind by two runs in the second inning, but rallied late to take a thrilling win.

George Ranch had a chance to break things open in the second inning, loading the bases with no outs and got a run off an RBI single from

See **CINCO**, page B5

Katy downs Dulles in bi-district round

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Katy has been excited for this moment all year.

All year the Tigers have wanted a chance to get back to the playoffs, a chance to prove themselves and a chance to keep their season going.

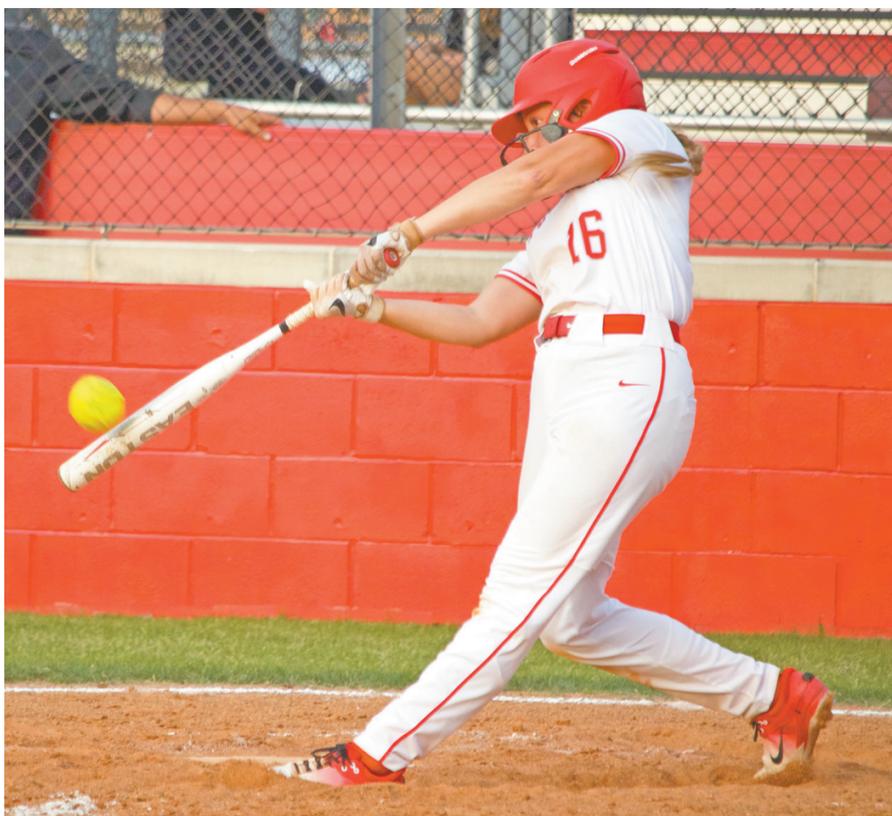
That moment finally came for the Tigers and they didn't disappoint, sweeping Dulles in the bi-district round behind two run rule wins, including a 14-0 win on Friday.

"We work extremely hard," said junior third baseman Hailey Gore. "We've been striving to get here all year and it fuels us. We practice hard and then once we step on that field we instantly are in game mode. This team has been ready to go every game and we weren't going to change that today."

Katy took no time putting its foot on the gas, as Gore gave them the lead in her first at bat of the game on a double. Camryn Harrison followed that up with a double of her own that drove in a run and Ella-Kate Smith hit a single that made it 3-0 after one inning. Katy went on to score six runs in the second inning and five runs in the third, with the backups coming in to close the game out in the fourth and fifth innings.

Gore had four RBIs in the game, hitting two doubles and a three run home run and she also scored three runs. Smith led the team with five RBIs on two hits, including a grand slam in the second inning that helped break the game open. Ashtyn Reichardt drove in a run and scored three while Camryn Harrison drove in one run and scored twice while drawing two walks. Lauryn Soeken pitched three innings of shutout ball, striking out three while not allowing a hit and not walking a batter before Caylee Gaytan closed out the game in the final two innings by striking out four and not walking any or allowing a hit as the two combined for a no hitter.

"Hailey has had a great season and she continued that today," said Katy head coach Kalum Haack. "It's been all year that she has proven herself. The hard work that she has put in over the



"Hailey has had a great season and she continued that today. ... Hailey has stepped up as a leader as well and it's just made her a better player both defensively and offensively."

KALUM HAACK,
Katy head coach

Above: Hailey Gore hits during Friday's bi-district round game between Katy and Dulles at the Katy softball field. Left: Caylee Gaytan pitches during Friday's bi-district round game between Katy and Dulles at the Katy softball field.

PHOTOS BY TYLER TYRE

See **KATY**, page B7

WEEK OF MAY 3

SCORES & SCHEDULES

SOFTBALL

Scores

BI-DISTRICT

- Cinco Ranch 11, George Ranch 6,
- Cinco Ranch 0, George Ranch 9
- Cinco Ranch 5, George Ranch 2
- Katy 10, Dulles 0
- Katy 14, Dulles 0
- Taylor 7, Ridge Point 0
- Taylor 11, Ridge Point 1
- Tompkins 8, Travis 5

Schedule

AREA

Thursday

- Game 1: Katy vs. Chavez, 6:30 p.m. at Butler Stadium
- Game 1: Tompkins at Memorial, 6:30 p.m.
- Game 1: Cinco Ranch vs. Bellaire, 6:30 p.m. at Cy-Lakes

Friday

- One-Game Playoff: Taylor vs. Heights, 6:30 p.m.
- Game 2: Katy vs. Chavez, 6:30 p.m.
- Game 2: Tompkins vs. Memorial, 6:30 p.m.
- Game 2: Cinco Ranch vs. Bellaire, 6:30 p.m. at Cy-Lakes

Saturday

- Game 3: Katy vs. Chavez, 10 a.m. (if needed)
- Cinco Ranch vs. Bellaire, 11 a.m. at Cy-Lakes (if needed)
- Game 3: Tompkins vs. Memorial, 1:30 p.m. (if needed)

BASEBALL

Schedule

BI-DISTRICT

Thursday

- Game 1: Cinco Ranch vs. Elkins, 6 p.m. at Langham Creek
- Game 1: Katy vs. Travis, 6 p.m. at Cy-Park
- Game 1: Tompkins vs. George Ranch, 6:30 p.m.
- Game 1: Taylor at Ridge Point, 7 p.m.

Friday

- Game 2: Cinco Ranch vs. Elkins, 6 p.m. at Langham Creek
- Game 2: Katy vs. Travis, 6 p.m. at Cy-Park
- Game 2: Tompkins at George Ranch, 6:30 p.m.
- Game 2: Taylor vs. Ridge Point, 7 p.m.

Saturday

- Game 3: Cinco Ranch vs. Elkins, 1 p.m. at Langham Creek (if needed)
- Game 3: Katy vs. Travis, 2 p.m. at Cy-Park (if needed)
- Game 3: Taylor at Ridge Point, 2 p.m. (if needed)
- Game 3: Tompkins vs. George Ranch, 5 p.m. at Langham Creek (if needed)

TRACK & FIELD

Saturday

- Class 6A State Track & Field Meet



Katelyn Wentzler hits during Wednesday's bi-district round game between Taylor and Ridge Point at the Jordan softball field.

TYLER TYRE

Taylor sweeps Ridge Point, advances to area for first time since 2011

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

It had been over a decade since Taylor had won a playoff series.

The Mustangs took a step last year, making it to the playoffs and putting up a strong fight against George Ranch, but this year's group had bigger

goals. This year, the Mustangs are focused on advancing and making a run.

Taylor took its first step in that on Wednesday, breaking a 13-year drought with no playoff wins by beating Ridge Point 7-0 in the first game of a three-game bi-district series, gaining a huge advantage over the Panthers, before

beating Ridge Point 11-1 Friday night to complete the sweep.

"We want this so badly," said senior pitcher Ari Hughes, "We want to get this win and go to the next round. We got the experience last year of the playoffs but we want to go further this year. It's given us a lot of

See **TAYLOR**, page B5

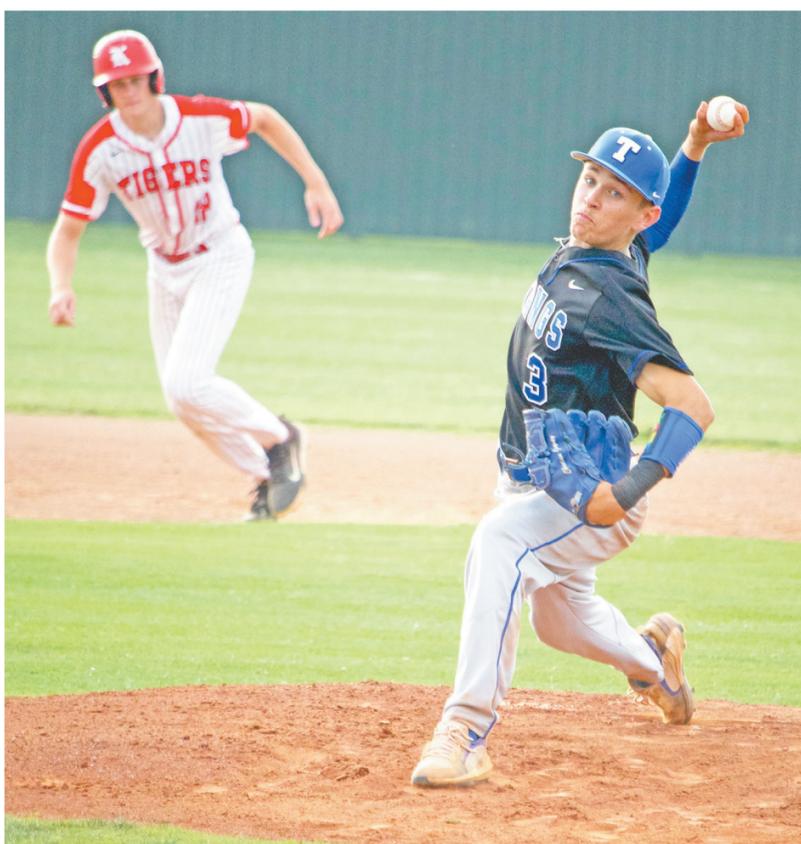


Left: AJ Atkinson hits during Friday's game between Katy and Taylor at the Katy baseball field. Above: Nate Larsen hits during Friday's game between Katy and Taylor at the Katy baseball field. Below: Jeremy Mazariegos hits during Friday's game between Katy and Taylor at the Katy baseball field.

PHOTOS BY TYLER TYRE



Katy ready for playoffs after sweep of Taylor



Christian Jaquay pitches during Friday's game between Katy and Taylor at the Katy baseball field.

TYLER TYRE

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

It's been an up and down year for Katy. The Tigers led District 19-6A for much of the year but there were times when mistakes would come back to bite them, whether it be inconsistency on offense or other areas of the field.

The Tigers (20-10, 13-3) dropped an important series late in district to Cinco Ranch, but they bounced back and still had a chance to achieve one of their big goals, which they did on Friday, clinching a share of the District 19-6A championship and the second seed out of district with a sweep of Taylor (21-12-1, 11-5), beating the Mustangs 11-0 in the team's final district game.

"It's a big step for us to get this second seed," said Katy head coach Wes Hearne. "We finished third last year and went on a big run and we are going to have to go through a tough bracket again. The kids are excited though and we just have to get ready."

The Tigers got some much needed momentum from their two games against Taylor. Katy came into the week with the possibility of finishing first or falling as far as fourth in district. The Tigers two wins secured a top two spot and they closed out district in emphatic fashion on Friday.

Katy got to work right away in the first inning. Connor Udland worked himself out a jam in the top of the inning, overcoming allowing two runners on with one out to get out of it unscathed, and then the offense had a very strong bottom half of the inning. Katy loaded the bases and got a run on a bases loaded walk to take the lead, which chased Taylor's starting pitcher from the game early. An error then gave the Tigers two more runs before Jeremy Mazariegos singled in a fourth to give Katy an early advantage.

Katy added on in the fifth, getting a run on a bases loaded walk and then getting another on an Ashten Ballew single before three more runs scored errors, AJ Atkinson then hit a single that drove in a run and made it 10-0 after three, with the Tigers scoring their 11th in the fourth inning on an Aiden Schipper sacrifice fly.

"It was so big for us to finish off district this way and have good performances against a good Taylor team," said junior pitcher Connor Udland. "I think that it's just going to elevate how we play in the playoffs, I can't wait for it."



TYLER TYRE

Connor Udland pitches during Friday's game between Katy and Taylor at the Katy baseball field.

Udland had a huge day on the mound for Katy to continue his monster season. The junior pitched all five innings and struck out six while allowing just three hits and walking three in the win.

"He's such a quiet guy, but when he gets up there, he's a different guy. He has such a fire to him," Hearne said. "He's a guy that throws a lot of strikes and doesn't walk people. That's half the battle for pitchers and we're just fortunate to have a guy like that."

The Tigers' next step is to be ready for the playoffs. It's something this group is familiar with, going to the regional semifinals and the regional final in the past two years, but every player knows they will have to continue to improve to reach that level again.

"The guys are finally starting to have good at bats offensively and grind things out, see pitches and do the right things," Hearne said. "We've talked about it a lot this season and these guys are doing it now. We just have to keep getting better at that and work up pitch counts. We're going to get into a schedule of getting these guys ready for the playoffs and see where it takes us."

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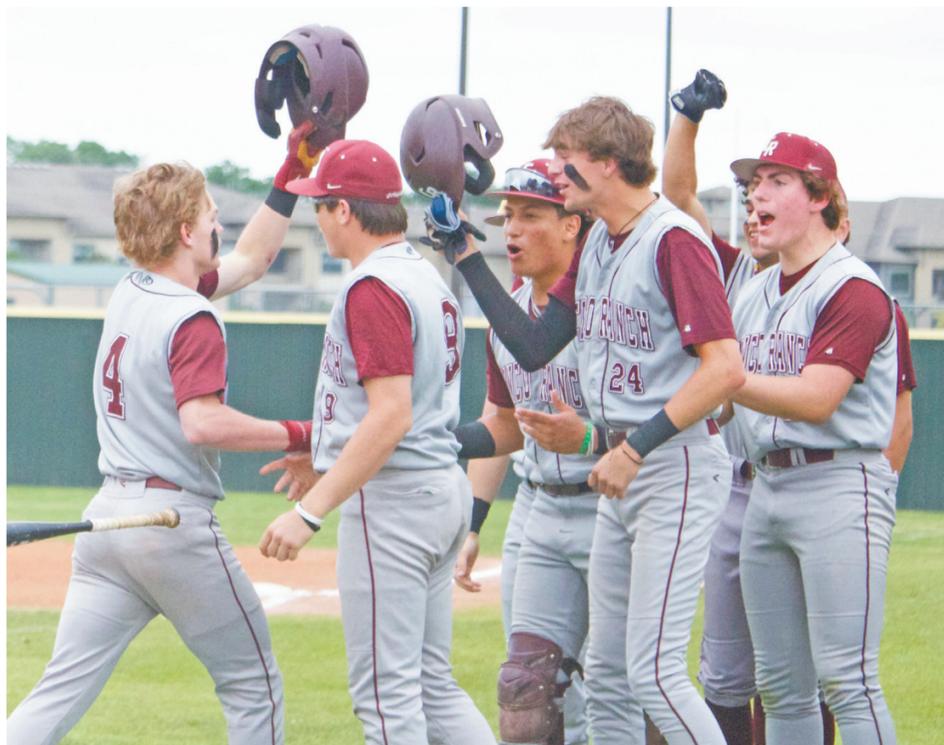
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**Honoring Their Sacrifice.
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Cinco Ranch players celebrate after a Brock DeYoung home run during Tuesday's game between Cinco Ranch and Seven Lakes at the Seven Lakes baseball field.

Cinco Ranch out to make a run after clinching second straight district championship

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Cinco Ranch has gone from one end of the pendulum to the other this season.

The Cougars had to go through lows to reach the heights they are at now, going from an 0-3 start in district play to back-to-back district champions who closed district out on a 13-game district winning streak.

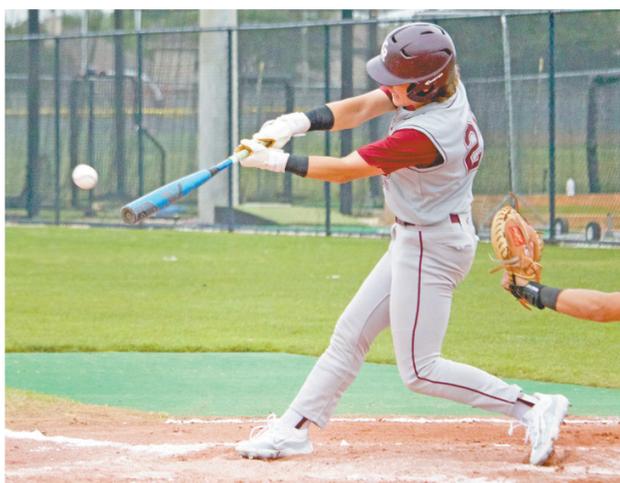
The Cougars clinched it all with a 2-1 win on Friday night over Seven Lakes where Ethan Muniz threw a gem of a complete game, striking out six and allowing just four hits without walking a batter and only allowing one earned run, while Dylan Muniz drove in a run on a single and Paul Acosta scored the winning run in the second inning on a wild pitch.

It's the first time in school history that the Cougars baseball program has won back to back district titles and it's a moment that they made sure to celebrate.

"It's a special moment for us," said Cinco Ranch head coach Brett Wallace. "But to do this from where we started makes it even more special. Our guys fought to get out of that hole and then to win it in a close game the way we did was great. It was a good challenge for us heading into playoffs."

The Cougars were in a must-win situation for all district if they wanted to defend that district title and they did everything they had to do, starting their winning streak in a thrilling game against Tompkins before going on to sweep the rest of their district opponents, including Katy in two dominant wins that secured the first seed in the playoffs for Cinco.

"The guys never dropped their heads after those first three games because we were in all of them and were just one hit away from turning them into wins," Wallace said. "Sometimes you do things



Dylan Muniz hits during Tuesday's game between Cinco Ranch and Seven Lakes at the Seven Lakes baseball field.

right and it doesn't fall your way. After those three games, the ball started to fall our way and our guys just kept getting better and better."

The Cougars have been bolstered by a strong and deep pitching staff that has helped them go on this huge run. The trio of Josh Morelli, Ethan Muniz and Brayden Hodge have shut teams down on the mound as starters while Thomas Guys has been strong as the first man on in relief. The Cougars have given up just over two runs a game on the season and the offense has been tremendous as well, with Cinco outscoring opponents by over four runs a game in district play.

"They all throw strikes and that's the key to success in high school is to throw strikes and pound the zone," Wallace said. "We have a really good defense to back them up as well with guys like Brock (DeYoung), Lucas (Franco) at third and Karten (Kleiwig) at second and our

outfield is good too and that helps take that pressure off the pitchers. That's been the key to our success, limit free bases and that's been a big emphasis this year that the guys have done well with."

The next step for the Cougars is playoffs. Cinco Ranch went on the biggest run in program history last year, reaching the regional semifinals before falling to state finalist Pearland. The Cougars want to make another run this year and they have guys who have been there before, a huge advantage and something they didn't have last season.

"Having guys that have that experience in the playoffs from last year I think is going to really help us out," Wallace said. "The moment isn't going to be too big for them and hopefully they can help those guys who haven't been here before settle in. We've been there and done that, the expectation now is to keep it going, not just to make the playoffs, but to make another run at it."

Cinco Ranch one step from district title after win over Seven Lakes

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Cinco Ranch has worked all year to get to this position.

It's been a grind. But the Cougars have gone on the biggest run of any team in the district. The Cougars have treated every game as a must win and it has led to them going on a 12-game district win streak and put them in prime position to clinch a second straight district championship.

The Cougars came into this week knowing that two wins to close out district would secure that goal and Cinco took that first step on Tuesday by beating Seven Lakes 12-1 in five innings.

"The guys just followed our approach that we've had all season and they did a great job of it today," said Cinco Ranch head coach Brett Wallace. "Our motto is to hit it hard and low. The guys all practice that and it's helped us on this win streak. They take advantage of what pitchers give them and the way we play just puts pressure on other teams."

Cinco took no time getting ahead in the game, as Brock DeYoung hit a leadoff home run in his first at bat of the game. DeYoung then drove in another in the second inning with an RBI single as the Cougars gained an early advantage.

"He's our sparkplug," Wallace said. "If he gets a hit in the first inning it seems like we always find a way to score him. He gets on base a lot and anytime he does we feel like our guys can get him in. The lineup behind him puts balls in play, hits it hard and we just find ways to score runs. But Brock starts all of that."

Cinco's offense exploded in the fourth inning. Karsten Kleiwig hit a fielders choice to get the scoring started before scoring himself on an error. Lucas Franco then made it 6-0 with a single that brought in two more. Dylan Muniz hit a single that drove in another run and Luis Gomez brought in another on a double, walks and hit by pitches then stretched the Cougars lead to 12. Seven Lakes got one run back in the fourth when Austin Hass-



Josh Morelli pitches during Tuesday's game between Cinco Ranch and Seven Lakes at the Seven Lakes baseball field.

mann hit an RBI single, but Cinco closed the game out strong to take the win in a run rule.

DeYoung led the way offensively with his two RBIs and two runs scored on two hits, while Franco also drove in two. Josh Morelli had a strong day on the mound and allowed no earned runs through five innings, allowing just three hits while striking out three and walking two.

"This whole team just feeds off each other — everyone in that dugout is my brother," DeYoung said. "We even go play pickleball together. We really do everything together — we go eat, we hang out, it's not just the practices — everyone here is always lifting each other up and it's amazing."

The Cougars can clinch at least a share of the district title and will secure the first seed out of district with a win on Friday over Seven Lakes at home, as the Cougars also swept Katy earlier this season. It would be a sweet moment for Cinco, which had to go on this big run after a slow start to district play as they try to win their second straight district championship.

"We're focusing on the game in front of us but it's important and we really want it," DeYoung said. "It's the first time in school history we'd go back to back and there isn't a better group of guys to do it with. I'm excited we have this opportunity."



Karsten Kleiwig celebrates with Jase Morris after Kleiwig turned a double play during Tuesday's game between Cinco Ranch and Seven Lakes at the Seven Lakes baseball field.



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PUBLIC NOTICES

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids addressed to Katy Development Authority, Attention Mr. Jonas W. Conner, President, Board of Directors, will be received at City of Katy City Hall, 901 Avenue C, Katy, Texas 77493, until **11:00 a.m. local time, Friday, May 10, 2024**, and then publicly opened and read for "Traffic Signal Improvements Project - Pitts Road at Cane Island Pkwy" for Katy Development Authority, of Harris County, Texas.

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the construction of a new traffic signal system at the intersection of Pitts Road and Cane Island Pkwy, including all labor, equipment, material, and incidentals required for the project.

Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A **NON-MANDATORY VIRTUAL** pre-bid conference will be held on **Thursday, May 2, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. local time via Zoom.us**. Attendance by each prospective bidder or its representative at the pre-bid conference is **NOT MANDATORY**.

Information for joining the virtual meeting is given below:

Join Zoom Meeting:
Meeting ID: 844 8509 0008
Passcode: 036608
Dial In: +13462487799,,84485090008#,,,*036608# US (Houston)

Each Bid must be accompanied by a Bid bond or a certified or cashier's check, acceptable to the Owner, in an amount not less than two percent (2%) of the total amount Bid, as a guarantee that the successful bidder will enter into the Contract Documents and execute the Bonds on the forms provided and provide the required insurance certificates and Bonds within seven (7) days after the date Contract Documents are received by the successful bidder. If a certified or cashier's check is provided, the successful bidder shall deliver, at the bid opening address, the original certified or cashier's check within one (1) business day of receipt of the bid opening.

Copies of the bidding documents may be reviewed and obtained from www.CivcastUSA.com. Bidders must register on this website in order to view and/or download specifications, plans, soils report, and environmental reports for this Project. There is **NO** charge to view or download documents.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive all defects and irregularities in bidding or bidding process except the time for submitting a Bid. The successful bidder, if any, will be the responsible bidder, which in the Board's judgment will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the Project.

The requirements of Subchapter J, Chapter 552, Government Code, may apply to this Bid and the bidder agrees that the Contract Documents can be terminated if the bidder knowingly or intentionally fails to comply with a requirement of that subchapter.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Electronic Bids addressed to Board of Directors, Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 171, will be electronically received, until **2 p.m. Local Time, Thursday, May 16, 2024** and then publicly opened and read at the offices of SWA Group Landscape Architects, 712 Main St., 6th Floor, Houston, Texas 77002 for "Elyson Basin D Trail Landscape", Harris County, Texas. In addition to the opening of sealed Bids at the address above, you may view the public opening of sealed Bids via Zoom. Join the meeting from your computer at <https://swagroup.zoom.us/j/8408644870?omn=99438048425>; Meeting ID: 840 864 4870.

Scope of Work for the Contract includes, but is not limited to, the construction of pedestrian trail, sprinkler irrigation, grading, grassing, planting, and landscape maintenance.

Bids received after the closing time will not be considered. A **MANDATORY** pre-bid conference will be held **Friday, May 10, 2024, at 10 a.m.** Local Time, via ZOOM. Join the meeting from your computer at <https://swagroup.zoom.us/j/8408644870?omn=93284123480>; Meeting ID: 840 864 4870. Attendance by each prospective bidder or its representative at the pre-bid conference is **MANDATORY**, and no Bid will be opened unless the bidder or representative was present at the pre-bid conference.

Each Bid must be accompanied by a Bid Bond or a certified or cashier's check, acceptable to the Owner, in an amount not less than two percent (2%) of the total amount Bid, as a guarantee that the successful bidder will enter into the Contract and execute the Bonds on the forms provided and provide the required insurance certificates within seven (7) days after the date Contract Documents are received by the Contractor. If a certified or cashier's check is provided, the successful bidder shall deliver, at the bid opening address, the original certified or cashier's check within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the bid opening.

Copies of the bidding documents may be reviewed and obtained from www.CivcastUSA.com: search **NWCT207**. Bidders must register on this website in order to view and/or download specifications, plans, soils report, and environmental reports for this Project. There is **NO** charge to view or download documents.

A bidder submitting electronic Bids must submit its Bid and Bid Securities in compliance with Owner's Order Adopting Section 49.2731 Electronic Bidding Rules and all electronic Bids and Bid Securities must be submitted through www.CivcastUSA.com. Bidder must register on this website in order to submit a Bid and Bid Security and there is no charge to submit Bids and Bid Securities on this website.

By submitting a Bid, bidder acknowledges and agrees that the Contract Documents may be accepted, executed or agreed to through the use of an Electronic Signature, as defined by and in accordance with Owner's Electronic Signature Rules for Construction Contracts.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive all defects and irregularities in bidding or bidding process except time of submitting a Bid. The successful bidder, if any, will be the responsible bidder which in the Board's judgment will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the Project.

The requirements of Subchapter J, Chapter 552, Government Code, may apply to this Bid and the Contractor agrees that the Contract can be terminated if the Contractor knowingly or intentionally fails to comply with a requirement of that subchapter.

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INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed electronic bids, addressed to Synova Ph. 1 Bid Package 1A will be received through email, at the address: mminorero@half.com, until 2:00 p.m. Thursday, May 16, 2024, at which time all bids will be opened and publicly read at the offices of Half (14800 St Marys Ln #160, Houston, TX 77079) for the furnishing of material, equipment, labor and supervision necessary or incidental to the Construction of Synova Ph. 1 Bid Package 1A. Proposals tendered after closing will not be opened. Scope of Project: 1. Concrete Flatwork, 2. Landscaping, 3. Irrigation, 4. Minor Site Grading and Preparation, 5. SWPPP Maintenance & Removal, 6. Select Clearing. Bid documents to be provided to interested bidders, upon request, at the email provided above. The successful bidder may be required to provide a performance bond, payment bond, and a maintenance bond as provided for in the bid documents, for the full amount of the contract. The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

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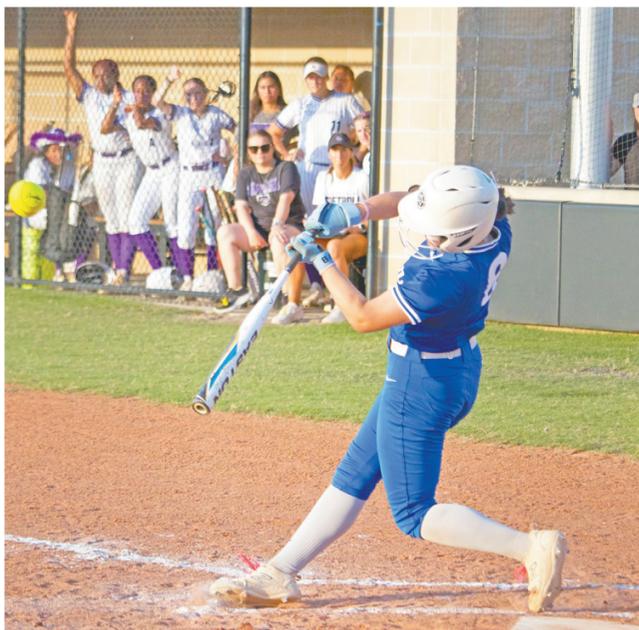
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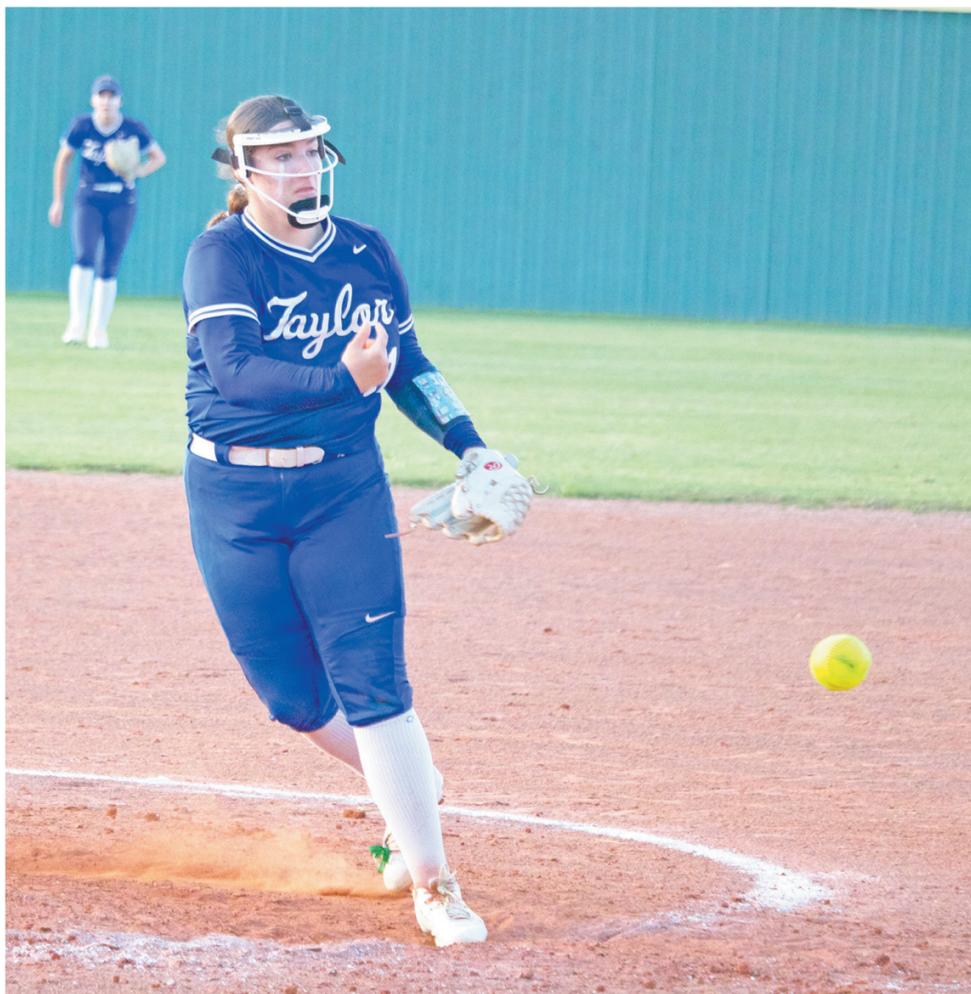
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TYLER TYRE

Bethany Fan hits during Wednesday's bi-district round game between Taylor and Ridge Point at the Jordan softball field.



TYLER TYRE

Ari Hughes pitches during Wednesday's bi-district round game between Taylor and Ridge Point at the Jordan softball field.

TAYLOR

from page B1



TYLER TYRE

Alyssa Sharrock catches a pop fly during Wednesday's bi-district round game between Taylor and Ridge Point at the Jordan softball field.

drive and motivation, we want to push forward and go to area."

It only took one at bat for the Mustangs to settle their nerves, as leadoff hitter Kaelyn Lerma stepped to the plate and slammed a solo home run to start the game. Even if there were any doubts before that, it quelled them and gave the rest of the Taylor team the belief that they could compete with anyone.

"It was a big exhale for everyone in the dugout," said Taylor head coach Billie Powell. "When you have somebody like Kaelyn at the top of the lineup like that it's so impactful and this is what she's done for us all season. But it allowed us to relax a little bit and it gave the dugout that feeling that they knew they could do this. It was a big boost right when we needed it."

Taylor settled in and started adding on in the third inning. Bethany Fan plated the Mustangs second run on a sacrifice grounder and Sophia Ybanez hit a double

that brought another home. Hughes hit an RBI single and Alyssa Sharrock made it 5-0 after three inning by driving in another run on a fielders choice. Taylor added two more in the seventh, one on a Katelyn Wentzler double and another on a Taylor Gray double as the Mustangs went on to close out the game in strong fashion.

"We just sat and waited on pitches that missed, when they did we took advantage of it," Lerma said. "Ridge Point has a good pitcher so we had to pick and choose when to get aggressive and attack only our pitches. That was a big part of our success today, we

didn't strike out once and we put balls in play."

Taylor's offense was big with 13 hits in the game, but Hughes was equally as impressive, pitching a complete game and not allowing a run on seven hits while striking out six. Ridge Point got runners in scoring position in three different innings, but each time Hughes stepped up and kept the Panthers from getting on the scoreboard.

"Nothing bothers her," Powell said. "Ari thinks every single time she's up there no matter who she's facing, no matter the situation, that she is going to win that battle. It's a special mentality, we could be up five runs or down five runs and

nothing changes for her. Ari just goes out and executes every single pitch the same way — it's special."

Lerma added three RBIs in Friday's game while Wentzler drove in four runs. Hughes pitched another complete game, striking out two in five innings and allowing just one run on six hits.

"We can still be better," Lerma said. "We're going to enjoy this but we are going to be ready. We have to be better at moving runners on Friday and we have to figure out how to produce every time we have someone on base. No team is going to go down quietly so we have to make sure we out produce them."

CINCO

from page B1

Abigail Dominguez, but Faith Piper stepped up and limited the damage, throwing out two runners at the plate and keeping another ball in the infield that turned into a fielders choice as the Cougars kept the George Ranch lead to only 2-0.

"It was big for us I think," Piper said. "Even with them scoring it shifted the momentum. We kept them at two runs and that frustrated them a bit and it gave us a better chance at coming back later in the game."

George Ranch held the Cinco offense at bay for the first five innings of the game, but the Cougars broke through in a big way in the bottom of the sixth. Cinco loaded the bases with no outs and Lindsey DeLeon stepped to the plate and had the biggest hit of her life, launching a grand slam over the right field wall to give Cinco the lead. The Cougars kept it going, getting a runner in scoring position after a single and an error and Katie Schmidt-Pena hit an RBI single to make it a three-run lead.

"We knew that we were the better team and that we could wear them down and eventually get those runs," DeLeon said. "The coaches put that mindset in us and we grinded for it all day. To be the one who put us ahead and to hit that grand slam was such an amazing feeling."

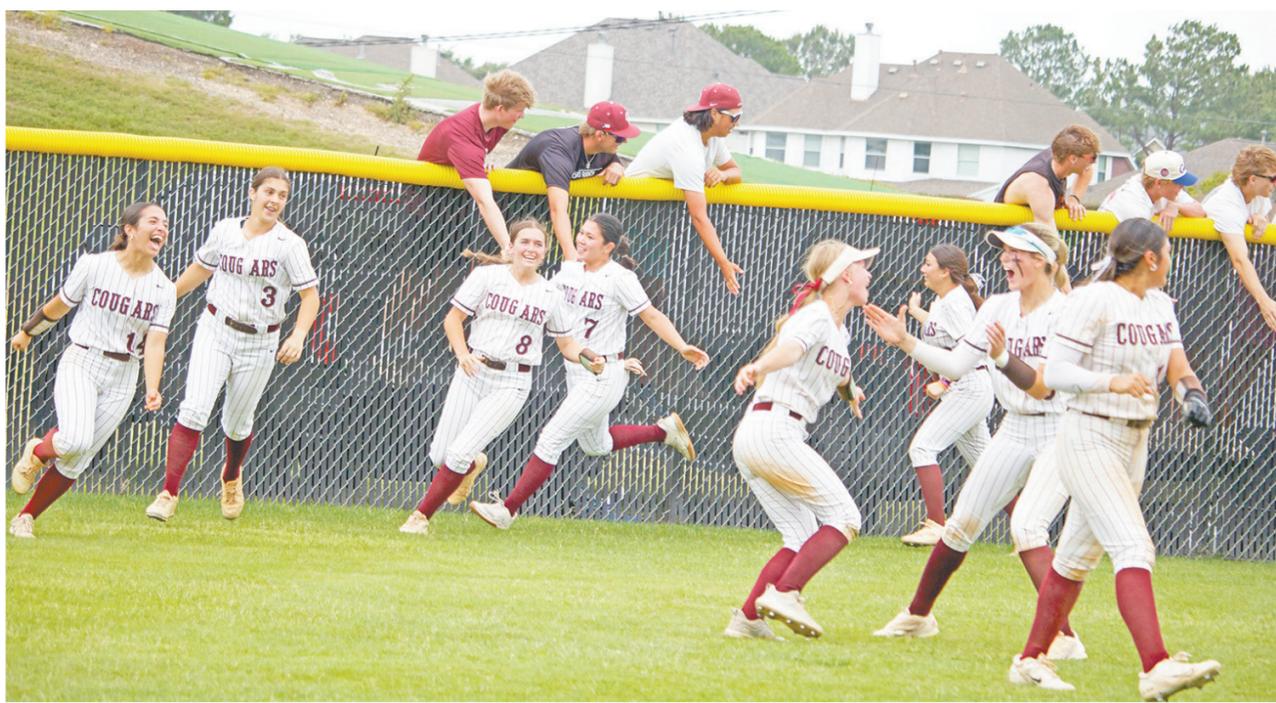
Cinco got the final three outs in a strong top of the seventh, working around a double to not give up a run and seal the win.

Savannah Henningson had a strong day on the mound. The senior overcame the two run second inning and didn't allow a run the rest of the way, working out of trouble on multiple occasions, allowing 10 hits but just the one earned run while striking out two and not walking a batter.

"Savannah is amazing up there," Reeve said. "She's so methodical up there and precise with her pitching. I'm sure she wanted to be in there the first two games, but when her number was called she fought and she was amazing when we needed her. We knew we would have to rally today and the whole team did it together."

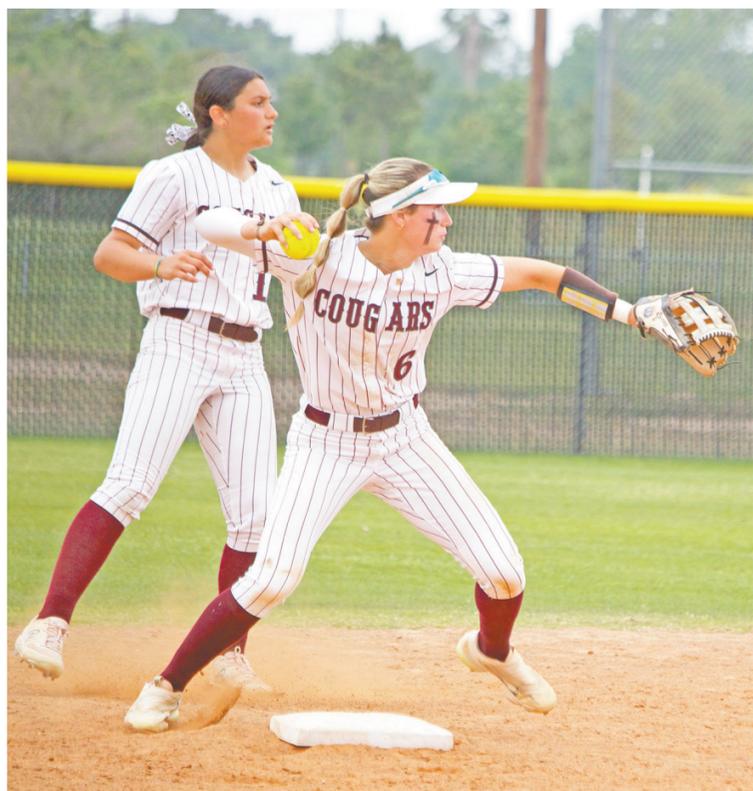
Cinco Ranch advances to play Bellaire in the area round of the playoffs, times and dates to be determined. The Cougars are happy to have one more week, and they will do everything to keep advancing.

"I'm so excited," Piper said. "This team deserves it. I just want to keep playing with these girls and I'm excited to keep going and have another chance."



TYLER TYRE

The Cinco Ranch softball team celebrates with the Cinco Ranch baseball team after winning Saturday's bi-district game against George Ranch.



PHOTOS BY TYLER TYRE

Above: Faith Piper makes a throw to first base during Saturday's bi-district game between Cinco Ranch and George Ranch at the Cinco Ranch softball field. Left: Savannah Henningson pitches during Saturday's bi-district game between Cinco Ranch and George Ranch at the Cinco Ranch softball field.

Katy ISD sends athletes to state track and field meet

Tompkins boys finish second at regional meet

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Katy ISD had a strong meet at the Region III-6A track and field meet and sent a number of athletes to the state track and field meet next week after big performances.

The highlight of the meet was the Tompkins boys continuing to be one of the best in the state and region. The Falcons finished second overall, behind only Atasococita, finishing with 95 points, five back of first place, while Katy's boys finished fifth, Cinco Ranch's boys finished seventh and Seven Lakes' boys finished eighth.

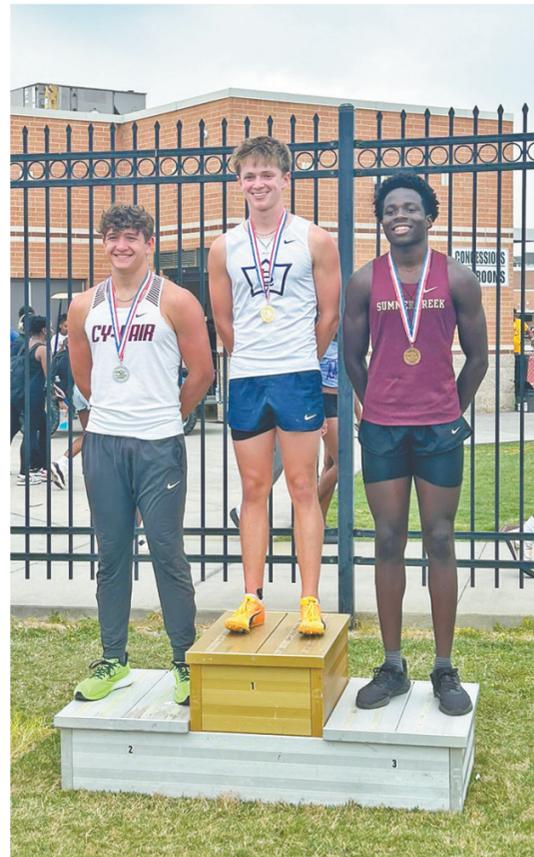
The Falcons came in first place in the 800-meter relay with a time of one minute 24.66 seconds and have the third fastest time in the state heading into the state meet. Jayden Keys kept up his dominant senior season, winning the 300-meter hurdles with a time of 36.72 seconds, winning the long jump with a jump of 7.42 meters, finishing second and qualifying for state in the 110-meter hurdles, while also being a part of the third place 400-meter relay team that qualified for state. Griffen Saacke added a gold medal in the 3200-meter run.

London Jackson Bray finished first in the 110-meter dash for Katy with a time of 11.44 for Katy and Adam Carter and Tyler Willis finished first and second in the shot put with throws of 18.09 meters and 17.13 meters. Mayde Creek's Elijah Ferguson came in first in the 400-meter dash with a time of 46.78 seconds. Seven Lakes earned wins in the boy and girls pole vault as well as the girls shot put. Max Austin won the boys pole vault with a jump of 3.73 meters, while Carla Angueira-Colombani finished first in the girls pole vault with a jump of 3.73 meters, Janey Campbell joined them on the gold medal stand by winning the girls shot put with a throw of 14.25 meters.

In Class 4A, the Royal girls won both the 400 and 800-meter relays. A team of Adriana Propet-Smith, Andrea Shaw, Aliyah Wilson and Airriona Jackson came in first both relays. The team won the 400-meter relay with a time of 48.11 seconds and won the 800-meter relay with a time of one minute, 42.06 seconds.



The Brookshire Royal 800-meter relay came in first at the Region IV-6A track and field meet.



Seven Lakes' Max Austin won the pole vault at the Region III-6A track and field meet.



Katy's Adam Carter and Tyler Willis finished first and second in the shotput at the Region III-6A track and field meet.



Tompkins' Griffen Saacke won the 300-meter run at the Region III-6A track and field meet.



Tompkins' Jayden Keys won the long jump and the 300-meter hurdles at the Region III-6A track and field meet.



Above: Katy's London Jackson Bray finished first in the 100-meter dash at the Region III-6A track and field meet. Left: Mayde Creek's Elijah Ferguson won the 400-meter dash at the Region III-6A track and field meet.

STATE TRACK & FIELD QUALIFIERS

Following is the full list of state qualifiers from Katy ISD and Royal ISD. Numbers are state qualifier rankings

Class 6A Girls

- 3200-meter run**
8. Jamie Klander, Mayde Creek, 10:40.19
- 400-meter relay**
7. Paetow, 46.32
- 800-meter run**
7. Elizabeth Brooks, Katy, 2:13.01
- 100-meter dash**
2. London Jackson Bray, Katy, 11.44
- 200-meter dash**
8. London Jackson Bray, Katy, 23.72

- 1600-meter run**
9. Rowan Saacke, Tompkins, 4:55.65
- Pole Vault**
Carla Angueira-Colombani, Seven Lakes, 12-03
3. Kayla Byrd, Cinco Ranch, 12-00
- Shot Put**
1. Janey Campbell, Seven Lakes, 46-09
7. Staphanie Williams, Seven Lakes, 43-07.75

Class 6A Boys

- 3200-meter run**
8. Griffen Saacke, Tompkins, 9:14.69
9. Matthew Montgomery, Seven Lakes, 9:15.75
- 400-meter relay**
3. Tompkins, 40.37

- 110-meter hurdles**
2. Jayden Keys, Tompkins, 13.63
- 100-meter dash**
5. Kevin Bello, Cinco Ranch, 10.43
- 800-meter relay**
3. Tompkins, 1:24.66
- 400-meter dash**
1. Elijah Ferguson, Mayde Creek, 46.78
4. Kevin Bello, Cinco Ranch, 47.20
- 300-meter hurdles**
1. Jayden Keys, Tompkins, 36.72
4. James Ledbetter, Jordan, 37.33
- 200-meter dash**
2. Jhase McMillan, Tompkins, 20.69
5. Blake Hamilton, Tompkins, 21.10
- Discus**
8. Joseph Otu Ugwu, Paetow, 167-04

- Long Jump**
2. Jayden Keys, Tompkins, 24-04.25
- Pole Vault**
3. Max Austin, Seven Lakes, 16-00
- Shot Put**
2. Adam Carter, Katy, 59-04.25
6. Tyler Willis, Katy, 56.02.50
Triple Jump
6. Harrison Lowe, Seven Lakes, 47-10

Class 4A Girls

- 400-meter relay**
2. Brookshire Royal, 47.81
- 800-meter relay**
4. Brookshire Royal, 1:42.06
- 100-meter dash**
5. Adriana Prophet-Smith, Brookshire Royal, 12.06

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Katy Times

Tompkins storms past Travis in bi-district round

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Tompkins was out to change things this year. The Falcons have been a perennial playoff team over the years, but each of the past three years the Falcons have gotten there and been unable to advance.

When head coach Shay Orsak got to the team over the summer, she and the team talked about that and they set themselves a goal — this year they were going to break that streak.

The Falcons (16-12) did just that on Thursday, beating Fort Bend Travis (15-8) in a one game bi-district series 8-5 and advancing to the area round for the first time since 2019.

“It’s just so amazing,” said senior first baseman and pitcher Samantha Crumrin. “Every year since I’ve been here we have gotten to the playoffs, but we haven’t been able to get past the first round. It’s just so awesome, for us to experience this as seniors is amazing and then we have a lot of freshman on the team too and they get this experience and that will build them up and make them even better going forward.”

The Falcons have been on a surge late in the season and it was offense again that led the Falcons to the win on Thursday. Tompkins jumped ahead in the first inning of the game, getting two runners on before Lex Cebrero stepped to the plate and hit an RBI single to give Tompkins the lead. Travis tied it in the fourth inning, but Tompkins immediately retook the lead on a Lainey Wilkerson single that drove in a second run.

The Falcons fell into a hole in the fifth inning as Travis loaded the bases before Aubrey Jones hit a grand slam that put the Tigers up three runs, but again Tompkins had the answer. Chloe Grigsby trimmed the lead to one in the bottom of the fifth inning and Tompkins kept going, tying it in the bottom of the sixth on a Leah Gershman double before Cami Hearn doubled in another run as the Falcons retook the lead. Kaylee Segura then added on two more with a deep double to left field that gave Tompkins a three-run cushion.

“We all just said ok let’s get the lead back,” Kaylee Segura said. “They got the grand slam and that was on us, but we knew we were going to come back. We had been making good contact all night and it was a matter of time before we got a few more runs. It was a really fun game.”

It was a good performance all around. Segura and Hearn both drove in two runs, while Leah Gershman, Segura and Peyton Ebel each scored two runs. Gershman pitched the first five innings and allowed four earned runs on nine hits while striking out two and walking two, before Crumrin came in and dominated the final two innings, allowing one hit and striking out two while holding Travis scoreless.

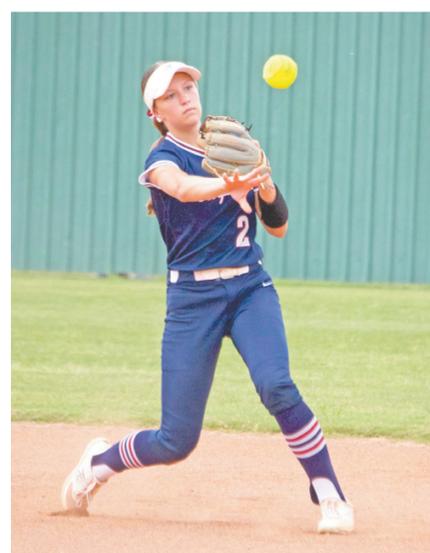
“Those two are such a good combo,” Orsak said. “They are each other’s biggest fans and they lift each other up. We had a game plan for them and the both of them executed it perfectly. I couldn’t be more proud of the way they did that.”

The Falcons advance to the area round, where they will play the winner of Memorial and Lamar. It’s a big step for the Falcons, but they want more.

“We’ve had this mindset of moving on past the first round in the offseason and to see them celebrate that is amazing,” Orsak said. “We met that goal tonight but these girls are still hungry and we’re not done.”



Leah Gershman pitches during Thursday's bi-district game between Tompkins and Travis at the Jordan softball field.



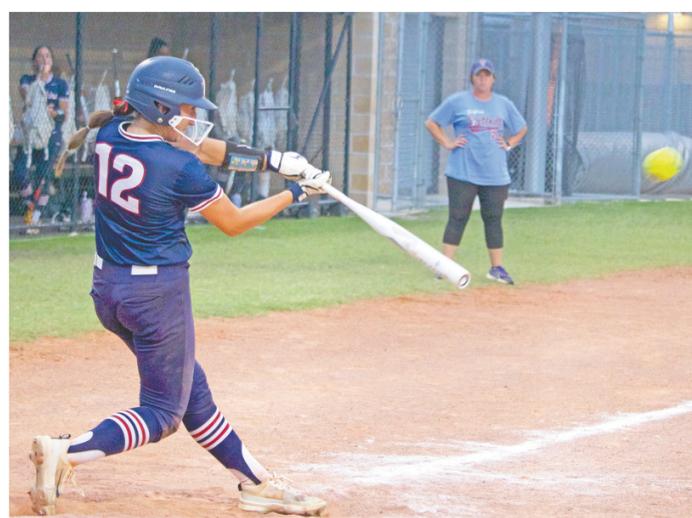
Above: Peyton Ebel throws a ball to first base during Thursday's bi-district game between Tompkins and Travis at the Jordan softball field. Below: Kaylee Segura throws a ball to first base during Thursday's bi-district game between Tompkins and Travis at the Jordan softball field.



PHOTOS BY TYLER TYRE



Leah Gershman celebrates after getting out of an inning during Thursday's bi-district game between Tompkins and Travis at the Jordan softball field.



Kaylee Segura hits during Thursday's bi-district game between Tompkins and Travis at the Jordan softball field.



Paige Stall hits during Friday's bi-district round game between Katy and Dulles at the Katy softball field.

KATY

from page B1

summer and offseason has paid off. Hailey has stepped up as a leader as well and it’s just made her a better player both defensively and offensively.”

Katy will try to keep their same mentality as they enter the area round, as they advance to play

Chavez, time and dates to be determined. The Tigers know first hand there can’t be any let up. That happened last year, and Katy was upset by Bellaire in the second round of the playoffs — the players have not forgotten that feeling.

“We want to just go out

there and destroy this next team,” Gore said. “We know what we are capable of as a team and we just want to go out there and beat whoever is in our way. We aren’t going to make the same mistake as last year and we are super pumped up for this next one.”



Ella-Kate Smith hits during Friday's bi-district round game between Katy and Dulles at the Katy softball field.

TYLER TYRE



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Occupational Therapist
23 years at Royal ISD
Total years in Education: 27



Laverne Patterson
Royal High School Admin Assistant
10 years at Royal ISD
Total years in Education: 30



Rhonda Martin
6th Grade Math & Science Teacher
Royal STEM Academy
3 years at Royal ISD
Total years in Education: 29



Ruth Willis
ELAR Inclusion Co-Teacher
11 years at Royal ISD



Diane Holub
Culture & Wellbeing Coordinator
15 years at Royal ISD
Total years in Education: 33

YEARS OF SERVICE



Jason Woods
Royal High School
20 years



Cheryl Henderson
Royal Junior High
25 years



Latachia Ames
Royal High School
25 years



Diana Hernandez
Administration
30 years



Theresa Worthy
Administration
45 years

TEACHERS OF THE YEAR



Gary Miller, Jr.
Royal High School



Jorge Espinoza
Royal Junior High School



Cierra Palmer
Royal STEM Academy (6-8)



Dorian Pineiro Rivera
Royal STEM Academy (2-5)



Laura Ruggless
Royal Elementary School



Kenadi Jackson
Royal Early Childhood Center

ROOKIES OF THE YEAR



Eureka Jackson
Royal High School



Ma'Kayla Davis
Royal Junior High School



Shelley Ward
Royal STEM Academy



Ilein Pellot Roman
Royal Early Childhood Center



Taylor Schneider
Royal Elementary School

PARAPROFESSIONALS OF THE YEAR



Magdalena Barrientos
Royal High School



Mieashia Stamps
Royal Junior High School



Emily Saldana
Royal STEM Academy



Tawn Ruggless
Royal Elementary School



Gloria Oviedo
Royal Early Childhood Center

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Royal Junior High School



Katacha Miller
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