

Inside SFISD



Patti Hansard is the assistant superintendent for human resources and the public relations officer for SFISD

#GivingTuesday in Santa Fe set for Nov. 29

We are proud in Santa Fe Independent School District that we see evidence of sharing every day in our district. Teachers share their knowledge, skills, talents and love with their students. Also, students, staff and parents share

their resources.

You may be aware of “Black Friday Shopping,” or maybe online purchases on “Cyber Monday.” However, do you know about #GivingTuesday? #GivingTuesday is always the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. This year, it is Nov. 29.

“#GivingTuesday is a global giving movement that has been driven by individuals, families, organizations, businesses and communities in all 50 states and in countries around the world. Since its founding in 2012, millions of people have come together to

support and champion the causes they believe in and the communities in which they live,” according to givingtuesday.org.

I think we should all give a little this holiday season, and Santa Fe

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Photos by Jennifer Reynolds/The Daily News

Ti'Rek Robbins, a Central Middle School student, learn about moon rocks, Nov. 10 from Robin Tiemann, an instructor at Space Center Houston's Exploration Academy.

Exploration Academy

Central Middle School students get the chance of a lifetime

By ANGELA WILSON
The Daily News

About 30 seventh grade students at Central Middle School Media Arts Academy are getting the chance of a lifetime as participants in Space Center Houston's Exploration Academy, developed in collaboration with experts at NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston.

The educational program is a 16-week project- and problem-based corrective science program, which immerses students and teachers in space-science learning. Students get the opportunity to learn about air systems, green energy and sustainability of energy sources — all while having fun doing so.

Seventh grader Ti'Rek Robbins, who is inspired to play football, also wants to become a math teacher and is one of the standout students who was chosen for the program.

“I've been liking science since the fifth grade, so being able to participate in this program is exciting for me,” Robbins said. “The most interesting thing that I've learned so far is concerning water pollution. It's fun and not boring, but it is a lot of stuff to learn and sometimes it can add a little pressure as far as school work is concerned. It makes me feel good, though, that I was chosen to be in this program. It feels good to help out my classmates.”

Ronald Puccetti, a science teacher at Central, applied through a grant for the school to be able to participate in this year's Exploration Academy. Students were selected based on prior STAAR test performance, teacher input, behavior and interest in science.

Puccetti, who worked with the program before in a different school district, wanted to be able to provide the students with an opportunity to be good role models for their peers as well.

“My colleague Derek Odelusi and I were thinking of ways to stimulate some of our students that we thought had the potential to be great thinkers,” Puccetti said. “I told him about my previous experience, and we thought it was a no-brainer. We contacted Alice Walker at the Space Center, and she had one spot still open. She let us



Chozen Turner, a Central Middle School student, touches a lunar sample, or moon rock.

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Inside Friendswood



Dayna Owen is the director of communications for Friendswood ISD.

Friendswood ISD.

Friendswood ISD is thankful

Thanksgiving is a season for recognizing the abundance of opportunities and blessings that are given to us. Because education has been such a key part of our culture, sometimes it can be taken for granted. Therefore, we should add education to our list of things we are thankful for.

Education is an opportunity to better yourself

Education is a common thread intertwined in all of our lives. As Americans, we are so fortunate to have access to a free education and an opportunity to better ourselves. We may have our disagreements about school; how early we start the school day, the amount of homework our children may have or the menu at lunch, but millions of people around the world just dream of educating their children.

Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.”

It is opening our eyes to what is in front of us; how we choose to use it. Education is an investment in our future but first, we must appreciate it and celebrate the value of this gift.

Education is immediate and personalized

Until recently, proximity was a vital part of education. If you didn't live near a schoolhouse or have a way to get there, you just didn't go.

Netflix has an inspirational documentary called, “On the Way To School.” It follows four students' treacherous commutes to school in Kenya, Morocco, Argentina and India. One wheelchair-bound boy is painstakingly pulled by his two brothers (because his wheelchair was not working properly in sand), taking hours each way all with a smile on his face because he is grateful to attend.

Today, our children not only have transportation to school, they have immediate access to information and curricula in a variety of ways that meet the needs of all learning styles.

Education is a path to discovering our best self

Schools today offer

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School briefs

» **FRIENDSWOOD**

The Friendswood Independent School District Transition Center is currently seeking donations for its second annual garage sale, which will be in February.

Donations can be dropped off from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays at 402 Laurel Drive.

For information, contact Arielle Downing, adowning@fisd12.net or 281-996-6668.

» **GALVESTON**

College Connection will be available for current college students or students planning on attending college from 5 p.m. to

10 p.m. Mondays at Central Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), 2702 Ave. O1/2.

Free Wi-Fi will be available. For information, call 409-762-4884.

» **TEXAS CITY**

The College of the Mainland Concert Band will perform a free concert reprising patriotic tunes and movie soundtracks at 7:30 p.m. today in the school's Fine Arts Building, 1200 Amburn Road.

For information, call 409-933-8437.

The Santa Fe Independent School District board of trustees will meet at 7 p.m. Nov. 28 at 4133 Warpath in Santa Fe. For information,

call 409-925-3526.

The Hitchcock Independent School District Education Foundation is inviting the public to participate in its inaugural Giving Tuesday event Nov. 29. To participate, visit www.hitchcockisd.org, click on Hitchcock Education Foundation tab and then click on the donate button. For information, call 409-316-6545.

» **GALVESTON**

The Galveston Chess Club will offer a free chess program for students at from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Nov. 29 at Satori School, 2503 Sealy St.

For information, contact George Laiacona Jr., laiaconajr@comcast.net or

713-252-4127, or Lori Farned Crossno, irolejak@yahoo.com or 409-771-8766.

The Elks Most Valuable Student Scholarship is open to high school seniors who are U.S. citizens through Nov. 30. Applications can be found at enf.elks.org/mvs. For information, call Cheri Ustinoff, 281-787-7679.

» **GALVESTON**

Texas A&M University at Galveston will have its annual craft show from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 2 at the Sea Aggie Center on campus, 1001 Texas Clipper Road, Building 3026. Handcrafted jewelry, soy candles, jams, homemade

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Jennifer Reynolds/The Daily News

Central Middle School student Rheiny Knight walks through the Skylab 1-G Trainer on Nov. 10 during a tour with Space Center Houston's Exploration Academy.

ACADEMY

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right in. Ms. Walker and the rest of the Exploration Academy are great. When there, the students are continually engaged in activities where they learn to think critically and work in groups doing labs and other activities that are aligned to our curriculum. They use math, reading and writing skills as well. Students reflect and journal the concepts they learned. Then they share out their experiences."

With hands-on learning experiences, Space Center Houston engages students to think about a future career in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. Based on national science standards with a focus on STEM to help adults and children think critically, the center's educational programs teach people of all ages about the present, future and past of space exploration.

Space Center Houston is a science and space learning center and Houston's first and only Smithsonian Affiliate museum. It draws one million annual visitors to experience its interactive exhibits and more than 100,000 teachers and students annually from around the world come to attend its educational programs.

"There is a great need for science curriculum and science labs to teach students about possibilities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics," said Daniel Newmyer, director of education for the science and space learning center. "It's important that we encourage children to be scientists and to become lifelong learners. We've developed Youth STEM Academies and programs like Exploration Academy to provide a learning environment for students to be challenged and explore STEM concepts in a fun, engaging way. We're dedicated to providing underserved students

with access to immersive space-learning experiences."

Students get to participate in hands-on activities while being taught major lessons with practical applications as well as gaining a more holistic and social view of science. They also get to learn, understand and seek solutions to problems that not only affect our communities, but also those that affect the world.

The topics of study encompass the International Space Station's water, air and electrical systems, alongside Earth's own water filtration, air/atmosphere, electrical, solar and renewable energy systems.

"Students collaborate in teams to work on real-world problems and develop innovative solutions for clean air and learn about renewable energy sources," said Walker, curriculum coordinator at Space Center Houston. "Together, they're building critical-thinking skills and applying it to science

concepts through hands-on activities."

Central students began attending the program on Sept. 15 and will be meeting every Thursday through March 3 at Space Center Houston.

In order to be a part of the program, students, like Rheiny Knight, must make a commitment to be present on all school days and not be tardy to their classes as well. Students also must exemplify good behavior and not have any discipline issues and/or problems.

Knight wants to be a plant engineer and knows that she has to learn and know a lot about science in order to be successful.

"I wanted to be a part of this class because it's a wonderful program," Knight said. "Not only does it teach and show us different educational things, but it's fun too."

Contact Community News Editor Angela Wilson, angela.wilson@galvnews.com or 409-683-5239.

SANTA FE

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ISD's Education Foundation has created a unique and easy way to support our students.

So, how can you make a difference on #GivingTuesday? You can choose a particular classroom project to support and give an online donation in any amount in which you are comfortable. You can see the projects by going to www.sfisd.org and clicking on the "SFISD Classroom Wish List" banner. What better time to participate than #GivingTuesday? Our district goal is to have all 14 of the remaining district classroom wish lists fully funded before the end of the school year.

The projects range from new books for classroom book shelves, alternative seating that has been proven to help students focus and a class trip to a forensics lab. Many of the projects could be implemented in our classrooms if numerous people gave just a small amount. The fun part is, that once the projects are implemented in the classroom, you will receive a special message from the class. You will know that your donation is making a difference in the lives of our students.

Santa Fe is not the only school district in

need. Every public school district in Galveston County has an education foundation that supports its students and educators. These foundations raise money that is awarded in the form of grants to classrooms and campuses for innovative educational materials. Although student needs are growing, public funding to Texas schools has not increased. State tax-based funding for the district covers the basic costs of operation, facilities, staff and resources. In order to offer our children additional innovative learning opportunities such as science lab experiences, reading newly released library books, competing in robotics, or encountering educational field trip opportunities, it requires supplementary funding made possible by the foundation.

In 2015, nonprofits raised more than \$117 million online on #GivingTuesday to help make the world a better place in countless ways. Much more was generated offline and through donations of time and other resources.

Those who are interested in joining Santa Fe ISD Education Foundation's #GivingTuesday initiative can visit www.sfisd.org and click on the SFISD Classroom Wish List graphic. For more details about the #GivingTuesday movement, visit www.givingtuesday.org.

THANKFUL

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much more than information. Our students are exposed to a multitude of career paths, certification options and intern possibilities that guide them in their future success. There are also volunteer

opportunities which allow students to give back and become well-rounded productive citizens.

So, this year, as you think about all the things you are thankful for, I hope you reflect on the value of your schools and see the endless possibilities they represent for students today.

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