



# In Plain View

Plainview ISD Staff eNewsletter

Fall 2013

## "Dare to Be Great" Teaching



Plainview High School social studies teacher Courtney Dorodchi brings history to life while teaching her students about the Constitution dressed as Benjamin Franklin. Franklin, age 81, was the oldest of the 55 delegates at the Constitutional Convention when the final draft was signed in 1787. Many great teaching moments are taking place throughout the district. Let's make a photo record of the great things happening in Plainview ISD.

**Ben Franklin's wise words to the members of the Constitutional Convention**— *"I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them: For having lived long, I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise. It is therefore that the older I grow, the more apt I am to doubt my own judgment, and to pay more respect to the judgment of others."*

# Governor declares October 9 Human Resources Day



Human Resource Staff includes Brandy Merrick (seated), Executive Director for Human Resource Services; JoAnn Gamez, Personnel Information & Records Clerk; Theressa Burns, Benefits & Leave Specialist; and Jeorgiana Gonzalez, Compliance Specialist for HR.

Under the leadership of Brandy Merrick, Executive Director for Human Resource Services, the Plainview ISD Human Resource Services Department, has done an outstanding job during the last six months of working with administrators in repositioning staff across the district to ensure each campus has a strong instructional and support staff.

The beginning of the school year seems an appropriate time to

recognize and honor them for their contribution to our district. These staff members have put in extra hours over the last few months on behalf of the district and will continue to do so through out the year.

It is appropriate that Texas Governor Rick Perry has proclaimed October 9, 2013 to be Texas Education Human Resources Day.

The proclamation states:

"We have no higher-priority—no greater responsibility—than to provide young Texans with the knowledge and skills to have successful lives and lead Texas into the future. Across our great state, human resources professionals play a vital role in ensuring our districts fulfill this fundamental mission.

"Human Resource Professionals are responsible for implementing effective practices

for the hiring of quality staff to teach young Texans and keep schools running smoothly. They serve the needs of students, teachers and administrators, creating a healthy environment in the best interest of students.

"At this time, I encourage all Texans to join me in recognizing all of our dedicated human resource professionals for the important role they play in our educational system."



The Human Resource Services Department representing TEAM PLAINVIEW at the State Capitol.

## Meet Our HR Staff

### *Brandy Merrick*

Brandy Merrick, Executive Director for Human Resource Services grew up on a working cattle ranch in Southern Dickens and Northern Kent counties of Texas. The ranch has a long history, having been in continuous operation in Brandy's family for 126 years. Her mother and father continue to own and operate the ranch.

Brandy is a graduate of Plainview High School, Wayland Baptist University. She earned a

master's degree from Sul Ross University.

She has spent her 16-year career working in Plainview ISD, beginning as an elementary teacher at Hillcrest before moving to the assistant principal position, and then moving to Central Office where she was eventually named Special Services Coordinator before moving into her present position.

Brandy's role in the district is to oversee and supports all areas in the HR Department including recruitment, staffing, job

postings, contracts, stipends, benefits, and new employee orientation.

Brandy is married to Bryan Merrick, a paramedic and firefighter for the City of Plainview. They have an Australia Shepherd named Skeet and a Wire Fox Terrier named Scotch. She enjoys spending time with Bryan, her dogs, family, friends and doing anything that takes her outdoors.

She adds that she is proud to be a part of TEAM PLAINVIEW!

## *Theressa Burns*

Theressa Burns, Benefit & Leave Specialist, is responsible for Health and Supplemental Insurance and Leaves (FMLA, Disability, Catastrophic) for all employees currently employed in the district.

She was born and raised in Plainview and is a graduate of Plainview High School.

She has worked for the district for 17 years.

Theressa's first role in the district was as receptionist at Central Office. She also served as Special Programs/Services Clerk, Federal & Migrant Programs Clerk, Secretary to the Director of Operations, and Secretary to the Executive Director of Administrative Services before moving into her present position.

She has been married for 17 years to her high school sweetheart, Josh. They have three children. Wyatt, 14; Abby, 8; and Jordan, 5.

Theressa enjoys anything and everything that has to do with family and is all about supporting TEAM Plainview.

She says, "Choices, Chances, Changes...You must make a Choice to take a Chance or your life will never CHANGE."

## *JoAnn Gamez*

JoAnn Gamez, Personnel Information & Records Clerk, is responsible for the processing of new hires (paperwork, fingerprinting, criminal history, etc.) including certified, non-certified, part-time employees, and substitutes.

She enters and updates personnel information in the Skyward database; prepares,

maintains, and updates employee service records; handles all personnel records and information requests; and manages the AESOP substitute system.

JoAnn was born and raised in Hereford and is a graduate of Hereford High School.

She has been with the district for five years, starting as the attendance clerk at Highland before transferring to Central

Office as the Receptionist and Personnel Information Clerk two years ago.

JoAnn is married to PHS graduate Rojelio Gamez. They have three children, JoVanna 21, Gabriella, 18, and Bethany 13, a student at Coronado.

JoAnn is very involved with her church and enjoys doing volunteer work with her family.

## *Gina Gonzalez*

Gina Gonzales, Human Resource Compliance Specialist, is the newest member of the Human Resource Services team.

Gina's responsibilities include ensuring the district is in compliance with applicable state and federal laws, regulations, certifications, licensing, and permit requirements of applicants and employees.

Gina was born in Mexicali, B.C., Mexico.

She moved to Yuma, AZ, at the

age of 13. She is a graduate of Cibola High School and Northern Arizona University.

She is married to Humberto Gonzalez.

Gina enjoys spending time with her husband and family.

Gina is also providing an extra service to the district after her regular hours.

Because there is a great need in our district to improve communication with our non-English speaking parents and/or students, the district

approved Gina to translate documents as needed.

These translation services are offered after her regular work hours. The campus or department requesting the translation will be responsible for her fees.

Fees will range from \$75 to \$150 depending on the job. You can contact Gina for further information.

There are incalculable resources in the Human Spirit, once it has been set free.

- Hubert H Humphrey

# Former exchange student shares culture with La Mesa students



David Hammarsten, a rotary exchange student from Sweden during the school year 2003-2004 school year, recently returned for a visit with friends he had met in the Plainview area.

While he was here he visited the students in Sherry

Thompson's class at La Mesa Elementary.

Hammarsten (photo below) shared information about the Swedish alphabet with students noting that the alphabet has four extra letter which he drew and explained to the students.

When the kindergarten students sang the alphabet song in English; David sang it for them in Swedish. When the children counted to 30 in English; David counted to 30 in Swedish.

David also entertained by drawing pictures as he spoke of the waterfalls, the green trees and fishing in the ponds. The children wanted to know about his house and he drew a red building where he lives with many other people.

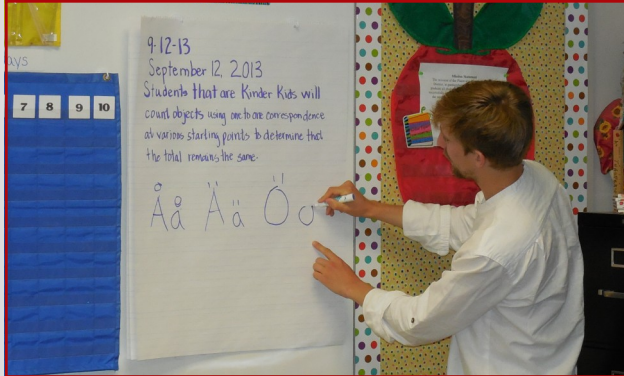
He explained that when he wants to go somewhere he usually walks, but if it is a long distance, he will take the train. He also drew pictures of a Swedish festival.

Sherry Thompson said, "My kids were so enthralled by his story telling and drawing that they kept asking him questions so that he would draw and talk more!"

Hammarsten lived with retired Highland counselor Jerry Bozeman and Lon Jones for six months when he was here as an exchange student.

During his time in Plainview, he was a member of the First Presbyterian Church youth group. Thompson was one of the sponsors for the youth group.

Hammarsten returned to Plainview to visit Jerry and Lon and also visited with the Wes Naron family on this trip. He is currently a graduate student in Sweden studying architecture.



**Belinda Pruitt**, Coronado, will be participating in the "Race for the Cure" in honor of her daughter Kenna (pictured left with her sister Kyla, the team leader). Kenna was diagnosed with cancer in February. They are collecting pledges or donations for the Komen Foundation. If anyone would like to make a donation they can contact Belinda at [belinda.pruitt@plainview.k12.tx.us](mailto:belinda.pruitt@plainview.k12.tx.us) or 806.292.0920 or go to [www.komenlubbock.org](http://www.komenlubbock.org); then select Komen Race for the Cure; then go to the drop down box to Donate. Select donate to a team on the right side. The team is BIG or SMALL Save'm ALL! Click SEARCH; team should come up and then click on donation. It will let you choose the amount and method of payment.

# John Gatica, Director of Student Engagement & Community Outreach

John Gatica is the new Director of Student Outreach and Community Engagement for Plainview ISD. He will also serve as the principal of the district's alternative campus, Houston School.

Gatica comes to the district from Uvalde ISD where he has served as Director of At-Risk Programs and principal for Excel Academy since 2007. Under his leadership, students were guided into a more advanced academic curriculum. 80% of the graduates of the non-traditional high school campus went on to pursue a college degree.

Gatica credits the school's success to the recruitment and retention of master teachers who have a passion for teaching.

In addition to his responsibilities as principal at Houston School, Gatica will work with students and families in the community to ensure students maintain eligibility and have the opportunity to participate in school activities. He will direct and manage dropout prevention activities and support compliance

with student discipline policies.

Gatica is looking forward to the new opportunities to work with students and families in Plainview.

"I am excited to take on the role of director of student outreach and community engagement," said Gatica. "It is my intention to implement systems to increase access to higher education among all students; and with a special emphasis on those currently underrepresented at colleges and universities."

"I believe in the high potential of all students and the power of a family's commitment to academic achievement," said Gatica. "I will work to involve families and form truly collaborative partnerships."

Gatica hopes to help each student recognize he/she has the ability within to succeed in the face of

challenges and that in doing so, each helps create a brighter future for those who follow.

Gatica is a graduate of Texas Tech University where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Education and a Master of Education degree in Educational Leadership. He has also completed further studies in re-designing schools for improvement, the consequences of poverty, and educational leadership. He received his superintendent certification in 2010.

Gatica grew up in Slaton and has many ties to the South Plains area. He served as a teacher/coach in Spade and Slaton, a principal in Hart and an assistant principal and associate principal in Lubbock ISD.

His wife, Irma, has also joined the Plainview ISD staff. She is a language arts and reading teacher at Estacado Middle School.



The CIS Five Basics  
Communities in Schools believes every child needs and deserves:

- A personal one on one relationship with a caring adult
- A safe place to learn and grow
- A chance to give back to peers and the community
- A marketable skill to use upon graduation
- A healthy start and a healthy future

**CIS Contacts**

**Trish Williams**  
(806) 296-4144  
patricia.williams@plainview.k12.tx.us  
Elementary

**Elena Azua**  
(806) 293-6015  
elena.azua@plainview.k12.tx.us  
Coronado & Estacado

**Denice Kirby**  
(806) 296-3324  
denice.kirby@plainview.k12.tx.us  
Plainview High School

Communities In Schools is a non-profit organization that has staff located directly on school campuses to meet student needs.

The CIS Mission is "to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life."

Services campus and free of charge!

- Truancy / Family Involvement
- After School Programs
- School Participation
- Peer Focusing
- Mentoring

## Cowboy Days Parade



Houston principal John Gatica is surrounded by Houston School students who represented the campus in the Cowboys Day Parade.



# ARAMARK "CLOWNS AROUND"

Aramark Food Service found a way to have some fun and de-stress following the busy first few weeks of school. Houston cafeteria manager Barbara McMurrian, her husband Larry McMurrian, and Teresa Landeros hosted an after hours get together for Aramark employees across the district. The theme was "Clowning Around." The food was an awesome spread of circus themed snacks. Attendees played games that had everyone laughing. Kudos to Aramark for finding a way to start the new school year with some light-hearted fun.



Attendees were treated to "Under the Big Top" refreshments including cookies, cake balls, popcorn and a clown cake.



Terry Soto (College Hill) poses for a photo at the photo wall.



Houston cafeteria manager Barbara McMurrian (right), her husband Larry McMurrian, and Teresa Landeros (Houston) planned the event.



Sally Rangel (Hillcrest) has fun with the clown accessories at the photo wall.



Jumping through the hoop.



Jovita Sepeda (Edgemere) pins the Nose on the Clown.



Cake Walking for Cookies.



Inga Pizana (LaMesa) poses for a photo at the photo wall.



Sandra Ramirez, Director of Aramark Food Services, walks the balance beam.



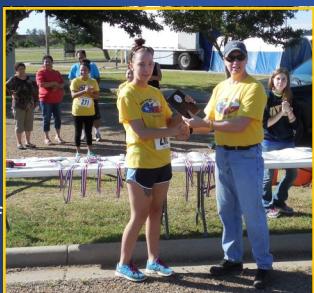
Val Lopez (Aramark secretary) poses for a photo at the photo wall.



# Cheers! Kudos! High Fives!

Hillcrest will begin a fitness challenge on October 1, "65 Miles In October". Each person that has accepted the challenge will walk, run, hike, bike a total of 65 miles. They can earn the miles in any way. For those who work out in a class, (hip hop, aerobics or other) each 15 minutes is equivalent to one mile. **Lori Glenn** is coordinating the event and says they have about 80-85 per cent participation.

**Logan Edwards (see photo)**, an assistant in Kindergarten at Edgemere, ran her first 5K on Saturday in the Hale On Feet. She won first place in the Women's Division with a time of just over 27 minutes. Logan is the granddaughter of **Sherry Thompson**, Kindergarten teacher at La Mesa, and Dean Thompson, former Dean at PHS.



**Abby Carlisle Long**, Daughter of Steve and **Lesle (PHS) Carlisle** will be opening her boutique 'Pink Tumbleweed' in downtown San Angelo in the middle of October. Grand opening is set for October 19. You can also check her online site at [pinktumbleweed.com](http://pinktumbleweed.com)

**Sandra De La Garza**, PHS graduate of 2011 is playing basketball at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (USAO). In Chickasha, Oklahoma. She is the daughter of **Jeffrey** (Coronado) and **Sylvia (Board of Trustees) De La Garza**.



## Sympathy



To **Denise Cochran** (Highland) on the passing of her mother, Jeffie Carlene Johnson.

To **Kym Norrell** (Business Office) on the passing of her mother, Mary Murray.

To **Geneva Garcia** (Highland) on the passing of her mother-in-law, Nancy Garcia of Brownfield.



**Megan Compton** (far left), daughter of **J.R. (PHS) and Bobby Jo Compton (Estacado)** is having a blast and loving school at Oklahoma State University. She is studying Sports Media and has an internship with [theoldcoach.com](http://theoldcoach.com) and rivals for Texas HS Sports. Her long-term goal is to work for ESPN.



PHS staff **Katie Wright, Rene Kayler, Josie Walker, Connie McGann, and Crystal Burdis** display their team spirit.



Brandy Merrick was surprised by her husband Bryan (left) with a balloon bouquet and flowers on her 40th birthday. Several of the balloons popped when he entered the Admin Bldg. prompting a few administrators to jump up from a meeting to see what was happening.

## Baby News

**Chris** (Houston/High School) and **Desiree Richardson** (Highland) and Ted and **Jane Hobgood** (Edgemere) are new grandparents. Brandon and Becky Hobgood had their first child, Madison Paige Hobgood on August 7, 2013. She weighed 6lbs 5oz and is doing great!



Brandon and **Megan Biggs** (Edgemere) welcomed a baby girl, Bristol Rhye Biggs on July 5. She weighed 7lb. 12oz. And was 21" long.



**Belinda Pruitt** (Coronado) is the very proud "Granny B" to a baby girl, Jessi Dale Pruitt. She was born on September 19 and weight 8lbs. 3oz. Her parents are Keevin Pruitt and Cayla Barrientos.



**Patti Hauk** (Thunderbird) has a new grandbaby, Weston David Dowell, born on September 12. He weighed 7lbs. 4 oz and is 20 inches long. Weston's parents are Scott and Sarah Hauk Dowell. They live in Abilene.



*A hug for you, my friend*



Please keep the members of our Plainview ISD family who are struggling with health issues in your thoughts and prayers.

# Buy, Sell, Rent, Trade, Give Away...

**Randa Wrenn (Estacado)** is working on a new District Wellness program and needs **steps and risers** for step aerobics classes. She also is searching for a **good sound system** for the classes.



Please contact her through email or call her at Estacado if you can help with these much needed items.

**Terra James** (PHS Family & Consumer Science Teacher) is looking for **magazines**—home decor, style, cooking, and other types. She also needs **used furniture, picture frames, old lamps, and fabric**. All donations are welcome and pickup is available if needed.

**FOR RENT: Michael (PHS) and Tracy Dawson** (PHS) have a **double-wide trailer** with 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, and two living areas in Kress that will be for rent in January. \$600 per month. You can contact them at (806) 292-0291 or (806) 292-8585.

**Susan Rivera** (PHS library) would like to sell a **King trombone** (\$300) and a **new recliner** (\$200).



**FOR SALE: Trap set** in good condition, \$1,300. Call **Rebekah Mize** (Lakeside) at 774-4554 or contact her through school mail.

**Chelsea Rushing** (Edgemere) has a **dollhouse bunk bed** that she wants to sell. You can call her at 292-4076. Bed is twin on top, full on bottom. Bed will come with both mattresses. They would like \$650, but are willing to negotiate a good offer!



Needs a good home: Free **double bed mattress and box springs**. E-mail **Pam Kennedy** (Houston School) if interested. [pam.kennedy@plainview.k12.tx.us](mailto:pam.kennedy@plainview.k12.tx.us)

**Free to a good home: Solid wood podium** made by former PHS AP Alex Glass. Please call Jeana Voss (Thunderbird) at 292-9173 or email [jdovoss@hotmail.com](mailto:jdovoss@hotmail.com)

**The Migrant Program** is in need of **good used clothing for school age kids** and gently used backpacks. They are willing to pick up items. Contact Anita Flores, 293-6146 (Admin Office) or email [anita.flores@plainview.k12.tx.us](mailto:anita.flores@plainview.k12.tx.us)

**Connie Westbrook** (Central Office receptionist) is looking for a Bow Flex or a Total Gym. Please contact her at [connie.westbrook@plainview.k12.tx.us](mailto:connie.westbrook@plainview.k12.tx.us)

For Sale: **Wall Piano**. \$400. contact **Jeremy Douglas** (Thunderbird) (806) 729-9288.

College Hill Pre-Kindergarten is collecting **Sunny D labels**. If you have some to help, please send them to **Michelle Daily** at College Hill.

**Rosie Romero** needs a dog house. If you have one to sell, please contact her at the Technology Center, email her at [rosie.romero@plainview.k12.tx.us](mailto:rosie.romero@plainview.k12.tx.us) or call her at 293-6145.

**Nathena Brown** is selling personalized stainless steel memory rings hand-stamped with your name, anniversary, phrases, etc. She also sells names



on rice jewelry and baby quilts at the **Vendor's Market**, 5201 N. I-27. It is open the last weekend of every month and will be open every weekend in December until Christmas. Hours are Saturday from 9 -6 pm and Sundays from 12-4 pm. You can also find custom made t-shirts while you wait (including Bulldogs), Scentsy, Grace Adele, custom woodwork, and one of a kind gifts. You can also rent a booth there to sell your stuff. For more info contact Nathena Brown or call 806-685-2278.

Comfortable, light **denim couch** for sale for \$20.00. Contact **Brent Richburg** (Technology) if you are interested.

**Jill Freeman** (Edgemere) would like to buy a **chest of drawers** that could be painted for a child's bedroom. You can contact her through school email if you have one. [jill.freeman@plainview.k12.tx.us](mailto:jill.freeman@plainview.k12.tx.us)

**Angie Perry** (College Hill) is in need of a few **large plastic coffee cans with lids** for her classroom. If you have some please send them her way or email her.

**Cynthia Brundage** (PHS) has an 8-month old **English mastiff puppy** for sale. She is sweet, and a beautiful brindle that loves being around people. She is fully housebroken and needs a new home ASAP. Cynthia's oldest daughter has asthma and has recently been diagnosed with an allergy to dogs and cats. Serious inquiries only. \$350 OBO Call (806) 236-5867.

**Tommy Caldwell** (PHS) has the **sofa, chair & ottoman** below for sale. Email him at [tommy.caldwell@plainview.k12.tx.us](mailto:tommy.caldwell@plainview.k12.tx.us) if you are interested.







## College Hill 3rd Grade "HOT"dog Cookout Focuses on Science



As a welcome back for third grade students and parents, College Hill held a "HOT"dog luncheon mingled with science experiments—HOT for Higher Order Thinking. After a great turnout of parents attending the hot dog luncheon, parents were invited to stay just a little longer to help their child with a science experiment.

The first week of school in science classes, the students had learned about the Scientific Method. In order to practice "thinking like a scientist", parents and students were asked to make a square and oval shaped wand to blow bubbles from and see what shape came out of the wand. Next they had to record their findings on a chart.

Teacher Kelly Mendoza says students and parents had a great time collaborating on the experiment. Teachers plan to have more activities throughout the year to get parents involved in their child's learning progress.

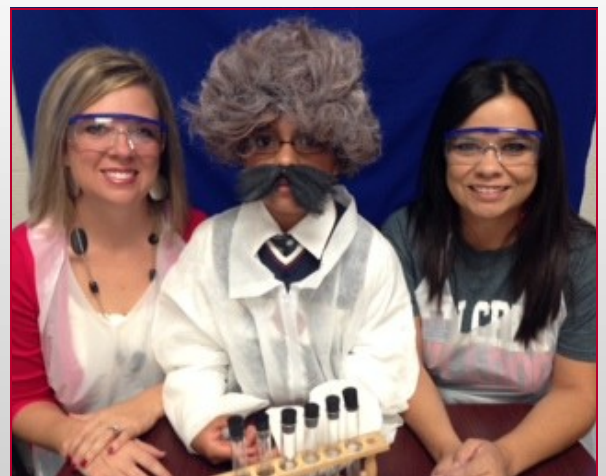
Third Grade teachers at College Hill are Kelly Mendoza, Ashley Carthel, and Jennifer Havens.

## PHS Communication Classes "Tweet"



PHS teachers Michelle Pittman and Rene Kayler use Twitter as another exit ticket activity. Students in their Professional Communications classes post in 140 characters or less what they learned for the day complete with hash tags! #exitticket #highschool #speech

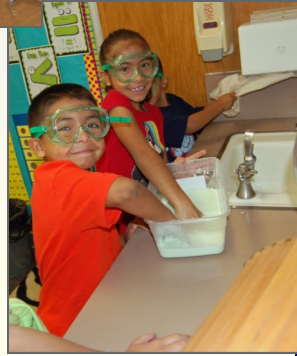
## Hillcrest S.O.S. Super Outstanding Science Day



Hillcrest Assistant Principal Amy Meek (left) and Principal Sylvia Suarez (right) pose with an unidentified scientist.



## Edgemere S.O.S. Super Outrageous Science



# PHS Open House



## College Fair

PHS recently hosted their annual College Fair for PHS seniors and students from around the area. The event allows the students the opportunity to talk with college recruiters.

