

# Head Start gets near perfect score

By Nola Tobias Casey  
Granted, it's summer vacation, but imagine this: it's one of the hardest tests you'll ever take. The scores really do follow you in your file for the rest of your life, and they impact hundreds of central Texas children, parents, volunteers and staff who are counting on you.

Quite a daunting scenario. One, however, the Cen-Tex Family Services Inc. Head Start team passed with

flying colors.

Cen-Tex Family Services Inc., permanent grantee who operates the Columbus and Eagle Lake Head Start programs along with seven other sites throughout central Texas, received a nearly perfect score on its recent federal review.

"We are ecstatic! We feel we are doing what the community needs and, not only that, we are complying with the law," said Mrs. Clinton Wright,

President of the Cen-Tex Board of Directors.

Such a high score is not rare for Cen-Tex. In its 1997 federal review, Cen-Tex scored a compliance rating of 98%.

"The success of the agency's federal review renews our commitment to children and families we serve and our efforts to share the future of our community by serving children and families today," said Windy M. Hill, Executive Director for Cen-Tex.

Conducted by a seven-member team over a week-long period in mid-April, the extensive federal review had simple objectives: to determine whether children and families are being served, and if so, to identify the level of quality of the agency's programs.

The extremely high level of program quality and compliance found by federal reviewers confirms that "everyone involved in Head Start embraces a commitment to leave no child behind," noted Ms. Hill.

The federal review team examined management systems and their impact on services as well as compliance with services implementation guidelines. Specifically, the review targeted these components: Early Child Development and Health Services, Family and Community, Partnerships, and Program Design and Management.

In the framework of Early Childhood and Health Services, the review commended Cen-Tex for developing its own twice-a-year health and safety checklist-a checklist more extensive than the Federal one.

The program was also praised for its computerized health care tracking system which enables the health status of any child to be quickly identified.

It was noted that both staff and parents actively contribute to the creation and development of the curriculum and lesson planning.

The curriculum's structure allows the staff to customize lesson plans to meet the needs of individual children. Visit a classroom and you'll see each child included in developmentally appropriate activity, including children with disabilities, thanks to the collaborative agreements with special education co-ops in the area.

When these students "graduate to kindergarten," Cen-Tex offers a network of special education assistance, just as when the children entered Head Start, contributing to a successful transition to the next phase of their academic career.

Federal reviewers also distinguished outstanding Family and Community Partnerships which offer families numerous comprehensive opportunities for growth toward self-sufficiency.

Over 400 parents attended training sessions, and the nearly seamless collaboration of these partnerships also encourages lifestyle wellness and success, while minimizing duplication of services.

The reviewers' focus on Program Design and Management revealed what many central Texans already know. "Results of the Monitor Review demonstrate the efforts of the agency's Board of Directors, Policy Council, staff and parents to create a first-quality Head Start program in Bastrop, Fayette, Lee and Colorado Counties," said Hill.

Reviewers also noted that Cen-Tex is "well structured" with a "highly qualified" management staff.

The seemingly effortless interplay of the Policy Council and the Board creates a solid foundation for the program.

Additionally, the Head Start facilities received high recommendation for their effective use of space, materials and equipment.

The reviewers cited other management strengths including user-friendly personnel recordkeeping, an excellent communication system maintained and held in-check by various quality-assurance processes, and systematic and in-depth personnel and volunteer training.

Executive Director Hill was applauded for her comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of the program-very much a hands-on, involved leader. Her leadership directly effectuates the high-quality services the children and their families enjoy.

Perhaps the results of the federal review can be best summarized as: it's never really summer vacation for the Head Start people committed to making a difference in our community. They care. They work hard. And it shows.



## A NEW ARRIVAL

### Gage Gregory Cone

Clay and Krista Cone of San Marcos announce the birth of their first child, a son, born at 9:12 p.m. Thursday, July 6, 2000 at Central Texas Medical Center in San Marcos.

Gage Gregory weighed seven pounds, 13 ounces.

Maternal grandparents are Ronnie

and Barbara Miller of El Campo.

Paternal grandparents are Tommy and Candy Cone of Katy.

His great-grandmothers are Clarice Bolton of Evergreen, Alabama; Margie Miller of Eagle Lake; and Virginia Smith of San Marcos.

## LIBRARY LINES

The Eula and David Wintermann Library has received a grant for more computers and computer tables.

Brandon Cope and Robert Finney put the new tables together.

Phyllis Williams has been doing the paper work on the grants.

Ralph Gertson has been busy with the new computers, getting them ready for service.

We now have 10 computers connected to the Internet.

The Library gratefully acknowledges the following memorials:

In memory of Tom Wilcox: Mr. & Mrs. George Causey, Fair Wells, Betty Wegenhoft; in memory of Raymond Brasher: Mr. & Mrs. Harry Anderson; in memory of Betty Brown: Lynda Appelt Evans; in memory of Mary Lou Szymanski: Mr. & Mrs. Bill Wegenhoft, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Spalinger, Mrs. Joyce Gordy, Lynda Appelt Evans, Laura Appelt Evans, Mr. & Mrs. Darrel Appelt; in memory of Vic Mascheck: Mr. & Mrs. Charles Spalinger, Jim Mathis Jr., Mr. & Mrs. Robby Cook; in memory of Bobby Weishuhn: Mr. & Mrs. Charles Spalinger, Mrs. Howard Wiese, Linda Appelt Evans, Laura Appelt Evans;

Also, in memory of Lloyd Spalinger: Mr. & Mrs. Jim Mathis Jr.; in memory of Mike Canaris: Mr. & Mrs. Bill Wegenhoft, Mr. & Mrs. Robby Cook, Linda Appelt Evans, Laura Appelt Evans, Mr. & Mrs. Darrel Appelt;

Also, in memory of Ethel McCreary: Mr. & Mrs. Bill Wegenhoft, Mr. & Mrs. Hruzek, Ernest Mae Seaholm, Mr. & Mrs. A.A. Anderson, Louise Spalinger, Lois Deshotel; in memory of Peggy Henry: Mr. & Mrs. A.A. Anderson; in memory of Gardner Seaholm: Mr. & Mrs. Robby Cook.

## CASA orientation meeting is July 17

The Golden Crescent Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) invites you to an Orientation Meeting at 6:30 p.m. Monday, July 17, at the Nesbitt Memorial Library in Columbus.

Golden Crescent CASA, officed in Victoria, is an out-growth of the urgency to address the special needs of children from our area who land in the court system due to abuse or neglect.

These victimized children are subjected to a criminal justice system and child welfare system. Eventually, they end up in court.

Their only "crime" is having been victims, yet, they will be sentenced to an average of more than 27 months in the state's custody.

The CASA program is a solid public/private partnership which is, perhaps, one of the most effective ways to curb juvenile crime; seeking a safe, loving permanent home for the at-risk child at the earliest moments in his or her life.

CASAs are able to reduce the time a child spends in foster care from the statewide average of 24 months to approximately 13 months, which saved the state of Texas approximately \$88 million in 1999.

CASAs are volunteers, appointed by District Judges, who are involved in helping the courts deal with the overwhelmingly difficult and costly increase in child abuse cases in Texas.

The CASA volunteer is the most consistent person in a child's life and provides the only independent voice for these children.

## AgLead now accepting applications

The Texas Farm Bureau has announced it is accepting applications for the fifth class of the popular AgLead program for young farmers and ranchers in Texas.

The Colorado County Farm Bureau is lending its support to the effort, according to Charles Harbich, county president. For more information, call the Farm Bureau at 732-2383.

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**New Treatments for Seizure Disorders**  
Seizure disorders affect over 2 million Americans and cost over \$12 billion in health care expenses annually. Epilepsy, the primary form of recurring seizures, can be caused by head trauma, tumors, birth injuries, and medications. In spite of the number of treatments available, less than half of the persons affected do not experience complete seizure control. No single drug can control all types of seizures, and some patients must take more than one medicine.  
Tiagabine (Gabitril) has been recently approved as "add-on therapy" or an additional agent for patients whose epilepsy is difficult to control. Tiagabine increases the level of GABA, a neurotransmitter needed to inhibit seizures. *Levetiracetam* (Keppra) is another new add-on therapy that is unique because, unlike many anti-seizure medicines, it has no significant drug interactions. However, levetiracetam can cause sedation and dizziness. *Oxcarbazepine* (Trileptal) is another new seizure medicine. It is similar to carbamazepine (Tegretol) but is reported to produce less side effects. *Zonisamide* (Zonegran) was also recently approved as an "add-on therapy" for adults. It should not be given to persons who are allergic to sulfa drugs.

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**Pumped Up**  
From the office of Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison  
Since oil was discovered at Spindletop in 1901, the fate of Texas has been closely tied to the energy industry. A year ago, thousands of oil producers were forced out of the business because of record low oil prices. Today, drivers are feeling the sharp pinch of rising prices at the pump.  
Such volatility is the direct result of America's growing reliance on foreign oil.  
By the first week in June, gasoline prices had increased by 50% over the past year. If your summer plans include a plane trip, the price of your ticket will have increased by about \$30 for a round trip. And travelers aren't the only ones feeling the pinch.  
Diesel prices are up too, costing the typical trucker and additional \$150 to \$200 to fill up. Small truckers are especially hard hit. Those who entered into shipping contracts based on lower fuel prices now face disaster. Eventually, consumers will pay in the form of higher shipping and retail prices.  
American consumers need short-term, immediate relief from this situation. Then, Congress needs to roll up its sleeves and get to work on some long-term solutions that will stabilize oil prices and reassert America's energy independence.  
To accomplish the first goal, I have introduced legislation that would suspend the 18.4¢-per-gallon federal gasoline tax and the 24.4¢-per-gallon tax on diesel fuel.  
This bill has been written to ensure that the tax reduction will have maximum impact on the price of gasoline at the pump - and no impact on the Federal Highway Trust Fund (which will remain fully funded throughout the proposed suspension period).  
The revenue is to be made up from surplus budget funds, \$150 billion of which Congress has already set aside for tax cuts. Suspension of the gas tax will use less than 3% of those funds. This pales in comparison to the anticipated \$1.7 trillion surplus expected over the next 10 years.  
Next challenge: finding long-term solutions that will stabilize oil and gas prices and wean our country from energy dependence on overseas supplies.  
During the 1973 OPEC oil embargo, the United States imported approximately 36% of its oil from overseas. In 1993, imports stood at 46%. Today, the U.S. imports 56% and that is projected to grow to 65% by 2020.  
To reverse this dangerous trend, I have introduced legislation that will revitalize domestic energy production.  
This bill includes a \$3 per barrel, phased tax credit that is triggered when oil prices fall to between \$14 and \$17 per barrel. Such a credit would apply only to low-volume "marginal" oil wells producing less than 15 barrels per day.  
It would encourage production from existing fields as well as open new areas to exploration. And it would also apply to marginal natural gas wells, which have the potential to reduce our oil needs by 20%-the same amount we import from Saudi Arabia.  
This legislation has been incorporated into the National Energy Security Act of 2000, the goal of which is to cut American dependence on foreign energy to 50% by 2010. The Senate (See Pump, Page 10)

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