

Support Quality EDUCATION

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In This Issue

- Page 1 UT Arlington Technology Education Academy | Robot TEA
- Page 2 14th Annual Animal Essay Contest | 2015 Winners
- Page 3 Animal Services Youth Volunteer Program | Eidan's Wish List | 2015 Calendar of Events
- Page 4 Arlington Public Library: Lights-Camera-Action | Technology Education Academy (continued)

Robot TEA

Seguin High School sophomore Joshua Alvarado (*pictured below*) said he isn't positive about engineering, but it does pique his interest. "I like education and I like technology. I want to teach something like this in a classroom."



Technology Education Academy

Through mid-May, UT Arlington is conducting a 12-week, after-school program for Arlington ISD students in grades 8-12.

Funded by a grant from the **Arlington Tomorrow Foundation**, the Robot TEA meets at **The Lab** in the East Arlington Branch Library.

"We want to make it fun," Computer Science and Engineering Assistant Professor Gian-Luca Mariottini (*pictured above*) says about how **this program** differs from most robotic initiatives. "We want to answer some more fundamental questions, like: Is robotics good to turn you on about STEM?"

continued on pg. 4

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2015 Winners

Third Grade Essay Topic:

If you were asked to help at a local animal shelter, what do you think you would be asked to do?

1st: **Avery Williams**, Miller Elementary

2nd: **Eidan Loyola**, Morton Elementary

3rd: **Samuel Moran**, Miller Elementary

Fourth Grade Essay Topic:

What changes do cats and dogs have to make to live and survive as homeless pets?

1st: **Molly Breclaw**, St. Maria Goretti

2nd: **Analicia Miller**, Beckham Elementary

3rd: **Chad Larson**, St. Maria Goretti

Fifth Grade Essay Topic:

What advice would you give to pet owners in order to prevent overpopulation of cats and dogs?

1st: **Michelle Nguyen**, Ditto Elementary

2nd: **Cory Bever**, Key Elementary

3rd: **Adriana Ortiz**, Arlington Classics Academy

Sixth Grade Essay Topic:

How would an overpopulation of homeless cats and dogs affect our local ecosystem?

1st: **Caden Blake**, Butler Elementary

2nd: **Colby Holloway**, Dunn Elementary

3rd: **Madeleine Vacanti**, Ditto Elementary

Highlights

14th Annual Animal Essay Contest

The contest is open to all students in grades 3-6 who reside in the City of Arlington. This year, there were 1,019 entrants.

One of the highlights is the personal visits by city officials and principals to make the surprise announcements to the 12 winners.

"This contest is not about winning a prize because everyone wins who takes the time to write, to learn, and to develop a better understanding of care and compassion for animals," according to Council Member Sheri Capehart. "We congratulate all students who took the time and cared enough about animals to enter."

Capehart, one of the innovative founders of the Animal Essay Contest, is a lifelong supporter of animal welfare and is dedicated to fostering responsible pet ownership education in youth.

At least two of those winning essays were written by students who made their own personal visits to the **Animal Services Center** to conduct research and gain firsthand knowledge of the services.

At a special reception held at the Animal Services Center, students read their **award-winning essays**.

"I was happy to interact with the students, teachers and principals to let them know of the great job each child did," says Animal Services Volunteer Administrator Cheri Colbert (*pictured on pg. 3 with Eidan*). "Through the writing process, they all learned how to be responsible pet owners."

They toured the shelter and got a lesson on how to use their new Kindle Fire HD at the Southeast Branch Library next door.

Special thanks to each student who took part, the community partners (ECU, Beacon E&P, UTA-Trio and the Star-Telegram) and all of the participating schools.

2015 Animal Essay contest winners standing in order as named at left.

First-place winners (left), second-place winners (middle) and third-place winners (right).

Students by grade (from third-graders on bottom row to sixth-graders on top row).



Highlights

Animal Services Youth Volunteer Program

When Morton Elementary third-grader Eidan Loyola entered this year's Animal Essay Contest, he got more than he bargained for. He thought going to the City of Arlington's Animal Services Center was just a logical step in conducting research to find out what he could do at an animal shelter if someone asked for his help.

He had his checklist. Walk around. Look around. Talk with the lady at the front desk. Visit website. Make notes. Submit essay. Check.

Not only did his extra effort produce a winning essay, but he learned that indeed he could help out at the shelter.

Students under the age of 18 can volunteer from May through August with a parent or guardian accompanying them.

Loyola's mom found even more added values, saying she thought the contest was a great opportunity for Eidan to practice his writing skills and it showed him hard work pays off.

Interested in learning more? Go to: www.arlington-tx.gov/animals/volunteer-opportunities-projects/



Eidan's Wish List

- Reception - greet, welcome, answer questions
- Administrative - file, copy
- Laundry - wash, dry, fold
- Dog Groomer - wash, clean, brush
- Kennels - wash, clean, feed
- Outside - train, walk, play

"In the new original hit movie, Annie says that 'it is a hard knock life,' but for these animals, they are really living this life."

Adriana Ortiz, fifth-grader at Arlington Classics Academy, said in her award-winning 2015 Animal Essay that overpopulation is a bad thing because lost, scared, unwanted, unloved dogs and cats never find forever homes.

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2015 Calendar of Events

- Dec. 8, 2014 - Animal Essay Contest began.
- Jan. 12-16, 2015 - Essays of 500 words or less submitted.
- Feb. 6, 2015 - School visits to announce winners (pictured above is Council Member Capehart at Arlington Classics Academy).
- Mar. 3, 2015 - Reception at City Hall and recognition of winners at City Council meeting.
- Mar. 14, 2015 - Reception at Animal Services Center.

Each winner received a Kindle Fire HD compliments of Beacon E&P and a \$100 savings account compliments of EECU and Beacon E&P.

P2 Partnerships x Programs = unforgettable learning experiences for Arlington's teens

Arlington Public Library

Lights - Camera - Action

February brought together a group of teen photogs, novice and expert alike, to indulge in creativity through the Photography Workshop for Teens.

The Library hosted a four-week photography series to teens at the Salvation Army's Youth Education Town (YET) Center. Through this program, students learned about the fundamentals of photography while exploring their new abilities through a number of artsy photography projects.

For the final project, the Arlington Public Library partnered with Arlington Animal Services to provide students with a unique opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills by photographing a restless breed of "talent."

Animal Services invited volunteer animal photographers to work with the teens for a hands-on learning experience photographing four-legged friends. Our young photographers received tips from experienced photographers and gained the experience of participating in an authentic photoshoot.



Technology Education Academy *(continued from pg. 1)*



It's not just playing with robots.

Twenty-four students collaborate with Dr. Mariottini and five UT Arlington student mentors to build robots as well as develop problem-solving skills by working through the educational curriculum developed specifically for this program.

Robot TEA provides engaging experiences for young people who may develop a passion for science, technology, engineering and/or mathematics.