

# SUPPORTING QUALITY EDUCATION

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*Arlington strives for quality  
public, private and higher  
education for our community.*



## MANSFIELD ISD

“Electronic textbooks and electronic lessons are becoming more and more prevalent,” said Dr. Jim Vaszauskas, superintendent of the Mansfield Independent School District, during the November 5 update he gave the Arlington City Council. Mansfield ISD continues to provide a 1 to 1 technology initiative, where every high school student and teacher in the district is given an iPad.

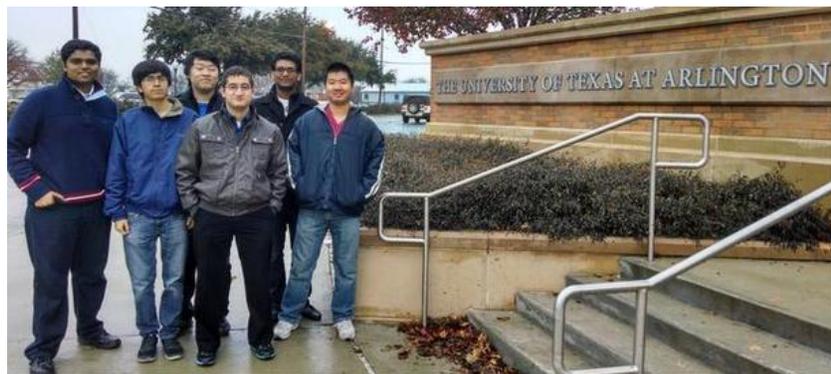
With almost one-third of Mansfield schools located in Arlington, hearing a

*(continued on page 3)*

## TEXTING WHILE DRIVING ... THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

Six UT Arlington students took first place at the AT&T “It Can Wait” coding contest, winning \$10,000 with an app that discourages texting and driving.

The [DriveMode®](#) app, which is free to AT&T customers, sends an auto-reply message when the vehicle reaches 25 mph and silences all



UT Arlington engineering and computer science undergraduates who created the texting while driving app, from left: freshman **Keyurkumar Patel**, junior **Andrew Toscano**, junior **Kevin Chung**, junior **Zedd Shmais** (front center), junior **Sidharth Goyal** and senior **James Fielder** (photo courtesy of UT Arlington).

incoming texts while the vehicle is moving. Texas has bans on texting for novice drivers and bus drivers and a complete ban on handheld cellphone usage in school zones. In 2011, Arlington became the first North Texas city to approve a ban on texting while driving.

# HIGHLIGHTS

## THORNTON ELEMENTARY

On November 21, East Foot Patrol Officers served kindness along with turkey, dressing and all the trimmings to approximately 800 Thornton Elementary School students and their families. This is the second year Arlington officers have participated in the luncheon and at other times, can be found reading to and mentoring students.

The Thanksgiving meal was part of Project REACH, an ongoing project aimed at improving student performance by putting caring adults into Arlington schools.

Vice Principal Veronica Pena expressed gratitude for the relationships the officers have with Thornton's students throughout the school year.

"I would like to thank Thornton Elementary faculty, staff and PTA members who helped coordinate and participate in the mentorship program," said East Police District Deputy Chief Os Flores. "Serving the students here today is an example of our continued commitment to support our community and students."



Oct. 9, 2013 – Arlington Deputy Police Chief Os Flores pictured with AISD Superintendent Marcelo Cavazos at Berry Elementary School. Schools across the country have been participating in the annual International Walk to School Day since 1997. Arlington sees a reduction in traffic congestion while boosting its neighborhood connections.



School Year 2013-14 – Arlington's East Foot Patrol Officers participate in classroom activities as part of the Project REACH program.



Nov. 25, 2013 – Bound for Success (from left): Arlington school district trustees Tony Pompa and Gloria Peña, Lamar High School student, Lamar Principal Larry Harmon, and UT Arlington President Vistasp Karbhari.

## BOUND FOR SUCCESS

On November 25, the University of Texas at Arlington and the Arlington Independent School District launched the *Bound for Success* program, designed to identify students in the top 20% of the class at the end of their sophomore year for pre-admittance to UT Arlington upon completing high school graduation requirements. "A college education can alter an individual's life, but the impact of ensuring that more, well-prepared high school scholars advance through the University has the power to transform our communities," UT Arlington President Vistasp M. Karbhari said.

Nearly 1,500 qualifying AISD students have received early admissions acceptance letters. Participating students will also be eligible for weekly sessions with university admissions counselors, financial aid workshops, special receptions, lectures, athletic events and other campus activities to assist in a smooth transition from high school to the University.

Arlington school district Superintendent Dr. Marcelo Cavazos said, "We know that there are students who excel throughout their high school years but for a variety of reasons do not pursue a college education. With this program, we are re-affirming that these students are prepared for success and that we are going to help guide them along their path to a college degree."

# UPDATES

## MANSFIELD ISD *(continued from page 1)*

firsthand account of the school district's plans for the future and the successes it has already achieved fits the Council's focus on quality education.

"We enjoy good partnerships and certainly we've had a long and good partnership with your group," Mayor Robert Cluck said.

Mansfield ISD has one of the best retention rates in the state and continues to be a desirable district for employees with elementary positions often drawing 1,000-plus applicants.

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## ADULT EDUCATION

At the December 18 celebration ceremony, 25 students received their General Educational Development (GED) diplomas. Recipients walked across the stage in the George W. Hawkes Central Library community room to shake hands with Libraries Director Cary Siegfried and Deputy City Manager Gilbert Perales. Waiting on the other side with a big hug for the new graduates was Glory Dalton, Literacy Coordinator of Arlington Reads.

Adults can get sidetracked by obstacles that life can drop along the way. Byron Alexander dropped out of school to become a truck driver in order to take care of his growing family of five children. "Some people do it to get better jobs or secure better lives," he said of his diploma. "I did it for my kids. I had to let them know that you just can't give up like that."

It took Irene Gutierrez 12 years to get her GED. After learning she had dyslexia, she was able to take advantage of special accommodations like having the questions read to her or listening to them on a tape recording that let her rewind and listen to questions more than once. Working a full-time job while raising four children, she said of her GED diploma, "I can't tell you what this means to me. I just can't."

GED classes fill up quickly. Registration, which takes approximately one to two hours, includes filling out paperwork and taking the first part of an assessment test. There is a \$25 registration fee. For more information about upcoming classes, call [Arlington Reads at the Literacy House](#) at 817-460-2727.



Dr. V, as he prefers to be called, pictured with MISD Alice Ponder Elementary students (Dayanara Martinez, Micaela Castillo, Cindy Pacheco, Andrea Tamayo, and Jaivia Conway) in his [December 2013 video message](#) posted on the school's website at [www.mansfieldisd.org](http://www.mansfieldisd.org).

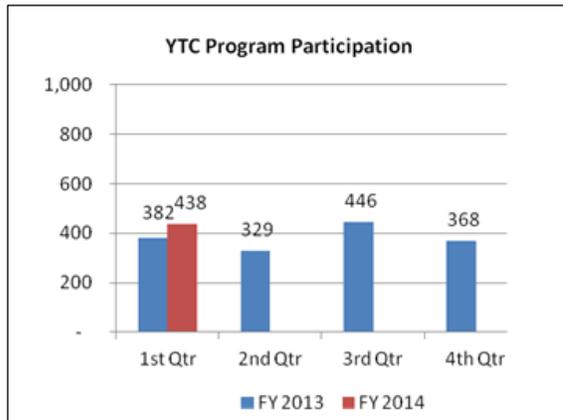


Dec. 18, 2013 – GED students before walking across the George W. Hawkes Central Library community room stage to accept their GED diplomas, pictured from left: **Byron Alexander, Cory Simmons, Gloria Lara, Haydee Reyes, Isis Sarbaz, Joaquina Solis, Lauren Greene, Linda Hernandez, Margaret Spence, Martha Castillo and Shonda Ruiz.** Not shown: **Evelin Arredondo, Leonardo Calderon, Gabriel Chavez, Ana Coria, Askary Crispin, Ana DeLeon, Alisha Duhon, Viridiana Guerrero, Irene Gutierrez, Mekdela Kidane, Melody Mitchell, Carolyn Morrison, Maria Riddle and Helen Vindel.**



Dec. 18, 2013 – GED graduate **Irene Gutierrez**, (center) pictured with her proud sisters, Silvia and Elizabeth. "She never gave up," said Literacy Coordinator Glory Dalton of Gutierrez's 12-year pursuit of her GED diploma prior to her dyslexia diagnosis, and then, "She passed every subject – and with flying colors."

## YOUTH TECHNOLOGY CENTERS



One of the City of Arlington's fiscal year 2014 business plan items under Council's *Supporting Quality Education* priority is "enhance student success through expanded Youth Technology Center (YTC) programming." Quarterly, we will bring you information about what's being offered, how many students are participating and what's planned for the future. Here's an overview of the YTC:

Programs are for teens in grades 7-12. Age permissions can change for special programming, so students in other grades are encouraged to keep checking the calendar for special classes just for them.

Recently, [GO Centers](#) have reached out towards public libraries and are currently located in all three of Arlington's YTCs. This is a Higher Education Servicing Corp. outreach program to ensure students have access to higher education. Trained staff are available to assist with college admission, sign-ups for SAT/ACT tests, finding applicable scholarships, and helping with financial aid (FASFA), financial literacy and career exploration.



Membership sign-up is required on the first visit to the YTC, and students should bring their personal library card and a form of photo identification, such as a driver's license or school ID (or a parent/guardian with his/her photo identification). Once signed up, a student is able to access the area and equipment by giving staff his or her name. Library cards are only needed to log-on to the computers. Visit [www.arlingtonlibrary.org/teens/ytc](http://www.arlingtonlibrary.org/teens/ytc) for more information.

- **The Lab** – The Gene and Jerry Jones Arlington Youth Foundation's Youth Technology Center, known as The Lab, is for teens interested in science, technology, engineering and robotics. Writing, science and math offerings support STARR (State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness) objectives as well as career planning. The Lab is located at the East Arlington Branch Library.
- **The Studio** – It is located at the George W. Hawkes Central Library in the basement area next to the Teen Area. Digital arts programs are offered, such as digital photography, videography, graphic arts, creative writing, web design and music. Offerings include PS2 with games, Wii with games, 52" LCD television, board games, magazines and more.
- **Teen Zone** – Located at the Northeast Branch Library, it is open after school Monday through Thursday, providing teens a safe place to hang out with friends. Features include lounge chairs for reading or handheld gaming, access to gaming systems, four computer stations and four laptops, public WiFi access, Teen Book Club, reading and writing sessions, field trips, mentoring, teen activities and more.

