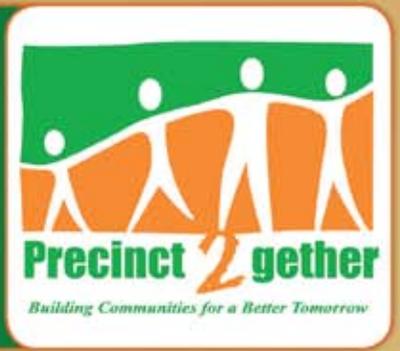


The Senior CHIT★CHAT

Fall 2009



A Publication for Precinct2gether from Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia

Don't Miss Out on the Fun! **THE FESTIVAL IN THE PARK**

Saturday, Oct. 24, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Clear Lake Park & Bay Area Community Center

This family-oriented day benefits Precinct2gether, a non-profit group that serves seniors, youth and veterans in Harris County Precinct Two.

There's no fee to enter The Festival in the Park. The concert admission – which includes access to Brian Jack and the Zydeco Gamblers, Negami, Southern Star and OGRE – is \$10 for adults, \$5 for youth ages 3-18 and children 2 and under are free. **Free shuttle service provided.**

For more information, call 281.452.7598 or e-mail Stacey.Bush@pct2.hctx.net.



Games
& Food



Live Music
Carnival



Craft &
Business Expo

Barbeque Cook-off

Check out what's inside...

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Mark Your Calendar



Following are some events for seniors taking place during September, October and November. If the event is hosted at one of Harris County Precinct Two's community centers, the center's name follows the activity. An * indicates this event is not at a Precinct Two community center:

SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 1-4** First week of bus booking
- Sept. 3** Gospel Night, Flukinger
- Sept. 4** Grandparent's Brunch, North East
- Sept. 8** Gospel Night, San Jacinto
- Sept. 8-11** Second week of bus booking
- Sept. 9** Fiestas Patrias Luncheon, North East
- Sept. 10** National Hispanic Council on Aging, Humble Civic Center*
- Sept. 11** Black-and-White Ball, Bay Area
- Sept. 14** South Channel Council Meetings, Bay Area and EHCAC
- Sept. 15** Grandparents Party, San Jacinto
- Sept. 15** Gospel Night, Grayson
- Sept. 16** Grandparents Day Party, Flukinger
- Sept. 17** Inner City Network Meeting, Martinez Annex
- Sept. 17** Lunch & A Movie, "A Salute to Grandparents," Bay Area
- Sept. 18** Tejano Dance, North East

- Sept. 24** Precinct Two Centers' Line Dance Competition, Barrett
- Sept. 25** Hometown Opry—'50s Night, EHCAC
- Sept. 29** Lunch & A Movie, EHCAC

OCTOBER

- Oct. 1** Gospel Night, Flukinger
- Oct. 2** Lunch & A Movie, Bay Area
- Oct. 2-3** Fall Fundraiser, North East
- Oct. 5** South Channel Council Meetings, Bay Area and EHCAC
- Oct. 5-7** Food Harvest Week, Grayson's Baldree Building
- Oct. 6** National Night Out, Barrett, Flukinger, Grayson, North East, San Jacinto and Walker
- Oct. 7** North Channel Network Meeting, Flukinger
- Oct. 8** Birthday Luncheon, Walker
- Oct. 9** Influenza, Pneumonia and Shingles Immunizations, North East
- Oct. 9** Precinct2gether Royal Pageant hosted by Nursing Home Program, EHCAC

Monthly Birthday Celebrations

- Second Tuesday:** San Jacinto
- Third Thursday:** Barrett
- Last Wednesday:** Flukinger, Grayson, North East

- Oct. 13** Gospel Night, San Jacinto
- Oct. 13** Influenza shots, EHCAC
- Oct. 14** Influenza shots, Bay Area
- Oct. 15** Inner City Network Meeting, Martinez Annex
- Oct. 20** Gospel Night, Grayson
- Oct. 20** Monster Mash Dance, Bay Area
- Oct. 21** Inner City Halloween Party, EHCAC
- Oct. 21** Nursing Home Party, Baldree Building
- Oct. 23** Hometown Opry, EHCAC
- Oct. 24** The Festival in the Park, Bay Area
- Oct. 26** Lunch & A Movie, EHCAC
- Oct. 28** Hobo Stew & Costume Contest Party, Flukinger
- Oct. 30** Fall Fest, Walker
- Oct. 30** Fun Day, Bay Area

- Nov. 6** Inner City Senior Gala, EHCAC
- Nov. 10** Thanksgiving Luncheon, San Jacinto
- Nov. 10** Gospel Night, San Jacinto
- Nov. 11** Veteran's Day Celebration and Fall Party, Flukinger
- Nov. 12** Senior Gala, Grayson's Baldree Building
- Nov. 13** Tamalada, North East
- Nov. 13** Lunch & A Movie, "Special Thanksgiving," Bay Area
- Nov. 13** Hometown Opry, "Legends Night," EHCAC
- Nov. 17** Gospel Night, Grayson
- Nov. 18** Thanksgiving Luncheon, North East
- Nov. 18** Lunch & A Movie, EHCAC
- Nov. 19** Inner City Network Meeting, Martinez Annex
- Nov. 19** Fall Party, Grayson's Baldree Building
- Nov. 20** Thanksgiving Dinner, Walker
- Nov. 20** EHCAPA Network Luncheon, EHCAC
- Nov. 21** Barrett Station Homecoming, Riley Park

Chit-Chat info:

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Community Center Dances: Proceeds benefit Precinct2gether:



Second Thursday:	Grayson
Third Tuesday:	Bay Area (ballroom dancing)
Third Thursday:	East Harris County (EHCAC) (country-and-western dancing)
Fourth Friday:	San Jacinto - no charge to attend (Pick 'N Grin Band)

A Message from Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner

Sylvia R. Garcia

The Census is coming! It's so important to Precinct2gether that you and your fellow seniors participate in this program.

There already has been quite a bit of media attention about our upcoming population count. This has stemmed mostly from specific groups – both minority and majority – who fear that their “group” may be undercounted. It is important that everyone living in Precinct Two is counted, as this will affect our future resources.

While it is not always easy to follow the dollars that flow to and from Washington, the bottom line is that virtually every funding source uses data from the Census at some time or another. This includes more than just head counts. It includes income and housing estimates as well as numbers that government agencies use to determine estimates about quality of life.

I want to ensure that when Precinct2gether and Precinct Two seek assistance for promoting projects and services in the future that we have a full and accurate account of how many people live in our precinct. Because I have come to know so many of you as active participants in our senior program, I am confident that you will participate when approached about the Census.

Please take it upon yourselves to talk with your friends and neighbors about how important it is for them to take part in the Census. They are not all as active as those of you who are members of our senior groups and may not realize what an impact the Census will have on our precinct.

Together, we can ensure that Harris County Precinct Two continues to lead the way at all levels – including Census 2010.



Sylvia R. Garcia

Every year, approximately 1.4 million people in the United States sustain a traumatic brain injury (TBI) which is caused by a blow or jolt to the head or a penetrating head injury that disrupts the brain's normal function.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), of these injuries, 1.1 million people are treated and released from an emergency room, 235,000 are hospitalized and 50,000 people die as a result of the injury.

Falls are the leading cause of TBIs followed by motor vehicle accidents. Many head injuries are minor because the human skull does provide the brain with protection and victims recover on their own. How do you determine if a head injury is serious enough that you should receive medical attention?

According to the Memorial Hermann Hospital Web site, the signs of a head injury may be immediately apparent or could develop over a course of several hours. Even if the patient's head looks uninjured, there could be internal injuries. If a person suffers a head injury and has any of the following symptoms, Memorial Hermann recommends immediate medical attention should be sought:

Understanding the Symptoms of Traumatic Head Injuries

- Confusion or drowsiness
- Convulsions
- Loss of consciousness
- Low breathing rate or drop in blood pressure
- Fluid drainage from nose, mouth or ears (may be clear or bloody)
- Fracture in the skull or face, facial bruising, swelling at the site of the injury, or scalp wound
- Inability to hear, see, taste or smell
- Inability to move one or more limbs
- Initial improvement followed by worsening symptoms
- Irritability (especially in children), personality changes or unusual behavior
- Restlessness, clumsiness, lack of coordination
- Severe headache
- Slurred speech or blurred vision
- Stiff neck or vomiting

Keep a close eye on anyone who has experienced an apparent mild head injury for 24 hours as symptoms of a serious brain injury can be delayed. If the injured person does go to sleep, wake him every two or three hours and ask a simple question to see if he or she still is alert.

If you have any question about a head injury, it always is best to contact your physician or emergency medical assistance for guidance and direction.

Things to Know

North East Center hosts annual fall fundraiser

On Friday, Oct. 2, and Saturday, Oct. 3, the North East Community Center is holding its annual fundraiser to benefit Precinct2gether. This event includes a silent auction, massive garage sale, raffle, and plant, craft and bake sales. On Oct. 2, a spaghetti lunch will be served from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. for \$3.50 per plate while concessions such as hot dogs and nachos will be available on Oct. 3. For more information, call 281-442-7950.



Precinct2gether celebrates Veterans Day

The 3rd Annual Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia Precinct2gether Veterans Picnic is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 17, at Highlands Park, 604 Highland Woods Drive in Highlands from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. The event will include food and drinks, games and door prizes. All veterans and their families are welcome to attend this free event.



Conference focuses on senior issues

The National Hispanic Council on Aging-Houston Chapter promotes the well being of seniors in Houston and Harris County through education and advocacy. The Council will be hosting its 16th annual “Bajo El Mismo Techo” Conference on Thursday, Sept. 10, 2009, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Humble Civic Center.

Approximately 600 to 800 seniors will have the chance to listen to speakers who will discuss issues affecting senior adults and visit more than 50 sponsor and vendor booths that feature a variety of health and well being services and products. There is no admission for this program. For more information, call Mary Guerrero at 713-514-0185.

Annual tamalada rings in the holiday season

In many households, tamales are a traditional element of their holiday celebrations. On Friday, Nov. 13, the North East Community Center is hosting its fourth tamalada and community members are invited to take part in this fund-raising event. “Our tamalada is more than a fund raiser; it’s a chance for us to get together to create something that so many people enjoy,” said Lisa May, director of the North East Community Center.

Pork tamales will be available for \$6 per dozen and must be pre-ordered. For more information on participating in the tamalada or placing an order, call 281-442-7950.



Mark your calendar for National Night Out

Twenty-six years ago, National Night Out (NNO) was created to strengthen neighborhood spirit, heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, and generate support for and participation in local anti-crime partnerships. More than 37 million people took part in NNO 2008 in all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide.

The Barrett, Flukinger, Grayson, North East, San Jacinto and Walker Community Centers are planning NNO events on Tuesday, Oct. 6. The Barrett Center’s program will be off-site at the City of Refuge Edu-Care parking lot, 12028 Crosby-Lynchburg Rd. beginning at 6:30 p.m. All other Precinct Two Community Centers participating in NNO will host on-site events from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Contact your local center for more information.

Left: Harris County Precinct Two Commissioner Sylvia R. Garcia greets attendees at a 2008 National Night Out event.

Protect yourself from seasonal flu

Every year in the United States, 5 percent to 20 percent of the population gets the seasonal flu with approximately 36,000 people dying from flu-related causes. Complications from seasonal flu can worsen chronic medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma or diabetes.

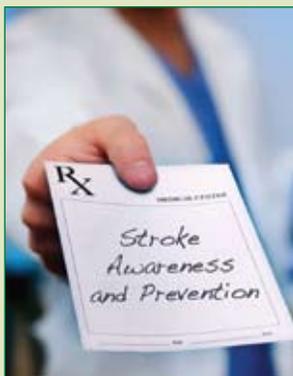
Your best bet to avoiding seasonal influenza is a flu shot. Several Precinct Two community centers will have seasonal flu shots available for seniors. Check with your center to find out further details on if they will be providing influenza vaccinations.

Please note: the seasonal influenza vaccine will not protect against the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus (swine flu). A separate vaccine for H1N1 is expected to be ready later in 2009.

Help make it a Merry Christmas for Precinct2gether nursing home residents

Each year, Precinct2gether’s Nursing Home Program sponsors “Adopt-a-Resident,” a program that focuses on making it a joyful Christmas for all those living in the participating 22 Precinct Two nursing homes. “Without this program, some of our nursing home residents would be forgotten at Christmas,” explained Freda Morris, director of the Precinct2gether Nursing Home Program. “Each year, between 350 to 400 residents are ‘adopted’ as sponsors provide each participant’s Christmas wish.” Wishes often include clothing and other small items.

To participate in the “Adopt-a-Resident” program, call Morris at 281-479-7199 or e-mail Freda.Morris@pct2.hctx.net.



Precinct2gether spreads the word about stroke prevention

Strokes are the third leading cause of death in the United States but, amazingly, 80 percent of strokes can be prevented. May has been declared Stroke Prevention Month as a time to further educate Americans on stroke awareness, prevention and treatment.

To help local seniors understand what a stroke is and how to prevent one, Precinct2gether's social workers Sharon Carter and Lisa Hernandez, along with their colleague Curtis Stanley and local medical professionals, held Stroke Awareness Programs at several Precinct Two community centers.

"The response to the program was really great, especially if you look at all the questions that were asked," explained Carter. "We really emphasized the F.A.S.T. acronym that is used to determine if someone is having a stroke by checking the Face, Arms, Speech and Time to call 911 fast! Everyone needs to know that the faster you act, the better chance a stroke victim will have."

Line dancing competition set for Sept. 24

The Barrett Community Center is hosting the first Precinct2gether line dancing competition on Sept. 24 beginning at 10:30 a.m. Both dance teams and those who enjoy watching line dancing are welcome at this fun-filled event.

For this initial competition, only line dancing groups from Precinct Two community centers are eligible to compete. Line dancing team must have at least three people on a line and dance for a minimum of three minutes and a maximum of 10 minutes. Dancers only may be on one team and must be dressed in costume or alike. Call 281-328-4713 for more details.

Computer Classes Popular Activity at Community Centers

Computers and the Internet have completely changed the way people live today. Being able to communicate with family and friends via e-mail, research any topic on the Internet or use Word processing packages are great tools for people of all ages. Seniors in Precinct2gether are taking advantage of computer classes and access offered at several community centers to gain entry to the Information Superhighway.

"Our seniors know that computers are the medium of communication of the future and everyone wants to at least be somewhat familiar with the vehicle as to not be totally left out," explained Lisa May, director of the North East Community Center. This center offers a free, six-week course that covers basic computer skills, e-mail and an introduction to word processing as well as a computer lab that seniors can access on their own.

The Walker Community Center also has a regular computer class with morning classes running two hours on Mondays and Wednesdays as well as evening classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. "We offer both beginner and intermediate classes for our seniors and the public with both levels of classes filling up quickly because of their popularity," said Patty Thierry, director of the J.D. Walker Community Center. The Center also allows seniors to use the computers during open lab times Tuesday through Thursday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Seniors who attend the Barrett Station & Riley Community Center are enthusiastic

about their computer class that includes learning Microsoft Office and e-mail. "We also have a computer lab that has a monitor who helps our seniors and other community members as they use our computers to look up all types of things including job hunting, taxes and social security issues," explained Bobbi Yarbrough.

While the San Jacinto Center currently is not offering any computer classes, they are taking names of interested seniors and will begin a new class when enough seniors have expressed interest. San Jacinto also has a computer lab that is open daily from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Computers also are available to seniors at

the East Harris County Activity Center, Flukinger Center and the senior program office at the Martinez Annex. Check with these locations regarding availability.



James Fretty

A LEADER IN THE MCNAIR COMMUNITY

“I just want to make the community better for the people who live here so we can all have a good life,” said James Fretty, a long-time resident of McNair. “I figure that someone has to make changes happen, so why not me?”

Fretty’s determined spirit and willingness to work for what he believes in has had a true impact on the McNair community. Born in Dayton, Texas, Fretty’s family moved to the McNair area in 1943 where he has lived ever since.

One of Fretty’s most notable accomplishments was being a driving force behind the establishment of Precinct Two’s JD Walker Community Center. “Back in the 1970s, many of us really wanted a community center here and I decided to put my full effort into this project,” Fretty explained. “I was able to find and work with others who believed in this project.”

Fretty’s dream became a reality in 1978 when the Walker Community Center opened its doors. Since that first day, he has remained involved with the Center, as he has served on its Advisory Board since its inception. “I’m probably the longest serving member on any community center’s advisory board,” Fretty joked.

His unwavering commitment to the McNair community has been evident in other projects. Fretty is a long-time member of the Concerned Citizens of McNair, a civic group that works for the betterment of the community. He also is actively involved with Holy Family Catholic Church and was one of the founders of the St. Martin Holy Family Cemetery.

Fretty also had a distinguished professional career. He spent 22.5 years working for the Houston Police Department (HPD) with most of that time in the juvenile division. Upon his retirement from HPD, he became an operator for Lyondell for another 15 years.

Though his days are busy with community projects, Fretty spends his free time with his wife of 51 years, their four children, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. He’s an avid hunter, fisherman, dominos player and traveler.

Fretty has enjoyed being around kids both in his family life and through his work with HPD. Over the past few years, he’s had a new way to bring some joy into a child’s life: by playing Santa for the local Head Start group.

“I’ve always worked with kids and been comfortable around them so when they asked me to be Santa, I said sure,” said Fretty.

Whether it’s bringing joy to children at the holidays or finding a project to make people’s lives in McNair a little better, James Fretty is a dedicated leader who has had a real impact on his community.



*“I figure that someone has to make
changes happen, so why not me?”*





Working hard for Bay Area seniors

The Chit-Chat's featured employee: Elizabeth Williams

Always looking for a way to provide new opportunities for seniors seems to be a daily goal for Elizabeth Williams, director of the Bay Area Community Center. Her zeal for senior programming, coupled with a love of party planning and decorating, makes her an amazing asset to the Precinct2gether team.

Williams joined Harris County in spring 2003 as a runner. "I ran from here to there!" Williams joked when remembering her first assignment. Just a few months later, she became the assistant director of the Bay Area Center and was promoted to center director two years ago.

Before her work with Precinct2gether, Williams ran her own business where she focused on special event planning and decorating. "When I became involved with the senior program, I was able to use my past work experiences as well as the arts and crafts projects I love doing into my new job," said Williams.

During the past few years, Williams has made a concerted effort to let the Bay Area community know about the Center. "The relationships I've formed in the local community really have helped our center in that not only do the businesses support us but many of the business owners have told their parents about the activities at the Bay Area Community Center," said Williams.

Williams's outreach activities have led to a partnership with the University of Houston-Clear Lake's Clear Lake Association of Senior Programs (CLASP) where 90-minute mini-classes are held September through May at the Bay Area Center. Her networking



also has given her the ability to host arts-and-crafts classes that use recycled materials.

"For example, we recently were given a book of wallpaper that our seniors will use to make gift bags for the holidays," said Williams. "We're going to make jewelry from old newspapers and even use empty toilet paper rolls in a project. I really don't like the idea of making more garbage so our efforts not only are good for the environment but our seniors are going to make some amazing things!"

Another favorite project of Williams is her "mystery trips." "Once a month, I take seniors out on an adventure in one of our buses but I don't let them know where we're headed," she explained. "We'll go out for a whole day, maybe visit an art gallery, a boutique or any other interesting place. We have lunch while we're out and just enjoy ourselves. Everyone seems to have a really good time."

Williams is truly dedicated to her work for Precinct2gether seniors. "I just want to make a difference for our seniors," Williams explained. "I believe that working hard and smart lets you get so much done. I'm committed to introducing new ideas to our seniors and to putting as many activities on the calendar as I can."

When Williams is away from her work, she loves spending time with her husband who she has been married to for 35 years. The couple enjoys taking weekends away and spending time with their two daughters and grandson.



Useful Resources on the Web

Following are some Web sites that provide information or services that may be useful to you:

Texas Medicaid Program

<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/index.html>

Medicaid is different in every state. This Web site provides information on the Texas Medicaid Program.

Artshound

<http://www.artshound.com>

The Houston Arts Alliance (HAA) has created Artshound.com, the largest database of local arts and cultural events. Categories include theatre and comedy; music; dance; visual arts; film and video; books, poetry and lectures; kids and families; festivals and special events; sports, outdoors and science; and free events.

Senior Guidance Directory and Caregiving Handbook

<http://www.srguidance.org>

This Web site provides access to this handbook, also available for free in printed form, that has information on numerous services for caregivers, eldercare professionals and seniors in the greater Houston area.

Metropolitan Authority of Harris County, Houston, Texas

<http://www.hou-metro.harris.tx.us>

Learn more about METRO trip planners, bus schedules, and information on MetroLift, MetroRail and senior discounted fares.

Texas Department of State Health Services—

Texas Vital Statistics

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vs>

Visit this Web site to obtain a copy of a Texas birth, marriage, divorce or death certificate. There is a fee charged by the state for this service.

FirstGov for Senior Citizens' Resources

<http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Seniors.shtml>

This site is a database of online resources for seniors covering topics such as consumer protection; education, jobs and volunteerism; housing; health; laws and regulations concerning seniors; travel and recreation; money and taxes; and retirement.



Precinct2gether, Inc.
 13828 Corpus Christi
 Houston, TX 77015

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**Precinct2gether welcomes
 all new participants!**

Precinct2gether serves Harris County Precinct Two seniors in Barrett Station, Baytown, Channelview, Clear Lake, Crosby, Deer Park, El Lago, Galena Park, Highlands, Houston, Jacinto City, La Porte, McNair, Morgan's Point, Nassau Bay, North Shore, Pasadena, Seabrook, Sheldon, Shore Acres, South Houston, Taylor Lake Village and Webster.

Precinct2gether, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

★ **DIRECTORY** ★

Department of Community Centers & Senior Programming

Precinct2gether Main Office
 281-862-9531

Precinct2gether TDD
 713-755-8919

Department of Community
 Centers & Senior
 Programming
 713-455-4869

Inner City Program
 713-514-0185

North Channel Program
 281-452-7598

Nursing Home Program
 281-479-7199

South Channel Program
 281-479-4232

Barrett Station & Chambers
 Community Centers
 281-328-4713

Bay Area
 Community Center
 281-326-2955

East Harris County
 Activity Center
 281-479-4232

Grayson Community Center
 713-455-3660

North East
 Community Center
 281-442-7950

Ramsey & Flukinger
 Community Center
 281-457-1810

San Jacinto & Highlands
 Community Centers
 281-426-7561

Walker Community Center
 281-426-3551

**Harris County Precinct Two
 Transportation Department**
 281-452-6071

Voucher Transportation
 281-326-6013

Veterans Services
 281-426-2832 or
 281-843-2019