

Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE)

ACE CELEBRATES *LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL*



ACE students in Donna ISD show their gratitude for the ACE program.



State Representative Joe Deshotel, Mayor Pro-Tem Jamie D. Smith, BISD Board President Woodrow Reece, and Superintendent Dr. Carrol A. Thomas speak at Beaumont ISD's *Lights On Afterschool*.



Students at Rich Schneider Middle School in Pasadena ISD enjoy time with their families, sharing why the ACE program is important to them.



Dear Texas ACE Colleagues,

I hope you are enjoying the cooler fall weather and looking forward to the upcoming holiday season.

You have likely heard about and maybe already participated in some of the exciting regional training opportunities being offered this school year. As I have previously shared, our training

efforts this year are focused around a few major areas: offering high quality programming, family engagement, and staff and leadership development. These topical areas were identified based on your feedback and ongoing analysis of programmatic data. Additional details about regional training opportunities will be provided throughout the school year. I encourage you to participate in these trainings and welcome your continued feedback.

And speaking of training, I am excited to announce the final stage of development for the Needs Assessment Online Course launching soon on [MyTexasACE](#). This comprehensive online course provides in depth content and strategies for conducting high quality needs assessments. This is the first of several online courses we will be rolling out on MyTexasACE and I look forward to your comments and feedback about the course and this mode of delivery.

I also want to congratulate Nicole Tanner, a 5th grade ACE ASPIRE student at O.H. Stowe Elementary School in Hamilton City (in the Dallas/Fort Worth area). She won the 2011 *Lights On Afterschool*

National Poster Contest out of over 1,000 student entries. You can read more about her in the *In the Spotlight* article. There are also two articles on how ACE students and staff in the Bastrop community responded to the recent wildfire disaster. These stories are uplifting and illustrate the resiliency of people during difficult challenges.

Finally, I want to close with a few words about offering high quality programming. Over the past couple of years TEA has focused on leadership development and grant management. While I am pleased with the progress we have made together, these will continue being areas of focus along with intentional lesson planning, targeted student recruitment, alignment to school day curriculum, connection with school day staff, and enhanced homework help and strategic tutoring. These are perhaps the most important things we can do to meet our student and family attendance numbers and create community demand that will sustain our programs. I ask that you too make high quality programming an area of focus and please be on the lookout for future training and development opportunities in this area.

Thank you all for your continued dedication to the Texas ACE program. On behalf of everyone here at TEA, best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Candace M. Ferguson
21st CCLC State Coordinator/Program Manager

ACE STUDENTS' APPRECIATION BRINGS 10 FIRE TRUCKS TO SCHOOL

ACE Students experience the weight of the firefighter's safety gear.



ACE Students hold up Thank You cards as they listen to a fire safety lesson.

On September 4th as so many Texans were casually celebrating the Labor Day weekend, the lives of the people in the Bastrop community were dramatically altered. A tree limb hit a power line causing a fire, which quickly grew into a massive wildfire. Over the next few weeks, firefighters from across the country fought the blazing, out of control wildfire. In the end, over 34,000 acres and 1,550 homes were destroyed in the surrounding community.¹ One of the affected communities was the small town of Red Rock, which is 12 miles Southwest of Bastrop.

Once it was deemed safe, ACE students, from Kindergarten – 4th grade, went back to class at Red Rock Elementary School. In response to the efforts of everyone who assisted the community during this tragedy, the ACE students wanted to express their appreciation. In the end, students decided to create Thank You cards for the firefighters. Every grade participated in this activity.

Tracy Daugherty, the ACE Site Coordinator at Red Rock Elementary, visited the Red Rock Fire Station and informed them about the students' activity. Together, they decided to have a few firefighters visit the students and teach them fire safety and provide students the opportunity to present their Thank You cards to the firefighters.

The following day, the students and school staff received the biggest surprise from the firefighters, 10 fire trucks drove up to the school—two trucks from the Red Rock Fire Department and eight trucks from the National Forest Service. Students screamed as they looked out the window, "Look Mrs. Tracy, Look! That's for us!" Their faces were beaming.

For the next two hours, ACE students toured the trucks learning about their various functions, tried on the firefighter gear, and practiced how to position the hose when putting out a fire.

As students prepared to go home later that afternoon, both boys and girls were overheard saying they wanted to become firefighters. Because of everyone's kindness, students, school staff, and firefighters all got to be a part of a memorable, meaningful event.

Ms. Daugherty said, next spring students will build flower boxes for the Red Rock Fire Station as a Service Learning project.

¹ Insured Losses in Bastrop County Fire to Reach \$250M. Insurance Journal, September 27, 2011. Wells Publishing, Inc. Retrieved on October 6, 2011 from <http://www.insurancejournal.com/news/southcentral/2011/09/27/217563.htm>

From a Dark Cloud Emerges a Silver Lining

Seeing images of the damage caused by the Bastrop wildfire and hearing stories about the destruction became personal when we learned that the fires affected our ACE family in Bastrop County. Two Site Coordinators from Bastrop ACE lost their homes. Many students either lost their homes or knew a family who had. In the mist of this tragedy, came hope and promise for new beginnings.

Within a few days of the disaster, Bastrop High School opened one of their cafeterias as a donation collection and distribution center. ACE students and staff assisted with collecting, sorting, and distributing donations. Within four hours, donations overflowed the space and the adjacent gym was opened to

accommodate the response. Donations included clothes, furniture, household goods, and non-perishable food. Over the next five days, ACE students and staff ran the center from 8:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M. with assistance from 40 – 90 volunteers each day, most of the volunteers were high school students who had lost their homes.

Laurie Celli, Project Director of ACE and Director of Community Services at Bastrop ISD describes her experience, "It was very touching to see our students and staff working together to help others, even though they too had suffered. To see the community pull together and witness firsthand the generosity of strangers is something I will never forget."

If you are interested in making a monetary donation to assist the Bastrop community, please contact the ACE Help Desk.

In the Spotlight

Budding ACE Artist Wins National Lights On Afterschool Poster Contest

Students in *After School Program Inspiring and Reinforcing Education* (ASPIRE) at O.H. Stowe Elementary School in Hamilton City (in the Dallas/Fort Worth area) were extremely excited to celebrate **Lights On Afterschool** this year as one of their own had created the poster for the nationwide event. **Nicole Tanner**, a fifth grade student at O.H. Stowe Elementary School drew a representation of what the ACE program means to her during Design Art, an ACE activity. As every artist dreams, on October 20th Nicole's artwork shined under the spotlight as the poster was proudly displayed at O.H. Stowe Elementary School during their *Lights On Afterschool* rally.



Nicole Tanner, winner of *Lights On Afterschool* Poster Contest

The ACE staff encourages their students to take pride in their work and submit their work in various contests. Nicole submitted her artwork in the 2011 *Lights On Afterschool* Poster Contest along with over 1,000 other students across the country. In August, Nicole was notified that she had won the contest and that her design would be printed on 70,000 posters and distributed to 7,500 afterschool programs nationwide.

In the Afterschool Snack blog titled, [Announcing the 2011 Lights On Afterschool Poster Contest Winner](#), Sarah Simpson, Associate at the Afterschool Alliance eloquently described Nicole's drawing, "Nicole's bright, eye-catching painting celebrates the endless possibilities of the afterschool space: everything from engaging STEM activities—like building rockets and learning about computers—to exploring sports, music and art."

The Executive Director of Afterschool Alliance, Jodi Grant, further described Nicole's poster, "What I loved about it was the way her hair is structured with all the different things available in afterschool. It's almost showing the brain doing all these things. To me, it showed a child's mind being opened to all sorts of possibilities."

As the poster contest winner, Nicole received a free trip to Washington, D.C. and an invitation to attend the *Lights On Afterschool* Kickoff rally at the National Mall on October 2nd. While it would have been an honor to attend the kickoff rally, Nicole and her family have postponed the trip to the nation's capital until the whole family can join her in this life changing experience. Nicole is hoping she will have the opportunity to meet President Obama.



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Afterschool Centers on Education

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Questions?

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Save the Dates:

February 28 – 29, 2012: ACE Project Director Retreat,
Lakeway Resort, Austin, TX
August 7 – 8, 2012: Texas ACE Annual Conference,
Grand Hyatt, San Antonio, TX

When asked about participating in the ASPIRE program and winning the poster contest, Nicole smiled and said, "Art is my favorite class as I have the flexibility to be creative. The "Lights On Afterschool" theme gave me the idea to shine the sunlight behind the activities offered at ACE ASPIRE."

A follow up story of Nicole's trip to Washington, D.C. will be in a future issue of the ACE Newsletter.

Congratulations to Nicole and to the ACE ASPIRE students and staff!

Samples of publicity:

Fort Worth Star—Telegram article, "[DFW girl's poster wins nationwide contest for Lights On Afterschool](#)", September 5, 2011.

Afterschool Alliance's Afterschool Snack Blog, "[Announcing the 2011 Lights On Afterschool Poster Contest Winner](#)", August 25, 2011.

FALL TRAINING

Inspires Higher Quality Programs



ACE Project Directors, Family Engagement Specialists, and Site Coordinators participate in breakout groups in Project Management 101.

This fall several training events were offered to Project Directors, Family Engagement Specialists, and Site Coordinators to improve and sharpen skills which focus on providing the highest quality programming to ACE students.

OCTOBER

Project Management 101—Project Directors, Family Engagement Specialists, and Site Coordinators were introduced to Project Management, learning how to implement it in their ACE programs.

Project Management 201—Anyone who completed Project Management 101 had the opportunity to advance their project management skills. This session offered more action focused exercises including beginning to draft a Project Plan.

Evaluation—Project Directors and Evaluators attended a webinar where they learned about the importance of evaluation, the ACE evaluation report template, data requirements, analysis framework, and the overall evaluation process. The webinar is archived and available to watch on MyTexasACE.org. Additional Evaluation training, specifically highlighting the Critical Success Model and the Performance Measures will be available in December.

Family Engagement—Project Directors, Family Engagement Specialists, and Site Coordinators participated in a webinar where they learned and discussed the results of the Family Engagement Survey, which was conducted earlier this spring. They were also introduced to available resources found on the Family Engagement webpage on MyTexasACE.org.

Innovative Practices—Members of the 2011 – 2012 Communication Network met and discussed innovative activity development, student recruitment techniques, and overall program best practices. This Innovative Team will meet again before the end of the year as well as during the Communication Network meetings.

NOVEMBER

Project Directors, Family Engagement Specialists, and Site Coordinators participated in Project Management training held at the Harris County Department of Education's Conference Facility in Houston. Participants had the opportunity to attend



A group of ACE staff in Project Management training work together to develop activity types.

both Project Management 101 and Project Management 201. The structure of the training was similar to the training sessions held in San Antonio in October.

DECEMBER

Interactive & Innovative Activities—Stay tuned for a webinar or live training that delves into intentional lesson planning presented by the ACE Training Consultant. This upcoming training will assist Project Directors and Site Coordinators in gaining a better understanding of how to develop more interactive and innovative activities.

Project Directors and Family Engagement Specialist will have the opportunity to attend a webinar, which will provide an overview of the Family Engagement Specialist's role and available support. More details coming soon.