

FRIdays

FERGUSON ROAD INITIATIVE
SERVING FAR EAST DALLAS

FALL 2026
ISSUE 43



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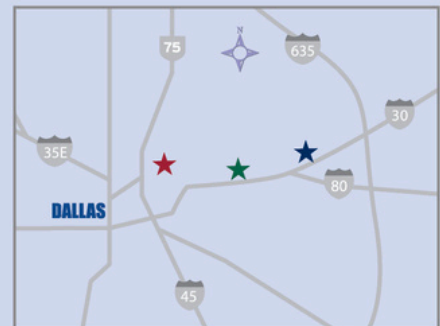


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A Letter From the Board President

Community Building since 1998

By Jared Greco



Volunteers Make the Difference:

In this issue of FRIdays, we celebrate the volunteers who make the Ferguson Road Initiative's work possible. Simply put, our mission succeeds because of people like you.

You are the heart of FRI. Your time, talents, and passion strengthen neighborhoods, support programs, and improve quality of life throughout Far East Dallas. As a community-driven nonprofit, we depend on your dedication to expand our impact.

Through your service, you build connections, inspire civic engagement, and prove that lasting change happens when neighbors work together. Thank you for making a difference.

White Rock Hills Recreation Center Moving Forward:

The White Rock Hills Recreation Center continues to move forward with strong community involvement including multiple public input meetings to help shape its design and programming. Construction is expected to begin in 2027, with the new facility opening in early 2029 as a hub for recreation, wellness, and community engagement in Far East Dallas.

A Commitment to Crime Prevention & Public Safety:

FRI recently concluded its "See Something, Say Something" public safety campaign encouraging residents to effectively report suspicious activity. This fall, FRI launches a year-long traffic safety initiative promoting safe interactions among pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. FRI's new CrimeWatch Toolkit, completed this year, equips neighborhoods with tools to

strengthen local crime prevention efforts.

Far East Dallas Public Improvement District:

The Far East Dallas Public Improvement District (FEDPID) is one of FRI's most impactful achievements, creating a dedicated funding source that reinvests directly into White Rock Hills and White Rock East. These funds support public safety, beautification, business development, and capital improvements, while providing a model for future investment and revitalization in other communities such as Casa View and Casa Linda.

Expanding Housing Opportunities:

FRI continues to support diverse, mixed-income housing options in Far East Dallas by advocating for new townhome and senior housing developments that provide choices for residents at every stage of life. At the same time, FRI is working with city agencies, law enforcement, and residents to address problem properties and improve safety, health, and quality of life throughout the community.

Join Us in Making a Difference:

FRI's progress is made possible by people who believe in and invest in our work. On September 17, we invite you to support FRI during North Texas Giving Day. Every gift helps turn our community's priorities into action and creates lasting impact throughout Far East Dallas.

Together, we are building a stronger, safer, and more vibrant Far East Dallas—one where families thrive, businesses prosper, and neighbors work side by side to create opportunity for all. Thank you for your continued partnership and belief in our community.

"From public safety and mixed-income housing to the White Rock Hills Recreation Center and FEDPID, FRI is moving Far East Dallas forward. Our volunteers make the work happen, and our donors make it possible. Together, they turn our community's priorities into progress."
Jared Greco, president, Ferguson Road Initiative

CONTACTS & CREDITS

FRI Office (physical):
1451 John West Road
Suite 200
Dallas, TX 75228
P.O. Box 570417 (mail)
Dallas, Texas 75357
Phone: 214.324.5116
fergusonroad.org

FRI STAFF:

Vikki J. Martin: Executive Director
Maria Valenzuela: Director of Finance & Operations
Susan Hopper: Director of Communication & Marketing
Zitziki Sanluiseno: Membership & Special Projects Administrator

Dolores Sosa Green: Far East Dallas Public Improvement District Manager

FRIdays News Staff:

Publisher: Vikki J. Martin
Editor/Layout: Susan Hopper

To place an ad in FRIdays magazine, call Vikki Martin 214.324.5116 or email vikki@fergusonroad.org



North Texas Giving Day

Sept. 17

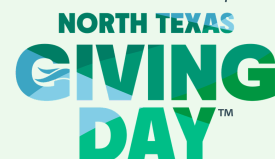
Early Giving Sept. 1 - 16

GOAL: \$70,000



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What is a Public Improvement District (PID)?

A PID is:

- a special district created at the petitioned request of property owners and approved by City Council.
- funded by an assessment paid with the annual property tax bill. Assessment funds are reinvested back into the community providing supplemental services above and beyond existing city services.
- focused on improving the quality of life in the community by enhancing public safety, improving and beautifying the community.

Contact Information

Dolores Sosa Green

FEDPID Manager

Email:

FEDPID@fergusonroad.org

Phone:

Office: 214-324-5116

Far East Dallas Public Improvement District (FEDPID) Launched January 2026



PID team established

August 2024



FEDPID Manager hired,
Dolores Sosa Green

March 2026



ENP begins in White
Rock East & White
Rock Hills areas

May 2026

March 2024

Councilmembers Bazaldua (D7) & Moreno (D2) recommend FRI establish a **Public Improvement District (PID)**



May 2025

Dallas City Council approves FEDPID



April 2026

Extended Neighborhood Patrol (ENP) Coordinator hired, Det. Robert Robbins



June 2026

FEDPID Committee attends annual Property Owners Meeting



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"FRI's approach to public safety works at a broader systems level by convening law enforcement, city departments, and community leaders. By tracking and reporting crime trends across multiple neighborhoods, supporting CrimeWatch and Volunteer-in-Patrol groups, and developing long-term public safety strategies across Far East Dallas, FRI serves as a force multiplier for public safety. Their work helps build trust between residents and law enforcement, encourages community engagement, and ensures that we are addressing crime proactively rather than simply reacting to it."

Major Yancey Nelson,
Dallas Police Department

Looking Out for One Another: Building a Safer Far East Dallas

By Susan Hopper



For more than 28 years, the Ferguson Road Initiative (FRI) has partnered with residents, law enforcement, schools, businesses, and community organizations to improve neighborhood safety and quality of life. Public safety remains one of FRI's core priorities because safe neighborhoods are the foundation of a strong community.

Pedestrian safety is a growing concern across Dallas. Fatalities involving pedestrians are often caused by distracted driving or walking, speeding, poor visibility, and failure to follow traffic laws.

In Far East Dallas, major corridors such as Buckner Boulevard, Ferguson Road, Centerville Road, and Interstate 30 and I-635 present unique challenges. Heavy traffic, limited crossing opportunities, and inadequate lighting can make walking difficult for residents traveling to schools, bus stops, parks, businesses, and other community destinations. The City of Dallas is improving pedestrian safety through Vision Zero Dallas, expanded sidewalks, safer crossings, and traffic-calming measures. Lasting progress also depends on personal responsibility.

To support this effort, FRI is partnering with **Lookout Texans** to encourage drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists to stay alert, avoid distractions, obey traffic laws, and watch out for one another.

Safer streets are everyone's responsibility. Together, we can reduce preventable crashes and build a safer Far East Dallas.

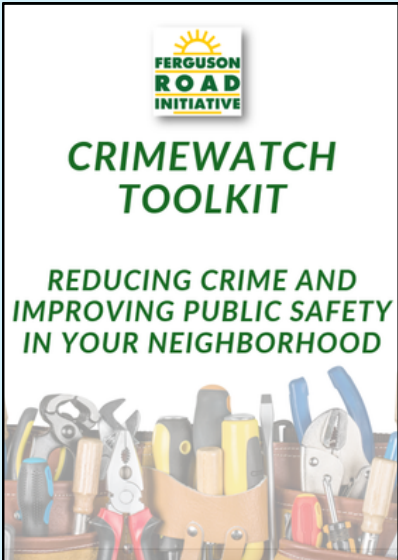
See Something. Say Something campaign was a partnership between the Ferguson Road Initiative (FRI) and the Dallas Police Department that encouraged residents to report suspicious activity using the iWatch Dallas app. Launched in September 2025, it **reached more than 22,000 residents** through community outreach and digital communications.



While the campaign has ended, FRI continues to encourage residents to report suspicious activity. Community awareness and timely reporting remain key to preventing crime and keeping neighborhoods safe.

CrimeWatch Toolkit: A Roadmap for Safer Neighborhoods

By Susan Hopper



The Ferguson Road Initiative, in partnership with the Dallas Police Department, is proud to introduce the CrimeWatch Toolkit, a practical guide for neighborhoods looking to start or strengthen a CrimeWatch program. The toolkit provides step-by-step guidance on organizing volunteers, building partnerships with law enforcement, improving communication, and promoting crime prevention. For neighborhoods with existing CrimeWatch programs, the toolkit offers best practices and fresh ideas to help revitalize and enhance current efforts. Whether starting a new program or improving an existing one, the CrimeWatch Toolkit provides valuable tools for building safer, more connected communities.



Lookout Texans
Flyer QR code



See Something,
Say Something Flyer QR code



CrimeWatch
Toolkit QR code

White Rock Hills Recreation Center Enters Design Phase

By Vikki Martin



The vision for the White Rock Hills Recreation Center (CENTER) continues to take shape as the project advances through the schematic design phase. Guided by extensive community input, the City of Dallas Park and Recreation

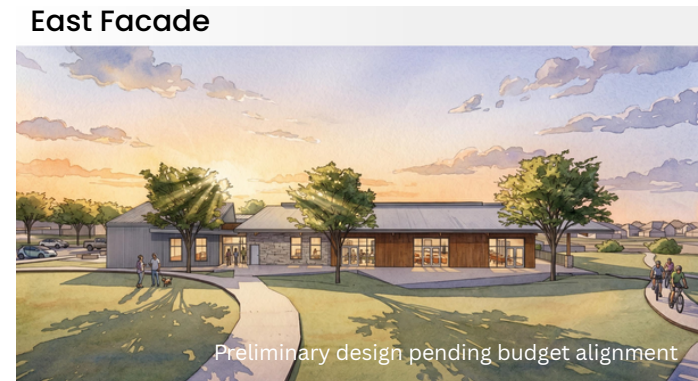
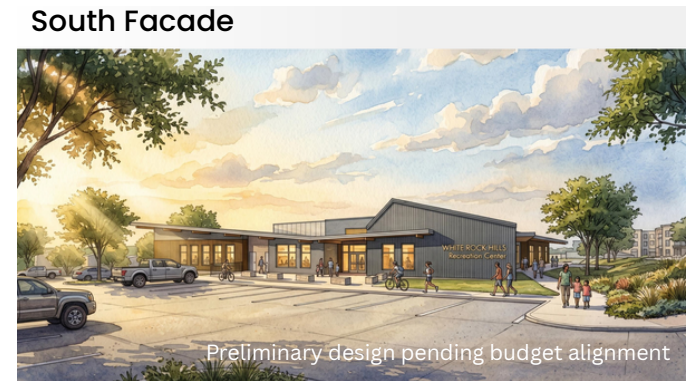
Department and the design team at FGMA Architects are working together to create a recreation center that reflects the unique character, needs, and aspirations of White Rock Hills.

Community engagement has been at the heart of the design process. Through public meetings, surveys, and interactive feedback sessions, residents have shared their priorities for the future center. The highest-ranked amenities include group fitness spaces, a gymnasium, multipurpose rooms, and a kitchen. These ideas are helping shape a recreation center designed to serve residents of all ages. Spaces will be designed to be flexible and multi-use, including senior gathering places, arts and crafts, education spaces, and children’s activity spaces.

Four design principles capture the identity of White Rock Hills: **Organic Integration** emphasizes a design that respects the area's natural beauty and mature trees. **Inclusive Hearth** envisions the recreation center as a welcoming place where neighbors gather and community connections flourish. **Vitality in Motion** reflects East Dallas' active lifestyle by promoting recreation, wellness, and movement throughout the facility. **Anchored Modernity** honors the neighborhood's rich history while embracing a vibrant future.

The preliminary site plan includes a recreation center with a solar-ready roof, playgrounds, a pavilion, an event lawn, outdoor gathering spaces, walking connections, and parking that enhances accessibility while preserving the site's natural features. Sustainability is a major focus, with native landscaping, rainwater management features, and conservation practices intended to reduce water use.

The CENTER is far more than a new building. It is the culmination of years of community advocacy and collaboration—a place where recreation, health, education, culture, and community come together. Groundbreaking is slated for early 2027, with the CENTER opening in 2029.



Friends of Harry Stone Park Rally Community Around a New Vision

By Vikki Martin



Harry Stone Recreation and Aquatics Center is looking for neighbors who want to help shape the future of one of Casa View's most valued community spaces.

A group of dedicated volunteers recently formed Friends of Harry Stone Park (FHSP), a community-led organization focused on improving and revitalizing the park. Created following a community meeting on park safety and engagement, the group has established a board, registered with the City of Dallas, and is pursuing nonprofit status.

The organization's first priority is replacing the aging playground and creating a safer, more welcoming space for children and families. This fall, FHSP will host a community visioning session to gather residents' ideas for the park's future.

The group also plans to organize beautification projects, community events, fundraising efforts, and grant opportunities in partnership with Dallas Park and Recreation. By working together, neighbors can help ensure Harry Stone Park remains a safe, vibrant gathering place for generations to come.

"I believe Harry Stone Park can become the heart and beacon of Casa View, a home away from home where families can safely gather, reconnect with one another, and build lasting memories,"

Jasmine Cadena, president of Friends of Harry Stone Park.

Public Art Coming to Harry Stone

Excitement continues to build at Harry Stone Recreation and Aquatics Center as the Dallas Office of Arts and Culture prepares to install an original public sculpture at the corner of Millmar Drive and Ferguson Road. Community members will have opportunities to participate in the final stages of the project and celebrate the artwork's installation.

The selected sculpture, ***Rising Together***, was designed by Miami-based artist **Vito Di Bari**, whose work focuses on creating site-specific landmarks that inspire hope and joy.

Standing 16.5 feet tall, five colorful vertical steel ribbons will symbolize the identity, energy, and shared experiences of the Casa View community.

The sculpture's base will feature words reflecting the community's core values, and residents are invited to help choose them. The Office of Arts and Culture will host a community meeting on **September 24, 6–7 p.m. at Harry Stone**, giving neighbors an opportunity to recommend the values incorporated into the artwork.

The public art installation and future park improvements build on past major investments at Harry Stone, including the 2013 recreation center renovation and the 2021 new aquatics center.

For more than 75 years, the Harry Stone Recreation and Aquatics Center has been a cornerstone of the Casa View community, providing recreation, gathering spaces, and lasting memories for generations. The launch of Friends of Harry Stone Park ensures that legacy continues.



"Rising Together rises as a bright gesture of welcome, five flowing forms lifted by the same shared spirit. Each ribbon carries a different rhythm of the neighborhood: family, play, memory, culture, and everyday life. Together, they become one upward movement of hope, color, and belonging," said artist Vito di Bari

Get Involved in Friends of Harry Stone Park

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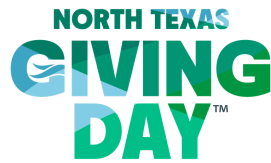


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Partnership Profile: Atmos Energy & FRI

By Vikki Martin



Since 2019, Atmos Energy has been a generous and steady partner in FRI's work to strengthen neighborhoods across Far East Dallas. As a Founder's Circle member and supporter of FRI's North Texas Giving Day campaign, Atmos helps make it possible for neighbors, families, and local organizations to work together for a safer, brighter community.

The partnership is a natural fit. Atmos Energy's Fueling Safe and Thriving Communities initiative reflects many of the values that have guided FRI for nearly 30 years: safety, neighborhood vitality, and the health and well-being of residents.

This year, Atmos Energy's support helped FRI move several public safety efforts forward. FRI released an updated **CrimeWatch Toolkit** to help neighborhoods start or refresh CrimeWatch programs. FRI also completed the **"See Something, Say Something"** awareness campaign, encouraging residents to report concerns and partner with law enforcement to prevent crime. This fall, FRI will launch **"Lookout Texans: Bike, Walk, Drive Safely,"** an informative, practical campaign promoting bicycle and pedestrian safety through education and community awareness.

FRI's work also supports two of Atmos Energy's philanthropic pillars: *Fueling Bright Minds and Healthy Futures*, and *Fueling Hope and Growth for Our Neighbors*.

Fueling Bright Minds and Healthy Futures: Through partnerships with organizations such as Book Drive for Kids, FRI is helping spark a love of reading by sharing free books in apartment communities and hosting book fairs at local elementary schools.

Fueling Hope and Growth for Our Neighbors: Working with the Wilkinson Center and the White Rock Center of Hope, FRI expanded food distribution to five local apartment communities, making nutritious food easier for residents to access close to home.

FRI is grateful for Atmos Energy's continued investment in Far East Dallas. As North Texas Giving Day approaches, we invite businesses, organizations, and residents to join Atmos in building a safer, stronger, and more connected community for the 84,000 residents of Far East Dallas.

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Making History in East Dallas: A Community's Vision Becomes Reality

By Loren Colman



What started as a simple question in donut shop lines and neighborhood parks has become a historic reality for East Dallas families.

As a longtime East Dallas resident, educator, and parent I have spent years

hearing parents ask the same question: What if we started a school together, one designed with and for the community?

In 2023, a small group of supporters began wearing shirts that read, "Want to start a school together?" That question sparked a two-year community co-design process unlike anything Texas had seen before.

Parents, educators, nonprofit leaders, and community members helped shape every aspect of the school's vision through focus groups, community meetings, surveys, and hundreds of conversations. Their efforts led to two historic milestones in 2025: The Museum School

of East Dallas became the first official community co-designed charter school approved in Texas, and it became the first National Association of Museum Schools affiliated in the state.

On August 11, 2026, that vision became reality as The Museum School of East Dallas welcomed its founding students. The tuition-free public charter school opened with more than 150 students and will grow into a K-8 campus serving approximately 450 students.

In true museum school fashion, students spent their very first week of school immersed in learning at the Dallas Arboretum, setting the tone for an educational experience that extends far beyond the classroom. Throughout the year, students will learn through museums, community expeditions, reflection, and public exhibitions across Dallas.

The opening of The Museum School of East Dallas is more than the launch of a new school. It is a testament to what can happen when a community comes together to reimagine education.

Learn more about future enrollment opportunities at www.tmseastdallas.org.

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"For the first time ever, my child is excited to go to school. Every morning, he hops out of the car with a smile and can't wait to tell us about everything he learned. We never imagined school could feel like this," a founding parent.



The Museum School celebrates its grand opening!

From a 1.2-Pound Miracle to a Community Movement

By Susan Hopper



For more than 20 years, Far East Dallas resident Maetzi Miller served as a Montessori guide, helping children develop independence, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning. She believed deeply in the power of education to transform lives, but she never imagined how personal that mission would become.

When her daughter, Amellié, was born at just 28 weeks, weighing only 1.2 pounds, everything changed. After spending more than four months in the NICU and undergoing multiple surgeries during her first year, Maetzi was determined to create the nurturing learning environment she envisioned for her daughter. Combining her passion for Montessori and bilingual education, she founded Cosmos Montessori.

What began in her living room with five children has grown into a bilingual Montessori school serving children from infancy through elementary school in East Dallas. As the school expanded, so did Maetzi's vision. She saw an opportunity to support not only children, but also educators and families.

That vision inspired the creation of the Cosmic Minds Fund, a nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to bilingual education, supporting teachers, creating innovative learning environments, and providing educational opportunities for children and families. She also founded Caminos Global, a bilingual Montessori training center that prepares future educators through virtual instruction and hands-on classroom experience.



Students feed chickens and water the plants at Cosmos Montessori School.

Today, Cosmos Montessori students learn far beyond traditional classrooms. They care for gardens and chickens, learn from an onsite international chef, participate in entrepreneurship programs, explore nature-based learning, and experience authentic bilingual Montessori education every day.

What began as one mother's dream for her tiny daughter has become a thriving educational community serving hundreds of East Dallas families. Through bilingual Montessori education, Cosmos Montessori continues to empower children, strengthen families, and help build a brighter future for the community.

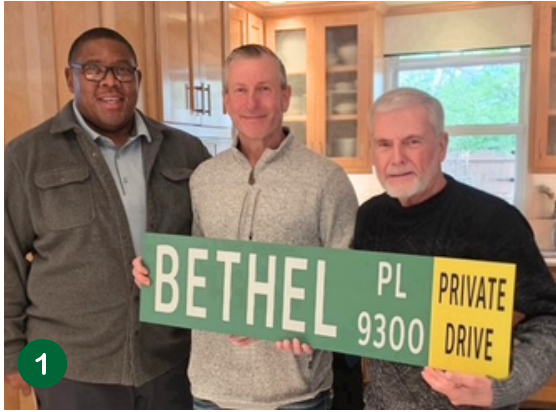
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Key:

1. Street sign for the future 9314 Ferguson Road (53) single-family townhome development.
2. Casa View Elementary School students select books provided by FRI partner Book Drive for Kids Book Fair.
3. Friends, neighbors, and fur-babies cut the ribbon on the new Lakeland Hills Dog Park.
4. New White Rock Hills gateway markers are installed at Lakeland Drive and Highland Road at the Ferguson Road intersection.
5. Bayles Elementary Back-to-School kick-off breakfast sponsored by the Claremont neighborhood and FRI.



Key:

6. Far East Dallas Public Improvement District manager, Dolores Sosa Green and Extended Neighborhood Patrol manager, Detective Robert Robbins.
7. White Rock Center of Hope and FRI partner to provide direct monthly food distribution to residents at the Finley Apartments on Highland Road.
8. Carter BloodCare partners with FRI for our annual community-wide blood drive.
9. The Garay Family arrive to pitch in with FRI's annual Operation Beautification Litter Cleanup event.
10. 2026 FRI Board of Directors serve the Far East Dallas community.



A Small Team with a Big Network of Volunteers

By Susan Hopper



With just five employees—three full-time and two part-time—FRI relies heavily on the dedication of volunteers to advance its mission.

From CrimeWatch programs and Town Hall meetings to VITA free tax preparation, board service, community events, beautification projects, blood drives, and advocacy efforts--volunteers play a vital role in expanding FRI's capacity and impact.

FRI evolved from the commitment of residents and volunteers who believed in the future of Far East Dallas. Today, FRI remains strong and vital because of the volunteers who continue to invest their time, talent, and leadership in our community.

How YOU can Volunteer for FRI

Whether you have an hour a month or a few hours a week, there's a place for you. Help at community events, serve on a committee, assist with beautification projects, prepare taxes through VITA, or lend your professional skills. Together, we build a stronger, safer, and more connected Far East Dallas.



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Turning Crisis Into Community Impact

By Zitziki Sanluiseno



In the fall of 2025, a federal government shutdown disrupted critical funding streams for programs that millions of American families rely on every day. Among the programs affected was the

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides food assistance to low-income households. Beginning November 1, many states experienced delays in receiving federal funds, leaving local governments, nonprofit organizations, and families scrambling to fill the gap. As a result, many households did not receive their full SNAP benefits and faced increased food insecurity.

In Far East Dallas, the Ferguson Road Initiative (FRI) stepped forward to help address this urgent need. With support from a generous foundation, FRI was asked to serve as a community connector, helping ensure that vital resources reached the families most affected by the disruption. While many nonprofits offer valuable programs and services, reaching the most vulnerable residents can be a challenge. By building partnerships and opening doors, FRI helped bridge that gap.

Working alongside White Rock Center of Hope and Wilkinson Center, FRI coordinated monthly food distributions at four underserved apartment communities. Residents received fresh produce and protein—essential resources for families struggling through the funding delays. Many of those served were seniors, individuals with limited mobility, or residents without reliable transportation. For these communities, food distributions became more than a convenience; they were a lifeline.

What began as an emergency response quickly evolved into a broader community initiative. As the distributions gained momentum, additional nonprofit organizations and City of Dallas departments joined the effort. Partners such as the White Rock Hills Branch Library, North Texas Votes, and, most recently, Lone Star Credit Union began providing programs, educational resources, and services tailored to the needs of residents living in these apartment communities.

FRI's involvement has continued to grow beyond food access. This summer, residents and families benefitted from expanded summer reading activities through Book Drive for Kids. This initiative provided educational enrichment and childhood development, while strengthening family connections.



Wilkinson Center serves nearly 100 families monthly in their direct food distribution program at Spanish Rock Apartments.

Today, what started as a response to a temporary crisis has become an ongoing collaboration that improves access to food, services, and opportunities for families throughout Far East Dallas. FRI is grateful for the dedication of its community partners, whose commitment to working together continues to strengthen the health and well-being of local residents.

By supporting FRI, community members and donors help strengthen the bridge between nonprofits and the neighborhoods they serve—ensuring that essential resources reach the people who need them most. As FRI expands to additional properties and continues to bring new programs into underserved communities, that bridge becomes even stronger, creating lasting impact for families across Far East Dallas.

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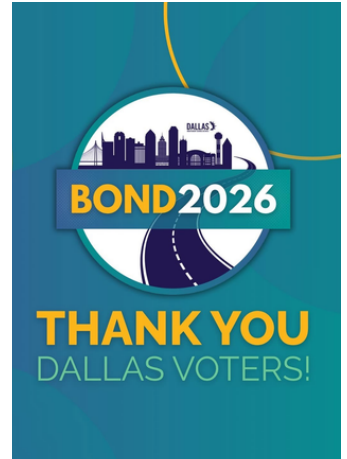
Investing in the Future of Dallas ISD

by Dan Micciche



Thank you to the voters of Dallas for sending a powerful message of support for our students and educators by passing all four bond propositions by overwhelming majorities of at least 70% of the vote. The 2026 bond will enable Dallas ISD to upgrade safety and learning environments

and renovate or replace aging school buildings across the district. All East Dallas Schools will be upgraded, and replacement schools are slated for Charles A. Gill, Bayles, and S.S. Conner elementary schools. This will continue the work done in the 2020 bond, which included renovations at many schools and brand-new replacement schools at Victor H. Hexter, Martha Turner Reily, and Edwin J. Keist elementary schools.



Beginning next year, 48,000 kindergarten through eighth grade Dallas ISD students will embark on learning voyages to the Dallas Zoo, Perot Museum, Dallas Arboretum, and Environmental Education Center, thanks to a partnership with Lyda Hill Philanthropies. This program connects classroom instruction with real-world learning by removing financial and logistical barriers and providing meaningful, engaging educational experiences.

Dallas ISD continues to maintain one of the highest teacher retention rates in the DFW area — something our district should take great pride in. Consistency in our classrooms strengthens relationships, supports student achievement, and builds trust within school communities.

The 2026 Bryan Adams High School class earned over \$67 million in college scholarships, and more than 70 students graduated with associate degrees at the same time they received their high school diplomas.

As we close out another successful school year, I am grateful for the students, families, educators, and staff who continue to make Dallas ISD a source of pride. The work happening in Dallas ISD and the support of organizations like FRI reflect a shared commitment to creating strong schools and even stronger futures.

Powering Prosperity: Dallas College's Role in East Dallas's Economic Future

By John Hopper



The heartbeat of a thriving economy is its workforce. For those of us committed to the growth of East Dallas and the mission of the Ferguson Road Initiative, the School of Manufacturing and Industrial Technology at Dallas College

plays an important role in preparing the next generation of skilled workers. By aligning hands-on training with the needs of local employers, the college is helping strengthen our workforce and support economic growth throughout the community.

A cornerstone of this effort is the Eastfield Campus, which provides accessible training in fields like HVAC, Auto Body Technology, and Welding. The campus is more than a place to learn technical skills—it's where students gain the experience and confidence needed to begin rewarding careers.

This work is supported by leaders like Eddie Tealer, President of the Eastfield campus and Manufacturing Sector Leader, and Rob DeHaas, Vice Provost. Together with faculty and industry partners, they help ensure students graduate with the practical skills employers are looking for. As East Dallas continues to grow, a strong local workforce helps make our community an attractive place for businesses to invest.

The impact extends beyond the classroom. Graduates enter careers in fields such as Logistics and Supply Chain Management and Construction Technology, contributing to the local economy while supporting businesses across the region. As the Ferguson Road Initiative continues its

work to strengthen Far East Dallas, the connection between education, workforce development, and economic opportunity remains an important part of the community's future.

By investing in hands-on education at campuses like Eastfield, Dallas College is helping build a stronger workforce and creating opportunities that benefit students, employers, and the entire East Dallas community.



Automotive Technology Program at Dallas College prepares graduates to work in rapidly changing industry.

"Manufacturing leaders across North Texas have united to strengthen and advance our industry. Through strategic collaboration, we are addressing workforce challenges, aligning with evolving industry needs, and creating new opportunities for growth and innovation. These partnerships provide students in our Dallas College School of Manufacturing and Industrial Technology with the possibility for work-based experience, such as internships and employment for high-demand, well-paying careers that are sustainable over time." Dr. Eddie Tealer, President of the Eastfield campus and Manufacturing Sector Leader

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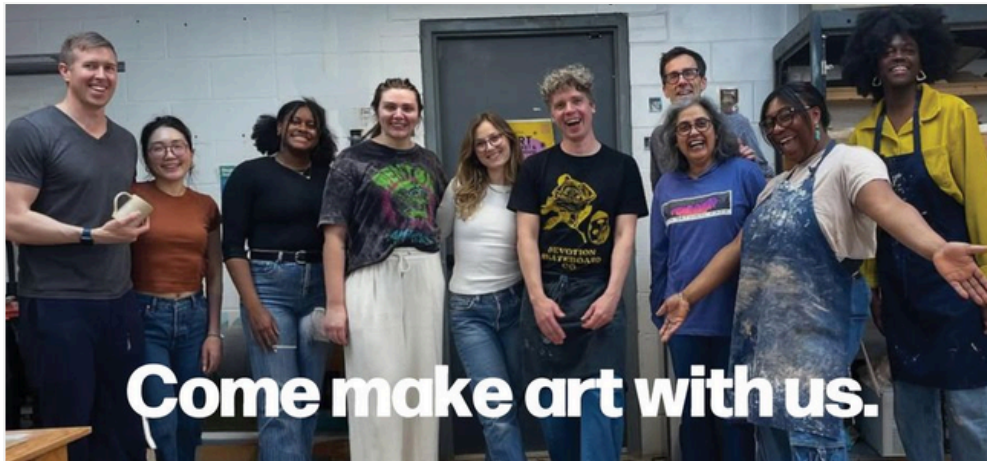
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Thank you for being part of our journey for the past 90 years.

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90 años creciendo junto a nuestra comunidad

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Brindemos por el próximo capítulo, juntos.

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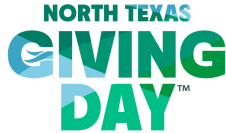


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