

IN THE CLASSROOM



Staff photo by GLORIA SALINAS/neighborsgo

CELEBRATING PARTNERSHIPS

Gail Johnston, a counselor at John F. Townley Elementary School, has seen the lack of state funding put a strain on the south Irving school's teachers. She chairs the Partners in Education committee dedicated to connecting Townley with local businesses to support and provide relief for teachers and students through donations, school supplies and classroom volunteers. The program was established by Irving ISD and the Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce in 1985; the goal is for every Irving ISD school to maintain relationships with at least three partners a year.

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Staff photo by ROSE BACA/neighborsgo

QUITE AN HONOR

When a group of Shadow Ridge Middle School students completes a 16-hour journey north, they'll step off the bus and into the Windy City. And then they're going to blow it. Big time. The Lewisville ISD school's Honor Winds band is one of three middle-school groups in the country invited this year to participate in the Midwest Clinic in Chicago, an annual gathering of musicians, composers and music educators from around the world. "It's probably among the largest — if not the largest — honor that any school, band or jazz orchestra can receive," said John Whitwell, Midwest Clinic board member.

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Staff photo by NANETTE LIGHT/neighborsgo

EMPATHETIC EDUCATOR

He wears a suit now, but Amir Ashiqali hasn't forgotten his past. A Pakistani refugee, Ashiqali grew up along the poverty line in the projects of Chicago. In school, he was a special education and English as a Second Language student. The new principal at Thomas Jefferson High School in northwest Dallas said it's these obstacles that help him relate best to his students, 93 percent of whom are limited in their English proficiency and 85 percent of whom are eligible for free or discounted lunch. Ashiqali, 36, said he's making college-readiness his No. 1 goal for the school.

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Staff photo by RUTH HAESEMEYER/neighborsgo

NO PLACE LIKE WILLIAMS

A "perfect storm" of activity has settled over Plano Williams High School, said principal Lynn Ojeda. Interior and exterior renovations culminate this year. Plano ISD has tapped the campus to be part of one of three planned academy programs. And, in late October, Williams — formerly Plano High School — will host a commemoration of its 50th birthday. Ojeda said when people hear that she works at the beloved school, they almost always tell her of a connection they have to it. "It's sort of like all roads in Plano lead to Williams," she said, "because the campus has been here such a long time."

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FACES OF THE MILITARY

Golfing for heroes



Photo submitted by CLAY ZEIGLER

Nearly 200 golfers participated in the 2012 Association of the United States Army Wounded Warrior Golf Classic Oct. 1 at Indian Creek Golf Club in Carrollton. Proceeds benefitted wounded warrior charities, Heroes on the Water and Operation Once in a Lifetime. Pictured are Andy Byrne (from left), Army Maj. Estill Collins, Jerry Denham and Hal Herron.

MARY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

One for the books



Photo submitted by ROSEMARY MARTINEZ

Members of the Junior Catholic Daughters of America from Mary Immaculate Catholic School in Farmers Branch recently presented 200 books to St. Augustine Catholic School principal, Marian Davis (back left), for her school's library. The JCDA chapter, which focuses on service to the community, collected the books for St. Augustine after learning they were looking for materials to supplement their library. Mary Immaculate adopted the southeast Dallas school as a sister school at the beginning of August.