

LaVoz

de
Denver
Harbor

Volume 2 Number 6
A Bi-Cultural Publication
February, 2026

FREE Gratis

“Faithful Through the Generations”: Faith Memorial Baptist Church Turns 85

Written by Kim Melchor | Photos courtesy of Faith Memorial

Faith Memorial Baptist Church on Kress Street will March, marking more than eight decades of worship in 1941, the church began at nearby Elliott members gathered before a permanent building anniversary theme — *“Faithful* reflects both that history and the

“We’re excited to celebrate how for these 85 years and all the sacrificed and served to make today,” said Senior Pastor time, we’re looking forward and minister to Houston for the next 85

Today, Faith Memorial continues to community. The church hosted Hurricane Harvey, supports local partners with addiction recovery Christian Academy, which offers families regardless of income.

But buildings and programs only tell has always been its people. Much of leadership. Faith Memorial has had **T. Lamar Mathis**, served for 54 years, construction of Houston’s interstates, and **James Morris**, who continued that

“Pastor Mathis had a vision to be lot of churches moved out to the



celebrate its 85th anniversary this **Denver Harbor**. Founded in Elementary School, where early was constructed. Today, the *Through the Generations* — congregation’s vision for the future.

God has been faithful to us heroes from the past who our church still be here Andrew Johnson. “At the same dreaming about how we can years.”

serve as a resource for the disaster relief during programs like Little League, ministries, and helped found Harbor classical Christian education accessible to

part of the story. The heart of Faith Memorial the church’s longevity is credited to stable only three pastors in its 85-year history. Its first, guiding the church through the post-war era, the demographic changes. He was followed by steady leadership for more than a decade.

part of the community,” Johnson said. *“A suburbs during that era. He stayed.”*

1947



Outreach efforts like the church's bus ministry became legendary. "There are tons of neighborhood people who remember when they were a kid and the big church bus pulling up," Johnson said.

Johnson became the leader of Faith Memorial in 2012, shortly after graduating from Houston Baptist University, following the passing of Pastor Morris. "I like to say they were crazy enough or desperate enough to pick me," Johnson said, noting that the congregation gave him the grace to learn and grow.

Johnson gives credit to longtime members such as **Virginia Owings**, who worked in nearly every capacity imaginable, from the church office to children's ministry, alongside her husband, a deacon. Others include **Frankie Atkins**, **Florinda Suarez**, and **Delilah Sanchez**, women Johnson describes as "part of the fabric of the church" for generations.



Looking ahead, Johnson hopes the next chapter will be shaped by new generations stepping into leadership. "We talk about the difference between being an owner and being a consumer," he said, explaining that larger churches can sometimes allow people to simply attend and enjoy. Faith Memorial's smaller, more organic community calls members to take ownership by serving in meaningful ways.



Johnson wants the community to know that everyone is welcome. "We have people from every background," he said, from "tucked-in shirts and ties" to "sleeve tattoos." His hope is that anyone who visits will feel the warmth of a church family. "If they come, they're going to find that they're loved," he said. "And once you encounter God in a real way, your life changes forever."

The anniversary celebration itself is designed as a homecoming—an invitation to anyone who has ever passed through their doors. For more information about the church and its 85th anniversary celebration, visit fmbchouston.com, call (713) 672-6472, or visit the church at **623 Kress St., Houston, TX 77020**.



1980



Word from the Editor

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Por cualquier
pregunta llama
(713) 459-3605

Neighbors,

Thank you for your continued support! **Congratulations to Faith Memorial Baptist Church on their 85th Anniversary.** Faith Memorial continues to be a true staple in the Denver Harbor community.

Early voting for the Primary Election begins February 17. I recently attended a candidate forum and heard all of the candidates speak—there are major differences between them. Please take time to read the background information on this race. **Sylvia Garcia will no longer be representing us** in Congress, so this election will bring new leadership. It is very important that you read the voter information and make a plan to vote. Your vote matters.

Good news! **Habitat for Humanity is accepting 20 applications for home repairs** from veterans or surviving spouses. Applications are first come, first served and can be completed online or by phone. More information is included inside. Rene Porras (Veteran) also has information available at the bakery. Thank you, Rene, for helping make these Habitat for Humanity applications possible for veterans and surviving spouses.

Programs and resources for residents over 55 will be coming to Denver Harbor soon. Inside, you'll find a QR code for a survey being conducted by the Area Agency on Aging about the programs they provide. Additional programs from other organizations will also be available soon.

Be sure to read all the information and resources included. There is also a story by **KPRC's Ricky Muñoz on United Way** featured inside.

Take care,

Carolyn Lopez

EDITOR



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DENVER HARBOR ON
YOUR MOBILE DEVICE**

Scan QR to explore past editions of
La Voz de Denver Harbor

Meet Our Writers | Conozca Nuestros Escritores



Kim Melchor, Writer

Kim Melchor is a Houston-based writer with strong ties to the Denver Harbor neighborhood. Her background is in engineering and technical writing, and she previously worked as a reporter for the Humble Tribune. Her work focuses on neighborhood storytelling, with a particular interest in education and the ways local systems and decisions affect everyday life.

Kim Melchor es una escritora radicada en Houston con fuertes lazos con el vecindario de Denver Harbor. Su formación es en ingeniería y redacción técnica, y anteriormente trabajó como reportera para el Humble Tribune. Su trabajo se centra en contar historias de vecindarios, con un interés particular en la educación y en las formas en que los sistemas y decisiones locales afectan la vida cotidiana.



Jessica Campos, Community Activist

Jessica Campos is a resident of Denver Harbor, Houston, a mother of three public school students, and a community education advocate focused on educational equity and community empowerment. Her work is guided by grassroots organizing and direct experience, supporting families as they navigate public systems.

Jessica Campos es residente de Denver Harbor, Houston, madre de tres estudiantes de escuelas públicas y defensora comunitaria de la educación, enfocada en la equidad educativa y el fortalecimiento de la comunidad. Su trabajo está guiado por la organización comunitaria de base y su experiencia directa, acompañando a familias navegando por los sistemas públicos.



Ricky Muñoz, Reporter for KPRC 2

Ricky Muñoz is a reporter for KPRC 2 in Houston, telling stories that connect, inform, and build trust with viewers across television, digital, and social platforms. His reporting spans accountability, public safety, immigration, culture, and community issues—always centering the voices of the people most affected.

Ricky Muñoz es reportero de KPRC 2 en Houston, donde cuenta historias que conectan, informan y generan confianza con la audiencia a través de la televisión, plataformas digitales y redes sociales. Su cobertura abarca temas de rendición de cuentas, seguridad pública, inmigración, cultura y asuntos comunitarios, siempre centrando las voces de las personas más afectadas.

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 Gift Store 6930 Lyons
 Harbor Food Store 803 Tremper
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 Quick Food Store 1103 Lathrop
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 Dixie Maid 6800 Lyons
 All in One 6715 Lathrop
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 Montes Tire Store 6620 Lyons
 Family Dollar Lyons
 Washateria 661 Rouse
 La Patrona Restaurant 6300 Lyons
 Vargas Food Store Lyons@Woolworth
 Tortilla 610 Lyons
 Reyna's 6000 Lyons
 Washateria 6004 Lyons
 Lyons Cleaners 6000 Lyons
 Matamoras Food Store 6800 Lyons
 Smoke Shop 661@Lyons
 Amigos Grocery 6300 Hillsboro@Kress
 Little Store Woolworth@Wallisville
 El Rincon Market 6830 Wallisville
 El Patron 7334 Wallisville
 Harbor Washateria 430 Harbor
 Lathrop Store 403 Lathrop
 Seven Seas 445 Lathrop
 Elite Food 7434 Eagle Pass
 Kress Food Store 6200 Market
 Pemex Gas Station
 Cliff Tuttle Library

Community Events | Eventos Comunitarios

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Lotería Games - Refreshments - Prizes

Grand Prize - BBQ Grill

Date: February 21st, 2026
 Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
 Location: Denver Harbor Multi-Service Center
 6402 Market St, Houston, TX 77020





Faith Memorial Baptist Church 85th Anniversary

Faithful Through the Generations
Celebrating 85 Years of God's Goodness
 Faith Memorial Baptist Church
 March 15, 2026



March 15, 2026
Brunch Appetizers & Fellowship
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Anniversary Celebration Service
Begins at 11:00 a.m.

All are warmly invited to come and fellowship, reflect on God's faithfulness, and renew our dedication to the future generations of Faith Memorial Baptist Church.

623 Kress St, Houston TX. 77020

“Fieles a Través de las Generaciones”: La Iglesia Bautista Faith Memorial Celebra 85 Años

Escrito por Kim Melchor | Fotos cortesía de Faith Memorial

La Iglesia Bautista Faith Memorial, ubicada en la calle Kress, celebrará este mes de marzo su 85º aniversario, marcando más de ocho décadas de adoración y servicio en la comunidad de Denver Harbor. Fundada en 1941, la iglesia comenzó en la cercana escuela Elliott Elementary, donde los primeros miembros se reunían antes de contar con un edificio propio. Hoy, el tema del aniversario —“Fieles a Través de las Generaciones”— refleja tanto esa historia como la visión de la congregación hacia el futuro.

“Estamos muy emocionados de celebrar cómo Dios ha sido fiel durante estos 85 años y de honrar a todos los héroes del pasado que se sacrificaron y sirvieron para que nuestra iglesia siga aquí hoy”

dijo el pastor principal **Andrew Johnson**. “Al mismo tiempo, estamos mirando hacia adelante y soñando con cómo podemos seguir sirviendo a Houston durante los próximos 85 años.”

Actualmente, Faith Memorial continúa siendo un apoyo importante para la comunidad. La iglesia fungió como centro de distribución de ayuda durante el huracán Harvey, apoya programas locales como las ligas pequeñas, colabora con ministerios de recuperación de adicciones y ayudó a fundar Harbor Christian Academy, que ofrece educación cristiana clásica accesible para familias de todos los niveles económicos.

Pero los edificios y los programas solo cuentan una parte de la historia. El verdadero corazón de Faith Memorial siempre han sido sus personas. Gran parte de la longevidad de la iglesia se debe a un liderazgo estable. Faith Memorial ha tenido solo tres pastores en sus 85 años de historia. El primero, **T. Lamar Mathis**, sirvió durante 54 años, guiando a la iglesia a través de la posguerra, la construcción de las autopistas de Houston y cambios demográficos importantes en el vecindario. Le siguió **James Morris**, quien mantuvo ese liderazgo firme durante más de una década.

“El pastor Mathis tuvo la visión de quedarse y ser parte de la comunidad”, explicó Johnson. “Muchas iglesias se fueron a los suburbios en esa época. Él decidió quedarse.” Iniciativas como el ministerio de autobuses de la iglesia se volvieron inolvidables para muchos residentes. “Hay muchísima gente del barrio que recuerda cuando era niño y llegaba el camión grande de la iglesia a su calle”, dijo.



Johnson asumió el liderazgo de Faith Memorial en 2012, poco después de graduarse de Houston Baptist University, tras el fallecimiento del pastor Morris. “Me gusta decir que estaban lo suficientemente locos o desesperados como para elegirme”, comentó Johnson, recordando que la congregación le dio la oportunidad y la paciencia para aprender y crecer.

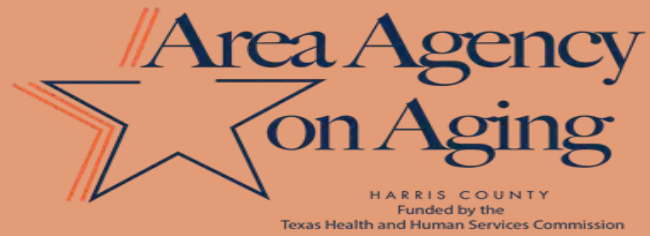
El pastor también reconoce a miembros de larga trayectoria como **Virginia Owings**, quien sirvió en casi todas las áreas posibles, desde la oficina de la iglesia hasta el ministerio infantil, junto a su esposo, quien fue diácono. Otros nombres incluyen a **Frankie Atkins**, **Florinda Suárez** y **Delilah Sánchez**, mujeres que Johnson describe como “parte del tejido de la iglesia” a lo largo de generaciones.

De cara al futuro, Johnson espera que el próximo capítulo esté marcado por nuevas generaciones que asuman liderazgo y responsabilidad. “Hablamos mucho de la diferencia entre ser dueño y ser consumidor”, explicó. Mientras que iglesias más grandes a veces permiten que la gente solo asista y disfrute, **la comunidad más pequeña y cercana de Faith Memorial invita a sus miembros a involucrarse y servir de maneras que tengan significado.**

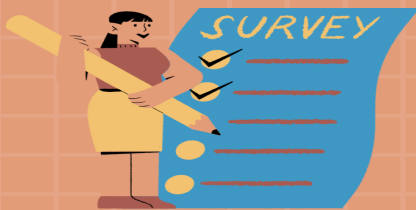
Johnson quiere que la comunidad sepa algo muy claro: todos son bienvenidos. “Tenemos personas de todos los orígenes”, dijo, desde “camisas bien fajadas y corbatas” hasta “tatuajes en los brazos”. Su deseo es que cualquiera que visite la iglesia sienta el calor de una familia. “Si vienen, van a sentir que aquí se les quiere”, afirmó.

La celebración del aniversario está pensada como un reencuentro — una invitación para todos los que alguna vez han pasado por sus puertas. Para más información sobre la iglesia y su celebración del 85.º aniversario, visite **fbmchouston.com**, llame al **(713) 672-6472**, o visite la iglesia en **623 Kress St., Houston, TX 77020**.





STATE OF OLDER ADULTS SURVEY



**Your Voice Matters.
Help Shape Services for Older Adults in
Harris County.**

The Harris County Area Agency on Aging invites you to take a brief survey about your needs and resources as you age. Your feedback helps us enhance programs and services to better support you and the community.

Thank you for your input!



Scan to see AARP Events & News in Houston, Texas

In The Community | En La Comunidad



BELOW: Congratulations to Vivian Alvarenga, who placed 5th in the Junior Cook-Off Division at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Her hard work, dedication, and talent make our Denver Harbor community proud—way to go, Vivian!

ABAJO: Felicidades a Vivian Alvarenga, quien colocó la quinta en la División Junior Cook-Off en el Houston Livestock Show y Rodeo. Su trabajo duro, dedicación y talento hacen que nuestra comunidad de Denver Harbor se sienta orgullosa ¡Si se pudo, Vivian!



ABOVE: Denver Harbor Seniors dancing at the Denver Harbor Mutli-Service Center

ARRIBA: Residentes de Denver Harbor bailando en un evento del Centro de Multi-Servicio

In Loving Memory of Adelfa Flores Parrish

July 12, 1924 – January 26, 2026

Houston, Texas — Adelfa Flores Parrish, a beloved mother, community member, and lifelong Denver Harbor resident, passed away peacefully on January 26, 2026, at the age of 101, surrounded by her family. Born in Wharton, Texas, she dedicated her life to her family, faith, and service, working for Houston ISD for 28 years and faithfully serving Resurrection Church for 75 years. Known for her strength, devotion, and beautiful singing voice, Adelfa leaves a lasting legacy of faith, resilience, and love.

Adelfa Flores Parrish, una querida madre, miembro de la comunidad y residente de toda la vida de Denver Harbor, falleció en paz el 26 de enero de 2026 a la edad de 101 años, rodeada del amor de su familia. Nacida en Wharton, Texas, dedicó su vida a su familia, a su fe y al servicio comunitario, trabajando para el Distrito Escolar Independiente de Houston (HISD) durante 28 años y sirviendo fielmente a la Iglesia de la Resurrección por 75 años. Conocida por su fortaleza, devoción y hermosa voz al cantar, Adelfa deja un legado duradero de fe, resiliencia y amor.

Sweet Rewards for Smart Students!

Kids should check out Porras Prontito at 6301 Market Street for its popular **Cookie Scholarship!**

One **FREE COOKIE** for every A (limit 4 per report card). Hard work has never been so delicious!



Community Resources | Recursos Comunitarios

How AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Can Help You Today

We offer free tax return preparation to anyone who needs it. AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers are trained to help you file a variety of income tax forms and schedules.

In certain situations, however, our volunteers may be unable to provide assistance. The Volunteer Protection Act requires that our volunteers stay within the scope of tax law and policies set by the IRS and AARP Foundation. Here's a guide to what our Tax-Aide volunteers can — and can't — do.

We can prepare most returns with:

- Wages, interest, dividends, capital gains/losses, unemployment compensation, pensions and other retirement income, Social Security benefits.
- Self-employment income, with limits.
- Schedule K-1 that includes only interest, dividends, capital gains/losses, royalties, or foreign taxes (within limits)
- Qualified Business Income deduction.
- New qualified tips, overtime, vehicle loan interest and senior deductions.
- Itemized deductions, including noncash contributions to charity that total no more than \$5,000.
- Cancellation of nonbusiness credit card debt.
- IRA contributions — deductible or not.
- Most credits, such as earned income credit, education credits, child/additional child credit and credit for other dependents, child/dependent care credit, premium tax credit, simplified method foreign tax credit and retirement savings credit.
- Estimated tax payments.
- Injured spouse allocation, depending on state.
- Health Savings Accounts (HSA).
- Amendments to filed returns.
- Certain prior year tax returns.

We can't prepare returns with:

- Self-employment if there are employees, losses, expenses that exceed \$50,000, depreciation, business use of home, 1099 filing requirements or other complicating factors.
- Hobby income or other activities not for profit
- Complicated capital gains/losses, such as futures or options.
- Complicated Schedule K-1.
- Rental income, except land-only rentals or rentals of personal residence less than 15 days.
- Royalty income with expenses if not from self-employment.
- Tax on a Child's Investment and Other Unearned Income (Kiddie Tax).
- Farm income or expenses.
- Some investment income or itemized deductions that are not included in our training.
- Alternative Minimum Tax, Additional Medicare Tax, or Net Investment Income Tax.
- Foreign financial asset reporting requirements.
- Form 1099-DA and certain other digital asset transactions (including virtual currency).
- Solar energy credits.
- Clean vehicle credits.

AARP Foundation
Tax-Aide

1-888-227-7669 aarpfoundation.org/taxaide

C3467 (10/25)

Cómo el programa AARP Foundation Tax-Aide puede ayudarte hoy

Ofrecemos preparación gratuita de declaraciones de impuestos a todo aquel que lo necesite. Los voluntarios capacitados del programa AARP Foundation Tax-Aide te ayudarán a preparar y presentar una variedad de formularios y anexos de tu declaración de impuestos.

En ciertas situaciones, sin embargo, nuestros voluntarios no podrán asistirte. La Ley de Protección de Voluntarios requiere que nuestros voluntarios se mantengan dentro del marco de las políticas y leyes tributarias establecidas por el IRS y AARP Foundation. Esta es una guía de lo que los voluntarios de Tax-Aide pueden y no pueden hacer.

Podemos preparar la mayoría de las declaraciones con:

- Salarios, intereses, dividendos, ganancias o pérdidas de capital, compensación por desempleo, pensiones y otros ingresos jubilatorios, y beneficios del Seguro Social.
- Ingresos de trabajadores independientes, con límites.
- Anexo K-1 que incluye solo intereses, dividendos, ganancias/pérdidas de capital, regalías o impuestos extranjeros (dentro de los límites).
- Deducción sobre el ingreso comercial calificado.
- Nuevas propinas calificadas, horas extras, intereses de préstamos para vehículos y deducciones para adultos mayores.
- Deducciones detalladas, incluidas las contribuciones no monetarias a causas benéficas que sumen no más de \$5,000.
- Cancelación de deuda de tarjeta de crédito no comercial.
- Contribuciones a cuentas IRA, deducibles o no.
- La mayoría de los créditos, como el crédito por ingreso del trabajo, créditos educativos, crédito por hijos/credito adicional por hijos y crédito por otros dependientes, crédito por cuidado de hijos/dependientes, crédito fiscal por pago de primas, método simplificado de crédito fiscal extranjero y crédito por ahorros para la jubilación.
- Pagos estimados de impuestos.
- Asignación del cónyuge perjudicado, dependiendo del estado de residencia.
- Cuentas de ahorro para gastos médicos (HSA).
- Enmiendas a declaraciones presentadas.
- Ciertas declaraciones de impuestos de años anteriores.

No podemos preparar declaraciones con:

- Trabajo por cuenta propia si hay empleados, pérdidas o gastos que superen los \$50,000, depreciación, uso del hogar para negocios, requisitos de presentación de Formulario 1099 u otros factores que compliquen el proceso.
- Ingresos de pasatiempos o de otras actividades sin fines de lucro.
- Ganancias/pérdidas de capital complicadas, como las relacionadas con futuros u opciones.
- Anexo K-1 complicado.
- Ingresos por alquiler, excepto alquileres solo de terrenos o alquileres de residencia personal por menos de 15 días.
- Ingresos por regalías con gastos si no son de trabajo por cuenta propia.
- Impuesto sobre las inversiones y otros ingresos no ganados de un menor ("Kiddie Tax").
- Ingresos o gastos por actividad agrícola.
- Ciertos ingresos por inversiones o deducciones detalladas que no se incluyen en nuestros cursos de capacitación.
- Impuesto mínimo alternativo, impuesto adicional de Medicare o impuesto al ingreso neto de inversiones.
- Obligación de reportar activos financieros en el exterior.
- Formulario 1099-DA y ciertas otras transacciones de activos digitales (incluyendo moneda virtual).
- Créditos por energía solar.
- Créditos por vehículos limpios (de bajas emisiones).

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(10/25)

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TRANSPORTATION VOUCHER PROGRAM

Precinct2gether, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, partners with Housing and Community Development (CDBG) to provide transportation voucher program that provides rides for the elderly (ages 65 and over) and the disabled (ages 18 and over) who are not served by Metro. The program will allow those in need, to have door-to-door transportation from approved providers for medical appointments, social services appointments, essential care appointments and essential shopping.

Program Guidelines

- Must live in Harris County Precinct 2.
- Elderly (ages 65 and over) - Required Proof of Eligibility: Copy of Photo ID and current proof of residence.
- Disabled (ages 18 – 64) - Required Proof of Eligibility: Copy of Photo ID, SSDI award benefit letter either/ or Physician's letter verifying disability.
- Must complete an In-take Interview with the Voucher Transportation Program Staff. (Special accommodations for this appointment are available, as needed)
- Must complete and sign an application and provide required documents.
- Must follow the RIDES Customer Guidelines.
- Cards are only good for the approved provider list and cannot be used for any other service.
- Companion rider must be at least 18 years of age.
- Vouchers subject to availability.
- Participants must live outside the Metro Service Area and unable to access alternate transportation.
- These areas may include not just geographic areas outside of Metro, but may also include areas where Metro service is unavailable or inaccessible to people who are disabled and/or elderly

All persons will be treated fairly and equally without regard to race, color, religion, sex, familial status, disability, national origin, or source of income.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Phone: 713-274-2149 — 713-274-2124



PROGRAMA DE VALES PARA TRANSPORTE

Precinct2gether, una organización sin fines de lucro 501(c)(3), colabora con Housing and Community Development (Vivienda y Desarrollo Comunitario, CDBG) para ofrecer un programa de vales que brinda servicios de transporte a personas mayores (65 años o más) y personas con discapacidades (18 años o más) que no cuentan con servicio de Metro. El programa permite que quienes lo necesiten reciban transporte puerta a puerta, de proveedores aprobados, para citas médicas, servicios sociales, cuidados esenciales y compras esenciales.

Requisitos del programa

- Debe vivir en el Precinto 2 del Condado de Harris.
- Personas mayores (65 años o más) - Prueba de elegibilidad requerida: Copia de una identificación con foto y comprobante actual de residencia.
- Personas con discapacidades (18 a 64 años) - Prueba de elegibilidad requerida: Copia de una identificación con foto, carta de beneficios del SSDI o carta de un médico que confirme la discapacidad.
- Debe completar una entrevista inicial con el personal del Programa de Vales de Transporte. (Se pueden hacer arreglos necesarios para esta cita).
- Debe completar y firmar una solicitud y proporcionar los documentos requeridos.
- Debe seguir las reglas para los usuarios del programa RIDES.
- Las tarjetas solo se pueden usar con la lista de proveedores aprobados y no pueden usarse para ningún otro servicio.
- El acompañante debe tener al menos 18 años de edad.
- Los vales están sujetos a disponibilidad.
- Los participantes deben vivir fuera del área de servicio de Metro y no tener acceso a otro tipo de transporte.
- Estas áreas pueden incluir no solo áreas geográficas fuera de Metro, sino también lugares donde el servicio de Metro no está disponible o sin acceso a transporte alternativo.

Toda persona será tratada de manera justa y sin discriminación, sin importar raza, color, religión, sexo, estado familiar, discapacidad, origen nacional o fuente de ingresos.

PARA MÁS INFORMACIÓN, COMUNÍQUESE AL:

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What Happened to Denver Harbor's Neighborhood Schools

Written by Jessica Campos

Right now, five out of six neighborhood schools in Denver Harbor are operating below 60% capacity, meaning many classrooms are sitting empty and the district is talking about consolidation. McReynolds Middle School is only 27% full, and Wheatley High School is about 41% full. These numbers didn't appear overnight and they didn't happen by accident.



Now the enrollment data shows the result of those years of instability. According to recent reporting, Houston ISD lost more than 8,300 students in just one school year, and district enrollment has dropped from about 195,000 students in 2021–22 to about 168,000 today. Analysis of state data shows that enrollment declines accelerated after the 2023 takeover, especially at schools under the New Education System.

To understand how Denver Harbor got here, we have to go back to June 2023. That's when the state took control of Houston ISD, removed the elected school board, and began major changes to how our neighborhood schools operate. Soon after, the district rolled out the New Education System (NES), which brought rapid restructuring to many campuses, especially in historically Black and Latino communities like Denver Harbor.

For families, those changes were immediate. Teachers were told to reapply for their jobs and many left. Principals left, support staff disappeared, communication between parents and teachers was severed. Libraries were closed or repurposed. Programs, schedules and teachers changed from semester to semester. Parents asked questions, but answers were often unclear or kept changing.

At Pugh Elementary, families raised concerns early. On June 15th 2023, parents publicly questioned why a strong, A-rated school with a successful dual-language program was placed on the restructuring list. Families warned that the changes were already causing anxiety, even before long-term data existed. Those warnings were about stability, trust, and what children need in order to learn.

Most families didn't leave right away. Many stayed and tried to push through the changes. But when schools began to feel unstable, families worried. Children needed consistency, and more than anything, parents needed stability they could trust. When that stability disappeared, families were forced to make hard choices, some moved to other HISD schools, some turned to charter, private, or online options, and others left the district altogether, not because they gave up on public education, but because their children's schools no longer felt stable.

In Denver Harbor, that decline looks like this:

Denver Harbor School Capacity Snapshot (2025–26)

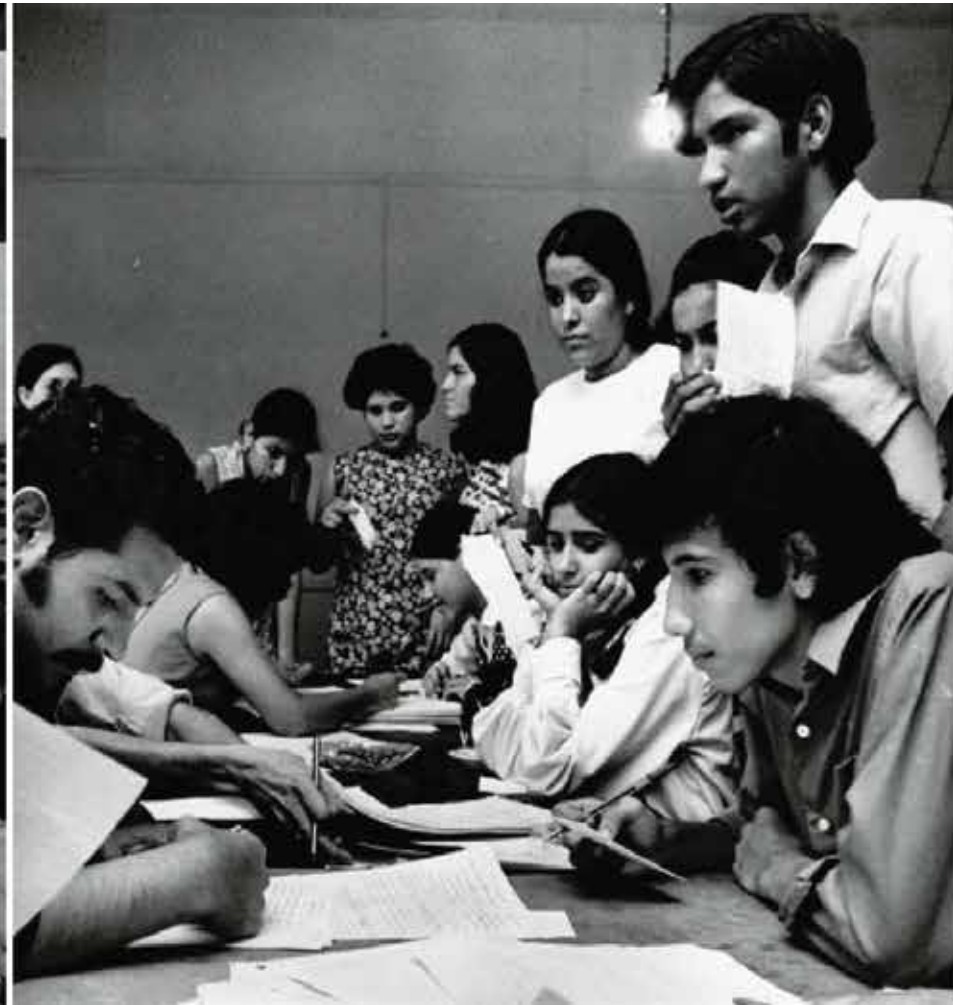
School	Level	Current Capacity
Eliot Elementary	Elementary	45% full
R. Martinez Elementary	Elementary	49% full
Scroggins Elementary	Elementary	56% full
Pugh Elementary	Elementary	64% full
McReynolds Middle School	Middle School	27% full
Wheatley High School	High School	41% full

Houston ISD defines schools operating at 60% capacity or below as underutilized.

Houston ISD considers schools underused when they are at 60% capacity or below. By that definition, five of six Denver Harbor schools are underused, including the middle school and high school that anchor the neighborhood and the district is pointing to empty seats to justify

consolidation. What's missing from that conversation is why enrollment dropped in the first place.

Families didn't abandon their schools. The schools were changed first, and families responded to that instability. Because many of these changes began in Denver Harbor, we are in a unique position to help shape what comes next. Being Denver Harbor strong doesn't mean being political or confrontational, it means staying informed, staying involved, and refusing to let decisions be made without the families who are most affected.



At the same time, we have to live in the present. If schools are stretched thin or programs disappear, we can't wait quietly. In the meantime, we supplement. We read together, we tutor, we share resources. We lean on grandparents, neighbors, older students, and community spaces. If the system isn't meeting our children where they are, we meet them there ourselves.

This approach has deep roots in our community's history. During earlier periods of upheaval, families created informal learning spaces, sometimes called Huelga Schools, to make sure children kept learning when institutions fell short. Learning happened in homes, churches, and neighborhood spaces, carried forward by parents, elders, and older siblings.

This isn't about rejecting HISD or public schools. It's about making sure children continue learning, even during periods of uncertainty. Denver Harbor families have always filled the gaps when systems fall short. This moment is another reminder that education doesn't stop at the school doors, and that community matters.

Jessica Campos, Community Activist

Jessica Campos is a resident of Denver Harbor, Houston, a mother of three public school students, and a community education advocate focused on educational equity and community empowerment. Her work is guided by grassroots organizing and direct experience, supporting families as they navigate public systems.

Jessica Campos es residente de Denver Harbor, Houston, madre de tres estudiantes de escuelas públicas y defensora comunitaria de la educación, enfocada en la equidad educativa y el fortalecimiento de la comunidad. Su trabajo está guiado por la organización comunitaria de base y su experiencia directa, acompañando a familias navegando por los sistemas públicos.



Denver Harbor Faces **New Future** After Redistricting

In an unprecedented move, the Texas Legislature—at the request of President Donald Trump—approved a rare mid-decade redistricting that has reshaped the political boundaries of Houston. One of the most notable changes is that Denver Harbor, long part of Congressional District 29 and represented by Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia, will now fall into the newly drawn boundaries of Congressional District 9.

This change means that starting with the 2026 election cycle, Denver Harbor residents will no longer cast their ballots for Garcia. Instead, they will be voting in District 9, which is currently represented by Congressman Al Green. However, Green has not yet announced his political future, and there is widespread speculation that the 2026 cycle could see a new face elected to represent Denver Harbor in Washington.

Key Election Dates

The Democratic and Republican primary elections for the reconfigured districts are expected to take place in **March 2026**, with the general election scheduled for **November 2026**. These elections will determine, for the first time in decades, who carries the voice of Denver Harbor families in the halls of Congress.

Community Concerns

The mid-decade redistricting has left many Denver Harbor residents concerned about their future representation. Longtime resident Rene Porras expressed his fears plainly:

“This will lead to worse representation in Washington for Denver Harbor. Our issues could be ignored when we’re combined with different neighborhoods that don’t share our same struggles.”

Historically, Denver Harbor has maintained strong ties with its East End neighbors in District 29, where Garcia was viewed as an accessible and responsive advocate. The shift to District 9 raises questions about whether the unique needs of working-class Hispanic families in Denver Harbor will remain a priority.



District 9 by the Numbers

According to demographic data, District 9 has a population of **approximately 767,000 residents**, with a strikingly diverse composition. Nearly **63% of the population is Hispanic**, while **10% is Black**, and about **25% is Anglo** (non-Hispanic White). **Asians make up roughly 2%** of the population.

When looking at the **Voting Age Population (VAP)**, the picture becomes clearer. Out of about **556,000 voting-age residents**, about **58% are Hispanic**, though the number of eligible Hispanic voters drops to about 52% when accounting for citizenship. Black voters comprise just over **10%** of the VAP, while Anglos make up **28%**.

This breakdown means Denver Harbor will be entering a district where Latino voters are the largest single bloc, but where coalition-building across communities—particularly with Black voters—will remain central to winning elections. With Denver Harbor’s record breaking voter turnout, it could be poised to be a critical voice in the upcoming election.

A Turning Point

For decades, Denver Harbor has been politically anchored in the East End. Now, it finds itself aligned with parts of Harris and Liberty counties under District 9. Whether this results in stronger advocacy or diluted influence will depend heavily on how actively residents organize, register, and vote in the coming 2026 elections.

One thing is certain: Denver Harbor is stepping into a new chapter of political history—one shaped not by its own choosing, but by the stroke of the Texas Legislature’s pen.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM 2026



La Voz de Denver Harbor newspaper, is looking for an intern based in or near Denver Harbor. Interns will assist with social media and other day-to-day activities that support our work in the community. Ideal for students or individuals interested in media, communications, or community engagement.

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LaVoz de
Denver
Harbor

Houston woman works toward first home after joining free United Way financial program

Written By Ricky Munoz for KPRC 2

HOUSTON, Texas – For many Houstonians, financial stability feels like a moving target.

Melanie Roldan says she knows that feeling well.

“I was in my senior year of college, and I felt like what I was doing in school, I didn’t feel like I was on a track, and it also felt like I was very unstable financially,” Roldan said.

Roldan worked as a teacher’s assistant and says she wanted more for her future. Not just a new job, but a new direction.

“I know that there’s more out there, but having the tools to figure that out, sometimes having to do that alone is not easy,” she said. “Having people around you, bouncing ideas off each other, can help.”

That search for guidance led her to a free program through United Way of Greater Houston called the Integrated Client Journey.

WHAT IS THE INTEGRATED CLIENT JOURNEY

The Integrated Client Journey is a long-term support program designed to help people build stability through goal setting, financial coaching, and career planning.

Jessica Davison, Assistant Vice President of Mission and Strategy at United Way of Greater Houston, says the program is built around each person’s goals.

“Everyone has unique goals, unique things they’re trying to accomplish for their lives, for their families,” Davison said. “What Melanie did was she worked with a navigator.”

A navigator is not a case manager. Davison says the role is more personal and long-term.

“So a navigator is the personal guide for someone,” Davison said. *“They’re going to sit down with you and really talk about what your needs are, but also what your goals are and what you’re hoping to achieve, not only today, tomorrow, but a month from now, three months from now, a year from now.”*

NAVIGATORS, NOT CHECKLISTS

Instead of handing people a list of resources, navigators help break large goals into steps. Those steps might include budgeting, savings plans, job training, or credit management.

“So maybe it’s financial education, career coaching, whatever that might look like,” Davison said. “That way, you can have some lasting stability based on what that means for you.”

For Roldan, the focus became financial stability.

“Being able to not worry about living paycheck to paycheck, being able to budget, and just being stable,” she said.

She says she learned to budget and to save intentionally.

“I started budgeting, and then I also started to pay myself first, putting money aside for my savings account, and that has made my savings account grow,” Roldan said.

WORKING HOMEOWNERSHIP

TOWARD

Those changes helped Roldan set a goal no one in her family has reached before.

Buying a home.

“Once I do buy a home and get to that point, it would feel great because, since I’m the first person to go through this process, it’s not easy,” she said.

Davison says Melanie’s story reflects why the program exists.

“It is this hope and self-motivation she has that is just inspiring,” Davison said. “To continue to strive to have this goal of owning a home.”

Roldan says the journey has changed how she sees herself.

“I feel like I’m better now than I was before,” she said. *“I feel like I’ve grown.”*

HOW HOUSTONIANS CAN GET HELP

United Way of Greater Houston says the Integrated Client Journey is open to anyone who wants help building long-term stability.

There are two main ways to get started.

Option one is working directly with a navigator. People can visit smallwindsbigmoves.org and enter their basic information, including ZIP code and language preference. United Way says this helps connect people with a navigator in their area.



FREE PROGRAM TO HELP REACH FINANCIAL GOALS



Option two is the self-service model. This option allows people to set goals, track progress, and find resources online on their own schedule.

For immediate needs such as housing, food, or healthcare resources, United Way encourages people to call 2-1-1. The hotline operates 24 hours a day and connects callers with local services.

WHO THE PROGRAM IS FOR

Davison says the program is designed for people who feel stuck, overwhelmed, or unsure where to begin.

It is for people trying to move out of debt. For people wanting career growth. For families working toward stability. For anyone who wants a plan instead of guessing.

“This is customized,” Davison said. “It’s unique to you, your needs, and what you’re wanting to accomplish.”

A MESSAGE FOR PEOPLE WHO FEEL STUCK

Roldan says the biggest lesson she learned is not to try to do everything alone. “There are a lot of resources out there,” she said. “You just have to push yourself to seek help.” United Way says no two journeys look the same, but progress often starts with one decision. To ask for help.

Ricky Munoz, Reporter for KPRC 2

Ricky Muñoz is a reporter for KPRC 2 in Houston, telling stories that connect, inform, and build trust with viewers across television, digital, and social platforms. His reporting spans accountability, public safety, immigration, culture, and community issues—always centering the voices of the people most affected.

Ricky Muñoz es reportero de KPRC 2 en Houston, donde cuenta historias que conectan, informan y generan confianza con la audiencia a través de la televisión, plataformas digitales y redes sociales. Su cobertura abarca temas de rendición de cuentas, seguridad pública, inmigración, cultura y asuntos comunitarios, siempre centrando las voces de las personas más afectadas.



DENVER HARBOR, I'M ON

**YOUR
SIDE.**

Happy New Year!

I'm excited to start a new year of progress, continuing our efforts to make Denver Harbor and all of Precinct 2 safer and more affordable for our families and small businesses. Wishing you a safe and prosperous 2026!



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