

LaVoz

de
Denver
Harbor

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FREE Gratis

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From Kitchen Table to Community Power

Why Cesar Espinoza's Work
Matters to Families Like Ours

Written by Jessica Campos

From Kitchen Table to Community Power

Why Cesar Espinoza's Work Matters to Families Like Ours

Written by Jessica Campos

In Denver Harbor, organizing does not start in conference rooms. It starts at kitchen tables, after long days, when families talk through fear, strategy, and hope. That is why sitting down with **Cesar Espinoza** felt familiar. His story begins in the same kind of household many immigrant families recognize.

Cesar grew up in Houston ISD and excelled academically, but he was undocumented. As a child, his mother kept emergency phone numbers in a small address book near the door and told him and his siblings that if they ever came home and she was not there, they should call those contacts. At the time, he did not fully understand. Now he does. She was preparing them in case she was detained.



Experiences like that shape you. They teach you that stability is fragile and that protection is not automatic. They also plant a question that can guide a lifetime: Who protects families like ours?

When Cesar began organizing, it did not start with branding or funding. It began at his own kitchen table with his family,



talking through what their community needed. **The name FIEL came from those conversations. In Spanish, “fiel” means faithful—faithful to family, to community, to dignity.** He also incorporated lucha libre symbolism. In Mexican culture, the luchador represents resilience and defense. It is about stepping into the ring to protect something bigger than yourself. That imagery reflects how Cesar approaches his work: **steady, protective, and committed.**

Over time, something else happened. The families he helped did not just see him as an attorney or an organizer. Many began calling him “Tío.” Not as a title, but as a sign of trust. In immigrant communities, family is not limited to blood. It is built through consistency. Through showing up. Through standing beside someone when they are scared. The people he helps often become extended family, and he treats them that way.

Recently, that protection became personal again when he traveled to Mexico to support his tía, who had lived

undocumented in the United States for 35 years. He was present when she received her green card. After decades of uncertainty, she could finally breathe. It was not political theater. It was dignity restored and a family gaining peace of mind.

That same instinct extends to young people. When HISD warned students they could face suspension or expulsion for protesting during school hours, and cautioned teachers not to assist them, Cesar helped create a safe and peaceful space where students could gather on their own time without fear of retaliation. He did not step in front of them. He ensured the students remained the focus.



In communities like ours, youth voices are often dismissed. We are told they do not understand policy or that adults are influencing them. But our children live inside these decisions every day. They experience curriculum changes, instability, and shifting expectations firsthand.



Cesar understands that perspective because he once navigated systems that did not fully protect him. He treats young people as participants, not props.

That commitment continues on **April 11 at 9:00 a.m., when FIEL will host the “We Have a Dream” Summit at the Harris County Department of Education on Irvington Boulevard.** The event will connect students with counselors, admissions staff, and community organizations to support college preparation and higher education access. It is not just about inspiration. It is about access.

Beyond public events, his organization provides legal support to families at a fraction of the typical cost. For immigrant households that have lived with uncertainty for years, access to reliable representation is not just about paperwork—it is about peace of mind.

For families who once kept emergency numbers by the door, peace of mind is everything.

As someone who advocates daily for Denver Harbor, I look up to Cesar not because he seeks attention, but because he shows up. He shows up for families in crisis, for young people finding their voices, and for relatives who have waited decades for stability. His story is not about individual success. It is about what happens when a child who once prepared for the possibility of losing his mother grows up and decides that no family should feel that alone.

Leaders rooted in family do not stop at survival. They stay faithful. They protect. They build community power.



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.

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**Por cualquier
pregunta llama
(713) 459-3605**

Dear Neighbors,

As we put together each issue of La Voz de Denver Harbor, I'm reminded that this newspaper is more than ink on paper — it is the living story of our community. Every event, every small business milestone, every student achievement, and every senior celebration is a reflection of who we are and where we're headed.

Denver Harbor has always been rooted in resilience, culture, and connection. From neighborhood gatherings at the Multi-Service Center to local initiatives that uplift our families, we continue to prove that community is our greatest strength. This publication exists to amplify those moments — to ensure our stories are told by us, for us.

Thank you to our contributors, advertisers, and readers who make this work possible. Your support keeps local journalism alive in our neighborhood. If you have a story to share, a business to spotlight, or an event the community should know about, my door is always open.

With gratitude and pride,

Carolyn Lopez

EDITOR



**READ LA VOZ DE
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.

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Ricky Campos, Writer & Poet

Ricky Campos has been a proud Denver Harbor resident since the 1950s. A writer and poet focused on cultural history, she has long been active in community organizing and volunteer work. Her latest project, Celebrating Denver Harbor, One Block at a Time, aims to revitalize Lyons Avenue while honoring the neighborhood's heritage.

Ricky Campos ha sido una orgullosa residente de Denver Harbor desde la década de 1950. Escritora y poeta enfocada en la historia cultural, ha participado activamente durante años en la organización comunitaria y el voluntariado. Su proyecto más reciente, Celebrating Denver Harbor, One Block at a Time, busca revitalizar la avenida Lyons mientras honra la herencia del vecindario.

Pick Up La Voz de Denver Harbor at The Following Locations

Porras Bakery
 One Stop9 Market @ Lathrop
 Washeria 910 Market
 JD Little Store 1145 Lathrop
 Washateria 1103 Lathrop
 Jo Co 1147 Lathrop
 Chevron 850 Lathrop
 Del-Sun 7200 Lyons
 Mexican Food 7102 Lyons
 Party Store 7236 Lyons
 D.H. Tire Shop 6900 Lyons
 Gift Store 6930 Lyons
 Harbor Food Store 803 Tremper
 J's Food Store 1143 Port
 LNoe 800 Gazin
 Quick Food Store 1103 Lathrop
 Kress Food 846 Market
 Washateria 7125 Lyons
 Fiesta Store #9 700 Shotwell
 DH Seniors 6402 Market
 Andrade Enterprises 542 Lathrop
 Moe's. Eagle pass @ Zoe
 Dixie Maid 6800 Lyons
 All in One 6715 Lathrop
 Pron Insurance 6715 Lathrop
 Washateria Lathrop
 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

Latin, Literature, and Limited Screens: Classic Education at Harbor Christian Academy

Written by Kim Melchor | Photos courtesy of Harbor Christian Academy

Step into a classroom at Harbor Christian Academy on Kress Street, and you may hear students speaking Latin, reciting poetry, or discussing Homer. Head of school **John Bryant** describes the school's approach as rooted in classical education—an ancient framework built around teaching students how to think.

“Harbor Christian Academy exists to transform students from varied backgrounds across Houston through a classical and Christian education to the glory of God,”

Bryant said. That mission shapes everything from curriculum to funding.

HCA takes a different approach than many other local educational providers. “We’re not a high technology school,” Bryant said.

“We purposely don’t have the kids on devices a lot.”

Rather than emphasizing robotics or programming at young ages, **they focus on reasoning and scientific inquiry.** “We want to provide them with the foundational aspect of logical thinking and sound reasoning and examining topics through the scientific method,” he said.

“We make our kids study Latin through 8th grade,” Bryant added. He describes it as foundational for language development and logical thinking, helping students recognize structure and order in English, Spanish, French, and beyond.

“We know that those kids love to learn by memorizing things,”



John Bryant, Head of School at Harbor Christian Academy

he said. “They get fixated on topics, and they want to just dive really deep into that.” Older students encounter increasingly complex texts, including The Odyssey and The Iliad. Bryant says these works create space for thoughtful discussion.

Harbor Christian also operates differently financially. Bryant calls it the “kingdom flip model.”

“Most private schools receive about 90% of their operating budget from tuition funds, and then they fundraise 10%,” he said. “So, we’re purposely the opposite of that.” Families contribute what they can, but donors and foundations carry most of the financial weight. Those donors are paired with students and invited to campus. “We call them partners,” Bryant said. “It’s really a neat way to kind of... help subsidize the student’s tuition. And that partnership just works really well.”

Bryant is clear that Harbor Christian is not simply educating children in isolation. “We think it’s a whole family endeavor, not just the students,” he said. From volunteer opportunities to designated family involvement days, **parents are invited to experience the school alongside their children and build relationships within the community.**

On a personal level, Bryant continues to lead in ways both visible and unexpected — in chapel, classrooms, and occasionally on the soccer field. Students know the head of school well, but not all of them may know that he’s an avid runner and former soccer player. “It does surprise them when I start kicking the ball around,” he said.

Harbor Christian Academy currently serves students **from kindergarten through ninth grade.** Looking ahead, Bryant hopes to expand beyond the school’s current capacity and eventually through 12th grade. “That’s our main goal right now,” he said.



**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.

Instilling Change

Why do you protest, why do you
fight

Students struggle with all their
might

Who are we to say they cannot and
are unable

For they are championing for
justice so not to enable

History has shown the young,
idealistic Instill change and reform

Can be fearless and peaceful but
rise like a storm

Do not underestimate or misjudge
their intent

Through all the struggle, they
remain unbent

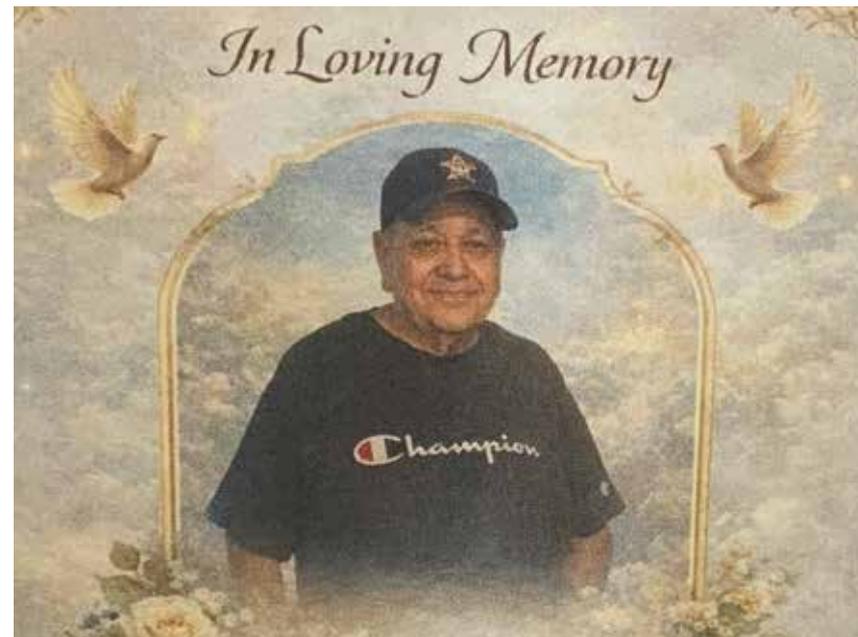
They challenge the norms, want to
restore and improve

We need to stand up and not
disapprove

Ricky Campos, Writer & Poet



Ricky Campos has been a proud resident of Denver Harbor since the 1950s. She is a writer and poet whose work centers on preserving and celebrating cultural history. Deeply committed to her community, Ricky has long been involved in organizing, activism, and volunteer efforts. Her most recent project, Celebrating Denver Harbor, One Block at a Time, focuses on revitalizing Lyons Avenue and honoring the neighborhood's rich heritage.



In Loving Memory of Samuel Ozuna

August 26, 1955 – January 8, 2026

“Sam was a pillar of strength. He stood tall like an oak tree. Deep rooted, grounded, all ten toes on the ground. He was a strong man. Strong in his beliefs, strong in his friendship. He never let his ego get in the way. He never looked at people with contempt in his eyes. He never looked at people with judgement in his eyes. He didn't care what a person said or did. He looked for the good in people, who they are in the inside. Sam walked a straight line. No ups, no downs. Never to the left, never to the right. He always walked forward. What you saw is what you got. Sam was the most honest, unselfish, respectful person we know. A very good all around person, but most of all, he was a very good friend. RIP Sam the MAN, you'll be missed.” -Pete Almaraz

“Samuel Ozuna was born in Houston, Texas and lived in the well known neighborhood of Denver Harbor for over 60 years. He went to the schools of Elliot Elementary, Scroggins Elementary, McReynolds Middle school, and Wheatley High school. Sam was well known in Denver Harbor and had many friends that he grew up with in Denver Harbor. Friends from Elementary through High school. Friends he had for over 50 years. Many attended his Funeral Service.

He was a kind and loving person. Always willing to help anyone who was in need. He sponsored many of the Denver Harbor BBQ fund raisers and attended many times in Resurrection church Bazaar on Market St.

Everyone that knew him and befriended him, all have good things to say about Samuel Ozuna. He will truly be missed.”
-Rene Ozuna, Brother

In The Community | En La Comunidad

McReynolds Middle School Shutting its doors at end of school year



McReynolds Middle School in Houston ISD will close at the end of the 2025–2026 school year as part of a 9-0 board vote on February 26, 2026, to shutter 12 campuses due to declining enrollment and high maintenance costs.



Denver Harbor seniors coming together to form a beautiful heart in celebration of Valentine's Day — a sweet reminder that love and community have no age.



Such a great night at McReynolds STEM Night! We loved being part of an evening filled with curious minds, hands-on activities, and future scientists, engineers, and innovators in the making.



An informative AARP presentation hosted for Living in Hope at the Denver Harbor Multi-Service Center — empowering our community with valuable resources and support.



AARP CUPID CREW delivering Roses and Valentine cards to DH Seniors

In The Community | En La Comunidad

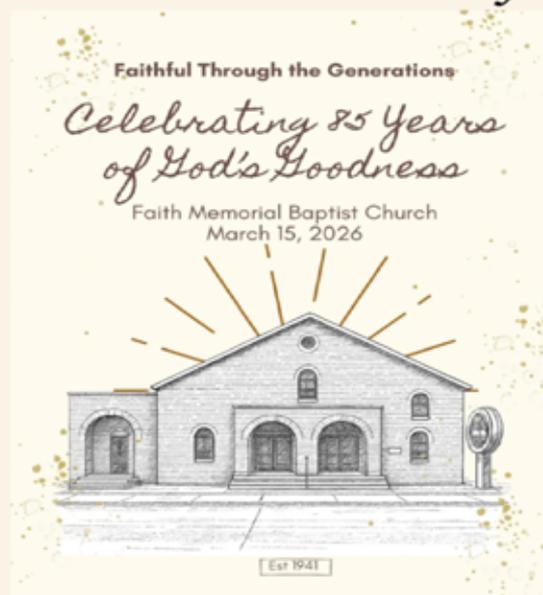
Los Jacales Restaurant Celebrates Grand Reopening!

6001 Lyons Ave, Houston, TX 77020



After much anticipation, Los Jacales Restaurant officially celebrated its Grand Opening on February 26th. The event drew an impressive crowd, with community members filling the space in support of the grand reopening of the local business.

Faith Memorial Baptist Church 85th Anniversary



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



Scan to see AARP Events & News in Houston, Texas

Upcoming Events | Eventos Próximos

Fish Fry Fundraiser

Host by: Resurrection Church and the Knights of Columbus 916 Majestic Dr Houston, TX

South Fried Catfish	\$13.00
Includes Hushpuppy, Green Salad, Corn and French Fries	
Fried Tilapia	\$11.00
Includes Hushpuppy, Green Salad, Corn and French Fries	
Baked Potato	\$8.00
Includes: Butter, Cheese, Chives and Sour Cream	
Nacho Chip Bowl	\$5.00
Includes: Creamy Nacho Cheese, Chips and Jalapenos	
Add Fried Shrimp	\$5.00
Dessert Cake	\$2.00

Come Join Us
9-3 PM
Every Friday during Lent
Starting Feb. 20



Contact: Joe Perez at 832-971-4230
Bene Pena at 713-397-0010

BENEFIT FOR RICK BONE LOPEZ

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026
12:00 PM - 5:00 PM
(OR UNTIL SOLD OUT)

Location:
Harrisburg Country Club
3618 Harrisburg Blvd
Houston, TX 77003

For Information or Donations:
Contact: David Arevalo (BULL)
713-416-0359

All donations will go toward Rick's medical expenses

- HAMBURGERS & CHIPS - \$15
- AWESOME RAFFLES
- LIVE DJ
- FAMILY FUN
- AND SO MUCH MORE!

Hosted by Damn Good Friends

Denver Harbor Civic Club and Denver Harbor Cares invite you to meet

HOUSTON POLICE CHIEF NOE DIAZ

JOIN IN DISCUSSING WITH CHIEF DIAZ THE SERIOUS ISSUES AND CONCERNS DENVER HARBOR RESIDENTS HAVE EXPRESSED.

DATE: APRIL 7TH, 2026
TIME: 6:00 - 7:00 PM
LOCATION: DENVER HARBOR MULTI-SERVICE CENTER
ADDRESS: 6402 MARKET ST.





SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026
10:00AM - 1:00PM

EGG HUNT BASH

Meet The Easter Bunny
Fun Outdoor Egg Hunt (Bring your Easter basket)
Art and Crafts, Music, Snacks for children
Easter Baskets Raffles

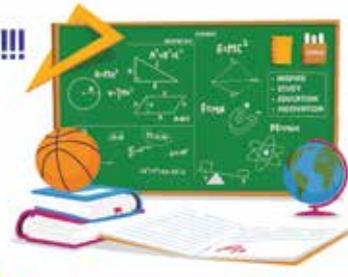
Denver Harbor Multi-Service Center
6402 Market St Houston Texas 77020



Texas Children's Health Plan | HOUSTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT | HPARD HOUSTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT | DFC Family First

Community Resources | Recursos Comunitarios

I TUTOR PARENTS TOO!!!



MATH & SCIENCE TUTORING

LOCAL TO DENVER HARBOR AND 5TH WARD

- 3 GRADE - COLLEGE MATH
- 3-8 SCIENCES
- BIOLOGY
- GEOMETRY

MON-WED
5:30 -6:30

SMALL GROUP RATE
\$25 PER PERSON

12 YEAR VETERAN TEACHER
MATH AND SCIENCE BACKGROUND FROM
TEXAS A&M, RICE, AND UHCL

KANDICE MELCHOR TEXT 281 840 1303

Houston Public Library Calendar of Events Linking YOU to the World							March 2026
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1 CLOSED	2 Bad Art Club! @11am LEGO Club! @4pm	3 Kids Craft! @4pm	4 Kids STEM! @4pm	5 Senior Social Hour! @2pm	6 Open Lab: Job Help! @2pm	7 Toddler Playtime! @11am Saturdays @ HPL! @2PM	
8 CLOSED	9 Bad Art Club! @11am LEGO Club! @4pm	10 Kids Craft! @4pm	11 Kids STEM! @4PM	12 Senior Social Hour! @2pm	13 Open Lab: Job Help! @2pm	14 Toddler Playtime! @11am Saturdays @HPL! @2PM	
15 CLOSED	16 Bad Art Club! @11am LEGO Club! @4pm	17 Kids Craft! @4pm	18 Kids STEM! @4PM Pajama Storytime! @6:30PM	19 Senior Social Hour! @2pm	20 Open Lab: Job Help! @2pm	21 Toddler Playtime! @11am Saturdays @ HPL! @2PM	
22 CLOSED	23 Bad Art Club! @11am LEGO Club! @4pm	24 Kids Craft! @4pm	25 Kids STEM! @4PM	26 Senior Social Hour! @2pm	27 Open Lab: Job Help! @2pm	28 Toddler Playtime! @11am Saturdays @ HPL! @2PM	
29 CLOSED	30 Bad Art Club! @ 11am LEGO Club! @4pm	31 Kids Craft! @4pm					

TUTTLE NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY
702 Kress St. Houston, TX 77020
832-393-2100
M.10-6; Tu.10-6; W.12-8; Th.10-6; F.1-5; Sa.10-5; Su. Closed

All events are free and open to the public.
Events are subject to change without notice. Please contact the library location to confirm the date and time of an event. Please visit www.houstonlibrary.org/events for more information.
If you have a special physical or communication need that may impact your participation in any of these activities, please contact the library staff prior to the program to discuss accommodations. We cannot ensure the availability of appropriate accommodations without prior notification of need.

Habitat for Humanity is Accepting 20 applications for Veteran or Surviving Spouse of Veteran to apply for home repairs

Apply by scanning QR code below or apply via phone call at **713.903.7819**



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!



Enseñando a los estudiantes a pensar: John Bryant y la misión de Harbor Christian Academy

Escrito por Kim Melchor | Fotos cortesía de Harbor Christian Academy

Entre a un salón de clases en Harbor Christian Academy, ubicada en Kress Street, y es posible que escuche a estudiantes hablando latín, recitando poesía o discutiendo a Homero. El director de la escuela, John Bryant, describe el enfoque del plantel como uno basado en la educación clásica—un modelo antiguo construido alrededor de enseñar a los estudiantes a pensar.

“Harbor Christian Academy existe para transformar a estudiantes de diversos contextos en todo Houston a través de una educación clásica y cristiana para la gloria de Dios”, dijo Bryant. Esa misión da forma a todo, desde el plan de estudios hasta el modelo de financiamiento.

HCA adopta un enfoque diferente al de muchos otros proveedores educativos locales. “No somos una escuela de alta tecnología”, dijo Bryant. “A propósito no tenemos a los niños usando dispositivos con frecuencia.”

En lugar de enfatizar la robótica o la programación a edades tempranas, la escuela se enfoca en el razonamiento y la investigación científica. “Queremos brindarles el aspecto fundamental del pensamiento lógico y del razonamiento sólido, y enseñarles a examinar los temas a través del método científico”, explicó.

“Hacemos que nuestros estudiantes estudien latín hasta el octavo grado”, agregó Bryant. Describe el latín como una base para el desarrollo del lenguaje y el pensamiento lógico, ayudando a los estudiantes a reconocer estructura y orden en el inglés, español, francés y otros idiomas.



John Bryant, Director de Harbor Christian Academy

“Sabemos que a esos niños les encanta aprender memorizando cosas”, dijo. “Se obsesionan con los temas y quieren profundizar mucho en ellos.” Los estudiantes mayores enfrentan textos cada vez más complejos, incluyendo The Odyssey y The Iliad. Bryant señala que estas obras crean espacio para discusiones reflexivas.

Harbor Christian también opera de manera diferente en lo financiero. Bryant lo llama el modelo “kingdom flip”.

“La mayoría de las escuelas privadas reciben aproximadamente el 90% de su presupuesto operativo de las colegiaturas y recaudan el 10% restante”, dijo. “Nosotros somos intencionalmente lo contrario.” Las familias contribuyen lo que pueden, pero donantes y fundaciones cubren la mayor parte del presupuesto. Esos donantes son vinculados con estudiantes e invitados al campus. “Los llamamos socios”, dijo Bryant. “Es realmente una forma muy especial de... ayudar a subsidiar la colegiatura del estudiante. Y esa alianza funciona muy bien.”

Bryant deja claro que Harbor Christian no educa a los niños de manera aislada. “Creemos que es un esfuerzo de toda la familia, no solo de los estudiantes”, dijo. Desde oportunidades de voluntariado hasta días designados de participación familiar, se invita a los padres a vivir la experiencia escolar junto a sus hijos y a construir relaciones dentro de la comunidad.

A nivel personal, Bryant continúa liderando de maneras visibles e inesperadas—en la capilla, en los salones de clase y, en ocasiones, en la cancha de fútbol. Los estudiantes conocen bien al director, aunque no todos saben que es un corredor entusiasta y exjugador de fútbol. “Sí los sorprende cuando empiezo a patear el balón”, comentó.

Actualmente, Harbor Christian Academy atiende a estudiantes desde kínder hasta noveno grado. A futuro, Bryant espera expandirse más allá de la capacidad actual de la escuela y eventualmente ofrecer hasta el grado 12. “Esa es nuestra meta principal en este momento”, dijo.

Kim Melchor Escritora



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.

From Gang Colors to College Colors

How Jesse Esparza Found His Way Through Education, Community, and Mentorship

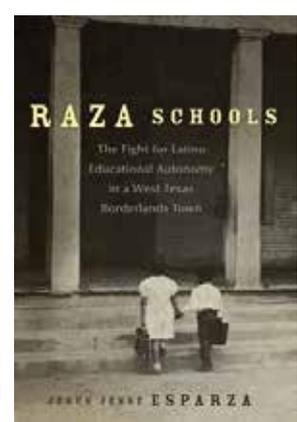
Written by Jessica Campos

Houston's Young Monarchs Little Free Library Update

We're excited to share that Houston Young Monarchs Builders Alliance is installing another Little Free Library at Porras Prontito in Denver Harbor. Each new installation is a reminder that books still matter, that stories still shape neighborhoods, and that access to knowledge should live on our own blocks.

Stay tuned for some powerful titles that will soon be placed inside. One of the books we are especially proud to feature is *Raza Schools* by Jesse Esparza.

Featured Book: *Raza Schools*



In *Raza Schools*, historian Jesse Esparza tells the story of Mexican American communities in Texas who built their own schools when public education excluded them. These community-created schools centered

bilingual education, cultural pride, and political awareness at a time when Latino students were punished for speaking Spanish and pushed to the margins.

The book is a reminder that when systems fail communities, communities organize. It documents resilience, resistance, and the power of families who refused to accept lowered expectations for their children. And behind this powerful book is a powerful story.



Before he was a professor or award-winning author, **Jesse Esparza** was a teenager navigating racially divided school hallways where wearing the wrong colors could mean a fight.

For many students, gang affiliation was less rebellion and more survival. College wasn't mapped out at home. It felt distant, something other people understood. Growing up in the 1980s, Esparza attended schools where gangs were racially formed and tensions were real. Wearing colors meant protection. It meant belonging.

Sports became structure. Coaches enforced accountability, "You don't pass, you don't play." It was one of the first systems that made expectations clear.

College brought new obstacles: no roadmap, no guidance on financial aid, no one explaining how the system worked. He arrived underprepared and quickly faced food insecurity, academic probation, and racial hostility.

Many students would have left. He didn't. What changed was community.

Latino student organizations became what he later called a "**good gang**", mentorship, shared knowledge, and collective support. It was a shift from gang colors to college colors.

Mentorship mattered. His high school English teacher, Ms. Boone, was demanding, unapologetically strict, and deeply invested in her students. She expected excellence and refused excuses, but her discipline came from care. She treated her classroom like a space where young people were capable of more than they believed. In her, Esparza saw both toughness and love, the same qualities he saw at home. It was in her classroom that he first imagined himself becoming a teacher. The standard she set became the standard he carries today.

Later, during a low moment in college, his father, a construction worker, offered a simple choice: finish school or join him in physically demanding labor for life. The message was clear. Esparza returned and committed fully.

Today, **he serves as Interim Chair of the Department of History, Geography & General Studies and Associate Professor of History at Texas Southern University.**

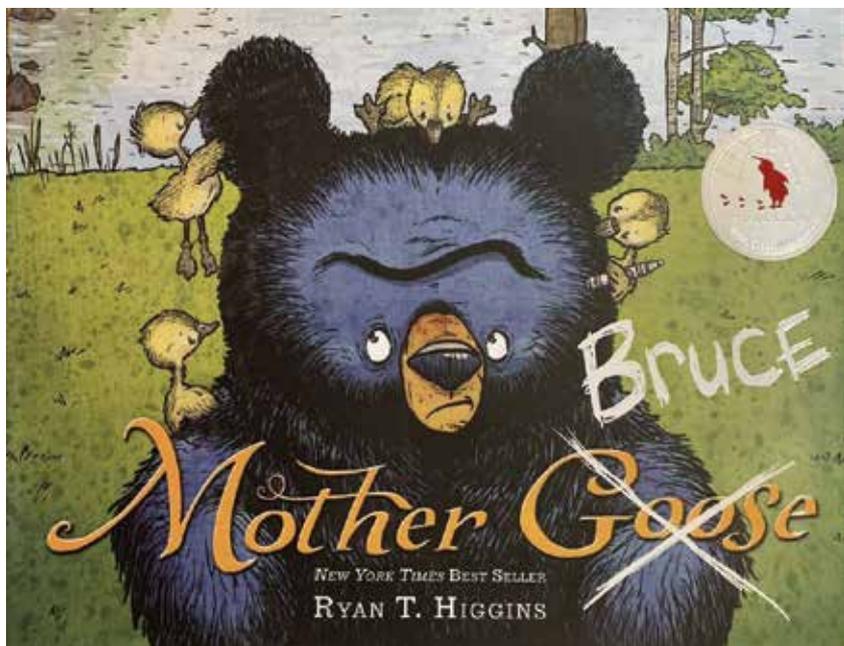
His book *Raza Schools* documents Mexican American communities who built their own schools when public systems excluded them.

His message is clear: lack of information is not lack of ability. Seek mentors. Ask questions. Build community.

A Library for Every Stage

We're featuring books that meet readers where they are, at every age and every stage.

For Little Readers

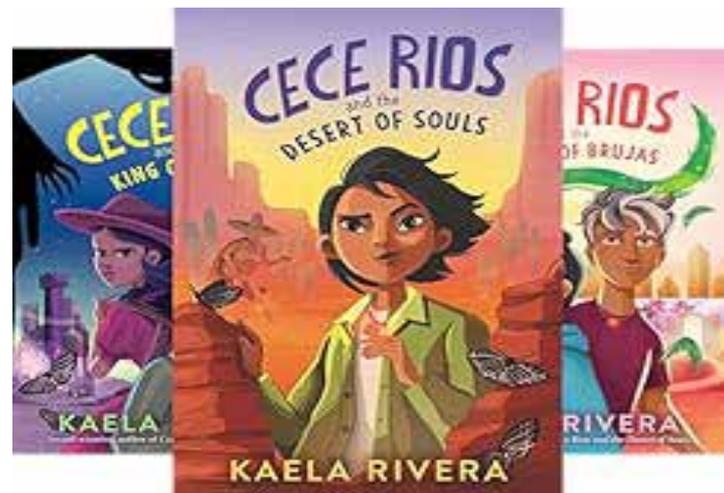


Mother Bruce by Ryan T. Higgins

Bright, funny, and impossible to ignore. This playful story grabs young readers immediately and reminds us that reading should feel joyful first. When kids see something bold and colorful, they reach for it and that's how a love of books begins.

For

Curious Middle Readers



Cece Rios and the Desert of Souls by Kaela Rivera

Adventure, mythology, and culture come together in a story that feels magical without feeling “schooly.” It gives growing readers a hero who is brave, layered, and rooted in folklore, a reminder that their imagination belongs here too.

You can find these and other featured books at one of our Little Free Library locations listed below.

Where to Find Our Little Free Libraries

Denver Harbor

- 5301 Palmer St
- 1013 Majestic St
- Blackshear Elementary School — 2900 Holman St (on campus)
- Emancipation Economic Development Council — 2900 Holman St (in front of the school)

Fifth Ward

- 3309 Charleston St
 - 3228 Milburn St
 - Progressive Fifth Ward Community Garden — 1705 Yates St
 - Ewing Apartments — Houston Housing Authority (on-site)
- Stop by. Take a book. Leave a book. Let's keep the stories moving!

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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I'm working hard every day to deliver responsible, trustworthy leadership that puts our community over politics. I'm staying focused on lowering costs and keeping our families safe and healthy. Thank you for your support!



POL. ADV. ADRIAN GARCIA CAMPAIGN

