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**HISD Names Outstanding Hall of Fame Partners during Annual Appreciation Breakfast**

*October 25, 2013* – The Houston Independent School District paid tribute on Friday to four of its long-standing, dedicated partners during the Annual Partnership Appreciation Breakfast.

The Houston Astros, Houston Food Bank, IPAA/PESA Education Center and Target each received a 2013 Hall of Fame award for their exemplary service to HISD students. The award is presented to businesses and organizations that have an impact on multiple schools and serve as a model for other partnerships.

The winners were announced during the ceremony on Friday, Oct. 25 at Kingdom Builders Center. The event included a breakfast followed by a program.

“Our focus as a district is to become great all over in every facet. You, as business and community partners, are diligently doing your part to ensure that we reach our goal. And I am happy to say that together we are succeeding,” said Michele Pola, HISD Chief Business/Community Relations Officer.

“So this morning, we are assembled together to salute you and thank you for the great work you are doing in our schools and for our students each and every day.”

The Hall of Fame awards program was first launched in 1995. The 2013 theme — HISD Partners: Becoming Great All Over — serves to recognize the importance of our partners and the role they play in students’ success. HISD currently has more than 300 district wide partners.

The 2013 Hall of Fame honorees are listed below.

**Houston Astros:** The Houston Astros have a long-standing partnership with HISD that dates back to 1986. Over the years, they have provided volunteers, community outreach programs promoting participation in sports and recreational activities and educational incentive programs designed to reward students for reading and doing well in school.

The Astros partner with the Houston Chronicle to sponsor Readers Are Leaders, a program that provides ticket vouchers to students who read during the summer months. The team also provides ticket vouchers as part of the Astros Perfect Attendance, Astros Honor Roll and HISD’s Cool to be Smart programs.

The team has hosted various educators and administrators during special events at the ballpark and provided donations to the 2011 and 2012 Back to School Fest. They also sponsor the Astros Urban Youth Academy at Sylvester Turner Park and the Grand Slam for Youth Baseball.

**Houston Food Bank:** The Houston Food Bank has been helping HISD students and their families fight hunger since it was founded in 1982. When kids go hungry, their academic performance, attention span and energy level suffer.

Though students can eat breakfast and lunch at school, they sometimes go without at home. To combat this problem, HISD partnered with the Houston Food Bank in 2006-2007 to offer the Backpack Buddy Club. As part of the program, food is discreetly put into student backpacks so that it can be taken home and shared with siblings over the weekend.

The Food Bank also offers Food Fairs at local food pantries throughout Houston including Burbank and White elementary schools, which were named school-based food pantry sites as part of the Target Meals for Minds program. The organization also offers the Student Heroes leadership program for teens and has participated the last two years in Back to School Fest.

**IPAA/PESA Education Center:** Since partnering with HISD in 2007, the IPAA (Independent Petroleum Association of America)/PESA (Petroleum Equipment Suppliers Association of America) Education Center has been enhancing the classroom experience for HISD students by arranging guest speakers from the oil and gas industry, funding field trips and providing for students volunteer opportunities and industry mentors.

The Education Center — with locations at Milby and Westside high schools and the Young Women’s College Preparatory Academy — plays a vital role in preparing students for college and careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. Through the partnership, students have the opportunity to obtain a summer internship with oil and gas companies and work with industry mentors who help boost their speaking, writing and critical thinking skills.

This year, IPAA/PESA Education Center expanded its partnership with the district by supporting the new Energy Institute High School, which will offer three academic pathways: geosciences, energy alternatives and offshore technology.

**Target:** Since partnering with the district in 2008, Target has impacted several HISD schools and thousands of students. The district has received numerous Target grants and the company’s team members donate an increasing number of volunteer hours to our schools and the communities in which they are located.

Target has donated $500,000 for after school fine arts programs since the partnership began. In 2011, the HISD Foundation received a $200,000 Target grant to support the literacy programs at 11 Apollo elementary schools. The money was used to establish 187 classroom librarieswith books for all student reading levels. During the 2012-2013 school year, Target awarded three HISD elementary schools with three separate $25,000 grants for educational classroom resources.

In 2012, Burbank Elementary Schoolreceived a Target School Library Makeover which included renovation work, 2,000 new books and a complete technology upgrade. White Elementary School received a similar library makeover in 2013. Target also provided volunteers and funding for the 2012 Back to School Fest.

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The **Houston Independent School District** is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States with 282 schools and 210,000 students. The 334-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area with more than 25,000 employees.
**For more information, visit the HISD Web site at** [**www.houstonisd.org**](http://www.houstonisd.org/)**.**

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