



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Newly renovated Velasquez learning center reopens for adult students

(San Antonio, TX) District 1 City Councilman Diego Bernal led City staff, San Antonio Independent School District partners and students/faculty in cutting the ribbon to officially reopen the Willie C. Velasquez Learning Center on Monday, February 18 on San Antonio's West Side after more than a year of closure for major renovations and repairs.

"Education is a life-long path toward opportunity for everyone in San Antonio, including our adult learners," Councilman Bernal said. "The reopening of a new and improved learning center here on the West Side not only honors the strong community values and advocacy traditions originally set forth by Willie Velasquez, but also serves as a continuous investment from the City in our families and their ability to succeed both now and in the future."

Center renovations were made possible through \$1.8 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. The center closed in January 2012; renovations initiated in October 2012 through City Council ordinance. Velasquez center students and staff members were successfully relocated to classes temporarily housed at the nearby Frank Garrett Multi-Service Community Center operated by the City's Department of Human Services.

"The Velasquez center and our other learning centers in the community are committed to giving our adults the support they need to reengage their education," said Melody Woosley, Interim Director of the City's Department of Human Services. "As we partner with our students towards their improved literacy and success, they also become more effective partners in their own children's education and goals."

Improvements to the center include new roofing and exterior metal siding, interior wall/flooring/ceiling finishes, restroom lighting/plumbing fixture replacements, new furniture and computers, new metal fencing, landscaping enhancements and parking lot/sidewalk repairs. Construction was completed by F.A. Nunnally Company. Design work was completed by Debra J. Dockery Architect, Alderson & Associates for Mechanical Electrical Plumbing, and CZF Group for landscaping.

“We understand what a vital resource the Willie C. Velasquez Learning Center provides to the community,” said Mike Frisbie, City Engineer and Director of the Capital Improvements Management Services Department. “We were committed to making this project run as smoothly as possible and our consultants and contractors helped us complete this project on time and under budget.”

The Willie C. Velasquez Learning Center is one of seven City-operated centers constructed as a result of an historic \$46.5 million bond election in May 1989. Learning centers offer free GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom instruction to adult students ages 18 and older across the city, along with computer training classes and workforce development resources. In FY 2012, over 900 GED and ESL students enrolled at Velasquez center classes, with a total of 41 Velasquez center students successfully earning their GED certificate. On average, adults with a GED certificate have greater access to career opportunities, educational opportunities and are more likely to earn higher income in their lifetime than those without a GED certificate or high school diploma. Educational partners supporting the City’s learning centers include San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD), North East Independent School District (NEISD) and Education Services Center, Region 20.

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