



Westchase District Businesses Reinvest and Reinvent Themselves In ‘New’ Buildings

EHRA Engineering and Harvey Builders’ amenities rejuvenate real estate



An Exceptional Build-Out: *Harvey Builders served as its own general contractor in the remodeling of its new Houston headquarters at 3663 Briarpark.*

Jim Russ represents the “R” in EHRA Engineering. As the second generation of his family to be part of EHRA, Russ led the 83-year old engineering company into its biggest transition to date: new offices at 10011 Meadowglen. Having been in a company-owned building on Westoffice Drive for 32 years, EHRA moved into 47,000-square-foot of leased space at the beginning of January.

Meanwhile, Kelly Hall, CEO of Harvey Builders, was leading his company on a similar mission: to relocate their office into more square footage with nice amenities that would allow them to compete for top employees. After 32 years in leased space on Westchase Drive, Harvey purchased the former Randalls corporate office building at 3663 Briarpark and gutted the building back to the studs.

“We created new entrances, a new canopy and brick interior walls giving the building a much more contemporary look,” said Hall. “We have all new air conditioning, new electrical and a new roof.”

Designing features employees love

Both Hall and Russ sought employee engagement in determining the features and amenities of their new offices and both took advantage of the existing structure in their respective buildings to create offices and cubicles with lots of warm, natural light

Russ pointed out the three rooftop skylights that bring natural light into EHRA’s new building. “That’s what I’ve always loved about this building. I’d never been here, but always admired it and thought it would be a good fit for us,” he said.

EHRA significantly reworked the interior of its new building, creating four color-coordinated pods to distinguish between the company’s business segments. The pods are located around the exterior of the building, leaving an open space downstairs and upstairs that EHRA calls the “Central Plaza.”

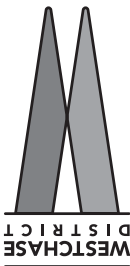
At EHRA, the cubicles are all placed near the exterior glass walls. Glass partitions on the upper walls of the cubicles attract light to flow through to the interior offices. The offices also have glass walls with sliding glass doors that allow natural light and maximize space. Light harvesters have been installed throughout the building so that lights dim automatically as the sun moves higher in the sky.

Both EHRA and Harvey Builders have multi-functional conference space in their respective buildings. Nine different conference rooms were created at EHRA.

(Continued on Page 8)



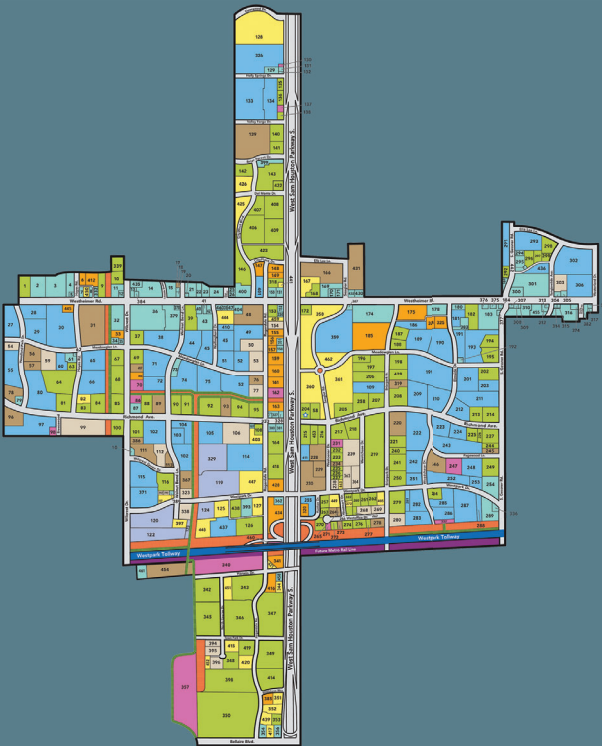
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WESTCHASE TODAY is published quarterly by Westchase District, a municipal management district funded by local property owners in a 4.2 square-mile area centered on the Sam Houston Tollway between I-10 and US-59 on the west side of Houston, Texas. We promote economic growth by enhancing mobility, beautification, public safety, planning and development of the District.



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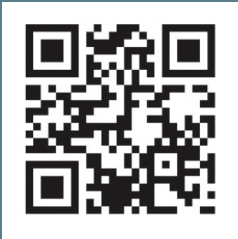
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Now What?

One of our local pastors, Father Mario Arroyo of St Cyril’s Catholic Church, is known for his homilies with a series of questions designed to identify scriptural teachings and put them into practice in our daily lives. “What?” is answered by the primary message, take away, or teaching of a passage or parable. “So what?” establishes a measure of impact or relevance and the opportunity to contextualize the teaching. And finally, the answer to “Now what?” provides the pivot point to put the lesson into action in daily living.

Westchase District recently held its “Westchase Today and Tomorrow” conference as the kickoff event celebrating its 25th year (see page 4). One of the presentations covered the large-scale infrastructure projects underway on Westheimer, Walnut Bend and our two parks – Woodchase and Wilcrest. There’s the “What?” Over the next 2+ years, Westchase District will invest more than \$50 million to make our community more mobile, attractive and positioned to prosper for the next 25 years and beyond.

The answer to “So what?” is straight forward. Our two road projects, which include new sidewalks, integrated bikeways, pedestrian lighting, custom bus shelters and more, provide new and expanded levels of inter-modal connectivity. That’s planner speak for coordinated connections between transit, bikes, cars and pedestrians. Westheimer is a three-mile project that is essentially the front door for many of our retail businesses. Improving its appearance and strengthening its “brand” are clear benefits for these businesses. Walnut Bend is a complete replacement of an aging street that takes its design to the leading edge of transportation planning. For the parks, the “So what?” is a stronger community by building new connections between and among residents, employees and people in adjoining neighborhoods. The parks are amenities for locals and help attract and retain companies and residents alike.

The “Now what?” answer is more complicated and evolving. At first, it means operating and maintaining these projects and the commensurate



Westchase District Board Chair Harry Greenblatt

financial obligations. This is a critical element going forward. Further, with respect to the parks, our support will also entail programming (defining, holding and sponsoring) a variety of events and activities. It is one thing to design and build great public spaces, but their value is fully realized only when they are activated. A yoga class will reach one group, a movie night another. The list goes on.

We anticipate Woodchase Park will open in August 2021 and Wilcrest Park a little more than a year later. But our Board has already approved a robust budget for operations, maintenance and programming years into the future. And we are working now to plan the events and activities that will take place in these wonderful public spaces. Even though the parks have not yet broken ground, we want to be ready to serve our community well.

Our hope is, that when we complete these projects, the answer to the “Now what?” on your part is also straight forward: “Let’s go there!”

Harry Greenblatt Assumes Westchase District Board Chairmanship

Hotelier is only 4th chair in District’s 25-year history

Harry Greenblatt, Vice President Managing Director/General Manager of the Houston Marriott Westchase, has been in the hotel business in Houston for 31 years. His first exposure to Westchase District was in January of 2003 when his company, Pyramid Hotel Group, began negotiations to acquire the 604-room Adam’s Mark Hotel. The company took possession of the hotel in May of that year and Greenblatt has been involved in our community ever since.

In his early days at the hotel, Greenblatt presided over a significant remodeling and rebranding to the Houston Marriott Westchase. His corporate responsibilities also required a lot of travel as he oversaw numerous other hotels within the Pyramid group. As his travel demands slowed, Greenblatt accepted the invitation to join the Westchase District board of directors in late 2013.

He’s served on numerous board committees and last year was elected vice-chair of the board. As he hands over much of the day-to-day hotel operations to Noreen Stewart, director of rooms, he’s eager to spend more time engaged in the

business of Westchase District.

Rolling up his sleeves

“I want to stay involved in the planning of all the new parks. I don’t want to just show up to chair board meetings. I want to be involved and know what’s going on in the community,” said Greenblatt.



His Ben Franklin: Harry Greenblatt regularly visits the Westchase District office to sign checks and execute contracts.



Experience International Flavors

Colombian coffee & arepas go hand in hand

You could say every Thursday at Westchase District Farmers Market is an international celebration. The farmers market boasts a line up of vendors whose roots come from Central and South America to the Mediterranean Sea and Asia.

Through food and one of the world’s most favorite beverages, a taste of Colombia enlivens the market’s offerings. De Mi Fogón and Hortiprocess Coffee Roasters are a small part of the patchwork of international discovery flourishing in the market. These two vendors are crafting traditional flavors for which Colombia has become known to the world.

De Mi Fogón

That slight sizzle of arepas is coming from De Mi Fogón. Vendor Dalia Gomez cooks up these tasty cornmeal cakes made to order at the market. The arepa is one of the most popular foods in Colombia. They’re served in almost every home and are the equivalent of tortillas in Mexico and bread in Italy. Gomez says most Colombians eat arepas every day while every region has its own variation.



All Day Dining: *Arepas are commonly enjoyed in Colombian households, topped with egg or mozzarella cheese.*

Made of ground maize dough, the arepa originates from the northern region of South America in pre-Columbian times and is also notable in the cuisine of Venezuela. Yellow arepas are made of cornmeal. Gomez says they can be grilled, baked, fried or toasted and topped with meat, cheese and minced vegetables like peppers, onion and tomatoes or even strawberries. For any recipe, arepas are prepared by being easily warmed to a soft, crisp and fluffy texture.

Her Arepa Blanca has white broken corn, Arepa De Choclo is made with sweet corn, and Arepa De Cueso is white corn. “The toppings are up to you,”

said Gomez. “A lot of people like mozzarella cheese, and enjoy that arepas are quick and easy to prepare.”

From the mountains of Colombia to the cup

The makers of Hortiprocess Coffee Roasters understand that Colombian coffee has been king of the coffee bean for ages. Its different texture and flavors are popular among coffee drinkers. Its success has led travelers to become coffee connoisseurs of native countries.

“From Turkey, Pakistan, Ethiopia to Italy, Vietnam and Indonesia, savoring local coffee is part of the amazing discoveries travelers seek,” said John Carey, farmers market manager. “Although coffee comes from everywhere, Colombia was one of the first countries on the scene to capture American tastes. Now people everywhere expect coffee, no matter what country they’re in, to taste as good as Colombian, if not better.”

To ensure they’re selling market goers the finest bean, Hortiprocess is diligent about how its coffee is harvested, packaged and distributed. What might seem like an unassuming collection of 16-ounce coffee bags proudly displayed at Hortiprocess’ market table are actually the result of careful cultivation that began at high altitudes.

According to vendor Juan Quinterro, the altitude at which a bean is grown affects the bean’s flavor. Coffee grown at higher elevations tends to be of higher

quality, and with that high quality comes more complex flavor notes than coffee grown at lower elevations. The difference in flavor and quality is due to two factors: water and temperature.

“We handle the production, transformation, commercialization and development, and logistics to sell at the farmers market,” said Quinterro.

In Colombia, Hortiprocess uses a network of coffee producers and operates the export system. Its office in Houston is responsible for the creation of products, brand development, production, and import of raw material. The company says this allows them to consolidate high quality products at a fair price and maintain a direct relationship with the producer and autonomy of the process.

"We are in every part of the chain. From the production of the coffee bean to the store, we take care of each process to give the best cup of coffee," said Quinterro.



Roast of the Town: *Cauca flavor is a top seller at the Farmers Market.*



Made Fresh Daily: *Dalia Gomez makes her specialty arepas.*

Hortiprocess sells four flavors at the Farmers Market including Colombian Classic grown in the north of Caldas, Colombia, in high mountains; Colombian Dark, a high roasting coffee roasted dark; Colombian Special comes from Anserma Caldas Colombia, a citrus and very floral coffee roasted medium; and Cauca, fruity and sweet, grown in southern Colombia in La Meseta region roasted medium.

Bringing the best coffee from Colombia drives Hortiprocess to deliver it to the Farmers Market.

Westchase District Farmers Market

Year-round, rain or shine, Thursdays @ 3 p.m.

St. Cyril of Alexandria Catholic Church
10503 Westheimer Road (at Rogerdale Road, one block west of Beltway 8)

www.westchasedistrictfarmersmarket.com

Wearing his distinctive bow tie, Greenblatt can often be spotted at the Westchase District Farmers Market. As a “foodie,” Greenblatt enjoys seeing the new product offerings each week.

On any given day, you might find him in the kitchen at the hotel. Once a quarter, he makes breakfast for the staff. “Food and beverage is my passion. I still dabble in the kitchen,” he said. In fact, the hotel participated in the Westchase Rotary Club’s recent soup cook-off and it was Greenblatt who perfected the bread serving bowls for the hotel’s signature clam chowder. “I worked with our bakery. The bread bowls we used at the event were our third attempt and we got it right.”

This year, Greenblatt will oversee the renovation of the hotel’s pavilion and conference space. They’re also installing new awnings in the lobby. Just recently, the hotel’s health club was completely remodeled.

As he gets more involved in Westchase District, Greenblatt is eager to participate in the ground breaking efforts for the two planned parks. “Philip laid the groundwork, I’ll get to see it to fruition,” he said, noting the leadership of immediate past chair Philip Schneidau of Woodbranch Management.

“It’s been great to see the District flourish,” said Greenblatt. “Having a hotel here has been a good investment on our part.”



First Shopper: *Greenblatt is a regular customer at the Westchase District Farmers Market.*

Westchase A Great Decision For Corporate Headquarters

Market experts say amenities in office, living stand out

Corporate real estate professionals heard from a major energy leader on why Westchase District has been a great choice for his company. Phillips 66 chairman and CEO Greg Garland spoke about his company's decision to build a new 1.1 million square-foot campus at 2331 CityWest Boulevard for 2,000 employees who had been previously spread throughout Houston in different locations.

Before a packed audience at the Houston Marriott Westchase, Garland pointed to the District's location and proximity to both airports and Beltway 8 as central factors in locating Phillips 66's headquarters here and in establishing one of the most innovative office amenity environments in the industry, in addition to traditional office space.

Garland's talk anchored the event followed by two engaging panels with insights on key real estate segments. The first focused on office/corporate space. Distinguished panelists included Kelly Hall, Harvey Builders; Eric Siegrist, Parkway Properties; Philip Schneidau, Woodbranch Management; Michelle Wogan, Transwestern; and moderator Jim Russ, EHRA Engineering. Panelists were asked about Westchase District.



All the Right Moves: Phillips 66 Chairman and CEO Greg Garland says why Westchase District was a perfect fit for building the company's headquarters in 2016.

Panelists on providing and finding amenities for employees:

"We made our single biggest move in our history. We are ecstatic to be in our new facility. Retention and recruitment factored high in how we selected our new space and its features."

Jim Russ, EHRA Engineering, whose firm relocated within the District after 32 years.

"The District is a good steward of financial resources. This a wonderful place to work and play. They offer the amenities everyone is looking for. The District is a really good place to be."

Michelle Wogan, Transwestern

"Westchase District has done a great job with investments in roads and parks. As the city has moved west, Westchase has become center of that movement. When Phillips 66 built its building, that was a higher level of endorsement for the District."

Eric Siegrist, Parkway Properties

"Because of Westchase, we can provide our team with a better place to work. Westchase has evolved with greater amenities. Buildings are brand new and nicer here."

Kelly Hall, Harvey Builders which relocated within the District and renovated Randalls' former corporate office at 3663 Briarpark Dr.

"Westchase listens to what's going on around us and where we need to be going. We now have miles and miles of trails. We have stayed in front of security needs versus following."

Philip Schneidau, Woodbranch Management, and Westchase District immediate past chair, board of directors

Panelists on multifamily and retail amenities:

A second panel led by moderator Ron Lindsey, RDL Associates, featured distinguished panelists Stacy Hunt, Greystar; Jon Jamison, NewQuest; Eric Lestin, Cushman & Wakefield; and John Boriak, Veritas Equity Management. The group discussed multifamily and retail amenities.

"The infrastructure improvements that Westchase has made give that feeling of community."

Ron Lindsey, RDL Associates

"Westchase has been the success story as far as master-planned and mixed-use development in Houston."

Stacy Hunt, Greystar

"We can see great, long-term benefits. There's a strong mix of daytime population and residential living with good school districts. It's a testament that top restaurants are going off frontage and coming here. There's a huge demand of more tenants who want to be here."

Jon Jamison, NewQuest

"You know when a Whole Foods and P.F. Changs are within a mile of each other that it's a good place. The Houston Apartment Association told me Westchase is the best well-run district in the city."

John Boriak, Veritas Equity Management, whose company was looking to purchase property in Westchase District two years ago

"What Westchase has done is phenomenal. As a management district, this is far more successful than counterparts I've seen in Dallas, San Antonio and El Paso."

Eric Lestin, Cushman & Wakefield



Unsurpassed Amenities: Panelists Michelle Wogan, Transwestern; Philip Schneidau, Woodbranch Management; Jim Russ, EHRA Engineering; Eric Siegrist, Parkway Properties; and Kelly Hall, Harvey Builders said Westchase District offers huge advantages in the corporate office market.

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Westheimer Improvements Coming Soon

Contractor begins work on streetscape

It's a project more than ten years in the making. Construction began in February on Westchase District's \$16 million project to transform Westheimer Road.

When the Westchase District Board of Directors created its long-range plan in 2006, one of the six actionable goals was to "transform streets into more attractive and convenient places." Today, that goal is being realized in two separate multi-million dollar projects: the complete rebuild of Walnut Bend Lane and the Westheimer streetscapes project.

The Westheimer project won't affect the roadway itself. Westheimer, which is one of the most heavily traveled roads in Houston and home of METRO's busiest bus route, is a state farm-to-market road, owned and maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation. The Westchase District improvements will all be "back-of-curb," meaning that it won't impact the driving lanes but will have a substantial impact on the pedestrian realm.

An enjoyable experience for pedestrians, drivers alike

"We're adding new, wider sidewalks, new pedestrian lighting, custom bus shelters and landscaping that will have a positive impact on pedestrians and the Westheimer retail experience," said Irma Sanchez, Westchase District's vice president of projects. "These improvements will benefit the retail space, better support transit operations and improve connectivity for pedestrians, all while making this major roadway more distinctive and attractive."

The Westheimer Streetscape project includes \$10.3 million in federal funds under H-GAC's Transportation Improvement Program and \$5.8 million from the 380 Area Program with the City of Houston. METRO is a supporting partner of the project.

Collaborative partnership

Sanchez and her projects staff also received more than 50 easements from property owners along Westheimer. "We solicited these easements because some of the improvements require additional right-of-way to meet ADA requirements," said Sanchez. "When we explained the significance of the improvements and the positive



Picture This: *This rendering illustrates the planned intersection of Westheimer and Walnut Bend (Remember El Palenque?) Note the mast arms, crosswalks, ADA ramps and bus stop.*

effect it will have on their property values, our owners were happy to provide easements. It's a great partnership with our stakeholders."

Some area residents and property owners may recall participating in community input meetings on this project back in the spring of 2015. "That was really the first step," added Sanchez. "After receiving input from the community regarding the improvements they wanted to see, we began to develop plans and cost estimates. Five years later, we're ready to begin construction."

Crews began work on the east end of Westchase District near Westerland Drive. They'll work westward on the north side of the street to Kirkwood, then turn around and work eastward on the south side of the street. The project will take approximately 20 months to complete.

"We seized on transformative improvements the community wanted," said Sanchez. "Pedestrians will love the improved tree canopy and the 6-8 foot wide sidewalks. Motorists will appreciate the improved traffic signals and mast arms. There is something for everyone to like and the project will ultimately spur development and improve property values on Westheimer."

Walking In Their Shoes

Officer Cody Thomas

Inspiration to become a police officer was always around a young Cody Thomas. "As soon as I could start making memories, I've always known I wanted to become a police officer," said Thomas. That was at age four.

His dream was boosted by many family role models. His father, who works for CenterPoint Energy, and two uncles at the Houston Police Department set an example by actions that he wanted to follow.

Thomas recalls how his dad's compassion for others left an enormous impression. "He would do anything under the sun to help somebody," said Thomas. "He would give you his shirt, his shoes, anything off his back to help you, even if they were strangers."

Upon graduation from Cypress Woods High School, Thomas entered the police force. He's now a two-year veteran and works shifts with HPD and Westchase District Patrol.



Here for Others: *Serving the community is the cornerstone of what Ofc. Cody Thomas does.*

Family ties inspire

Like his father, Thomas' uncles reminded him to make a difference in the world every day. "They put me on steppingstones which led to the path I took." He recalls his uncles saying, "It's a great, rewarding profession but you need to know what you are getting yourself into. You will see the best and the worst in people." He thinks about that in every situation.

"Nine out of 10 times when people call a police officer is when they need the most help in life. They are at their lowest point. You need to be ready to respond to the individual and diffuse a situation before it gets worse."

Good Samaritans among us

Since Thomas joined the District's Patrol in June 2019, he's witnessed good Samaritans who don't hesitate to help others. Thomas approached a stalled vehicle on a Westpark Tollway frontage road to offer the driver tow truck assistance. The driver insisted one not be called. Congestion started to build. Thomas put on his lights, stayed with the driver, carefully managing his anxiety. "I put myself in his shoes. His car was old and maybe he couldn't afford a tow." Out of nowhere, a random motorist arrives. He opens the car's hood and determines the battery needs a charge. After the jump start, the stranded man drove away before congestion worsened.

In another instance, an idle vehicle was blocking traffic on Westheimer. As Thomas was directing traffic around the vehicle, another man came to the driver's aid. They began pushing the car but struggled. Thomas then joined the two men. "We didn't just get the car out of the way, we pushed it for what seemed like miles back to the owner's apartment complex. It was quite a workout!"

Countering media perceptions with community presence

Thomas sees the media missing opportunities to share real stories about what officers do and experience. Despite this trend, he believes the best thing is for officers to be present in the community.

"Building connections in the community goes a long way," said Thomas. When people view police officers as a resource it provides reassurance about their feelings toward safety and security. "I tell people to always be alert and have good situational awareness. Even if it's just locking your car, the smallest things can help reduce criminal activity," he said.

Technology impact

Body cameras are a significant technology his uncles didn't have. Officers also face a public with mobile camera phones. Even a simple act of kindness can become problematic. As Thomas gave bottled water to a homeless man, another man far away was filming it on his phone. "Aren't you going to arrest him or beat him up," yelled the man, intent on inciting a response. Despite the distraction, Thomas continued his focus on helping, which is what always guides his work.

Bánh Mì Bon

Former caterer takes traditional Vietnamese to restaurant kitchen, opens Bánh Mì Bon

Broth known as pho is one essence of Vietnamese cuisine. Bánh mì, the Vietnamese word for bread, is the other. Not just any type of bread but a baguette which is split lengthwise.

It's a signature menu item that is stuffed to please at newly opened Bánh Mì Bon at 10555 Westheimer Road. Specializing in baguettes and traditional Vietnamese dishes, Bánh Mì Bon owner Hien Huynh makes sandwiches filled with savory ingredients like grilled chicken, pork, beef and strips of carrots and greens. She says they can be enjoyed for breakfast, lunch and dinner because plain bánh mì is also eaten as a staple food.



Baguette Fill Up: Treat your tummy to a pork belly baguette, one of many sandwiches on Huyhn's menu.

While Huynh describes her menu, a first-time customer pays a compliment. “Pretty good and the prices are good. I was going to eat somewhere else but saw you were open,” he said. That makes Huynh smile. He just ate her shaking beef or Bò lúc lắc, the restaurant's most popular dish featuring a plate of vegetables and rice topped with grilled beef.

His feedback affirms her dream of bringing her traditional Vietnamese cooking to the public. A foray that began with a catering business five years ago, she recently made the jump to food service.

“Whether you like American food or something else, everybody appreciates good food and that’s what I wanted to serve,” said Huynh. Looking for a restaurant location, she learned about Westchase District from friends. “They told me to look here and it was the place to be,” she said.

Comfort break Vietnamese style

The Vietnamese version of comfort food is bowls of Vermicelli rice noodles in sauce. An appetite for the dish can be met with stir fry lemongrass pork and six dishes made to order where diners have a choice of charbroiled meat or sautéed shrimp. Influenced by the geography of the country, Huynh’s cooking reflects how Vietnamese cuisine is divided into three distinct regions including the North, Central, and the South.

Each region has unique local specialties which compete for your palate. Huynh hails from Long Xuyên, the provincial city and capital city of An Giang Province, in the Mekong Delta region of southwestern Vietnam.

A house special called Long Xuyên Rice pays homage to her native home. It’s a mound of rice sprinkled with diced meat and celery surrounded by sliced boiled eggs, more meat strips and sliced tomato.

For drinks, dining-in or on-the-go, Bánh Mì Bon has a variety of fruit juices with watermelon, orange and passion fruit which can be topped off with brown sugar, crystal bobas or tapioca bobas. Diners’ sweet cravings are satisfied with Vietnamese coffee, peach tea and honey oolong milk tea.



A Place for Traditional Dishes: Hien Huynh’s friends encouraged her to turn her catering operation into a restaurant in Westchase.

Bánh Mì Bon
10555Westheimer Rd. Suite G • 346-802-4794

Corporate Challenge Time Is Near

Outdoor fun fundraiser enters 23rd year with new sponsors

The 23rd annual Westchase District Corporate Challenge is on track to be one of the largest ever. The event – which will take place Friday, April 3 at Quillian Recreation Center – will see the return of title sponsor Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc. (LAN), a full-service consulting firm offering planning, engineering and program management services. LAN is involved in streetscape projects in Westchase District.



Lockwood, Andrews & Newnam, Inc.

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Top Sponsor: Lockwood, Andrews & Newman is the title sponsor for the 2020 Corporate Challenge.

This year’s event will field approximately 55 registered teams filled with hundreds of participants.

“This year marks our fourth year to

participate and we are proud to be the title sponsor,” said Ricky Gonzalez, senior project coordinator with Lockwood Andrews & Newnam. “Every year, Corporate Challenge gets bigger and that’s a testament to the excitement companies, organizations and their teams have about not only competing but raising important proceeds that benefit worthwhile organizations around the community.”

Gonzalez is also a volunteer board member of the Westchase District Community Fund, the 501 (c)(3) charitable arm of Westchase District. Corporate Challenge is the nonprofit’s largest fundraising event of the year. Since 1998, the event has raised more than \$280,000 for area charities, including the WDCF and the Quillian Center’s summer day camps.

“Reaching a high level of participation yearly means that we can involve more stakeholders from companies and organizations in our community and make a deeper impact with the funds raised during the Corporate Challenge,” said Gonzalez.

Competitive events

The competition features favorites like rugby, dodgeball, soccer, briefcase relay, basketball and kickball. Whether you're speedy and strong or just tagging along, a good time will be had by all, bonding and networking with other Westchase District business people while raising money for the Westchase District Community Fund. “There’s serious fun and ‘serious’ competition which is why the Corporate Challenge is the marquee event of the year,” said Sherry Fox, Westchase District’s vice president of communications.

“The enthusiasm is phenomenal. The activities that make Corporate Challenge popular are much like things that you can do every day around Westchase District. We’ve got trails, open spaces and recreational centers where people can stay active and fit. A lot of the teams who come from the District are in corporate and office

buildings with fitness amenities like gyms and workout centers. We get great feedback about how participants love the team building and problem-solving aspect while engaged in competitive fun.”

Aiming for a win, but all fun

While the event is billed as “No Serious Athletics, Just Serious Fun,” the friendly competition among some businesses can get intense.

“We typically meet and practice twice a week to prepare for the event by playing mock games similar to those that have been at the challenge in the past,” said Tianisha Adams, American InterContinental University (AIU). A long-time participant, the AIU team goes to Quillian Center for its preparation. “We want a strong showing which is why we practice weekly and draw consistent attendance. What’s great is that we always win by participating.”

Sponsor IronEdge shares that expectation too. “We love the local comraderie it brings, but we really don’t show up expecting to win,” said Haylee Feil, IronEdge marketing coordinator. “Our team name is ‘At Least We Tried.’ We’re an I.T. company for crying out loud,” said Feil with a laugh.

Thanks to all our major sponsors, who include: Binkley & Barfield; Camden; Cantina Laredo; DataVox; Frost Bank; The Goodman Corporation; Harvey Builders; Houston Marriott Westchase; Houston SaberCats; IronEdge Group; Primrose School of Westchase District; Quillian Center; Residences 2727; and SignatureCare ER.



Keeping an Eye on the Ball: 55 teams will compete this year.

Making The Most Of Summer

Camp Quillian, Grace missions and Kidventure keep kids engaged

Summer camps are time well spent. Many camps in the District will serve children ages 5-12 and teens ages 13-14. Registration will open soon so parents can begin planning a productive summer for their children to stay engaged. Camps focus on social skills, organization and learning new skills in addition to fun and games. Camp Quillian has provided summer camps for 60 years. Hosted at First United Methodist’s Quillian Center, camps will be offered from May 26 to August 21. Open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., there are half-day or full day options. Registration begins on April 15 at quilliancenter.org or by calling 713-781-9195 for more information. Weekly camp at Quillian starts at \$225.

“Many parents still work during the summer so they need a camp with flexible hours like Camp Quillian,” said Tom Gaden, Quillian Center director. Camp Quillian activities include swimming, arts and crafts, rock climbing, guest speakers, special events, ice cream socials, basketball, soccer, Vacation Bible School and more.



On a Meaningful Mission: Teens who go on Grace Presbyterian Church Middle and High School Missions this summer will help impoverished families or the elderly by cleaning or repairing homes.

Middle and high school summer mission trips

Another option for keeping older students busy is offered by Grace Presbyterian Church. Middle and High School students will be partnering with Blueprint Ministries in San Antonio, TX. Blueprint Ministries is a non-profit organization in urban San Antonio providing servant leadership training for youth and adults while restoring homes for



Summertime Growing and Learning: Camp Quillian has programs for children ages 5-12 and teens ages 13-14.

elderly, disabled and low-income residents. The main goal of the repairs is to make homes warmer, safer and drier. The projects can consist of anything from roof repair, floor repair and drywall repair to painting, wheelchair ramp construction and bathroom updates. Registration is offered at gpch.org/students-missions. Dates for the Middle School Summer Mission Trip are June 21-26 and July 19-24 for the High School Summer Mission Trip. “We will share Christ’s extravagant love, hope, and grace by serving the San Antonio community,” said Phil Warman, director of student ministries at Grace. Grace also hosts Vacation Bible School June 8-11 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. each day for kids in Pre-K to rising sixth grade.

Ascension Episcopal School hosts Kidventure’s Camp Ascension

Ascension Episcopal School is excited to be hosting Kidventure’s Camp Ascension again this summer. Kidventure is an award-winning camp program rooted in adventure, learning and growth. Camp Ascension will provide 10 weeks of athletic and educational opportunities in an inspiring camp setting for kids from three years old to 5th grade. Camps begin May 26. Each camp week is Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. with an option for extended care between 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. Activities include athletics, rock climbing, art, science, archery tag, field trips, splash day, team building and more. General registration is open at aeshouston.org or call Kidventure at 713-960-8989. Ascension Episcopal School is located at 2525 Seagler Rd.

ALDI Arrives In Westchase

Discount grocer adds variety to retail

You’ll find ALDI in cities, suburbs and rural areas. And, now you’ll also find it in Westchase District. One of the newest ALDI stores in Houston opened at 9525 Westheimer Road in October.



Waiting for ALDI: Customers continually tell store manager Santiago Font that ALDI could not have arrived soon enough.

ALDI’s entry increases grocery options in Westchase District. Randalls and Kroger are within a mile of the store on Westheimer. Whole Foods Market is 2.4 miles away. At 18,900 square-feet of space in Tanglewilde Center, the ALDI Westchase location is one of the latest in the brand’s planned expansion to 2,500 stores nationwide in the next two years.

Location factors: District is place to be

Interest for an ALDI was high prior to its opening in the former Ace Hardware. ALDI store manager Santiago Font heard from customers who would search for the nearest locations and couldn’t find any nearby. According to ALDI Rosenburg Division Vice President Karla Waddleton, the company looks at many factors when choosing a store location. “We want the best sites that are closest to our shoppers and can support a high daily traffic volume. As the demand for ALDI grows, so do our

real estate options. Bottom line, we want to be conveniently located for our shoppers,” she said. The area’s thriving population in multifamily apartments and single-family homes met their criteria. “Shoppers love our prices and concept. The response has been everything that we expected,” said Font.

A different kind of grocery store

ALDI stores are smaller than their competitors which enables it to offer lower prices due to fewer employees and simple store layouts. Its approach is operational efficiency. There are no butchers serving the meat section which carries fresh pork, chicken and beef. The stores also feature open ceilings, natural lighting and environmentally-friendly building materials. In an age of online retailers like Amazon, ALDI’s growth parallels how customers have evolved from larger traditional supermarkets that sell more to easier, affordable finds that offer convenience. Even though the industry sees ALDI as a discount grocer, it sometimes carries unexpected products like home furnishings

such as ottomans, trim pillows and chairs. “Our stores also provide a consistent, streamlined and efficient shopping experience,” said Waddleton. The typical ALDI store is about 12,000 square feet of retail space and only four or five aisles, which makes them simpler and easier to navigate than traditional supermarkets.

“As part of our remodel initiative, we’ve added even more refrigeration space to accommodate 40 percent more fresh food in stores. At our core, we are different by design. We are private-label trailblazers and have set the industry standard for quality and affordability. Our priority focus is saving people money on the food and products they want most, and we do this by offering shoppers a curated selection of ALDI-exclusive brands.”

Private label value finds

Earth Grown line, which started as an ALDI Find, was recently launched and the products flew off the shelves. “We always listen to our customers’ feedback and adapt quickly to bring new products to market. In as little as seven months from its debut as an ALDI Find, we added Earth Grown to our everyday selection. This is the fastest we’ve ever brought a line of products to market,” explained Waddleton. Nonetheless, ALDI’s presence brings innovation in the grocery store space in the District, making the area’s 4.2 square miles of shopping variety one of Houston’s best. “People want grocery shopping to be easy so they can get on with their lives. We’ve removed the guesswork from shopping. People appreciate how our simple, streamlined experience can provide what they need on their first, and only, shopping trip,” said Waddleton. “Plus, we’ve found there’s a thrill to finding a great deal. Our shoppers love bragging to friends about an award-winning wine or a trendy item like low-calorie, protein-rich ice cream that they found for a low price.”



New Grocer on the Block: One of Houston’s newest ALDI stores opened in a former Ace Hardware location.

ALDI
9525 Westheimer Road • 833-478-1032

(Continued from Page 1)



See This: *The artwork in Harvey Builders’ new office features Harvey-built buildings from around the country. The front desk is a poured concrete slab, accented by wood.*

They can all be reserved through a central scheduling system. All feature magnetic, dry-erase boards, plus the latest technology, including giant flat screen monitors, Bluetooth technology and all carry names that are distinctly Houstonian: Skyline, Independence, Thirty-Four (in homage to Earl Campbell, Hakeem Olajuwon and Nolan Ryan.) Utilizing movable walls, the rooms can be combined to accommodate groups of up to 58. Another Westchase District business – DataVox – designed and installed next generation technology features.

Both businesses installed brand new sit/stand desks for all employees. In fact, very little furniture was moved from their previous locations.

“I’m not going to build beautiful new offices and bring all that old furniture and equipment,” said Russ. EHRA did move some vintage drafting tables, because you just can’t buy them anymore, according to Russ.

Time to transform

Harvey Builders seized on the availability of the former Randalls building and made an off-market bid on the property. They’d spent 32 years in their previous location, continuously expanding from their original 4,000-square-foot lease.

Leadership strategically planned the build-out of the 57,500-square-foot building. Updating the 1978 building was key. Like EHRA, they created conference rooms that, through the use of movable walls, can accommodate up to 200 chairs. “We have a hefty training program. It’s nice to be able to offer that in-house,” said Hall. The conference rooms feature lots of natural light, open ceilings and are anchored by garage doors, giving them an urban, contemporary feel. When the garage doors are raised, the space flows into the lobby and kitchen area, giving Harvey a large open space for trainings or social gatherings. Another eight small conference rooms exist throughout the building.

Both employers added fitness areas to their respective buildings. And while EHRA employees can take advantage of concessionaire-provided prepared foods, Harvey employees can stroll next door to Lockton Place’s deli.

Harvey’s Marketing Coordinator Megan Tatsch says the new building provides a dynamic, motivating environment. “It’s nice to come to a space that you like. A lot of thought went into creating this environment and my colleagues and I are very happy here,” said Tatsch.

“We did a lot of this for retention and recruitment,” said Russ. “Our competitors have congratulated us on this move. They said it makes it harder for them to recruit.”

While EHRA plans to grow into its building, Harvey Builders has 15,000 square feet of space available for lease on the ground floor. So act quickly if your business would like to take advantage of a this unique opportunity to move into brand new space, courtesy of “Extreme Makeover: Office Edition.”



A Pleasing Atmosphere: *EHRA’s Jim Russ appreciates the skylights that bring natural light into the building’s second floor plaza.*

Neighborhood News

The Westchase District Advisory Board presented **Community Impact Awards** in January to a new set of honorees. 2019 awards were presented to Gwyn Buzzini, a Walnut Bend resident and elementary school volunteer; Beverly Okosun, Quillian Center afterschool director and programs manager; and Gerry Ross, a semi-retired engineering executive and ESL volunteer with Literacy Advance.



Next time you’re on Richmond Avenue heading west bound, check out the visual treats that mural artist **Larry Crawford** has created. For this series, he departs from nature scenes, painting captivating rectilinear and geometric patterns on the retaining walls adjacent to METRO bus stops. Moreover, the work at Seagler Drive is a mind puzzle, even baffling the artist. Crawford muses about how many unique squares that audiences will see. “It’s tricky and I wouldn’t even know,” said Crawford. A visual reminder of the digital age’s emergence depicts computer circuitry on his third work at 10350 Richmond Ave. Check out Crawford’s public art on trails, buildings and now a popular roadway.

There are many ways to put your **Westchase District** pride on display. In February, the District debuted handsome new flags to replace the previous design. The flags are a perfect addition to join Texas state and American Flags atop masts on building lawns and apartment communities. Need a new flag for your property? Contact Westchase District at 713-780-9434 to receive yours today.



Suit up in your favorite superhero costume for **West Houston Assistance Ministries’ (WHAM)** second annual Spring Dash. This 5K/1K fun run is on May 9 at 7:30 a.m. at METRO’s Westchase Park & Ride, 11050 Harwin Dr. Channel your Wonder Woman, Iron Man or Captain America prowess to help WHAM fight poverty and hunger. Instead of battling villains, you can run to make a difference in the lives of others in this timed, fun run/walk. Sponsorships range from \$500 to \$7,500. The Spring Dash will feature sponsor booths, a moonwalk, snow cones, face painting, raffles, and more! Kids and pets welcome. Go to whamministries.org for more info.



Capes Away: *Superheroes will unite for the WHAM Spring Dash on May 9.*

Want more neighborhood news?

Then subscribe to receive *The Wire*, our e-newsletter. Sent twice monthly, it takes just 90 seconds to read five short blurbs and be up-to-date on the latest in Westchase District. Sign up today at westchasedistrict.com/subscribe.