



## *Thankfulness*



As we prepare for the holidays and get ready to close out 2015, we look forward to a new year with new expectations, new goals, new dreams. We must, however, first be thankful for all the gifts we have received throughout the past year.

To all the wonderful people who have supported the programs of the Achievement Center of Texas, and to all the organizations, civic groups, clubs, contract agencies, business partners, parents, staff, friends, our generous donors, and to our very dedicated Board of Directors, we thank you. It is your love and support that lifts us up so that we can provide the best services for our amazing students.

Also, we are thankful for those who care about our families. Some years ago, Benchmark Mortgage developed a program called the Benchmark Loving Cup Fund. These wonderful people donate \$1 for every mortgage they write nationwide to help our families afford the tuition to the Achievement Center. The City of Garland supports Garland residents who have children or adult family members with special needs attending the Achievement Center with a HUD grant to subsidize the tuition for families of low income. The Linda Rasmussen family contributes to the Linda Rasmussen Family Outreach Fund to help ACT families in crisis. We are thankful for the Town North Optimist Club who has contributed funds for numerous large projects including the annual Breakfast with Santa for the last 12 years and to Ecolab who has given us grants for much needed equipment, appliances and this year a beautiful patio for our Sunshine Class.

So much love and generosity helps to make us the excellent program we are today, serving approximately 135 students daily, Monday through Friday. This year, on October 12th, we celebrated our 38th year of serving children and adults with special needs in Garland. We could not have accomplished all we have without the love, compassion, and generosity of all who gave financial support, volunteer time, and your continuous love and prayers.

Most of all, we thank our wonderful God who loves and protects us and helps us help his very special children and adults at ACT to be all they can be. We create lots of smiles and warm fuzzies.

**Achievement Center of Texas**

**2950 North Shiloh Road**

**Garland, Texas 75044**

**972 414-7700**

## *Thank You*



### David Parrish .

David and his wife Sharon worked for the Environmental Protection Agency in Dallas prior to retirement. They have been active participants on the board of directors as well as faithful volunteers for the Achievement Center for many years. They are the parents of an ACT student Matthew Parrish who went to be with the Lord in June of 2010 after a long struggle with Muscular Dystrophy. A painting of Matthew depicting his love of music (especially the drums) is on the wall in the multi purpose room at ACT.

In 2012 David and Sharon were honored with our Champions Who Care Award for their service to people



## Hanging Around the President's Corner

*“When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.”*

### Willie Nelson

In the United States the Holiday season begins with Thanksgiving Day. On the fourth Thursday of November we remember those things in our lives for which we are most grateful. One of the greatest blessings for the ACT family is the loving staff that serves our students all year long. So, this Holiday season, take a moment to express your gratitude to Marilynne, Andrew, Margie, Rose, Jill, Shonta, Noel and all of the very dedicated staff for a job well done this year.

What else are we thankful for? First, a successful ACTion Walk, on October 24, despite the rain, we collected over \$16,000 for ACT. This helped to get our fund raising efforts back on track. Then looking back to the Spring, we had a great Gala where we honored the Garland Cultural Arts Commission and John Bramblitt, internationally recognized blind artist and his wife Jacqi Serie for their contribution to bringing the arts to people with disabilities. Next, we completed a challenging fiscal year which presented unexpected costs. Most notable was replacing a large broken air conditioning unit in mid-summer. and repairing another. Then we had a major water leak which required walls to be taken out and repaired. Yet we managed to make ends meet, thanks to the many partners who support ACT. Read this newsletter for more details on these topics.

I am grateful for feedback from our families, which provides us with the opportunity to address your issues and make ACT a better place for all of our students. If you have a concern, please, let us know via the suggestion shoebox in the ACT Front Office or email us at [act.parent@tx.rr.com](mailto:act.parent@tx.rr.com).

Thanks for your time, enjoy this newsletter, and join me in counting our blessings. I will see you at *Breakfast with Santa* on Saturday, December 12, right here at the Achievement Center of Texas.

David Parrish, President  
Board of Directors  
Achievement Center of Texas  
Special Needs ... Our Specialty!

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## **5k ACTION WALK/RUN**

### **Our Ghoulishly SpooktACTular 5K ACTION Walk**

**On October 24th the Achievement Center held its very successful 5k Walk/Run at Holford Park on Shiloh and Homestead in Garland. Though it rained the day before and early that morning, the rain subsided and the walk was not delayed or hampered in any way.**

The 5k walk/run was very successful and brought in almost \$17,000. God was good to hold the rain back for us for the entire walk and the festivities afterwards. We had balloons, hot dogs, buns, chips, candy and drinks after the race. We had music provided by Randy Davis' WOW Entertainment, and our own (past employee) Bobby Berger played some tunes on the guitar and sang. We gave away trophies for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> place runners, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place walkers and a plaque for the team raising the most money. That team was: TeamJeff coming in at over \$14,000. We had the following teams: TeamJeff, Team Linda, Matthew's Raiders, Roger's Howl Rock Stars, RKC Promo Express and Team Sommerman & Quesada LLP.



Running for Team Jeff, clad in his SMU duds and rain gear, Political Science Professor, Dr. Joseph Kobyłka (pictured at bottom right) actually ran 5 miles (not just 5k which is 3.1 miles) and raised over \$14,000. Dr. Kobyłka's son Jeffery has Down syndrome and has been a student at the Achievement Center of Texas for many years. Thank you Dr. Kobyłka and all the teams who participated in this years ACTION Walk.

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS:



**December 2nd**, the Achievement Center will co-sponsor the Sensory Friendly Tree Lighting event with the City of Garland on the downtown square at 6th and Main Streets at 6:30 p.m. This event is designed to accommodate individuals who are sensitive to loud noise and bright lights. There will be activities on the square and a visit from Santa before the tree lighting.

**December 12th**, the Town North Optimist Club will hold our annual Christmas party, Breakfast with Santa, cooking up some delicious pancakes, sausages, coffee and juice and a visit from Santa around our beautiful Christmas tree. Students and their families will enjoy music and entertainment.

**To Be Announced:** In January, the Achievement Center will hold a Volunteer and Donor Appreciation Dinner at the center. Check our website for date and time.



**March 19th**, the Achievement Center's Special Arts Festival will be held at the Springcreek Church 2660 Beltline Road, Garland, 75044 at 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The focus is to bring in artists and performers to inspire people to find self expression through the arts. There will be 30 live stage performances and 56 art exhibition and activity tables.

**April 30th**, the Achievement Center will hold its Annual Spring Gala at the Renaissance Hotel in Richardson on Central Expressway just north of Campbell Road at 6:30 p.m.. The event will include dinner and dancing and the amazing sound of Ken Savage and the Best Kept Secret. The theme will be Mardi gras. There will be a small casino by the Dalmatian Rescue of North Texas, and silent and live auctions. A fun night for all. This is our major fundraiser of the year.



**August 12th**, Student talent show at ACT.

**To Be Announced:** In October we will hold our Annual ACTION Walk.

Your participation and support is greatly appreciated as we continue to provide the best services and programs for our wonderful students at the Achievement Center of Texas.

Hope to see you at our events!

## THE MANY WAYS YOU CAN HELP

Did you know that the Achievement Center has been serving people with special needs for over 38 years. We serve students with multiple disabilities, students who require feeding, diapering, students who have behavior disorders, students who require medication administration and other health related services such as tube feeding and breathing treatments. We provide training in life skills which includes an outside garden where students grow vegetables, cooking, skills in cleaning, making a bed, setting a table, using a washer, dryer, dishwasher and microwave. We provide sensory motor training, computer and library activities, health and fitness and much more. Our newest program is the addition of Milo a robot that teaches social skills. All of this is costly. You can help. Here is how:

**Regular Giving:** Include ACT in your regular giving program. Some schools require parents to give, we don't.

**North Texas Giving Day.** Each year in September is **North Texas Giving Day**. We would like all our parents to go to [www.Actgivingday.org](http://www.Actgivingday.org) and donate at least \$25. We may get some matching funds or prizes.

**Amazon Smile:** Do you shop on Amazon. If you do, shop through **AmazonSmile** and register the Achievement Center of Texas as your charity. They will give a small percentage of your purchase to ACT. There is no cost to you. You can sign up to support the Achievement Center at: [www.amazon Smile.com](http://www.amazon Smile.com).

**Store Rewards Cards:** Do you shop at Tom Thumb? Kroger? Register your **Tom Thumb or Kroger** card to give a portion of the amount of your purchase to Achievement Center of Texas. Again, there is no cost to you.

**Annual Spring Gala:** Each Spring, ACT has an amazing **Annual Spring Gala**. Tickets are \$125 and includes entertainment, a gourmet meal, a casino, activities and our Champions Who Care Awards Ceremony honoring those who have given of their time, expertise, or financial support to help people with disabilities. Don't have the \$125? Ask our Chair person, Roberta Clark about a parent discount. Not able to attend? You can donate items for the silent auction. (They must be new not used items) unless they are sports memorabilia. You can make up a basket filled with theme items like a "baby basket" with new items for a newborn or a "kitchen basket" with items for a newlywed or a piece of furniture for a new home owner . Sports gear is a great seller too. A wine basket filled with gourmet wine always brings in a good price. Memorabilia always sells very well. Do you know a celebrity who can provide a signed football, boxing gloves, baseball, hockey puck? Don't know someone, write a letter to one. They usually will send you something. There is always something for someone to help with for the gala. This is our #1 fund raiser. This event pays for a lot of the special things ACT does for the students, i.e. tickets for special events, trips to the circus or Disney on Ice, transportation, equipment, etc.

**Employee Campaigns:** Do you work for the Federal Government or the State of Texas or City of Dallas, choose the Achievement Center when making your employee contribution. Here are our numbers:

**Combined Federal Campaign: (CFC) 85765,**

**State Employee Contribution: (SECC) 283091,**

**City of Dallas: (LECC) 85765.**

**Annual 5K Walk** – This event has several ways you can help. You can get people to sponsor you as you walk 3.1 miles. Show the City of Garland that you support your center by walking or running in the race. You can support another walker with a sponsorship. You can sponsor the event or get your company to sponsor the event.

**Ebay Giving Works** – Favorite us on eBay. Sellers on eBay can contribute a portion of their proceeds and buyers can find stuff to buy.

**Wishlist**—We post a wish list on our website. Please consider reviewing the wish list and donating items to keep our costs down. As needs occur we will list them on the website.

**Old Cars**— DO YOU HAVE AN OLD CAR, VAN OR TRUCK TO DONATE, CALL CHARITY MOTORS AT (972)CHARITY or online at <http://www.charitymotors.org> and specify you want your donation to go to the Achievement Center of Texas. You can still claim Fair Market Blue Book Value for your donation on your taxes; the donation is 100% tax deductible and pick up is free. And great news, the Achievement Center receives the amount the car, van or truck is sold for less a small percentage that pays for this service.

**Volunteers needed for the Special Arts Festival, the Gala, the ACTION Walk, etc.**

**Like us on Facebook!**

***"It is our unlimited power to care and to love that makes the biggest difference in the quality of our lives."***

***Anthony Robbins***