

City Connections FY20-21 Report

City of Houston - Council District H

The Center for Afterschool, Summer, and Enrichment for Kids (CASE for Kids), a division of Harris County Department of Education (HCDE), collaborated with the office of council Member Karla Cisneros to fund ten (10) nonprofit organizations to provide out-of-school time (OST) programs through the **City Connections** grant program. Diverse services were provided to 583 Pre-K to 12 students from November 6, 2020, to April 30, 2021. The programs provided engaging academic and enrichment activities in a safe and inclusive learning environment after school.

Some of the activities offered to youth during **City Connections** project term included physical fitness, STEM programming, dance, music, and reading and language skills. Grantees utilized program quality improvement funds to enhance their programming with supplies & materials, organizational training, and conferences related to current OST topics. Grantees reported a few challenges during the project period, such as scheduling issues, virtual program attendance during pandemic conditions. Overall, nonprofit organizations were successful in keeping kids safe, engaged and inspired to learn after school.

Summary of Funded Projects for City Connections- District H

Organization	Project Sites	Awarded Amount	Students Served
Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans (AAMA)	George I. Sanchez Charter School-North	\$5,000	36
American Festival for the Arts	American Festival for the Arts	\$5,000	114
Color of Life Resource and Activity Center	Girl Scouts	\$5,000	30
Comp-U-Dopt	Comp-U-Dopt	\$10,000	11
FotoFest International	Yale Village Apartments Booker T. Washington High School	\$5,000	29
Greater Emmanuel Family Worship Center	Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic School	\$5,000	60
Houston Youth Symphony	Jefferson Elementary School Looscan Elementary School C. Martinez Elementary School Sherman Elementary School	\$5,000	51

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Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts (MECA)	MECA at Dow School MECA at TBH Center	\$5,000	117
STEM Urban Perspective	Booker T. Washington High School	\$5,000	15
Young Audience of Houston	Wesley Community Center Texas Serenity Academy	\$5,000	85
	Wesley Community Center	\$5,000	35

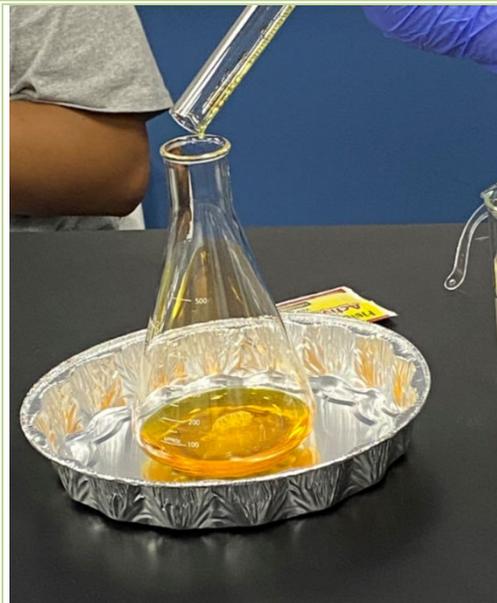
Fiscal Year 2021 District H Total		\$60,000	
Actual Amount Spent by Grantees	AAMA did not utilize all grant funds.	\$59,945.33	583

Program Highlights

CASE for Kids requires **City Connections** grantees to submit a final report on funded project activities. The information below summarizes the out-of-school time programming provided by each grantee.

Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans (AAMA)

AAMA offered Book Club, Science Club, and Wolves for Success (multiple activities: games, sports, NHS, arts/crafts etc.) Once Governor Abbott lifted the executive order and reopened the state, our students were able to come to campus and interact safely with their peers outside of their regular classes. This allowed students to feel “normal” again. Many students were overjoyed and asked to attend extra days because they we enjoyed being a part of extracurricular activities. Overall, we believe the programs were successful and the students enjoyed them. The main challenge was Covid-19. Unfortunately, with an executive order in place, it was hard to get students on campus for extracurricular activities due to so many restrictions. Our main concern is always our students’ and faculty’s safety.



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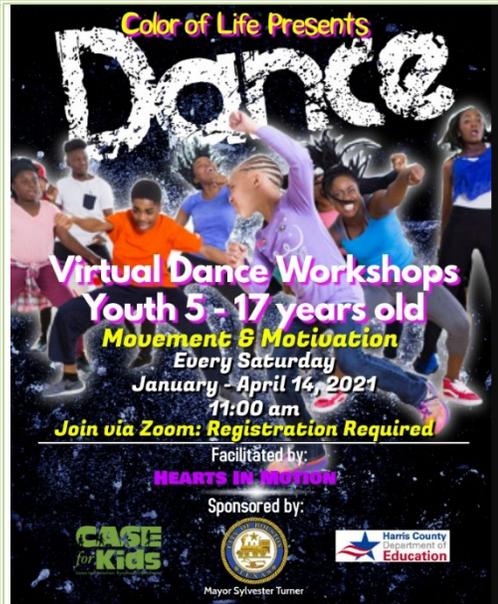
American Festival for the Arts

AFA's Year-Round Curriculum comprised of Houston Girls Chorus, Chamber Music Academy, and Composer Institute provided unique learning opportunities for young musicians. Houston Girls Chorus, a small chamber ensemble of 16 young women, met in person on Sunday afternoons in the fall wearing masks specifically designed for singers. Chamber Music Academy enrolled 35 and 39 students in the fall and spring respectively, that met in small ensembles in person on Saturdays/Sundays focusing on musical technique. The Composer Institute consisted of an in-person songwriting class of eight students on Saturday mornings, as well as eight students who received one-on-one virtual instruction and mentorship with a local or national composer. HGC and CMA culminated in outdoor socially distanced recitals at AFA's offices in District H. The programs provided a safe environment for music instruction and camaraderie and maintained enrollment during the pandemic. The main challenge was rethinking programming during COVID-19.



Color of Life

Color of Life provided Virtual Dance- Youth learned different styles of dance which included Hip Hop, Modern dance, and Jazz. The program was very successful! The youth were always excited and engaged. Our challenge was that Yes Prep was not able to participate as originally intended for this grant term. We had to find a youth group with District H that we could serve. Fortunately, we were able to partner with two dynamic Girl Scout Troops within District H.



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Comp-U-Dopt

This program was our first attempt at hybrid or virtual learning with our core programs during the pandemic. We had challenges recruiting any high school students to our virtual programming as many cited "Zoom fatigue" and a lack of desire to continue working in a virtual space. We decided to shift our focus in the spring to at-home kits and programs for elementary students instead. This yielded several parents who would come every two weeks to our site to pick up supplies for programming. Students completed at home STEM kits in coding, virtual reality, and programming.



FotoFest International

Students were led through creative writing lessons and photographic activities through the Literacy Through Photography new virtual learning platform, LTP Online (Nearpod). Students were issued cameras and were able to follow along with guided activities from the Teaching Artist. Some student projects will be displayed in the LTP Student Exhibition in May 2021. Students enjoyed participation in the program even through the virtual platform. Inconsistent enrollment in the program posed challenges to the class size and instruction time.

Literacy Through Photography was able to introduce their online learning platform to sites in the district as a way to continue engagement previously established during in person learning. The virtual tool offered flexibility for both our program and sites as we strive to meet the challenge of providing a quality learning environment within the time of a pandemic.



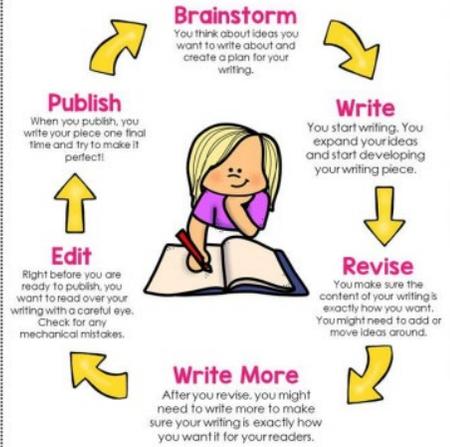
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Greater Emmanuel Family Worship Center

The following goals were completed: 1. Teachers requested programming based on the academic needs of their students; and customized programming was offered to meet those specific needs. 2. Applied hands on and inquiry-based challenges that support overall academic growth and creative writing. 3. Inspired interest in creative writing and contributed to closing the Achievement Gap by fostering a bias-free, fun learning environment. 4. Engaged students in challenges and activities that require working individually and as a team. 5. Provided real-life examples to build a conceptual understanding. 6. Forged partnerships with organizations, teachers, parents, and community leaders to enhance opportunities for all students. 7. Introduced students and families to college and career resources/support. 8. Incorporated Social Emotional Learning Skills. 9.. Inspired students by offering complimentary family learning experiences to NASA Space Center and Heights Kids Music Day.

The Writing Process

Strong writers will use the writing process to help them become stronger writers and improve their writing. Writing is a process. Strong writers need to take time to think, plan, write, reread, and write some more.



Houston Youth Symphony

HYS Coda Music Program provided virtual group string instruction to students after-school at Looscan, Sherman, Jefferson and C. Martinez Elementary schools. Students spent 75 minutes twice/week working on posture, bow hold, left hand shape, rhythm, note reading and instrument care. Coda staff worked with schools to distribute instruments and music at no charge to the school/families. In December, students submitted recordings of themselves playing "Mary's Boy Child" which were digitally woven into an ensemble holiday performance. Despite many kids never having had an in-person lesson, they made quick progress and the students who participated rarely missed a class and achieved practice goals. Challenges included lack of technology and internet at home; students returning to in-person school and having to return school-provided computers; parents returning to work and unable to continue helping; and students moving out of the school zone due to damaged homes caused by the winter storm.



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Other programs funded by CASE for Kids in District H

Project/Program	Campus/Site/Organization
Partnership	Lyons Elementary
Partnership	MECA – Dow School

For additional information regarding the content in this report, contact HCDE - CASE for Kids staff:

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About CASE for Kids:

As an afterschool intermediary, the Center for Afterschool, Summer and Enrichment for Kids, or CASE for Kids, provides resources, training and funding for students in grades pre-k through 12 in afterschool programs in schools, childcare facilities and community centers. Services benefit approximately 12,000 kids in greater Harris County. CASE for Kids programs happens before and after school, on weekends and during the summer. As a branch of Harris County Department of Education, the division was founded in 1999 to keep kids safe, help working families, and improve academic achievement. For more information, visit www.afterschoolzone.org. For additional information about HCDE services, please visit our website at www.hcde-texas.org.