



**AAMA**

**Inspiring Latinos  
through education**

*Community Report*



*“Education empowers children to break the debilitating cycle of poverty and illiteracy. AAMA helps its students, both children and adults who often come from the lowest socio-economic areas in our community, to reach their full potential for a better tomorrow.”*

*- Walter E. Johnson  
Chairman of the Board,  
Company and Bank Director  
Amegy Bank N.A.*

*AAMA is an amazingly effective organization. They care about the whole person's success in life and work. The respect for individuals and their dedicated faculty and staff provide the energy and commitment that develops the people they serve. If you want to put your money and your time where it will go right to the people who need it this is the organization. This is a grassroots way to help the community and build capable citizens for the future.*

*- Dr. Karen Hofmeister  
Chair, Capital Campaign*

*“Texas Children's Hospital is excited to partner with such a proven community advocate as AAMA. We are pleased to offer accessible, affordable health care to children of the community on the AAMA campus. Opening our fourth Project Medical Home in a community long supported by AAMA assures support for our mission of creating a community of healthy children.”*

*- Mark Wallace  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Texas Children's Hospital*



**T**he mission of AAMA is to advance the lives of at-risk youth and families through an array of innovative programs that provide education, healthcare, human services, and community development initiatives to strengthen families and neighborhoods.

*Rosi Hernández, Vice-President, Market Development, Houston Astros,  
Dr. Karen Hofmeister, Author and AAMA Capital Campaign Committee Chair  
and Laura Jaramillo, Chair, AAMA Board of Directors.*



# Education



## *Charter Schools*

AAMA believes that by giving students a more personal learning environment, along with the necessary support services, at-risk students will have the best opportunity to learn and succeed. This philosophy, coupled with the passionate and dedicated staff, is responsible for the school's 30-year legacy of turning would-be dropouts into high school graduates and promising leaders.

Smaller classes, block scheduling, intensive tutoring, night school and an optional English as a Second Language program, are all part of the school's innovative academic plan. The Early College Program allows students to take college-level coursework leading to concurrent high school graduation and an Associate's Degree through Houston Community College.

Support services are designed to remove the most prevalent barriers at-risk students face, including pregnancy, parenting, behavioral challenges and family issues.

Free on-site daycare services, a pre-kindergarten program and parenting courses are available to pregnant and parenting students.

Emotional and behavioral challenges are addressed through extensive counseling, home visits to engage students and parents, and practical, no-nonsense policies such as a strict dress and behavior code, a proactive attendance program and strong expectations outlined in a contract signed by students and parents.

Students who are homeless, have been placed in a foster home or referred to protective services, find caring relationships via extensive counseling and a free on-site health clinic.

AAMA's teachers and administrators share a deep empathy for at-risk youth and a commitment to improving students' educational and career

opportunities. Teachers are credentialed in their fields – more than 50 percent have Master's degrees – and have expertise working with academically challenged students.

The unique combination of a rigorous academic curriculum, comprehensive social support services and an empathetic staff is yielding extraordinary results, especially in light of the serious academic deficiencies most students bring to AAMA.

AAMA's 11th grade students posted some of the highest gains in Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) scores of any Houston area school, including a 39-point increase in Science and 31-point increase in Math. Additionally, 10th grade reading scores exceeded the statewide average for all Hispanics.

## *Adult Literacy*

AAMA's Adult Education Program provides challenging courses and flexible schedules for working adults and those who wish to enter the work force. Founded in 1987, it is one of the largest adult education programs in Texas, with more than 3,000 students enrolled in day and evening classes at three Houston-area locations:

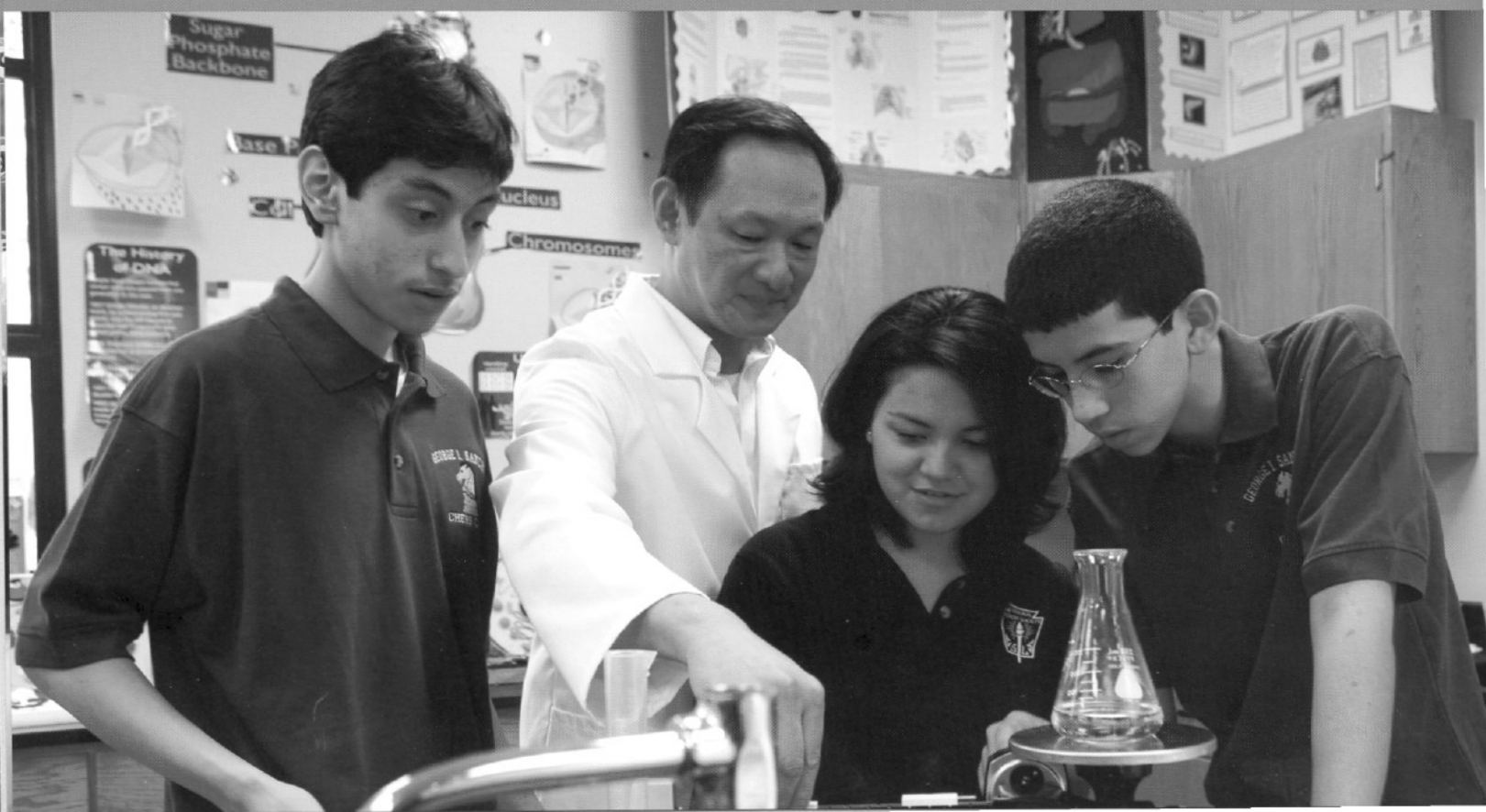
- 6001 Gulf Freeway
- 705 Cavalcade, in partnership with the M.D. Anderson YMCA
- 2314 Cochran, in partnership with the El Buen Pastor Church

AAMA's Adult Education partners include AmeriCorps, Houston Community College System, Houston READ Commission, Monterrey Tec University, National Council of La Raza, Texas A&M University and Texas Workforce Commission.

# Education

Classes are free and include the following:

- ESL (English as a Second Language) offered in six progressive levels;
- ABE (Adult Basic Education) with basic instruction in math, reading and writing;
- GED (General Educational Development) courses in English and Spanish which prepare students for the GED test, the equivalent of a high school diploma;
- Computer Literacy courses which prepare students for a professional work atmosphere;
- Citizenship classes which prepare students for the oral and written required U.S. Citizenship tests; and
- The Texas Engineering Extension Service of Texas A&M University which offers graduates training in many areas.

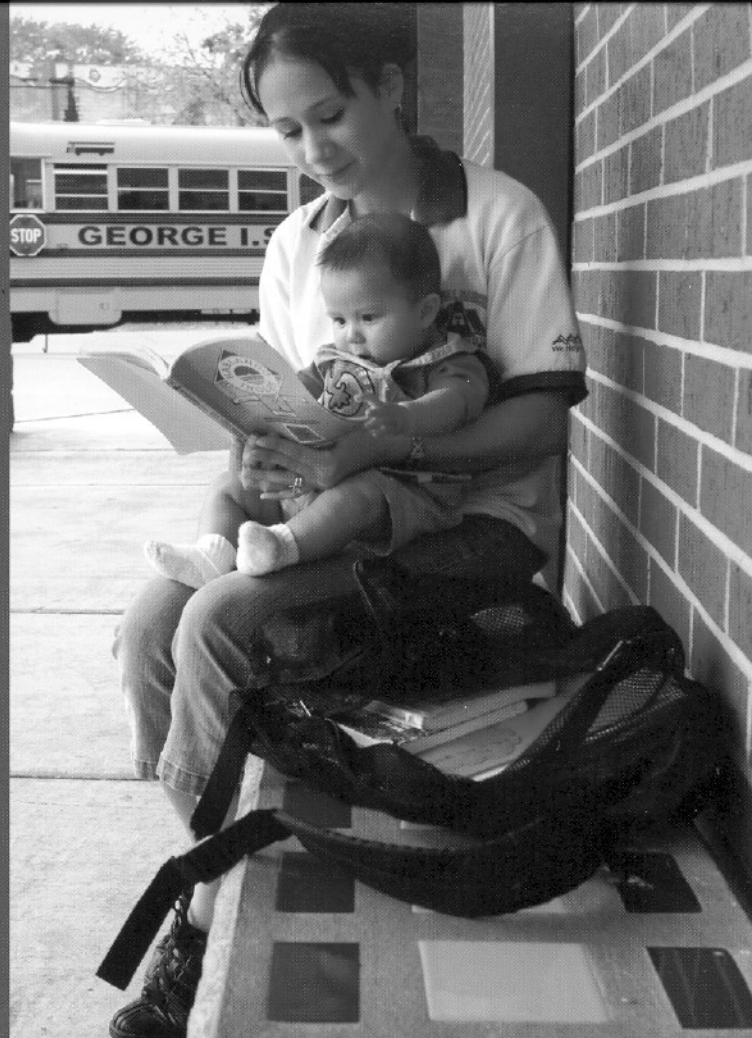


As it has for 35 years, AAMA continues to combat drug abuse, gangs, and juvenile crime. AAMA has developed a variety of successful residential and out-patient treatment and prevention programs in Houston, San Antonio and South Texas.

AAMA is one of the largest providers of prevention and treatment programs in Hispanic communities, particularly along the Texas/Mexico border.

*AAMA House* – a supportive housing program providing shelter and case management to youth, ages 13-17. The program also provides instruction in life skills, relapse prevention, HIV prevention and job skills, as well as employment placement, family counseling, and assistance in the transition to permanent housing.

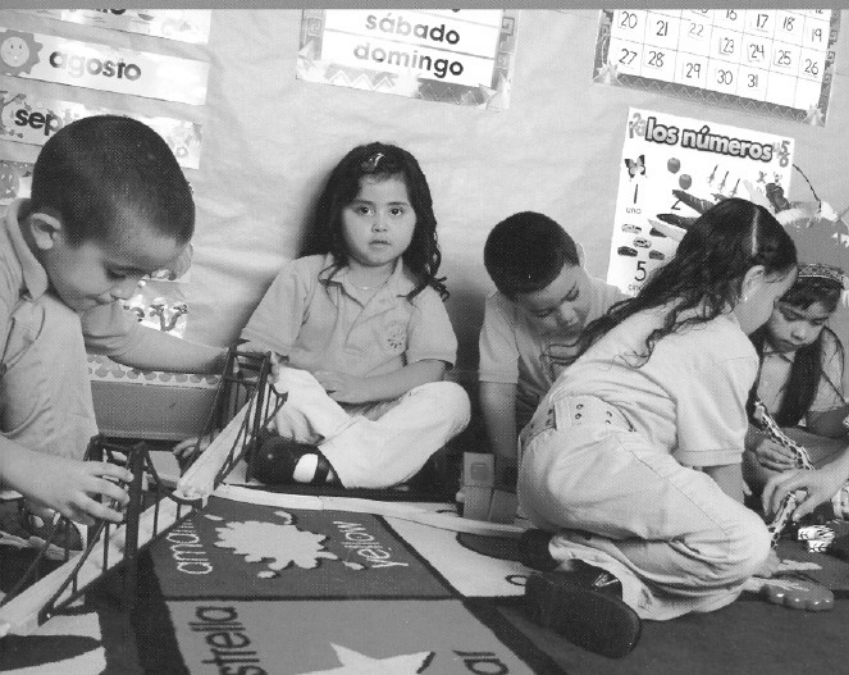
*Barrios Unidos* – an intensive intervention program offering services to youth in the barrios of Houston and San Antonio who are at risk for gang involvement, drug use, dropping out of school, and family difficulties. Highly structured activities introduce youth to positive associations to increase self-esteem.



# Human Services

*Casa Phoenix* – a residential substance abuse treatment program for boys ages 13-17. The program includes an outpatient counseling component that also serves as an aftercare program for teenagers who complete the residential treatment program.

*DiNosaur Program/El Program DiNo (Say No!)* – a community-based prevention service for children. The program's puppet shows tell the story of a dinosaur and his friends faced with the pressures of drug use, helping children learn to make positive choices at an early age.



*Minorities Action Program* – an outreach program that provides information and referrals for people who are particularly vulnerable to the spread of communicable diseases and may be unable to access community services due to language barriers.

*Project Tejas* – Outpatient Counseling services made available in both Spanish and English to men and women.



# Read Francisco's Story

**W**hen 21-year-old Francisco arrived in the United States from El Salvador, he spoke no English. He and his mother had followed the rest of their family to Houston in hopes of building better lives for themselves.

Francisco learned about AAMA from a public service announcement on television and believed that AAMA's adult education programs could help him succeed in America. He registered for GED classes in the morning and ESL classes in the afternoon. He covered all six levels of ESL classes quickly and received his GED diploma with excellent results in 2005.

The youngest in his family, Francisco has been a natural leader at AAMA, volunteering and excelling in many campus activities. He won the 2005 Spelling Bee, competing in the advanced category for ESL and English GED students. He was selected to help promote AAMA's GED program on KTMD - TV 47.

Francisco led a group of students who presented concerns about education and immigrant issues to state legislators during a visit to the state capitol. He also received an Excellence Award for his leadership, volunteer efforts, attendance and overall positive influence on others.

Yet more important than all the awards and recognition, is the knowledge he gained and the friendships he found at AAMA.

"Adelante is like family," Francisco said. "It is an honor to be here and to be part of this school. I'm thankful for people like Juan Esquivel and Gabriela Martinez who supported my dreams and helped me through challenges."

A musician who plays the guitar, sings and composes, Francisco plans a career in the music business. His dream is to become a music producer. His next stop? San Jacinto College where he plans to enroll in the Audio Engineering curriculum.

"We know Francisco will succeed," said Juan Esquivel, director of AAMA's Adult Education Program. "He has the determination, knowledge and skills to overcome any challenges he may face, as well as the support of his friends and mentors."



# Read Lily's Story



**T**he summer after Lily's ninth grade year was a low time in her life.

With a 2.25 grade point average, she wasn't doing very well in school and wasn't really interested in academics or school activities. She found herself following others when what she really wanted was to be her own person.

When she heard about AAMA's George I. Sanchez Charter School, she thought she would take a look and see if it met her need for change. Her perception of the school before her visit was that it was only for kids who were pregnant or had been kicked out of other schools. What she found was a close-knit student body with faculty and staff who paid attention and didn't "close out" students' concerns.

"At GIS, you can go to any staff member for help," Lily said. "They are like family and, like the motto says, they really do help people."

Lily said three GIS faculty members have been particularly helpful to her. "Mr. Wong is strict and determined; yet he inspires me to have confidence in myself and pushes me to do better." Wong, who teaches math and science, is faculty advisor for the National Honor Society and coach of the academic team, both activities in which Lily has participated.

"Mr. Hardt is very open-minded and has expanded my horizons," Lily said. Hardt teaches social studies, coaches the girls' soccer team and is faculty advisor for Club Cultural. He also organized the first student trip to

Washington, D.C. For many students, the trip was their first opportunity to travel outside Texas and to fly.

Lily also gives counselor Ms. Pena high marks for her work with students. "Ms. Pena is just great," Lily said. "She listens to my concerns and personal issues in a non-judgmental way and offers the best advice."

Lily has many dreams - to travel, to study communications at the University of Texas and to pursue a career in broadcast journalism. Ultimately, she wants to help children, although she's not sure yet how she will do that. Already, she has achieved one goal she set for herself - Lily is ranked 10th in her class and has brought her grade point average up to 3.5.

President of the senior class, Lily still worries about her grades and not living up to her potential. Ed Socha, director of the GIS Early College program has no such worries. "Lily is an outstanding student and will graduate from GIS with 26 hours of college credit," Socha said. "She has the ability and determination to achieve whatever she dreams."

# Leadership

**F**or over thirty-five years, AAMA has been advancing the lives of at-risk youth and families through education, health and human services. We are taking important steps to insure that AAMA will continue to help Mexican American and other Latino youth and adults build brighter futures for many years to come.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recently awarded AAMA a significant grant to fund business analysis and planning. This generous contribution led to our work with BridgeSpan, a non-profit consulting firm, to identify key success factors of our George I. Sanchez Charter Schools (GIS) and other AAMA programs. As a result, we have developed a plan to strengthen our school model and replicate our success by opening eight new schools in Texas over the next ten years. We are extraordinarily proud that the Gates Foundation has committed to be our partner in this exciting endeavor.

We are also gratified that both the Houston and San Antonio charter school campuses received an Acceptable rating from the Texas Education Agency. More importantly, significant increases in students' TAKS scores demonstrate that our education strategies are working with an extremely challenging student population.

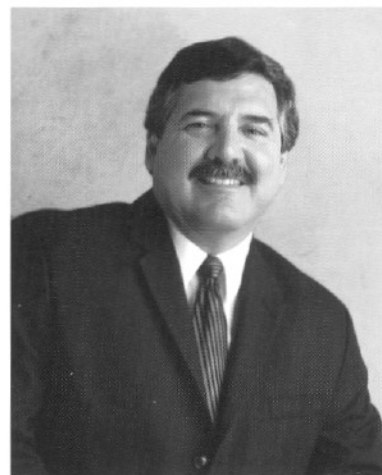
Among the most exciting accomplishments of our Human Services Program was AAMA's receipt of two major federal grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). These grants fund innovative youth prevention programs in South Texas and Houston.

Our Adult Education Program helped hundreds of students complete their G.E.D., increasing their opportunities to begin higher education and join the work force. We have opened a new computer lab at our Northside Houston location that will provide opportunities for more job-training programs and allow students to search for jobs. And we have begun moving forward with our plans for a new campus at our primary Houston location that will provide efficient and adequate space to serve our clients.

As our target population grows in Houston and across Texas, and demand for AAMA's services continues to increase, our commitment to advance the lives of Mexican Americans and other Latinos is stronger than ever. We invite you to join us in our journey.



*Laura Jaramillo*  
*Chair, Board of Directors*



*Gilbert Moreno*  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*

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