



Dear Friends,

Monday would have been the 82nd birthday of the late Congressman John Lewis. As our nation faces attacks on our democracy through extensive voter suppression legislation, I urge you to once again read Congressman Lewis' final words, which were published in [The New York Times](#).

"Ordinary people with extraordinary vision can redeem the soul of America by getting in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble. Voting and participating in the democratic process are key. The vote is the most powerful nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society. You must use it because it is not guaranteed. You can lose it," stated Congressman Lewis.

His words were not only meant to remind us of those who came before us in the fight for a **true democracy, in which participation is not limited by the color of one's skin or gender or income**, but also to encourage us to continue fighting for a nation that makes every effort possible to allow our democracy to flourish.

With his words in mind, I urge all eligible voters to use "the most powerful nonviolent change agent" in the March 1 primary. Early voting ends tomorrow, **Friday, February 25** and election day is **Tuesday, March 1**. You still have time to have your voice heard. Visit [HarrisVotes.com](#) to find your nearest polling location.

HELPING OUR MOST VULNERABLE NEIGHBORS

The pandemic has made it perfectly clear that our community is only as healthy as our most vulnerable neighbors. Together, we must lift those who need our help the most. In doing so, our entire community benefits. Harris County approved the funding for three programs: one to help those experiencing homelessness, and two benefiting Harris County children.

Community-Wide COVID-19 Housing Program

All residents deserve quality, accessible and affordable housing regardless of their income or location. However, almost 4,000 Harris County residents experience homelessness on any given night.

Last month, Harris County Commissioners Court doubled down on our commitment to families without shelter by investing up to \$29.5 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to Phase 2 of the Community-Wide COVID-19 Housing Program. The County's initial \$20 million investment in Phase 1 of the collaboration with the City of Houston and the Coalition for the Homeless has already provided housing and supportive services to over 7,000 people.

With these historic investments we are helping Harris County move closer to ending "chronic homelessness" while also being recognized nationally for its strategic approach for program design. Learn more about the [Community-Wide COVID-19 Housing Program](#) and its outcomes.

Investing in Lead Abatement and Testing

All families deserve safe and healthy homes without the threat of lead exposure. This month, Commissioners Court approved a \$20 million investment of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to expand testing lead levels in children under five and increase household lead abatement.

For the 19,000 Harris County children living below the poverty line and facing a higher risk for lead poisoning, this investment in Harris County Public Health's (HCPH) existing program will help to further reduce lead exposure. It is [well documented](#) that high blood lead levels in children cause brain and nervous system damage, learning and behavior challenges, and hearing and speech difficulties.

Using mobile testing units in affected neighborhoods, HCPH staff will identify more children with elevated lead levels and increase the number of lead-abated homes from 60 per year to 200 per year (233% increase).

Making a Difference for Children and Families

Every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential. **Studies show that early childhood education helps children reach their full potential and those with access to it receive life-long benefits from participating.**

To help more than 100,000 low-income infants and toddlers in Harris County access early childhood development programs, Commissioners Court allocated almost \$8 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for three organizations -- Texas Children's Hospital, First3Years, and The Alliance -- to serve 23,000 young children and their families.

Investing in these **low-cost yet highly effective programs lower school drop out rates, healthcare costs, special education placements and reduce future engagement in crime or violence.** Additionally, children who attend high quality preschools graduate from high school at higher rates and earn 25% more in their future careers.

Building a safe, strong and healthy community takes intentional and effective investments that promote equity, justice and opportunity for all. Every resident deserves the opportunity to thrive.

Sincerely,

Rodney Ellis



Throughout February, Precinct One is celebrating the Black community's rich history and contributions in our country by honoring local and national figures who have shattered ideas of what's possible for Black people living in the wake of enslavement in this country.

While we are surrounded by Black history every day, these local and national trailblazers made it possible for others to follow in their footsteps.

2022 Black History Month Trailblazers

Deloyd Parker | The Honorable Senfronia Thompson | U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris | Monica Roberts | The Honorable Barbara Jordan | John Guess III | Amanda Gorman | The Honorable Ada Edwards | Willie Belle Boone | Beulah Shepherd | Ida B. Wells | The Honorable Stacy Abrams

[Learn more about all of these trailblazers](#)



**BRING YOUR BEST GAME!
REGISTER FOR OUR CO-ED
B-BALL LEAGUE**

Harris County Precinct One is hosting two co-ed adult basketball leagues. Registration is now open in-person or [online](#). Game days will be held once a week from 6pm-8pm. **League game play begins March 21, 2022.**

For more information, please contact the [Finnigan](#) or [Lincoln](#) community centers.

[Register today!](#)



**GET YOUR FAMILY
CONNECTED FOR FREE**

Two recently launched programs are helping Harris County families gain access to the internet for work and school. [Harris County Public Library Emergency Connectivity Fund](#) is providing **40,000 wifi hotspots and 15,000 laptops** to qualifying households.

[Affordable Connectivity Program](#) - offers free or reduced cost internet for qualifying households.

[\[Learn more...\]](#)



**REGISTRATION OPEN:
SPRING BREAK STEM CAMP
FOR YOUTH**

Spring Break can be fun and educational! Between March 14 and 18, **Lincoln Park** and the **YET** Community Centers will host Precinct One's first annual **Spring Break STEM Camp** for youth 6 to 12.

This camp is designed to build proficiency in **science, technology, engineering and math**.

Registration is limited.

[Register today!](#)



BLACK HISTORY MONTH QUILT DISPLAY AT CAVALCADE COMMUNITY CENTER

For over 20 years, **Patricia Henderson**, a Trinity Gardens and Precinct One resident, has been honing her art of quilting. As an active member of the Aldine Area Quilt Guild and the Jubilee Quilt Circle, Ms. Henderson still has time to stay engaged at several Precinct One Community Centers, including Cavalcade, Deussen and Hester House.

Until March 11, Precinct One is honored to display ten of Ms. Henderson's quilts, which she created during the pandemic. In addition to her current display at the [Cavalcade Community Center](#), her quilts have been featured at the **Houston Museum of Fine Arts**, **Collective Arts**, and the **Gregory School**. Additionally, a future piece will be featured along with **The Sewing Machine Project** on CBS with Nora O'Donnell. Stop by to view her beautiful work.

PHOTOS: [Cavalcade Community Center Quilt Display](#)

[VIDEO:](#) [Museum of Fine Arts Black History Month Quilt Exhibit](#)



EL FRANCO LEE PARK AND COMMUNITY CENTER SERVING HARRIS COUNTY SOUTHBELT AREA RESIDENTS

Named after the late Harris County Commissioner El Franco Lee, who served as Precinct One Commissioner for 30 years, this large park has sport fields, picnic areas, playgrounds and a splash park for the summer. The park is the perfect place to go for nature enthusiasts, with bird watching, a butterfly garden and a wetlands nature trail. [Learn more about the park](#).

[Reserve the El Franco Lee Park pavilion](#) online or call 346-286-1805

Senior Health & Wellness

The El Franco Lee Community Center offers an array of Health & Wellness activities for Precinct One Seniors. Learn more about the exercise, gardening, craft, educational classes offered at this Community Center. [View and register for these programs](#).

PHOTOS: [El Franco Lee Park](#)



BCYCLE STATION INSTALLED IN FIFTH WARD'S FINNIGAN PARK

Finnigan Park is home to a new BCycle station that gives residents increased mobility throughout Fifth Ward. For \$13 per month or \$79 per year, residents receive unlimited 60-minute rides which make going to the store, exercising, or getting to work easier. Students and staff of local universities ride for even less, paying only \$60 per year for unlimited 60-minute rides.

VIDEO: [BCycle makes getting around town easy](#)



[Learn more about Houston BCycle](#)



WILLOW WATERHOLE TRAILS: COMBINING FLOOD PROTECTION AND GREENSPACE

Greenspace and recreational opportunities help communities stay active and healthy. By expanding the existing walking, jogging and biking trails around [Willow Waterhole Detention Basin](#) to a total of 3.5 miles, residents will have additional areas to stay active while maintaining the vital flood protection of the basin. Combining flood protection with new parklands and recreational areas help communities become more resilient.

This project is currently scheduled to begin in May 2022. Weather permitting, the completion date will be November 2022.

[VIEW:](#) [Project Map](#) | [Project Webpage](#)



W. RICHEY ROAD EXPANSION: IMPROVING MOBILITY

Safe streets and sidewalks are essential for every Harris County resident. This month, Precinct One completed the expansion of **West Richey Road** by over a mile to connect **I-45 to Kuykendahl Road**. This investment reduces the risk of street flooding and makes sidewalks and streets safer for people driving, walking and biking. Improved mobility expands a community's opportunity and quality of life.

[VIEW:](#) [Project Map](#) | [Project Webpage](#)



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