Most of us don’t enjoy seeing a doctor, but when we must, we want it to be affordable, quick and convenient. Consumer demand has driven a boom in recent years of healthcare facilities with extended hours that are located in or near high-traffic retail centers. Westchase District has two of them on Westheimer Road: one is an urgent care clinic within walking distance of a grocery store and the other is a new freestanding emergency room built on the site of what used to be a popular casual dining restaurant.

Urgent Doc

Urgent Doc is a walk-in urgent care clinic located in the Woodlake Square Shopping Center at 9668 Westheimer, next to the Flagship Randalls supermarket. Seeing patients since 2013, Urgent Doc accepts patients without appointments from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. 365 days a year. “The average visit, from walk in to walk out, lasts between 30 to 45 minutes, so you can be seen and treated over your lunch hour,” said Don Battle, director of business development and marketing for Urgent Clinics of America, Urgent Doc’s parent company.

Manned by either an M.D., physician’s assistant or nurse practitioner, along with a nurse and front-desk assistant, staff are able to treat everything from infections to broken bones and administer immunizations and vaccinations. “We can suture cuts and wounds, take digital x-rays, perform echocardiograms, run intravenous fluids – we’ve even once delivered a baby here at the clinic,” Battle said.

Battle added that many area businesses use Urgent Doc to treat on-the-job injuries, perform employee physicals, and conduct drug screenings and breath alcohol testing. “We also do a lot of physicals and sports participation screenings for the local schools – they’re only $25,” he said. For self-pay patients, Urgent Doc offers three tiers of discounted pricing – $99, $169 and $249 – depending on whether X-rays or bloodwork are needed. “Because we don’t have any facility fees or (Continued on Page 8)
Connecting the Dots

We’ve all seen a building project underway or maybe a piece of artwork taking shape. Sometimes, the finished product can’t be discerned until it is almost complete. Clearly, there is a plan behind all this and it is known to the creator even if it is a mystery to the rest of us.

Much of Westchase District’s work focuses on planning. We plan our activities and projects but also play a key role in helping other government entities plan their work for our area. This includes the City and County as well as TXDOT, METRO, AISD and HISD. Ensuring that the various projects are coordinated and complement one another means that we get the most out of all our tax dollars while meeting the area’s needs. Our plans run the gamut from a simple sidewalk project to a 30-year master plan for the entire area. Importantly, we focus or work on public spaces and public infrastructure. This both respects property rights and the free market. Our goal is establishing an environment that attracts and retains new residents, tenants, retailers, owners and investors.

Our long-range focus is both a strength and a challenge. Going 20-30 years into the cloudy future is definitely challenging, but, in a realm of unlimited and uncertain options, constantly coordinating the best options and highest priorities is our goal. We work toward a set of inter-related projects, each with its own merits but able to leverage others that are a part of the plan for a multiplier effect.

Trailside Park is a great example. Using utility corridors for trails was part of our 2006 Long-Range Plan (LRP). Then in 2013, legislation was passed to make these trails possible and the HCC Campus Trail was completed in 2017. Two other plans provided projects to complement it. Our Pedestrian/Transit Plan identified the strategic value of a sidewalk extending west to Hayes, and the Parks and Open Spaces Plan identified a parcel available adjacent to the trail and proposed sidewalk extension. Now we have a trail, connected to a sidewalk with safe and expanded access, and a wonderful green space that benefits trail users, tenants in the adjacent office building, and area residents.

AISD and HISD. Ensuring that the various projects are coordinated and complement one another helps us focus or work on public spaces and public infrastructure. This both respects property rights and the free market. Our goal is establishing an environment that attracts and retains new residents, tenants, retailers, owners and investors.

The Corporate Concierge
Who’s into Classic Cars

H"ome to such companies as BMC Software, Equinor (formerly StatOil) and TechSpace, the four buildings that make up CityWest Place are some of Westchase District’s most outstanding, amenity-rich office spaces. Managing all four properties is Parkway Properties’ Chris Ball. Earlier this year, Ball became one of the newest members of the Westchase District Board of Directors. It’s a role for which he’s well-suited, given his vision for the 35-acre campus.

A Lucky Leprechaun
A Houston native, Ball graduated from Aldine High School and earned his bachelor’s degree in hotel management from the University of Houston. “Like all good students, I crammed my four-year degree into five years,” he said, laughing. Ball spent about 25 years in the hospitality industry, managing everything from hotels to a golf course to a retirement community before transitioning to commercial property management.

After a few years in the business, Ball joined Parkway in 2017, first managing four buildings at Houston’s Greenway Plaza before switching to CityWest Place. Featuring such amenities as three first-class restaurants, multiple athletic facilities, an auto repair center, an on-campus dentist and a hair salon, CityPlaceWest is one of the crown jewels of Westchase District’s office market. “This is an incredibly beautiful campus that offers its tenants world-class services and conveniences,” Ball said. “I feel like I work in the middle of a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.”

Ball is tasked with creating and nurturing relationships among tenants inside a campus that houses nearly 1.5 million square feet of office space. “People tend to be creatures of habit and insular; one of my roles is to open up our tenants’ peripheral vision to one another,” he said. “In addition to catering to our companies’ needs, we host events that develop tenant interaction, like our ‘Inks & Drinks’
Painting party and campus-wide sports tournaments. Parkway is committed to nurturing an inclusive corporate culture among companies to create the ideal, productive environment each of them wants."

**Spreading the word**

Although he managed hotel properties throughout Houston, it was only recently Ball was exposed to Westchase District. “I first noticed the classy landscaping and unique signage and could tell immediately when I had left the District,” he said. “I later realized the role the District as an entity plays in creating and maintaining the area,” Ball continued. “I feel comfortable approaching District staff members with those questions and being able ‘Oh yeah, we did that,’” he said. More about infrastructure projects and safety initiatives. “It’s been a lot of fun to drive around the District and say, ‘Oh yeah, we did that,’” he said. “I later realized the role the District as an entity plays in creating and maintaining the area,” Ball continued. “I feel comfortable approaching District staff members with those questions and being able to not only convey answers, but share news about all the positive things the District is doing.”

**Family fun**

Ball lives in Spring, Texas, with his wife of 22 years and their two high-school-aged sons. “My wife and I met at church in the sixth grade, though we didn’t date until college,” he said. “My older son and I enjoy working on classic trucks together, and he wants to pursue his college degree in automotive restoration. My younger son has opened my eyes to the world of robotics. We have an overwhelming amount of electronic devices around the house. I have no idea what I’m doing, but we’re figuring it out together and having a lot of fun.”
Exquisite Confections at Sugar Rush Too - Westchase

Cupcakes, cookies, pies and pudding are works of art at new cake gallery

Since the early 2000s, America has been caught up in a cupcake craze, with customers clamoring for gourmet versions of the frosted desserts. A new business recently opened in Westchase District that aims to help satiate shoppers’ sweet tooth urges: Sugar Rush Too – Westchase, located at 10908 Westheimer Road. The store features a glass display case against a fuchsia wall, where rows of ornate cupcakes made fresh daily sit like works of art. The smell of gourmet coffee brewing fills the air and general manager Adam Magoti greets visitors with a smile.

From East Africa to West Houston

Born in Tanzania, Magoti immigrated to the United States in 2000 and moved to Houston in 2004. Before plunging into the world of pies and puddings, he worked in the oil and gas industry as a plant inspector, checking for gas pipe leaks. “A few years ago, my wife started bringing home these delicious cupcakes on Sundays after we got to know the founders of Sugar Rush Cake Gallery, located near I-610 and Stella Link Road. We got to know the founders and eventually began discussing opening a franchise location,” Magoti said. Initially hesitant about changing careers, Magoti considered the venture for about two years before taking the plunge into the cake business in July, opening the Westchase District’s HCC Campus Trail.

Rushing to Serve You: Adam Magoti, general manager of Sugar Rush Too – Westchase, is all about serving up customer service on a platter for his customers.

Secret ingredient for success

While the owners, understandably, are highly protective of their recipes, Magoti said he has his own secret ingredient for success: outstanding customer service. “I want to make sure when you walk in my Sugar Rush location, you and your family feel comfortable sharing in the joy I feel selling these delicious sweets,” he said. “The customer is always right and will be treated well – that’s my recipe.”

Sugar Rush Too – Westchase is open from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays and closed on Mondays.

Sugar Rush Too – Westchase
10908 Westheimer Road • 713-978-RUSH (7874) • www.sugarrushwestchase.com

District moves forward with development of two parks

Everyone deserves a great park within a 10-minute walk from their home – so says the Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit that advocates for park creation and land conservation. In 2017, TPL ranked Houston 42nd in the country for park access, a number that leaves much room for progress. Westchase District is working to improve Houston’s ParkScore index number with the creation of two parks in the District during the next two years. One of them is well-underway, with visible results appearing this fall.

Trails Park

First up is Trails Park, a half-acre park located just north of Richmond Avenue that’s part of a 750-foot trail connecting the HCC Campus Trail with Hayes Road. “Because the HCC Campus Trail runs along a CenterPoint Energy powerline corridor, we’re not allowed to place any amenities along that trail,” said Louis Sanchez, Westchase District’s vice president of projects. “We wanted to acknowledge projects and he came up with the initial concept for Trailside Park,” said Irma Jullien, Westchase District projects director. “Fortunately, we were able to secure a parcel next to the CenterPoint corridor just behind 10200 Richmond that makes for a perfect little recreation area.”

This summer, workers cleared the area of brush and poured the park’s eight-foot-wide concrete trail. Later this fall, the park will feature a children’s playspace to be included in the future Woodchase Park.

Woodchase Park

Next to Trails Park is Woodchase Park, a two-acre parcel on Woodchase Drive just north of the Westpark Tollway. The park will connect to the Westpark Trail, which runs parallel to the Westpark Tollway between Briarpark Drive and Gessner Road. “This will place commuters at the METRO Gessner Park & Ride, as well as nearby residents, within a 10-minute walk to a beautiful neighborhood park,” Sanchez said.

The park is being designed by the Office of James Burnett, the award-winning firm responsible for Houston’s Levy Park and Kyle Warren Park in Dallas. Park elements will include a dog park, a children’s play area with a rock-climbing wall, a gathering lawn, walking paths, a pavilion with restrooms, parking for food trucks and a community garden.

Sanchez said she expects construction designs to be finalised this fall and for construction of the park to begin in Spring 2019. Construction of Woodchase Park should last about 12 months.

Greenspace for Westchase

Cupcake Namesake: Sugar Rush Too offers “The Westchase,” a vanilla cupcake with buttercream icing topped with sprinkles and a cherry.

WESTCHASE TODAY
Modern Technical Training for Area Students

Innovative Alief ISD Center for Advanced Careers begins first classes this fall

In August, the Alief Independent School District welcomed students, many of whom live in Westchase District, to its brand new Center for Advanced Careers at 12160 Richmond Avenue. The 235,000 square-foot facility can accommodate up to 2,500 students and will house career and technical education programs such as advanced audio/video production, auto tech, culinary arts, health sciences, robotics, welding, engineering, HVAC training and more.

The center also will host events and professional learning opportunities for AISD employees and will host tours for intermediate and middle school students so they may see first-hand the opportunities that await them.

Pathways to profitable careers

Designed by PBK Architects, the center was made possible by voter approval of the $341 million bond referendum in May 2015. The bill provides a chance to earn certifications in many academic areas that were all made possible through the passage of HB5 by the Texas Legislature in 2015. The bill provides students a chance to choose an endorsement area of their choice for their high school years.

“For decades, high school students were all taught the same way, as if all of them were heading to a four-year university,” said HD Chambers, AISD superintendent. “Study after study shows that not all students are meant to attend a four-year university; and that, through these endorsement areas, students may pursue a career of their choice and not just be conformed into a one-size-fits-all approach that was mandated by the state for decades. This facility will provide our students with even more opportunities for success after graduating high school.”

Some of the programs at the center will begin with sophomore students while others will start with juniors and seniors. All first level courses will still be housed on the district’s three traditional high school campuses (Elsik, Hastings and Taylor).

For decades, high school students were all taught the same way, as if all of them were heading to a four-year university. “Students in the automotive, veterinary tech and culinary arts programs will offer services to community members and be able to experience real world situations.”

High-tech, high-wage skills

Participating students take first- or second-level courses at their home campuses and then complete advanced courses at the center in the following programs:

- **Advanced Architectural Design** – Students learn to use industry standard software to create designs, drawings, renderings and scaled models and can earn Auto Desk Revit and AutoCAD certifications.
- **Automotive Technology** – Working in a 23,000 square-foot lab with 18 service bays, students perform minor car maintenance such as alignments, oil changes and brake jobs on vehicles and can earn Automotive Service Excellence certifications.
- **Construction Technology** – Coursework includes basic construction practices, framing and finishing as well as mill and cabinetry. Students can pursue certifications in the areas of NCCER and OSHA.
- **Culinary Arts** – Students will have the chance to show their skills to the public through a restaurant which is open to the public and can also earn their ServSafe certification.
- **Digital Design** – Using state-of-the-art laboratories featuring built-in sound booths and a control room, students will be able to obtain industry-recognized Adobe certifications through courses in audio/video production, graphic design and commercial photography.
- **Health Science** – In partnership with West Houston Medical Center, which is located across the street from the center, students will practice their skills in real-world settings to earn certifications as pharmacy technicians and certified nursing assistants.
- **Industrial Robotics** – Students interested in manufacturing careers will learn how to program the FANUC robotic arm and work toward the Certified Production Technician credential.
- **Information Technology** – Students will learn skills in computer maintenance, networking and cyber security with opportunities for industry recognized certifications.
- **Veterinary Science** – Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, students will learn veterinary practices for large and small animal species and may earn veterinary technician certifications.
- **Welding** – In a laboratory with 20 welding booths, students use hand tools, power machines and the latest welding equipment to practice welding processes and earn qualifications to take industry certification tests.

For more information about the Center for Advanced Careers, or to schedule a tour, call 281-485-8120.

In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, many affected Houstonians benefited from heroic actions taken by first responders. A second wave of response occurred in the form of temporary shelters and assistance from various aid organizations. But for those in West Houston living with Harvey’s devastating effects a year later, nonprofits such as West Houston Assistance Ministries (WHAM) fill an important role in continuing to support lives still reeling from the costliest tropical cyclone on record.

Third responders

“I call us the ‘third responders’,” said Mark Brown, WHAM’s CEO. “There’s still so much needed in terms of rebuilding homes, providing assistance with food and employment and offering mental health support. Even before the disaster, there were a lot of people in crisis in West Houston and in Westchase District. We normally see about 2,500 clients per month, but thanks to Harvey, we’ve seen about 40,000 people in the past year.”

Brown said as third responders, WHAM’s 20 staff members and about 300 active volunteers work to provide rental assistance to prevent eviction and resulting homelessness and to ensure that no one leaves WHAM hungry. Their Client Choice Food Pantry is one of the largest in the region, where clients are provided shopping carts and may select items with volunteer guidance. “Along with the Houston Food Bank, many local restaurants and grocery stores donate fresh items daily, so in addition to non-perishables we offer meat, milk, cheese and fresh produce – it’s really high-quality food.”

Since last October, WHAM distributed more than one million pounds of food to the community and has given more than $620,000 in financial assistance. Brown said WHAM works with apartment communities on rent payments for clients with documented needs. “All of our assistance is evidence-based,” Brown said. “We’re extremely careful about how we steward our resources. That said, our assessment shows that we’re about a million dollars shy of meeting the need – about 5,000 area people who need at least $200 in assistance aren’t getting it. We’re part of the solution, but there’s a lot more work that needs to be done.”

Development and donations

Work is another key component to WHAM’s services. Last year, the nonprofit provided employment services to more than 800 clients, assisting with everything from resume building to interview clothing and coaching. They also offer a job training partnership with Houston Community College. “One of the reasons I love sitting on Westchase District’s Advisory Board is because I’m pro-economic development,” Brown said. “I don’t want WHAM to have a dependency model. We’re about helping people to get over their hurdles, to get a job and to get on with their lives.”

One source of revenue for WHAM is its Second Blessing thrift store, which sells clothing, furniture, books and housewares donated from the community. “We don’t buy and sell on consignment; 100 percent of our goods are donated and the profits from the store help fund our work,” Brown said. “It’s been a good promotional tool as well, because many bargain hunters have learned about WHAM from our store.”

The WHAM staff learned about the generosity of the Westchase District community in the days following Harvey. “Companies whom we’d never heard of and didn’t know they knew about us would turn up with truckloads of clothing and diapers to the point where we didn’t know where we would store it all,” he said.

Brown said there’s always room at WHAM for individuals and companies seeking volunteer and teambuilding opportunities. “If you’re looking to give something back to your community and help those who are struggling and in crisis, we have a safe and supportive environment and would welcome your time and talents,” he said. “It can be a powerful, meaningful experience for reconnecting with others.”

West Houston Assistance Ministries

10501 Meadowglen Lane • 713-780-9942 • whammministries.org

New Hope from Old Items: Mark Brown, CEO of West Houston Assistance Ministries, and Sonya Scott, WHAM’s director of client services, stand in the middle of WHAM’s Second Blessing thrift store. Revenue from Second Blessing helps to fund WHAM’s social service programs.

Follow the Funding: How Texas Redistributes Your Taxes for Public Schools

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HD Chambers
Alief ISD Superintendent & Scott Muri
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Thursday, November 1
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7 am Networking | 7:30 am Breakfast | 8 am Presentations/Q&A
$20/table of 4 or $55/person
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West Houston Assistance Ministries helps area families in crisis

Responding to Basic Needs While Promoting Independence

New Hope from Old Items: Mark Brown, CEO of West Houston Assistance Ministries, and Sonya Scott, WHAM’s director of client services, stand in the middle of WHAM’s Second Blessing thrift store. Revenue from Second Blessing helps to fund WHAM’s social service programs.
Having ditched his desk job, Officer John Reyes now trains rookie cops

With his likable demeanor and winning smile, John Reyes doesn’t seem like the kind of guy who’s always looking for trouble. Yet three days a week, the Houston Police Department officer canvases the streets of Westchase District doing just that. As a member of the Westchase District Patrol, Reyes keeps his eyes peeled for suspicious activity and opportunities to intervene in difficult situations. It can be risky work, but this former finance executive wouldn’t have it any other way.

From corporate finance to crime fighting

Reyes grew up in San Antonio with an older sister, graduating from John Jay High School and earning his bachelor’s degree in corporate finance from the University of Texas at San Antonio. After four years of working for Washington Mutual and UPS, he decided he was in desperate need of a career change. “I was tired of sitting behind a desk looking at the same pieces of paper every day,” he said. “I realized there was no way I could do that for the next 20 or 30 years.” It was Reyes’ brother-in-law, an employee of the Texas Department of Public Safety, who suggested a job in law enforcement. “He always had interesting stories about his work and I decided I wanted to pursue a career as a police officer,” Reyes said.

After graduating from the Houston Police Academy in 2009, Reyes was assigned to Midwest District. “It’s fun working in a lot of different situations,” he said. “It’s especially rewarding when I see some of the people I’ve trained turn into pretty good officers.”

Reyes learned about Westchase District Patrol from fellow officer Zhen Wang. Reyes has patrolled the District for the past 18 months, first filling in for other officers and eventually working three shifts per week. “What I like about working in Westchase District is that the community is made up of mostly good people who are trying to go to work every day and do better for themselves and their families and they’re appreciative of our service,” he said. “Plus, there are some really great guys working for Westchase District, some of whom I’ve known for years.”

The best part of his job, Reyes added, is the camaraderie with his fellow officers. “When we’re working a scene together, I really feel like part of a team. The world of corporate finance was pretty dog eat dog, while police work is more of a collaborative effort for the greater good and to accomplish the police mission.”

Duty and diapers

The married father of three is juggling his training and patrol duties with studying for the sergeant’s exam this fall, all while adapting to the sleep schedule of his newborn daughter. “Right now it’s all about time management,” Reyes said. “My sons are starting to enjoy flag football and t-ball, but with my daughter, I’m starting over at square one.”

More than a desk and a chair

Offic Evolution joins coworking trend in Westchase District

Coworking venues now total 1.5 million square feet of the city’s available office space, according to Forbes. In Westchase District, companies such as TechSpace and Regus have helped transform what used to be a niche alternative to traditional office leases for start-ups and freelancers into a widely-embarked workspace option for companies of all sizes. Joining the District’s coworking offerings is Office Evolution, which opened its first Houston location earlier this year at Briar Forest Crossing, 1300 W. San Houston Pkwy. S.

Operating with ohana

With 76 locations (31 operating and 25 under development) in 25 states, the Denver-based company is the fourth largest coworking space franchise in the country. It aims to provide not only flexible offices, meeting spaces and administrative services, but to create a supportive corporate culture among its members. When Fritz and Leigh Fowler—managing partners of the Houston location—were looking for franchise opportunities, they were attracted to the concept of networking with other people and helping small businesses grow.

“I’ve worked my entire career from virtual offices, so this just made sense,” Leigh said. “One of Office Evolution’s core values is the Hawaiian idea of ohana, or family, meaning we’re in this together. The company views its tenants as members. That appealed to our personalities.”

The Fowlers also found Westchase District an appealing site for their venture. “We’re right next to the beltway, which puts us in an easy in-and-out location,” Fritz said. “Plus we offer free parking and are on the first floor of the building, so we’re easy to reach.” The 8,700 square-foot space houses 29 private offices, four dedicated desks and two conference rooms with audio-video capabilities. “You can have the right amount of office space you need while staying within your budget, knowing that as your business grows, we can grow with you,” he added.

Interactive environment

Fritz said while some coworking spaces target startups or tech companies, Office Evolution in Westchase District caters to the professional service industry, such as independent attorneys and accountants who are looking for private office space. “We have members who are in the oil and gas and engineering sectors, as well as other franchise owners and individual contributors,” he said. “Regardless of the field, we try to make working with us simple and easy so that our members can focus on developing their core businesses.”

Leigh said the Houston location regularly hosts networking events such as lunch-and-learns featuring a mix of members and outside experts who can share their insights about business development and branding. “Even though technology allows people to work from home, there’s real value in interacting with other people, whether that’s asking for advice or referring business to one another,” she said. “Our members get to know each other in a friendly, supportive environment.”

Favoring flexibility

Shared workspaces start at $99 per month, with dedicated workspaces starting at $349 per month. Members also may choose live phone answering and remote receptionist services as well as a business address, private mailboxes and package reception. Each Office Evolution location has community printers, copiers and scanners, and complimentary coffee, tea and wireless internet.

“We have both month-to-month and long-term agreements and we require only a 30-day cancellation notice,” Fritz said. “We even offer conference rooms and day office options for non-members that let guests book in 15-minute increments. We find that really gives businesses the flexibility they need.”

Office Evolution

1300 W. San Houston Pkwy. S., Suite 100 + 346-561-0612 oficeevolution.com/locations/houston

Adjustable Amenities: Featuring 29 private offices, Westchase District’s new Office Evolution offers its members workspace flexibility and professional decor.

Take Three: (From left) Fritz Fowler; Brett Brown, business center manager; and Leigh Fowler take a quick break in the community kitchen at the new Office Evolution in Westchase District.

Keeping Multifamily Safe: Officer John Reyes often interacts with apartment communities in Westchase District, addressing concerns and suggesting public safety improvements for properties.

Duty and diapers

The married father of three is juggling his training and patrol duties with studying for the sergeant’s exam this fall, all while adapting to the sleep schedule of his newborn daughter. “Right now it’s all about time management,” Reyes said. “My sons are starting to enjoy flag football and t-ball, but with my daughter, I’m starting over at square one.”

Community and camaraderie

Reyes learned about Westchase District Patrol from fellow officer Zhen Wang. Reyes has patrolled the District for the past 18 months, first filling in for other officers and eventually working three shifts per week. “What I like about working in Westchase District is that the community is made up of mostly good people who are trying to go to work every day and do better for themselves and their families and they’re appreciative of our service,” he said. “Plus, there are some really great guys working for Westchase District, some of whom I’ve known for years,” he said. “And Don (McKinney, the District’s vice president of public safety) has a great manner of speaking, so he understands the stresses we deal with and it’s easy working for him.”

The best part of his job, Reyes added, is the camaraderie with his fellow officers. “When we’re working a scene together, I really feel like part of a team. The world of corporate finance was pretty dog eat dog, while police work is more of a collaborative effort for the greater good and to accomplish the police mission.”

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Take Three: (From left) Fritz Fowler; Brett Brown, business center manager; and Leigh Fowler take a quick break in the community kitchen at the new Office Evolution in Westchase District.
Neighborhood News

SignatureCare ER

If, however, you feel that you’re dealing with a life-threatening condition, then you may want to consider SignatureCare Emergency Center, a new 8,000-square-foot freestanding emergency room that recently opened at 11103 Westheimer (at the southwest corner of Westheimer and Wilcrest Drive).

The center is staffed 24/7 with board-certified physicians and is equipped with a full laboratory, plus X-ray, ultrasound and CT equipment to treat most adult and pediatric medical emergencies. “We’ve able to treat heart attacks and strokes, as well as injuries, abdominal pain, burns, pneumonia and more,” said Jennifer Bower, SignatureCare’s facility nurse manager. “We believe we can help offload some of the workload of the busy surrounding hospitals and give people in the area access to comprehensive care without the wait. Our goal is for you to be seen within 10 minutes. Customers had to wait longer than that to be served when this was a restaurant.”

SignatureCare’s digital marketing manager, said repurposing the location brought considerable challenges. “We had to stabilize the entire slab and raise the floor by 18 inches so it could withstand the weight of our radiology equipment, which sits on the old kitchen space,” she said. “Also, the building had no sprinkler system so we had to run piping from the road to the building which meant shutting down a lane of Westheimer for almost a week in order to complete the project.”

Bower said while admissions have steadily increased since opening, some visitors have shown up simply to see what’s become of the former eatery. “We’ve had people just come in to visit and look around who’ve said, ‘Oh, I once had a drink over there’ or ‘I had a steak on the patio,’” she said. “We tell them that while we don’t serve sirloins, we’ve here to provide white-glove concierge medicine and give them quality care.”

When to choose which option

In general, urgent care is a good choice for dehydration, stitches and most primary care complaints. Emergency rooms are best equipped to evaluate chest pains, numbness or slurred speech, seizures and head or eye injuries. ER facilities may be more expensive than urgent care clinics; it’s a good idea to check first with your healthcare insurance provider and know your options before you find yourself in an urgent, or emergent, situation.

Urgent Doc Urgent Care Clinic

9668 Westheimer Road
Open daily from 8 am to 9 pm
713-597-7770
urgentdoc.com

SignatureCare Emergency Center

11103 Westheimer Road
Open 24 hours, 7 days a week
713-708-3561
ercare24.com

and Mercedes Santos-Garay are pictured sorting through some of their donations.

One highlight from the drive: Kongsberg Oil & Gas, 10777 Westheimer, donated a smart board to Paul Revere. Thanks to all who participated.

The demand for Houston self-storage space continues to grow. Westchase District is home to 750,000 square feet of self-storage facilities, spread across 15 locations throughout the District, according to John D. McWilliams with CBRE. The oldest one dates back to 1975 while the most modern one, Security Self Storage, recently opened at 9526 Westheimer (at the northeast corner of Tanglewilde and Westheimer).

The three-story location has both drive-up and climate-controlled spaces available starting at $39 per month for a 5’ x 5’ unit. The facility features computerized entry systems, LED security lighting and video surveillance. Renters receive free use of a moving truck with any new rental and they also may purchase packing supplies. Office hours are Monday-Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. Call them for more details at 713-266-9139.

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