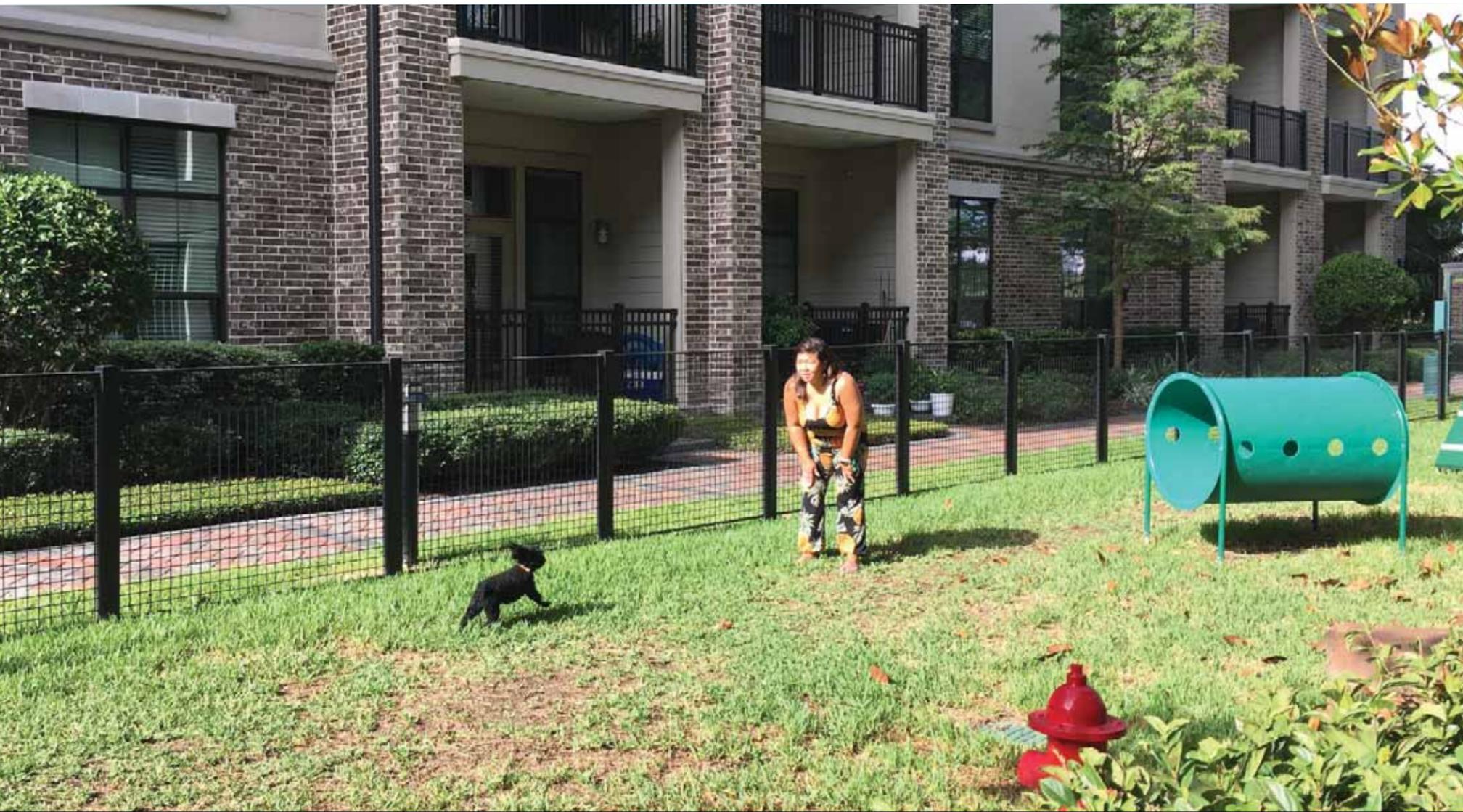


## Apartments Offer Modern Amenities to Attract Residents

*Keeping competitive, Westchase District apartment communities market to contemporary lifestyles*



**Room to Roam:** Residents at Arlo Westchase (and their pets) love the recently-built “bark park.” Westchase District apartment communities are catering to contemporary demands to attract residents.

As Houston’s economy bounces back from Hurricane Harvey and a slowdown in the oil and gas industry, so does the city’s demand for apartment housing. As the largest living generation in America, Millennials play a major role in shaping multifamily real estate trends. Westchase District is home to some 33,000 residents in 54 multifamily communities, ranging from modest workforce housing to luxury living apartments. Owners and property managers throughout the District are paying attention to what renters want and exploring new amenities designed to attract and keep residents, be they young professionals, families or empty nesters.

### Keeping connected

Whether online or in person, residents want to be

connected. “One of the biggest requests we heard from our residents and prospective residents was to offer fiber-optic Internet connections, which provide the fastest load times and higher-quality steaming,” said Anita Gilliam, community manager at Ventura Lofts, 2401 South Gessner Road. “So last year we installed fiber-optic cable in all our units so that residents have that choice.”

Many communities in Westchase District offer online resident portals for residents to sign lease contracts, pay rent and submit maintenance requests. “We receive about 70 percent of our service requests online,” said Monique Davidson, community manager at Arlo Westchase, 3505 West Sam Houston Parkway South.

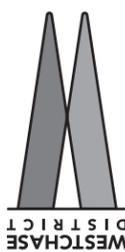
Built in 2015, Arlo Westchase recently added a new business center and an additional conference room. “We’ve created lots of spaces where residents can come to handle their business and not have to go into the office,” Davidson said. “Also, we have young professionals who work at home and will come down to use the free Wi-Fi, have their coffee and reserve space to study or host meetings and presentations.”

In 2017, Megan Behrens – community manager at The Village at Westchase, 2750 Wallingford Drive – oversaw a 24-month, \$16 million renovation of the property. The project included converting an upstairs storage area in the leasing office into a yoga room, fitness center and bistro-style community room.

*(Continued on Page 8)*



10370 Richmond  
Suite 1350  
Houston, Texas 77042  
westchasedistrict.com



### IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2 Meet Eugene Thompson
- 3 Farmers Market News
- 4 Dining at Moderno and Palazzo's
- 4 Bayou City Ballet School

- 5 MediaTech Institute
- 6 New Philippine Consulate
- 6 Beemac Logistics
- 7 Pet Care Options

WESTCHASE TODAY is published quarterly by Westchase District, a municipal management district funded by local property owners in a 4.2 square-mile area centered on the Sam Houston Tollway between I-10 and US-59 on the west side of Houston, Texas. We promote economic growth by enhancing mobility, beautification, public safety, planning and development of the District.



**Dave Gilkeson**  
VP, COO

**Irma Sanchez**  
VP, Projects

**Sherry Fox**  
VP, Communications

**Jonathan Lowe**  
Assistant  
Communications Director

**Don McKinney**  
VP, Public Safety

**John Carey**  
Farmers Market Manager

**Louis Jullien**  
Projects Director

**Kathy Kaufman**  
Administrative Assistant

**Rayshell Ford**  
Operations Assistant

## Connecting the Dots

Our *Westchase Today* readers will see a wide range of topics covered in the articles in this issue. We always have a variety, but this quarter's selections really push the envelope. However, their connectivity goes well beyond the simple fact that they are occurring here in the 4.2 square miles of Westchase District. We can look at these stories through the lens of better understanding Westchase District's mission, methods and outcomes.

We talk about our focus as "Building Higher Value," and while that is true in a literal sense with respect to properties, it also applies in a larger sense to the Westchase District brand whether it describes a company's home, a store's location, or the general neighborhood. We are, fundamentally, a real estate organization dedicated to helping owners achieve greater returns through both increased revenue and decreased expenses. Since Westchase District is primarily funded through assessments on real property, this is appropriate. Yet we have come to understand that our activities should also encompass those that attract and retain residents, companies and shoppers, among others. They, in turn, are the ones who will generate this income for the owners. We can't benefit the owners without ensuring we are taking care of our tenants and the wider group of stakeholders.

The Westchase District Board of Directors oversees the District's operations. The Board's role is to ensure that our projects and programs support our mission. It is a diverse group (by design) with Directors from the corporate, retail, multifamily, office and hotel market segments. Achieving consensus is not always easy, but it is necessary to find the best use of our resources and the best results for our stakeholders. The diversity of the Board's composition is what helps produce a wide array of beneficial programs and amenities.

We can logically divide the articles in this issue into those that report on Westchase District efforts and those that cover their effect on the market. The lead story for our efforts is the profile of Ofc. Kinawa Kongvongsay (Page 7). Our top-notch Public Safety program has been central to our success and is a program that benefits each of



Westchase District Board Chair Philip Schneidau

our stakeholder groups. You'll also read about our weekly farmers market (Page 3) that does more than promote health and support local farmers, but also helps build and connect our community. The Westchase District Farmers Market attracts about 15,000 attendees throughout the year. Finally, in our staff profile (Page 2), we are proud and appreciative of the work done for us by Eugene Thompson, who keeps our community looking good. At first, you might not notice all that he does, but compare our visual environment to the areas around us and you will easily see his positive impact.

The real estate market, through the actions of our owners and tenants, is responding to these efforts. You can read in this issue about major leases, leading-edge tenants, and owners reinvesting in their properties to attract the best residents. We don't control this market, of course. However, with the right work on our part, we can continue to provide an environment where good things can take place -- including, "Building Higher Value."

## Bandit Signs Don't Stand a Chance with E.T. on Patrol

*Eugene Thompson keeps visual clutter out of Westchase District*

Creating eyesores in Houston's landscape, "bandit signs" - cheap signs staked in large quantities at intersections and along sidewalks and esplanades - have long been a scourge of Westchase District's beautification efforts. For nearly a decade, removal of such illegal signage has been the responsibility of Eugene Thompson, better known to staffers as "E.T." As the project department's "man about town," Thompson is the go-to guy for everything from bandit sign removal to graffiti abatement to trash pickup and - as Dave Gilkeson, Westchase District's chief operating officer puts it - "other duties as assigned."

### Jack of all trades

Born in Baltimore, Thompson was reared in New York and Michigan before enlisting in the U.S. Navy. Thompson served for eight years in a variety of duties including deck hand, cargo crane operator and barber, as well as working on several ships that supplied and supported submarines. "For several years, I played as a fullback on several All-Navy football teams,"

he said. "I traveled all over Europe and the Mediterranean playing against semi-pro teams from the Air Force, Army and Marine Corps."

Later, Thompson moved to New Orleans where he embarked on a 26-year career with the Internal Revenue Service, working as a stock clerk, regional mailroom supervisor and special collection procedures file clerk. After enduring hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, Thompson retired from the IRS and moved with his wife to Houston. While working as a security guard for West Houston Assistance Ministries, he learned about a part-time opening at Westchase District for bandit sign removal and graffiti abatement.

### Enforcing standards

Since 2010, Thompson regularly canvasses the District on a search-and-destroy mission for bandit signs. He's often driving around the District in the early-morning hours taking inventory of nonworking streetlights, as well as surveying lighting issues with METRO bus shelters and the District's monument signs.

Receive *The Wire*, our e-newsletter, twice monthly.

Three quick and easy ways to subscribe:

1. Visit [www.westchasedistrict.com/signups](http://www.westchasedistrict.com/signups),
2. Text WESTCHASE to 22828, or
3. Use your mobile device to scan the code below.



713-780-9434

[westchasedistrict.com](http://westchasedistrict.com)

Copyright © Westchase District. All Rights Reserved.



# Enjoy Shopping with the Seasons

*Seasonal product shifts at market give customers something to anticipate*

One of the many charms of our weekly farmers market is that every week is a slightly different shopping experience. Not all products are offered year-round and, indeed, not all items are even available year-round. Embracing the fleeting nature of seasonal items not only keeps the market vibrant and exciting, it helps us to mark annual milestones and reinforce fond memories and traditions.

## Featured this fall

Elvis d'Agrella and his wife Pat have operated **PEAS Farm** in Conroe for about a dozen years and have remained one of the anchors of the Westchase District Farmers Market since its start in 2013. "When we began farming full-time, it took us about three years to diversify our offerings so that we had a variety of things to bring to market year-round," he said. "The tomatoes that we grow in the summer are not the same variety of tomatoes we grow in the winter, because one kind can sit out in the heat better while another is suited to grow in cooler weather."



**Only in Winter:** Expect PEAS Farm to deliver delicious strawberries to the Westchase District Farmers Market this winter.

d'Agrella said he's noticed each of his crops has a seasonal sales cycle as well as a life cycle. "We see surges when products first come out and then a decline as it nears the end of the season," he said. "People have life experiences based around certain types of meals and so they expect those flavors around those times of the year. If I brought kale all the time, people would get tired of it and stop buying it."

In addition to kale this fall, PEAS Farm will harvest other leafy greens like collards and hydroponically-grown lettuces. "We'll start seeing broccoli, cauliflower and brussels sprouts, which run from fall through spring, he said. "We'll be bringing pie pumpkins to the market. These are different from carving pumpkins, in that they contain less water and their flesh is sweeter and better for making pumpkin pie. We'll also have our winter squashes such as acorn, butternut and spaghetti squash."

Fall is also the season when d'Agrella releases some of his sweetest treats. "By the end of September, our citrus fruits will start coming in, like grapefruit, lemons, oranges, satsumas and tangerines," he said. "We plant strawberries at the end of September and begin harvesting them around Christmastime. Every year is different and harvest seasons are never exact."

d'Agrella said shoppers need to remember that Texas' growing season is different from that in other parts of the country. "People who have moved to Houston from northern states will come to the market in May looking for strawberries, because that's when they have traditionally enjoyed them," he said. "We have to tell them that they're too late."

## Seasonal scents

While it's never too late to take a bath or use deodorant, using the same old soap all the time can cheat you from fully experiencing seasonal scents and the memories evoked by them. "Because it's located in the same parts of our brains that affect emotions and creativity, the sense of smell is one of the most important triggers of memory," said Karen Trezell, owner of **LatherMeUp Bath & Body Products**. She said she consciously curates her handcrafted, all-natural soaps and deodorants to match the cyclical expectations of her customers.

"Nobody wants to smell pumpkin in the spring," Trezell said, laughing. "Starting around April or May, I'll bring out my floral scented soaps like lilac

& lilies, honeysuckle and blue lotus. I'll save my pumpkin soap for late September and I'll bring out my Guinness soap and some of the darker fragrances in the winter, along with several Christmas-themed fragrances." Supplementing her annual rotation of aromas, Trezell sells a line of CBD oils, plus arnica massage oils and balms infused with CBD that are available year-round.

## Ebb and flow

While the Westchase District Farmers Market averages about 30 different vendors each week, market manager John Carey acknowledged that weekly fluctuations are a part of the nature of a farmers market. "Some weeks are more packed than others, especially around the holiday gift-giving season," he said. "And some vendors we see for only part of the year. Ice cream has been popular this summer, but probably not so much in January. We feature Fredericksburg peaches for only about eight weeks out of the year."

Carey said the good news is that this ebb and flow to the market is the very thing that keeps it fresh and interesting. "It pays to frequent the market every week, because you never know what unique delights you'll find," he said. "And we're always happy to welcome returning vendors once their products, and their customers' demand for them, are back in season."



**She Sells Seasonal Smells:** LatherMeUp's Karen Trezell handcrafts all-natural soaps with different fragrances based on each unique season.



**Fleeting Favorites:** The season for delicious Fredericksburg peaches has passed, but don't worry, they'll be back at the market next summer.

## Westchase District Farmers Market

Year-round, rain or shine, Thursdays @ 3 p.m.

St. Cyril of Alexandria Catholic Church

10503 Westheimer Road (at Rogerdale Road, one block west of Beltway 8)

[www.westchasedistrictfarmersmarket.com](http://www.westchasedistrictfarmersmarket.com)

"People might think of E.T. as our bandit sign sheriff, but really, he does so much more for the District," said Irma Sanchez, Westchase District's vice president of projects. "He brings roadway hazards to our attention and keeps a close eye on our public art and the graphic wraps on our METRO bus shelters. He regularly performs maintenance checks on our trail system and at Trailside Park, removing debris and litter. E.T. keeps the District looking its best."

Thompson said he takes great pride in keeping the area clean and clutter-free. "Westchase District has its patrol officers, but I like to think of myself as being a different set of eyes and ears on the street," he said. "I've picked up trash and glass that was hazardous to the flow of traffic, helped people push stalled cars out of intersections, brought gas to drivers who ran empty and given battery jumps. Though my main duty is hunting down bandit signs, I never know what I'll run into on any given day."

Ever diligent and on the lookout for unauthorized elements in the public right-of-way - such as attention-getting banners, balloons and flags - Thompson said he knows what would happen if he wasn't on duty. "Sometimes people put out feelers to see if I'm on the job," he said. "Once I take their things down, they realize they can't get away with it."

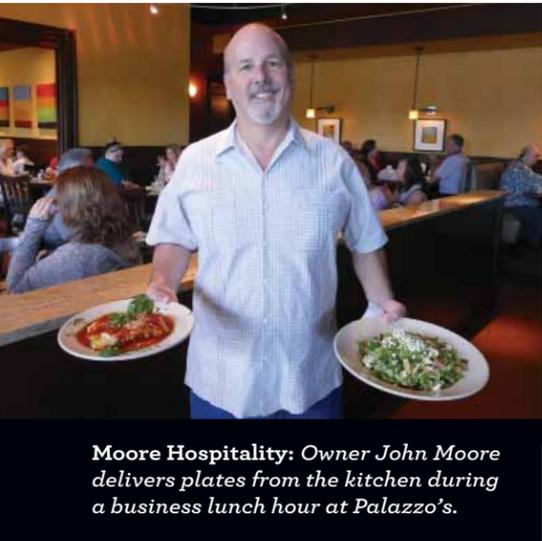


**On a Bandit Run:** Eugene Thompson makes regular rounds throughout Westchase District removing unsightly bandit signs.

# “Restaur-preneur” offers two culinary choices

*Success in Westchase boosted by two different dining audiences*

John Moore and wife Stassa opened Palazzo’s Trattoria in 2006. With an existing Palazzo’s located in the Briargrove area, they were eager to expand their brand and signed a lease in the BriarLake Village Shopping Center while it was still under construction, because they knew it would be a great location.



**Moore Hospitality:** Owner John Moore delivers plates from the kitchen during a business lunch hour at Palazzo’s.

Since then, they’ve been serving pastas, pizza and fish specials to appreciative customers who enjoy the culinary delights with a glass of wine or a beer.

“I think Westchase District is a great location,” Moore said. “It has the perfect mix of office buildings and great neighborhoods. We have a great lunch business from all the office building businesses and the neighborhoods come see us at night.”

When another restaurant location opened up in the same center in 2014, Moore did not hesitate to sign a lease. Moderno Tacos + TexMex was born and

has been serving tacos and TexMex specialties for three meals a day ever since.

The challenges of operating a restaurant these days don’t center on food creation, he said, but rather delivery, marketing and hospitality.

Moore promotes his two restaurants on social media, navigates the intricacies of third-party delivery and develops new menu items for specific food diets, all while ensuring his guests are treated well when they come through the door of his three restaurants.

“There is an overall trend in the restaurant business of people not going out to eat, but eating at home,” he said. Both Moderno’s and Palazzo’s menus are available for home or office delivery through Door Dash, Favor and Uber Eats. Moore’s restaurants also offer in-house delivery. “I prefer that because we control the whole process,” he said. “If something goes wrong, we’ll take care of it.”

Moore, along with his kitchen staff, develops most of the menu items at his restaurants. “We’re working on things for people on special diets,” he said. “For those who prefer low-carb or keto options, we have cauliflower pizza crust at Palazzo’s and cilantro cauliflower rice at Moderno. Plus, we’re working on zucchini noodles for pasta.”

Moore reminds his employees that hospitality is their top priority. “It’s our job to make sure that person who walks in the door feels comfortable and at home, just like you’d welcome someone into your own home,” he said.

Moore recently upgraded the wine list at Palazzo’s. “We tried to get away from some of the bigger producers and linked up with some importers from Italy. We’re featuring more boutique Italian wines and have several organic wines.”

The wines pair well with Palazzo’s standards like Chicken Piccata, pasta and pizza. But Moore suggests you check out the daily specials. “Our chalkboards are where we do more exciting, innovative stuff,” he said. “Typically, we’ll have two or three different types of fresh fish that are off-menu. We might be doing salmon during the day and redfish at night.”

Moore enjoys the challenges of the restaurant business and said that he’s still learning every day. “Twenty years ago, you opened your doors, ran some print ads and that was it,” he said. “Now you’ve got the Internet, social media, third-party delivery, loyalty programs, all these different boxes you have to check throughout the week. Customers are a lot more sophisticated than they were 20 years ago. They expect more.”

**Palazzo’s**  
10455 Briar Forest • 713-785-8800  
palazzoscafe.com



**Quick Service:** Moderno features counter service during weekdays and table service nights and weekends. “It’s a great way to serve the lunch crowd fast and get them back to their office,” said Moore.

**Moderno Tacos + TexMex**  
10455 Briar Forest • 713-784-4600  
motacos.com

# Ballet That’s Fun and Accessible for Everyone

*New Bayou City Ballet School opens in Westchase District*

If you think of ballet as something exclusive, snobby and competitive, then think again. A new ballet school recently opened in Westchase District that welcomes dancers of all ages and abilities. Bayou City Ballet School is in the Westchase Corporate Park at 11231 Richmond Avenue and Alex Pandiscio, the school’s founder and director, has created a classically-based ballet curriculum updated for the 21st century.



**Community Outreach:** Bayou City Ballet School offers classes and workshops for dancers of all ages and skill levels.

## The perfect fit

“The school aims to prepare aspiring young men and women for a life both in and beyond dance by teaching the values of commitment, kindness and hard work,” Pandiscio said. “While only a handful will become professional dancers, we give each student a quality education that prepares them for success in any field - including professional ballet, if that’s their path.” Originally from Massachusetts, Pandiscio began dancing at four years old with Jacqueline Cronsberg. A graduate of San Francisco Ballet School, he moved to Houston in 2003, where he performed and taught with the Houston Ballet. He earned an undergraduate degree from Rice

University in kinesiology and later received teacher training at Canada’s National Ballet School. “A huge part of ballet education has been simply oral tradition, but I wanted to learn more about anatomy and how to nurture healthy, functioning dancers,” he said.

Opening his own ballet school has been a decades-long dream for Pandiscio. “My mother lives in a nearby retirement community, so Westchase District had been on my radar for a while,” he said. “I researched properties all over town, but this location and space seemed like the perfect fit for me.” To create his ideal studio, he knocked out some walls, raised the ceiling and installed a special patented “sprung flooring” that absorbs shocks, giving it a softer feel and helps to reduce injuries.

## Diverse dancers

The school’s impressive faculty includes Priscilla Nathan-Murphy, previously the principal of Houston Ballet Academy for 12 years. The children’s program begins

at age four with joy of dance, pre-ballet and primary classes. Starting at age eight, students may enter the pre-professional program, where they are placed in levels based on ability, not age. The school also offers classes and workshops for adult learners from beginners to advanced.

Laura Chandler started ballet lessons when she was almost 40 years old. Now in her 60s, she said she’s aware of her limitations but feels Pandiscio brings out the most of her abilities. “I had cancer several years ago and I continued with ballet lessons and I found ballet class was a place to put my feelings aside and concentrate on the music and my movement and form,” she said. “It feels very healing to me. Alex is such an encouraging teacher. He takes you where you are and just wants you to be better.”

Bridget Schmal is another more “mature” dancer who has attended other classes taught by Pandiscio around Houston. “I’m nursing an injury and my orthopedist told me not to quit my ballet lessons. It’s done wonders for my strength and flexibility,” she said. “Alex doesn’t stop paying attention to us just because we’re older.”

Spring resident Shelby Craze began ballet training in earnest at age 10. Now in her early 20s, she currently trains at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, but whenever she’s in Houston she makes time to attend Pandiscio’s classes. “The core muscle exercises he teaches in his floor bar class have helped me nurse back and hip injuries everywhere I travel,” she said. “Mr. Pandiscio has so much passion for dance and he inspires me - he’s a great motivator. He’s really paying attention and cares about every single dancer, no matter their experience or ability.”

**Bayou City Ballet School**  
11231 Richmond Avenue, Suite D106 • 713-280-3646 • bayoucityballet.com



**On the Dance Floor:** Alex Pandiscio, founder of the Bayou City Ballet School (center), leads a class on a special “sprung flooring” that keeps dancers light on their feet.

# Turning Passions into Professions

*MediaTech Institute mixes multimedia production training with real-world experience*

Within its 4.2 square miles, Westchase District is home to seven degree-granting higher education institutions, including one of the state's finest recording engineering schools. Nestled in the Wilcrest Green Office Park, MediaTech Institute, located at 3234 Walnut Bend Lane, is a hidden gem for students interested in careers in the digital technology, multimedia production and entertainment industries.



**Master Mixologist:** *Arian Rivers, career services director, adjusts a 72-track mixing console in the Grey Room Studio at MediaTech Institute. The console was once used to mix sound on the 1999 motion picture Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace.*

## Sunrise Sound

The 15,000 square-foot recording studio and production facility was originally known as Sunrise Sound, founded during the 1970s by chief engineer Skip Burrows. Sunrise played host for a diverse lineup of artists such as Lenny Kravitz, Destiny's Child, Selena, Clint Black, Yolanda Adams and Too \$hort. In 2004, Sunrise became home to the Houston campus of MediaTech Institute, an expansion

of audio engineering workshops at the Dallas Sound Lab recording studio.

Over the past 15 years, nearly 1,000 students have earned associate degrees and diplomas from MediaTech. The institute also offers programs in music production, digital film and video production, animation and visual effects, web design and mobile app development. Currently about 100 students are enrolled in courses.

MediaTech's Houston studios include four recording consoles, each in specialized rooms which can accommodate everything from individual voiceover talent to full live bands. The studios offer both analog and digital professional grade equipment and classrooms are outfitted with Apple computers loaded with the latest Adobe Creative Cloud Suite software. Two editing rooms support a large film production studio, complete with a green screen room, lighting rigs and camera dollies. Dr. Sylento Lewis, Houston campus director, oversees a staff of about 16 instructors who bring a combined total of nearly 200 years of professional experience to students.



**Smooth Operator:** *Gary Foster, director of education and an instructor at MediaTech Institute, operates a J.L. Fisher camera dolly in the green screen room at the institute's digital film production facilities in Westchase District.*

## Cultivating careers

MediaTech's career services department guides students through the process of seeking employment in the audio and video production industry. "While many of our graduates may not be as famous as the celebrities they produce, they've gone on to careers at TV news stations across the country, mix and master albums at Capitol Records, or open their own successful recording studios," said Gary Foster, MediaTech's director of education and head of the digital film department. "One of our film program graduates created a 20-minute highlight reel for Marvel Studios that was screened this spring at the world premiere of *Avengers: Endgame* in Los Angeles. His work received a standing ovation from the audience."

Lewis said while MediaTech can be a launchpad for students wanting to work in New York, Hollywood, Atlanta, Nashville or Las Vegas, plenty of local possibilities exist that require the high-tech skills the institute teaches. "Many of our students have found work running sound systems at Houston-area megachurches," he said. "I'd say the lion's share of live sound engineers at Houston's House of Blues have come from here as well. We teach them how to operate multiple sound mixes simultaneously so that both audiences and performers can hear everything clearly. It's a lot more than karaoke."

Arian Rivers, career services director, also teaches business communications courses to ensure that graduates can easily assimilate into professional environments. "Our reputation and relationships within the industry are on the line, so we want students to have appropriate soft skills as well as technical expertise," he said. "We remind them that music and videos aren't going away, that there will always be studios and live shows and that they will always have jobs if they're good at what they do and are professional and likeable."

## Creative consultation

While the studios are primarily used for educational purposes, Lewis said studio time may be rented on a space-available basis by non-students. "There are times when our instructors have brought in rappers like Paul Wall or Lil' Keke to record or observe," he said. "Also, we can consult with corporate clients and match them with appropriate students to facilitate production of commercials, podcasts and training films. We're not like a barber college offering cheap haircuts, but we are willing to participate in community projects as much as we can."

Tuition is \$550 per credit hour. Financial aid and scholarships are available for qualifying students.



**Learning from the Pros:** *In classes at MediaTech Institute, students receive hands-on instruction in audio production fundamentals using professional-grade equipment.*

## MediaTech Institute

3234 Walnut Bend Lane • 832-242-3426 • mediatech.edu

**An education you can afford ...**

Financial Assistance Available  
Certifications, Accredited Curriculum, Job Placement Assistance, Day & Night Classes

Associate of Science Degrees and Short-term Diploma programs in:  
Medical Office Administration, Accounting, Business Information Systems, Bilingual Administrative Support, Vocational English as a Second Language

Classes are forming now for our new IT program in the Westchase District! Call 713.771.5336

**Call today to schedule a tour!**

**... A future you can depend on**

**INTERACTIVE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Southwest Campus - 713.771.5336  
2950 S. Gessner, Houston 77063  
Pasadena - 713.920.1120 • North Campus - 281.931.7717  
[www.ict.edu](http://www.ict.edu)

**LOGAN FARMS**  
*Honey Glazed Hams*  
& MARKET CAFE

**DINE-IN & SAVE!**  
**BUY ONE, GET ONE!**  
(Dine-in only)

Free item must be of same or lesser value. May not be combined with other offers. One per customer. Must be surrendered upon purchase. Not to be used with product gift cards. Good only at Houston store. **Expires 12/31/19**

**10% OFF**  
**YOUR FIRST CATERING ORDER**

May not be combined with other offers. One per customer. Must be surrendered upon purchase. Not to be used with product gift cards. Good only at Houston store. **Expires 12/31/19**

[www.loganfarms.com](http://www.loganfarms.com)  
10950 Westheimer Road  
Houston, TX 77042  
**(713) 781-3773**

# Beemac Logistics Swarms to Westchase District

*Transportation provider creates buzz in Houston with new office space*



**On the Move:** (From left) Marshall Greer, Houston branch manager, Ashley Boguszewski, executive assistant, and Michael Ceravolo, chief commercial officer, will expand Beemac Logistics' regional presence from new offices in Westchase District.

Like nectar to bees, Westchase District's superior mobility and office amenities have attracted yet another corporate leader to its boundaries – Beemac Logistics recently occupied about 5,000 square feet of the Towers at Westchase II, located in the District at 10350 Richmond Avenue. The lease is the latest in a fresh swarm of expansions and relocations that

sweeten the District's reputation as a beehive for corporate colonization.

## Honey, we're home

Founded in 1984 by Rick Macklin (the "mac" in Beemac) in Beaver, PA, Beemac Logistics serves more than 14,000 customers across a range of industries including industrial manufacturing, automotive, oil and gas, retail and agriculture. The company handles thousands of loads per month across all major freight modes including flatbed, van, refrigerated, rail, barge, ocean and air. Beemac provides cost-effective solutions to transportation and logistics challenges throughout North America by partnering with more than 17,000 carriers. For the past two years, the company has doubled in size each year and has recently opened offices in

Pittsburgh, Denver and Birmingham, with more offices in the works.

"Over the past few years, our work in Texas has increased significantly," said Michael Ceravolo, chief commercial officer. "We have a healthy base of loyal customers in the area, and Houston has truly become a second home for us. We have a robust service offering in the region, providing storage, material handling, transloading, inspection services, warehousing and direct discharge as well as local and long-haul trucking."

It makes sense that one of the fastest growing transportation providers in the country would want to expand its presence in Houston. The city is home to the second busiest port in the country, two of the top 50 busiest airports and a network of freeways and rail connections that make it a major transportation center. After conducting an extensive, months-long search for the ideal location to expand its operations, Ceravolo said Beemac ultimately chose Westchase District. "We looked at other parts of the city, but for us, the area's access to other areas of town via Beltway 8, along with the building's great amenities, really put Westchase District over the top for us."

## A hive of activity

Built in 2008, the 14-story Towers at Westchase II offers its tenants Class-A workspace in one of the landmark locations on the Westchase District skyline. "We have an amazing space with world class amenities including a state-of-the-art gym, multiple on-site restaurant offerings, ample secure parking and unrestricted access to the beltway and surrounding metro areas," Marshall Greer, Houston branch manager, said. "We plan to staff this office with about 50 logistics professionals as Phase 1 of our Houston growth. This location, paired with Beemac's strong offering of solutions and network of capabilities, will allow us to bring the top talent in Houston to our organization."

Ceravolo said the company plans to recruit many of those new operations, customer service and sales professionals (dare we call them worker bees?) this year. "Our management team is interviewing like crazy and starting to build the pipeline for new hires," he said. "There are so many opportunities for development in this market and we can't wait to grow out our team."

# Convenient Cultural Resources for Filipino Community

*After 25-year absence, Philippine Consulate General office reopens in Westchase District*

Earlier this year, the Republic of the Philippines opened a new Philippine Consulate General (PCG) office in Westchase District at 9990 Richmond. The move was met with overwhelmingly positive response from Filipino-Americans and Philippine nationals alike throughout the south-central region of the United States, as the office assists thousands, promotes national culture and strengthens international economic ties.

## Return to the region

In addition to its diplomatic embassy in Washington, D.C., the Philippine government has consular offices in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco as well as in Hawaii and Guam. Back in 1993, budget cuts closed the Philippine consulate-general offices in Houston. This meant that for years, Filipino-Americans in the southern United States faced considerable hardships when handling official business with in-person requirements, such as passport renewals. "Filipinos in the area are so happy they no longer have to travel to Chicago or Los Angeles for consular services," said Gilbert Segarra, consul.

Jerril Santos, consul general for the Houston office, oversees 11 staffers who offer clients a variety of services, including: issuing passports, travel documents and visas; processing applications for retention and re-acquisition of Philippine citizenship; civil registration of births, marriages and deaths of Filipino nationals; and acknowledgement and authentication of various legal documents. "Everyone in our office is bilingual in English and Tagalog," Segarra said. "And because we all came from different provinces in the Philippines, we speak many provincial dialects as well."

The Houston PCG serves about 200,000 Filipino-Americans in a six-state region that includes Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Mississippi and New Mexico. The PCG also supervises honorary consulates in Dallas and New Orleans. Throughout the year, staff from the Houston office coordinate with community organizations in these states to conduct regular consular outreach missions in various cities. Since the PCG's official opening in January, Segarra estimates the staff has processed nearly 10,000 documents.

## Cultural education

Already, the PCG has exhibited at several local economic forums, showcasing products made in the Philippines ranging from clothing and jewelry to handbags and art. Mary Jane Mariano, cultural officer, said the PCG plans to host a series

of educational programs aimed at Filipino-Americans who have never been to their cultural homeland or who have made only brief visits. "We especially want to educate children who are unaware of their parents' origins about their heritage and traditions," she said.

She added the PCG also coordinates with the Philippine government's departments of foreign affairs and tourism to arrange and promote special VIP ambassador tours. More than 300 tourists annually embark on eight-day, seven-night vacation packages that are designed to help Filipinos reconnect with their culture. "Now that we're established in Houston, we hope more people from the region will be represented on future trips," Mariano said.

## Centrally located

Segarra said when choosing the ideal location for the PCG, current and projected demographics made Westchase District the best place to be. "There are large Filipino populations in Sugar Land, Pearland and Katy, as well as many Filipinos working as doctors and nurses in the Texas Medical Center," Segarra said. "We feel Westchase District is a booming area that's centrally located for easy access for our constituents, not only now but looking ahead to the future. Plus, there are two METRO bus routes right outside of our office and we offer ample parking."

For comprehensive information about services and events offered through the Philippine Consulate General Houston, as well as to schedule an appointment online, visit [houstonpcg.dfa.gov.ph](http://houstonpcg.dfa.gov.ph).

## Philippine Consulate General

9990 Richmond Avenue, Suite 100  
346-293-8773



**Maligayang pagdating:** At Houston's new Philippine Consulate General office, you're sure to receive a warm welcome from staff. (From left: Gilbert Segarra, consul; Jerril Santos, consul general; and Mary Jane Mariano, cultural officer).

# Nearby vet and pet grooming services offer options for pet owners

## Two-thirds of U.S. households have pets

Studies have shown that companion animals may improve heart health for their live-in humans by lowering blood pressure and regulating their heart rate during stressful situations. But nothing can stress pet owners more than finding their pets in poor health or having to transport their animal friends to the vet or the groomer. Fortunately, pets and humans in Westchase District have several nearby options for pet health, wellness and grooming.

### Houston Cat Hospital

“Cats are my thing,” said Houston Cat Hospital’s Dr. Anne Romeo. She spent two years working at a feline-only practice in San Antonio before moving to Houston and is a contributing author of the veterinary textbook, *The Feline Patient*.

“Cats and dogs are so different,” she added. “At a regular vet clinic, only about 30 percent of the patients are cats. Since we only see cats, we develop special skills with cats. It really is a niche for us.”

In a dog-free environment, cat patients are much calmer, said Jessica Weitzel, practice administrator. “We’re able to handle fractious and nervous cats much better. We speak cat,” she said.



**Cat Scan:** Dr. Romeo and her techs perform an ultrasound on a feline patient’s bladder. The ultrasound machine is just one of many pieces of high-tech diagnostic equipment available at Houston Cat Hospital.

Located at 11169 Westheimer in the Market at Westchase shopping center, Houston Cat Hospital offers vaccinations, annual exams and dental care, as well as diagnostic and emergency care. An in-house lab and x-ray equipment result in quicker diagnostic times for worried owners and the onsite pharmacy means they can fill most prescriptions right away. Medically-necessary grooming and boarding services are also offered.

Weitzel estimates they see about 120 cat patients per week. “We try to be a one-stop shop,” she said. “With all our in-house equipment, we can perform most diagnostic tests and procedures without sending you and your cat elsewhere.”

[Houstoncathospital.com](http://Houstoncathospital.com)

### Cathy’s Critter Corner

Cathy Worth, from Cathy’s Critter Corner, has been grooming pets at the same Westchase District location, 2703 Rockyridge since 1998. “I do their hair cuts and trim their nails and send them on their way as soon as possible. The less time they

spend in the grooming shop, the better experience they’ll have,” Worth said.

Worth recommends that dogs come in for their first grooming experience as soon as they’ve had all their puppy shots. “Don’t wait until they’re a year old,” she said. “Introduce them slowly to grooming. We’ll start with a bath and a nail trim and introduce the clippers later on.” Grooming prices start at \$45 and vary depending on the size, breed, age and temperament of the dog. Call 713-781-7838 for an appointment.

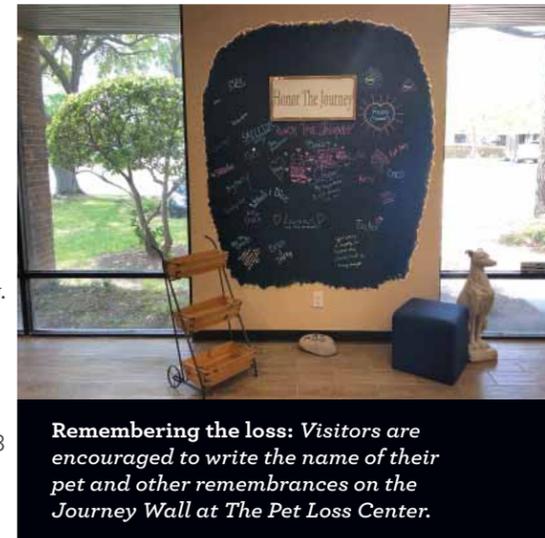
### The Pet Loss Center

Houston’s Pet Loss Center opened in 2018 to partner with veterinarians and pet parents in handling the end-of-life experience for pets. “We partner with vet clinics to provide cremation services for pets,” said Lindsey Nace, vice president of marketing. “Some of our clients use mobile vets to perform the euthanasia at home. We’ll pick up the pets after they’re deceased and bring them here for cremation. We have viewing rooms and memorialization rooms so pet parents can spend time with their animal.”

Nace added that the center also assists with grief support. “We have a care line available 24/7 to provide support to pet parents,” she said. “Sometimes it is used by vet techs. They see and deal with pet death daily and it can become overwhelming for them too.”

The Pet Loss Center is located at 10645 Richmond Avenue, Suite 190.

[Thepetlosscenter.com/Houston](http://Thepetlosscenter.com/Houston)



**Remembering the loss:** Visitors are encouraged to write the name of their pet and other remembrances on the Journey Wall at The Pet Loss Center.

### More pet-centered business in Westchase District:

**Tanglewilde Veterinary Clinic** • 2717 Rockyridge • [tanglewildevet.com](http://tanglewildevet.com)

**Woodlake Pet Hospital** • 9630 Westheimer Road • [woodlakevet.com](http://woodlakevet.com)

**PetWorks Express** • 11326-C Westheimer Rd. • [petworksexpress.com](http://petworksexpress.com)

**Good Dog Grooming Shop** • 11394 Westheimer Rd.  
[facebook.com/GoodDogGroomingShop](https://facebook.com/GoodDogGroomingShop)

**Petco** • 10911 Westheimer • [Petco.com](http://Petco.com)

# Sergeant Stays Sharp Safeguarding Streets of Westchase District

## Patrols help Sergeant Kinawa Kongvongsay keep his edge

Most officers of the Houston Police Department are seasoned veterans with years of policing under their belts. They bring proficiency in diverse specialties to the work, including administrative expertise learned at “desk jobs.” One way some officers keep their patrol skills sharp is by whetting them patrolling the streets of Westchase District. Sergeant Kinawa Kongvongsay is a prime example of someone honing his talents in the service of the community.

### A diverse career

Born in Austin, Kongvongsay was reared in southwest Houston by his mother, a computer hardware technician. “Ever since I was a kid, I wanted to be a police officer, but I was working a lot of odd jobs to help my mom and dropped out of high school,” he said. After earning his G.E.D., Kongvongsay enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2005 as a combat engineer stationed at Fort Hood, where he was deployed twice to Iraq. “I was attached to infantry divisions to assist with route clearance,” he said. “Basically, I searched for bombs on the side of the road and would detonate them so that troops could pass safely.”

Following his honorable discharge as a Specialist in 2009, Kongvongsay worked briefly as a jailer in Huntsville, Texas before attending the Houston Police Academy. After graduating, he was assigned to HPD’s Midwest Division as an evening shift patrol officer. After seven years working in the Galleria area, Kongvongsay was promoted to Sergeant and transferred to Southeast Division. Since January 2018, he’s worked at the Joint Processing Center of the new Harris County Jail in downtown Houston. “I make sure that all the charges for the inmates are correct and act as a liaison between HPD and Harris County,” he said. “I like it - it’s the first administrative job I’ve ever had, and it’s been a nice change of pace from patrol work.”

### Meaningful discussions

Kongvongsay first learned about the Westchase District Patrol from fellow officer John Reyes. “Even though I grew up in southwest Houston, I was not that familiar with the Westchase District area,” he said. The sergeant has received a crash

course in all things Westchase during the past 18 months, patrolling apartment communities, hotels, office buildings and retail centers four shifts per week.

“It’s a lot nicer that other parts of Houston for sure, and I feel like the community is very pro-police,” he said. “It’s interesting, but in my time patrolling the area, I haven’t had to arrest anyone yet. Once I speak with someone who’s panhandling or loitering, they move on down the road.” Kongvongsay said he’s always had an interest in business, so he enjoys discussing things with area business owners. “Sometimes they give me little bits of intel about what’s going on in the area,” he said. “They seem to really appreciate our presence, which makes patrolling the area enjoyable.”

### Education and the outdoors

Off-duty, Kongvongsay is working on his undergraduate degree at Lamar University. “Eventually I think I’d like to earn a master’s degree in business,” he said. When not studying or rearing his two children, Kongvongsay enjoys spending time outdoors fishing and hiking. “It doesn’t matter to me whether or not I actually catch any fish, I just like being outside and away from the city,” he said.



**The Sergeant with a Smile:** Frequently patrolling retail centers in Westchase District, HPD Sergeant Kinawa Kongvongsay is a friendly and familiar presence in the area.

(Continued from Page 1)

“Now our residents take advantage of the bistro’s free Wi-Fi, game tables, kitchen and seating areas,” Behrens said. “We created a flexible space where we host monthly social events or where residents can just hang out and relax with their neighbors.”

Sometimes neighborly interactions just need a nudge. Built in 1984, Westchase Creek Apartments, 3000 Woodland Park Drive, was acquired last year by Veritas Equity Management. “Since last August, we added a gazebo, grilling station and pergola near our pool deck,” said Ruha Vorha, community manager. “When I first joined the property, no one was using the pool. Now, people love to have outdoor get-togethers and celebrate birthdays around the area,” she said.

## Activity and amenities

Opportunities for outdoor exercise are also a factor drawing residents to the District. “Since my property backs up to the District’s trail system, we installed a new fence with coded padlock access,” said Dario Quezada, community manager at Commons at Westchase, 10751 Meadowglen Lane. “Our residents really like to be out on the trail. Also, I have several pet stations with waste pickup bags and trash receptacles.”

Based on resident feedback, Arlo Westchase built a “bark park” last October, complete with a dog run, an agility course and water fountain. “My dogs love the park,” said resident Itezelle Arienza. “When I can’t take them for a long walk, I can bring them here and let them run free. I’ve met so many of my neighbors here.”

Arienza said she recently renewed her lease, but not before shopping other apartment communities. “I looked at one place in the Heights that had a dog run that was really just a row of rocks,” she said. “The dog park at Arlo definitely influenced my decision to stay. Plus, I work from home and I sometimes use the conference room to have coffee and work from there, which is a really nice amenity.”

## Special delivery

Traditionally a challenge for leasing office staff, e-commerce package delivery to apartments is being transformed via new technologies. Arlo Westchase employs Luxer One package lockers, a leading solution that sends residents a text message or email with a one-time use access code to scan and retrieve their packages. The system features lockers that accommodate oversized packages and even has a refrigerated



**Blending Work & Play:** The remodeled community room at The Village at Westchase offers residents free Wi-Fi as well as space to relax and mingle.

locker for flowers or perishable deliveries. Video surveillance with access logs maintain security and accountability. “Now our residents can pick up their items 24 hours a day,” Davidson said. “It also allows residents the perk of shipping their online shopping returns straight from the community.”

Ventura Lofts chose to eliminate the time and space devoted to package delivery entirely by using an innovative service called Fetch Package. When packages are ready for delivery, residents receive smartphone notifications to schedule a convenient time to have their packages hand-delivered to their door. “This way, residents never have to worry about rushing home before the leasing office closes and they can order anything from a meal to an entire home of furniture,” Gilliam said.

These high-tech solutions can free up leasing office staff to spend more time simply interacting with residents. “I have residents who will come in to our leasing office and talk to me about everything from *Catfish: The TV Show* to what their cats are up to,” Behrens said, laughing. “Sometimes it feels like I’m offering free therapy sessions, but we want residents to feel like our office is an extension of their home, not a business and that they feel heard. I feel that personal touch gives us a competitive advantage.”

# Neighborhood News

**Burnett Specialists** - Texas' largest employee-owned recruitment, temporary staffing, contract and headhunting service - recently celebrated 45 years in business with a festive anniversary party at the Houston Marriott Westchase. Staff members from Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Houston and San Antonio enjoyed dinner, dancing and a casino party.

Sue Burnett, the company’s founder and president, presented a proclamation from Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner making August 1, 2019 Burnett Specialists Day in Houston. In 1979, five years into its history, Burnett Specialists established its headquarters in what would become Westchase District. “We’ve been in Westchase for 40 years,” Burnett said. “Being close to Beltway 8 and the Westpark Tollway has been convenient for my employees as well as for our candidates coming to interview with us. I think the landscaping projects make the District look professional and consistent. It’s been a wonderful location and we plan to stay here for many years to come.”



You’re invited to join **Texas Senator Paul Bettencourt** (District 7) for breakfast on Thursday, November 7. You’ll be among the first to hear the senator’s perspective on November’s national and local elections, as well as about the hot topics from this year’s legislative session.

The breakfast will take place at Cantina Laredo, 11129 Westheimer Road, Houston, TX 77042. The event will kick off with networking at 7:30 a.m., followed at 8 a.m. with a seated breakfast and presentation.

Reserve a table of four (\$200) or purchase a single ticket for just \$55. Proceeds benefit the Westchase District Community Fund (WDCF), the charitable arm of Westchase District. Formed in 2010 to advance the District’s goals and objectives, the WDCF aligns donor support with area needs. The WDCF is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization overseen by a volunteer board of leading citizens.



**Paul Bettencourt**

Limited seating is available. Reserve your table at [WDCFund.org](http://WDCFund.org) or send a check made payable to WDCF to:

Westchase District Community Fund  
10370 Richmond Avenue, Suite 1350, Houston, TX 77042  
Have questions? Contact Dave Gilkeson, 713-780-9434.

At a recent meeting of the Westchase District Advisory Board, two new members were welcomed to its ranks: **Manu Gupta, M.D.**, managing director, Indus Management Group, and **Frank Lo**, principal, Cardno Structural Engineering.

Established in 2014, the WDAB consists of business owners, elected officials, school representatives, pastors and business leaders who want to contribute to the growth and continued success of Westchase District. The board’s mission is to advise District staff on community outreach efforts, priorities on projects and programs, and to act as a sounding board for issues within our community.



(From left: Manu Gupta, Frank Lo and Jim Russ, Westchase District Advisory Board chair)

## Want more neighborhood news?

Then subscribe to receive *The Wire*, our e-newsletter.

Sent twice monthly, it takes just 90 seconds to read five short blurbs and be up-to-date on the latest in Westchase District. Sign up today at

[westchasedistrict.com/subscribe](http://westchasedistrict.com/subscribe).