

*The Delta Kappa
Gamma Society
International*

*Epsilon Kappa
Chapter #130*

*Alpha State
Austin, TX
Area 7*

The Reporter

International Mission: Delta Kappa Gamma promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education

International Theme: 85 Years and Beyond: Advancing Key Women Educators for Life

State Theme: Expand the Vision: Educate—Inspire—Encourage

Chapter Theme: Expanding Our World – Exploring the Possibilities

Volume 58, Issue 3

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President's Message

Spread Your Wings and Take Flight

Teachers are natural-born leaders. Modeling lifelong learning, today's teachers automatically take on a leadership role when they take responsibility for their own learning as well as the learning of their students. They perform the role of instructor, guide, mentor, coach, and facilitator. In their own classrooms on a daily basis, teachers lead individual students, groups of students, and classrooms of students. Teachers lead other teachers when they share knowledge, expertise, and learning among themselves. Teacher leaders operate in an environment of collegiality and receive inspiration from one another.

We know that "leaders" come from all walks of life, all ages and genders, all races and ethnicities. I believe that each of us becomes a "leader" at some point in our lives, formally or informally, often frequently in our lives; sometimes for only a brief moment, sometimes longer. I'm sure you have all seen many of your students assume a leadership role countless times, oftentimes without even being asked. Each one of us has something to contribute as a leader, whether it is for a single activity, a short or long-term project, a year or biennium, or a life-long endeavor. No two people lead exactly alike or have exactly the same leadership style ~ the manner in which a person leads is as unique as the person herself.

It is becoming apparent that leadership in today's world may require some new skills not traditionally considered as necessary for effective leadership – skills such as flexibility, adaptability, resilience, trust, tolerance, technology orientation, patience, compassion, self-awareness, a strong sense

of purpose, collaboration, respect for others, the ability to establish meaningful relationships, and the ability to make a decision. These are in addition to those skills thought to be more traditional for effective leadership, such as innovation, creativity, being a responsible visionary, change-oriented, team-oriented, a good communicator (verbal and written), and having good interpersonal skills.

But it may be unrealistic for us to think that one individual might be all of these things – which is why "leadership teams" can often be more effective in accomplishing an organization's mission and goals. Members of the team complement each other by bringing their own different skills to the table. For example, we have all seen how rapidly changing technology affects our everyday lives. It's often challenging for any one individual to keep up with every technological advance that pertains just to the tools many of us use every day. But when we share our new "discoveries" with one another, we learn from each other and do not have to rely or depend solely on our own to make those discoveries.

When we choose to lead, we must be willing to take risks and to make mistakes. We may fall more than once, but when we fall, what's most important is that we get back up again. When we fall, we hope and trust that others will be there to help us get back up and to support us along the way.

There are many leadership opportunities in Delta Kappa Gamma at the local chapter level, the state level, and the international level. Some require more time, effort, and commitment than others, but some require only a very short-term commitment and responsibility. Members can serve on a committee, serve as chair of a committee or

President's Message Continued

a specific activity/event, serve as hostess for a meeting or chair the hostesses for a meeting, provide a short program or update to a critical topic, or serve as an officer.

Part of the mission of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is to promote the professional and personal growth of women educators. One of the primary vehicles for growing both personally and professionally is to engage in a leadership activity of some type, be it short term or long term, simple or more complex.

Whether you're currently employed or retired, I challenge each of you to examine your own strengths, desires, and opportunities for growth and to use the results of that examination to determine what type of leadership activity, be it short term or long term, simple or more complex, that you feel could best meet your own goals in this biennium as life-long learners. Use it as an opportunity to share your talents, skills, and expertise with your fellow sisters or just to learn to become a better leader.

So go ahead ~ *spread your wings and take flight*. Take the challenge to lead in some capacity and help advance our chapter and DKG while advancing your personal and professional goals. Be willing to take a chance ~ be willing to make a difference, no matter how small. Let your own personality and style lead the way for you. You will be rewarded in more ways than you can imagine.

Earin Martin



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USDE Issued Fact Sheet Regarding Unaccompanied Immigrant Children

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) recently distributed to state educational agencies (SEAs) a Fact Sheet on Educational Services for Immigrant Children and Those Recently Arrived to the United States. The fact sheet provides information to SEAs and to school districts to help educational personnel understand their responsibilities in connection with these students. The fact sheet also identifies existing resources available to help educate all immigrant students, including those who recently arrived in the U.S.

All children in the United States, including those who recently arrived, are entitled to a free, appropriate public education regardless of their origin, citizenship, or immigration status. Unaccompanied children who were apprehended while crossing the border are cared for at a Health and Human Services (HHS) Shelter and receive educational services and other care from providers who run those HHS shelters. The children are released from federal custody to an appropriate sponsor during their immigration proceedings. While residing with a sponsor, these children have the right under federal law to enroll in public elementary and secondary schools in their local communities and to benefit from all educational services.

In addition to the regular education program offered by a school district, available federal resources already received by school districts include:

- Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB); provides supplemental educational services to educationally disadvantaged children
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); provides supplemental services to children with disabilities
- Title III of NCLB, English Language Acquisition (ELA) Program; provides assistance to districts with significant increases of immigrant students
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Education for Homeless Children and Youth; provides supplemental assistance to homeless children and youth
- Migrant Education Programs (Title I, Part C of NCLB); provides supplemental educational and support services to children of migratory workers or to children who are migratory workers (agricultural or fishery)

News from Texas Education Agency

TEA Announces New Suite of College and Career Readiness Tools

Opportunity to Earn 24 Hours CEU Credit

In a letter to superintendents dated October 3, 2014, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) announced a “new suite of college and career readiness tools available to districts and campuses.”

Per TEA, the Online College and Career Readiness Resource Center (www.txccrsc.org) is a comprehensive tool for college and career development in Texas, providing over 250 free resources, videos, and interactive activities, as well as the most current research and best practices available for college and career readiness.

The Resource Center features two primary pieces: a Profile Planning Guide for school leadership teams and administrators, and the Resource Center for all educators that includes 22 professional development lessons. Educators can earn 24 hours of CEU credit after completing all 22 lessons by taking an exam on ESC Region 13’s E-campus (online) system.

TEA Conducted Principal Survey to Evaluate Texas Educator Preparation Programs

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) recently conducted a mandatory survey of principals to evaluate the effectiveness of educator preparation programs in Texas. Each principal who has first-year teachers on his or her campus was required to respond to the survey to measure the performance of beginning teachers and the educator preparation program’s effectiveness in preparing those teachers to succeed in the classroom. Completed surveys were to be submitted to TEA by June 30, 2014. Principals who failed to complete and submit the required survey face sanctions imposed by state law.

The survey is required pursuant to Section 21.045 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) and Chapter 229 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), which requires new accountability standards for Texas educator preparation programs. Section 21.0451 of TEC also requires that sanctions be imposed for educator preparation programs that do not meet accountability standards.

TEA Publishes New Report on Grade-Level Retention

In a letter to educators dated October 7, 2014, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), Division of Research and Analysis, Accountability Research Unit, announced the publication of a new report entitled *Grade-Level Retention in Texas Public Schools, 2012-2013*.

Per TEA, the report is available online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/retention_index.html and provides data on retention by student characteristics, including grade level; race/ethnicity; gender; degree of English proficiency, and other student population demographics such as at-risk and socio-economic status. Data are also provided by participation in special education, career and technical education, gifted and talented, and Title I programs. You can search retention data at the campus, district, and education service center region levels at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/retention/years.html>.

Life Milestones / Kudos

Hilda Diaz, our Second Vice-President, just received exemplary status from the Gomez and Gomez evaluators when they visited her fourth grade dual language classroom at Walnut Creek Elementary. In fact, they were so impressed that they are recommending other teachers to visit her class as a model of excellence. Way to go Hilda!

Sandi Causey's daughter, Liz, married Ross Kononen on September 1 in Denver, Colorado. Our own Marilyn Gregor was the photographer. Congratulations!

Membership Review

Submitted by Mary Louise Poolman & Bernadine Eaton

Many of us have participated in creating our school's mission statements so we understand the importance of identifying the purpose for our actions. If you check our yearbook on page 4, the Mission Statement of DKG gives chapters the direction in which to support excellence.

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education.

The statement is simple and direct. So how do we as individuals reap the benefits of this idea? When we attend meetings that have been planned by the thoughtful women of our Educational Excellence Committee, we gain insights into educational programs that support or broaden our interests. Other meetings may give us ways to share in self-improvement or bonding with our sisters. Our aim is always to encourage life-long learning.

Bringing Facebook to Epsilon Kappa

Submitted by Julie Jistel

Facebook is an online social networking service created by Mark Zuckerberg and his roommates at Harvard University. To date, Facebook is helping 1.32 billion people connect, communicate and stay in touch, and it's time we put Facebook to work for the members of Epsilon Kappa. This user-friendly social utility will provide members of both our organization and the Austin community with the most current happenings within our DKG chapter. It's a living, breathing, rapidly changing "yearbook," if you will. With all members sharing news, reminders, photos, and posts, our Epsilon Kappa Facebook site will not only help members stay informed but connect with one another, which I think we can all agree will only support and strengthen our goals and mission.



Image from Creative Commons

Lunch Bunch Crosses the River!

Everyone is invited! Please enjoy the pleasure of good food, laughter, and friends. The fellowship begins at 11:30 on Thursday, December 4, at the Brio Tuscan Grill. Located at 10000 Research, 78759, in the Arboretum at Great Hills, it was once the TGI Friday's. Please call Mary Louise Poolman to reserve your seating, by Monday, Dec.1, at 512-626-8280.

EYE ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Can you match the following winter festivals with the 8 countries listed below?

<i>Festival of Lights</i>	<i>Gingerbread Town</i>	<i>Dec 6— Independence Day</i>	<i>St. Nicolas Parade</i>
<i>Le Carnaval du Bonhomme</i>	<i>Our Lady of Guadalupe</i>	<i>St. Lucia Day</i>	<i>Tribute to Santo Tomas</i>



Image from Creative Commons

At the December 6th holiday meeting we will share information about winter festivities from 8 of our 16 DKG International Countries (Canada, Norway, Sweden, Mexico, Finland, Guatemala, Iceland, and the Netherlands) in the order they became part of DKG. We'll include music for each country, and one darling video. Hostesses will prepare samples of the foods served at these winter festivals. So, save some room for the goodies. We will also have a brief presentation on the International project, Schools for Africa, and you will have the opportunity to make a donation if you'd like.

Although there will be no chapter meeting in January, the EEC will be meeting to plan ahead for the 2015-2016 year and finalize details for upcoming spring 2014 meetings. The plan is to have the 2015-2016 programs determined before school is out.

Guidance Issued to Schools

The U.S. Department of Education, as well as the Texas Education Agency (TEA), issued guidance to superintendents (in a letter dated October 20, 2014) related to the Ebola virus. Per TEA, as a result of the first case of the Ebola virus being diagnosed in Dallas, the Dallas Independent School District was the first to deal with issues related to potential exposure to students and/or staff. Aware of the multitude of questions from school districts and communities, the letter provides guidance related to the three most common issues brought to the Commissioner's attention: School Closures, Attendance Waivers, and Instruction Options for Quarantined Students.

The Texas Department of State Health Services released a statement on October 19, 2014, indicating that no public health reason exists at this time to close schools, cancel classes or cancel extracurricular activities. The decision to close a specific campus is a district decision. In addition, districts are permitted to seek waivers regarding attendance policies for health and/or safety reasons. The Commissioner also informed districts that there are a variety of potential options to address the educational needs of students who are being monitored for potential Ebola exposure and cannot attend class during the isolation period, including providing instruction by remote conferencing for those students who are quarantined at home at the direction of a public health official.



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Food for Thought

Chicken Pate

Contributed by Kathy Mihalik

This is an old Cuisinart recipe and makes a great appetizer for holiday get-togethers.

1 to 1 1/4 cups cold cooked meat (I always use roast chicken, and use the breast meat)
 4-6 anchovy fillets (I use a complete can)
 1 piece raw onion, "half as big as a walnut" (I use a much bigger piece)
 1 stick unsalted butter (that's what I use)
 1 lemon cut and juiced (I use lime juice)
 1/2 teaspoon salt (I skip this as anchovies are salty)
 A pinch of freshly ground black pepper



Image from Creative Commons

Cut the meat into 1 inch cubes; rinse and dry the anchovies. Put the metal blade in the food processor, and process the meat, anchovies, and onion for 60 seconds, or until finely chopped. (They start with 4 anchovies at this point, add more later to taste.) Then add the butter, lemon juice, and salt - process until "completely smooth." Taste for seasoning and as needed add "pepper, more salt, lemon juice, or anchovies."

Serve with crackers or toasted or freshly-sliced French baguette slices.

(P.S. Kathy served this at the November meeting.)

News Eye on the Web

Submitted by Bernadine Eaton

Checking websites is almost a daily necessity! As I started to prepare for this newsletter, I thought I had noted all the news from TSO. However, a brand new section popped up on the last day of October. If more interesting announcements arrive before the end of the year, I will send out a quick note to all members to keep everyone informed.

Beginning with our own deltakappagamma-tx-epsilonkappa.weebly.com, two pictures from the September meeting are under the *More* tab. Check this for photos each month.

The most updates are found at alphastatetexas.org. The first article is about the newest chapter, Mu Omega, that was chartered on October 19 in Premont. Next is the link to the Lone Star News fall edition. The third section is the one that popped up the last of the month. [Get Connected](#) is a new publication about how to promote the Society along with technology tips. This first edition asks, "What are YOU communicating?" There are several questions to ponder on what one does as she walks into a meeting and how she leaves the meeting. Also, there are instructions on how to use a PDF form. This will be a valuable tool for all of us. Continuing down the front page, the fourth part announces the CTAUN conference in Houston on April 11, 2015. Several of our members have participated in previous conferences. One of the most important headlines is information about copyright laws. All of us who write for public consumption need to be aware of the restrictions on use of material. Just for fun, look at the photo gallery on the left sidebar. The pictures from the state convention are posted as well as links to the International convention.

At dkg.org there is a banner that has the breakout session proposal for the regional conference. We do have members who may want to share their expertise at the Wichita regional next summer.

All these websites are listed in our yearbook on page 25.

Another very interesting notice appeared on the Girl Scouts of Central Texas newsletter that I receive because of my previous connection to the council. As of October, Scouts are concluding a challenge from Samsung to engineer new water conservation techniques. This is an exciting way to promote STEM knowledge in a very useful way. So educators are all around us.



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DECEMBER 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JANUARY 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Looking Ahead

- December 6, 2014—Chapter Meeting at Home of Charlotte Hanna, 10:00 a.m.
- January 1, 2015—Submission period for DKG Fine Arts Gallery
- January 3, 2015—Deadline for DKG Educational Foundation Project Grant Applications
- January 10, 2015—Executive Board Meeting at Home of Earin Martin, 11:00 a.m.
- January 10, 2015—Deadline for Proposals for Regional Conference Breakout Sessions
- February 1, 2015—Deadline for submitting application for International Scholarship for pursuing Master's Degree or Doctorate
- February 1, 2015—Deadline for submitting application for Lucille Cornet Professional Development awards
- June 24-27, 2015—86th TSO Convention

SEE MENTORING PROJECT IS PROMOTING LITERACY THROUGH STEM CLASSROOM LIBRARY SETS

Submitted by Bernadine Eaton/Marcia Kirkland

Our first STEM classroom library sets for second grade and fourth grade classrooms have arrived! At the November 6th meeting, Hilda Diaz presented our third year mentee and recently initiated member, Nancy Alaniz, with 35 books for her second graders at Guerrero Thompson Elementary. She will be able to use them with her students and share the library set with her grade level team on a rotating basis. The fourth grade STEM classroom library will be delivered soon to Alba Garza, who is also a third year mentee at Guerrero Thompson Elementary.

The committee has also ordered sets of Spanish STEM books for those mentees who are in dual language or bilingual classrooms. English sets will continue to go to those educators in ESL and regular classrooms. As soon as the library sets arrive, mentors will be busy working with their mentees on implementing strategies to engage students in individual use or through shared reading with the whole class.

Please remember your tax-deductible contributions to support our SEE Project will allow more early-career educators to receive STEM classroom libraries. Each set of 35 books costs approximately \$250.



Put Your Dollars to Work Support Austin Area Educators and Students

EPSILON KAPPA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, established in 2010, is affiliated with Epsilon Kappa Chapter of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. The Foundation administers two programs:

• **Phyllis Richards Leadership Grants** for attendance at leadership events

• **S.E.E. Project - Supporting Early-career Educators**



S.E.E.

- Currently established in eight North Austin elementary schools
- Provides professional and financial support for teachers in their first five years of service
- Project is enthusiastically received by teachers and administrators in participating schools
- Project was featured last year in a KXAN report on factors affecting teacher retention (aired June 21, 2013)

- Every project participant is paired with an experienced educator who serves as a mentor throughout the school year
- In initial stages of project, each new teacher is given a ream of copy paper, a flash drive, and an electric pencil sharpener
- Teachers receive professional books, such as *The First Days of School* by Harry and Rosemary Wong, with follow-up discussions scheduled with mentors
- Focus for 2014-2015 is purchase of S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) classroom libraries for each grade level in participating schools
- Additional funding is provided for classroom supplies/equipment or for professional development activities

Here's what your money can buy –

\$35 provides a ream of paper, flash drive, and pencil sharpener for one teacher

\$100 provides copies of *The First Days of School* for five teachers

\$250 provides one S.T.E.M. classroom library of 35 books

\$1000 provides twenty \$50 gift cards for classroom materials

\$1500 provides six classroom libraries – one for each grade K-5 – for one elementary school

→ All contributions (100%) designated for the **S.E.E. Project** go directly to benefit teachers and students.

Make checks payable to **EPSILON KAPPA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION** and mail to:

12314 W. Cow Path

Austin, TX 78727



EPSILON KAPPA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Contributions to the Foundation are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

ekedfound@aol.com

512.250.2026



Epsilon Kappa Educational Foundation Contribution Form

Donor Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZipCode _____

- Yes, I want to support educators and students through the **S.E.E. Project**. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift in the amount of:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other \$ _____ |



Complete if applicable:

- This contribution is in honor of in memory of _____

Please send notification to: _____

→ Make check payable to **EPSILON KAPPA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**. Mail this form and your check to:

Marcia Kirkland, Treasurer

12314 W. Cow Path

Austin, TX 78727

→ For further information, contact **EPSILON KAPPA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION** at ekedfound@aol.com or 512.250.2026.

EPSILON KAPPA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

The Scoop on Scholarships and Grants

Grants Funds Available for DKG Educational Foundation Projects

The Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation has awarded over \$4 million to groups or individuals for projects to benefit children and education. Generous donations from DKG chapters, members and friends make these Project grants possible. Any project leader may apply. Applicants need not be members of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. Applications are due January 3, 2015.

DKG Educational Foundation projects must be consistent with and show a clear connection to the Educational Foundation mission statement and purposes.

Mission Statement: The DKG Educational Foundation supports and encourages intercultural understanding and educational excellence.

Purposes are to:

1. support and encourage intercultural understanding,
2. encourage standards of excellence in education, and/or
3. assist and cooperate with schools, colleges, universities, and other persons, with organizations, trust funds, or foundations in support, encouragement, and improvement of education.

Types of project activities can include excursions/study visits, stipends/awards, technology/equipment, books, school materials, teacher training, pedagogical/didactic development, tutoring, and other. Topics can include reading and writing; math; science; arts; values, like Equal Opportunities/Democracy; intercultural education/understanding (Integration, ESL, etc.); and others.

Project awards are not granted for salaries or overhead costs. Project periods are for one year, July 1 – June 30, and renewal funding for subsequent years may be available if evidence of seeking additional sources of income is provided.

Consider applying for one of these project grants to aid you in accomplishing your goals for educational improvement. And since non-members can apply, share this information with fellow educators on your campus. Sharing these types of opportunities with others could be a great way of recruiting new members to Delta Kappa Gamma while helping them accomplish their personal and professional goals related to education.



Image from Creative Commons

Year at a Glance

Reserve the following dates on your calendar for chapter meetings and make plans to attend. Locations, programs, and hostesses are listed in the 2014-2015 chapter yearbook.

Saturday, December 6, 2014	10:00 a.m.
Saturday, February 7, 2015	11:00 a.m.
Monday, March 2, 2015	6:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 11, 2015	10:00 a.m.
Saturday, May 2, 2015	TBA
Thursday, September 10, 2015	6:00 p.m.
Monday, October 5, 2015	6:00 p.m.



Image from Creative Commons

Give yourself the gift of time to attend meetings. If you are unable to attend every meeting, try to attend at least one meeting in the Fall and at least one in the Spring. You will benefit greatly from the fellowship and personal/professional growth.

Love Reading and Discussing?

"Book Lovers Unite!" are planning to meet again in January. All you have to do is read pages 1- 112 of The Art of Possibility (by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander) and come to the meeting. The discussion begins from 4:00-6:00, in the home of Mary Louise Poolman, at 7012 Windrift Way, 78745. Last time we enjoyed lots of free-flowing perspectives. Please join us, even if you missed the last meeting.

Let's Celebrate!

Here is a list of birthdays to celebrate in December and January:

Claudia Knowles	12-04	Jenna Rice	01-06
Sandi Causey	12-08	Marilyn Gregory	01-08
Kathy Mihalik	12-08	Martha Dolman	01-11
Leyla Cohlma	12-10	Julie Jistel	01-16
Jolene Crozier	12-13	Jo Watts	01-23
Ann Lilie	12-19	Charlotte Hanna	01-26
Janet Bernard	12-22	Jeanette Abrajan	01-27
Carol Staskus	12-22		
Montie Simpson	12-31		



Highlights of October & November Epsilon Kappa Meetings

October – *Initiation and Celebrating Epsilon Kappa's 56th Birthday*

The October meeting, held at the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International Headquarters, was a memorable one. We wish you could have all been there to experience it.

New members Nancy Alaniz and Ashley White were initiated, and Nita Scott, Membership Services Administrator for The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, participated in the initiation ceremony as a special guest.

Guest speaker Nita Scott spoke about the rewards of membership in DKG from a personal perspective. She shared with us that the “official home” of the Society is not in the headquarters building, but rather, it is in *us*, the members, and it is what *we* make of it. Nita shared what DKG really means to her personally, experiencing a “wow” at her first state convention, and then a “whoaaa” at her first international convention. Reminding us what DKG is really all about, she relayed that membership in DKG “empowers (her) and you, to unleash our potential and develop our strengths. It is about being a better educator, a better leader, a better presenter, a better writer, a better advocate ... and the list goes on.” Nita encouraged all of us to experience the “wows” and the “whoas of DKG.” In her closing comments, she paid what we thought was a beautiful compliment to the chapter by saying, “Epsilon Kappa, you are out in the forefront leading the way with an awesome blend of new and traditional, with a beautiful spirit of innovative thinking founded on what is tried and true.”

We celebrated Epsilon Kappa's 56th birthday by reviewing information about some of the chapter charter members and viewing an electronic “photo album” (i.e., video) of all of the charter members. We also celebrated significant birthdays of three chapter members: Julia Mellenbruch, in honor of her 98th birthday; Dr. Natalie Barraga, in honor of her 99th birthday; and Marie Scheel (not in attendance), in honor of her 100th birthday. We are fortunate to have such remarkable longevity in our chapter, with all three of these ladies still active. Each of these three special ladies has made significant contributions to education during her long and storied career.

And lest we forget, we honored Dr. Phyllis Richards with her 50-year chapter membership pin and certificate. We are fortunate to have Dr. Richards' gift to our Epsilon Kappa Educational Foundation, the Dr. Phyllis Richards Endowed Leadership Fund, to provide opportunities to members to attend conventions and conferences and other professional development events.

November – *Developing Positive Parent Communication*

Held in the Library of Walnut Creek Elementary School, the November meeting proved to be a very informative and special one featuring a panel of educators from Austin-area schools. Panel members discussed strategies and techniques for establishing positive communications and effective relationships with parents of students who attend those schools. Panel members who so graciously gave of their time included Tracie Montanio, Principal of Westside Elementary School in Leander ISD; Amy Reynolds, Classroom Teacher at Ojeda Middle School in Del Valle ISD; Richard Castillo, Parent Support Specialist at John H. Reagan Early College High School in Austin ISD; David Rainey, Counselor at Canyon

Highlights Continued

Ridge Middle School in Leander ISD; and Michael Benavides Griffin, Assistant Principal at Svante Palm Elementary School in Austin ISD. Our own Dr. Claudia Knowles did an exquisite job serving as the panel moderator.

The demographics of each school bring its own set of challenges and calls for different strategies and techniques to communicate effectively with and fully engage parents. But the common thread running through all is that parents and children are treated with dignity, resulting in partnerships established among parents and school personnel that help in designing the most appropriate solution for dealing with a particular issue. At Westside Elementary in Leander, parents are invited to the gym for morning announcements, where students are empowered to be leaders in the community by taking part in making the announcements. Tracie keeps in mind that parents are always looking out for the best interest of their child. At Ojeda Middle School in Del Valle, Amy meets with teachers to determine any extenuating circumstances and tries to meet with every parent and really listen to what the parents have to say so they can work toward possible solutions. All discussion maintains the focus on the behavior of the child and exploring options.

Richard understands that parent involvement means something different to everyone and knows how effective a simple greeting (hello and shaking hand) for each parent can be. At Reagan in Austin ISD, workshops are provided for parents and attendance has increased because Richard asks, “Which workshop is the best time for you to attend?” as opposed to just making the workshops available. At Palm Elementary, absenteeism is improving because Michael calls the parent of every child who is absent. Because Palm is in a predominantly Hispanic area, the morning assembly is held on alternate mornings in Spanish and English. Michael understands that you must be flexible and gauge parents without judging.

David represented a more affluent area where parents and the community have high expectations for their children and for the teachers at Canyon Ridge Middle School in Leander. School personnel know they have to “be on point” and have accurate data and precise systems. David works to be a preventative partner to develop a plan with a parent as soon as an issue arises. Several of the schools use an electronic system to document and track calls with parents; all teachers have access to the system, and it follows the child from elementary school through high school. In many instances, parents can also view grades, attendance records, late arrivals, graduation plans, and other data for their own children.

Epsilon Kappa also set chapter history by offering 1.0 hour CPE credit through the Texas State Organization for those members who desired CPE credit. Thanks and congratulations to the Educational Excellence committee for designing and coordinating such a valuable session that truly speaks to the heart of the purposes of DKG.



Fed any cute pigs lately?

Four ASTEF pigs are regularly attending Epsilon Kappa Chapter meetings this year. Please share your loose change – even folding money – to support ASTEF project stipends.

Meet ASTEF Effie, owned by Sandi Causey. Other “pig parents” in our chapter are President Earin Martin, Evelyn Barron, and Marilyn Gregory.



Submitted by Evelyn Barron

Meeting Highlights

SEE mentor Hilda Diaz (right) presents the first set of STEM classroom library materials to new initiate and mentee Nancy Alaniz (left) at the November 6th meeting at Walnut Creek Elementary School.



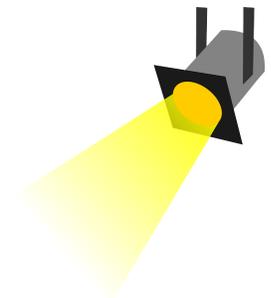
Guest panelists (left to right) Tracie Montanio, Amy Reynolds, Richard Castillo, Dr. Claudia Knowles (chapter member and panel moderator), Michael Benavides Griffin, and David Rainey discuss strategies and programs for *Developing Positive Parent Communication* on their campuses. See Highlights of November meeting (article)

Spotlight on Personal Growth

Submitted by Janet Bernard

On November 6, 2014, Epsilon Kappa experienced a new milestone. Those who joined us were treated to a night of insightful information provided by a panel of 5 educators in the Austin area who represented diverse school populations. The focus of the discussion was **Developing Positive Parent Communication**. We heard about the need to approach all stakeholders with understanding of their unique needs and respect for the dignity of all students. It was an evening to hear from teachers, principals, a parent specialist, and a counselor about the importance of listening to and developing a working relationship so that we can make our children's school lives a valuable experience. Because we were able to address the Society's purpose #3 (advance the professional interest and position of women in education), Epsilon Kappa was able to award CPE credit for those who applied. What a grand first for us! If you were not able to be there, consider joining us in the future. You never can tell what might be next!

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Jamestown and Beyond! A Road Scholar/ASTEF Trip

Submitted by Bernadine Eaton

In the first week of October, Sandi Causey and Bernadine Eaton travelled to Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown in Virginia. Sponsored by ASTEF in partnership with Road Scholar, this historical adventure was full of exciting sights and up to date information about the beginnings of our country.

Each day we had delicious meals at the Clarion hotel. Neither the lunch nor supper menus were the same, which had us all looking forward to the dining aspect. That always is an important point when traveling!

Our presenters were so passionate about their subjects and had amazing knowledge of details of the life and culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The mornings began with someone who shared his or her expertise on the area that we would visit in the afternoon. Some of the ladies came as a person from the 1700's. We all felt like we were transported back in time to visit with a neighbor of the town. We learned details of daily life from the perspective of Native Americans, African Americans, as well as the early English settlers dealing with hardships.

Our first field trip was to Jamestown as the original settlement is called. It is on an island and for many years historians believed too much of it had been lost to the James River. However, modern methods have reclaimed land and found a treasure trove of artifacts in the abandoned wells. Excavations were being done the very day we visited. The plan is to preserve the footprints of the buildings as they are discovered. The only restoration is to the original church. We learned that too many tourists just visit Jamestown Settlement, which is across the channel, and do not come to the actual site of the village. The second day was the trip to the Settlement. The reconstructed fort and a Native American village are on that site. Also there are the replicas of the three ships that brought the soldiers to the New World. Those men came looking for riches so they were ill prepared for making a living in what turned out to be the worst drought in 700 years. The whole colony almost perished before supply ships arrived after a three-year wait. It was quite a precarious beginning to the land that would become our country.

The third excursion was into Williamsburg proper. The town flourished in the early 1700's because it was home to William and Mary College, Bruton Parish Church, the Governor's residence, and the Capitol building for the state. Many of the buildings burned several times so the researchers are still uncovering many footprints of the old town. After listening to tour guides in the morning, we were let loose to explore the mile long main street on our own.

On personal time some of us went to an evening concert at the Bruton Parish Church. The organ recital was one of the opening events in their 300th anniversary of the church building.

The last trip was to Yorktown where General Washington decisively crushed the British. As we viewed the redoubts in the battlefield we were reminded of the hardships that all soldiers faced during the long campaign for freedom.

Our last morning included musical selections played on a variety of colonial instruments. We also got to help make a trifle pudding the old fashioned way. It was a quick snack before we all left for our flights back home.

Watch for more trip opportunities in the future from ASTEF. It will be well worth considering for your vacation plans.





Newsletter Information

Please submit your articles and highlights for our next Chapter newsletter on or before Friday, January 16. You can send your submissions by email to Diane Sidoroff at diane.sidoroff@gmail.com or to Earin Martin at grantsmanagement101@gmail.com.

During this year members may be asked to submit articles about their reflections of meetings or other DKG activities. We want to involve as many people as possible to highlight the diversity of our chapter. Also, let us know about your Life Milestones whether you have attended a meeting or not. News is always appreciated.

Please contact Marcia Kirkland if you wish to receive a printed copy of the newsletter though we are trying to "go green" and send most by e-mail. Thanks, Marcia, for your help with communications!

Epsilon Kappa Chapter The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

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Pictures from Jamestown

First is the rebuilding of the church at Jamestown. Second, the reconstructed officers quarters. Third a "lawyer" at Williamsburg. Fourth. A "redoubt" that the colonial soldiers had to overcome before defeating the British at Yorktown.