

February 2022

River Oaks

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Houston PetSet is Here For the Animals

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publisher's
letter

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Cathy & Lynda



Houston PetSet *is Here For the Animals*

Picture this: a medium-sized dog, head and tail held low, trots along the side of the road. She weaves through parked cars, occasionally stopping to sniff some trash, hoping for a morsel of discarded food. In many areas of town, this is a familiar sight. As the fourth-largest city in the United States with a population and an economy that rivals that of many countries, Houston is home to a startling number of homeless pets.



In the digital age, charitable giving has never been easier. In fact, by shopping with Amazon Smile, you can donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to your charity of choice just by shopping online. When you visit smile.amazon.com, you can select the charity that you would like to receive funds, in this case Houston PetSet, and then each time you shop through Amazon Smile, a percentage of your purchase will be donated. These small percentages add up to valuable contributions for the animals!

Thankfully, there are dedicated heroes working day in and day out to address this heartbreaking problem. Twin sisters, Tama Lundquist and Tena Lundquist Faust, spend almost every waking hour dedicating their time and energy to the cause of humane animal treatment. They have served as co-presidents of 501c3 Houston PetSet for the past decade, fighting tirelessly for the animals of Houston. In their time with the organization, they have grown it from a small group of animal lovers hosting yearly fundraisers to an influential stakeholder in the field of animal welfare in Houston and beyond.

Houston PetSet was founded in 2004, and Tena and Tama joined the board just a few years later. Every year, HPS would throw a soiree and distribute the raised funds to Houston-area animal welfare groups. At the start, about 30 groups received these grants. There was no office, no day-to-day operations, no employees to speak of. In 2012, because the organization was on the brink of closure, the twins stepped into the roles of co-presidents when nobody else would.

“We realized that even though there were a lot of resources going into animal welfare, the city and county were not getting any closer to solving the problem,” said Tena Faust. Though Houston PetSet was started as a granting organization, with that realization, the mission changed. In addition to raising funds for other animal nonprofits, they brought in a staff to build their own operations and work with key stakeholders to address the ever-growing animal crisis in Houston.

Tena and Tama realized that in order to combat the animal cruelty and homelessness in Houston, they would need to take a more holistic approach. An in-depth strategic planning session led to the designation of six key areas of focus and gave Houston PetSet a foundation on which they could build their operations.

FOCUS ONE: RESCUE, ADOPT, AND TRANSPORT

Hurricane Harvey jump started the strategic plan, and Houston PetSet sprang into action in the wake of that terrible storm. With the drastic influx of animals into local shelters, the need to transport pets out of Houston became paramount. Tama and Tena started a transport program to escort animals safely out of Houston. From this initial endeavor, they were able to purchase their own bus. Now, dozens of animals are pulled from crowded shelters and rescue groups in Houston and sent to rescue partners across the country every other week. To date, Houston PetSet has transported more than 6,000 cats and dogs to safety.

FOCUS TWO: SPAY AND NEUTER

Addressing pet overpopulation is the linchpin of improving animal welfare. Most pet owners can't neuter their pets due to a lack of access to resources. Veterinary care is expensive. That's why Houston PetSet started a mobile veterinary program in 2019 that hosts free spay/neuter clinics several times per month across the region. To date, nearly 3,000 dogs and cats have been fixed, microchipped, and vaccinated at no cost to their owners.

Tena and Tama also know that owners are sometimes forced to surrender or even euthanize their pets after devastating illness or injuries because they can't afford the veterinary care. During the pandemic shutdown, the organization opened a mobile unit once a week to treat emergency cases for free in order to give frantic owners the chance to keep their beloved companions. In a time when wallets were bare and hope was sparse, Houston PetSet provided the compassion that Houston so desperately needed.

FOCUS THREE: EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

While there are those who mistreat animals on purpose, many more do so out of ignorance. Houston PetSet has focused on addressing the lack of humane education in Houston. They have

partnered with Crime Stoppers of Houston to work within their Safe Community Program in order to educate school-age children about good guardianship of animals.

Houston PetSet is also there for the victims of domestic violence. In households where family violence is present, the victims are statistically less likely to leave if they have a pet because most family violence shelters do not allow animals. Through their Pet Protect program, victims fleeing violence can board their pets with full veterinary care, free of charge, until they can find a safe place to land. Since its inception in the fall of 2020, Houston PetSet has spent nearly \$20,000 to care for these pets with nowhere else to turn.

FOCUS FOUR: DATA COLLECTION

In a field overwrought with emotion, data is key. It is one thing to look around and see homeless animals on the streets. It is another thing entirely to quantify the effect that these animals have on Houstonians. To that end, under the guidance of Tena and Tama, Houston PetSet commissioned a study at Rice University to better understand the issue. In fact, they coordinated with Dr. Stephen Klineberg, Founding Director of the Kinder Institute of Urban Research, to include a question in his Kinder Houston Area Survey. From this survey, they determined that 25% of Houstonians view stray animals as "somewhat of a problem"

to a "very serious problem" in their neighborhood. In addition to examining the problem in Houston, the twins have traveled to other cities to learn more about what is being done to successfully combat the issue of animal homelessness.



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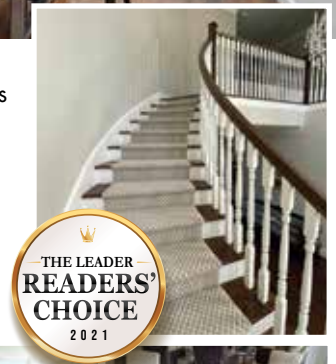
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FOCUS FIVE: ANTI-CRUELTY EFFORTS

Animal cruelty gets bigger headlines than stray overpopulation, but it often stems from the same root causes; a lack of education and/or access to resources. But in these cases, the animals need to be removed from their dangerous living conditions. To do so more efficiently, Tena and Tama worked with Crime Stoppers of Houston to fund the Harris County Anti-Cruelty Task Force. They created a centralized place where concerned citizens could report animal cruelty via hotline or online submission. Response times shortened and more lives have been saved as a result.

FOCUS SIX: LEGISLATION

Having an anti-cruelty task force only works if there are laws to enforce. That's why Houston PetSet maintains direct lines of communication with elected officials to advocate on behalf of those who can't speak for themselves. In fact, through their tireless efforts and multiple trips to the Texas state Capitol, Tama and Tena worked with the Texas Humane Legislation Network to successfully advocate for the passage of SB5, the Safe Outdoor Dogs bill. As a result, it is now illegal in the state of Texas to leave dogs outside on a chain. While there is still more work to be done, legislators are now listening and more progress can be made.

With so many impact areas to monitor, sometimes it can be hard to see that progress. But bit by bit, change is happening in Houston. And that is thanks, in no small part, to Tama, Tena, and the Houston PetSet team. Since their inception, the organization has distributed \$3.8 million in funds to other animal welfare organizations. This includes nearly \$200,000 for the anti-cruelty task force and almost \$180,000 in emergency funds for individual animals.

2021 was Houston PetSet's best year yet, raising \$700,000 at their annual Fierce & Fabulous Soiree, with the majority of those funds being disbursed to 68 groups working to solve animal homelessness and overpopulation in the greater Houston area at their 2021 Gifting Event. But of course, it isn't all about the money. Right here in River Oaks, Tena and Tama are working with the River Oaks Patrol to ensure the safety of those street dogs and cats you see running loose every day. They recently provided a microchip scanner so that lost pets can be reunited with their worried owners.

It will take relationships like these and commitment from the community to finally make a dent in Houston's animal crisis. Said Tama, "We have to change the culture to change the problem." The more our neighbors understand the root causes of animal homelessness and cruelty, and the more knowledge they have of the available resources, the better equipped Houstonians will be to come together for the animals.



Houston PetSet Gifting Event

By Lisa Tynan Marketing & Special Events Specialist

Photos by Quy Tran

For those of our readers who were unable to attend the 2021 Gifting Event for the Houston PetSet we have included some photos and information for your enjoyment. The event took place at Buffalo Bayou Brewing Co. and this is the second time the brewery has hosted this event.

During the Houston PetSet's Fierce and Fabulous Soiree in September \$300,000 was raised and distributed among 68 animal welfare organizations. This was the most ever raised by Houston PetSet, a record-setting year despite the pandemic. In 2020, approximately 100,000 pets were directly impacted by the organizations receiving grants.

Not only was money raised by the event a true blessing for the animals, but the humans were not forgotten. Complimentary food and drinks were provided by Houston PetSet in recognition of the hard work done by the grantees. In addition rescue were entered in raffle drawings and won prizes generously donated by Houston PetSet supporters.

In addition free pet beds, toys and supplies were distributed to the attending organizations to help bring joy and comfort to the animals they serve.

Houston PetSet is immensely grateful for all of the important work being done every day by the being done every day by the grantees to help the homeless and abused animals of Houston and the surrounding communities. As always, thank you for your support, and please don't hesitate to reach out directly if you have any questions.



St. Thomas High School Celebrates Its Annual Round Up

Unwavering tradition, brotherhood, and commitment to excellence are three pillars that have kept St. Thomas High School's Annual Round Up event going strong for over 90 years. This year, the event will take place on Sunday, March 6th, 2022.



Round Up has humble origins going back to 1927. The Basilian Fathers had passed their first quarter of a century educating young men and the strain on their finances was immense. They decided to hold a bazaar to raise funds and even received a loan

from the Basilian General Council to purchase and auction off a Ford Model T.

The first school newspaper, The Tom Weekly, described the event as "a night when... campus was covered with a bright array of colors flowing from booths of candy, cake, and ice cream." In 1928, the bazaar experienced success but it was not held again for 17 years due to the Great Depression.

By 1945 it had grown to include raffle ticket fundraising. The event was moved to the spring to be closer to the Rodeo and eventually the name was changed to Round Up in keeping with the theme.



During the 1980s, exciting assemblies for Round Up were created to give students more to look forward to. Through the years, all of these pieces came together and Round Up began to fully resemble its modern-day form.

Today, Round Up has continued to grow as each class of students, more determined than the last, tries to smash the raffle ticket sell records of the previous year to provide tuition assistance to future Eagles. It brings about a greater sense of camaraderie as students work for the same goal before the community comes together in celebration. We hope you will take part in our unwavering tradition by attending Round Up on March 6th!





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By Laura Pennino, Pennino & Partners
Photos by Daniel Ortiz

“Broad Stripes and Bright Stars” Gala

HONORING OSCAR S. WYATT, JR.

Oscar S. Wyatt, Jr. was showered with honors and inducted into the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame at the Lone Star Flight Museum’s gala. The formal fundraising event was attended by Houston society and contributed to raising more than \$600,000 to support STEM-related programs and the museum’s educational mission. The Lone Star Flight Museum is located at Ellington Airport only 20 minutes from downtown Houston.

Casey Curry, local Houston news personality and Director of Corporate Citizenship for Alliant group served as Mistress of Ceremonies and Houston philanthropists, The Honorable & Mrs. Hushang Ansary served as honorary gala chairs. Gala Co-Chairs Lisa & Mark Ammerman and Carolyn & Anthony W. Hall, Jr. led the evening celebrating Oscar Wyatt at the first gala to ever honor the businessman and decorated World War II B-25 pilot and visionary.

Guests arrived to a breath taking transformation of the Waltrip Hangar by The Events Company into a beautiful gala setting featuring the B-25 at center stage with patriotic colors of red, white and blue elegantly filling the hangar and a grand head table that included many of Oscar and Lynn’s family and dear friends. Guests including ; Susie & Sanford Criner, Whitney & Jim Crane, Rosanette S. Cullen, Richard Flowers & Angel Rios, Mack Fowler, Lynne & Joe Hudson, Cynthia & Anthony Petrello, Hon. Mervin Ras-Wyatt & O.S. “Trey” Wyatt, III and Bradford A. Wyatt were all present to celebrate the man of the evening.

The program began with a moving tribute video chronicling Wyatt’s life, accomplishments, and service in WWII. The video included congratulations from U.S. Senator John Cornyn and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. LSFM President and CEO Lieutenant General Doug Owens (retired) then officially inducted Wyatt as the only member of the Class of 2021 into the Texas Aviation Hall of Fame (TAHOF). All guests rose to their feet to honor and congratulate Wyatt as Owens placed the TAHOF medal around Oscar’s neck.

The museum also premiered a video at the gala. The video highlights the educational programming and STEM focus of the museum and featured along with Owens, Mike Foreman, former NASA Astronaut and Mayor of the City of Friendswood;



Linda McReynolds, Richard Flowers, Oscar Wyatt, Lynn Wyatt, Rose Cullen



Lone Star Flight Museum gala décor

Rhonda Parmer, Assistant Superintendent, Pasadena ISD; 17, former, museum youth ambassador and student pilot.

The funds raised at the gala ensure the continued growth of the museum's content and educational programs. General Owens commented, "Our mission is to celebrate flight and achievements in Texas aviation history and educate and engage our youth through STEM. It is fundraising events like these and the amazing support from the Wyatts and Houston's giving community that allow us to continue with those efforts." To support the Lone Star Flight Museum and to learn more about the STEM education programs at the only museum in Houston whose exhibits fly, please visit LoneStarFlight.org or call our development department at 346-352-7678.



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Resiliency Skills and Health Education for Women and Girls

For 42 years, The Women's Fund for Health Education and Resiliency has worked tirelessly to teach women and girls resiliency skills and relate those skills to current and future health risks. Resiliency is a key strategy to empowering individuals and communities to either increase or decrease long-term health outcomes. The Women's Fund teaches resiliency skills to increase self-efficiency, decision-making, goal setting and communication, and resourcefulness to ensure positive health outcomes for individuals and communities.

The Women's Fund invests in community partnerships to educate girls and women in the Houston area through unique curriculum-based classes, workshops, lectures, and publications focused on physical, mental, financial, emotional, health and wellness. With a mission to provide Houston area women and girls with the tools they need to be advocates for their health, The Women's Fund offers all programs, publications, and resources free of charge to the public.

To enhance individual and community resiliency, The Women's Fund provides needed and continued access to information, skills, and learning opportunities for health. The Women's Fund's outreach education programs for women include monthly series of "Health and Wellness Awareness" virtual presentations, DOC Talk, The Women's Health Lecture Series, and more. The Women's Fund has created and offers a variety of health education programs throughout the Houston community targeting adolescent girls at risk for poor health conditions from a variety of causes. The Women's Fund's adolescent girls outreach education programs include What About Me? (WAM) Health Education Classes, Power Up the H.E.A.T. (Health Education Anytime), Girl + 1 Healthy Living Workshop, and the Annual Barbara Devetski Scholarship Essay Contest.

Houston-area girls and women have access to The Women's Fund's four publications, free of charge. All publications are written, reviewed, and updated by medical professionals to ensure accurate and up-to-date information on the health topics covered. Organizations may request these free publications to distribute at health fairs, clinics, and schools, use to supplement their educational programs, or use to educate clients. Publications are also available for download online in Spanish and English.



The Women's Fund hosts two annual fundraising events to help raise funds and awareness for women and girls' health education. This May, The Women's Fund will host its 7th Annual Wine Dinner and invite guests to an evening of inspiring entertainment while famed Houston restaurateur Donna Vallone guides guests through and an exquisite four-course meal with wine pairings. The evening will include special entertainment and a silent auction. In the fall, guests along with girls and women who participate in The Women's Fund's Health Education classes are invited to the 12th Annual Rockin' Resiliency Luncheon featuring a fun-filled afternoon with a keynote speaker, silent auction baubles and bubbles champagne raffle, and shopping extravaganza.

Every year The Women's Fund reaches close to 12,000 of the Houston area's most vulnerable women and girls in neighborhoods identified as underserved and at-risk to ensure positive health outcomes for individuals and communities. For more information about The Women's Fund for Health Education and Resiliency, visit www.thewomensfund.org, or call 713-623-6543.

Laura M. Pennino, Pennino and Partners Photos by Quy Tran

Houston PetSet Transport

For its final transport of 2021, Houston PetSet honored the father of founders and Co-Presidents Tena Faust and Tama Lundquist, Wayne Lundquist, who made this transport program possible.



Houston PetSet, a local nonprofit organization working to end Houston’s homeless animal crisis, honored the man who made their transport program possible - Wayne Lundquist, father of Houston PetSet Co-Presidents, Tama Lundquist and Tena Lundquist Faust (all are natives of Minnesota). The ‘Crown Royal Express’, so named because of Mr. Lundquist’s occasional sip or two of his favorite drink,

will be the final Houston PetSet transport of 2021.

The transport began loading 107 animals (cats and dogs) on Friday 12/10/21 at 8:15 a.m. Friday 12/10/21 at Harris County Pets, 612 Canino Rd., Houston, TX 77076 (north of downtown Houston). All were headed to new homes in Minnesota.

Two drivers and a vet tech accompanied the animals on their journey to Minnesota, stopping only briefly along the route. Representatives from Houston PetSet were in attendance and available for media interviews and photos at the departure.

The transport included 107 adoptable dogs and cats from Harris County Animal Shelter, Citizens for Animal Protection

(CAP), Pasadena Animal Shelter, Pearland Animal Services, S.A.V.E., Woly Kitten Club, and the Sunshine Fund. The receiving rescue organizations in Minnesota are Angel of Hope, Animal Humane Society and The Babinski Foundation.

“Our Transport program would not have happened without our beloved Dad,” says Tena Lundquist Faust. “He planted the seed, laid the groundwork and then, as our animal angel, made the program come to life. There’s no doubt he’s up above everyday making little miracles happen for the animals and for Houston PetSet. Although we miss him beyond measure it is comforting to feel his presence in the work that we do. He knew how much we loved animals and he championed the cause because of his love for us.

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By Juan Alanis, Big Oak Tree Media
Photos by Vicky Pink

The Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans celebrated 50 years of service to Houston at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

The legacy of Houston Latino leaders was commemorated when the Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans (AAMA) celebrated its **Illumine Celebration/Celebración de Iluminación** on Saturday, December 11, 2021, at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

The Illumine Celebration/Celebración de Iluminación is AAMA's largest annual fundraising event, and this year recognized the contributions of its founders as well as the legacy of the non-profit organization over its first 50 years. AAMA was formed by a group of Mexican American business owners and community leaders who were motivated to address key issues in Houston's East End, including drug use and low school completion.

Today, AAMA is a leading nonprofit organization in Texas working with nearly 10,000 individuals each year to achieve financial security, well-being, and self-actualization.

"The ballroom looked spectacular. It was not just sit-down dinner," says Alexandria Hernández, Gala Co-Chair, who was instrumental in the event along with her sister Leandra Hernández. "The Illumine Celebration evening started with cocktail networking, then was followed by an inspiring and entertaining program over dinner from influential, high-profile luminaries, and the chance for the audience to participate with the auction."



Co-Chair Alexandria Hernández, Community Honoree Froilán Hernández, Ernestine Hernández, Co-Chair Leandra Hernández



Honorary Chair Christian Navarro, Blanca Laurenzo, Community Honoree Roland Laurenzo, Community Honoree Froilán Hernández



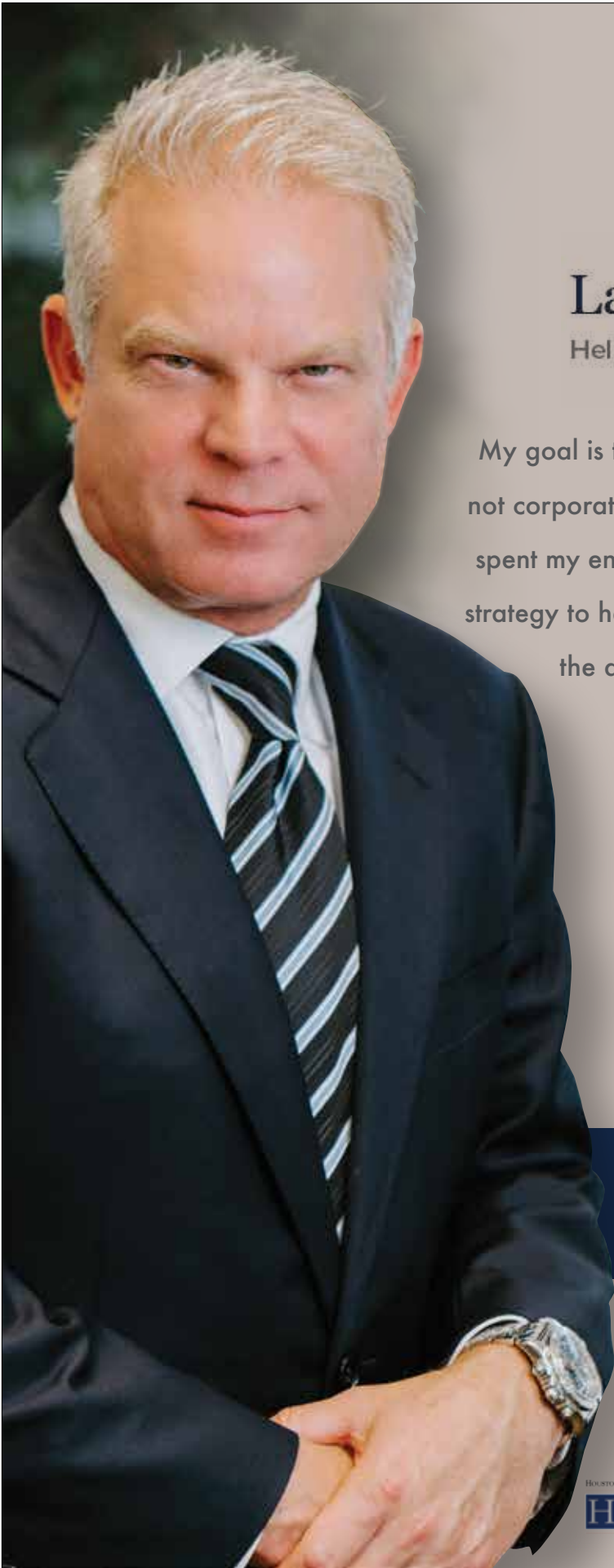
Honorary Chair Sofia Adrogué, AAMA President & CEO Joe Jimenez, Roland García, Honorary Chair Christian Navarro

Houston Luminaries honored were **Roland Laurenzo** and **Froilán Hernández**, who have made significant contributions toward the betterment of the Latino community in Houston's East End.

The Illumine Celebration/Celebración de Iluminación was chaired by namesake sisters **Alexandria and Leandra Hernández**; honorary chairs were **Sofia Adrogué** and **Christian Navarro**. Alexandria and Leandra Hernández are the daughters of Froilan Hernández. Christian Navarro is the son of legacy founders Yolanda Black Navarro and William Navarro.

"Over the past 50 years, AAMA has been a beacon of hope for so many. One of the most rewarding aspects of our work is to be able to share in the progress and successes of the individuals we have served," said Joe Jimenez, president and CEO at AAMA. "Our work and longstanding history would not be possible without the generous support of our community. We are excited to honor the men and women who started it all, as well as to celebrate with those who continue to make our mission possible."

Proceeds raised by the **Illumine Celebration/Celebración de Iluminación** will benefit the various educational and health programs provided by AAMA in Texas. AAMA is dedicated to inspiring and empowering Latinos to pursue their potential and achieve success through education, workforce readiness, and leadership development.



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