

## Healthy celebration



WADE CARPENTER

Community Health Development staff, board members and fundraising committee members gather Saturday for a ribbon cutting during a grand opening for the Center for Community Wellness.



MEGHANN GARCIA|LEADER NEWS

Community Health Development Inc. staff member Dolores Quiroz (standing) shows a young visitor how to use to the children's fitness room at the Center for Community Wellness Saturday during a grand opening ceremony.

## Wellness Center opens

MEGHANN GARCIA  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Community was a recurring theme on Saturday when a grand opening celebration was held at the Center for Community Wellness, part of Community Health Development Incorporated, located at 908 S. Evans St.

Rachel Gonzales-Hanson, CHDI chief executive officer, said the event was the culmination of a four-phase \$7.2

PLEASE SEE **OPENS**, PAGE 13

# Water warning

## Dropping aquifer level may trigger additional restrictions

MEGHANN GARCIA  
ASSISTANT EDITOR

During discussion at Tuesday night's city council meeting, City Manager Jennifer Garver announced that she anticipated Stage 3 water restrictions would be declared on Wednesday.

Stage 3 restrictions prohibit city utility customers from watering landscapes by means of irrigation systems, sprinklers or soaker hoses except on one designated

day every other week, and then only between the hours of 8 p.m. and 10 a.m. of the utility customer's garbage pickup day.

According to the Edwards Aquifer Authority, the reading for Uvalde's J-27 well measured 843.8 yesterday morning. An ordinance passed by the city of Uvalde sets the Stage 3 trigger is 845. Stage 4 is triggered when the well measures 842 feet above mean sea level.

Other rules include prohibition of water waste at all times; reduction of water consumption by all possible means; covering a minimum of 25-percent surface area of swimming pools when not in use; not using fountains, waterfalls and other aesthetic water unless a variance has been approved; limiting linen and towel changes at lodging establish-

PLEASE SEE **WARNING**, PAGE 13

## Saturday election to decide city, school posts

When area voters cast ballots for city council and school board representatives Saturday, it will be the first of two election days scheduled this month.

Early voting for municipal and school elections ended Tuesday, with 110 votes by personal appearance in

the city of Uvalde election to choose a District 2 council representative, and an additional four returning ballots by mail. Seven mail-in ballots were requested.

For the school race, 617 ballots were cast in the election to choose three Uvalde Consolidated Independent School Dis-

trict trustees, and 116 ballots by mail had been returned. Over two hundred mail-in ballots were requested.

Election day is Saturday. Voters must take either a valid voter registration card or identification card to the polling

PLEASE SEE **SATURDAY**, PAGE 16

# OPENS: Wellness Center celebration highlights completion of four-phase, \$7.2 million project

FROM PAGE 1

million project kicked off with a \$380,000 cash infusion from CHDI.

"This campus is a testament to what our communities can do when we work together for a healthier tomorrow," CHDI board chairperson Monica Gonzales said. "Each and every one of us, 100 percent of us, personally contributed to this campaign."

The phases, Gonzales-Hanson said, included acquiring property, renovation, construction of a fitness center and a new administration building, and addition of a second medical wing at the 200 S. Evans St. facility.

The goal was to increase dental services, offer mental and behavioral services, implement a comprehensive chronic disease management program, create a fitness center and increase existing medical services.

The first round of funding came from CHDI,

grants from the city, county and state, and appropriations made possible by former congressmen Henry Bonilla and Ciro Rodriguez.

Gonzales-Hanson said that funding brought resources up to \$3.42 million, but the group was still short of the goal of \$7.2 million.



Jan Elliott

"At that point, once again, we looked to God," she said. "And, as always, he responded by opening doors to us and he started by bringing Jan Elliott into our CHDI familia."

From there, Elliott took over telling the story, emphasizing how generous community members funded both this project and the Kate Marmion Regional Cancer Medical Center.

"It was amazing," Elliott said. "To think that this

*'This campus is a testament to what our communities can do when we work together for a healthier tomorrow.'*

**Monica Gonzales**

CHDI board chairperson

town and this area has raised up these two wonderful facilities all in the name of health tells you something so amazing."

The idea for the wellness center came about five years ago, Gonzales-Hanson said, when the entity's board held a strategic planning session to determine what the community viewed as current resources and gaps.

Personal stories were chief among evidence used to determine what direction to take, and one of the most revealing came from a diabetic patient.

"At the end of the office visit, before she left, she took the time to thank our staff," Gonzales-Hanson said, pausing for a moment. "And then she

began to cry."

The patient's doctor had instructed staff to organize nutritional material for her to take home, much to her surprise. She told staff that for the previous 15 years the only meat she had consumed was boiled chicken.

"Even sadder than that, this was not an isolated case," Gonzales-Hanson said. This case and others similar in nature inspired the test kitchen at the wellness center.

As the grand opening ceremony continued Elyssa Luevano, who sang two songs, spoke briefly about the process that brought about the facilities enveloping the crowd on Saturday. The dental and mental/behavioral

health building provided the backdrop for the event, while speakers faced the new fitness center.

Before singing "Raise Me Up," Luevano asked those in attendance to concentrate on the lyrics, which she sang without musical accompaniment.

The Rev. Nancy Willet, who also led the invocation in both English and Spanish, asked the crowd to participate in two special blessings. The first called for everyone seated near the medical building to place their hand on the building while everyone else passed a blessing by placing their left hand on the shoulder of the person next to them. Second, Willet called forward CHDI staff, board members, and those involved in fundraising, before asking each person in attendance to raise his or her right hand and pass a blessing to the gathered group.

Attendees included Rodriguez, state Rep. Tracy King, Mayor Cody

Smith, Mayor-elect J Allen Carnes, 38th Judicial District Judge Camile DuBose, Uvalde County Commissioner Jerry Bates and County Clerk Ramona Hobbs.

Recognition was given to CHDI's board of directors. Members are Monica Gonzales, Randy Scheide, Anita Shackelford, Frances Canales, Beatrice Garcia, Noris Garcia, Amanda Hadley, Linda Massey, Vale Rodriguez, Gilberto Torres and Jesse Ybarra.

Capital Campaign Committee members were also acknowledged. They are Jan Elliott, Ben Elliott, Tony Arce, Carlos Fernandez, Gene Ayala, Mary Garcia, Jama Brown, Karen Roberts, Olga Charles, Kathy Voss, J Allen Carnes and Nancy Willet.

Girl Scout Troop 374 raised the American flag and led the group in the pledge of allegiance.

MGARCIA@UVALDELEADERNEWS.COM,  
278-3335