



'We're all about YOU'

Foundation helps with burial expenses

The 3 "A" Bereavement Foundation is dedicated to serving the community, says Michele Lara, founder and president of the Sugar Land-based, non-profit organization.

The three As stand for assist, arrange and accompany — which form the mission of the foundation, begun in 1997. The foundation assists with burial/funeral service arrangements and expenses for those in financial need. It also provides grief counseling for families.

Lara worked with Harris County Child Advocates and Juvenile Court Volunteers before obtaining her funeral director degree.

"I really saw people struggling ... It is a very difficult time for people trying to deal with emotional loss," she says.

With over 15 percent of the population living at or beneath the poverty level, Lara saw many unable to pay for funeral and burial expenses for loved ones.

"That adds to the grief," she says.

In its first year of operation, the 3 "A" Bereavement Foundation has helped 15 families. In one case, a mother, 38, died of AIDS and her daughter, with limited funds, was left with the cost. In another, a young man was killed. His mother, a disabled diabetic, had no funds for a burial. Several cases involved senior citizens.

Referrals come from churches, the county hospital district and the district attorney's office, and from caring individuals.

"We need the support of con-



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cerned citizens and civic-minded companies to raise money for grants to bereaved families," Lara adds.

For information, call Lara at (281) 980-7505

Channel 11 anchors Lisa Foronda and Tonia Bendickson and Fox 26 anchor Andrea Watkins will serve as celebrity starters for "Home Run," Fort Bend Habitat for Humanity's Sept. 12 fund-raiser at Sienna Plantation.

More than 500 runners and walkers of all ages are expected to participate in a 5K run at 8 a.m. and a kid's 1K at 9 a.m.

The Fort Bend Association of Realtors and the Fort Bend Women's Council of Realtors have hosted "Home Run" since 1996.

"More than 100 Realtors volunteer their time each year to make the race a success and many more participate in the event," says race director Susie Mahoney. All proceeds benefit the Fort Bend affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International.

Sienna Plantation, a master-planned community off Highway 6 in Missouri City, will host

"Home Run" for the second consecutive year, offering a flat, paved, USA Track and Field-certified race course that winds through the heavily-wooded community.

The first overall male and female runners will each receive an airline travel voucher for \$200. Overall and top three male and female finishers in each age group will receive a goody bag and a limited-edition T-shirt with the "Home Run" logo.

Awards and prize drawings will take place at the Sienna recreation center. The post-race celebration will once again be catered by Carrabba's Italian Grill.

Early registration is \$15 and continues through Sept. 5. Late registration is \$18. Race-day registration is \$20. Participants can register on the Sienna web site: www.siennaplantation.com, or pick up entry forms at area banks and community centers. For more information, call Sienna Plantation at (281) 778-7777.

Through the creation of affordable housing, Habitat strives to create stronger communities. Volunteers and low-income home recipients construct and renovate homes together; then Habitat sells the homes to its partners-families and individuals who have contributed at least 300 "sweat equity" hours for their new homes through a no-profit, no-interest 15- to 30-year mortgage. House payments, recycled through a local "Fund for Humanity," build more houses.

The Fort Bend chapter of Habitat for Humanity has built several homes every year since 1992, each at an average cost of \$30,000.