

# Heart of Texas GEAR UP



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## ABOUT GEAR UP

The Heart of Texas GEAR UP works with the class of 2026 to **empower** and lead them to a **successful** future. At GEAR UP we believe in the importance of **postsecondary education** and we work towards guiding students to a life full of personal and educational success.

# GEAR UP STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Heart of Texas GEAR UP employees are devoted to empowering students to fulfill their potential to achieve post-high school success. Our staff consists of a range of area coordinators, site managers for Hearne and Bryan ISD, on-campus outreach specialists, and student workers. Each GEAR UP team member plays an essential role in creating relationships and opportunities for the class of 2026.



Erik Dorbecker is a valuable part of our GEAR UP team! He is the Site Manager - North and is from San Luis Potosi, Mexico. Erik moved to the United States in 2015 with his wife and two kids to work in education. He is currently pursuing a Bilingual Education Masters at Texas A&M University.

**Erik's advice to current students:** "Never quit studying. There is always a good moment in your life to keep growing your potential."

**Thank you for all you do, Erik!**

# GET INVOLVED WITH GEAR UP!

## **Aggie Homework Helpline (AHH)**

AHH is offered to all GEAR UP students including recurring and on-demand tutoring via Zoom.

## **Mentoring**

One-to-one mentors are paired with students to help keep them on track towards graduation.

## **College Visits / Educational Field Trips**

Increase student awareness and exposures to post-high-school options including college visits, college fairs, and educational experiences.

## **College Readiness / Career Activities**

Activities take place throughout the year to prepare students for after high school by increasing self-advocacy, self-determination, financial literacy, college knowledge, and goal setting.

## **Work-Based Learning**

Students have the opportunity to gain valuable work skills through: volunteerism, job shadowing, internships, etc.

## **Counseling and Advising**

GEAR UP staff is on campus to offer counseling and advising to all GEAR UP students throughout the year.





# SUMMER PROGRAMMING

## HISD & BISD Summer School

GEAR UP offers activities during summer school to help students learn about their strengths, interests, and increase skills to promote success.

## St. Joseph's Volunteering

2-month long volunteering program that provides the opportunity for students to explore various medical career opportunities and shadow several medical professionals.

## BVCIL Summer Camp

Week-long camp offered to Special Education GEAR UP students in BISD that focuses on future planning, independent living skills, self-advocacy, financial literacy, etc.

## High School Camps

In 2023, as students are transitioning to the new school year, GEAR UP will participate in programmed high school back-to-school events for all students.

## Additional Summer Camps

GEAR UP gives the opportunity to students to attend YAP camp at Texas A&M, participate in the Boys and Girls Club Camp, and Aggie STEM Camp.





## PARENTS CORNER

High school is a time in which teens are establishing their individuality. It is important that parents teach independence and responsibility to their children. We encourage you to spend some time talking about their future goals and aspirations. Being open and understanding are traits that will not go unnoticed by your child and which will increase their self-confidence. In addition to these conversations, it is important that you foster a safe space in which they can feel free to make mistakes and fail, but always get up and try again.

## FINANCIAL LITERACY

As students transition further into high school, financial literacy continues to be an essential part of their growth. Some students might be starting jobs within the next year therefore, it is important they understand the different types of accounts they can choose from, how to open, and how to use it properly.

### Saving & Checking Accounts

**Checking Accounts:** Money that can be easily accessed for every day needs. These accounts often come with debit cards, checks, etc.

**Savings Accounts:** Money saved for long-term needs and goals. This money accrues interests and grows over time. Money has limited access.

# FAFSA

## WHAT IS IT?

FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

## WHAT IS ITS MAIN PURPOSE?

FAFSA calculates the EFC (Expected Family Contribution). The EFC is an estimate on how much your family is expected to be able to pay for college. Based off the EFC, FAFSA offers different types of aid to help bridge the gap in paying for college.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF AID

- **Grants:** Free money given based on financial need.
- **Loans (Subsidized & Unsubsidized):** Money that you must pay back. Unsubsidized loans accrue interests.
- **Scholarships:** Money usually given based on academic achievement.

Applying for college can be a stressful process but thinking about how you will afford it can sometimes be even more concerning. This is why it is important to be informed about the financial student aid options available.

## WHERE TO APPLY?

You can create a profile and fill out your FAFSA by going to [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov)

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I HAVE FILLED OUT THE APPLICATION?

Your information will be reviewed and sent out to the colleges/universities you listed on the form. You will then receive an aid offer from these schools.

TIP: Compare the offers before deciding where to attend!



# EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

At Heart of Texas GEAR UP we value the importance of community engagement. One of the most special events our students partake in is field trips. These field trips give our scholars the opportunity to learn about the postsecondary options that are available in our amazing community and beyond!



Students toured GoldStar Barber Academy and Manuel & Theresa's School of Hair Design where they learned about admission and licensure requirements. Some students even received free haircuts!



Students visited and toured Texas State Technical College where they learned about the different technical programs available to them right here in the state of Texas!

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

"Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions, as well as the emotions of others." (Psychology Today). Having the ability to confront your problems with patience and kindness is just one of the many ways in which we can build emotional intelligence.

## How can we improve our emotional intelligence?

### UNDERSTAND HOW OTHERS FEEL

It's important to remember that words and actions have consequences that are not only affecting yourself but are also affecting those around you. It is important to be considerate of the effects you have on people and how you can behave around them!

### BE AWARE OF YOUR EMOTIONS

Check in with yourself and make it a habit to identify your emotions to help you manage them.

### MANAGE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

If someone upsets or angers us, it can be easy to automatically react with aggression. If you understand how a person is making you feel, then you have a higher chance of being able to react in a well-mannered way.

### ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Sometimes we can have a limited perspective of our emotions and behaviors. Therefore, it is encouraged that you seek advice and feedback from others.

### THINK POSITIVELY

We encourage a "glass half full" approach to life. Thinking positively can help boost your mood and come up with reasonable solutions to your problems.

### NURTURE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Take care of your friends like you would want someone to take care of you. Friendships are important!



# IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

High school can be a challenging time to navigate by yourself. We recognize the changes that are occurring in your educational and personal life. One way to combat this is to lean on those around you with experience and who can mentor you to achieve success. But, how can mentors help us?

## MENTORS HELP SET GOALS

Mentors can help you identify your educational and professional objectives and recommend tasks that are achievable within the frame of your abilities.

Mentors provide a perspective that might be new to you. Therefore, they can provide you with advice and constructive criticism to help your growth.

## MENTORS PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Mentors can help you keep track of the progress you have made on your goals. They can also serve as motivation in times of need and ensure you are doing your best.

## MENTORS HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE

Mentors genuinely want to help you and want what is best for you. Use this relationship as an opportunity to network and learn from all they can offer!

## MENTORS OFFER RESOURCES

# CAREER PATHWAYS

The process of figuring out a career path to follow can be confusing and stressful for many students. At GEAR UP we encourage and empower students to learn about and explore all the different career pathways available. Below you will find the six different career path categories and some of the jobs related to each field.

1

## ARTS & COMMUNICATION

Careers related to humanities, visual and performing arts, etc. From architecture to journalism, this pathway is for all the creatives!

2

## HEALTH SERVICES

Careers intended to provide medical care to the community which can range from surgeons to mental health care providers.

3

## INDUSTRIAL & ENGINEERING

Careers that use engineering and manufacturing technology to improve production such as civil and mechanical engineers.

4

## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

These careers can lead you to executive and administrative roles like finance and business manager positions.

5

## HUMAN SERVICES

Careers that work to meet the needs of the community in a wide variety of settings. From barber shops to government agencies.

6

## NATURAL RESOURCES AGRICULTURE

Careers in this field focus on cultivating food and natural resources with jobs such as farmers and food scientists.

For more info read: <https://xello.world/en/blog/career-exploration/career-pathways-future-planning/>

# SUMMER RECOMMENDATIONS

Summers are a fun and exciting time for students. At the Heart of Texas GEAR UP, we offer different summer activities for the Class of 2026 and we encourage all students to consider the following ways in which they can strengthen their resumes over the summers!

## SUMMER JOBS AND/OR INTERNSHIPS

Summer jobs and internships are a great way to build your resume and strengthen your future college applications. With a job you will not only be able to gain work experience, but you will also earn money that can be used towards your needs or saved for the future. With a summer internship you can get to work for a company that relates to your career interests and gain exposure.

## ATTEND SUMMER CAMPS

Summer camps offer students a structured and fulfilling summer experience where they will get to learn new skills and socialize with other high school students! Some students may also take this time to enroll in college classes if the summer camp provides coursework that can be transferred to the student's transcript.

## VOLUNTEER

Volunteering at different sites can be included in your resume but, most importantly, it will teach you about your community and how to serve others. Look for a field of interest that you're passionate about and help out your community!

**As always, don't forget to relax and have fun!**



# STAY IN TOUCH: GEAR UP REMIND 101

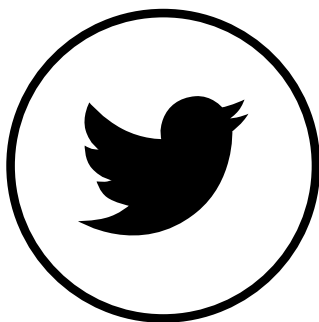
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Use the QR code or text the  
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The updates will include  
information regarding college  
knowledge, college terms, career  
readiness, as well as general  
reminders and motivational texts.

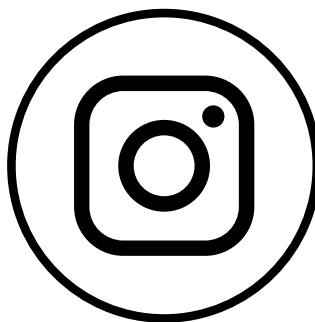


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