



Stephanie enjoys working with mentors, Christina Young and Lindsey Strait



Lindsey high-fives Cody for doing a great job



Jose Perez has a blast mentoring Gloria Alarcon's class at Hutsell Elementary



Hutsell Elementary students in Mrs. Deady's class with their mentor, Chelsea Van Cleave



Christina enjoys working with students and wants to study behavior therapy in college

# Ready, Set,



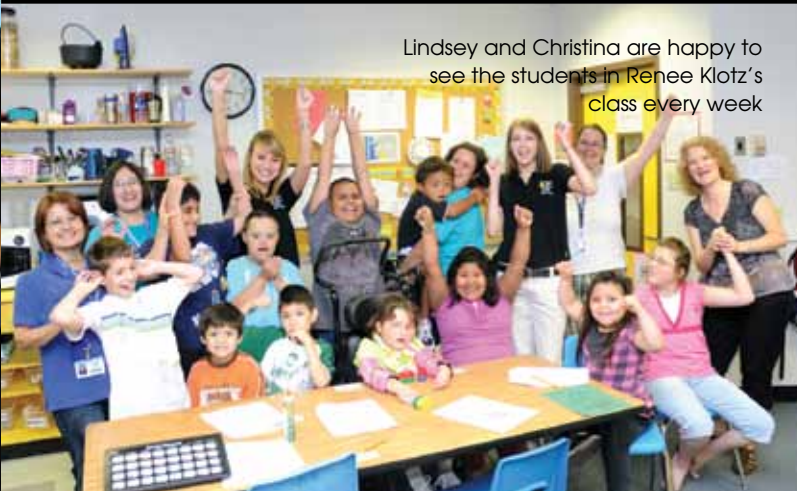
Students give Cheslea their full attention during storytime



Christina and Hutsell student, Joshua



Alejandro and Christina work on a classroom activity together



Lindsey and Christina are happy to see the students in Renee Klotz's class every week



# Teach!

Katy ISD Brings Real-World Experience to Aspiring Educators



By *Natalie Cook Clark & Suzi Issa*  
Photography by *Suzi Issa*

In today's competitive market, gaining a head start on your chosen career can be advantageous – especially if you're a high school senior. Experience in a given field can not only add to a student's resume, it can also help her decide if the field she wants to study in college really is a good fit. Katy ISD recognizes this. With the district's Ready, Set, Teach program, high school students are given the unique opportunity to explore the teaching career through classroom instruction and real-world experience. "I always wanted to be a teacher, but this program has given me a better idea as to what grade level I prefer," says Chelsea Van Cleave, a Cinco Ranch High School senior.

### Touching the Lives of Students

Ready, Set, Teach lets mentors work with students in kindergarten through eighth grade at Hutsell Elementary, Kim Elementary, and Katy Junior High. Along with impacting the lives of college-bound high school students, the program also proves beneficial for those they mentor. "It's so much fun to watch the interns touch the younger students' lives," says Ready, Set, Teach instructor Linda Carr. "And the experience these high school students receive is immeasurable. When you experience something, you really learn it."

The younger Katy students also make a difference in the lives of their high school peers. "When I walk into Mrs. [Gloria] Alarcon's class, every student rushes up to hug me," says bilingual intern Jose Perez. The Morton Ranch High School senior has always wanted to be a coach, hopefully one day making it to the collegiate level. "In order to be a coach, you need to be able to teach something,"

Perez says. He knew the experience could help him in college, too, even though he wants to teach 11th graders and up. "Even though I'm working with younger students, I'm still getting the valued experience of working with kids," he says. "Whether they are 6- to 7-year-olds or 16- to 17-year-olds, they may have a different way of expressing it, but the impact is the same."

### Learning Skills for Life

Christina Young has also always had a passion for working with students. The Taylor High School senior tutors autistic children after school and wants to go into behavior therapy, specializing in working with disabled children. When she learned that this program would give her one-on-one experience with life skills students, she knew it was for her. "I love the challenge and want to be pushed," says Young.

Hutsell Elementary teacher Renee Klotz has seen the difference high school student teachers make in the lives of her life skills students, who have a wide range of disabilities. "This is my third year at Hutsell and my third year with interns," she says. "It is a blessing to have them. They really make a difference to these students." As a senior, Young has enjoyed every minute of her time at Hutsell. "I've enjoyed working with the kids on a different level than their teacher," she says. "They treat us a little differently because we are a little closer to where they are." Gloria Alarcon, who teaches first grade at Hutsell, has also seen how the Ready, Set, Teach program benefits her students, as well as the high school mentors. "The students get so excited when they know the interns are coming," she says. "And as a teacher, I see the true value of this program and wish that I had been able to do something like this when I was their age."

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Bethany Peterson, M.D.      Catherine Corovessis, M.D.

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## Beyond the Classroom

Teachers Michelle Smith and Lisa Roesler have taken the program to another level by creating Hutsell Elementary's Hornet Academy. This offers students a chance to come to school early and work on their homework or tutoring. "It's a safe alternative [for] the kids [who] are waiting alone at the bus stops. This is ideal for working parents," says Smith. Ready, Set, Teach student interns help with the tutoring at the Hornet Academy, gaining even more valuable experience while working to make a difference. "My own children attend and love working with the interns," Roesler shares.

## Graduating Ahead of the Game

Van Cleave always knew that she wanted to follow her mother's footsteps as an educator, and the Ready, Set, Teach program only further encouraged her to pursue that path. When planning for college this coming fall, she chose to attend Sam Houston State University based on the school's excellent education department. "I've met with teachers at Sam Houston and they are very impressed with the work I have done in this program," she shares. "I know that I will be ahead of the game compared to my peers, since their department really focuses on classroom experience."

Perez is set to start college this fall, and is also seeing a similar positive reaction from Abilene Christian University. "They may lower my required student teaching hours because of this program," he explains.

## A Priceless Program

From the interns, to the students and teachers, the Ready, Set, Teach program impacts a lot of people in Katy ISD. "I'm amazed



Jose Perez has enjoyed his year with Gloria Alarcon's class at Hutsell

at the ideas and enthusiasm the interns bring to the participating schools as they interact with the students and teachers," says Carr of her high school students. "I also feel the experiences gained by the interns and the examples set for them by the teachers are priceless." The Ready, Set, Teach program is a valuable component of Katy's successful and highly acclaimed school district, and it leaves a lasting impression on everyone involved. KM

*NATALIE COOK CLARK is happy to be back in her hometown and loves her job as a freelance writer. She lives with her wonderful husband, Stephen, and dog, Oscar. They are expecting their first child this July.*

To learn more about Katy ISD's Ready, Set, Teach program and how to sign up, contact counselor, Patty Norrell at 281-237-6331.

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