



U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, Mayor Annise Parker and AVANCE Executive Director Jose Villarreal help cut the ribbon for the new Mangum Education Center.

## Hundreds attend Mangum Center groundbreaking

More than 200 people joined Mayor Annise Parker and other dignitaries Friday, Oct. 22, to celebrate the opening of the new Mangum Education Center, which offers a variety of free early childhood and adult education programs for the northwest Houston community.

Students from both Southwest Schools and AVANCE entertained the crowds with songs and poems while elected officials spoke to them about the importance of a strong education.

"Two strong agencies partnering side by side to build strong families and healthy children make a successful Houston," said Mayor Parker.

The afternoon concluded with tours of both campuses and a closing message from U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee who helped make the project possible for AVANCE.

Although operating independently, Southwest Schools and AVANCE, can now offer families the opportunity to take advantage of several programs at one location.

The Southwest campus offers kindergarten through fifth grade, and the nonprofit AVANCE offers Early Head Start, Head Start and Adult Education programs such

as GED, ESL and Computer Literacy, in a small and safe environment with highly-qualified teachers and a dedicated staff.

The 46,503 square-foot Mangum Educational Center was once the site of the original Randalls.

Dr. Spyros Catechis and Jose Villarreal, American Leadership Forum fellows and strong advocates of collaborative efforts as modeled by ALF, contributed to the partnership and re-designed an abandoned facility.

With the help of the Mangum Education Center Partnership this aging facility was transformed into an educational campus.