

# COMMUNITY GEM: College unveils Community Education Center

By SHANNON DAUGHTRY | Posted: Saturday, January 21, 2012 2:00 am

## LAKE JACKSON

It was hard for Cathie Hanson to decide what she was most excited about at Brazosport College's new Community Education Center, she said.

Walking down the freshly painted hallways and newly furnished classrooms, the center's director couldn't help but smile at everything each had to offer.

One room was filled with sewing machines, fabric and patterns to teach students how to sew, another had images students had taken during their photography class projected on the wall and another was filled with tables where the massage therapy class learned techniques needed for state certification.

"We're not restricted by anything at the CE center," Hanson said as she showcased a room filled with new laptops and a projector system. "We're open to everyone."

Vivian Flores, 20, of Lake Jackson, who recently completed the massage therapy certification courses, said she was really excited about the center's grand opening and planned to take a Photoshop class the center was offering.

"They're really helpful here," Flores said. "They pretty much give you all the tools you need for the real world."

Flores said the Photoshop course wasn't the only offering she planned to take.

"I love the classes here," she said.

Community Education classes had been housed at a storefront in Lake Jackson for about 10 years, said John Ray, dean of industry and community resources. Bringing them onto the main campus involved renovating the first floor of the B-Wing.

The contract to construct the Community Education Center was for \$14.4 million and included the recently completed Student Life Center. It was paid for through the \$70 million voter-approved bond in 2007.

"We are glad to have the Community Education program back on campus," Ray said. "We're particularly pleased to be in this renovated space that will so help meet the needs of the community."

The Community Education Center offers health classes from basic CPR and first aid all the way to an EMT-based refresher course and dental assistant classes. There also are courses for substitute

teacher training, veterinary assistant, keyboarding, an introduction to Microsoft Office, business writing skills and Spanish communication skills.

Students also can work toward their GED and prepare for the SAT and ACT exams, Hanson said.

“We have programs that begin with elementary-age school kids and ones that go all the way through senior residents,” Ray said.

One of the aspects of the new facility Hanson and college spokeswoman Patty Sayes were most excited about was its state-of-the-art kitchen. Classes such as cake decorating and a food safety manager course will be offered there.

“You can learn about quick foods for your kids to help steer away from fast food and other things like pastries and cakes,” Hanson said.

The kitchen is furnished with residential-type ovens so students are able to learn on equipment that they would have in their homes.

“They can do what they learned on what they’ve practiced on,” she said.

The possibilities at the Community Education Center are endless, Hanson said, which is why she encourages residents who have an idea for a class to suggest it, and even teach it to the students there.

“We’re always looking for new ideas to meet the needs of the community,” Hanson said. “We’re excited to have it open back at the main campus again.”