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## **HOUSTON HOUSING AUTHORITY WELCOMES AVANCE HEAD START PROGRAM TO LINCOLN PARK**

**HOUSTON**— Houston Housing Authority President and CEO Tory Gunsolley, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, community leaders and HHA residents celebrated the opening of AVANCE’s newest Head Start center at HHA’s Lincoln Park family development on Monday, October 24. This makes the second AVANCE Head Start program at an HHA site, the first, Oxford Place, opened in 2010. The center offers Head Start services for three to five year olds and is already at full capacity, serving 50 students.

Gunsolley spoke at the ceremony congratulating AVANCE for its many accomplishments and its commitment to educating young children and promoting stronger communities.

“AVANCE is very effective at providing key resources to communities that are in need,” Gunsolley said. “We are thrilled to have them serving kids in the community.”

The Housing Authority has 12 students participating in the Lincoln Park center’s Head Start program and 20 students at the Oxford Place site. One of the children at the new site is LaKeithra Autry’s 3-year-old son, Anthony Evans. As a single mom with two children, Autry said that being able to place her child in the Head Start program has benefited her and Anthony. Her son is learning and making friends. While he is in class, she is able to work as a home healthcare provider.

“This program has really benefited my family,” Autry said. “I am able to do more things now that my son is in Head Start and I can see a strong improvement in his reading.”

AVANCE offers other programs at its centers such as parenting classes, ESL, computer literacy, GED and college readiness courses. Thanks to a four year grant award of \$3.2 million, Lincoln Park residents and families in the Acres Home area will have the opportunity to enroll in Healthy Marriage workshops. The workshops are designed to

strengthen relationships of married couples and help prepare individuals for marriage. The Healthy Marriage program will begin January 2012.

The Houston Housing Authority provides affordable homes and services to more than 55,000 low-income Houstonians. The agency and its affiliates own and operate 25 housing communities with about 5,500 units for families, elderly and disabled residents as well as mobile voucher programs that serve over 16,000 low-income households. More information about HHA can be found at [www.housingforhouston.com](http://www.housingforhouston.com).

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