

# Center receives kudos

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Texas Workforce Commission Executive Director Larry Temple and a TWC commissioner visited the San Benito Literacy Center Friday.

"I've been to literacy centers before, but this one's just extraordinary," said Diane Rath, TWC Chair and Commissioner Representing the Public.

The guests' tour of the facilities was led by Ron Rogers, the center's board president. Rogers is proud and ought to be proud of the center, said the TWC executive director. "We have so many people coming to us all the time saying, they can't do things, because we don't have a whole lot of money," said Temple.

"And here we have somebody doing a whole lot on a shoestring."

Rath spoke to students, while visiting the classrooms, asking their names and how they felt about their studies.

The TWC officials were joined by STCC Assistant for Workforce

Development Wanda Garza. Along the tour, the group ran into a number of the center's success stories, former students now working as instructors or staff.

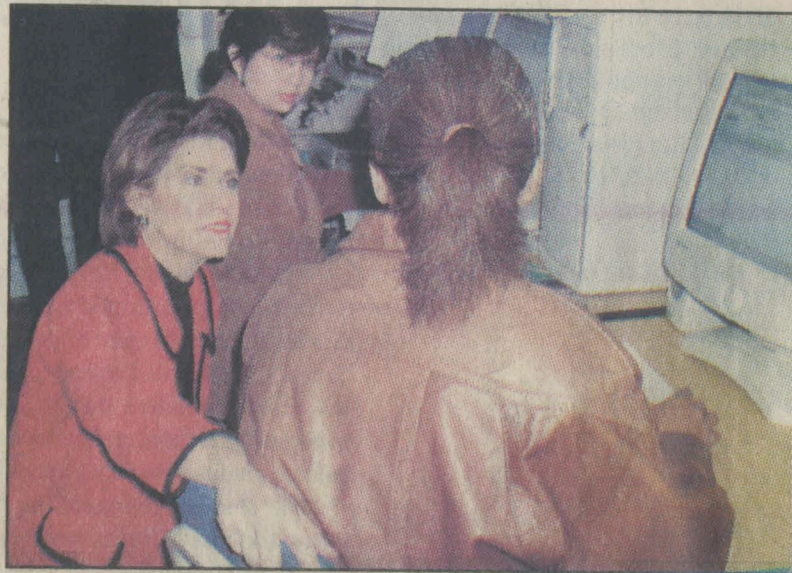
"It's really good to see local communities and volunteers are stepping up to the plate and addressing the problem of illiteracy," said Temple. "It's really inspiring to see this type of operation."

Transforming a garage into a classroom is one example of the help volunteers have provided.

Similar stories had one guest say the center "is truly community." According to Garza, this feeling is beneficial for the students. "An advantage a lot of people don't think about it that (the students) are comfortable here, not intimidated," she said.

The visit also allowed officials to see the center's need for more classrooms and parking areas.

"I've never seen so many people in such a small space," remarked Rath during the tour. Rogers expressed his wishes for a new building and spoke to the group about the possibilities for relocation.



## Learning about learning

Texas Workforce commissioner Diane Rath speaks to a student at the San Benito Literacy Center during her visit Friday. (Staff photo)

While the local center looks toward a new building, Temple said literacy center locations, in general, are changing. "Right now, what we're seeing is that a lot of businesses have an onsite literacy (center) for the workers. I've really been excited about seeing that change," he said.

While Temple and Rath's trip to

the Valley was not solely to visit the center, Rath said, "They invited me for years."

The center's board president said a recent documentary about the facility peaked the commissioner's interest. "(The San Benito Literacy Center is) one that certainly has gotten a lot of not only local but also national acclaim," said Temple.