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By Mayor Annise D. Parker

State of the City

As the last year of my time in office proceeds, we are at a point where we can celebrate the accomplishments. But we are also reminded that time is running out to do more. My love of Houston and its residents has been the driving force behind every decision I've made. I have been a mayor who has always put Houston first and never hesitated to take on the difficult fights, even when it wasn't to my personal political benefit to do so. There is no question the city is better off today than it was five years ago.

Our long list of accomplishments that includes Hire Houston First, job growth, record economic development, the Wage Theft Ordinance, a revitalized convention center district, the lowest crime rate in decades, Rebuild Houston, creation of the independent crime lab, testing of rape kits, the sobering center, restoration of Buffalo Bayou, Bayou Greenways and other park improvements, demolition of abandoned properties and a more sustainable Houston.

As I approach the end of my term, I am giving a lot of thought to what I would like to see from the person who replaces me. My job description for the next mayor includes the following:

- A mayor who will fight hard to maintain Houston as a national and world leader;
- A mayor who recognizes the importance of providing opportunity in poor and minority neighborhoods;
- A mayor who will take what her administration has accomplished and build upon it;
- A mayor who tells the truth, even when it is hard;
- A mayor who tackles the hard problems head on;
- A mayor who will put Houston first and loves the city as much as she does.

Being mayor requires more than talking about needing more police officers, filling more potholes or eliminating pension debt. A mayor has to know how to pay for it and how to make it happen. It's easy to point out problems. The hard part is finding the solutions.

While the candidates jockey to replace me, I promise to continue working as hard as I can until the very last day of my administration at the end of 2015.

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Lebanon Times

3 Years Later

By George M. Nassar, M.D., F.A.C.P., F.A.S.N.

Dears Nabil and Julia,

With the passage of 3 years since the inception of Lebanon Times in Houston, I like to congratulate you on your success in establishing a magazine of good quality. Lebanon Times has thus become valuable for the Lebanese American community in Houston, and many look forward to reading it on a monthly basis.

Lebanon Times has captured events in the Lebanese American community at all levels. On one hand, it has captured personal moments with individual stories, friendship gatherings, birthday celebrations, and numerous happy hours. On the other hand, it has documented larger community and city-based events such as banquets, galas, ceremonies, receptions, presentations, festivals, and educational and cultural events. Capturing these broad and diverse occurrences has highlighted what an active Lebanese American community we have in Houston.

Lebanon Times has promoted connections within the Lebanese American community in Houston. Thus, it has increased the awareness of several community businesses in various sectors and disciplines, and highlighted achievements of many prominent individuals who are successful in their respective fields. By doing so, Lebanon Times enhanced communication, and interconnected individual professionals, businesses, with the community at large, and vice versa.

Lebanon Times has connected the Lebanese community with the Arab community. This is essential for both the Lebanese and the Arabs by virtue of Lebanon being part of the Arab World. Lebanon has traditionally been a leader among the Arab nations in culture, education, finance, business, health-care, history, journalism, entertainment, and progress. The

Arabs have always admired Lebanon and flocked to Lebanon especially in the summer to enjoy many of its venues and amenities. It is no surprise that many Arab Americans admire Lebanon Times, and have become faithful readers of the magazine.

Beyond the Lebanese and Arab communities, Lebanon Times has created new bridges with the great city of Houston, including City Hall and the Mayor's office. By doing so, Lebanon Times has enhanced the image of Lebanese Americans living in Houston, and in the United States. Such American awareness can only bring respect to Lebanese Americans, whose community is rich with high achievers, scholars, and leaders.

Since Lebanon continues to be prey for discordant forces and sectarian trends, it is difficult for any Lebanese group, club, or institution, in Houston, or anywhere in the world, to claim true global representation of Lebanon. Yet, Lebanon Times has carefully and successfully navigated through such difficulties and disparities to rise to an encompassing representation of all society sectors, ethnic groups, and religions that constitute the makeup of the beloved country Lebanon.

Dear Nabil and Julia, I wish you continued success in your resilient and determined efforts and endeavors to keep Lebanon Times a first class magazine, with broad community representation, and a radiant source of pride for Lebanese Americans. I also urge all Lebanese Americans residing in Houston to rally in support of Lebanon Times to further enrich it with ideas, depth, vision, and momentum, while keeping in mind that the success of Lebanon Times is the personal success of every individual of Lebanese origin.

14th annual St. Jude Evening of Hope Gala

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital hosted the 14th annual St. Jude Evening of Hope gala on Saturday, April 18, 2015 at the Royal Sonesta Hotel with Title Sponsor, Amerapex Corporation. It was a record breaking year, raising \$370,000 for the kids of St. Jude.

The event honored Brittany Hebert, active Houston Philanthropist and Founder of Sky High for St. Jude, for her dedication to fundraising for the kids of St. Jude. Royce Walker of Epsilon Sigma Alpha was presented the Lifetime of Service Award for serving over 20 years as a volunteer for St. Jude. Guests heard from the true heroes, four local St. Jude patients who shared "why there is a reason for St. Jude". Their touching stories inspired the guests and led to raising over \$121,000 in the Live Auction and Give to Live.

The success of the gala was the result of the passionate work of the Gala Co-Chairs, Mrs. Roula Nassar Gerguis and Mrs. Amal Zakhem Nassar, and the dedication of the entire Gala Committee: Mrs. Nina Baki, Mrs. Mirna Chammas, Ms. Maya Hariri, Ms. Alissa James, Mrs. Dana Khan, Ms. Jackie Macha, Ms. Sophia Mafrige, Mrs. Rosemary McMullen, Mrs. Hilda Najjar, Ms. Donna Solomay, Ms. Yara Suki, Mrs. Royce Walker, and Mrs. Nouha Zaineldeen.

The gala would not exist without all the incredible sponsor support. Title Sponsor, Amerapex, Healing Hope Sponsors - Lois A. Lewis, Steve and Carolyn Mafrige and MasterCard Worldwide, and all of the Child's Dream, Heart Song, Angel's Wing, Family and Friends, and In-Kind Sponsors.

"No child should die in the dawn of life" was the dream of Danny Thomas when he opened St. Jude over 50 years ago. St. Jude Children's Research Hospital is leading the way the world understands, treats and defeats childhood cancer and other deadly diseases.

St. Jude has the world's best survival rates for the most aggressive childhood cancers, and treatments invented at St. Jude have helped push the overall childhood cancer survival rate from 20 percent to 80 percent since we opened more than 50 years ago. St. Jude freely shares the breakthroughs we make, and every child saved at St. Jude means doctors and scientists worldwide can use that knowledge to save thousands more children. Families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food – because all a family should worry about is helping their child live.

For more information about the event or to make a donation, visit stjude.org/houston.

or contact Susannah Causey, Senior Regional Event Specialist at 713-599-1441. (Photo: Julia Nader)



لقاء الأُحبة

14th annual St. Jude Evening of Hope Gala





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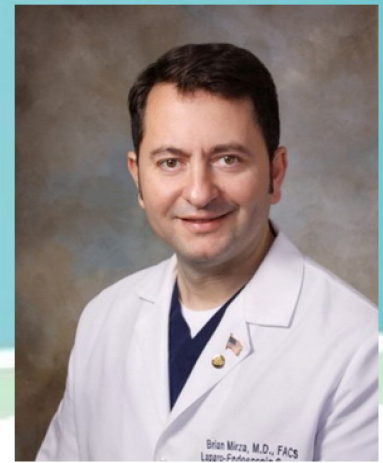
Brian Mirza, MD, FACS

Weight Loss Surgery

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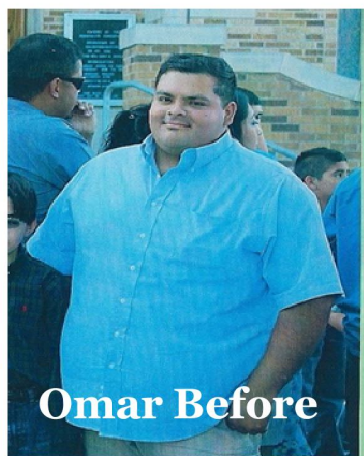


Carrie Before



Carrie After

At 310 pounds on the scale, I knew it was time for weight loss surgery. I went on the internet and did some researching, which is where I came across Dr. Mirza. I asked around and after hearing great things my decision was final, so I made my appointment. The staff was nothing but caring and compassionate throughout my entire experience and remains so to this day. Since losing 132 pounds my life has finally started. Before, I never wanted to go out with my friends and would only work out in my garage. Now I am out and about, and have no problem going to the gym. Recently I tried on some clothes that I wore in the eighth grade, and they were too big! I couldn't be happier with the results and would highly recommend Dr. Mirza to anyone looking into weight loss surgery. I have said it before and I will say it again....I'm a brand new person!



Omar Before



Omar After

I have always struggled with my weight. Being 345 lbs., I was a prisoner inside my own body. Simply put, I was miserable and felt my life was passing me by. When I came to Dr. Mirza's office in April 2011, I knew I was in good hands. Since the surgery I have lost 175 lbs! I have literally shed a whole other person! My days of suffering quietly and feeling terrible about myself for who I was, and what I had become are way behind me... they are now my PAST! Now I feel healthier than ever and I can enjoy life with my loved ones and live life to the fullest! Dr. Mirza is a great surgeon, a great listener and a great person in general. I trust Dr. Mirza so much I have recommended him to many others including my own sister!

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Alf Mabrouk

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