



Houston ewiConnect



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

LILY PORTALES | HILCORP ENERGY COMPANY

New Currents, Shared Impact

January ushered in a fresh start for EWI Houston as we gathered for our monthly meeting at Amegy on Main, where members enjoyed a timely wellness program led by Bridget Dawn. As we step into a new year, the conversation served as an important reminder that leadership is strongest when we prioritize both professional excellence and personal well-being.

One of the most meaningful moments over the holidays and as we entered a new year was hearing from one of our EWI scholarship recipients, who shared an update on her first semester of college. Listening to her reflect on her transition was a powerful reminder of why our work matters. Her progress is a living example of how EWI of Houston's investment in education creates ripples of opportunity that extend far beyond the classroom.

Behind the scenes, your Board of Directors continues to work diligently to ensure our chapter remains strong, responsive, and thriving. Their commitment—often unseen—keeps EWI Houston moving forward with purpose and momentum as we balance governance, programming, and community impact.

Planning is also well underway for Executive Night this April, one of our most anticipated signature events. This evening represents the collective efforts of our chapter and directly supports our scholarship programs. We look forward to sharing more details as preparations continue.

We are excited to share encouraging news from EWI Corporate with the launch of the 2026 Emerging Executive Women Program, now open for applications, alongside a membership promotion. The Houston Chapter will match this incentive through March 31, making it an ideal time to invite future leaders to join a community rooted in growth, connection, and service.

Finally, be sure to check out our Philanthropy Corner to “sea” what’s happening now and what’s ahead. From ongoing volunteer opportunities to upcoming community initiatives, our calendar reflects the many ways EWI Houston continues to give back and make an impact throughout the year.

As we move forward, these new currents remind us that when wisdom guides us and change propels us, meaningful progress follows. Thank you for being part of EWI Houston and for the role you play in shaping our shared impact.

Lily Portales

JANUARY 2026

2025-2026 Officers & Directors

President

Lily Portales

Hilcorp Energy Company

President-Elect

Elisa Garcia

Houston First Corp

Secretary/Treasurer

Linda Petticrew

Shell Energy Resources

Membership Director

Barbara Stokes

Amegy Bank

Director-at-Large B/C/DP

Cristina Barron

Martha Tuner Sotheby's International Realty

Sergeant-at-Arms

Anna Bryant

H-E-B

Communications Director

Victoria Maldonado

Harvest Midstream Company

Program Director

Isabel McKinney

Hilcorp Energy Company

Advisor & Parliamentarian

Cindy Baker

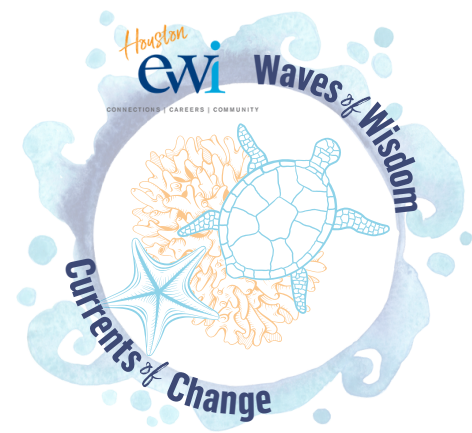
Black Haw Group LLC

Advisor

Shari Schiffman

Douglas Elliman Real Estate

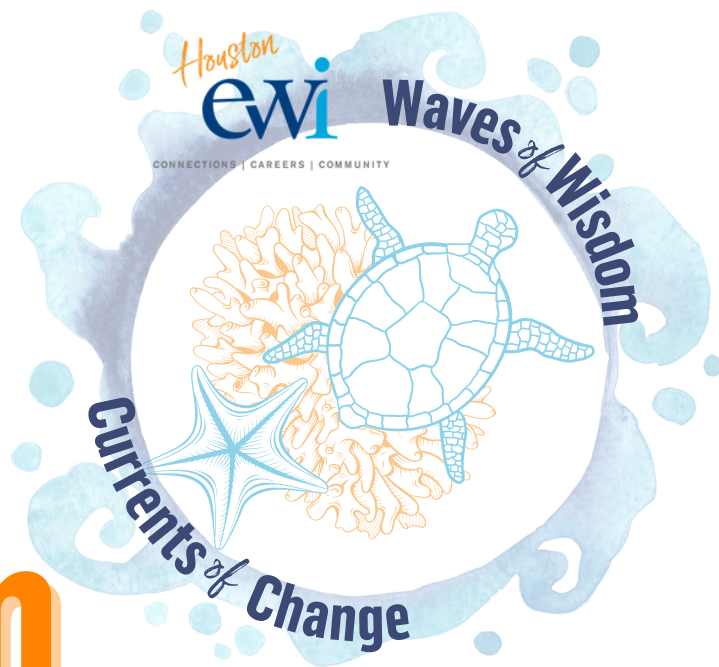
DIVE INTO THIS ISSUE



- **President's Letter**
- **Words of Wisdom - WOW**
- **Tides of Thanks**
- **Tides of Generosity**
- **"Sea" What's Coming - Event Calendar**
- **Waves of Celebration**
- **Welcome to the Reef**
- **Currents & Highlights**
- **Currents of Growth - Professional Development**
- **Mission**
- **Leadership**
- **Surf the Digital Wave - Connect with EWI Houston**

Houston
ewiConnect

Words of Wisdom



“I loved being active in the EWI—Houston Chapter when I worked for Randall’s. Not only did I become a better person from the benefits of EWI, but I’ve made lasting friendships... long after my career! And now retired, we stay in contact thru our WOW group. I love that we get together once a quarter to see each other and reminisce, but mostly check on each other and age gracefully!! I LOVE my EWI connection!”



-Betty Stolarksi, WOW Member

<https://ewihouston.org/>

Houston
ewiConnect

Tides

of

Thanks

ewisp
EXECUTIVE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

“Dear all,

I wish this email finds you well. I'm currently in my winter break, so I thought I would share with you an update on my first semester in college. So far, it's been an exciting and positive experience. I got used to the college life style from both academic and social perspectives as I live on campus, meeting people from different parts of the US and outside the US. Academically, it requires a lot of work, dedication, and discipline, and thankfully, I've grown with, but now I'm applying these skills in full independence. With the grace of the Lord, I was able to achieve an A average for the first semester. Once again, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for your financial support and purposeful scholarship mission. I trust you all had a Merry Christmas and wish you all a Happy New Year.”

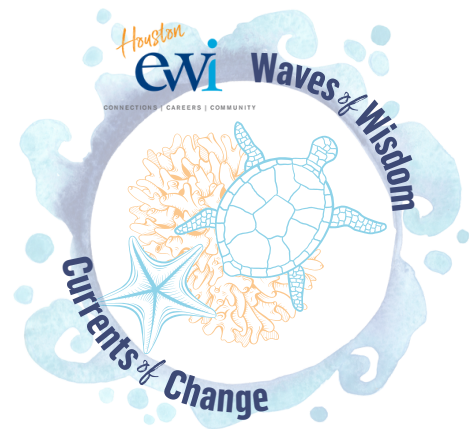


-Melvina Morkos

2025 EWISP Scholarship Recipient

<https://ewihouston.org/>

Tides *of* Generosity



**HELP US CREATE A WAVE OF SUPPORT
FOR EWI OF HOUSTON'S BIGGEST
FUNDRAISING EVENT OF THE YEAR!**

PURSES WITH A PURPOSE

Turn fashion into fundraising! Donate new or gently loved designer handbags to add a splash of flair to our event!

Contact: Lily Portales

lily.portales@hilcorp.com



LIQUOR WAGON

Donate unopened liquor, mixers, or chic barware to help us craft a show-stopping cocktail raffle. Every bottle adds to the splash!

Contact: Shari Schiffman

shari.schiffman@elliman



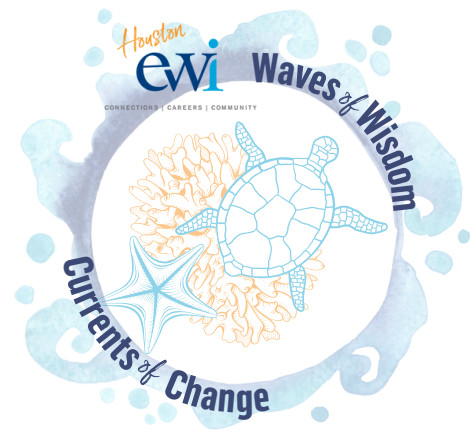
WINE PULL

Help us build an unforgettable wine pull! Donate wine valued at \$25+ or make a tax-deductible cash gift to support premium bottle purchases.

Contact: Patti Strawther

pattistrawther@hotmail.com





“SEA” WHAT’S COMING

February 10

Chapter Monthly Meeting
Saltgrass Steakhouse Meyerland

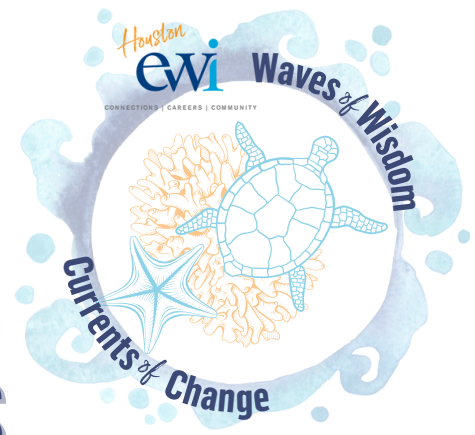
February 13

Durham Elementary
RSVP to Patti Strawther at
pattistrawther@hotmail.com

February 19

Monthly Board Meeting
Hilcorp Energy





“SEA” WHAT’S COMING PHILANTHROPY HIGH TIDES

February 13

Durham Elementary

Assist passing out lunch to the school staff
RSVP to Patti Strawther at
pattistrawther@hotmail.com

May TBD - Stay tuned!
**EWI Houston’s Annual
Reading Rally**

More info to come!

February 21

Kids’ Meals

Decorate lunch bags at Patti McLean’s house
RSVP to Patti Mclean at
patti.mclean@daikincomfort.com

June 5

Durham Elementary

Assist passing out lunch to the
school staff
RSVP to Patti Strawther at
pattistrawther@hotmail.com

April 6

Durham Elementary

Distribute a small gift to each student to
cheer them on ahead of STAAR
testing. RSVP to Patti Strawther at
pattistrawther@hotmail.com

June 20

Pillowcase Sewing Day

Benefiting Child Advocates
Sewing not required!
RSVP to Patti Strawther at
pattistrawther@hotmail.com

May 9

Dress for Success Drive

Chapter Monthly Meeting
More info to come!

Waves of Celebration

FEBRUARY

REPRESENTATIVES BIRTHDAYS

DELYNN WALKER, PAST PRESIDENT - FEB 2

DEBORAH MAYFIELD - FEB 4

LILY PORTALES, PRESIDENT - FEB 6

DEBBIE CASEY, PAST PRESIDENT - FEB 10

VALINDA CORTEZ - FEB 15

MICHELLE VOTANO - FEB 15

CAROLE PITTS - FEB 21

CINDY JOUTRAW - FEB 25

MEMBER FIRM ANNIVERSARIES

HOUSTON FIRST CORP - 2003

IMAGEN VENUE - 2023

<https://ewihouston.org/>

Waves of Celebration

CONGRATULATIONS!!

SCOTT MCLEAN WITH AMEGY BANK CELEBRATING THE \$58 MILLION GOAL REACHED FOR THE 2024-2025 LIFE FLIGHT CAPITAL CAMPAIGN.



Steve Stephens, Barbara Stokes, and Scott McLean

**Submitted by EWI Member
Representative
Barbara Stokes**

AmegyBank®
and Steve & Anne-Laure Stephens

<https://ewihouston.org/>

Waves of Celebration

**WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST LITTLE SEA STAR!
A NEW BUNDLE OF JOY HAS ARRIVED, AND WE COULDN'T BE HAPPIER.
HELP US WELCOME THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE EWI FAMILY!**

**BABY SAWYER
BORN: 12/18/2025**

7 LBS 10 OZ

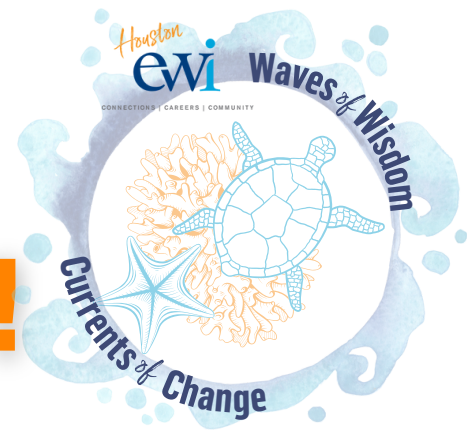
19.75" LONG

SON TO SARAH SWEET, LET IT FLY EVENTS



Have something to celebrate?! We'd love to share it. Email Victoria Maldonado at vmaldonado@harvestmidstream.com

<https://ewihouston.org/>



WELCOME TO THE REEF!

**NEW TIDES BRING NEW CONNECTIONS!
WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBER!**



Kori Peters
Past President 2014

CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY MEETING RECAP

January 13, 2026 - Amegy Bank

The 2026 kick-off meeting for EWI of Houston was held at the beautiful Amegy on Main offices in vibrant—and always under construction—downtown Houston. President Lily Portales, representing Hilcorp Energy Company, welcomed our guests, executives, and representatives. She then introduced past president LaTonya Perez, representing The Rose, who delivered the invocation.

LaTonya offered an inspiring prayer and asked for special blessings for Bill Stokes; his wife, Barbara Stokes, representing Amegy Bank; his sister, Cindy Baker, representing Black Haw Group; and their entire family. The moment was deeply moving, and there was a strong sense of unity and hope shared by all in attendance.

Our guest speaker for the evening was Bridget Dawn, a certified mental well-being coach and behavior change specialist. She spoke about the importance of hydration, good nutrition, and even the simplest yet most powerful practice—breathing. Bridget guided us through several breathing exercises that left everyone feeling relaxed and refreshed.

The Philanthropy Committee, chaired by Patti McLean, representing Daikin Comfort Technologies, N.A., led our efforts to support the Houston Food Bank and its ongoing hunger relief mission. January is a critical time for food banks across Houston, and many generous donations were made. It is especially gratifying to know that a \$10 donation provides 30 meals.

The evening included delicious barbecue and wonderful camaraderie, making it a truly memorable start to the year.



- Carole Pitts
Martha Turner Sotheby's
International Realty



Houston
eViConnect

CURRENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY MEETING



Carole Pitts, MTSIR; Stephanie Howard, The Ballroom at Tanglewood; Shari Schiffman, Douglas Elliman Real Estate



LaTonya Perez
The Rose



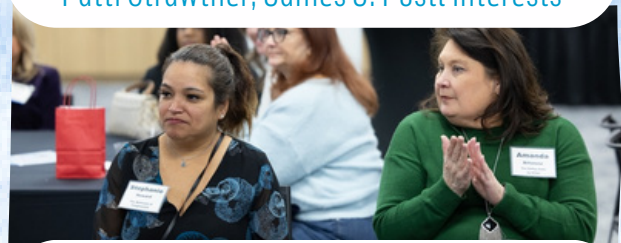
Isabel McKinney, Hilcorp Energy Company



Kori Peters, Past President 2014
Patti Strawther, James J. Postl Interests



Bridget Dawn, Guest



Stephanie Howard, The Ballroom at Tanglewood,
Amanda Billstone, The Chifley



Kristin Skille
Experience Houston



Marilyn DeSimone, Landry's, Inc.



Lily Portales, Hilcorp Energy Company

CURRENTS OF IMPACT

KICKING OFF 2026 BY GIVING BACK WITH BRIGHTER BITES AND CLOVERLEAF ELEMENTARY



Thelma Green, Sr. Program Manager, Brighter Bites
Lisa Helfman, Founder, Brighter Bites

"This experience was both meaningful and humbling—a powerful reminder not to take access to fresh produce for granted, and a testament to the big hearts behind Brighter Bites. So glad we went out to help."

— **Patti McLean**, Daikin Comfort Technologies

"Preparing nearly 190 bags of fresh produce was hard work, but incredibly rewarding knowing these items will be used by families who need them."

— **Elisa Garcia**, Houston First

Thank you to all the volunteers, and a special thank you to Anna Bryant, HEB, and Mary Margaret Carroll, Sustaining Member for taking the lead and coordinating the event!



CURRENTS OF GROWTH

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



CURRENTS OF CONVERSATION

Podcast: “Drowning in To-Dos?”
(The Gold Digger Podcast)

 [Listen Here](#)



CURRENT READS

Read: “Lift Your Head and Lower Your Arms – You Might Just Feel Better” (NPR)

 [Read It Here](#)

Read: “What I Wish I Knew When I Was 20” (Tina Seelig)

 [Get the Book](#)



THE CYBER CURRENT

Read: “AI Skills That Stick: Why Practice-First Learning Drives Real Adoption” (LinkedIn)

 [Learn More](#)



KEEP THE CURRENT FLOWING

Help us grow the wave of wisdom! If you have a resource, article, or insight worth sharing email Victoria Maldonado at

vmaldonado@harvestmidstream.com

CURRENTS OF GROWTH

NEWS FROM CORPORATE

ASIST SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Discover our Adult Students in Transition Scholarship

Scholarship Details:

- Available to Students in the Greater Houston Area
- Scholarship benefits non-traditional students
- Apply for our Scholarship & Invest in your Education

Application Deadline:
Tuesday, March 31, 2026
by 11:59 PM

Apply Now!



CURRENTS OF GROWTH

NEWS FROM CORPORATE

Professional Development Webinar: “Facing West: Turning your unique potential into possibility”

Hosted by: Nancy Kramer

Date: February 18, 2026

Time: 12:00pm CST

 [Register here](#) for this EWI Professional Development Webinar



2026 Emerging Executive Women Program



The corporate board is pleased to offer the Emerging Executive Women program again for 2026. The program is open now and winners will be announced in April.

If you have any questions, please contact the Growth and Engagement Director, Lesley Cornathan at lcornathan@columbusconventions.com or 614-827-2661.

TEXOMA

Date: July 30 - August 1, 2026

Corpus Christi, TX

More info to come!

 [Click here](#) to visit the EWI Corporate site for past professional development webinars.

<https://ewihouston.org/>



EWI of Houston Mission Statement

EWI of Houston aspires to be the premier business organization of choice for member firms and their key individuals. Recognized by the Houston community as an avenue to achieve personal and professional excellence, every activity of the Houston Chapter will fulfill at least one of the objectives of the EWI Mission Statement.

Our Mission

EWI brings together key individuals from diverse businesses for the purpose of promoting member firms, enhancing personal and professional development, and encouraging community involvement.

Our Vision

To enhance professional growth and development within a diverse group of women while empowering them to make a difference as they inspire others.



Our Strategic Goals

- To strengthen, expand, and broaden membership
- To provide member firms with meaningful benefits
- To actively promote education for all representatives
- To achieve a high level of community visibility through service

Corporate Office

Vicki Chapman, EWI

c/o SWBC

9311 San Pedro Avenue, Suite 600

San Antonio, TX 78216

210-321-7535

www.ewiconnect.com



Leadership

Board of Directors



President
Lily Portales
Hilcorp Energy Company
lily.portales@hilcorp.com



President Elect
Elisa Garcia
Houston First Corp
egarcia@houstonfirst.com



Sergeant at Arms
Anna Bryant
H-E-B
bryant.anna@heb.com



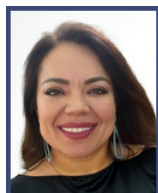
Membership Director
Barbara Stokes
Amegy Bank
barbara.stokes@amegybank.com



Secretary/Treasurer
Linda Petticrew
Shell Energy Resources
linda.petticrew@shell.com



Communications Director
Victoria Maldonado
Harvest Midstream
vmaldonado@harvest
midstream.com



Program Director
Isabel McKinney
Hilcorp Energy Company
imckinney@jdhcap.com



Director at Large
Cristina Barron
Martha Turner Sotheby's
International Realty
cristina.barron@sothebys.realty



Advisor & Parliamentarian
Cindy Baker
Black Haw Group LLC
cindyb@blackhawgroup.com



Advisor
Shari Schiffman
Douglas Elliman Real Estate
Shari.Schiffman@elliman.com

Leadership

Committee Chairs



ASIST Committee Chair
Debra Jaime
The Rose
djaime@therose.org



Bylaws Committee Chair
Cindy Joutraw
CenterPoint Energy, Inc.
cindy.joutraw
@centerpointenergy.com



Courtesy Committee Chair
Elisa Garcia
Houston First Corp
elisa.garcia@houstonfirst.com



EWISP Committee Chair
Patti Strawther
James J. Postl Interests
pattistrawther@hotmail.com



Hospitality Committee
Chair
Anna Bryant
HEB
bryant.anna@heb.com



Member/ Retention
Committee Chair
Carole Pitts
Martha Turner Sotheby's
International Realty
Carole.Pitts@sothebys
.realty



Nominating Committee Chair
Cindy Baker
Black Haw Group LLC
cindyb@blackhawgroup.com



Philanthropy Committee
Chair
Patti McLean
Daikin Comfort
Technologies, N.A.
patti.mclean@daikin
comfort.com



Professional Development
Committee Chair
Isabel McKinney
Hilcorp Energy Company
imckinney@jdhcp.com



Public Relations &
Social Media Chair
Victoria Maldonado
Harvest Midstream
vmaldonado@harvest
midstream.com



Strategic Planning
Committee Chair
LaTonya Perez
The Rose
lperez@therose.org



Web Committee Chair
David Jones
D. Jones Photography
studio@djonesphoto.com

Surf the Digital Wave

Connect with EWI Houston



<https://www.facebook.com/EWIHouston>



<https://www.instagram.com/ewiofhouston/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12076399/>



<https://ewihouston.org/>

