

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Outstanding Houston Student Athletes Earn Reliant Scholarships**

*—Nine High School Leaders Win \$45,000 in Scholarships through Program with Houston Texans—*

**HOUSTON, Nov. 5, 2013** – They run, hit and catch, but the winning students in Reliant's eighth annual [Scholarship for Champions](#) program also volunteer time in their communities and lead in academics. Nine Houston area student athletes earned \$5,000 scholarships through the merit-based program in partnership with the [Houston Texans](#). Their stories highlight top academic performance, athletic skill, ethics and commitment to their communities.

"The young people we are honoring today are simply inspirational. Many have persevered through difficult trials and performed at the highest levels demonstrating strong values and hard work as they used their time, gifts and talents to make a difference in their community and on their teams," said Elizabeth Killinger, president of Reliant. "We are excited to honor them with the Scholarship for Champions, which remains one of the most important ways Reliant gives back to the communities we serve and supports local all-star students who will one day be our future leaders."

All students participated in at least one varsity sport, maintained a minimum GPA of 3.0 and plan to pursue a college degree. But beyond those important accomplishments, they overcame a number of individual challenges that caused each to stand out from their peers.

"These Scholarships for Champions winners have demonstrated the talent, tenacity and strength of character required to be future leaders within our community," said Houston Texans President Jamey Rootes. "We are proud to join Reliant in recognizing these students and supporting them as they take the next steps in their educational journeys."

The winning students received surprise visits at their schools from Houston Texans Ambassador J.J. Moses. They also will be recognized during an on-field ceremony at a Texans home game against the Jacksonville Jaguars on Nov. 24. Since 2006, Reliant and the Houston Texans have awarded 65 scholarships totaling \$325,000.

The winning students are:

- **Gabriel Chaparro of Lamar Consolidated High School** – Gabriel challenges himself in a technology competition club, traveling to a neighboring school to take Chinese, and even started his own business selling cookies. He also plays soccer and is called a "go getter" by his coach.
- **Marissa Clark of Spring Woods High School** – Marissa is tied for valedictorian and is an active volunteer. She is also a member of the varsity track, cross country and swim

teams. She recovered from an injury requiring surgery and continued to lead her teams.

- **Michael Gonzalez of Sam Houston MSTC** – Michael is ranked number one in his class while also serving as captain of the cross country team and is a varsity member of the football, basketball and track teams. In addition to all of these activities Michael also participates in robotics competitions and tutors his classmates.
- **Austin Hawkins of Cypress Ridge High School** – Austin plays football and was praised for his consistent encouragement of his teammates, volunteering with the team and commitment to academics. After his family lost his 8-year-old sister in an accident last spring, Austin's perseverance and positive spirit inspired the school.
- **Maelega Lealaimatafao of Thurgood Marshall High School** – Maelega plays volleyball and basketball, often found helping younger players learn a new task. Outside of sports, she gives back as part of several groups, including visiting a retirement home, cleaning up campus and helping her peers in the classroom.
- **Cindy Onyekwelu of Alief Taylor High School** – Cindy plays tennis and was commended for her active leadership, multiple honor society groups and more than 400 volunteer hours. She also helps her mother clean homes to supplement the family's income.
- **Brian Portis of Westside High School** – Brian graduated in spring 2013. While in high school, he played football and was recognized for his discipline as a player and student. He tutored teammates, was a member of the National Honor Society, had a part-time job and volunteered with a national youth service organization.
- **Tony Smith of Cinco Ranch High School** – Tony plays football and was called by his coach a "natural leader" both on the field and in the classroom. He volunteers, was vice president of his class and participates in a mentoring program.
- **Taylor Troutt of Clear Falls High School** – Taylor is active in church volunteering and has earned recognition for her strength of character. She plays softball and served three years as a team captain in the first years the new school fielded a team.

For more information about the Scholarship for Champions program, visit:

<http://scholarship.myreliantenergy.com/>

### About Reliant

Reliant provides electricity, smart energy solutions, and energy services to business and residential customers across Texas. Reliant is part of NRG (NYSE: NRG), a Fortune 500 company that is at the forefront of changing how people think about, buy and use energy. Backed by a diverse portfolio of about 100 power generating facilities that can support over 40 million homes nationwide, NRG's retail businesses, including Reliant, collectively comprise Texas' largest retail energy provider and serves more than 2 million customers in 10 states and the District of Columbia. For more information about Reliant products and services, please visit [www.reliant.com](http://www.reliant.com). Connect with Reliant on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/reliantenergy](https://www.facebook.com/reliantenergy) and on Twitter @reliantenergy.

### About the Houston Texans

The city of Houston was awarded the National Football League's 32nd franchise on October 6, 1999 thanks to an effort spearheaded by local businessman Robert C. McNair; and on

September 8, 2002, the Houston Texans made their regular-season debut, returning the NFL to Houston after a five-year absence. That night, the Texans became the first expansion team in NFL history to win its debut game, defeating the Dallas Cowboys 19-10. The Texans play at Reliant Stadium, the first retractable-roof stadium in the NFL, and home to the largest in-stadium HD video displays in the world. The Texans have sold out every game at the stadium in franchise history. The Houston Texans are the two-time defending AFC South division champions; and in 2013, the Texans were named the 13<sup>th</sup> most valuable sports franchise in the world and the 5<sup>th</sup> most valuable NFL franchise by Forbes magazine with an estimated value of \$1.3 billion.

**Contacts:**

Shabina Zakaria

713.537.2159

[shabina.zakaria@nrgenergy.com](mailto:shabina.zakaria@nrgenergy.com)