



The Oracle

FIGHTIN' FRANK



Frank Hall has lived at the Allen Wood homes for almost 23 years. While his face shows his years of experience, he retains a youthful twinkle in his eye. Frank has been volunteering with the Housing Authority for 9 years and he continues to help, especially with the kids in the after-school program. He helps prepare and serve food for the Kid's Café program and he has contributed to some of the holiday parties by buying treats for the kids. He is also responsible for maintaining the yard in front of the PODER Learning Center. Since the beginning of the year, Frank has undergone many surgeries. The kids made him get well cards while he was recovering. Despite his ailments, he continues to show his determination and fighting spirit. He was able to go home early from the hospital because he showed his doctor that he was strong enough to get out of his bed and walk in the hallway. He also continues to come to work even while he is recovering. No one said that life was easy but no one said you can't fight for it either. Frank continues to be an inspiration to the staff at PODER and to his fellow residents. We love you Frank!

Notes from the Main Office

***Shopping Carts** are showing up at various locations within our housing sites. We remind everyone that if you bring a shopping cart onto Housing Authority property, you are responsible for returning it. If you need assistance, please contact the Resident Services Center at your site.

*If you have **Christmas decorations** outside your unit, you are a bit early. Christmas is more than 300 days away. Please take the decorations down until we get a bit closer.

*We used to remind people that they shouldn't feed stray cats and that is still true. If you are feeding them, they belong to you and you must comply with the terms of your lease regarding pets. In recent years, **turkey vultures** have moved into town. Guess what? If you feed them, they belong to you. "But I'm not feeding them!" you say? Well, if you leave trash with food in it outside and not properly covered, you are feeding them. While beautiful in flight, these birds are a nuisance around homes. Don't encourage them to be your neighbors. Keep trash well-covered or keep it indoors until the morning of trash pickup! By the way, if you leave cat food outside, they'll eat that . . . and occasional kittens.



ALLEN WOODS HOMES – P.O.D.E.R. LEARNING CENTER

¡CHISTES!

La maestra le reclama a Pepito:

- Pepito ¡Copiaste en el examen de ayer!

A lo que Pepito responde:

- ¡Mentira! Yo no copié profe, ¡cómo cree!

- Entonces, por qué donde Juanito puso "no lo sé" tú pusiste "yo tampoco."



La maestra le pregunta a Juancho:

-Si yo digo "fui rica", es tiempo pasado, pero si digo "soy linda", ¿qué es?

-Exceso de imaginación, maestra.



Kids Bring Christmas Spirit to Springtown!



The kids at the PODER Learning Center after-school program made Christmas cards, paper candles, and cardboard ornaments as a special gift for the residents of Springtown Villa. The kids were also welcomed to activities in the Community Room at Springtown Villa. They made paper wreaths, yarn ornaments, and Rice Krispie snowmen. What a great way to spread the Christmas spirit!



PODER LEARNING CENTER AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Tutoring, Nutritious Meals, Safe Environment, Fun! Bring your child in today!
Every school day from 3 p.m.—5:45 p.m.

PARENTS: CALL 396-3367

RESIDENTS:

Please look at the events paper given to you at the beginning of each month for **IMPORTANT** dates.

Have a suggestion on what services we can bring to you? Please call **Maria Calcaben** at **396-3367.**

RESIDENT SERVICES IS HERE FOR YOU



Ask about our kickball team and free guitar lessons!

A Special Thanks to Springtown Villa

This Fall at Springtown Villa, I completed my internship for my Bachelor's of Social Work degree. I was very blessed and grateful to have had the opportunity to spend time with the residents of Springtown Villa. I was very sad to be graduating, as it meant leaving Springtown Villa. I did, however, want to share my celebration with the residents. Shortly after the graduation ceremony, my family and I celebrated this momentous occasion with many of the residents. One of the greatest experiences of my life was rewarded with a plaque, presented by Mr. Gene Martin, which was purchased by the residents themselves. The inscription on the plaque reads: *In grateful appreciation of your dedication, service, and commitment to the residents of Springtown Villa.—December 2010.*



It was such an honor to work with the residents of Springtown and I am very happy that they felt the same.

To all the residents: I am still around. Come check me in the Resident Services office of Springtown Villa. I am here several hours during the week and I am eager to see you all! [From Intern to Program Assistant. Thanks for everything! —Lorene](#)

Residents Help Pilot Internet-Learning Software

During the last week of January, four residents of Springtown Villa participated in a pilot study of a software program which helps individuals learn to use the internet. The program consisted of four two-hour classes held during the week. Each resident attended all four sessions, and at the end of the computer class they received a \$25 HEB gift card. This computer class was offered through Community Action, Inc. The hope is that the same residents can return for classes later, where the software will be different but will still assist individuals to navigate the web. In addition to this class, the program may be offered to others in the future. Watch for announcements!



Upper right: Ramona and Joe work on a lesson together.
Lower right: Evaristo and Santos work on a lesson separately.

G.M. Allen Celebrations

The kids of KAD were very busy this holiday season. On December 7, Alex, Pedro, Craig, and Angelina were busy helping the San Marcos Police Department wrap Christmas gifts for the Blue Santa program. The Blue Santa helps provide gifts to children through generous donations from police officers, the general public, and private donors.



The KAD youth, through the Adopt-a-Spot program, have adopted the children's park on Sturgeon Street. On December 13, several youth attended a Parks and Recreation meeting where they were presented a certificate of appreciation in recognition of valuable contributions to keep San Marcos Beautiful.



On December 14, the C.M. Allen community was treated to a special Christmas play, food, games, and gifts for the children sponsored by the Seventh Day Adventist Church.



UNDER-AGED DRINKING PRESENTATION AT KAD

On December 21, KAD youth had the opportunity to attend a Travis County Underage Drinking Prevention. Our youth saw and heard the impact that drugs can have in their lives. They were told what the effect of choosing to use drugs and drinking would be in their lives and the lives of those around them. They were able to use special goggles that allowed them to feel the effects of being intoxicated. This activity left a significant impact on the kids.



Family Self-Sufficiency

ATTENTION ALL FSS PARTICIPANTS!

The Chapultepec Resident Assembly meeting on March 7 will be devoted to a special workshop. Join us in the new Chapultepec Learning Center from 6:30—8:00 p.m. The Resident Services Director, Stewart Dale Spencer, will be teaching a class in money management that has a proven track record. This



class applies to one of your FSS goals. Don't miss it! Limited baby-sitting is available but you must call to get on the list. **Open to all FSS Participants!**

All FSS Participants are required to earn 12 participation points every year! Earn points by attending the monthly FSS Support Group! The next Support Group will be on Thursday February 17 at 6:30 p.m. in the Chapultepec Learning Center.

FSS GOALS:

In addition to your customized Individual Training and Services Plan (ITASP) Goals, the following goals must be completed by all FSS Participants:

- Participate actively in the FSS Program as defined in your FSS Contract Addendum.
- Complete the "Money Smart" financial education course or some other course of financial literacy instruction approved by the FSS Coordinator.
- Achieve and maintain effective money management skills, as demonstrated by applying a budget and paying, by their respective due dates, rent and all utilities required by the terms of your lease, for at least three consecutive months before the end of this contract.
- Improve credit rating by avoiding any new negative credit accounts and taking positive steps to improve or remove negative credit accounts as demonstrated by a reasonable increase in your credit score and/or qualifying for a home loan at a reasonable rate of interest, to be determined by the San Marcos Housing Authority.
- Build family assets by making regular deposits into your savings account and by making no unnecessary withdrawals.
- Meet with the FSS Coordinator each year to plan a budget for your federal income tax refund before you spend any of the refund.
- Get and maintain suitable employment, for at least three consecutive months before the end of this contract, that is specific to [your] skills, education, job training, and the available job opportunities in this area.





SAN MARCOS HOUSING AUTHORITY

Board of Commissioners:

Rose Brooks, Chairperson
Rev. Samuel Montoya, Vice-Chairperson

Stacy Green—Resident Rep.
Ovelia Mercado

Lorraine Burleson

Brian Guenther

Administration:

Executive Director

Albert Sierra

Accountant/Program Mgr.

Lana Bronikowsky

Maintenance Director

Albert Hernandez

Public Housing Manager

Rose Miranda

Resident Services Director

Stewart Dale Spencer

Section 8 Coordinator

Frances Santoya

Springtown Villa Manager

Veronica Miranda

Housing Offices:

Allen Woods Homes (Main)

353-5059

C. M. Allen Homes

353-1116

Chapultepec Homes

396-3364

Housing Choice Voucher

353-5061

Springtown Villa

396-3363

Resident Services Centers:

**Family Self-Sufficiency*

396-3364

**KAD Korner Store*

392-6273

**PODER Learning Center*

396-3367

**Springtown Villa*

353-7343

WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT

The San Marcos Housing Authority provides decent, safe, and sanitary housing for about 555 low-income families and individuals, including the elderly and disabled. Our Resident Services Program consists of several initiatives designed to support Self-Sufficiency & Family Development, Elderly & Disabled Services, Youth Services, and Resident Organization & Community Development. All Resident Services initiatives are united in the overall goals of improving the quality of life for public housing residents, reducing dependence on the welfare system, and empowering our residents to take charge of their lives and of their environment.

*The Oracle is produced and published monthly by the Resident Services Department of the San Marcos Housing Authority. Concept by Herod King Ellison. Senior Editor—Stewart Dale Spencer. Contributing Editors—Maria Calcaben, Bonnie Pecina, Megan Perez, Amanda Ramirez, & Lorene Sandwith. Contact: SMHA Resident Services, 701 South LBJ Drive, San Marcos, Texas, 78666 * 512-396-3364 * www.smpba.org*

The Many Lives of Gene Martin



Gene L. Martin, II has served the Housing Authority in several different roles for almost two decades. He is a Licensed Social Worker and a Certified Mediator. He came to us in 1991 as a Texas State “Social Work in the Community” volunteer. After he graduated, he became our Crime & Drug Prevention Coordinator. He left on a pre-commitment to enlist in the Peace Corps in 1994 where he worked with homeless children in Ecuador. When he returned to the States, he became our Family Self-Sufficiency Coordinator and Assistant Director of the Resident Services Department. He served as the Resident Services Director from 1998-2005. Gene now serves as an Operations Consultant for Resident Services, advising our service coordinators in day to day events and difficult situations. To top it all off, Gene is also our

Network Administrator, helping us stay online and on task. He and his wife, Shaila, met in the Peace Corps and have been married for 14 years. They have four boys, all under the age of 10. Gene is also an active member of our community. He served on the Salvation Army Board for several years. He has been a member of the Hays County Child Welfare Board for the last four years, assisting Child Protective Services in raising funds for families and children in foster care.