

**Welcome back to  
School!**

## The Oracle

### *Eliza's Story: Success and Sacrifice*

Eliza Rodriguez (on the left in the picture) joined the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program in June 2003 to receive support for attending school, finding suitable employment, improving her credit rating and raising three growing children. Prior to joining FSS, Eliza became a Registered Dental Assistant through training at San Antonio College. During her time in FSS, Eliza worked diligently to improve her credit rating and went to school to become a dental hygienist. Eliza's participation in the program helped restructure her priorities. A couple of years into the program, her financial and family obligations caused her to rethink her educational plans. She decided to focus on getting control of her financial life and meeting the needs of her three young children while she sought career advancement with her existing skills.

We are happy to report that she accomplished all three goals. She improved her credit score from the low 500's to the mid-600 range. She was able to combine her training as a dental assistant with her customer service, computer, and organizational skills. She is now the administrative assistant at a dental clinic. She significantly increased her income and was able to accrue escrow credit, which she will no doubt use wisely as her journey to self-sufficiency continues beyond the FSS Program. Most importantly, her three



children are healthy and happy. Eliza strongly believes that children should come first. She said, "This is their time, not mine."

As a graduate of the FSS Program, Eliza can count on continued support from our FSS Coordinators and from other FSS participants. We are confident that she will continue to grow in wisdom and will serve as an inspiration to others.

### *FROM THE PUBLIC HOUSING OFFICE*

*\*The HUD Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) will be conducting an inspection of our housing units and other buildings on October 12–13. Please report any repairs that might be needed in or around your home right away! A good REAC score helps us secure financing for services and physical improvements.*

*\*Renter's insurance is cheap. Replacing stolen or damaged household items is not. Landlords are not responsible for losses of tenant's possessions in fires, floods (including water leaks), and other disasters. If you lost all your furniture, clothes, children's toys, appliances, and electronic equipment, how long would it take to replace it? If you don't know how to get renter's insurance, ask the Service Coordinator at the Resident Services center at your site!*

## *The Buzz on BINGO*

Springtown Villa residents, get your markers ready! BINGO is back by popular demand! Residents gather at the Community Room to have eight chances to win a prize. It is \$0.25 each game or \$2.00 to play all eight games. The eighth game is played in blackout (or marking out all your numbers in the BINGO card) and the winner gets a grand prize. The latest grand prize winner was Beatriz Tello who won a hand mixer. Great job Beatriz! Come join us every

Thursday at 1:15 p.m. in the Community Room at Springtown Villa.



### *MORE FROM THE PUBLIC HOUSING OFFICE*

*\*Shopping carts may not be left outside of your home. If you use a shopping cart to get groceries home, you must return it. If we have to return it for you, we must charge you for the service. Again, if you need help, contact Resident Services. They want to help you live a more fulfilling life!*

*\*The Housing Authority Board of Commissioners approved a bid for the construction of the Chapultepec Learning Center. This building will help us deliver quality adult education with a focus on self-sufficiency and job readiness. Watch for news about the grand opening sometime in the fall!*



## *A Trio of Terrific Interns*

Three inspiring college students share their experience as interns at SMHA Resident Services this summer.

### *Ashley Andary—Social Work Intern*

Ashley has come a long way from Leander, Texas. This spunky, soon-to-be graduate of Social Work from Texas State University is passionate about human rights and advocacy through empowerment. Her first experiences as a social work intern included meeting SMHA employees and residents, developing relationships, encouraging self-realization and positive changes within her clients, and getting to spend time with the kids of the PODER Learning Center. Her experience as an intern has taught her not only to always have snacks in the office, but other valuable skills

such as how to network with other agencies and how to plan and budget. One lesson that she'll never forget is that "every effort makes a difference...every person has a story."

### *Blanca Davila—Applied Sociology Intern*

Blanca hails from Brownsville. She enjoys reading, staying active, and watching movies. At a young age, Blanca had an interest in how people and society work. The "applied" aspect of her major, Applied Sociology, relates to how she can apply theories and concepts to real life experiences. Her internship at Kids Against Drugs consisted of conducting research to help improve our services to teens. She has

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Our Generation

### *Back-to-School Tips (pueblo.gsa.gov)*



*(Above: SMHA kids are having fun in the summer!)*

#### 1. Health

The single most important thing your child can do to prevent illness is to *wash his or her hands thoroughly and frequently*. Despite your best efforts, your child is going to get sick – especially during his or her first few years of contact with larger groups of children. But a child's immunity improves with time. School-age children gradually become less prone to common illnesses and recover more quickly from the diseases they do catch.

#### 2. Sleep

For a child to get a good night's rest, set a regular time for bed each night and stick to it, avoid feeding children big meals close to bedtime or giving anything with caffeine less than six hours before bedtime, and make after-dinner playtime a relaxing time. This can all be done by establishing a calming bedtime routine.

#### 3. Nutrition

Offer similar choices for snack time. Instead of ice cream or pretzels, offer your child frozen yogurt or soda crackers. Provide a variety of food groups so your kids won't be bored with their snack choice. Be creative like dressing up fruits and vegetables – offer celery with peanut butter, or carrots with a low-fat dip.

#### 4. Stay Active

Kids can choose any type of moderate or higher intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking, playing tag, jumping rope, or swimming, as long as it *adds up to at least one hour a day*. Work with your child's school to ensure the activity is age appropriate and, to ensure safety, provide protective equipment such as helmets, wrist pads, and knee pads to prevent sports injuries.

#### 5. Backpack Safety

Pack light – a backpack should never weigh more than 10 to 20 percent of the student's body weight. Organize the pack to make use of all compartments and pack heavier items closest to the center of the back. Choose a pack with wide, padded shoulder straps and a padded back. Always use both shoulder straps. Slinging a backpack over one shoulder can strain muscles and may increase curvature of the spine.

### *August Birthdays*

#### Allen Woods

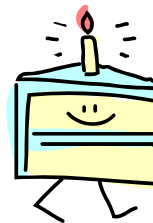
- Kayla Martin—29th

#### Chapultepec

- Lindsey Longoria—11th
- Liberty Smith—11th
- Brandi McKinney—13th
- Maddison Stovall—15th
- Brissa Landin—30th

#### C. M. Allen

- Benjamin Ortega—6th
- Arturo Jasson—11th
- Nicholas Stillwell—15th



### PARENTING CLASSES

#### Part II

PODER Learning Center  
Special Guest: Nancy Turner

Psychotherapist

**Tuesday, August 17th**

**2-3 p.m.**





## The Corkboard: Announcements, Games, and Laughs



Bobcat Promise

### *SAN MARCOS HIGH SCHOOL BOBCAT PROMISE!*

**Helping guarantee all San Marcos High School graduates have access to a higher education, regardless of their family's financial resources.**

In an initiative to increase access to higher education, Texas State University-San Marcos has developed the San Marcos High School (SMHS) Bobcat Promise. This program guarantees free tuition and mandatory fees for 15 credit hours per semester to new entering freshmen who are graduates of San Marcos High School with a family adjusted gross income that does not exceed \$35,000.

Eligible students must apply and be accepted for admission, as well as submit a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), no later than March 31 prior to the upcoming academic year in order to receive the guaranteed funds. Students may qualify for the program for up to eight continuous long semesters (fall and spring). This program will provide up to the cost of 15 credit hours of tuition and fees each fall and spring semester (an award in excess of \$7,800 per academic year).

Under the SMHS Bobcat Promise, tuition and mandatory fees will be paid through a combination of federal, state and institutional funds. These funds include, but are not limited to, PELL Grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG), TEXAS Grant, Texas Public Educational Grant (TPEG), Texas State Tuition Grant (TSTG), institutional scholarships, college work study, etc. The SMHS Bobcat Promise plan began in Fall 2009.

To be eligible for the SMHS Bobcat Promise, you must:

- Be a graduate of San Marcos High School
  - Be an entering first-time freshman (transfer students are not eligible)
  - Be a Texas resident
  - Have a family adjusted gross income \$35,000 or less
  - Be enrolled full-time and complete at least 15 credit hours each semester (fall and spring semesters)
  - Apply and be accepted for admission, as well as submit a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), no later than March 31 prior to the upcoming academic year
- Disclaimer - In accordance with NCAA rules, current and prospective student-athletes will be awarded on an individual basis. In some cases, certain forms of financial assistance (such as those offered via the SMHS Bobcat Promise) may not be awarded to or accepted by a student-athlete.*

#### Renewal Criteria

To continue being eligible for the SMHS Bobcat Promise after the first year, you must:

- Maintain at least a cumulative 2.0 Texas State GPA
- Have completed at least 15 credit hours per semester during the previous academic year (fall and spring)
- Meet institutional and program-specific (TEXAS Grant, ACG, SMART, etc.) "Satisfactory Academic Progress" (SAP) requirements
- Submit a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by March 31 prior to the upcoming academic year
- Continue to meet the income eligibility requirement.

*Any combination of aid, including outside scholarships, will not exceed the cost of attendance. Call 245-2315 or visit [www.txstate.edu](http://www.txstate.edu) for more details.*

### *Site Announcements*



#### Chapultepec:

-Resident Assembly Meetings moved to *First Monday of the Month*, 6:30 p.m.

-Support Group moved to *Third Thursday of the Month*, 6:30 p.m.

#### Allen Woods:

-August 31 Randolph Brooks Federal Credit Union, Financial Education Class 1:00 p.m.

#### C. M. Allen :

-August 5 Resident Assembly Meeting, 6:00 p.m.

-August 4-5 College Awareness Tour of Texas State Campus (for teenagers) 9:00 a.m.

#### Springtown Villa:

-August 24 Brown Hearing Center 10:00 a.m., Free electronic hearing screenings

 **Mi Vida, Mi Comunidad** 

*Programa de KAD a C. M. Allen Homes*



Yo estoy muy contenta con este programa despues de que mi hijo llega de la escuela en vez de irse de vago a la calle llega aqui. Le dan de comer, juega, y hace muchas cosas utiles para nosotros. Como madre me siento contenta en donde esta mi hijo. Ayuda mucho a los niños y a los jovencitos. Las personas que están encargados de ellos son muy buena gente y amables. Me gusta mucho este programa. Es muy util para todos los niños y jovenes. La señora Bonnie Pecina es muy buena persona.

Atentamente

Carmen Ortega

*Mother of Ben Ochoa*

*Resident of C. M. Allen Homes*

## CLASES PARA APRENDER INGLÉS-GRATIS

Clases son lunes y miércoles, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

**Inscripción debe completarse antes de poder atender clases.**

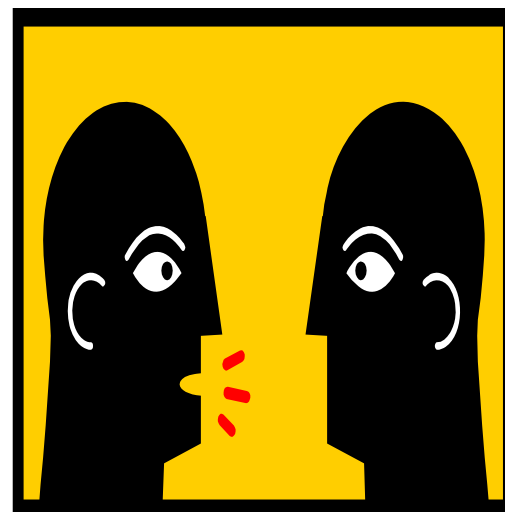
**INSCRIPCIÓN: Miércoles, 1 de septiembre a las 6:30 PM**

o

**Miércoles, 8 de septiembre a las 6:30 PM**

Las clases comenzarán el lunes, 13 de septiembre.

**San Marcos Public Library Learning Center  
625 East Hopkins, San Marcos, Texas 78666  
512-393-8215**





# 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

Housing Choice Voucher

353-5061

Springtown Villa Manager

396-3363

**Resident Services Centers:**

\*Chapultepec Homes

*Family Self-Sufficiency*

396-3364

\*KAD Korner Store

*Youth Development Services*

392-6273

\*PODER Learning Center

*Resident Self-Sufficiency*

396-3367

**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.

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*Managing Editor—Maria Calcaben; Senior Editor—Stewart Dale Spencer; Creative Consultant—Herod King Ellison. Contact: SMHA Resident Services, 701 South LBJ Drive, San Marcos, Texas, 78666 \* 512-396-3364 \* www.smpaha.org*

## Trio of Interns (continued from page 2)

learned that professionalism takes discipline, staying true to yourself, and working hard to be respected. She appreciates her mentors and says, "I would also like to thank the kids for giving me a chance to be part of their lives for the summer. They were funny and great sports!"

**Lucy Hernandez—Social Work Intern**

Lucy is from Del Rio and enjoys spending her time with her fiancé, her friends and family, and her two dogs. Her heart for helping and making positive differences in peoples' lives led her to the field of Social Work. She has been at Chapultepec working with Family Self-Sufficiency residents and the kid's program. Some of her responsibilities included planning activities and working with a set budget for the summer. One quote that inspired her as she learned to cope with the unexpected is from renowned artist, Flavia Weedn: "If one dream should fall and break into a thousand pieces, never be afraid to pick one of those pieces up and begin again." Lucy has a quiet, serene presence that the children have learned to respect.



(Above: Blanca Davila — Ashley Andary — Lucy Hernandez)