



The Oracle

**VOLUNTEER
AWARDS!**

Monica Cherry is Her Own Boss



Monica proudly displays her FSS Completion Certificate along with Stewart Dale Spencer and Megan Perez.

Monica Cherry joined the Family Self-Sufficiency Program in 2006. She had moved from Las Vegas, Nevada to San Marcos with her son, Bennie. When Monica first entered the program, she was asked where she saw herself in five years. She replied that she would like to continue a career in Information Systems but her dream job was to own her own janitorial business. She soon got a job at teleNetwork, where she worked for about a year. She then accepted a position as the Assistant Manager at Kids of the Kingdom, a local child care facility. In 2008, Monica decided it was time to pursue her dream and with help from the FSS Program and the San Marcos Chamber of Commerce, Monica began Whirlwind Cleaning Service. It took some time, but eventually her perseverance paid off. By the time Monica completed the FSS Program in April 2011, she had a commercial contract with a local restaurant, 23 other clients, and was considering taking on another commercial contract. Monica stays very busy and doesn't have a lot of time to relax but being her own boss makes it all worth-

while. Monica says her plans for the future are to become filthy rich, purchase the home she lives in now, and see her son enroll in Texas State University. When asked if she had any advice for new FSS participants, Monica didn't bat an eye. She said, "Never lose focus, no matter how rough things get. Obstacles get in the way *only* when you take your eyes off of your goal." We miss having her as a resident at Chapultepec but we love to see people living their dreams! You can reach Whirlwind Cleaning Service at 216-9694.

Notes from the Main Office

- ✓ **Satellite Dishes Are No Longer Welcome!** Unfortunately, because our policy regarding the proper installation of satellite dish antennae have been consistently ignored by installers and residents, resulting in safety hazards and the potential for HUD inspection violations, we will no longer allow any new installations of satellite dishes. If the removal of dishes installed in violation of our policy results in charges to the subscriber, the Housing Authority will not be liable for such charges. Contact your site manager if you have any questions.
- ✓ **Bedbug Update:** We recently had our first report of an apartment infested with bedbugs. (See our March 2011 issue.) If your unit becomes infested, we will treat the unit but you are responsible for treating your household items. If you put an infested item outside for trash pickup, please put a sign on it to warn anyone who might decide to take it for themselves.
- ✓ **Feeding Stray Animals:** Setting out bowls of food and water attracts more strays as well as insects, vultures, and animals that might be infected with rabies. There is a \$5 fee for each violation. If you want to help strays, volunteer at the PAWS Animal Shelter in Kyle or with some other animal welfare organization.

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

A Walk to Remember: Hike to Purgatory Creek

We often find ourselves bombarded with stress and children are no different. The children from the P.O.D.E.R. Learning Center recently went on a hike at Purgatory Creek Park off Wonder World Drive. The afternoon sun was blazing upon us and it released not only sweat, but stress as well. We picked up dried mesquite beans and made maracas, observed a variety of plants from cacti to tomatoes, and learned about a compass and the phases of the moon. The children (pictured from left to right: *Eliga Davis, Kara Marin, Diamond Stallworth, and Damaris Vasquez*) and the volunteers had a pleasant walk and ate their brown bag lunch under the learning tree fruitfully.



PARENTAL TIPS How to handle Lying

Responses by parent:

- *Focus on the behavior*, not your child.
- Set non-physical consequences that “fit” the behavior, for example, loss of privileges or making amends.
- Help your child “fix” or make restitution when possible.
- Talk with your child about the importance of being truthful and taking responsibility . . . and model it yourself.
- Acknowledge that it is natural to want to lie to get out of trouble, but let your child know it won’t help in the long run.
- Consider additional consequences if the lying continues.

Source: www.circleofparents.org



Respuestas de los padres:

- Enfóquese en el mal comportamiento, no en su hijo/a.
- Aplique castigos que no sean físicos. Que “corrijan” el mal comportamiento [perder un privilegio, tener que corregir el error cometido].
- Ayude a su hijo/a “arreglar las cosas” o hacer restituciones cuando sea posible.
- Hable con su hijo/a sobre la importancia de decir la verdad y de asumir responsabilidades [sírvalle de ejemplo].
- Explíquelo que es natural querer mentir para liberarse de alguna situación difícil, pero también explíquelo que al final no le servirá de ninguna ayuda.
- Considere otras consecuencias adicionales si las mentiras continúan.

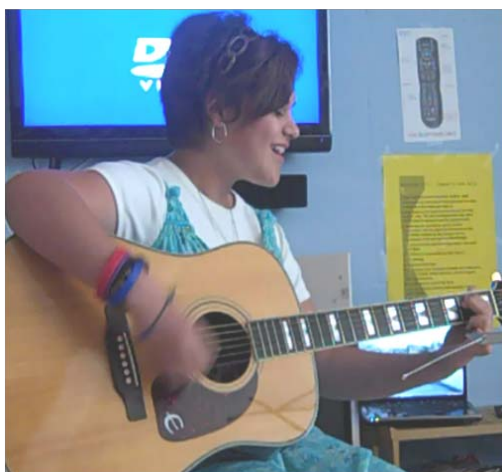
SPRINGTOWN VILLA

Children's Talent Show a Hit at Springtown Villa

Children from the P.O.D.E.R. Learning Center got their fifteen minutes (well, more like five minutes) of fame when they performed a talent show to the residents of Springtown Villa. The residents showed their support and welcomed the children as a big crowd anxiously awaited the show. Aside from a few technical difficulties, the show went on with a variety of talent that included singing, gymnastics, rapping, and guitar playing. Santos Espinoza raves, "We love having the kids here. They all did a great job!" A big thanks to all the children for their hard work and for all the residents that came and supported the show!



With a swing in her step, Diamond Stallworth (above left) sings her song a capella. Brandon Rengel (above right) plays *You are My Sunshine* on the guitar.



Samantha Serrano (pictured left) finishes the talent show playing the guitar and singing Taylor Swift's song *Mary's Song (Oh My My My)*. It was a great way to end the show!



Damaris Vasquez (above) sings a Taylor Swift song *You Belong to Me* to a crowd of people. She also sings and dances with (pictured on the left from left to right) Briana Salas and Kara Marin to a different song.

G.M. Allen Happenings



The KAD summer program has been a fun opportunity for the youth at CM Allen. They participate in different activities each day. To the left, HCCADA staff member CeCe Gomez, and volunteer Leslie, are preparing Benito Castillo for what is going to be a face mask. On the right, Sahenna Martinez shows off her beautiful artwork and her desire of one day becoming a teacher.



In the pictures below, we see a group of teens, along with our intern, Larissa Schaeetz, who helped Community Action and Hays County Literacy Action at their annual GED graduation reception held at the Performing Arts Center in Kyle earlier this summer. This was a very moving experience for the teens and inspiring to see what these graduates accomplished.



Above: Recently, a group of C.M. Allen Residents attended a Healthy Cooking Class at CTMC. They were able to sample all the good food that was cooked. Lots of free recipes were given out!



Here we see a Carter Healthcare Physical Therapist working with Mrs. Martinez to fit her new

prosthesis. Mrs. Martinez is very excited and works hard during her therapy sessions. She has faith that she will walk again. We are very proud of her hard work and perseverance.



Family Self-Sufficiency

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW FSS???

Use the clues below to find the answers in the word search. The first three Chapultepec Residents to complete this Word Search and bring it to the office will receive a \$10 gift card to HEB.

- THE GOAL OF THE FSS PROGRAM IS TO MAKE FAMILIES _____.
- TO GRADUATE FSS, YOU MUST COMPLETE YOUR _____.
- YOU WILL BUILD FAMILY ASSETS BY MAKING REGULAR DEPOSITS TO YOUR _____ ACCOUNT.
- EVERY YEAR YOU WILL MEET WITH YOUR FSS COORDINATOR TO PLAN A _____ FOR YOUR TAX REFUND.
- YOU WILL ATTEND A SEMINAR TO LEARN THE BASICS OF BECOMING A _____.
- YOU WILL NEED TO CREATE A _____ 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO THE END OF YOUR JOB TRAINING PROGRAM.
- A PORTION OF YOUR FAMILY'S INCREASE IN EARNED INCOME WILL BE CREDITED TO WHAT TYPE OF ACCOUNT?
- HOW OFTEN WILL YOU MEET WITH YOUR FSS COORDINATOR?
- WHAT TYPE OF REPORT DO YOU TURN IN TO YOUR COORDINATOR EVERY THREE MONTHS?
- WHEN YOU COMPLETE YOUR ITASP GOALS YOU WILL BE _____ OF WELFARE ASSISTANCE.

B P R H O M B R O W N O R S A V I N G S
 U L E N O L O B R E D I R B I R S N P R U
 D E S B E M Z S S E R G O R P N I O B F F
 G R U P W R E S U M E B L A D N E R P L
 E B M N B R Q O S U C C E S S F U L I J N
 T N O R R N M W E S C R O W Q L R X I
 T N E D N E P E D N I V I Z X S U F F I T R
 S A V D I G O A L S E A R L M B V O I T S
 I N D S Q U A R T E R L Y N O R P L E

We Want Your Ideas!

There is a suggestion box in the Chapultepec Office where you can leave suggestions for us. This could be for future Support Group meetings, things you would like to see happen at Chapultepec, or ideas that you think would make the FSS Program better. Don't be shy! You have great ideas!



CHAPULTEPEC

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The after-school program at the Chapultepec Homes is off to a great start! We have an outstanding 16 children participating! Children are fed a healthy meal, receive help with homework, and participate in fun yet educational activities. The after-school program is led by Rebecca Reyes and resident volunteer Stephanie Luna. If you are interested in having your child participate, please contact Rebecca at 396-3364 and sign up!

There's only a few open spaces available, so make that call now!



Special Report: Volunteer Appreciation Banquet

On August 17, we honored our 2010 volunteers during a special banquet at Logan's Road House. The Service Coordinators from each of our 4 largest housings sites presented awards to some special volunteers at their site. The presentation began with an invocation from Reverend Samuel Montoya, Vice-Chairperson of our Board of Commissioners. Rev. Montoya shared a quote from Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who exemplified a spirit of volunteerism and humility. She said, "I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world." The Reverend told the volunteers gathered at the banquet, "We don't pay you . . . not because you are worthless but because you are priceless."

All total, 18 volunteers who served at least 50 hours during the previous year were honored at the banquet with certificates, small gifts, and gift cards, depending upon their level of service. The top volunteer at each site had his/her name added to the permanent plaque at their site. The top volunteers for 2010 were:

- ☺ Allen Woods Homes - Pablo Gomez (1,780 hours) ☺ Springtown Villa - Lino Puentes (60 hours)
- ☺ C. M. Allen Homes - Monseratte Fernandez (786 hours) ☺ Chapultepec Homes - Greg & Joy Smith (300 hours)

Other volunteers included Sherri Martin (50 hours), Christine Williams (50 hours), Steve Goelzer (60 hours), Beatrice Pacheco (345), Frank Hall (544), Brigitte Bell (218), Santos Espinoza (50 hours), Gloria Galindo (50 hours), Laura Ward (60 hours), Louise Pettigrew (50 hours), and Martin & Reyna Montelongo (50 hours).

Each year we select as *Volunteer of the Year* someone whose contributions to our programs have made a significant difference in the lives of our residents. This person does not have to be an official volunteer and their selection is not based on number of hours served but their effect on the quality of life of our residents was noteworthy nonetheless. Our 2010 Volunteer of the Year was Dr. Karen S. Meaney (a.k.a. Coach Karen) from Texas State University. Coach Karen developed a summer health & fitness program for our kids called *Fun n' Fit*. She devoted attention to individual kids and has a reputation of treating public housing residents with the utmost dignity and respect. Her name was placed on the permanent plaque displayed at the Main Office of the Housing Authority. She received her own plaque which included this acknowledgement:

THANK YOU FOR PLANTING SEEDS OF HEALTHY LIFESTYLE CHOICES AND FOR YOUR SELFLESS SERVICE TO PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN. YOU HAVE A HEART OF GOLD AND ARE AN INSPIRATION TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.

Coach Karen also received a special gift. We heard a rumor that she used it as a door prize in a meeting for residents. Looks like we made the right choice!

We are so very grateful to all our volunteers, including those performing required community service hours. We are fortunate to have many Texas State students from various departments such as Social Work, Engineering Technology, Psychology, Sociology, Family & Consumer Science, and Health & Human Performance. Beyond that we are aided by Bobcat Build volunteers as well as several different Greek and other student organizations. We cannot do justice to them all in this limited space but we are very grateful for each and every volunteer. We could not successfully implement our multifaceted activities without their assistance.

More pictures of the banquet will be posted soon at www.smpa.org.



Coach Karen is flanked by Gene Martin II, LBSW and Bonnie Pecina, Service Coordinator.

PARTNER PAGE

Hays-Caldwell Women's Center presents the Middle Way Family Education Class

Families will learn to improve communication skills, listening skills and behavior management.

Adults, adolescents & children will be engaged in age-appropriate, interactive classes.

Childcare is provided.

- Thursday nights, October 6 - November 17 from 5:30 – 7 p.m. in San Marcos for 7 consecutive weeks
- Open to the community, **FREE** and confidential
- Enrollment and participation in the program will count toward Housing Authority, DFPS, CPS, & Probation Parent Education Classes

You must be registered to participate, so please sign up soon! Contact Amy Carr, LMSW at (512) 396-4357, ext. 233 or acarr@hwc.org to enroll.



Turkeys Tackling Hunger, the annual Hays County Food Bank's turkey campaign, officially kicks off October 1st. \$20 feeds a family in need a complete turkey meal that can be enjoyed at home with loved ones. Volunteers are needed to help distribute promotional materials to businesses and churches in communities throughout the Hays County area where students attend San Marcos ISD and Hays CISD. For more information, call 392-8300 and ask for Lisa or Jane.

Donate nonperishable food items to the Hays County Food Bank and get a \$2 discount off Dick's Classic Garage museum tour at their awesome "Cruise In," Saturday, September 17, from 5–9 p.m. See amazing classic cars, and enjoy a free show by Aubrey Slackey and the 6th St. Cowboys. Grab a great burger from Johnny Rockets for just \$5. All this and more, while helping support your local Food Bank!

The SMCISD has set up tutoring for High School students in Math and Science on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, at 211 Lee Street (formerly Bonham School). Tutoring goes on from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Students just need to come in and sign in to get some help! They do not need to come right at 6 p.m. or stay until 8 p.m. Please encourage your child, their friends, and anyone you may know who could benefit from this service before the six-week grades come out. There is good help waiting for your kids!



If students are having trouble with other classes, please have them share that with the tutors. The school district is willing to send tutors for other classes if needed. Contact the SMHS at 393-6809 to register or call Centro Cultural at 878-0640.



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

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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 Garcia

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.

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Rebecca Saves the Day . . . Twice!



Rebecca Reyes began serving as a part-time administrative assistant for the Resident Services department in June. We had been without an assistant for a few weeks and were having a hard time keeping up with the work load. Rebecca came to us after serving as an attendance clerk at the school district for several years. Her skills and experience made a big difference almost immediately. In August, we needed someone to help with the Kid's Cafe program at the Chapultepec Homes. Rebecca already knew most of the kids from her time at the school district so she was a natural fit. We expanded our after-school program recently and with Rebecca's help, the program is off to a great start!

Rebecca has two children. Andrew is 9 years old and Evelyn is 2 years old. Rebecca comes from a big family (6 sisters and 1 brother) and has lived in San Marcos all her life. In her free time she likes to watch movies, go dancing, play computer games and spend time with her family. We asked her what she likes best about working for the Housing Authority. She said, "I like the family atmosphere that I feel among the Housing Authority employees." She would like to go back to school someday to learn new skills but for now she wants to be as involved as she can in the lives of her children. Rebecca says, "Working at the Housing Authority gives me that opportunity. I'm able to spend more time with my family."