

## THE



## ORACLE

**Against All Odds: A Single Mother's Continual Journey to Success**

By Maria Calcaben

As a single mother with five children, limited income, and limited English proficiency, Elizabeth Cante had many odds against her going back to school. Originally from Reynosa Tamaulipas, Mexico, she moved to Houston at the age of 11 and made her way to San Marcos in 2000. Elizabeth has 5 children ranging from ages 4 to 12 and has had to work two jobs to support her family. When she could not get a good paying job at a warehouse because she did not have a high school diploma, Elizabeth decided to go back to school. After getting her GED, she gained the confidence to keep moving forward on her education. Elizabeth said, "You put your own limits and everything is possible, you just have to be persistent and hard working." Although one of the challenges she faced was less time available for her kids, her children have been supportive and great motivators. They write her encouraging letters, do house chores, and help take care of each other. Elizabeth completed the GED preparation classes and also graduated the College Prep Academy from Community Action of Central Texas. (See page 7 for more information.) Elizabeth is now on a path to getting her nursing degree. Elizabeth took advantage of the great resources offered at the PODER Learning Center, such as the free after-school and summer programs for her children and the free computer lab for her homework and assignments. She also got connected to a personal mentor and was able to get assistance with her bills when she was struggling. The advice Elizabeth would give others who are looking to go back to school is to keep moving forward and to take advantage of the resources available at the Housing Authority because, as she says, "We have all the resources that we need for success." Elizabeth was recently accepted into the Housing Authority's Family Self-Sufficiency Program. She is looking forward to completing the program and eventually moving into her own house. We are so proud of Elizabeth and wish her great success in the FSS Program!

\*For more information about the FSS Program, call Megan at 512-396-3364.\*

**The Housing Authority will be closed on Monday, September 1 in observance of Labor Day. If you have a maintenance emergency that cannot wait until Tuesday, call 512-738-1243.**



# ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

## Intern Reflections



Stephanie Goedecke was the Summer Intern for Allen Woods Homes. She is a native Texan, born and raised in New Braunfels. She has three beautiful children named Dorian, Erin, and Kaitlyn and three step children Arianna, Gavin, and Samantha. Stephanie

recently retired from the Texas Army National Guard after 13 years of military service. She loves gardening and being outdoors.

What brought Stephanie to San Marcos was pursuing her Bachelor's Degree in Social Work at Texas State University. She states, "I learned a great deal while at the PODER Learning Center. I especially learned how to be a better listener and observer. For instance, I learned how to allow the kids to guide me into their world and better understand their child-like ways." Some of the challenges Stephanie faced and overcame were being able to speak publicly and confidently take charge when necessary.

Stephanie's future plans include graduating and finding a position as a case manager or possibly work in an activities department at an assisted living facility with the geriatric population. Overall, Stephanie had a great experience in her internship and says she will miss all the kids. She added, "The kids have made a permanent impact on my life and for that I will always be most grateful!" We wish Stephanie the best of luck!



## Miles of Smiles in the Summer!



Summer is a time to make new friends, do lots of activities, and have fun! This summer, the PODER Summer Program combined Allen Woods kids and Chapultepec kids to make our largest summer program ever. A field trip to the movies, a private pool party at Rio Vista, and hands-on activities are just some of the components that made this summer great! A big thanks to the San Marcos CISD Summer Feeding Program for providing meals all summer, Mission Good Neighbors and Brother Jim Lanning for bible study, Cephas House for weekly activities, and individual volunteers such as Lindsey Fry for helping to make this summer shine!

FREE LUNCH FOR SCHOOL AGED KIDS will still be served until school starts at the PODER Center M-F from 11 AM — 1 PM. Ask about our free after-school program by calling Maria at 512-396-3367.



## ¡CHISTES!

En el colegio la profesora pregunta:

-María, dime una palabra que tenga muchas "o".

Y María responde:

-Goloso, profe.

- Muy bien, María. Ahora tú Pepito.

Pepito se queda pensando y dice...

-Goooooooooooooooooooooooooooool.



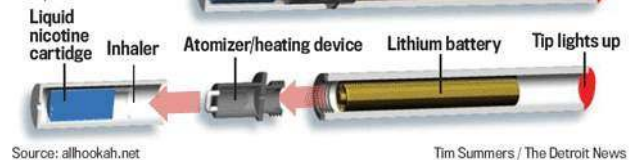
## Springtown Villa



Emily Elders, Prevention Specialist with the Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse, speaks to residents regarding the use of the e-cigarettes. Some of our residents thought that the e-cigarette was a healthier alternative to smoking, the fact is that there just hasn't been enough scientific research to make that claim. Springtown Villa Resident Council Vice-President, Deborah Morris plans to start a support group for our residents. Go to <http://health.howstuffworks.com/wellness/smoking-cessation/10-facts-about-e-cigarettes11.htm> for a well-documented story about e-cigarettes.

### How an electronic cigarette works

The electronic cigarette contains a battery that activates a heating device, atomizing liquid nicotine inside a cartridge and producing a vapor that is inhaled.



Source: allhookah.net

Tim Summers / The Detroit News



Evaristo, Estella, and Resendo wait patiently to have their blood pressure checked by Bridgette Meneses, Community Liaison from Continental Healthcare. On the right, Bridgette talks to Roland regarding his results. Everybody got a breakfast taco and bottle water after their reading.



## Lotería

Residents enjoy a friendly game of Lotería, sponsored by BEE First Primary Home Care. Juanita Torres, Community Liaison for BEE First, was the card caller. Lotería is a Mexican game of chance, similar to bingo, but uses images on a deck of cards instead of plain numbers on ping pong balls.



## C. M. ALLEN HOMES — KAD KORNER STORE



Dr. Gail Dickinson, Assistant Professor of Science Education at Texas State University, teaches children how to make wheat bread.

In the picture above, we see her supervising Ben Ortega as he measures the necessary ingredients. Ben left the How-To Class with two loaves of bread saying, "This is the best day ever!" Adults were also welcomed and enjoyed learning just as much as the kids did. The children couldn't express their excitement enough. One said, "Who knew learning could be so fun?" Following the demonstration, more science activities took place. Ahem.



*Bee First*  
Primary Home Care



**A+**  
Federal  
Credit  
Union

TEXAS  
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION  
SERVING TEXANS THROUGH  
28 LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS

**gsmc.org**  
Greater San Marcos Youth Council

We would like to thank all of the agencies that were a part of our recent Resource Fair. Each one provided useful information for our residents. All of the agencies went above and beyond. A special thanks goes out to Rachel Valdez from Crescent Dental for helping with this event.

**Krispy Kreme**  
DOUGHNUTS

CRESCENT  
DENTAL



**SENDERO**  
HEALTH PLANS

## CHAPULTEPEC HOMES & ADULT LEARNING CENTER



Recently, Karen Brown and Paul Boyd helped get Chapultepec residents registered to vote in time for the General Election in November. If you have never registered to vote or need to update information on your voter registration card, please come by the Chapultepec Office for assistance. Your application must be received in the [Voter Registrar's office](#) or postmarked at least 30 days before the election for you to be eligible to vote in that election. The election will be held on Tuesday, November 4.

### COOKING DEMONSTRATION

Thursday \* August 21

6 PM — 7 PM

#### Chapultepec Adult Learning Center

At this demo you will:

- ◇ Learn the basic nutrition based on MyPlate guidelines.
- ◇ Taste a healthy recipe that is easy to prepare!

**Attend and Earn an FSS  
Participation Point!**  
Presented by the  
Capital Area Food  
Bank CHOICES  
Program



FSS participant Stephanie Luna and Chapultepec Administrative Assistant Rebecca Reyes are working out to Shaun T's T25! Not pictured is Brenda McKinney, who was feeling a bit camera shy. Residents and staff are also walking in the afternoons, despite the heat! If you would like to join, call or come by the office!

*Tax-Free Weekend**Information***Sales Tax Holiday—Aug. 8 - 10**

*From the State Comptroller:* As in previous years, the law exempts most clothing, footwear, school supplies and backpacks priced under \$100 from sales and use taxes, which could save shoppers about \$8 on every \$100 they spend. Subject to the criteria explained below, all sales of qualifying items made during the holiday period qualify for the exemption, including items sold online, or by telephone or mail.

Lay-away plans can be used again this year to take advantage of the sales tax holiday. The dates for the sales tax holiday are set by the Legislature. Go to the State Comptroller's website to get more information:

<http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxpubs/taxholiday/d/>

*From the Youth Council:* Our 14<sup>th</sup> Annual School Supply Drive is underway and the Parent Liaisons will be picking up supplies from us once we have divided it among all the campuses. Families can contact them about their needs. Supply lists for the 2014-2015 school year are now listed on the SMCISD website: [www.smcisd.net](http://www.smcisd.net).

**Sara Moves On** by Gracie Campos

When Sara Frias joined the Family Self-Sufficiency program in December of 2009 her goals were working on her Pastry and Baking certification, improving her credit score, and becoming a homeowner. Sara graduated the Family Self-Sufficiency program last year. Not only did she receive her Pastry and Baking Certification from LeCordon Bleu Culinary Academy in Austin but, upon her graduation, she was hired by the Pennington's Cake (where she had completed her internship) as a full time employee. With \$50 in hand, Sara opened a savings account. Completing her goals was a requirement for complete of her FSS Contract of Participation. Sara has truly completed every goal she has set for herself. Not only was she able to get off government assistance but in July 2013 she and her husband, Cliff, were given the keys to their new home. When she successfully completed the FSS program, Sara received the funds that had accumulated in her FSS Escrow Account. She used some of it as a down payment on the house. Sara and Cliff have shown their children that hard work pays off and that having goals and reaching those goals is possible! These days, Sara is working on her next goal. She wants to open her own business and plans to work side-by-side with her oldest son, Lance, who has shown an interest in attending a culinary school after he graduates high school. Another happy ending for the FSS Program!



*L-R: Resident Services Director Gene Martin II, Cliff Frias, Sara Frias, & FSS Coordinator Gracie Campos.*

**Do you have a GED or High School Diploma and want to go to college, but feel you aren't ready? Apply for the Fall 2014 College Prep Academy**



**Community Action, Inc.  
of Central Texas**  
— DEVELOPING OPPORTUNITIES —

**What's it all about?**

☒ **We'll help you get ready to start at ACC**

- Help with the ACC application and Financial Aid application!
- Help with passing the College Placement Test!
- Improve your Math, Reading, & Writing Skills
- Save \$\$ by possibly placing out of developmental classes
- Best of all, it's FREE!!!



**Are you eligible? You must:**

- Have your GED or a high school diploma
- Live in Hays, Blanco, or Caldwell counties
- Be willing to attend class four nights a week for twelve weeks
- Be self-motivated and willing to work hard to achieve your goals

**What are the details?**

- The Academy is planning on running for twelve weeks beginning September, 2014.
- Class will be held Monday through Thursday from 6pm-8:30pm in San Marcos
- College preparatory Math, Reading, and Writing will be taught by college professors and the "College Knowledge" section will be taught by a Community Action Career Counselor

**Interested in learning more? Get an interest form at the Resident Services Center at your housing site and drop it off to any of the locations listed below. Or, you can fax it to 512-396-4255 and the career counselor will call you regarding your interest. Questions? Call Francesca at 512-392-1161 ext. 313**

**Learning Center**

San Marcos Public Library

**Kyle Learning Center**

21393 IH 35 North

**Old Mill**

101 Uhland Rd., Suite 107

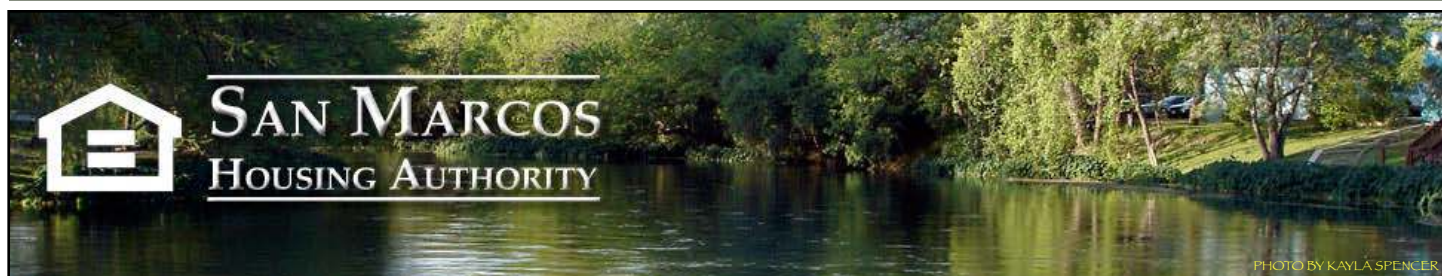
**SAN MARCOS  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

[www.sanmarcostx.gov/library](http://www.sanmarcostx.gov/library)  
512/393-8200

Make sure a San Marcos Public **Library Card** is part of your child's back-to-school supplies. Library cards are free to residents of Hays County and children in the San Marcos school district. Friendly librarians are always available to help you find the books and information you need. The library offers free weekly story times, monthly puppet shows, assistance with job searching, and getting

into college. Call 512.393.8200 or stop by 625 E. Hopkins St. or go online to

[www.sanmarcostx.gov/library](http://www.sanmarcostx.gov/library) for more information.



## FREE & FUN THINGS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!

### • August 2 ~ A Cat of Many Faces

A reception celebrating the work of artist Rene Perez at Centro Cultural Hispano, 211 Lee Street — 3 to 5 PM. Preview works by Rene Perez at [jreneperez.com](http://jreneperez.com).

### • August 2 ~ Smile San Marcos Dental Health Fair

Free dental, vision, blood pressure, & hearing screenings at Crescent Dental in front of Target — 11 AM to 3 PM.

### • August 7 & 14 ~ Summer in the Park Concert

Enjoy a fun-filled summer evening in San Marcos Plaza Park with a live performance from the Terri Hendrix Band with Lloyd Maines — 7:30 to 9:30 PM.

### • August 14 ~ Summer in the Park Concert

Enjoy a fun-filled summer evening in San Marcos Plaza Park with a live performance from Two Tons of Steel — 7:30 to 9:30 PM.

For more Awesome August events go to: <http://www.toursanmarcos.com/events/index.html>



## WHAT WE DO

The San Marcos Housing Authority has provided decent, safe, and sanitary housing for San Marcos Residents since 1950. We have three housing programs: Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher, and Project-based Section 8. These programs provide housing for 574 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.

## WHO WE ARE

### Board of Commissioners

Rose Brooks—Chairperson  
Mary Barnhart—Vice-Chairperson  
Susan Tilititsky—Resident Representative  
Gloria Salazar—Commissioner  
Frank Arredondo—Commissioner

### Administration

Albert Sierra  
*Executive Director*  
Lana Bronikowsky  
*Accountant/Programs Manager*  
Albert Hernandez  
*Maintenance Supervisor*  
Rose Miranda  
*Public Housing Manager*  
Gene Martin, II  
*Resident Services Director*  
Frances Garcia  
*Section 8 Coordinator*  
Amanda Ramirez  
*Springtown Villa Manager*

## HOUSING OFFICES

### Allen Woods Homes (Main Office)

512-353-5059

### C. M. Allen Homes

512-353-1116

### Chapultepec Homes

512-396-3364

### Housing Choice Voucher

512-353-5061

### Springtown Villa

512-396-3363

## RESIDENT SERVICES CENTERS

### Chapultepec Adult Learning Center & Family Self-Sufficiency

512-396-3364

### KAD Korner Store

512-392-6273

### PODER Learning Center

512-396-3367

### Springtown Villa

512-353-7343