



THE ORACLE

The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Tours Flooded Housing Site



Julián Castro, Secretary of HUD and a member of President Obama's Cabinet, wanted to take a first-hand look at the status of our flood recovery efforts at the C. M. Allen Homes. He toured the site, accompanied by Executive Director Albert Sierra, SMHA Board Chairman Frank Arredondo, Mayor Daniel Guerrero, HUD Region VI Regional Administrator Tammy Trevino, HUD Acting Regional Hub Director David Pohler, FEMA Infrastructure Branch Director Chris Walsh and local press. (Go to <https://www.facebook.com/smpaha> or see another story in the July 31 issue of the San Marcos Daily Record.) They looked at a unit that had been severely damaged, a unit that had been moderately damaged, and the first unit to be completely

restored and ready for occupancy. After that, Castro came to the Allen Woods Homes. The first stop was the PODER Learning Center, where he was enthusiastically greeted by a small mob of kids who had been participating in an end-of-the-summer-program party. The kids had inquiring minds. Questions included such posers as, "Have you ever been in a jet?" and "Do you know the President?" One kid had the Secretary stumped with "What's my name?" Castro may not be the Psychic Secretary but he was gracious and seemed to greatly enjoy his time with the kids, posing for numerous pictures and greeting as many people as possible. I



Councilwoman Lisa Prewitt looks on while Secretary Castro chats with Pablo Gomez.



Michelle Harper, Executive Director of United Way of Hays County, talks with Secretary Castro about local needs.

introduced him to Pablo Gomez, one of

our top volunteers and the custodian of the PODER Learning Center. Secretary Castro showed great respect for Mr. Gomez and warmly acknowledged his contributions to our programs.

After his visit to PODER, Castro went to the Allen Woods Dining Room to visit with Housing Authority staff and Commissioners as well as City officials and other persons involved in the recovery efforts. Albert Sierra provided a brief update on the status of the repairs and the efforts to secure adequate funding to meet the FEMA requirement of a 25% match of non-federal funds. Castro took several questions from the audience. He was supportive and honest about HUD's role in our recovery process. After the program ended, he stayed until everyone who wanted to meet him had a chance to shake hands, chat, and get their picture taken with him. — Stewart Dale Spencer

ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

El Programa de Alimento



El Programa de Alimento es un programa que ofrece comida gratis a la comunidad de San Marcos, a través del distrito escolar. Niños menores de 18 años tuvieron la oportunidad de comer gratis en el Centro Poder de las 11 AM a la 1 PM, y adultos pudieron comprar un plato por solo \$3. Cada semana niños y familias comieron hamburguesas, sándwiches, burritos, pizza y muchas frutas y verduras. Gracias a este programa niños pueden disfrutar de comida rica y también pueden convivir con otros niños. Después de terminar su comida, muchos niños jugaron billar, juegos de mesa, y muchos juegos más.

FREE COOKING DEMONSTRATION

Learn a healthy recipe and eat it too!



**Tuesday, August 11, 2015
10 AM—11 AM
PODER Learning Center**

Fun Fabulous Summer!

The PODER Center was filled with children's laughter this summer along with activities, field trips, and free nutritious meals. The meals were provided by the San Marcos



Consolidated Independent School District. Activities include Fun & Fit Camp, bowling, going to the movies, a visit by firefighters from the San Marcos Fire Department, a soccer clinic with S.C.O.P.E. (Student Community of Progressive Empowerment), making masks, and working on media projects. The children even enjoyed cooking a meal for their families during a Family Feast Day which used vegetables grown in our very own garden! The best



behaved kids enjoyed attending a special all day field trip to Schlitterban Water Park in New Braunfels! A big thanks to Coach Karen Meaney, Hays-Caldwell Women Center and Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (HCCADA) for doing group activities with the kids this summer!

Springtown Villa



Door Prizes!



Ramona C.
\$25 gift card



Cynthia
Goody basket



Gloria
Silver picture frame



Estela
Plant

Many thanks to Lindy with Hays Nursing Center for coordinating the "Health Resource" event for our residents. Our residents were given information regarding health care, medical supplies, rehabilitation and behavioral health for seniors.



Springtown Villa Intern Rebecca plays a friendly game of Wii bowling with resident Ramona Galvez. Wii Sports provides good, moderate exercise for our residents.

Let the games begin!



There were no words to express the joy and excitement our new resident Melissa Montoya was feeling today as St. Vincent de Paul delivered a scooter to her. Melissa is very grateful to St. Vincent de Paul for the donation. Melissa's neighbor Elnora was there to share in the excitement for her neighbor.

GRATEFUL

C. M. ALLEN HOMES — KAD KORNER STORE



FUN
in the
SUN



Last month, CM Allen kids with good participation in the afterschool program earned a trip to Schlitterbahn in New Braunfels. The Sanchez family had a great time during this trip. The kids were so excited to go on this trip, especially after living through the flood. They needed a nice break. They keep asking when their home will be ready for their return. See the update on page 1 for that answer.



It's been two months since the Memorial Day flood. These days you can find me at the Allen Woods Homes in the PODER Learning Center computer lab. Like the families I served, I too am looking forward to returning "home." These days I must travel all over San Marcos to visit my families. I have families living at Allen Woods, Chapultepec, Porter Homes and the scattered site housing, thanks to the SMHA transferring as many CM Allen residents as possible into vacancies at other housing sites. During my visits to these families, I find that they are looking forward to their return back home. Some are concerned about the possibility of future flooding. That's difficult to predict but we hope that will not happen again. — Bonnie Pecina



Everyday we look back at the life we had living at CM Allen Homes. Living there was great! We miss our home, we were going on 2 years living there. My children Jeneen, Jazmine, Jennica, Jesus and Juan always participated in the KAD program. They always knew Ms. Bonnie would be there waiting for them. Everyday we go to check our mail and find ourselves talking about the good ole' times. I met a lot of great people at CM Allen. A lot of them soon became good friends. I also participated in many activities at KAD. Last summer I was able to attend the Fun and Fit program along with my children at Texas State University. I don't know what our future holds but this I know: As soon as we are able to return to CM Allen, we plan to go "home." — Leslie Martinez



CHAPULTEPEC HOMES & ADULT LEARNING CENTER



FSS Coordinators Gracie Campos and Megan Spiller along with Resident Services Assistant Director Stewart Dale Spencer discuss the goals for the FSS program for the next grant cycle, beginning in January

2016. We are half-way through the first year of the combined program. Megan works with FSS families at Chapultepec and other public housing sites, except for CM Allen. Gracie works with those families and with families enrolled in the Housing Choice Voucher program.

The Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse is holding weekly parenting support



group meetings every Friday from **8:30 to 10:30 AM** at the Chapultepec Adult Learning Center. This is open to anyone who wants to attend. FSS participants receive a participation point for each class they attend. Call Gloria Olivo-Mendoza at **512-396-7695 ext. 218** for info.



In early June, the Chapultepec Office had its own series of mini-floods after each heavy rain. Gene Martin, Resident Services Director, along with Keandre and Aden Richardson worked to remove debris from the roof so water was properly diverted away from the raised flower and shrubbery bed. Sooner or later, it will rain again.

The Chapultepec Resident Assembly meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6 PM in the Chapultepec Adult Learning Center. New officers will be appointed in September! Earn a participation point for attending!



IN HER OWN WORDS — The Future is Bright for This FSS Graduate

My name is Holly Justus. I am the single mother of two young boys, Lukah and Valen. I have been a part of the Housing [Choice] Voucher program for 3 years, and the FSS program almost as long. I am very grateful for the opportunity afforded me and my family through these initiatives. I am so proud to report that I have been able to get on my feet through the assistance provided in these and other related programs. My sons have had access to pre-k programs that will have unforeseen benefits in the area of education for their development and future. There were definitely some hard times when I was not sure what life would be like but through those times I was always encouraged by my FSS coordinator, Gracie.

I am currently employed at Hired Killers Pest Control (www.hiredkillerz.com), using my BS in business/marketing to assist the office manager as well as help plan and implement new marketing initiatives. I am especially excited about this position because of the role I have been asked to assume over the next year. The owner of our company would like to see me develop into his right-hand. During my recent evaluation he recognized my efforts in professionalism and his desire to see that continue and be a fostered culture throughout our business. He believes that I am someone who can help him develop, pursue, and accomplish goals in this manner for the business. It is so great to be somewhere in which your potential is recognized and nurtured, with Hired Killers I feel like I can settle into investing long-term. It is also exciting because of the location of the business. Hired Killers is located in the same great town where I am hoping to become a home-owner, Wimberley Texas.

My family is my number one priority and it is truly a blessing to be able to rest knowing that I can have my career and be there for them as well. My mother also lives in Wimberley. I am fortunate to be able to take care of her and be close to her. She too was a single mother and being able to raise my boys with her has been very special. I really do not know where my family or I would be without the help I have received through the state. I cannot imagine what our lives could have looked like for a single mom with no car, no home, no job, no childcare, no help from anyone other than her mother. To now a happy productive mother of two with a reliable car, amazing education with full-time care for children, a beautiful home, a dependable job with earning potential, and a savings account to boot! My credit has been restored. Our lives were saved due to being able to have these opportunities and I have done my best to make the most of them. We now have a future and the skills we need to stay successful and keep moving forward. Thank you so much FSS!



SAN MARCOS PUBLIC LIBRARY

www.sanmarcostx.gov/library
512/393-8200

FALL GED REGISTRATION

PART ONE:

Tuesday, August 25 at 9:30 AM, 1:30 PM, or 6:30 PM

PART TWO:

Thursday, August 27 at 9:30 AM, 1:30 PM, or 6:30 PM

Plan to be here 2-3 hours each day to complete registration, orientation, and assessment.

DreamWorks Daze

Mondays, August 3, 10, and 17 at 1:30 PM

Ages 2 and up

Come in out of the heat and watch a popular DreamWorks Animation movie in the library. Bring a blanket to cuddle on, your own snacks, and chill out.



SMHA Board of Commissioners News

At their regular meeting on July 28, Executive Director Albert Sierra welcomed the newest member of the Board. Catherine Welsh of the Allen Woods Homes is now the Resident Commissioner. The Commissioners received routine operational reports from Sierra. One notable highlight was that in the public housing program, revenues were about \$27,000 below projections as of June 30. This is the result of June rent that was waived for all residents of CM Allen. Sierra provided an update of the flood recovery process to the Commissioners. After various delays, FEMA finally gave us the green light to begin repairs at CM Allen as of July 22. The Housing Authority will act as the general contractor. Sierra said that the strategy would be to restore the lightly damaged units first. He said this would help get the greatest number of families back into their units in the shortest possible time. He expected a one-week turnaround time for the first unit to be repaired. It had 6 inches of flood water. The issue of mold was addressed. Only the toxic "black mold" is a major concern according to various experts. Sierra said that our mold prevention efforts have been successful but that every unit would be tested before repairs begin. With regard to the displaced residents, Sierra reported that out of the 96 families at CM Allen at the time of the flood, 49 had found a place to stay with a lease, which is critical to continued FEMA assistance. Of those 49, 16 are in one of our other public housing sites in San Marcos, 25 are renting elsewhere, and 8 families said they do not intend to return. Of the remaining 47 families, 33 are staying with other friends or family and the status of the remaining 14 families is unknown. Sierra said those families not in stable housing are our primary concern. He said he thinks that all units will be repaired within 6 months. Sierra told the Commissioners that discussions with Texas State University regarding their desire to purchase the site of the Allen Woods Homes have been placed on hold so we can focus on the restoration of our existing housing stock. There is also concern about the effect that the redevelopment of Springtown Mall might have on the value of the land. Finally, Sierra informed the Commissioners that Secretary Castro was coming to visit. He noted that flood recovery is now a joint HUD/FEMA "mission assignment."



Nicholas Henry decided that Secretary Castro was getting enough attention and asked me to take a picture of him. On the right, Castro, the Mayor, and others listen to an update provided by Albert Sierra. — S. D. Spencer





FREE & FUN THINGS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!

Summer in the Park Concert Series - San Marcos Plaza Park @ 7:30 PM on Thursdays
Every Thursday through August 13 you can enjoy an evening of music at the newly renovated Plaza Park. Fun for the whole family! Go to <http://smpaa.us/events/summerinthepark/> for the schedule of performers.

Sales Tax Free Weekend - August 7 through August 9

The annual Sales Tax Free Shopping weekend!! Offered all over the San Marcos! You receive a break on the State of Texas and local sales taxes on qualifying purchases including all clothing and footwear purchases individually priced at \$100.00 or less. To view the list of eligible non-taxable items during these dates, visit the State of Texas Comptroller website at: <http://comptroller.texas.gov/taxinfo/taxpubs/taxholiday/d/>

Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive: Commemorative Air Force Exhibit - August 15

This 70th anniversary of the end of WWII may be the last opportunity to say "Thank you!" to the men and women of our "Greatest Generation." Their example of courage, shared sacrifice, can do attitude, service to others, and national unity will continue to inspire us and future generations. Admission Is Free and Open to the Public • Gates Open at 10:00 AM • Living History Flights in WWII Aircraft • CAF Aircraft Flyover and Landing • Static Display of Vintage Warbirds • Cockpit Tours of Select Aircraft • WWII Museum and Gift Shop • Museum and Hangar Tours • Food Booths and Vendors • Kids Rides and Activities • Vintage and Classic Car Show * For more August events go to: <http://www.toursanmarcos.com/events/index.html> *

WHAT WE DO

The San Marcos Housing Authority has provided decent, safe, and affordable 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 about 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

Frank Arredondo—Chairperson
Mary Barnhart—Vice-Chairperson
Catherine Welsh—Resident Comm.
Gloria Salazar—Commissioner
Richard Cruz—Commissioner

Administration

Albert Sierra
Executive Director
Lana Bronikowsky
Accountant/Programs Manager
Albert Hernandez
Maintenance Supervisor
Rose Miranda
Public Housing Manager
Gene Martin II, LBSW
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