

# THE ORACLE

## It Takes a Village But What if Your Village is Gone?

Greetings Oracle readers and Maligayang Pasko (Merry Christmas)! My name is Maria Calcaben and I am one of the Resident Services Coordinators for the Housing Authority. My job is to help residents thrive and to help build up people, families, and communities. My job involves confronting problems and heartache but the strength to flourish through disasters of any kind is never an easy journey.

I was born in the Philippines but I grew up in America. I was always told I was "lucky" that my immediate family moved to the United States, the land of many opportunities, and prospered while most of my family is still thousands of miles away still left in a small, usually forgotten cluster of islands once controlled by the United States. I guess I didn't know how lucky I was until multiple disasters — including earthquakes, aftershocks, and typhoons — hit my family's homeland. Suddenly the small, usually forgotten islands were no longer invisible to the world but very much visible in a devastating way. On October 15, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit the island of Bohol. A few weeks later, the strongest tropical storm in history hit the Philippines with sustained winds of 196 MPH.



Maria and her father, Jimmy Calcaben, pose in front of Baclayon Church in 2012, before it was destroyed by the typhoon, as seen in the opposite picture.

Closer to home, on October 30 & 31, Central Texas experienced one of the worst floods in years. Schools were closed, roads were underwater, homes were damaged, and many people were evacuated, including the C. M. Allen Homes. Many people stayed at the Activity Center until it was safe to return to their homes. What was to be a heavy rainfall desired by many to end the drought unexpectedly affected hundreds of lives in Austin, San Marcos, and surrounding areas.

So what do these two seemingly unrelated events have in common? It is the power of people, empathy towards other's pain, and the unity of communities that I have observed to have the most impact in making changes and giving relief. For example, during the Halloween Flood, residents from the Housing Authority went to bring food to people at the Activity Center. Others made calls to friends and families to assist them with their needs. Residents continued to demonstrate community by showing support for each other just as members of a tribe take care of their village. It is much the same with contributions flooding into the Philippines from around the world. My family in the U.S. continues to collect donations to send back to the island of

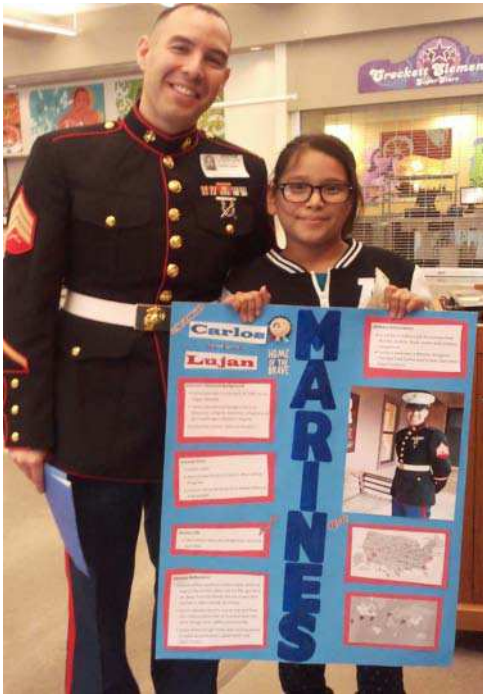


Bohol and surrounding islands that were affected by the typhoon. My family in the Philippines, although suffering damages on their homes, all seem to be fine. On her birthday, my Aunt Aster (right) cooked a feast of Filipino dishes and distributed all the food to people left homeless in her town from the natural disasters. Personal friends of all races responded quickly and actively with supportive words, prayers, fundraisers, and donations to send to the Philippines. **(Continued on Pg. 6)**

## ALLEN WOODS HOMES—PODER LEARNING CENTER

### VERY VALIANT VETERANS

Liberties and freedoms are still ours because of our veteran's bravery, courage and sacrifice. Veterans of Allen Woods Homes received cards that the children of the PODER After School Program made!



Ana, pictured left, a student of the after-school program, interviewed Carlos, a tutor at the PODER Center, for her Veteran's Day project. She received an A+ and tied 10th place with Jasmine, pictured right, and another student from the program, who did hers on her uncle Elias Cante. Congratulations girls!



### Cascabel

*Sung to tune of 'Jingle Bells'*

Cascabel, cascabel,  
música de amor.  
Dulces horas, gratas horas,  
Juventud en flor.  
Cascabel, cascabel  
tan sentimental.  
No ceces, oh cascabel,  
de repiquetear.

#### Translation

Jingle bell, jingle bell,  
music of love.  
Sweet time, pleasant time,  
Youth in bloom.  
Jingle bell, jingle bell  
So sentimental.  
Don't stop, oh jingle bell,  
the happy ringing.



[www.spanish.about.com](http://www.spanish.about.com)

### Haunts, Spooks, and Treats!

The PODER After-School Program had a fun-filled Halloween! They started off the day trick-or-treating at Springtown Villa where residents anticipated their arrival with candies and goody bags. The children then came back to a scary haunted house! A big thanks to volunteers from Sigma Delta Lambda, Chi Beta Delta, The Disney Store VoluntEars, and many committed individuals including former Allen Woods Homes residents RJ Lizama and Kevin Reyes for helping with the haunted house. The day ended with a costume contest for the kids! Pictured right is Santi as one of the winners!





## Springtown Villa



One of our newest residents, Bill Cruz, participated in the Susan G. Komen's Race for the Cure in Austin. Bill participates in honor of his mother, Anita Espinoza Cruz. This is Bill's sixth year to participate. He plans to invite other residents to join him next year.



Residents at Springtown Villa celebrated October birthdays and Halloween. Residents had a Halloween costume contest, Rosie took 1st place with the "Most Scariest" costume, everyone had fun in their costumes.



Many thanks to our resident Deborah Morris for decorations and preparing the food for the party!



### GETTING ANSWERS

Rosa Morales is an independent agent that works with Medicare Advantage Plans, a type of Medicare health plan offered by a private company that contracts with Medicare to provide clients all their Part A and Part B benefits as well as various Medicare supplements such as prescription medicine. Ms. Morales recently spoke to our residents. They had a lot of questions regarding the Affordable Care Act. Ms. Morales also works with companies offering life, health, burial, and long term care insurance policies as well as affordable health care programs.



## C. M. Allen Homes—KAD Korner Store



It was a spooky and eventful night for all who participated in the Halloween carnival on October 24. The evening air surrounding KAD was filled with positive energy, priceless smiles, and delicious food. Parents and their children were given the opportunity to participate in games such as ring toss, basketball shootouts, a potato sack race, and ping pong pounce. Children competed with one another for the endless prizes. Volunteers from the San Marcos Academy were on hand. Among those volunteers was a student from China

named David. He was able to help Bonnie Pecina, the Service Coordinator, communicate with a resident who is also from China but does not speak English so All Saints Day came a little early this year. The senior citizens were also having some fun of their own, enjoying many games of bingo with prizes awarded to the winners. Of course, the biggest attraction of the night was the haunted house put together by Texas State's Kappa Delta Chi.



## Another success story from KAD!

Former KAD member Stephanie Alvarez, never let the challenges of her childhood stop her from succeeding in life. Stephanie could have chosen a different path for herself after dropping out of high school; instead, she made a great leap to join Gary Job Corps. This year in July, she graduated top of her class and has recently accepted a job at the Hays County Juvenile Detention Center. We are all very proud of Stephanie and her determination to



help in the community. She serves as a great example to the current crop of KAD kids that hard work and perseverance is the key to success!

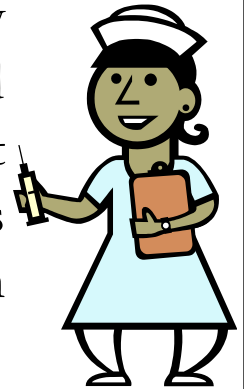




## Chapultepec Homes — Family Self-Sufficiency



Congratulations to Mary Moore! Mary has been attending Austin Community College and has completed her pre-requisite classes for the nursing program. Mary applied for the Licensed Vocational Nursing Program at St. Phillips University and was accepted! Mary begins classes in August 2014! Congrats Mary!



The winners of the Halloween Door Decorating Contest were:

Ashley Hernandez, Daisy Hernandez, Jenifer Esparza, Stephanie Luna, Alexis Garza, and Heather Coryell! Thanks to all who participated!



The Chapultepec Holiday Party will be held on December 19! We are in need of food, games, and ideas to make this event spectacular! Please contact Megan at 512-396-3364 with your suggestions or if you would like to help in planning this event!





Family coffins destroyed by the typhoon.

### Village (Continued from Pg. 1)

Suddenly, strangers that are thousands of miles away have been invited as guests into people's hearts. Truly, it is love that makes those affected from these disasters survivors with hope instead of victims of devastation.

In this holiday season, be thankful for all the blessings you have including the roof over your head, the family and friends you hold dear, and the food on your table because no matter how little that may be, many more people have much less. Many victims of the typhoon were left with nothing but the clothes they were wearing when the storm hit.

If you would like to share your blessings to help people affected by the Halloween Flood in Central Texas, you can go to the Austin Disaster Relief Network at [www.adrntx.org](http://www.adrntx.org). If you would like contribute to children and families to the Philippines affected by Typhoon Haiyan and the Bohol earthquake, you can visit [www.unicefusa.org](http://www.unicefusa.org). If you would like to donate clothes, non-perishable goods, or medical supplies to the Philippines, please contact me at 512-396-3367. Salamat (Thank you)!

## WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE SAN MARCOS LIBRARY?

### BLUEBONNET BOOK CLUB

Join third through sixth graders at the San Marcos Public Library to "Read Five, Then Decide." Kids are invited to discuss the 2013-2014 nominees for the Bluebonnet Book Award each Thursday from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. through January. Which will be your favorite?

The Texas Bluebonnet Award is a statewide reading program designed to promote reading a variety of books in fiction and nonfiction selected with the student's interest and relevant content in mind. Students participating in the program are required to read a minimum of five books from the current master list to vote for their favorite title. This unique reading program has proved popular with Texas children, with nearly 188,000 votes cast in the 2011 program.

The Texas Bluebonnet Award reading program encourages Texas children to read more books, explore a variety of current books, develop powers of discrimination, and identify their favorite books. The award process provides librarians, teachers, parents, and writers with insight into young students' reading preferences. It further affords an opportunity to honor and encourage imaginative authors who create books with high appeal to children. Children vote on their favorite title from the list each January. Contact Deb Tomaselli at 512-393-8217 for more information.



### MUSIC AT THE LIBRARY

#### Destination: Holiday Spirit

*Vocal group returns for songs of the season*

Are you dreaming of a white Christmas? Experience a very special Christmas concert at the San Marcos Public Library on Thursday, December 12 from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Once again "Destination" takes their Andrews Sisters Revue and presents it as an old time live radio show. Linda and Michelle Sriro along with Juli Dearington will bring the Christmas spirit to young and old alike. Special guest Grant Mazak will also perform several tunes with the group.

As always the show will be bright with colorful costumes, filled with your favorite songs and fun for all ages. With their energetic renditions of Andrews Sisters' songs to their eclectic original material, Destination has become a novelty act that people seek out for entertainment that is familiar, yet fresh and original. Destination has been extremely popular with large groups, small parties, and celebrations of every sort.





On Thursday, November 21st, Community Action Inc. of Central Texas, along with Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area and Central Region GREAT Center (Getting Results Educating Adult Texans), hosted a Career Pathways Conference at the San Marcos City Park Recreation Center. The purpose of the conference was to expose individuals to in-demand jobs in the area and discuss some of the skills and training necessary to work in these fields. Featured careers included those in the electrical, HVAC (heating and AC), truck driving, construction, U.S. air force, computer technology, dental, health (nursing, medical lab tech), bookkeeping, and automotive fields. The sponsors are looking into making the conference an annual event. Community Action is one of the Housing Authorities most important partners, especially the Adult Education team. Pictured above, from left to right, is Jonathan Engel, the Adult Education Director, along with Paula Simmons, Matt Chambers, Douglas Mudd, and Maribel Booker.



**Do you have a GED or High School Diploma and want to go to college, but feel you aren't ready?**

Apply for the

**Spring 2014 College Prep Academy**

**What's it all about?**

- We'll help you get ready to attend 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
- 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 runs from **Monday January 27th - Thursday, April 24th**
- Class will be held Monday through Thursday from 6pm-8:30pm in San Marcos
- College preparatory Math, Reading, and Writing will be taught by university professors and the "college knowledge" section will be taught by the Community Action Career Counselor

**Interested in learning more?**

- Please plan on attending one of the following information sessions
- Information sessions are scheduled for:

<b>Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30pm-8:00pm</b>
<b>Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>6:30pm-8:00pm</b>
<b>Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>11am-12:30pm</b>

Information sessions will be held at the San Marcos Public Library (625 E. Hopkins St.)

Interest Forms can be dropped off at the San Marcos Public Library or faxed to Community Action, Inc. at: 512-396-4255

**PICK UP AN INTEREST FORM AT THE  
RESIDENT SERVICES CENTER AT YOUR SITE!**



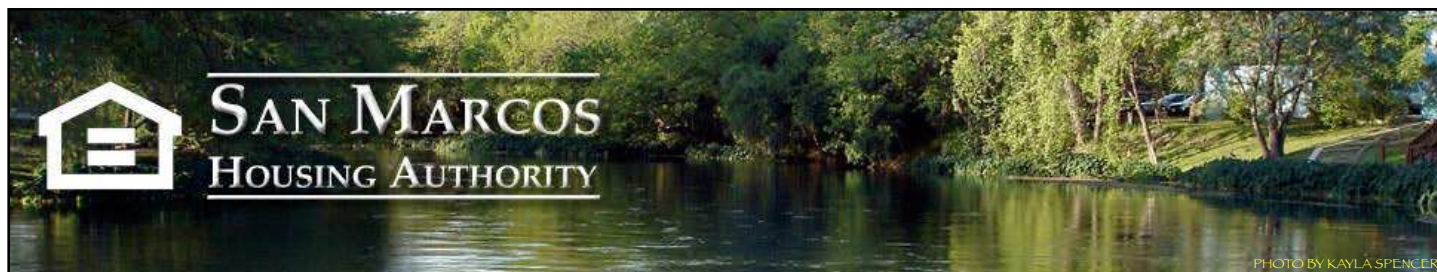
**Show your support for abused & neglected children!**

Looking for a way to help others this year? How about coming to Conley Carwash on Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup> to get your car cleaned, have a great chili dog and purchase homemade goodies?

**Saturday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 @ 1200 Thorpe Lane**

*The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conley Carwash is to raise money for the Children's Shelter. We hope you'll come with a dirty car; maybe you will need an oil change too! We'll be selling home baked goods, and chili dogs all day. Hope to see you then, dirty car or not!*

A portion of each carwash to benefit the GSMYC Children's Shelter  
"It shouldn't hurt to be a kid." Report suspected child abuse or neglect!  
1.800.252.5400



## Event Calendar

### December 4-7

Sights and Sounds of Christmas, San Marcos Plaza Park

### December 9, 11, & 17

College Prep Academy information sessions, San Marcos Library, 6:30 - 8 PM (11 AM - Noon on 17th)

### December 24 - 25

Christmas Holidays, SMHA Offices Closed

## *Sights and Sounds of Christmas Schedule*

### Wednesday, December 4th, 5 - 11 PM: Family Night

- o Enjoy half price carnival rides with the entire family.

### Thursday, December 5th, 5 - 11 PM: Texas State Night

- o Wear your Texas State University t-shirt and enjoy \$1 drinks. TSU faculty, staff and students may show school ID for discount.

### Friday, December 6th, 5 - 11 PM

- o Come see the best of the best on our Friday night main stage.

### Saturday, December 7th, 5 - 11 PM: Special Music

- o Special guest artists from around the community join in on the festival fun.

**\*Kids under 12 free \*Nightly admission \$5**

## 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 569 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  
Lorraine Burleson—Vice-Chairperson  
Vacant—Resident Representative  
Ovelia Mercado—Commissioner  
Mary Barnhart—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