

THE *DECEMBER* ORACLE

REACHING INTO THE WEEKEND

by Stewart Dale Spencer

The folks at SMHA Resident Services are always on the lookout for ways to secure new services that can help residents move toward ever-increasing self-sufficiency.

Recently, in cooperation with the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) and Feeding America, a nationwide network for regional food banks, Resident Services added a new dimension to our after-school programs. When kids get off the school buses, they run in to the Resident Services center at their site and get a hot meal as part of Kid's Cafe, which is sponsored by CAFB. This goes on four days a week, Monday through Thursday. According to FeedingAmerica.org: "More than 21 million children qualify for free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program and the National School Breakfast Program.

For many of these children, school meals may be the only meals they eat. What happens when they go home over the weekend? For more than 15 years, the Feeding America Backpack Program has been helping children get the nutritious and easy-to-prepare food they need to get enough to eat on the weekends. Today, bags of food are assembled at more than 160 local food banks and then distributed to more than 450,000 children at the end of the week."



**CAPITAL AREA
FOOD BANK
OF TEXAS**



In the first month of the new service, our staff distributed 269 backpacks, each of which contains enough food for four meals. Gene Martin II, our Resident Services Program Director, said that the Capital Area Food Bank ran a pilot program at a few agencies in the summer. The Backpack program became available in our area only this Fall. He said, "We're very happy to have this opportunity to bring a new service to our residents." Does it make a difference? Maria Calcaben, Service Coordinator at the PODER Learning Center, reported that a mother at her site was very grateful because it was the only food she had for her kids that weekend.

**Housing Authority offices will be closed on December 24, 25, & 26.
Offices will close at 3 PM on December 31 and will be closed on January 1.**



Please don't use snow spray on your windows. Maybe this year we will be blessed with real snow to liven up your holidays! Do you wanna build a snowman?

ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

Thankful Thanksgivings



Toby Reyna is just one of our folks that received a Turkey Box for Thanksgiving. Thank you, Hays County Food Bank, for providing a turkey with all the fixin's to our residents that are most in need of a good Thanksgiving Dinner. Residents who were not able to get a Turkey Box were put on a list with Operation Turkey which delivered fresh, hot, fully loaded turkey plates to their houses on Thanksgiving Day. No one went hungry this Thanksgiving!



Ashley Godsend (holding the sign) is a Social Work major from Texas State who volunteered at PODER this semester. Thank you Ashley! You made a difference in lives of the kids at PODER.

Salute to Our Veterans



A big thanks and salute to all the heroes that served in the military! The kids of the PODER After-School Program made cards and

passed them out to veterans in the neighborhood as well as other veterans in the San Marcos area. Many of the resident veterans were happily surprised when they found a card at their door on Veteran's Day!

¡Feliz Navidad!

*"Que la
Navidad sea
motive para
regocijo y
celebración,*

*y el año Nuevo motive para
esperanza y fe."*



Springtown Villa



Happy
Birthday!

Crystal and Roland took center stage as everyone sang happy birthday to them. Bee First Home Care sponsored the cake for our October birthday celebration. Thank you Juanita!



Children from Allen Woods visited Springtown Villa residents for an early Halloween "trick or treat".

Halloween costume contest winners: Ryan (1st), Gloria (2nd), & Cynthia (3rd).

Professor Dee's class from Texas State University sponsored this years Halloween events at Springtown Villa!



Residents participated in a pot luck dinner for All Soul's Day & El Día de los Muertos. They gathered in the community room to share stories of loved ones that had passed away this year.



Jennifer Pena with Visiting Physicians held a meeting for

residents providing them with information regarding their services. Jennifer was available after the meeting to speak to each resident regarding their requirements.

C. M. ALLEN HOMES — KAD KORNER STORE



Armin Montalvo, Placement Specialist II with Goodwill Industries, held a class for our residents regarding applying for a job, how to interview, and how to write a resume. He also informed our residents about the job search center available through Goodwill Industries.



Residents Victoria Burgos and Ruby Griffin helped deliver turkey boxes to residents at C. M. Allen. Boxes were donated by the Hays County Food Bank.



A division of First National Bank Texas

A financial management education class was conducted by Lacy Goldberg, Assistant Branch Manager of 1st. Convenience Bank in Kyle. Residents were given valuable information on how to stretch their money along with the importance of creating a monthly budget and taking responsibility with their finances. 1st. Convenience Bank will sponsor a second financial management education class in January.

Classes coming in 2015

- *Financial Management
- *Health Check
- *Job training
- *Elderly activities



KAD annual Halloween Carnival was a huge success with help from KAPPA DELTA CHI. Residents enjoyed the haunted house, face painting, and a cake walk. Hot dogs were served throughout the evening.

CHAPULTEPEC HOMES & ADULT LEARNING CENTER



Janis Hendrix, City Community Initiatives Administrator from the City of San Marcos, presented a First-Time Homebuyer Seminar at the November FSS Class. Over 25 people attended! Janis covered every step to becoming a homeowner, including building credit, saving money, the types of home loans, the difference between realtors, brokers, and agents, the offer and closing process, and all the other details involved in buying a home. The presentation was comprehensive and included

information on the City program that provides up to \$7,000 for closing costs and down payments. Participants who had attended other first-time homebuyer classes in the past said this was the best one yet and that they learned several new things about the process and the program.



The FSS Program is expanding!

Welcome to the start of a new beginning:

Bobbi Jo Riel

Shamarie Simmons

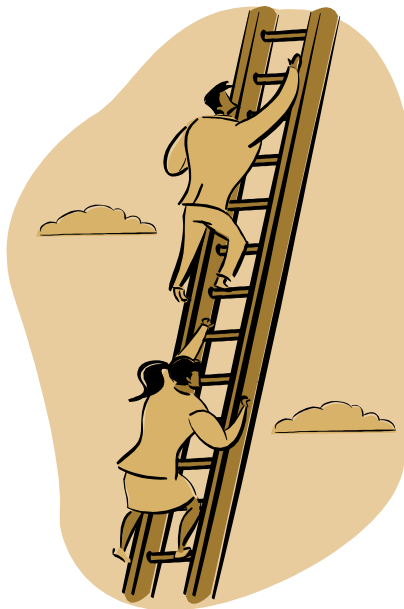
Michelle Sloas

Oscar Perez

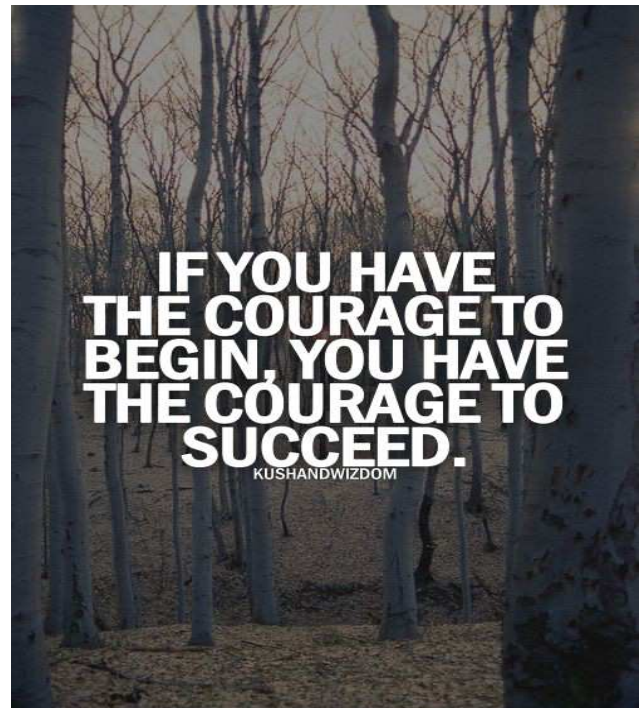
Louise Pettigrew

Marleen Johnny

All these new FSS participants live at the Allen Woods, C.M. Allen, or Porter Homes! If you are interested in joining FSS, call 512-396-3364, while spots are still available!



The Chapultepec Adult Learning Center was at maximum capacity. The empty chair belongs to the photographer!



SAN MARCOS PUBLIC LIBRARY NEWS:

**SAN MARCOS
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

- Music at the Library! — Destination takes their Andrews Sisters Revue and presents it as an old time live radio show. Thursday, December 18 at 7:00 PM.
- How to Write Your Life Story — Saturday, December 6, 10:00 AM — 1:00 PM.
- Puppet Show: The Night Before Christmas — in Texas That Is. Two shows: Tuesday, December 16 at 10:00 AM, 11:00 AM, & 7:00 PM and Friday, December 19:00 at 10:00 AM & 11:00 AM.
- Lego Mania! — Tuesday, December 9 at 4:00 PM. Ages 4 & up.
- Holiday Movies! — Monday, December 22, 10:00 AM to noon. Fun for all ages! Children must bring their own adult.
- Fired Up About Reading — Wednesday, December 31 at 10:00 AM. Celebrate the end of the old year and the beginning of the new with the San Marcos Fire Department! Firefighters will share stories and safety tips and demonstrate the gear they use to save lives.

There is also the Adult Learning Center, Storytime, Puppet Shows, Creation Station, Computer Classes, Book Discussion Groups, and more. Call 512-393-8200 or go by the Library to see the rest of their December Calendar. You can also get a copy of their calendar at any of our Resident Services offices.



Conway park is at the corner of Sturgeon & Bliss Streets, across from the KAD Korner Store, which is our Resident Services center at the C. M. Allen Homes. What a difference a decade makes! Gene Martin II, Assistant Resident Services Director at that time, provided some perspective before the city acquired the property. On the right is what that same spot looks like today. By a quirk of fate, a man named Bill Spiller lived on Conway Street, behind the overgrown lot. His daughter and other kids in the neighborhood used to participate in the KAD after-school program, often running through that lot. Bill would sometimes mow it himself because the owner was not getting it done. Today, Bill's daughter, Megan Spiller, is our Senior FSS Coordinator! The new & improved park has transformed the area. Bonnie Pecina, our Service Coordinator at C. M. Allen, has been with us since 1990 and has seen the changes that have occurred around the edges of the Conway neighborhood, which is bounded by River Road, I-35, and Bugg Lane. She says, "I see a lot of mothers with their children, sitting there, watching them play. Before that, they had no where to take their children."



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 2015 College Prep Academy

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 January, 2015.
- 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?

Complete an interest form and drop it off to any of the locations listed below, or you can fax it to the Old Mill location and the career counselor will call you regarding your interest.

Learning Center
San Marcos Public Library
625 E. Hopkins St.
San Marcos, TX 78666

Kyle Learning Center
21393 IH 35 North
Kyle, TX 78640

Old Mill
101 Uhland Rd. Suite 107
San Marcos, TX 78666
Fax: 512-396-4255

Questions? Call Francesca Ramirez at 512-392-1161 ext. 313



FREE & FUN THINGS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!

• Wednesday, Dec. 3 - Saturday, Dec. 6 ~ Sights & Sounds of Christmas

San Marcos Plaza Park — This four day event includes a carnival, arts & crafts, pictures with Santa, local school performances and entertainment, food court, local vendors, and more. Kids 12 & under are free but adults pay.

• Sunday, December 7 ~ The Wittliff Collections present: The Devil's Backbone, 7 PM

Texas State University, Alkek Library, 7th Floor — The Devil's Backbone, the first of a trilogy by Bill Wittliff, published by the University of Texas Press, is an engrossing tale of a runaway boy's search for his missing Momma across the old-time Southwest badlands. A page-turner packed with colorful characters, folk wit and wisdom, and unexpected twists of events, the story transforms into mythic quest through the magic of Wittliff's imaginative narrative and JACK UNRUH's equally wondrous illustrations. Unruh's original drawings will be on view during the event. ATTENDEES are asked to RSVP to thewittliffcollections@txstate.edu to receive further information including parking instructions.



*For more Decidedly December events go to: <http://www.toursanmarcos.com/events/>

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

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