



## FINDING SUCCESS AT THE CM ALLEN HOMES

by Victoria Burgos



Moving to the CM Allen Homes and signing up for the FSS program was a huge goal for my family. We knew that this program was the answer to becoming homeowners. Well, that dream quickly changed when the Memorial Day flood came. We were devastated. We lost everything and the plans and goals we had set for our family became impossible. We did not know or understand just how different and difficult it was going to be to rebuild what we once had. I knew we were not the only ones hurting and I wanted to do something for the community I loved. When my son started the Head Start program at Bonham Pre-Kindergarten, I was instantly amazed at how effective they were teaching my son. At a parent meeting I learned about the program's mission, which was to promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through education, health, nutrition, social and other services for children and families. I thought, "Wow. That is

amazing! This is the program I would love to be an advocate for." Since joining this program and serving on the policy council (which is made of parents) I have learned so much. This program gave me the voice I thought I never had. They trained me and gave me the resources to be a great representative. Being a part of this policy council, I was voted to become their representative on the Community Action Board. Being a part of something as amazing as this was a great accomplishment for me. We finally moved back into our apartment at CM Allen last July. Ever since I have been working closely with Bonnie Pecina, who is the Resident Services Coordinator for the CM Allen Homes. Mrs. Pecina was very persistent in actively coming to my apartment and getting me out to help her. It gave me a sense that I was needed in my community and I owe it all to her. Learning more about my fellow residents and community, I decided to join the CM Allen Resident Assembly where I became the Vice-President. I also volunteer daily with the KAD after-school program, a place where children can come get a hot meal and get help with homework from Texas State volunteers (Sorority girls and Fraternity guys). The children are provided with nutrition classes on a monthly basis. The Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse provides classes that help build strong self-esteem and teach teamwork activities as well as how to be responsible and respectful. The KAD center also serves elderly and disabled residents. There are weekly classes that they really look forward to doing. One of the classes they provide is on nutrition. Bee First Home Health provides health care information and does a Senior Social, which consists of a Loteria game, something that seniors love to play. There is also Quality Providers Home Health that does free blood pressure/glucose checks and sponsors games of Bingo. A Zumba class is a weekly activity that is enjoyed by the senior residents. I'm very proud to say that I love my community and the families I volunteer with. Without them, I wouldn't feel like a successful volunteer!

### **FREE TAX AID AT THE SAN MARCOS PUBLIC LIBRARY!**

Saturdays from 10 AM to 1 PM and Mondays from 3 to 6 PM. No tax aid on Monday, February 20. Trained volunteers from AARP will help low and moderate income individuals file their income tax returns. Service is guaranteed to the first 50 signups each session. Signup no later than 30 minutes before end of the session.

# ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

## LET'S GET HEALTHY!



The Hays County Food Bank came to our after-school program and did a presentation on the immune system. They ended their lesson with a parfait snack with Greek yogurt and mixed fruits including strawberries, mangos, and blueberries.

The HCFB also did a cooking demonstration for our Family Night. They talked about the importance of fiber in the diet and the families worked together to create a fiber rich dish. The recipe was also family budget friendly and Programs Coordinator Chadwic Layne encouraged families to take it home and "make it their own" by adding their favorite meats or protein in it. Many of the kids who were hesitant at first ended up trying the dish because they were involved in the process of creating it by cutting or mixing the vegetables.

## Positive Pamela



Allen Wood's newest intern, Pamela Holmes, is originally from Little Rock, Arkansas but went to high school in Clarksville, Texas. She is studying Social Work because she wants to be able to make positive impacts by helping others. She hopes to learn more about public housing and be a

valuable asset to the community. She also plans to be better educated about the needs of the people she will serve to help develop her advocacy skills. Pamela is also balancing work as a Resident Assistant in one of the college dorms and is involved in different campus groups. After graduation, she plans on getting a job where she can help youth with their educational goals. If you haven't met her yet, stop by and take in Pamela's positivity!

## Vroom, Vroom!

Former intern Jordan Phillips continues to inspire our youth with another successful Teen Night event! The teens were taught how to budget. After a short lesson on money management, each participant was given \$256 play money to spend, a budgeting sheet for a tool to complete challenges, and a task to exercise their budgeting skills. The first challenge was the best decorated car contest. The teens had to purchase a car and wheels and then the material to decorate their car. Alicia Sanchez was the winner. Her car was decked out with a spoiler, feathers, and white streamers. The teens then were given the option to spend their money on snacks and "theater seating" in our home-made Drive-In Movie experience to watch *Hairspray*. Overall, the best budgeter was Dade LaPlant and the biggest saver was Makayla Spurlock. It's never too early to learn to manage money wisely.



## La Esquina Chistes

- ◇ ¿Cómo está tu hijo pequeño?  
— Hace tres meses que camina.  
— Pues, ¡ya debe estar muy lejos!  
(-How is your little boy? - He's been walking for three months. - He must be really far away by now!)
- ◇ — Maestra, ¿qué quiere decir «nothing»?  
— Nada, responde la maestra.  
— Algo querrá decir, ¿no?

(What does "nothing" mean?  
— Nada — the Spanish word for nothing  
— It has to mean something, doesn't it?)

◇ ¿Sabes las dos palabras que te abrirán muchas puertas en el mundo?  
— Tire y empuje.  
(Do you know the two words that will open many doors for you in this world? Pull and push.)



Source: [www.spanishplayground.net](http://www.spanishplayground.net)



## Springtown Villa



*Hello everyone! For those of you whom I have not yet had a chance to meet, my name is Brianna Lopez and I am the Resident Services Intern at Springtown Villa. I am originally from McAllen and moved here three years ago to attend school at Texas State. I am in my last semester of the Social Work program and anticipate to graduate in May. The reason I chose to study Social Work is because I have a passion to understand, help, and make connections with people. Throughout this internship, I hope to learn more about myself and achieve a sense of confidence in my professional abilities. After graduation, I plan to further my education and continue on to graduate school. In my spare time I like to do yoga, sing, take walks in the park, read, take photos, and watch horror movies.*



Present Resident Council officers conduct their last meeting before the new officers are sworn in. We would like to thank them for their services as officers and residents of STV. Pictured above are President Bill Cruz, Vice-President Deborah Morris, and Secretary Arleen Machado.



Corporal Taylor from the SMPD stopped by to give a presentation on apartment safety. It was very educational. We learned many things that we had never thought of before. He went over building entry, door safety into apartments, and balcony doors . . . even for people on the third floor. He also talked about windows and sliding doors as well as elevator and parking lot safety.



Rebecca Julian is a new resident at Springtown. She is originally from South Carolina. She has traveled to the Middle East and even lived there. She has two children and two grandchildren that she adores very much. She loves plants and has a variety of them in her apartment. She also enjoys embroidery.



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



Cynthia Jasso Arredondo and her husband Frank organized Christmas donations from Fire Station #1. Appearing in the picture are Battalion Chief Howie Minor, Captain Arredondo, Engineers Larry Howard & Bobby Nance, and Firefighters John Pakula and John Craft. Cynthia told us, "It was an amazing experience and I appreciate you helping us make it a memorable Christmas for the beautiful families."

**Kathy and Jude Prather** brought smiles and joy to the Ellis family during the holiday season. The Prathers have been helping families for the past seven years!



***KAD Family Science Night***  
Hosted by Professor Gail Dickinson on Thursday, March 2 from 6—8 PM.



### Health and Happiness

A nutrition class hosted by Mary Odum, PhD from TSU, covered how many servings of fruits and vegetables we should eat as part of a healthy diet. During the lesson she told the kids how many servings of fruits and vegetables they should eat each day and how much fruit makes up a serving size. The children were given a handout to take home to their parents with pictures of household objects that can be used to measure a serving size of fruit. The class ended at the park with a snack of fresh apples and 100% fruit juice.

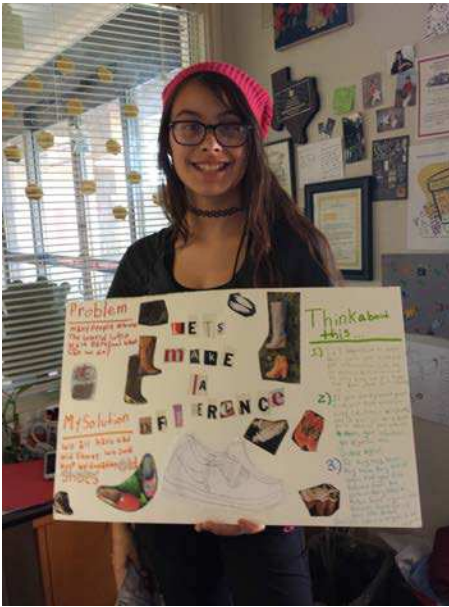


### Our Kappa Delta Chi girls are back!

The KDC girls come in and tutor our kids every afternoon and enjoy spending time with them. They are excited to come back to mentor and guide our kids on their path to a successful future. We are so happy they are back and ready to make a difference!







# I Can Make A Difference!

By Maria Calcaben

We kicked off the Martin Luther King holiday by making DreamMobiles and asking the kids what their dreams were for themselves, their community, and the world. Many of the kids wanted to live in a cleaner world and a nicer community. Some wanted to get higher education. We then held a one-week "Let's Make a Difference" contest. After a short presentation and discussion about some problems in this world like poverty, lack of nutrition, and environmental challenges, the kids came up with some great points. We then challenged them to come up with solutions to some real world problems. The problems included asking the kids what we could do about trash in the San Marcos rivers and parks, what we could

do about our elderly who are alone, and what could we do about bullying. The kids worked either by themselves or in groups and began brainstorming. The next day the kids created their poster. They worked together to make sure their message was clear with pictures to illustrate their point and that it emphasized their solution. On the last day, the kids then did a short presentation on their topic. They came up with some great conclusions including a toy drive, getting fresh fruits and vegetables donated to people who can't afford them, and helping kids who cannot read to get books. Overall, we could only pick one winner. Judges included volunteers, interns, SMHA staff, and Executive Director Albert Sierra. The winners were Zoe Hinojosa and Kendra Luera. Their problem was "There is a lot of negativity in this world. A lot of people face mean words, mean people, and mean places. What can we do?" Their solution was to make positive posters to replace negative ones. The winners got a trophy, a giant chocolate coin, and a \$50 prize that was donated to us. Next, the PODER After-school Program will actually take actions towards their solutions! We will also be taking steps to accomplish the second place winners' solution of doing a shoe drive for people around the world who do not have shoes. Second place went to the teen group which included Makayla Spurlock, Arik Castañon, Keandre Richardson, Alicia Sanchez, and Dade LaPlant.



This project helped the kids become more aware of the problems in the world and how they themselves can take small steps to make big changes. It also helped them realize that what may seem like an impossible situation can be changed with some creative thinking and hope. This year is going to be our year to make a difference!


## BOARD OF COMMISSIONER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- The Commissioners met on January 24 at the Allen Woods Homes. Financial reports show all programs in the black as of December 31. Public Housing has a YTD surplus of \$80,133. The Housing Choice Voucher program has a surplus of \$8,900. Springtown Villa has a surplus of \$36,367. Occupancy is at 100% in the Housing Choice Voucher program, 85% in Public Housing, and 95% at Springtown Villa.
- Other agenda items included employee health benefits and a legal services contract. The Board also approved \$12,242 of additional funding for the Resident Services department to address a budget shortfall. The Resident Opportunities and Self-Sufficiency grant was not selected for renewal. HUD used a lottery process to award this three-year grant but evidently ran out of funds before SMHA was drawn from the list. The Resident Services Department made significant program and personnel adjustments to reduce the deficit.
- **Directors Report:**
  - \*Albert Sierra reported that repairs at the CM Allen Homes are complete and that 84 units are currently occupied.
  - \*Texas State has hired a new consultant to provide information regarding the possible acquisition of the Allen Woods Homes.
  - \*The Section 8 waiting list is closed as of December 31 with about 600 applications on the waiting list.
  - \*An update of the Public Housing Admissions and Occupancy plan is in progress with the assistance of NelRod Consulting. Once complete, it will required a 45-day comment period and Board approval.

### FROM THE MAIN OFFICE

\*We have noticed an increase in the number of unsupervised children at our housing sites. This is from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. It is about being home alone but also applies to being outdoors: "Texas law doesn't say what age is old enough for a child to stay at home alone. However, adequate supervision is critical to keeping kids safe. An adult caregiver is accountable for the child's care and inadequate supervision can be a type of neglect (neglectful supervision). Here are some of the things you should think about when deciding how closely to supervise a child: 1) How old, emotionally mature, and capable is your child? 2) What is the layout and safety of the home, play area, or other setting? 3) What are the hazards and risks in the neighborhood? 4) What is your child's ability to respond to illness, fire, weather, or other types of emergencies? 5) Does your child have a mental, physical, or medical disability? 6) How many children are being left unsupervised? 7) Do they know where you are? 8) Can they contact you or other responsible adults? 9) How long and how often is the child (or children) left alone?"

\*We also remind you that all residents must keep their front and back porches reasonably neat and clean. Do not use it as a place to store things that would not normally be considered an outside item. Also, furniture must be intended for outdoor use (a.k.a. patio furniture). If it looks like junk, it probably is. Residents are notified of violations and given an opportunity to fix the problem. If it is not fixed, SMHA Maintenance personnel will remove trashy items and charge the resident for the service. Contact your site manager if you have questions.

SMHA CALENDAR - February 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
The Roman month Februarius was named after the Latin term februum, which means purification, via the purification ritual Februa held on February 15 (full moon) in the old lunar Roman calendar. January and February were the last two months to be added to the Roman calendar, since the Romans originally considered winter a monthless period. - Wiki			1	2	3  ALLEN WOODS RESIDENT ASSEMBLY 10:00 AM	4
5	6  CM ALLEN RESIDENT ASSEMBLY 1:30 PM	7	8  SPRINGTOWN RESIDENT COUNCIL 3:30 PM	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20  SMHA OFFICES CLOSED	21  Chapultepec Resident Assembly 6 PM	22  SPRINGTOWN RESIDENT COUNCIL 3:30 PM	23	24	25
26	27	28  SMHA Board of Commissioners 5:30 PM	1	2	3	4
			MARCH		MADNESS!	

**LEADERSHIP****Board of Commissioners**

Richard Cruz—Chairperson  
 Mary Barnhart—Vice-Chairperson  
 Gloria Salazar—Commissioner  
 Gerald Brown—Resident Comm.  
 Rose Brooks—Commissioner

**Executive Director**

Albert Sierra

**HOUSING OFFICES**

Allen Woods Homes (Main Office)  
 512-353-5059  
 CM Allen Homes  
 512-353-1116  
 Chapultepec Homes  
 512-396-3364  
 Housing Choice Voucher  
 512-353-5061  
 Springtown Villa  
 512-396-3363

**RESIDENT SERVICES**

Chapultepec Adult Learning Center/  
 Family Self-Sufficiency  
 512-396-3364  
 CM Allen KAD Korner Store  
 512-392-6273  
 Allen Woods PODER  
 Learning Center  
 512-396-3367  
 Springtown Villa  
 512-353-7343