

THE ORACLE

Housing Authority & Community Action Partnership Helps Resident Make Fresh Start

By Stewart Dale Spencer



Francesca Ramirez presents a Certificate of Completion of the College Prep Academy to Rosaura Rodriguez of the C. M. Allen Homes.

Thirty years ago, Rosaura Rodriguez took a wrong turn on life's highway. She was skipping classes at school and hanging around with a bad crowd. She got into drugs but eventually got into drug rehabilitation. It took multiple attempts at rehab before she made a permanent change. Several years ago, her son, Jose, developed a brain tumor when he was about eight years old. By the time he turned fifteen, it became critical and had to be removed. Having children and dealing with life's crises has a way of turning people around. Rosaura was ready for a change. She knew she wanted something better out of life but didn't know quite how to make it happen.

She moved into the C. M. Allen homes last July. She had a nephew who was attending the after-school program at the KAD Korner Store, our Resident Services Center at that site, and then a neighbor told her that Bonnie

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SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAMS GET CONTINUATION FUNDING

Earlier this year, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded \$75 million in grants nationwide to help public and assisted housing residents to connect with local services to obtain education and training to find jobs. The San Marcos Housing Authority will receive continuation grants for both its Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Programs. All total, the Housing Authority will receive \$102,520. These funds allow us to operate our long-standing and successful FSS programs.

In a press release announcing the awards, HUD said, "The Family Self Sufficiency (FSS) Program is a long-standing resource for increasing economic security and self-sufficiency among participants. HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research [PD&R] issued [Evaluation of FSS Program: Prospective Study](#) in 2011 that evaluated the effectiveness of the FSS Program. Conducted from 2005 to 2009, the study showed that financial benefits are substantial for participants who remain and complete the program. This study is the second of a three-part series that evaluates the effects of the FSS program. The [first study](#) found individuals who participated in the FSS program fared better financially than those



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ALLEN WOODS HOMES—PODER LEARNING CENTER

ACTIVE TEENS



There has been a growing number of middle school teens coming to use our services at the PODER After-School Program. In November, we gave them a challenge: Who can collect the most cans to donate to our Neighbors Helping Neighbors Holiday Food Drive sponsored by the Allen Woods Resident Assembly? We explained to the teenagers that the collected food items will be given to neighbors in the Allen Woods Homes who are either homebound or in great need of food this winter. At first they didn't seem interested, but once we encouraged a healthy competition between the boys and girls and emphasized their impact on the community, they began to get more excited. Michael, the Kid's Cafe Monitor, took a group of boys and Maria, the Service Coordinator for the Allen Woods Homes, took a group of girls. Both groups went out into the neighborhood. In about half an hour, the two groups came back with bags of canned foods! Combined, the teens collected over 70 cans and about 20 stuffed animals! They were so very proud of themselves of what they had accomplished. Everyone came away with smiles and lifted spirits.

¿Qué es la Resolución de Año Nuevo?

-Pierda el Peso: Comer cinco o seis pequeñas comida al día. De hecho, es como la división de la recomendada de tres comidas en cinco o seis comidas más pequeñas.

-Hace Bien en el Trabajo: No aplaces cosas pendientes. Las dilaciones son estresantes. Cualquier cosa que tengas que hacer mañana, hazla hoy, cualquier cosa que tengas que hacer hoy, hazla ahora.

-Reduce el Estrés: Si tienes momentos de relax, tomar un buen baño, meditar, dormir una siesta, leer sin interrupción... desconecta y descuelga el teléfono y aíslate de otras interrupciones.

Fuentes: es.prmob.net & empresa.euroresidentes.com



Celebrating Community

Residents from Allen Woods Homes have come together to celebrate the end of the year at the PODER Learning Center. Allen Woods Resident Assembly Officers RJ Lizama and Kevin James Reyes were fantastic cooks and Christine Williams was very helpful cleaning up. Great job officers! Numerous residents attended the party that was filled with Christmas songs, a raffle, and good conversations with friends. Everyone left full of turkey, ham, and chicken with all the fixings plus appetizers and dessert! There was also a "Giving Tree" where residents could sign up themselves or their neighbors to received extra food for Christmas. Canned foods were raised from the Neighbors Helping Neighbors Holiday Food Drive. It was truly a community celebration!

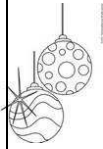


Springtown Villa



Our residents enjoyed a night filled with songs from Jingle Bells to Feliz Navidad sung by local Cub Scouts from De Zavala Elementary School. Residents were also presented with a Christmas card and candy canes.

Eye exams were provided for our residents by Dr. Michael P. Sorensen, O.D. from Eye Care Associates.



Residents enjoyed good food and good music during our combined Christmas Dinner & December Birthdays celebration.



Residents continue attending classes provided by Capital Area Food Bank of Texas. This month's class covered planning healthy yet thrifty meals. Residents were given a pre- and post-test to help measure how much they learned.

Resident Council President, Lino Puente was given the honor of cutting the birthday cake.



Over 30 of our residents participated in our Christmas door decorating contest. The doors were judged by Maria Calcaben, the Service Coordinator from the Allen Woods Homes.

First place winner \$25
Ruben Mujica



Second place \$10
Sylvia Barrera



Third place \$5
Lino Puente



C. M. Allen Homes—KAD Korner Store



KAD Youth will be attending the upcoming Soar Education Fair on January 12 at the San Marcos Activity Center.



KAD youth enjoy helping out our community by wrapping presents for the San Marcos Police Department's Blue Santa Program.



KAD teens enjoy a warm doughnut courtesy of Krispy Kreme doughnuts for all their hard work wrapping presents.

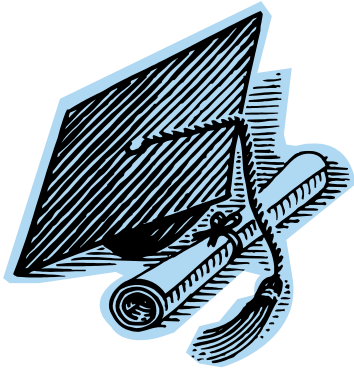


C. M. Allen resident bible study group celebrated their last session of 2012 with lots of good food, good company and great conversation. The group will resume on Tuesdays, starting on January 8. Everyone is invited.



Chapultepec Homes — Family Self-Sufficiency

Roxanne is one of our newest tenants at Chapultepec and came here with insufficient furniture to fill her new apartment. When FSS Graduates Gabriel and Marisol heard that the person living in their old unit needed a little help, they jumped at the opportunity. Gabriel and Marisol gave Roxanne’s daughter a new toddler bed and new sheets. Words cannot express how generous this was. It is an act of kindness that no one will forget, especially Roxanne and her daughter. If you know anyone who is in need of furniture or other household goods or if you know someone who is willing to donate, please contact the Service Coordinator at your site.



Congratulations Teresa Escobar! Teresa is a resident at Chapultepec and on December 15, she graduated from Austin Community College with an Associate of Applied Science in Nursing degree. She will spend the next few weeks studying for the board exams and when she passes, she will be looking for work in the San Marcos area. Way to go Teresa!



Thank you to Rebecca and Danielle for outlining the programs and services offered by the Hays-Caldwell Women’s Center. If you or someone you know is in need of services or is interested in becoming a volunteer with HCWC, please call 396-HELP (4357).



THE PARTNER PAGE



HAYS CALDWELL COUNCIL
ON ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE

1901 Dutton Drive, Suite E • San Marcos, Texas
78666
512-396-7695 • 1-800-733-1214 • Fax
512-396-7633
E-mail: info@hayscaldwellcouncil.org •
www.hayscaldwellcouncil.org

ATTENTION PARENTS: Are you concerned about your adolescent? Do you think they may be using alcohol or other drugs? Do you need help to talk to your child about drugs and alcohol? The Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse can help.

If you think your child is using drugs or alcohol Project Hope is a program for adolescents and their families who are experiencing problems with substance abuse issues. This 12 week program can provide families with the support they need to get their lives back on track and living a healthy lifestyle. Please call 512-396-7695 and ask for more information about Project Hope. Don't wait call today.

COMING UP AT THE SAN MARCOS PUBLIC LIBRARY!

SUPERFOODS: THE GOOD, THE BAD, & THE UGLIFRUIT

Thursday, January 17 at 7:00 PM

Ever wondered what an acai berry is or how to eat quinoa? Would you like to add some excitement to your meals and improve your diet but without spending a ton of money? Learn about the "superfoods" that are in the news and some of the "supervillians" to watch out for. Heather Martin, a registered and licensed clinical dietitian, will offer tips on nutrition and other valuable information.



ROSAURA RODRIGUEZ (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Pecina, the Service Coordinator, was very resourceful and was good at motivating people. Initially, Rosaura was thinking about how she might be able to use computers to work from home. Bonnie upped the ante and told her about the College Prep Academy that was coming up soon and gave her a flyer about it. Rosaura said Bonnie would also come and knock on her door to tell her about meetings that were going on at the KAD Korner Store. Rosaura said, "She doesn't give up. That's what's so awesome about her."

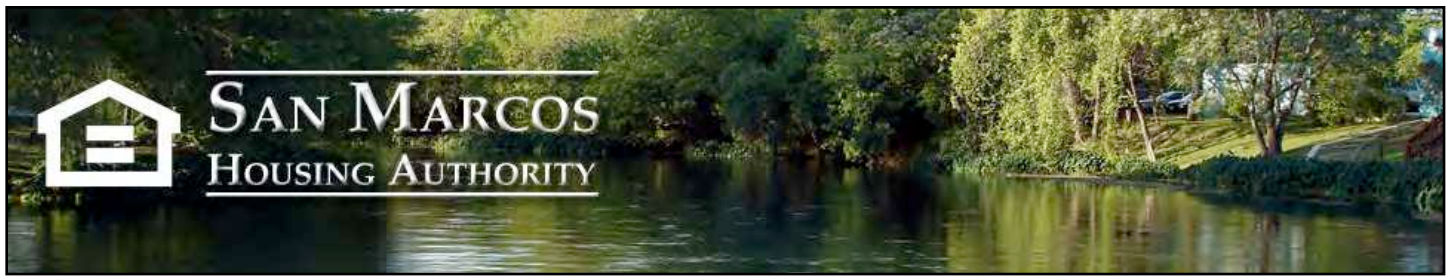
Rosaura decided to enroll in the College Prep Academy, which is sponsored by Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas. The primary goal of the Academy is to help people who want to attend college to be better prepared for the experience. Rosaura described it as a refresher course in reading, writing, and math. She said the program helped her to relearn things that she had forgotten or had never mastered in high school because she didn't care about getting an education in those days. The biggest challenge for her was to simply go there every day. She said, "The will to complete something was enough for me to overcome any challenges." Rosaura added that Francesca Ramirez, the Career Pathways Coordinator for Community Action, was very helpful to her during her participation in the Academy. She said that Francesca pushed her and the other students. Rosaura especially enjoyed a trip to one of the Austin Community College (ACC) campuses, which helped to familiarize her with the college environment. Francesca and other Academy personnel assisted her and other students to complete the enrollment process for ACC.

She has registered for classes at ACC and will be taking English and math this semester. Because of her participation in the College Prep Academy, her test scores were high enough that she was able to enroll in a regular English class. Because she is still struggling with math, she had to enroll in a developmental math course. She feels confident that she will overcome that challenge and said that one of her instructors from the Academy has agreed to tutor her this semester to help her to be able to successfully move on to college algebra. She plans to take other basic courses but her ultimate goal is to become a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor (LCDC). When asked about why she is interested in becoming a LCDC, she jokingly said, "I invested a lot of money into it in the past as a patient and now I just want to get my money's worth." The reality is that she wants to use her experience to help other people turn their lives around.

Rosaura said her son is very excited and happy for her and that he also pushes her. In an interesting twist of fate, we learned that Jose is also starting at ACC this semester. He is a junior at San Marcos High School but is involved in a dual credit program and will be attending ACC classes. Rosaura also has a daughter, Rocio, who is twenty-seven years old. Rosaura told us that Rocio is also very happy about the changes in her mother's life and that her extended family is very supportive.

According to Rosaura, "No matter how far or how deep you go down, there is always light at the end of the tunnel." Some people think that having to move into public housing means giving up on building a life for yourself but Rosaura said that moving into public housing was a big turning point for her. She said, "If I hadn't moved here, I wouldn't have learned about Community Action." She hopes her story will inspire other residents who may feel as though it is too late for them. At the tender age of forty-seven, Rosaura is stepping out into a new life because she knows it is never too late to begin making your life better.





Calendar

January 1

New Year's Day - SMHA closed

January 7

SMCISD classes begin

January 12

SOAR San Marcos Education Fair - Activity Center, 10 AM - 2 PM

January 14

Texas State University classes begin

January 17

Superfoods: The Good, The Bad, & The Uglyfruit - Public Library, 7 PM

January 21

Martin Luther King Day - SMHA closed

January 27

Senior Citizen EXPO - Activity Center, 10 AM - 2 PM

(Busy month, ain't it?)

HUD FUNDING (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

who did not enroll in the program.

"PD&R is currently working on a follow-up evaluation to the Prospective Study that tracks the outcomes of people who were still enrolled in the program at the end of the study. The third and final study looks at the effectiveness of the FSS program nationally. This will be the first national study of the FSS program and is part of HUD's Transformation Initiative that uses metrics and research to evaluate programs and gauge performance to encourage more transparency and accountability within the agency.

For more information about our Public Housing FSS Program at the Chapultepec Homes, call Megan Perez at 512-396-3364. For more information about our Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher FSS Program, call Gracie Campos at 512-353-7343.



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 Burlison—Vice-Chairperson
- Steve Goelzer—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
- Lorenza Lopez—Springtown Villa Manager

HOUSING OFFICES

- Allen Woods Homes (Main Office)**
353-5059
- C. M. Allen Homes**
353-1116
- Chapultepec Homes**
396-3364
- Housing Choice Voucher**
353-5061
- Springtown Villa**
396-3363

RESIDENT SERVICES CENTERS

- Chapultepec Adult Learning Center & Family Self-Sufficiency**
396-3364
- KAD Korner Store**
392-6273
- PODER Learning Center**
396-3367
- Springtown Villa**
353-7343