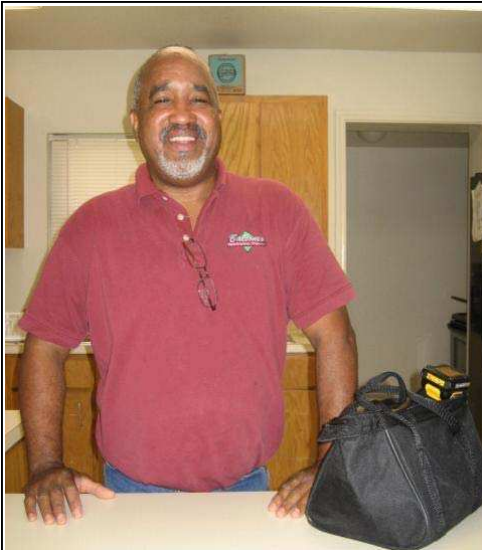




# The Oracle



## Michael Cook: Making His Way to Success



About 40 years ago, Michael Cook's family was among the first residents to move in to the C.M. Allen Homes when they were brand new. Their family of ten moved in to a house with four bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a big yard. Michael said, "It was a blessing compared to where we used to live." They lived there for about six years, until his father found a better paying job. Later, Michael served in the army for four years and then went to school to become a repair technician. He worked for Balcones Appliance Repair for 15 years and bought the company two years ago. He is now the proud owner, and hard worker, of his own company. He has five children and is sending the youngest to Texas Lutheran University. His advice to public housing residents: "Appreciate what you have while in housing. You're there until you can do better."

Michael recently repaired a malfunctioning refrigerator at the PODER Learning Center, which is where we snapped his picture. We are happy to be able to share his success story with you. If you would like to speak to Michael to learn his secrets of success . . . or to find out if your broken dryer can be repaired, call him at Balcones Appliance Repair, 396-1122. We are confident that he will make a good impression on you!

### **Notes from the Main Office**

- ✓ **Want to be a voice for the residents on the Housing Authority Board of Commissioners?** The City Council will be selecting one or more residents to serve for the 2012/2013 term. The Board meets monthly for about one and a half hours. Free training opportunities are included. Call Albert Sierra at 353-5059 for more information .
- ✓ **Attention Allen Woods Residents!** We just started the weatherization project we told you about in the May issue. Workers will need access to your unit to complete the job. We understand that it may not be convenient but when they are finished, you will have lower utility bills. That's money in your pocket! Please be patient and remember that the workers have a big job to do and limited time to get it done. They are working for you so please be considerate of the big job they are facing. What are they doing? They are providing compact fluorescent light bulbs, adding insulation, replacing weather stripping, replacing or cleaning certain appliances, and replacing shower heads.
- ✓ **Speaking of utility bills, your air conditioner condensing unit** (the box on the outside that blows air through the top) will use less electricity if the foil fins that wrap around the unit are not crushed together. Please keep kids away from it. Tell them not to sit, stand, or jump on it. If the condensing unit is damaged, you may pay twice: once with a higher electric bill and again with a costly repair charge. Also, good air flow is necessary to proper functioning of the unit so please leave plenty of open space around it (about 3 feet should do) and never put anything on top of it!

# ALLEN WOODS HOMES—P.O.D.E.R LEARNING CENTER

## Music to My Ears

The free guitar lessons at the P.O.D.E.R. Learning Center have become quite a hit! Wednesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m., kids and teens of all ages can enjoy free lessons from our guitar teacher Don Thorndyke. If you are serious about learning to play but don't have a guitar, we can provide one for you to practice on. Aside from learning chords and having the confidence to sing, Don teaches the kids the most important thing about a guitar: Have fun!

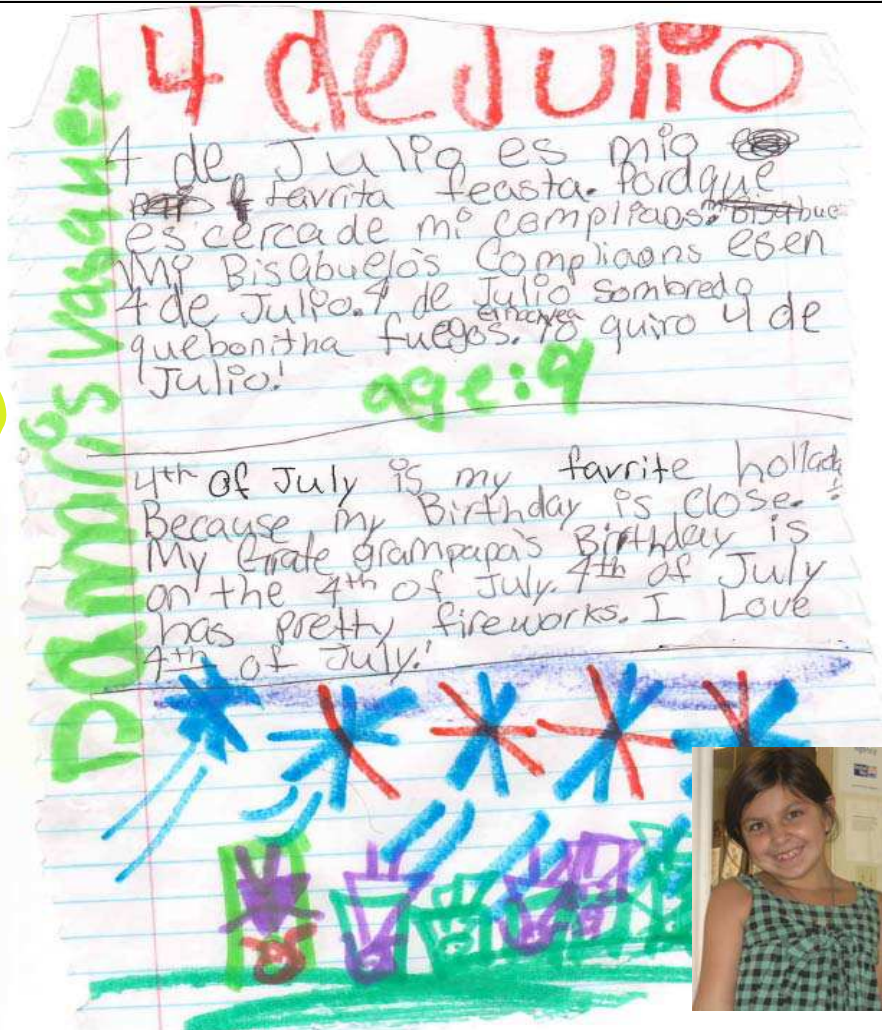
Call 396-3367 or stop by the P.O.D.E.R. Learning Center for more information.



IT'S NOT TOO  
LATE TO HAVE  
A COOL



Parents: Sign up your child for the P.O.D.E.R. Summer Program in July! If you have teens, ask about our Teen Group. We still have lots of fun activities to do and more cool field trips ahead!



Do you need a phone?  
 Do you need help with your utility bill?  
 Do you need to see a dentist?  
 Come see Lorene! She can help you  
 will all of these things and more!  
 Visit Lorene on the 2nd floor of  
 Springtown Villa.

### Recipe for Life

4 cups of Love  
 2 cups of Loyalty  
 3 cups of Forgiveness  
 1 cup of Friendship  
 5 spoons of Hope  
 2 spoons of Tenderness  
 4 quarts of Faith  
 1 barrel of Laughter

Take Love, Loyalty, and Friendship and mix it  
 thoroughly with Faith.

Blend it with Tenderness, Forgiveness, and  
 Hope.

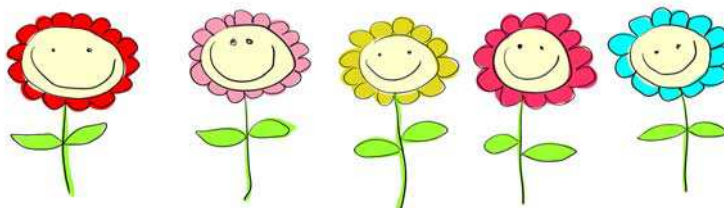
Sprinkle abundantly with Laughter.

Bake it with sunshine.

Serve daily with generous helpings.

## Recipes For Life Cookbooks for sale at Springtown Villa!

The cookbooks were created by the Beta Xi Chapter of  
 Phi Upsilon Omicron using recipes, pictures, and words  
 of wisdom from the residents of the San Marcos Housing  
 Authority.



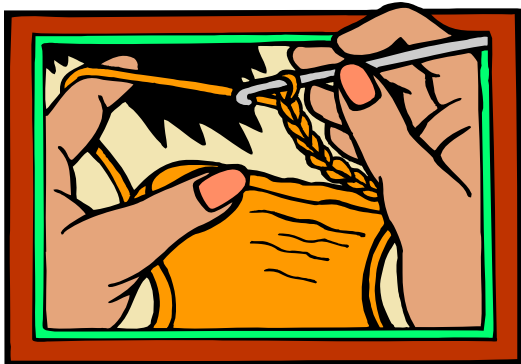
Cookbooks can be purchased at the  
 Springtown Villa Resident Services office.  
 Delivery arrangements can be made by calling:

353-7343

### Price

\$5.00 - Housing Residents

\$7.00 - Non-Residents



## Crochet Club

Every Monday

1:30 pm

Springtown Villa Community Room

## Summer has arrived and so has the **HEAT!**

**HEAT EXHAUSTION** occurs when the body gets too hot.

**Symptoms:** thirst, weakness, dizziness, profuse sweating, cold and clammy skin, normal or slightly higher temperature.

If you or someone or someone else is experiencing these conditions move them into an air-conditioned environment, or a cool, shaded area. Replace fluids with water or juice and **avoid** caffeine and alcohol. Recommend a cool shower or bath. Encourage rest.

**HEAT STROKE** occurs when the body temperature reaches 105 degrees within minutes and can cause severe damage.

**Symptoms:** confusion, faintness, strong, rapid pulse, dry, flushed skin, lack of sweating, bizarre behavior.

**HEAT STROKE is a medical emergency!** If you think someone is suffering from heatstroke, call 911 right away!



# G.M. Allen Happenings



In the picture on the left, youth from C. M. Allen are staying busy helping deliver meals for the Meals on Wheels program at Allen Woods. To reward their dedication in giving back to the community, we took them on an outing to Hamilton Pool. Other community service youth assist with delivering staples from the Capital Area Food Bank to elderly residents. The kids also clean up the city park on Sturgeon Street.



Lydia Perez from Community Action, came to CM Allen to educate our residents on Breast Cancer prevention. Pictured below is Molly Gonzales with a prize she won during the Breast Cancer Awareness Presentation.



Charmaine Thompson with Carter Health-Care came to C. M. Allen to do a blood pressure/sugar check for our residents. In this picture, Ms. Thompson



does a blood pressure check for Mr. Florencio. These services are free to all residents. (Pay no attention to the fund-raiser garage sale items piling up in the background!) ☺

Here we see kids getting in line to wait for the bus that would take them to the Fun & Fit4Life Summer Camp at Texas State



University. Besides lots of physical activities, the kids learned about ways to make healthy food and lifestyle choices. They were also introduced to the university community.

# Family Self-Sufficiency

## How Does Our Garden Grow?

Liberty & Elias Smith enjoyed fun in the water on a hot summer day (before Stage 2 water restrictions), while mother Joy Smith, works hard on the garden! Residents who are interested in helping with the garden — and getting fresh, delicious fruits and veggies — should call Megan at 396-3364!



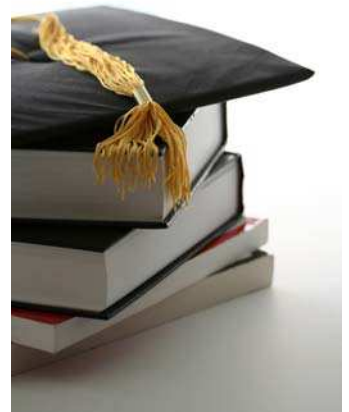
Thank you to all those who helped with the Community Sale on June 25, especially, Victoria Landin, Gabriel Mendoza, Gerri Moregon, Joy & Greg Smith, Stephanie Luna, Jonis Mejia, & Marcella Nance!

## QUESTIONS ABOUT COLLEGE?

### GET ANSWERS AT THE LIBRARY!

Walk-In Hours:  
Sundays 1 - 6 PM  
Tuesdays 1 - 6 PM  
Thursdays 1 - 6 PM

Other times available  
by appointment.



Texas State University-San Marcos and the San Marcos Public Library offer information and assistance at the library. The College Access Project (CAP) can assist those interested in going to college with searching for colleges, filling out applications, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, applying for scholarships, information on entrance exam fees, and much more. They will work hard to help you reach your educational goals.



# Special Report: The Chapultepec Adult Learning Center



In late 2008, we began to talk about how we might meet the need for more space for activities and classes at the Chapultepec Homes, the site of our Family Self-Sufficiency Program and the Henry Bush Child Development Center, one of two Head Start locations in San Marcos. We decided that we had enough room to add a new building next to the existing office building. That building had a small meeting area and a computer lab but it was not conducive to adult education activities with more than about eight people.

We came up with a basic design and applied to the City of San Marcos for Community Development Block Grant funds for 1/2 of the funds needed. The rest of the funds were to come from the Public Housing Capital Fund, which supports management and physical improvements in public housing. Our request was approved in the summer of 2009 with construction set to begin in Fiscal Year 2010.



Project partners at the June 1st dedication (L-R): Michelle Harper, Stewart Dale Spencer, Reverend Samuel Montoya (Commissioner), Rose Brooks (Commissioner), Albert Sierra, B. J. Friedman, Ph.D., Nicole Baker, Sylvia Crixell, Ph.D., Kim Porterfield, Janis Hendrix..

Early in 2010, we were approached by faculty from the Department of Family and Consumer Science at Texas State University. They were looking for a location to house a new program called Best Food for Families, Infants and Toddlers (Best Food FITS). We told them about our



new building, which was in the final design phase at that time. A few meetings later, we had an agreement to expand the design to accommodate four kitchen stations for the purpose of involving students in teaching affordable, nutritious meal preparation skills to parents of young children as part of an ongoing research effort and a larger program within the community designed to reduce childhood obesity.

The Best Food FITS program, through a grant from the Texas State Health Department, was able to add some equipment and some direct funding to the project so the building design was altered to make room for the kitchens. Unforeseen circumstances delayed the start of construction until late September of last year but the building was completed last January and program activities began in February. You can view a slide show of the construction from the home page of our website: [smpha.org](http://smpha.org).



We held a formal dedication ceremony on June 1 but many classes and activities have already been held at the *(continued on Page 7)*

# PARTNER PAGE

## **Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos**

**512-878-0640 - [centro@sanmarcoscentro.org](mailto:centro@sanmarcoscentro.org) - 211 Lee Street, San Marcos**

**[www.sanmarcoscentro.org](http://www.sanmarcoscentro.org) Visit our Museum on Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm**

### ***Sacred Springs Summer Art Camp - July 18th-22nd - 9 am to 3 pm***

*San Marcos youth can honor the arts of their ancient Native American ancestors this summer in a five-day Sacred Springs Summer Art Camp that offers performance on indigenous musical instruments, the art of storytelling, making Native masks, creating storybooks Aztec-style and learning about Mexica danza. Camp is presented by Indigenous Cultures Institute. Registration online at [www.indigenoscultures.org](http://www.indigenoscultures.org) or at the Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos.*



**A special thanks to Laura Ward for her dedication to helping Youth. Laura has been tutoring several of our youth in the K.A.D. program. Here, she posed with Sehenna Martines, who has been an exceptional student. Bonnie Pecina, Service Coordinator at C. M. Allen, says, "Thanks Laura, for helping make a difference, one child at a time. May God bless you."**

*(Chapultepec Center continued)* new center. It is perfect for life skills classes as well as staff development activities. The Head Start staff have been especially appreciative. Parent activities were often held in classroom areas designed for children. Many of our readers can probably remember how they felt when they met with the teachers of their children attending elementary school. There is something about having to sit in those small chairs that takes you back to your childhood and makes it hard to feel respected as an adult. Those days are over! It's time for adults to get serious about the challenges they face raising families in these uncertain times. We are still improving the facility by adding wireless Internet and other equipment and furnishings that will enhance the effectiveness of adult education activities. We are looking for funding to have 20 laptop computers available (along with a laptop security harbor) for computer-based instruction so if any of our faithful readers have about \$14,000 of spare cash just lying around, give us a call!

Teaching important skills such as how to create life-enhancing meals, how to manage money, how to avoid or get out of debt slavery, how to set goals, and how to become a better parent are just some of what the future holds for the Chapultepec Adult Learning Center. There is no charge for non-profit or government agencies serving the public. Just clean up after yourself and take out the trash . . . but you learned that in kindergarten so no sweat, right? Call 396-3364 for more information or to schedule your activity.





# SAN MARCOS HOUSING AUTHORITY

### Board of Commissioners:

Rose Brooks, Chairperson  
Rev. Samuel Montoya, Vice-Chairperson  
Stacy Green—Resident Rep.  
Ovelia Mercado  
Lorraine Burleson

Brian Guenther

### Administration:

Executive Director  
*Albert Sierra*  
Accountant/Program Mgr.  
*Lana Bronikowsky*  
Maintenance Director  
*Albert Hernandez*  
Public Housing Manager  
*Rose Miranda*  
Resident Services Director  
*Stewart Dale Spencer*  
Section 8 Coordinator  
*Frances Garcia*

Springtown Villa Manager  
*Veronica Miranda*

### Housing Offices:

Allen Woods Homes (Main)  
353-5059  
C. M. Allen Homes  
353-1116  
Chapultepec Homes  
396-3364

Housing Choice Voucher  
353-5061

Springtown Villa  
396-3363

### Resident Services Centers:

\*Family Self-Sufficiency

396-3364

\*KAD Korner Store

392-6273

\*PODER Learning Center

396-3367

\*Springtown Villa

353-7343

## WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT

The San Marcos Housing Authority provides decent, safe, and sanitary housing for about 555 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.

*The Oracle is produced and published monthly by the Resident Services Department of the San Marcos Housing Authority. Concept by Herod King Ellison. Senior Editor—Stewart Dale Spencer. Contributing Editors—Maria Calcaben, Lorene Sandwith, Bonnie Pecina, & Megan Perez. Contact: SMHA Resident Services, 701 South LBJ Drive, San Marcos, Texas, 78666 \* 512-396-3364 \* [www.smpaha.org](http://www.smpaha.org)*

## AmeriCorps Volunteers are Helping Make July a Special Month



Will Padgett

Will Padgett grew up in Bellville. He attended the University of Louisiana-Monroe on a track and field scholarship but later transferred to Texas State in San Marcos where he double-majored in Creative Writing and Political Science and went on to earn a Master's degree in Literature, focusing on Southwestern studies. He has been working with Communities in Schools of Central Texas, serving at Simon Middle School in Kyle as student mentor. He also works as a University of Phoenix online instructor, teaching courses in philosophy. This month, he is volunteering at K.A.D. where he will complete his AmeriCorps service. Will says, "As a longtime resident in the community, it is a privilege and a joy to give back and volunteer for the youth of San Marvellous, Texas." In September, he will relocate to Kiev, Ukraine to teach English. He says, "It will be a great opportunity to combine my passions of language, travel, and education." We wish he could stay longer but we're grateful for the time we have him!

Hayley McGinley was born in Austin but raised in Kouts, Indiana. She majored in Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Indiana. Texas called her back and she volunteered at Wallace Middle school in Kyle as a mentor. She is spending her July at the P.O.D.E.R. Learning Center, helping us with our summer activities and also serving as a positive adult role model. She encourages our kids to show respect for and to listen to each other. She demonstrates that she cares by taking their interests into account when planning activities. For example, she asked the kids to write down on a sticky note what kinds of activities they like to do and then she incorporated some of them into the schedule. What's next on Hayley's list? After she finishes her AmeriCorps service, she plans to teach English in Thailand for five months starting in October. Hayley says, "I want the experience of traveling and teaching in another culture." Her time with us will be short but we know she will leave a lasting impression.



Hayley McGinley