

THE *July* ORACLE



FSS Program Expanding to Serve More Residents!

by Stewart Dale Spencer

Last month we told you about the great successes we have been having with both sides of our Family Self-Sufficiency programs and how the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher FSS Programs were going to merge into one program. Our two FSS Coordinators have always worked closely to share resources and information. The next phase is an expansion of the program.

Since 2002, we had been serving a maximum of 55 participants, 30 in Public Housing and 25 in the Housing Choice Voucher program. We will now serve up to 80 participants. That's a 45% increase! We will begin the expansion in public housing. Effective immediately, residents of the Allen Woods Homes, the C.M. Allen Homes, the Porter Homes, and even our stand-alone homes (a.k.a. scattered-site units) are potentially eligible to participate in the FSS Program. Previously, only residents of the Chapultepec Homes could participate in FSS. The entire site (30 units) is set aside for the FSS program.

What's in it for you? Glad you asked! You get in-depth service coordination and access to additional resources to help you reach your goals. What goals you ask? The goal of reducing or eliminating your dependence upon public welfare and the need for subsidized housing. Imagine spending your time working to provide a better life for you and your children without all the appointments and forms and waiting and always asking for help just to get by. Is it easy? No. Is it worth it? The answer to that question is, "Is it worth it *to you?*" Do you want to have more choices in life? Do you want to be able to provide more for your children? Do you want to lead a more independent and fulfilling life? If you answered "Yes, yes, yes!" then we are waiting to hear from you.

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My name is Edith Villarreal and I am from Austin. I am a student at Texas State University and will be graduating in December. My major is Nutrition & Foods with a Psychology minor. As an intern for the KAD program at the C.M. Allen Homes, I have had the opportunity to make a contribution to all the great things being done there. I have really enjoyed being able to interact with the children. I have also had the pleasure of meeting so many of the residents, young and old. I even got to call Bingo for the guests who play every Wednesday. It's a lot of fun! There are many prizes and chances to win. I have treasured the opportunity to work with wonderful people like Bonnie Pecina and Mrs. Fernandez. It has been a completely positive experience for me and I am very grateful for my time here at the Housing Authority.

ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

Resourceful Residents



The Resident Resource Fair provided opportunities to obtain information from different agencies designed to support independent living and self-sufficiency. From job solutions to finding medical treatment, local organizations showed residents how to get assistance. A few organizations even

offered free hearing exams and blood and glucose level health checks. The residents that took advantage of the fair took home bags filled with goodies and information as well as a chance to win raffle prizes donated by the agencies. Pictured below is Toribia Reyna, who won a thermos bag from Randolph-Brooks Credit Union. A big thanks to all the agencies that participated including Bee First Primary Care, The Military Veteran Peer Network, the Workforce Center, and CommuniCare. If you need assistance or just want to get some information, contact the Resident Service Coordinator at your site to get connected to great local resources!



Cool Summer Program



The PODER Summer Program is off to a great start with over 50 children signed up and an average of 25 children that showed up each day the first week! The first two weeks of the program, the kids went to Texas State University for The Fun & Fit Camp where they participate in games and activities that promote good health. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the students do activities at The Cephas House, a facility operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. Pictured above are Arik and Ana applying their new engineering skills to create a wind turbine!

FREE LUNCH FOR ANY SCHOOL AGE CHILD*

June 9 — August 15

MONDAY — FRIDAY, 11 AM — 1 PM

PODER Learning Center

***No sign-up required.
Guardians may eat for a small fee.**



Springtown Villa



Residents from Springtown Villa take time out of their day to participate in activities offered at the **Cephas House**, the historic home of Ulysses Cephas, a blacksmith and community leader at the turn of the 20th Century. Residents will attend activities on the last Tuesday and Thursday during the summer months.



Cephas House



Rain or shine, CARTS stops at Springtown Villa to pick up residents every Tuesday and Thursday. CARTS takes residents to HEB, Wal-Mart, Dollar Tree, Dollar General, and the Cephas House. Mary Morgan (right) is excited about this trip to an art class at the Cephas House.



If you plant it, it will grow!

Resident Cynthia Watts enjoys showing off her vegetables: squash, okra, tomatoes, peppers, and watermelon along with herbs dill, sage and peppermint. Cynthia has help from her neighbors and from her granddaughter, Gabriela Perez.

Some of the vegetable seedlings were donated from Sam Woodward, farmer from Blanco River Organics at Montesino Ranch in Wimberley, TX.



Gabriela

Cynthia

C. M. ALLEN HOMES — KAD KORNER STORE



C.M. Allen dads celebrated Father's Day on June 14th. Residents were serenaded by former KAD students Benito and Pedro Castillo along with their father Pedro Sr. The trio sang a variety of songs during the celebration. Benito did an awesome job on the trumpet while Pedro Sr. played the guitar. Mrs. Fernandez cooked all the food for this event. Every adult that attended received a prize. Prizes were donated by the Greater San Marcos Youth Council.

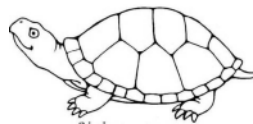


Recently, Maritza Rodriguez from the Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse provided activities for kids from KAD. Maritza will be working with the kids throughout the summer.

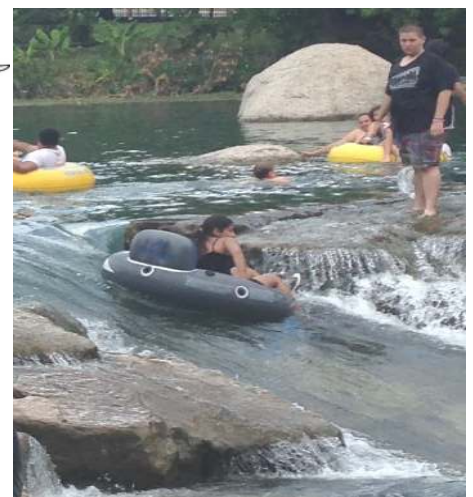


San Marcos River Toobing

If you've never toobed the San Marcos river, you should.



Summer intern Edith Villarreal and Asst. Service Coordinator David Hamm take students Jennie, Jasmine, and Vanessa toobing down the San Marcos river. Students learned how fast things can change in the river, also about the endangered species and how we need to protect them.



CHAPULTEPEC HOMES & ADULT LEARNING CENTER

The Summer Program at Chapultepec needs your help! We are raffling three baskets with items such as:

Beach Towels
Sunscreen
Toys
Tote Bag
\$10 Old Navy Gift Card
Toiletry items
Throw Blanket



Please support our kids! Buy tickets. Buy lots of tickets. Just \$1 each or \$5 for 6! The drawing will be held on July 16! Get your winning ticket at the office!



(above) looks happy about it. Marcos (right) is in an apparent state of bliss. Must be good food!

Chapultepec Kids enjoying lunch at PODER thanks to the SMCISD Summer Feeding Program! Makara



The **Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse** presented information about underage drinking and what parents need to know at the last FSS Class in June. Here are a few tips to help keep your teen safe:

- ◇ Begin talking together about alcohol.
- ◇ Listen to your teen's concern respectfully, and use positive parenting techniques.
- ◇ Set clear no-alcohol use rules, and agree on appropriate consequences for breaking these rules.
- ◇ Enforce consequences when the rules are broken.
- ◇ Discuss short-term and long-term risks of underage alcohol use.
- ◇ Help you teen plan how to deal with social pressure to drink alcohol.
- ◇ Keep track of where your teen is, and with whom.
- ◇ Make sure your teen is in a supervised, alcohol-free environment.
- ◇ Work with other parents and community leaders to make and enforce policies that keep alcohol away from underage youth.
- ◇ Support the 21 minimum Drinking Age Law.



From the MAAD Parent Handbook for Talking With Teens about Alcohol—Power of Parents

FSS Program Expanding to Serve More Residents! (continued from Page 1)

If you want more out of life . . . If you want your kids to grow up with more opportunities . . . If you aren't afraid to work harder now for a better life later . . . then contact Megan Perez at 512-396-3364 or go by the Chapultepec Homes office and apply for the FSS Program.

Remember, taking the easy path *now* means you are choosing a harder and more limited life when you are in the evening of your life. We can help you take control of your life. Get help to get past the barriers that have held you back. Get more education, get training, learn how to control your money instead of letting it control you. Fix your credit, improve your health, build a career or start your own business. Learn how to be a better parent, be part of a support network to help you over the rough patches. You can do it! We can help you!

There is no magic wand. The magic is in *you*. There is no quick fix. It took time to get where you are now. It will take time to change the direction of your life but if you start today and focus on the simple tasks that lead to success, you will get there before you know it! Start today and be one of the first to apply!

Not everyone is accepted into the FSS Program. We are looking for people who can prove they are motivated. Right now, we are only accepting applications from current public housing residents. We expect to take applications from persons on the Housing Choice Voucher list toward the end of the year. Beginning in January 2015, our FSS Coordinators will be allowed to work with both public housing residents and persons with a Housing Choice Voucher. Either way, you will get quality assistance to help you reach your dreams! Take the first step . . . come by the Chapultepec Office to see the FSS Wall of Success and imagine *your* picture and *your* story up there!

**Community Action Is Fighting Poverty**

In the continuing effort to help people achieve self-sufficiency, two Community Action programs are combining their expertise and resources to help local

residents obtain skills that can lead to living wage jobs. The staff of the Community Services Self-Sufficiency Team and Adult Education Career Pathways Team have partnered together to help families escape poverty. So far this year, they have enrolled four students in an agency-sponsored Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program offered by Health Training Services. Once the students receive their certification and obtain employment, the Community Action team will continue to monitor their progress. The Self-Sufficiency Team is also working with three other individuals, helping with transportation needs for one student already enrolled in CNA classes and two others who are trying to obtain Child Development Associates (CDA) certification. If you know of someone who would like to explore ways that Community Action can help guide them to become self-sufficient, please contact Tina Morrow at 512-392-1161, or visit our webpage at communityaction.com.

The Greater San Marcos Youth Council is a great resource for **Parenting Classes**. The next round of classes starts July 21st and goes through August 25th. This is a 7-week course on Mondays. **Anger Management Classes** are held on a various Saturdays throughout the year from 9 AM — 3 PM. A parent is required to attend the class with their adolescent. The class is offered free of charge but pre-registration is required. Please call 512-754-0500 to inquire about the next class date.



Go to www.gsmyc.org for updates and information on our other programs such as Individual and Family Counseling, Crisis Counseling, Youth & Family Advocacy, Delinquency Prevention, and Child Abuse Prevention Education. Through Youth & Family Services, Hays County families with children under the age of 18 are able to access these programs, free of charge, 365 days per year. The **Youth & Family 24 hr. Crisis Hotline** is available around the clock at **800-457-0797**. We continue to be a reliable resource for

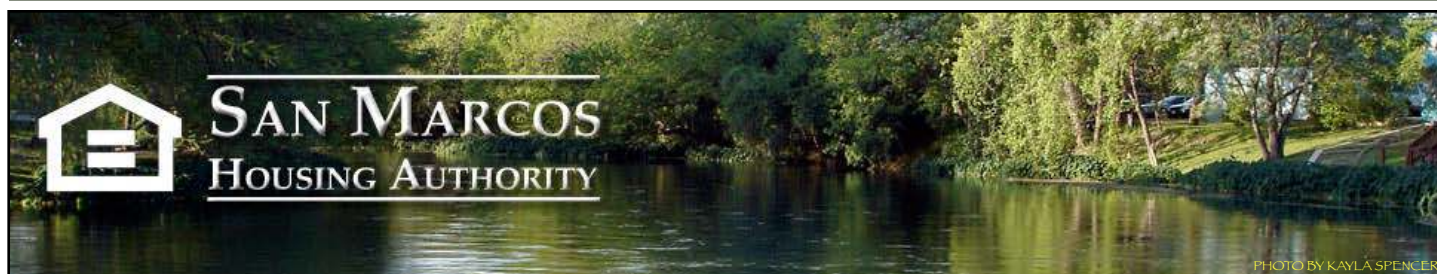


Amy Valles joined the FSS program in 2008. Soon after, she got a job as a Site Clerk for the Housing Authority. She has come a long way during her time in the program and as an employee. She is now the Site Manager at the C.M. Allen Homes. She has had her share of challenges. In 2011, her mother became very ill. Once she was released from the hospital, she began a long period of rehabilitation. This took a toll on Amy since her mother has always been her

strongest supporter. Amy's perseverance paid off. She graduated from the FSS program in June of last year. In the picture above, FSS Coordinator Gracie Campos presents a graduation certificate and an FSS Escrow payment to Amy. That's Cody on the left and Avery in the middle. In December, Amy and her partner Ruben Villapando were blessed with baby Mason (see the [March 2014 issue of the Oracle](#)). We wish Amy and her children all the best in their life endeavors.

*When the world says, "Give up,"
Hope whispers, "Try it one more time."*

~Author Unknown



FREE & FUN THINGS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!

• July 4 ~ SummerFest

San Marcos Plaza Park — 6 PM to 10 PM. Kid-friendly community-wide Independence Day celebration with live music, fireworks, and a patriotic costume contest and parade for kids. 6 PM - Grounds open, Cheryl Murdock performs; 6:30 PM - Children's Parade registration begins; 7 PM - Children's Patriotic Parade and Costume Contest; 7:30 PM - David Ybarra and Friends band; 9:30 PM - Fireworks display;

• Tuesdays in July ~ Movies in Your Park

San Marcos Plaza Park — Activities begin at 7:30 PM and the feature film begins at sunset. July 1 - The Little Mermaid; July 8 - The Polar Express; July 15 - The Nut Job; July 22 - The Game Plan; July 29 - Jumanji.

• Thursdays in July ~ Summer in the Park Concert Series

San Marcos Plaza Park (rain location: Activity Center) — 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM. July 3 - Pianorama; July 10 - Soul Track Mind; July 17 - Midnight River Choir; July 24 - Willow Creek Project; July 31 - Brave Combo.

For more juicy July events go to: <http://www.toursanmarcos.com/events/index.html>



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 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