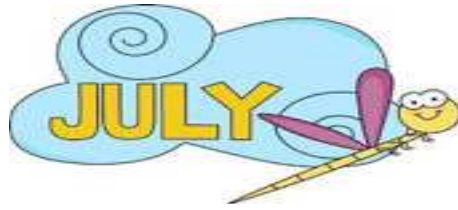


## THE



## ORACLE

**Whatever It Takes**

by Maria Calcaben

It all began with an idea proposed by then-piano teacher Rana Zeidan (see October 2014 issue of *The Oracle*) to create a program that would interest kids and give them opportunities they would not normally have because their families cannot afford the cost. Now, a whole school year later, 8 kids have gone through her karate program and graduated with either a yellow belt or higher, earning them through tournaments and tests. Rana has used her resourcefulness to connect the class with another local karate class to spar and has also provided free uniforms, belts, equipment for the kids to practice on, and tournament tickets for the kids and their families. Sure our kids might not have their names sewn in the back of their uniforms or patches on their sleeves, but their skills are anything but blank! The kids learn discipline, listening skills, and build confidence in themselves.



Because Rana holds the kids to high standards, they are able to get first place in many of the tournaments they enter and win in sparring matches against local karate classes, even with kids above their belt color! During their most recent tournament in May, all the kids in the class — and Rana herself — won first place in their division! Rana expresses that “working with the kids that we have in the program is truly amazing. I am so blessed to have such wonderful kids. Coming to every class and seeing how much they have progressed and how much of a goofy family everyone is together is so rewarding.”

The parents have been so impressed and are very supportive of their children and their interest in karate. One mother, after seeing her daughter spar for the first time, was

awestruck at how talented her child was and how important it is for her to continue the classes. One of the kids in the class confessed that if he wasn't in karate, he'd just be watching television. Rana reflects on her own experience, “I started karate when I was 6 years old and actually did not want to do it at first. But, it gave me something to be passionate about, kept me out of trouble, and helps me defend myself if I ever need to. Whether it is karate or another activity, kids should be involved in something so they can develop a passion that creates an outlet for them.”

Rana has graduated with a degree in Communication and is eager to start work on her Masters in Social Work in the



SMHA offices will be closed on Friday, July 3 for the Independence Day holiday. Enjoy the public fireworks show on the 4th but please remember that private displays of fireworks are not allowed within city limits.

fall but hopes to continue and grow the class. With support from the community and the Housing Authority, this program will grow. Influenced by her own instructor, Rana's mantra has become, “Theres is no *I can't* or *I will try*. If you want something, you do *whatever it takes* and that is why this is our motto. As long as you do whatever it takes, you will get to where you want in life.”

## ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

### Charles Vidrine is Living the Dream

By Maria Calcaben

*"Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome." -Booker T. Washington*

Charles Vidrine always knew he would be college bound. Throughout his life, his family instilled the value of education and the rewards for aiming for big dreams. Because of his hard work, support from his family, and continually pushing for better, Charles will attend Stanford University in the fall!

Charles and his family live in the Allen Woods Homes, a low-income housing neighborhood. Despite the stigma that society often places on families in public housing, Charles embraces his background, which he admits "gives me a layer of toughness, a sort of edge" when he starts college in the fall. He believes that although he may come from a low-income neighborhood, he is not fated to stay here. He witnessed his parents work low-paying jobs and living paycheck to paycheck just to provide necessities for their family. As Charles got older, his parents could no longer assist him with subjects he was struggling with at school. Instead of giving up, his parents encouraged him to seek help through tutoring programs and other resources at school, having faith that there is always help for those who seek it. Charles says that "if you put in the work, [results] will come to you."



Charles' academic life included being inducted into the National Honor Society, participating in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, being involved in the community, and maintaining a 4.0 grade point average. Out of 1.8 million teens that took the ACT, Charles was one of only 1,168 teens that obtained a perfect score. [Editor's Note: Wow.] He was also accepted to a university with a 5% acceptance rate and received a \$234,400 Academic Scholarship from Stanford University. He plans to earn an advanced degree in either Electrical Engineering or Computer Science. He expects to work while he goes to school. In his free time, Charles likes to play basketball, help people, read, and research various subjects that interest him. His advice for other kids in housing: "Don't be scared to apply to schools because you never know what will happen. Don't be discouraged to apply anywhere because not everyone has the same filters. Do the best with what you have and show who you are through your application. Just be yourself!"



Cada año los estudiantes de la Universidad de Texas State estudiando para ser maestros y entrenadores, facilitan el campamento Fun & Fit para la comunidad de San Marcos. Este campamento está diseñado para que niños de 6 a 12 años puedan participar en diferentes actividades físicas, y al igual aprender maneras de vivir vidas saludables. El 15 de Junio los niños de CM Allen, Chapultepec, y Allen Woods, inscritos en el Programa de Verano tuvieron la oportunidad de participar en este campamento. Los niños asisten cada lunes, miércoles, y viernes de las 12:30 a las 3:30 de la tarde, y el último día del campamento será el 26 de Junio. Los niños han disfrutado el campamento. Han tenido la oportunidad de conocer la escuela y se han divertido mucho aprendiendo diferentes maneras de mantenerse activos y maneras de vivir vidas saludables. — by Anapaulina Thurman



## Springtown Villa



Springtown Villa residents were excited to attend the annual "Pack It Up and Pass It On" event at Texas State University.

Our residents enjoy attending the special day set aside for elderly and disabled persons. They were able to bring their walkers and scooters and they felt less rushed as they took their time looking through the items. Thanks to all the volunteers that helped carry items for our residents!



Springtown Villa resident Deborah Morris enjoys spending her Monday afternoons offering meditation art coloring classes to Springtown residents. Deborah feels that through the art class she is helping residents reach a greater level of calmness. Deborah plans to offer the classes throughout the summer and will be introducing different methods of art by using music, paint, sketching and finger painting.

Resident Cynthia Watts recruited new resident Chuck Gay to help out with the San Antonio Food Bank distribution held at Centro Esperanza in Redwood on June 3. Cynthia and Chuck picked up 30 bags for some of our residents. Resident Roland Cruz provided transportation to the distribution to fellow resident, Andrew Jackson. We love to see neighbors helping neighbors!





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

This page will be dedicated to documenting the effects of the Memorial Weekend Flood and the recovery work at the CM Allen Homes. Most images speak for themselves. Phoebe, a comfort dog, ([www.K9Comfort.org](http://www.K9Comfort.org)) paid a visit to some of the victims. Residents attend a special meeting of the SMHA Board of Commissioners to make comments and hear the options being considered by the Board. David Pohler, Acting Regional Hub Director (HUD) attended the meeting. The KAD Korner Store has been gutted but the computer lab equipment was saved. Albert Sierra practically lived at the KAD Korner Store for 2 weeks, coordinating recovery efforts and meeting with residents. See more on page 7.





## CHAPULTEPEC HOMES & ADULT LEARNING CENTER



Catherine Shellman is the founder of the non-profit organization *Unsilence the Violence* to spread knowledge about dating and domestic violence. Catherine's daughter Tiffanie Perry found herself in an abusive relationship. When she broke up with her abuser, two weeks later he shot and killed her. She was only 23.

Catherine shared her very personal story with our residents this past month. It really helped some of our tenants open up and realize they are not alone and help is available. If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, please contact the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center at 512-396-4357 or for more information about Catherine and her mission visit [www.unsilencetheviolence.com](http://www.unsilencetheviolence.com).

The Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse will be having weekly parenting support group meetings every Wednesday from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Chapultepec Adult Learning Center. This is open to anyone who wants to attend. FSS participants will receive a participation point for each class they attend. If you have questions, please contact Gloria Olivo-Mendoza at 512-396-7695 ext. 218.



**HAYS CALDWELL COUNCIL**  
— ON ALCOHOL & DRUG ABUSE —



Staff from the Capital Area Food Bank provided a cooking demonstration for our tenants on May 21. They showed our tenants how to prepare a fresh summer salad and how to make a vinaigrette dressing from scratch!

Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas Head Start will now be offering home-based education to low-income families in Hays County, through the Texas Home Visiting program. Texas Home Visiting is a free program that helps good people be great parents. The program matches parents with a trained home visitor who comes to wherever you live. Your home visitor is a friendly, experienced person who can answer questions about your pregnancy or being a parent and can help you find services that help you care for yourself and your children. Texas Home Visiting uses programs that are proven to support families from pregnancy until the time your child enters kindergarten. Home visiting supports you and helps you set and reach goals for yourself and your child.

If you are interested in applying, or learning more about this program, please call Alex at 512-396-3395, ext. 209.



## READY TO GET A GED?



### REGISTER FOR OUR FREE GED PREPARATION CLASSES

#### PART ONE:

**TUESDAY, July 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:30AM or 6:30PM**

#### PART TWO:

**THURSDAY, July 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:30AM or 6:30PM**

**Plan to be here 2-3 hours each day to complete registration, orientation, and assessment**

**YOU MUST BE REGISTERED TO ATTEND OUR FREE CLASSES**

**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday through Thursday, 1:00 – 4:00 PM  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

### SAN MARCOS PUBLIC LIBRARY LEARNING CENTER

**(A Community Action, Inc. Partner)**

625 East Hopkins, San Marcos, Texas 78666, (512)393-8215  
smpl2learn@yahoo.com

### A Reminder About Some SMHA Pet Rules:

- No pet owner shall keep a vicious or intimidating pet on the premises.
- No pet owner shall permit his or her pet to disturb, interfere or diminish the peaceful enjoyment of the pet owner's neighbors or other residents.
- The pet owner shall not permit dog droppings to accumulate or to become unsanitary or unsightly, and shall dispose of such droppings by placing them in a sack in a designated container outside the building where the pet owner lives.

*Please be a good neighbor and do your part. Keep some poop bags handy, like the pooch on the right. Plastic grocery bags are a cheap alternative.*







\*On the left, a resident perspective on FaceBook.

\*Below, the aftermath and the work begins.

\*Above, Lupe Zuniga, good neighbor who lives on Sturgeon Street, volunteers to maintain the community garden while CM Allen is vacant.





## FREE & FUN THINGS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!

**Summer in the Park Concert Series - San Marcos Plaza Park @ 7:30 PM on Thursdays**  
Every Thursday through August you can enjoy an evening of music at the newly renovated Plaza Park. Fun for the whole family! Go to <http://smpaa.us/events/summerinthepark/> for the schedule of performers.

### Summerfest - San Marcos Plaza Park - July 4 @ 6 PM

SummerFest is the annual Independence Day Celebration on the banks of the San Marcos River in Plaza Park featuring live music, food and activity booths. Fun for the whole family. The celebration starts at 6:00pm. Free parking will be available at the Public Library and Activity Center parking lots, City Park and Texas State's Strahan Coliseum parking lot. Schedule of Events: 6:30pm- Children's Parade registration begins; 7:00pm- Children's Patriotic Parade and Costume Contest; 7:30pm- David Ybarra and Friends Band; 9:30pm- Fireworks Display begins; 10:00pm- Festival grounds close.

### Movies in the Park - San Marcos Plaza Park on Tuesdays (July 7, 14, 21, & 28)

Pre movie games being One hour before sunset. Bring your blankets and lawn chairs  
Schedule: July 7- Maleficent; July 14- Alexander & The terrible, horrible, no good, VERY BAD DAY; July 21- The Goonies; July 28- Dolphin Tale 2



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

### 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

Frank Arredondo—Chairperson  
Mary Barnhart—Vice-Chairperson  
Susan Tilatitsky—Resident Comm.  
Gloria Salazar—Commissioner  
Richard Cruz—Commissioner

#### Administration

Albert Sierra  
*Executive Director*  
Lana Bronikowsky  
*Accountant/Programs Manager*  
Albert Hernandez  
*Maintenance Supervisor*  
Rose Miranda  
*Public Housing Manager*  
Gene Martin II, LBSW  
*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