



Volunteer Awards for 2015



Two thousand and fifteen was a year we won't soon forget. It was filled with unexpected challenges and more than a few heartaches. Through it all, however, we had the continued blessings of some wonderful volunteers. Last month we honored those volunteers at our annual Volunteer Awards Banquet, held at Kent Black's BBQ. In 2015, we had dozens of volunteers who provided 6,547 hours of service . . . and that doesn't include the outpouring of volunteers who came from everywhere to help us and our residents after the disastrous flood last May. See page 6 for more about that story. The Volunteer of the Year Award for 2015 was presented to Rana Zeidan. That's Rana on the left along with Service Coordinator Maria Calcaben and Resident Services Director Gene Martin II. Long before she began her internship with us, she started teaching American Karate to kids at the PODER Learning Center. American Karate is similar to

Olympic Taekwondo, and draws on several different martial arts styles. If you are a regular reader, you have followed the success of that program and how it has so positively affected the kids and their parents. The plaque that we presented to Rana says this: "The Housing Authority is a brighter place because of you! Thanks to your hard work and dedication, families have become more involved and children have learned self-discipline, confidence, and respect. Thank you for sharing your gifts with us!" Rana is training her replacement, Alicia Contreras, so that when she moves on, the program will live on. That is the definition of dedication! ~ Stewart Dale Spencer

WANT TO BE OUR NEW RESIDENT COMMISSIONER?



Our previous Resident Commissioner no longer needed housing assistance and moved out of public housing. If you live in one of our Public Housing sites (Allen Woods, CM Allen, Chapultepec, Porter, or one of the single homes) and would like to be the voice of your fellow residents on the Housing Authority Board, this is your chance!

Get an application from the link below or contact the Service Coordinator at your site.

<http://www.sanmarcostx.gov/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=9731>

ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

Baking from the Heart



The Allen Woods Resident Assembly had their annual Valentines Day Bake Sale Fundraiser and has proudly raised a record-breaking \$300 for the neighborhood! A huge appreciation to all the hard work of the Assembly officers for baking cakes, cookies, pies, and other treats! Larry (pictured right) is proudly holding up one of the pies he bought from the bake sale. Other residents also pre-ordered treats to enjoy on this lovely holiday or bought some at the center the day of the bake sale. Thanks to all the residents and community members that supported the fundraiser! On the left, RJ helps with a cupcake display.



Smile Big, Dream Big

Meet Veronica Gonzalez, a Dallas native with daring ideas and a smile in every step! Veronica is studying Social Work at Texas State University and is currently one of the interns at PODER. She grew up helping her family translate paperwork from English to Spanish and realized that helping people is her passion. This semester, she hopes to conquer some of her anxieties, such as working with kids, and accomplish building genuine relationships with the residents. So far, Veronica loves working with the kids and getting to know residents through events at PODER. In her free time, she loves to play with her cat Mariska, read, and cook. Come say hello to our newest member of the PODER family!



Expanding My Horizons

A familiar face to the PODER After-School Program, Rana Zeidan has been our karate instructor for almost two years! She now wears two new hats: a current student of the Masters of Social Work program and an intern at PODER. She hopes to expand her knowledge of the Housing Authority and is up for the challenges this semester of balancing work, internship, school, outside sport activities, and life! After graduation, Rana wants to spend a few years working in a hospital doing medical social work, specifically working with terminally ill children and their families. She also wants to open up her own nonprofit program centralized around sports for children victimized by abuse. Best of luck on a challenging but fun semester!



Springtown Villa



Daughters Maggie and Claudia spent some time with their mothers Rosie and Erminia for Valentine's Day!



Valentine breakfast was provided by BEE First Primary Home Care. Valentine basket winner Lino Puente was happy about his winnings.

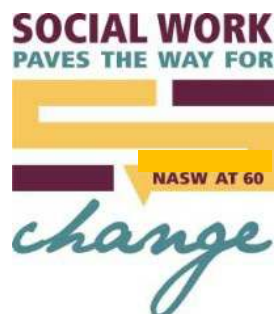
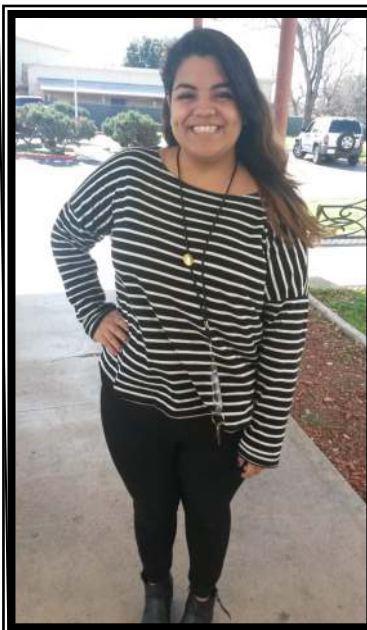
★SUPER BOWL★

We had a Super Bowl party on the Friday before the game. The party was sponsored by BEE

First Primary Home Care.



Residents took pictures, played table football, and had chicken wings, chips, and dip. Everyone left with a super gift!



Stacy Hernandez is the newest intern at Springtown Villa. She is a first generation college student at Texas State University and is in her senior year. She's studying Social Work and looks forward to applying what she learns at the Housing Authority in a future career placement. She has an interest in working with the elderly and hopes to work in that field but is open to any opportunity that might come up! She's originally from Houston (Go Texans!) and plans to head back there after graduation to spend some time with her family. When she's not working, Stacy enjoys reading, going out to dance, and daydreaming about her future pug. You read that right. Her graduation present to herself is going to be a pug and she plans to name him William. She also loves jokes (the pug is not a joke) so if you see her make sure to share some of your favorites!

C. M. ALLEN HOMES — KAD KORNER STORE



Meet Valerie Murillo, Our New Spring Intern!

Valerie was born in Houston. Her parents were recent immigrants from Mexico. They moved to Austin shortly after she was born. Her mother was working in Austin and her father was a student at Texas State University. When she was 11, they moved to Kyle. Valerie grew up doing volunteer work with organizations like Blue Santa, the Capital Area Food Bank, and Paws Animal Shelter. She loves helping others so when she got to college she chose to study Social Work. She will graduate from Texas State with a Bachelor of Social Work degree this May. Her favorite parts of becoming an intern at the Housing Authority are working with the kids at the KAD after-school program and learning the different processes that keep the SMHA running. In her spare time Valerie likes to lift weights, play sports, and go hiking. Valerie will be an important part of our program as families return to CM Allen! ☺



THE GARDEN ANGEL by Valerie Murillo
When the disastrous floods washed over us everything was lost. The life that was CM Allen was taken from us in what felt like the blink of an eye. As plants washed away with the rubble, the vibrant colors went with it. The garden became overgrown with brush and was unattended and ignored. It became another task on the never-ending to-do list. Months went by and it was still untouched. We feared that if it remained uncultivated, CM Allen would lose another part of its former life. It was nearing the end of January and still nothing had been done to the garden. The end was nearing, we thought, until one morning we showed up to work and a mysterious white truck was in the parking lot in front of the garden. We went inside the office to put our stuff down before walking over to the garden to investigate. It had only been about 10 minutes when we



walked back outside. The truck was nowhere to be found. The garden was completely cleared out and the brush had been removed. We drove around the site to see if we could locate the truck but we came up empty-handed. To this day the garden angel has yet to be identified. We would like to thank our angel for saving our garden.



Aseneth Gill started working the ground so she can begin planting soon. If you would like to claim some space, contact Bonnie at 512-392-6273.



CHAPULTEPEC HOMES & ADULT LEARNING CENTER



FSS participants enjoyed the first date night at Chapultepec, where they were able to drop their children off and enjoy a few hours to themselves. We had a total of 11 kids participate. They enjoyed watching the Minions Movie and Hotel Transylvania 2. They also made Valentine crafts and we played a few rounds of Pie Face!



Please Welcome Tali!

Talicia Denasty is our Social Work intern this semester. Although her parents are originally from Haiti, Tali was born in New York but raised in Texas just outside of Houston. She is a senior at Texas State University and chose Social Work as her major because she enjoys working with children and helping people. Tali knew she made the right choice after she completed her Social Work volunteer class with the after-school program at the PODER Learning Center at Allen Woods. Along with helping around the office and meeting with FSS participants, Tali is in charge of the after-school program and is doing a great job with our kids!



Looking to stay on top of news and information pertaining to FSS? Want to be the first to hear about great opportunities and free stuff? Current participants and FSS Graduates can request to join our new Facebook group: "SMHA Family Self-Sufficiency Program"

facebook.com/groups/smhafss/

Recognizing the Flood Volunteers

On May 24, just like the Blanco River, what started as a trickle eventually became a human flood of goodwill. Housing Authority personnel spent many days working out of the KAD Korner Store at the CM Allen Homes, doing our best to coordinate the initial flood mitigation efforts. People came from everywhere to help our residents salvage what they could and to help us save a precious community resource . . . more than a third of the only true, community-owned low income housing in San Marcos. We tried our best to keep track of everything that was going on but in those chaotic days it simply was not possible. There were so many groups and so many individuals that, in the end, we decided to select one to represent that amazing volunteer spirit. In a bit of serendipity, ServeSanMarcos.org was inaugurated by the First United Methodist Church only a few months before the flood. Todd Salmi is the Associate Pastor at the FUMC and was deeply involved in the flood response. He said that they had initially hoped to have enough volunteers to be able to make a difference by the beginning of the new school year. As it turned out, because they had their basic organization set up, they were able to direct hundreds of volunteers into the Blanco Gardens neighborhood. For 2015, our Top Volunteer Award for the CM Allen Homes went to "Flood Volunteers" and was accepted on behalf of so many unknown and unsung souls by Pastor Salmi.



Highlights From the February Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

- >Cathy Welsh moved out and resigned from the Board. City Hall has been advised of the Commissioner vacancy.
- >The Commissioners retired into Executive Session to discuss a legal matter. The item was tabled for further consideration.
- >Financials: Public Housing YTD surplus is \$264,917 - mostly due to reduced expenses and funds received for on-going repairs at CM Allen. We have received \$106,842 from FEMA for the May flood and \$168,629 from TML for the October flood. Section 8 has a deficit of \$6,620 but that will be made up by HUD by the end of the Fiscal Year. Springtown Villa has a surplus of \$28,493.
- >Occupancy: Public Housing is at 96%, Section 8 is at 99%, and Springtown Villa is at 97%.
- >We received notice of our Capital Fund allocation for this year: \$409,211. This is \$34,000 more than last year. Albert Sierra reviewed the budget, which includes \$66,000 to be repaid to the San Marcos Reinvestment Corporation for any funds loaned to the SMHA for the purpose of flood repairs. Sierra reported there has been none so far. He also reported that United Way of Hays County will award \$70,000 to assist with flood repairs.
- >The Section 8 program received a SEMAP score of 97%. The Section 8 Management Assessment Program is how HUD tracks how well Housing Authorities are administering their Housing Choice Vouchers.
- >HUD sent notice of our Public Housing Operating Subsidy for 2016: \$759,246. This is about \$37,000 less than last year because although we had less revenue from CM Allen, we also had lower operating expenses. Sierra said that we will probably receive only about 88% of this total in the appropriations process.
- >The Board approved a resolution to authorize an application to the CDBG program for \$174,750 to establish a new community center at the CM Allen Homes. Stewart Dale Spencer reported that this center would serve the entire neighborhood, not just public housing, and would replicate the success of the PODER Learning Center at Allen Woods.
- >The Board approved a partnership agreement with *World Renew - Disaster Response Services* to provide skilled volunteer teams to help with the rebuilding and repair of homes in the San Marcos area, including at the CM Allen Homes. The volunteer teams will reside in two damaged buildings, which they will repair, for the next several months.



Community Action, Inc.
of Central Texas
Head Start Program (zero-to-five)



Come Join Us for Family Fun!!

At the Head Start Family Festival

When: Tuesday, March 16th
10am – 12pm

Where: Henry Bush CDC, 722 So. McKie St.

- ◊ Enjoy Family Friendly Activities
- ◊ Learn about Community Agencies
- ◊ Apply to Head Start

Head Start Services are free for families who qualify!

- ◊ Child Care ◊ Health ◊ Nutrition ◊ Education ◊ Family Services ◊
- ◊ Transportation for children with special needs ◊ (Please ask for details)

**SAN MARCOS
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING

Hays County Master Gardener Jo Hackett will guide participants through selecting the best location for garden beds, preparing the site, choosing crops, and planting from seeds and transplants. The workshop will also cover watering techniques and basic maintenance of the vegetable garden through the season. Thursday, March 24 @ 6:30 PM.





COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID

Staff from the Texas State University Financial Aid Department will meet with you to help you learn your financial options for grants and scholarships. They will also explain how to complete the FAFSA. Wednesday, March 16 from 6 - 7 PM.

GED CLASS REGISTRATION

Part 1 -- March 8 at 9:30 AM or 1:30 PM or 6:30 PM
Part 2 -- March 10 at 9:30 AM or 1:30 PM or 6:30 PM



March 2016						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 SPRINGTOWN RESIDENT COUNCIL 3:30 PM	3	4 ALLEN WOODS RESIDENT ASSEMBLY 10 AM	5
6	7 CM ALLEN RESIDENT ASSEMBLY 10 AM	8 COOKING CLASS 5:30 PM CHAPULTEPEC	9 CHAP. RESIDENT ASSEMBLY 6 PM	10	11	12
13 SPRING BREAK WEEK	14	15	16 SPRINGTOWN RESIDENT COUNCIL 3:30 PM	17 FSS CLASS 6 PM CHAPULTEPEC	18 Happy Saint Patrick's Day 	19
20	21	22 SMHA BOARD 5:30 PM ALLEN WOODS	23	24 SMHA OFFICES CLOSE @ 2 PM	25 GOOD FRIDAY SMHA CLOSED	26
	28	29	30	31		

The name of March comes from Latin Martius, the first month of the earliest Roman calendar. It was named for Mars, the Roman god of war who was also regarded as a guardian of agriculture and an ancestor of the Roman people through his sons Romulus and Remus. His month, Martius, was the beginning of the season for both farming and warfare, and the festivals held in his honor during the month were mirrored by others in October, when the season for these activities came to a close. Martius remained the first month of the Roman calendar year perhaps as late as 153 BC, and several religious observances in the first half of the month were originally new year's celebrations. Even in late antiquity, Roman mosaics picturing the months sometimes still placed March first. (Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March>)

LEADERSHIP

Board of Commissioners

Frank Arredondo—Chairperson
 Mary Barnhart—Vice-Chairperson
 VACANT—Resident Commissioner
 Gloria Salazar—Commissioner
 Richard Cruz—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