

THE ORACLE

Consuelo's Advice: Start Today!



Consuelo Valenzuela has been a part of the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program for the last five years. She has come a long way during her time with FSS. Connie, as she is known by her friends, is working at the Waxing Studio and is very happy there. She would like to have her own salon one day. She no longer needs assistance from the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program and

plans to purchase her own home some day. We asked Connie what she would do different if today was her first day in the program. Connie's reply was, "I would start working on my goals the first day because even though five years seems like a long time, it isn't." Connie is very proud of her accomplishments during her time with the FSS program and asked if she would still be able to attend some of our classes. One of the unique features of the FSS Program is that successful graduates are eligible to continue receiving services from the FSS Coordinator so the answer was "Yes!"

In the picture above, Connie and her daughter, Cathryn Owens, receive the balance of their FSS Escrow account from Gracie Campos, the HCV FSS Coordinator.

We are modifying our local FSS Program as a result of changes in how the program is funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. We plan to announce those modifications in the June issue of The Oracle so y'all come back now, ya hear?

Housing Authority offices will be closed for Memorial Day on Monday, May 26.



ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER



Source: <http://fashion.ekstrax.com/2013/09/inspirational-quotes-in-spanish.html/5>

Thank You, Bobcat Build!



Our park areas and playgrounds are looking pretty sharp because of the Bobcat Build volunteers from Texas State University that helped clean it up. Thank you Laurel Hall residents and Omega Delta Phi!

Centered Around Community



Many residents of the Allen Woods Homes have taken advantage of the variety of activities and resources at the PODER Learning Center. We not only have a free after-school program, where children learn and grow in a safe environment, but we have computer labs with free access for residents on weekdays from 8:30 AM to 3 PM, various events and fundraisers that benefit the neighborhood, and resources for adults to help improve their lives. PODER is also a great place to start if you are in need of assistance. Our Service Coordinator, Maria Calcaben, can help you take the first step to going back to school, help you get home health care, and just about anything in between.

What's new at PODER? We have free guitar classes, free Lotería once a month, a computer basics class for beginners, and free health assessments from a nurse. You can look forward to more events, such as a resource fair, basic financial classes, the kids summer program, and neighborhood parties. Stop by at PODER today and see how we can help you get where you want to be in your life!



Springtown Villa

The Easter Bunny came to visit our residents during an Easter event sponsored by the Sociology of Aging Class from Texas State University.



Ramona E.



Estela



Ramona G.



Arleen & Rupert

At the same event, students listened to residents share their life experiences, their travels, and other stories from their past.



Springtown Villa Resident Council officers Bill Cruz (Secretary) and Arleen Machado (Treasurer) presented a thank you banner to Professor Lillian Dees (holding the left side of the banner) and the students of her Sociology of Aging class from Texas State.

C. M. Allen Homes — KAD Korner Store



Juanita Sanchez is a member of the Kappa Delta Chi sorority. Her mom, Ruby Sanchez has adopted the KAD program by being there to support the sorority's activities. Our Service Coordinator, Bonnie Pecina, says Ruby "is an awesome mom" and she is always there to help with KAD events. Thanks Ruby, Juanita, and all the women of Kapa Delta Chi! This is how communities and kids grow and thrive!



KAD kids wait patiently to start their Easter egg hunt sponsored by Kappa Delta Chi sorority girls.



Up, up and away!

The kids take time out to fly a kite with Jeanette Hernandez, a volunteer from Kappa Delta Chi sorority. On Jeanette's last day with the kids, she gave them parting gifts. She had such a connection with kids, it was hard to let go. She will graduate from Texas State this month.



Jeanette doing what she likes best — working with children. In this picture, she is playing word bingo with Emma.

We wish Jeanette the best on her new journey!

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Chapultepec Homes — Family Self-Sufficiency



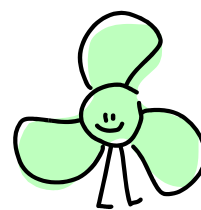
A huge **Thanks** to Texas State University's Bobcat Build for sending us Alpha Delta Pi Sorority! The girls raked leaves, cleaned up around our parking lots, trimmed bushes, and removed a few dead ones. The residents are very happy with the results. Thanks again Bobcats!!!



To celebrate Earth Week, Chapultepec Resident, Kamecca Bolton bought a Texas Red Bud tree and worked with Gardenville to have soil and mulch donated. The tree was planted at Chapultepec with the help of children from the after-school program. Even Batgirl showed up to help. Thanks Kamecca!!



Thanks to Texas State Social Work volunteers for all of their hard work this semester! For their final day at Chapultepec, they helped organize the annual Easter Egg Hunt for the kids in the after-school program.



Thank you to Johnson Controls and Family ElderCare for the donation of 90 box fans! The fans will be available for qualified families on May 1. If you would like to see if you are eligible for a fan, contact the service coordinator at your site!

CONWAY PARK IMPROVEMENTS UPDATE

by Janis Hendrix, City Community Initiatives Administrator

Improvements to Conway Park, located across from C. M. Allen Homes on Sturgeon Street, will begin in early May. A number of C. M. Allen residents asked the City Council to make improvements to the park. Based on their requests, Council authorized the use of Community Development Grant funds to pay for the project. The project will be overseen by the City's Parks and Recreation Department.



Photo by Gene Martin II

Improvements will include adding a shade cover to the existing playground, adding new play equipment with shade covering, building a fence around the park, building a small pavilion to cover a picnic table, building interior sidewalks to make the park accessible, planting shade trees, putting in an irrigation system, and installing a drinking fountain.

The City will also build a small skate feature in the southwest corner of the park. The project is expected to take approximately 3 to 4 months to complete.



This past month, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, was kind enough to make a donation to Community Action Inc. of Central Texas to help our utility assistance program, which has recently suffered some funding cutbacks.

To find out more about our agency, our utility assistance program, or how you can make a donation, please visit www.communityaction.com.

THE ORACLE WINS ANOTHER AWARD!

by Stewart Dale Spencer (Photo by Gene Martin II)

The Texas Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (NAHRO) selected the San Marcos Housing Authority as the 2014 winner of the Best Newsletter award for a small housing authority. Shelli Scrogum, Service Officer for Texas NAHRO said, "We had many quality applicants this year, and the staff of the San Marcos Housing Authority should be very proud to have been selected as the winner."

The Oracle is produced by the Resident Services Department, which is overseen by Gene Martin II, LBSW. The initial concept for the Oracle was developed by Herod Ellison, a former resident who served on the board for a time as the Resident Commissioner and was a Service Coordinator for three years before moving on to other things. The Oracle has seen a number of changes in overall design and size. Yours truly has always served as the Senior Editor. I also contribute some of the stories.

A major change took place a few years ago when the Service Coordinators at each site began producing their own pages. Kudos to Maria Calcaben, Gracie Campos, Bonnie Pecina, and Megan Perez for their excellent work on the newsletter. Contributions also come from Executive Director Albert Sierra, Maintenance Supervisor Albert Hernandez, and other Housing Authority management staff.

A variety of Housing Authority partners contribute stories and other material on a regular basis. Those partners include the United Way of Hays County, the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center, Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas, the Greater San Marcos Youth Council, the Hays County Food Bank, the Capital Area Food Bank, the Hays Caldwell Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, the City of San Marcos, and various departments of Texas State University.

So the secret to cooking up a good newsletter is to encourage and develop talent among your staff, seek input from a wide spectrum of contributors, mix well, and bake for one day in a proof-reading oven. Black & white paper copies go out to the residents of all sites. An online color version is posted at www.smpa.org. It is also distributed via email to Housing Authority staff, the Board of Commissioners, the City of San Marcos, the HUD office in San Antonio, and a large number of social services providers and community leaders.

We always welcome comments and suggestions from the community. Contact us at newsletter@smpa.org or call the Resident Services office at 512-396.3364.



Indigenous Arts Summer Camp

Native instructors teaching indigenous arts:
Native American flute playing, painting animal-spirit symbols,
danza Chichimeca, storytelling, indigenous instruments,
traditional Native songs and more

July 7 - 11 | 8:AM - 5:15 PM

**Cuauhtemoc Hall | 1100 Patton Drive
San Marcos, TX**

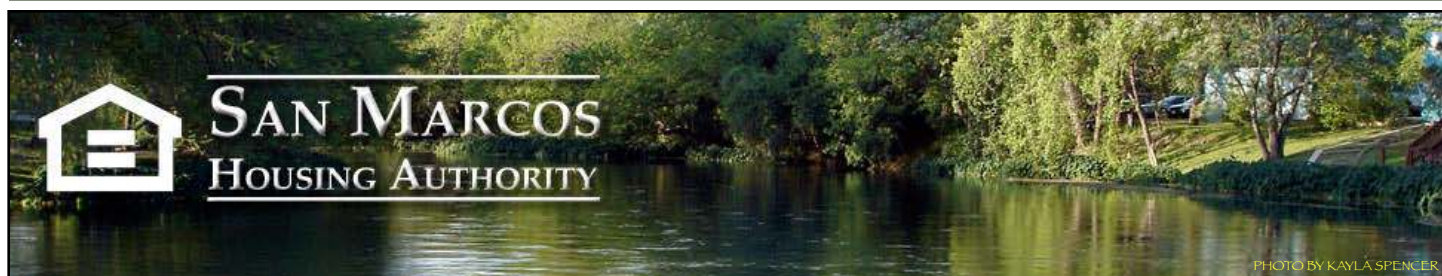
Students ages 8 to 14 years

Free for S.M.C.I.S.D. students
Other school districts: \$200
Scholarships available

Call to reserve a space: **512-844-4107**
Or send online application:
www.IndigenousCultures.org

Sponsored by:
Indigenous Cultures Institute
La Sociedad Cuauhtemoc

Funded by:
San Marcos Arts Commission
Texas Commission on the Arts
Hays County



FREE & FUN THINGS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY!

- **May 3 ~ 40th Annual Viva! Cinco de Mayo Celebration & State-wide Menudo Cook-off, 9 AM - 6 PM**
This year's celebration is in downtown Martindale. Parade begins a 9 AM. Enjoy live music all day, Folklorico dancers, Little Miss Cinco de Mayo, food booths, arts & crafts. Menudo judging 4 - 5 PM. Bring your lawn chairs!
- **May 4 & 11 ~ Unicycle Football Playoffs, Gold Crown Billiards, 3 PM - ?**
- **May 10 ~ Art Squared Art Market, Downtown Square, 9 AM - 4 PM**
Come out to Art Squared on the second Saturday of each month. Browse booths where local artists will have their work for sale and enjoy live music.
- **May 16 - 18 ~ Western Swing Heritage Festival, Downtown Square, Friday - Sunday (most events free)**
Enjoy this festival on the lawn of the Hays County Historic Courthouse with games, food and live music on the Square. Ticketed dinner Friday night. Western Swing Hall of Fame Show on Saturday. Gospel Brunch on Sunday.
- **May 17 - 18 ~ Dirt Dauber Art Festival, Eye of the Dog Arts Center, 405 Valley View West Road**
Great clay work, music, kid's table, contests, and more! (Lime Kiln Road, left on Hilliard, right on Valley View W.)
- For more *Marvelous May* 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 Tilatitsky—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