

# ORACLE *hello, september*

## Families Begin Returning to CM Allen!



*SMHA Service Coordinator Bonnie Pecina welcomes Jessie Perkins back to her home.*

After moving around and staying with family and friends, Jessie Perkins is excited to be the first family to move back to the CM Allen Homes, which was flooded during the Memorial Day Weekend storms. Perkins is very grateful for all the assistance that was provided to her family during this hard time. She said, "I am so grateful for the assistance provided by FEMA. I am glad and grateful that we have such a program as FEMA and that it is set up and always ready when disaster hits." The only thing she would like to see FEMA change is caseworker training. She said that sometimes when people don't experience a disaster for themselves, it's hard for them to understand what the victims are feeling. She is thankful to the Housing Authority for working so hard to get their home ready for them, with staff working overtime trying to make sure that their questions and concerns were answered. She says it feels good returning to a somewhat normal life. Perkins is joined by her sons Jonathan and Jarrett.

The Housing Authority has had its share of minor disasters over the years but three months ago the Blanco and San Marcos Rivers got together and flooded large portions of San Marcos. The Blanco Gardens neighborhood was hit the hardest with many businesses and homes damaged or destroyed. After the initial cleanup, we have worked with various local, state, and federal agencies in an effort to secure the resources to effect repairs. Most people think of public housing as "government housing" but it is more accurate to describe it as a local community housing program that is partially subsidized by the federal government. The SMHA is a unit of local government and only about 1/3 of our public housing revenue comes from HUD in the form of a per-unit subsidy. The rest of our operating revenue comes from the rents paid by tenants, which is based on their income. The Low Income Housing program has only about three months of operating funds in reserve. Legal restrictions on other resources meant that we could not do anything beyond the initial damage control until other funds became available.

**Housing Authority  
offices will be closed on  
Monday, September 7  
in observance of Labor  
Day but repairs to the  
CM Allen Homes will  
continue.**

**All labor that uplifts  
humanity has *dignity*  
and *importance* and  
should be undertaken  
with painstaking  
*excellence***

*Martin Luther King Jr*



## ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

### Perfect Summer Ending



The children that stayed for the end of the Kids Summer Program and had good behavior were treated to an all-day field trip to Austin Parks & Pizza. Seventeen kids had access to the buffet, the rides, and most of the arcade. There was never a dull moment! They also enjoyed playing laser tag, rock climbing, and racing in go-karts with the volunteers! The short lines made it easy for the kids to enjoy their favorite rides or games multiple times. It was a perfect way to end the summer and have a break before the start of school!



### Terrific Teens

Meet the girls who made up our teen summer program: Jazmine, Zeriah, Ana, and Jeneen. These girls had a great time cooking up snack recipes, making t-shirts, and painting artwork



with Primary Prevention Educators from the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center. Pictured is their last project for the summer: designing an outfit out of ordinary material on a model. A "rags to riches" outcome! These girls not only exhibited friendship and teamwork, but built confidence and leadership throughout the summer. Great job girls!

### 5 consejos para regresar a la rutina escolar

#### Consejo #1: Reciclar utiles del año pasado

Al concluir el ciclo escolar es muy común darnos cuenta que muchos de los útiles escolares del curso anterior quedaron en perfectas condiciones de uso. Es por ello que como padres debemos fomentar la costumbre de reutilizarlos y contribuir con ello al cuidado del *medio ambiente* y del *presupuesto familiar*.

#### Consejo #2: Descansar y dormir las horas necesarias

Un buen descanso la noche anterior es lo que te va a permitir aprovechar el primer día a clases al máximo.

#### Consejo #3: Crear rutinas salvavidas

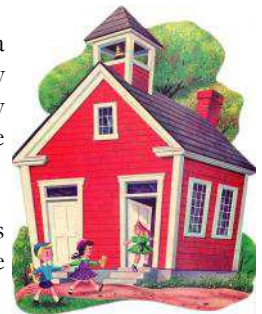
Para el regreso a clases es ideal establecer *rutinas salvavidas*; les llamo así por que a pesar de ser pequeñas o parecer insignificantes tienen un gran valor.

#### Consejo #4: Tener un calendario aliado

Tener un calendario en casa ayuda a las rutinas, a identificar eventos importantes, establecer horarios y marcar prioridades; además brinda estructura y seguridad a los niños, al saber con anticipación lo que sucederá.

#### Consejo #5: Preparar una lista de Quehaceres

Sin importar la edad de los niños de edad escolar es importante enseñarles a tener una lista de cosas que se deben hacer la noche anterior.



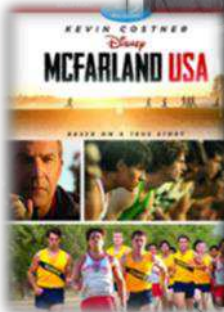
Para el artículo complete: <http://espanol.glam.com/5-consejos-para-regresar-a-la-rutina-escolar/>

## Springtown Villa



Elnora, Daniel, and Maria might be new residents at Springtown Villa but they have no problem lending a helping hand with our flower bed. Maria and Daniel enjoy living at Springtown Villa. They say the other residents made them "feel right at home."

Becca, one of our summer interns, surprised our residents with a movie day filled with popcorn, nachos, and drinks. But our residents surprised Becca with colorful cupcakes as we celebrated the end of her internship. Becca has made many friends at Springtown Villa and she will be missed!



**IMPORTANT NOTICE to all residents and visitors at Springtown Villa!** We have only one parking spot for disabled residents operating specially-equipped vans. Please do not park anywhere in the yellow lines next to the van, even if no van is present. That space makes it possible for the disabled driver to get in and out of the van. We have only 2 visitor parking spots but the Christian Community Church allows our visitors to use their parking lot for **short-term parking** except during church services.

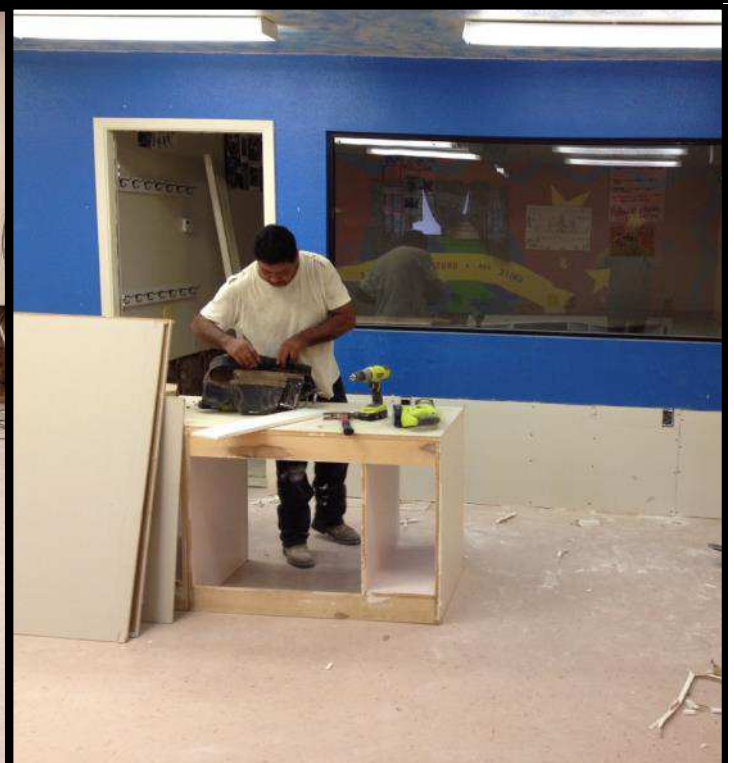
## C. M. ALLEN HOMES — KAD KORNER STORE



ABOVE: CM Allen remains a ghost town but a few souls have returned and are beginning to breath life into the neighborhood.

LEFT: The first unit to be repaired has a super shiny floor, a fringe benefit of the restoration process.

BELOW: Repairs to the KAD Korner Store are in progress. There will be a grand re-opening of this facility, which serves the entire neighborhood. Repairs will be completed in plenty of time for the November election, when KAD will serve as a voting location.



## CHAPULTEPEC HOMES & ADULT LEARNING CENTER



Our After-School program is off to a great start! The program runs Monday through Thursday from 3:30 PM to 5:30 PM. Kids will be fed a nutritious meal and get help with their homework! If you are interested in enrolling your school-age child contact Janet at 512-396-3364.



Texas Night Out is October 6th! We are in need of donations in order to make it a success! We need the following:

- Hot Dogs
- Hot Dog Buns
- Chips
- Cakes and Sweets for the cake walk!

Please contact Megan at 512-396-3364 to sign up!



Melissa Trevino of Goodwill Central Texas will be doing another job readiness presentation on September 16 at 6 PM in the Chapultepec Adult Learning Center.

Childcare and food will be provided. Attend and earn a participation point!



## Elva Gonzalez Has Deep Roots in Chapultepec by *Stewart Dale Spencer*

Elva Gonzalez is the Director of Programs and Services at the Hays-Caldwell Women's Center (HCWC). The HCWC staff and Board of Directors recently honored her for her 35 years of service to victims of abuse in the San Marcos area. At the HCWC Annual Auction, the theme was "1979" to highlight Elva's time with HCWC. They also recognized Elva's contribution to their organization and her service to victims of abuse with a short film created by Chris Kelly and Christine Giordano, which you can see [here](#) or find it at HCWC's channel on [YouTube.com](#).

I have known Elva for many years, going back to my earliest years at the Housing Authority, at a time when I was first getting connected to our many partners in the field of social services. I remembered Elva telling me that the Women's Center office used to be located at the Chapultepec Homes office. At the time, she said that management of the Chapultepec site was being done from the Allen Woods Homes and the Chapultepec office building was being used as a storage area for the SMHA Maintenance Department. This was before the major renovation of Chapultepec, which culminated in the establishment of the FSS Program. I am a supporter of the HCWC and when I saw in their newsletter that Elva was being honored, I was inspired to explore her connections with the Chapultepec Homes. I recently visited with her after a meeting in the Chapultepec Adult Learning Center.

Elva told me that as a young woman, she was attending Abilene-Christian University in Abilene. She had a full scholarship but didn't like Abilene or the school. She returned to San Marcos and Southwest Texas State University (SWTSU), utilizing a work study program, made possible by what used to be called the Job Training and Partnership (JTPA) program, which was all about getting more Hispanic and Latino students in college. As part of that program, she needed to work with a non-profit for 20 hours a week. There were only a few non-profits in San Marcos at the time. She took an interest test and The Hays County Women's Center, as it was called at the time, was the only match that came up. Talk about fate. Sarah Whitaker, the first Executive Director of the HCWC, interviewed her. She had established an administrative office at Chapultepec but needed some help. Elva began working there in October 1979. In another twist of fate, I moved to San Marcos just a few weeks later. Until I was able to arrange a roommate, I stayed in the home of one of the original founders of the Women's Center, just a few blocks away, although I did not know anything about it at the time.

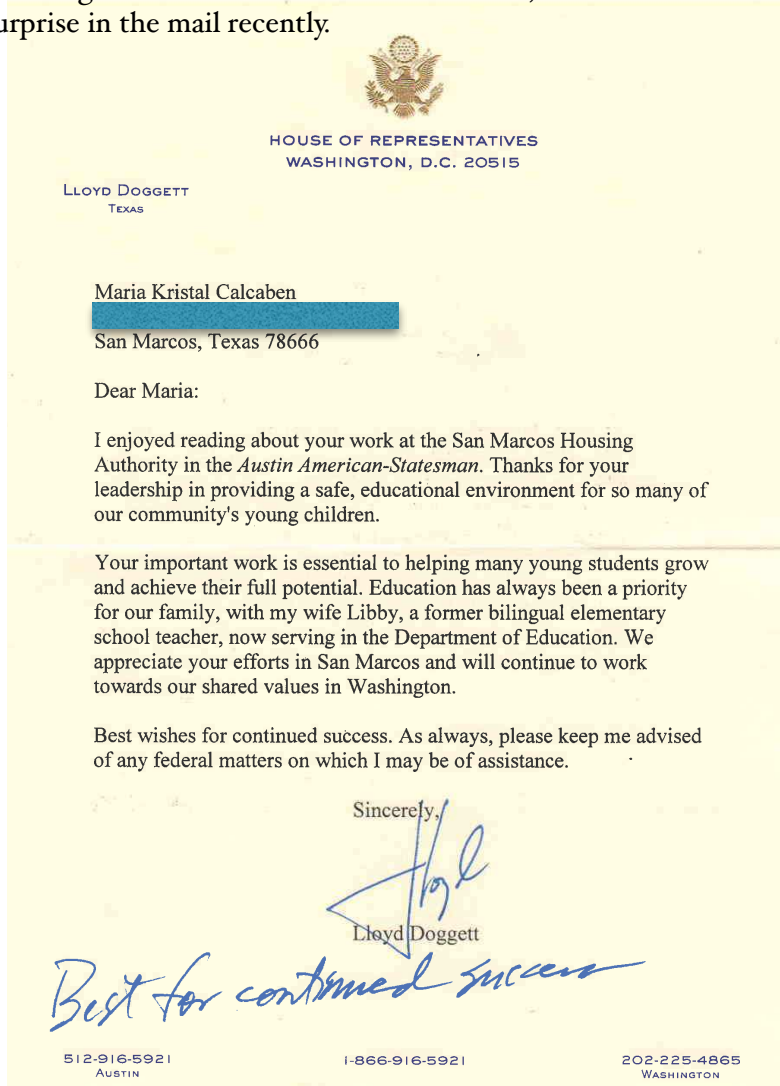
Elva said workplace professionals established the Women's Center. The City of San Marcos and SWTSU were hiring more professional women and the male-dominated workplace was sometimes an awkward setting. There was no battered women's shelter at the time. This was a professional women's network. Elva answered phone calls and did the bookkeeping. They were helping professional women integrate into the male-dominated workplace. They later began teaching other skills such as budgeting and car maintenance. It was all about female empowerment. In a way, this was the first family self-sufficiency program in San Marcos and it was administered at Chapultepec. That is exactly the sort of thing we do today.

The Center began receiving calls from victims of domestic violence. Elva said that one day a woman came into the office. She had walked from Kyle with a broken arm and carrying a baby in her good arm. She didn't know where else to go for help. Because of the obvious need, the organizers of the Women's Center decided to pursue a non-profit status and to seek funding for a shelter. Elva said they went to the City of San Marcos first and were able to secure use of a home on Georgia Street, not far from the current Senior Citizen Center. It had been a private residence. She said the Women's Center was a real grassroots organization. It had sprung from a community need. She noted that it was not just poor people who needed help and that there was no typical battered woman. She said financial abuse is also part of the problem. They used Chapultepec as their main office for quite some time but that she eventually left to work and live at the shelter. Back in those days, Elva covered the hotline from 6 PM to 7 AM. She was in college during the day and stayed at the shelter during the night. She could not recall exactly when the office was relocated from Chapultepec to the new shelter that Dennis and Cindy McCoy helped build. SMHA staff at the main office found a Board Resolution from 1982, approving a one-year lease at 322 Love Street. The official address now is 701 South LBJ Drive but it is still on Love Street, which seems appropriate to the purpose of that building. The rent was \$1 per year. Nina Pryatel signed as the President of the Women's Center Board of Directors. As far as I can tell, 1983 was the last year that the Women's Center used the Chapultepec Office. It became storage space again until it was remodeled and reincarnated as the home of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program 10 years later, in 1993.

Elva and I discussed the need for transitional housing for victims of abuse and how the Housing Authority and the Women's Center would be natural partners in such a project. They know how to assist victims and we know how to manage housing programs for challenged populations. All great things start with a dream.



Maria Calcaben, the Service Coordinator at the PODER Learning Center in the Allen Woods Homes, had a nice surprise in the mail recently.



# SAN MARCOS PUBLIC LIBRARY

[www.sanmarcostx.gov/library](http://www.sanmarcostx.gov/library)  
512/393-8200

## Commemorative Air Force Talk

**Wednesday, Sept. 9 at 3 PM**

Museum curator Clint Epley will speak about the planes preserved by the Central Texas Wing of the Commemorative Air Force. Their hangar houses six CAF aircraft including a rare flying P-39Q Bell Airacobra, the B-25 Mitchell "Yellow Rose," a BT-13 Valiant, T-6 Texan, a C-45 Expeditor, and U-3A Administrator.



## SMHA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

*The Board of Commissioners had their regular meeting on August 25. Here are some highlights:*

- Albert Sierra reported that there was no contract award from FEMA yet for the funds to repair the CM Allen Homes but that we are expending money for which we are anticipating reimbursement. He said we have spent \$137,000 so far. He expects an award after the 60-day cost revision period has expired.
- Sierra said there were 8 CM Allen residents at Allen Woods and 3 in Section 8 housing that would not be returning to CM Allen. He said that as of this date, there are 4 units occupied at CM Allen and that 3 more units are ready for occupancy.
- Sierra explained how long-term lease issues might delay the return of some CM Allen families when their unit is ready. He said that we cannot leave a specific unit vacant if the family cannot get out of their lease. It is a complex situation involving the evacuees, HUD requirements, FEMA, other landlords, the repair schedules, etc. Sierra said that our primary focus is on helping the evacuees that still do not have suitable housing and repairing the units with light to moderate damage as quickly as possible. - *Stewart Dale Spencer*



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

### 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony - City Hall, September 11

The San Marcos Fire Department would like to extend an invitation to you and your family. A ceremony will begin at 8:45 AM by the Fire Bell at City Hall and will last approximately 15 - 20 minutes. Flowers will be provided to place on the 9-11 Flower Memorial.

### United We Sing Concert - Evans Auditorium, September 13

The Heart of Texas Chorus and Texas State University will honor our military, first responders, and the heroes and victims of 9-11 at 3 PM. Free event parking will be available in the parking garage at the corner of Pleasant Street and North LBJ on the Texas State campus. Doors open at 2:30 PM.



### Tomas Rivera Award Book Fair - San Marcos Activity Center & Public Library, September 26

Fun for the whole family including hands-on activities, student performances and presentations by award winning authors. A Book Parade starts the event at 10 AM followed by readings at the library and activity center at 11 AM. Meet over ten Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award winning authors and illustrators, including Duncan Tonatiuh, 2015 winner for *Separate is Never Equal*. The book fair ends at 3 PM.

\* For more September 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  
Catherine Welsh—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