

# THE ORACLE

## JESSIE SANCHEZ SHARES HOW THE FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY PROGRAM WORKED FOR HER

Five years ago I had it mapped out on what I wanted to accomplish while participating in the FSS program. Just a little under a year things started going left which forced me to stop attending school and for my plans to change. I started visiting my FSS coordinator on a quarterly basis to reevaluate my goals and to make and meet new ones each time I saw her. I also attended classes which were fun and a really great learning experience for me. The goals I would make with my coordinator each visit and the classes I attended encouraged me to work harder on my workforce skills, my credit, financial status, and most importantly becoming a single, self-sufficient parent. Because of FSS, I was able to gain knowledge on how to work in a professional environment, repair my credit, open a checking and savings account, and pay off my school loans and



car. This program has really changed my life and helped me prepare for a bright future. I am so thankful for my FSS coordinators Megan Spiller and Gracie Campos and of course [Resident Services Director] Gene Martin! "If plan **A** fails, remember there are 26 more letters."

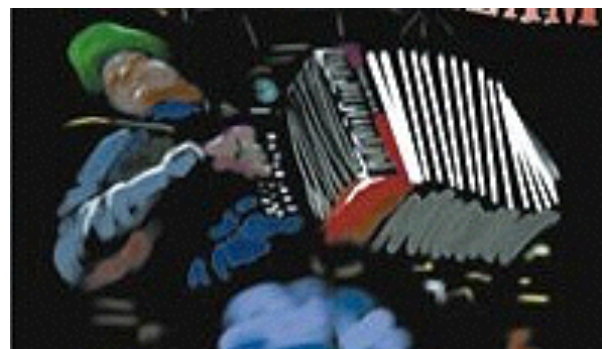


Jessie's new addition to her family, Miah.

*Editor's Note: As Jessie celebrates new beginnings she also mourns an ending. Just prior to press time, Jessie's mother, Irene Sanchez, a long-time employee at Texas State University, passed away unexpectedly. Please keep the Sanchez family in your thoughts and prayers.*

## "ACCORDION DREAMS" Film Showing

Sunday, October 4 at 2 PM in Room 5 of the Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, 211 Lee Street. This film explores the exciting history and tradition of Conjunto music with its roots in Germany and South Texas. This is a musical journey into the heart and soul of a distinct American musical genre that has had a major impact on the Mexican American community of the United States and one that is gaining fans around the world.



## ALLEN WOODS HOMES — PODER LEARNING CENTER

### Live. Laugh. Learn.



Here at the PODER After-School Program, we continue to find new ways to improve our programs. This year we have

partnered with the Education Department at Texas State University to launch a pilot program where the children will have one-on-one mentors. The mentors are studying to become teachers working with children from “emerging bilingual” households where a language other than English is spoken in the home. The children have enjoyed having more people to play with and the one-on-one attention during homework time. The mentors have enjoyed getting to know the children and using what they have learned in class. The program also hopes to incorporate family and social aspects to have a positive impact on the neighborhood. We look forward to implementing this program on other Housing Authority sites! See more information on page 7.

### Ultimately Awesome Intern

Meet Jessica Kishi, our new fall intern! Jessica was born in St. Louis and moved to San Antonio when she was 5 years old. She always knew she wanted to be a Social Worker, especially after a mission trip to Ukraine in



2011, where she worked with kids in an orphanage. At the end of this semester she will have a degree in Social Work from Texas State University. One of the challenges Jessica is facing in her internship is how different life is when you work 40 hours a week compared to the college life she was used to but she is learning how to manage her time wisely. Next semester it's back to school to earn a Master's degree. Her favorite part of being an intern is working with the kids in the after-school program. She also enjoys meeting new residents in the neighborhood. In her free time, Jessica likes to work out, cheer on the San Antonio Spurs, and spend time outdoors. She is also president of the Ultimate Frisbee team at Texas State! We look forward to a semester of flying colors!

## TEXAS NIGHT OUT!

Tuesday, October 6, 2015

FREE games, food, and prizes for kids

\$1 RAFFLE

HOT SAUCE CONTEST

BAKING CONTEST

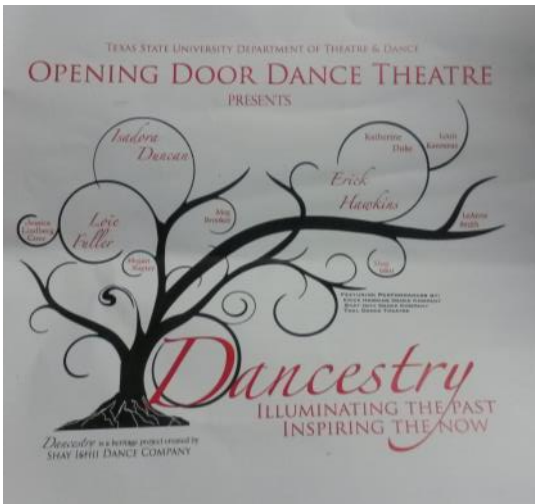
Call Maria for more information: 512-396-3367



POLICE • COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

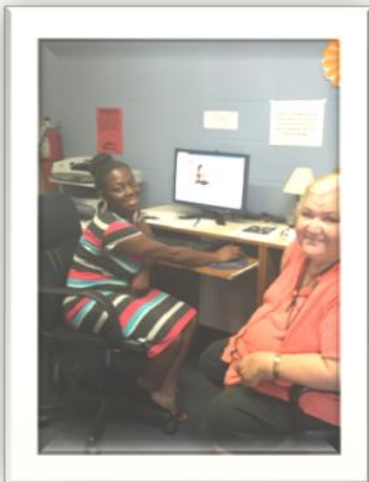
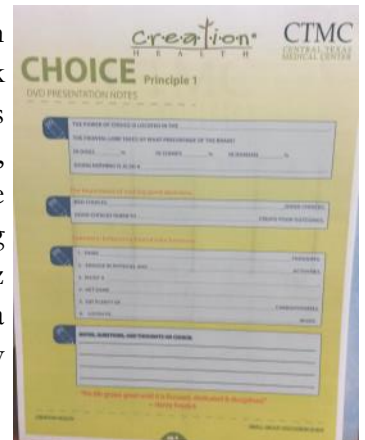


## Springtown Villa



**Residents were invited by Kim Porterfield, Community Relations Director at Texas Sate University, to attend the performance of “Dancestry” last month. Hazel Mayfield, Gloria Galinda, Service Coordinator Gracie Campos, and Tracy Franks had a wonderful time and enjoyed the performance.**

Residents Ramona, Gloria and Tracy have been attending CREATION Health (Choice Rest Environment Activity Trust Interpersonal Relationships Outlook Nutrition). This is a free program at the Central Texas Medical Center. It offers classes that focus on disease management, support groups, women’s health, nutrition, healthy living for seniors, and children’s health. Classes are free to the public. Residents were given a folder filled with information on health issues. During this series, participants watch a video and answer the questionnaire. Dalia Hernandez goes over the questionnaire and is available to answer questions. CREATION is a four-week series. Afterwards, the participants are taken to HEB where they learn how to use nutrition information labels to shop healthy.



Central Texas Medical Center and The City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation are co-hosting a FREE Social Spin for ages 50 + on Wednesday, October 14 from 2 – 4 PM at the San Marcos Activity Center. The Social Spin is designed to encourage a healthy celebration of activity, healthy refreshments, and developing more interpersonal relationships among our community. Meet new friends! Wear a decorative mask for the Masquerade Ball! There will be great music, snacks (courtesy of Hacienda Oaks Nursing & Rehab), and door prizes. In the picture, Ramona Galvez is getting ready with help from Texas State volunteer Courtney Fields.

**Call 512-753-3818 to RSVP.**



# C. M. ALLEN HOMES — KAD KORNER STORE



In their own words . . .

**Lois Sladek** (above): "Since I have been back, everyday is a good day!"

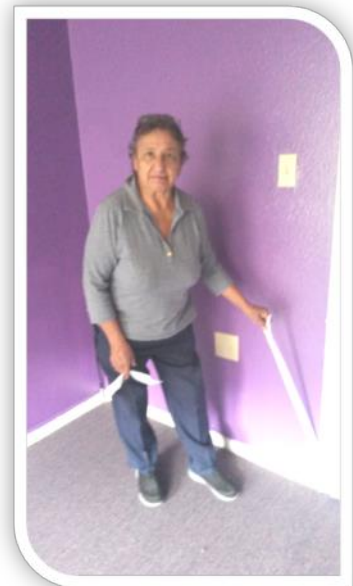
**Melissa Barrientos** (right): "I'm grateful to my family for taking us in, but there is nothing like coming back home to your own place."

*There's no place like home!*

**Bonnie**: "I am so ready to come back to KAD — ready to greet families returning and to welcome new families that we might have! I'm ready to hear the laughter, excitement, and joy of our children!"



This empty room will soon be filled with computers and kids!



Service Coordinator Bonnie Pecina tries to speed things up by pulling up the edging tape after her office was painted. With the purple walls, it looks like there is some Rattler Pride going on!



## CHAPULTEPEC HOMES & ADULT LEARNING CENTER



Janet and her smile of sunshine came to the Chapultepec office last April. She has served as an administrative assistant and helped with our after-school program. Sadly, the Memorial Weekend flood has affected our budget and we are losing this support position. We are sad to see Janet leave, but we know she will accomplish wonderful things!



The after-school program is off to a great start! We have lots of volunteers from Kappa Delta Chi and Texas State's Social Work Community Service class helping with our kids. They work on homework, arts & crafts, and play games

either inside or outside of our learning center. We are so excited to have so many helping hands this semester at Chapultepec!



### FSS CLASS

#### First Time Homebuyer Seminar

Thursday, October 22, 2015

San Marcos Public Library

Attend and Earn a Participation Point!

Transportation and childcare will be available to those who RSVP. Please contact Megan no later than October 21 to RSVP.



Thanks to Melissa and Liz from Goodwill Career Services for speaking to our residents about their services and how to build a successful resume. The class was filled with lots of info and fun!





### **HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SEPTEMBER MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

- Public housing revenues as of August 31 are less than original projections because of the vacancies at the CM Allen Homes but routine expenses are significantly less for the same reason, which more than offset the loss.
- Occupancy rates as of August 31: Public Housing – 96% (this does not include the units at CM Allen that are in “casualty” status as a result of flood damage), Springtown Villa – 98%; Housing Choice Voucher – 98%.
- The Housing Authority’s Fiscal Year 2016 budget of \$1.693 million was approved by the board. According to Executive Director Albert Sierra, HUD officials said that for now, we should assume all units will be available for occupancy and subsidy and that adjustments can be made later as needed. The fiscal year begins on October 1.
- Write-offs for the fiscal year ending on September 30 were approved by the Board: \$4,800 in back rent and unpaid fees, mostly as a result of previous evictions; \$37,451 of appliances lost as a result of the flood. Some losses have not yet been recorded—mostly air conditioning compressors in units where repairs are still pending.
- Status of the CM Allen Recovery: The contribution from FEMA is significantly less than initial projections, which were based on information originally provided by FEMA but which have proved to be incorrect. So far the Housing Authority has incurred about \$186,000 of expenses but has received only about \$51,000 from FEMA. Some additional portion of the total is still in process and will be received later but Sierra said that it looks like instead of paying 75% of the cost, FEMA will only pay about 50% of the cost. Sierra said he is exploring other options and remains in discussion with FEMA and HUD regarding this unexpected development. No further contracts for repairs will be issued until the Housing Authority has some certainty about how the repairs will be funded.
- Sierra reported that the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) resolved two outstanding discrimination complaints. Both were dismissed because FHEO found there was no basis for the complaints.

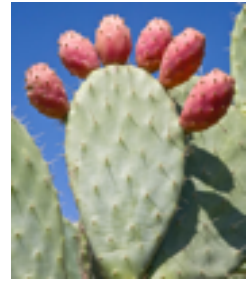




## SAN MARCOS PUBLIC LIBRARY

### USEFUL PLANTS OF ANCIENT TEXAS

Thursday, October 1 at 2:00 PM



The Texas plants we enjoy today have been used for food, medicine, and crafts for millennia by Native people of Texas. Written accounts by Spanish missionaries and European explorers, Native oral traditions, and archeological investigations provide windows into the many fascinating uses of our Texas native plants. Dr. Leslie Bush will discuss some of our more common plants - sumac, juniper, switchgrass, prickly pear - as well as some very important but lesser-known plants such as maygrass and camas. Lifelong Learning Lectures are presented by the Texas State Retired Faculty and Staff Association (RFSA) in partnership with the San Marcos Library. No registration required.

### FALL STORY FESTIVAL

Saturday, October 31 from 10:00 to 11:30 AM

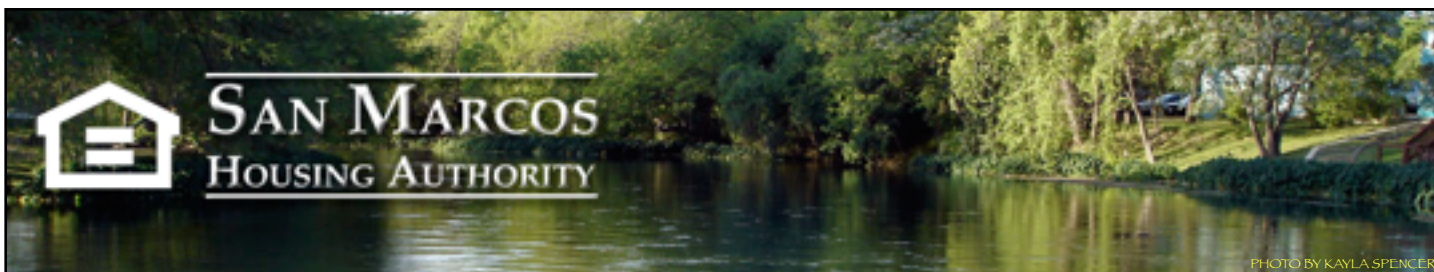
Families are invited to wear costumes and come to the library for a morning of crafts, stories, face painting, and festive fun to celebrate Fall with guest readers from Texas State University. For all ages.

### GED PREPARATION REGISTRATION

Community Action, Inc. coordinates with the San Marcos Public Library to offer free GED test preparation classes. **Part 1** of registration for new GED students is on Tuesday, October 6 at 9:30 AM, 1:30 PM, or 6:30 PM. Students then return for **Part 2** on Thursday, October 8 at 9:30 AM, 1:30 PM, or 6:30 PM. Each session will take approximately two hours and attendance at both sessions is required to complete registration, orientation, and assessment. For more information call the San Marcos Public Library Adult Learning Center at 512-393-8215.



**Dr. Christopher Milk and Blanca Loya** from the Education Department at Texas State are piloting a mentorship program with the PODER after-school program and the Allen Woods community. They met with some of the parents to discuss ways on how the program can bring positive changes to their children's lives and to the community. Not pictured is Graduate Assistant Larry Guerrero. The course is called "Foundations of ESL/Bilingual Instruction." It is a teacher preparation course for undergraduate students working on getting teacher certification.



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

### 50+ CHEESY LUNCHEON - SAN MARCOS ACTIVITY CENTER, OCTOBER 8 (NOON - 2 PM)

Come eat, drink, and be merry at the monthly luncheons! They provide games, Bingo, prizes, drinks, and fun! Most luncheons are potluck, unless otherwise noted, so bring a dish to attend. Please arrive on time to eat. It's American Cheese Month! Celebrate it with us by bringing your favorite cheesy dish and we will too! If not, please bring a side or dessert to share.

### Sacred Springs Powwow - Aquarena Center, October 10, 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Native dancers from across Texas gather at the Sacred Springs in San Marcos dressed in beautiful, hand-crafted regalia. Come watch the dancers, participate in the intertribal dances, and enjoy the booths that offer authentic Native American arts and food. Children under 12 are free and adults are only \$3. That's close enough to free! The event begins at 10:00 AM with the blessing of the springs.

### Dia de los Muertos Celebration - San Marcos Rec Hall, October 29, 6:30 - 8:30 PM

The Rec Hall is at 170 Charles Austin Drive. Dia de los Muertos is a rich combination of indigenous and Spanish cultural traditions, transcending borders and generations, which celebrates the lives of loved ones who have passed away. This event is a collaboration between the Honors College, Center for the Study of the Southwest, Multicultural Programs Committee, El Centro Cultural Hispano de San Marcos, and various student organizations. Enjoy an evening filled with music, dance, food, face painting, and crafts as you learn about what this holiday means and how to create your own Dia de los Muertos altar. Share stories, but take home more than just memories!

### 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