

# Around the House


Volume 4, Issue 6

November/December, 2007



**Housing and Community Services Department Mission**

*... to provide housing and related services to benefit the citizens and neighborhoods of Wichita*



By the time you receive this newsletter, there will be less than 60 days left in the year. 2007 is marching along and will soon be history. As we approach the end of the year, I thought it might be helpful to take a look back at highlights of the past year and goals for the future.

In 2007, Your Wichita Housing Authority opened the application process for Section 8 vouchers and over 3,000 people have responded.

In 2007 Your Wichita Housing Authority's Public Housing Division achieved its highest rating in years for customer service.

In 2008 Your Wichita Housing Authority hopes to become a major participant in efforts to provide housing for the homeless.

In 2008 Your Wichita Housing Authority will implement new safety measures in our office

and in our residential units, including physical structures and lighting.

Everything we have done and will do, is designed to meet your housing needs. You can help in many ways, by taking good care of your rental unit. Following are two simple tips to help your home 'weather' the coming winter months.

- Disconnect garden hoses from **outside faucets**. Public Housing tenants should know that repairs for plumbing problems caused by leaving hoses connected, will be charged to the tenant.
- Close exterior **foundation vents**. This will prevent cold air from circulating under the floors, and reduce heating bills. (Houses without basements won't have these vents).

Let's march into 2008 safe and ready to make it the best year ever!

## Results That Matter

Roger Burrig, Public Housing Property Manager for many of our single family units, has forged relationships with the Wichita Police Department which are paying off. Recently he notified the officers of units which had been vacated and were being prepared for new tenants. A few days later the police reported that someone was observed in the units. The trespassers were 'evicted'. And in addition, the police were able to arrest others who had stolen copper from a property. These actions are helping us avoid unnecessary costs when readying vacant units for new occupants. Roger's efforts, along with the police, are creating 'results that matter' in our goal of providing affordable housing.



### Inside this issue:

<i>From the Director</i>	2
<i>Public Housing Community Service</i>	2
<i>Behind the Scenes</i>	2
<i>Section 8 News</i>	3
<i>HAP Payment Schedule</i>	3
<i>Health News You Can Use</i>	4



## From the Director's Chair Mary K. Vaughn

It is a common practice to see Christmas decorations in stores even before we've put away our summer shorts and flip flops! Many of us complain that the retailers are rushing the seasons.

However since this is the last newsletter before the holidays, I too must take this early opportunity to extend to you my wishes for a *Happy Holiday Season!*

As you prepare to celebrate the holidays with your families, please remember those who are less fortunate than you and make a commitment to do something positive for someone else. No matter what else is going on in your life, the fact that you are on this mailing list means that you have a home. That alone is a reason to be thankful.

On a personal note, one of the highlights of my week, is the time I spend with my "little sister" at Spaght

Elementary, through the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. Whether reading or just talking, that one hour each week makes a difference for both of us! If I can volunteer a little time, you can too!

In closing, let me say it is my privilege to serve as the Director of the Housing and Community Services Department and to be able to provide safe, affordable housing for nearly 3,000 households. But it is also the reason I give back to the community in this small way.

## Community Service—It's the Law!

The City of Wichita Housing Authority continues to enforce the mandated participation of non-exempt Public Housing residents in the Community Service Program, which began October 1, 2003. The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998, contained a community service and self-sufficiency requirement that every adult resident of public housing contribute eight hours of community service each month, or participate in an economic self-sufficiency program for eight hours each month.

This means that residents and household members who are not employed, who are not participating in a qualified self-sufficiency program, who are not age 17 and under and/or are not disabled, are required to complete 8 hours of commu-

nity service per month in order for the household to continue their occupancy of a Public Housing rental dwelling. The community service and self-sufficiency requirement is intended to help adult public housing residents improve their own economic and social well-being. It also allows residents an opportunity to "give something back" to their communities.

Public Housing residents required to participate in the program, have been notified by their Property Managers. The United Way Volunteer Center administers the Program, and offers many and varied service opportunities with local agencies where program participants can complete their service. Many of the residents who are partici-

pating in community service and self-sufficiency activities are persons who are unemployed and may have been out of the work force for some period of time. Benefits include contacts with possible agencies or employers that the resident may never have had the opportunity to interact with. Also, residents' confidence in their own skills and abilities may encourage them to pursue permanent employment or training, and thereby become self-sufficient.

Failure to comply with this requirement is considered grounds for termination from the Public Housing program. Many families have lost their housing for failure to meet this obligation. Don't let this happen to you!! Make the most of this opportunity to serve your community.

## Behind the Scenes ...

Housing and Community Services Department staff know what service is all about. In addition to the work we perform every day to insure our tenants and clients have safe, affordable housing, we also participate in community initiatives such as supporting the United Way. The 2007 campaign just ended and once again Housing staff



We're proud of  
our people!

rose to the occasion by contributing approximately **\$4,700**.

Thanks to everyone who participated and to this year's campaign coordinators, **Carla Bonjour** and **Shreda Johnson**. This year's theme was Help Write Happy Endings! I certainly hope that our contributions will do just that, for those who need help in our community.

# WELCOME

In this issue we welcome **Katina Wheeler** who joined the Housing and Community Services Department team as a Housing Specialist in the Family Self-Sufficiency program. Ms. Wheeler is already at work, helping Section 8 participants realize their goals of self-sufficiency. Welcome Katina!

# Section 8 News

## CreditSmart Graduation!

Thank you to all involved in making our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual CreditSmart education workshop series a huge success! CreditSmart attendees received valuable financial literacy information and life-long money management skills. CreditSmart workshops were made available to Family Self-Sufficiency participants and the general public throughout the 2007 calendar year. We were proud to present the following attendees with Certificates of Achievement for completing the CreditSmart financial literacy curriculum on October 13, 2007.

### *Congratulations to:*

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Kristi Banks       | Lorena Barnett      |
| Clarissa Becknell  | Sandra Bell-Jackson |
| Virginia Bilello   | Elona Carroll       |
| Ada Castruita      | Natalie Doherty     |
| Nicole Dupree      | Cynthia Fitz        |
| April Flowers      | Quinten Foy         |
| Trina Franklin     | Dianna Gilkey       |
| Herbert Horton     | Mary James          |
| Rochelle Jefferson | Connie Johnson      |
| Gregory Johnson    | James Maloney       |
| Debra McFadden     | Felicia Owens       |
| Lovetta Poe        | Pamela Richardson   |
| Christine Scruggs  | Janet Smith         |
| Joshua Smith       | Larry Stevenson     |
| Linda Stevenson    | Mia Turner          |
| Lorene Williams    |                     |

Freddie Mac introduced the CreditSmart curriculum to help consumers understand, build and maintain good credit. The 2008 sessions will be scheduled soon. Section 8 Voucher holders are reminded that CreditSmart Certificates of Achievement are mandatory for those with goals of Homeownership. Watch this newsletter for more details on the next CreditSmart series!



## SECTION 8 LANDLORDS

### Inclement Weather Policy

Effective November 1, 2007 the Section 8 Inclement Weather Policy regarding exterior defective paint problems, will go into effect, and will remain in effect through May 31, 2008. Section 8 landlords will be approved for extensions to correct exterior paint deficiencies only until May 31, 2008.

Please note that exterior extensions apply only to Section 8 dwelling units already in the program and will not apply to initial preoccupancy inspections.

## 2007 Homeowners Alumni Meeting

Nov. 19, 5:30 pm  
Atwater City Hall  
2755 E. 19th Street

For current Section 8 homeowners!

The is the last Homeowners Alumni meeting for 2007. You do not want to miss this one!

This is your opportunity to provide valuable input on the upcoming 2008 Homeowners Alumni Calendar. We look forward to seeing you there!

## 2007 FSS Workshop

Nov. 8, 6 pm  
"Understanding Your FSS Escrow"  
Atwater City Hall  
2755 E. 19th Street

Family Self-Sufficiency participants are asked to bring suggestions and ideas for the structuring of 2008 workshops.

## 2007 CreditSmart Workshops

CreditSmart Workshops have ended for 2007. However new sessions will be conducted in 2008. Watch this space for the new dates!

## Current HAP Payment Schedule

<i>Month</i>	<i>Mail Date</i>
DECEMBER, 2007	NOVEMBER 30, 2007
JANUARY, 2008	JANUARY 3, 2008

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*We're On The Web!*  
[www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing](http://www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing)

## Health News You Can Use

**November is American Diabetes Month (ADM)**, to highlight the seriousness of diabetes and the importance of proper diabetes control. ADM focuses on type 2 diabetes risk factors and prevention, treatment of those diagnosed with the disease, and support for their families.

While diabetes occurs in people of all ages and races, some groups have a higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is more common in African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, as well as the aged population.

Certain health problems (including being overweight, unhealthy cholesterol, smoking, high blood glucose, high blood pressure, and physical inactivity) put you at higher risk for diabetes and heart disease. Keeping an eye on these problems -- keeping them "in check" -- can help you prevent diabetes and heart disease.

Since 1981, every President of the United States has demonstrated his commitment to preventing impaired driving by proclaiming **December as National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month**. Reducing the incidence of impaired driving requires a comprehensive approach, while recognizing that every community faces different challenges.

An alcohol-related motor vehicle crash kills someone every 31 minutes and nonfatally injures someone every two minutes (NHTSA 2006).

Drugs other than alcohol (e.g., marijuana and cocaine) are involved in about 18% of motor vehicle driver deaths. These other drugs are generally used in combination with alcohol (Jones et al. 2003).

This holiday season and also throughout the year, remember:  
"Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk"

### **New Housing Authority Board Member Named!**

Allan Murdock was officially sworn in as the new Housing Authority Board member at the Board's October 2 meeting. Allan is a single parent in the Public Housing program. He is also working on a degree in Business Operations Management at Southwestern College.

Allan was selected from several applications which were submitted. He stated in his application that he hopes this appointment will help him achieve his career goals. We certainly hope so too, and extend our congratulations!