

# Around the House

Volume 3, Issue 5

September/October, 2006



September marks the official start of school (although many classes started in August). Following are tips for parents and students, to make the return to school safe—and to insure a successful school experience. Parents, please read and heed these tips—and share them with your children.

### GOING TO & FROM SCHOOL

#### School Bus

- Wait for the bus to stop before approaching it from the curb.
- Do not move around on the bus.
- Check to see that no other traffic is coming before crossing.
- Make sure to always remain in clear view of the bus driver.

#### Car

- All passengers should wear a seat belt and/or an age- and size-appropriate car safety seat or booster seat.
- Your child should ride in a car safety seat with a harness as long as possible and then ride in a belt-positioning booster seat.
- Your child should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child reaches about 4' 9" in height and is between 8 to 12 years of age).
- All children under 13

years of age should ride in the rear seat of vehicles.

- Remember that many crashes occur while novice teen drivers are going to and from school. You may want to limit the number of teen passengers to prevent driver distraction. Do not allow your teen to drive while eating, drinking, or talking on a cell phone.

#### Bike

- Always wear a bicycle helmet, no matter how short or long the ride.
- Ride on the right, in the same direction as auto traffic.
- Use appropriate hand signals.
- Respect traffic lights and stop signs.
- Wear bright color clothing to increase visibility.

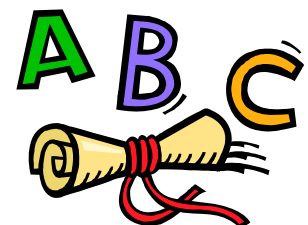
#### Walking to School

- Make sure your child's walk to school is a safe route with well-trained adult crossing guards at every intersection.
- Be realistic about your child's pedestrian skills. Because small children are impulsive and less cautious around traffic, carefully consider whether or not your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision.
- Bright colored clothing will make your child more visible to drivers.

### DEVELOPING GOOD HOMEWORK AND STUDY HABITS

- Create an environment that is conducive to doing homework. Youngsters need a permanent work space in their bedroom or another part of the home that offers privacy.
- Set aside ample time for homework.
- Establish a household rule that the TV set stays off during homework time.
- Be available to answer questions and offer assistance, but never do a child's homework for him/her.
- To help alleviate eye fatigue, neck fatigue and brain fatigue while studying, it's recommended that youngsters close the books for 10 minutes every hour and go do something else.
- If your child is struggling with a particular subject, and you aren't able to help them yourself, a tutor can be a good solution. Talk it over with your child's teacher first.

(These tips were prepared by the American Academy of Pediatrics).



### Housing and Community Services Department Mission

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



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

August 29, 2006, marked the one year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and called me to a time of reflection—on what happened, on how people responded, and on what still needs to be done.

### *On what happened:*

Hurricane Katrina (and Rita) taught us that disasters can strike at any time. We should therefore take seriously, any warnings of the approach of bad weather or storms.

### *On how people responded:*

The response from across the country and here in Wichita has been great. And much of that response is continuing. Our local American Red Cross recently hosted a gathering for families who relocated to Wichita after the storm, and noted that our spirit of hospitality made a big difference in their lives at a very difficult time for them. There was and continues to be a very real sense of care & concern.

### *On what still needs to be done:*

Many families are putting their lives back together after losing so much in the hurricane. However many are still struggling with the loss of lives and possessions. On this anniversary of the hurricanes, my message to those of us who have homes is twofold: do not take your safe shelter for granted (or do anything to jeopardize it)—and continue to extend kindnesses to those who are continuing to rebuild.

## Is It *Fall* Already?

The August heat is still a recent memory, however it will soon be time to start thinking about fall. And that leads to thoughts of ways to prepare your home for the cold weather which is just around the corner. Here are a few tips:

- Disconnect and drain garden hoses and outdoor faucets. Water left in hoses can back up and cause pipes to burst.
- Replace your furnace filter.
- Run all gas-powered lawn equipment until the fuel is gone.
- Check all window and door locks for proper seals.
- Clean gutters to prevent a buildup of leaves which can block the flow of water away from your home.

Even if you live in a high-rise or apartment building, there are habits you can start, to help save on heating bills this winter.

Turn off unnecessary lights, unplug electronics when not in use, and adjust your thermostat (higher in summer, lower in winter) before leaving for work.



Take advantage of free solar heat - keep blinds open in the day to let in

the sun, close them at night to hold in the heat.

This final safety tip is for everyone. Please handle candles safely—and never let children handle candles or lighters. We have had recent instances where homes were destroyed by fire due to the misuse of candles.

P.S. Don't forget to "Fall Back" - turn your clocks back one hour Saturday night, October 29, 2006. The Fire Department also recommends that you **change the batteries in your smoke detector** when you change the time, and that you review your **fire escape plan** with your family. Remember—October is National Fire Safety Month!

## Behind the Scenes ...

Behind the scenes, Housing & Community Services Department employees, perform volunteer service to the community above and beyond their jobs. **Shreda Johnson, Marlys Duchinsky** and **Mary K. Vaughn** volunteer at the Lord's Diner. In addition, **Marlys** is a volunteer with the Wichita Open, Seniors Open, American Red Cross and the



We're proud of our people!

Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. **Shreda** also volunteers with the Meals on Wheels program. **Mary K.** is a volunteer with the Big Sisters-Big Brothers program, along with **Tom Byler** and **Tiffanie Johnson**. **Elda Backes** is a Cub Scout Leader and **Charis Parks** is hosting a foreign exchange student from Germany.

### WELCOME!

Public Housing welcomes 3 new employees: **Michael Fisher**, Electrician II, **Mike Weber** and **Lapaca Williams** who are Maintenance Workers.

Section 8 welcomes 2 new employees: **Tony Heimerman**, Admin Assistant; **Anne Duncan**, Housing Landlord Specialist.

We're glad to have all of them

# Attention Section 8 Landlords

As you are aware, the Section 8 program accepted applications in June, for the first time in 4 years. Over 2,500 persons applied for the 160 vouchers which were available. We are working hard to process their applications and to issue vouchers so that they can be housed in a safe affordable environment.

This means that our inspectors are working especially hard to schedule all the new inspections, while maintaining their existing obligations to conduct annual, reinspection, special and quality inspections.

We plan to issue and lease as many as 200 families by the end of

the year and need your assistance in the inspection process. We are requesting that landlords provide us **actual dates units are ready for inspection**. The inspection process is delayed when inspectors go to inspect a unit that is not ready to be inspected. This time could have been utilized to inspect a ready unit. During this busy time, inspections may be scheduled as far out as 14 days, or we may be able to schedule the unit as quickly as within 48 hours, depending on the receipt of Request for Tenancy Approval from prospective clients. As you prepare your units and schedule inspections, keep in mind the date you provide on the Request For Tenancy Approval.

Another major initiative which is underway and will be of interest to landlords, is the "Prisoner Reentry Program". The Housing and Community Services Department is partnering with State and County officials to create a program where housing can be identified for persons housing released from the State's prison system. A Housing Landlord Specialist has been hired to work with landlords to identify housing for these ex-offenders. In addition, other community resources, including the Community Police program, will be engaged to help support the returning ex-offenders to ensure a successful reintegration into the community.

More information will be provided on the Prisoner Reentry program at the annual landlord meeting. Details of the meeting will be provided in the next edition of Around the House. We look forward to seeing you there!

We appreciate our partnership with Wichita landlords, as we seek to provide a means for decent, safe and sanitary affordable housing for the citizens of Wichita. Your continued cooperation with program guidelines and requests, will be appreciated!



## Family Self-Sufficiency Workshop Schedules

FSS Workshops	2006 Credit Smart Workshops
September 14.....Career Building October 12.....Domestic Violence November 16.....Understanding Your FSS Escrow  These workshops are <u>required</u> for FSS participants and are held at City Hall, in the 1st Floor Board Room at 6:00 pm.  Many participants have homeownership as their self-sufficiency goal and are required to also attend Credit Smart workshops.	September 16..... Restoring Your Credit & Planning For Your Future October 7..... Becoming A Homeowner  These workshops are held at Dellrose United Methodist Church, 14th & Oliver, from 10 to noon—and are <u>open to anyone</u> interested in homeownership.

## Current HAP Payment Schedule

<i>Month</i>	<i>Mail Date</i>
SEPTEMBER	August 29, 2006
OCTOBER	September 29, 2006
NOVEMBER 2006	October 31, 2006
DECEMBER 2006	November 28, 2006

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[www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing](http://www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing)

## If You're Between the Ages of 6 and 18 You can Win up to \$50 for Your Fire Safety Poster!!!

October is **Fire Prevention Month** and your Housing Authority is sponsoring another Poster Contest to help everyone remember to practice kitchen safety. The theme is:

### **"Prevent Cooking Fires: Watch What You Heat!"**

Posters will be judged in three age groups:

**6-9**  
**10-14**  
**15-18**

Three prizes will be awarded in each age group: **\$50, \$30, \$20!**

Posters must be original artwork, using any of the following:

Markers, paints, crayons and colored pencils. (No stenciling or tracing allowed). Posters should be on poster board or poster paper (22"x28").

Everyone who submits a poster will receive a special gift. The winning posters will not only receive cash awards, but the posters will be displayed in the Housing Authority Offices and on the Internet!

Please submit posters to the Housing Authority office at 332 N. Riverview. The deadline is Friday, September 29, 2006.

If you have questions, please call Joe at 462-3742 or Pearl at 462-3731.



"Reproduced from NFPA's Fire Prevention Week Web site, [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org). ©2006 NFPA."

Here are some cooking safety tips:  
**Stand by your pan**—don't leave cooking pans unattended.

**No kids allowed**—maintain a 3 foot 'kid-free' zone around your stove.

**Keep it clean**—keep paper towels, potholders, plastic bags, etc., away from the stove's cooking area.

**Microwave with care**—don't use extension cords, do use microwave safe dishes, never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave.

Visit the National Fire Protection Association website for more helpful information: [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)