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Celebrate
May is Better Hearing & Speech Month
Helping People Communicate

It's 11:00 am at the Lakeside cafeteria and residents start gathering inside. "Sign Language classes everyone," someone yells out. For the last ten weeks, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday the cafeteria seats have been filled when Ailana Larson begins her instruction. Larson is a resident at Lakeside who teaches and interprets sign language. She has complete hearing but has been practicing sign language over 40 years. Larson worked as a professional teacher and interpreter for the deaf before a repetitive motion injury stopped her from working, but it did not end her passion for teaching.

Larson began teaching fellow residents at Lakeside sign language because she saw the need for interactivity between the hearing and hearing impaired residents. She says there are four deaf residents at Lakeside, who can communicate, just in a different way. Larson's sign language classes serve to bridge the gap of communication. She says, "I don't want to be the only one who knows how to talk to residents that are deaf. If an emergency occurs, everyone should know what the deaf person is trying to say." Her motto is give a man a fish; he'll eat for a day. Teach a man how to fish; he'll eat for a lifetime.

Over a ten week time period, Larson has taught basic sign language words for emergencies and words for day-

to-day conversation. Larson plans on placing the food words in the cafeteria and giving the emergency words to the maintenance staff. Additionally a book of all the words will be placed in the Lakeside library for continued reference. "It's already catching on," Larson says, "Ray in maintenance says he was able to decipher what Doris (a hearing impaired resident) said about her room."

This beautiful moving language is not only for the hearing impaired, anyone can learn the language and at any age. Larson says she has taught sign language to her son and her four-year-old grandson before they could speak words. She says, "Children can learn sign language at a very young age."

You may not think of musicals and sign language in the same sentence, but Larson has created two musicals in sign language. They are called, "The Communication Connection: What Deaf People Want Hearing People to Know About Deafness," and "Bear Essentials: An Introduction to Sign Language Through Story, Dance and music." She has performed these musicals for both the hearing and deaf persons.

As Larson shares her skills Lakeside residents are having a good time learning basic words that will jump-start their vocabulary in a language full of movements, gestures, and expression.



Lakeside resident, Ailana Larson, teaches basic sign language to eager residents.

Did you KNOW?



All HACA offices will be closed May 26 in observance of Memorial Day

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Need a Life Makeover? Try CWJC!

How would you like to meet with a group of goal-minded women focused on self-improvement, job training, and spiritual growth? Christian Women's Job Corp (CWJC) is just the answer with an encouraging team of teachers in a supportive environment. Lee Ann Ramirez, CWJC participant, shares her positive experience in the program and as a recent graduate.

CWJC focuses on training skills to help women become more self-sufficient. Those training skills include technology training, job training and advancement, spiritual growth and financial training. Life skills is also an important competent to self-sufficiency. Ramirez, a single mother of five school-aged children, wanted to increase her skills to obtain a better job. Ramirez says, "We learned about setting boundaries with money and with our kids. I learned how to say 'no' in an appropriate manner."

Like many mothers, Ramirez says her motivation to advance her career comes from her children. She says, "I joined CWJC because I was not working at the time and I knew I needed to further my education to get a good job." She gained computer skills in applications like PowerPoint and Microsoft Word. Ramirez says she did not have a



Lee Ann Ramirez and her family at the Christian Women's Job Corp Graduation Ceremony

resume before she joined CWJC, but now she knows how to write and build a resume for her career.

About the program: CWJC is a non-profit organization that began classes in 1999. Chris Rowley, Director and co-founder, says over 350 women of all ages, races, and nationalities have graduated from the program. The program is for a duration of eight weeks and there are three sessions per year. CWJC partners with other organizations around the city to provide resources to participants.

How to get involved? Call Chris Rowley at (512) 236-1718 or visit CWJC offices at the Booker T. Washington Neighborhood Networks Center 2nd floor. The next session starts in June 2008. Classes meet every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9-12 am at Booker T. Washington. (They even provide transportation assistance if you are in need and don't live at BTW.) All women, ages 17 and up, are welcome to join.

Cool facts: In the past, participants have received a free makeover worth \$250 at the end of their session. Rowley says "Encouraging and inspiring change comes a lot from a change in physical appearance." She says she knows eight weeks is not enough time to turn a life around but CWJC provides a jump-start and provides ongoing support for women.

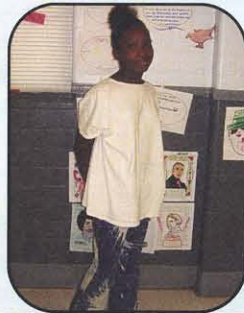
Born to Run!



Thurmond Heights youth prepare for the Born to Run Race

Last month HACA youth participated in the Texas Round-Up Walk/Run held on April 27th. All participants received free running shoes as well. The Texas Round-Up is a statewide initiative that strives to improve the health of Texans through education and promotion of physical activity and healthy living.

On May 17th, Khadeishua "Kiekie" Boyd and other HACA youth, will participate in the Born To Run Race. Born to Run is a Run-Tex Foundation program funded by the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. For 12 weeks the children trained in preparation for the mile long race on Congress Avenue. The overall goal of the program is to encourage movement and health.



Khadeishua Boyd, 11, enjoys running, computers, math, and basketball. She is a 6th grader at Kealing Middle School.

HACA Idol

Mayfest is HERE! This year's theme is "HACA Idol," showcasing the talents of our senior residents. Mayfest is an annual event to celebrate Older Americans Month.

We want to let our seniors know we value them and their contributions to society. Mayfest is always an entertaining event, but most importantly educational. It is a time to bring awareness to health issues facing older americans. In addition to entertainment, food and fun, there will be vendors offering free blood pressure checks, eye exams, hearing checks and blood sugar screenings.

16th Annual Senior Mayfest
Friday, May 9, 2008

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Parque Zaragoza Recreation Center
Transportation for seniors provided,
sign-up with your Outreach Specialist.

Homeowner, Monica Hargrove, has lived in her home for nearly three years. She was a participant in the Down Payment Assistance Program which assisted her with \$10,000 towards the downpayment of her home. She decided to live in the Round Rock area because it was more affordable and she liked the school district for her son Lance. Monica works for Dell and after 8 years she is gearing up to face the downsizing of the company. She has made plans to keep her three-bedroom, two-bathroom home even after her job ends at Dell.



Monica Hargrove and son Lance, 10, stand in front of their home.

Monica has faced obstacles, but they did not stop her from obtaining her home. She worked hard to get her credit in order and she had to change realtors twice before she found the right place for her and her son. She says her house has been a meeting place and refuge for family and friends. The kitchen and floorplan are her favorite things about her home. A year from now, Monica says she will be advancing her education to become a Pharmacy Technician. She advises others to be certain their credit is in decent order, saying, "I can not stress enough the importance of good credit. Credit drives how much you will pay for the big things in your home even down to the small things."



Citywide Advisory Board Notes

Last month's Citywide Advisory Board meeting was held April 8, 2008 at the Central Office.

Nelson Mock from Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, along with Morgan Morrison from Austin Tenants' Council came to address the audience about Fair Housing issues. The Austin Tenants' Council operates to ensure tenants have fair housing and supports legislation that prohibits discrimination of any kind. Some of the services include:

- Fair Housing Testers-volunteers who act as secret shoppers to test landlords are not discriminating
- Counseling services
- Repair Assistance Program-assists in getting reasonable repairs completed.

The next Citywide Advisory Board meeting will be held May 13th at 9:30 a.m. at HACA's Central Administration Building.

Transportation is provided. Call at least 1 day in advance.

North properties call Mary Gonzales at 589-7451.

South properties call Angie Cortez at 589-7985

Lock, Take and Hide Posters

HACA, in its commitment to provide safe and quality housing for our residents, has decided to be proactive in posting



the "Lock, Take, and Hide" signs throughout our properties. The signs remind the public to "Lock their cars, Take their keys, and Hide their belongings" when leaving their vehicle.

In addition, throughout the next few months, tenant safety watch programs will be implemented in several of our communities in District II. Tenants who are interested in being in their safety watch group are encouraged to contact their Site Manager. I am optimistic that the combined efforts of APD, HACA, and our residents will help our agency strive to it's mission of providing safe and quality housing.

*-Contributed by Alejandro Dominguez
Community III Director*

Pictured left to right: Johnny Arriaga, Sheldon Celedon, Stefan Jones, Alejandro Dominguez, and George Purnell.

HACA Property Improvements

The Planning and Development team is dedicated to making the Housing Authority of the City of Austin a place residents are proud to call home. The following are improvements that are either currently under way or are scheduled for the near future:

Current Project Status

■ **Water Heater Replacements-Gaston-Contract** approved for replacement of 300g system with "tank-less" WH system, to reduce energy costs. Currently in scheduling.

■ **Lead-Based Paint Abatement-Santa Rita--Full** removal of encapsulated LBP on approx. 80 entry doors/frames at Santa Rita, thereby improving safety for residents and eliminating need for HACA LBP Operations and Maintenance Program at site. Currently working to schedule work.

■ **New Management and Community Facility-Meadowbrook--In** preparation for demolition of obsolete office building and design/construction of a new administrative building to serve the Meadowbrook neighborhood.

■ **Siding Replacements and Painting-Manchaca Village--Removal** of existing siding and replacement with cementitious siding prior to full paint. Upcoming project.

Energy Conservation Tips

*by Energy Manager
James Bean*

Air Leaks Waste Energy

Warm air leaking into your home during the summer and out of your home during the winter can waste a lot of your energy dollars. You can save 10% or more on your energy bill by reducing the air leaks in your home.

First, test your home for air tightness. On a windy day, hold a lit incense stick next to your windows, doors, electrical boxes, plumbing fixtures, electrical outlets, ceiling fixtures, attic hatches, and other locations where there is a possible air path to the outside. If the smoke stream travels horizontally, you have located an air leak that may need caulking, sealing, or weather-stripping.

ONE VOICE

Housing Authority of
the City of Austin
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Our Mission

The **Housing Authority of the City of Austin** is a public agency whose business is to:

- ensure that safe, quality affordable housing opportunities exist for families of low income
- break the poverty cycle by serving as a catalyst for our residents to become economically self-sufficient
- create meaningful partnerships to maximize available community resources for our residents
- efficiently and effectively meet federal, state and local mandates

HACA will pursue entrepreneurial opportunities to address emerging trends and respond to the challenges of the future.

Important Phone Numbers

HACA Administration	477-4488
24 Hour Resident Hotline	495-1897
Maintenance Work Orders	477-8518
Section 8	477-1314
Fire/Police	911
Non-Emergency Police	311
Poison Center	800-764-7661

ONE VOICE Newsletter

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Judy Paciocco, Sr. Director of Operations

Comments, articles and photographs are welcomed for the One Voice newsletter. E-mail submissions to Monique Duvall.
moniqued@hacanet.org

Or by mail to:
HACA, Attn: Media Relations
P.O. Box 6159
Austin, TX 78762

All submissions must have a name and phone number to be considered. Due to space limitations, the editor reserves the right to reject or edit copy as necessary.