

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

HACA Administration	(512) 477-4488
Resident Call Center	(888) 842-4484
Maintenance Work Orders	(512) 477-8518
Section 8/Housing Choice	(512) 477-1314
Fire/Police	911
Non-Emergency Police	311
Poison Center	(800) 222-1222
Quit Smoking	(877) 937-7848
RAD Hotline	(844) HACA-RAD

One Voice is published by the Housing Authority of the City of Austin. Submit comments, articles and photos to One Voice via email at: media@hacanet.org.

All submissions must include a name and phone number to be considered. Copy may be edited because of space limitations.

OUR MISSION & VISION

To cultivate sustainable affordable housing communities and partnerships that inspire self-reliance, growth and optimism. We envision neighborhoods where poverty is alleviated, communities are healthy and safe, and all people can achieve their full potential.



@hacanet

facebook.com/hacanet

December 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Rent due	2	3
4	5 Quit Tobacco Class 1-2 p.m. @ North Loop	6	7	8 Resident Council Gaston 1:30 p.m.	9	10
11	12 Quit Tobacco Class 1-2 p.m. @ North Loop	13 Citywide 10 a.m. Resident Council BTW 11:30 a.m.	14	15	16 Resident Council Santa Rita 3 p.m.	17
18	19 Quit Tobacco Class 1-2 p.m. @ North Loop	20	21	22	23 HACA Closed	24
25	26 Quit Tobacco Class 1-2 p.m. @ North Loop	27	28	29	30	31



ONE VOICE

A monthly publication of the Housing Authority of the City of Austin

December 2016 • Volume 26 • Issue No. 12

Stronger Together: FSS Grads Share How Family Helped Them Succeed

HACA and Austin Pathways recently honored 20 Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) participants and six homeowners during “Sources of Our Strength,” the agency’s 19th Annual FSS and Homeownership Recognition Luncheon.

Austin Board of Realtors President Paul Hilgers hosted this year’s celebration. Austin City Council Member Sheri Gallo, Assistant City Manager Bert Lumbreras, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development San Antonio Public Housing Director David Pohler also came to show support for the graduates.

This year’s honorees included Eboni Hargis-Bell, a Housing Choice Voucher client who persevered through teen pregnancy, foreclosure, and single parenthood to further her education to find a solid and fulfilling career.

“When life is throwing you rocks, build a mountain of strength,” Eboni said during her speech.

She now serves as a licensed vocational nurse at the Texas School for the Blind, and is working toward buying a home for herself and her two children.

Former public housing resident Constance Lattimore said her children also are the reason she has worked so hard to improve her education and career.

“My source of strength was to show my children they can improve the hand they were dealt,” Constance said, “to show them an example, and that resources are there to help you.”



(From left) Eboni Hargis-Bell and Constance Lattimore after speaking during the 19th Annual FSS and Homeownership Recognition Luncheon at the Hilton Austin.

After completing money management and home buyer education classes, Constance is no longer on housing assistance. She has been employed as a full-time certified nurse’s assistant at Visiting Angels Home Health Care for five years.

More than 200 participants like Constance and Eboni have graduated from the FSS program since 1995. In addition, the Austin Affordable Housing Corporation has helped more than 100 families become homeowners since 2004.

For more information about the FSS program, contact Becky Summersett at beckys@hacanet.org or (512) 477-4488 ext. 1347. To learn more about the homeownership program, contact Suzanne Schwertner at suzannes@hacanet.org or (512) 477-4488 ext. 2118.

Blogger Uses Keyboard to Spread Tolerance



There's a new name on the Wall of Tolerance in Montgomery, Alabama. Gaston resident Carol Stepp last month received a certificate from the Southern Poverty Law Center for her pledge to take a stand against hate, and work for justice and tolerance in her daily life.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center website, the group fights hate and seeks justice for society's most vulnerable members through litigation, education and advocacy. The Wall of Tolerance digitally displays the names of people like Carol on a 20-by-40-foot wall within the Civil Rights Memorial Center.

Carol, 76, said she has been active in politics and equal rights since 1967.

"Racism and intolerance have been my main concerns in my life, beginning about 50 years ago," Carol said. "I simply do not understand looking down on anyone, as a person. We can all dislike the actions of some people, but we should never judge a whole race by the actions of a few."

When she was a young woman growing up in Corpus Christi, Carol said she did all she could to accept all types of people amid a constant climate of bigotry.

"I was a free thinker," Carol said. "Every human being is equal to every other human being."

In 1975, Carol's career brought her to Austin, Texas. She worked for several years in the mortgage industry, and then at the University of Texas' public radio station, as well as the departments of astronomy and graduate studies. She retired from the university after 22 years.

Since 2011, Carol's beliefs about politics, the constitution, crime, equality, and equal rights have been encapsulated in a self-titled blog, carolstepp.wordpress.com. On the lighter side, she also enjoys writing about topics including music, science fiction, health and weather.

Carol doesn't write because she's out for glory. She said she enjoys blogging because it keeps her creative mind busy and allows her to use her natural writing talent, as well as the techniques she's learned from Gaston's Badgerdog creative writing workshops, to tell the world what's on her mind.

"There's a lot more to me than [people] think there is," Carol said. "I just want to make my mark on this world, and I want it to be a good one."

Be Practical When Gifting to Seniors

One of Carol's most popular blog posts (reprinted with permission below) details what elderly people want for Christmas. The original post was read by over 2,000 visitors in one day!

Most elderly people don't need any more gifts of talcum powder, perfume, night gowns or bath robes.

Most of us have homes full of things we have collected over the years. I've gotten rid of more stuff than I need, and don't want any more.

We want are things you may not think are decent holiday presents. But here is what I would appreciate, and I bet your elderly relatives would too:

- ★ A 24- or 48-roll package of toilet tissue wrapped in a big, fluffy, beautiful bath towel
- ★ Gift cards to places like H.E.B., CVS, Walgreens, Target or Wal-Mart
- ★ Books of stamps, preferably the pre-stuck kind, and if they still sell them, the good-forever stamps
- ★ A gift card to a fancy food place, like Central Market or World Market
- ★ Food gifts wrapped in a package with something in which you would serve the food or drink
- ★ A 12 pack of soap

There are necessities for every elderly person that they sometimes cannot afford.

Most of us simply don't want another knickknack or bath product that is just going to collect dust.

If you feel silly giving toilet paper, remember many of us have limited income, and paper products can add up.

Toilet paper, tissues or paper towels are great, especially if you get creative with the wrapping or decorating. Add a set of kitchen towels, or a utensil or two.

Children want fancy, expensive things. The elderly don't.



Need Money for College? Apply for a Scholarship Today!

The Public Housing Authorities Directors Association (PHADA) offers three scholarships for high school seniors living in public or assisted housing. Applications are due January 27, 2017.

- **Stephen J. Bollinger Memorial Scholarship (\$7,000):** Submit a typed essay in English addressing the following topic: How my public housing and high school experiences have influenced my life. (350–500 words)
- **Freedom & Civil Right Scholarship (\$5,000):** Include a personal essay (350–500 words) demonstrating your efforts and achievements in furthering the values of the civil rights movement. Explain why the cause is still relevant in communities today and how they relate to your educational goals. Include any relevant volunteer experiences and community involvement activities relating to advancing the cause of civil rights.
- **SACS Software/Scott Accounting & Computer Services, Inc. Scholarship (\$5,000):** Submit a typed essay in English addressing the following topic: How my public housing and high school experiences have influenced my life. (350–500 words)

The scholarship fund will be administered by the PHADA Scholarship Committee. The money will go directly to the recipient's school. The school will deposit the money into the student's account. The money may only be used to pay for tuition, books and activities directly related to the student's education. If the student discontinues his or her education, the unused portion of the scholarship will be returned to PHADA. For more information, contact PHADA at (202) 546-5445.

Stay Informed about RAD at These Upcoming Meetings

RAD MEETING SCHEDULE*

- **Dec. 6:** Lakeside 10:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
- **Dec. 8:** Santa Rita Courts 5:30 p.m.
- **Dec. 12:** Meadowbrook 4 & 5:30 p.m.
- **Jan. 12:** Thurmond Heights 4 & 5:30 p.m.
- **Jan. 18:** Rosewood/Salina 10:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m.
at the Salina Community room, 1143 Salina St.
- **Jan. 19:** Booker T. Washington 4 & 5:30 p.m.

**Meeting times subject to change. For more information, call the RAD Hotline at 1-(844) HACA-RAD (422-2723) or email hacarad@hacanet.org.*



RAD Construction is under way at Manchaca Village! Ezequiel Castillo was among the first residents to move into an upgraded unit, which includes a new bathroom and kitchen, new paint, and new appliances.

GIFT CARD GIVEAWAY

Are you reading One Voice? For a chance to win a \$10 gift card, call (512) 477-4488 ext. 2601, and leave a message with your name, phone number, property name and unit number. Mention the best gift you've ever received. The first 15 callers will be entered into a drawing to win one of 10 gift cards. Contest open only to public housing residents.