

# ONE VOICE

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

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## From Exile to Excellence: How Education is Changing One Woman's Life

Conflict has forced millions of Iraqis to leave their homes and seek protection elsewhere – often beyond the borders of their own country, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Hanan Ibrahim Ismail Mohammed, 35, and her father Mohammed, 75, found refuge in Austin, Texas, after they were exiled from Iraq during the war. In possession of not much more than their IDs and immigration papers, the small family bounced from place to place in north Austin while looking for stable housing.

"I struggled in Austin – living in Texas," Hanan said, "because I needed subsidized housing and I couldn't pay rent."

Finances became more difficult when Hanan suffered an injury that affected her health for more than a year.

"That was a big thing that affected me," she said, "I was going through lots of treatment, and it's affected my vision and my hearing."

Fortunately, after applying for public housing, Hanan and her father received a letter from HACA informing them they were eligible for an apartment at Santa Rita Courts in east

**"I feel like I can handle most of my struggles, and I feel like I can help the people."**

*-Hanan*

Austin. Hanan said the opportunity to live at a HACA property while she was recovering from her injury was a godsend.

"HACA is friendly, and whenever we have any issue or any question, we have someone to answer us and tell us what to do and where to go," she said. "It's very helpful. First of all, on the rent, and it's a safe environment. The third thing is the activities."



*Hanan Ibrahim Ismail Mohammed*

Hanan and her father connected with HACA ROSS Specialist Dominique Sam, who provided them information about a number of resident programs, including English as a Second Language classes at nearby churches, and GED classes at Austin Community College and the Ascend Center for Learning. HACA provided Hanan a GED test voucher.

"[HACA has] helped me to find the resources, where to start, what to study — it's made me more exposed to the resources and apply myself in a better way — So I know now what's next."

So what *is* next for Hanan? With HACA's support, she recently finished her GED. Her experience serving on the Resident Council and volunteering with Mobile Loaves and Fishes and the Capital of Texas Food Bank has inspired her to apply for an Austin Pathways HACA Scholarship so she can go to college and pursue a career as a volunteer coordinator.

"I can do more and more, and first of all help myself be a self-sufficient person, and help my dad, and my ultimate goal — the big goal — is to help the community and the people — whoever struggles in life. I feel like I can handle most of my struggles, and I feel like I can help the people."

## Smile, You're On Thurmond Heights' Camera!

Thanks to a Safety and Security Capital Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Safety, HACA last month installed high-tech security cameras at the Thurmond Heights community.

There are a total of eight cameras now on property, and they are 360-degree cameras, which provide views from multiple angles.

We're always looking for ways to help improve our residents' lives. Lighting and fencing upgrades at Thurmond Heights are also in the works!

For more information about how HACA is making improvements for our residents, visit [www.hacarad.org](http://www.hacarad.org).



### Apply for a HACA Scholarship Today!

HACA and Austin Pathways have awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships to public and HCV residents over the past 16 years. This year, it could be you!

Scholarship applicants must be a current HACA public housing resident or Housing Choice Voucher participant; a graduating high school senior, or already have high school diploma/GED; and currently attending or planning to attend a college, university, technical school or other post-secondary school.

The deadline to apply for the Austin Pathways HACA Scholarship is March 10. Get the application and more details at: [www.hacanet.org/residents/scholarships.php](http://www.hacanet.org/residents/scholarships.php). For more information, call Felisa Jones at (512) 477-4488 ext. 3405 or email [felisaj@hacanet.org](mailto:felisaj@hacanet.org).

## February is Black History Month

Each February, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History names a theme for the annual celebration of Black History Month. The theme for 2017 is The Crisis in Black Education, as education plays a crucial role in the history of African Americans.

While the focus in the U.S. is to recognize contributions of African Americans, it's important to understand the true meaning of Black History Month — to remember important people and events of descendants from Africa and worldwide. Contact a Community Development staff member for more information about upcoming Black History Month events at your property!



## A Healthy Dessert for Your Sweetheart

HACA supports healthy living. Here's a light and delicious recipe for Strawberry Cheesecake Minis (serves 12) from Taste of Home that you can feel good about serving to your family and friends on Valentine's Day!

### Ingredients

2 packages (8 ounces each) reduced-fat cream cheese  
 Sugar substitute equivalent to 1/2 cup sugar  
 1/2 cup sugar  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 1 egg, lightly beaten  
 1/4 cup egg substitute  
 12 reduced-fat vanilla wafers  
 1 can (12 ounces) strawberry cake and pastry filling

### Directions

In a small bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Gradually beat in sugar substitute and sugar. Beat in vanilla. Add egg and egg substitute; beat until blended.

Place each vanilla wafer flat side down in a foil-lined muffin cup. Fill with cream cheese mixture. Bake at 350° for 15-20 minutes or until puffed and set. Cool on a wire rack for 1 hour (centers will sink slightly).

Spoon pastry filling into the center of each cheesecake. Store in the refrigerator.



### Nutritional Facts

1 each: 217 calories, 9g fat (5g saturated fat), 44mg cholesterol, 209mg sodium, 29g carbohydrate (20g sugars, 1g fiber), 5g protein. Diabetic Exchanges: 2 starch, 2 fat.

## 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. Say the key word: "VALENTINE." The first 15 callers could win one of 10 gift cards. Contest open only to public housing residents.

HACA will host an on-site Health & Wellness Fair for all HACA residents from 10 a.m. to noon Feb. 25 at 1201 W. Live Oak St. Access Dental, Any Baby Can, Austin Public Health, and other local groups will provide free info. Join us for prizes, snacks, raffles, and kids' activities! Transportation assistance is available. Questions? email [felisaj@hacanet.org](mailto:felisaj@hacanet.org) or call (512) 477-4488 ext. 3405.



## Valentine's Day Word Search

K	S	Q	S	J	I	V	R	T	D	S	R	Q	G	K
R	Q	Q	T	D	M	A	B	X	U	F	N	Q	J	J
K	G	D	A	S	N	L	Y	E	U	S	F	S	N	S
S	V	E	E	M	B	E	R	I	G	C	E	V	O	L
Q	W	Q	R	Q	Q	N	I	A	W	R	A	O	C	G
T	Z	E	T	G	R	T	Z	R	E	Y	I	N	Q	T
D	Q	I	E	E	O	I	K	Z	F	D	R	E	D	J
H	O	B	N	T	P	N	W	N	O	E	F	T	G	Y
X	U	T	H	C	H	E	H	V	X	E	A	L	A	T
N	A	G	B	P	R	E	E	Y	B	M	T	C	B	H
F	O	M	G	T	U	S	A	R	L	R	K	U	T	Q
I	M	T	M	Q	S	K	U	R	A	U	N	P	E	H
C	A	R	D	S	K	A	A	E	T	W	I	I	G	U
M	C	D	I	R	R	M	H	H	X	E	P	D	P	N
W	Q	K	L	Y	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	J	O	J

CANDY  
CARDS  
CUPID  
DEAR  
DOVES  
FEBRUARY  
FLOWERS  
FRIENDS  
HEART

TREATS  
VALENTINE  
SWEETHEART  
RED  
LOVE  
KISS  
PINK  
HUG





## 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](mailto: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.



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## February 2017

*Editor's Note: Scheduled meetings are subject to change. Resident Council meeting dates/times are currently under review.*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Rent due	2 RAD Meeting 5:30 p.m. @ Northgate	3	4
5	6	7 Spanish EGBI Workshop: Sales Tax para Restaurantes & Catering 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. \$30	8 Spanish EGBI Workshop: Sales Tax para Construcción y Landscaping 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. \$30	9 Pay for College Workshop 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. @ 1124 S. IH-35 RAD Meeting 10:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. @ Rosewood	10	11
12	13	14 Citywide 10 a.m.  Valentine's Day	15  RAD Meeting 5:30 p.m. @ Santa Rita	16 HACA Board Meeting-Noon @1124 S. IH-35 RAD Meeting 5:30 p.m. @ Goodrich	17	18
19	20 President's Day HACA Closed	21  RAD Meeting 4 & 5:30 p.m. @ Meadowbrook	22  RAD Meeting 10:30 a.m. @ Gaston Place	23	24	25 Health & Wellness Fair 10 a.m.-noon @ Meadowbrook
26	27	28  RAD Meeting 10:30 a.m. & 5:30 p.m. @ Lakeside				