



ONE VOICE

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

December 2017 • Volume 27 • Issue No. 12

'01 FSS GRAD SHARES HOW HACA HELPED HER TRANSFORM HER LIFE

In the early '90s, former HCV client De Shaun Ealoms was in a financial crisis. At the time, she was the single parent of an autistic son, Jonathan.

"Working and going to school was almost impossible, Ealoms said. "I honestly don't know how I would have made it without the support of my family. It was a chaotic and unpredictable time."

Ealoms also had the support of HACA's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program. She entered FSS in '96 at a time when only about 5 percent of HACA public housing residents and HCV clients were enrolled.

HACA recently celebrated its 20th Annual FSS and Homeownership Recognition Luncheon. To date, over 250 participants like Ealoms have graduated from FSS. In addition, 104 graduates have purchased homes through HACA's Homeownership Program.

FSS equips residents with the tools they need to achieve housing and financial independence. Services include education, workforce, health and life-skills programs, bolstered by access to child care and transportation. Participants accrue escrow savings funds as their earned income increases, which are then used to support goals like homeownership or debt repayment.

Ealoms, who graduated from FSS in '01, says HACA provided her with the opportunity to work part time while earning her bachelor's degree in sociology from Huston-Tillotson University, and gave her the incentive she needed to work toward buying a home.



She used her escrow account funds to pay closing costs toward the purchase of a house in Kyle, where she still resides. Jonathan, now in his 30s, lives with a personal caregiver in Austin, and is happy and thriving. He comes home often to visit with his mom.

"My son's disability is part of the greater plan - One that would force me to grow and expand and discover my gifts and my abilities which would serve me as I began living out my God-assigned purpose."

Ealoms went on to earn a master's degree in special education from Texas State University. She currently serves as a Parent Program Specialist for Child Protective Services (CPS) at the Department of Family and Protective Services. She is a member of the Autism Society of America, and is a staunch advocate for youth in the CPS system.

For more information about the FSS program, visit <https://www.hacanet.org/residents/fss-services/> or call Becky Summersett at (512) 477-4488 ext. 1347.

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.

NEED MONEY FOR COLLEGE? APPLY FOR A HACA SCHOLARSHIP!

The cost of higher education doesn't have to be overwhelming. HACA has many resources available to residents who plan to attend college or a trade school. HACA offers scholarships exclusively for HACA's public and subsidized housing residents. If you are currently attending or have previously attended a post-secondary school, you must have a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or greater (transfer credits are not considered in this GPA). Scholarship applicants must be a current HACA public or subsidized housing resident or Housing Choice Voucher participant; a graduating high school senior or already have a high school diploma/GED, or currently attending or planning to attend a college, university, technical school, or other post-secondary school.

2018 Scholarship Opportunities

- **Public Housing Authorities Directors Association Scholarship (PHADA):** PHADA will award two scholarships. Visit <http://memberservices.phada.org/conferences/PHADA-Scholarship-Program> to download the brochure and application. Complete and submit the application to Y.E.S. Manager Felisa Jones at felisaj@hacanet.org or mail to 1124 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78702, Attn: Felisa Jones by January 12, 2018.
- **Texas NAHRO 2018 Scholarship:** TX NAHRO provides scholarships each year to high school seniors, graduating in the spring following this application deadline and who are currently living with their families as public housing or HCV residents. Applications must be submitted to felisaj@hacanet.org or by mail at 1124 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78702, Attn: Felisa Jones by February 2, 2018.
- **Austin Pathways HACA Resident Scholarship:** You can download the complete Austin Pathways HACA Resident Scholarship packet here: <https://www.hacanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/2018CompleteScholarshipPacket.pdf>.

For more information about any of these scholarships, email Y.E.S. Manager Felisa Jones at felisaj@hacanet.org or call (512) 477-4488 ext. 3405.

HACA RESIDENTS, STAFF SAY GOOD-BYE TO LONGTIME FRIEND

Last month, HACA announced with great sadness the passing of Georgian Manor resident Rachel Martinez. Rachel was a longtime resident leader, and had served on the Resident Council since 2007. Most recently, she served as Citywide President. In 2015, Rachel was named TX NAHRO Resident of the Year.

Despite health concerns and mobility challenges, Rachel was one HACA's most active residents. She'd tackle any resident issue – whether it concerned children, older adults or resident safety. Rachel was a kind, generous person who was always ready to help organize a fellowship event.

Rachel learned how to build a computer through American YouthWorks, so her son could access the same resources as his peers. She attended classes knowing this tool would help him keep up with his classmates.

In 2014, Rachel participated in HACA's groundbreaking Unlocking the Connection digital inclusion initiative



to bring internet to HACA's housing units. That fall, HACA and HUD Secretary Julián Castro held an event to officially launch Unlocking the Connection. Rachel shared her message about the transformative power of digital inclusion, bringing 120 people to their feet.

Rachel was truly an inspiration to HACA and the Austin community. She will be deeply missed by everyone who knew her.

TIPS TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE AS DAYS GET SHORTER DURING WINTER

Daylight Saving Time ends at 2 a.m. Nov. 5. The time will fall back one hour, meaning there will be less sunlight for children to enjoy in the evenings. As the nights get longer, it is important for parents and guardians to help keep children safe.

Here are a few general rules of thumb as the season changes:

- Be aware of your surroundings
- Start a buddy system when walking after dark; always walk with a friend or family member
- Remind kids to avoid crossing the street without using a crosswalk, or crossing the street from between parked vehicles. Crosswalks are safer and more visible, especially after dark.
- Wear reflective clothing or light-colored clothes to be easily seen by motorists.
- Children should always be accompanied by an adult.
- Make sure your children are home before dark.
- Create a safety plan with your children if they see strange vehicles or persons near them. For example, do your children know how to call 9-1-1 in an emergency? What should they do if a stranger approaches them?
- Teach your children about trusted adults like law enforcement officials or HACA property staff.



Young residents chat with an Austin Police officer during this year's National Night Out party at Booker T. Washington Terraces in east Austin.

For more information and safety tips, try the Austin Police Department's new mobile app called AustinPD. You can download the app on your smart phone to stay informed and engaged by getting direct access to important services like: police station locations, crime prevention information, news updates, and the ability to file reports.

LOCAL CHURCH SERVES THANKSGIVING DINNER AT GASTON PLACE



In the spirit of giving, volunteers and their children from Austin Christian Fellowship donated and served Thanksgiving lunch to Gaston Place residents last month.

Gaston residents enjoyed traditional Thanksgiving fixings including mashed potatoes, ham, yams, green bean casserole and pie.

Thank you to Austin Christian Fellowship and all of the HACA Resident Council members and HACA staff that helped make this event possible! Happy holidays!

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 phrase: "SILVER BELLS." The first 15 callers could win one of 10 gift cards. Contest open only to subsidized and public housing residents.

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.



HACA does not discriminate on the basis of disability status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its federally assisted programs and activities. The following person has been designated to coordinate compliance with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in HUD's regulations implementing Section 504: Vice President of Housing & Community Development, 1124 S. IH 35, Austin, TX 78704, (512)477-4488; TTY: (800) 735-2989 or 711 Voice Relay.



@hacanet
facebook.com/hacanet

December 2017

Editor's Note: Scheduled meetings are subject to change.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 Rent due Resident Council: 11 a.m. @ Georgian 1:30 p.m. @ Santa Rita Courts	2
3	4 Resident Council 1 p.m. @ Bouldin	5 Resident Council 11 a.m. @ Coronado	6	7	8	9
10	11 Resident Council 1:30 p.m. @ Meadowbrook	12 Citywide 10 a.m. Hanukkah	13 Resident Council: 10:30 a.m. @ Northgate 2 p.m. @ Lakeside	14 Resident Council 1:30 p.m. @ Gaston	15	16
17	18 Resident Council 1 p.m. @ Thurmond	19 Resident Council 11 a.m. @ BTW	20 Resident Council 1:30 p.m. @ North Loop	21 Resident Council: 10:30 a.m. @ Chalmers 1:30 p.m. @ Rosewood/Salina	22 HACA Closed	23
24 Christmas Eve New Year's Eve 31	25 Christmas Day HACA Closed	26 Kwanzaa	27	28 Resident Council: 11 a.m. @ Goodrich 1:30 p.m. @ Man. 11 1:30 p.m. @ Man. Village 1:30 p.m. @ Shadowbend	29	30