

# Around the House

Volume 3, Issue 3

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## Housing and Community Services Department Mission

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

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## Public Housing



Public Housing needs applicants with **large families** (minimum of 4 persons). There is a short waiting list for eligible families with 7 or more members; five and six bedroom homes are available now for such families. Families with 4-6 members may have less than a six-month waiting period.

In addition to the family unit openings, Public Housing is also accepting applications from persons **50 years of age and older**. Occupancy within 60 days is available for persons age 62 and over, at Greenway Manor and McLean Manor. Both Greenway and McLean Manor have an electronic security door system, low energy bills, live-in building attendant, and resident service coordination. Also in-

cluded are senior companions, housekeeping, and transportation services at little or no cost.

Public Housing is also available for **persons with physical disabilities**. Many apartment units in the Public Housing inventory, have been modified to meet handicap accessible standards, however according to current records very few of the applicants on the waiting list are in need of such units. Property Managers will offer a vacant accessible unit, first, to an eligible qualified applicant on the waiting list who has declared that they have a handicap requiring accessibility features (often skipping down the waiting list to such persons). If there are no such applicants on the list, the unit will be

offered to the first eligible person on the list. It is important that persons needing special accommodations, indicate their needs on the Preliminary Application, because Public Housing staff are prohibited by law from asking this question.

If you know someone who needs subsidized housing and who:

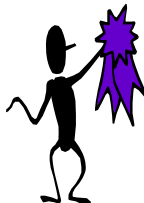
- ✓ has a family size of 4 or more persons
- ✓ is age 50 or over, or
- ✓ who is a disabled head of the household

encourage them to complete an application for Public Housing, at the Housing and Community Services Office located at 332 N. Riverview (one block west of the downtown Post Office), from 8-5, Monday through Friday.

## Playground Safety Contest Winners!

Last month we announced a contest for children to make posters or write essays about playground safety. Over 100 children responded with many creative thoughts on what playground safety means to them.

Following are those whose entries were selected for recognition.



Ages 12-14 (Poster)  
Maelee Tolbert

- Ages 9-11 (Poster)
1. Karisha Wheeler
  2. Madeline Clark
  3. Aylin Rico

- Ages 9-11 (Essay)
1. Jason Nguyen
  2. Lena Quach
  3. Candace Brown

- Ages 6-8 (Poster)
1. Cameron Hill
  2. Kimberly Sathngam
  3. Eber Martinez

The top winners in each category and age group will receive a special prize and will be entered into the national contest. Everyone who entered will receive a special gift and their work will be displayed at Neighborhood City Halls.

Thanks to everyone who participated—and during the upcoming summer months, remember all those wonderful ways you listed for being

**Safe and Sound at the Playground!**



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

The Housing and Community Services department has many dedicated employees, whom we recognize in our newsletters from time to time, for their individual achievements. However, as a department, we are also achieving great things.

For instance, the Section 8 program recently received a score of 97% on the Section 8 Management Assessment Program. This rating represents Section 8's performance on a number of indicators such as managing the waiting list properly, correctly calculating

rent subsidy payments and enforcing Housing Quality Standards on the properties we subsidize. This high score could not have been possible without the careful and thorough work of all Section 8 staff.

Another department program which continues to receive high honors, is the HOME program. It continues to be ranked as the Number 1 HOME program in the state of Kansas. This ranking reflects the fact that we disburse funds in a timely manner and that we are serving a diverse population in our homeownership and home repair programs. Our rank-

ings in these and other factors are higher than the state and national averages! Again, these achievements would not be possible without the professional commitment and dedication of the HOME program staff.

I hope you will join me in offering your congratulations to the staff on these program achievements—keeping in mind that the value of the recognition is not in having a new plaque to put on the wall, but it is evidence of the high quality of service our staff is delivering to our community.

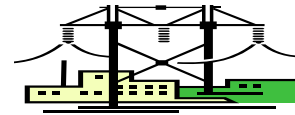
**Congratulations!**

## New Utility Allowances

The Public Housing and Section 8 programs will be implementing new utility allowance rates within the next few months. Utility allowances are calculated on the basis of the amount of standard utilities an energy-conserving household would use, according to the number of bedrooms in the unit.

The Wichita Housing Authority contracts with the South Central

Kansas Economic Development District to calculate current utility allowances, using standard software designed for this purpose. When their report reflects a change in utility consumption of 10% or more, the WHA is required to modify its utility allowance struc-



ture. The utility rate structure is used to calculate rent payments for Public Housing tenants, and to calculate the Section 8 Housing

Choice Voucher payment required. All tenants and clients will be notified in advance of the impact of these changes.

*For information on the exact utility allowance rates for your type of unit, check the Housing & Community Services Department website after May 15, 2006.*  
[www.wichita.gov/cityoffices/housing](http://www.wichita.gov/cityoffices/housing)

## Behind the Scenes ...

Michelle Rucker has been working behind the scenes to help fill much needed positions in the department. We are pleased to announce the following promotions and new employees:

**Shaun Davis** was promoted to the position of Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency Homeownership Coordinator.



We're proud of our people!

**Jackie Robinson** was promoted to the position of Neighborhood Inspector I.

**Teresa Beacham** was hired to fill a vacant secretary position.

**Raymond Davis** was hired to fill a vacant Rehabilitation Specialist position.

In accordance with Section 3 of the Housing & Urban Development Act of 1968, Public Housing and Section 8 residents are reminded to watch the City's website and to apply for positions for which you qualify. When you do, be sure and indicate that you are in Public Housing or receiving a Section 8 voucher.

# Family Self-Sufficiency



# Program News

## The Family Self-Sufficiency Program is on TV!!

The FSS program is being featured on Wichita's Channel 7, in a special feature which runs every Monday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday at 7:30 am, 8:30 am, 9:30 am, 12:30 pm, 5:30 pm, 6:30 pm and 8:00 pm. Tune in to learn more about this important program which is making a huge difference in the lives of program participants. You might even see someone you know!

One of the ways the program assists persons who want to become self-sufficient, is through mandatory workshops. Following is the schedule of workshops remaining in 2006.

### FSS Workshops

- May 11.....Safety
- June 8.....Physical Fitness, Health & Nutrition
- July 13.....Adult Education
- August 10.....Life Skills (Organization)
- September 14.....Career Building
- October 12.....Domestic Violence
- November 16.....Understanding Your FSS Escrow

These workshops are required 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.

### 2006 Credit Smart Workshops

- May 6.....Managing Your Money & Goal Setting
- June 24.....Banking Services & Establishing Good Credit
- July 22.....Understanding Credit Scoring & Thinking Like A Lender
- August 12.....Avoiding Credit Traps
- September 16.....Restoring Your Credit & Planning For Your Future
- October 7.....Becoming A Home owner

These workshops are held at Dellrose United Methodist Church, 14th & Oliver, from 10 to noon—and are open to anyone interested in homeownership.

## Attention Section 8 Landlords, Property Managers and Owners: New Shelter Plus Care Program Guidelines!

Effective January 1, 2006, the Housing and Community Services Department's Section 8 Division is no longer required to conduct criminal background checks for applicants or participants in the Shelter Plus Care program. Regulations for this program have changed such that participants for the Shelter Plus Care program cannot be denied housing assistance due to a negative criminal history.

This change only affects the Shelter Plus Care program. The Section 8 program will continue to conduct criminal background checks of participants and applicants for the Section 8 Rental Assistance (Housing Choice Voucher) Program.

Shelter Plus Care participants will be given a "purple" certificate confirming their eligibility.

Shelter Plus Care is a Federal program which provides housing and supportive services on a long-term basis for homeless persons with disabilities (serious mental illness, chronic problems with alcohol or drugs, and AIDS or related diseases), and their families.

Call Lena Wagner at  
462-3700  
if you have questions.

## Current HAP Payment Schedule

<i>Month</i>	<i>Mail Date</i>
MAY	April 28, 2006
JUNE	May 31, 2006
JULY	June 30, 2006
AUGUST	July 28, 2006

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*We're On The Web!*  
[www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing](http://www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Housing)

## Residential Smoke Alarms—Not Just A Good Idea—It's the Law!



The State of Kansas requires every home to have a smoke alarm. The Sedgwick County Fire District recommends at least two smoke alarms in each home. The larger your home, the more smoke alarms you need for adequate protection. If you're not sure how old your smoke alarms are, it's best to replace them.

Smoke alarms should be installed within 15 feet of sleeping areas, in corridors outside the bedrooms, on each level of your home, and above stairwells.

### For Best Performance

When possible smoke alarms should be mounted in the middle of the ceiling within corridors or outside of bedrooms. If not possible, mount them on a wall at least three

feet from any corner, and four to six inches from the ceiling.

Do not install smoke alarms where drafts from fans or air ducts can reach them. The moving air can blow smoke away from the sensor.

To avoid nuisance alarms (like those caused by cooking smoke) keep smoke alarms at least 10 feet from stoves.

When there is a fire it is important to get out fast! It helps to have a plan so you'll know what to do to get out of your home. Talk to your children about good escape plans that can help you and them to get out of the house quickly and safely. Fires are scary and confusing and children have a tendency to hide. Make sure

they know the escape plan—and that they should leave and meet family members at the designated place outside. A great fire safety teaching tool for children is available online at [www.firesafety.gov/kids/flash.shtml](http://www.firesafety.gov/kids/flash.shtml)

Fires can be loud, they burn very fast, and the smoke can make a room very dark. The best plan is to have two ways to get out of each room. If fire blocks one way, you can get out the other way.

In case of fire, do not take time to gather up your belongings. When escaping, stay low to the floor. Smoke rises during a fire. The safest air is down low. Once you get outside, stay outside no matter what! Don't go back for anything.