

The HOME Edition

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First Quarter 2014

Smoke-Free Policy Implemented



Houston Housing Authority announced its new smoke-free policy in January at a press conference at Cuney Homes alongside Mayor Annise Parker, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services Stephen Williams & HHA Board Commissioners Lance Gilliam and Assata-Nicole Richards. HHA's President & CEO Tory Gunsolley addresses the audience during the press conference.

In an effort to protect non-smokers, especially children, from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, the Houston Housing Authority has implemented a smoke-free policy at its 25 public housing and tax credit properties throughout the city. Effective January 1, 2014, smoking is not allowed inside resident units, common areas, offices and 25 feet from all main entryways. Smoking is only allowed in designated areas. Houston joins other major cities across the nation, including Seattle, Boston, San Antonio, and Detroit, among others, that have recognized the dangers of secondhand smoke and its impact on the health of children, seniors, and others at risk for chronic health conditions. Nationwide, more than 250 public housing authorities have gone smoke-free. The Houston Housing Authority Board of Commissioners approved the smoke-free policy in 2013.

“As one of the largest housing authorities in the country, we believe that providing a smoke-free environment for our residents is a major step in improving the health and well-being of our residents and will help HHA fulfill its mission of providing safe, quality housing,” said Houston Housing Authority President & CEO Tory Gunsolley. “The smoke-free policy is not an attack on smokers but rather an effort to protect non-smokers including children, elderly, disabled and people with chronic and respiratory illnesses. Also, we want to protect our employees such as the managers and maintenance staff who have to regularly go inside the units and may encounter first, second and third hand smoke.”

Oxford Place resident Lolita Wilson proudly displays a No Smoking sign on her front door. Wilson was raised by parents who smoked, and when she became a parent, she made a conscious effort to raise her children in a smoke-free environment. Nobody in her household smokes cigarettes but she is aware that if her neighbor smokes a cigarette that the

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HHA 2014 Goals:

- Improve Agency Performance
- Increase Quantity and Quality of Housing
- Increase Resident Self-Sufficiency
- Increase Customer Satisfaction
- Increase Community Engagement and Participation

Our Mission:

To improve lives by providing quality, affordable housing options and promoting education and economic self-sufficiency.

CEO Corner



As we enter spring, my staff and I are working hard to achieve the goals we set for 2014. This year, we plan to 1) improve agency performance 2) increase quantity and quality of housing 3) increase resident self-sufficiency 4) increase customer and employee satisfaction and 5) increase community engagement and participation. We are a HUD

designated “High Performing” agency, and we are committed to remain in that ranking by continuing to administer our programs with the highest level of care and dedication.

There is a tremendous need for additional affordable housing in Houston. We will begin the creation of 1,000 units of affordable housing with the development of new communities. We also plan to pursue acquisitions of multi-family units to turn into mixed-income, affordable housing. Also, the agency will play a critical role in the City of Houston’s initiative to get homeless Houstonians off the streets and into housing. Since 2012, working with our partners, we have housed over 2,000 homeless Houstonians, including homeless veterans. We will continue to work with community agencies to make sure that the neediest Houstonians have a home. For our residents living in our public housing communities, some of the properties will undergo renovations this year. We are planning to improve the community rooms and install new playgrounds at properties that need the upgrade.

We are committed to promoting healthy living and building healthy communities. The population that we serve has disproportionately higher rates of prediabetes and diabetes. We are participating in the Tour de Cure, a cycling event organized by the American Diabetes Association, to lend our support for a cure to diabetes. We invite you to join the Houston Housing Authority’s cycling team. To join our team or to donate, please visit the website www.tour.diabetes.org. The Houston Tour de Cure will be on Saturday, September 20, 2014. The race will start at Katy Mills Mall. For more information on registering for our team please contact KyAushawa Hallman at 713-260-0517. We hope you’ll be able to join us.

As we look with excitement towards the future, we want your input and feedback on the work that we are doing. Your input is always needed as we create and implement plans to transform the lives and communities of those that we serve. We look forward to hearing from you at our upcoming meetings and events.

Upcoming Programs

► Summer Jobs Program Internship

Goodwill Industries of Houston is seeking an Exxon-Mobil Community Summer Jobs Program Intern to support its Youth Services Programs. **A stipend is available.** Intern will help implement and coordinate Goodwill Houston’s summer youth employment program targeting at-risk youth ages 16 to 18.

Dates of Internship: June 16, 2014-August 8, 2014. Please send letters of interest and resumes to Houston Housing Authority Section 3 Coordinator Damien Kelly at dkelly@housingforhouston.com
Deadline to apply is April 30, 2014.

Goodwill Qualifications

- Able to meet the internship commitment dates of June 16, 2014 – August 8, 2014
- Available to work 5-days a week for 7-hours a day
- Ability to maintain meticulous case notes
- Strong PC skills with knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel
- Ability to work with people of varying backgrounds and cultures
- Ability to work under deadlines
- Ability to travel around Harris and surrounding counties
- Valid driver’s license, automobile, and auto insurance
- Customer service, sales or some recruiting experience is a plus
- Flexibility to occasionally work some evenings and weekends
- Capacity to work independently and collaboratively as part of a team
- Strong verbal and written communication skills; multilingual abilities (strongly preferred)

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Houston Housing Authority is providing you with more ways to connect with us. Follow us online to learn about events and meetings that are important to you. There are plenty of pictures of people you may know and activities happening at the properties. Come and join in on the fun!

Working Towards Their Goals

Lincoln Park resident Kelli Haygood is proud of her accomplishments and believes that she is on the right path to homeownership and self-sufficiency. The single mother of a 16-year-old girl and twin 4-year-old boys works full-time in the accounting department of an oil and gas company in Houston. Between taking care of her children and her job, her life is busy. She credits the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program for helping her keep her priorities in line and locate the resources to help her obtain her goals. Working with the FSS Coordinator Gilda Jackson, Haygood hopes to maintain her job, strengthen her credit score and become a homeowner.

“The FSS program has helped me to jumpstart the pursuit of my goals,” Haygood said. “It’s helping me to think outside the box and focus on what I want to accomplish. I know that nothing can deter me from getting to where I want to be.”

The public housing FSS program works with current residents to increase their earned income, advance their education and job training, and increase their assets. The FSS program provides participants with community resources, life skills workshops, credit repair and homeownership assistance. Participants work with an FSS Coordinator to help them stay on track and achieve their goals.



Lincoln Park resident Kelli Haygood (left) and Oxford Place resident Eleetia Hunt (right) are participants of the Family Self-Sufficiency program. Both women are on track to achieving their goals of financial independence.

Oxford Place resident Eleetia Hunt is taking full advantage of the FSS program. The single mother of a 14-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter aspires to own an event planning business, improve her credit score and become a homeowner. Currently, she is working on her business plan and creating business cards for her event planning business, which she calls Katered 2 You. “The program has kept me moving forward towards my goals one step at a time,” Hunt said. “I’m confident that in three years I will have accomplished all my goals and be on my way to a better life for myself and my kids.”

The Houston Housing Authority received \$52,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to continue its Family Self-Sufficiency program. If you are a public housing resident and would like to participate in the Family Self-Sufficiency program please contact FSS Coordinator Gilda Jackson at 281-409-8676.

Smoke-Free Policy Implemented, *continued from page 1*

fumes will enter her home. She is concerned about her health and the well being of her 8-year-old granddaughter who lives with her.

“I’m glad that Housing decided to ban smoking inside the apartments,” Wilson said. “Smelling cigarettes makes my throat itch, burns my eyes and I just can’t stand it. I don’t want to be around it and I don’t want my family around it.”

Since we implemented the smoke-free policy, Wilson said that she noticed fewer cigarette butts on the ground in her area. She hopes that the smoke-free policy will encourage those that smoke to stop and encourage everyone to make healthier choices.

Enforcement of the smoking ban will take effect in March allowing residents the opportunity to adjust to the new policy. The smoking ban will be handled as any other lease violation, which may lead to eviction if a resident is found not in compliance. Houston Housing Authority will provide free resources to residents who want to quit

smoking. For more information on smoking cessation classes and resources please contact Director of Client Services Cheryl Rivers at 713-260-0714.



Oxford Place resident Lolita Wilson welcomes HHA’s new smoke-free policy, which she believes will protect her and her 8-year-old granddaughter from the health effects of secondhand smoke.

Building up our Communities

Heatherbrook resident Darryll Carr watched proudly as we transformed his community over the past couple of months. At Heatherbrook, we replaced damaged roofs and painted the exterior of the buildings including the fence. Having lived at Heatherbrook for six years, Carr appreciates seeing his neighborhood beautified.

“The spirit of the community changes for the better when the people in that community see that their community is looking nicer,” Carr said. “People feel better about their environment, and about themselves.”



Heatherbrook received repairs to its damaged roofs as part of the renovations at the property.

The renovations were a part of our commitment to provide quality affordable housing to our residents. Fulton Village Resident Council President Chiquita Dexter has lived in the community for five years. The renovations at Fulton Village she said is refreshing and makes the community look better. At Fulton Village, we upgraded the flooring in the lobby area, and painted the exterior of the buildings including the fence.

“It’s a good feeling to drive up to the community and see that the place looks newer,” Dexter said. “The updates are good on the eyes and overall good for the community.”



Lincoln Park received fresh paint to the exterior of the buildings as part of the renovations at the property.

Security Improvements

The Houston Housing Authority was awarded \$250,000 by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to improve safety and security systems at Kelly Village. The HUD award allowed HHA to install 38 security cameras in the interior and exterior of the buildings, improve lighting and add additional speed bumps throughout the 270 unit site.

Kelly Village resident Cheryl Buckner and her 24-year-old daughter have lived at the property for two years. Both women agree that the security improvements will make them feel safer. Buckner has not had any incidents occur to her or her daughter while living at Kelly Village, and believes that the cameras will deter any future incidents occurring in the neighborhood.

“In every community there are bad people who don’t want to do the right thing,” Buckner said. “With the security cameras here, hopefully it will prevent the bad people from coming onto the property and committing crimes.”



Houston Housing Authority installed 38 security cameras to the interior and exterior buildings at Kelly Village.

Introducing HHA's Director of Security Brian Terry

Beginning March 2014, the Houston Housing Authority (HHA) will partner with the private management companies and Precinct 6 Constables to host quarterly community meetings at each site. The meetings will inform and engage public housing residents in activities related to: lease compliance, safety and supportive services. Among the speakers at the meeting will be HHA's new Director of Security Brian Terry. HHA is proud to introduce the community to Brian Terry.

How long have you been with the HHA and why did you choose to work at HHA?

I like to look at it as I did not choose the HHA but the HHA chose me and I am thankful for that. I joined HHA in September 2013, the same month that I retired from the Houston Police Dept. It was a very short retirement. In joining the HHA, I saw an opportunity to continue working in the field of public service. Serving is what I have done most of my life. My first experience started when I got out of high school and enlisted in the US Army. I feel I am just programmed to serve others.

Where were you before the HHA?

For the last 30 years I was with the City of Houston, Houston Police Dept. I spent my career in patrol, Juvenile Division, Chiefs Command Mayors detail, SOLO motorcycle detail, and I ended my career in Homeland Security Hobby Airport.

As Director of Security what is your role and how does it affect residents?

I have the awesome responsibility to decide what type of security the HHA will provide to our residents and who will provide it. My decisions will directly impact the lives and safety of those who live on our properties. It is a responsibility that I take very seriously.

What is the purpose of the safety meetings?

These meetings are really called community meetings; safety is just a part of it. The purpose of the meetings is to inform and engage the community, to distribute information, and to help residents gain a better understanding of their involvement to stay safe. There will also be other departments of the HHA represented at these meetings to provide information to our residents.

I am a strong supporter of Community Oriented Policing. I know crimes are better solved when the community and



the police are working together. We would like to see the community being a willing participant in the safety of the community in which they live. So the number one goal is to engage the community.

What can residents expect at the safety meetings?

Our residents can expect 3 things:

1. A host of information on how they can be safe, and help solve crime.
2. They can expect to be asked to take an active part in being engaged with the safety of their own community. See something; say something, when it comes to potential crimes they are aware of.
3. They will be able to ask questions directly to those in the law enforcement community and the security company we employ to help protect our residents and our properties.

Why should residents attend the safety meetings?

Residents should attend if they want to learn about being safe or how to participate to help keep their community safe for themselves and their families. They will have the opportunity to ask questions and to be updated about what we are doing on their property to keep them safe.

What are ways that residents can protect themselves from being victims of crime?

There are so many simple things residents can do but to name a few they should:

1. Not leaving anything visible or in plain view in their vehicles
2. Not walking alone at night
3. Always letting someone know their whereabouts
4. Being familiar with their surroundings
5. Locking car doors and resident doors always (the list goes on and on)

We will be providing this type of information during the meetings.

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Beautifying the Community

In our efforts to provide our residents with quality housing, we teamed up with Keep Houston Beautiful, and its partners to plant vegetables, trees, plants and flowers at our communities. The project started in March with the beautification of the courtyard and garden area at Lyerly senior apartments. Volunteers and residents helped to plant six trees and over 200 plants including starter plants at the property. We plan to expand the beautification project to Bellerive, Historic Oaks of Allen Parkway Village, and Telephone Road this spring. Keep Houston Beautiful has



Lyerly resident Santos Aguilar, Director of Asset Management Rick Johnson and volunteers from Keep Houston Beautiful and Liberty Mutual helped to plant six new trees at Lyerly.



Volunteers from Keep Houston Beautiful and Liberty Mutual planted over 200 plants at Lyerly.

pledged to donate over 1,000 plants including starter plants and over 200 trees to plant in the communities.

Rainero Ulabarro has lived at Lyerly for a year. He enjoyed planting bell peppers, tomatoes, egg plants, rosemary and peppermint alongside the volunteers.

“The new trees and the flowers really make the place look good,” Ulabarro said. “It’s great that we got the opportunity to help our home look nicer.”



Lyerly resident Elmo Brown and volunteers from Keep Houston Beautiful and Liberty Mutual planted more than 200 plants at Lyerly.



Lyerly residents Syrenna Riles and Rainero Ulabarro show off the vegetables that they helped to plant during the garden beautification project at Lyerly.

Brian Terry, *continued from page 5*

How can a resident report crimes?

For all emergencies call **911**

For non-emergencies HPD @ 713-884-3131

For non-emergencies Pct. 6 @ 713-923-9156

Also, some reports can be done online at the HPD website.

What else do you want residents to know about you?

I am a native Houstonian, grew up in the Sunnyside area of town and a graduate of Worthing High School. I graduated 3rd in my class from the Houston Police Academy, and I

was one of the first officers to teach the D.A.R.E. (Drug Awareness Resistance Education) curriculum in the Houston area schools. A program which I believe saved kids from drugs.

What else do you want residents to know about the safety meetings?

I want them to know that they will be heard and they will be informed.

Community Resources

Summer Jobs Program Internship, continued from page 2

ExxonMobil Qualifications

- Must be a high school graduate
- Be able to show proof that you are a currently enrolled, full-time, undergraduate who will be returning to school in the fall of 2014 as a full-time sophomore, junior, or senior
- Have no relation to any employee or permanent contractor of ExxonMobil
- Have no relation to any Goodwill Houston employee or board member
- Have never served as an ExxonMobil intern at Goodwill Houston
- Be able to attend mandatory events as directed by the program including but not limited to:
Friday, June 13, 2014 – Intern Development Seminar, 8:45 a.m.- Noon; Tuesday, June 24th, Wednesday, June 25th or Thursday, June 26th - Intern Service Projects; Thursday, July 10th, 2014 – Intern Development Seminar, 1:00 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.



Youth Achievers Club 2014 Student Round-Up

The Houston Housing Authority is recruiting High School Juniors and Seniors to join the new Youth Achievers Club (YAC). Members of the YAC will receive assistance reaching their college and work dreams.

We will help you:

- Research and select your career
- Enroll in college
- Get a job or internship
- Complete and submit financial aid documents
- Prepare and register for SAT/ACT tests
- Access scholarships and other funding

For more information and to enroll please contact Section 3 Coordinator Damien Kelly at 713-260-0614.

13th Annual Student Internship

13TH ANNUAL STUDENT INTERNSHIP

APPLICATIONS DUE FRIDAY MAY 9, 2014
Program begins on June 9th – August 7th

Eligibility Qualifications

1. Current Tenancy in the Houston Housing Authority Public Housing Program;
2. Must be between the age of 16-19;
3. Satisfactory school attendance (not exceeding 3 unexcused absences);
4. Satisfactory school conduct; (no "P")
5. Pass pre-employment drug screening;
6. Acceptable reference – a letter of recommendation from School Official, Resident Council Officer, Property Manager, or Community Leader;
7. Demonstrate Interest – 1 page typed essay explaining your interest in participating in the Houston Housing Authority's Student Internship Program.

HHA applications can be obtained at www.housingforhouston.com or by contacting Damien Kelly Section 3 Coordinator at (713) 260-0614, or via email at dkelly@housingforhouston.com. **ALL DOCUMENTS** (applications, final copy of grades, proof of residency, letter of reference, and a one page essay) must be submitted by May 9, 2014 via fax 713-260-0822 or deliver/mail to 2640 Fountain View Dr. Suite 230, Houston TX 77057.

Interviews will be held on 5/14/2014 at 3:00 at 815 Crosby St. Houston, TX. 77019

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TELEPHONE: (713) 260-0614 FAX: (713) 260-0822
WWW.HOUSINGFORHOUSTON.COM

Summer Programs

The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) offers summer programs for all ages and interests. Many are free or low cost. The Summer Activities Guide and Class Catalog has information on these programs and more, and is available at all HPARD community centers as well as online at www.houstontx.gov/parks.

HPARD also administers a summer meal program for youth ages 1 to 18. The HPARD'S Summer Food Service Program will operate from June 2 – August 15, 2014. Check with your Resident Council to learn if there will be a summer meal program at your community center.

For more community resources visit HHA's website at www.housingforhouston.com. Look for it under the Client Services tab.



HOUSTON
HOUSING AUTHORITY

2640 Fountain View Drive
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Houston, TX 77057

Board of Commissioners

- Lance Gilliam**, Chair
- Assata-Nicole Richards**, Vice Chair
- Bobbie Figures**, Commissioner
- Tina Arias Peterman**, Commissioner
- LaRence Snowden**, Commissioner
- Nicola Toubia**, Commissioner
- Phillis Wilson**, Commissioner
- Tory Gunsolley**, President & CEO

Important Telephone Numbers

- Customer Service Hotline:**
713.260.0377
- Fraud Hotline:** 713.260.0724
- Neighborhood Resource Center:**
713.655.1940
- City of Houston Service Helpline:**
311
- United Way Helpline:** 211

APRIL

- 4/15** Board of Commissioners Meeting at Long Drive at 3:00 p.m.
- 4/18** Good Friday—HHA closed
- 4/18** Easter Egg Hunt at Victory Place starts 4:00 p.m.
- 4/19** Easter Egg Hunt at Cuney Homes at 1-3 p.m.
- 4/20** Easter Egg Hunt at Forest Green starts 3:00 p.m.
- 4/25** Reading Rainbow Day at Oxford Place at 4-6 p.m.

MAY

- 5/5** Cinco de Mayo Celebration for all residents at Oxford from 4-6 p.m.
- 5/9** Mother's Day Ice Cream Social at HOAPV from 1-2 p.m.
- 5/9** Breast Cancer Awareness Mother's Day Luncheon at Oxford from 3-5 p.m.
- 5/20** Board of Commissioners Meeting at Irvinton Village at 3:00 p.m.
- 5/20** Mother's Day Luncheon at Lincoln Park starts at 12:00 p.m.
- 5/26** Memorial Day—HHA closed

JUNE

- 6/13** Juneteenth African-American Celebration for all residents at Oxford from 4-6 p.m.
- 6/13** Men's Health Awareness Father's Day Celebration at HOAPV from 1-2 p.m.
- 6/17** Board of Commissioners Meeting at Peninsula at 3:00 p.m.

The Home Edition is produced by the Houston Housing Authority.

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Claudia Nwaogu
Communications Coordinator

Comments, articles and photographs are welcomed for *The Home Edition* newsletter. All submissions must have a name and a phone number to be considered. Due to space limitations, the editor reserves the right to reject or edit copy as necessary.

Email submissions to
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