

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MAKING LUPE'S DREAM COME TRUE 2

ROSS GRANT = SUCCESS IN BELTON 2

PIC'S PICKS—POINTERS ON PIC 3

DON'T GET INTO HOT WATER 3

DIRECTOR'S CORNER 4

HUD REMOVED FROM GAO'S HIGH-RISK LIST

For the first time in 13 years, there are no HUD programs on the Government Accounting Office's (GAO) High-Risk list. In a recent report, GAO recognized HUD's progress in implementing financial and management reforms that led to significant improvements in the Department's Rental Housing Assistance Programs.

In 2001, the *Quality Control for Rental Assistance Subsidies Determinations Study* estimated that HUD's public housing, tenant-based and project-based rental assistance programs issued \$3.2 billion in gross annual improper payments attributable to program administrator errors and tenant underreporting of income.

The Office of Public Housing worked with housing industry partners to reduce improper rental assistance payments. In addition to improving guidance and training, HUD developed and implemented the Enterprise Income Verification System (EIV). Through the Rental Integrity Monitoring program, HUD was able to determine if and to what extent PHAs were accurately, thoroughly, and clearly determining family income and rent, for the purpose of reducing subsidy errors.

On March 20, 2007, Orlando Cabrera, Assistant Secretary for Public and Indian Housing, awarded certificates of appreciation to HUD staff whose outstanding efforts assisted in the

removing the Office of Public Housing's housing assistance programs from the High-Risk list. **Becky Kruse** and **Robin Barton**, from our Fort Worth Office of Public Housing, were among the 31 employees recognized for their commitment to and knowledge of the housing programs.

Without the cooperation of our Housing Authorities none of this would have been possible. The Albuquerque, Fort Worth, Houston and Oklahoma City Offices of Public Housing want to thank our Housing Authority staff members for working diligently with our offices to improve policies and procedures that contributed to the reduction of improper payments.

Dates to Remember

FYE 3/31/2007-

- **Unaudited financial data due to REAC 5/31/2007 (all PHAs)**

- **MASS due to REAC 5/31/2007**

HCVP only:

- **SEMAP due 5/30/2007**

MOVING FAMILIES TOWARDS ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

Patty Hamm, Director of the Housing Choice Voucher Program for the City of Amarillo's Housing Office, and her Program Coordinator, **Susan Kirkes**, are shaping attitudes and practices that allow human potential to emerge and flourish through the Housing Office's Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) and Homeown-

ership programs. It's been said that in each of us lies extraordinary promise. The problem is full potential is largely untapped in most people. Amarillo's Housing Office programs are designed to tap and develop participant's capabilities, moving families toward fulfillment and economic independence.

The Housing Office partnered with the City of Amarillo's Community Development Office to ensure the success of its programs. According to Patty and Susan, the success of the programs are, "due in large part to the support and assistance from the Community Development staff. The growth

(Continued on page 4)

MAKING LUPE'S DREAM COME TRUE

Once upon a time, a little girl named Lupe lived in a homeless shelter. She was only six years old, but Lupe dreamed big. She dreamed that everybody had a home.

Staff at the **Amarillo, Texas Housing Office** is doing all it can to fulfill Lupe's dream. It has 78 families enrolled in the FSS program and 66 enrolled in the Homeownership Program. The Housing Office is particularly proud of **Sherry Jones** and her family. Ms. Jones graduated from the FSS program and a year ago began

buying her family a home. Through the FSS program, she obtained her commercial driver's license and is a bus driver for Durham School Services. But that's not all. She also completed therapy technician training and works in that capacity for Texas Panhandle Mental Health Mental Retardation. Somehow Sherry also manages to drive her church's van on Sundays and sing in the choir. She is an active member of the church's women's organization, and an excellent role model for her two children, **Jasmine and Jimaal**.

Jasmine is a High School Senior, planning to attend West Texas A & M University in the Fall. Jimaal also attends High

School. He spent his Spring break in Houston with the City Church and helped open a new City Church.



Proud homeowner,
Sherry Jones

ROSS GRANT EQUALS SUCCESS AT BELTON

BY CARRIE KLINE AND CHAD KLAWETTER

(Carrie Kline is the Grants Director for the Belton, Texas Housing Authority and Chad Klawetter is the Resident Services Coordinator.)

Because the problems residents face while working to become self-sufficient are so varied, it was critically important to provide a comprehensive approach when requesting Neighborhood Network (NN) grant funding. The Belton Housing Authority's grant enabled renovation of a building into a training/meeting facility for residents. It allowed staff to manage programs

funded by the grant and to assist residents with referral services that linked residents to supportive services provided by other partners and agencies.

During the grant, 775 programs were held at the NN facility and others were held off-site. Off-site programs such as after school care for children, college enrollment, and summer youth activities were well attended. Residents utilized services as needed. For example, one resident only utilized scholarship funding. Other residents used multiple grant

funded programs on their way toward meeting goals. Some of the programs offered by the Authority were:

- Weekly computer classes attended by 45 adults and 94 youth,
- 276 computer skills training classes held at the NN facility,
- 181 residents participated in computer skills training classes,
- 36 residents attended GED classes,

- 5 residents passed GED tests,
- Homework Club,
- 149 youth utilized computers to assist with homework assignments,
- 4 residents utilized computers for college homework and employment needs,
- 19 residents enrolled in college or vocation programs,

(Continued on page 5)



Belton HA Homework Club in Action



Adult and youth computer class at Belton's NN facility

PIC'S PICKS

Dear Mr. PIC:
I can't figure out when to do an historical adjustment.

—Waiting for a Historic Moment

Dear Waiting:
If I have a current 50058 on the family in my database, you'll be waiting a long time. Use a historical adjustment to send a snapshot of info on a tenant that is **NOT** in my database. See the following questions for examples.

—Mr. PIC

Dear Mr. PIC:
Oops! I reversed a couple's SS#'s. What should I do?

—Socially Incorrect

Dear Socially Incorrect:
Do an online EOP. Assign the correct SS# to each person and transmit the '58 as an historical adjustment.

—Mr. PIC

Dear Mr. PIC:
The head of one of my households died. How do I make the remaining adult family member the HOH?

—Dead Head

Dear Dead Head:
Do an online EOP. Make the new HOH family member 01, (this will code the relation as "H") and send me the '58 as an historical adjustment.

—Mr. PIC

Dear Mr. PIC:
I caught you! You told me you couldn't find my tenant's SS#. I checked and everything is correct. There's no reason for you to reject the '58.

—Proved PIC Wrong

Dear Hostile:
Remember I no longer let you see the full SS#. So before I admit defeat, do something for

me. In Viewer, pull the record up by first & last name. Do an online EOP. Reenter the verified SS#, ensuring it's correct and send me the '58 as an historical adjustment. Let me know if it works.

—Mr. PIC



Mr. PIC

DON'T GET INTO HOT WATER

BY STEVE MCGREW

Occasionally we encounter issues that we have to research outside of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Yes Virginia, it is true. The CFR does not contain the answer to every question posed by the human mind.

Most water heater manufacturers recommend that the water temperature be set no higher than 120 degrees F. for ordinary residential use. The reason is that at 122 degrees, human flesh burns in 1 minute. Raise the temp to 131 degrees and it only takes 5 seconds to burn. Neither one of these temps is a particularly good temp to soak in. Note the fact that an elderly person may not sense the heat does NOT mean that the destructive effects of the heat are in any way mitigated. REMEMBER, scalding can be life threatening.

This burn chart from the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is quite graphic. It specifies the immersion contact times to cause various degrees of burns. By the way, a third

degree burn is the most serious.

Don't forget! Hot water *is* dangerous and there is no reason that it ever needs to be over 120 degrees in a residential setting.

If your residents object, you can explain that lowering the thermostat to 110-120 degrees will not only promote safety, it will save money.

Notice	Burn Chart		
	Water Temp ° F	Time for 1st Degree Burn	Time for 2nd & 3rd Degree Burns
The Engineering & Sciences Division of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has compiled the following time-temperature burn chart (based on the 1946 Harvard studies of Moritz & Henriques under Dept. of Defense contract.) The chart shows the exposure times, under circumstances of full immersion, that will result in superficial, & partial or full-thickness, scald burns at various water temperatures.	110°	Normal shower temp	
	116°	Pain threshold	
	116°	35 minute	45 minutes
	122°	1 minute	5 minutes
	131°	5 seconds	25 seconds
	140°	2 seconds	5 seconds
	149°	1 second	2 seconds
	154°	instantaneous	1 second

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Let me introduce Jerry Hyden, our new Program Center Coordinator in Oklahoma City. Jerry has been with PIH a number of years. We are glad he accepted the Program Center position—*Justin Ormsby*

The primary success for any organization is service to its customers. Everyone in the organization provides service for its customers, even if they never see those individuals or know their names.

Customer service is what the person perceives and remembers of the experience. It seems that the mood of the

customer has a significant impact on the perception of the service received. Perception is reality in the minds of every person when it comes to experiencing service satisfaction. Determining what impacts the customer's perception and memory of the service is the key to providing good service.

Sometimes it is hard to provide a good experience for every clients but we should all make a conscious effort to understand what we can do to improve the delivery of services to our

customers.

Here in the Oklahoma City Office of Public Housing, we make customer service a priority. Every member of the staff attends customer service training at a minimum of once a year. Customer service is on the agenda of every staff meeting and we continually strive to improve our services. While the superficial and immediate solution is just to solve the customer's problem, we like to think a little harder and find a deeper solution: a way to prevent this particular problem

from ever happening again.

Our main telephone line is rotated on a daily basis. This keeps the staff aware of the concerns and problems our clients have, while allowing them to practice the skills learned in training. We've established a dedicated problem solver at each of our PHAs and typically resolve issues within 72 hours.

It's our office goal to give remarkable customer service. The intent is to provide customer service so good that people *remark*.—*Jerry Hyden*

MOVING FAMILIES TOWARDS ECONOMIC

(Continued from page 1)

and efficiency of any program cannot be attained, nor sustained within a vacuum." The Community Development Office provides grants for the Homeownership Program and pays 75 percent of closing costs and down payments up to \$20,000 to assist participants in purchasing their own homes.

The FSS program in Amarillo provides case management to

each of its participants. Each family is evaluated to determine its current status and where it would like to be in five years. The case manager and the family then develop a five-year plan with a final goal of being welfare-free and self-sufficient. Barriers that prevent success such as childcare, education, employment, transportation, and insurance coverage are overcome through the involvement of local community agen-

cies.

When referring to participants in the FSS program, Kirkes said, "It's sort of like the carrot and the stick. We want them to reach economic independence. We want them to be the best role model for their children and break the cycle." Just as the FSS participants are reaching their goals, it appears the Amarillo Housing Office is as well. (See related story, page 2, "Making Lupe's Dream Come True.")

Website of the Quarter

RASS Business Calendar

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/reac/products/prodrass.cfm#rass>

HOUSING AUTHORITIES GO THE EXTRA MILE

A special thank you to our Low-Rent Housing Authorities. Each of you went that extra mile by submitting the Capital Fund Program (CFP) Amendments for the 2006 Bonus Fund grants on time. This grant had the shortest turnaround time for documentation receipt in the history of the CFP program. You make our job much easier! **Thank you!**



COMMINGLING NOT ALLOWED BY JACKIE MILLER

Funds provided by HUD are to be used by the HA only for the purposes for which the funds are authorized. Program funds are not fungible and withdrawals should not be made for a specific program in excess of the funds available on deposit for that program.

(For example: Low Rent funds must **NOT** be used to pay expenses for any other programs such as Section 8, USDA Rural Rental Development or Non-profits developments.)

Generally, the term “Commingling of Funds” refers to the use of one program’s funds to pay expenditures for, and in excess of the funds available for, another program. An HA does not “commingle” funds by pooling funds or by making expenditures for various programs from a single account used to pool funds.

Unless there is a specific legal requirement to maintain separate bank accounts for a specific purpose, the prohibition against ‘commingling of funds’ does

not mean that the HA is required to physically segregate program funds in multiple bank accounts.



ROSS GRANT EQUALS SUCCESS AT BELTON

(Continued from page 2)

- 19 residents received college or vocational scholarships,
- 6 children were enrolled in child development centers so parents could work or attend training,
- 172 children enrolled in the For Grades Sake incentive program,
- 45 children either maintained or improved their grades,
- 6 residents attended literacy training,
- 251 hours of transportation were provided that enabled 19 residents to attend self-sufficiency programs and 40 youth to participate in programs,
- Partner sponsored programs such as the Neighborhood Safety Program.

The Authority’s Neighborhood

Networks grant has helped many residents improve their quality of life, increase lifetime earning capacity and has enhanced learning for public housing children. The cafeteria approach to helping residents will result in long term resident benefits.

Melissa Price is just one example. She used only the scholarship portion of the grant. She is a great example of someone who is intent about turning dreams into reality. A single parent of three children, Melissa had a passion for helping others long before becoming a Belton Housing Authority (BHA) resident. Having lost a childhood friend to cancer, Melissa’s dream was to become a nurse. When she learned about the BHA scholarship program, she had already tried to work full-time, parent her children, and take a full course load at Temple College. “The scholarship really helped by giving me the money I needed to focus on school and family.” Recently, Melissa was

accepted into Temple College’s nursing school—and beat out over 400 other applicants—which she is excited to begin on June 3rd. She plans to pursue her LVN, RN, and bachelor’s degree in nursing. “I just want to pull my family up from poverty,” she explains. “And not only pull them up, but set an example as well.”

“I just want to pull my family up from poverty, and not only pull them up, but set an example as well.”



Melissa Price and her 4-year old son, Trent