



THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

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Kentucky PHA Offers Summer Programming for the Youth and Teens

Many young people in Northern Kentucky spend their summers outdoors, riding horses, fishing, and swimming in nearby lakes. However, children living in the state's inner-city neighborhoods rarely have this opportunity. For this reason, the Housing Authority of Covington (HAC) joined forces with the YMCA to enable Public Housing youth, ages 6-13, to spend their summers at Camp Ernst. The camp offers Public Housing youth an intensive group experience through educational specialists, mentors and recreational activities all in a safe and encouraging atmosphere. Camp Ernst is located in Burlington, KY and the program is provided at no charge to the participants.

"Probably every child who is here with us would not have an opportunity to participate in a summer camp like this if not for this program," said Jon Adkins, HAC Education Coordinator.

HAC and the Diocese of Covington partnered to provide an educational component for the camp. For an hour a day, two certified teachers give classroom instruction. Also, five paid high school/college students give one-on-one mentoring throughout the day.

"The statistics show that urban children who don't have anything going on in the summer will fall further behind other kids their age, so with that knowledge we felt we had to do something," Adkins added.

The children are having so much fun; they do not even seem to mind the academic component. "I was so excited that I actually got better in math," said 12-year-old Nautica Ruffin.

The 1-hour morning classroom work is followed by swimming, lunch, and other recreational activities. These include canoeing, archery, and horseback riding. The camp also has a ropes course with a zip-line, a giant swing, a climbing wall, and a 100-foot waterslide.

The housing agency also has additional summer youth activities; its Teen Summer Work Program for teen residents ages 16-20, helps young people gain summer employment. The program was launched with over 40 teens participating in employment/life skill training. Each teen resident works 20 hours per week for 6 weeks, gaining over 120 hours of paid experience. "I now have my own money to spend for college," noted 18-year-old Ra'Monne Dandridge.

These activities give young residents the opportunity to build character, avoid negative activities, and increase their self-esteem. To learn more about how your housing authority can implement similar programs, contact HAC Education Coordinator Jon Adkins at jadkins@covingtonky.gov.



Summer campers singing a camp song.
Photo credit: HAC

Participation in the Family Self-Sufficiency Programs Pays Off

Since 1990, the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program has encouraged families to become economically independent. The program provides Public Housing residents an avenue to becoming self-sufficient through education and training. At the same time FSS lets Public Housing agencies (PHAs) provide supportive services that help their residents meet their financial goals such as homeownership and a better job.

Public Housing residents who join the Public Housing FSS (PH FSS) program work with a program coordinator. The program coordinator connects residents with training opportunities or other services within the community and helps residents connect with local employers for jobs. Residents are required to sign a contract of participation. This contract details their individual responsibilities and goals and also the PHA's responsibilities. The PHA must establish goals on how to help the families achieve independence from welfare.

As the participant begins to earn extra income, an escrow account may be set up. This is money set aside for the resident, funded with the increased income, which would otherwise pay for increased rent. Upon successful completion of the FSS program, the resident may use the escrow funds in various ways.

FSS participants and the FSS coordinators help residents often create a plan of action to reach goals and stay on track. It may be working out a budget, planning for education or future employment, or setting up a successful child care plan. FSS participants gain a sense of financial freedom and independence from welfare assistance. Many successful candidates would agree that the lessons learned while on the program assist them throughout their lives, not just while they are living in Public Housing.

The Newport News Redevelopment & Housing Authority (NNRHA), in Virginia, is an example of a successful FSS program. NNRHA currently has 962 families enrolled in their FSS program with 439 of those families residing in public housing. Many of the participants focused on purchasing a home or improving their education. 70 participants purchased homes and 280 earned General Education Diplomas (GED), college degrees, or vocational programs.

Residents who want to get on the road to financial independence through the FSS program should contact their local housing authority. For additional information on the basics of the FSS program go to: <http://1.usa.gov/IB6zTW>.

TIPS: Grilling Safety



Now that the summer is here, you might be grilling outdoors. When grilling outdoors there are a few things you need to know to make sure nothing goes wrong and to get the most out of your cooking. With the combination of explosive fuels, hot metals, and lots of people, one needs to be aware of a number of safety issues for both gas grills and charcoal grills.

Gas Grills

Liquid petroleum (LP) gas or propane is highly flammable and can cause grill fires and even explosions. Many of these fires and explosions occur when consumers use a grill that has been left unused for a period of time or just after refilling and reattaching the grill's gas container. There are a number of actions that you can take to reduce the risk of fire or explosion.

Check the tubes that lead into the burner for any blockage and use a pipe cleaner or wire to clear the blockage by pushing it through to the main part of the burner. Check grill hoses for cracking brittleness, holes, leaks, and any sharp bends. Gas hoses need to be as far away as possible from hot surfaces and dripping hot grease. You can also install a heat shield for protection. Replace scratched or nicked connectors because they can eventually leak gas. Do not ever use a grill indoors, on a porch, or in a breezeway, and use the grill at least ten feet away from your home. Do not repair the grill yourself and always follow the manufacturer's warranty that comes with the grill.

Consumers should always use caution when storing propane containers. They should be kept upright. Never store or use flammable liquids near the grill. Consumers should transport containers in an upright position and never keep a filled container in a hot car. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when connecting or disconnecting LP gas containers. Grills manufactured after October 1, 1995, are required to have three additional safety features to eliminate leak hazards: a device to limit the flow of gas in the event of hose break, a mechanism to shut-off the grill, and a feature to prevent the flow of gas if the connection between the tank and the grill is not leak proof.

Charcoal Grills

Charcoal produces carbon monoxide (CO) when burned. A colorless, odorless gas, CO can accumulate to toxic levels in an enclosed environment. There are a few actions that you can take to reduce the risk of poisoning. You should never burn charcoal indoors, including in homes, vehicles, tents, or campers, regardless of ventilation. Do not store your grill indoors with freshly used coals since charcoal can produce CO fumes until the coals are completely extinguished. The label on charcoal packaging is very explicit in its warning to consumers about deadly CO gas that is released when charcoal is burned in a closed environment. To report a dangerous product or a product-related injury, go to <http://www.saferproducts.gov> or call the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Hotline at (800) 638-2772.

Contact us:

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Big Changes Coming to the PIH Newsletters

The Resident, *EcoWise* and *Public Housing Management* are going quarterly! This will be the last issue of this newsletter until the fall. When *The Resident* returns, it will have a new look and a new format. One thing that will not change is HUD's commitment to bringing you the newest information on the Public Housing program and most inspiring stories from its residents. You can get in touch with HUD's newsletter team by writing TheResident@HUD.gov. Please contact us with questions, comments or story ideas. For now, happy reading and see you in the fall!