

THE SOURCE



Jan./Feb. 2006

Useful information for Columbia and Cayce Housing Authorities residents

Vol. 16 No. 1

Columbia Housing Authority Continues to Move Forward with Hope VI Revitalization

The Columbia Housing Authority has completed additional phases of projects in the Celia Saxon and Rosewood Hills neighborhoods.

Celia Saxon

In the past month, CHA has opened 39 tax credit units and 36 public housing units in Lower Saxon (near Harden and Read Streets). These units are now 100 percent occupied.

Now, CHA is focusing on Upper Saxon (near C.A. Johnson Preparatory Academy), which is the final phase of the Hope VI Celia Saxon Project. The Authority has set a goal of completing this final phase by June 30, 2006.

Recently, CHA purchased Columbia Apartments and will soon be renovating the interior and exterior of 24 units. Exterior improvements will include adding porches.

In addition, CHA is building 55 townhouses, 23 of which will be new public housing and 32 will be new tax credit housing.

If you are currently a public housing resident or Section 8 participant and would



Left: An available single family home on Waverly St. in the Celia Saxon community.

like to move into one of these new apartments, contact Angela Anderson at 254-3886 ext. 246.

Rosewood Hills

AT&T has finished relocating their phone lines and CHA is now working with BellSouth on relocating their lines. This relocation process should be completed by March 2006.

At that time, the infrastructure contractor will return to the site to complete the

storm water drainage system, grading, streets and other utilities. This process will take approximately three months. Construction on the dwelling units is expected to begin in June 2006.

Did You Hear...?

CHA is pleased to announce that 65 families have moved back into Celia Saxon. Welcome back!!

Look for these symbols to see if an article applies to you!



For conventional public housing residents only.



For Section 8 residents only.



For all Housing Authority residents.



For Cayce residents only.



Executive Director's Message Gilbert Walker

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

Now that the new year has arrived, it's time to start working on those resolutions. Each January, most of us make an effort to change something about ourselves or our lives. After all, the new year presents us with the opportunity for a new beginning. We can look at this time as a fresh start and a great time to try new things.

What are your resolutions for 2006? Are you planning to shed the pounds you put on after your rich holiday dinners? Do you need to improve your financial situation after holiday shopping? Would you like to learn more about finding a new career, owning a home, or earning your GED?

Well, if you are hoping to lose a few pounds this year, the new Charles R. Drew Wellness Center is now open. This 40,000 square foot complex includes a 25-meter swimming pool, a full gym, six basketball goals, running track and much

more. Many different wellness classes are also offered, including aerobics and kickboxing. Call 545-3100 for more information.

If you would like help with your finances, CHA offers a Budget and Credit class that can help you. Not only can this class help you plan your budget and improve your credit, but you can also get assistance with filing your income taxes (see pg. 7 for details).

Like many people, maybe you have dreams of owning your own home. Working toward homeownership may be easier than you think. CHA offers a class that successfully helps residents buy new homes every month (see pg. 7).

If the new year brings you hopes of finding a new career, CHA can help you prepare for this too. Our Career Development class can assist you with writing a resume and looking for that new job.

No matter what your needs or goals, the CHA's HOPE VI/Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Department has something for almost everyone. However, it's up to you to take the first step. All you have to do is contact your Case Manager or the HOPE VI/FSS office at 254-3886 ext. 220.

The new year is the perfect time for making a commitment to change your life. From all of us at CHA, we wish you much success during 2006.

Wall of Fame 2006

CHA is currently accepting applications for its Nineteenth Annual Wall of Fame ceremony. The Wall of Fame honors past CHA residents who have achieved personal success and made significant contributions to their community. For an application form call 376-6161 or visit <http://www.chasc.org>. **The deadline for submitting applications is 12 noon on Monday, January 30, 2006.**

The 2006 Honorees will be announced at the annual Wall of Fame Ceremony on **Thursday, April 20, 2006 at 11:00 a.m.**

About the Wall of Fame

The concept of a Wall of Fame began in 1988 under former Columbia Housing Authority Executive Director William Ballou. Always concerned for the well-being of youth in communities and wanting a way to present positive, encouraging images and role models, Ballou commissioned a local artist to paint the first portraits. He believed that youth would be influenced by former residents of public housing who became successful leaders and pillars of the community. Thus, the Wall of Fame began.

Training Opportunitites for all CHA Residents



Fire Safety & Prevention Training

The Columbia Fire Department will offer tips on keeping you and your family safe.

Career Development

This class is for those needing help finding a job or creating a resume.

Homeownership Training

Want to work toward owning your own home? This class is for you.

Budget and Credit Class

Worried about your credit? This class will help you plan your budget and assist you in improving your credit.

Home and Yard Maintenance Class

This exciting two-hour class gives you a hands-on experience regarding home repairs and lawn maintenance

GED Classes are currently being offered at the Tillis Center every Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon. Contact Richland One Adult Education for more information at 343-2935.

****For more information or to sign up for any classes offered at the CHA call 254-3886 ext 220.**

Allen-Benedict Resident Awarded Service Medals 55 Years Later

Benjamin F. Williams was recently issued two medals of honor by the U.S. Marine Corps for his military service during the Korean War.

Williams was awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds sustained against the enemy on October 2, 1950. He was also given the Korean War Service Medal which is issued by the Korean government and approved by the Department of Defence for acceptance and wear.

CHA would like to thank Williams for his service to our country.



Summer Youth Employment

Applications for the Summer Youth Program will be available on April 17th and are due by May 12th. This eight (8) week program will take place June 5 - July 28.

To qualify, you must be 16 or 17 years old and a resident in Public Housing or Section 8. If accepted, you will be paid \$6.00 an hour and enjoy a great learning experience working at CHA.

Join the Section 8 Homeownership Club

The Section 8 Department will organize a "Homeownership Club" to provide support to those interested in becoming homeowners. Mortgage lenders, realtors and others from the community will be invited to speak at our meetings. We will especially discuss credit issues and provide information on how to resolve credit history problems.

The club will be open to everyone and is expected to begin in March. We would also like recent homeowners to attend and offer advice on making the transition from rental to homeownership.

For more information, call John Spann at 254-3886 ext. 210.

Remembering Reverend Edward Francis

CHA Board Member Reverend Edward Francis, Sr. died Christmas Day at a hospital in Charleston while awaiting a heart-lung transplant. He was 62.

Rev. Francis was a distinguished member of the Board of Commissioners for the Columbia Housing Authority and for the Columbia Housing Authority Developments, Inc. from 2000 until his passing in 2005.

Rev. Francis also served on the Columbia Urban League Board and participated in the Benedict-Allen Community Development Corporation. He was deeply involved in the Civil Rights movement, having marched alongside the late Martin Luther King, Jr. in Washington and South Carolina during the 1960s, and was a leader within the community for many years.

Rev. Francis will especially be remembered for his effort in improving the quality of life for families in the C.A. Johnson area. He championed the creation of the new Carver-Lyon Elementary School to replace sorely outdated facilities and served as Richland District One's Blue Ribbon Committee Chairman. Rev. Francis will be greatly missed.



If you need legal aid go to www.lawhelp.org/sc

Hundreds of easy to use, free resources are offered in the following areas: Consumer, Family and Juvenile, Criminal Law, Housing and more.

Specifically, you can find:

- Information about your rights and legal responsibilities
- Contact information for local telephone hotlines, social service agencies and community organizations
- Court information

The Holidays at CHA

2005 Agency of the Year Awards

On December 16th, CHA presented its Agency of the Year Awards to four deserving businesses and agencies for their outstanding service to the Authority and its residents during 2005. Nominations for this year's awards were submitted and voted on by CHA employees.

The award categories and winners are as follows:

Business Partner of the Year

Gary Realty (above right)

Community Partner of the Year

Columbia Police Dept. (below right)

Resident Impact Award

St. Peter's Catholic Church (below left)

First Baptist Church (not pictured)



From left: CHA Executive Director Gil Walker with Joy Teel and John Washington of Gary Realty.



From left: CHA Executive Director Gil Walker with Robert Keeder and Willis Hamm of St. Peter's Catholic Church.



From left: CHA Executive Director Gil Walker with Chief Crisp and Lieutenant Caldwell of the Columbia Police Department.

Big Smiles with Santa Claus



The Holidays at CHA

On December 19th and 20th, 100 CHA resident youth were hand selected to participate in the 2005 CHA/Jermaine O'Neal Christmas Extravaganza, a shopping spree funded by the Jermaine O'Neal Foundation. The youth were given a \$200 gift certificate to Wal-Mart and a \$100 gift certificate to The Finish Line. Here are some photos from the event.



Above: Twin girls pose with their new bikes.



Above: Officer Cruz poses with a young man and his new guitar.



Above: CHA employee Monya Terry helps two young men at the checkout line.



Above: A young girl tries on shoes at The Finish Line.

Tips for Clearing Holiday Debt

If you spent too much money during the holidays, you could now be in financial hot water. Hopefully this was not the case for you, but if it was, here are some steps you can take to repay your debt and restore your finances:

***Make a new year resolution to balance your checkbook every time you get paid.**

This will ensure you're not spending more than you make.

***Keep track of your bills.** Designate a specific place for bills and other financial statements. Separate your bank statements, tax documents, credit card bills and other important records. Keep up with due dates for bill payments.

***Create a monthly budget. Your budget is your spending plan.** To create a budget plan, determine your monthly income and recurring expenses like rent or mortgage, utilities, food, transportation costs, savings, entertainment and personal grooming. Then, identify periodic expenses like clothing, maintenance, gifts and vacations.

***Prioritize your expenses and spending.** After writing down expenses, prioritize each

by needs vs. wants. Set spending limits and determine an estimated cost for each expense. Pay off high interest credit cards and loans. This will save you money over time. Use extra funds to increase your savings for unplanned expenses. Look for ways to reduce daily spending, like taking your lunch to work or seeing matinees instead of evening movies.

***Develop a diversified savings plan.**

Don't save for retirement only. Save for things like a down payment on a new home or vehicle, or other items like annual medical expenses. Take advantage of employer sponsored benefit savings, such as retirement accounts and flexible spending accounts, which help cover uninsured medical costs and also lower the taxes you'll pay on payroll income.

***Recognize early signs of debt trouble.**

For instance, if you are behind on basics like rent, mortgage and utilities, or if you are using credit to buy items you should be buying with cash, such as groceries. Also, skipping some debt payments to pay others and receiving overdue notices or phone calls from bill collectors are other signs.

***Don't suffer in silence. Take action and get help.**

If you know you are going to have problems, contact your creditors and explain your situation. Depending on their policies and your situation, you may be able to negotiate your next payment or lower your interest rate. Remember, creditors would rather keep you as a customer than lose you to bankruptcy or foreclosure.

For more information contact Delores Nelson at 254-3886 ext. 259 or by email at dnelson@chasc.org.



Delores Nelson teaches a spending class at Allen-Benedict Court.



****Excellent College Opportunity in Knoxville****

Historically black [Knoxville College](http://www.knoxvillecollege.edu) in eastern Tennessee has reduced its tuition from \$5,000 to \$1,400 per student. This includes room, board and books!

All you need is \$600 for the enrollment deposit. Then, the other \$800 can be paid in four monthly installments of \$200 each.

The program is funded by corporate spon-

sors and guarantees a college education where students graduate debt free.

Requirements include a high school diploma and a 2.0 average. If a student has below a 2.0, but feels they are college material, they may be considered provided they have three letters of recommendation.

For more info, call 1-800-743-5669 or visit www.knoxvillecollege.edu.

Tips for Filing Your Taxes

Do you know that early filers get their refunds sooner? Get an early start on your taxes to avoid the last minute rush.

Here are some simple tips to get you started on your taxes. Remember, the deadline to file is April 15th.

***Gather your records in advance.** Make sure you have everything you need, including W-2's and 1099's. Then, save a copy for your files.

***Get the right forms.** They're available around the clock on the IRS website: www.irs.gov.

***Take your time.** Don't rush when filling out your tax return, because you could make a mistake.

***Double check your math.** Don't forget to verify all Social Security numbers. These are among the most common errors found on tax returns. Being careful will reduce your chance of making mistakes and speed up your refund.

***Get the fastest refund.** Filing early will get you your refund faster. Choosing direct deposit is faster than waiting for a check by mail.

***E-filing is easy.** It catches math problems, confirms that your return has been received, and gives you a faster refund.

***Don't panic.** If you have a problem or a question, remember the IRS is there to help. Visit www.irs.gov or call IRS customer service at 800-829-1040.

Free Tax Help

The VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) Program will offer free tax help beginning in February. To qualify, you must have an income under \$38,000 per year.

Beginning in February, sites will be held at the Cecil Tillis Building every Tuesday evening from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m., at the OneStop on Thursdays from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m., and at the State Museum on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 9 a.m. until 12 noon.

A tax payer must bring identification and SSN, as well as all W-2's and 1099's. If you are filing "married filing jointly," both parties must be available for signatures.

Visit www.vita-sc.org for more information.

Congratulations

The Section 8 Department would like to congratulate the following Section 8 Program participants who have recently bought an existing house or had a house built using the resources of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program:

Antoinette Y. Willis - September 2005
Vlassis Rice - October 2005
Lisa F. Smith - November 2005
Barbara A. Dykes - November 2005
Jolynn G. Gregory - January 2006

The following persons have completed the Family Self Sufficiency Program:

Victoria Johnson - Homeowner
Brenda Johnson

Certified Nursing Assistant Graduates:

Ashley Phillips
Genevieve Davis
Janet Betts

Newly Elected REC Officers

President: Bobby Brown

Vice President: Raymond Taylor

Secretary: Mary Drayton

Treasurer: Bruce Peoples

Chaplin: Joann Burris

Parliamentarian: Carolyn Smith

REC Officer training will take place on February 16, 21, and 23. Residents are welcome, but space is limited, so call 376-6153 to reserve your space.

CHA Phone Directory

Maintenance Work Orders:

256-2091

CHA Applications:

254-3886 ext. 200

Section 8 Department:

254-3886 ext. 235

HOPE VI/FSS:

254-3886 ext. 220

Fraud Hotline:

252-8484

Security:

254-3886 ext. 266

CHA Main Number:

254-3886

Website Address:

www.chasc.org

The Source is a bi-monthly publication of the Columbia Housing Authority, Columbia, South Carolina.

CHA Board of Commissioners

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CHA staff members contribute articles and all residents are invited to send news items and photos. Submissions are subject to editing. Please send information or change of address to: Columbia Housing Authority, ATTN: Director of Public Relations, 1917 Harden Street, Columbia, SC 29204 or email information to lweathersbee@chasc.org.



Upcoming Events

February

- 6 through 17 - Gonzales Gardens Career Development Training
- 9 - Wall of Fame Selection Committee Meeting, Tillis Center, 12:00 noon
- 14 - St. Valentine's Day**
- Arrington Manor High-Rise Community Club, Community Room, 3:00 p.m.
 - Gonzales Gardens Community Club, Community Room, 6:00 p.m.
- 16 - Oak Read High-Rise Community Club, Community Room, 3:00 p.m.
- 17 - Gonzales Gardens Career Development Training Graduation
- 20 - CHA Offices Closed for President's Day**
- Allen-Benedict Court Community Club, Community Room, 5:00 p.m.
 - Latimer Manor Community Club, Community Room, 6:00 p.m.
- 22 - Eastover Community Club, Lower Richland Community Club, 6:00 p.m.
- Wall of Fame Selection Committee Meeting, Tillis Center, 12:00 noon
- 25 - Homebuyer Class, Tillis Center, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
- 27 - REC Meeting, Tillis Center, 5:30 p.m.
- Marion Street High-Rise Community Club, Community Room, 3:00 p.m.
 - Residential Housekeeping Class, Tech Service Building, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
(This is **MANDATORY** for residents interested in Celia Saxon or Rosewood Hills)

Happy New Year from the CHA staff and Board of Commissioners!!



Columbia Housing Authority
1917 Harden Street
Columbia, SC 29204

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