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## **Oakland Housing Authority Adds Four to List of Successful Family Self-Sufficiency Program Graduates**

*Once Unemployed, Section 8 Tenants Hoping to Buy Homes, Build Better Lives,  
Be Role Models for Family*

OAKLAND, Calif., September 17, 2007 – The number of successful graduates of the Oakland Housing Authority’s (OHA) Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) Program keeps growing as four more Section 8 clients were recently added to the list, with escrow accounts in the tens of thousands of dollars.

The latest FSS graduates are all women, ranging in age from 34 to 59.

- A 59-year old unemployed West Oakland resident joined the program in August 2002, and established a life-long goal to open her own day care business. Today she is the FSS program’s most “senior” graduate, and is pursuing early childhood education courses; she owns a flourishing daycare business, and with an escrow account valued at more than \$25,800, she hopes to someday complete her dream and purchase a home in Oakland.
- A 34-year old single East Oakland resident was unemployed when she joined the program in September 2002. She set goals to work in the health-care field, and is now finishing her LVN prerequisites. She hopes to graduate from nursing school and purchase her first home through OHA’s Section 8 homeownership program. Her escrow account at graduation time was valued at more than \$15,300.
- A 36-year old single mother of three recently passed the LVN state boards, following through on her educational and professional goal to become a nurse. She was unemployed when she joined the program in August 2000. She now manages a team of nurses at a nursing home in Oakland, and may use her escrow account of more than \$8,600 toward the down payment on a house.

- A 51-year old mother of one residing in East Oakland joined the program in September 2002. She had faced many obstacles in her professional life, including bouts of unemployment and numerous lay-offs. Her main FSS goal was to get and keep a steady job, and she has succeeded for more than a year and a half. She is improving her reading skills and hopes to use her escrow funds of more than \$6,800 to improve her credit standing.

“The promise of a new business, a new home, a brighter future motivates FSS participants to work hard in the program,” said Avery Sim, FSS program coordinator. “In the coming months, I look forward to hearing from this latest crop of FSS graduates, and being regaled with their success stories.”

The Section 8 Family Self-Sufficiency Program offers eligible participants the ability to build a savings account over a five-year period. Because rent in the Housing Choice Voucher (or Section 8) Program is income-based, as a tenant’s income increases, so does the rent. But participating in the FSS Program allows OHA to match a portion of that rent increase into an escrow account, building what can amount to a substantial amount of money. Participants must set and meet several interim goals during the 5-year contract (perhaps work to clean up a credit score), and complete one final work-related goal.

The Family Self-Sufficiency Program, started in 1994 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), currently has 241 OHA clients enrolled, with 117 successful graduates.

The Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) is the City of Oakland’s state-chartered and federally funded agency to promote the availability of quality housing for low-income persons. OHA works to promote the civic involvement and economic self-sufficiency of its residents and to further the expansion of affordable housing within Oakland. The Authority is currently helping to house 14,000 of the city’s lowest income families. ([www.oakha.org](http://www.oakha.org))

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