



OUR Voice

Oakland Unified Residents



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The Scoop

Earn It! Keep It! Save It! Free Tax Preparation Assistance

Since 2002, United Way of the Bay Area has lead a coalition of organizations whose mission is to provide free tax preparation for low to moderate income Bay Area residents. Last year the Earn It! Keep It! Save It! program assisted over 64,000 residents who collectively received over \$68 million in tax refunds. The program focuses on ensuring Bay Area residents claim the tax credits for which they are eligible. For example, the Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Education Credit can increase the refund amount a person receives by thousands of dollars. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) estimates that 20% of workers who are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) do not claim it on their tax returns.

This year, regardless of how you decide to file your taxes it is important to ask about all of the tax credits that may apply to you. To locate a free tax center near you visit www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org or dial 211. The deadline to file your 2012 tax returns is Monday, April 15, 2013.

RAB Newsletter Committee

- Henry Flowers
- Lillian Gibson
- Robin Johnson
- Tina Moses

Staff

- Greer McVay, Managing Editor
- Jillian Ryan, Senior Editor
- Natalie Garcia, Contributor

OHA's 75th Anniversary

Created in 1938 under the U.S. Housing Act of 1937, 2013 marks the 75th Anniversary of the Oakland Housing Authority. What started as war-time housing for workers near the port of Oakland has grown and evolved to become affordable housing for over 15,000 families, seniors and individuals living with disabilities throughout the city. OHA now offers a wide range of supportive services that help OHA residents in their efforts to achieve maximum self-sufficiency, more than at any other time in the past.

For those who were raised in households subsidized by OHA, positive changes are evident and there are many compliments for the improvements in customer service



and the quality of OHA housing. One thing that has not changed is the dedication of the OHA staff to the City of Oakland and the residents who make their homes in our community. OHA invites residents to share their experiences and photos which might be incorporated in our 75th Anniversary commemorative material being developed over the course of the year. Whether your piece of OHA history is woven into the fabric of the stories we tell or your photo appears in our newly designed website or other printed material, you are encouraged to represent all that is good about the Oakland Housing Authority.

Please share/upload memories and photos to OHACommunications@oakha.org.

Jobs of the Future

New years often inspire new goals and a shuffling of priorities to make the future more successful than the past. Whether your resolutions for 2013 involve getting a new, better or higher paying job or losing weight or just taking more time to stop and smell the roses, there is an abundance of supportive services all around to help you succeed.

The Bureau of Labor and Statistics tracks and reports trends in the job market that include industries and professions with anticipated future job growth. Preparing for the jobs of the future with targeted training and customized education plans is a prudent way to get a jump on the competition. While there will be more jobs available, there will also be more people competing for those jobs as increased automation in the workplace will displace some workers and some "baby boomers" will have



to delay retirement due to a sluggish economy.

With the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare) being in full effect by 2014, careers in the healthcare field will increase significantly. Over 35 million new Americans will now have access to healthcare, and significant growth in the field is anticipated in areas of healthcare delivery, medical

continued inside

Spotlight

FSS Graduate

Sheila Douglas (October 2012)

College acceptance:

Brandon Douglas was accepted to San Francisco State University for Fall 2013.

Mother and son are on the road to success!

Spotlights for future issues:

Send names of OHA family and friends who have recent accomplishments you'd like to share with the housing community.

Jobs of the Future

continued from front

records billing and health information and technology (IT). Growth is also expected in the social services fields and in construction. A decline in employment is expected in federal government, particularly at the US Postal Service and in the garment and textile industry.

As employment ticks up, so too will the need for childcare and other ancillary services (like dry cleaning, auto maintenance and personal services). Bay Area organizations like Bananas provides free referrals for childcare as well

as information about how to become a licensed childcare provider.

OHA offers tools and resources to help with job searches, career changes and education. The Oakland Unified School District's Adult and Career Education conducts a Certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) Program. Also, the Family and Community Partnerships department at OHA presents Microsoft Office Suite computer training classes year-round to residents.

For more information contact Patraya Lowe-Smith at (510) 587-5107. 🌱

President's Day

Not since Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) was elected to his fourth term in 1944 has a democratic candidate won re-election with over 50% of the popular vote. In fact, President Obama made history as one of only four presidents to win each of two presidential elections with more than 50% of the votes in the past 100 years. Ronald Reagan, Dwight D. Eisenhower, FDR, and now, Barack Obama have earned a place in the history books for their popularity; however, all U.S. Presidents deserve our honor and praise for leading the nation. The job of president has been held by only 43 different men, each with unique and unpredictable challenges. While the political climate may shift over time the complications of governing amidst political opposition endures.

Since President Obama's second

inauguration on January 20, there have already been major swings on hot-button issues like immigration reform, the debt ceiling, gun control, war in the military serving in combat, *Roe v. Wade*, and arguably most important, changes to the Electoral College voting system, which opponents fear would give greater weight to the votes of voters in some of the nation's rural districts. Political followers will be busy for the next four years watching the drama unfold, predicting the 2014 mid-term elections and debating who will seek the presidency in 2016.

Recognizing the contributions and hard work of the American President, the holiday to honor George Washington, "the Father of Our Country," was established by Congress in 1880 on the date of his birth. Since that time, this day that originally honored one president has evolved into a day called Presidents Day to honor



Washington, Lincoln and all presidents on the third Monday of February annually. Abraham Lincoln's birthday is sometimes recognized the week prior.

This year, the President's Day holiday is Monday, February 18, 2013. The day is often celebrated with school assemblies, parades, and for some, a day off of work. Check www2.oaklandnet.com/Events for local activities.

For fun, presidential facts and trivia visit www.history.com/topics/the-us-presidents. 🌱

America's Growing Diversity

If the 2012 election taught us nothing else about the shifting demographics in America, it made clear that Latino Americans are a growing force to be reckoned with. Since the nation's founding, Mexicans, Cubans, Spanish and other ethnic groups of Spanish origin have played an integral role in the cultural, economic, religious and political life of the country. Nowhere has their presence been greater than in southeast and western states like Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. Poised to become the most populous ethnic group in California by the year 2042, Hispanics are the "fastest growing ethnic group in the country" according to the 2010 US Census.

Celebrations like Cinco de Mayo, César Chavez Day, La Semana Santa (Easter) and Mexican Independence Day go a long way toward helping people appreciate the richness of the Hispanic culture which is inextricably woven into the fabric of American life. Those celebrations also help to tear down barriers that have ostracized many Latinos. Increasingly, Americans are realizing how important it is to understand the significance of Hispanics not just in history but in the role they play in our daily lives. Today, millions of influential Hispanics permeate every facet of American life in politics, arts, entertainment, business, media, education and healthcare. From Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Hilda Solis to Los Angeles Mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa, Nike CEO, William Perez and media personalities like Eva Longoria, John Quinones, and Rosario Dawson. We should expect Hispanics to be featured more prominently in American life as President Obama has tapped several people for highly visible roles like San Antonio Mayor, Julian Castro, who delivered the Keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2012.

This year, keep an eye out for the local activists who make a difference as well as the 100 Most Influential Hispanics as identified by www.hispanicbusiness.com. 🌱

Success Stories



Saeed Family

The Saeed family closed escrow on a 4-bedroom, single family home this month. An immigrant from Yemen, Mr. Saeed and his family left a war torn country in search of new opportunities in America. The family has overcome many struggles along their journey which includes caring for a child with special needs, another who recently underwent surgery and a new baby on the way. Working as a taxi driver, Mr. Saeed and his family of eight have made sacrifices, and worked to build savings. Using all resources available to them, the Saeed family has affected the change that they wanted for themselves.

Mr. Saeed and his wife utilized the IDA matching grant (which leveraged their \$4000 savings by an additional \$8000); and they received a City of Oakland First Time Homebuyer loan which provided them a \$60,000 silent second. Mr. Saeed expresses gratitude for the programs that OHA offers and the support of the staff.

FAMILY RESOURCES

Saving money always makes sense and now residents at Lockwood Gardens can save money on their grocery bills through a new pilot program. The Oakland Food Pantry has partnered with OHA to provide residents fresh and healthy food every Thursday between 2pm-4pm in the Lockwood Gardens community room. Unlike other food pantries that provide bags of food that have been pre-packed, through this program residents may select foods they prefer which minimizes waste. The healthy food choices also allow families to cook the foods they enjoy while saving money on their food budget. The program is expected to eventually expand and be available at other communities in the future.



YOUR VOICE

Q: I'm a resident and I need to have my blood pressure checked. Does OHA ever have health fairs?

A: The Samuel Merritt Nursing program is offering health clinics to OHA residents, providing health screenings for vision, blood pressure, scoliosis and developmental assessment. The weekly clinic will operate January 17 through May 2, 2012 every Thursday at 1327 65th Avenue, in the Lockwood Gardens Community Room, from 1pm -4:30 pm. All services are free!! For additional information, contact Dawn Pipkins at 510-777-4123.

For residents who do not have health insurance or other access to regular healthcare, the East Oakland Family Health Center and the West Oakland Family Health Center are local options available to meet some of your medical needs. Visit www.wohc.org to learn more about services and fees.

E-mail your comments or news to ohacommunications@oakha.org or drop off content at your management office.

RAB Blog

The Resident Advisory Board (RAB) announces with great sadness that William Curry, a former OHA Commissioner and member of the RAB and the RAB's newsletter committee passed away peacefully in the hospital before Christmas, 2012.



Mr. Curry served on our Board of Commissioners from 2010 to 2012. He believed that "knowledge is power" and was passionate about helping OHA residents gain access to the Internet by working with the Get Connected Oakland!, initiative of Mayor Quan, and OCCUR to help refurbish computers so that everyone would have access to the modern tools used to gather information.

In his spare time, Mr. Curry loved politics and was a staunch supporter of President Obama. An avid NPR listener, he often called into talk radio shows to share his political opinions and participate in the conversations that shape our nation. He also loved Irish folk music, art and working on creative projects at home. William Curry was an active member of The Church in Berkeley and is survived by his daughter, son, son-in-law and three grandchildren. He will be greatly missed by his fellow RAB members and all who worked with him.

RAB'S MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure that OHA Public Housing Residents and Section 8 Participants actively participate in the decision making process regarding OHA policies and procedures and are actively engaged in their community as leaders.

Mentoring Helps Drive Success

For many, the key to success is opportunity. The opportunity to learn in a supportive environment, the opportunity to explore without judgment, and the opportunity to thrive while pursuing your dreams are infinitely more possible with the guidance of a strong mentor. Several mentor programs are available through community-based organizations that have established partnerships with OHA..

Whether you would like to establish a mentor/mentee relationship for yourself to help with advancing your education or career or for your child(ren) to assist with homework, college test prep or emotional support, there is a program that meets your needs.

If you would like to volunteer to be a mentor and share your knowledge and expertise please consider working with one of these organizations that reach out to the OHA community.

Mentoring sometimes unlocks the potential that leads to great things! 🌱

Mentor Programs

Be A Mentor	
Ages 11-17	(888) 232-6368
Boost West Oakland	
Ages 5-10	(510) 444-7285
Community Works	
Age 5-Adult	(510) 486-2340
Brothers on the Rise	
Ages 9-14 (male)	(510) 599-3582

Teen Scene



Youth UpRising, works with Alameda County youth ages 13 to 24 to change their lives and transform their community.

Youth UpRising's members build leadership by participating in career & education, health & wellness, arts & expression, and civic engagement programming all on YU's campus.

Youth UpRising is proud to partner with OHA by working with its youth residents and by maintaining OHA sites.

OHA residents 18-24 get on the job training with Youth UpRising's in-house grounds-keeping business, YU WORK, maintaining 50 OHA scattered sites in East Oakland. To join the program, just come into Youth UpRising, become a member, and give us a resume along with a note about your interest in getting into job training.

Youth who are on probation, in foster care or in CalLearn are eligible for case management and may receive job training, job placements and support to advance their education.

All OHA youth are invited to participate in programming at YU this summer, including music production, filming, muraling, and much, much more.

To learn more about how you or your child(ren) can get involved with any of these programs please come to the YU office located at 8711 MacArthur Blvd in East Oakland or call us at (510) 777-9909 or visit youthuprising.org. **Make sure to mention that you are an OHA resident!**

Kid's Play



- Ahm (Arabic)
- Maji (Hindi)
- Mamma (Italian)
- Mother (English)
- Mzazi (Swahili)
- Haakui (Maori)
- Makuahine (Hawaiian)
- Mater (Latin)
- Muter (Yiddish)
- Okaasan (Japanese)
- Madre (Spanish)
- Maman (French)
- Moeder (Afrikaans)
- Mutter (German)
- Pabo (Punjabi)

k	i	z	a	z	m	n	a	m	a	m	d
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m	f	m	a	h	n	k	b	r	m	h	b
a	e	x	n	k	a	m	a	f	z	e	m
m	y	y	w	d	u	a	p	a	k	r	h
g	c	n	r	t	m	a	k	v	s	o	a
w	e	e	e	e	a	m	h	u	u	a	v
j	v	r	c	u	t	f	a	i	i	t	n
d	o	d	h	b	e	t	c	j	n	r	w
q	y	a	t	l	r	q	u	a	i	e	k
j	q	m	o	e	d	e	r	m	m	z	q

Send questions or comments to nataliegtmp@oakha.org
or ohacommunications@oakha.org



Community Partners Host Gun Buyback Program



which included seven who died in a mass shooting at Oikos University, a small college in East Oakland. Each one of those deaths could have been prevented if the perpetrators had found other ways to resolve their grievances. The saying, “Guns don’t kill people, people kill people” may be somewhat true but the reality is that people with guns kill people.

President Obama, with the help of Vice-President Biden, has launched a massive campaign to deliver comprehensive gun reform. Biden formed a task force made up of leaders in a variety of industries who came together to discuss solutions to this epidemic. Mayors Against Illegal Guns, mental health professionals, and video game and movie producers were among those who participated in the discussions to find common ground that might begin to help affect change. The most controversial participant in those meetings was Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association (NRA) who has adamantly opposed any and all legislation that would limit access to semi-automatic weapons, high-capacity clips and magazines, or even background checks which recent polling shows about 90% of Americans favor.

While that debate continues in Washington, DC, local governments and activists are taking matters into their own hands with gun buyback programs and other education outreach. With a \$100,000 donation from Keith Stephenson, YouthUprising, and their community partners hosted a gun buyback program that netted nearly 700 guns in Oakland and San Francisco. With no questions asked, Oakland residents were given \$200 in

exchange for guns which will be turned into the metal used to build park benches and light posts. One in five of Oakland’s homicides happen within one mile of YouthUprising’s office, which thrusts them into the center of the problem both literally and figuratively.

When sensible solutions to the out of control killing happening in our nation’s suburbs as well as in our inner cities is resisted or dismissed as politically impossible, we all need to step up and make our voices heard. Start with your own family by making your home safe and free of illegal guns. Get involved with local organizations like YouthUprising to give your children healthy alternatives to negative environmental influences. Learn about the 23 Executive Orders announced by President Obama that would improve inter-agency communication, research into the impact of guns within our communities and begin to reduce gun-related crime. Visit www.whitehouse.gov/now-is-the-time for a comprehensive view of the national discussion. Vote for the change you wish to see in your community by learning where your elected representatives stand on issues of concern to you. And commit to making a difference in whatever ways, large or small, you feel comfortable.

Global Problem Local Solution

The OHA Board of Commissioners recently passed a resolution ordering the destruction of all firearms no longer used by OHAPD. Now, when OHAPD purchases new weapons the older ones will not be reconditioned and re-sold, which could potentially put them back on the streets in the hands of criminals. OHAPD is doing their part to make Oakland safer by reducing the proliferation of guns on the street.

Resolutions 2013

With 2013 well underway, many people have already started experiencing success with their New Year’s Resolutions. Congratulations! But even if you started to slip or never quite decided what goals to work toward, it’s never too late for a fresh start.

Let 2013 be your year for improved health. Your physical, spiritual and financial health is right at your fingertips if you take positive steps toward those goals.

Housing – Start with spring cleaning and rid yourself of last year’s clutter. Save important documents but recycle things you haven’t used in at least a year.

Exercise – Talk with your doctor about incorporating regular exercise into your day. Regular exercise reduces stress, increases fitness and improves heart health.

Activity – Participate in the many activities in your community. Contact OHA to learn about programs offered by community-based organizations.

Leisure – Get out and meet your neighbors, volunteer to serve others or even take up a hobby.

Thoughtful spending – Contact cell phone, cable and other service providers to inquire about discounts and special promotions that could reduce your bill. A penny saved is a penny earned.

Happiness – Stop and smell the roses! 2013 is a new year and with new year’s come new possibilities.



AT-A-GLANCE • WINTER/SPRING 2013

FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

02/01 - 02/28/13
Black History Month

02/14/13
Valentine's Day

02/18/13
President's Day**

MARCH

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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

03/10/13
Daylight savings time begins

03/14/13
Resident Advisory Board Meeting

03/17/13
St. Patrick's Day

03/20/13
Spring begins

03/25/13
Cesar Chavez Day**

03/31/13
Easter

APRIL

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

04/04/13
Resident Advisory Board Meeting*

04/15/13
Tax Day

04/24/13
Administrative
Professionals Day

MAY

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

05/02/13
Resident Advisory Board Meeting

05/05/13
Cinco de Mayo

05/12/13
Mother's Day

05/22/13
Earth Day

05/27/13
Memorial Day**

*Advisory Board "work group" only meetings. Contact FCP for more information at (510) 587-5110 **OHA business offices closed

Visit the Board of Commissioners web page for Board meeting schedule, agendas and minutes at <http://www.oakha.org/boc.html>

All OHA offices will be closed Wednesday, March 6 and Thursday, March 7, 2013 for staff training. Limited staff will be available for emergencies. Please call for (510) 874-1500 for assistance. We look forward to serving you when we re-open on Friday March 8.

DON'T FORGET!

SUNDAY MARCH 10

Spring Forward!

Daylight Savings time begins 2am Sunday, March 10. Don't forget to set your clocks forward one hour!



Oakland Housing
Authority

1619 Harrison Street
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