

*Spring
Edition
2014*

Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville Newsletter

Working Together to Build Stronger Communities



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Chief Executive Officer

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Welcome

Ms. Carla Y. Mancha, MPA, PHM became the Chief Executive Officer for the Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville (HACB) on October 28, 2013. She received her Bachelor's Degree from the University of Texas at Austin majoring in History and Government and she received her Master's Degree from St. Mary's University at San Antonio in Public Administration. Ms. Mancha came to Brownsville with nine (9) years of experience in the housing industry and she previously served as Executive Director of a smaller housing authority. Ms. Mancha took over that agency when it was categorized by HUD as a "troubled" housing authority. She reorganized the agency and brought it out of the "financially troubled" status to a "high performing" housing authority and left the agency with high reserves that could be strategically used for future development. Ms. Mancha has been praised by her peers in the industry and HUD personnel for her leadership and work ethic. She brings a great deal of experience to HACB and is excited about the new challenges and opportunities that are on the horizon. Along with the current developments, HACB has embarked on several new projects including the on-going construction of thirty (30) homes at Sanchez-Vela Subdivision for the Public Housing Program, which began in November 2013; application for participation in the Rental Assistance Demonstration Program through HUD to replace our older properties with new, modern housing communities for the Brownsville Residents served by HACB; disposition of our Main Warehouse on Thompson Road to engage in a joint effort with the City of Brownsville to establish a Fire Station at that location; interior and exterior renovation of the Fernandez Home located at 405 E. Washington Street; and establishment and implementation of an agreement between HACB and the City of Brownsville for the Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) Program to provide rental assistance for a period of two (2) years to residents in our community. The Board of Commissioners has put a lot of emphasis on Strategic Planning and Organizational Assessment and Ms. Mancha will be instrumental in overseeing these projects. Requests for Proposals were advertised for these services, because they will shape and solidify the vision and mission statement for HACB and will be used to reorganize our agency to be better positioned for future growth. Ms. Mancha strongly believes in professional growth of the staff, teamwork and that the staff is the #1 asset to the agency. Ms. Mancha and her husband are excited to be in Brownsville and have embraced the community, visited various spots throughout the Valley and attended several local events. They love walking on the beach at South Padre Island with their dogs, visiting the Farmers' Market and exploring all that the Rio Grande Valley has to offer. The HACB Staff appreciates her drive, her enthusiasm, her wisdom and we wholeheartedly welcome Ms. Mancha as our new leader!



Carla Mancha, CEO

HUD RECOGNIZED "HIGH PERFORMER" AGENCY

AMP I, III & V

Bougainvillea, Victoria, Las Brisas and Citrus Annex



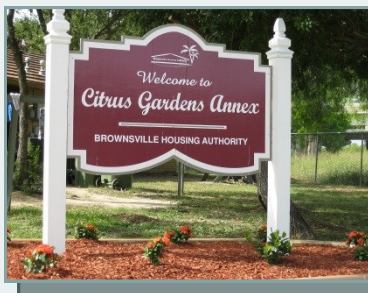
We continue to work together for a better housing development and want to thank all our residents for their cooperation in keeping the grounds clean and free from any hazards. We are encouraging all residents to follow the rules and regulations that are in their lease.

Soon the office in Victoria Gardens will be completed. This office will help serve the people from Las Brisas, Bougainvillea, Victoria Gardens, and Citrus Annex. Tenants will be notified by mail as soon as it is open for business and they will start reporting to that office.



Annex, involves doing landscaping work in the whole development, which means sprinkler systems being installed to water the new sod that was planted on Tangelo Street. We are also planning on planting additional trees and plants. At the Victoria Gardens and Bougainvillea Developments we have added mulch and a new plastic fence around the playgrounds. We hope the children from Victoria and Bougainvillea enjoy their playground and keep it clean.

The HACB Inspectors are in the process of conducting ground inspections which will identify deficiencies on buildings, playground areas, sidewalks, and on the exterior of units. The inspectors have finished annual inspections in some developments which involved identifying plumbing and electrical deficiencies. The inspectors also completed a housekeeping inspection. We, the staff, appreciate the tenants' cooperation with these inspections. Furthermore, the maintenance staff is working diligently on correcting all the deficiencies that the inspectors identified, while addressing regular work orders.



We are happy to see the residents of Citrus Annex enjoy the new park that was completed in Citrus Gardens Annex (AMP III). The park includes a Gazebo, playground equipment, walk trail, and benches. Future plans, for Citrus

We strongly encourage all the residents to help us maintain the developments up to the lease standards by keeping the areas assigned to them clean and organized.



AMP I: Buena Vida



AMP I Staff is working towards making our developments clean, decent, affordable, and a safer place to live. One of our foci this year has been to encourage all our residents to follow the rules

and regulations that are in the lease.

Bathroom renovations by the Capital Fund Program at Buena Vida Development are still in progress, there are approximately nine (9) units still pending. Our staff has also been working on installing A/C brackets, tuff timbers around the playgrounds, and two roofs at Buena were repaired. Future plans for our development include pos-



sibly planting grass, removal of trees and tree stumps, replacing damaged clothes lines, repairing water heater closets, and painting parking lot lines.

The Section 8 inspectors conducted annual inspections; the maintenance staff are currently working on the deficiencies that the inspectors found.

This year we will be having our REAC Inspection. AMP I staff will continue to work hard to achieve our goal of being high performers.

We continue taking applications for housing assistance every second Tuesday of the month at each respective Public Housing Office.



AMP V: Linda Vista, Sunset Terrace, Rose Gardens & Scattered Sites

At AMP V, this year, our main focus is the REAC Inspection. The staff has started working on annual inspection repairs to ensure that everything is working properly in the units. Contract work has been done to ensure our sites are in good conditions. Tree stumps have been removed and fences at Linda Vista have been replaced.

We have also been working on the curb appeal of the properties. Storage sheds have been installed at



Sunset Terrace for that purpose. Walk-throughs are being conducted at the developments by the property manager and staff to help address all issues that need to be corrected both by the staff and the residents.

The staff at AMP V continues to encourage our residents to do their part in maintaining the developments clean and safe. At AMP V we look forward to continue serving our 198 Families and to provide them with suitable, safe and sanitary housing.

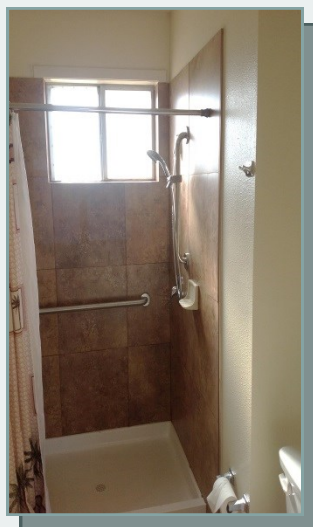
Capital Fund Program

Greetings:

In the latter part of Federal Fiscal Year 2013, the Capital Fund Program continued comprehensive renovation of units with funds awarded via Federal Fiscal Year 2011 Grant in the amount of \$1,002,634.00. These funds allowed the department to complete the modernization of nineteen (19) units at the Citrus Annex Housing Development.



The Capital Fund Program is currently using its 2012 Grant in the amount of \$964,663.00 to convert forty-eight (48) bathrooms from fiberglass bathtubs to showers at the Buena Vida Housing Development. Currently the project is 80% completed and will be 100% completed by April 2014.



The Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville is constructing thirty (30) single-family detached housing units that are designated for public housing to qualifying citizens of Brownsville. The homes will complement the existing residences and will comply with covenants and restrictions in the Sanchez-Vela Subdivision in the community of San Pedro.

The homes are all three bedroom, two bath with one car garage. They are all electric including central air and heat, with Energy Star rated appliances. There are three different models with the square footage of 1300, 1387, and 1400 living area. The homes will consist of 80% masonry/brick selection and will include landscape sodding.

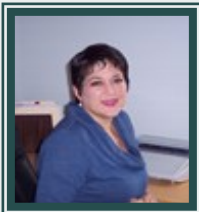
On October 7, 2013, the construction contract was awarded to H2O Construction Services (McAllen, Texas) in the amount of \$2,582,700.00. H2O started construction on December 2, 2013. This project is expected to be completed on or before December 2014. The source of funding for this project is being made possible from the HUD's First Increment Replacement Housing Factor (RHF) Grant-\$1,581,546.00; Second Increment RHF—\$818,117.00; and 2012 CFP Grant — \$400,000.00.



Existing homes at Sanchez-Vela Subdivision



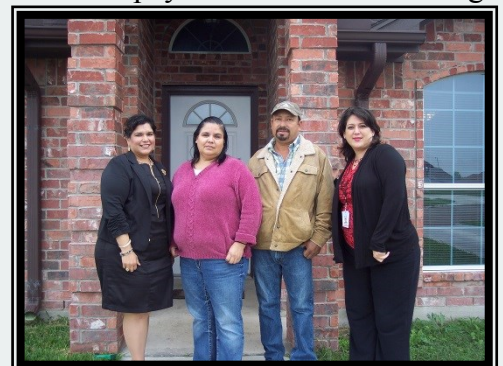
First of thirty new homes under construction
at Sanchez Vela Subdivision



Enterprise Housing Programs Department

The Enterprise Housing Programs Department has closed on the sales of ten (10) homes in the Sanchez Vela Subdivision. We have homebuyers ready for the remaining three (3) homes and are working hard on having them approved by the State. The Neighborhood Stabilization Program, also known as NSP, provided loans at zero percent interest and down payment assistance for eligible homebuyers.

*Carla Mancha, CEO,
Isabel and Jesus Millian
(New Home Owners), and
Lilia Valdez , Enterprise
Program Director*



Family Self-Sufficiency Program

The staff in the Family Self-Sufficiency Program is excited about continuing to offer our clients the services that they need to become self and economically sufficient. We continue to create partnerships with members of our community that can help us bring our clients the necessary tools for them to meet their goals and become successful. In addition to our work with



the Self-sufficiency Program we are in the planning phase of the

2014 Home Expo. Our Home Expo will take place on June 21, 2014 at the Brownsville Event Center. We hope to see everyone there. For more

information you can call Cesar Barrera at 956-214-1525 or Magda Fernandez at 956-214-1526.

Success Story: Mrs. Molina graduated from the FSS Program because she exceeded the 30% adjusted income. She joined FSS in 2010 and started working full time short after. Her goal is to become a homeowner and she has been working with Bank of America to get her mortgage loan approved.



Scholarship Opportunities

ATTENTION GRADUATING SENIORS:

We currently have the Housing Alliance of the Valley Employees Scholarship available at the Family Self Sufficiency Office for high school seniors graduating this year 2014. Please stop by our offices located at 2606 Boca Chica Blvd to pick up an application or you can access it on www.hacb.us. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact either Cesar Barrera or Ana Trejo at 956-214-1525 and 956-214-1527, respectively.



Community Garden on Roosevelt St.

We are very excited and looking forward to the inauguration and the official naming of the Community Garden on Roosevelt St. This year HACB has entered into a partnership with the Brownsville Wellness Coalition, Inc. This partnership will allow the Brownsville Wellness Coalition to build a Community Garden on a HACB lot that is not currently being utilized. The creation of this Community Garden



Model of the Community Garden on Roosevelt St. Designed by Architecture Students at Texas Southmost College.



will give the opportunity to our clients to participate in training sessions where they will learn about gardening and farming while being able to have ownership of a lot in the Community Garden where they can put their knowledge to the test and plant and farm their own crops. This collaboration will allow students from Faulk Middle School to partake in this project and have a curriculum in the classroom and outdoors instruction in the Community Garden. All this is done in an effort to educate our community on the health benefits of eating healthy and having an active lifestyle.



Family Learning Centers



Tutors: Rosa Peña, Melba Mendoza, Javier Abrego, Rosa J. Cummings, and Graciela Paez



Greetings from the Family Learning Centers Staff!! We are half way through another exciting school year. We are currently planning our summer field trips. Our students have been working hard all year hosting the fundraisers that will get them to their destinations. Last year our students were able to travel to San Antonio. They spent a couple of days sight seeing and visiting a couple of landmarks; such as the Alamo, Tower of the Americas, and Fiesta Texas.

Besides keeping up with their grades in school and hosting fundraisers our students are involved in an array of extracurricular activities. Student Mario Sanchez has been competing in Skills USA in Action Skills Mechanics and he's been placing in the top three. This year he will be competing at the state level in Corpus Christi and we want to wish him good luck.

Las Brisas, Victoria Gardens, and the Linda Vista Learning Centers have been working together with the UTB Center for Civic Engagement by helping out the future educators with their "Service Learning Project".



Our residents are also part of the "Apasionados por la Lectura" program which is a non-profit organization that focuses on educating parents on the importance of their involvement in their child's education. The organization fosters the educational relationship between parent and child by embracing a love for reading. At each ses-



sion the organization has been able to give away bilingual children's books to those students that actively participate in the program.



Our learning centers remain open with the help of our partnership with the Brownsville Independent School District and the 21st Century Program. This program has enabled us to maintain all five learning centers open throughout the school year. We have been busy at our learning centers, tutoring our students, and creating fun hands-on learning experiences. We have incorporated life skills to our program by exposing our students to money management and etiquette skills. Some of our recent activities include a Valentine's Day Celebration at Victoria Gar-



dens Learning Center in which the students were encouraged to practice their pastry decorating skills. The Linda Vista Learning Center joined the Charro Days Celebrations with their now traditional "Antojitos Mexicanos Fiesta." Students and parents cooked traditional Mexican and Tex-Mex meals and dressed in traditional Charro Days' attire and spent a few hours in each others' company having a good time. We encourage all our residents to attend any of our five Family Learning Centers located at the following developments: Buena Vida, Victoria Gardens, Citrus Annex, Linda Vista, and Las Brisas.

Come get involved and have fun while learning.



RESIDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Hello Everyone!! The members from the Resident Associations invite you to join them at their monthly meetings and learn about the different agencies and programs that are here in our community.



**HACB Administration and
Resident Advisory Board**

One of the roles of the Resident Associations is to serve as a liaison between the residents and the administration of the HACB. It enhances the communication between the two parties to further improve the efforts made to enhance the living conditions of our residents.



By conducting the monthly meetings the board members of the associations are able to inform the residents of upcoming changes that affect them directly and indirectly. Furthermore, these associations also build stronger ties with community members by exposing the residents to the different services available to them in the community.

Besides hosting the monthly resident meetings these associations are also involved in organizing fundraisers that give the residents the opportunity to come together and partake in the different celebrations they have during the year. Some of their fundraisers include lunch plate sales, raffles, and Mexican Loterias. The funds raised through these activities are used to facilitate the following celebrations: Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Dinners.



We currently have Zumba classes at the Citrus Apartments and at the Buena Vida Community Center Monday –Friday with Instructor Noami Chapa. We are also having Health and Well-Being Sessions once a month with Dr. Mata at the Buena Vida Community Center. Everyone is welcome to assist any of these activities. For information you can call Ana Trejo at 956-214-1527 or e-mail at atrejo@hacb.us.





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Chairman



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Vice-Chairman



Noe Guerrero
Commissioner



Ruben Longoria
Commissioner



Norma Zepeda
Resident Commissioner



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The Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville Newsletter enhances communication between residents and the Housing Authority of the City of Brownsville Staff. The statements made in this newsletter are in no way a representation of the beliefs and opinions of HUD. No Federal funds were used to print this Newsletter.



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