

The mission of the King County Housing Authority is to provide quality affordable housing opportunities and to build communities through partnerships. We encourage self-sufficiency and we protect the dignity of people with limited resources while safeguarding the public trust.

A Paramount upgrade
RESIDENTS CELEBRATE
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KCHA NEWS

March
2008

A resource for King County Housing Authority residents

Ballinger Homes youth grow recycling passion

By HEATHER MILLER
King County Housing Authority

Naty Weldetnsae is trying to save the planet one plastic water bottle at a time.

The 14-year-old Ballinger Homes resident is one of the most enthusiastic participants in the Family Support Center's new recycling program. She knows that recycling is one way she can make a difference in the global effort to clean up the environment.

"I want to help, and little things do help," she said. "I think it's good to help the environment so that we don't fill up the landfills."

Morgan Moore, an AmeriCorps member through the King County Housing Authority and the Center for Human Services, started the recycling program at Ballinger's Family Support Center. She wanted the youth who spend time there to have a chance to learn about the benefits

of recycling. And Moore says she's been thrilled to see many children not only recycling what they use at the center but also bringing in newspapers, plastic bottles and other recyclables from home.

"It's catching on as people see other people doing it," she said.

Moore also has tried to teach the children about how they can reduce their waste by reusing items whenever possible. For example, rather than giving each child his or her afternoon snack in a Ziploc bag, the children now have their own plastic cups that they can fill with snacks day after day.

"It's really a simple thing," Moore said. "That's made a huge difference in the amount of garbage every day."

That kind of thinking also inspired Natty to start reusing water bottles at home.

Anwar Shah, a 16-year-old who attends

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PHOTO BY HEATHER MILLER

(From left) Natty Weldetnsae, Morgan Moore, Tracy Dang and Hoa Nguyen show off the Ballinger Homes Family Support Center's new blue recycling bin. The center recently kicked off a new recycling program.

KCHA answers your questions about rent reform

You might have heard that the King County Housing Authority has started a review of its existing policies related to checking residents' income and calculating rent for the Public Housing and Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher programs. As new policies are developed, we want to ensure residents have the chance to ask questions and provide input. Below are answers to residents' frequently asked questions about the Rent Reform Initiative.

Why is KCHA making changes to its rent policies?

The current way that KCHA checks residents' income and calculates rent is complicated and time-consuming for both residents and KCHA staff. KCHA wants to make the policies easier for residents to

understand and for staff to administer; it's just the right thing to do.

KCHA is using a two-part approach in making rent policy changes. What are the two parts?

The first part will simplify rent calculations for seniors and residents with disabilities on fixed incomes.

The second part will improve policies related to checking income and calculating rent for work-able adults and working families. It also will encourage residents to save money and become more financially secure.

Will my rent go up after changes are made?

That depends on your circumstances. Some residents might have a slight decrease. Some residents might have a slight increase. For residents whose rent goes up as a result of Rent Reform, KCHA will set a limit on the amount rent can increase in the first year. KCHA also will create a hardship policy for residents who experience a sudden loss of income.

How are income and rent currently calculated? What will change after Rent Reform takes effect?

Currently, households must submit third-party documentation every year showing all of their income sources. KCHA checks the information through an online system. Residents can get deductions for some items like out-of-pocket medical expenses for elderly

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Immigrant parents, kids become classmates at three Highline schools

By HEATHER MILLER
King County Housing Authority

Patricia Pineda is a Mexican American whose parents weren't native English speakers. But they made her education a top priority.

"That's what has allowed me to succeed," said Pineda, who is Toyota Motor North America's group vice president for legal, philanthropy and administration.

She hopes Toyota's Family Literacy Program will bring similar success both in and outside the classroom to many Highline Public Schools students who come from immigrant families.

Toyota announced in February that three Highline elementary schools – White Center Heights, Mount View and Beverly Park – are the newest sites for the literacy program, which helps meet immigrant families' educational needs. The company has contributed \$600,000 to fund the program at the three schools, which have an average of 32 percent Hispanic enrollment.

"We've been given an opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of our children and our families," said David Darling, principal at White Center Heights Elementary.

Under the K-3 program, children receive quality literacy instruction and their parents also spend time sitting side-by-side with them in class. Parents also get help learning English and ways they can support their child's education at home.

"We know that a child does better in school and in other areas of their lives when parents are involved in their education,"



PHOTO BY HEATHER MILLER

A group of White Center Heights Elementary students and their parents work on reading together as part of the Toyota Family Literacy Program, which focuses on the educational needs of immigrant families.

Highline Superintendent John Welch said.

Parent Maria Mora, whose two daughters attend Mount View Elementary, said the program not only allowed her to work more closely with her children but also was helping her gain the English skills she needs to continue her own education.

The National Center for Family Literacy coordinates the program. The Highline schools were among five new sites chosen for the program among some 230 applications from 39 states, said Sharon Darling, the national center's president and founder.

Earned Income Tax Credit

To learn how you can save money by using the Earned Income Tax Credit, see the story on Page 1 of the Local and National News section. The article is translated on Page 8.

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Find free education, training, employment services at CCA

By KCHA STAFF

Do you need help finding a job, learning English or finishing your high school math homework? Assistance with all of that and more is available for free at the Center for Career Alternatives (CCA) in the Kent Family Center. CCA offers:

- A job readiness training program that helps clients with applications, cover letters, resumes, mock interviews, financial literacy and life skills training.
- A job club program that assists clients with job searches and problems on the job site.
- Job placement and retention services.
- Short-term vocational training referrals.
- Beginning and advanced computer classes in using Microsoft Office 2007. Instruction is available for the following programs: Word, Publisher, PowerPoint and Excel.
- English as a Second Language/citizenship classes, which provide permanent residents with information about filing an application for citizenship, the interview process and the exam on U.S. history and government. Information and forms also are available to help residents file for adjustments to their immigration status.

• SAT workshops that give students the chance to learn about test taking and to practice the SAT's critical reading, math and writing sections.

• A Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) Academy that focuses on improving students' reading fluency, comprehension, writing and math skills.

• A Title III program to help elementary school-aged children who aren't native English speakers

to increase their reading, writing and math skills.

• Homework instructional assistance for middle and high school students in math, English, social studies, health and science. Students also can use the center's computers to prepare presentations and projects.

• Instruction for students seeking to earn their General Educational Development (GED) or to retrieve high school credits.

Written and verbal translation services also are available. Staff at the center can speak Arabic, Italian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog and Visayan.

The center is at 13111 S.E. 274th St.



PHOTO BY HEATHER MILLER

The Center for Career Alternatives' Kent office is located inside the Kent Family Center at the entrance of Springwood Apartments.

WASL testing season approaches

High school 10th-graders are scheduled to take the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) reading test March 10 and 11 and the writing test March 12 and 13.

Sophomores aren't scheduled to take the math and science tests until April. That's also when elementary and middle school children take all of their WASL tests.

in Kent. It's open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information, drop by the center or call 253-639-1162.

Frequently asked questions about the WASL

What is tested on the WASL?

The WASL tests are based on the state's learning standards. Here is how the subject tests break down from grade to grade:

Reading: Grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight and 10

Writing: Grades four, seven and 10

Math: Grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight and 10

Science: Grades five, eight and 10

What types of questions appear on the WASL?

The WASL includes multiple-choice, short-answer and essay questions. In addition to demonstrating content knowledge, students also are expected to apply their thinking skills to solve problems and explain their answers.

How do students who are English Language Learners (ELL) participate in the WASL tests?

All students who are ELL must participate in all WASL tests scheduled for their grades regardless of the number of years they have been in the United States.

The only exception is students who are in their first year of enrollment in U.S. schools. These students are not required to participate in reading or writing tests, but they must take the math exam.

In addition to participating in WASL, ELL students annually must take the Washington Language Proficiency Test-II (WLPT-II) in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Youth of the Year shine at Boys & Girls Club

By HEATHER MILLER

Nebiat Gebreziabher, 17, and Justin Cox, 19, have big plans for their futures.

Cox wants to become a police officer after he finishes college. Gebreziabher expects to pursue a career as either an architect or a fashion designer.

But setting long-term goals for themselves isn't the only thing they have in common.

Cox and Gebreziabher also were selected as the Youth of the Year — in 2007 and 2008, respectively — at the Southwest Branch of the Boys & Girls Clubs of King County.

Teenagers apply for the Youth of the Year program by writing essays about family, home, school, community service,



PHOTO BY HEATHER MILLER

Nebiat Gebreziabher (left) and Justin Cox (right) are the Youth of the Year for the Southwest Branch of the Boys & Girls Clubs of King County for 2008 and 2007, respectively.

service to the club, moral character and life goals and preparing a speech about "What

the Club Means to Me."

After their applications are reviewed, they are interviewed by a panel of judges — mostly club board members. The chosen Youth of the Year winners from across King County go on to compete in a regional contest.

Gebreziabher is an Evergreen High School senior who has been a club member for eight years.

"Nebiat's impact on the club as a role model has been incredible," said Tara Irvin, the Southwest Branch's interim executive director. "Her involvement in our programs as well as her transformation into a strong, confident and outspoken young lady has allowed her to take a bold stance within the club and in her own life."

Cox, who joined the club four years ago, is in his second year at South Seattle

Community College and now a club staff member.

"When I moved here from Los Angeles, they saw how I continued to keep my grades up and help out the younger kids," he said.

Though she initially was nervous about giving a speech to board members and competing against others in the King County contest, Gebreziabher said the entire experience was a rewarding one.

"It was a lot of fun," she said.

Cox said he thinks the Youth of the Year award winners act as examples to other children and teenagers.

"You get a lot of respect from the kids," he said. "You can show kids it's O.K. to be a winner. You don't always have to be the bad kid that's really popular in high school. You can be the cool kid in high school and still get your school work done."

Promote reading for all children

National Reading Day on March 2 acts as a reminder that it's never too soon for parents to start reading with their children. Below is a list of March story times at area King County libraries:

AUBURN

Auburn Library
1102 Auburn Way S.
253-931-3018
Mondays: 10:15 a.m. Toddler Story Time; 11 a.m. Preschool Story Time; 7 p.m. Spanish-English Story
Wednesdays: 10:15 a.m. Family Story Time; 11 a.m. Baby Story Time

BELLEVUE

Bellevue Regional Library
1111 110th Ave. N.E.
425-450-1765
Wednesdays: 4 p.m. Preschool German Story Time; 7 p.m. Hindi Story Time
Thursdays: 10:30 a.m. Toddler German Story Time

Library Connection at Crossroads
15600 N.E. Eighth St.
425-644-6203
Fridays: 7 p.m. Mandarin Story Time

Saturdays: 11:30 a.m. Spanish Story Time

BURIEN

Burien Library
14700 Sixth Ave. S.W.
206-243-3490
Tuesdays: 10:30 a.m. Preschool Story Time
Wednesdays: 10:30 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Toddler Story Time
Thursdays: 10:30 a.m. Toddler Story Time
Fridays (except for March 14): 11 a.m. Baby Story Time

DES MOINES

Des Moines Library
21620 11th Ave. S.
206-824-6066
Mondays (except for March 31): 7 p.m. Children's Story Time
Wednesdays: 10 a.m. Preschool Story Time; 10:45 a.m. Toddler Story Time; 11:30 a.m. Baby Story Time

Saturdays: 11 a.m. Story Time in Spanish

FEDERAL WAY

Federal Way Regional Library

34200 First Way S.
253-838-3668

March 3, 24: 11 a.m. Preschool Story Time

March 4, 25: 11 a.m. Toddler Story Time; 7 p.m. Pajamarama Story Time

March 6, 27: 10:15 a.m. Young Toddler Story Time; 11 a.m. Preschool Story Time

Federal Way 320th Library
848 S. 320th St.
253-839-0257

Tuesdays: 7 p.m. Spanish Story Time

Fridays: 11 a.m. Children's Story Time

March 5, 26: 10:15 a.m. Toddler Story Time; 11 a.m. Preschool Story Time

March 7, 28: 10:15 a.m. Young Toddler Story Time

KENT

Kent Regional Library
212 Second Ave. N.
253-859-3330

Tuesdays: 10:30 a.m. Preschool Story Time; 7 p.m. Children's Story Time

Wednesdays: 10:30 a.m. Preschool Story Time; 7 p.m. Russian Story Time (except for March 26)

Thursdays: 10:15 a.m. Toddler Story Time; 11 a.m. Baby Story Time; 7 p.m. Spanish Story Time

Fridays: 11 a.m. Children's Story Time

March 8: 11 a.m. Dr. Seuss Celebration

KIRKLAND

Kirkland Library
308 Kirkland Ave.
425-822-2459

Mondays: 10 a.m. Japanese Story Time

Tuesdays: 10 a.m. Toddler Story Time; 11 a.m. Preschool Story Time

Wednesdays: 10 a.m. Young Toddler Story Time; 11 a.m. Preschool Story Time; 7 p.m. Children's Story Time

Fridays: 10:30 a.m. Young Toddler Story Time

SHORELINE

Shoreline Library
345 N.E. 175th
206-362-7550

Mondays: 10:15 a.m. Young Toddler Story Time; 2 p.m. Chinese Story Time

Tuesdays: 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m. Toddler Story Time; 1:30 p.m. Preschool Story Time; 7 p.m. Pajamarama Story Time

Wednesdays: 10:30 a.m. Preschool Story Time; Noon, Baby Story Time

WHITE CENTER

White Center Library
11220 16th S.W.
206-243-0233

Thursdays: 11 a.m. Children's Story Time

Residents celebrate recent renovation at Paramount House

By CANDACE IVES
King County Housing Authority

Resident Kay Vosika describes the newly upgraded Paramount House as a wonderful place to call home.

The 70-unit Shoreline building, which houses seniors and individuals with disabilities, recently completed critical fire and life safety improvements. Paramount has new fire alarms and a new sprinkler system. Plus, the building got a much-needed facelift that has transformed the entire building from dark and outdated to fabulous, fun and colorful.

"Our building is much safer, beautiful and quiet again," said Vosika, a senior who has lived at Paramount House for several years.

The first floor lobby has been fully updated with new tile, paint and a curved art tile wall. Also, the lobby and front entrance were expanded. Rather than a sharp decline, the sidewalk leading up to the building's

To learn more

An open house to showcase similar fire and life safety upgrades and other critically needed improvements at Riverton Terrace is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. March 5. Riverton Terrace is located at 14410 41st Ave. S. in Tukwila.

front now has a slow, gradual grade with a switchback that's much safer for residents, especially if they use a wheelchair or walker. There are new mailboxes for the residents, making it easier for them to pick up larger packages. The hallways throughout the entire building received new carpet and paint. Each unit has a new front door and new entryway vinyl. A big bulletin board was put up next to each unit to accommodate flyers, pictures and more. The community room now features new paint, new carpet and a new microwave and dishwasher.



PHOTO BY RUBÉN RIVERA-JACKMAN

Residents Dot Sherbondy (left) and Lynn Toyer (right) were among those who attended a recent potluck dinner to celebrate the completion of upgrades at Paramount House.

"For as many months as they were working on the building, the workmen were very helpful and courteous," Vosika said.

Paramount House residents along with King County Housing Authority staff members recently had a big celebration to mark the completion

There was a terrific potluck dinner with plenty of food, cake and other goodies. Some residents invited their families to see the transformation. Residents enjoyed watching a wonderful DVD created by Ruben Rivera-Jackman, KCHA's resident services manager, which showed before and after pictures of Paramount House. Everyone had a good time.

The project also gave Al Khalaf, a KCHA property manager, his own office at Paramount House. Before the upgrade, Khalaf shared an office with a fellow staff member. Now that he has his own office, he will be more accessible to residents and have a nice place to meet with them to answer questions and help them with paperwork.

Paramount House is one of eight buildings undergoing similar improvements as part of an innovative financing transaction by the King County Housing Authority. That transaction involved federal tax credits, tax-exempt bonds and public housing capital fund bond proceeds.

So far, four buildings, including Paramount House, are finished. Four others — Casa Madrona, Mardi Gras, Munro Manor and Plaza 17 — will be completed this year.

Protect yourself against the flu

The flu season can last as late as May. That means it's still important to take steps to avoid getting sick.

- Get a flu vaccine. For people at high risk for serious flu complications — such as infants, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart disease, and people 65 and older — getting vaccinated is especially important.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then, throw the tissue away.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. If you're not near water, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

- Stay away from people who are sick.

- If you're sick, stay home from work or school. Avoid other people so that you don't make them sick.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

- Flu antiviral drugs that must be prescribed by a health care provider can treat

the flu or prevent infection.

Flu shots cost \$25, but that fee can be reduced based on income. Those 18 or younger can have their fee waived. For a flu shot, call one of these clinics for an appointment:

AUBURN

Auburn Public Health Center
20 Auburn Ave.
253-833-8400

BELLEVUE

Eastgate Public Health Center
14350 S.E. Eastgate Way
206-296-4920

FEDERAL WAY

Federal Way Public Health Center
33431 13th Place S.
253-874-7639

BOTHELL

Northshore Public Health Center
10808 N.E. 145th St.
206-296-9816

WHITE CENTER

White Center Public Health Center
10821 Eighth Ave. S.W.
206-296-4646

Recycling

Continued from front page

the Ballinger Family Support Center's after-school program, thinks that recycling helps people learn more about how what they do affects the world.

"People our age don't always think about this stuff," he said. "Recycling is one way we can pay back Mother Nature."

Hoang Nguyen, 16, said he's inspired to recycle partly because he's read about the devastating effects of deforestation in some regions of the world.

"In the rainforests, every year they are cutting down more," said Nguyen, who also attends the after-school program. "If we can reduce what we use, we can reduce the number of trees they have to cut down. If we reduce and reuse, more wildlife will be saved."

Tamara Piwen, the center's family support manager, said she's been impressed by how much passion the children and teenagers at Ballinger have for the new recycling program.

"They are so excited to do this," she said. "They feel so good about taking care of the environment."

Five ways you can become a 'trash terminator'

1. Recycle more of what you use. Find out about all the items you can recycle at www.earth911.org and at 1-800-CLEANUP. For more on King County recycling, go to www.metrokc.gov.

2. Choose products with minimal packaging, and buy in bulk. Avoid individually wrapped items. A jumbo box of cereal uses less packaging than several single-serving-sized boxes.

3. Choose durable, reusable products rather than single-use, disposable items. For example: Use cloth napkins rather than paper ones. Get your coffee in a refillable mug. Use canvas bags for shopping.

4. Reuse bags, containers, packing materials and other items. Bags, cardboard boxes, bubble wrap, packing peanuts and padded envelopes can be used many times.

5. Reduce your use of paper. Whenever possible, use e-mail, take care of personal business online and use the library.

Return unwanted meds for free disposal

Group Health Cooperative pharmacies now are accepting unused prescription and over-the-counter drugs. The pharmacies will properly and safely dispose of the medications — an effort that helps protect individual safety and the environment.

Here's how you can return your unwanted medications:

- Keep them in their original containers (must be 12-oz. bottle size or less).

- Bring the medications to a participating pharmacy (see list below).

- Deposit the medications into the secure bin marked "medication return."

- The pharmacies will accept: prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, medication samples, medications for pets, vitamins, medicated ointments and lotions, inhalers and liquid medication in glass or leak-proof containers.

- The pharmacies won't accept: needles, thermometers, lancets, controlled substances (narcotics), IV bags, bloody or infectious waste, personal care products, business waste, empty containers, hydrogen peroxide, aerosol cans.

Participating pharmacies:

BELLEVUE

Factoria Medical Center
13451 S.E. 36th St.
425-562-1302

8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday

BOTHELL

Northshore Medical Center
11913 N.E. 195th St.
425-489-3113

8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through

Friday

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday

BURIEN

Burien Medical Center Pharmacy
140 S.W. 146th St.
206-901-2405

8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday

9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday

FEDERAL WAY

Federal Way Medical Center
301 S. 320th St.
253-874-7000

8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through

Friday

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday

KENT

Kent Medical Center
26004 104th Ave. S.E.
425-251-4070

8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through

Friday

REDMOND

Eastside Primary Care Clinic
2701 156th Ave. N.E.
425-883-5020

9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday and Tuesday

8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday

through Friday

9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday

Eastside Specialty Clinic

2700 152nd Ave. N.E.

425-883-5940

8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through

Friday

9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday and Sun-

day

Rent policy

Continued from front page

and disabled households and childcare for working families. Not all income sources are included in the calculation.

Under Rent Reform, KCHA is considering doing reviews less often and simplifying the way deductions and rent are calculated.

If I pay utilities, will I continue to get a utility allowance?

Currently, KCHA plans to keep utility allowances for residents who pay for utilities on their own. But KCHA also plans to simplify these complicated allowance schedules.

KCHA says it wants to make its new policies "revenue neutral." What does that mean?

"Revenue neutral" refers the income KCHA receives from resident rent payments. KCHA hopes to create policies that neither make money nor lose money for the housing authority.

Do residents have a chance to give input about the changes?

Yes. KCHA already has been meeting with groups of residents, including the Resident Advisory Council, and community organizations to discuss possible improvements to its rent policies. If you hear about a meeting, please join in. Before anything takes effect, KCHA will have a public hearing. Information about the hearing and proposed changes will be posted online at www.kcha.org and in resident newspapers. Also, KCHA has set up an e-mail address — rentreform@kcha.org — for residents to submit comments or questions.

