

Landlord Link

The Housing Authority of the City
of Santa Barbara

Looking To A Great 2009!

By Rob Pearson, Housing Authority Executive Director



It's a pleasure to offer these words and thoughts for our first 2009 issue of the Landlord Link....and a great year it will be! 2009 marks the Housing Authority's 40th anniversary...40 years of building and operating award winning and affordable housing for Santa Barbara. A major anniversary is a time to celebrate. It's also a time to reflect on accomplishments...and ours have been many. Over the past 40 years, we sought to provide the best possible housing for those in need. In doing so, we have always placed customer service at the core of our mission. Almost everyone, at some point in life, needs the assistance of someone else to navigate the path to personal and economic independence. This understanding underlies our success. We understand that to successfully house a family, successfully end homelessness, change lives for the better, and foster hope, we must be **"more than just housing"**. For our senior and disabled clients on fixed incomes, we provide a safe, secure,

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We Are More Than Just Housing ... Our "Second Story"

For those that have faced difficulty, improvement lies in the opportunity for a better life. At the Housing Authority, we believe in creating opportunities... opportunities that allow our clients to write a *second story* of their life if the first was difficult or lacked opportunity. To this end, we have launched a new non-profit to help us be more than just housing. It will secure funding and deliver needed services that foster success and self-sufficiency. The non-profit is named *Second Story*. *Second Story* will provide our clients coaching, education, hope, and inspiration—things that are key to success and independence. Through *Second Story* and our affordable housing developments, hope will no longer be an intangible

for those struggling to survive day to day. *Second Story* will provide a path from trial and tribulation to opportunity and success.



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affordable and attractive home for as long they need it. For low income working households struggling to keep a roof over their family's head and move forward economically, we provide them with decent, affordable housing **AND a path to self-sufficiency and private market housing**. Our work values the human spirit, builds on basic American values, helps our neighbors, seeks to end homelessness and improves our community's public and social health. It is an approach that truly makes us "**more than just housing**". As I stated, quality customer service is at our core. We care about those with whom we interact, particularly our residents along with neighboring property owners, the City Council, the Santa Barbara community, federal and state governments, and the tax paying public to name but a few. They are all Housing Authority customers.

For 2009 and forward, we will continue to dedicate ourselves to being more than just housing. We shall work to match the programs we operate and the projects we build to the identified needs of the community. Our past successes such as Garden Court for frail low income seniors, Casa de Las Fuentes for downtown workers, and El Carrillo that successfully houses and reengages the chronically homeless, help guide our future endeavors. And our future is bright. It holds the recent opening of the Garden Street Apartments where we are assisting the Mental Health Association of Santa Barbara (MHA) with their project's financing and construction and will serve as their property manager. The project provides MHA needed office space, a fellowship hall along with 51 new apartments for their clients and low income, downtown workers. Our future endeavors

include Artisan Court, a 56 unit rental development on East Cota Street that is well into the development approval stage and a recent property acquisition at 512 Bath Street where we have selected an architect to help us design a new 50 to 60 unit apartment complex.

For the Housing Authority Commission and Staff, the words "community", "family", "opportunity", "success", "hope", "change" are not simply idealistic catchphrases. We embrace their meaning and make sure they are integrated with our core values of competence, cooperation, commitment, communication and compassion. They are our "5-C's". These words define what we feel are necessary values for the operation of an organization such as ours where excellence in customer service to the community and the client is the foundation.

For our clients, the opportunity to have a safe, secure and affordable home is the needed foundation for pursuing life's other activities that bring success and happiness. Things like education, career advancement, sending a child to college, or simply being healthy and warm with a safe place to call home. Without the foundation and security of a home, such goals are elusive and the path to self-sufficiency is difficult, if not impossible to find. The reality (let alone the idea) that there are homeless on our streets in a nation so great is one that the Housing Authority is determined to change.

As we celebrate our 40 years of successful service to Santa Barbara, we say thank you to all of our partners...and this includes you our participating landlords. Our best wishes to you and yours for 2009!

Complying with the Violence Against Women Act

In January of 2007, former President Bush signed a law known as the Violence Against Women (VAWA). VAWA affords rights to victims of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking who are applicants or participants of the Section 8 Program. The following is a brief summary of the principal provisions of the law:

Selection of tenants: The law prohibits landlords from refusing to lease to persons who are, or have been, victims of domestic violence, dating violence or stalking when the applicant is otherwise a qualified applicant.

Lease terms regarding termination: If a tenant is a victim of an incident or incidents of actual or threatened domestic violence, dating violence or stalking, those incidents may not be construed as a serious or repeated violation of the lease by the victim or the threatened victim of the violence, and shall not be good cause for terminating the tenancy or occupancy

rights of the victim of such violence or threatened violence.

Termination of assistance/eviction: Criminal activity directly relating to domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking engaged in by a member of a tenant’s household or any guest or other person under the tenant’s control shall not be cause for termination of the tenancy if the tenant or an immediate member of the tenant’s family is the victim or threatened victim of that domestic violence.

The landlord can evict a leaseholder who engages in criminal acts of violence as described above to family members or other without evicting the victimized lawful occupants.

If you have questions or want more information about VAWA, please see the complete text in Public Law 109-162 (specifically Title VI, Sections 606 and 607) or contact your attorney.

Leanne’s “Second Story”

You would never know the cheery, smiling woman behind the counter of a local SB bakery was homeless just a few years ago, struggling to keep a job, battling depression and sleeping on friends’ couches, in seedy hotels or outside. She would still be there if it were not for the Housing Authority’s newly built 61-unit homeless project, El Carrillo, which opened in September of 2006. As Leanne states “I was barely hanging in there, I cried when I got the call from the Housing Authority.” Leanne spent 9 months getting her life back together, and credits the supportive on-site staff and support groups, as well as the El Carrillo community with her ability to flourish. She did so well in fact that we offered her the opportunity to move into a 1-bedroom unit in our 42-unit downtown worker development, Casa de Las Fuentes. With the assistance of Section 8, Leanne currently pays \$350 in rent monthly and is participating in the Family Self Sufficiency Program. Her goal now is to give back as she feels she has been given so much, “I feel like a million bucks...I want to let people know it can happen to them.”



We're on the Web!

www.hacsb.org



The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara

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OUR MISSION:

The Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara is a local public agency created under state law for the purpose of providing safe, decent, and quality affordable housing and supportive services to eligible persons with limited incomes, through a variety of federal, state, local and private resources.

OUR VISION:

The Housing Authority does more than handle the day-to-day demands of providing affordable housing solutions to lower income families, seniors and the disabled. We strive to craft solutions to our community's affordable housing dilemma in a holistic manner and turn them into a reality.

News Flash!

List Your Vacancies...FREE!

The Housing Authority maintains a **FREE** listing service for your vacancies. If you want to fill a vacancy quickly, add it to our list which is sent out to all Voucher holders currently looking for a unit. Please contact Ramon Escobedo at 897-1049. Currently we have 25 new Voucher holders looking for their new home. It is our recommendation to always screen any potential tenant, whether Section 8 or not, for suitability.

Who to Call...

For HAP contract/lease-up questions:
Andrea Fink, 897-1034

For inspection questions: **Ramon Escobedo, 897-1049** or **Ronnie Anderson, 897-1045**

For HAP payment questions: **Ruben Venegas, 897-1046**

Director of Housing Management:
Veronica Loza, 897-1032

Housing Authority Office Hours

As a reminder, the Housing Authority works a flex schedule, with alternate Fridays closed to the public. We also have extended daily customer service hours:

Monday—Thursday:

7:30 am - 5:30 pm

Alternate Fridays:

8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Got Direct Deposit?

Direct deposit is the safest and fastest way to get your HAP payment. Some of the benefits include:

- No risk of lost or stolen checks
- Payments posted to your account the day the check is issued, no waiting for checks to clear
- Save a trip to the bank

Please contact Andrea Fink at 897-1034 for more information.

Landlord Meeting

The Housing Authority will be hosting a luncheon to both honor our current participating Section 8 landlords and welcome new landlords at the end of March. Topics to be covered will include rent increases, lease violations, rent payments and more. Please contact Andrea Fink or Ramon Escobedo if you have a particular topic you'd like us to address. Stay tuned for more information.

Reporting Changes

Please remember to notify our office of any changes to your payment information in order to avoid delays in HAP payments. This would include account numbers for direct deposit, names, addresses, etc. Changes must be in writing and can be reported to our office by contacting Ruben Venegas at 897-1046.