



SUMMER 2025
Volume 4, Issue 2

THE Key Wester

a seasonal newsletter for residents of the



HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Message from the ED	2
Employee Spotlight	2
What to do Before, During, & After a Hurricane Hits	3
Good to Know!	3
Pest Control Schedule	4
Looking Back	4
Mr. Gary's Corner	4

IMPORTANT DATES

Independence Day—July 4
(KWA Offices Closed)

Parents Day—July 27

Senior Citizens Day—August 21

Women's Equality Day—August 26

Labor Day—September 1
(KWA Offices Closed)

Patriot Day—September 11

Off to College: A Big Step for Kids — and Parents

For some of you, the moment has arrived: your child is heading off to college. It's a time filled with pride, excitement, and yes, maybe even a few tears. Whether they are going out of state, or just a few hours up the road to South or Central Florida, this milestone marks a major transition for the whole family. Here are a few tips to make the transition smoother:

- 🎓 **Help with the Move:** Packing up and settling into a new space can be overwhelming. Lend a hand, but give your child room to make their new home their own.
- 🎓 **Stay Connected:** Set up regular check-ins, but try not to overdo it. Trust that they'll reach out when they need to.
- 🎓 **Offer Support, Not Pressure:** They'll face challenges, and your encouragement will mean more than constant advice. Champion them as they figure things out.
- 🎓 **Send a Little Love:** A care package now and then can make a big difference.

Watching your child go off to college is a proud moment that reflects all the love and guidance you've given. It's not goodbye — it's the beginning of a new and exciting chapter.

KWA Public Housing Policy

When someone who has been considered a family member attends school away from home, the person will continue to be considered a family member unless information becomes available to the KWA indicating that the student has established a separate household or the family declares that the student has established a separate household.

HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE

George Whiting Allen (1854-1922)

George Whiting Allen, namesake of the George Allen Apartments at 1200 1st Street (dedicated in 1951), was born in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1854 to William Smith and Mary Jane (Sprague) Allen. The family relocated to Key West shortly thereafter, where Allen would go on to leave a lasting legacy.

From 1878 to 1884, Allen served as a Florida State Senator. During his tenure, he married Miss Leonore X. Browne, and together they had two daughters. In 1891, Allen founded the First National Bank of Key West and became its first president.

He later served as the Key West Collector of Customs from 1897 to 1913, an appointment made by President William McKinley (the last president to have served in the Civil War; assassinated in 1901 and succeeded by VP Theodore Roosevelt).

A memorial tribute described Mr. Allen as "a patriot of unselfish devotion, a citizen of great intellectual attainments, a friend of unswerving loyalty, (and) a man of incorruptible integrity." He is also credited with influencing Henry M. Flagler's decision to extend the Florida East Coast Railway from Miami to Key West—a pivotal moment in the island's development.

George W. Allen passed away in May 1922 at his residence at 511 Caroline Street.



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Residents,

I hope this message finds you well. As we settle into the summer months, I want to take a moment to thank each and every one of you for making our communities a welcoming and vibrant place to call home. Our team at the Housing Authority is dedicated to providing safe, quality housing and supporting opportunities for you and your families to thrive.

Throughout the summer, we'll be working on a number of projects and activities aimed at improving the quality

of life in our neighborhoods — from property improvements and maintenance to resident events and programs. I encourage you to stay connected, participate, and let us know how we can best support you.

Thank you for being a valued part of our housing family. I hope this summer brings you moments of relaxation, joy, and connection with friends, family, and neighbors. Together, we can continue to build strong, supportive communities for everyone.

In service,

Randy Sterling

"You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them."

- Desmond Tutu—a South African Anglican bishop, anti-apartheid activist, and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Alberto "Pumar" Pumar

Maintenance Mechanic II

Interview by Peter Batty / Photo by "JB" Bastillada

Pumar has been with the Housing Authority for 21 years, serving as our dedicated plumber throughout his time here. A native of Key West, he worked in his family's plumbing business for most of his adult life before joining the Housing Authority.



Pumar says that he genuinely loves his job. He says it keeps him active, and he appreciates both the camaraderie with his colleagues and the opportunity to work with our residents every day. He says he finds it rewarding that no two days are alike, making each one unique and interesting.

Pumar and his wife Pam have been married for an astounding 42 years and are the proud parents of three grown children: Bobby Pinder, Daniel Pumar, and Christy Pumar. In his free time, Pumar enjoys fishing, boating, tossing a football, and cruising around Key West in his golf cart. His favorite places to dine are El Siboney and Salute! on the Beach. Pam and Pumar also have a Labrador Retriever with a distinctive ridge down its back.

Although he loves life in Key West, Pumar admits there are three things he'd happily change: the messy chickens, the traffic, and the cars that drive by blaring loud music.

(Sounds like Pumar has mastered the 'Key West trifecta' — loving the island for its charm, while wishing for quieter streets, orderly chickens, and a slightly lower volume on the soundtrack!)

Do you want to join our awesome team?

Check out the job opportunities on page 3 of this newsletter or on our website at www.kwha.org!

Hurricane Preparedness

weather.gov/hurricane

Prepare Before Hurricane Season



Develop an evacuation plan



Assemble disaster supplies: food, water, batteries, charger, radio, cash



Get an insurance checkup and document your possessions



Create a communication plan with a hand-written list of contacts



Strengthen your home



Hurricane Preparedness

weather.gov/hurricane

Get Moving When a Storm Threatens



Protect your home: cover windows, secure doors & loose items



Determine sheltering options and consider your pets



Ready your go-bag, meds & supplies, charge phone, fill up/charge vehicle



Help your neighbors, especially the elderly & other vulnerable people



Follow evacuation orders if given



Hurricane Preparedness

weather.gov/hurricane

Use Caution After Storms



If you evacuated, only return home when directed it's safe to do so



Remain vigilant, as hazards remain: heat, downed powerlines, floodwaters, & more



Clean up safely: don't push yourself, and check on neighbors



Only use generators outdoors, 20+ feet from your home



Prepare for the likelihood that help and communications may not be available



GOOD TO KNOW!

The Monroe County Public Library at 700 Fleming Street in Key West offers Computer Classes every Tuesday & Thursday! Topics include Basic Microsoft Word & Resume Formatting. Stop by their front desk or call 305-292-3595 to sign up for an upcoming class.



JOB OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE KEY WEST HOUSING AUTHORITY

The Housing Authority of the City of Key West, Florida is dedicated to providing excellent customer service and assistance to its tenants, applicants, & landlords by employing and retaining a highly qualified and well-trained staff that supports its mission.

Current Employment Openings (as of 06/20/2025):

- Carpenter (F/T)
- Housing Assistant (F/T)
- Housing Mgr. (F/T) (*Marathon*)
- Maintenance Mechanic (F/T)
- Resident Care Supervisor (F/T)

How To Apply:

To apply for a position with the Key West Housing Authority, please submit a completed Application for Employment, a completed Criminal & Traffic Background Authorization Form, & a signed job description for the position you are applying for.

Via Email:

Kathy Wright
WrightK@kwha.org

Via Postal or Hand Delivery:

The Housing Authority of the City of Key West, Florida
Attn: Human Resources
1400 Kennedy Drive
Key West,
FL 33040



PEST CONTROL SCHEDULE



Fort Village—
3rd Wednesday of each month

Garden View Apartments—
1st Wednesday of each month

George Allen Apartments—
2nd Wednesday of each month

Jack T. Murray Senior Complex—
2nd Wednesday of each month

Lang Milian Apartments—
2nd Wednesday of each month

Poinciana Gardens—
2nd & 4th Wednesday of each month

Robert Gabriel Apartments—
3rd Wednesday of each month

Roosevelt C. Sands, Jr. Affordable Housing Complex—
3rd Wednesday of each month

Senior Citizen Plaza—
4th Wednesday of each month

Please promptly report any pest control issues, including bed bugs, to the Maintenance Department or your property manager.

LOOKING BACK

Spring was a busy season! Below are just a few of the exciting things that happened the past few months:

- ◆ Staff hosted a ribbon cutting and luncheon in the renovated auditorium for the residents of Senior Citizen Plaza
- ◆ Painted all of the stairs, decks, and railings at Roosevelt C. Sands Affordable Housing Complex
- ◆ Contracted with a locally-owned roofing company to replace all the roofs at George Allen Apartments with new metal roofs
- ◆ Secured a unanimous recommendation of approval from the City's Planning Board to build 54 new affordable units at Poinciana Plaza
- ◆ Renovated several occupied units at Poinciana Plaza
- ◆ Awarded several thousand dollars in scholarships to residents graduating from High School
- ◆ Completed major tree trimmings at all properties in advance of the upcoming hurricane season

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

WITH MR. GARY

"A person who *won't* read has no advantage over a person who *can't* read."

Mark Twain, American writer, humorist, and essayist

The Housing Authority congratulates all High School Seniors who earned their graduation diploma in May. This year, we had a record number of eligible graduates who applied for Vocational and College Scholarships!

Congratulations to **Housing Authority of the City of Key West** 2025 Class Night scholarship recipients. We are so proud of you!

- Dominick Rodriguez- \$1000
- Tricia Desroches- \$500
- Shusmita Shawlin - \$500
- Rotchison Alexander- \$500

Congratulations to the **Gulf Atlantic Bank** scholarship recipients, and thank you to our generous community partner.

- Zaikee Lopez- \$500
- Jeremiah Mobley- \$500
- Nathalie Espinosa Salgado- \$500
- Milodgina Pierrilus- \$500

Congratulations to the "Community Keeper" Haylee Brogli, the Key West High School 2025 recipient of the 2nd annual **Mr. Roosevelt Sands "Community Keepers" Legacy Scholarship.**



"Community Keeper"

Haylee Brogli,
pictured with
Housing Authority
Director of Community Relations,
Peter H. Batty.

Visit the Monroe County Sheriff's Office Animal Farm free of charge the 2nd and 4th Sunday of each month from 1 – 3 pm at the Sheriff's Office Headquarters on College Rd. For more info, call (305) 293-7300.

Gary Young
Contact Info
youngg@kwha.org
or



CallMax is up & running. Get real time updates about scheduled maintenance, water shut-offs, pest control, office closures or community activities. Make sure your housing manager has your current contact info, or complete the CallMax update form when you pay your rent.

Your Housing Authority offers a FREE after school program for families who reside at Lang Milian, George Allen, Robert Gabriel & Fort Village. Elementary and Middle School students have fun during play activities and receive assistance with homework, reading, & math. Check out our new Computer Lab!

Call Mr. Gary TODAY! at (305) 304-5568 and schedule an Open House visit to our classroom at Building 13-G, Lang Milian Apartments, 301 White Street near the new playground!

After School
program



Attention Residents of Senior Citizen Plaza & Jack T. Murray Senior Complex: Our community partner, Monroe County Social Services, provides transportation to the Publix and Winn Dixie shopping centers. Please speak to your Housing Manager for details, and sign up by calling Mr. Gary! (305) 304-5568