

FALL 2025
Volume 4, Issue 3

THE Key Wester

a seasonal newsletter for residents of the



HOUSING AUTHORITY

OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA

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Policy Spotlight: Guests vs. Household Members

Did you know there's a difference between a *guest* and a *household member* in public housing? Our Admissions and Continued Occupancy Policy (ACOP) sets clear rules to help protect everyone's housing.



Guests are welcome to visit! But the ACOP limits how long they can stay. A resident family must notify the KWHa when overnight guests will be staying in the unit for more than three days. A guest may visit no longer than 14 consecutive days or a total of 30 cumulative calendar days during any 12-month period. If someone stays longer than this, they are no longer considered a guest.

Household Members are the people listed on your lease and approved by the Housing Authority. They are the only people allowed to live in the unit full-time. If you want to add someone to your household, whether it's a new baby, a spouse, or another family member, you must request approval from the Housing Authority **before** they move in.

Why does this matter?

- It keeps rent fair for everyone, since rent is based on total household income.
- It ensures that units are the right size for the family.
- It keeps our communities safe and in compliance with HUD rules.



Remember: If you'd like to add someone to your household, please contact the management office first.

We're here to help guide you through the process.

IMPORTANT DATES

Columbus Day / Indigenous Peoples' Day —
October 13
(KWHa Offices Closed)

Veterans' Day—November 11
(KWHa Offices Closed)

Thanksgiving Day—November 27
(KWHa Offices Closed)

Day after Thanksgiving—November 28
(KWHa Offices Closed)

HISTORICAL REMEMBRANCE

Robert Gabriel Apartments—Sites A, B, and C



The Robert Gabriel Apartments were built in 1959 by the Key West Housing Authority, during a time when Key West remained segregated and housing pleas were mounting. The development was created specifically to provide homes for Black families.

"Most of the apartments were filled by families whose homes were uprooted when the project was built," recalled the Housing Authority's executive director at the time. In total, 38 homes were removed to make way for the new community.

Today, the Robert Gabriel Apartments consist of 53 units spread across three sites. Site C is the largest, with 33 apartments, while Site B, photographed here in 1965 from the corner of Whitehead St. and Olivia St., consists of 10 units.

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Residents,

As the seasons change and we welcome the slightly cooler air of fall, I am reminded that this time of year is about gratitude.

At the Key West Housing Authority, we are thankful for each of you who call our communities home. You are what make our neighborhoods strong. Every day, I see residents supporting one another, looking out for children, and lending a helping hand. These small acts of care create a sense of family.

We are also grateful for the partnerships that allow us to improve our housing and provide supportive services. From community programs to new housing initiatives, we remain committed to building opportunities that help every resident thrive.

We should all reflect on the good around us, whether it is a caring neighbor, a safe place to call home, or the simple joy of a shared meal. Together, we have much to be thankful for.

On behalf of the entire team, I wish you and your family a warm and joyful fall season.

In service,

Randy Sterling

"If we never try, we shall never succeed."

**- Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States of America
(February 12, 1809—April 15, 1865)**



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Cari Díaz

Housing Manager

Interview by Peter Batty / Photo by Tasha Jean

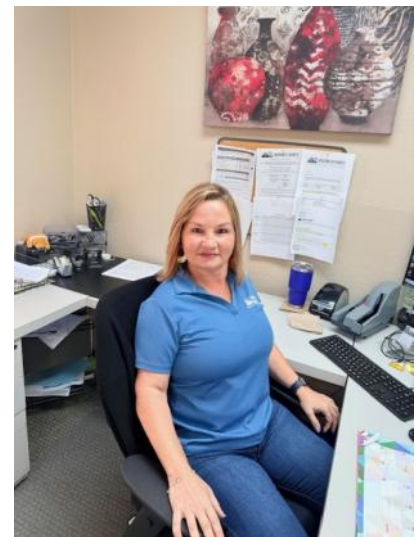
Cari has been a dedicated member of the Housing Authority for 21 years. She currently holds the position of Affordable Housing Manager. Cari started in Accounting and then moved to Applications before assuming her current role.

Cari truly loves what she does, and her greatest enjoyment is seeing people smile when they move into their new apartment.

A Key West native, Cari feels fortunate to have her two adult children and three grandchildren living nearby. She likes biking and walking, but her absolute favorite thing to do is spend time with her family. I asked her if she cooked for them and she said with a smile, "I cooked for them all my life. Now they cook for me!"

Although it is a bit of a drive up the Keys, Cari's favorite restaurant is Broil on Cudjoe Key. Her family pet is a Shih Tzu named Rylee.

Cari likes living in Key West and really appreciates the small-town atmosphere and the fact that she knows a lot of people. While she admits she misses the days of Sears and Kmart, she certainly doesn't miss the traffic.



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!

SUPER EASY PUMPKIN PIE RECIPE

Ingredients:

- 1 9" frozen unbaked pie crust or graham cracker crust
- 1 16-ounce can of pumpkin puree
- 1 14-ounce can of sweetened condensed milk
- 2 large eggs, cracked and slightly scrambled
- 1 teaspoon of pumpkin pie spice



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425-degrees F
2. Unwrap pie crust but keep it in its tin container and place on baking sheet.
3. Pour pumpkin puree, condensed milk, eggs, and pumpkin pie spice in large bowl. Mix until combined. Pour the mixture into your pie crust.
4. Bake for 15 minutes. Then reduce the heat of the oven to 350-degrees, and bake for another 35-40 minutes, until the filling is set. Cool on wire rack for at least an hour before enjoying and sharing with family and friends.

Chef's Tip: for additional decadence, add a shot of your favorite whipped cream to each slice before serving!



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 09/29/2025):

- Carpenter (F/T)
- Electrician (F/T)
- Housing Assistant (F/T)
- Maintenance Mechanic (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



**Hunting, Fishing, & Camping
Sales Tax Holiday
Now until December 31, 2025**



The Joy of Camping in Monroe County

Did you know that right here in Monroe County, we have four incredible state parks where families can enjoy the great outdoors together? Camping is a wonderful way to unplug, spend quality time, and make quality memories surrounded by nature. Whether you're pitching a tent under the stars or exploring local wildlife, there's no better way to connect as a family.

Our local treasures include:

Bahia Honda State Park – Famous for stunning beaches & breathtaking sunsets.

Curry Hammock State Park – A peaceful getaway perfect for kayaking, birdwatching, and stargazing.

John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park – The first undersea park in the U.S., where families can snorkel and dive among vibrant coral reefs.

Long Key State Park – Ideal for waterfront camping, with hiking trails and views of Florida Bay.

Each park offers its own unique experiences, from snorkeling adventures to quiet evenings by the campfire. So pack up your gear, bring the kids, and set out for an unforgettable camping adventure, without ever leaving Monroe County!

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.



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

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

- ◆ Secured Major Development Plan approval from the City Commission to build 54 new units on vacant land at Poinciana Plaza
- ◆ Staff hosted two resident meetings, one at Lang Milian Apartments, and one at the Senior Citizen's Plaza. Thank you to all who attended!
- ◆ Secured funds from the MCLA to renovate units at Poinciana Gardens
- ◆ Reopened the Public Housing MF waitlist—first time in several years!
- ◆ Reopened the Garden View Apartments waitlist
- ◆ Issued an IFB for concrete spalling repairs at Poinciana Plaza
- ◆ Major reroofing project at George Allen Apartments nearly finished
- ◆ Completed several renovation projects in units at Poinciana Plaza
- ◆ Completed the annual audit and presented to the Board

RESIDENT ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITIES

WITH MR. GARY

Our summer program was super fun and busy! Our community partners opened their hearts and doors to our children. Grateful thanks to:



Key West Department of Parks and Recreation, and the MLK Jr. Community Pool Supervisor for Water Safety and Swimming lessons
Historic Tours of America for field trips to the Key West Aquarium, the Wreckers Museum and the Conch Train Tour of Key West
Boondocks Mini-Golf for mini-golf games, snow-cones and delicious kid's meals

Boca Chica Naval Air Station for Airplanes Bowling, and a tour of the Military Working Dog Training Center

Key West Art and Historical Society for free summer camp scholarships and museum tours

Reef Relief free Coral Camp scholarships and a tour of Reef Relief Educational Center

Gary Young
Contact Info
youngg@kwha.org
or (305) 304-5568

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.

CallMax: 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.



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

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